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***Haegue Yang: Emergence* opens Oct. 1 at the AGO**

New installation by acclaimed South Korean artist transforms the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Sculpture Atrium with floating venetian blinds and LED tubes

TORONTO — ***Haegue Yang: Emergence***, the first North American survey exhibition by the acclaimed South Korean artist, opens at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) on Oct. 1, 2020 and runs through Jan. 31, 2021. In addition to the 82 works featured in the exhibition, the AGO has commissioned two new works by the artist.

On view, suspended above the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Sculpture Atrium, ***Woven Currents – Confluence of Parallels*** (2020) is a large-scale installation composed of venetian blinds and LED tubes, inspired by the layered architectural history of the space. ***Tectonic Undulations – A Fugue for the Great Wilderness*** (2020), a new wallpaper designed by Yang and American artist and book designer Conny Purtill, will go on view later this year in the AGO’s South Entrance.

“***Woven Currents – Confluence of Parallels*** exposes the layered architecture of the AGO and makes its intricate history visible. The genesis for this work was the *Two Row Wampum Treaty* of 1613, a belt made from wampum shells that I learned about while at the AGO. The belt is an agreement between the Five Nations of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) and the Dutch government,” says Yang. “I was struck by how powerful this treaty is, so unlike legal documents we are accustomed to, and how an object can clearly convey a lasting message about the values, hopes, and beliefs of those who created it. These thoughts led me to connect the parallel lines of the wampum belt, which maps a trajectory for two very different peoples, to the linear structure of venetian blinds. Like history itself, these lines are entangled.”

Curated by Adelina Vlas, the AGO’s Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, ***Haegue Yang: Emergence*** will be on view on Level 5 of the AGO’s David and Vivian Campbell

Centre for Contemporary Art. A leading artist of her generation, this focused survey of Yang's artwork includes large-scale installations, sculptures and two-dimensional artworks from the last 25 years, and intentionally resists any kind of chronology. Works from various moments of Yang's career, from the mid-1990's all the way to the present, have been assembled and grouped together, in order to prompt new meanings and new readings. The exhibition title, **Emergence**, refers to a natural, social, and economic phenomenon in which a whole entity exhibits qualities and behaviours that its individual parts do not have on their own.

"Emergence is a concept that revealed itself during Yang's residency at the AGO. It is both the theme of this exhibition and its desired effect," says Vlas. "It is what can happen when artworks and people come together, escaping the narrow conditions of their construction. From the selection of sculptures welcoming the visitor on the fifth floor, to the presentation of the series of **Non-Indépliables**; from the **Anthology of Haegue Archives** to the **Lacquer Paintings**; and from the **Can Cosies** to the **Sol LeWitt Vehicles**, one can trace the development of a deliberately idiosyncratic practice rooted in conceptual strategies and a partiality to everyday materials. Our intention in bringing these complex works together was to reveal the emergent relationships between them and their respective contexts of creation."

Addressing historical and contemporary narratives of migration, displacement and belonging, Yang's rich visual language of everyday materials includes venetian blinds, canned goods, light bulbs, drying racks, knitting yarn and bells. By incorporating sound, light, air, smell, and movement into her works, she transforms our understanding of these objects, creating allegorical figures that resist simple definition, being at once local and global in nature.

"Yang's awareness of her own place in the world in general and in the art world in particular," says Vlas, "instills her work with a profound criticality evident throughout her career. Particularly exciting for us at the AGO is how, in time, **Woven Currents – Confluence of Parallels** will become part of the AGO Collection and emerge a participant in a continuous process of becoming."

A hardcover catalogue, co-published by DelMonico Books/Prestel and the AGO, will be released later this fall to accompany **Haegue Yang: Emergence**.

