



CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts presents:

Diamond Stingily: Doing The Best I Can

January 15 through March 30, 2019

Curated by CCA Wattis Institute Director and Chief Curator
Anthony Huberman

Rosha Yaghmai: Miraclegrow

January 15 through March 30, 2019

Curated by CCA Wattis Institute Associate Curator Leila Grothe



Above: Diamond Stingily, installation view, *Diamond Stingily: Life In My Pocket*, May 17–October 14, 2018, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen Studio. Below: Rosha Yaghmai, installation view, *Made in L.A. 2018*, June 3–September 2, 2018, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

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San Francisco, CA—November 7, 2018—CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is pleased to announce two parallel solo exhibitions: *Diamond Stingily: Doing The Best I Can* and *Rosha Yaghmai:*

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Miraclegrow. As CCA Wattis celebrates 20 years of contemporary art in the Bay Area, these exhibitions continue the institution’s commitment to providing emerging artists space to experiment and expand their practice. Stingily, who has begun to capture the art world’s attention with her politically charged installations, will present a new body of work at the Wattis and dive more deeply into the theme of athleticism. Yaghmai, who has garnered acclaim for her visionary work in sculpture, will have a platform for her first institutional solo exhibition.

“For two decades, Wattis has been a place for artists to advance their ideas and where audiences can experience something new, challenging, and thought-provoking,” says Anthony Huberman, CCA Wattis director and chief curator. “We are grateful to work with artists like Diamond Stingily and Rosha Yaghmai who are participating in the urgent conversations shaping contemporary sculpture as we know it.”

Chicago-born, New York-based artist Diamond Stingily (b. 1990) is recently known for her deeply personal work on race, violence, and American suburbia. For *Doing the Best I Can*, Stingily will focus more astutely on the experience of being an athlete—a theme that has risen within her previous work that she will further explore for this exhibition. She will develop a new body of work in a site-specific installation for the Wattis’s front gallery that involves hundreds of trophies, custom-made hurdles, a human-sized doll, and other physical interventions in the space, all of which will be lit by a single massive portable light tower.

To be an athlete, for Stingily, is more of a state of mind than a description of a specific type of activity. While hailing from a family of athletes, with two brothers playing in the NFL, she considers her own experience as an artist to be like that of an athlete, involving the necessity for resilience and perseverance in the face of seemingly impossible odds, alongside the joy and exuberance inherent in overcoming an obstacle. In that sense, her site-specific installation at the Wattis reflects on what it means to live a life that is always under scrutiny and on the edge of danger, but also with celebration always in reach. In her own life experience as a black woman in the United States, she has noted, there has been pain but there has also been encouragement. Stingily hopes that by sharing that sense of empowerment with others, they might overcome their own obstacles.

Los Angeles-based artist Rosha Yaghmai (b. 1978; Santa Monica, CA) is one of today’s rising stars of contemporary sculpture in America. For her much-anticipated exhibition *Miraclegrow*, Yaghmai will create a new installation specifically for Wattis’s second gallery. Her site-specific installation will be conceived as a supersized replica of a bathroom

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floor. In the center of the gallery, Yaghmai will fabricate a 17-foot “hair” by welding and bending a long rusty pipe. The hair’s exaggerated scales will be composed of epoxy resin castings of the artist’s own body, referencing the unique markers ingrained in a person’s expended biomaterial. Yaghmai is captivated by the information contained within such material, within our DNA. With an interest in reincarnation and anamnesis, she asks through sculptural exploration whether a body can carry inherited memory, language, and history from one person to the next.

Additionally, the baseboards of the gallery walls will be lined with enormous black tiles, which the artist considers paintings. They will curve slightly at the bottom, resting on a tiled gallery floor that serves as a pedestal for the large hair. Another rusty pipe will be embedded in a wall, this one acting as a portal to another place just out of reach. A collage of found sounds emerge from the pipe, including “River Song,” originally composed by Persian singer Ramesh and re-recorded by Yaghmai and her brother. A bug zapper will cast a forensic glow, acting as an awareness of mortality and a conduit to the next life.

About Diamond Stingily

Chicago-born, New York-based artist Diamond Stingily (b. 1990), working primarily in sculpture and video, uses objects and images from her immediate surroundings, such as wooden doors, chains, synthetic hair, or dolls, to point to the shared but also deeply personal experience of the violence of racism in American suburban life. “Violence,” she says, “is a part of every day for a lot of people—to be non-violent, I think, is a very privileged thing.” In the United States, the black body has always been considered a threat, and, to this day, continues to live in a constant state of danger.

Stingily grew up in Country Club Hills and then in Romeoville, both suburbs of Chicago. While rooted in an experience marked by systemic racism, Stingily avoids making art that attempts to speak for the black experience in general terms and prefers to speak only of what she knows: her own life, family, and childhood memories. For example, she has incorporated dolls and playground sets into recent sculptures and videos. Her use of hair is based on growing up in her mother’s hair salon, where black women took pride in their hair. “Everyone has had a childhood, good or bad,” she says. “I think mine could be, dependent on perspective, good or bad.”

Stingily’s recent solo shows include ICA Miami (2018), Freedman Fitzpatrick in Paris (2018), Ramiken Crucible Gallery in New York (2016) and in Los Angeles (2017), and Queer Thoughts Gallery in New York

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(2015). Her work has also been featured in recent major exhibitions such as the *2018 Triennial: Songs for Sabotage* as well as *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon* (2017), both at the New Museum in New York. She lives and works in New York.

