

Grace Lee: Fitting Room

25 October – 25 November 2023



CLICK AND DRAG, 2023
GRACE LEE

Huxley-Parlour are pleased to announce *Fitting Room*, the first solo exhibition by London-based artist Grace Lee. The title of the exhibition refers to the themes Lee explores including disguise, the construction or concealment of identity, truth and 'fitting in.' The exhibition is testament to Lee's singular exploration of narrative, fantasy and how we utilise both to navigate contemporary existence.

The mediated image, the object seen second-hand, is key to Lee's approach to image making. Lee's imagery is gleaned from current image economies, or what the artist terms 'orphaned' images. Infographics, shutterstock pictures and google image archives coalesce in Lee's work to create irreverent and enigmatic paintings. For this exhibition, Lee's subject matter is seemingly disparate - board games, cult TV, clipart, constellations - and yet, together the works explore central themes of misunderstandings, parody and the manipulation of the truth. *Deep Down* depicts a Matryoshka doll that hints at hidden or layered truths as well as heredity and legacy. *Click and Drag* draws on ideas of technological advancement and the increasing ease of material manipulation. A recurring motif that threads through the suite of paintings is the star, frequently used as a shorthand for ideas larger than itself. It is a marker of Lee's multi-layered approach to their subject matter.

The themes interrogated in Lee's exhibition seem to converge in one particular scene from Peter S. Beagle's 1968 fantasy novel *The Last Unicorn* - depicted in the painting *A Horn They Can See*. Beagle's titular unicorn is captured and enslaved by a travelling circus, owned by a witch who casts spells on the animals she seizes so they appear as mythical beasts. However, humans in Beagle's world can no longer see real unicorns, so when presented with a truly magical creature the witch must crudely attach a second horn to its forelock in order for her spectators to see the animal's true identity and real mythical status. Lee reads this moment as a poignant metaphor for the societal pantomime we perform in order to feel understood and accepted in the contemporary world.

The works in Lee's exhibition reveal the potentially antagonistic relationship between reality and fiction, and how the two overlap. This ambiguity speaks to our uneasy relationship with the truth and how society's increasing reliance on spectacle and myth-making has led to an inability to discern veracity. A year before Beagle's novel was released, French critical theorist Guy Debord published *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), which outlined how the development of modern society had a degrading effect on authenticity. In our post-truth era, Lee's work speaks to the total infiltration of this phenomenon and how visual culture has become co-opted and utilised by the ever-increasing fetishisation of the spectacle.

Grace Lee (born 1995) received their BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, London and their MA in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. They were awarded the *Barto Dos Santos Memorial Award* in 2021, as well as the *NOA15 East of England Award* and shortlisted for *The Worshipful Company of Painters-Stainers Award* in 2015. They live and work in London.

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25 October - 25 November 2023
HUXLEY-PARLOUR, 45 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PE

Opening, Tuesday 24 October, 6–8pm

Opening Hours Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:30pm
Saturdays, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Entry is free

More information can be found online at www.huxleyparlour.com