

## **Abstract**

### **A study of 'Lessness' in relation to my artistic practice**

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My art works exist as individual structural installations that resemble contemporary household interiors. The walls are covered with wall paper and the floors with wood grain printed plywood. These materials create spaces that mimic the interior aesthetic of newly built Japanese houses, and the gallery space containing them takes on the appearance of an orderly showroom for interior design. Such interiors exclude people and furniture and there is no sense of life within these minimal constructs, which take on the appearance of empty, cast-off, human shells.

The term I propose to describe such a quality is 'Lessness', in order to create negative nuance by suggesting that something is missing or lacking in this kind of distinctly contemporary visual language. This is an essential aspect of my artistic practice, and the main aim of this thesis is to define 'Lessness' in order to contextualise my work and research.

Firstly, I make a comparative study of other artists work that embodies what I call 'Formal Lessness', in particular Yuji TAKEOKA's sculpture 'Showcase' (1996/2000), and discuss the formal elements of such works. This focus then shifts to the design concepts of the Japanese retail company MUJI in order to show how 'Lessness' is pervasive in objects that surround us in everyday life. This 'Sensorial Lessness' has its origins as a design philosophy in 1990's Japan culture, and objects that embody 'Sensorial Lessness' act to distance themselves from their users, being described as 'empty vessels' by their creators. In this way, such objects mirror a psychological and social mindset of dissatisfaction, prevalent in 1990's Japan.

My work as an artist stands on the crossing point between Formal and Sensorial 'Lessness', and reference the fake domestic interiors of 'Model Homes'. These full-scale samples of house designs are open to the public as showrooms in Japan, but remain airlessly pristine precisely because they lack inhabitants and are forced to exist at a carefully maintained distance from human life.