

TINA KIM GALLERY

Maia Ruth Lee: Double Vision
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double vision

as a translator, i know language by its bearings. 출발어, the language of departure. 도착어, the language of arrival. a sentence leaves one shore and reaches another. something is carried across. but nothing arrives intact.

in the act of translating, those bearings come crashing down. i look in two directions at once, at what was there and what is becoming there, one language underneath and another arriving over it. here and there, before and after begin to occupy the same space.

i dreamed of this exhibition before i ever entered it. or perhaps i dreamed its memory. it was dark, part gallery, part archive. things came slowly into view. every object seemed significant, connected to another. i strained to see.

what is the 출발어 of a dream?

in dreams, the space between past and present is haunted. places fold into other places. the dead return without having returned. we become other bodies and remain ourselves. what has been, what is, what has yet to be are all there at once. nothing asks which came first. one seeing laid over another seeing, one present passing through another.

i know something of this doubled time, these doubled lives. i have left places that continued inside me and returned to places that had gone on without me. departure does not stay behind us. arrival does not stay ahead.

perhaps this is what it means to be haunted. not that the past returns, but that it never finished passing.

a place becomes a memory, a memory enters the body, the body carries it somewhere else. what returns acquires another tense.

nothing begins only once.

language acquires weight, memory acquires material, time acquires layers. material passes into sign, biography into form. the glyph leaves one body and enters another. the archive receives a new hand. the baggage carries other baggage.

출발어 becomes 도착어 becomes 출발어.

i wonder if there is ever really a source language or a target language, whether anything can be carried intact from one side to another. perhaps there is only this passage through material, place, memory, body, time.

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and perhaps the archive dreams too. maybe this is why i dreamed myself there before i had been. i had already seen somewhere my body had not yet arrived. perhaps memory moves in two directions, carrying what has passed and remembering what is still making its way toward us.

not the language of departure, not the language of arrival, but the language of motion itself.

everything is alive.

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