

Press release  
January 2020

Koo Jeong A

January 26 to February 22, 2020  
39 Great Jones Street, New York, NY 10012  
Opening on Saturday, January 25, 6 to 8 pm

Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present an exhibition project with South Korean artist Koo Jeong A.

The work of Koo Jeong A incorporates objects with the capacity for transformation, still and moving images, sound and scent. These disparate mediums are combined with elements such as wind, gravity, and site-specific reconfigurations and interventions into architectural space. By placing these varying mediums into delicate and meticulous tension, Koo Jeong A's installations trigger a certain energy in their encounter, asking the viewer to engage in a cryptographic unraveling of each artwork. Often using commonplace matter in order to conjure alternative realities, Koo Jeong A traces a certain poetic within the nature of forms that permeate the universe. What underpins the artist's transient approach to making is an interest in the minute details of our earthly environments and the cosmic constellations that simultaneously connect and expand them. Koo Jeong A traverses these details with a flexible and rational movement, where order and disorder, perception and memory, beauty and practicality are always oscillating.

Koo Jeong A's solo exhibition at Eva Presenhuber, New York brings together a new body of work comprising phosphorescent pigment and acrylic on canvas, an animation, with a series of watercolors made in 2008, each considering the delicate nuances of image-making, representation, and gesture. Ten watercolors are presented in the first gallery, depicting a sequence of bodies, faces, and shapes rendered in vivid washes of color. These fragmented figures appear caught in fleeting acts of movement – an elongated stretch, a step or leap forward, or a squat down towards the ground – while in others their bodies appear static, but with mouths gaping wide, crudely smiling, or gazing outward at the viewer. Each of these images speaks to a quiet observation on the part of their maker; by isolating these everyday gestures, such that the subjects appear to levitate off the paper, Koo Jeong A highlights a certain fragility within their movement and expression – a momentary glimmer of energy caught on a two-dimensional plane.

Acts of appearing and disappearing are also embedded within a series of works on canvas made using phosphorescent pigment. The lights in the main gallery and lower level will remain on for approximately 3 minutes and turn off for 15 seconds in a repeated timed sequence allowing Koo Jeong A's stars to materialize in the blackness. Titled *Seven Stars*, each composition is scattered with differing numbers of these five-pointed formations, emanating their green luminosity out of a black background to create an illusory depth within each image. The grounded gestures of the body that are portrayed in the series of watercolors in the first gallery are here transformed into cosmological activities in the sky, where the ephemeral movement of a shooting star is held within a fragile network. These new works continue Koo Jeong A's interest in the innate connectivity between earthly and universal matter, and how the energies of our bodies and those of the stars are not only aligned but intricately woven together.

*Seven Stars* is presented within a specially conceived installation that alternates between moments of light and dark, physical and immaterial spaces. Displayed alongside the watercolors in the front entry is a new 3-minute-long animation titled *CHAMNAWANA (true me & i)*. Out of a black-sky backdrop emerges a cartoon figure lying restfully. Its tattooed body appears to float and glide in a suspended state, until the one mind becomes two minds. Koo Jeong A's contemporary reference to the Gorgon of Ancient Greece connects to acts of looking and being looked at, which permeate this entire exhibition through the subtle gestures of human and otherworldly entities. Locked in acts of stargazing, visitors are drawn into a hypnotic, mutable, and mystical environment constructed by the artist, entering into a space where bodies can levitate and minds can float.

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Koo Jeong A was born in 1967 in Seoul, Korea. Koo Jeong A was named '2016 Artist of the Year' by the Korean Cultural Centre UK, celebrated with a solo exhibition in London in October 2016. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions include: *ajeongkoo*, Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2017); *Enigma of Beginnings*, Yuz Project Room at Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2016); *Koo Jeong A x Wheelscape: Evertro*, Everton Park, Liverpool (2015); *Annual Journey*, Pilar Corrias, London (2015); *Oussseer*, Fondazione La Raia, Novi Ligure (2014); *Koo Jeong A: 16:07*, Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf (2012); *OTRO*, Centre international d'art et du paysagelle de Vassivière, Vassivière (2011); *E opened his eyes he is now walking*, CCA KITAKYUSHU Project Gallery, Kitakyushu (2011); *Constellation Congress*, DIA Art Foundation, Dia:Beacon, Beacon, The Dan Flavin Art Insitute, Bridgehampton, NY (2010); *Koo Jeong A*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2008); *Flash Cube at Leeum*, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2007).

*Joseph Constable*

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