

MOON**19 November 2014 – 31 January 2015****Chang Eung-Bok, Caroline Corbasson, Jake Harvey, Lee Hun-Chung, Simon Lewty, Liliane Lijn, Bridget Macdonald, Will Maclean, Simon Morley, Karel Nel, Douglas White**

'It isn't surprising that the moon has always fascinated mankind. It is the largest and brightest object in the night sky, and unlike the sun has a different shape every day',

writes Simon Morley in his essay accompanying *MOON*. As he continues:

'In one way or another the works in this exhibition evoke the multi-faceted symbolism of the moon, its power to move us. The artists use a wide range of styles and media, traditional and not so traditional. Even in an age when science and technology seem to have relegated it to the margins of the mind, these works are testimony that the moon continues to exert its influence upon the imaginations of both the East and West.'

From the East – specifically, from South Korea where he has a base - Morley selects works that both suggest continuities within Korean culture and links between East and West. A beautiful Moon Jar made by Lee Hun-Chung, a well known Korean ceramicist and sculptor, embodies a uniquely Korean style of pottery, characterized by the subtle play between symmetry and asymmetry, purity and imperfection. Also evoking the Moon Jar, Chang Eung-Bok, the leading Korean textile and interior designer, exhibits an ethereal moon fabric-hanging, and like Lee Hun-Chung, spans the divide between the Decorative and Fine Arts. In Simon Morley's own contemplative work in watercolour, *trompe l'oeil* Korean pine needles are painted to read the words *Moon Valley*, the title in English of a landscape painting by the famous Korean artist, Jeong Seon (1676 – 1759). Also for this show, Morley exhibits a video work - a coloured moon upon which the names of imaginary Lunar Seas emerge and submerge silently.

Liliane Lijn's *moonmeme*, is a digitally programmed real-time simulation that tracks the moon's phases, with the image updated every 26 hours and 13 minutes. The single word SHE is projected across the moon-image. Over the course of the lunar monthly cycle, the movement of the moon, earth and sun reveal the HE contained within the rotation of the SHE, and the SHE emerging again from the HE. *Moonmeme* was shown as an immersive installation in ArtCatalyst's 2014 *Republic of the Moon* exhibition, and at Art First Lijn has adapted the work for a more intimate display on a wall mounted monitor.

This linguistic intertwining of gender suggested a universal pattern, but Lijn has gathered data on world languages, discovering to date only thirteen languages that contain the S/HE combination. From Latin to Japanese scripts she chose a set of 9 variations (Catalan: Ell /Ella, Croation: On / Ona, Kambaata: IS/ISE etc) to create an edition of richly inked digital prints in midnight blue with golden moonlit lettering of the S/HE in a range of languages.



Liliane Lijn - Moonmeme

Paris based artist Caroline Corbasson, who was invited to create work at the Paris Observatory, unites the rigours of scientific investigation with the freedom of the artistic imagination. The shimmering ink paintings of her *Galileo* series depict the moon as Galileo might have seen it through his telescope, while also suggesting a micro-macro alternative, evoking cells under a microscope.

Karel Nel, who has also worked with the Paris Observatory, since 2004 has been resident artist on the Cosmos Project. He works with a team of astrophysicists exploring two square degrees of the universe using some of the most sophisticated technology available. In the distilled, minimal approach used in *Chords*, where distant moons appear between two planetary spheres, Nel uses materials such as carboniferous coal dust, red, yellow or white ochre, salt and earth, to convey notions of deep time and space.

On a tall scroll covered with calligraphic text and sections of coded 17th Century shorthand, Simon Lewty names the Lunar 'Seas' in English and Latin, seizing on their evocative names and associations with the moods, rhythms and atmospheres associated with the mysterious seas on earth - such as Mare Tranquilitatis / Sea of Tranquillity and Mare Serenitatis / Sea of Serenity - repeating them like a mantra.



Will Maclean – Kyoto Moon

Astral navigation has long played a role in Will Maclean's work, and his *Kyoto Moon* reprises the link between East and West, displaying pages of lunar tides from a Japanese book mixed with other collaged references to the moon.

The *Moons and Planets* carved by Jake Harvey from rich, polished granite of varying hues, are like the moons of another planet - Jupiter. Their elemental discs are subtly differentiated, the upper form floating, the lower fixed in a more static manner, referencing ideas of stasis and orbit. Harvey evokes infinite spaces, creating a visual metaphor for that experience of wonderment in gazing into the universe.

Douglas White's practice returns time and again to a fascination with form, and specifically texture, within the natural world. His series *Dark Moon* re-imagines the pock-marked and scarified surface of the moon in meticulously layered and crafted sculptures in wax and raw pigment. The positioning and illuminating of these sculptures within reclaimed furniture, screens and frames is White's acknowledgment of the moon as an iconic image in itself – captured, brought 'down to earth' and re-projected by mankind as an object of awe and reverence.

Moving away from the night sky, Bridget Macdonald's *Daylight Moon* is a subtle drawing of a fugitive white moon lingering between the branches of a powerful, windswept old pine tree. The tree is one of her earliest memories, and a recurring motif in her work. In Ancient Chinese art the pine tree is invested with human emotions, being a symbol of endurance and longevity. In this drawing it is a constant presence pitted against the ever-changing face of the moon.



Douglas White – Moon Screen

All the artists participating in MOON suggest correspondences, visual, literary and scientific, and seem linked by a meditative aesthetic. Drawn from the works of gallery and guest artists in a year that has featured several exhibitions relating to the moon, MOON addresses a timeless subject. Dominating and ornamenting our night sky, the moon never ceases to enchant and to inspire.

'Moon' – a new and thought provoking essay by Simon Morley, commissioned for this exhibition, can be viewed on the Art First website: www.artfirst.co.uk