

The female body has been a motif in Sarmiento's works since the 1970s. Though it looks whole, *First Easy Piece* is a concatenation of fragments, since even the figure itself was made with a machine that scans the body layer by layer, and so the final sculpture is a reconstruction made of hundreds of thin slices. In *142 Silicone Leftovers*, the body of a woman, in the form of the silicone molds that Sarmiento used to make his 1999 sculpture *A Human Form in a Deathly Mould*, is also presented in pieces. Each part hangs from a hook like those found in butcher shops. The uneasiness provoked by *First Easy Piece* is augmented here. At first the sculpture appears to be merely a group of abstract shapes hanging from hooks. It is only upon closer inspection that one disturbingly recognizes various parts of the body.

The works in the show draw together different references and objects to create a juxtaposition that is conceptual but also literal. Each results from an accumulation of seemingly diverse elements—a fragmented collection of notes, thoughts, and objects—that allude not only to other pieces in the show but also to previous works by the artist. In a Duchampian gesture, Sarmiento takes these different elements as if they were readymade themselves and represents them almost as found objects. But is the body also a readymade—a leftover from some previous process of production? Sarmiento asks us to consider this possibility too.

—Filipa Oliveira

#### HØVIKODDEN, NORWAY

### "Arbeidstid"

HENIE ONSTAD KUNSTSENTER

The current leadership of the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter has repeatedly repudiated the idea that art can stand isolated from the society that surrounds it. Recently, for instance, we saw a multipart project about education, "Learning for Life." The center's summerlong show "Arbeidstid" (Work Time) explored historical and contemporary notions of labor. The exhibition included pieces by fourteen artists and groups, and was accompanied by the publication *Living Labor*, edited by the exhibition's curator, Milena Hoegsberg, with writer Cora Fisher. More a freestanding component of the exhibition than a catalogue, this playfully organized collection of essays and artist projects served as an instructive introduction to the show's topic: our increasing tendency to allow labor to govern life.

"Arbeidstid" was shown in two rooms separated by a passageway, a challenging set of spaces only partly unified by the show. Ironically, the space dominated by several red surfaces seemed to welcome you with an inviting "go"; the other, dominated by a green wall, signaled "stop." The dominating "positive" green of Olivia Plender's *Self-direction Lounge* (all works cited, 2013) was indicative of this installation's strong

sense of alienation. Partitions partly obstructed the way into a barren, depressing landscape of generic workplace furniture, representing the "fun, flexible" post-Fordist headquarters inhabited by "creative" office workers encouraged to set their own hours. An arrangement of the art center's own obsolete office equipment (including analog phones with speed-dial labels naming actual employees past and present) was stashed behind yet another partition, reminding us that the present institution, too, has had to adapt to new, demanding regimes of labor conditions.

Across the hallway, both Michala Paludan's installation *Syklus* and a proud century-old workers' banner, borrowed from the Labour Movement Archives and Library of Oslo, were in bright reds. *Syklus* allowed the viewer to shut herself in a red-fabric-clad cube and become immersed in the artist's selection of material on feminist labor struggles of the 1970s, drawn from libraries and archives in Oslo and Copenhagen and presented as slides accompanied by female voice-overs. Stepping inside the installation was like being transported to another time; the feel of the coarse textiles, the wood/orange/red color scheme, the slide projectors, and the cushions for floor seating were all perhaps pointers from Paludan to the fact that this very air of the anachronistic is an indication, sad to say, of how sociopolitical issues of gender and labor are commonly seen in Norway today, despite their continued relevance.

Several moments in the show foregrounded the human presence behind the ostensibly dry facts and statistics of archival material. One felt this, for instance, in the corporeal intensity lent Paludan's study chamber by the very heat and whirl of the projectors. Another take on this connection was Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens's *The Prophets*. Here, abstract economical contents of graphs and diagrams were shaped by hand into frail miniature sculptures. In the air above them hovered an original labor movement banner from 1902 reading (in Norwegian) 8 HOURS FOR WORK, 8 HOURS FOR REST, 8 HOURS FOR WHAT WE WILL. Such rights are now taken for granted in Norway, one of the few nations to escape the recent financial crisis, and one in which this year's centenary of women's right to vote sometimes feels more like a mandatory exercise than a really heartfelt commemoration, as that right, too, is now perceived as a given by many citizens. But elsewhere in the West today, workers living with increasingly casual and contingent employment are demanding more work rather than less. It's nice to see an art institution attempt to publicly confront our apathy.

