

## Press Release

July 23, 2020

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### Mire Lee *Carriers*

July 23 – September 13, 2020  
Art Sonje Center, 3F

Curated by Hyo Gyoung Jeon (Curator, Art Sonje Center)  
Organized by Art Sonje Center  
Supported by Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Seoul Metropolitan Government,  
Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture



Mire Lee, *Carriers*, 2020, mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo: Yeonje Kim.

Art Sonje Center proudly presents *Carriers*, a solo exhibition by Mire Lee from July 23 to September 13, 2020. Mire Lee uses machinery that operates by simple principles, along with materials

that can be felt with the hands in her sculpture and installation work. An artist who regards it as important to touch materials by hand as she works, Lee relies on purely physical cues to perceive the world.

Her new work *Carriers* (2020), which is being shown for the first time in this exhibition, is a large kinetic sculpture that uses a hose pump, with a form resembling an animal's digestive organs. The installation/sculpture work repeats movements as it sucks up, transports, and extracts viscous matter. As the substance moves through the sculpture's structure, sounds are produced at odd moments along with the rhythm of the machinery movements. Those sounds—which lead one to imagine a situation where some living thing is prying through narrow cracks to emerge into the outside—represent another form of energy produced by the substance's movement. With the sculpture serving as an analogy for the living body, the movements are natural, and the machinery is an important element that propels the substances touched by the artist and drives their repetition.

This structure serves as a figurative expression of Mire Lee's conceptual approach. She imagines bodies as "carriers" to concretize her relationship to the substances she touches. For Lee, "carriers" is a word to describe a state of the human body, but it is also a concept that could be applied to her sculpture works. Mire Lee's *Carriers* can be explained more concretely through the idea of the "vore" genre of subcultures. "Vore" is short for "vorarephilia," a fetish that has to do with living people or creatures consuming or being consumed alive. In conceptual terms, "vore" is a matter of being swallowed by and existing within another, or conversely of placing another inside of one's body, and thereby eliminating the very idea of distance from it. Taking this concept to its extreme, one may even imagine a return to the mother's womb—a condition in which the "vore" idea transforms into an asexual, abstract state, which ultimately evokes the human condition at the most primal of stages.

The other sculptures within the exhibition put on view bit attitudes that contrast with the *Carriers* installation. *Concrete Bench for Carriers* (2020) is a concrete cast sculpture created so that viewers can sit down to observe the exhibition. The work is placed low and long on the ground together with the sculptures of *Horizontal Forms* (2020), which exhibits a weaker range of energy activity next to the movements of *Carriers*. Their positioning forms a natural overlap when one observes the video work *Sleeping Mom* (2020), which is projected on the wall. Compared with other physical movements and postures, the state of reclining requires only a very small amount of energy. Moreover, reclining presumes the obvious state of being alive rather than dead—equating it to the continuation of a still undecided state of vulnerability to attack. Conversely, this vulnerability calls to the moment the preconditions for being alive. By placing her sculptures side-by-side in moving and reclining states, the artist employs a dialectic of sculptural language to suggest the ambivalence of the human state of being.

In some tribes, shamans are said to undergo a ceremony of stripping away skin so that they can respond more keenly to small stimuli, and thereby mediate the feelings of others. In this story from the

oral tradition, Lee identifies a starting point toward a subversive power. To her, sculptures serve as a centripetal point that incites an experience and contemplation of everything besides oneself—like the flayed shamans, they are “carriers” keenly raising their sensory feelers. This is also the approach of the artist, who attempts to view her objects not through an intellectual approach or interpretation, but in terms that are practical and intuitive.

With its metonymic representation of the primal movements of various substances as they travel through the body—blood, embryos, pathogens, and nutrients—the exhibition *Carriers* suggests an experience of being imbued with the world within the most private and physical realm of the senses.

