

PRESS RELEASE

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Re:visioning HANJI Exhibition to launch as a part of Asia Week 2016 at the Korean Cultural Center New York

*Hanji, Korean traditional paper created by “ninety-nine touches by the maker and one touch by the user” is presented in showcase exhibition from **February 24th to March 31st, 2016** (Gallery Korea at the Korean Cultural Center New York, 460 Park Ave. 6th Floor, NYC)*



Highlights include:

- **Exhibition on view from Wednesday, February 24th to Thursday, March 31st. The Opening Reception will take place on Wednesday, March 9th from 6 to 8 pm.**
- **Artwork by contemporary artists Ran Hwang and Aimee Lee to be featured in the exhibition**
- **Special hanji making seminar and hands-on workshop by Aimee Lee on Saturday, March 12th and Sunday, March 13th**

New York, NY – Celebrating 1000 years of the rich history of *hanji*, Korean traditional handmade paper, the Korean Cultural Center New York presents a feature exhibition of *hanji* artworks by contemporary artists Ran Hwang and Aimee Lee in **Re:visioning HANJI**.

Hanji literally means ‘the paper of Hanguk (the Korean term to refer to the country),’ and is the exquisite traditional Korean paper made with the fibrous skin of mulberry trees. The process of making *hanji* is lengthy and complicated, and it is said the completion of a single sheet of *hanji* requires “ninety-nine touches by the maker and one touch by the user.” The deliberate complexity and multilayered steps required for the creation of *hanji* is not only a direct reflection of its rich history but also contributes to its longstanding allure. In its respect of nature in the production process, its unmatched resilience and textural range, and the ways that *hanji* has so closely been intertwined with the livelihood of Koreans (not only for as paper for drawing and writing but in the creation of everyday, household products), *hanji* has been an indispensable part of Korean history.

The exhibition explores the past, present, and future of *hanji* – from its long history since the 4th and 5th centuries in the Korean peninsula to the visually and texturally intricate artworks and industrial application in our contemporary times, Re:visioning HANJI is a celebration of the deep tradition and continuing potential of *hanji* in the global market.

The participating artist, **Ran Hwang**, is an internationally renowned poetic installation artist who uses thousands of handmade *hanji* buttons to create large-scale installation works. Hwang’s 9 feet tall installation depicting the Triumphal Arch and Eiffel Tower will be shown at the exhibition. The installation, the Beginning of the Bright, is made of Hanguk (Korean alphabet) shaped *hanji* buttons to celebrate Hanguk’s designation as a UNESCO Record Cultural Heritage. **Aimee Lee** is a *hanji* educator, artist, and a founder of the first and only Korean papermaking studio in North America at the Morgan Conservatory in Cleveland. The exhibition will display diverse range of Lee’s artworks from woven *hanji* ducks to *hanji* dresses and more.

Further detailed information and materials on the history, materials, and applications of *hanji* can be viewed and downloaded at our website at www.koreanculture.org

Partnered Event: HANJI Workshop

A weekend ***hanji* workshop will be held on Saturday, March 12th and Sunday, March 13th** at the Korean Cultural Center New York led by artist **Aimee Lee**, one of the leading *hanji* experts in the United States. The workshops provide an in-depth and hands-on opportunity to learn about the nuanced process of making *hanji*, and also is a great chance to make your own *hanji* craftworks.

The program is free, but reservations are required and space is limited. Please note that programs on March 12th and 13th differ, and level of difficulty should be noted. For more information on the workshop, please email gallerykorea@gmail.com.

For press inquiries, please contact Mickey Hyun at mickeyhyun@koreanculture.org or pr@koreanculture.org (212-759-9550 ext. 212).

For further inquiries on the exhibition, please contact Curator Hee Sung Cho at hyangaoao@koreanculture.org (212-759-9550 ext. 204).

Participating Artists

Aimee Lee



Aimee Lee is papermaking artist and the leading *hanji* researcher and practitioner in the United States. She holds a BA from Oberlin College and an MFA from Columbia College Chicago. She researched Korean paper arts as a Fulbright fellow and built the first and only Korean papermaking studio in North America in 2010 at the Morgan Conservatory in Cleveland. In 2012, The Legacy Press published her first book, *Hanji Unfurled: One Journey into Korean Papermaking*, recognized by the Eric Hoffer Book Award in 2013.

Based on Korean gifting and *hanji* traditions, Aimee Lee's *Hanji Ducks and Pot* series are 100% *hanji*, woven and naturally dyed in varied dimensions, gestures, and environments. Lee says, "my pieces examine traditional objects used in various moments of life and history: paper shoes, once in vogue during the last dynasty in Korea; wedding ducks given to bride and groom to encourage fidelity and fertility; and water or wine gourds to store and improve the taste of beverages while traveling. I alter these forms by changing their proportions, shapes, and pairings to see how older technologies and stories inform contemporary versions of objects we use to this day."

Lee exhibits internationally, and her artists' books reside in collections that include the Joan Flasch Artists' Books Collection, Museum of Modern Art Library, and Yale University Haas Library. She teaches and lectures at sites that include the American Museum of Natural History, Asian Art Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, Denver Art Museum, Cleveland Institute of Art, Institute of East Asian Studies at UC Berkeley, Metropolitan Museum of Art Paper Conservation Department, Oberlin College, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Mills College, Notre Dame College, UC Davis, UW Seattle, University of the Arts, University of Iowa Center for the Book, Center for Book Arts, Peters Valley School of Craft, Penland School of Crafts, and North Bennett Street School. She has been a resident artist at Art Farm, Jentel, Guapamacátaro Center for Art and Ecology, Haystack, Ox-Bow, Ragdale, Saltonstall Arts Colony, Santa Fe Art Institute, Vermont Studio Center, and Weir Farm Arts Center. Funders include the US Fulbright Program, Korea Fulbright Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts Special Opportunity Stipend Program, John Anson Kittredge Fund, American Folklore Society, Manhattan Graphics Center, and the Puffin Foundation.

Ran Hwang



Ran Hwang creates monumental iconic imagery by using materials from the fashion industry: buttons (made of *hanji*), thread, and beads. Born in Busan, South Korea, Hwang moved to the United States in 1997 to further her artistic studies. She studied Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and attended the Graduate School of Fine Arts at Chung-Ang University in Seoul.

Ran Hwang's *the Beginning of the Bright* is a triptych installation which displays over **100,000** handmade *hanji* buttons on 86.6 inches wide Plexiglas panels. To construct her work, Hwang handmade *hanji* buttons and hammered each on pins approximately twenty-five times until secured. Hwang says her work is a form of meditative ritual, similar to the the meditative practices by Zen masters as her work requires labor-intensive process and utmost concentration.

Ran Hwang is currently works and lives in New York City and Seoul. She has exhibited at several international institutions including the Queens Museum of Art, the UNESCO Paris Headquarters, the MASS MoCA, International Museum of Art and Science, the Third Floor-Hermès, and the Seoul Arts Center Museum. Hwang's works are held in esteemed public and private collections including the Pullman Kaifeng Hotel, Four Seasons Hotel, Royal Caribbean International Anthem of the Seas AFT Wall Art, Third Floor-Hermès, King County Library in Issaquah, Des Moines Art Center, the Brooklyn Museum, New York Plaza Hotel, National Museum of Contemporary Art, and Hammond Museum.

The Re:visioning HANJI exhibition is presented in part with the 2016 Asia Week New York and in its mission "to promote Asian art in New York City [in collation with] top-tier Asian art specialists, major auction houses, and world renowned museums" including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, Sotheby's, and Christie's auction house among many others.