

INTERVIEWS

GEORGIA SAGRI

June 05, 2017 • Georgia Sagri talks about her work *Dynamis* in Athens and Kassel



Georgia Sagri, *Soma in orgasm; as leg, as hand, as brain, as ear, as heart, as breast, as sex*, 2017, aluminum, acrylic spraypaint, various metallic parts, plastic, fabric, dimensions variable. Photo: Angelos Giotopoulos.

Georgia Sagri is an artist based in Athens and in New York. Here, she discusses Dynamis, 2017, her piece for Documenta 14, which entangles twenty-eight sculptures of organs, ten breathing scores, and six days of “demonstration / performance simultaneously and in continuum” with a chorus—featuring Nora Barbier, Sophia Djitli, Ioannis Karounis, Clara Marie Müller, Angela Stiegler, and Fernanda Valdivieso, Marianna Feher, Emma Howes, Lo-Yi Lee, Jaqueline Lisboa Silva, Hannah Peinemann, Deva Schule, and Catherine Woywod—and will take place from June 7 through June 12, 2017, in Athens and Kassel. The departure points on June 7 are Tositsa 5 in Athens at noon and the Glass Pavilions on Kurt-Schumacher-Straße in Kassel, also at noon. A public discussion on the work will take place on June 12 at 8 PM at the Papier Café in the School of Fine Arts in Kassel.

MY WORKS ARE DECLARATIONS, CLAIMS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. They are ghosts—appearances that eventually take shape materially and then disappear. My *Dynamis / Invitation* was emailed to a lot of people—friends, friends of friends. I sent it to so many people because I hope they will in turn send it to their friends and make the invitation open up even more. In that sense materiality is not simply what it is made and finalized. I’m more interested in the tactics that the piece proposes, in terms of how it defines and claims the time and how it is produced.

The invitation is a call for something to take place and a confirmation that it will try to make its declaration possible. It is a text, it has a design, it is distributed in many different ways and it can be utilized by everyone—like a poster on the wall, a message on a flyer that it is handed out to passersby—my works could happen if the realm, the moment, factors and agents allow it to be received and make its reason exist.

Production is defined not only by an already existing frame—such as institutions, language, and the specific decisions I have made about the work materially—but by the moment when the work is able to autonomously shift its fate as a piece of art, as something that makes everyone feel responsible to have a claim in its production. My work hinges on this. That’s why the up-front language in the invitation—“We need to continue to stay in trouble”—is written the way it is: I want the receivers to respond and to create a purpose, the ground of the work. The invitation itself is not the piece. The

piece is made when the text is read, when the message is received, and when curiosity and excitement come. The receivers are all different; I thought it was really beautiful that you wrote to me to ask what is this all about and you wanted to know more about it. The invitation is also, symbolically, a return of Documenta's institutional invitation back to where it belongs—to everyone.

Clearly over the past decade we have been experiencing the decisive development of fascism through the dictating assumption that capitalism is the only way for all of us to organize our lives and deaths. Creative producers under such economic and social pressure can turn into unquestioning automatons of production, working just for the sake of acquiring the authorship stamp made in art.*

The piece *Δύναμη / Dynamis* is taking place at the same time in two cities, and it acts as a reminder that the social exists. The orgasm is the work's structural methodology. Sexual encounter for all living creatures demands four stages: excitement, plateau, peak (orgasm), and resolution. The sculptures involved in the work evoke organs, and when they go out in the public, on the streets, that's the moment of the orgasm, and that's why the sculptures are called *Soma in orgasm; as leg, as hand, as brain, as ear, as heart, as breast, as sex*. The excitement in the piece is the emotional shaping, and the shape of the training, the breathing patterns, and the shape of the sculptures, the shape of the work. The plateau is the moment when this shape makes a trajectory with other trainings, with different forms and others, and of course when this takes place the orgasm happens and the organs go out. The resolution is when, after six days of demonstration and performance, we will all gather to talk and to recall.

