

Jihyun Jung: Hangdog

정지현: 행도그



November 3, 2023 – January 21, 2024

A

SJ

C

Jihyun Jung: Hangdog examines the sculptural processes and forms of Jihyun Jung, an artist who achieves unpredictable results by experimenting with unexpected combinations of substances and passing through novel pathways of ideas. The exhibition takes its title from an adjective meaning “ashamed” or “dejected” which in mountain climbing, is a term used to refer to a situation where a person who falls on the way up, hangs in place and rests for a time before continuing their ascent. “Hangdog” is used to refer to a different situation from the ones conveyed by the root words “hang” and “dog,” and in this exhibition, it is applied to the nature and compositions of Jihyun Jung’s works as things become increasingly remote from their original state.

Jung’s process begins with the discovery of various objects and discarded industrial items that are unexpectedly encountered in the urban environments where we live. Having lived out their useful lives, these items are sometimes brought to the artist’s studio to be used as material for his sculptures. Other times, the artist makes casts of these urban findings, shaping them into the frameworks for his art. Jung uses various casting techniques within his process: creating molds using oil-clay mixture (which is well suited to quickly replicate shapes from the external environment), wrapping the objects in aluminum mesh and pressing his fingers to capture the undulations on its surface, or using the 3D scanning feature on his cell phone to transform the object’s shape quickly into digital data. Through his touch, the illusion of an object—grounded in tangible yet existing only as an empty shell—is transformed, taking on the qualities of a real sculptural piece. Here, the representation of the object as something objectivized into an assemblage of sensory elements becomes channeled into Jung’s sensory organs through the mediation of the sculptural acts. A real-world object navigates through various stages of sensory transformation and intersections between the actual and illusory as it is woven finally into the body of a sculpture. No longer confined to the ideas and concepts tied to its name, the object hovers in an intermediate state, never quite reaching any particular point.

For *Peggy_Right* (2023) and *Peggy_Left* (2023), Jihyun Jung used his iPhone to produce 3D scans of automobile scraps piled on the road near a junkyard. These flattened data were then given depth and printed into physical objects using 3D printing techniques. Objects symbolically associated with the “automobile” let go of their names and return to being “matter” when they are discarded as being unable to perform their role any longer. Scanning and outputting an object in this transitional phase, as it shifts toward its raw essence, represents

