

# Planthouse

## Elizabeth Duffy | Various States of Amnesia

September 11 – October 18, 2025

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 11, 2025



*If history is a record of survivors, Poetry shelters other voices.*

–Susan Howe

THE TRANSITORY AND FRAGILE NATURE OF LIFE, along with its startling combination of cruelty and beauty, compels Elizabeth Duffy to express herself through visual art. *Various States of Amnesia*, Duffy's first solo exhibition at Planthouse, will also mark the final exhibition at the gallery's 28th Street location, as Planthouse will be moving to a new home in far West Chelsea this fall. The exhibition includes new works on paper, twelve handmade coats, two folding chairs on the back patio, and videos and prints documenting Duffy's ongoing project, *Wearing*.

For Duffy, the apparent comforts associated with domestic spaces, upon close examination, reveal embedded contradictions, bewilderment, outrage, and humor. She responds to and recreates the environments and objects we surround ourselves with in our confused quest for permanence. By disassembling things, she uncovers hidden worlds.

*Wearing* unravels worn braided rugs and transforms them into coats and other objects that they might have once been. These rugs, made from old clothing, embody the labor of anonymous women across generations. As Duffy irons, opening each strip of wool, the scents of nicotine, mothballs, and perfume rise, bringing to life the women behind the braiding.

The fabrics—unexpectedly radiant and patterned—disrupt any memory of the past as muted or restrained. Leopard-like dirt prints and dotted wear lines trace human presence: shoes that tread across thresholds, lives that moved, paused, and departed. These markings speak of labor, arrival, absence, and return. The rugs serve as time capsules of thrift and creativity.

Duffy keeps remnants of the original rug visible to evoke the cyclical act of braiding and unbraiding—a metaphor for transformation, survival, and renewal. The twelve coats featured in the exhibition are made from a single worn rug inspired by the Silent Sentinels—over 2,000 women who protested for women’s right to vote between 1917 and 1919. These women stood in front of the White House, twelve at a time, for two and a half years. Many of the women faced incarceration for demanding equality. These coats honor their steadfast courage and the resilience of women throughout history.

The drawings in the exhibition represent another form of assembly: line by line, strand by strand, they gradually form a collective of threads. The act of drawing—of witnessing—restores strength, even when threadbare patches and tears threaten stability. This process is akin to weaving: each line helps create a community, and their alignment suggests the idea of fabric. They “open a sentence,” as Sheila Hicks puts it. Duffy uses tailor’s pencil, dressmaker’s chalk, and graphite on cotton rag paper—tools connected to garment making—to emphasize how phenomena mirror one another, serving as a reminder to remain aware and to avoid forgetting.

*Various States of Amnesia* is on view through October 18, with an opening reception on Thursday, September 11, from 6-8 pm. Duffy will invite viewers to wear the exhibited coats and sit on the folding chairs on the patio, engaging in imagined conversations, linking the past with the present.

**Elizabeth Duffy** is an artist and educator based in Providence, Rhode Island. She has exhibited her work widely, including at the Drawing Center, White Columns, Wave Hill, and DM Contemporary in NYC, the RISD Museum in Providence, the Newport Art Museum, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Aldrich Museum, and Espace Senghors in Brussels. She has held residencies at the Bogliasco Foundation in Italy, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Sirius Art Center in Cobb, Ireland, Arts Itoya in Takeo, Japan, Yaddo, and MacDowell. She has also been an artist-in-residence at VCCA in Virginia, Jentel and Ucross in Wyoming, and at the Wedding Cake House in Providence, RI. Most recently, she was an artist-in-residence at Espace Columban in Belgium. Duffy holds an MFA from CUNY/Brooklyn College and a BA from Rutgers College. She studied French Language and Culture at the Sorbonne in Paris, and did graduate work in Art and Art History at CUNY/Hunter College, in Fashion and Textile Studies at FIT, and Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture at the New York Studio School. She is the recipient of awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. She currently teaches in the Art Department at Roger Williams University.

55 West 28th Street  
New York, NY 10001

Info@planthouse.net  
Tel: (212) 564 - 5502  
planthouse.net