

Sarah Sze: Afterimage

Private View 6–8pm, Thursday 7 June 2018

Exhibition 8 June–28 July 2018

Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Sarah Sze *Images in Debris*, 2018
Mixed media: mirrors, wood, stainless steel, archival prints, projectors, lamps, desks, stools, ladders, stone, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable
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Victoria Miro is delighted to present two new site-specific works by US artist Sarah Sze: *Images in Debris*, an installation of images, light, sound, film, and objects, that seeks to transform the visitor's perception and experience of the first-floor gallery; and *Afterimage*, an environment of wall-based works in the ground-floor gallery that replicates aspects of the artist's studio and includes elements made in situ as well as images collected, gathered and discarded in the process of making the work. In both works Sze continues her decades-long exploration of the ways in which the proliferation of images – printed in magazines and newspapers, gleaned from the Web and television, intercepted from outer space, and ultimately imprinted on our conscious and unconscious selves – fundamentally changes our relationship to physical objects, memories and time.

Constellatory, monumental, intimate and immersive, *Images in Debris*, 2018, is the latest iteration of a major series of sculptures that study the image in motion. Begun in 2015, this series includes *Timekeeper*, first shown at Rose Art Museum, Massachusetts, in 2016 and subsequently at Copenhagen Contemporary in 2017, and *Centrifuge*, Sze's site-specific installation for the Middle Hall of Haus der Kunst, Munich (on view until 12 August 2018). In these expansive works, Sze explores our sense of time, place and distance, and the construction of memory, through the never-ending stream of images – personal, searched, researched and found – that we negotiate daily. While Sze has worked with moving image since the late-1990s, these installations represent an evolution in her practice, where light, movement, images and architecture coalesce into a single, precarious equilibrium.

Simultaneously a sculptural installation and a functional projection tool, *Images in Debris* lends equal weight to images and objects, breaking out of the flat screen into the space of architecture, and experimenting with the edges between the two. At its centre is an L-shaped desk, inspired by the artist's own studio desk, which, acting like a projector at the centre of a planetarium, casts images on to torn sheets of paper attached to an intricate structure built on the desktop, and across the gallery walls. Moving and scanning the architecture at different speeds, the work unfolds

like a series of experiments that seem to alter our sense of gravity, scale and time. Sze's work has often referred to instruments of measure and mapping as well as the worlds they strive to evaluate. Part constellation, part debris field – a place of both networked and fractured relationships – *Images in Debris* is analytic of the ways in which we experience the image-saturated contemporary world. Poised at the intersection of the material and the virtual, it offers multiple screens or windows on to moments by turns public and private.

The imagery itself – much of it shot on the artist's iPhone – often points to its own materiality or changes in material state. A forest burns. Water spills or splashes – a reference to Harold Edgerton's famous 1936 photograph *Milk-Drop Coronet* and to the earlier experiments of Muybridge and Marey. Edits, meanwhile, draw attention to processes of decay or transformation in a virtual sense – succumbing to pixilation, becoming ghostly like digital 'snow'. In tandem, altered states of consciousness are suggested by imagery such as the motif of a child asleep. Within the slow loop of the imagery – so long that repeats take days rather than hours – beginnings and endings are willfully suspended. Here, Sze applies to sculpture the filmic idea of the edit, where meaning occurs in the splice, and the viewer, moving through the space, creates their own narrative arc.

In the ground floor gallery Sze debuts the first iteration of her ongoing project, *Afterimage*, which explores how images function as tools to make sense of the world. Comprised of multiple layers of paint, ink, paper, pencil, prints, objects, and wood, this new body of work, like *Images in Debris*, both re-frames and refracts the collision of images we are confronted with daily. The title, referring to the effect where an image continues to appear in our vision after exposure to the original image has ceased, also alludes to the filmic idea of the persistence of vision, where the afterimage fills in the gaps between film frames, setting still images into motion in our perception and memory.

The *Afterimage* series consists of paintings integrated within and amongst a constellation of their own archival references and materials, revealing the processes of their making and questioning how meaning is ascribed to individual works of art. Sze has completed much of this work on site, using the gallery walls as an active location to map, dissect, and construct images, laying bare the generative narrative of the studio as a live event. The process of how images are generated, collected, appropriated and developed to create other images is evident in the range of materials and paraphernalia on the walls. The wall becomes a place of experimentation where ideas in their conception are mapped out to create images. Traces of multiple image-making mediums are layered in the work, such as the ghost images of etching, the skidding surface of silkscreen printing, the layering cuts of collage, the dripping and brushing of paint, the exposure by light of photographs, the digital disturbance of computer processing, and the flickering movement of film. Circling the circumference of the gallery, the constellations of images shift in scale, fade, disappear, re-emerge, creating a storyboard of how an image is burned into memory and persists over time.

Sarah Sze represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 2013 and was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2003. The artist has exhibited in museums worldwide, and her works are held in the permanent collections of prominent institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Fondation Cartier, Paris; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles. Sze's work has been featured in The Whitney Biennial (2000), the Carnegie International (1999) and several international biennials, including Berlin (1998), Guangzhou (2015), Liverpool (2008), Lyon (2009), São Paulo (2002), and Venice (1999, 2013, and 2015). Sze has also created public works for the High Line in New York, and subsequently the city's Second Avenue Subway Station; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. *Centrifuge*, a major commission by Haus der Kunst, Munich, occupies the museum's Middle Hall until 12 August 2018. Sze was born in Boston, Massachusetts and lives and works in New York.

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