

Discover

Inspiring

Artistry

Suh Heesu

DIA

Suh Heesu <Last Summer>

July 26 – August 24 2024

Last Summer

Born in Seoul in 1973, Suh Heesu studied ceramics and installation art at Hongik University and the State University of New York. Over the years, the artist has developed a unique artistic world by researching the properties of clay, the most essential material in ceramics, and blending it with various media. Suh's work involves observing materials and immersing oneself in the creative process, abandoning fixed notions of the medium, and projecting personal concepts into the work through metaphor. This approach invites viewers to share in the experience and engage with the art. His pieces move beyond the conventional forms of pottery in ceramics, showcasing the free-form nature of materials in a variety of formats, including two-dimensional works, installations, and sculptures.

In this first exhibition with DIA Contemporary, visitors can explore works that visually represent the artist's long-term exploration of "human wounds and healing" as well as "decay and creation," using new media.

The latest work, "Time of tree," introduces the material properties of traditional Korean paper, Hanji, instead of the bandages previously used by the artist. Suh had previously represented the unconscious wounds of humans through the "texture" of bandages, presenting the healing process in sculptural and flat collage works. In this exhibition, he shifts his focus to the "texture" of tree bark, further expanding the scope of his sculptural artistic language.





Suh Heesu

Time of tree 2024
Hanji on canvas
145.5x112.1cm

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The new work "Time of tree," featured in this exhibition, originates from the artist's experience of the natural cycle of decay and self-recovery in the Gotjawal Forest, one of the harshest environments in Jeju. The artist presents concepts based on the duality of humanity's fundamental wounds and the self-healing power explored previously, using traditional Korean paper, Hanji, derived from trees. The focus is on the "texture" of tree bark, which decays and regenerates in nature, reflecting on themes of wounds and healing, decay and creation. The work seeks to find intersections with the implied meanings of the "textures" left by bandages and weaves a conceptual narrative structure.

Much like the careful wrapping in the previous bandage series, this work involves delicately layering and adhering each sheet, reminiscent of a meditative process. Through this immersive process, the artist reflects on and consoles herself, maximizing the material properties to concretize her concepts. This process also allows viewers to engage and experience the work on a deeper level.



Suh Heesu

Time of tree 2024
Hanji on canvas
145.5x112.1cm

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Concrete and Flexible Experiences

DIA Contemporary is pleased to present "Last Summer," a solo exhibition by artist Suh Heesu, running from July 26 to August 24, 2024.

Suh Heesu's work explores the intrinsic, unconscious wounds found in humans and the resilient qualities of nature, drawing from her personal experiences. Her art emphasizes the grotesque beauty found in decay and disappearance, uncovering stories from marginalized and overlooked subjects in life and nature. In this exhibition, Suh utilizes 'bandages' and 'clay' to explore themes of healing and the inherent anxieties and wounds within humans. The unique process involves wrapping cloth, textured like bandages, around clay, which is then fired at 1,230 degrees Celsius. The burning away of the bandage material leaves behind textures on the solid ceramic, symbolizing scars, extending into both three-dimensional sculptures and collages.

"Last Summer" features new works that explore the dichotomy between humanity's fundamental wounds and nature's self-healing capabilities. Inspired by the rugged and often overlooked Gotjawal Forest in Jeju, South Korea, Suh reflects on themes of decay, resilience, and the mysterious recuperative power of nature, exploring these concepts in a context that predates humanity. She draws parallels between the enduring life of trees and the human experience, highlighting their shared resilience and growth.

"I am drawn to the beauty of the wounded, the decayed, and the vanished."

The exhibition also reflects Suh's reverence for nature's cycles and the comfort found in detachment. This introspective journey, captured in her art, leads to a period of mourning, honest self-reflection, and acceptance of one's connection to nature. Suh's latest works transition from bandage textures to the textures of tree bark, emphasizing its protective and regenerative qualities alongside inherent vulnerability.

Suh's exploration extends to traditional Korean paper, Hanji, made from trees. She layers Hanji sheet by sheet in a process similar to her previous wrapping techniques, creating a meditative experience. Through a meticulous study of her materials, Suh experiments with texture, pushing beyond traditional forms to articulate her conceptual ideas more concretely. Additionally, the exhibition includes installation pieces that offer an immersive experience, inviting viewers into a vibrant and mysterious forest. These installations encourage exploration and evoke diverse emotional responses, sparking memories and imagination. Suh's installations convey the complex emotions elicited by encountering the deep green, showcasing how color can evoke a multisensory response and connect with multiple emotions. These works invite viewers to reflect on their emotional memories and embark on a journey of new perceptions and thoughts.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition and find inspiration in the complex interplay between nature, humanity, and art.



Installation View

DIA



Suh Heesu

Time of tree
2024

Hanji on canvas
Dimensions variable





Suh Heesu
Time of tree 2024
Hanji on canvas
162x130cm

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" I am drawn to the beauty of things that are wounded, decayed, and disappearing. In nature, these phenomena are seen as a very natural and necessary cycle. Through this inevitably necessary time of decay, life finds its vitality once again."

