



Lee Kun-Yong: Equal Area

Lee Kun-Yong (Korea) with:
Huseyin Sami
Daniel von Sturmer
Emily Parsons-Lord



Centre for
Contemporary
Asian Art

Over the past two decades, the academic discipline of Art History has undergone rigorous and complex reshaping. Postmodernism and its accompanying pivotal theories of postcolonialism, global art and transnationalism have splintered the once singular narrative of Art History. The Euramerican linear narrative approach to Art History is now thoroughly obsolete and the discipline is subsequently challenging itself to redefine how history has been written and can be written. The collective rethinking of Art History has critically influenced approaches to contemporary art, both academically and through institutional exhibitions. No longer shackled to the undulation of linear movements that Euramerican Modernism decreed, the contemporary is now a much more complex examination of the interwoven nature of global culture. Emerging from this framework is a growing understanding that threads of reference span time and traverse the globe. Opening 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's twenty-second year of programming, *Lee Kun-Yong: Equal Area* celebrates this expanded understanding showcasing new connections and undiscovered influences.

Lee Kun-Yong: Equal Area presents seven key performance works in preeminent South Korean artist, Lee Kun-Yong's oeuvre. Born in Korea in 1942, Lee was central to the 1960s Korean art collectives *Space and Time* and *Avant Garde* that contributed to the advent of the contemporary in Korea. Since then, he has worked to expand the possibilities of performance art through his visual and theoretical methodology, drawing upon twentieth-century phenomenological philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, along with the writings of Lee Ufan and Joseph Kosuth about the logic of the mind and gesture of the body. Primarily using painting and drawing, Lee's performances are marked by their tight directives that deconstruct the body's gestures, defining its relationship to space. More than just performances, Lee termed them 'events' differentiating his particular mode of performance as tightly planned, intentional and self-sufficient. His performances would later take on the poetics and politics of agency, will power and control ultimately testing the strict government controls of 1970s authoritarian Korea.

The exhibition has been conceived as an unfolding curatorial experiment that examines the global influence and reach of Lee's practice by situating it among recent and newly commissioned works by Australian artists Daniel von Sturmer, Huseyin Sami and Emily Parsons-Lord. Their responses, through ongoing conversation, are conceived as equal parts homages to, and dissections of, Lee's practice.

In recognition of the breadth of Lee's contributions, *Equal Area* begins in 4A's ground floor gallery with a selection of archival images documenting Lee's most powerful performances following his watershed presentation at the Biennale de Paris (1973). On the first floor, images from *The Method of Drawing* series (1976) and *The Logic of Place* (1975) contextualise the tabula rasa space that serves as an arena for artistic exchange. At the exhibition opening, Lee Kun-Yong will re-perform a suite of seminal works, recasting the gallery with his performative gestures. His inky dark marks will then provide the basis for interpretation and collaboration for Daniel von Sturmer, Huseyin Sami and Emily Parsons-Lord who together will reiterate 4A as a place to gather, to witness and to share. By the final days of the exhibition, the gallery will be a living document of this collaboration, illustrating the interwoven, interconnectedness of the global contemporary art community.

The first intervention is led by Melbourne-based video artist Daniel von Sturmer. *Electric Light (facts/figures/...)* (2017) envelops 4A's gallery with beams of light, that fold onto, cradle and frame the space. The unfolding trail of von Sturmer's mechanised light frames the absences within the gallery, drawing them out of shadows into plain sight for consideration, contemplation and study. For von Sturmer, emptiness and absence are

critical elements within this work, allowing him to draw attention to how the unsaid and the unnoticed can shape experiences of an environment. This predetermined approach to creating performative events is central to both Lee Kun-Yong and Daniel von Sturmer's exploration of gestures, providing definition to the body and how it relates to the visible and invisible senses and forces that surround it.

