

GAGOSIAN frieze

2013

Sarah Sze's *Triple Point*

BY JENNIFER EGAN

There are countless qualities to admire in Sarah Sze's remarkable sculptures – which I've viewed, with exhilaration and awe, in an array of locales over many years. But what has made Sze's *oeuvre* a creative polestar for me is its narrative power. She is a master of inadvertent storytelling: narratives that are latent or suggested rather than rendered outright. Without including a single figure, Sze suggests a world of feverish human activity. In her miraculous *Triple Point* (2013), which I experienced at the 55th Venice Biennale, the viewer enters a series of spaces whose inhabitants seem to have vacated their posts just moments earlier. We can almost feel the draft of their flight – an effect Sze heightens with the use of fans and fluttering objects. What remains for us to examine is the mysterious detritus of human endeavour: fragile constructions of torn paper and blue tape; plastic bottles encompassed by sand; hundreds of small, meticulously archived clay forms; stones bandaged with strands of duct tape. The manifest complexity – and ultimate unintelligibility – of these projects render them heroic and poignant in equal measure; what better tribute to the galvanic force of human creativity than the fact that its object is often illegible?

But I'm biased toward narrative, being a fiction writer. One can appreciate *Triple Point* without giving a thought to storytelling. As with all of Sze's work, the power of the piece inheres, finally, in its epic sweep of light and colour and texture, its visual evolution over time and space. My favourite phase of the work is *Triple Point (Planetarium)*, in which a precarious handmade environment of string and paper and plastic and other fragile-seeming materials aligns to suggest a massive rotating sphere. Human handiwork is subsumed by a more elemental force – a roiling culmination of energy suggestive of an explosion. Sze has paused her explosion, so we can study its anatomy: a corpus of visual surprises and delights, questions and jokes and flashes of beauty and tenderness that feels inexhaustible. ●

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