

TheoGanz Studio

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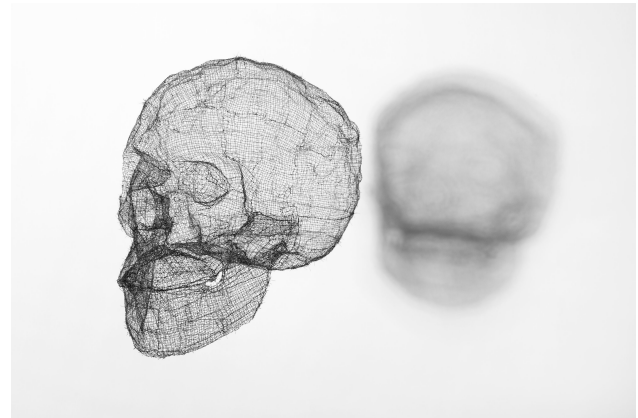
Jayoung Yoon *Ephemerality*

Sculpture • Painting • Video

June 11 - July 10, 2016

Opening reception June 11 6-8 PM

Artist Talk Thursday, June 23 7-8 PM



TheoGanz Studio is pleased to present *Ephemerality*, a solo exhibition of recent sculpture, painting and video by Jayoung Yoon, a Korean-born artist now living and working in Beacon, New York who is known for her interdisciplinary art using human hair as a medium. The artist's video, *Crown of Thoughts*, and her painting, *Empty Void*, were included in the gallery's recent group show, *Dispatches from Eternity*.

Yoon completed her MFA in Painting at Hongik University in Seoul, Korea in 2006 before relocating to the US and attending Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan where she completed the Fiber Art program and received an MFA in 2009. Since then, the artist has attended a dozen residencies and has been awarded numerous fellowships and scholarships for, most recently, The Artist in the Marketplace program at Bronx Museum, 2016; the Vermont Studio Center, 2015; BRIC Media Arts, 2014; Franklin Furnace Grant Fund; Sculpture Space; Anderson Ranch Arts Center and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, among others.

It was at Cranbrook that Yoon first started to use human hair as a medium in her art work; she spends countless hours hand-knotting strands of her hair, a tactile,

ephemeral symbol of the spiritual and physical realms, into such shapes as a lotus leaf, a glove, skull, cube, or even a crown. Many of her sculptures will be found in her videos as an integral part of her meditative performance rituals.

Shaped by an upbringing which included an eclectic range of influences - Christian, Buddhist and Pungmul, a traditional Korean ritual music and Salpuri, a shamanistic healing dance her mother used to perform as a therapist and teacher - Yoon intuitively understood the power of ritual and repetition. Such traditions as Korean embroidery with colorful threads and hand sewing and knitting were passed down to the artist from her mother and aunt; Yoon was taught the craft of repairing clothing, socks and making winter sweaters and scarves. "Threads were part of my aesthetic consciousness," she explains. Further, a year before coming to the States, Yoon attended a spiritual retreat which was a turning point in her thinking. She states: "I learned the practice of fully inhabiting the present, cleansing the memory and



acknowledging our duality...since then, my art has been influenced by diverse spiritual practices and texts that emphasize clearing the mind and directing attention into the body to achieve a heightened awareness of the present."

Yoon's videos become an immersive act of meditation over a compressed period of time - conveyed by the subtle shift in light - in which one experiences a perceptible slowing down and merging with the androgynous figure of the artist, usually with her back to the camera facing an empty, white landscape such as a desert, symbolically a place of spiritual searching. Yoon ritualistically shaves her head for the filming so her identity becomes neutral and detached from the

material world. One emerges with a feeling of serenity and well-being after experiencing her films.

Yoon elaborates:

I use the hair sheared from my head, then transform it into sculptures. I make shaped forms out of the woven hair that represent invisible thoughts. In my videos, I connect the 'invisible thoughts' to my head, often lifting slowly into the air and disappearing as a cleansing gesture. The videos become ritualistic meditation ceremonies. My head is shaved - as monks do - representing a detachment from materialist identity. I meditate with my back to the camera, embodying a detachment from gender, culture, and thought. The immersive quality of the videos in conjunction with my androgynous appearance invites viewers to inhabit my body, and experience the process of clearing the mind.



Jayoung Yoon, *Crown of Thoughts*, 2014, stills, single-channel, hd video, 16:9 video, 10 min

In *Crown of Thoughts*, 2014, Yoon's small, childlike figure is facing the desert, her back towards the camera; she is wearing her human hair sculpture, *Crown of Thoughts*, which she directly relates to Christ's *Crown of Thorns*. "Making a crown of thorns out of human hair symbolized the impurity of mind, which causes our pain; in the video *Crown of Thoughts*, I am enduring and letting go of the mind's impurity as an act of purification."

In addition to sculpture, performance and video, the artist has a diversity of 2D work ranging from the reductive grid and oval hair paintings to monoprints and drawings. The recent series, *Sensory Thresholds* (2014-2016), approaches "a simple space of perceiving structure fading away into the painted ether, representing thoughts dissolving or surfacing between states of the conscious and unconscious mind." Here, Agnes Martin's work is an acknowledged inspiration and influence.

Jayoung Yoon's extensive range and background is luminously archived on her website, jayoungart.com and on Thursday, June 23 from 7-8 PM the artist will give a talk on her work at the gallery. Seating is limited; we respectfully request an RSVP by June 17 to Eleni Smolen, director, TheoGanz Studio; email theoganzstudio@tds.net.

TheoGanz Studio is open Fri-Sun from 12-5 PM and by appointment. The gallery is located in Beacon's west end at 149 Main Street. The website is theoganzstudio.com.



Jayoung Yoon, *Sensory Thresholds 22*, 2016, Human hair, gouache, acrylic medium on panel, 8 x 8 in

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