

ROCK  
PAPER  
SCISSORS  
**ROCK**  
PAPER  
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SCISSORS  
PAPER  
ROCK



Soonja Han  
*Life, Love, and Death* 1999-2003  
Mixed media  
51 x 90.5 in / 130 x 230 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

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Curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath

July 12 - August 18, 2012  
Leila Heller Gallery, New York



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# ROCK PAPER SCISSORS

*Rock, Paper, Scissors* is at once an exploration of the formalistic choices that artists chose to adopt and adapt, as well as a differentiated exploration of the metaphorical qualities that each of the three words suggests. Similar to the children's game, where winning very much depends on choosing, the exhibition is more keen on exploring the artist's individual act of committing to a specific medium both as a mode of expression and as a symbol for a politicized gesture. At no point in this exhibition are we interested in trumping one genre over another, or presenting the three media it explores within contrived hierarchies and classifications.

With the chaotic proliferation of production, and the accessibility to an infinity of heterogeneous visual traditions and social objects facilitated by today's technologies of communication and modes of travel, the *tabula rasa* available to today's artists is no longer a clean slate that they can inscribe with the "novel," but an infinite plethora of forms, albeit exhausted, ready to be inserted into new settings, to be appropriated, even plagiarized. The process of recruiting these "forms" and the perception of new materials as possible compositional elements for artistic production have replaced the traditional notion of art as the mark of a specialized manual "skill" that separates the artist from other human beings.

This "eclecticism" (we use the term here for its positive connotations, and not in its Greenbergian sense) <sup>1</sup> was adopted early on, albeit differently, by Europe's new realists and America's pop artists. In protesting the purifying zeal of modernism, they expanded the formal vernacular of art by sequestering new iconographical material inspired by the visual terminology of advertising and the rise in mass production/consumption. A decade or so later, no longer capable of being eschewed, this over-production propelled conceptual artists to the dematerialization of art and to the removal of the object as an attack on its "special or privileged status; a status which removes art objects from their everyday settings and renders them immune to common-sense assumptions."<sup>2</sup> New formal sensibilities had to be advanced to keep up with a world of endlessly shifting loci. Hello Post-modernity! The form of art (in contrast to art forms) as the world knew it was to change forever. Soon the conterminous fascination with new technology would allow for the absorption of more forms and modes of representation laying the foundations for what Rosalind Krauss would refer to, more than three decades later, as the "Post-Medium Condition."<sup>3</sup> In order to drag themselves out from the morass of the bankrupt "high culture" of modernity, inexorably confined to an ideology of framing, artists had to supplant the canonical with the popular, replace the sanctimonious with the profane. "By some sort of Duchampian twist of ironic affirmation and inversion, today's forms,

the offspring of the 'readymade,' are simultaneously consumed and produced by the artist as they are being projected onto another symbolic-semantic plane altogether."<sup>4</sup>

With these ruminations in mind <sup>5</sup>, *Rock, Paper, Scissors* is a double folded statement that ponders the broad range within the formalistic trends that have come to define the contemporary moment of artistic production. The exhibition explores the extent to which contemporary art oscillates between a concern for art-historical lineage on the one hand, and an intergenerational rupture on the other. The works assembled here are all equally grappling with the notion of continuity as far as aesthetic expression is concerned, while at the same time manifesting an almost ontological desire for asserting an original departure in formal expression.

On a more metaphorical level, the exhibition seeks to explore the extent to which contemporary art remains equally engaged with questions of subversion and "politicality", with notions of radicalism and "art as life". As August Wilson once said, "All art is political in the sense that it serves someone's politics."<sup>6</sup> The formal choices made by each of the nine artists in the exhibition reflect more than just a negotiation with medium and technique. They evidence an adoption of a specific *modus operandi* that points towards an acute consciousness of where these formal choices sit in relationship to the ones made by their contemporaries. In other words, the choice of medium becomes as much, a means of self-differentiation as it is a technical result of the creative process.