**About the Artist**

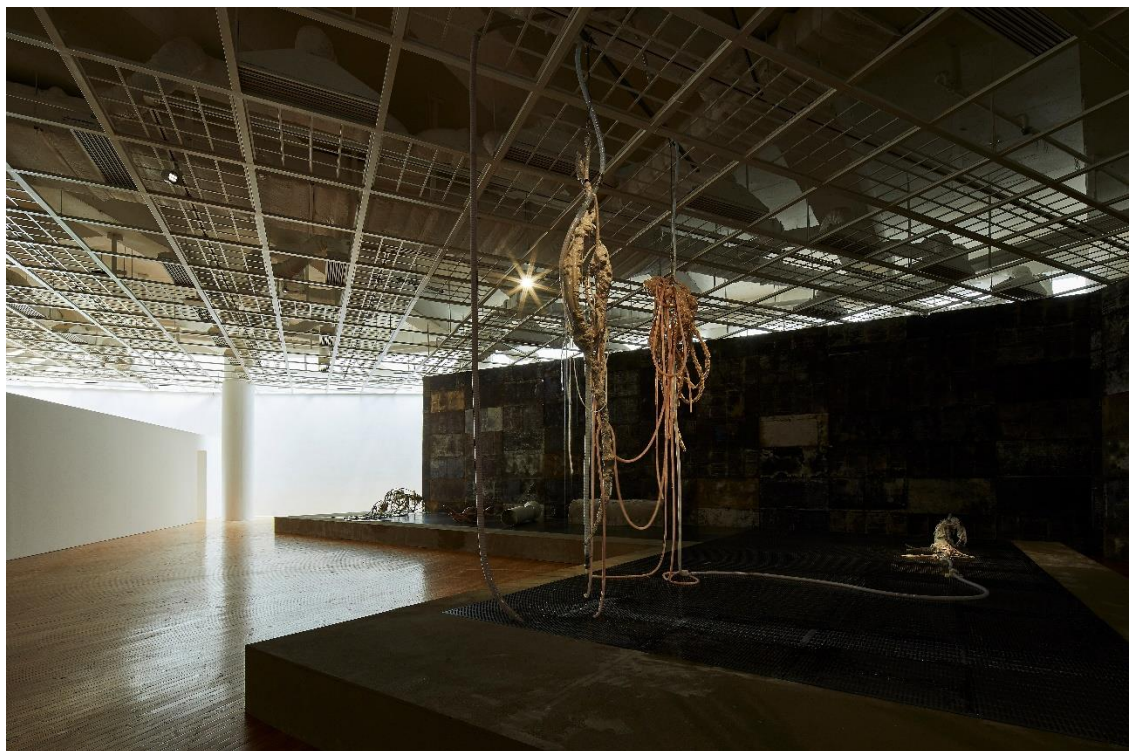
Mire Lee (b. 1988) pursues an artistic process based on substances the act of “making.” With a primary interest is in the material properties and movement of three-dimensional media, she explores affect and energy—including desire, sentimentality, vitality, and drive. She has taken part in various exhibitions, including the solo exhibition *War Isn't Won by Soldiers It's Won by Sentiment* (Insa Art Space) and the group exhibitions *Moving / Image* (Arko Art Center), 2016 Media City Seoul, *NERIRI KIRURU HARARA* (Seoul Museum of Art), 15th Lyon Contemporary Art Biennale, *Where Water Comes Together with Other Water*, etc.



