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VICTORI + MO Presents:



View of *(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room.*, 2017 by Rachel Lee Hovnanian.
Courtesy of the artist and VICTORI + MO

(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room
November 3–December 22, 2017

September 8, 2017 (New York, NY) - VICTORI + MO is pleased to present ***(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room***, a solo exhibition of new and updated works by **Rachel Lee Hovnanian**, on view **November 3 - December 22, 2017**. The exhibition inaugurates *The Ray Lee Project*—an ongoing exploration of the gendered ways in which artworks are consumed. ***(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room*** is a large-scale immersive installation, which is accompanied by a series of small-scale mixed media works made using raw, natural pigments sourced from stone.

Working at the intersection of photography, video, sculpture, painting, and installation, Hovnanian's multidisciplinary artistic practice critically engages how digital technology has changed contemporary subjectivity, transforming human relationships and our perceptions of reality. In order to enter *(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room*, visitors must surrender their phones to be secured within a

lockbox. As one traverses the threshold of the installation, one's eyes adjust to the darkness of what appears to be an autumn night deep in the forest. Dry leaves crackle underfoot, while the chirps and whirrs of live insects fill the air. Few signs of civilization are present: a lantern and a campfire are all that illuminate the interior space. The calmness is meant to produce a meditative, introspective effect in the viewer. While it is recommended for visitors to commit to at least ten-minute immersion sessions, those who cannot tolerate this amount of time may exit the installation and retrieve their technological devices from the lockbox by smashing the glass encasement with a readily available hammer.

The title of the work derives from the concept of Nature Deficit Disorder ("NDD"), coined by American journalist and author Richard Louv to describe a form of human alienation from nature that results in both a greater susceptibility to negative moods and a reduced attention span. Hovnanian's inspiration for the work also comes from E.M. Forster's 1909 science fiction short story "The Machine Stops" (1909), which portrays a world where human beings live in isolation beneath the Earth's surface, depending on an all-powerful machine for survival. The story concludes with the collapse of the machine, and the collective realization of the doomed underground society that man's connection to the natural world is all that matters.

NDD Immersion Room was initially presented at the 2017 edition of SPRING/BREAK Art Show in New York City as a work created by Ray Lee, supposedly a male artist, and debuted during Armory Arts Week to a fair-going public unaware that both the art and the artist Ray Lee were inventions of Hovnanian. Ray Lee was Hovnanian's adolescent nickname, assigned by her peers to reflect her interest in stereotypically masculine outdoor past-times like camping and fishing. Her pastoral Texan upbringing serves as the imaginative source material for her work in this series.

About Rachel Lee Hovnanian

Rachel Lee Hovnanian (lives and works in New York City) received her BFA from the University of Texas, Austin, and has since exhibited internationally in both solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Her recent solo exhibitions have been held at Leila Heller Gallery, New York; Pechersky Gallery, Moscow; Joyce Gallery, Beijing; and Foundation Pons, Barcelona. In addition, Hovnanian has been widely shown in group exhibitions including the University of Connecticut, Connecticut; Parasol Unit in London; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines; Manarat al Saadivat, Abu Dhabi and at Loretta Howard Gallery, New York, in an exhibition curated by Beth Rudin DeWoody. Hovnanian's artwork has been featured in numerous publications such as *The New York Times*, *WWD*, *Flaunt*, *Cultured*, *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, *Vogue*, *Interview*, *Tatler*, *Food & Wine*, *ARTnews*, *Modern Painters*, *Hyperallergic* and *BOMB*.

About *The Ray Lee Project*

The Ray Lee Project engages with the history of female artists working under male pseudonyms in order to exhibit their work in male-dominated contexts that would often otherwise reject them due to their gender. The artist draws from her personal experience in which a powerful art world influencer initially celebrated her work *Perfect Baby Showroom*, thinking it was created by a man, and later dismissed the installation upon discovering it was created by Hovnanian.

About VICTORI + MO

VICTORI + MO is a contemporary art gallery located in Bushwick, Brooklyn dedicated to developing and presenting emerging artists. Founded by Ed Victori and Celine Mo in 2014, the gallery has consistently served as a platform for artistic experimentation centered on supporting collaborative efforts to realize novel and ambitious projects, providing artists the freedom to transform the gallery to create immersive

environments. VICTORI + MO's program focuses on storytelling at the intersection of personal, social, and political narratives, promoting empathetic experiences that are relevant to life in an increasingly globalized community. In addition to nurturing artists and mounting exhibitions, the gallery also functions as a center for rigorous intellectual exchange, hosting dialogues, lectures, and other community activities. VICTORI + MO aims to transcend geographic and cultural boundaries by creating dialogue not only between the artists and the public, but across generations.

Gallery Hours

Thursday – Sunday, 1pm - 6pm
And by appointment

Location

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Brooklyn, NY 11206

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