

IERIMONTI GALLERY

Jukhee Kwon & Maria Lai – *The Phantom Thread*

September 26 – November 4, 2018

Opening Reception: Wednesday, October 17, 6 – 9pm



Ierimonti Gallery is pleased to announce a group exhibition “The Phantom Thread” featuring Maria Lai and Jukhee Kwon, located on Delancey Street in the Lower East Side.

The exhibition comprises the work of two artists – Maria Lai and Jukhee Kwon – both of who transform ordinary objects such as books and textiles with thread in order to intertwine new narratives and meaning. The artists accomplish this through producing fabric works with abstract images sewn in a rhythmic order as well as by practicing a physical and conceptual deconstruction of ordinary objects.

Jukhee Kwon’s creative process begins by discovering abandoned books within her everyday surroundings. Kwon explains that for her, “each book has individual personality and it has narrative and history like a human being.” Through a process of deconstruction and recreation, she reissues these abandoned books a new story and existence that is derived from its original narrative, recognizing a sense of inception and wonder in its previous ownership. The subsequent

reformation and rearticulation of the pages act as a metaphor for the freedom of metamorphosis, the possibilities in a vital cycle, and resistance, life and death. Her reformation of these books injects a new sense of freedom and movement that is reminiscent of her migratory experience. The viewer is encouraged to walk along the experiential paths formed around her sculptures and open up a new conversation.

Maria Lai's artworks are carefully interwoven with literature and poetry of her own personal history and the traditions of Sardinian folklore. Her seventy years of work are defined by her continued exploration of the identity of a Sardinian woman and the articulation of language through means of contemporary art. Lai chose the medium of sewing to physically construct the pathway of her thoughts and leave them entrusted within the textile. She describes how nothing is transformed in her artwork; rather, it is about the connection of elements that remain as they already were. An abstract, poetic language is created through her use of stitches, fabrics, and loose threads, which mimic poetic devices, such as the contrast between full and empty spaces and the rhythmic alternation between words and silences. Lai's goal for her artwork is to engage the audience in a reflection on art's potential for freeing thought and action, inspiring both personal and shared responses among the diverse experiences the viewers draw upon.

Jukhee Kwon was born in South Korea in 1981 and is currently living in Italy. She studied in Korea and holds an MA from Camberwell College of Arts, London. She has exhibited internationally in UK, Italy, France and Korea. Her first show in New York-- Metamorphosis-- was held at Ierimonti Gallery in Winter 2018.

Maria Lai was born in Sardinia in 1919. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Italy and received her degree in 1943. She was awarded an honorary degree in Literature in 2004 from the University of Cagliari. She has exhibited extensively in Italy and Europe, as well as across the United States, in New York City, Miami, and Colorado. She has also been featured several times at the Venice Biennale. In response to her death in 2013, several institutions joined together to present a comprehensive reflection of Lai's work. She is considered one of the most important Sardinian artists of all time, and one of the most significant female Italian artists of the 20th century.

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