

Yona Lee: In Transit (Arrival)

11 March — 19 November 2017

In Transit (Arrival) by Auckland-based artist Yona Lee is a major Te Tuhi commissioned sculptural installation that explores the organisation and pulse of civilisation through a vast entangled structure. The work is made of 1.4 kilometres of stainless steel tube that has been laboriously measured, cut, bent and welded to fill the length and breadth of Te Tuhi's building. Starting in the foyer the sculpture weaves down corridors, invades classrooms and parasitically occupies a courtyard. Throughout the structure is a miscellany of everyday objects ranging from coat hangers to bus handles and from lamps to umbrellas.

This elaborate artwork is part of a series of installations by Lee that aim to explore how modern civilisation functions by drawing attention to the objects that surround us, the infrastructures that mobilise and the systems that control. For instance, the steel tube used is a common system designed for barriers and handrails in train stations and airports around the world. This is the same railing that fences off sections of Seoul Metro stations, the tubing that rotates in the turnstiles as you enter the New York subway, the pole that you grasp as the Tube hurtles beneath London, or the bars that hold your bag in place on the Shinkansen as you depart Tokyo. The ingenious simple design of this system makes it easy to install and easily adapted for purpose, and is the means through which bodies can be corralled in efficient uniformity.

Since the industrial revolution human civilization has become dependent upon the efficiencies of such infrastructures that empower us to overcome the limitations of space and time. This logic is even more apparent in our global age with the ease through which we can communicate through the Internet and the ability for consumer goods to be traded between vastly distant parts of the world. However, these universal systems not only facilitate movement and connections between people and place, but also control how we relate to each other and the world.

The effect of instantaneous communication and excess consumerism upon our daily lives is reflected in the plethora of items enmeshed within Lee's installation. Some of these objects, such as functioning showers, mailboxes, tables, beds and a swing, can be used by gallery visitors while other items remain suspended out of reach. By simultaneously inviting and negating interaction, Lee invites us to question the relationships we have with mass-produced objects and the means through which they come into our lives – whether that be through second hand use or virtual online purchase. Therefore, *In Transit (Arrival)* provides us with an experience through which to understand the structures that enable and restrict the way we live.

To create this technically complex installation, Lee worked closely with a team of 6 gallery technicians for four weeks often working late into the night to avoid the hundreds of people that pass through the building during business hours. In total, the work took 12 months to design and prefabricate. To do so, Lee enlisted the expertise of metal workers, a structural engineer, a health and safety manager and gallery staff in order to satisfy regulations and to customise the work to the needs of the diverse communities that frequent Te Tuhi.

Commissioned by Te Tuhi in association with the Auckland Art Festival. The Te Tuhi Commissioning Fund was established in 2015 by a generous donation from 2016 Walters Prize recipient Shannon Te Ao.

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PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



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Yona Lee

In Transit (Arrival), 2017

commissioned by Te Tuhi in association with the Auckland Arts Festival
situated in Te Tuhi's foyer, reception, courtyard, cafe, corridors and LEOTC classroom

te tuhi

