



From the Roster: Joyce Yu-Jean Lee

By **Rebecca Locke** — Posted in **Visual Art** on December 23, 2014 — 0 Comments — 5 min read

Every Tuesday afternoon, The Curator is showcasing an individual artist recognized for their unique voice, ideas and process. Once a month, a featured artist will be selected by Rebecca Locke, a New York City-based artist and curator, who develops collaborative and artist-led projects.

Curator's Introduction:

Joyce Yu-Jean Lee's work is full of surprises. It is both sublime, and mesmerizing. Were her work static it would constitute a focal point, a centerpiece, yet her moving and changing images beckon the viewer, imploring them to stay, to reflect, to think. Lee's subject matter is the here and now, the world of our collective experience explored through her performance and video-based artworks which in part contemplate globalization, society, mass media, commercialism and labor inequality.

With the large-scale *On the Brink*, Lee projects a typhoon-like storm of matter she calls the "residue of everyday life"—cars, branded beer bottles, cell phones and material objects—onto a suspended custom-built circular screen. Through the movement of these seemingly valuable goods thrown through the air—weightless as Dorothy's house in Kansas—the artist symbolizes the fragility of life and the instability of all in which humanity puts trust.

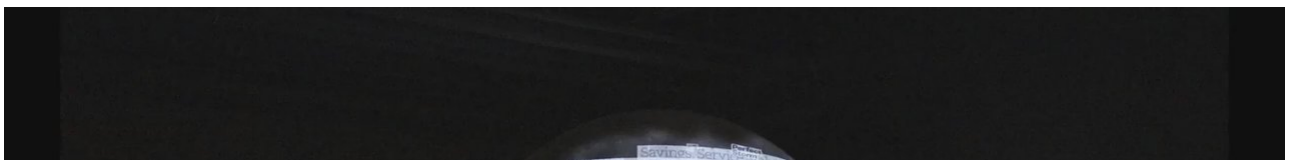
In the video and performance-based work *Made In China* the artist depicts both nameless laborers on a production line and the

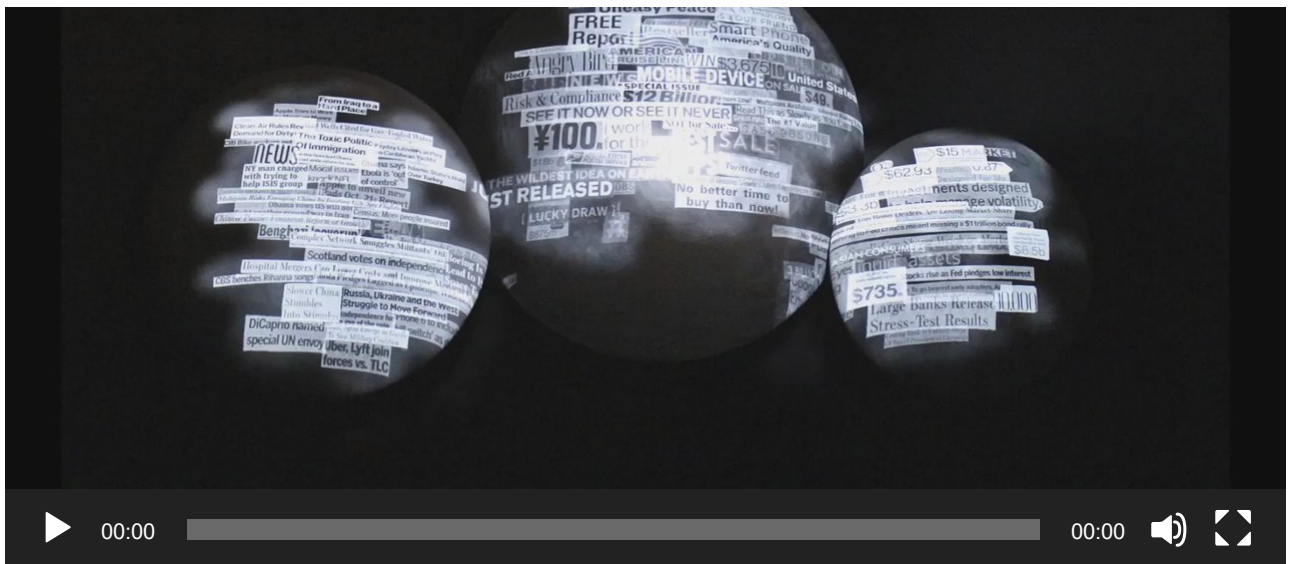
retailer, or ‘peddler’, of material goods. It is a work that references the plight of low-paid laborers, specifically Chinese factory workers producing high-end goods for Apple. With every transaction of the artist’s merchandise, consumers are confronted with visual imagery from the production line, contrary to our daily experience.



