

LE PLUS TÔT C'EST DEUX JOURS MIEUX SOONER'S TWO DAYS BETTER SEULGI LEE

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exhibition 21 September – 17 November 2019
opening Friday 20 September 2019, 6:30 pm
part of the new City of Rennes visual arts season

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Titled *SOONER'S TWO DAYS BETTER* – from the Breton proverb *'N abretañ ar gwellañ*, a quirky equivalent of «the sooner the better» – Seulgi Lee's exhibition at La Criée Centre for Contemporary Art comprises a group of works fuelled by more or less close collaborations. Its focus is the trope, a figurative or metaphorical use of a word or expression.

The artist has borrowed the concept of the trope from the American sociologist Richard Sennett. Defining craft as something more than just a specialised skill, Sennett reappraises its crucial contribution to the development not only of different practices, but also of human theorising. His approach is echoed in the work of Seulgi Lee, who «has been working closely with craftsmen for some years now, in an attempt to make visible the connection between craftsmanship and oral culture.»

The title is the exhibition's opening trope: its semiotic glitch is due to a misunderstanding of the proverb by the artist, who gets a kick out of playing on her relationship with the foreign strangeness of French. The same figure of speech is to be found in the group of works titled *U*, six of whose quilts are on display at La Criée. The quilts are embellished with geometrical compositions using the traditional Nubi technique, each design illustrating a common Korean proverb. The colourful treatment of language and the symbolic power of the drawings simultaneously trigger a dual tweaking: in *짚신도 짝이 있다*. *Jip-sin-do Jjak-i It-da* («Even a straw sandal finds its pair») – a way of saying «everyone has a soul mate somewhere» – we see two sandals in the slightly overlapping ovals of coloured fabric on the quilt.

Her interest in oral transmission has led Seulgi Lee to an exploration of the immaterial culture of France's regions via their repertoires of traditional songs, as illustrated by the two films included in the exhibition. The first, *DEPATTURE*, has strong documentary overtones in its mustering of songs and personal narratives by singers from the Poitou region, inspired by their love of singing and the urge to protect their heritage. Fictional echoes are to be found in *L'ÎLE AUX FEMMES* (Island of Women), shot in the Breton province of Trégor, with two young women singing and dancing in the deepening dusk.

Seulgi Lee's exhibition at La Criée blurs the boundaries and effects multiple shifts between craft and art, oral transmission and its recording, the universal and the singular, the timeless past and the fleeting present. She transforms the art centre with

colour, bringing together for the first time Tongyeong quilts, shamanic paper props from Mount Gyeryong and the Korean island of Jeju, Ixcatec basketry from Mexico, Moroccan pottery from the Rif, songs from the land of Gargantua, and among them two big, painted metal stables – huge, abstract renderings of vulvas. Her idea is to fold the La Criée space, then slowly unfold it so as to accentuate the glows emerging at twilight.

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Seulgi Lee was born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1972. She now lives and works in Bagnolet, near Paris. She is represented by Galerie Jousse Entreprise, Paris and Gallery Hyundai, Seoul.
www.seulgilee.org

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This exhibition is the first in the new La Criée cycle *Lili, the Rozell and the Marimba*, which looks into popular knowledge systems, local productions and contemporary creativity. The cycle will take place over two cultural seasons, from September 2019 to August 2021, and will comprise eight solo exhibitions, a journal and research and transmission projects.

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discussion with Seulgi Lee

Saturday 21 September 2019, 3 p.m.

Green Flashes

Pierre Déléage and Seulgi Lee, *The Song of the*

Anaconda: a joint talk

Tuesday 24 September 2019, 7 p.m.

Lætitia Paviani, *Eleven Thousand Old Ladies reading*

performance

& Brigitte Kloareg Celtic songs and tales

Wednesday 6 November 2019, 7 p.m.

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curator

Sophie Kaplan

production

La Criée Centre for Contemporary Art, Rennes

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