

**Gabriel Kuri**

***Afterthought is Never Binary***

**23 June – 26 August 2017**

**62 Kingly St London W1**

**Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm**

In his third exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ, Gabriel Kuri presents five new groups of works. Bridging fabricated and found objects, these interrelated series articulate themes of systemisation, consumption, and the porous border between functionality and formal allure. Alternating between floor-based sculptures and wall pieces, Kuri evinces the complex relationships between the innate material properties of things – their sheen, softness, weight or colour – and their ‘real world’ meanings.

In a group of steel boxes, Kuri has inlaid the pure Minimalist geometry of the cube with circular niches – dually repositories and dispensers – for everyday consumables. The ‘autonomy’ of the cube is infiltrated by the reality of mass commerce. A bundle of straws converts the abstract module into a cafeteria

dispensary. A slice of artificial lettuce is laid on one cube’s surface, its rippling layers mirroring the concentric funnels slotted into an adjacent hole. These items foreground the viewer’s capacity to touch, hold or consume – appearing available for use, while also retaining a sculptural autonomy and otherness. Some cubes are filled with unexpected or abstruse materials – the abstractness of the steel is here reinforced rather than undermined.

Kuri repeatedly sets up an ambivalent relationship between rational structures and inchoate, formless matter. Often, this appears as a dialectic between numerical systems (methods of quantifying, measuring and monetising everyday life) and the contingency of life in the raw. A meticulous replica of a pricing card, enlarged to the scale of a portfolio case, has been overlaid by a heap of coagulated concrete which partially blocks its numerical displays. Complicating this antithesis of sleek design and surface ‘mess’, the top of the concrete has been immaculately planed so as to mirror the top edge of the card. The dumped cement becomes, in its own way, a precise calculation. In two floor-based works, Kuri creates a similar tension: the enlarged price cards are sandwiched between a hard mass of concrete and a similar-sized rock. The utilitarian item of the pricing card (paradoxically magnified into a functionless simulacrum) is balanced and sandwiched by two different modes of abstraction, manmade and natural.

Elsewhere, the opposition between fluid abstraction and a numerical system is collapsed in a single object. Kuri has created magnified replicas of punch cards (the perforated sections of card formerly used in computer programming), surfaced in PET felt whose pastel shades are reminiscent of monochrome Colour Field paintings. Kuri has attached physical objects – themselves cyphers of information – to the felt surfaces. An oscillation between clinical literalism and abstraction is again discernible in a series of works in which Kuri has used laboratory-style steel tables and magnetic wall panels – playing on the familiarity of customs checkpoints or assembly lines – as ‘supports’ for eclectic arrangements of objects. As with the table top assemblages of Jannis Kounellis or Marcel Broodthaers, superficial familiarity is belied by an intricate dynamic of shape, colour and texture. Meaning is rendered unstable and transferrable, residing neither in the sum nor the individual parts.

“My interest is in the natural tendency to create ordering principles and the drive to understand patterns,” Kuri has explained. “How does experience, in all its subjectivity, get codified into quantities, forms and cyphers?” This question plays out as an investigation into the nature of abstraction, as reflected in a grid of black plastic wall panels, each bearing the relief impression of repeating bean ‘counter’. In many panels, the bean shapes adopt a stratified arrangement, similar to the lines of beads on an abacus. At times, however, they fall into disarray – mathematical order gives way to a kind of free play. Throughout the exhibition, Kuri thus invokes and subverts the logic of abstraction, subverting it through an embrace of the contingent or vernacular. By the same token, he transforms the hard facts of everyday life into a set of allusive and alluring propositions. Objects function as indices of larger realities – pointing to numerical and economic systems, while also carrying a countervailing sense of the intuitive and irrational.

Gabriel Kuri (b. 1970, Mexico) studied at Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas U.N.A.M. México, Mexico City, and Goldsmiths College of Art, London. In June 2017, his sculpture *Shelter* (2011) was on view at Art Unlimited, Art Basel. Recent solo exhibitions include *Product Testing Unit*, Alte Fabrik, Rapperswil, Switzerland; *with personal thanks to their contractual thingness*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2014); Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway (2012); *Before Contingency After the Fact*, South London Gallery (2011); *nobody needs to know the price of your saab*, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA (2011); and Blaffer Art Museum, Houston University, Houston, USA (2010); *join the dots and make a point*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany (2010); and Kunstverein Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany (2010); and *soft information in your hard facts*, Museion – Museo de Arte Moderna, Bolzano, Italy (2010). Recent group exhibitions include *DESERT X*, Palm Springs and Coachella Valley (CA), USA; *Portrait De L’artiste En Alter*, FRAC – Haute-Normandie, Sotteville-lès-Rouen, France (2016); ICH, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany (2016); *Over you / you*, 31st Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, Ljubljana (2015).

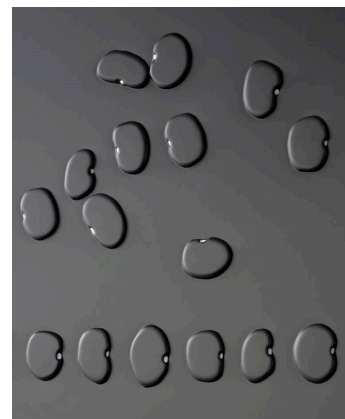
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