

# THE BREEDER

ELENI CHRISTODOULOU

## “Ambivalent Spaces - Anarchic Identities”

Opening: Thursday 13 February 2020, 8-10pm

Exhibition dates: 13 February – 21 March 2020

Opening times: Tuesday –Friday 12 - 8pm, Saturday 12 - 6pm

The Breeder is pleased to present “Ambivalent Spaces - Anarchic Identities” a solo show by **Eleni Christodoulou**. As Judith Butler states in “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity”, (1989), “woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification”. **Eleni Christodoulou's** fabric sculptures openly challenge conventional gender stereotypes. Her work goes deeper than the skin of things, examining the varying nature of pleasure or pain in ways that are sometimes uncomfortable. The variety of textures **Christodoulou** examines in her work, express the vulnerability of penetration, the strength and at the same time the fragility of the human body. **Christodoulou** proposes an extended idea of femininity, a kind of femininity unconcerned with the male gaze.

Captured and designed as “Identity Narratives”, **Eleni Christodoulou's** sculptures revolve around corporal subjectivity, embodied desires and practices of gender at the margins. Amalgams of narratives about differing kinds of love, such as polyamorous love, submissive or traumatic, dysphoric or impregnating love, **Christodoulou's** sculptures express tabooed desires that live outside the scripts ascribed by a heteronormative society. The felt sculptures represent fluid states in a process of emergence, much like Beuys' felt sculptures emphasize ongoing processes rather than fixed states, sculpture as an evolutionary process. The artist seems to have designed personalized Joseph Beuys felt suits for each one of her sculptures. In her work, titled “Muse”, which resembles a double sided impregnated entity, **Christodoulou** uses blood stained pieces of a shepherd's warm fleece cloak, symbolizing the Muse's long and treacherous journey from pure and innocent bucolic Arcadia to convey her golden gifts intact.

The soft, insulating qualities of felt, the fluffy polyester filling used along with the quilting in the works resemble a soft comforter that absorbs and protects. Indeed, Beuys stated that his felt suit represented a way of protecting the individual from the world, as well as a symbol of the isolation of human beings. On another level, the sensibility of Joseph Beuys signifies for **Christodoulou** her long and complex journey of turning back to Europe after an extended exposure to art currents in New York where she lived worked and went to Art School. Those who are familiar with **Christodoulou's** signature abstract paintings of the nineties are sure to find them again embedded and re-contextualized within every fiber of her new sculptures. In a way, this work marks an important moment of Synthesis in the artist's career after a transitional period of re-evaluations and working in private.

**Eleni Christodoulou** recently participated at the group exhibition “Same River Twice: Contemporary Art in Athens”, curated by Margot Norton and Natalie Bell, organized by DESTE Foundation and New Museum, New York, in collaboration with the Benaki Museum, Athens. “Ambivalent Spaces - Anarchic Identities” is **Eleni Christodoulou's** second solo show with The Breeder in Athens, following the exhibition “Wave Optics” (2006).

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