TWO WOMEN

Two Women, multimedia installation by Ha Na Lee

“Two Women” is an installation inspired by the invisible crisis of the suicide of the artist's grandmother. Though the motivation of her suicide is unknown, the work explores several possible ways to understand her death. The imagery of Two Women invokes themes of repression, resistance, submission, resignation, power, melancholy, death, and violence.

The piece consists of an elderly Korean woman narrating a story where describes her room, a dream about a room with two machines, and a fantasy in which she sees her younger self drowning.

The installation space is a cinematic realization of this fantasy, decorated as a domestic room in a state of decline and dispair. A pair of kinetic machines dominate the space. The machines record suicide-related news stories as morse code physically punched on a roll of black paper.

Each roll of punched paper slowly feeds into a pool of water where it forms a perforated projection screen for a video of a woman submerged under the water. The paper is pulled up to the ceiling where soft light reveals the structure and pattern of the punches.

The narrative is interwoven with news stories culled from Korean newspapers dating as far back as the 1920’s. The narrative and the stories are projected as subtitles on each of the punching machines - Korean on one side, and English translations on the other. The piece is driven algorithmically, with the movement of the machines, audio, and video progressing in concert with one another and reinforcing each other.