

LEE BUL

AFTER BRUNO TAUT

LONDON ELY HOUSE

23 Nov 2017 - 10 Feb 2018



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Opening in the presence of the artist: Wednesday 22 November 2017, 6 - 8pm

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce *After Bruno Taut*, an exhibition of works by Lee Bul running from 23 November 2017 to 10 February 2018 in our London gallery.

One of the foremost contemporary artists in Korea today, Lee Bul creates works that reflect her philosophical exploration of the 20th century cultural history. Exploring issues ranging from societal gender roles and the perceived failure of idealism to the relationship between humans and technology, she produces genre-crossing works rooted in critical theory, art history and themes from science fiction. In this presentation, Bul's suspended sculptures are inspired by the futuristic spirit of prominent German architect Bruno Taut, who designed the Glass Pavilion, a prismatic glass dome structure, for the Cologne Werkbund Exhibition in 1914.

The sculptures presented in the exhibition *After Bruno Taut (Beware the Sweetness of Things)*, (2006-2007) and *State of Reflection* (2016) construct a dreamlike scene resembling a frozen landscape of floating mountains with winding roadways across a land studded with stalactite-like shapes. This miniature world, which seems both ancient and futuristic, constructed and biomorphic, expresses what Lee describes as 'the vision of a society exemplified by its architecture through transparency, lightness, and organic shapes'. These sculptures are inspired by Taut's utopian visions of an 'Alpine Architecture', devised just before the end of the First World War and the collapse of the German empire. In an attempt to divert mankind's energy away from war and conflict, Taut proposed the construction of dazzling cities in the Alps, made entirely of crystal and glass. Both delicate and ominous, the sculptures pay homage to Taut's vision, while being highly experiential. Through their ethereal structure and reflective surfaces, the sculptures overwhelm the viewer and provoke a sense of wonder. This fragmentation created on the surface of the sculpture is true of Bul's concept of self, as the artist states: 'We can only gather knowledge of ourselves by reflection, so we cannot see ourselves directly'.

Lee Bul was born in 1964 in Seoul, Korea where she lives and works. She was academically trained in sculpture but her interest quickly diversified into other techniques including performance art. Through her mesmerizing installations, she investigates how visionary narratives and notions of progress affect the way our world is structured both in the present and the future.

Solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at museums throughout the world, including Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2015); MMCA, Seoul (2014); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, (2014); MUDAM, Luxembourg (2013); Artsonje Center, Seoul (2012 and 2016); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012); Fondation Cartier, Paris (2007); Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2004); New Museum, New York (2002); and the MoMA, New York (1997).

Her work has been included in important group exhibitions and biennials such as the 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016); 10th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea (2014); 10th International Istanbul Biennial (2007); Taipei Biennial (2006). On the occasion of the Gwangju Biennale, she received the Noon Award in 2014.

A survey exhibition of her work will open at The Hayward Gallery, London in Spring 2018 and will travel to Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin in the fall of 2018.