

# GEARY

# *THIS TWO*

# SUN YOU

# JANUARY 21-

# MARCH 5,

# 2021



*No Title*, 2020, Sun You, polymer clay, cardboard , 13 x 22 x 36 in.

Geary is pleased to present *This Two*- a solo exhibition featuring Sun You. *This Two* takes place in Geary's Bowery location in the Lower East Side and Main Street location in Millerton, New York concurrently, opening on January 21st.

You's first solo exhibition at Geary features the artist's oven-baked polymer clay forms mounted on painted wood panels, alongside arrangements of sculpted clay forms composed in cardboard boxes. A separate body of sculptures are made using delicate metal wire, artificial flowers, razor blades, and beads. These precarious arrangements are held together with magnets and gravity.

An accompanying exhibition text contributed by Michael McCanne follows this press release.

Sun You is a Seoul-born, New York-based artist. You has exhibited her work in galleries and museums internationally. Recent exhibition venues include The Pit, Glendale, CA, Step Sister, New York, The Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA , Queens Museum, New York, The Korean Cultural Center, New York, Scotty Enterprises, Berlin, Kunstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems, Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, SARDINE, New York and The Suburban, Chicago. You was an artist in residence at The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, Marble House Project, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Triangle Arts Association, and Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral in Bad Ems, Germany. She was also selected as Artists to Watch in 2016 by WIDEWALLS and 18 Artists to Watch, by Modern Painters, 2015. You heads President Clinton Projects, a curatorial project and co-runs an artist collective gallery, Tiger Strikes Asteroid New York.

*Please note that all visitors of the galleries must adhere to strict protocols regarding the ongoing pandemic, including social distancing of at least 6 feet, wearing a mask over your nose and mouth at all times, refraining from eating or drinking in the gallery, and leaving your phone number or email for contact tracing efforts.*

34 Main Street  
Millerton, NY 12546

208 Bowery  
New York, NY 100142  
+1 212 242 0185  
info@geary.nyc  
geary.nyc

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Everyone is at home, trying to fill the time. Some people bake, some work on crafts. The end results are not as important as the process of making, of occupying the days. Sun You's work is well suited to these times. Her colorful and animated pieces evoke the flows and rhythms of domestic labor, as well as the unfettered creativity of the home crafter. In her works, she explores a tension between play and process, producing a unique visual grammar indebted as much to domestic ornamentation as to painterly abstraction.

Her recent works feature vibrant and energetic patterns, which she creates by affixing pieces of brightly colored polymer clay to painted panels. Like a home baker, You sculpts the clay into intricate shapes; pinching, flattening, and tearing it apart like dough. She bakes the pieces in her kitchen and then transports them to the studio in cardboard boxes. The pieces shift in transit and she uses the resulting configurations as a starting point for her compositions, editing from their arrangement like a visual cut-up. This working process establishes a fluid relationship between the artist and gravity: a kinetic chance operation at the heart of her work. Several boxes of clay pieces—remnants of this dynamic process—are on display as part of her solo show at Geary.

In earlier sculptures, this interplay extended to include other people. Her baked clay pieces were not fixed in place but laid out in ornate patterns on large pedestals. This allowed the owner of the work to arrange them as they saw fit. But the pull toward figurative representation is strong, and people often rearranged the pieces into faces or other body parts, undoing the careful abstraction You had created. As they are now, fixed in place with glue, the expressive patterns of clay maintain their delicate abstraction, reaching the threshold of representation without crossing it. The brightly colored polymer parts resemble toys scattered across a floor, refrigerator magnets, or elaborately colored pastries covered in rainbow sprinkles. From a distance, some of the patterns look like floor plans, pieces of architecture, or scraps of letters or textiles. A sense of home haunts the colorful works the way domestic labor haunts the world: adorning, nurturing, creating but remaining largely unseen.

In her exquisite tabletop wire sculptures, we find the influence of a different form of domestic ornamentation. These works are inspired by *ikebana*, a meditative practice of floral arrangement, which loosely translated, means "give life to flowers." You similarly imparts vitality and tension into her wire sculptures, carefully suspending earrings, beads, razor blades, eyelash extensions, and other objects in fronds of wire. Small magnets hold the wires together, putting the pieces in dynamic relationship with gravity, magnetism, and chance. As the sculptures are moved or re-displayed, they shift imperceptibly, slowly changing their configuration over time. This exemplifies You's overall practice. She works in and out of entropy, in a multi-step process that allows for play and discovery. She lets the work evolve on its own, editing the results into a delightful visual language that draws inspiration from the domestic sphere. Her pieces are artifacts of that process: objects that appear still but are brimming with energy and materiality.

Michael McCanne

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