

TINA KIM GALLERY



Maia Ruth Lee. (b. 1983)

South Korea

Lives and works in San Francisco, California

Born in Busan, South Korea, then growing up between Kathmandu and Seoul, Lee spent over a decade in New York City, recently relocating to San Francisco, California. Her lived experience of migrating as well as an awareness and empathy for the life of migrants in Kathmandu serve as continual source of inspiration and investigation for Lee. Therefore, her multidisciplinary practice spanning photography, video, painting, and sculpture move through questions around the self as a diasporic subject that expands and challenges our notion of borders and communities. Her baggage and textile works are metaphors and stand in's of the body, their accumulations and narratives.

Language as a mechanism in its ability and failure to shape and give account to experiences, memories, and emotions has been a major thread in Lee's work, as for those whose lives are precarious and unrooted—maps, atlases, and banners become a device that calls to mind their life of movement, and often, loss. Lee's use of india ink, with its reference to calligraphy, point to human compulsion for storytelling, mark making, and archiving. Rather than lingering in futility and loss, Lee's work opens up a passage way, forging new lexicons that give form to lives of transience, their stories, beyond immediate and accepted forms of legibility and comprehension.

Maia Ruth Lee has held solo exhibitions at Primary Nottingham (UK), Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (NY), The Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (CO), Francois Ghebaly Gallery (LA), and Jack Hanley Gallery (NY). Lee has participated in numerous group exhibitions including the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Sky High Farm Biennial 2025, Prospect 6., New Orleans, the Aspen Art Museum (CO), 2019 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, Helena Anrather Gallery, CANADA gallery, Studio Museum 127, Salon 94, Overduin & Co. Gallery, and Roberts & Tilton Gallery. Lee attended Hongik University in Seoul, and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, Canada. Lee was the recipient of the Gold Art Prize in 2021 and the Rema Hort Mann grant in 2017. Her work is held in the public collections at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

525 West 21st Street New York, NY 10011 T 212.716.1100 F 212.716.1250 tinakimgallery.com