

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Fogle, Douglas, "Pause, Reflect: Luisa Lambri on Donald Judd", T Magazine, November 14, 2012

The Los Angeles-based Italian artist Luisa Lambri has spent the better part of the past 15 years circling the globe to train her camera on contemporary and modern architectural monuments by the likes of Alvar Aalto, Louis Kahn, Le Corbusier, Giuseppe Terragni, Luis Barragan, Mies van der Rohe, Kazuyo Sejima, Richard Neutra, John Lautner, Oscar Niemeyer and Alvaro Siza. Recently, she shifted her lens to the artworks of the minimalist artist Donald Judd.

Unlike the well-known documentary work of the photographer Julius Shulman, who gave us the zeitgeist-defining views of modern Los Angeles architecture, the subjects of Lambri's photographs are barely identifiable as icons of the built environment. Hers has been a quest for the idiosyncratic, quiet and forgotten moments within the space of a building — corners and windows — and she has used her camera almost as a divining rod to bring out the subtler qualities in a given building. In the case of John Lautner's Sheats-Goldstein house in Beverly Hills (a well-known piece of architecture that was prominently featured as a location in Joel and Ethan Coen's "The Big Lebowski"), Lambri avoided the monumental views in favor of a study of the shifting light through a small skylight in its galleylike kitchen. "The subject of my work is the human being even if you never see anyone in my image," Lambri says. "It is about the relationship that people have with the world around them."

Lambri's architectural odyssey recently took her to Marfa, Tex., where she became fascinated by Donald Judd's monumental sculptural installation "100 Untitled Works in Mill Aluminum" (1982-1986), a series of brushed aluminum cubes that stretches out over the entire length of a former army barracks that housed German P.O.W.'s during the Second World War. Lambri's camera approaches these works as built spaces that are no different than the architecture that she has shot. "It was natural for me to shift my attention to the artists who had inspired my work on architecture," she says. "Judd's work — especially in Marfa — is so austere yet so warm." The resulting images, on view at Marc Fox Gallery in Los Angeles, reflect this unique perspective on minimalist sculpture, making the Judd cubes more abstract but also revealing their warmth as they reflect the desert light of Marfa that bathes them day in and day out.

"Luisa Lambri" is on view through Nov. 28 at Marc Foxx Gallery, 6150 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.