

Lint

Lub Poeem

September 12 - December 25, 2022

Press Release

The Kimmel Gallery is pleased to announce *Lint*, an exhibition of new and historical works by Lub Poeem. The artist's first institutional solo exhibition, it will open September 12, 2022 and will continue on view through December 25. A reception will be held on Saturday, October 15 from 10:00am until 4:00pm.

Lint is about the co-constructive nature of our collective gaze. The exhibition explores the relationship between images and identity. The ways we cohere our sense of selfhood through a process of identification and disassociation reflects the logic embedded in systems of power—cultural, social, and institutional. Informed by a deep interest in the visual language of commercial vernacular and the narrative traditions of cinema and art history, Poeem creates an environment for critical reflection on the entanglement of image and ideology. *Lint* presents an installation of new wall works, a large sculpture, and a relational intervention on the university's campus. As viewers navigate the exhibition, a dialogue between the works and the space generates a participatory experience described by the artist as “living cinema.”

Lub Poeem's multidisciplinary practice, which includes installation, photography, sculpture, painting and performance, manifests in an allegorical visual language rooted in the materialities of the everyday. Objects and scenarios operate as vessels for channeling collective desires and common dreams, leveraging symbols and images distilled from popular culture. Navigating the uncanny line between the mundane and the sublime, Poeem's work explores how belief systems are reproduced through mythology and narrative. By conflating disparate visual languages, at turns theatrical and documentarian, Poeem underscores both the constructed nature of our fantasies and the visceral resonance of such synthetic passions.

The interior gallery space displays four new wall works, emphasizing Poeem's uniquely sculptural approach to framing photographic imagery. *Maternity*, 2022 presents an eerily tranquil image of a mother and daughter playing in a verdant park. Constructed as a 16:9 aspect lightbox, the armature of the work is wrapped with gaffer tape. Poeem's specific use of materials and scale evoke the presentational strategies of Jeff Wall, conjuring the invisible labors of film and theater production.

Presented on opposing walls, in an overtly binary fashion, *The Image*, 2015—2022 and *The Artist (Self-Portrait)*, 2022, attempt to generate an interior gaze marked by voyeuristic desire. *The Image*, a dye sublimation print on latex, adhered with Italian packing tape to a pane of acrylic glass, rests at a slant on a thin wooden shelf. Contrasting the adhoc materiality of the former, *The Artist (Self-Portrait)*, is rendered in a manner distinctly more traditional. The image is ostensibly a portrait of the artist. Naked, contorted, and sucking on their toe, the pose references a work by Peter Hujar, *Daniel Schook Sucking Toe*, 1981. Hujar, a pioneer of portrait photography, is famous for his work documenting the queer artistic community of his generation.

The final wallwork is a small contact print on thick Hahnemuhle paper mounted to a sheet of copper-plated aluminum. *View from an Aeroplane (La Vie en Rose)*, 2022 depicts lint gathering on a wooden surface, inscribed with the index of a puzzle. The image is itself a reimagining of *Dust Breeding*, a collaborative work by Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp made in 1920. Drawing upon Duchamp's legacy of libidinally-charged institutional critique, Poem takes the Surrealist document and reconstitutes it as a synecdoche for the exhibition as a whole.

In the center of the gallery space lies a sprawling mirrored jigsaw puzzle, arrayed in a circle. *Negotiation*, 2015—2022 is a sculpture and relational intervention which has been presented in a variety of different contexts. In a previous iteration, the puzzle was installed in a public park, given away one piece at a time, shared with pedestrians and parkgoers. Once the work was completely dispersed, these participants reconvened and attempted to complete the puzzle as a collective. Comprising 1400 pieces of mirrored acrylic glass, the puzzle is designed such that each piece appears self-similar to all others, though, in fact, each piece is absolutely unique. The installation at Midland University dynamically engages the Brutalist architecture of the Kimmel Gallery, reflecting light upon the ceiling in a dazzling constellation, unifying ground and sky.

If *Negotiation* is “above and below”, Poem's relational work, *Joy (Simul Justus et Peccator)*, 2022, lies in-between, floating throughout the gallery's exterior courtyard. This work is a continuation of Poem's relational practice of Bubblefields, whereby the artist installs high-volume bubble machines in public spaces to create an immersive landscape teeming with soap bubbles. This particular intervention makes reference to Martin Luther, a site-specific gesture, as Midland University is itself a Lutheran institution. Invoking Luther's seminal philosophy regarding the duality of man as being both justified and damned, Poem infuses the purity of this phenomenological scene with a meditation on the polemics of transgression and forgiveness.

Lub Poem lives and works in Middle America. Exhibitions of their work have been held previously at Baader-Meinhof, Omaha, NE; Fall River MOCA, Fall River, MA; Palazzo San Giuseppe, Polignano a Mare, IT; and Proxy, Providence, RI.