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## THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY-KATE

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# TRASH TALKING

Her ex-husband may get all the attention, but we think Agathe Snow is as, if not more, deserving. By Naomi Nevitt

"I often feel like a shepherd," says artist Agathe Snow. "I collect people." The 31-year-old Snow's most prominent body of work is her sculpture—poetic assemblages of objects she finds in her Chinatown, New York, neighborhood—and she has arranged her life in much the same way, positioning herself at the epicenter of a recently re-emerged dynamic downtown art movement. Originally from Corsica, Snow moved to Manhattan at age 11, and after graduating college, became involved with a group of downtown graffiti artists, photographers, and musicians who make up the recently dubbed "Bowery School"—including aNYthings' Aaron Bondaroff, recent Whitney Biennial alum Dan Colen, and her ex-husband, Dash Snow. "I think that New York has fine-tuned the person that I am today," Snow says. "I have an extremely symbiotic relationship to this city. I am a parasite. Corsica taught me what it meant to be human. New York has taught me what it takes to be an active member of society."

Much like the work of her peers—from Dash Snow and Colen's "Nest" at Deitch Project this past summer to Ryan McGinley's quixotic vision of youth in his American Road Trips series—Snow uses her sculptural and performance work to grapple, both politically and poignantly, with issues of community, the human will towards destruction, and myth-making. Snow's art, though, speaks to something not tender and romantic, but more immediate: what the human race will leave records of when the Apocalypse comes—global warming, garbage, and war. "My work is intended as the start of a conversation," says Snow of her sculptures, many of which seem to spring right out of T.S. Eliot's "Wasteland." "An initiation, a petition, an invitation, an enticement,

sometimes an invocation."

While she has exhibited at various galleries and venues since 2004, notably collaborating with Kim Gordon and Jutta Koether at the Reena Spaulings Fine Art in Chinatown, and organizing a dinner party performance as part of her renegade catering company The Chop at the buzzed-about West Village bar Beatrice Inn, her first major solo show last March at Lower East Side gallery James Fuentes LLC marked her true coming-out. Snow transformed the gallery, a newly opened space in lower Manhattan operated by the former Deitch Project curator, into her own post-catastrophe, flood-ravaged vision of New York. In Noah's Ark (or Jonah) fashion, she constructed a whale carcass that acted as her home for a month, out of which she traded her own "offerings" (objects she culled from trash and purchased at the corner bodega) for items the gallery's visitors brought her, which she subsequently arranged into her signature sculptures. Each of Snow's acquisitions was accompanied by corresponding text that, as in an archeological dig, noted the place and time each element was obtained.

Last month, after finishing a show of new work at Peres Project in Berlin, Snow teamed up with Marianne Vitale at Perfoma, the biennial performance art festival held in New York. The duo enacted a script entitled "OK\_KO," dealing with the battle of the sexes at White Columns gallery. "I want to speak to all without ever having to say a word," Snow says of her work. "Each of the components of any of my sculpture are words to me, they are my vocabulary. These found materials are as banal as they are testimonies of the place and time they were found at. I organize them in such a way to support my narrative."

