

## Michelle Lopez



In “LASSO REPRIEVE,” Michelle Lopez’s solo exhibition here, arrangements of hand-twisted steel rope in various colors loom larger-than-life, hovering in gravity-defying formations that resist the limpness evoked by their velvety, braid-like texture. Liberated from the constricting function implied by the lasso of the show’s title, the ropes converge to form contingent structures of support whose apparent vulnerability belies their stability. Five pieces from the series “ROPE PROP REVERSAL,” 2023, build on Lopez’s long-term engagement with feminist subversions of Minimalism and abstraction, deconstructing the movements’ pretensions of monumentality and universality by restoring an unwieldy humility to the industrial materials that she manipulates.

The artist’s series responds to Richard Serra’s canonical Minimalist work, *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*, 1969, reducing Serra’s cubic sheets of antimonial lead to a sinewy silhouette of their form, and in turn translating the sculpture’s heavy-metal grandiosity into a seemingly weightless geometrical skeleton. Reminiscent of oversized pipe cleaners, the sculptures in “ROPE PROP REVERSAL” transform the fortuitous, pliable shapes of child’s play into permanent outlines, undermining Minimalism’s claims of immutability by underlining the contingency inherent to the construction of monuments, and reframing Serra’s balancing act as one necessarily mediated by the supportive collaboration of material bodies.

Interspersed among the choreographed steel forms are cartoonish pools of bronze hair (installed respectively in a floor corner, windowsill, and over the edge of the gallery’s front desk).

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*Michelle Lopez* / par Vanessa Holyoak

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The three works, which comprise the series, "GHOST," 2010/2023, reference the stylized (and feminized) Asian locks of manga and anime characters. But their reflective surface evocatively appropriates the racist stereotype of the "inscrutable Asian," refusing the violent scrutiny of the gaze by reflecting it back onto the observer. Peering into the disembodied tresses, our eyes have nowhere else to land but on ourselves. The "GHOST" pieces coincide with the rope sculptures to rupture the totalizing fiction of monumentality, punctuating the viewer's experience of abstraction with the particularity of these uncannily scalped objects.

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