## ■ Images

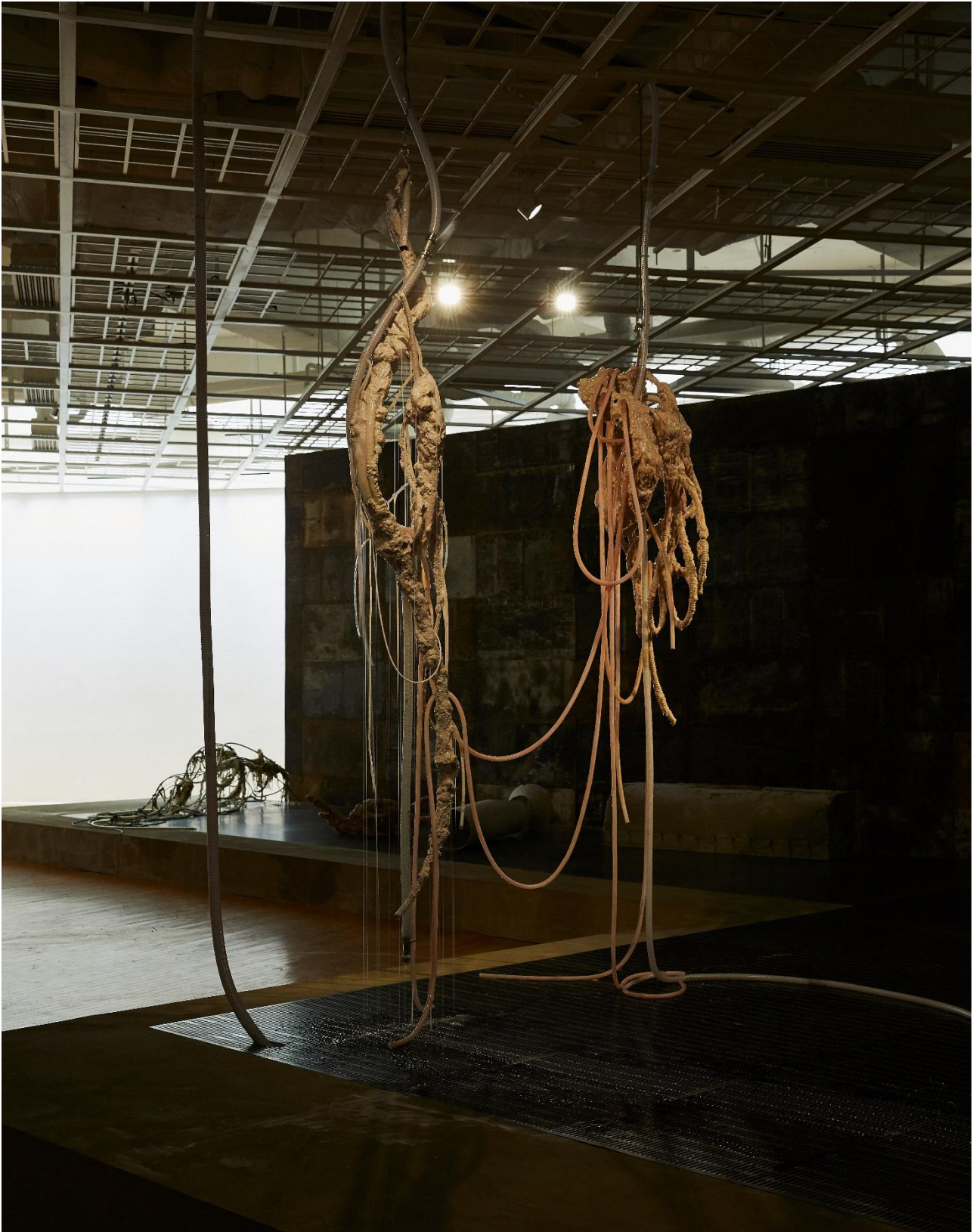


Mire Lee, *Carriers* (2020), installation view. Art Sonje Center. Photo: Yeonje Kim.



Mire Lee, *Carriers* (2020), installation view. Art Sonje Center. Photo: Yeonje Kim.





Mire Lee, *Carriers* (2020), Resin, glycerin, motors, hose pump and mixed media, dimensions variable, Photo: Yeonje Kim.

■ Outlines, Mire Lee: *Carriers*

<b>Artist</b>	Mire Lee
<b>Dates</b>	July 23 – September 13, 2020
<b>Venues</b>	Art Sonje Center, 3F
<b>Curated by</b>	Hyo Gyoung Jeon (Curator, Art Sonje Center)
<b>Organized by</b>	Art Sonje Center
<b>Supported by</b>	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture

<b>Hours</b>	Tuesday–Sunday 12–7pm
<b>Admissions</b>	General 5,000 KRW Students 3,000 KRW
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