

PROJECT #2293

SUBURBAN STORIES IN CURIOUS TIMES

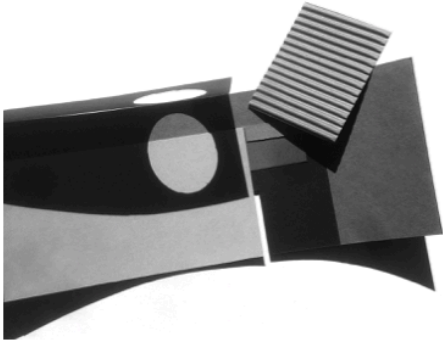
March 2017

For the duration of one week starting Saturday 11th of March, a Palo Alto family home will be the host gallery for a site-specific project featuring the work of **Lucinda Newton-Dunn, Martha Sakellariou** and **Christina Vervitsioti**.

The set up is intentionally that of a typical suburban environment, yet the house introduces a viewpoint and a legacy that hold clues about the works on display. Residence 2293 is one of only a few thousand unconventional homes that were built in California by visionary estate developer Joseph Eichler in the 50's and 60's to meet the rapid growth of the housing demands of the middle class. That postwar building boom era signified the establishment of the American Suburbia, an idea inseparable from the modern concept of the American Dream and its counterpart, California Dream living. Eichler houses epitomized that utopian lifestyle and highlighted the flowing optimism of the suburbs through their design ethos.

Within the glass walls and mahogany panels of such an evocative space, the three artists find elements that resonate with their own lives, common circumstances and shared interests. The three of them also share a creative past dating back to the late 90's when they all attended the Royal College of Art in London. After two decades of living in different cities around the world, they have by chance all relocated to the Bay Area's suburbs, where they have reconnected and started working together. Their gatherings progress from simply exchanging ideas about their suburban experience to a quest in redefining and embracing their creative presence within the constraints of a somewhat domesticated identity. The house therefore becomes instrumental in its use as a common point of reference and a source of inspiration. It provides the visual and emotional stage upon which they are able to discuss, observe, document and translate their findings through their respective visual language. In following with the idea of the house being the epicenter of their creative enquiries, they employ that very same space to present the outcome. As such, the exhibition is designed to elicit visual stories about the house's patterns and forms as well as the life and emotional states of its inhabitants, while themes on architecture, domesticity and identity are explored and seen from three different angles.

Lucinda Newton-Dunn approaches her subject from a designer's point of view. Her process involves an exploratory observation of the house as a cell and a structure, where all the visual architectural characteristics are thoroughly investigated and documented. By keeping a somewhat emotional distance from the elements that are associated with human presence, she offers a pure and undistracted view of the features that define these iconic suburban homes. The warmth of the wood, the strength of black steel, the big glass, unpredictable angles, trapped shadows and reflections, the fine variations of colors and textures are all meticulously captured, deconstructed and reconstructed to reveal new readings. By fragmenting and abstracting those elements Lucinda extracts the house's essential architectural qualities and returns them back to their source with a new shape and purpose. In paying homage to such fine detail, the artist enables one to follow her gaze into the secretive beauty of patterns and hidden forms.



Christina Vervitsioti takes a step closer into the house searching for memories and instances. Her photographs offer clues about the inhabitants, weave narratives about what has already taken place and reveal hidden nooks and corners. Her methodology is reminiscent of an archeologist that respectfully unearths the secrets of a lost tale by piecing together found evidence. She revisits the space over a period of time to familiarize and follow the movement of certain objects, in a way that one follows human traces and moments in time. Through her eyes one is invited to observe the nostalgia and affection that random remnants of mundane domestic activities can reveal. A toy, a bag, a piece of furniture, shreds of paper become statements and are elevated into symbols of a private territory. Her photographs are strategically displayed around the house sometimes close to the actual places where the story was captured thus giving the viewer the opportunity to be led in a path of discovery and storytelling.



Martha Sakellariou is the home dweller, the house is her reality, an extension of herself and a part of her everyday existence. Inevitably her view is intimate and her story is one of daily home rituals, domestic appearances, personal mythologies. The house in that sense serves as a repository of dreams and anxieties of everyday life, ideas of the quotidian and telltales of reality. Immersed in her home's architectural and emotional history the artist utilizes its surface to project her ideas about life in suburban America, cultural archetypes, gender roles and experiences. By reflecting on personal moments of crisis and euphoria that are staged and performed around the house, she gives access to a private area through an esoteric pathway. One that is irrevocably connected to a personal understanding of self and space. The artist is literally or metaphorically a carrier of the house and the house carries her imprint in a variety of positions that signal entrapment, isolation, immersion, belonging or protest.



BIOS

Lucinda Newton-Dunn was born in the UK. She holds a BA in Art & Design from Camberwell College of Arts and an MA from the Royal College of Art in Graphic Design. After graduating she moved from London to Tokyo, where she lived for seven years working as a photographer and video artist for exhibitions and events before moving to California in 2007. Lucinda's work is most often derived from her countless photos and day-to-day observations, frequently paying homage to pattern, the complexity of which is translated through 2D and 3D prints or drawings on fabric and paper. In recent years Lucinda has been exploring her interest in printed textiles and produced a selection of designs for the Japanese textile collective LINK.

Christina Vervitsioti's work brings to life the brief memories that objects project in the spaces we live. Born in Greece and raised on the island of Corfu, she then studied Photography in London, obtaining a BA from the London College of Printing and an MA in Illustration from the Royal College of Art. Her photographs focus on interpretations of interiors, architecture and urban space. She co-authored "French Interiors" (Flammarion 2009) a book that enters the world of some of France's private residences including Yves Saint Laurent, Hubert de Givenchy and Madeleine Castaing. Her photographs have been published in European publications including Elle Deco, Symbol and Le Monde d'Hermes. She has worked with Christie's on Private Collections including the photographs of the "Sale of the Century" for Yves Saint Laurent-Pierre Berge auction sale.

Martha Sakellariou uses the word "ritual" to describe her creative process as a series of actions that involve experiencing, observing, analyzing and finally transforming her findings through a visual language. Inspired by human experience and personal reality, the dual existence of public-private, fictional-real, Martha's work inevitably intertwines narratives based around gender, identity and space. Born in Athens-Greece, she received her BA/MA in painting from the Athens School of Fine Arts and an MA in Fine Arts from the Royal College of Art. Her work belongs to private and public collections. She has exhibited internationally and collaborated with other artists, designers and tech innovators to produce project-specific works. In 2008 she directed a curatorial project at the Whitechapel Gallery London on behalf of Friends of the Earth, an environmental NGO in London, UK.