

Haegue Yang

Mesmerizing Mesh – Paper Leap and Resonating Habitat

October 18 — December 3, 2022



Descending Medusa Hands: Buddhistta Requiem - Mesmerizing Mesh #109, 2022 (detail).
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. © Studio Haegue Yang.

For me, it is curiously exciting when something appears alien but simultaneously demonstrates an affinity to the human realm.
—Haegue Yang

Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris is pleased to announce Haegue Yang's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition presents Yang's further exploration of her signature materials such as venetian blinds and metallic bells as well as her recent investigation into *hanji* (traditional handmade Korean paper derived from the mulberry tree), which has resulted in a new body of work consisting of paper collages.

Mesmerizing Mesh – Paper Leap and Resonating Habitat, the exhibition title, reveals the two main elements of the show—paper works and sculptures. Nineteen *hanji* collages from the *Mesmerizing Mesh* series form the exhibition's focus; alongside these, sculptures made of paper, bells, and venetian blinds inhabit the rest of the gallery space in an intriguing co-existence.

Yang's engagement with paper collage techniques has become recognized through the production of series, such as *Trustworthies* (since 2010) and *Hardware Store Collages* (since 2012). *Mesmerizing Mesh* (since 2021) however, builds its central idea onto counter-authoritarian spiritual orientations such as shamanism. While her research has been extensive, her production deliberately circles around the materiality of paper. *Hanji* or similar mulberry paper can be found in various artistic as well as ritualistic traditions in places like Korea, Japan, and China. For her initial production of *Mesmerizing Mesh*, Yang has focused on motifs and objects in shamanism, Shinto, and folk rituals used to create objects reserved for purifying, healing, and exorcizing rites.

The *Mesmerizing Mesh* works take different forms. Some deal with the process of "formation" and are composed of geometric and abstract patterns unfolding and spreading out from the center. They reference *sumun*, a sheet hung from the ceiling in rituals sites to keep away evil spirits. Others represent figurative and almost anthropomorphic motifs. They resemble soul sheets (*nukjeon*), in which the shaman blows a spirit treated as the identical entity of the deceased being honored. Of late, the collages have been displayed against hand-dyed multicolored backdrops and also gradually combined with vegetal or animal motifs drawing from the Slavic tradition of *wycinanki*. By folding, cutting, and perforating *hanji*, Yang examines a methodology shared between artists and shamans of taking "mystic leaps" out of earthly matter into something beyond.

Next to the *Mesmerizing Mesh*, *Mesmerizing Pagoda – Overgrown Ultramundane Flowers* (2022), a sculpture made of green painted birchwood and *hanji* flowers, is suspended from the ceiling. Paper has been chosen instead of real flowers, similar to sacred paper money, and *hanji* flowers appear both in Korean Buddhist as well as shamanistic rituals. Most of those *hanji* flowers are fantastical, symbolizing the topology of sacred places beyond this world, while the structural panels are all cut by computer numerical control or CNC, a common technique in the architectural world of maquette-making.

In the corridor, two wall-mounted blind works are on view. *Angular Evergreen Climber Habitat* (2022) and *Alternating Hollyhock Habitat* (2022) present Yang's employment of venetian blinds. As industrial and domestic objects, the blinds are a hybrid material, both common and personal. Drawn to their ambiguity as well as their formal structure of slats that can be opened and closed, the artist's blind installations evoke the permeable boundaries between inside and outside, private and public. The titles of Yang's new works allude to the natural home of living organisms, imagined as welcoming environments for creeping plants such as the hollyhock or evergreen climbers to grow and develop. Their spread-out shape gives the impression that they are devouring the walls, growing indefinitely on their fertile environment while concealing it completely. Far from their original function as objects, the blinds no longer cover windows and hide the inside of the home; they now obscure walls, making the "home" disappear under their developing force.

Three *Sonic Celestial Ropes* (2022) hanging from the ceiling punctuate the gallery space. In Yang's Sonic Sculptures, the primary material is the bell, used as a visual, physical, and sonic material. Not only do bells carry connotations of sound

and movement, each of Yang's Sonic Sculptures emits an inherent sound when activated by human intervention, referencing the rattling of bells in religious ceremonies and rites. The *Sonic Celestial Ropes*, in particular, were inspired by a Korean folk tale of two siblings who climbed a robe into the sky to escape a tiger, eventually turning into the Sun and the Moon. By interpreting the rope as one of bells, the artist highlights the bell as a medium between the physical and spiritual realms.

In the parquet room, a display of books, including several rare ones, provides further insight into various paper cutting traditions, such as Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Jewish, Slavic and Mexican cultures. This focused selection of resources sheds light on Yang's sources of inspiration and reflection as well as anticipate Yang's future development of *Mesmerizing Mesh*.

Haegue Yang
Lives and works in Berlin and Seoul.

Haegue Yang creates installations that include photographic, video, and sculptural elements and are informed by her philosophical and political researchs. Responding to the places where she exhibits, Yang creates site-specific new work that incorporates both the architecture of the exhibition space and materials gathered from the region. Her highly refined and yet particular sense of materiality, combined with an elegant sense of space and atmosphere, contribute to her enveloping and resonant installations.

In 2018, Haegue Yang was awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize by the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Yang's work has been presented in solo exhibition by the following institutions: Statens Museum for Kunst - SMK, Copenhagen (2022); Tate St Ives, St Ives (2020); Museum Of Modern Art, New York (2019); The Bass, Miami Beach (2019); South London Gallery (2019); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2018); KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2017); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2016); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2016); UCCA Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2015); Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2015); Tate Modern, London (2012); Kunsthalle Lingen (2011); Aspen Art Museum (2011); Kunsthau Bregenz (2011); New Museum, New York (2010); Walker Art Center (2009); South Korean Pavilion, Venice Biennale (2009); Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2008) among others.

Her works are featured in the collection of numerous institutions, including the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, U.S.A.; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, U.S.A.; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Museum of Modern Art, New York, U.S.A.; M+, Hong Kong, China; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea; and The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, U.S.A.