

Featured Artist: Sammy Lee



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Newsletter editor

Image top right: Sammy Lee during her artist's residency at the Château de La Napoule, France, 2018
Image above: A Very Proper Table Setting by Sammy Lee, RedLine, Denver, Colorado
photos by artist

A black box of a building in the Santa Fe Arts district contains the studio space of contemporary artist Sammy Lee. Within that box magical things happen. If Sammy Lee's face is familiar to you it is because you may have seen her at many Asian Art Association lectures and events. She is a board member of the Asian Art Association and between extensive traveling, exhibiting, mothering, and creating, she is the art director of this newsletter and is the one who makes it look so good!

Sammy Seung-Min Lee was born and raised in Seoul, Korea and moved to Southern California at the age of 16. She studied fine art and media art at UCLA and architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her Korean heritage and life history inform her art where art and architecture merge to tell many stories. Lee refers to her art as "experiential storytelling."

"My work is an opportunity to talk about and explore what is important in a way that enhances the experience," says Lee.

Lee's work is deeply personal. Her recurrent themes are narratives about immigration, displacement, belonging, and community. Memories inform her work. Lee uses Joomchi, old Korean felting technique working with HanJi (translated as Korean paper) made from strong and durable inner bark of the Mulberry tree to encase objects and freeze memories and ideas. The material itself tells a story of transformation. Through the process of soaking, crumpling and beating the material takes on a life of its own transformed from delicate to rugged and to more beautiful than it began. Suitcases wrapped in it carry tales of compartmentalization and transience. Asian tableware laid out in table settings are encapsulated in it and speak to culture, home and family. A suit made from it can resemble a rock-strewn landscape and encase a person needing shelter.

Lee is a wellspring of imagination and ingenuity. Big ideas come in small packages and Lee's architectural training is evident in her work. Imagine an artist studio, a gallery, and art fair booth on wheels that fits into a suitcase. Inspired by street food carts from Asia, Lee did and fabricated one during an artist residency in Seoul, Korea. As if that were not enough, it also served as a stage upon when Lee collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma at a community performance last August in Denver!

Book making and book binding are another of Lee's passions. In architecture, a building can unfold and create an experience and like a building, a book or a box can be designed to hold and reveal all sorts of images and memories. Lee's books, engineering challenges in their own right, are magical and powerful. She is member of the Guild of Book Workers, and served as Events Chair for the Denver area, instrumental in bringing well known binders and book artists to the area.

Community is an important theme that runs through Lee's life as well as her art. The physical space above her basement studio, Collective SML |k, an art project space, is shared with others through CAARP, a contemporary Asian Art residency program whose mission is to promote and foster contemporary Asian Art in Denver by hosting established and emerging visual artists and curators through exchange programs. CAARP is a partnership of Collective SML |k, Redline Contemporary Arts Center, and the Asian Art Coordinating Council. Since 2017, artists and curators from Tibet, China, Japan and Korea have participated in its program.

Lee's work is exhibited internationally and is in collections at the University of Denver, the Getty Research Institute, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Spencer Museum of Art, and the Spanish National Library in Madrid, Spain. 🍷



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, March 27, 12pm: Gallery talk led by Sarah Magnatta of Tenzing Rigdol's exhibit "My World is in your Blindspot" at the Emmanuel Gallery, University of Colorado Denver Auraria Campus

Wednesday, April 3, 6:30pm: Curator's Circle with Peichin Yu, chief curator of objects at the National Palace Museum, Taipei, "Emperor Qianlong's Taste of Ancient Chinese Ceramics."

SAVE THE DATE:

Sunday, May 5, 4-7pm: Annual Meeting and Auction at Walker Fine Art, 300 W 11th Ave Denver, CO 80204

Wednesday, May 15, 12pm: Bilha Moor, Assistant Professor of Art History, University of Denver

AAA Annual Meeting & Silent Auction

This year's event will be on Sunday, May 5th from 4-7 PM at the Walker Fine Art Gallery on Cherokee. Watch for your invitation!

Our goal this year is to assist the Asian Art Department in its purchase of "Sentinel," a beautiful contemporary sculpture by our very own Shohini Ghosh! This would be a very special purchase that the AAA would like to be a part of for 2019.

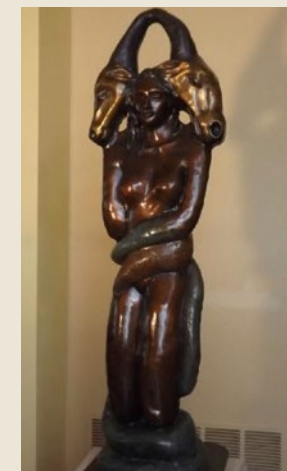
During our meeting Walker Fine Art Gallery will be hosting a number of artists, including Sammy Lee, Kim Jong-Ku, Kazu Oba, Corey Feder, and others. This will be an elegant affair, with at least 2 of the artists present! I'm very excited about this venue and know it will be enjoyed by all.

We are currently seeking sponsorships in the amount of \$300.00-\$500.00 to help defray the cost of our event and of course, donations of items or experiences you feel will be wonderful additions to our silent auction. Please call me at 303 819 3494 or email me at trudyturveypt@gmail.com if you have something to contribute!

If we are all involved, our success will be guaranteed!

Warmly,

Trudy Turvey
President, AAA



Name of Sculpture: Sentinel
by Shohini Ghosh
H 244 X W 60 X D 122 cm
Bronze with patina

Images left:
Speaker, Sally Leung with Trudy and Yang
At the Shohini Salon
Yang and Anne Henochowicz by Ai Weiwei
photos by Rita Bhasin, Yang Wang

