

Chingsum Jessye Luk

Varieties of Sameness

From November 12, 2021 to January 15, 2022

In *Varieties of Sameness*, her first solo show in Spain, Chingsum Jessye Luk (Hong Kong, 1982) proposes an installation game between photography, collage and object where the repetitive, redundant and reiterative nature of the creative process itself becomes an artistic act, collapsing the boundaries between the physical procedure and the aesthetic result.

Varied sameness, multiple equalities, diverse similarities. In a quest for physical and emotional safety the strict rules that Luk prescribes before taking every action provide a sense of coherence and predictability to her creative process. The use of repetition in her eagerness to collect, measure, count, catalog or inventory is the engine that powers her obsessive work, characterized by minimal gestures, allowing anxiety to be transformed into an aesthetic act. It is in this compulsive repetition, which Freud called the basis of the marvelous principle, where time fades, the body and space combine and become confused. In an intimate reflection on the time wasted in everyday acts, Luk contemplates the objectuality of her inhabited space.

After receiving the prestigious City of Zurich Art Fellowship, Chingsum Jessye Luk found herself locked up and isolated in her Paris studio, where she was carrying out an art residency. The unexpected solitude and serenity unleashed in the first group of works that make up the exhibition, arising from the recording of daily ritual gestures and everyday movements in a restricted space. In the project "55 Days of Confinement", Luk places her own body in relation to the inhabited space, establishing the point of conversation between the interior of the four walls of her studio and the exterior, abstract, unreachable and immeasurable, of the open sky. Recording her own steps during the 55 days of the confinement, photographing the same fragment of the sky obsessively, the artist weaves a metaphor of lost time. In the series "Shadows", Luk blurs the lines between photography and painting by repeatedly, daily recording the same wall of her studio. In the cadent rhythm of the shadows, space is abstracted, time fades, recedes, summarizes and reduces. Luk's interest lies in the minimal and ephemeral gesture, in what Duchamp defined as inframince, in the limits of the visible and memory.

The essence of the human being, says Heidegger, is to inhabit. Building cannot be understood without inhabiting, without the human footprint in space. Personal experience is what separates the four walls as a place of alienation and uprooting from a living space, the one that evokes the moments lived, the sensorial perceptions, the trace of shared relationships. In this record of time lived and lost, Luk lets the place itself speak, unraveling the spiritual relationship with the inhabited space.

Questioning the logical structure of knowledge, Luk establishes absurd structures and systems, imposes a semblance of order where none is necessary. The obsessive desire to count, measure and catalog, to number, group and classify forms the basis of the second group of pieces in "Varieties of Sameness". In the "A Million Holes" project, the thin sheets of tracing paper were punched to a set of one million holes. In this exercise in discipline and in following the rules, methodical repetition suggests a semblance of equality and structure. Although each piece contains the exact same number of holes, they constitute individual and independent events, blurring the lines between the definite and the unexpected, between order and surprise, between logic and poetry. In "Loss [1 percent]", the artist documents her natural hair loss from a minimalist poetic, hand-weaving each strand of hair painstakingly, showing the relationship between time, volume and length.

This act of weaving nets translates into the last group of pieces, where the artist starts with discarded, found and recovered materials to recombine them in minimalist frameworks, thus redefining a technique traditionally and historically associated with the domestic environment. Receipts for personal expenses, collected during a trip to Japan and under confinement in France, were blackened with the remaining heat from the kitchen stove plate and recombined into minimalist collage where, once again, place, time, and memory spin an intimate story. The used envelopes, the discarded cigarette packs wind up fabrics where the subtle interplay of light and shadow, of nuances and textures lend what was once considered garbage an aesthetic nobility. The fragments of the real are adapted to the imagined geometries.

In *Varieties of Sameness*, contemplation reigns. Luk sets up a personal labyrinth in which there is not one single Ariadna's thread.. In the apparent logic, there are many threads, which get tangled, raveled and confused.

Kasia Nagórska