

Haegue Yang: *Lost Lands and Sunken Fields* / February 1-April 27, 2025

About Haegue Yang

(Pronounced HAY-goo YONG)

Haegue Yang grew up in Seoul, South Korea, during a time of significant national upheaval and division that would profoundly impact her family and home life. Her parents were both writers and activists who worked to dismantle South Korea's military government during a prolonged political movement. As she began her work as an artist, the labor migration, family separations, and political instability she faced in her early years influenced her interest in everyday materials, movement, and cultural studies. Yang attended the Seoul High School of Art, Music, and Dance, then studied sculpture at Seoul National University and, in 1994, relocated to Frankfurt, Germany, to study at the Städelschule Art Academy.

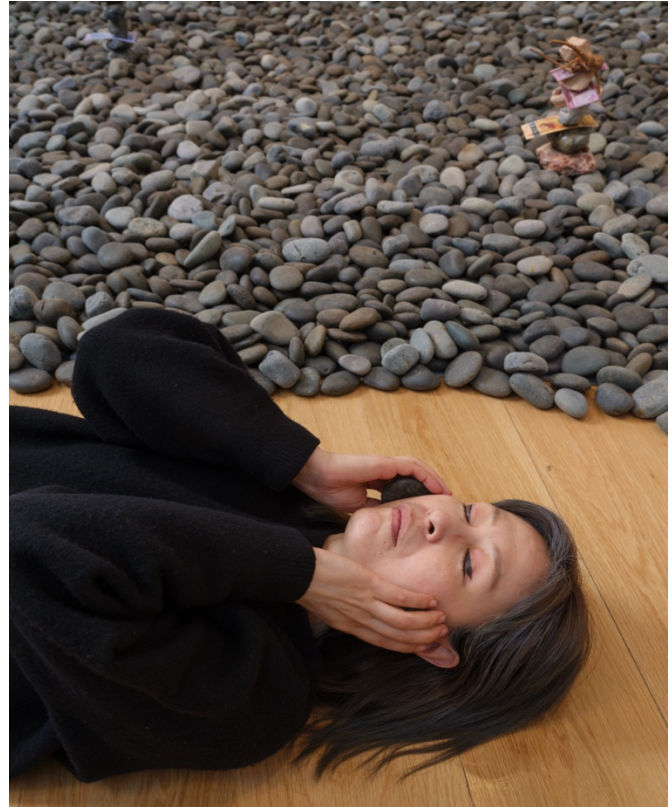
Yang's sculptures and installations incorporate sharply contrasting materials, ranging from industrially manufactured drying racks to store-bought spherical bells, wind turbines, paper feathers, artificial banknotes, dried citrus, Punjabi goat bells, and hair ornaments. Her work is informed by a practice of meticulous research and commitment to travel, but she prefers her references to be indirect and open.

Yang believes that an artist's practice should be experienced and not necessarily "understood." For Yang, abstraction has become a means to access deeper layers of meaning through form and sensation rather than explicit narrative, enabling the exploration of both collective and individual narratives across various histories, generations, and cultures.

Yang currently resides in Seoul, South Korea and Berlin, Germany. She is a professor of fine arts at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, Germany.

The title of her exhibition at the Nasher Sculpture Center, *Lost Lands and Sunken Fields*, evokes Yang's life of travel and exploration. It is divided into subgroups: each section examines distinct aspects of new and existing work from 2016 to 2025.

Haegue Yang truly embodies the term "global artist." Her curiosity has taken her all over the world to learn about different places, people, and materials. How do you seek new ideas? What do you notice most when you are in a new place?



Haegue Yang. Photo: Kevin Todora. Courtesy of the artist and Nasher Sculpture Center.



Installation View of Haegue Yang: *Lost Lands and Sunken Fields*, 2025. Photo: Kevin Todora.

The exhibition engages in a discussion of contrasts across both levels of Nasher's galleries and gardens. You can use them to help guide your engagement with the exhibition.

During your exploration of Yang's work, you may decide which category best describes the work of art.

Which of the following words would you use to describe individual works you see?

- Light or Dark
- Aerial or Grounded
- Buoyant (weightless) or Heavy
- Sparse or Dense

Airborne Paper Creatures—Triple Synecology

Look up! Nine new works hang in the Nasher's Entrance Gallery. The kites are designed to capture disruptions in airflow caused by opening doors and people moving. *Airborne Paper Creatures—Triple Synecology* take flight as abstracted forms of fauna named for the actions they take: flutterers (birds), swimmers (marine life), and crawlers (insects). Each set has their own distinct qualities. The *Flutterers* are covered in beautiful Hanji paper that mimics birds' crown and wing feathers, the *Crawlers* birchwood pieces take on the shapes of insect thoraxes and claws, while the *Swimmers* shapes evoke tail fins and scales of marine life.

