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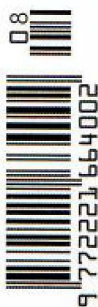
Diana d'Arenberg Parmanand on

Wolfgang Tillmans

at David Zwirner

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Leung Chi Wo

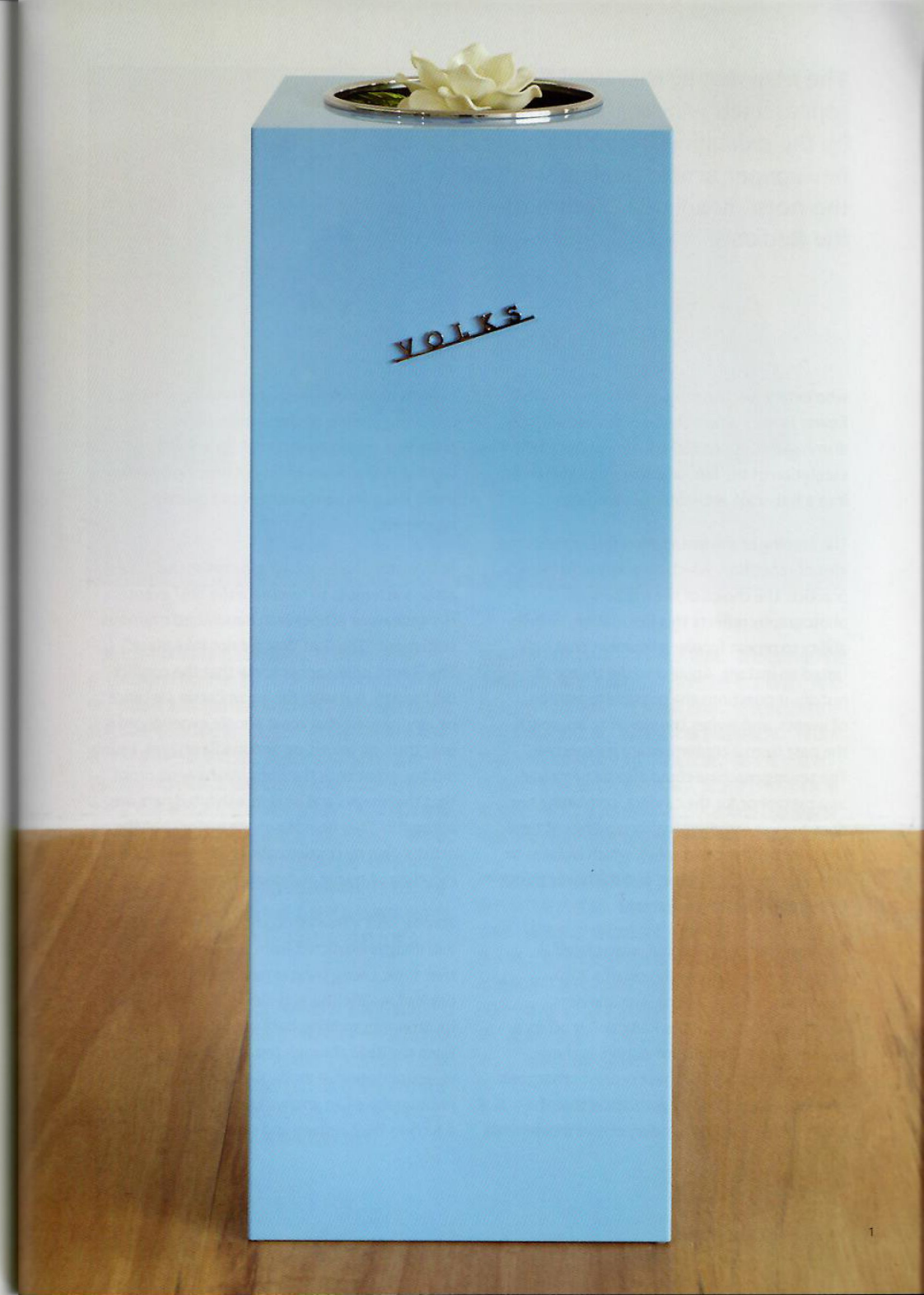
there and thenness

By Caroline Ha Thuc

"Is History not simply that time when we were not born?" asks Roland Barthes, while looking at a photograph of his mother as a child, in his book *Camera Lucida*. Leung Chi Wo's process is all too Barthesian: born in 1968, he focuses here on 1967, the year when the most violent riots in the post-Second World War history of Hong Kong took place. In the womb of his mother, the artist could not witness those events, and to recollect today occurrences that are lost forever, he can only rely on archives, found objects and stories. This exhibition could be perceived as a personal museum, another version of the *Museum of the Lost* project he and Sara Wong began in 2013, but one dedicated to 1967, a year he was not around but tries to reach for – despite the effects of time and subjectivity – through the power of photography and the socially constructed memory of the past.

Fraser (2015) epitomises the artist's practice and concerns. The installation features an old sewing machine that has been modified to make holes very slowly, at one stroke per minute, in a loop. It regularly pierces a roll of black-and-white negative film depicting artificial roses. The act of puncturing a bunch of roses is by itself both poetic and violent. The roses, exhibited as a series of photographs, feature a line of holes as if shot using a machine gun.

