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**Kiwha Lee**  
*Light Punch*

January 19 – March 9, 2024



Kiwha Lee, *Noble Discontent*, 2023, oil on canvas, 72 x 53 inches, 182.9 x 134.6 cm

CHART is pleased to present *Light Punch*, a solo exhibition by Kiwha Lee. Featuring a suite of new paintings, her work poses questions about what painting is in the 21st century, complicating the viewer's reading of pictorial hierarchy by engaging pattern as a narrative tool. Taking ancient Asian printmaking processes derived from craft traditions and reinventing them with oil paint, Lee explores notions of intersubjectivity between vision and immersion in the physical world. The exhibition, Lee's first solo show in New York, will open with a reception on Friday, January 19, from 6–8pm, and remain on view through March 9, 2024.

Kiwha Lee expresses a desire to transgress artificial and arbitrary boundaries. Having lived and worked around the globe, Lee's densely patterned abstractions reflect the artist's own multi-layered identity. Seeing painting as "a construct born of cultural imagination," Lee decentralizes European modes of

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pictorial composition and linear perspective, and instead embraces Chinese and Korean landscape painting and original patterning to create a sense of spatial depth.

The painting *Noble Discontent* is emblematic of Lee's turn away from classical European pictorial traditions. Not only is the piece a meditation on subtractive and additive application of paint through resist techniques traditionally found in textiles, in this case with oil paint, it also employs intricate tiling logic found in architecture. Simultaneously exploring ideas of painting, the ornamental, and architectural, Lee marries the real world with the "virtual" image, as theorized by David Summers in his book *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*. Her "about-face" radical approach may best be exemplified by her proposal of a new framework through which to see painting: the ornamental "jali"—latticed stone screens in ancient non-Western architecture—as an alternative to the Western glass window. Bringing one's attention to this decorative motif is not unintentional, with Lee drawing a contrast between portals and how cultural perception of visual information might be altered. Instead of the canvas acting as a wholly transparent metaphorical window to look through, concentrated patterns of light pierce through the obfuscating designs, flooding the viewer's space with parcels of partial details from the outside world.

These paintings ultimately demonstrate Lee's search for a new way to approach abstraction, informed by the art historical canon yet also drawing from overlooked narratives rooted in objects and architecture, subverting both the history and hierarchy of painting. Pattern becomes a metaphor for the rich textures and subtle nuances of our own lives while also veiling or drawing attention to shared space. Lee breaks down distinctions between barriers of perception, deliberately making spatial relationships among "characters" ambiguous and emphasizing that the body's experience in space is inherently interactive with its environment, never still, forever inseparable between body and vision.

**Kiwha Lee** (b. Seoul, South Korea) is based in New York and Singapore. She holds an MFA in Painting from Hunter College. She has exhibited at COL Gallery, San Francisco (2023), Vardan Gallery, L.A. (2023), Thierry Goldberg Gallery, NY (2022), 205 Hudson Gallery, NY (2022), M Street Gallery (2021), Fergus McCaffrey Gallery, NY (2020), Ortega y Gasset Projects, NY (2020), and NPE Art Residency, Singapore (2019).

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For more information, please contact us at [info@chart-gallery.com](mailto:info@chart-gallery.com) or at @\_\_chart\_\_ on Instagram.

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**Kiwha Lee: *Light Punch***

January 19 - March 9, 2024



**Kiwha Lee**

*Cosmic Crucibles*, 2023

oil on canvas

54 x 44 in

137.2 x 111.8 cm

(CH1303)



**Kiwha Lee**

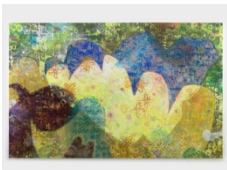
*Ancestral Murmurs*, 2023

oil on canvas

54 x 44 in

137.2 x 111.8 cm

(CH1300)



**Kiwha Lee**

*Mutual Becoming*, 2023

oil on canvas

66 x 106 in

167.6 x 269.2 cm

(CH1304)



**Kiwha Lee**

*Bifocal Floaters*, 2024

oil on canvas

54 x 44 in

137.2 x 111.8 cm

(CH1299)



**Kiwha Lee**

*Vital Breaths*, 2024

oil on canvas

72 x 53 in

182.9 x 134.6 cm

(CH1305)

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**Kiwha Lee**  
*Light Years*, 2023  
oil on canvas  
66 x 102 in  
167.6 x 259.1 cm  
(CH1301)



**Kiwha Lee**  
*Noble Discontent*, 2023  
oil on canvas  
72 x 53 in  
182.9 x 134.6 cm  
(CH1184)



**Kiwha Lee**  
*Pendulum*, 2023  
oil on canvas  
24 x 18 in  
61 x 45.7 cm  
(CH1302)