In what ways are we as human beings all distinctive yet similar?

The secondary title for the series, *Triple Synecology*, refers to the study of interactions between species that share a habitat, and highlights the thread that links these three animal groups.

Have you seen synecology in action? How have you noticed animals around your home or neighborhood coexist?



Haegue Yang, *Airborne Paper Creatures—Flutterers*, 2025. Photo: Kevin Todora.

Mignon Votives

Look down! Within the street-level gallery, two new groups of petite sculptures—one constructed from pinecones on driftwood bases (*Seedpod Statues*) and the other pillars of stacked stones made of hand-painted clay and faux paper currency (*Pebble Parade*)—emerge from an environment of moss and river rock. The small, pebble towers echo the universal ritual of stone stacking as an act of good fortune. While on hikes around the world, Yang noticed that people occasionally add offerings in the form of banknotes in between their stacked stones. *Pebble Parade* cairns represent Yang’s observations and her wish for unity between humanity and nature. *Seedpod Statues* are meticulously embellished; the scales of the pinecones are decorated with organic and inorganic materials, such as artificial plants, feathers, beads, q-tips, and other everyday objects. *Seedpod Statues* suggest a sculptural transformation of the pinecones, resulting in new hybrid forms.



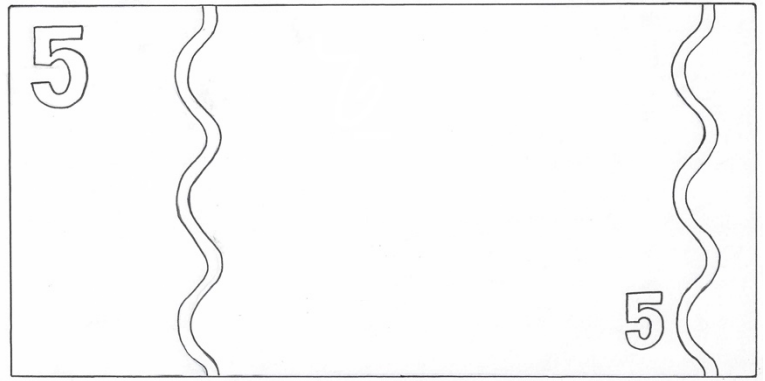
LEFT: Haegue Yang, Mignon Votive—Pupal Offshoot Pebble #5, 2025.
RIGHT: Haegue Yang, Mignon Votive—Binovular Twin Blossoms Seedpod #1, 2025. Photos: Kevin Todora.

Stone stacking is a practice of meditation or prayer, where each stone represents an intention. With your students, use each pebble in the drawings on page 7 to think through wishes you may consider while stacking stones.

The layout and materials in the space incorporate a reference to Joseon-era Korean poet and activist Yun Seon-do (1587-1671). During a 12-year political exile on the remote island of Bogildo, he built a garden named Buyong-dong where he spent his isolation reading, writing, and meditating. Sounds of the same crashing waves he would have listened to, recorded by the artist on the island, fill the gallery with a rhythmic, almost meditative soundtrack. Written during exile, his poem, “Song of My Five Friends,” highlights his relationship with the natural world. In it, he wrote, “You ask how many friends I have? Water and stone, bamboo and pine, the moon rising over the eastern hill is a joyful comrade. What other pleasure should I ask?” **In what ways might the Nasher’s indoor and outdoor spaces honor Yun Seon-do’s profound connection to the natural world? Are there outdoor settings that bring you peace?**

The faux paper currencies Yang selected for *Pebble Parade* are from countries that choose to illustrate their national identity and heritage with an animal native to their location in the world.

How would you describe yourself? Which animals and their traits do you relate to? Fill the blank banknote with animals that represent you or your community.



Sonic Cosmic Rope—Light Blue Dodecagon Straight Weave



Haegue Yang, *Sonic Cosmic Rope—Light Blue Dodecagon Straight Weave*, 2023. 179 1/4 x 4 x 4 inches (455 x 10 x 10 cm). Stainless steel bells, powder-coated stainless-steel bells, stainless steel chains, split rings. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Studio Haegue Yang

Upon crossing over the threshold into the museum's Lower Level Gallery, visitors are welcomed into a densely packed space featuring Yang's anthropomorphic, action-oriented works from 2016-2023. Titled *Cenote Observatory*, the gallery is theatrically light and beautifully shadowed. Several sculptures sit on casters and display handles that suggest the sculpture can be activated by human motion, while others are suspended from the ceiling or attached to the wall on rotating mounts. A futuristic vinyl image covers the back wall and suggests our exit from a water-filled cenote and onto a path forward into the unknown.