Rock stands for the three dimensional object. It could be a metaphor for sculpture. But it also refers to Monuments and Monumentality. The Monument has always been defined by the agencies and histories that it is made to convey. In that sense, it is the final stage of a politicized act of marking a certain ideology, promulgating a specific narrative and fostering a constructed collective identity.

Setting the tone for this section, and for the entire exhibition for that matter is a rare stone sculpture by Jackson Pollock from the early thirties. Carved out from a raw piece of stone, a small head a little bigger than the size of a clenched fist manifests that introspective gaze of an artist's mind. Serene yet troubled, the face manages to capture that quest for creative expression that every artist has to undertake alone in search for his or her own individual form of expression. The two other artists in this section Louise Nevelson and Kasper Sonne, while representing a different generation and moments of artistic production, each works as a sculptor and with the three dimensional object employing the medium to become a statement on how an artwork can become a monument of sorts that is at once absent and present, meaningful and meaningless. In doing so, they challenge the process by which art as monument can become a tool through which certain associations and conclusions can be reached vis-à-vis the "gaze" of the beholder. Nevelson's work stands as a constant reminder of how the human brain functions when confronted with the familiar that has been appropriated into something unfamiliar altogether. Sonne's encasement of his previous canvases within stele-like monoliths confront the viewer with a metaphor of entombment in which the artist's sculptural work creates a politicized rejection of a previous aesthetic for the same of a monumental statement about his own artistic choices.





Paper stands for a distinct medium, less intrusive and seemingly fragile, and, according to many, the art form that is most difficult to master. Every child had their share of Paper and Pencil whether they became artists or not. In other words, paper speaks to the intuitive in all of us. On a different level, paper is that surface on which all is inscribed. History, prayer, diaries, architectural plans, the daily news... Thus, it is a metaphor for the transmission and at times coercion of knowledge, becoming a container for something bigger than what the words or images stand for alone.

The three artists in this section, Kim Chun Hwan, Rob Carter and Hadieh Shafie, work with paper as both aesthetic medium and vessel of knowledge. They each negotiate the original utilitarian function for which the paper was employed, transforming it into an artwork that is capable of pushing the boundaries of paper as medium as well as challenging the notion of paper as palimpsest. Kim Chun Hwan, for instance, works with newspapers, magazines, and auction catalogues transforming them to paintings that question the content that the papers included in the first place. Shafie appropriates prayer scrolls into a constructed surface that replaces the traditional canvas and becomes the foundation for a new composition where color replaces words and texture and patterns assume center stage in the process of visual communication that initially was relegated to the interplay between words and intellect. Rob Carter's video *Stone on Stone* is a complex, multilayered visual experience that blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction and transforms the brick and mortar of what monuments are made of into sheets of paper that are constantly drawn, shifted and ripped. In this process, he alerts us to the ability that any site or physical constructions can have in embodying, even promulgating narratives and ideologies that can only be challenged if torn down and re-arranged from scratch. Hadieh Shafie's works function as a double narrative. They embody a recycling or reincarnation of hidden stories written by the artist herself onto the scrolls of paper comprising the final artwork. However, once placed side by side, these stories/scrolls transform into another composition that has a life of its own, where the colorful traces of the ink that was used to write these stories creates a new visual narrative that exists autonomously beyond the realm of the initial stories. Shafie explains: "As I roll the paper the colors on the edges of the strips align, creating bands of alternating hue that stand alongside one another, while at once seeming to merge into new color formations which are often delightful surprises. I may decide to repeat the color sequence but I try to encourage myself to let go so new combinations may arise. Placing each scroll side by side, I make decisions about color and composition at every step of the work and so the process of making progresses much like a painting/ drawing or weaving. What interests me is the tension between control and spontaneity that emerges at every step."

Scissors make a direct reference to the act of cutting that has come to define the technical aspect of the creative process for numerous artists. Paper, fabric, metal, and even the canvas itself has been cut, sliced and punctured to make a formalistic statement informed by a variety of artistic and social contexts. On a metaphorical note, the exhibition uses the analogy of scissors to illustrate acts of radical departure that have left an undeniable effect on the arts world.

