

# ESSEX FLOWERS

19 Monroe St  
New York, NY 10002

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Claire Watson, *It Could Go Either Way*, 2020, bodice and skirt pattern pieces of leather coat, canvas, wood veneer, thread, gesso, 42 x 36 inches.



Ester Partegàs, *Codependence*, 2019, cardboard, cotton fabric, wood glue, Fast Maché, acrylic and enamel paint, sealer, steel, plywood, 61 x 49 x 49 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Foxy Production, NY.

## **GUARDIAN**

### **Ester Partegàs & Claire Watson**

Organized by Tamar Ettun & Antonia Kuo

September 10 – October 2, 2021

Opening Reception: Friday, September 10, 5 – 8pm

Essex Flowers is pleased to present *Guardian*, a two-person exhibition featuring Ester Partegàs and Claire Watson.

Both artists create composite structures, joining and mending fragmentary materials to twist and refresh our perceptions of familiar objects. There is an aspect of care or maintenance; the artists pull apart seams, suturing and reconstituting these elements to form uncanny embodied wall works and sculptures imbued with presence. Their work brings into question the life of the commodified object and the labor associated with it, whether it is a laundry basket or the sewn garment. What has traditionally been known as “womxn’s work” is receiving a new life and meaning here, resisting the innate gendered associations.

Watson’s pieces source used leather garments, permeable skins with embedded, unique histories. In this particular body of work, she composes the individual pattern pieces from leather coats to form totemic

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Gallery hours: Fridays and Saturdays from 12-6pm and by appointment  
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entities with features created with punctured slits. What had previously served as a protective barrier for the body becomes a body in itself, speaking to us from a past or a future we can't place, in a voice that is seemingly ancient and yet unknown.

In her series of sculptures referencing the laundry basket, Partegàs creates shelters or traps that have a sense of play and makeshift precarity. The agglomerate forms are constructed and deconstructed, propped and braced. Planes of plywood, cardboard, papier-mâché and plaster are perforated by exaggerated portholes, both mimicking the motif of the laundry basket, but essentially emphasizing the porosity of the form, leaving an opening for the viewer to project themselves inside. There is an unresolved tension between tenderness and control, guardian and overseer.

**Ester Partegàs** is a visual artist and educator that splits her time between New York City, Marfa TX and Barcelona. She holds an MFA in Sculpture, Universitat de Barcelona, and Postgraduate Diploma on Multimedia Arts, Universität der Künste Berlin. Partegàs has shown extensively, nationally and internationally. Most recent shows include Fundació Joan Miró (upcoming 2021); Pure Joy, Marfa TX (2020, solo); Conde Duque, Madrid (2020); The Drawing Center, NY (2019); the Museum of the City in NY (2019); Transborder Biennial / Bienal Transfronteriza, El Paso Museum of Art + Museo de Arte Ciudad Juárez (2018). Other shows include MACBA Barcelona; Sculpture Center, NY; Artist's Space, NY; Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; Public Art Fund, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria; Whitechapel Gallery, London; MACRO Museum/Depart Foundation, Rome; and the Moscow, Busan and Athens Biennials among others. In 2020 she received the Rome Prize from the Royal Spanish Academy in Rome and a COVID Relief Fund from Foundation for Contemporary Art. She has participated in several residencies such as the Chinati Foundation, Macdowell, and Skowhegan. She is faculty at Parsons School of Design. Her work is represented by Foxy Production, NY, and NoguerasBlanchard, Barcelona/Madrid.

**Claire Watson** is a visual artist based in New York. Born in Amarillo, TX, she earned a BFA from the University of Texas at Austin, and an MFA at Tyler School of Art in Rome and Philadelphia. Her awards include an Artist Residency at The Watermill Center; a Residency Fellowship at the Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts; a Fellowship in Sculpture from New York Foundation for the Arts; and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. Claire has exhibited at The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY; Southampton Arts Center, Southampton, NY; Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers, Newark, NJ; and Art in General, NYC, among other venues. Her art is included in the permanent collections of The Heckscher Museum of Art and The Watermill Center, and in numerous private collections.