

QUESTIONS TO HA CHA YOUN FOR THE EXHIBITION “HOME(S) PROJECT”

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1. Why is the subject of poverty important to you?

I believe I'm seeking harmony and balance within society. Despite the discomfort in addressing the subject of poverty, it undeniably exists widely throughout our society, almost everywhere.

When we feel fragile and find ourselves facing difficulties, we tend to seek parallels in similar situations, don't we?

Bringing visibility to societal concerns is important. It aims to provide a fair place for these issues.

2. What does the plastic bag mean for you – you use it very often?

The daily material, varied color, transparency, and environmentally poor material of the bags are like the clothes of a person. However, the true essence of the bags I use represents individuals without a place to call home.

In my artistic practice, I often interconnect plastic bags and frames. The plastic bags symbolize those experiencing homelessness, both physically and culturally, finding it challenging to establish a new cultural home upon immigration.

These bags are depicted in a state of motion, flying and floating, portraying the transient nature of their existence. My aim is to provide a temporary settlement, offering a framework for these bags—a place to reside. Yet, it remains impermanent.

For the plastic bags, I refrain from using glue and avoid altering their shape, employing a simple folding system. At any given moment, they can depart from the frame and regain their freedom.

I've incorporated plastic bags into my artistic works since the early 90s."

3. Could you please explain the idea behind the “Tojjigi” project?

For “Tojjigi”, the plastic bags collected from the “Toji” area are displayed without glass frames. They are filled with earth from various locations and placed on a hill, overlooking the fields.

“Tojjigi” translates to 'Watchwoman of the earth' or 'Watchwoman of the Land.' The intention is for these plastic bags to not fly away but to watch over this place, providing a space for my plastic bags.

Primarily, it's a homage to the renowned Korean author, “Park Kyung-ni”, celebrated as a national novelist in Korea. It also pays tribute to farmers who resist in a traditional and eco-friendly manner.

This performance was initially realized in 2016 during an artist residency in Korea. It will be presented for the first time at Lescer Art Center this year, accompanying a new work titled "Return Home", created in Brittany, France. This piece is dedicated to the victims of the Mediterranean Sea.

4. Some of Your works were created in Korea, some in Europe. How important is the background for you?

I travel occasionally, but rarely for tourism purposes. Most of the time, I reside in Europe. When I travel, it's often to visit family, places I've lived before, or locations related to work-related exhibitions.

I find myself in both an immigrant and emigrant situation. It's crucial for me to establish equal importance and existence in two places - Europe and Korea."

5. What do You think is the role / impact of socially engaged art these days? Do you consider your art this way?

I'm not closely connected to social networks, and often many active artists who are socially engaged may not be prominently visible in exhibition spaces.

I'm deeply connected to and observe the happenings in our societies: the diverse ways of life and thinking, political landscapes, global economy, and consumption patterns. These elements significantly influence me and a part of my artistic works.

However, labeling myself as a socially engaged artist carries a very weighty responsibility, which limits me. It's a significant constraint.

If everyone were to ask the question, 'Is the world going well?' (Est-ce que le monde va bien?), it would be truly impactful.

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