

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For all inquiries, please contact Irene Fung: irene@hainesgallery.com
www.hainesgallery.com

WON JU LIM

Casting

March 2 – April 29, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 9, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is pleased to present *Casting*, an exhibition of new and recent works by multimedia artist Won Ju Lim (b. 1968, Gwangju, South Korea; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA). This is Lim's first solo exhibition with Haines Gallery, and her second in San Francisco, following the successful *Raycraft is Dead* at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in 2015.

One can cast a spell, a net, a form, a vote, a shadow. *Casting* echoes the multiple meanings of the word, and develops from the artist's interest in the life and works of Marcel Proust, building upon a range of literary and cinematic sources that were inspired by the French writer. The exhibition comprises a series of lightboxes, paintings, and sculptures, and also sees Lim expanding her practice to include filmmaking for the first time.

Five new works from Lim's *Broken Painting* series depict French actress Sylvie Testud, who starred in Chantal Akerman's 2000 film *La Captive*, based on Proust's *The Prisoner*. These works examine the notion of fragmentary identity and relativity of selfhood, as portraits of the actress in various career-defining roles were literally torn apart and pieced back together. According to Proust, "Our social personality is a creation of the minds of others." The essence of an individual is a slippery thing, always in flux, as people, places, and objects cast their presence on top of one another, leaving behind traces and residues that create a palimpsest.

Lim's new film *Magic Lantern* (2017), begins in Proust's first childhood bedroom, and ends in the room where he passed away with longtime housekeeper and companion, Celeste Albaret, by his side. As the film progresses, references to Proust's world appear in a series of non-linear vignettes. The action takes place off-screen, visible to the viewers only as shadows and reflections, just beyond our grasp. Here, Proust's life—from his first breath to his last—plays out from



Detail of Won Ju Lim, *Anne*, 2017
portrait painting (oil on canvas) on foam, silk pins, adhesive
24 x 32 inches



Detail of Won Ju Lim, *Lara*, 2017
portrait painting (oil on canvas) on foam, silk pins, adhesive
24 x 32 inches

the peripherals, as told through the eyes, words and lenses of others. Our understanding and access is further complicated by Lim's own invisible presence, her intervention as director and set-maker.

We are given our only direct glimpse of Proust himself in a pair of related works, *Casting 1 (The First Room)* and *Casting 2 (The Last Room)*. Each of these lightboxes is fitted with motorized LED lights and contain identical sculptural elements arranged as mirror images on another, creating unique shadow theaters within. Mounted on top, the famous posthumous photograph of Proust taken by Man Ray serves as a haunting backdrop when the boxes are illuminated, and creates an opaque print obscuring our view when they are turned off.

Complementing this body of new works are *Untitled Silence (Compressed City)* and *Untitled Silence (Crystal City)*, a pair of related sculptures created during Lim's 2011 residency at Dartmouth College's Hopkins Center for the Arts. Loosely resembling architectural models, these works are not the depiction of a city, but rather the suggestion of one, a metropolis pared down and abstracted to its most essential visual qualities—density and verticality—their shapes inspired in part by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai's film *2046*. According to curator F. Javier Panera Cuevas, Lim's "emphasis on the rhetorical [...] ends up nullifying any need to experience the piece as a 'real' place." Like Proust's church steeples and madeleines, these sculptures trigger memory and emotion, sites for us to cast ourselves upon.

Throughout the exhibition, Proust's influence can be seen in both Lim's artistic approach and the formal qualities of her work. Borrowing from the languages of cinema, literature and architecture, Lim engages with the functions of fantasy, memory and longing, and the ways in which we project meaning onto real and imaginary spaces.

Won Ju Lim's work has been exhibited widely at institutions such as Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2015); St. Louis Art Museum, MO (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2013); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2009, 2001); and internationally at Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2011, 2002); Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea (2009); and Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2008), among many others. She received the City of Los Angeles (C.O.L.A.) artist award in 2016.



Won Ju Lim, *Casting 1 (The First Room)*, 2017
anodized aluminum, frosted Mylar, Plexiglas, motor, LED lights,
mixed media sculptures
42 x 42 x 20 inches



Won Ju Lim, *Untitled Silence (Compressed City)*, 2011
mixed media
dimensions variable