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GB £10  
JP ¥1800  
NZ \$20  
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“Shooting the Elephant 象 Thinking the Elephant,” at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, was Haegue Yang’s first solo exhibition in Korea in five years. A homecoming of sorts, Yang’s midcareer survey did not disappoint, featuring 35 old and new works that presented a mesmerizing portrait of an artist with relentless energy and determination to reexamine and expand on her profession.

The show began with Yang’s new installation of Venetian blinds, *Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times* (2015), which was suspended above a long inclined ramp that led into the exhibition. A single-file escalator to a lower-level gallery offered a bird’s-eye view of her new series “The Intermediates” (2015), a group of three architectural structures and six anthropomorphic sculptures made of artificial straw. The ride itself gradually transformed into a visual odyssey, in which viewers became improvised elements seeking their way through Yang’s idiosyncratic universe.

The voyage continued with *Trustworthies* (2010–), geometric collages composed primarily of security patterns found on the inner side of bank envelopes. The work was set against *Hovering Lion Dance* (2015), whose blue, green, red and black vinyl sheets were adhered to a tall, indented wall, recalling the imagery of a lion and presiding over the exhibition like a totemic guardian. In front of another wall was the “Seoul Guts” series (2010), light sculptures made of clothing racks hung with everyday items from the city. Behind that was a wall covered with a digital print capturing Yang’s works playfully floating against an upside-down skyline of Hiroshima. At the other end of the space was *VIP’s Union* (2001/2015). Here, chairs and tables lent by local citizens served as a lounge—an emblematic intersection where the intentions of the lenders, artist and spectators came together.

The most conspicuous series in the show was “The Intermediates.” Large sculptures resembling familiar forms (such as a dog, robot and fish), and structures that reference a Mayan pyramid, the ancient Indonesian Buddhist temple Borobudur and the Russian Islamic mosque Lala Tulpan, dominated the viewer’s line of sight. *The Intermediate – After El Castillo* and *The Intermediate – After Lala Tulpan* (both 2015) each wrapped around thick structural columns of the exhibition space, appearing as if the industrial supports had been overtaken by the growth of Yang’s otherworldly creations.

Upstairs, *Cittadella* (2011), a large-scale installation of Venetian blinds, moving spotlights and scent emitters, and the “Boxing Ballet” series (2013/2015), comprising sculptural figures on wheels made of bells or spinning fans, occupied a 660-square-meter space enclosed in black

concrete. The latter work is a reinterpretation of modern dancers in Bauhaus artist-choreographer Oskar Schlemmer’s *Triadic Ballet* (1922).

Horizontal rods with black handles resemble outstretched arms tempting the viewer to dance with them. Navigating through the scented perfumes, sculptural dancers, labyrinthian paths and light that intermittently slipped through the blinds induced an internal collision of the senses.

The exhibition was disorienting, but perhaps purposefully so. In the lower gallery were three cement columns linked by white, triangular walls hung from the ceiling. At the core of this semi-enclosed space was *Storage Piece* (2004), which, in contrast to the meticulously crafted works and calculated chaos of the overall exhibition, stood out for its unfinished presentation. The piece was originally conceived when Yang, faced with making works for an upcoming exhibition and in need of storage space for her earlier ones, decided to present the latter—packed and placed on four transportable wooden pallets—as a new piece of art.

The focus on the biography of an artwork, from its creation and exhibition to storage and sales, harks back to when Yang’s dilemmas were as much about creativity as they were about logistics. Situated at the nucleus of Korea’s hybrid civilization and exhibited inside a modern-day monument of a museum, *Storage Piece* proposed the artist as a pilgrim, conduit and intermediary of dichotomous integrants—established and marginalized cultures, folklore and history, and the ancient and modern—within contemporary society. Yang’s stored works lay bare her unending questions about her role as an artist. Her willingness to present such a naked endeavor, in her native South Korea where she may be most scrutinized, is what made the exhibition so captivating.

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