The sewing machine could have been the symbol of Hong Kong in the 1960s and 70s, when most of the city's workers were employed in factories. They had no labour rights and often worked 12 hours a day without leave. The artist's father worked in a large garment factory, and his mother used to sew at home to earn additional money. The work asks what price was paid for the economic development of the territory, and



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who benefited. The roses refer to the artificial-flower factory where the riots started with the dismissals of about 650 workers in April 1967. The escalation of the labour dispute quickly turned into a full-scale anti-colonial campaign.

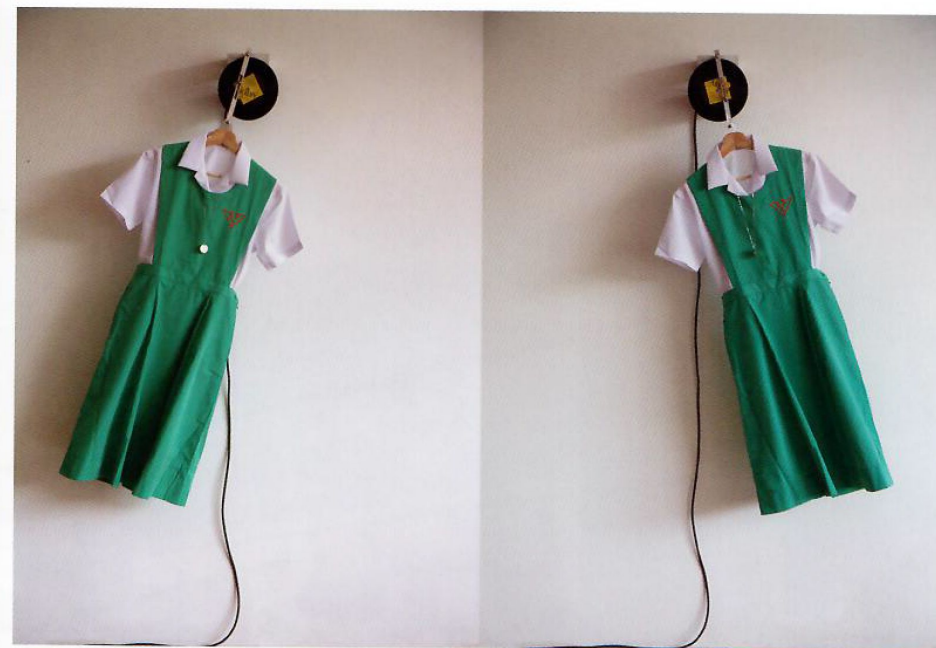
The looping of the installation foregrounds the idea of repetition, which is essential to Leung’s practice: the choice of the medium of photography reflects this fascination, with its ability to repeat forever a moment that only lasted an instant. Applied to the theme of history, it questions the possible repetition of events, and invites the viewer to approach the past from a contemporary perspective. The sewing machine could also be perceived as a metaphor for the camera, combining two opposite yet complementary readings of time: the punctual (photography), which isolates or freezes moments in time; and the linear (film), with its continuous movement.