Each of the artists in this section, Soonja Han, Jim Dine and Louise Bourgeois is radical in their own way. They have all used the scissor, or in Dine's case the image of the scissor, in some shape or form setting into motion a rippling effect that has irreversibly marked their lives as well as their artistic environments. Soonja's obsession with the act of cutting, collaging

and tracing circles has become a major statement that defines a life-long quest for a personal form of artistic expression that is at once informed in the modernist expression of geometric constructivism, yet in dialogue with contemporary trends that explore the infinite manifestations of a recurring concept. In the mid 1960's, Dine began to incorporate mundane objects into his work with a gestural dynamism informed by that of Abstract Expressionism. The tools, scissors included, represent Dine's childhood memories of his family's hardware store in Cincinnati. In line with his earlier happenings that involved chance and audience participation, his works depicting tools defy the rigid boundaries of "high art" and reflect a disregard for the confines of traditional artistic practice. Last but not least, Bourgeois' use of fabric also references her personal history. She grew up in her parent's tapestry restoration business, her childhood surrounded by the reparation of 17th and 18th century textiles. Bourgeois's peripatetic, philandering father sought out fragmentary, often damaged tapestries, while her mother, patient, reasonable, and, as Bourgeois notes, more "scientific," would match their colors, dye new wool and painstakingly re-weave them. Bourgeois's later fabric collages and assemblages – their many disparate pieces assembled and sewed together – attest to the early influence of this restorative process, as well as to the conceptual and psychological connotations of the words associated with it: cut, unravel, weave, knot, stitch, mend. Bourgeois said, "I always had the fear of being separated and abandoned. The sewing is my attempt to keep things together and make things whole."

*Rock, Paper, Scissors* is a gesture in favor of an intervention that seeks to comprehend the complex yet accessible correlation between form and semantic in the practice of contemporary art. The exhibition operates along a paradigm of art-critical inquiry that is informed by a desire for a rational dissection of the contemporary artwork as a physical form that the artist decided best serves the tangible manifestation of a specific idea. As Bourdieu once said: "I would simply ask why so many critics, so many writers, so many philosophers take such satisfaction in professing that the experience of a work of art is ineffable, that it escapes by definition all rational understanding; why are they so eager to concede without a struggle the defeat of knowledge; and where does their irrepressible need to belittle rational understanding come from, this rage to affirm the irreducibility of the work of art, or, to use a more suitable word, its transcendence."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, if all good answers start with a good question, then this exhibition is an attempt to offer a visual illustration to a set of answers that could begin to tackle a number of pertinent observations about art as both form and metaphor, object and idea, physical presence and abstract concept.

### **Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath**

Art Reoriented  
Munich, May 2012

1 Clement Greenberg and John O'Brian, *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 3: Affirmations and Refusals*, 1950–1956 (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

2 Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (M.I.T. Press, 2000), p. 403.

3 Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (Thames and Hudson, 2000).

4 Martha Buskirk and Mignon Nixon, *The Duchamp Effect* (The M.I.T. Press, 1996), p. 83.

5 The two preceding paragraphs were taken from the curatorial essay by Sam Bardaouil for the exhibition *Told, Untold, Retold* for Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, 2010.

6 August Wilson, *The Paris Review*, Winter 1999

7 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 114.



