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# Zarouhie Abdalian at LAXART

August 17, 2017  
Text by Adam Monohon

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Submissions



Zarouhie Abdalian, *brunt (v)*  
(2017). Steel tool head, 12.3 x 4 x  
3.8 cm. Image courtesy of  
LAXART.

In *Work*, a multi-disciplinary exhibition by Zarouhie Abdalian, the boundary between nature and the made is taken as subject. Across the exhibition, Abdalian meditates on labor in its most essential forms. In her emphasis on the impact of early tools on the efficiency of work Abdalian aims to highlight the moment at which, through technologically assisted labor, humankind began to distance itself from nature.

The main gallery is given over to work that riffs on minimalism and the notion of the ready-made. *From Chalk Mine Hollow* (all works 2017), a series of slab-like reliefs with aggressively tooled surfaces, hanging on the perimeter walls while pieces from the *brunt* series (heavily oxidized steel tool heads) stand atop slender white plinths in the gallery's center. Set against one another *brunt* and *from Chalk Mine Hollow* stand as evidence of opposite ends of a primitive sort of work; *brunt* as tool and *from Chalk Mine Hollow* as tooled. Abdalian here draws attention to the moment of production itself, complicating ideological systems in which the products of labor are afforded primacy over production.

Elsewhere, Abdalian's work engages installation and media art, particularly *to hazard functions, events*, an array of objects bent and ripped into their current form through some catastrophic failure, and *threnody for the millions killed by silicosis*, a sparse sound installation playing the dull thuds and pings of one object striking another.

While the works in the exhibition succeed in prompting open-ended questions on work in its various guises, ultimately, they fail to communicate any clear thesis. Focused on the index of work itself, as represented through tools and tooling, Abdalian suppresses the human role in work. In her adherence to a minimalist approach Abdalian obscures the actual implications of work on humanity that she sets out to explore.

Zarouhie Abdalian: *Work* runs July 30–September 2, 2017 at LAXART (7000 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038).



**Zarouhie Abdalian, *from Chalk  
Mine Hollow (iv)* (2017).  
Hydrocal. Image courtesy of  
LAXART.**



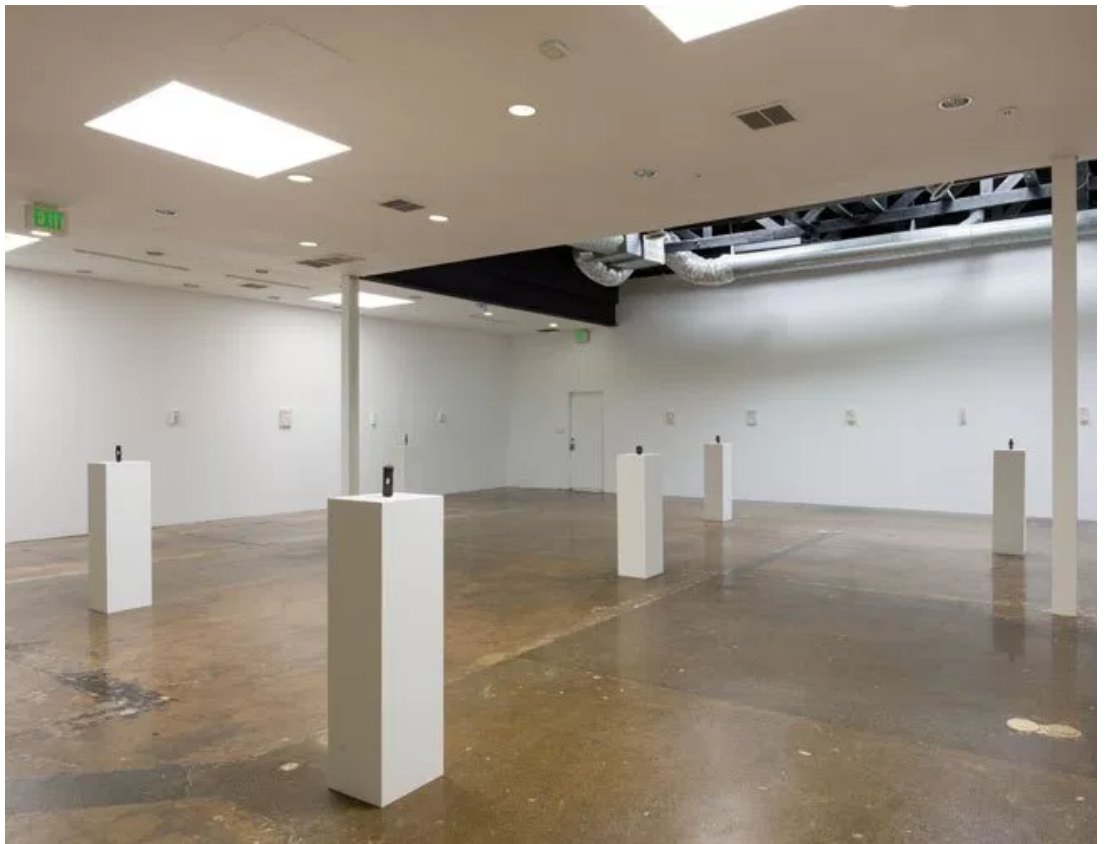
**Zarouhie Abdalian, *to hazard functions, events* (2017). Steel, aluminum, tarp. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of LAXART.**



**Zarouhie Abdalian, *to hazard functions, events* (2017) (detail).  
Image courtesy of LAXART.**



**Zarouhie Abdalian, *from Chalk Mine Hollow (i)* (2017). Hydrocal.  
Image courtesy of LAXART.**



**Zarouhie Abdalian, *Work*  
(installation view). Image  
courtesy of LAXART.**



**Zarouhie Abdalian and Joseph  
Rosenzweig, *threnody for the  
millions killed by silicosis* (2017).  
4.1 audio, 45 minutes. Image  
courtesy of LAXART**