The idea that history could repeat itself is underscored by the exhibition of a 2010 newspaper article dealing with the riots, headlined “Return of the Radicals”. It offers a guideline to the whole exhibition: is there anything left today of these protests that took place 50 years ago? The paradox is that the artist’s kinetic devices and repetitive movements

suggest an iterative return of history, without any change, while at the same time his subjective reappropriation of the events highlights the impossibility of history repeating itself, since we barely know what exactly happened.

Both history and photography resist the artist’s attempts to re-create the 1967 events. His endeavour echoes Jean Baudrillard’s famous statement “The Gulf War did not take place”. The French philosopher knew that the conflict did happen, but with this provocative sentence he emphasised that most people experienced it only through television and media images. Leung did not experience the riots. We have no proof that the images and objects exhibited here are authentic. They do not narrate history but the artist’s own re-contextualisation of history, a recycling of traces and quotations.

Playing with a free association between quotes and images extracted from the newspapers of that time, Leung creates new meanings on the brink of reality. This is typical of his work and its attempts to bring back anonymous people from the dead through the re-appropriation and re-actualisation of archival photographs: here, a photograph of an anonymous person, taken on a ferry in 1967, revived and recontextualised with



「歷史並不單單指那些我們還未出生的時候，是嗎？」在Roland Barthes的《Camera Lucida》一書中，他看著媽媽小時候的照片問到。梁志和經歷的過程與Barthes太為相似：出生於1968年的他關注點卻在1967年——那是香港二戰後歷史中最为暴亂的一年。尚在娘胎裡的這位藝術家沒能目睹當時的事件。如今當他想重拾那些已經遺失的過往，就只能依靠檔案、現有物和故事。是此展覽可視為一個個人博物館項目，即他和黃志恒2013年開始進行的《遺失博物館》項目的另一版本。不同的是撤除時效性和個人主觀因素，此次展覽借由攝影的力量以及社會建構的過往記憶向1967年致敬，梁氏不曾歷經卻努力想企及的一年。

裝置作品《弟兄》（2015）集中體現了藝術家的努力和思慮。一台舊縫紉機經改裝後以每轉一分鐘極其緩慢的速度，一針一針刺在一卷捕捉了人造玫瑰花的黑白底片上。在一束玫瑰花上打孔，這個動作本身就是即詩意而暴力的。這些玫瑰花作為一系列照片展出，其上的一排小孔就像是用機器槍而射出的。

衣車可視為香港60、70年代的標識，當時這所城市裡大部分工人都在工廠打工。他們沒有勞工權益，經常每天工作12個小時，沒有有薪假期。梁氏的父親在一個大型製衣廠工作，母親在家縫衣貼補家用。作品扣問城市的經濟發展究竟以何為代價，誰才是受益者。作品中的玫瑰指代人造花工廠，那正是1967年4月暴亂開始的地方，起因是650名工人被辭退。這場勞資糾紛不斷升級，很快就發展為大規模的反殖民運動。

迴圈播放的裝置藝術突出了「重複」這一概念，此為梁氏創作中的要素，從其選擇攝影為媒介就能反映出這點，因攝影能讓轉瞬即逝的時刻永遠停留不斷重複。將之置於歷史中便就事件能否重演提出疑問，並邀請觀者以當代視角探討過去。衣車也可視為照相機的一種隱喻，將兩種相對卻相輔相成的歷史文本並置：點狀（攝影），孤立、凍結了時刻；線狀（膠捲），連綿不斷的動作。

