

AN INTERVIEW WITH SUNG RIM PARK

Sung Rim Park is an artist who transforms traditional weaving to create three-dimensional installations. Inspired by her South Korean heritage, she reflects on exploring knotting techniques, and using Hanji fibers to craft her personal universe.

CG What initially attracted you to creating three-dimensional forms and installations, and where did you acquire the techniques and style that define your work today?

SRP My work began with weaving. I was fascinated by the way fabrics are created by crossing the weft and warp threads. Initially, I felt there were temporal and spatial limitations of weaving with a handloom, so I studied how to weave fabric without a handloom. By making knots to connect the weft and warp threads, I was able to naturally express weaving in a three dimensional way, going beyond a two dimensional form.

CG How has your South Korean heritage influenced your interest in traditional handcrafted techniques? Specifically, your choice of materials, ranging from cotton thread to fine ramie and Hanji fibers.

SRP As a child, I grew up in the countryside surrounded by nature and spent much of my time visiting traditional Korean houses, locally referred to as Hanok. These houses have a static and elegant beauty, the simple architectural structures of Hanok seem to naturally seep into the work. I decided to use Hanji when I discovered it was the material used to create Hanok windows.

As I moved to the city to attend college, I began to miss my childhood



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environment, especially being surrounded by nature. The city was a desolate place filled with concrete buildings. Consequently, nature became an object of admiration and a place of relaxation for me, so I decided to use natural materials as much as I could throughout my work.

The natural materials I use convey a unique blend of naturalness, comfort, hardness, and a soft yet resilient vitality. Each day, I absorb the emotions and thoughts that arise while appreciating the nature I see through my window, building a personal universe akin to a diary. My creative process stems from this daily habit of admiring nature and personal reflection. This abstract, subjective, and emotional thinking forms the basis for my personal growth.

CG What is the significance of your knotting technique?

SRP Knots are a joining technique for construction, and an important way of expressing my work. They are related to the idea that 'all things begin from a single point.' The space created by knotting threads and intertwining dots, lines, and irregular shapes becomes my own world; my universe.



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CG Can you share what aspects of the sensibilities of nature inspire you most?

SRP My work is a projection of the emotions I experience while appreciating the night sky. Looking at the twinkling stars I am faced with myself, freed from the anguish, complications and problems of life. I see humans as insignificant beings in the vastness of the universe, though believe the act of looking at the universe is a powerful one, and is what makes its existence real. When I imagine the unpredictability of outer space, I feel a sense of tranquility. For me, the night sky is a haven for my mind and allows me to realise my true self.

This experience of relaxation also exists in my working process. My creative process always includes repeated acts, including sewing, knotting, and weaving, these serve as a time of immersion. Again it is a moment of rest and healing, freeing my mind from any anguish through repeated physical labor over a period of time.

CG Your pieces showcase varying densities and knotting combinations; vertical and horizontal. How do you decide on the composition when creating these lattice structures?

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SRP During the meditative time I spend looking at the night sky, I envision the movements and energies of the universe beyond what I can perceive. This time of contemplation is not only a time of reflection but also the foundation of my work.

Once there is harmony in my own universe, I can express my curiosity through various shapes and densities of materials. My compositions are representation of how I imagine the size and shape of the universe, multiple universes, and the unpredictability of the universe.

CG **What influences your choice of colours, such as green, purple, and white, in your work; do they hold any specific significance?**

SRP Each colour carries its own meaning. Recently, I've experienced many joyful moments, so my works are composed of bright and cheerful pastel-tones. The colours in my work seem to be determined by my state of mind during production. Most of these colours are dyed directly.

CG **Taking into consideration the role of light, mass, and scalability, how does the removal of unnecessary visual elements influence the interaction between the viewer, the space, and your work?**

By focusing on my emotive sensibilities when appreciating the nature viewed through my window, the early form of my work emerged as a window frame. This serves as the starting point for incorporating geometric figures to represent the beauty of nature and the complexity of the mind. The intricate and subtle order of nature, along with its metaphorical tangled threads, is neatly organised into a concise form to maximise the physical properties, texture, and lyricism of the materials used in my work.

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The structure, atmosphere and character of a space, including its colour, temperature, humidity, and even the flow of light and air permeate my netted structures. My pieces, integrated into the spaces where they are installed, blend my explorations with the viewer's perspective, the emotions of the space, and the day's atmosphere inviting viewers into their own narratives. Through appreciating works composed of dots, lines, and planes - basic formative elements - I hope viewers find moments of rest and reflection, awakening their senses and experiencing the silence, beauty, and awe I felt while observing nature.

CG **You have exhibited your work across South Korea, participating in Cheongju Craft Biennale, completing a doctoral program, and a residency at Seoul Art Space Sindang. How have these experiences shaped your craft, and how do you see your work evolving in the future?**

SRP So far, my activities have provided valuable opportunities to develop the concepts and techniques of my work. I realised that bringing a concept to physical form requires various experiences of failure and time to master. I aim to create works with sincerity, maintaining the spirit of craftsmanship. I prefer not to think much about future works because I believe the present moment will shape them.



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