

GAVLAK

Bovey Lee

Divertical

January 9 – March 5, 2016

Gavlak Los Angeles is pleased to announce *Divertical*, a solo exhibition by Bovey Lee. Drawing on the ancient tradition of Chinese paper cutting, Lee creates intricately crafted cut paper works, a practice that she describes as "drawing with a knife." Taking as her subject matter the surrounding environment, Lee's paper cuttings are populated with delicate flowers, birds, the sun, moon, and trees, often placed in conversation with images drawn from the urban environment – towering skyscrapers, geometric power lines, and expansive highways. Through the juxtaposing imagery, Lee draws attention to the odd, volatile, and sometimes-unstable relationship we have with our environment, while simultaneously recognizing our ongoing ability to coexist nonetheless.

Lee creates all of her works on rice paper, a nod to her Chinese heritage and her earliest encounters with art making as a child. Her formal practice as an artist began with painting, drawing, and calligraphy – a form of art-making that Lee sees in particular as a natural starting point for paper cutting, as it mirrors the linear nature and the play between intentional gesture and void in the work. Over the course of her career, Lee has created works that depict a range of subjects, from Chinese vases to women performing domestic work, reflecting both her lived and family experience. *Divertical* at Gavlak continues Lee's study of her surrounding environment, this time reflecting on her recent relocation from Pittsburgh to Los Angeles.

Taking inspiration from the overwhelming nature of a cross-country move, the works are predominated by a motif of rollercoasters winding their way throughout the pieces and often forming the perimeter of the cuttings. The title of the exhibition itself takes its name from an actual rollercoaster, the world's tallest water roller coaster located in Italy. Embedded within each work – contrasting with the chaos of the rollercoaster and the natural and urban elements that fill the work – is evidence of a small balancing act, depicted in the form of a tightrope walker, an acrobat, or a surfer carefully balanced on his board. Speaking to the motivation for her move, the works also feature imagery associated with romantic relationships – wedding bouquets, engagement rings, cakes, and eternity symbols populate the pieces.

"In these works, I draw parallels between one's romantic relationship and our relationship with nature," says Lee. "While seeking balance, eternity, stability, and harmony in both relationships, the journeys we take on are often complex, dramatic, changing, and lopsided. But there's also incredible beauty, energy, richness, and even whimsy in chaos and imperfections through the ups and downs, and trial and error." Characterized by bold lines, large gestures, and curving, overlapping lines, the works represent a shift towards more fluid and dramatic works. The result is a whimsical series of cut paper works that bring together disparate and complex imagery to form playful and engaging pieces.

Bovey Lee was born in Hong Kong and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. She has practiced Chinese calligraphy since the age of ten. She received her B.A. in Fine Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, an M.F.A. in painting from the University of California at Berkeley, and a second M.F.A. in computer graphics and interactive media at Pratt Institute in New York. She was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art, and has been included in major group exhibitions at numerous institutions including: Museum Kunst der Westkueste, Föhr; Museum of Craft and Design, Los Angeles; Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, Mesa; Wing Luke Museum, Seattle; Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Shelburne Museum, Shelburne; Museum Bellerive, Zurich; National Glass Centre, Sunderland; Blackburn Museum, Blackburn; Museum of Fine Arts, Beijing; Fukuoka Museum of Art, Fukuoka; Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong; and Museum Rijswijk, Rijswijk; among others.

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