Like several of Yang's *Sonic Sculptures*, *Sonic Cosmic Rope—Light Blue Dodecagon Straight Weave* is made from bells attached to each other by metal and mesh. This work takes inspiration from the folktale *Sister Sun and Brother Moon*, which describes how two siblings transformed into celestial bodies to escape mortal danger. Like all her *Sonic* pieces, when activated, the bells emit a soft, metallic sound that adds a life-giving and communicative quality. Yang says "the bells are intended to trigger associations with ancient times in the history of civilization, when they were used for shamanic rituals, calling out the spirits through their sound." In the folktale, a brother and sister are chased by a hungry tiger. After climbing a tree, the sister prayed to the heavens seeking help, upon which a strong metal chain was sent for them to climb.

During your visit, facilitators will occasionally activate this work. Please note that visitors are not allowed to touch the artworks at any time.

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Many of the sculptures in this gallery are composed of everyday objects that we would find around our homes, schools, or workplaces. Can you think of any ordinary yet significant objects that make up or define your everyday environment?

The Intermediate—Six-Legged Carbonous Epiphyte Imoogi

In the garden, *Six-Legged Carbonous Epiphyte Imoogi*, a tentacled body made of plastic twine that highlights the weaving crafts practiced by agricultural societies, seems to rest atop the garden's fountain wall. The creature's tufted center sits at the wall's highest point. At the same time, its limbs extend downward to the ground, and others cling to the branches of nearby trees, embodying its title term: epiphyte (a non-parasitic organism living on another.)

It is uncertain whether the positioning suggests the Imoogi's descent from or ascent to the skies above. Yang's Imoogis are representations of a mythical creature featuring sinuous, elongated bodies often installed in positions that suggest a state of change, transformation, and movement.



Haegue Yang, The Intermediate—Six Legged Carbonous Epiphyte Imoogi, 2025. Photo: Keven Todora.

In Yang's artmaking practice, *The Intermediates* series explores metamorphosis and moments of "in-between." Likewise, in Korean mythology, an Imoogi is a lesser, non-flying dragon who must complete monumental tasks and adventures before becoming a true dragon. It exists in a transitional state until the time it evolves into its full potential.

In what ways might you be in the middle of an important journey, too?

Additional Resources

Dickie, Anna. "Haegue Yang (Part One)." *Ocula.com*, 15 Dec. 2021, [ocula.com/magazine/conversations/haegue-yang/](https://www.ocula.com/magazine/conversations/haegue-yang/).

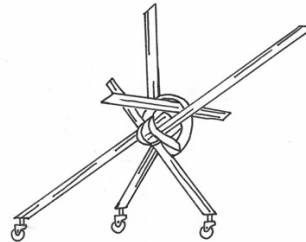
Haegue Yang Presentation Latent Dwelling at Kukje Gallery Hanok. Kukje Gallery, 2023.

Phillips, Christopher. "A Certain Uncertainty: Haegue Yang's Sculpture Takes Unpredictable Paths." *ARTnews.com*, 21 Apr. 2020, www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/haegue-yang-sculpture-unpredictable-1202684275/.

Explore the exhibition in the Nasher App:

- Download the app [Bloomberg Connects](#) (available through the Apple Store App and Google Play) and enter Nasher Sculpture Center in the Search bar.

In an interview with *Ocula* magazine in 2016, Yang said, "I'm not sharing what I know; I rather attempt to share what I don't know." As an educator, how might you relate to this idea?



While exploring the Nasher's collections, select a work you'd enjoy seeing come to life, like Yang's moving sculptures. What sounds or movements might it make?

Suggested Curriculum Connections (TEKS)

