

THE WHITE PUBE

X SYSTEMCARE



this week's post:
THOMAS HIRSCHHORN @
KOCHI BIENNALE

Reviews
 Art thoughts
 Exhibitions
 Art dates
 Library
 Accounts
 About
 Patreon

Ghislaine Leung, CONSTITUTION @ Chisenhale
 17/03/19 ZM

Emoji summary: 🏠👁️💬

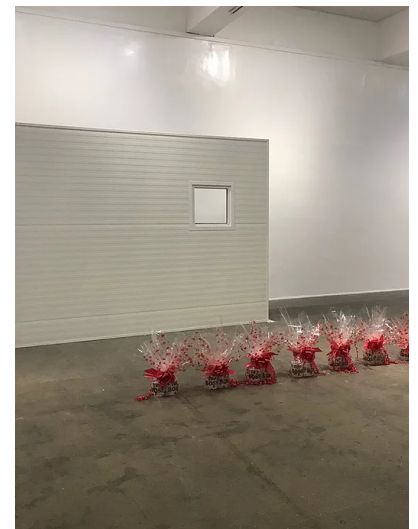
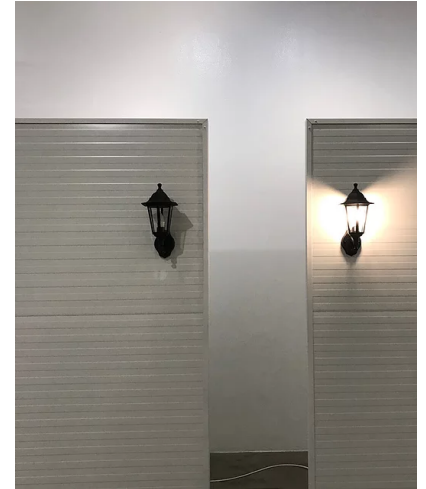
This week's review is Ghislaine Leung's 'Constitution,' at Chisenhale Gallery. I first ran into Ghislaine's work December last year; not long, I know. I read her book 'Partners' on the beach and in the sea while we were on holiday. I thought it was like an oozing sore. There was an urgency to it, in the way certain passages almost fell over themselves to get the words out. It was written into a lexicon I was so tightly attuned to, the rhythms of speech I've fallen into a pattern of absorbing quicker than others. I drank that book in, left the pages crinkled from the saltwater, foundation marks along the spine. I was eager to see that rhythm / synchronicity / kinship translated into space.

Normally I'd use this part of the text to describe what was in the room in as faithful / sensitive a way as I can, but this time, the artist has done the work for me. The first page of the handout has a rly delicious description of every single aspect of what is in the room, so I'll pass the mic n plop in some snippets from that. (brb)::

'Tonal sounds fill the space in pockets and holes that shift and move. Directly opposite are two prefabricated white metal panels filled with polyurethane and secured with bolts via white powder-coated metal brackets into the concrete floor. Both panels contain a small fixed double-glazed window with vent and a double plug power supply that run, with white coated electrical cable, to double sockets fixed into the gloss painted wall. On the back of the panel on the left, mounted low and close, is a large monitor screen running a video file from a small concealed media player, the cables of which are held together with a combination of cable ties and an unlocked heart shaped padlock...

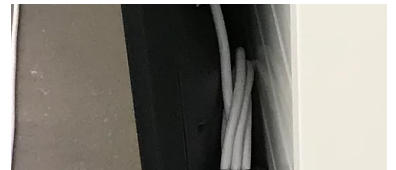
To the right, a row of forty ceramic objects with black text printed on them are wrapped in pairs in an abundance of red heart and clear cellophane with a combination of oversized pull bows and light pink and red curled ribbon that sits, entrail-like, at the base of each object. [Here the text describes a row of 40 mugs, wrapped in pairs, with 'THE BOSS' written across them in massive all-caps lettering]. I think there's something specific and particular that bobs up out of that description, for me. This show was in the smaller gestures:: the glossy walls, the monitor tucked behind the panel, the coiled up wires and the half-concealed heart-shaped padlock. Slow and small, it fostered a kind of careful silence in me.