Exclusive AGO Member previews for **Haegue Yang: Emergence** begin on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020. Admission to the exhibition is included with an AGO Membership or Annual Pass, and is free for visitors 25 and under. To book your timed-entry ticket and to learn more about exhibition-related programming, visit ago.ca/exhibitions/haegue-yang-emergence

ABOUT HAEGUE YANG

Haegue Yang (b. 1971 Seoul) lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Seoul, South Korea. She is a Professor at the Stuedelschule in Frankfurt am Main. For the opening of the expanded building of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, MoMA commissioned Yang to create an installation for the Marron Atrium. *Handles* has been highly praised for its performative power to render and weave seemingly irrelevant historical narratives into a singular immersive, mesmerizing and performative field, and it is on view until November 15, 2020. Yang has participated in major international exhibitions including

the 16th Istanbul Biennial (2019), the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018), La Biennale de Montréal (2016), the 12th Sharjah Biennial (2015), the 9th Taipei Biennial (2014), dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel (2012) and the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009) as the South Korean representative as well as in the International Art Exhibition at the Arsenale.

Yang's work is included in permanent collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; M+, Hong Kong, China; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; Remai Modern, Saskatoon, Canada; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA.

Her work has been the subject of numerous monographs and catalogue raisonnées, such as *Haegue Yang: Anthology 2006–2018; Tightrope Walking and Its Wordless Shadow* (2019); *Haegue Yang: ETA 1994–2018* (2018); *Haegue Yang: VIP's Union* (2017); and *Haegue Yang: Family of Equivocations* (2013).

Other solo shows opening this fall are: *O2 & H2O* at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea; *The Cone of Concern* at Museum of Contemporary Art and Design Manila, Philippines; and *Strange Attractors* at Tate St Ives, UK. Yang will also participate in the group show *Ground/work* at The Clark, Williamstown, MA, USA

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Haegue Yang: Emergence is organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario.

This exhibition is generously supported by:

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ABOUT MAXMARA

MAX MARA, founded in 1951 by the late visionary Achille Maramotti, epitomizes Italian luxury and style. A modern collection of ready-to-wear and accessories for the confident woman, Max Mara is the premier offering within the Max Mara Fashion group consisting

of sophisticated silhouettes and couture details achieved through masterful design. Recognized for its timeless sensibility and constructed from the most luxurious fabrics, Max Mara is revered for the classification of the coat, sharp suiting and elegant accessories. Max Mara is available in 2,600 locations in more than 100 countries worldwide. The Max Mara Fashion group counts nine different brands under its ownership. The company remains privately held and managed by the Maramotti family.

ABOUT THE AGO

Located in Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario is one of the largest art museums in North America, attracting approximately one million visitors annually. The AGO Collection of more than 105,000 works of art ranges from cutting-edge contemporary art to significant works by Indigenous and Canadian artists and European masterpieces. The AGO presents wide-ranging exhibitions and programs, including solo exhibitions and acquisitions by diverse and underrepresented artists from around the world. In 2019, the AGO launched a bold new initiative designed to make the museum even more welcoming and accessible with the introduction of free admission for anyone 25 years and under and a \$35 annual pass. Visit AGO.ca to learn more.

The AGO is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Additional operating support is received from the City of Toronto, the Canada Council for the Arts and generous contributions from AGO Members, donors and private-sector partners.

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MEDIA BACKGROUNDER – *Haegue Yang: Emergence*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXHIBITION

Featuring loans from museums and private collections worldwide, ***Haegue Yang: Emergence*** disregards chronology, instead grouping 82 works from various moments of Yang's career, allowing for new conversations and relationships to emerge. Yang's fascination with and awareness of the movement of objects and people, be it forced, natural or stalled, as well as the complexities of the domestic sphere, is critical to her work—her own quasi-immigrant experience and her mobile life as an artist is on display. Her rich visual language and multi-sensorial approach provides the viewer with a range of entry points.

Entering the exhibition, visitors encounter a selection of sculptural works from 2011-2020, including examples from ***The Intermediates*** (since 2015), using artificial straw,

and **Sonic Sculptures** (since 2013), featuring plated bells. These quasi-anthropomorphic figures reveal in their expressive personality Yang's ongoing transformation and metamorphosis of basic forms, a reflection of her constant material exploration.

With irony and humour, some of Yang's earliest works are assembled together in a classical museum display case. Entitled **Anthology of Haegue Archives** (1998), this artwork defiantly showcases Yang's aspirations as a young artist, historicizing her own nascent artistic production.

