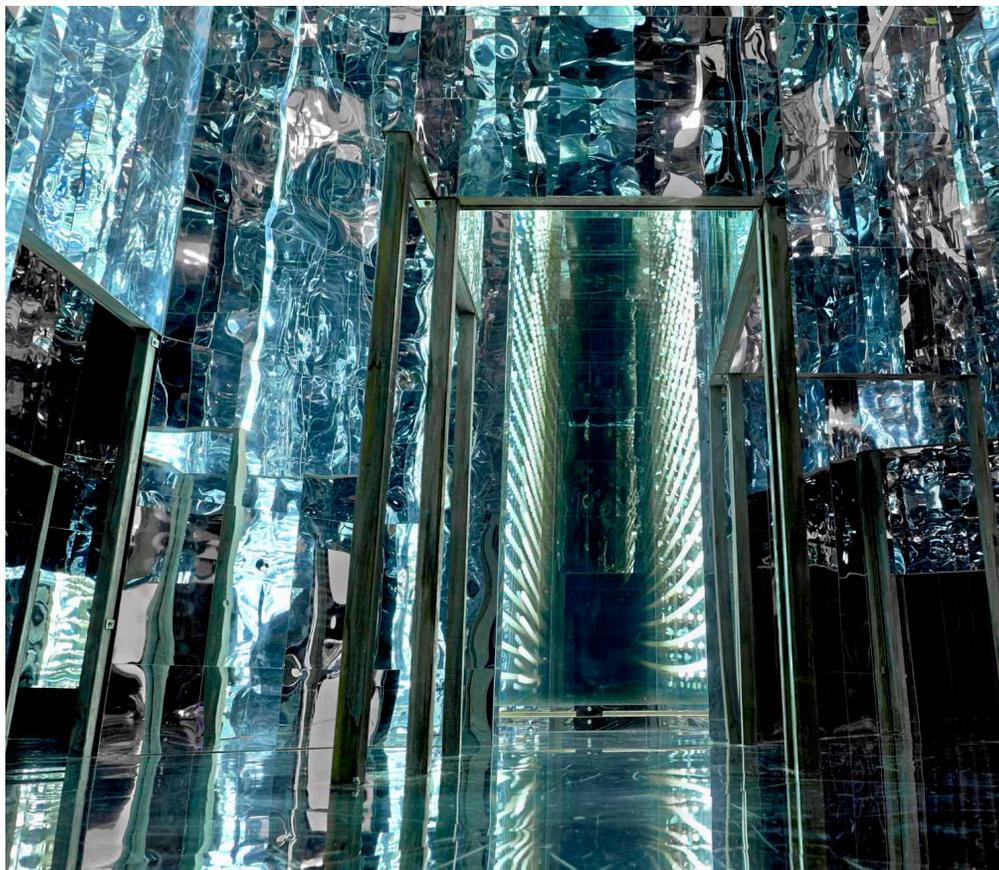


Lee Bul

May 2 - June 21, 2014

201 Chrystie Street, New York

Opening Reception: Friday, May 2, 2014 6-8 PM



Lee Bul, *Via Negativa* (installation, interior detail), 2012

Photo: Remi Villaggi. Courtesy: Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg.

New York, March 31, 2014—**Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present Lee Bul's fourth exhibition with the gallery, on view at 201 Chrystie Street from May 2 through June 21, 2014.** Further expanding her exploration of the intrinsic tension within utopian idealism, Lee will present new sculptural works and a large-scale installation in this exhibition. The artist's practice of employing formal, architectural and theoretical concepts continues with this show, inviting the viewer to reassess humanity's vision of a perfect future. **The artist will be present for an opening reception on Friday, May 2nd, from 6 to 8 PM.**

From the beginning of her career, Lee has investigated idealized conceptions of the human form, delving into issues of beauty, corruption, decay and humanity's desire to transcend physical, intellectual and spiritual boundaries. Alternating between the utopian and the dystopian, this narrative of perfection, evinced most prominently in the works of her *Cyborgs* series (1997-2001), is informed by Lee's experience of South Korea's meteoric rise to modernity in the second half of the 20th century. With vibrant complexity, Lee's work reveals the tension embedded in our collective notion of progress: the fraught, intertwined relationship of man, technology, and nature. For example, *Monster: Black* (1998; reconstructed 2011), which viewers encounter when entering the exhibition, depicts a biomorphic form riddled with structures that recall tentacles or multiplying limbs. Behind the

seductive shimmer of the sculpture's sequined skin, however, loom dark anxieties about the proliferation of biotechnology.