Huseyin Sami continues to test the boundaries of painting by placing contingency and performance at the core of his art making, adding to Lee Kun-Yong and Daniel von Sturmer's performances. Sami presents *Painting Cut Performance* (2018), a series of stretched white canvases which conceal backsides painted with layers of resonant acrylic paint. Throughout a series of live performances, he will incise the front surface of each canvas, revealing the paint filled undersides of his canvases through the gestural cuts on the surface. This performative gesture is a nod to Lee's *Method of Drawing 76-2* (1976). In this series, Lee stands with his back against a stretched canvas roughly infilling, with only his right hand, the space within reach. Here, Lee's instinct and contingency disrupt the traditional makeup of painting through self-imposed limitations. In these examples, both artists walk a careful tightrope balance of chance, planning and instinct. Through these conceptual underpinnings, each artist creates restlessly alive paintings that record performative actions.

The final intervention is enacted by Sydney-based artist Emily Parsons-Lord whose practice is marked by the act of the gesture and the body's interaction with space and place. Employing scientific materials and spectacular encounters a *raging event of continual noise (the Sun)* (2018) responds to Lee's particular mode of performance art. Using explosives and coloured smoke Parsons-Lord commandeers the gallery with a dramatic display of mark-making. Here, wisp like tendrils of a smoke-path and burnished billows of pigment ash serves as the only remnants of an ephemeral event.

In an increasingly fragmented global 21st century, new theories and perspectives demand new versions and visions of Modernism. Through the corrosion and reformulation of linear narratives, Lee's oeuvre has newly found global resonance. *Lee Kun-Yong: Equal Area* adds to this history by curating across geographies, histories and generations presenting an almost forensic recollection of past events, arming us with a richer understanding of a more interwoven and encompassing global history. On the final day of the exhibition, Sunday 25 February, only drips, burns, flashes and marks will remain as evidence of a collaborative act of the investigation of how bodies and gestures through performance can shape and define the worlds around us.

Artists:
Lee Kun-Yong (Korea)
Emily Parsons-Lord (Australia)
Huseyin Sami (Australia)
Daniel von Sturmer (Australia)

Curators: Micheal Do, Mikala Tai

Curatorial Assistant: Con Gerakaris

To view a full list of works, artist biographies and public program details, please visit:
4a.com.au/lee-kun-yong-equal-area/

Cover image:
Lee Kun-Yong, *Snail's Gallop*, performed at the 7th ST Exhibition in 1980. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Hyundai, Seoul.

Background image:
Lee Kun-Yong, *The Method of Drawing 76-2*, photographed in 1975. C-type print. Courtesy the artist and Gallery Hyundai, Seoul.

LIVE PERFORMANCES

Please join us for a live performance program featuring artists Lee Kun-Yong, Emily Parsons-Lord, Huseyin Sami and Daniel von Sturmer across the duration of the exhibition. All performances have been commissioned by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

Saturday 20 January, 4pm

Lee Kun-Yong, *The method of Drawing 76-3*, first performed in 1976 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Eating Biscuit*, first performed in 1975 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Logic of Place*, first performed in 1975 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Snail's Gallop*, first performed in 1979 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Thursday 25 January, 6pm

Lee Kun-Yong, *The method of Drawing 76-2*, first performed in 1976 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Lee Kun-Yong, *The method of Drawing 76-4*, first performed in 1976 (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Terrorism is an Enemy of Humankind* (re-performed in 2017), dimensions variable.

Daniel von Sturmer, *Electric Light (facts/figures/...)*, 2017, animated light installation, dimensions variable.

Thursday 1 February, 6pm

Huseyin Sami, *Painting Cut Performance*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, dimensions variable.

Thursday 8 February, 6pm

Emily Parsons-Lord, *a raging event of continual noise (the Sun)*, 2018, performance, dimensions variable.

Photographs:

Lee Kun-Yong, *Five Steps*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Eating Biscuit*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Logic of Place*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *Snail's Gallop*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *The Method of Drawing 76-1*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *The Method of Drawing 76-2*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *The Method of Drawing 76-3*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

Lee Kun-Yong, *The Method of Drawing 76-4*, photographed in 1975 (reprinted in 2017), C-type print.

All performances and photographs by Lee Kun-Yong are courtesy the artist and Gallery Hyundai, Seoul. All performances and works by Daniel von Sturmer are courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. All performances and works by Huseyin Sami are courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. All performances and works by Emily Parsons-Lord are courtesy the artist.

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20 January – 25 February 2018

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