

ARTFORUM

CRITIC'S PICKS

NEW YORK

William Lamson

PIEROGI

177 North Ninth Street

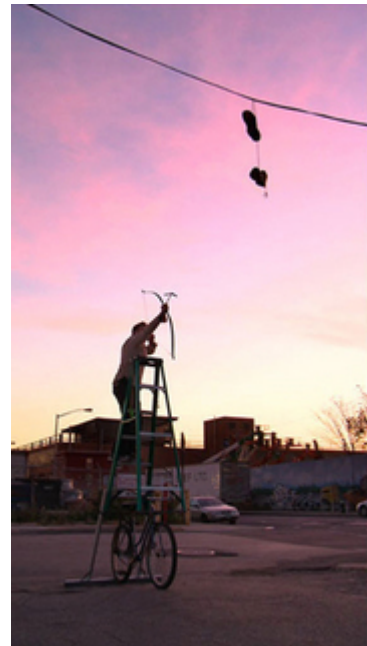
May 22–June 21

Few artists would claim total control over what they produce, but in "Work and Trade," his third solo exhibition at Pierogi, [William Lamson](#) assigns chance a leading role. Using simple homemade machines activated by natural forces, and initiating processes that revolve around found or bartered objects, Lamson juxtaposes the systematic with the random, questioning his own role as artist while maintaining an individual aesthetic. Named for a project in which early visitors were encouraged to exchange an object of their choice for a drawing made in the gallery, the show fuses abstract and documentary images in an entertaining take on strategies with roots in Dada, process art, and hobbyist gadgetry.

In the series "Automatic" (2009), plastic bottles, bits of wood, and lengths of twine have been assembled into quirky devices that, buffeted by wind and water, produce nervy quasi-gestural designs in ink and graphite. Several examples of these are on display, alongside two videos of Lamson's "collaborators" at work. In *Assisted Kite Drawings*, 2009, the artist holds a pen but allows his hand to be tugged around from above; in *Automatic*, the nonspeaking characters take center stage. A video from 2008, *Hunt and Gather*, depicts Lamson on safari in various Brooklyn neighborhoods. Biking around in search of shoes hung from power lines, he downs his targets with a bow and arrow, dons them, and leaves his own footwear behind. It's an oddly satisfying act of near-invisible intervention, an exercise in give-and-take that aligns conscious human action with the involuntary cycles of nature.

-Michael Wilson 06/02/2009

<http://artforum.com/archive/id=23040>



William Lamson, *Hunt and Gather*, 2008, still from a two-channel color video, fifteen minutes.