

Stanley Street Gallery, Darlinghurst presents

## Margarita Sampson.

### Infectious Desires

An exhibition of soft sculpture

25 February – 14 March 2015

[www.margaritasampson.com](http://www.margaritasampson.com)



Above L-R. Detail Zsa Zsa 2013; Detail Baby Jane 2013; Detail Zsa Zsa 2013

*Infectious Desires* marks Margarita Sampson's first solo show in Sydney in over 10 years, and brings together a significant body of work which has been created over 3 years. The works are based on the idea of a mythical *Salon* - a domestic interior where the very fabric of the objects have become animated, *infectious* with ideas, the desire for growth and expansion.

**Grounded in an upbringing where the natural world encompassed the human**, Sampson turns the tables, so to speak, on our idea of domestic safety- the room as an ordered shelter from chaos. In her *Salon* series, the chaos has come to live in the very fabric of our furnishings - chairs grow rudimentary twins while their upholstery spills into reef-like forms. Holes eat through stuffing, forms mutate and are caught in the act of changing – often works are poised at a junction of collapse or expansion. Deeply concerned about failing ecosystems, she says, *there IS no safe place*.

**The work also explores psycho-sexual tropes & human relations**, often engaging humour. Pieces in the series *Pussy Galore* and *Baby Jane (whatever happened to)* engage pink satin, faux fur & velvet to conjure a glamorous hyper-femininity, multiplied into an alarming fecundity of crevices and mounds, overrunning their hosts. Other, darker works see chairs kneeling, eaten by great cancerous tentacle clusters, or gutted, sitting in a pool of inky detritus.

**Sampson uses found chairs which are altered through carpentry & carving**, and spends many months meticulously piecing together and sewing the textiles which are then upholstered onto the works. The sculpture series is accompanied by photographs.

**Margarita Sampson (b. 1970) moved to Norfolk Island at 5 years old from Nowra, NSW.** She spent her childhood there, attending boarding school for several years in her late teens in Sydney and later art college at COFA, UNSW where she received a BA and an M.Art, Majoring in Painting. **Her first textile sculpture in 1997 was made in response to a call-out from *Sculpture by the Sea*, for their inaugural exhibition at Bondi.** This work, *Urchins* went on to become a seminal image for the exhibition, and her sculpture *Fish Curtain* made for the show the following year won *People's Choice*. Sampson has subsequently shown with *Sculpture by the Sea* nine times including 2014, where she exhibited her first major piece in wood and steel, marking a significant change from her traditional material of textiles.

**Sampson lived for 4 years in Germany in the late 90's**, exhibiting regularly in Australia during this time, including at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, a solo exhibition at Pcl Exhibitionists and the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, as well as the Pacific Biennale in 2000.



*Anenome (Klaus), 2012*

Continued...

In 2001, on her return to Australia, her entire studio contents, documentation, personal effects and all works for an upcoming solo show were swept off a container ship in a storm. Following this, Sampson and her partner moved back to Norfolk Island where they opened a bookshop. She exhibited in Australia only sporadically during this 10 year period, including a solo show of paper works (from recycled books) at *Craft Victoria* in 2006 for the Commonwealth Games, and some *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibitions.

Internationally, Sampson's work has been exhibited at three [Festival\(s\) of Pacific Arts](#): Samoa (2008); Palau (2004); and New Caledonia (2000). Sampson also received a *Churchill Fellowship* in 2009 for her work in contemporary jewellery, where she travelled to Australia for training and then to Europe for several internships with significant artist jewellers.

Sampson returned to live in Sydney in 2011. Her first sculpture made on her return, *Anemone Incursions: Zsa-Zsa* went on to win the sculpture/object section of the *Waterhouse Art Prize* in 2012. Subsequent sculptures in the same series have been included in the *Wynne Prize* 2013, the *Willoughby Sculpture Prize* 2013 & the *Gold Coast Art Prize* 2012.

The artist has been selected to exhibit in nine *Sculptures by the Sea* exhibitions since the first event of 1997.

Sampson's work *The Yearning* won the *Andrea Stretton Memorial Prize at Sculpture by the Sea* in 2011.



The artist, Margarita Sampson, at work in her studio.

**ABOUT THE GALLERY** Stanley Street Gallery [www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au](http://www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au)  
Contemporary Jewellery, Object, Sculpture, Ceramics, Painting & Photography



Stanley Street Gallery opened in the dynamic arts precinct of East Sydney in late 2012. Owners, Liza Feeney and Marilyn Bailey, close friends and artists, are also the directors and curators of this contemporary art space.

Liza and Marilyn met at the Sydney College of the Arts in the 1980s when both were studying Visual Arts. Their interests and connections in art are broad and they are excited by the possibility of establishing a gallery that will explore these interests, as well as their personal aesthetic. Marilyn and Liza are both makers of art and have incorporated their jewellery studio into this beautiful light filled gallery space.

Nearby galleries include Watters Gallery, Conny Dietzschold Gallery, King Street Gallery on William, Robin Gibson Gallery, National Art School Gallery and Liverpool Street Street Gallery to name a few. Street parking is available, plus three nearby parking stations.