—Johanne Nordby Werno

#### AMSTERDAM

### Katja Mater

MARTIN VAN ZOMEREN

From the very start of her career less than a decade ago, Katja Mater has ventured further and further into the borderlands of photography. For her latest show, "Interior A-J," she constructed a wooden "room" inside the gallery that echoed the shape of its interior almost exactly. This seemingly redundant installation was necessary because Mater wanted to record as if looking through the walls from outside the goings-on inside the space—namely, the process of painting the gallery's walls in four layers, starting with blue and ending up with silver, with the aid of ten cameras—and she would not have been able to complete the complex installation required for this equipment within the actual walls of the gallery.

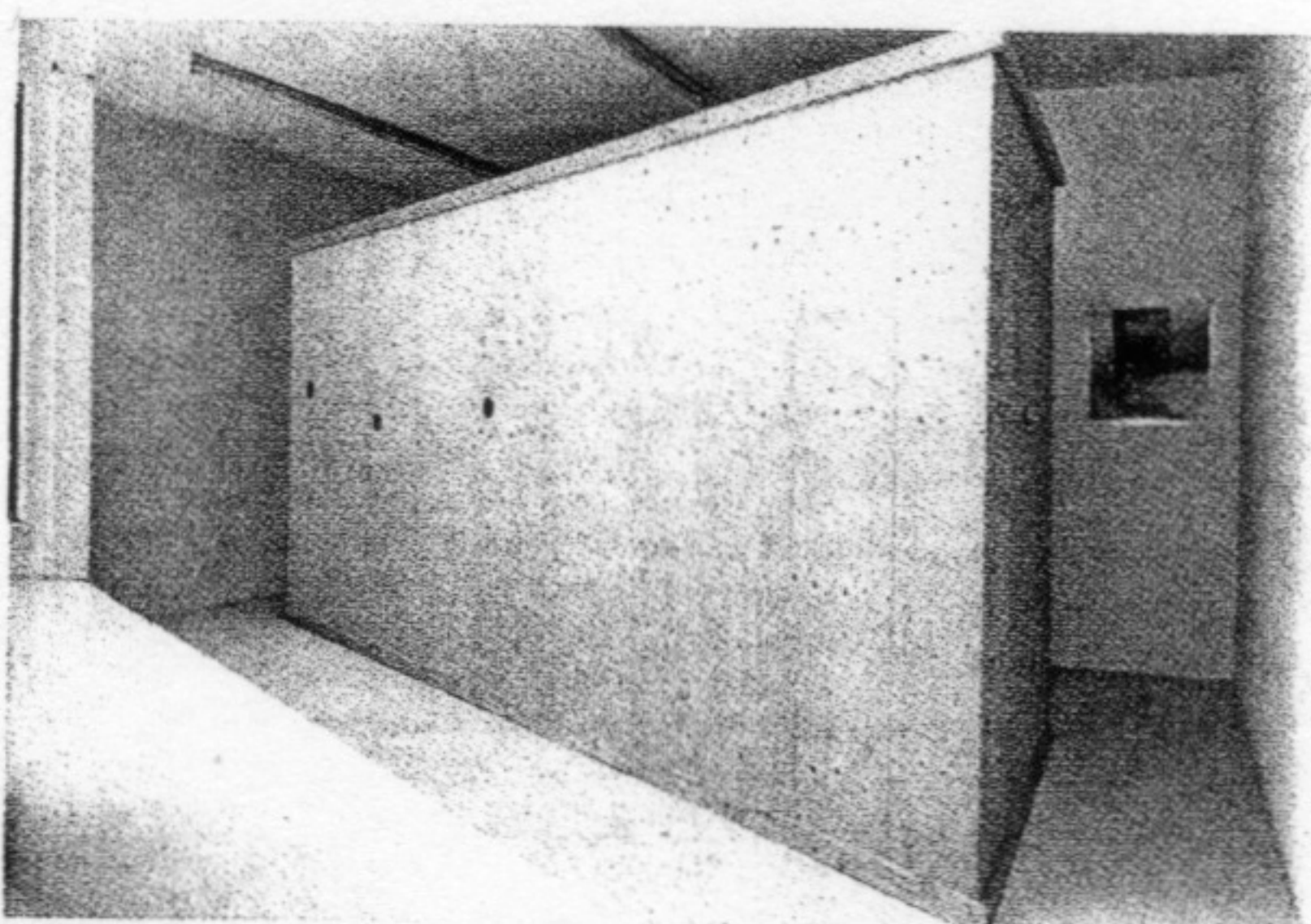
It is hardly surprising that Mater decided to use the entire space. Her pictures have consistently tested the boundaries of photography in the modernist sense, pushing both space and time to the absolute limit. In recent years, her usual procedure has been to paint multilayered, geometric abstractions—sometimes on a flat surface and sometimes in one corner of a room—which she photographs in different stages of com-

Olivia Plender, *Self-direction Lounge*, 2013, mixed media, dimensions variable. From "Arbeidstid" (Work Time).





