

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

258 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877

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Catarina Leitão, *Uplift*, the second of seven letter-press printed and hand painted booklets, edition of 5 (detail), 2008

Pretty Tough Contemporary Storytelling

June 21, 2009, to January 3, 2010

Ten women with a point of view—nine artists and The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum's new curator, Mónica Ramírez-Montagut—opened the exhibition *Pretty Tough: Contemporary Storytelling* at the Museum on June 21, 2009.

The exhibition highlights the recent proliferation of women artists—in this case Ambreen Butt, Kate Clark, Orly Cogan, Amy Cutler, Kyung Jeon, Catarina Leitão, Rosana Palazyan, Liliana Porter, and Stacey Steers—who reclaim storytelling as a strategy to address contemporary discussions on warfare, the environment, and female struggles in their work.

Each of the artists in the exhibition focuses on narrative representation and figuration. Their fairytale-like depictions are in reality reflections of underlying conflicts explored through refined, delicate, and meticulous work—including hand-crafted pop-up booklets, watercolor and gouache paintings on rice paper, re-embroidered vintage textiles, taxidermic sculptures, toy assemblages, and a video of animated collages.

Curator Mónica Ramírez-Montagut points out, “The artists look back at traditional modes of expression, such as storytelling, as well as employing old-fashioned techniques that require labor-intensive processes—obsessive, elaborate, yet impeccably manufactured. This highly stylized work—pretty—offers profound assessments of our contemporary world—tough—by relying on storytelling. This unique combination of methods is a subversive strategy that permeates the public sphere more effectively than confrontational discourses.”

The exhibition will be on view through January 3, 2010. The public were invited to Meet the Artists and to celebrate the exhibition on June 21, when Ramírez-Montagut moderated a panel discussion entitled *Stories in the Making*, featuring artists Kate Clark, Kyung Jeon, and Catarina Leitão

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The Museum:

The Aldrich is one of the few non-collecting contemporary art museums in the United States. Founded on Ridgefield's historic Main Street in 1964, the Museum enjoys the curatorial independence of an alternative space while maintaining the registrarial and art-handling standards of a national institution. Exhibitions feature work by emerging and mid-career artists, and education programs help adults and children to connect to

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today's world through contemporary art. The Museum is located at 258 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877. All exhibitions and programs are handicapped accessible. Free on-site parking. Regular Museum hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 5 pm. For more information call 203.438.4519.

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