HUMcard

Notes from an artist

Kia ora HUM supporters and ***welcome to our sixth*** **HUMcard** ***of 2022!*** *We hope you've been enjoying these special mailouts produced in collaboration with contemporary artists/curators from Aotearoa New Zealand, highlighting an international project they're working on. Each year we send out six editions, to you—our supporters and patrons—to say thanks for your continued encouragement.*

In the last HUMcard, *Kate Newby shared some thoughts on her exhibition at Palais de Tokyo in Paris. For this edition, we've invited Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland artist* ***Yona Lee*** *to reflect on the work produced during her 11-month residency at the* ***Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht****, the Netherlands.*

Accepting some 45 visual artists from around the globe, the Academy's program is one of the most prestigious international residencies, offering participants access to five labs, three departments, a well-equipped library and guidance from staff. From November 2021 - October 2022, Lee had the chance to use the available facilities and expertise to develop her practice and learn about the history of the city of Maastricht. Keep reading to find out more!

From Yona Lee
at Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht

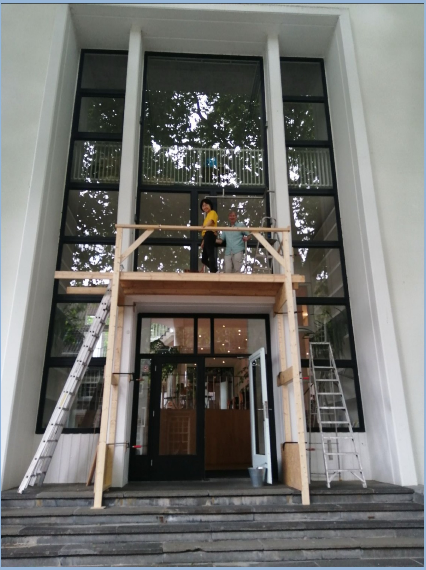
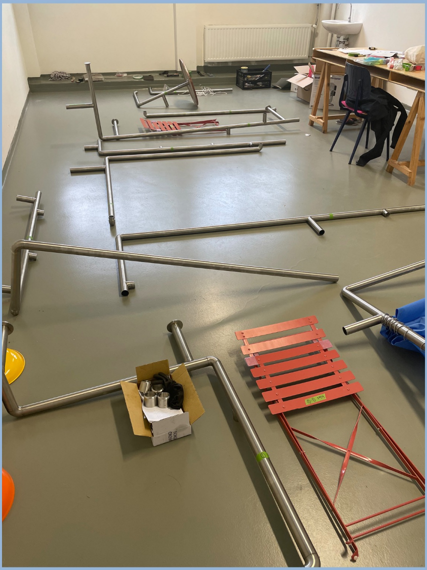


Image: Yona Lee installing *Balcony in Transit* at Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht, 2022. All images courtesy of the artist.

"What interested me when I first arrived at Jan van Eyck Academy was their modernist building and how displaced it looked in the context of the historical city of Maastricht. When the building was first designed in 1959 by Frits Peutz, who was a follower of Bauhaus, it was intended to represent the progressive thinking of the time.

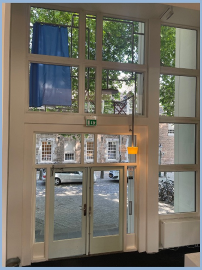
In recent history, the Academy has transitioned in various ways. In 2013, it undertook a major renovation - with additional entrances to the building, a cafeteria and an auditorium to make it more accessible to the public and to counteract the hierarchical features of the modernist architecture. In 2020, Hicham Khalidi, the director of the Academy and Rolando Vázquez, author of

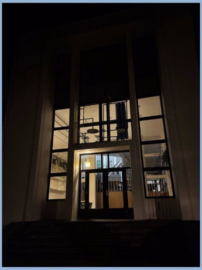
Vistas of Modernity: Decolonial Aesthesis and the End of the Contemporary wrote a letter undersigned by more than 450 artists and colleagues to the European Commission pointing critique towards their naming of the European Green Deal initiative after the Bauhaus school, addressing its problematic modernist legacy and Eurocentric view."



Images: (top row, #1&2) work in progress; **(bottom, #3)** studio view.