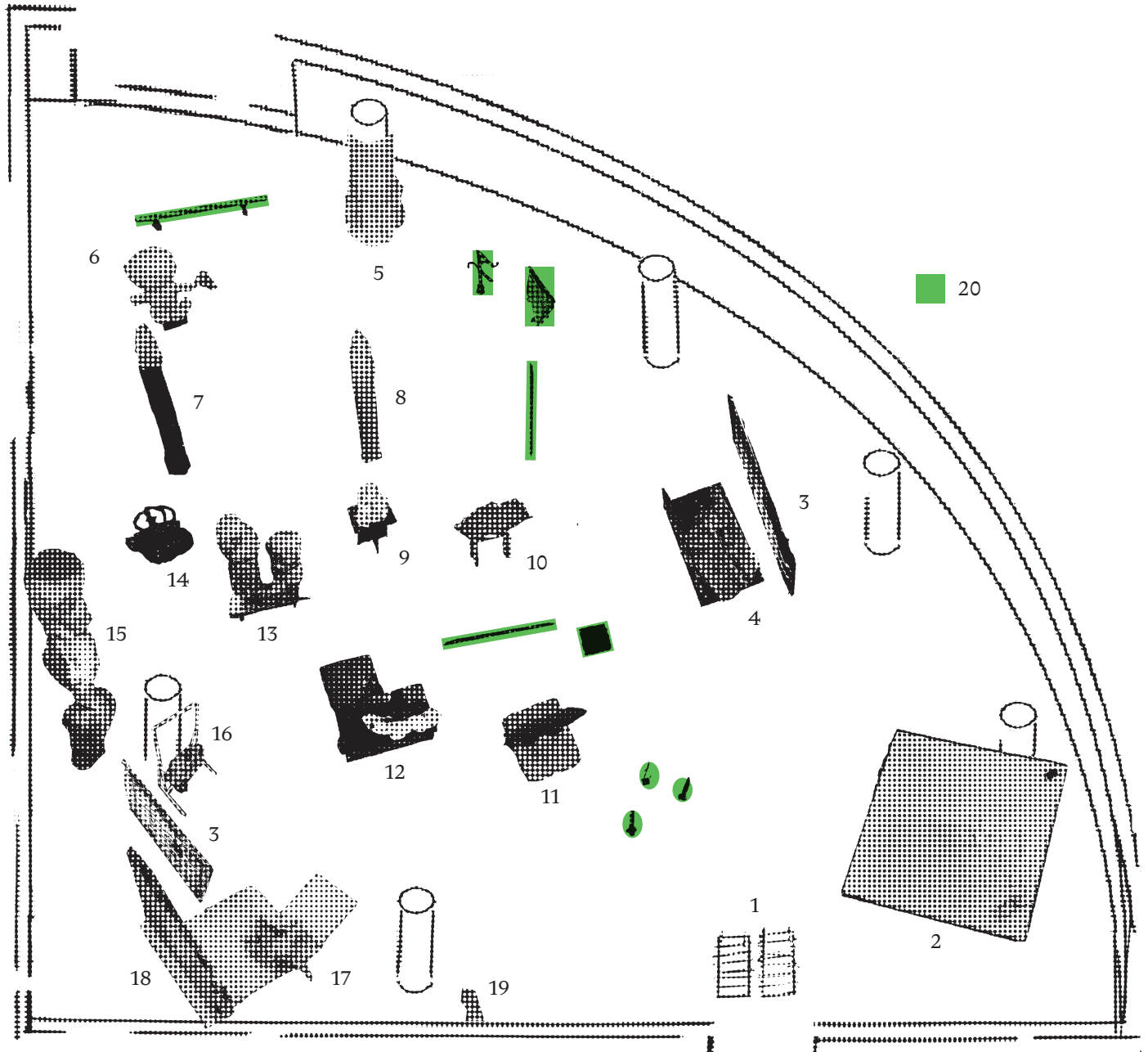
an attempt to draw on the power of technology to pin down and embody a temporary, arbitrary state of the object once its practical essence has been lost. In the process, Jung ironically reveals the lost materiality by showing the boundaries of misalignment with the coarse fibers of the 3D printing, which derive from the absence of information or the limits of technology. He applies repeated labor and sculptural acts to this incomplete technologically generated mass—placing other materials onto it with his hands or grinding it down—and thus adds an element of movement to the rigid substance. The resulting sculptures have an aesthetic quality that suggests the effects of weathering or damage by years of erosion and exposure to the elements, giving the viewer the sense of a gradual disassociation of these objects from their original forms, and transporting into a realm of abstraction. Similar examples of these manifestations of sculptural properties can be found in other works in the exhibition space, such as *Flower Handed* (2023), *Caught Sleeve* (2023), and *Torso from Afar* (2022).

When Ji Hyun Jung repeatedly observes the same landscape from the same position, or when he discovers various abandoned urban artifacts, he imagines how those objects could become something else. He collects, categorizes, and recombines them from a new perspective, attempting a material shift away from the object's essentiality. For instance, *Double Decker* (2018, reproduction 2022), which brightly illuminates the exhibition space, is a sculpture made by taking apart a discarded seven-meter billboard found on the side of the road. Removing its function and role as an advertising tool, the work operates as both a sculpture and a fixture, emanating light within the gallery. *Facility* (2022), a sculpture series made from abandoned structures and materials at a leachate treatment site, now occupies space in the form of the installation work *Park* (2022), while also temporarily switching functions to serve as a platform for *Peggy_Right*. Also found throughout the exhibition space are structures that were utilized in prior exhibitions at Art Sonje Center—walls, pedestals and benches that were originally scheduled for disposal. Jung considered how to bring those back into the exhibition space to form relationships with his own sculptures. These structures, that have been reassigned to new conditions and temporality, establish a unique territory in the space, with shapes and forms altered to take on a sculptural sense. It is a form of mutability where previously “consumed” objects in the exhibition setting are repurposed and interwoven with sculptures through different shapes. This approach parallels Jung's methods of incorporating drifting by-products and discarded urban waste ob-

jects, allowing them to flow in unfixed, unfamiliar forms.

Jihyun Jung: Hangdog uses the shapes of objects drawn from the real world as a central point for creating various incidents. It is a landscape based on contingency, made through a constant process of moving toward new properties and forms. Whether he disassembles the tangible or assembles something that has never existed, Jihyun Jung's creations drift about along the crevices and boundaries of the senses between the actual and the illusory, ultimately obtaining a sense of reality at some point in time, as they become entwined with the sense of sculpture. "After the movements of arrangements and the endless mutations of combinations, what appears is a limit to the narrative that arises through the exchange of influence with the object," Jung explains. "Like a lost puzzle piece, it is constantly deferred, avoiding the moment when the image is represented through language." Through his sculptural process, all that are lost, incomplete, or fragmented discover new realms and identities.

