

Artist Statement: Arousal of the Ordinary
Collaboration between Sarah Schuster & Nanette Yannuzzi-Macias

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Schuster investigated how the destructive and constructive human forces of the international sphere impact the private sphere. Schuster is and was particularly intrigued by the concept of safety based in part on the cultivation of an illusion, and so central to our quality of life in the United States. She was drawn to images where natural and manmade disasters turned safe havens: suburbs, homes and icons of everyday life into rubble revealing the limits of human technology. ‘...for now I know in part...’ and “Wringing My Hands in Webs” and the “Disaster Series” grew out of this long investigation.

The family is a microcosm of human relations. The inequalities, insularity, and boundary disputes that govern our international relationships are folded into the social architecture of our homes. Without much digging we find the basic tenets of human relations running unmonitored through the drone of our everyday lives. As we eat, wake, sleep, clean and work, we involve ourselves in a mesmerizing ritual that connects us to the larger human condition. The unpaid labor of the home opens a space for creativity much as the unpaid labor of the artist does.

In this exhibition Schuster and Yannuzzi-Macias utilize the white space of the gallery to foil the constant flow of information we experience between our internal and external environment. We begin with the graying activities of domesticity: monotonous, flat, routine and soothing. Within the space, the power and sensuality of these routines gradually becomes evident. Lamps, wires and electricity charge and illuminate the work, metaphorically exposing the imbalance of our inner lives. What do the machinations and desires of our home life look like if seen through the kaleidoscope of our desire, our frustrations or our dreams? Within the grayed space of the gallery participants will encounter the accumulation of history, tools, and memories, as something that is both oppressive, when the home is treated as a container to fill, and hypnotic, in the sense of the beauty inherent in *knowing* the rhythms that become the patterns of our lives. Close attention will be paid to notions of labor, as it relates to *tasks*, and the range of work that occupies us from the paid to the unpaid. We’re examining these issues by asking, as expressed through the materiality of the art object, what kind of work is valued and why? How do we arouse ourselves from our mesmerizing routines with a sense of value for the space they occupy in our lives. Can these mundane activities hold something more for us? What happens when we collect the detritus of daily life and find value in this process? There is a temptation to minimize the vitality, creativity and erotic energy of everyday life as we attempt to defuse the chaos and power struggles that co-habitation involves but in doing so we erase our capacity for invention.