

Koo Jeong A

‘Navigation without numbers’

10 Oct 12-10 Nov 12

Pilar Corrias, is delighted to present Koo Jeong A’s first solo show in London, *Navigation without numbers*.

For her show at the gallery Koo Jeong A has produced two site specific installations that juxtapose the simple initial awareness of the space with that of a rich immersive one, slowly revealing itself as the viewer spends time in the space.

The ground floor room at first glance appears as an empty white space. However it slowly becomes apparent that the room is activated by a number of large-scale installations: intermittently two of the gallery white walls would suddenly tremble as if the building is shivering. The experience is tense and somewhat disarming.

Across the longest wall in the room is a gigantic explosion of a star. The star in its full enormity only becomes fully visible when it catches the light from certain angles. At the edge of the star hangs a graphite drawing of a strange creature caught between worlds. Like the star the dull sheen of the work brings the viewer closer, only to realise that the drawing has been made by covering the entire surface of the paper with hand drawn graphite marks.

Taking the stairs down to the lower gallery one sees a corridor bathed with a rich pink light. A dazzling fluorescent pink floor fills the entire room with colour. The 40 drawings hung at eye level around the room are a photographic diary of Jeong A’s own experience of swimming and walking both literal and imagined. The installation is all encompassing and immersive; only upon closer inspection the intricacies and details of the multitude of drawings become visible. The pink light of the wall literally frames the white and blue drawings in a sanguine rose frame of light.

Koo Jeong A makes work, which is very simple, unostentatious, conceptual and sensitively philosophical. Her attention is focused on presenting the personal and the self as something enigmatic, uncanny, mysterious and simultaneously universal, without disclosing it. The experience of looking at her work can be likened to going into a dark room: at first one does not see anything, then when one’s eyes adjust everything within the space suddenly looks alive. At first glance Jeong A’s presentations are extremely quiet, however when the viewer spends time with her work, her complex interventions become apparent.

This summer the artist unveiled a now eponymous ‘glow-in-the-dark’ skate park, named Otro, commissioned by the Centre international d’art et du paysage Ile de Vassivière.

Since the early 1990s, Koo Jeong A has made works that are seemingly casual and commonplace, yet at the same time remarkably precise, deliberate, and considered. Her reflections on the senses incorporate objects, still and moving images, audio elements, and aromas within site-specific environments that question the limits of fact and fiction, the imaginary and actuality of our world.

In realizing her spaces and images, she draws from a wide spectrum of concerns which she developed over the years, ranging from human cognition to the philosophy of Taoism, and from the science of Qi to the interaction of natural elements such as earth, fire, metal, water, and wood. In her environments, nothing is merely ordinary; on the contrary, any material or phenomena—be it a mound of charcoal, a shaft of iron, or a glare of sunlight—is endowed with dignity and reverence and incites the surprise of a discovery. To venture near Koo Jeong A’s work is to travel unreservedly through a cosmos of unassuming large and small forms, mysterious dwarfed spaces, and perilous landscapes of memories.