

MARTOS GALLERY

Jennie Jieun Lee

Sizzling Gouba and Long Beach
September 15 – October 27, 2019

If you've ever ordered Sizzling Gouba, you know it's not an order for the timid. The loud crackling of sizzling rice at the table commands attention and stares. If you're a young child out with your family, this dish is served with a generous side of embarrassment. Personal history and other moments of introspection make up Jennie Jieun Lee's *Sizzling Gouba and Long Beach*, at Martos Gallery.

Through a series of sculpting, embossing, printing, painting, and drawing, the classic form of the body, or vessel, is recontextualized, and Lee creates a psychosomatic expression of the past. A giant house covered in blades of grass like an overgrown and unkempt lawn — a nod to Lee's memories of childhood — draws you into the main gallery, which is filled with ceramic paintings and a cacophony of sculptures.

Lee's work formally alludes to abstract expressionist paintings. Small wheel-thrown vessels, hand built slabs, and organic forms are stamped and malformed without clear delineation as to whether the deformity was intentional or if Lee embraced a happenstance gesture. These ceramic forms simultaneously read as crude and delicate.

After a sudden parental death in my teens, our front and back lawn had become extremely overgrown and unruly. None of the remaining family members knew how to operate the lawnmower which caused stress for me since the neighbors were then able to appraise by the length of our grass that something was wrong inside our home. A sense of shame laced my mourning and this memory has lingered. For this show, the blades of grass on this house were made in a variation of ways. One being with custom dies for the clay extruder to recall and mimic the shapes of memories of this excessive lawn. Each blade accesses a part of my psyche during that time and also created a place for emotional intelligence to grow.

– Jennie Jieun Lee

Sizzling Gouba and Long Beach is Lee's first solo presentation with the gallery since 2015, and the first in our Chinatown location.

This show was made at the Center for Contemporary Ceramics in Long Beach, California.

Special thanks to Graham, Diana and Jeremiah Collins, and Tony Marsh.

This exhibition is dedicated to Stanley Love.

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Jennie Jieun Lee (b.1973, Seoul, South Korea) received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1999, and an MFA from California State University, Long Beach in 2019. She currently lives and works in New York, NY.

Select exhibitions include: "Mrs. Thompson's Mirror," Martos Gallery, New York, NY (2015); "Marlborough Chelsea Viewing Room," New York, NY (2016); "Seizure Crevasse," The Pit, Los Angeles, CA (2017); "Am I Ugly," Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada (2015); "Smile Purgatory," Galerie Lefebvre et fils, Paris, France (2014); "Immigrant's Ear," Levy Delval, Brussels, Belgium (2016); "Object Painting – Painting Object," Jonathan Viner, London, United Kingdom (2015); "Life Eraser," Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy (2016); and Halsey McKay, New York, NY (2018).

Select awards and fellowships include: CSULB Graduate Research Fellowship (2018); John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2017); Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant (2016); Artadia New York Award (2015).