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Activist Art Speaks Louder Than Words: The Practices of Artist Nancy Popp

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28 MINUTES AGO

If there is a single question that could summarize performance artist, activist, and yogi [Nancy Popp](#)'s approach to art making, it is one she poses herself: "What does it mean to have an individual occupy public space?" Less interested in the creation of physical objects than in public interventions, community collaborations, and solo performances, she travels to cities and sites in and outside of the U.S., and makes scenes. She draws from the rich tradition of artists using their own bodies as the principal medium for their work, and from the history of grassroots protest movements across the U.S. and around the world, including Occupy Wall Street, to demonstrate how an individual has the power to affect change, while simultaneously highlighting the challenges and forces bearing down on individual freedom.

Though she documents and expands upon her projects through videos, photographs, and drawings, actions form the heart of her practice. "I find representation (of any kind) inherently problematic, which is why my work takes the route of direct action," she has written. Construction sites are among her preferred locales, as she sees them as representative of the nexus of political, economic, and social hierarchies that shape and re-shape cities, too often to the exclusive advantage of those with influence and means. In her ongoing "Untitled (Street Performances)" series, for example, she defies the "no entry" signs at construction sites to clamber over half-formed buildings, claiming, at least for a moment, a modicum of control over each development project. Through the contrast of her living body with the industrial armature, she questions the relationship between these projects and the human beings that they simultaneously serve and displace. She has also gone inside, to interrogate the very particular realm of the commercial gallery space. Recently, at Culver City's [Klowden Mann](#), she strung up lengths of bright orange mason line between photographs documenting her construction site interventions and the architecture of the gallery itself, including a temporary exhibition wall, which ultimately deconstructed—a barrier much easier to break down than those going up all the time outside of the gallery's confines.

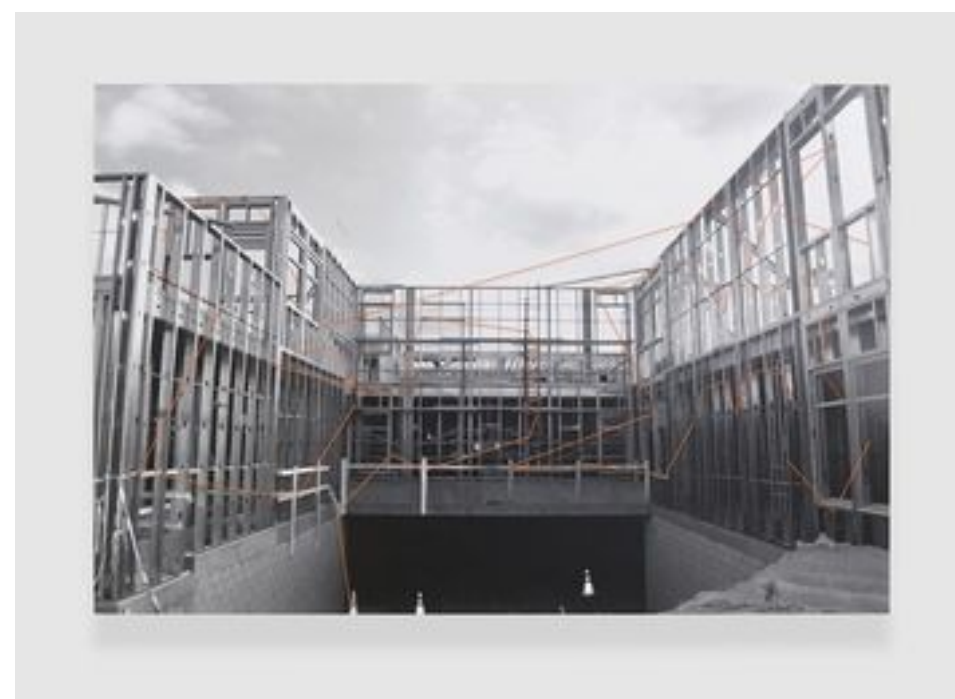
—[Karen Kedmey](#)

[Explore more artists at Klowden Mann.](#)



Nancy Popp
Untitled (Street Performances), San Francisco MOMA, 2014
Klowden Mann

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Nancy Popp
Untitled (Street Performances), 19th/Boradway, Los Angeles, ...
Klowden Mann