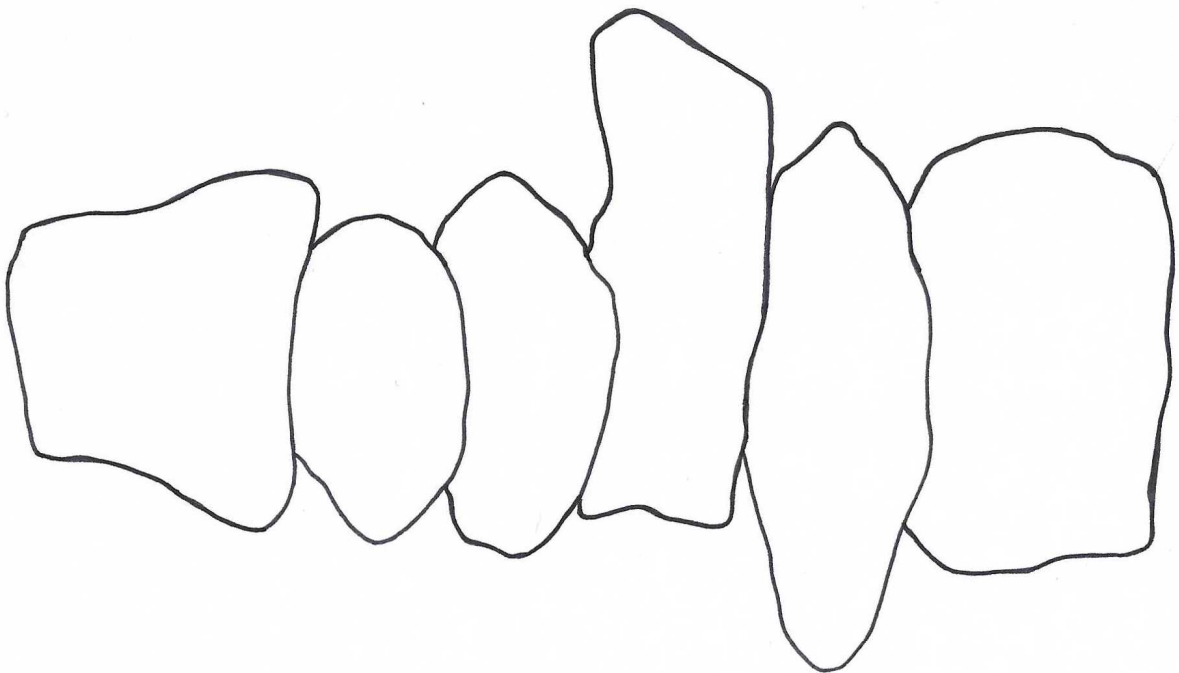
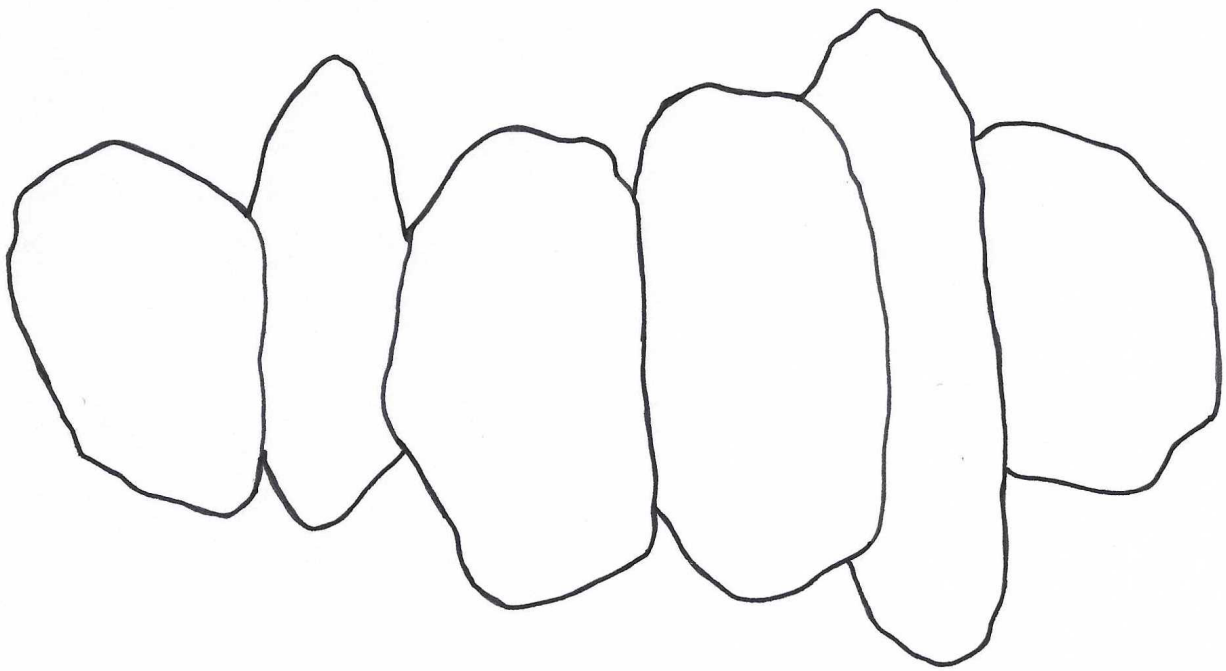
Fine Arts: Knowledge and Skills | §117.302. Art, Level I (b) (4)

Fine Arts: Critical Evaluation and Response | §117.4 (b), (d) and (e)

Fine Arts: Critical Evaluation | §117.52 Art, Level I (c) (3) and (4)

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