About Rosha Yaghmai

Los Angeles-based artist Rosha Yaghmai (b. 1978; Santa Monica, CA) melds industrial and intensely handmade processes with cast off materials, situating her work in a long history of sculptural and installation practices in Southern California. Yaghmai typically makes large-scale installations with many parts, suggesting quasi-recognizable scenes where the collected objects are dependent on the context in which they are viewed. Her work is often described as psychedelic and regularly explores the binaries of familiar and foreign, inside and outside, abject and sophisticated, and the phenomenon of occupying many worlds at once.

Yaghmai's father immigrated to the United States from Iran in the late 1960s, where he met and married her American mother. Yaghmai was born and raised in Santa Monica, California, where she was not explicitly taught Persian culture and history and, instead, absorbed her heritage through a connection to an immigrant pressured to assimilate. This sort of cultural amnesia is one where she is continually in a process of waking up from her own history. These antecedents become hybridized with the artist's lived experience growing up in a working class California beach town.

Yaghmai received her BFA in visual arts from School of Visual Arts, New York, and her MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 2007. Her work was most recently shown in *Made in L.A. 2018* at the Hammer, and has been exhibited at TATE St. Ives, England (2018); Marlborough Contemporary, New York (2017); Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles (2017); Cleopatra's, New York (2016); Central Park, Los Angeles (2016); Weiss Berlin, Germany (2016); Human Resources, Los Angeles (2016); Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles (2013); Tiff's Desk, Los Angeles (2012); Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles (2011); Terra Foundation for American Art, Giverny, France (2009); GBK, Sydney, Australia (2008); Estacion Tijuana, Mexico (2008); Riverside Art Museum, California (2007), among others. Yaghmai is a recipient of the Villa Aurora Berlin Fellowship (2016) and a Terra Foundation Fellowship (2009). She lives and works in Los Angeles.

About CCA Wattis Institute of Contemporary Arts

Founded in 1998 at California College of the Arts in San Francisco and located a few blocks from its campus, CCA Wattis Institute for

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Contemporary Arts is a nonprofit exhibition venue and research institute dedicated to contemporary art and ideas. As an exhibition space, it commissions and shows new work by emerging and established artists from around the world. Recent solo exhibitions include *Adam Linder: Full Service* (which traveled to Mudam Luxembourg); *Ken Lum: What's Old is Old for a Dog*; *Henrik Olesen: The Walk*; *Melanie Gilligan: Parts-wholes*; *Howard Fried: Derelicts*; *Laura Owens: Ten Paintings*; *Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys: Tram 3* (which traveled to MoMA PS1); *Josephine Pryde: Lapses in Thinking by the Person I Am* (which traveled to ICA Philadelphia and earned Pryde a 2016 Turner Prize nomination); *K.r.m. Mooney: En, set*; *Sam Lewitt: More Heat Than Light* (which traveled to Kunsthalle Basel and the Swiss Institute, New York); and *Ellen Cantor: Cinderella Syndrome* (which traveled to Künstlerhaus Stuttgart). A recent group exhibition, *Mechanisms*, traveled to Secession in Vienna in an expanded form entitled *Other Mechanisms*.

As a research institute, the Wattis dedicates an entire year to reflect on the work of a single artist, which informs a regular series of public programs and publications involving the field's most prominent artists and thinkers. The 2018–2019 season is dedicated to the writer Dodie Bellamy; past seasons featured Joan Jonas, Andrea Fraser, David Hammons, and Seth Price.

The Wattis also hosts an annual Capp Street Artist-in-Residence, one of the earliest and longest-running artist-in-residence programs in the country, founded in 1983 by Ann Hatch as Capp Street Project, and incorporated into the Wattis Institute in 1998. Each year, an artist comes to live and work in San Francisco for a semester, teaches a graduate seminar at CCA, and presents an exhibition. Recent participants include contemporary (2017–2018), Melanie Gilligan (2016–2017), Carissa Rodriguez (2015–2016), Nairy Baghramian (2014–2015), Claire Fontaine (2013–2014), Ryan Gander (2012–2013), Harrell Fletcher and Kris Martin (2011–2012), Paulina Olowska and Renata Lucas (2010–2011), and Abraham Cruzvillegas (2009–2010).

For more information, visit wattis.org.

About California College of the Arts

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. Benefitting from its San Francisco Bay Area location and a faculty of expert practitioners, the college prepares students for lifelong creative work by cultivating innovation, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility. Graduates are highly sought-after by the world's cutting-

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edge companies, architecture and design firms, cultural and arts organizations, and more. CCA is currently expanding its San Francisco campus with new student housing and a new building by award-winning firm Studio Gang that will open during the 2021–2022 academic year.

For more information, visit cca.edu.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts presents *Diamond Stingily: Doing the Best I Can* and *Rosha Yaghmai: Miraclegrow*

Opening reception: Tuesday, January 15, 2019, 6:30–8:30pm

Location: 360 Kansas Street (between 16th and 17th streets), San Francisco

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 12–6pm; closed Sunday and Monday

Admission: Free

Information: 415.355.9670 or visit wattis.org

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