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Nancy Popp
Untitled (Street Performances), San Francisco MOMA, 2014
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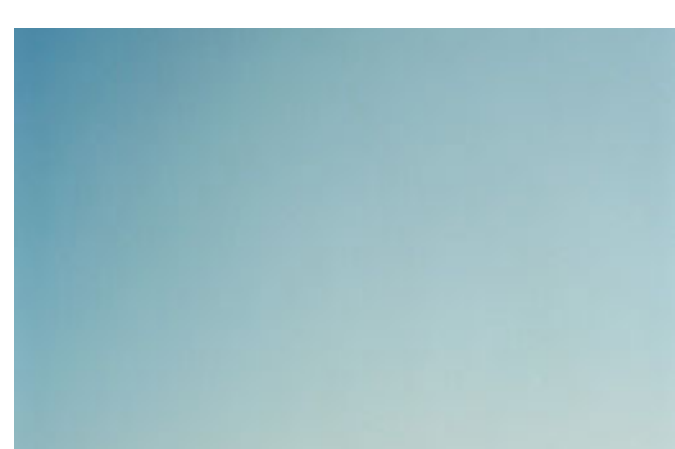
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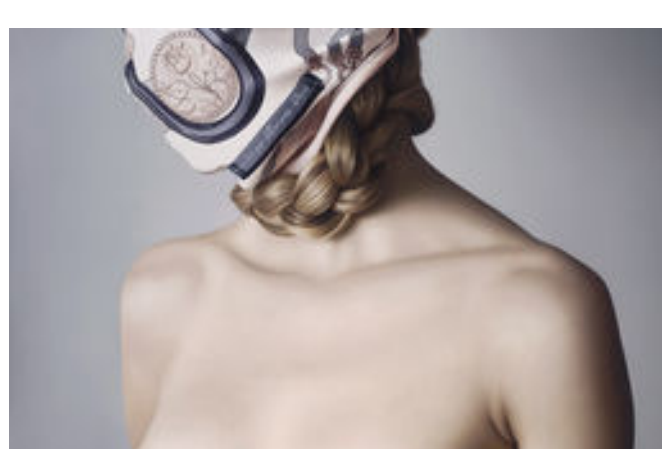
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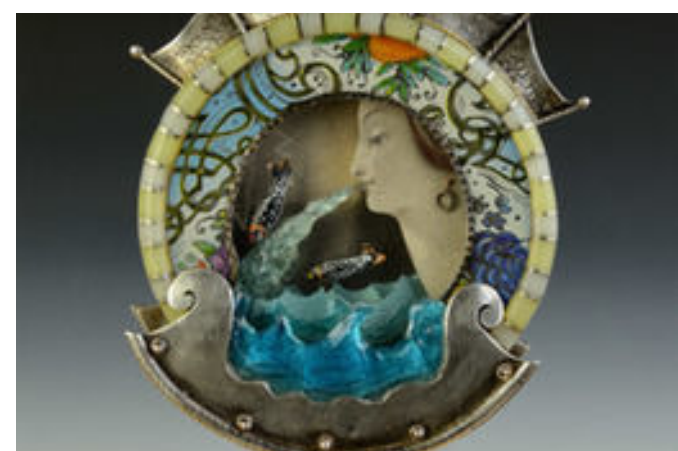
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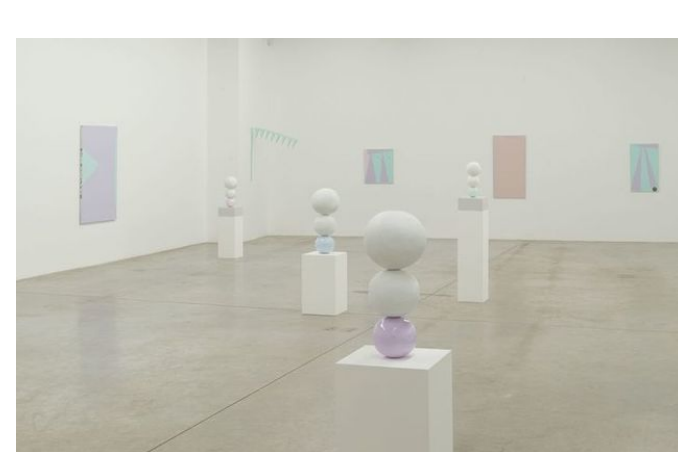
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