

# ESSEX STREET

## Household

Georgia Sagri

November 3 – December 23, 2018

*Semiotics of the Household*

Performance

Saturday November 3, 10 - 5PM

Opening Reception

Saturday November 3, 6 – 8PM

*GEORGIA SAGRI GEORGIA SAGRI and I*

Book Release and Conversation

Bettina Funcke, Stephen Squibb, Christina Lehnert and Georgia Sagri

Sunday November 4, 2 – 4PM

Artbook at MoMA PS1

At ESSEX STREET, New York, Georgia Sagri re-assembles a social and aesthetic body – “an assembly of assemblages” – following a parallel presentation at Lars Friedrich, Berlin.<sup>i</sup> There, she gathered a plurality of imprints: a bathroom sink, column base, cornered stairs, cracked street. Here, another imprint made on-site – *entrance* – joins *Square*, an iteration in a series of alterations to public space; *And (1-18)*, an endless edition of broken, walled enclosures; and *deep cut*, wounds that have been enlarged from their initial presentation. Though the formal components of the exhibition remain the same, their repetition deviates under the unique pressures of ESSEX STREET.

As a domestic fiction, the household maintains a bodily arrangement, a particular distribution of resources and erotics. Yet what is assembled here under the title of *Household* breaks down and alters what the house otherwise keeps. Sagri experiments with what is neither inside nor outside – in the entrances and exits, in liminal spaces, in neither-nor and yes, and. And in tending to the debris of domestic edifices, in turning the domestic inside out, Sagri insists that political relations must emerge from sites as contested and starved as these.

The fleshy ripped parts, the touched and informed parts, the messy wet parts that then dry and are cracked and repaired: as these ruptures collect and assemble, they compose one another en masse. Sagri is investigating the inside out of forms, turning form inside out through the vestibular gash of a tear. Their insides invert surface and generate depth in, as Fred Moten and Nate Mackey together write, “a broken claim to connection.”<sup>ii</sup> The undressed and remembered cut marks both the non-evasion of a structure of containment as well as that structure’s undoing. What assembles attempts a future contingency – an alternative infrastructure – through which another social organization might be felt through doubles, modules, and shadows. Though cornered and contained, this assembly lives together beneath the register of what is properly made. Any resistance to modernity’s aesthetic projects bears this break both as rupture and condition of assembly. Still, the cut remains open.

Sagri’s sculptures are both touched and a performance of touching. For the imprints, she knelt, squatted, and bent around each edifice to fill its surface with papier-mâché — “wet, squeezed paper” — and its chewed pulp absorbed surface: transient, impersonal dirt held wet and encased by contact. Sagri likens this process of imprinting to repairing.<sup>iii</sup> Touching both marks and tends to; it understands those labors to condition each other. That which gathers in cracks and corners, in improper spaces openly abandoned, in the sinks and drains where no sovereign goes, is potentiated here by another form.

## ESSEX STREET

55 HESTER STREET NYC 10002

Wednesday-Sunday 12-6PM

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Both levels of the gallery are accessible by elevator. Open To The Public. Free Admission For All. Tours Available Daily. Groups Always Welcome.

“What is staying,” Sagri writes, “is the time or the length of a touch.”<sup>iv</sup> Sagri is simultaneously touching and being touched in a blurred, trembling oscillation between subject and object, between the almost inside and the not yet outside.<sup>v</sup> But as José Muñoz asks, reparatively: “What is it to enact a mode of touching that isn’t about mastery, that isn’t about foreclosure, that isn’t about fusing, that isn’t about collapsing things?”<sup>vi</sup> The things that refuse collapse assemble here in contact. To assemble is to differentiate-in-contact.<sup>vii</sup>

There is a legend about the *archon*: that it weaponizes the archive, holding only what is properly valuable and disappearing the rest. A domesticated archive only produces loss. But some thing or set of things resist that house arrest — maybe some remnants, a crowd of them. They index the contour of dirt, dragging residue into their cross-temporal assemblage. A sink’s drain: the persistent absent-presence of maintenance. Sagri’s work tends to the emergence of what evades. This is her sculptures’ fugitive performance. Of the multiple etymologies of anarchy – *an- arche*, against the law and the people without government – Sagri’s *Household* performs another: “without beginnings.”<sup>viii</sup> An originary anarchy refuses the cold fiction of a single point — a unit, an individual, a time – to arrange refuse into another kind of durational infrastructure. Still, this infrastructure must be maintained.<sup>ix</sup> Against the order of oikonomic management, *Household* sustains the fleshed materials of another proposal. *An-arche*: deregulated maintenance, supported movement, wayward home, lawless archive.

