

## Hejum Bä LIFE REPORTAGE

April 23 – May 21, 2016

### Press Release

Sophie's Tree is pleased to present Life Reportage, an exhibition of Stuttgart-based artist Hejum Bä's works on paper. This will be her first solo exhibition in New York.

Hejum Bä's work is centered on observations of, and engagements with, her collective surroundings in a broad sphere. These could be an object, a person, a place, a conceptual idea, or a reality. Her particular explorations of subjects form the basis of her painting practice and at the same time, her paintings become fundamentally a record and a thinking method. Bä paints her observations in a visual rhetoric and her paintings act as an archive of her thoughts and studies. Her recent work series include Raoulia of Liverpool (2009-ongoing), Thinking Gymnastics (2012-13), Begging Rhetoric (2015), Insecure on Board (2015), and Wrongdoings in the Park (2015-ongoing), among others.

Life Reportage will feature selected works from two ongoing series, Raoulia of Liverpool and Wrongdoings in the Park. Bä has continued to paint these two series for years based on her memory and documentation. The lapse of time naturally builds narratives. Raoulia of Liverpool was begun in 2009, when she first encountered the plant Raoulia, a genus from New Zealand, after moving to Liverpool, UK. It is composed of a large number of small portraits of various exotic plants (native to different regions) inhabiting the city. As a foreigner in a strange land, Bä subjectively and intimately focused on these plants and their unfamiliar ecology.

As part of her other series, Wrongdoings in the Park, Bä started observing homeless people in urban parks during her visit to New York in 2015. A simulation of nature for city dwellers, urban parks become a chaotic, uncontrollable place at night. Using found materials, homeless people quietly, but desperately, build their own temporary living spaces behind bushes. The various imageries and scenes in Bä's unsettling portraits of them reflect her confrontation with issues of individual needs and homeless' way of living in public parks. This group of works portrays a sense of both closeness and aloofness towards the subjects. Through her persistent practice, Bä's ephemeral, intuitive, and yet solid paper paintings slowly speak to the viewer about the artist's underlying stories and chains of thoughts.

Hejum Bä (b. Seoul, Korea, 1987) studied fine arts at Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart, Stuttgart (in the class of Prof. Alexander Roob) and Ewha Women's University, Seoul. Recently, her works have been shown in a number of group exhibitions including: UNKNOWN PACKAGES at Queens Museum, Queens (2015); RUNDGANGPRAESENTATION at Inter Art Galerie, Stuttgart (2015); SPIEGEL FUER FORMLOSE DINGE at Projekt Just, Stuttgart (2014); IMPORT GLEICH EXPORT at Galerie Modul Acht, Dresden (2014); and TRANSMEMBRAN – UNDER NEUER HAUT at Kunstverein Feuerbach, Stuttgart (2013). She currently lives and works in Stuttgart.

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Founded in 2015, Sophie's Tree presents exhibitions by both emerging and established artists who demonstrate sincerity and singular aesthetic focus in their practice. Speaking their own artistic language, we together think and question issues within today's contemporary art discourse. The gallery presently occupies the owner's apartment in New York City. In this domestic context, the works are temporary guests sharing the intimate space with the owner. We seek to explore different possibilities of presentations than a white cube space.