展覽中一則刊登於2010年關於六七暴動的報導以「Return of the Radicals」（激進派的回歸）強調

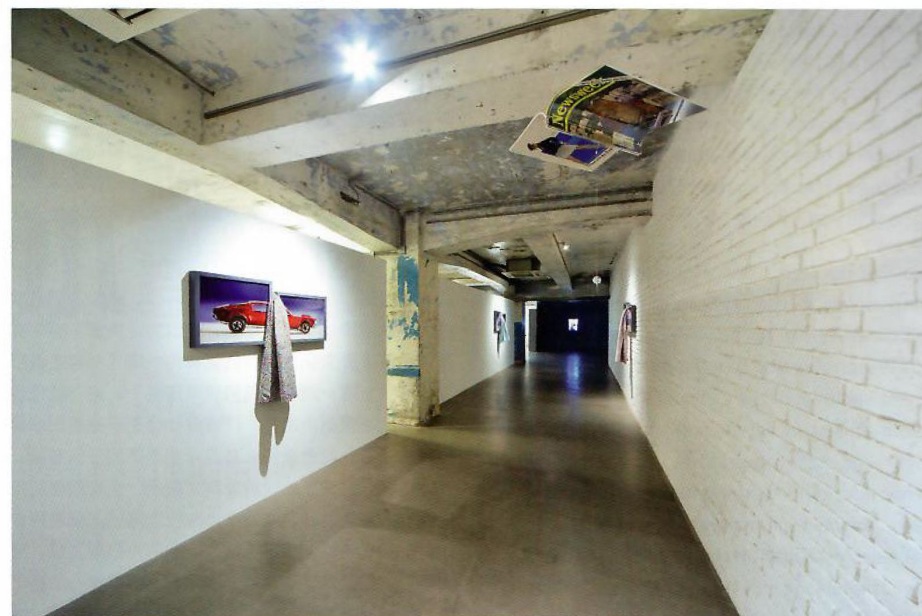


the unconnected words "I hate him", quoted out of context from the *Hong Kong Standard*; or another anonymous photograph showing a young man in 1967 on Lugard Road and engraved with the caption "growing up", a reference to a quote from a magistrate in another newspaper. It is left to the audience to invent their own narrative and to connect the individual stories if they wish to do so.

Another series in black and white represents archival photographs that have been reproduced as pairs and juxtaposed as if they were reflected in a mirror. All of them bear the engraved caption "extremely recalcitrant". Without reading the artist's statement, it is hard to get an idea of what he intended to express. The word "recalcitrant" refers to Susan Sontag's definition of photography, "understood as recalcitrant, inaccessible", and to a comment by a magistrate

towards schoolgirls who disobeyed police officers during the riots. Once more, Leung draws a parallel between photography as a medium and history.

It is almost impossible to follow all the trails intertwined in the exhibited works, and some associations are a bit far-fetched. For example, Leung combines a schoolgirl's uniform with a record of the theme tune of Charlie Chaplin's last film, *A Countess from Hong Kong*, with the argument that they both refer to women who had to escape Hong Kong: the student was jailed because of her involvement in the riots, and Sophia Loren, in the movie, emigrates to the west. One of the core questions with research-based practices is the extent to which the public needs to know the context and underlying stories hidden behind each work to be able to appreciate it. While it is impossible to fully



了歷史可以自我重複這一思路。這也引出了整個展覽的主旨：那些50年前的抗議事件至今還剩下什麼？此處存在一個悖論：藝術家通過動態裝置和重複動作呈現出一段毫無差異、不斷重複的歷史；但同時，其主觀挪用此次事件的舉動卻強調了歷史是不可重複的，因為我們都不大知道事情始末。

無論歷史還是攝影兩者都抵制了藝術家想要重塑六七事件的意圖。他的一番努力正呼應了讓·鮑德里亞的著名言論：「海灣戰爭不曾發生」。這位法國哲學家明知戰爭確實發生了卻拋出了這樣挑釁的言論，他要強調的是大部分人所看到的只是電視和媒體的畫面。梁志和並沒有經歷這些暴亂。我們無法證實展出的相片和物品是真實的。它們敘述的不是歷史而是藝術家以追溯歷史軌跡和字句而重構的歷史。

梁將當年的報導和圖片隨意關聯，從而賦予現實新的意義，這是他的典型風格。其試圖通過重新演繹和呈現檔案圖片讓那些無名人士起死回生：展覽中有一張無名人士的照片，攝於1967年一艘輪渡上，無關聯