— Sarah Richter

Georgia Sagri is an artist who lives between Athens and New York. She studied music at the National Music School of Athens and holds a BFA from Athens School of Fine Arts, Athens, and an MFA from Columbia University, New York. From 1997-2001 she was a member of Void Network, a cultural, political and philosophical collective operating in Athens. In 2011 she was one of the main organizers of Occupy Wall Street movement in New York City. Since 2013 she has been a member of the assembly of Embros Theater Occupation. In 2009 she co-founded the audio-only magazine FORTÉ (magazineforte.com). The same year she inaugurated the SALOON, an ongoing curatorial project. In 2014 she initiated HYLE (hyle.gr) a semipublic space in the heart of Athens. She is a visiting professor at Zhdk, Media Department, Visual Arts, in Zurich. Her work has been shown in international exhibitions and institutions such as documenta 14, Athens and Kassel; Public Programs, documenta 14; Sculpture Center, New York; Manifesta 11, Zurich; Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; 14<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennale; MoMA PS1 and MoMA, New York; Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, among many others.

From winter 2017 to summer 2018 Georgia Sagri presented ten years of her oeuvre in two significant solo exhibitions, first at Kunstverein Braunschweig under the title *GEORGIA SAGRI GEORGIA SAGRI* and later as *GEORGIA SAGRI and I* at Portikus, Frankfurt; both curated by Christina Lehnert. Following these exhibitions, the monograph *GEORGIA SAGRI GEORGIA SAGRI and I* was published by Sternberg Press in September 2018.

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<sup>i</sup> In conversation with the artist.

<sup>ii</sup> The cut is irreducibly sexual. It also – through Mackey and Moten by way of Derrida – involves the dense succession of arrangements that search for and evade origin. The tear’s “insistent previousness that evades every natal occasion” is one that, in the sense of performance, both disappears and recurs, conjuncting and evaporating performance’s reproductive economy. Mackey, Nate. From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate: Bedouin Hornbook, Djbot Baghostus’s Run, Atet A.D. (Vol. 1-3). New York: New Directions, 2010; and Moten, Fred. In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Moving backward through their genealogical inheritance (while radically throwing into question genealogy and inheritance), black feminist flesh as a “vestibular gash in the armor of man,” could be invoked here as a requisite reworking of interiority and exteriority. This would bring us to Spillers, Hortense. “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book.” *Diacritics*, vol. 17, no. 2, Culture and Countermemory: The “American” Connection (Summer, 1987) pp. 65-81.

<sup>iii</sup> Eve Sedgwick notes that the reparative assembles “broken part-objects” into “something like a whole” (128) by conferring upon them “a plenitude” that is “additive and accretive” (149). Though an inchoate self of unaddressed fracture, the reparative performer “helps himself again and again” (150). Sedgwick, Eve. “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You.” *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

<sup>iv</sup> In conversation with the artist.

<sup>v</sup> Vourloumis, Hypatia. “Ten theses on touch, or, writing touch.” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, vol. 24, nos. 2-3 (2014): 232-238.

<sup>vi</sup> Muñoz, José, and Samuel Delaney. “Queer Commons.” JNT Dialogue. Student Center, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti. 25 Mar. 2013. Lecture.

<sup>vii</sup> This is to paraphrase Ethan Philbrick’s forthcoming article on Simone Forti’s Huddle. There, he theorizes gathering as differentiation using Gilbert Simondon’s theories of individuation. Philbrick, Ethan. “Huddling, Then and Now: Simone Forti and the Nonsovereign Collective.” *TDR: The Drama Review*. Forthcoming 2018.

<sup>viii</sup> Sagri, Georgia. “Spaces of Common. Times of Anarchy.” *Solution 275-294: Communists Anonymous*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018.

<sup>ix</sup> For an extended discussion of infrastructure and sociopolitical assembly, see Mitropoulos, Angela. *Contract and Contagion: From Biopolitics to Oikonomia*. New York: Minor Compositions, 2012.