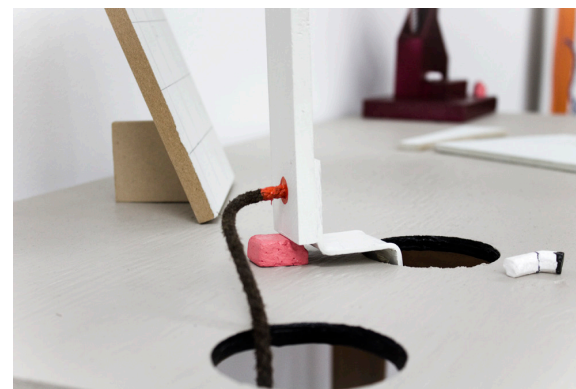




# BARTLEBY REVIEW

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A Collaborative Enterprise •••• Dustin Brons



**Adam Shaw and Logan Sturrock**  
*'Staging Economy'*

*Sunset Terrace*  
*2028 Clark*  
*Through February 4*

The exhibition is on a platform raised two steps above ground level, sort of like a stage. I imagine it was once a sales floor for something like vacuum cleaners or bathroom fixtures. The objects placed around this space

seem to be presenting a place of work, a hybrid between corporate office and design studio. A modern, open concept space, absent of cubicle walls, yet from a distant time when people still smoked at the office.

Like the half-finished cigarettes that litter the ledges and tables, the exhibition shows unfinished products and productivity halted; still in progress yet eerily abandoned. We seem to be presented with the tools of production as product. The objects in the space, such as the desks, chairs, photocopier, and bicycle, are all identifiable as such. However, by the hackneyed construction and use of impractical materials, use-value is almost entirely expunged from the objects. They are unsuitable for anything other than exhibition, like placeholders for the objects they represent. Fake Exacto knives have sliced fake pieces of real foam core, but the cardboard boxes are real, although some of them are made of wood. The objects here exhibit an earnest, yet misguided intent, as if built by someone who had come across a picture of, for example, a bicycle, and, having no idea what it was for, decided to construct one as an investigation of its form.

The small grid of bars on one window and the comically oversized security camera dome on the ceiling pose two models of security: the window bars protecting from external threat, and the security camera protecting

from internal threat, possibly in the form of unproductive workers. The camera's function is echoed in the overall arrangement of the space. The watchful eye of the security camera is what the open office space accomplishes after all. Since each worker has no individual space of their own, the constant observance by other workers guarantees their productivity. However, both security apparatuses appear equally dated and outmoded in the present, when voluntary participation in cybernetic systems makes traditional forms of surveillance superfluous.

At a time when workers perform their productive duties in all corners of their lives, consuming all free time, *Staging Economy* presents a welcome alternative, a separate space of work where productivity seems to be able to pause for a moment. "A COLLABORATIVE ENTERPRISE": the show's poster invokes a familiar vocabulary, suitably imbued with the logic of financialization, to describe the paradigmatic contemporary group show. By presenting a communal space of production, does the exhibition actually suggest the potential of collaborative work? Or, in that the exhibition suggests a more sinister possibility of collectivity, as a locus for surveillance, is this more of a critical reflection on the group show?

Dustin Brons