

# PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

## ZAROUHIE ABDALIAN

*Bells for Baku, London, Louisiana*

10 February – 18 March 2023

**Private View: Thursday 9 February 2023, 6-8 pm**



Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present *Bells for Baku, London, Louisiana*, the first UK solo exhibition of New Orleans-based artist Zarouhie Abdalian. This follows Abdalian's project *con sordino* presented by Pippy Houldsworth Gallery in late 2021 in The Box.

In a new body of work conceived especially for this exhibition, themes related to the conditions of modern industrial production continue to occupy the artist. Abdalian turns her attention to heavy industry, to the massive accumulation of labour that confronts the workers exploited by the owners of Shell, Cargill, General Electric and BP, amongst others. As the exhibition title suggests, Abdalian's bells – a recurring image in her work – are meant to ring out across the distance that separates the oilfields of Baku from the Port of South Louisiana, now joined together through modern commodity production.

In several works Abdalian spotlights landscapes scarred by fossil fuel extraction. A new video surveys the petrochemical plants, LNG terminals, and granaries of the U.S. Gulf Coast. Coupled with the video are two pieces – a dye sublimation print and a charcoal drawing – that depict the oil industry of Baku, Azerbaijan, as recorded in the 1932 Soviet Georgian film *26 Commissars*, which depicts the country during and directly after the brief Baku Commune (1917-1918).

A set of ceramic reliefs trace the topologies of electronic circuits, some designed to function as medical assistive devices, some to chart the terrain of battlefields. Abstracted into their respective forms, one circuit might be converted into another, if only its design weren't specified by Raytheon or General Electric's owners. A stack of printed takeaways are weighed down by a drop of petroleum encased in lucite. The printed text reminds the viewer that property—whether factory, grain elevator, or oil tanker, is not only a category of society but of history.

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Zarouhie Abdalian (b. 1982, New Orleans, Louisiana) lives and works in New Orleans. She is currently included in *Put it This Way: (Re)Visions of the Hirshhorn Collection* at Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, an exhibition of work by women and nonbinary artists from the museum's permanent collection.

Abdalian has exhibited her work at numerous international venues and biennials, including San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Secession, Vienna; Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; 2017 Whitney Biennial, New York; MOSTYN, Wales; the 5th Ural Industrial Biennial, Ekaterinburg, Russia; Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), North Adams; Prospect.3 Biennial, New Orleans; the 8th Berlin Biennale; 9th Shanghai Biennale; CAFAM Biennale, Beijing; and the 12th Istanbul Biennial. Previous solo exhibitions include Haynes Court, Chicago (2022); Altman Siegel, San Francisco (2021); Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans (2018); LAXART, Los Angeles (2017); The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (2017); and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2013). Abdalian was a 2017–2018 Pollock-Krasner Foundation grantee and 2020 recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant.

Her work is held in public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Mills College Art Museum, Oakland; and Berkeley Art Museum. Select publications include *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Art Review* and *The Wire*.