

# The Museum of Modern Art

## THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS *HAEGUE YANG: HANDLES*, A MAJOR NEW INSTALLATION IN THE DONALD B. AND CATHERINE C. MARRON ATRIUM, OPENING ON OCTOBER 21

**NEW YORK, July 12, 2019**—Seoul- and Berlin-based artist Haegue Yang (Korean, born 1971) is known for genre-defying, multimedia installations that interweave a range of materials, historical references, and sensory experiences. For the opening of The Museum of Modern Art's expanded campus on October 21, 2019, MoMA has commissioned an installation by Yang for the Marron Atrium. *Haegue Yang: Handles* will feature six dynamic sculptures activated daily, dazzling geometries, and the play of light and sound to create a ritualized, complex environment with both personal and political resonance. *Haegue Yang: Handles* is organized by Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, with Taylor Walsh, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints; produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Producer, with Kate Scherer, Manager, Performance and Live Programs.

Handles are points of attachment and material catalysts for movement and change. Yang's installation in the Marron Atrium considers this everyday interface between people and things. Steel grab bars are mounted on the walls amid the iridescent pattern of a panoramic collage, and put to functional use in her sculptures. These monumental works come in distinctive shapes: some are inspired by the work of early 20th-century figures such as artist Sophie Taeuber-Arp and mystic philosopher G. I. Gurdjieff, and others use open-source designs for door handles to produce freestanding bodies at once futuristic and prehistoric.

Mounted on casters and covered in skins of bells, the sculptures generate a subtle rattling sound when maneuvered by performers at regular intervals, and recall the use of bells in shamanistic rites, among other sources. The chorus of bells also suggests ideas of resonance, championing more diverse social and political models. While the patterns of movement in the installation echo Yang's ongoing investigation into concerns of migration, the haptic and auditory qualities of Yang's *Sonic Sculptures* animate their imposing physicality. The sensorial nature of *Handles* is heightened by the seemingly innocuous ambient noise of birdsong that permeates the space, which in fact was recorded at a tense political moment in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea during the historic summit in 2018. Reporters strained to hear the private conversation between the two nations' leaders, but their audio devices only picked up the chirping of birds and the faint click of cameras.

*Handles* draws on Yang's in-depth research into various sources, ranging from vernacular craft traditions to the historical avant-garde, esoteric spiritual philosophies to contemporary political events. She integrates these disparate narratives into a visual language uniquely her own, offering a fresh take on modernism and a critical reading of its legacy.

Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, explains, “Haegue Yang has built a distinguished career on her singular ability to synthesize a rich array of cultural references across time periods and geographies into sculptural and sensorial installations. Her ambitious commission for MoMA presents an immersive, prismatic environment through which a diverse set of histories and forms is transformed into an exciting new vocabulary of mobile sonic sculptures that animate the space as much as they do a more open notion of history.”

Organized by Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, Department of Media and Performance, with Taylor Walsh, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints; performances produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Producer, and Kate Scherer, Manager, with Stavia Grimani, Assistant Performance Coordinator, Performance and Live Programs.

#### **SPONSORSHIP**



The exhibition is presented as part of The Hyundai Card Performance Series.

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