

MEDIA RELEASE

## **Nicholas O'Brien: The Four Tools** **Opens February 10th at the New Media Artspace, Baruch College, CUNY**



Video still from *As Much as We Sweep*, Nicholas O'Brien, 2014.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

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**NEW YORK, NY- February 10, 2016** – [Baruch College](#) presents *Nicholas O'Brien: The Four Tools*, an exhibition of video works by Nicholas O'Brien, curated by Katherine Behar, Assistant Professor of New Media Arts at Baruch College.

The show will open on February 10th, 2016 and run through May 2nd, 2016 at the New Media Artspace gallery in Baruch's Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street. The New Media Artspace will host an opening reception and casual discussion with the artist for Baruch students on Wednesday, February 10th, from 1:30-3:30 PM in the New Media Artspace and room 415 of the Library and Information Building. Members of the public who wish to attend may RSVP to [katherine\[dot\]behar\[at\]baruch\[dot\]cuny\[dot\]edu](mailto:katherine[dot]behar[at]baruch[dot]cuny[dot]edu). A public artist lecture and closing reception will be held on Monday May 2nd from 6:00 - 8:00 PM, at the Baruch Performing Arts Center's Engleman Recital Hall.

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*Nicholas O'Brien: The Four Tools* is a new series of 3D animations addressing labor, technology, and personal history. In each animation, artist Nicholas O'Brien portrays a single everyday tool: a broom, an eraser, a coat rack, and a church key. Narrated in the artist's own voice, the animations reflect and playfully speculate on moments when these tools have intersected with his life. His biographical reminiscences of personal encounters with each tool gradually evolve into musings on the nature of tools and their larger meanings.

O'Brien shows that in addition to doing manual tasks for which they were designed, tools also "operate" symbolically. They are not only mechanical devices, but metaphorical devices as well. Tools help us interact with our physical environment, and they aid our understanding of the world by lending meaning to our actions. For example, in *As Much as We Sweep*, the broom attempts to stave off entropy, while in *For the Faithful*, the church key opens up worlds of reprieve. Likewise, the coat rack marks sociality in hospitality and departure in *Where to Hang your Hat*, while, in *Accepting the Essential Errors*, the eraser accommodates human error by providing correction and forgiveness.

O'Brien's portraits of tools strike an uncanny balance by showing us virtual and actual versions of the object at the same time. Visually, the computer-generated images show each tool in the abstract, in pristine, white spaces, beyond time and human contact. But the soundtracks, filled with eccentricities of personal memory, embed the objects in a human world, exposed to the depletions of touch and time and the wonders of free association. *The Four Tools* offers mediations on these objects, exposing their hidden symbolism and everyday profundity.

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Nicholas O'Brien is a net-based artist, curator, and writer. His work has exhibited in Mexico City, Berlin, London, Dublin, Italy, Prague, as well as throughout the US. He has been the recipient of a Turbulence Commission funded by the NEA and has curated exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, 319 Scholes, and Eyebeam Center for Art and Technology. As well as making work, O'Brien writes critical essays as a contributor to Rhizome at the New Museum, SFAQ, and Artsy. His work has also appeared or been featured in *ARTINFO*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *DIS magazine*, *Frieze d/e*, *The Atlantic*, and *The New York Times*. He currently lives in Brooklyn and is Assistant Professor in 3D Design and Game Development at Stevens Institute of Technology.

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*Nicholas O'Brien: The Four Tools* is curated by Katherine Behar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences at Baruch College. The exhibition is made possible by support from the Baruch Computing and Technology Center (BCTC) and the Newman Library.

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**Gallery Location:** New Media Artspace at Baruch College, Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

**Gallery Hours:** The New Media Artspace is open to the CUNY community during regular library hours. Members of the public may request access to the New Media Artspace at the security desk at the second floor entrance to the library. For this week's public hours, please check the gallery website: [www.newmediartspace.info](http://www.newmediartspace.info) or dial a docent at 626-312-1664.

The New Media Artspace is a teaching exhibition space in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Baruch College, CUNY. Housed in the Newman Library, the New Media Artspace showcases curated experimental media and interdisciplinary artworks by international artists, students, alumni, and faculty.

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### About Baruch College:

[Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/) is a senior college in the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](http://www.cuny.edu/) with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students, who represent 160 countries and speak more than 100 languages. Ranked among the top 15% of U.S. colleges and the No. 4 public regional university, Baruch College is regularly recognized as among the most ethnically diverse colleges in the country. As a public institution with a tradition of academic excellence, Baruch College offers accessibility and opportunity for students from every corner of New York City and from around the world. For more about Baruch College, go to <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/>.

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