

Almudena Lobera at Parra & Romero

Artist: Almudena Lobera

Exhibition title: Rest

Venue: Parra & Romero, Madrid, Spain

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Photography: Exhibition photos by Roberto Ruiz. Performance photos by Mismo Visitante
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Parra & Romero is pleased to present Almudena Lobera's (Madrid, 1984) first solo exhibition at the gallery in Madrid.

In the artist's multidisciplinary practice, the deconstruction, reinterpretation and denial of language takes on special importance and is constantly resignified. On this occasion, *Rest* takes as an object of study and highlights the concept of silence through a series of newly produced works that refer to a reflection on dialogue based on the silence/sound dichotomy. It calls for listening, as a kind of care or self-care, paying special attention to non-verbal communication. Thus, the artist displays a succession of silent presences through drawing, sculpture, installation and performance.

In music, silence is marked as *Rest* and denoted by the Latin word *Tacet*. In 1952, John Cage's iconic work *4'33"* revealed that silence, while seemingly empty, contains intentional pauses full of latent communication. The English term "rest" captures this ordered, intentional pause, emphasizing that, though quiet, something remains present. Complete silence is impossible, as even in pauses, subtle layers of communication exist.

The closest we come to true silence is through sound itself, as demonstrated by noise-cancelling technology. Cultures such as Japan recognize the richness of silence, where concepts like *Haragei* ("the art of the belly") describe non-verbal communication through restraint. In contrast, Western culture tends to avoid silence, embracing a constant flow of media and entertainment.

Etymologically, the word "rest" suggests a journey—a pause between two points rather than a single moment. Silence itself is a space where all other sounds could potentially reside, like the static before music on vinyl.

This dialogue between sound and silence is brought to life in the *Rest* series, an installation of drawings that opens the exhibition. The work evokes an anechoic chamber, a space that absorbs sound and encourages deep introspection. Hands are depicted as if "taming" audible ranges, or referencing the pulse as a metaphor for the physical presence of sound—both visible and tangible.

Moving through the exhibition, *Eternal Silence* emerges, a sculptural installation of 34 stacked books whose spines contain encrypted fragments of the last Morse code message. The closed books prevent access to the text, and Morse code remains undecipherable, illustrating the limitations and silences embedded in language.

In *Scores for Silent Reading*, a series of drawings inspired by Paul Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* and musical notation, Lobera manipulates typography to obscure legibility. By cutting out the central "eye" of the letters, she transforms the text into a visual sign, emphasizing the importance of interpretation while also acknowledging the gaps and silences in communication.

Preserving 7:59 minutes (Beau Mot Plage Loop) reflects on the human desire to capture sound's fleeting immateriality. These drawings, housed in small jars, map out the sound waves of the song *Beau Mot Plage* by Isoleé. The creative process was permeated by the song, using the looping technique to alternate between reflection and writing, making an attempt to "preserve" sound's essence.

The exhibition concludes with the installation-performance *Sixty-Fourth Rest*, where viewers witness an interview with a plant, whose "thoughts" are interpreted through touch by a translator. Set in a space resembling a TV set, this poetic conversation explores silence, solitude, and empathy toward other life forms. The script, composed of fragments from authors like Jean-Dominique Bauby and Walter Benjamin, weaves a reflection on the challenges of translation and communication beyond words, paying homage to John Baldessari's *Teaching a Plant the Alphabet* (1972).