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Godmother of MOMA New York and contemporary art in New York Petah Coyne to mount exhibition in Asian; her first in Taiwan (Ha Jin) (Zhang Yimou)



Following her work in New York's MOMA, the Whitney Museum, Guggenheim, Brooklyn Museum, and other institutions, sculptor and photographer Peita Keyin (Petah Coyne) will hold an upcoming exhibition in Asia, her first in Taiwan, *Free Life*. The exhibition is inspired by Ha Jin's fictional novel *A Free Life*; thus, her use of medium, from silver prints to wax sculptures, are presented in the most primitive, unaltered forms that hold a deep desire for freedom. It also captures Petah Coyne's interest and enthusiasm for the culture of photography, natural forms, and human existence. In a tribute to "the grand masters", Petah Coyne pays homage to Chinese creatives Ha Jin and Zhang Yimou in her sculptures! To only see images of her work as exhibited in the United States is simply not enough – when the exhibition opens, one must simply see her works in person!



Petah Coyne captures the essence of life and our obsession for culture

Since she was young, contemporary sculptor and photographer Petah Coyne travelled the world due to the nature of her parent's jobs. Born in the American Midwest, Coyne's childhood was spent witnessing a wider world outside of this, including oriental culture. Coyne deeply believes in a multiculturalism that spans the five oceans, a theme that occurs in her 40 years of artistic production. Petah is widely known for her photography, sculpture, and installations, with both easygoing and complex ways of presenting her thirst for life and culture, humorous perspectives toward the current state of society, as well as making judgements toward the future.



Paying tribute to Ha Jin, Zhang Yimou, chasing a free life and Eastern philosophies

The exhibition *Free Life* refers to Chinese-born American-based writer Ha Jin's 2007 novel *A Free Life*, "You must go there, experience emigrating. Leave your sentimental belongings behind. Upon entering your new life, you will find fragrant flowers beneath your feet." In the midst of Ha Jin's novel, he depicts a family who leaves the comfort of their lives to settle into a strange new country and learn to make a living, in a story about chasing freedom. He says in earnest, "If you do not know how to utilize your freedom, freedom will not mean much to you." Not to be restricted or constrained – Petah Coyne pursues the same life. In the wax sculpture portion of the exhibition, Petah most especially advocates for Taiwan in the creation of a new sculpture "Ha Jin" and "Zhang Yimou", aside from paying tribute to these two masters, also highlights how Coyne's practice is richly informed by Eastern philosophies.



Wax sculpture expresses equality for all lives

One can clearly deduce from Petah Coyne's sculpture her passion for life. She uses the vine-like, corporeal quality of hot wax as her medium, capturing a movement and very natural appearance of how plants grow in reality. Her wax sculptures' materials give them a Baroque appearance, including for example silk flowers, velvet, feathers and other biomorphic objects, which often sneak their ways into the wax sculpture.

These works deal with themes of life as well as death, but Petah does not necessarily wish for her works to have a religious connotation. She continuously tries to shake free of and rejects this classification, and thus tries to obscure the religious symbols within her work in order to prevent viewers from associating it with a particular religion. Not restricted to gender, religion, endangered species, Petah's wax sculptures convey an equality between all lives. In her eyes, all lives should fundamentally be met with respect and tolerance.



Silver prints capture the disappearing aspects of life

Due to Ha Jin's film and novel "We only Have Life", the exhibition not only has sculpture. Petah's silver prints capture the speedy movement of monks, the skirts of tap-dancing brides – all capturing the free spirit of life.

Achieved through shining light on billowing folds, the process of silver prints is completely different from today's photography; though more difficult, the special effects of the silver print process is unparalleled. Petah considers life's candid moments to be like a beautiful, fragrant feast that is quickly devoured. She has described her own work as like Betoh general, "It was the depression within Li Zisheng's dance with death." These works have rushing monks, dancing brides; every piece captures an emotional moment in Petah's life, but also record how fleeting life is itself.