

Lee Jeongwoong

Laputa : The Fall

2 February – 4 March 2018

Opening reception Thursday 1 February | 6–8 pm

Korean artist, Lee Jeongwoong, was born in 1982 in Seoul. He graduated from Sungkyungwan University in 2008, after which he exhibited extensively at home and abroad. He had a solo exhibition with Shine Artists in 2015, where he showed paintings on the subject of 'Laputa'. Several pieces developing the theme were shown in 2016 at the newly opened Pontone Gallery. We are now delighted to present 'Laputa : The Fall', a solo exhibition of his latest work.

Realised in a seductively rendered, representational technique, strongly reminiscent of Alma-Tadema's and Frederick Leighton's high Victorian romanticism, this is an ambitious sequence of related paintings that hang together to tell a story: 'The Fall From Laputa'. The eponymous flying island, created by Jonathan Swift in 'Gulliver's Travels', is co-opted by the artist as a vehicle for his inventive allegory. As Laputa passes over Korea, women who have been trapped in colonial servitude fall to land, escaping from a stultifying and oppressive regime. Their hieratic figures drop gracefully through space to arrive in an idealised Korean landscape identified by its distinctive traditional architecture. Here they populate the country like a benign female ministry, archetypal and emblematic, symbolic of the artist's hopes for his homeland.

The paintings display an accomplished subtlety of execution. The elegantly fluent application of paint, clear delineation of perspectival space and evocative description of light make for a captivating illusion. The painter is a skilful interpreter of colour and tonality, achieving an especially sensuous modelling of skin and fabric. The arrangement of his cast of mysterious characters in his invented landscape makes for convincingly powerful compositions, through which his complex intentions can be perceived.

Lee Jeongwoong's deliberate adoption of such a sumptuous and graceful aesthetic belies the serious, and sometimes, contentious substance of his work. He overtly refers to the problematic issue of Japanese colonisation and its ongoing repercussions in modern Korea. He has also talked about the conflict between modernity and tradition and Korea's ambivalence towards the West. These beautiful images embody his ideas, articulating a dynamic contradiction between harmonious appearance and turbulent content.



Koi
2018 | Oil on Canvas | 162 x 130 cm (63.5 x 51 in)



Falling
2018 | Oil on Canvas | 100 x 100 cm (39.5 x 39.5 in)

Pontone

GALLERY



(left) **Delphinium Blues**
2018 | Oil on Canvas
130 x 193 cm (51 x 76 in)

(below left) **Palace White**
2018 | Oil on Canvas
100 x 100 cm (39.5 x 39.5 in)

(below right) **Secret Garden**
2018 | Oil on Canvas
100 x 100 cm (39.5 x 39.5 in)

(bottom) **Deep Drop** (Tetrptych)
2018 | Oil on Panel
33 x 212 cm (13 x 83.5 in)