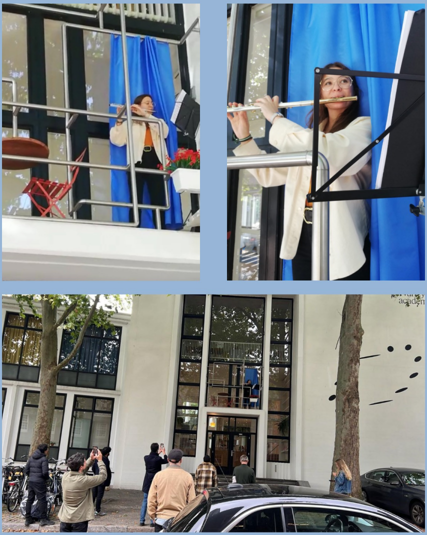
"I was interested in these encounters and wanted to work on a project that engages with the architecture, legacy of Bauhaus, and the Jan van Eyck Academy as an institution where it stands in this moment. This led to 'Balcony In Transit' which is a site-specific installation on the façade of the building depicting a dysfunctional balcony. Emphasising the redundancy of functionality, the work is a modest interference that resists the structure of modernism and the Bauhaus - as an attempt to represent the ethos of the Academy."





Both images: installation view, *Balcony in Transit*

"I was fascinated by the unity of the urban design of Maastricht, which is a result of strict control by the municipality. The level of control is quite extreme, to the extent that one has to choose the design of a chair recommended by the municipality if to be placed outside - this meant that installing the work on the façade of the building required an intense process to be granted a permit. The architecture is listed as a heritage building, further complicating the administrative process, and the collaboration between the municipality and the Academy became an integral part of the work. The work will remain in place for a couple of years before the municipality finds a new home for the work."



Images: (all, above) live performances held on *Balcony in Transit,* 21 Sept 2022; **(header)** Yona Lee, *Balcony in Transit*, 2022. Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht, the Netherlands. Photo: Ron Bernstein; **(below)** Yona Lee, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

More on the artist

Yona Lee (b.1986, Busan, South Korea) makes sculptural objects and installations that combine elaborate linear structures of stainless steel tubing with everyday objects of urban and domestic spaces that include mop heads, bus handles, lamps, fans, umbrellas, bunk beds, tables and chairs, letterboxes, etc.

Lee's larger-scale installations invite viewers to enter into and interact with the work in places, and her work allows itself open to being read as structure or system, as serious or funny, as aggressive or playful, as authoritarian or utopian, as utilitarian or pointless, as site-specific or self-contained, as light touch or heavy duty. Having played the cello since childhood, there are parallels between Yona Lee's approach to the making of sculpture and the sculptural experience of her work with her classical training in music – both in the physical engagement with objects/instrumentation, the specificities and contingencies of audiences and spaces, and relationships between the individual and the collective.

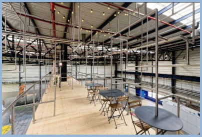
Yona Lee's work has recently been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions including the Auckland Art Gallery (2022), Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2020); City Gallery Wellington, Wellington (2018-2019); Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2018-2019); and has been included in recent large-scale thematic exhibitions including the Busan Biennale, South Korea (2020); the 15th Lyon Contemporary Art Biennale, France (2019); and Changwon Sculpture Biennale, South Korea (2016).

Learn more about the artist here

Yona Lee, *An Arrangement for 5 Rooms* exhibition view, 2022, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, New Zealand

Yona Lee, *Kit-set In-transit* exhibition view, 2021, Fine Arts, Sydney, Australia

Yona Lee, *En route home* exhibition view, 2020, Busan Biennale, South Korea



Yona Lee, *In transit (highway)* exhibition view, 2019, 15th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art, France

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Featuring projects from Aotearoa artists at Colomboscope, the 59th Venice Biennale, APT10, documenta15, and Palais de Tokyo, we hope you've enjoyed our HUMcards *this year. We look forward to sharing more projects with you in 2023 and as always, THANK YOU. With your generosity and encouragement, you help us champion New Zealand's creative practitioners working in an international context, increasing their—and Aotearoa's—visibility on the world stage.*

If you know anyone interested in New Zealand arts please consider sharing our ***Support page*** **with them.** *Every donation helps us continue our work.*

HUM

HUM is the only platform dedicated to the international activity of creative practitioners from New Zealand. In December 2021, HUM celebrated 5 years of documenting and publishing about Aotearoa arts abroad!! As always, we want to thank all of you who have supported us over the years.

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