Map



1. *Stand*, 2023, Steel, LED tube light, Dimensions variable
2. *Square*, 2023, LED tube light, fog machine, aluminum, steel, MDF, 368×368 cm
3. *Double Decker*, 2018(reproduction in 2022), Signboard, LED tube light, steel, fan, Dimensions variable
4. *Peggy_Right*, 2023, Mixed media, 53×235×124 cm
5. *The First Ribbon*, 2021, Steel mesh, steel, 214×130×110 cm
6. *The Last Worldee*, 2022, Urethane foam, 177×148×106 cm
7. *Far*, 2023, MDF, PLA, mixed media, 360×45×45 cm
8. *From Afar*, 2023, Melanin Foam, 320×35×27.5 cm
9. *Torso from Afar*, 2022, Sponge, resin, PLA, 63×53×55 cm
10. *Swept (Light)*, 2022, PLA, steel, 188×147×41 cm
11. *Swept (Heavy)*, 2022, Aluminum casting, steel, 137×147×100 cm
12. *Caught Sleeve*, 2023, SLA, 98×163×60 cm
13. *Boots*, 2022, FRP, steel, 215×190×115 cm
14. *Mrs. Brown*, 2021, FRP, 120×120×110 cm. Commissioned by Incheon Art Platform.
15. *Haechi*, 2021, Urethane foam, 390×80×110 cm

By exchanging 3D scan data with an anonymous person online, Jung took the dimensions of *La Rivière* (1938) by Atride Maillol (1861–1944) and recreated a 3D-printed resin piece titled *Torso from Afar* (2022). The process behind this work is perhaps one of the easier to understand, demonstrating how the artist generates the sculpture in his fictional space. A heavy substance that once remained affixed on the opposite side of the planet has become lighter, disassembled, and reassembled upon its arrival here. The geographically distant concept of space defined as “the opposite side of the planet,” the contrasting materiality between “bronze and data,” and the transformations of “disassembly and reassembly” serve as metaphors of the temporality of sculpture, which is unique as an artistic practice in that

growing distant leads to proximity. The important thing is not to determine the answer to the chicken-or-egg question, but rather that the object has departed from some point of origin, i.e., movement.

(...)

The title of Marshall Berman’s book *All That is Solid Melts into Air* not only resonates throughout the concept of modernity but also serves as an apt forecast on what may be taking place in the interior space of Jung’s sculptures. In the interest of avoiding any misconception, it is worth noting that what Jung dismantles and regenerates does not come in visible form. He does not resort to creating illusions that trick the eye into thinking the knowable is unknowable, as if there is something new created every time. Rather, he focuses on the arduous process of detaching the surface of objects to preserve its form. Thus, while the form remains, the substance that once comprised everything beneath that shell vanishes. In turn, what remains becomes something completely different, despite its resemblance to its former existence. It is solely in such process that Jung intervenes every now and then. For example, for *The Last Worldee* (2022) and *Haechi* (2021), Jung created molds of local government mascot sculptures using an aluminum net, then filled the molds with urethane foam. The resulting works are light and cute yet somehow creepy. Some of them retain clear facial features while others are missing chunks of their heads. (...) Each work has its own sculptural event, which Jung undoubtedly watched unfolding, verifying whether the sculpture went as far as possible and checking if such distance also increased in proximity to something else at the same time.

— Hanbum Lee’s essay ‘Sculpture Gone Far, Further Away’ from publication *Gouge* (2022)

16. *Air Haechi*, 2023, Aluminum mesh, PLA, steel, 220×105×86 cm
17. *Peggy_Left*, 2023, Mixed media, 47×194×150 cm

Let us consider *Peggy_Right* (2023) and *Peggy_Left* (2023). At first glance, these two works seem to have surfaces as durable as any stone sculpture, with textures and weights resonating modernist sculpture. But on closer inspection, we see the strangely even thickness, the structure of industrial items joined by mechanical means, the repeated holes formed at angles where no hands or arms can reach, and the various shapes that are not formed by hand based on the artist's intention. By applying FRP resin to a 3D-printed output of data scanned from automobile scraps and paring it down with a grinder, Jung has overlaid slow, intuitive movements of his hand onto outputs fabricated in fast and cold ways. This is the traditional process of carving and sculpting: contemplating the nature of the output as an object and reflecting once again on the material. As he looks at the hollow object that has gained a body through mechanical means, Jung ponders the meaning and applies the decisions of the artist's hand. Yet he also decides to reveal the empty portions of spiritless technology that appear in the sculpture, rather than attempting to conceal them.

