

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Ido Radon, [radon@societysocietysociety.com](mailto:radon@societysocietysociety.com)

# Lydia Rosenberg's *Lamp Store, Grand Reopening* at SOCIETY

(Portland, Oregon) — Let there be light.

SOCIETY has invited Pittsburgh-based artist Lydia Rosenberg to mount the first exhibition in its new space above Mother Foucault's Bookshop at 711 SE Grand Avenue in Portland, Oregon. Rosenberg's *Lamp Store, Grand Reopening* will open on June 7 with a reception from 5-7pm. The exhibition will continue through July 19.

*Lamp Store, Grand Reopening* is a lamp store as sculpture: loose, assisted readymade assemblages—lamps of exceptional formal invention and wit—as well as materials of the apparatus of the store itself. *Lamp Store, Grand Reopening* is an exhibition that is also a store that sells lamps.

Rosenberg's installation nods to Claes Oldenburg's *The Store* (1961) and Sturtevant's *The Store of Claes Oldenburg* (1967). ;) Recall as well that poet Mina Loy made a living for a time selling painted lampshades out of a Parisian lamp shop backed by the venerable Peggy Guggenheim. See also: every other day job, gig, and hack that artists do to get by.

The artwork, among goods for sale, holds a privileged place as a product of nonproductive labor: labor done for the artist not for a boss who profits from it. This is not to say that it does not eventually become a commodity, and an exceptional one at that, one whose value can be artificially inflated in mystical ways by sophisticated players in the art market. Dear god, read *Duveen* and weep at that wheeler-dealer's artful machinations.

The readymade is traced by art historian John Roberts as a commodity removed from the sphere of exchange into the autonomous sphere of artist's studio that returns to commodity form when it is put up for sale. What's special about the readymade – and the *assisted* readymade in the case of Rosenberg's lamps – is that it “dare[s] to expose the necessary labor which makes artistic labor possible,” the labor of every worker in every factory who produces goods we artists take up as materials in our own labors.

Overlayed on this scenario, floating above the outlets, extension cords, and price tags, is the invisible narrative Rosenberg has imagined for these objects, the character shutting down the lamp store at the end of the day, the conversation that ensues among the lamps themselves. This exhibition is an extension of Rosenberg's 'novel-as-

sculpture' series, which included her installation at Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, *Do this while I wait*. Rosenberg has written, "recent exhibitions are part of an ongoing project of writing a novel-as-sculpture in which the text centers on objects and prompts the creation of installations and events which recreate and complicate the fiction."

Any commercial gallery may as well have a sign swinging above the door reading "art shoppe," no more, no less. And the art institution, regardless of its prevarications about its role in the market obviously enhances the value of artists' works via their exhibition and collection. You won't find *that* in any institutional mission statement.

SOCIETY is neither commercial gallery nor traditional institution and yet, in service of this debut exhibition it finds itself in the position of needing to move some units! So yes, let's put the dollar signs front and center just this once. Look exchange value right in the eye. Engage in some commerce. Do some 50/50.

Somebody's paying for all these joules.

**Lydia Rosenberg** is a visual artist based in Pittsburgh, PA. She received her MFA. in Interdisciplinary Art from the University of Pennsylvania and a BFA. from Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR in Intermedia. Her work, primarily in sculpture, is concerned with the impact of language on our perception of the material world and the ways that narratives shape value systems as well as objects. Recent solo exhibitions include incomplete objects, Labor is a Medium, Santa Rosa, CA (2023) Lamp Store, Here Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA (2023); Do this while I wait, Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA (2023); Spaghetti Restaurant, Basket Shop, Cincinnati, OH (2019); The Complete Subject, Napoleon Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (2019). Upcoming exhibitions include *lawn*, Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Visual Arts, Pittsburgh, PA (2025) Her recent exhibitions are part of an ongoing project of writing a novel-as-sculpture in which the text centers on objects and prompts the creation of installations and events which recreate and complicate the fiction. She is a co-founder of both Anytime Dept. an artist-run exhibition project based in Cincinnati, OH with Rebecca Steele (ca.2017-2019) and H. Klum Fine Art formerly in Portland, OR with John Knight (ca.2012-2013).

## SOCIETY

A space for art, its discourses, and histories.

711 SE Grand Avenue

Portland Oregon

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