

Aki Sasamoto
Sounding Lines
6 Sep–19 Oct 2024
The Upstairs

Bortolami is pleased to present *Sounding Lines*, an exhibition by celebrated performance and visual artist Aki Sasamoto. For her third solo show at the gallery, Sasamoto re-envisions her recent commission at Para Site in Hong Kong by creating an installation of oversized, handmade fishing lures suspended from a network of motorized springs. *Sounding Lines* continues her series of installations which imply movement without requiring physical activation, “performing” without her presence.

Each of Sasamoto’s suspended lures houses a kitchen tool; a knife, a strainer, a whisk, a spatula, which quake at seemingly random intervals, triggered at the turn of a motor. The effect is a choreography of catalytic movements set to a metallic soundscape as the coils zip and the kitchen implements rattle within. Historically, sounding lines are among the oldest navigational instruments. Composed of a rope and a heavy weight, the simple tool has been used to measure the depths beneath a ship for hundreds of years. In the gallery, however, Sasamoto’s sounding lines might quantify the profundity of interpersonal relationships rather than measure the depth of water. Situated between sculpture and performance, the constellation of lures in the gallery, tethered via supple springs, allude to the physical and psychological distance between things, people, and places, relative to each individual position.

Fishing lures might be categorized into two types: those that look like a fish, and those that move like one. Within the niche fishing culture, an aphorism says that the first type of lure (conspicuous and flashy) is said to catch only fishermen—an apt metaphor for function over form, substance over style, quality over quantity. For the artist, it is the latter category of lures—those with life-like movement (or action) that matters. The same might be said of relationships. Sasamoto’s trembling, tenuous network manifests how an action causes a reaction, how each lure or locum might be affected and how it might appear.

Aki Sasamoto (b. 1980, Kanagawa, Japan) is a New York-based artist working in performance, dance, installation, and video who is currently teaching at Yale School of Art’s Sculpture Department. Sasamoto received the Calder Prize in 2023. Her institutional solo exhibitions include those at Para Site, Hong Kong (2024); Queens Museum, New York (2023-2024); the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York (2023); The Kitchen, New York (2017); and SculptureCenter, New York (2016). She has participated widely in international exhibitions including the 59th Venice Biennale (2022); Aichi Triennale (2022); Busan Biennale (2022); Okayama Art Summit (2022); Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2016); Yokohama Triennale (2008); and the Whitney Biennial (2010). Forthcoming, Sasamoto will be the subject of survey exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, in 2025 and HangarBicocca, Milan, in 2026.