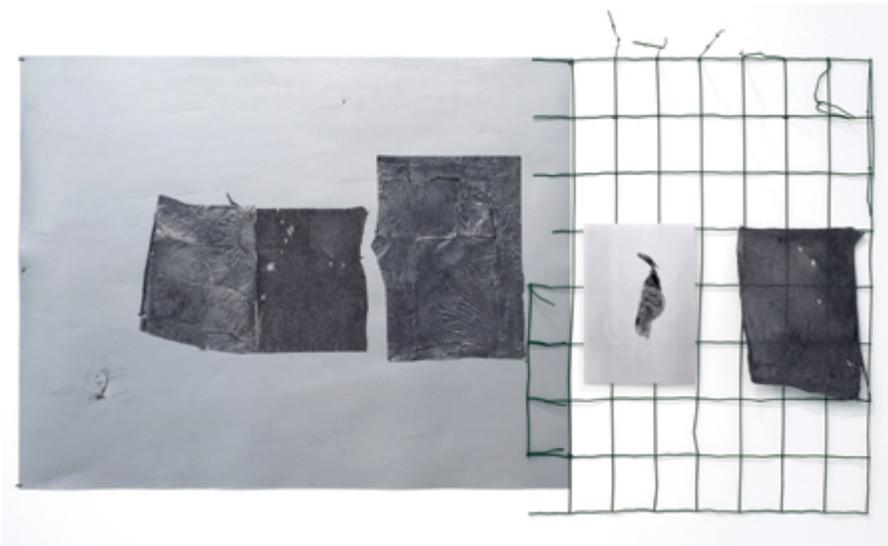


art ltd.

Kate Levant: "Inhuman Indifference" at moniquemeloche

by robin dluzen

Jul 2013



Skin/Flaps/Graph/Scanning, 2013

Plastic coated paper, plastic coated wire, nylon stockings, plastic laminate, charcoal
32" x 60" x 10 ½"

Photo: courtesy of the artist and moniquemeloche

In the wake of her 2012 Whitney Biennial appearance, the Chicago-born, Amsterdam-based artist Kate Levant presented her first solo exhibition in her hometown, at monique meloche. Most works in the exhibition "Inhuman Indifference" were created on-site, and that spontaneity showed. Papers were left to lie in a haphazard pile on a narrow shelf near the floor; lengths of tangled, green-wire garden fence were attached to gallery walls and pillars; and smudgily laminated photocopies

adhered to corrugated plastic leaned against the wall. Though Levant's treatment of these materials is not what we'd think of as masterful craftsmanship, it nonetheless reads as simultaneously nonchalant and deliberate. The show employed a grab-bag of media, and while most are fairly commonplace, "Inhuman Indifference" was also punctuated by a few more conceptually weighted materials. *Blackout Loop Lid* (all works 2013) features a hoop earring: a feminine symbol hidden amongst grainy, indistinct Xeroxes bent into loops affixed to the wall. Buried in *Awe Bird without Eyes* and *Vito*, the aforementioned piled papers, is an image of Vito Acconci: an art historical figure notorious for a practice that has very often involved flesh. Gray, opaque nylon stockings have been raggedly cut apart, squares of them sometimes hanging on the garden wire creating the effect of synthetic skin and bones. There is no arguing that subject matter related to body and gender is present in these mostly abstract works, but it's subtle, more like mere connotations than expressly illustrated content.

Equally as intriguing as Levant's material choices is the myriad of ways in which the materials are used. Pieces like *Skin/Flaps/Graph/Scanning* and *Three Limb Equation* speak through painting and drawing language, with their careful compositions and picture-like imagery. Others, like *Resistance Pull with Snake* project sculpturally off the wall, with pieces of wire poking out precariously at viewers. Exploring the gray area between two- and three-dimensionality, though still interesting, is certainly not unique to Levant. However, a more unusual and somewhat troublesome gray area explored in this exhibition is that between installation and autonomous artworks. Levant's pieces here often felt site-specific, but were identified as 15 separate works. Plenty of the artworks seem perfectly equipped to stand on their own outside of the exhibition, though some, like the palm-sized tangle of wire, *Socket Retrieving Thing*, would prompt one to wonder if it would be able to retain its presence and meaning without the help of its more substantial neighboring works.