

hands-on

Hwado

Jimin Lee

08 - 28 November 2024

Online Exhibition



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Hands-on is pleased to present Hwado, an online presentation of recent works by Jimin Lee.

Hwado is a Korean term that combines “hwa” (painting) and “do” (path or way), symbolising the journey of artistic creation— a voyage through the landscapes of the mind and the material world.

The Hwado series reimagines traditional landscape painting by exploring the interplay of materiality, space, and time. Born from Lee’s deep curiosity about the concept of “landscape”, this series reflects a personal journey to capture the essence of the intangible. A key aspect of the project involves a performative act of temporarily returning canvases to their original locations, symbolising traces of presence and records of inhabited spaces. During this process, the imperfections of natural elements like light and wind become part of the visual narrative.

This collection of medium-format photographs serves as the physical embodiment of each moment's essence, inviting viewers to share in the emotions and experiences that reflect the flow of space and time. Using natural materials like Hanji (traditional Korean paper) and sand, Lee’s work involves techniques of layering, staining, and scratching to evoke depth and texture. Each piece reveals the dynamic evolution of colours and materials, inviting profound contemplation on the nature of art and existence.

The Hwado project departs from narrative-driven work, shifting the focus toward a direct exploration of self and space. It calls to venture into nature, to immerse in its embrace, and to document Lee’s experiences as she confronts the challenge of “recording” these encounters. The process involves a series of tasks— from exploring the terrain to constructing frames and applying paper and canvas— all of which are integral to leaving her mark on the work. Through this, she seeks to capture the essence of space through landscape painting, translating her experiences into tangible artworks. By relocating these landscape paintings to their original environments, the aim is to deepen the connection between the painting and the space, elucidating the intricate relationship between them.

Reflecting on the artist’s previous project “Ikebana”— a short autobiographical film inspired by the Japanese art of flower arranging— Lee recognises the profound power of storytelling in materialising intangible concepts. Employing the motif of “seasons” as a unifying thread, she sought to weave disparate memories into a cohesive narrative, punctuated by surreal elements that underscore the editing process inherent in storytelling.

JIMIN LEE | About the artist

Jimin Lee (b.2001, Korea) is a visual artist whose creative journey is deeply rooted in an exploration of time, space, and cultural identity. Born in Seoul and raised in diverse cultural environments- including China and the United States- Lee graduated from Yewon Arts School and Seoul Arts High School, before moving to London as a student at Central Saint Martins, where she broadened her approach, experimenting with various mediums, from film photography to digital art.

Lee's work is distinguished by her meticulous use of traditional materials such as paint, Hanji (Korean paper), charcoal, and pencil, as well as her innovative incorporation of tactile elements like sand. Influenced by Korean monochrome painting and the Japanese Mono-ha movement, her process is labour-intensive and meditative, emphasising repetitive actions that explore the relationship between time, space, and materiality.

Lee has exhibited her work in prestigious venues, including group exhibitions at Gyeongbokgung Metro Station (Seoul) in 2017, Seoul Arts High School in 2018-2019, and Bank Station (London) in 2023. Her final graduation work was showcased at Central Saint Martins in June 2024. She has received recognition in the form of a Highly Commended award (4th place) at the 2024 Maison/O Earth Awards.