In her recent work, Lee has moved beyond the corporeal dimension toward a consideration of the larger human environment, drawing upon the utopian ideals of the theoretical work of German architect and urban planner Bruno Taut (1880-1938). Suspended from the gallery ceiling and floating freely overhead, Lee's *Untitled* (2014) formally echoes the detailed architectural drawings of Taut's 1917 volume, *Alpine Architecture*. Intricately constructed of crystal, glass, and acrylic beads in a latticework of steel and bronze chains, the sculpture brings to mind a future cityscape, infused with Taut's vision of a new architectural paradigm.

Broadening her artistic inquiry into the spiritual realm, the massive, immersive installation *Via Negativa II* (2014), presents a labyrinth of corridors, adorned with fragmented reflective surfaces, through which viewers must make their way before ending their journey in a central chamber lined with brilliantly illuminated infinity mirrors. The installation provides an intense and disorienting experience that disrupts the viewer's perceptual and cognitive bearings, and alludes to the tenets of apophatic philosophy, which posits that divine nature is beyond the understanding of the rational human mind and can only be comprehended by defining what it is not – 'the negative way' – rather than what it is.

Lee's focus on the pursuit of the ideal—whether in the body, in society, or in humanity's search for the true essence of divine nature—is a hallmark of her artistic practice. Through explorations of human/machine dichotomy, ideas of utopia embodied in architecture, and the perceptual and cognitive boundaries of consciousness, Lee's works seek to delineate the limits of the human body and mind, and the fallibility of the quest for perfection.

About the Artist

Lee Bul (b. 1964, Korea) grew up in Seoul and received a BFA in sculpture from Hongik University. Considered one of the leading Korean artists of her generation, she has achieved international recognition for her formally inventive, intellectually provocative oeuvre. Demonstrating virtuosity across diverse media—from drawing and performance to sculpture, painting, installation and video—her multifaceted production is representative of the most innovative aesthetic currents shaping contemporary art in the global sphere.

Lee Bul's work has been featured in solo presentations at museums throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1997); Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (1999); Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2001); MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2002); the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2002); Le Consortium, Dijon (2002); Japan Foundation, Tokyo (2003); The Power Plant, Toronto (2003); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2004); Domus Artium, Salamanca (2007); Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (2007–08); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012); and most recently MUDAM, Luxembourg (2013-14). Forthcoming exhibitions will take place at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2014); Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló, Spain (2015); and Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Etienne, France (2015). She has also participated in major group exhibitions around the world, and in 1999, she was awarded an Honorable Mention at the 48th Venice Biennale for her contribution to both the Korean Pavilion and the international exhibition curated by Harald Szeemann. The artist currently lives and works in Seoul, Korea.

About Lehmann Maupin

Founded in 1996 by partners Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin, Lehmann Maupin has fostered the careers of a diverse group of internationally renowned artists, both emerging and established, working in multiple disciplines and across varied media. With three locations—two in New York and one in Hong Kong—the gallery represents artists from the United States, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and the Middle East. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of visual expression, Lehmann Maupin presents work highlighting personal investigations and individual narratives through conceptual approaches that often address such issues as gender, class, religion, history, politics and globalism.

Upcoming Exhibitions

Adriana Varejão, *Pólvoro*, April 24–June 21, 2014, New York

Hernan Bas, May 13–June 2014, Hong Kong

Mickalene Thomas, June 27–August 9, 2014, New York

Gilbert & George, June 27–August 9, 2014, New York

For more information on Lee Bul or other gallery artists, please contact Graham Newhall at Lehmann Maupin at +1 212 255 2923 or visit www.lehmannmaupin.com.