It's discrete; a discrete understanding, a discrete surfacing, discretion in its position and declaration. I wonder if that discretion makes the work less navigable, I wonder if sometimes discretion obfuscates, prevents an entry or immersion into the work, buries it. I am asking these questions I know the answer to bc I want to soften my thoughts, from statement to rhetoric. I wanted so badly to love this show. I still want to love it now! It grapples with so many things that flutter across my chest as I think of them; opacity & transparency, site & structure as foreground and background both, sublimation of the human figure and the rise of the object, the immutability of the institution, constitutional critique (something I think I read Ghislaine discuss in Partners (?) I think? But as I was reading about it in the handout I found myself immediately wanting to soak it up and feel it leak out into my vocabulary). Buttt. Oh man, idk, this show was too cerebral for me. I feel like maybe this was meant to be processed higher up in the body, in the head and the mouth; I wanted to feel it in my



gut and my chest and the bones that connect my spine to my hips at the base of my back... - but it was cold against my skin.

It was just these lil bitty crumbs, that I liked (!) in parts: Loads & the rolling images like a collection of plastic cheapo items you find in an off-brand pound stretcher, that silent embrace of a sweet kind of kitsch-y tat // the same plastic happiness in synchronicity, across the cellophane wrapped mugs and the stuffed balloon tutorial. But there was NO Affect. And as I say that, I wanna shake myself by the collar and say, 'But why do u need affect?' Why is a show without it not what I want, why is it lacking? Where's the gap, the [] void, why am I not crossing over into understanding or clarity? I was speaking about this frustration with Gab, and she said 'bc what's the point otherwise?' That sometimes it feels like the artist isn't giving it their all, it falls short, like affect should be a kind of climax, no? But that's a bit fucked, isn't it.. Like if I'm sat there tapping my foot waiting for an artist to split themselves in half, just so I can take a peek at the interior. And in that, I wonder if this does just boil down to a conversation around opacity t b q h. Would I be happier if I was given the grounding of a body? An emotional guide rope in the form of a subjective account? Perhaps it's that these lil crumbs are so wispy, yet strongly specific, it gives you the feeling that it means something - but that something is indiscernible (again, an opacity?) to you. I d k man, idk idk, I just remember when I walked out, I spoke to the person behind the desk & they told me a lil nugget of info about the mugs in a line. It was the kind of info that felt like skin-to-skin contact, like phlegm in the throat: a body. It was kinda personal and it's not in any of the literature, so I won't repeat it here, but it was kinda the hand on my back that I wanted, that I felt was missing in the weird moist feeling of all of these things being in the air and not knowing how to reconcile them all. Maybe they all j needed a better genealogy or backbone, and that's the transparency I'm looking for? I think there is a void between thinking about these big grand(ish) concepts that tower over us, tryna wrestle them into something cogent or coherent:: (coherent enough to be able to materialise something, be it object, gesture, ideation) // there's a void between that and making those big concepts tangible or palpable. The fog never condensed tbh, doesn't quite land right. There are moments that circle what I want: but this show was like edging. I wanted a body between us, a grounding; it was cardinal air sign, untethered beyond autonomy & into the clouds. Wisp and clammy hands ~~~



Statement by the artist: It is important to note that this website is built on Wix, an Israeli web development platform and company that has attempted to highlight the hypocrisy of pro-BDS groups that use the Wix platform themselves. I was not able to access this website without a VPN because it is blocked by the Lebanese government which engages in boycott of Israel. It is useful in this takeover to re-iterate some clarification about BDS made by the Cornell University SJP Group [here](#): "BDS is not abstention, nor an absolute moral principle. It is not isolation or withdrawal, and it does not entail a rejection of everything Israeli. It is not anti-Semitic, and it has nothing to do with the merits of Israeli technology. BDS is not the attempt of beautiful souls to avoid contamination with oppression and keep their own hands clean: it is a tactic within a larger strategy, and it is beginning to work."