

GROUP SHOW

TRACES AND THREADS

KÖNIG SEOUL
28 JUNE – 27 JULY 2024

KÖNIG SEOUL is pleased to present a group exhibition, TRACES AND THREADS, which brings together over 40 works from 12 female Asian artists, many of whom are showing with the gallery for the first time. While media range from charcoal and acrylic to canvas and paper, the unifying character of the works selected is the breadth and diversity of contemporary forms of drawing. Specifically, as the title of the show suggests, the quality of line within the framework of compositional space is of particular importance.

According to British Social Anthropologist, Tim Ingold, "... lines come in two principal kinds: traces and threads. Traces are formed on surfaces; threads are strung through the air; in their dissolution, traces are converted into threads." Furthermore, Ingold contends that every line is the trace of a delicate gesture of the hand that holds the brush, and therefore, two senses of drawing emerge that are intimately related – as pulling threads and inscribing with thread – both of which are integral to the theme of the exhibition. Such thinking about the various iterations of linear composition inspired not only the title of this exhibition, but the descriptive language around the various practices by Asian women artists that collect a group of works in which these and other ideas around contemporary drawing are animated. The continued relevance and centrality of tracing and threading takes many forms: the gestural, raw tactility of Ayako Rokkaku's hand-painting, the deployment of actual thread in Chiharu Shiota's intricate works on paper, and in Xiyao Wang's epic tableaux, where charcoal traces the artist's body as she created her arabesque marks.

Line is therefore both performative and compositional, inviting considerations of the directness of its application, even as its realization in the artworks on display varies immensely. Another quality of lines as both traces and threads are its ability to cut through generational and cultural boundaries, which might otherwise influence the context in which such works are displayed. In Hadieh Shafie's composition, the hand-written and printed Farsi text is hidden within the folds of elaborate paper spirals. Monica Kim Garza's audacious female figures emit fast-paced, gestural brushstrokes. With similar traits, Shin Min's collages and sculptures further showcase unattractive portrayals of young laborers, unveiling the suffering endured by everyday people. Keem Jiyoung's layered oil-brushstrokes came together as a trace (or connectivity) to the intimate narratives of individual lives with collective resilience under the guise of tragedy.

Threading is both an act of bringing disparate elements together and a means of foregrounding the fragility of connection, as seen in the delicate knitted maps in Movana Chen's contribution to the show, or the poetic paintings of Rina Banerjee, fusing boundaries between East and West. Banerjee's work summarizes much in the theme of the exhibition, using line and collaged elements as both additive and analytical modes of construction. Precarity extends into the qualities of touch as well, in the impressions that make up Odonchimeg Davaadorj's intricate paper works. Odonchimeg's method involves puncturing a hole through the front and back surfaces of the paper, a technique that allows her to connect dots, lines, and surfaces to represent the current plight of younger generations as well as urgent ecological problems. Myung-Joo Kim's gouaches naturally reveal the formation of her tortured sculptures, where the cruelty of romanticism is especially vivid in the populated faces in her drawing. Wu Jiaru employs a method of automatic drawing in her paintings, a technique that helps her "unlearn" by shutting off the conscious mind and allowing her body to dictate her actions.

Seen together, the richness and diversity of line is matched only by the new and wildly inventive practices that constitute drawing today, works on paper, and all that lies between. The spaces of KÖNIG SEOUL provide a unique environment for works of art such as these, which require careful attention, much like the conditions under which these works were created.

KÖNIG SEOUL

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OPENING HOURS

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11 am – 7 pm

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