

haegue yang's straw creatures take over 'latent dwelling' exhibition at kukje gallery hanok

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HAEGUE YANG'S LATENT DWELLING AT KUKJE GALLERY IN SEOUL

Until October 8, 2023, Kukje Gallery in Seoul presents Haegue Yang's Latent Dwelling, greeting visitors at the gallery's Hanok, a traditional Korean house. Yang's approach in this exhibition revolves around capturing the latent energy of hibernation. The exhibition actively embraces the house's present 'latent' condition, preserving it as a transitional phase frozen in time before completely transforming into a fully developed exhibition space.

As visitors enter the exhibition, their senses are immediately welcomed by the herbal scent of Chinese medicine and the gentle flickering of electric candles spread throughout the space. In one corner of the Hanok, sculptures are casually arranged on the floor, while in another, they serve as storage containers or mimic straw sacks found in a granary. The works, densely displayed within the modestly sized interior of the Hanok, encompass various series created over different years. Yang's approach to the Hanok is unconventional, aiming to create a context where artworks exist in their own unique time and space, rather than a standard gallery setup. The artist hopes Latent Dwelling will allow her works to be experienced in a more natural manner, akin to offseason landscapes or actors away from the limelight.



Kukje Gallery Hanok Haegue Yang Presentation, Latent Dwelling
installation view | all images provided by Kukje Gallery

HAEGUE YANG'S FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION IN KOREA

In August 2006, the South Korean artist held her first solo exhibition in Korea, titled *Sadong 30*, in an abandoned house in Sa-dong, Incheon. For this show, Yang had to clean the uninhabited house, which had accumulated waist-high trash, and restore electricity. As these issues were addressed, Haegue Yang began to bring in various mundane items, such as broken mirrors, light fixtures, IV stands, wall clocks, origami objects, and fluorescent paint, creating a unique 'ghostly' ambiance in the space.

Surprisingly, a cloth-wrapped drying rack appeared in the master bedroom, even though there was no laundry to be done, and a vintage ventilator was placed in front of a stroboscope, giving the impression of slow rotation. Instead of conventional storage, a lookout station was set up, where visitors could rest and freely access a cooler for water. This unconventional use of materials and unfamiliar objects throughout the space was quite unique and somewhat alienating, but it was the old house itself that brought these disparate elements together.

In contrast to the loose composition of *Sadong 30*, *Latent Dwelling* features a more cohesive body of work within a relatively stable setting. However, similar to *Sadong 30*, the reliance on natural light during the day and handheld flashlights at night, creates a sense of continuity between the two exhibitions. This connection to place, combined with the ongoing construction of the Hanok, conveys a feeling of perpetual transition interwoven with the passage of time.



straw creatures dominate the Latent Dwelling show at Kukje Gallery Hanok

INSIDE KUKJE GALLERY'S HANOK

Entering the exhibition, visitors will first come across a light sculpture titled Totem Robots (2010) from Haegue Yang's series displayed behind a glass front. As they proceed, they'll encounter The Intermediate – Five-Legged Frosty Fecund Imoogi (2020), a piece from The Intermediates series primarily made of artificial straw. The creature appears lifelike, with its head lifted above the ground, leaving it unclear whether it's rising or descending. One of its arms extends over a distant crossbeam, and bell seedpods hang beneath its tentacles. Moving on, visitors will encounter one of Yang's most recent works, Sonic Planet Pockets – Iridescent Botanic Map (2023). This creation, resembling a large beehive or fruit, is covered in iridescent bells and contains pockets filled with artificial plants representing different regions like the ocean floor, desert, and tropics, blending artificial and natural elements.



The Intermediate – Five-Legged Frosty Fecund Imoogi (2020)

Beyond this, there's a wall-mounted reflective black sculpture called *Obscure Rotating Reflective Running Black Cube-Handle Faucets – Scaly Squirrels #17* (2023). Visitors then enter a relatively dark and compact rear space filled with larger sculptural pieces from *The Intermediates* series. Among them is *Sonic Rotating Whatever Running on Hemisphere #22* (2022), as well as sculptures from the ongoing *Sonic Clotheshorse – Dressage* series (2020–). Finally, through a window on one side, visitors can spot *The Intermediate – Seven-Legged Carbonous Male Imoogi* (2023), wrapped around trees in the Hanok's backyard.

On the opposite side of the entrance, there's a well-organized area that used to serve as a showroom. It showcases a variety of artworks, including monoprints created by the artist over a decade, pieces from her *Lacquer Paintings* series that capture accidental environmental impressions like raindrops and dust, as well as the abstract *Carsick Drawing* series depicting bumpy roads in the China-Vietnam border region. The collection also features sculptures such as *Biped Chalky of Innate Black* and *Mesmerizing Two-Leaf Folding Screen*, drawing inspiration from folklore and shamanistic rituals. In the Hanok's courtyard, one can find pieces from the *Mesmerizing Mesh* series, inspired by the shamanic tradition of *Sacred Paper Cutting*, and *Sonic Rope*, an installation inspired by the Korean folktale *Sister Sun and Brother Moon*, symbolizing an escape from reality.



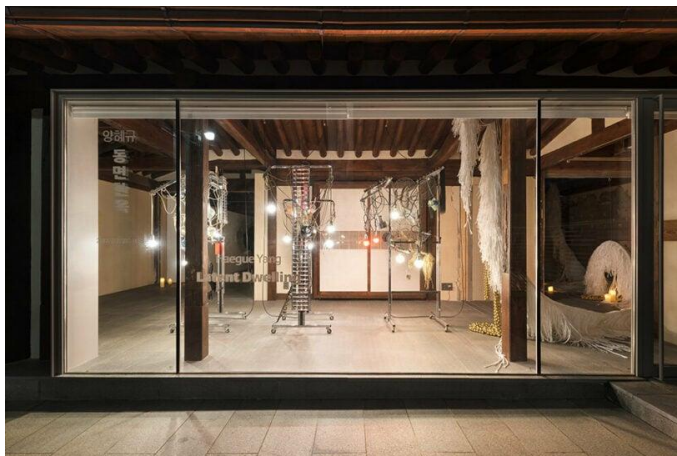
Sonic Planet Pockets – Iridescent Botanic Map (2023)



The Intermediate – Five-Legged Frosty Fecund Imoogi (2020)



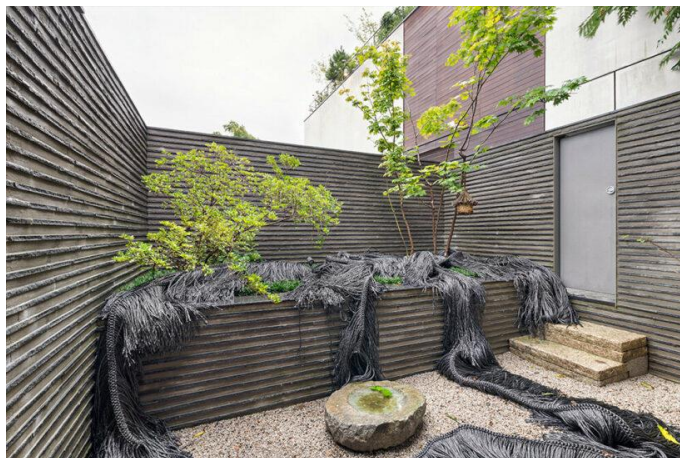
Totem Robots (2010)





Obscure Rotating Reflective Running Black Cube-Handle Faucets
– Scaly Squirrels #17 (2023)





The Intermediate – Seven Legged Carbonous Male Imoogi (2023)