Performance—an exhausted term—has the capacity to return an invitation, to distribute power and to let go of representation. It allows for the manipulation of an existing framework. The very fact that its core is nongraspable but at the same time so common accounts for its impossibility as a medium and makes it uncontrolled. One of the dynamic elements of performance is time. Everyone talks about the here and now of performance, the presence of the artist, and that performance is ephemeral. For me, what takes place in performance has already been formed before, meaning that it was already. As the material

has taken place before, it is a heritage of shadows you carry. Performance is crystal-image. It is projection. It is visual affect. And it has the materiality of a dream.

**made in art* © Georgia Sagri.

Δύναμη/Dynamis

Invitation to the demonstration of *Soma in orgasm*

Six days of demonstration and performance, simultaneously and in continuum, in Athens and Kassel
From 7 (noon) until 12 (morning) of June
Open discussion at the auditorium of the School of the Arts (Kunsthochschule) in Kassel, June 12, 8pm

Dynamis is the state of that which is not yet realized—potentiality, in contrast with *energeia*, energy. While strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between people. For Hannah Arendt, *dynamis* is always; not an unchangeable, measurable, and reliable entity like a force but rather a power that creates the public realm. It is the coming together of the people to constitute and govern their lives and the means by which they can create new beginnings for their societies to live and become. Judith Butler calls this urgency for transformation *performativity*. It is a tool of struggle to free ourselves from the constraints of certainties, total convictions, and the violence of polarities, in order to actualize this creative power as an ever-shifting and negotiable belonging. Paul B. Preciado calls it the *orgasmic force*, the power that comes from within and the crucial moment of claiming of one's own body as a threshold for myriad relationalities. This potentiality is not necessarily and not forever.

2017 finds us all in tyranny from within. The outstanding form of tyranny is when the public realm cannot be realized. A constant lost potential. It is no longer represented by a single figure or a group; but it is all of us who hold it. The system of behaviors, the oppressed emotions, fear and suspicion as a general mood of living dictates all of our actions. We are in constant shock, paralyzed and passively accepting our surroundings like virtual-reality sets of data. Wars, killings, detention camps, mystery attacks, threats, isolations, hate, and the cultivation of a fast and easy accumulation of everything and everyone calibrates the colors and shapes of our day-to-day existence.

It is now already more than one year of work that has moved me to write to you and openly invite you to be part of *Dynamis*. The work has been processed as a) exercises and performances under the title *Attempt Come*, presented already in both Athens and Kassel; b) workshops where I shared my practice as well as my breathing patterns and the training that I have developed over the years; c) scores of the breathing patterns made out of glass; and d) *Soma in orgasm*, the final expression of the work, made out of metal. These freestanding flat structures are animations of organs: brain, breast, ear, hand, heart, leg, sex in two copies each. One copy stays inside while the other goes out into the public where it feels more at ease, in the space of appearance and potentiality. *Soma in orgasm* is signs, banners, and declarations. The way for it to be is for it to go out into the streets, and this can happen with the involvement of people who want to take the organs out and who feel part of this declaration. Your involvement can be executed in different forms—music, movement, spoken words—and it can be realized through our joyful capacity to salute, celebrate, and create the orgasmic body.

The meeting points are the sites of the works' temporary display, Tositsa 5 in Exarcheia in Athens and the Glass Pavilion (Hansa Haus) in Kassel. On June 7, the procedural moving of *Soma in orgasm* will begin, slowly, at noon in both cities, with an unsynchronized tempo according to the common clock. The performance will be maintained through June 12 by seven people in each city who are responsible for taking care of the works and keeping up the tempo of the demonstration. They can also let you know in different manners how the organs need to be treated. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask them anything you need. I will also be around.

We need to continue to stay in trouble,

Georgia Sagri



Georgia Sagri, *Dynamis / Invitation*, 2017, C-print.

— *As told to* Lauren O'Neill-Butler