

PRESS RELEASE

Hye Lee: poetic imageries

Solo show at Improper Walls gallery, Vienna, Austria

Korean artist Hye Lee presents her solo show *Poetic Imageries*

“How
did
you
fall
in
there
so far
so near”

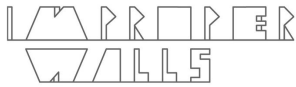


The exhibition *Poetic Imageries* explores artist Hye Lee’s poetic visual language, presented in the forms of watercolours, written works, and ceramic sculptures. Through various mediums, the artist questions the meaning of saying farewell, and the experience of forgetting. Often we leave a place or a certain person behind, only to rediscover them later, recreated into a symbolic figure in one’s memory, or safely transformed into a meaning attached to certain objects. Sometimes in one’s own gestures; in a slip of a phrase, in tilting one’s head in a certain way, we rediscover them. Absence is presence.

Her watercolours make use of the visual vocabularies of illustrations to build the basic scaffolding of a visual narrative. The poetic ambiguity in her images hints at certain thoughts and themes without offering specific details of the events illustrated, nor the identity of the narrator. This openness is an invitation. After sharing its part of the story, the paintings turn their listening ears to the audience, waiting for them to whisper their own stories back to it.

The interactive ceramic sculpture *Toad’s New Home* is inspired by a children’s game in Korea called by the same title. The goal of the game *Toad’s New Home* is to build a cave, by piling a handful of wet sand on top of your hand. The action of adding sand on top is accompanied by a sing-song that consists of a lyric as follows: toad toad, take my old home and give me your new home. In the end of the song, one takes the hand out of the sand structure, as carefully as possible, to create an entrance to the new home.

The idea of leaving an old home and building a new one resonates with the artist’s experiences of being raised and nurtured by soils of different cultures. Like the toad house built with sand, which eventually loses its shape after a rainfall, her own temporary homes also met similar fates. It is a sad business, having to rebuild one’s home again and again. On the other hand, through this ability to build not one but multiple homes, we learn to initiate a bond with the new, the different and the strange, that we are exposed to.



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The Toad's New Home is an elegy to all the temporary homes we have built, which we had to leave behind. The artist invites the audience to carefully open the ceiling of the sculptures. In its warm interior, you will find a small object that became a symbol of home for different people.

About the artist

Hye Lee is a Korean artist whose artistic voice accrued from multicultural backgrounds. Following her nomadic mode of living, she spent her early and mid-20s in Europe studying fine art in London and Oxford, and afterwards studied and worked as an art educator in Chicago and NY. The rapid geographical unsettlement led her to discover certain recurring themes in her studio works. Some of the central themes in her artworks include the 'meaning of leaving home and having to rebuild it', 'structure of memory', and 'cultural and poetic narratives of materials'. She was interested in objects that were left behind as traces, such as egg shells, or marks of time carved on wooden surfaces. The poetic symbolism she found in the materialistic qualities of such materials, would be woven into the concept and narrative behind the work.

Playfulness as a creative mode of being is a key condition in her artworks. The artist used narratives behind children's games as an inspiration for her sculptures and fine art prints.

An example of this is the series of sculptures toad's new home, which will be exhibited at the Improper Walls gallery in Vienna. The artist currently lives in Vienna, working as a freelance illustrator and as an art educator at the Commonroom ceramic studio.

www.instagram.com/hyeskiste

Vernissage: September 12, 2018, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition duration: September 13 until September 28, 2018

Opening hours: Wednesday - Friday, 3 pm - 7 pm

Location: Improper Walls. Reindorfasse 42, 1150 Vienna

Organized and curated by Improper Walls. Kulturverein zur Förderung von Kunst und soziokulturellen Initiativen.

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