

# Michael Joo

## *Simultaneity Biases*

20 January — 24 February 2018

Private View:  
Friday 19 January, 6-9pm

Blain|Southern Berlin  
Potsdamer Straße 77-87  
(Mercator Höfe)  
10785 Berlin



Michael Joo, *That Which Just Evaporates All Around Us*, 2016  
Courtesy Savannah College of Art and Design  
Photo John McKinnon

In each of the works in his new exhibition at Blain|Southern Berlin, Michael Joo takes various approaches to the idea of transitory states of objects, identities and artworks.

Geological transformation, environmental disaster, human impact, disputed borderlands, industrial processes, material fabrication and atomic-level chemical reactions are all addressed, holding equal importance when it comes to the way Joo discusses liminal spaces in his work.

Two bodies of work in the exhibition draw from the artist's research into Sapelo Island, a naturally formed sedimentary landmass off the coast of the American state of Georgia. Used over centuries as an enclave for slave-driven industries such as tobacco plantations and timber mills, the island is now largely owned and populated by direct descendants of that enslaved workforce. As such, this now verdant nature reserve has layers of complex social and biological history that are continually overwriting one other.

Joo takes a cyclical approach to unpacking these layers in *That Which Just Evaporates All Around Us* (2016). The work references an enormous landmass of compacted sawdust left after Sapelo's intensive deforestation. Field recordings, taken from the island, play through a speaker encased within a frozen cube of sawdust that thaws over the span of the exhibition. Like the 'pulse' of the island, the natural sounds of Sapelo pump life into the speaker, becoming increasingly prominent as the man-made form of the block steadily disintegrates. Ideas of energy transfer, creation and destruction are also explored in the *Entasis* series of three large, composite silver-nitrate images of mature trees that were struck by lightning and petrified. These centuries-old sentinels are witnesses to generations of human time that were transformed in an instant into petrified monuments, slowly returning to nourish the island itself. These silver nitrate 'paintings' are created with a hybrid of traditional processes of photographic development, exemplifying the artist's continued interest in transformative and chemical processes.

Joo emphasises his cyclical approach with a body of work in glass collectively titled *Simultaneity Bias*. Here he turns the manufacturing process on its head by recreating in glass, tools and items from a glass blower's studio, such as palettes, a sawhorse and a stepladder. Producing glass casts of inflated paper bags, he reverse engineers glass blowing and takes the process full circle, back to the initial thought of the breath that gave form to the blown glass. In this sense, Joo explores the fabrication process as a liminal

space between the psychological and physical realm. The material nature of the glass also allows Joo to use speed to represent the concept time in a way that can be sensed and enacted. He creates a cycle that starts with slow-moving molten cast glass that is then arrested in a cooled and solid state, to form tools which are then operated at human speed that is itself dictated by the nature of the original material.

## Notes to Editors

### About the artist

Michael Joo (b. 1969, Ithaca, US) creates narratives that explore places, people and objects by reinterpreting perception.

He received his MFA from the Yale School of Art, Yale University, New Haven, in 1991, after graduating with a BFA from Washington University, St Louis, 1989. Solo exhibitions include: *Single Breath Transfer*, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, KR; *Uniformitarian Assumptions (and other ghosts)*, Galeria Carles Taché, Barcelona, ES; *Seven Sins*, Carolina Nitsch Project Room, New York, US (2017); *Barrier Island*, SCAD Georgia, Savannah, Georgia, US (2016); *Perspectives: Michael Joo*, Smithsonian Freer|Sackler Museum, Washington D.C., US (2016); *Radiohalo*, Blain|Southern, London, UK (2016); *Drift (Bronx)*, The Bronx Museum of Arts, New York, US (2014); *Transparency Engine*, SCAD Moot Gallery, Sham Shui Po HK (2014); Solo presentation of *Doppelganger*, Cass Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood UK (2014); *Michael Joo: Drift*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Connecticut, US (2014) and the South Korean Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale together with Do-Ho-Suh, IT (2001).

Joo's work is in numerous public and private collections, including FNAC, Paris; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Samsung Centre for Art and Culture, Seoul and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

### About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an international roster of contemporary artists and is the world-wide representative of The Estate of Lynn Chadwick. The gallery's recent exhibitions include James White, Sislej Xhafa, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Michael Simpson, Bernar Venet, Mat Collishaw, Jonas Burgert, Amy Feldman, Tim Noble & Sue Webster, Nasan Tur, Chiharu Shiota and the critically acclaimed group show, *Revolt of the Sage*.

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