

## JEWYO RHII OF PICTURES

September 25 – October 13, 2015

## Press Release

Sophie's Tree is pleased to present *Of Pictures*, an exhibition of Jewyo Rhii's recent work. Known for her ephemeral sculptures and installations, this time Jewyo will also present her new explorations on painting.

Since the mid-1990s, Jewyo Rhii has developed a unique body of work that stems from her sensitive and personal responses to her immediate environment, the physical world around her. As Jewyo has been constantly moving between cities in Asia, the United States, and Europe without a permanent address, her displacement and disorientation have become the focal subject of her work. It conveys a sense of fragility, instability, reluctance, temporality, construction and deconstruction. Jewyo is more finely tuned to her surroundings – may be due to her small and weak body – and she attempts to customize this environment to her own standards in a way to cope with the physical world. To Jewyo, her intuitive art making is a way to understand, record, and reconfigure certain moments or struggles occurring between herself and the external world.

*Of Pictures* includes two sculptures called *LECTURE MACHINE* and *LOVE LETTER* (hand-made typewriter) with various paintings. Alone or in groups, the works demonstrate her continuous study to find different ways of presenting narratives. Both *LECTURE MACHINE* (debuted early this year at Queens Museum for her artist talks) and *LOVE LETTER* (one of her Typewriter series started in 2010) are functional but in an awkward, humorous way. Like other works, these strange contraptions need to be operated by bodily movements and there is a constant risk of failure. Even for her paintings, she made simple “projector devices” that looks almost like her sculptures to create images. The paintings capture particular scenes from her previous installation/video works including *HAN RIVER*. As her installations often unexpectedly creates two-dimensional pictorial scenes, Jewyo grasped these moments for her first-time exploration on painting. *Of Pictures* shows her endless efforts to communicate with others in a more physical, and to her, a more complete form of storytelling.

*How we choose to present a narrative is what ultimately defines it. Jewyo's mode of storytelling is particular – one might say peculiar - because it refuses to rely only on the realm of words, memories or imagination. Or rather, for Jewyo these tools are simply not enough. Her narratives need to be experienced physically – a physicality that Jewyo represents, enacts and imposes. By doing so she mobilizes a complex relationship between imagining or remembering and experiencing – what she calls 'physical memory.'* – Nick Aikens, “Introduction”, *Jewyo Rhii Walls to Talk to*, Van Abbemuseum exhibition catalogue, Koenig Books (London), 2013.

Jewyo Rhii was born in 1971 in Seoul, South Korea. She received her M.F.A. from University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (1997) and Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (2000). She also studied at the Rijksacademie, Amsterdam through a residency program (2004-5). Recently her major museum survey, *WALL TO TALK TO*, was presented at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and travelled to MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt and the Artsonje Center, Seoul (2013-14). Other recent solo exhibitions include *DEAR MY LOVE*, *ANTI-CAPITALIST* at Galerie Ursula Walbröl, Düsseldorf (2015); *COMMONLY NEWCOMER* at the Queens Museum, New York (2014-5); and *JEWYO RHII* at Wilkinson Gallery, London (2014). Rhii has participated in numerous group shows including: *La Triennale Paris*, Paris (2012); *Media City Seoul*, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul (2010); the 7th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2008) [curator: Okwui Enwezor]; the 10th Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul (2007) [curator: Hou Hanru]; and the Korean Pavilion, The 51st Venice Biennale, Venice (2005). Work by the artist is held in public collections internationally, including MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Rhii currently works and lives in New York.

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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.