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Serena Seo Yeon Lee



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PROFILE

Serena has a commercial, chancery, and international arbitration practice.

Serena originally qualified as a New York attorney in 2019, and worked as an associate at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan in London from 2019 to 2023. In that role, Serena worked on international commercial and treaty arbitration cases and complex commercial disputes. Serena has also worked as a judicial assistant at the High Court (Commercial Court).

Serena has published on international arbitration and commercial law topics in leading law journals such as the Lloyd's Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly, Arbitration International, the ICSID Review, and the Journal of International Dispute Settlement.

EXPERTISE

International Arbitration

Serena has particular experience in international commercial and investment treaty arbitration work. She was previously an arbitration associate at Quinn Emanuel from 2019 to 2023, and continues to practise in that field.

Her experience includes:

- Representing the claimant contractors in a DIAC arbitration concerning a complex construction project in a Middle Eastern state, involving claims of c. USD $198 million

- Representing a European aerospace company in a Swiss-seated arbitration involving a contractual dispute concerning the repair and maintenance of aircraft
- Advising on a proposed s.68 Arbitration Act 1996 application arising out of a London-seated arbitration involving a contractual dispute between a European software developer and a US company
- Representing the claimant in a commercial arbitration involving contractual claims concerning an international oil major's failure to deliver LNG cargoes (LCIA rules, London seat)
- Representing the claimant in a commercial arbitration concerning breaches of an electricity supply contract between an electricity company and a copper mining and smelting company (UNCITRAL rules, London seat)
- Representing the claimant in a commercial arbitration involving claims brought by a UK investor against a regional government of a Middle Eastern state arising out of a gas extraction project (LCIA rules, London seat)
- Representing the claimant in a commercial arbitration concerning the validity of energy tariff adjustments made by a state-owned entity in an African state (UNCITRAL rules, London seat)
- Representing the respondent in a commercial arbitration concerning breaches of an asset distribution agreement between the shareholders of a group of companies (ICC rules, Paris seat)
- Representing the claimant in a commercial arbitration involving a dispute arising from the late exercise of a share option in a shareholders' agreement (DIFC-LCIA rules, DIFC seat)
- Representing the investor claimant in an investment treaty arbitration against a Central Asian state arising out of failed national rail and road projects (ICSID)
- Representing the investor claimant in an investment treaty arbitration against a Middle Eastern state involving a dispute about the revocation of aviation licences (ICSID)
- Representing the respondent State in an investment treaty arbitration involving claims arising out of the alleged expropriation of a factory (UNCITRAL rules, London seat)
- Representing an investor claimant in an investment treaty arbitration against a South American state concerning the alleged expropriation of a brokerage company (ICSID)
- Representing an investor claimant in a treaty-based PCA arbitration against an international organisation (UNCITRAL rules, The Hague seat)

Commercial Disputes and Insolvency

Serena has a broad commercial disputes practice. She frequently works on complex commercial matters with an international element. Serena also acts and advises in relation to corporate and personal insolvency proceedings.

Recent work includes:

- Representing the claimant contractors in a DIAC arbitration concerning a complex construction project in a Middle Eastern state, involving claims of c. USD $198 million.
- Representing a European aerospace company in a Swiss-seated arbitration involving a contractual dispute concerning the repair and maintenance of aircraft
- Advised on a proposed s.68 Arbitration Act 1996 application arising out of a London-seated arbitration involving a contractual dispute between a European software developer and a US company
- Advising on a contractual dispute between a European food manufacturer and a subsidiary of a global agribusiness company, including on jurisdictional issues
- Advising a European creditor of a UK company in relation to a proposed CVL and potential misfeasance claims
- Advising a European bank on the extra-territorial enforcement of costs orders made by the Commercial

Court

- Advising a European oil major on contractual issues arising out of an EPC contract to construct a Floating Production Storage and Offloading platform
- Advising a European investment company in relation to a commercial transaction involving the assignment of corporate debts
- Advising a UK IT company on the prospects of a creditor commencing insolvency proceedings
- Advising a UK manufacturer of aircraft components on the prospects of challenging a winding-up order
- Representing a shareholder of a property development company in unfair prejudice proceedings (High Court, Chancery Division)
- Representing a defendant in civil fraud proceedings in the Supreme Court of Gibraltar involving alleged misconduct by the directors of a joint venture company and its auditors
- Advising a derivatives trading company in relation to a dispute with a European state-owned enterprise concerning EU emission allowances
- Advising an investment manager in Commercial Court proceedings involving a civil fraud dispute between joint venturers in an investment fund
- Various appearances in the Insolvency and Companies Court and the County Courts for winding-up and bankruptcy petitions.
- Representing a UK manufacturer of thermal defence products in professional negligence proceedings in the High Court (Chancery Division) against a former director
- Representing a UK construction company at a trial concerning a contractual dispute with a UK real estate company (County Court)
- Representing a UK manufacturer of leather products at trial in relation to a breach of contract claim (County Court)

FURTHER INFO

Publications

- ‘The nature and parameters of the ‘market substitute’ rule’ [2024] Lloyd’s Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly 533
- ‘The applicability of Henderson v Henderson in an arbitration seated in England’ (2022) Arbitration International 278 (co-authored)
- ‘Procedural Prerequisites to Arbitration: Categorisation over Construction?’ [2022] Lloyd’s Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly 40
- ‘Taxonomising ‘quasi-contractual’ anti-suit injunctions’ [2021] Lloyd’s Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly 58 (co-authored)
- ‘An Employer’s (Dis)entitlement to Liquidated Damages for Delay Where the Contractor Never Completes: Defending ‘Orthodoxy’’ (Society of Construction Law Papers 2020), Winning Entry in the SCL Hudson Essay Prize Competition 2020
- ‘Supervision y Control v. Costa Rica: Developing the Pantechniki v. Albania Standard for ‘Fork in the Road’ Provisions in Investment Treaties’ (2019) 34(1) ICSID Review 203 (co-authored)
- ‘Why Allianz v West Tankers Still Applies under the Brussels Regulation (Recast): An Analysis of Nori Holdings v Bank Otkritie[2018] EWHC 1343 (Comm)’ (2019) 10(4) Journal of International Dispute

Settlement 520 (co-authored)

- ‘Anti-Suit Injunctions Enforcing Arbitration Agreements in the EU: Analytical Failings’ [2017] 2 Cambridge Law Review 12 (co-authored)

Education

- LLM, Columbia Law School, Columbia University
- BA Law (Senior Status), University of Cambridge
- BA Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, University of Oxford

Languages

Korean (fluent)

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