On Campus

Mess, Mess, Mess . . . Art

Spring 2012



"Hermes 1" by Sarah Sze. (Courtesy of Sarah Sze)

A piece of sculpture by Sarah Sze is a pack rat’s fantasy: empty bottles, wire, paper clips, food containers, newspapers, hangers, pillows, light bulbs, pipes, fabric scraps, utensils, and plastic toys all arranged in a way that makes their gathering seem, somehow, monumental.

“As with Calder’s art at its best,” the critic Holland Cotter ’03GSAS once wrote, “Sze’s is reverse-heroic, tinkering made sublime.”

Sze, a professor at the Columbia School of the Arts and a past recipient of a MacArthur Foundation “genius grant,” was recently chosen to represent the United

States at the 2013 Venice Biennale. The arts festival, which is arguably the world's most prestigious, consists of dozens of nation-themed pavilions scattered around the Italian city.

The forty-three-year-old Sze plans to create a series of installations in and around the US pavilion, a 1930s Palladian-style structure designed by Delano and Aldrich, over the next year. The Bronx Museum of the Arts will soon begin streaming video highlights of her artistic process on its website.

"My work is always a mix of stuff collected over time and all over the place," Sze told the *New York Times* recently. "Wandering around Venice without a map, you find the most incredible things. And I'm hoping to create an immersive environment that deals with that abstract experience of discovery."



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