

Simon Lee Gallery Hong Kong is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by celebrated American artist Sherrie Levine. Since the late 1970s, Sherrie Levine has re-contextualized images and objects in explorations that span a wide array of mediums, including photography, painting and sculpture. Levine centres much of her practice on the appropriation and transformation of modern masterworks, in an explicit examination of the primacy of authorship, originality and cultural legacies. Levine's installations also emphasize the powerfully seductive, tactile nature of the art, and the complex layers of reference and meaning that unfold between the ostensible sources and Levine's own work. Examining the relationship between repetition and chance, the erotic and the banal, the handmade and the mass produced, Levine employs complex mechanisms, ranging from drawing from reproduction, creation of a work only imagined in its original incarnation, to direct casting of a sculptural source.

Deepening her investigation of the relationship between original art object and readymade, Levine's most recent sculptures are a series of bronze cast alligator skulls that reference certain lineages such as the vernacular South West, the legacy of artist Georgia O'Keeffe, and the early aesthetics of specimen collection that lead to the Enlightenment. Their glowing, polished surface embodies Levine's artistic mastery over transforming unorthodox material into precious object. The formal and aesthetic qualities of Levine's works reprise the appeal of commodity and the industrial repetition and materials of Minimalism. Existing somewhere between the ready-made and still life, psychologically powerful and aesthetically seductive, the alligator skulls and handmade papers are presented to the audience over and over, an assembly line of substitutions subject to scrutiny as the repeated image dissolves from a specimen into a sign for unseen content.

With their visual and textural allure and elements of nature and decay, the works resonate as spectres of abstractions and commodities. The veil-like images of 'Flower Papers' and the 'Nature Morte' collage, exist on multiple strata, hovering between the genuine and artificial, familiar yet obscure, they are masquerades that are both representing and replacing nature. Transient forms in nature are re-materialised, engaging with the ambiguous ideas of source and context while revealing the extraordinary singularity of the object or image and its transformation.

Levine builds a complicated, ambivalent framework with the images and objects she lays claim to. An experiment in art historical interpretation, the inherently destabilizing nature of her art disrupts canons and conventions, resisting narratives that assume continuous and categorical histories of painting and sculpture. The tension between the object and its substitute and the space existing between these repetitions and replacements, problematise ideas of readability and propose new

trajectories that question permanence and prior meaning in the charged and elusive presence of the works.

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