



## Teachers' Resource Card Yona Lee *In Transit*

Yona Lee *In Transit (Double-Function Form)* 2018, Art Gallery of New South Wales

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Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

## Yona Lee *In Transit*

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### About the Exhibition

Yona Lee makes large, maze-like installations. Hundreds of metres of stainless-steel pipe are cut and welded to form elaborate linear structures, bisecting and transforming gallery spaces and the activities that take place there. By incorporating a miscellany of surprising urban and domestic fixtures, Lee infuses her pipe structures with an everyday surrealism.

The Auckland-based, New Zealand-Korean artist's work can be read in many ways: as structure or system, as minimalist or maximalist, as serious or funny, as aggressive or playful, as authoritarian or utopian, as utilitarian or pointless, as site-specific or self-contained, as light touch or heavy duty, as sculpture or drawing, and even as music.

Each work starts with Lee mapping the gallery space, and analysing its particular spatial and social dynamics. Lee conceives her sculpture in musical terms. At City Gallery, *In Transit* takes sonata form. It's staged as three interconnected structures spread across two downstairs galleries and the corridor that links them to the Auditorium. Form follows function as the sculpture traces the movement of utility pipes and tubes through and between these spaces. As it snakes around columns, behind walls, through vents and ceilings, Lee's work draws attention to functional dimensions of gallery architecture normally rendered invisible by the art work and expansive white walls. Lee invites visitors to interact with her work, adding switches, seats, and tables, even a phone charging station.

### Vocabulary

**Sculpture**—a three dimensional art object.

**Installation art**— a type of art that is three dimensional and often aims to transform a space. Installation art is different from sculpture as it is a complete unified experience, rather than a display of separate, individual artworks.

**Site-specific art**—is artwork created to exist in a certain place. The artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork. Installation art is often site-specific.

**Surrealism**—an art movement that began in the 1920's and rejects a rational vision of life in favour of one that values the unconscious and dreams. Surrealist artists are interested in the unexpected, the uncanny, the disregarded and the unconventional.

**Futurism**—an art movement that began in the 1920's that tries to express characteristics of the modern age, such as machines, speed, movement, and power.

### Pre-visit activity

Yona Lee was inspired by the bustling streets, bullet trains, and subway of Seoul in South Korea. Take a journey through your local area on foot, by car, train or bus. Notice the colours, shapes, sounds, objects, and spaces around you during your journey. Watch some YouTube clips of different ways of journeying through Seoul. What differences do you notice between the journeys in that city and your local area? Can you identify anything in Seoul that might have inspired Yona's sculpture?

### Post-visit Reflection and Activities

**Reflect** on your visit. What did it feel like to walk through, in-between, and around Yona's sculpture? How did you interact with the work? What did you enjoy about being in the space? What did the sculpture remind you of?

**Construct** a series of 3D, site-specific installations to divide up the volume of space in your classroom in interesting ways. Experiment with string, wool, elastic, washing line, bamboo, paper strips, cardboard tubes, or cardboard strips. What physical and logistical challenges do you need to overcome? How does your construction change the way the space looks, feels, or can be navigated? Invite students from another class into your installation and watch their reactions, and how they navigate the space. Document your work with photos or video. Which material and which installation produced the most interesting results and why?

**Draw** an abstract two dimensional maze-like pattern with two pencils taped together. Use graph paper as a background grid to help guide your drawing. Will the lines on your maze overlap and cross each other? Will your maze have one beginning and one end, several different beginnings and several different ends, or will it be one continuous looping journey?

**Experiment** with creating 3D spatial and sculptural designs by using these online digital tools:

<https://www.doodle3d.com/>

<https://www.putty3d.com/> <https://www.tinkercad.com/>

**Research** other artists who have approached space in interesting ways: Jim Allen, Tiffany Singh, Joanna Langford, Richard Serra, Peter Trevelyan, Sarah Sze, Cornelia Parker, Bill Culbert, Peter Robinson, Simon Morris, Esther Stocker. Compare and contrast one of these artists with Yona Lee and identify ways in which their work is similar or different.