View of "Katja Mater," 2013.



pletion. Crucially, she leaves a single negative in the camera for all these exposures. The negatives thus serve as canvases of a kind. Surfaces created early in the process are covered by additional layers; colors mingle, and different types of light intersect. She thus compresses not only the multiplicity of successive layers but the time spent painting into a single image. Forget the decisive moment; forget shutter speeds of 1/125 s. Mater's photographs expand continuously before your eyes.

The effort required to grasp the complexity of Mater's images (which at first seem like off-putting photographs of geometric paintings) reflects the scope of her ambition to destabilize the photographic conceptions of both time and space. And this is precisely what she accomplished with "Interior A-J." Because she painted the walls as well as the floor of her temporary room, the lines in the final, two-dimensional photos clashed markedly with those of the space itself. Experiencing the work was thus profoundly unsettling; having already lost control of time, you felt your grip on space slipping away. In this respect, it was clever of Mater to exhibit the nine final photographs (one of the ten she'd planned to make didn't come out) in the narrow passageway between the actual gallery and her painted wooden installation, which was left in place during the exhibition, like a smoking gun. As a visitor, you tried, with a growing sense of defeat, to situate the photographs in space, and to re-create the space in your mind, as it were. But in fact, you knew right from the beginning that you were doomed to fail, lost in space—and time.

—Hans den Hartog Jager

Translated from Dutch by David McKay.

#### HONG KONG

### Leung Chi Wo

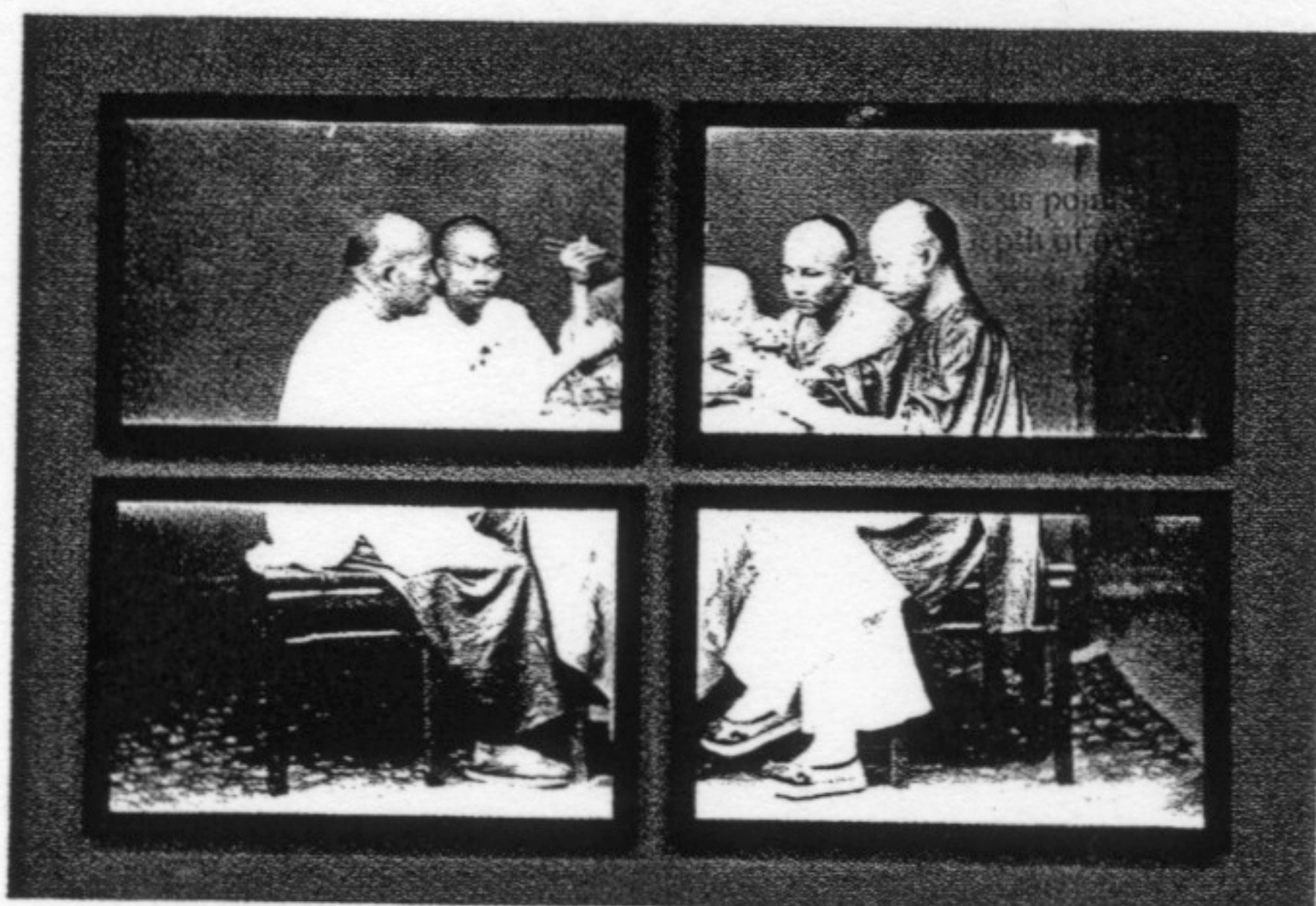
2P CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