Made In China, 2012 (Video projection and installation based performance)

For *Uneasy Peace: Mr. Technology is Your Friend*, the artist sourced recent political, economic and news headlines from printed newspapers and journals, and projected juxtaposing cuttings of headlines on large, suspended black weather balloons. The words and phrases, animated and jostling for space, impose themselves into the viewer’s physical environment, and like weather—only in this instance weather made from alphanumeric characters—stimulate and determine the atmosphere.





Uneasy Peace: Mr. Technology is Your Friend, 2014 (Video projection)

Likewise, *Water Wisdom: Miracle Workers*, is based on printed text, borrowed here from Lifestyle magazines. Her projection, a composite of words, echoes the magazine's tone in 'projecting' a perception of beauty. But here, these words are read from banks of sand, characteristic of the artist's practice in drawing attention to fragility and vulnerability.



Water Wisdom: Miracle Workers, 2014 (Video projection onto sand on

Two exhibitions of Lee's work open in January 2015: A solo

exhibition at Creative Paradox in Annapolis, Maryland, opening January 17th from 7-9pm and on view until Feb 22nd; and *TechNoBody*, a group exhibition at Pelham Art Center in Pelham, New York, opening Friday, January 23rd from 6-8pm, on view until March 21st.

Artist Bio:

Joyce Yu-Jean Lee is an artist who works in video installation, photography and performance. She has a M.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. Before art school, she worked as the Programming & Art Director for International Arts Movement in New York, NY. She has shown at Connersmith Contemporary and Hamiltonian Gallery in D.C.; Arlington Arts Center, VA; Westchester Arts, White Plains, and has an upcoming exhibition at Pelham Art Center, NY which opens on January 23, 2015. Joyce teaches at Fashion Institute of Technology and New Jersey City University. She serves as a trustee for The Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, and Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), and is the recipient of a 2013 Franklin Furnace Fund Grant.

Artist Statement:

The search for illumination—be it physical, intellectual, or spiritual—is a universal pursuit. In her search, Joyce Yu-Jean Lee creates video installations, photographs, and performances that examine how various societies have historically depicted concepts of enlightenment. She projects life-size video animations onto walls, floors, and into corners, transcribing pictorial space into three-dimensions. Currently, she is experimenting with various projection surfaces: mounds of piled sand on the floor, large inflated weather balloons, and a custom circular screen to project video in the round. Joyce integrates these materials with their architectural environment to produce an immersive viewing experience. Curious about how the act of seeing is transformed by technology, her video work slows down viewers causing them to contemplate quiet moments they might otherwise miss.

Joyce also makes digital photographs of illuminated spaces: cast light, shadows, and various light phenomena—both natural and artificial. These formal studies capture fleeting, visually arresting moments of physical light. Her performances are designed and choreographed around how technology mediates consumer behavior and worldviews. Often taking form as public research projects, this work sets up specific scenarios within which to interact and dialogue with live participants. These video installation-based performances function as visual ethnography—reconsidering traditional narratives in contemporary hybrid contexts.