

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Solo Exhibition of Internationally Renowned Korean Artist Lee Bul
Presented at the Vancouver Art Gallery**



The media is invited to preview the exhibition *Embracing Canada: Landscapes from Krieghoff to the Group of Seven and Lee Bul* on Thursday, October 29, 2015, 9am at the Vancouver Art Gallery (750 Hornby Street). The artist and curator will lead a tour of *Lee Bul* at 10:30am. To RSVP or request an interview, please contact Debra Zhou.

Vancouver, British Columbia (October 26, 2015) – The Vancouver Art Gallery is proud to present a solo exhibition of recent works by internationally renowned Korean artist Lee Bul, who is widely considered one of the most important artists of her generation. Opening October 30, this exhibition features large-scale sculptures paired with early drawings, revealing Lee Bul's visually and conceptually compelling practice. *Lee Bul* marks the 2015 feature exhibition for the Gallery's *Institute of Asian Art*, an initiative that advances scholarship and public appreciation of art from China, India, Japan and Korea.

Acclaimed for her *Cyborg* sculptures of the 1990s that draw upon elements of art history, critical theory and science fiction and were featured in the Vancouver Art Gallery's *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture*, Lee Bul's more recent work explores the future of the past. Through elaborate sculptures and assemblages she reflects upon utopian architecture of the early 20th century, as well as architectural images of totalitarianism that are echoes of the artist's experience of living in a military controlled Korea.

This exhibition begins with over a hundred drawings produced by the artist since the mid-1990s, it is followed by large-scale sculptures from the last decade based on modernist constructions, and concludes with a reconstruction of the artist's studio that offers insights into Lee Bul's methodology. In this last section of the exhibition, the artist and her assistants use makeshift tables and surfaces from the Vancouver Art Gallery's preparation department to restage her studio within the exhibition space. It contains a wealth of preliminary drawings, intermediary models and material tests, offering insight into the process of her prolific artistic output.

Together these works deepen the visitors' understanding of Lee Bul's practice, highlighting her reflections on the failed ideals of recent history and the human optimism that prevails in the face of uncertain futures.

About the artist

Born in 1964, under the military dictatorship of South Korea, Lee Bul studied sculpture at Hongik University in Seoul during the late 1980s. Early in her career she created works that crossed disciplines in provocative ways, delving into the many ways that ideologies permeate society. Her performance art in the late 1980s and early 90s broke from the artistic conventions governing Korea at that time and included public appearances with the artist clothed in full-body soft sculptures that were at once grotesque and alluring. These quasi-monstrous, fabric forms predated her female cyborg sculptures of the late 1990s, which drew heavily on critical theory, science fiction and classical sculpture to explore apprehensions around emerging technology. Since 1987, Bul's work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions at art institutions around the world. The artist has also received several prestigious awards. In 2000, Bul received two awards: Young Artist of the Year Award presented by the Ministry of Culture, Republic of Korea and the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Korean Culture & Arts Foundation, and in 1999 the 48th Venice Biennale awarded her the *Menzione d'Onore*. In 2014, she was honoured with the Noon Award for best artist at the Gwangju Biennale, for creating the most experimental artwork within the Biennale's theme of "Burning Down the House". Her work has been included in two group exhibitions at the Gallery since the 1990s.

About the Institute of Asian Art

Building upon the Vancouver Art Gallery's longstanding commitment to fostering cultural connections throughout Asia, the Institute of Asian Art is a comprehensive initiative to advance scholarship and public appreciation of art from China, India, Japan and Korea through exhibitions, public programs and permanent collections dedicated to the visual arts of Asia.

About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of the most respected and innovative visual arts institutions in Canada and is committed to strengthening ties between artists and diverse communities throughout the city, province and beyond. As the largest public art museum in Western Canada, the Gallery features the work of ground-breaking contemporary artists from around the world and presents historical art of international significance, is committed to exploring the art of Asia, and provides a global platform for British Columbia's dynamic artistic community, including the work of First Nations artists. Its growing collection represents the most comprehensive resource for art in British Columbia and is the principal repository for visual art produced in the region, as well as related works by other notable Canadian and international artists. The Gallery also places an emphasis on advancing scholarship through major publications and presents a multitude of public programs that offer new ways to consider art for visitors who come from throughout the region and internationally.

Following an in-depth master planning process that was in response to the significant growth in collection, exhibitions and attendance, the Gallery unveiled in September 2015 the conceptual design by Herzog & de Meuron for a new and expanded home in downtown Vancouver. Double the Gallery's current size, the future facility will be a vital catalyst in enhancing Vancouver's cultural community, and will serve as a centre for cross-cultural dialogue and exchange in the visual arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Lee Bul is a touring retrospective exhibition produced in collaboration with participating venues Artsonje Center, Seoul; Musée d'Art Moderne GrandDuc Jean, Luxembourg; IKON Gallery, Birmingham; Korean Cultural Centre UK, London; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain Saint-Étienne Métropole and Espaid'art contemporani de Castelló (EACC), Castelló. The Vancouver Art Gallery presents a truncated version of the exhibition, accompanied by a brochure, with Coordinating Curator Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery.

Related Events:

Saturday, October 31, 3:00pm - Tour of the exhibition with Lee Bul

Generously Supported by:

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Lee Bul is presented as part of the Gallery's Institute of Asian Art initiative

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Image credit:

(left) Lee Bul, *Mon grand récit: Weep into stones . . .*, 2005, polyurethane, foamex, synthetic clay, stainless-steel and aluminum rods, acrylic panels, wood sheets, acrylic paint, varnish, electrical wiring, lighting, 280 x 440 x300 cm, at the Musée d'art modern et contemporain de Saint-Etienne métropole, France, 2015, Photo: Yves Bresson. Courtesy of Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Etienne metropole

(right) Lee Bul, *Untitled*, 2014, crystal, glass and acrylic beads, mirrors, stainless-steel, aluminum and black nickel rods, steel and bronze chains, stainless-steel, and aluminum armature, Courtesy the Artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong, Photo: Jeon Byung-cheol

-30-

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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