

MAKE ROOM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Joeun Kim Aatchim

사자굴 [Sajagul] — *Then, out of the Den*

April 16–June 4, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 16, 5:00 PM–7:00 PM

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11:00 AM–6:00 PM



Joeun Kim Aatchim, *A Safe Coffin — A Tale of a Tail, Out of the Blue. (Kinderszenen)*, 2022
Mineral & earth pigment suspended in glue, refined pine soot ink, charcoal, graphite, chalk on silk, 22-1/8 x 34-1/8 x 1.5 inches

Make Room Los Angeles is proud to present *사자굴 [Sajagul] — Then, out of the Den*, a new project and series of paintings by New York-based artist Joeun Kim Aatchim. This is the first solo exhibition for the artist in the West Coast, spanning the gallery space and outdoor garden at Make Room Los Angeles in Hollywood. The opening reception will take place on April 16 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and the exhibition will remain on view until June 4th.

In *사자굴 [Sajagul] — Then, out of the Den*, Aatchim enters her own memory game. Her words *말* are her token *말* in this game, challenging the accuracy of her visual memory and pushes it to the limits until it breaks from reality and transforms into wild imagination. Through her drawings and painting, she visualizes the language. Aatchim extends both the concepts in the game and children's' understanding of them into various realms—the cinema, memory palace and collective memory, auditory and visual hallucination, psychosis, fantasy, exorcism, debts, Biblical allusion, Korean folktale and poetry, and rescue—as she describes in her own words:

“In *사자굴 Sajagul*, which means lions' den, I use translations of memories and languages as a pillar to structure the visual scenes. *사자 Saja*—Korean for lion—is one of them:

한 사자 가 집안을 어슬렁거렸다 can be translated into:
A Saja (獅子 a lion) was roaming around the house.
A Saja (死者 the dead) was roaming around the house.

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Then again, I translate the word to a nonlinear visual narrative with a specific scene in the movie *Jumanji* (1995)—how a lion appears in the film; a tail sweeps and hammers down the dusty piano keys with noise, and the older sister Judy tells the younger one, ‘It’s not real, Peter. It’s a hallucination.’ This scene, which I played hundreds of times with my sisters, was a direct parallel to the time during my mother’s sudden absence and all the mysterious things around the time when we lived above a piano store. Understanding the concept of a game helped [us] stay afloat during this episode, and of course, Hollywood’s happy ending means that things will go back to normal. To draw these incomprehensible, grim, and somewhat fantasy-like periods, I started drawing the space, from the architectural details to specific objects; then, I carefully summoned my family to the space with me (in the drawing) to review my memories and counter them.”

사자굴 [*Sajagul*] — *Then, out of the Den* finds itself enmeshed in Aatchim’s singular painting techniques. When drawing from multiple viewpoints with the intimacy of the subject—through her recall and the play on her memory of the space—she draws objects as if the object, figure, and space are transparent. The softness of the earth pigment and the crushed stone pigment grittiness inject texture into the visual effects of her stereoblindness and inability to distinguish depth.

Through these artistic elements and others, her in-depth material studies and experimentation are evident in this new series. Jumping in and out of traditional East Asian silk painting studies, she experiments with various textiles, organic pigments, and binding and sizing methods to ultimately construct double-layered paintings with two overlapping images. To draw attention away from the transparent surface of silk to emphasize the innate transparency of her mark-making, Aatchim experiments with creating absorbent and opaque surfaces on linen for the first time, such as making her own waterborne ground with powdered silk and mica to paint on with casein and egg tempera, watercolor, and distemper that the artist mixes herself. Her attraction to water-based media stems from their capacity for transparent layering and her urgent desire to draw as many details as possible before she forgets.

For the final revision of the audio-visual essay 사자굴 [*Sajagul*] — *Then, out of the Den*, Aatchim stages the series of paintings, intaglio, texts, sounds, and objects at Make Room Los Angeles. Touching on themes of memory, language, and the psychology of children, 사자굴 [*Sajagul*] — *Then, out of the Den* finds Joeun Kim Aatchim working at the height of her powers.

Joeun Kim Aatchim (b. South Korea)

In search of transparency in vision and voice, the medium-independent artist Joeun Kim Aatchim draws audiovisual essays. Her recent research focuses on the poetic translation of her stereoblindness and the psychology of womanhood.

Aatchim earned an MFA from Columbia University in 2017 and has received fellowships at Triangle Art Association (2021); Lighthouse Works (2021); Foundation for Contemporary Arts (2019); The Drawing Center (2018-20); Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2017); and Nida Art Colony (2015). Aatchim has exhibited work at Harper’s, East Hampton, NY and Los Angeles, CA (2021); Asia Art Center, Taipei, TW (2021); Make Room LA, Los Angeles, CA (2021); The Drawing Center, New York, NY (2019 and 2018); SBC Galerie d’art contemporain, Montreal, QC (2018); Long March Space, Beijing, CN (2016); and The Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2015). Selected public collections include The Bunker, West Palm Beach, FL; The Perimeter, London, UK; L.C. Bates Museum, Hinkley, ME; and Fondazione Imago, IT. Her work has appeared in *Artforum*, *Artillery Magazine*, and *Hyperallergic*, among other publications. Aatchim lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Make Room Los Angeles

Established in 2018, Make Room is a contemporary art gallery owned by Emilia Yin. The newly relocated 2500 square foot gallery is situated at the heart of Hollywood neighborhood in Los Angeles, made up of two exhibition spaces with an outdoor courtyard and garden. The flexible space is designed to create intimacy with the artwork on view. Set back from the street, Make Room is just steps away from the famous Paramount Pictures Studios and has both indoor and outdoor areas. Artists are invited to create site-specific artist activations in the courtyard to complement the traditional gallery space.

Make Room Los Angeles supports artists actively engaging with cultural identity, conceptual practices and global perspectives in their practice. Make Room promotes art across a wide range of disciplines, engaging with works from video and installation to painting and sound. With a particular focus championing female, emerging and artists of color, Make Room serves as an international platform for exhibiting experimental works and telling a diverse range of stories. Not limited to a physical gallery, Make Room actively works to generate new possibilities and support its artists’ ambitious projects and new bodies of work. Make Room frequently collaborates internationally, particularly in Asia.

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