In these sculptures appear like fragments ripped off from a whole, the distinction between what is created by outputs and what is produced by the hand is beside the point. It is a sculpture whose bearing cannot inherently be imagined, with a form that structures information unrelated to the truth. Departed from the utility of realism with its emphasis on the meaning of existence, it is merely a plausible-seeming situation—utterly just a prototype. Within that attitude, the meaning of reality represented by the shape is left empty, which leads us to consider the reason or process behind its wilful emergence and the materiality of the result. Instead of attempting to justify or resolve the contradictory situation that appears in his process of perceiving and

responding to the world—the inextricable relationship between the machine and the actions of the hands—Jung Jihyun simply embraces it.

- Text from Hyo Gyoung Jeon's essay 'Massless Bodies of Matters'

18. *Cloud*, 2023, PLA, 85×94×8 cm
19. *Flower Handed*, 2023, SLA, 22×50×29 cm
20. *Park*, 2022, Steel pipe, wood, stainless steel, LED tube light, Dimensions variable

Park (2022) is a sculptural ensemble of industrial-inspired structures, crafted from the remnants of a facility, symbolic of the transformation of Nanjido from a landfill site that once bore the burden of Seoul's waste mountains into a public "ecology park." In 2021, Jihyun Jung's studio was positioned behind the water treatment facility, a space that had emerged during the revitalization of Nanjido. Discarded objects from this very site, including pipes, railing structures, and drain covers, were transported into the studio space. Utilized as material for the artist's creative explorations, each object underwent a meticulous process of re-evaluation and editing by the artist, focusing on both their form and surface. While these objects may appear unchanged and retain their original form, they have undergone subtle yet profound transformations, pushing the boundaries of our perception and crafting a distinctive realm within the exhibition space. *Park* appears to be an attempt by the artist to demarcate a specific area within the exhibition space while merging it with the external environment. The boundary has been redefined through the display of industrial waste materials and night-lighting structures more commonly found within the city's public grounds. Within the confines of the museum, it provides a carefully curated setting for art appreciation, yet paradoxically engenders a profound dissonance, evoking the feeling of wandering through an abandoned park. This enigmatic

assembly draws comparisons to hastily constructed urban playgrounds or vacant terrains, invoking a poignant irony and fostering a shared, anonymous nostalgia that resonates with the memories of any individual's childhood.

Double Decker (2018, reproduction 2022) features a strategic alignment of diagonally arranged LED tube lights, securely mounted within a metal frame. These lights emit distinct, sharp lines diffused through the translucent fabric, creating an expansive and uniform illumination. Resembling a square-shaped artificial moon, *Double Decker* bathes the entire exhibition area in its radiance. Its illumination imparts an intriguing sense of emptiness within the museum space, echoing the scale of large urban billboards and the structured arrangement of LED lights found along the city streets.

— Text from Sohyun Kim-Yi Sohyun's essay 'About Park'

Jihyun Jung: Hangdog
November 3, 2023–
January 21, 2024
Space 2, Art Sonje Center

Curated by
Heehyun Cho

(Head of Exhibitions, Art Sonje Center)

Assisted by
Yein Lee

(Curatorial Assistant, Art Sonje Center)

Organized by
Art Sonje Center

Supported by
Seoul Metropolitan Government,
Seoul Foundation for
Arts and Culture

Text
Heehyun Cho

Editing
Sohyun Kim, Yein Lee

Translation
Colin Mouat

Graphic Design
Moonsick Gang

© 2023. Authors, translator,
Art Sonje Center.
All rights reserved. No part of
this publication may be
reproduced in any form or by any
means without prior permission
in writing from the copyright
holders and publishers.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jihyun Jung (b. 1986)'s artistic practice revolves around the exploration of the functionality and movement of sculpture, experimenting with materials such as drifting urban debris and discarded industrial elements as his creative medium. His work responds to the ever-changing urban environment, where through close exploration of its transformations, he extracts the coexisting elements that form the boundaries of urban development. Through his practice, he systematically dissects and reassembles the coexistence of discarded and recognized items, the conventional and the institutional, as well as the aesthetic and the political. Jihyun Jung's recent solo exhibitions include *Gouge* hosted at Incheon Art Platform in 2022 and *Multipurpose Henry* at the Atelier Hermès in 2019. In 2023 he received the 2023 Kimsechoong Award for Young Sculptors.

Artist Talk

Dates

Thu. November 16, 2023. 16:00

Venue

The Ground-L, Art Sonje Center

Docent-led Tours

Dates

Tue–Fri 15:00

Sat–Sun 15:00, 17:00

How to book

Online or on-site reservations

Opening Hours

12:00–19:00 (Closed Mondays)

Admission

25–64 years: 10,000 KRW

19–24 years: 7,000 KRW

9–18 years: 5,000 KRW

Art Pass cardholders: 7,000 KRW

Free: 8 and under, over 65,
visitors with disabilities, ICOM ·
CIMAM · SCM cardholders

