

ArtReview

The Lulennial: A Slight Gestuary

Lulu, Mexico City 17 February – 8 March, 14 March – 14 April, 18 April – 17 May

The three-part *Lulennial: A Slight Gestuary* is one of the most ambitious projects I have seen in Mexico City. And that's despite, or because of (depending on how you look at it), the fact that it takes place in one of the city's smallest exhibition spaces. The first part mind-blowingly packs an entire conceptual art-history course into 9sqm. Nor does the second part disappoint, despite the bar having been set so high. (The third and final part has yet to take place at the time of writing.) The premise behind the 28-artist exhibition, cocurated by Chris Sharp (an *ArtReview* contributing editor) and Fabiola Iza (Sophie Goltz has curated a historical performance component live and online, accessible for the duration at aslightgestuary.tumblr.com), is that small gestures can have a great impact, and here conceptually based work of the type that is conventionally grouped with a geographic focus is grouped not by nationality or even by generation, but rather in terms of an affinity in their economy of means and gesture, all of which allows young artists to be placed alongside historical figures, and art created in response to a variety of contexts to be shown side by side.

Marcel Duchamp's concept of *inframince* (an imperceptible difference between two things that cannot be defined, only illustrated with examples, such as 'the heat emanating from a just-vacated seat' or the 'fog of breath on a polished surface') is cleverly explored through many of the works, as for example in Karin Sander's monochromatic painting in the negative: a white rectangle contained in the wall proper created by a process of sanding and polishing that reveals the history of the space

itself. In stark physical and material contrast, next to it, Goran Trbuljak's *Jazz Brush* (1991), a textured canvas transformed into a tambourine, begs people to play it.

Jiff Kovanda is one of the exhibition's central artists. For this first part, the shoelaces of his desert boots, replaced with spaghetti, incarnate an antimemorial gesture (*Untitled*, 2004). In an interesting reversal of synaesthesia, one sees the opposite of Trbuljak's piece in Zarouhie Abdalian's silenced whistle, her delicate *Buoy* (2014). Another departure point for the show, and the perfect literal and figurative condensation of the *inframince*, is Gabriel Orozco's iconic *Breath on Piano* (1993), next to which Jenine Marsh's clay 'ears' on a found metal armature, in themselves a compact compendium of discreet gestures (*Talk Closely*, 2014), seem to listen attentively.

Fernanda Gomes's monochromatic sculpture *Untitled* (2015), a homemade rough wooden cover for electrical wires taken from a neighbour's house and placed in the gallery, has a narrative component to it and includes the 'poor' aspects of Kovanda's materials while at the same time representing a different sort of monochrome to Sander's. Just as this work was taken from the street, one noticed a coin on the gallery floor that begged to be picked up: Tania Pérez Córdova's *Holy Drunk...* (2014), specifically conceived for *The Lulennial*, is an astute commentary on the economy of art, but also on the economy of gestures in the show. Consisting of three ten-peso coin replicas formed from alloys of beer can and bronze, the first is on the gallery floor, the second in Sharp's pocket throughout the show's duration and the third in the care of Lulu,

a juice stand a short walk from the gallery (and from which the gallery takes its name). Full of paradoxes, this work questions nobility and value in a succinct way.

Atrapar la mosca, a 2014 video by Chantal Peñalosa, comments on a local tourist economy bled dry and devastated by the trade in illegal drugs, but also on idleness and wasting time, as the artist follows a fly buzzing through the restaurant where she works (or rather doesn't work, due to a lack of clients). Despite its banal, almost ridiculous action, the video captures light reflecting off the restaurant's floor that is revealed as almost identical to the gallery's own floor – a more formal type of bleeding out.

If the first part of *The Lulennial* had a sonic quality to it, the second part presented an organic feel: Kovanda's *Necklace* (2007), a piece encountered on the first day of the show (it was destroyed during the opening), was a line of green peas on the gallery floor, right in front of where Peñalosa's video had previously made a seamless connection between the gallery and the works. The peas were soon displaced and smashed, but in perfect colourful resonance with the green of the work in front: Francis Alys's *Untitled, Study for a Story of Deception* (2004), a painting sawed through onsite, depicting a lush green jungle. This was just the beginning of part two, which also included documentation of beautiful performances by Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci, a humorous tortilla-and-instruction-based piece by Darren Bader and Wilfredo Prieto's *Look at the size of this mango* (2011), to mention only a few. I cannot wait to see part three. *Gabriela Jauregui*



Tania Pérez Córdova, *Holy drunk 1, este país 2, esta gente 3, este gobierno* (installation view, Lulu juice stand, Mexico City), 2014, bronze mixed with melted beer cans. Courtesy the artist and Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City