的文字「我恨他」取自《英文虎報》，為照片重構了語境使其復蘇；又比如另一張一個年輕男子在1967年盧吉道上的照片上刻了文字「長大」，摘自另一份報紙上某法官的話語。作品留下空間觀眾去創建自己的敘述，讓他們根據自己的意願與這些個體故事建立聯繫。

另一組黑白系列檔案照片以組合或並列的形式呈現，如同是鏡子反射。所有圖片說明均刻為「極其倔強」。不看藝術家的解說，觀者很難瞭解他究竟想要表達什麼。「倔強」(recalcitrant) 這個詞源於蘇珊·桑塔格的關於攝影的定義：「倔強而難以掌握」，同時取自某法官對一群女學生在暴亂中不服從員警的行為所做出的評論。梁氏再一次在媒介和歷史之間畫出一條平行線。

想要追溯各展品之間縱橫交織的所有事件幾乎是不可能的，因而有些關聯就太過牽強。比如，梁志和將一套女生校服和差利·卓別靈執導的最後一部電影《香港女伯爵》組合，理由是兩者均代表被迫逃離香港的

appreciate Leung's practice without an introduction, the explanations in the booklet here reduce the significance of the installation. The risk with the systematic contextualisation of the work is that the audience tries to understand or decipher the work rather than feeling it or responding to it freely.

The 1967 riots left a deep impression on Hong Kong society. Interpretations of the events are still controversial today, with debates over who was responsible and to what extent they were a spillover of the Cultural Revolution: a "communist-initiated confrontation" or a "righteous mass movement". Leung is not taking either side: in his statement, he says: "I know I am no historian or researcher. I will be lost and will never establish any conclusion." Maybe this is what is lacking in the exhibition: the artist addresses the issue from many perspectives, from micro-history to official narrative, but he remains on the edge, as if he did not dare really embrace his subject. His work is all about contours, detours, deviations and anecdotes, and the very detailed private stories do not compensate for the vagueness of the global vision.

女性：這名女學生因參與暴亂而被捕，影片中蘇菲亞·羅蘭逃至西方國家。探究性創作的一個核心問題在於把握度——公眾需要瞭解多少內容以及每件作品背後隱含的故事才能夠完好欣賞作品。不看引言就無法充分欣賞梁氏的創作，但宣傳冊中的解說則有些拉低了此裝置藝術的意味深長。有計劃地為作品添加文字伴隨著風險，那便是觀眾會努力去理解或者說去破譯作品而不是去自由的感受、回應作品。

六七暴亂給香港社會留下了深刻印象。如今人們對事件的不同解讀依然充滿爭議，誰因對此負責？事件在多大程度上受文化大革命的影響？一場「共產主義引發的衝突」或一場「正義的民眾運動」。梁不站任何一方，他在聲明中說道：「我深知自己不是歷史學家或研究人員。我會迷失，並且永遠得不到任何定論。」或許這一點正是此次展覽所欠缺的：從宏觀歷史角度到官方敘述，藝術家從眾多角度來闡述這個議題卻始終徘徊在邊緣，似乎不敢去大膽擁抱他的主題。所有展出的作品均是週邊的、迂迴的，偏離核心的軼事。極其詳細的個人故事並不能填補全局的含糊。

Leung Chi Wo

1

People's Flower, Vintage acrylic flower, synthetic leather-mounted cushion, vintage signage, automotive paint stainless steel plinth, 40.3 x 40.3 x 116 cm, 2018.

2

A Countess from Hong Kong, Belilios Public School uniform, cloth hanger, 1967 Hong Kong 50-cent coins, vinyl record *This Is My Song* by Petula Clark (1967), motor system, 19 x 68 x 134 cm (still), 2016.

3,5

Exhibition view. *there and thenness* at Blindspot Gallery.

4

Blue Volkswagen, Inkjet prints in wooden frames, embroidery on fabric, 100 x 93 x 25 cm, 2018.

Courtesy the artist and Blindspot Gallery.