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## DIRECTIONS



Courtesy of D'Amelio Terras Gallery

### POSTSCRIPT

## Invitation Only

More than 100 artists were included in last year's Whitney Biennial; countless others hoped to be invited but were left out in the cold. Some worked through their disappointment on the therapist's couch; some groused over drinks with friends. But the painter Delia Brown took a more active approach: she parlayed her feelings of exclusion into a new work of art.

Last spring, Ms. Brown, 35, persuaded the three women who rejected her — the Biennial's curators, Shamim M. Momin, Debra Singer and Chrissie Iles — to pose for a group portrait. The painting, "Party," above, was recently on view at D'Amelio Terras Gallery in Chelsea. "She didn't really tell us too much about the project beforehand," Ms. Singer said. "But it was after the Biennial, so it's not like we didn't know what was going on."

Ms. Brown took the three curators to a Park Avenue apartment owned by an art collector, where she staged a party filled with faces familiar to art world insiders;

she then took photographs and based the painting on them. The three curators stand before a painting by Dubuffet, glasses of white wine in hand. Rendered slightly larger than life, they stare out at the viewer with the same brutally appraising air as the teenage fashionistas in "Mean Girls."

Lingering in the background are the people who own the apartment; the unidentified collector who bought the painting last month for an undisclosed amount (the works in Ms. Brown's show were priced from \$20,000 to \$60,000) is in the group on the right. And just behind the curators, as a waitress carrying a tray of hors d'oeuvres, is the artist herself.

For Ms. Brown, the painting was cathartic. "I've never been included in a major museum show," she said, "and I was working through the feeling of not being embraced, not being given the institutional stamp of approval."

Ms. Singer sees the situation differently. "There's a slight irony here," she said, "since from the point of view of many other artists, she's very successful. For the opening of her show, one of the people in the painting threw her the most amazing, in-crowd party — even more fabulous than the party in the painting. But whatever level you're at, you always want more. It's human nature."

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