

# Viewing One Piece at a Time at Pied-à-terre

By [Sarah Hotchkiss](#)

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Hidden from view, inside the garage of a nondescript Richmond neighborhood home, is **Pied-à-terre**, an "occasional off-space and publishing house" run by artist McIntyre Parker. Showing only one work at a time, Parker keeps the self-funded operation as small as possible, creating an intimate viewing experience for each piece. Pied-à-terre (literally "foot on the ground") is a perfect name for the slightly-below street level gallery space Parker carved out of his garage almost five years ago. Bringing artworks in from artists around the world, Pied-à-terre provides locals with an opportunity to experience pieces it might be impossible to see otherwise, all within a surprising and memorable space.

I visited Pied-à-terre on a sunny Sunday afternoon during the final viewing hours for the last show, a video by Canadian artist Michael Snow titled *Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids)*. Parker rolled up the garage door and welcomed me onto a cleared-off viewing

platform. A simple set-up of one projector, two speakers, a DVD player and four chairs provided the setting for Snow's mesmerizing 62-minute piece.

Parker added a bit of white wall to the garage's exposed wooden framework for this particular show, but beyond this necessary touch, he makes no attempts to gussy up the garage or hide its contents. The minimalism of each exhibition creates clear demarcation between it and the organized clutter of household storage. In fact, the darkened domestic space provided the perfect ambiance for *Solar Breath*, a fixed-camera shot of curtains in the artist's Newfoundland summer cabin.

In Snow's video, a strange wind gently moves the left curtain both in and out, causing it to hit the window's screen with a satisfying "fwomp" again and again. Visually, it strikes a similar chord to Andrew Wyeth's iconic tempera painting *Wind from the Sea*, in which a transparent curtain flutters before an empty country road. Glimpses here of the land outside are fleeting. Small domestic sounds -- cooking, conversational murmurs, utensils against plates -- blended during my viewing with muffled street noises from outside.



Michael Snow's *Solar Breath* at Pied-à-terre in San Francisco Parker sought out *Solar Breath* after seeing it at MoMA years ago. He uses his curatorial process as a way to bring works he wants to see, objects he would like to spend time with, to San Francisco. In this way, Pied-à-terre is a vital contribution to the local arts environment, providing glimpses of works and artists' practices from beyond the often-hermetic Bay Area scene. From [Charlotte Moth](#) to [Lorna Macintyre](#), the artists who exhibit at Pied-à-terre are not likely to

show up in your average Bay Area commercial gallery.

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An economy of means permeates the entire project: showing one piece at a time, Parker splits shipping costs with the artists and the space is covered by his rent. In 2011 he received an Alternative Exposure grant from Southern Exposure to help support the space. Instead of coming off as either low-budget or overly precious, the works shown at Pied-à-terre are thoughtfully selected through Parker's intuitive and careful process and exhibited with equal sensitivity. Donating his energy and time, Parker offers Pied-à-terre to the public like a gift. When the next piece comes into town, (**Lisa Radon** in the spring), be sure to knock on the garage and have a singular experience of your own.

For **more information** visit [pied-terre.com](http://pied-terre.com).