Suh Heesu

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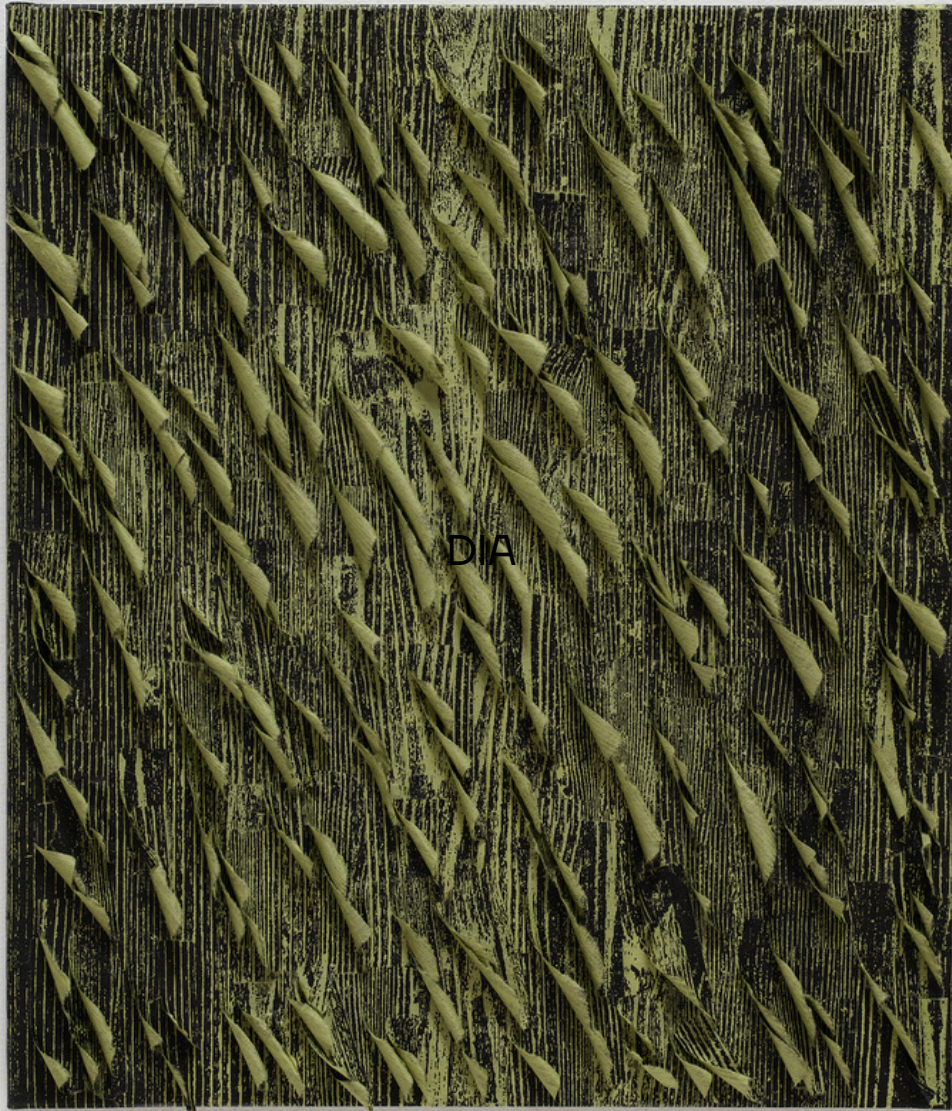




Suh Heesu
Time of tree 2024
Hanji on canvas
53x45.5cm



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Suh Heesu (b.1973)

Suh Heesu expands the narrative elements originating from her personal experiences into social narratives and concepts, aiming to encapsulate a narrative within her works that fosters communication through organic relationships. Her notable "Bandage Series" captures the wounds inflicted on humans, both consciously and unconsciously, and the healing process. In her new work, "Time of the Bark," Suh shifts her focus towards nature, exploring the cyclical nature of decay and creation in nature and its organic connection to human life, seeking the intersection of these themes.

Suh Heesu graduated from the Department of Ceramics and Glass at Hongik University and completed her graduate studies in Craft Design at the same college. She also completed a doctoral program in Art Therapy at the State University of New York. She has held major solo exhibitions at Daham Gallery (2020), Tongin Gallery (2017, 2011), Woong Gallery (2014), Kwanhoon Gallery (2003), and the Samuel Dorsky Museum at SUNY New Paltz in New York (2000). Additionally, she has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including Seochon Craft Hill (Honggeonig House, Seoul, 2024), White Anthology (Cheongju Korean Craft Museum x Seoul Museum of Craft Art, 2023), Baekja Exhibition (Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Seoul, 2022), Thesis (Boon the Shop, 2021), and Left Turn, Right Turn (Youngeun Museum of Contemporary Art, Gyeonggi-do, 2002). She has also been actively involved in various projects with companies such as Hyundai Motor Hpix, Yoonhyun Sangjae, and Art and Edition. Her works are held in collections at Hyundai Motor, Coreana Museum, and the Hilton Hotel, among others.

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