What do you see when you look at images from the past? This question hovers over *Bright Light Has Much the Same Effect as Ice*, a body of work produced as a single installation by Leung Chi Wo for the 2012 Guangzhou Triennial in Hong Kong. The project was based on a news item published in the *China Mail* on January 18, 1893, the day after Hong Kong experienced its coldest day on record at zero degrees Celsius. A quote from this report—"Mr. Pun Lun, the well-known photographer, took a number of views in the Peak district during the two days that 'Jack Frost' was reigning supreme"—printed on white paper and box-framed, comprised one individual work. An adjacent box frame featured a Hong Kong carte de visite taken in 1870 (depicting a fleet of ships in Hong Kong's harbor), with the stamp PUN LUN visible on the back.

These two works set the conceptual frame around this exhibition's look into a recorded moment in the past. But the 1893 newspaper

report was mistaken. There was never any "Mr. Pun Lun"; Pun Lun was a Hong Kong photography studio. When Leung went in search of Pun Lun studio images documenting that January 1893 day, he found none. However, he did notice a number of recurring figures in Pun Lun's staged snapshots, presumably studio employees. Leung brought them to the fore in his *Roles Series*, 2013, an extension of the original 2012 installation consisting of four white Plexiglas surfaces, each laser-engraved with the image of a different figure: an opium smoker in one, men working with an abacus in two others, and a man standing over a table in the last. They were chosen for their likeness to four men who appear in the same backing photograph used for each etching—five men seated at a table (an equivalent image was not found for the fifth man). A light underscores the construction of these works as images that have literally been layered; each face appears as an apparition.

The same backing photograph in the *Roles Series* was used for the largest work in the original 2012 installation. It was blown up and framed in steel and Plexiglas to produce four large LED boxes (the central figure of the image is cut out). A light switch was connected to this arrangement: an 1893 Hong Kong silver twenty-cent coin set into the wall, connected to a mechanism that kept the coin's temperature at freezing. As long as one kept a finger on the coin, the LED boxes remained alight, and a quote etched into the Plexiglas was legible—another report from January 1893: "It was a novel experience to the majority of the residents to be confronted by the white-capped hills on



Leung Chi Wo, *Bright Light Has Much the Same Effect as Ice* (detail), 2012, albumen prints, engraved Plexiglas, LED light boxes, steel frames, each 32 x 49 1/4 x 2 3/4", one element of a mixed-media installation.

the mainland." The unexpected cold might have been a novelty for the colonialists in 1893, but for locals living in unheated homes, it would have been disastrous.

What is at stake in this accumulation of archival material is not so much the depiction—or the accuracy—of a reported event so much as the questions that surround the actors constituting the society preserved in these historical fragments. Though mere "extras" performing in a larger, grander historical narrative, the men in these photographs are presented as contemporary reflections: abstract, decontextualized figures inscribed by the lens of colonial and, by implication, economic occupation. By deconstructing the report of that cold January day, Leung transformed a moment in history into a site of metacontext, the projection of a narrative made up of gaps and what he calls "mythical facts."

—Stephanie Bailey

**CORRECTION:** In the introduction to "Saul Leiter: A Portfolio," published in our Summer 2013 issue, we neglected to describe the crucial role critic and curator Martin Harrison played in persuading Steidl to publish Leiter's first book, *Early Color*, which Harrison then edited. *Artforum* regrets the omission.