

FRANCE

Catharsis And Redemption

Lefebvre & Fils Gallery is presenting Jennie Jieun Lee's *Smile Purgatory*, the Korean-American ceramics artist's first solo exhibition in France through October 11, 2014. Though her work is grounded in formal training, Jennie Jieun Lee has made a conscious decision to move away from an approach focused purely on technical virtuosity. This experimental attitude gives free reign to imagination alongside classical ceramic forms and technique. Using methods more commonly associated with abstract painting, multiple layers of glazes are brushed, dripped, and poured, surfaces built up and cut down.

In *Smile Purgatory*, Lee treats ceramics as a proving ground for catharsis and redemption. Hand-thrown vessels sit next to bizarre masks. In an explosion of colors and shapes, we find secret stories, horror, and comedy: a celebratory analysis of life. While harboring traces of pain and fear, the layered masks and vessels revel in riotous color and intuitive form. Instigated by personal history, Lee's project conjures an agoraphobic freedom, a contemplative, associative space.

Jennie Jieun Lee was born in Seoul, Korea and raised in New York where she still lives. She studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and at the San Francisco Institute of Art. For several years, Lee was an associate designer for the luxury-clothing brand, *Libertine*. Whether through painting, printmaking, or ceramics, she reinterprets historical forms and techniques through the lens of her unique personal history. Her work has been shown in Europe and the United States. Most recently, she participated in the 2014



Clockwise from above left: Jennie Jieun Lee, *Mushroom Man*, 2014, stoneware, 16" x 17", Jennie Jieun Lee, *Cosmo*, 2014, porcelain, 15" x 15", Jennie Jieun Lee, *Soft Violence*, 2014, stoneware, 15" x 5". Photographs: © A. Ramirez; courtesy of the Artist and Lefebvre & Fils Gallery, Paris.

group show, *Bad Fog*, curated by Eddie Martinez at Martos Gallery in New York City.

Established in 1880, Lefebvre & Fils Gallery is dedicated to ceramics from France and Europe generally. The Gallery, well-known for its expertise, is now oriented toward contemporary art under the director Louis Lefebvre. An informed collector of art and design, Louis Lefebvre made the jump in 2009 to bring together his passion and profession and show the consistency and the relevance of ceramics in contemporary art.

Lefebvre & Fils Gallery is at 24 rue du Bac, 75007 Paris. Tel: (33-1) 4261 1840. www.lefebvreffils.com.

HONG KONG

The Unexpected

Xu Bing is staging his first major solo exhibition in Hong Kong, entitled *It Begins with*

Metamorphosis: Xu Bing features some of the artist's latest works alongside several newly commissioned pieces for this exhibition, showing how metamorphosis marks the beginning of the process of ideas and methods, which brings insights to Xu Bing and his art. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Dr. Koon says: "He is able to talk about very complex ideas to large numbers of people by turning familiar things into unfamiliar things and vice versa—hence the concept of transformation and metamorphosis. In this exhibition, we see how this artist uses different materials and, through different mediums, explores the idea of transformation."

The exhibition also features works that provide a glimpse into Xu's life—who he is, how he started as an artist, his family relationships, and where he is going today.

Notable works in the exhibition include *Background Story* (2014), which looks like a traditional Chinese landscape painting but is in fact a composition made of leaves and debris; and *Square Word Calligraphy* (2014), an excerpt from *Zhuangzi*, a famous Taoist classic, written in what appears to be authentic Chinese characters but on closer examination we see

Metamorphosis: Xu Bing, at Asia Society Hong Kong Center through August 31, 2014. Xu is known for his printmaking, calligraphy and installations, as well as his works using unexpected materials such as tobacco leaves, debris, and silkworms. Curated by Dr. Yeewan Koon, associate professor in the department of fine arts at the University of Hong Kong, *It Begins with*



Xu Bing, *Background Story*, 2014, natural debris, glass panel and lightbox, 395 x 150 x 60 cm. Collection of the Artist. Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Asia Society Hong Kong Center.