

QUEENS Chronicle

Artist Captures the Neuroses of Cleanliness

By Neil Chiragdin — September 29, 2016



Aki Sasamoto's "The Ball" may remind you to do the laundry / Photo by Neil Chiragdin

It is waiting at the end of a dark corridor, cloistered in the dingy recesses below. Bound tight, and looming taller with every step you take toward it, it stirs something within you — you really ought to do the wash more often.

"The Ball," a knotted mass of cotton sheets, measures 5 feet in diameter, and is just one of the installation pieces in **Aki Sasamoto's** new show at **SculptureCenter**, "**Delicate Cycle**."

This is the first solo exhibition in a U.S. museum for Sasamoto, who has previously shown her work in group exhibits in Paris, Tokyo and at the 2010 Whitney Biennial. She has claimed the lower level of the SculptureCenter — well-suited in its narrow passageways to Sasamoto's sculptures, many of which are large for the space, lending an air of claustrophobia to a visitor's experience. But the show creeps upwards into the north stairwell and out into the secluded courtyard as well.

Outside on the SculptureCenter's gravel-filled back lot, visitors will find two large pots and a frying pan, and a strange sound in the air. The churning and swishing of the laundromat has found its way inside the cookware, bubbling out and upward to a laundry line above, hung over the yard with sheets attached.

Back down the stairs, past a wearable washboard and utensil ensemble that Sasamoto has designed, you will find canvases covered in Sharpie scribbles, more cooking utensils and toothpaste. Each diagram note somehow alludes to different shows that Sasamoto will perform in the SculptureCenter throughout the course of the exhibition, which unfortunately all sold out prior to the show's opening.



A visitor peeks inside Aki Sasamoto's "Shoelightbox." / Photo by Neil Chiragdin

Around the corner, two industrial washers and a dryer fill out a small room in which a small television screens a looping video titled "Birds, Dung Beetles, the Washer." This theme, of the dung beetle rolling its ball of filth in contrast with the tendency of washers to tumble their items clean, is a major focal point of the show.

Rounding another corner reveals another television playing the movie, and two sculptures that resemble stall showers, built into potentially rollable, if unwieldy, frames. One is shaped like the letter D, and the other is rhomboid with two corners cut short, to give it six sides. At the exhibition's opening, early-arriving guests witnessed Sasamoto's first performance, screwing the final pieces of these "washrooms" into place, and strapping them up at odd angles to the wall and ceiling.

Throughout the floor, shoebox lids are backlit and built into strange wall sconces, somewhat puzzlingly. In the final corridor of the space, a floor-to-ceiling array of shoeboxes fills the hollowed walls of the museum. Light leaks from holes bored into the sides of these, and when a visitor presses her eye to the box, she can see balled-up pages of literature, so only some words remain visible. Among them: beetle, brown and ball.

'Delicate Cycle'

When: Through Jan. 2

Where: SculptureCenter, 44-19 Purves St., Long Island City

Entry: \$5 suggested donation; \$3 students. (718) 361-1750,
sculpture-center.org