Collaged portraits form an abstract landscape in Yang's large-scale wall mural **Eclectic Totemic** (2013). A visual guide to Yang's many, often invisible references, this patchwork of primary colours features George Orwell's mustache, glimpses of the faces of Marguerite Duras and Petra Kelly, the costume designs of Vaslav Nijinsky, Igor Stravinsky eyes, a figure from Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* of 1922, and more. This wide-ranging, and seemingly ahistorical assemblage, centers the importance that the western avant-garde has had on her art practice.

Yang's deep consideration of modernism is at the heart of her ongoing investigation into the rigorous and mesmerizing cube forms of the late American artist Sol LeWitt. Part of a series of moveable sculptures on casters, two **Sol LeWitt Vehicles** (2018) will be activated on occasion starting Oct. 3, by people working collaboratively, proving that their kinetic energy can bring about change—both physical and potentially social.

Sallim (2009), a to-scale reimagined model of Yang's Berlin kitchen from that time, explores the conflation of private and public space. In Korean, the word 'sallim' simply translates to 'running of a household,' yet its meaning goes beyond that literal translation. The kitchen is historically perceived as the representative location of women's work, and Yang here highlights its status as a central and vital space for life's preparation and maintenance. Yang explores the associative powers of the kitchen, by recreating a sensorial experience for visitors, of scents, of lights, of heat, and moving air.

Paying homage to one of Canada's biggest exports, Yang continues her **Can Cosies** series (since 2010) with **Can Cosies – Jakeman's Maple Syrup, 100 ml, 250 ml, 500 ml, 1 L** (2019), a collection of crochet jackets for cans of Ontario produced maple syrup.

Yang's distinctive and multifaceted approach to text, writing, and translation, is manifest in **A Chronology of Conflated Dispersion – Duras and Yun** (2018) where she parallels the seemingly unrelated timelines of two artistic figures—French writer Marguerite Duras and the Korean composer Isang Yun—to remarkable result. This is but one of many instances where Yang highlights the possibilities to be found in parallels, doubles and halves.

In **Doubles and Couples – Version Turin** (2008) Yang reimagines household appliances from her homes in Berlin and Seoul as abstract sculptures, before reuniting them as pairs. As a subject living between places and cultures, the artist is aware of the importance of domestic environments in establishing one's sense of belonging.

The six sculptures covered in brass-plated bells that form **Boxing Ballet** (2013-15), wait to transform a box-shaped gallery into a stage every Saturday between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. beginning Oct. 3. Inspired by Oskar Schlemmer's historic *Triadic Ballet*, the figures reference Bauhaus and Western art history, and their spiral trajectory, which is outlined on the floor, realizes the performative potential in Yang's sculptures. A seventh sculpture, **Windy Orbit – Brass Plated Second Cycle** (2015) shares this stage.

Recent **Lacquer Paintings**, lead visitors out of the exhibition, reminding them of the uncertainty of the outdoors. Adopting a traditional Asian art form for a student budget, this series of two-dimensional works began in 1994, and continues, featuring various spices, plants and seeds, sealed on common chipboard with wood varnish. Yang leaves these works to dry outdoors for many months, allowing nature and circumstance to imprint on the surface.

For more details please visit <https://ago.ca/exhibitions/haegue-yang-emergence>.

Exhibition programming highlights include:

- On Wednesday, Oct. 7 join Adelina Vlas, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the AGO, on Zoom for an overview of **Haegue Yang: Emergence**. Illustrated with images from the exhibition, Vlas will discuss the collaboration and effort that brought this global exhibition together during a pandemic. Register for this free talk at <https://ago.ca/events/curators-talk-adelina-vlas-haegue-yang>
- Counted as a life commitment, Haegue Yang has been staging readings of French author Marguerite Duras's short novella *La Maladie de la mort* in multiple locations with diverse actresses all over the world. A story about the search for love, in each presentation a different female performer reads the novella on stage. AGO Live presents *The Malady of Death*, featuring Canadian filmmaker and artist, Sook-Yin Lee on Friday, Nov. 27. For more information about tickets, visit <https://ago.ca/events/ago-live-malady-death>.
- Join us for a free Zoom conversation with Haegue Yang, on Wednesday, Dec. 2. A leading artist of her generation, Haegue Yang is celebrated for her prolific and diverse work that evokes historical and contemporary narratives of migration, displacement and cross-cultural translation.