**ROCK**

In the Autumn of 1932, after returning to New York from his summer in Los Angeles, Jackson moved to the apartment his brother Charles used as a studio at 46 Carmine Street. Charles and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in an apartment across the street. Charles used the front room of 46 Carmine Street for his studio. Jackson's bed and paintings occupied the back room. Jackson Pollock, now in his third year at the Art Students League was the class monitor for Thomas Hart Benton's class. He hired models and assisted Benton during teaching. In exchange he didn't have to pay tuition. He also helped Benton install the murals titled *Arts of Life in America* in the Whitney Museum's reading room. Soon after the murals were unveiled, Benton was offered a commission to paint the history of Indiana for the Indiana Pavilion at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. He left his teaching position at the Art Students League and moved to Indianapolis in December 1932, returning to New York the following autumn. The Whitney sold the murals when it moved location in 1954. After Thomas Hart Benton left the Art Students' League, Jackson was taught by John Sloan in his life drawing, painting, and composition class at the League. In addition to Sloan's class he also signed up for a morning class in stone carving at Greenwich House Annex on Jones Street in January taught by Ahron Ben-Schmuel. He also worked there as a part-time custodian. He had previously taken free sculpture classes at Greenwich House on Barrow Street prior to enrolling at the Art Students' League in 1930. According to the chronology published by The Museum of Modern Art in Jackson Pollock, Jackson rendered "small sketches for murals in lunettes at Greenwich House" in the winter of 1933, although the murals were never executed. Pollock quit Sloan's class after one month. In February and March he registered for night classes in clay modeling at the Art Students' League taught by the sculptor Robert Laurent. On March 25, 1933 he wrote to his mother about sculpting "I like it better than painting - drawing though is the essence of all."

Gary Comenas, Founder and author of the online sites Warholstars and the AbEx Chronology

“Pollock’s sculpture acts as a haunting metaphor for the creative mind of the artist, the internal process of negotiation that every artist undergoes in their search for a material manifestation of the act of expression.”

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath

Untitled 1930-33  
Stone  
4.25 x 3 x 2.75 in / 10.8 x 7.6 x 7 cm  
Courtesy of Jason McCoy Inc





**Monolith (hope and death)**

As monuments are a manifestation of a historical event that we (for one reason or another) have decided worthy of historical preservation, they stand as physical symbols of a mental portal to the past. However, Sonne's monoliths are placed on pallets and so it is hard to decipher whether they are still to be erected for future veneration or rather ready to be rolled away and obliterated from memory.

In Stanley Kubrick's infamous film 2001 - A Space Odyssey, the encounter with a large black monolith emitting a strange sound, changes the behavioral patterns of our forefathers, the monkeys, from living in peace to raging war against each other. Sonne's two works Monolith (hope and death) and Monolith (life and fear) likewise emit a **deep and dark**

**sound**, but as one spends time with the pieces it becomes clear that what is actually heard from within their core is the constant chanting of a fragmented monologue about hope, death, life and fear.

Stephen Decaluis, Independent writer and art critic



*Nine Letter Words (Rubik's cube revisited)* 2007  
Pvc. Vinyl with print, artist sown fabric bag  
cube: 2.3 x 2.3 x 2.3 in / 5.75 x 5.75 x 5.75 cm  
bag: 9.8 x 6.3 in / 25 x 16 cm  
Edition 2 of 5, 2 APs  
Courtesy of Charles Bank Gallery

*Monolith (Hope and Death)* 2009  
Wood, aluminum, industrial paint, mirror glass,  
euro-pallet, ipod shuffle, sneakers  
84.5 x 39.5 x 31.5 in / 215 x 100 x 80 cm  
Courtesy of Charles Bank Gallery



Kasper Sonne speaks of, and to, a world broken and shattered; his practice carries with it an impossibility of reckoning with yesterday and an impetus to start over. While his practice is built upon well-learned lessons of critical negation and phenomenological drama in service of deconstructing our subjectivities, unlike many similar approaches, it seems more concerned with what happens next than with what can happen next.

Kasper Sonne's approach is planted in a (recent) art-historical lineage, yet his project seems to be one of parricide, of learning from his forbearers but then negating them. Though Sonne hews from the traditions of minimalism and conceptualism, he transcends mere material play and epistemological wit. His works melt down the sheet of 1960's and 1970's minimalist sculpture and conceptual practice, to recast their aura in a die cut for our digitally encumbered age. The results are sharp angles and a high-gloss,

**black sleekness of surface**

that draw you in, physically closer, but then rebuff the impetus of your advances. That is not to say that the work spurns your attention- quite the opposite, as it reflects and exposes how your expectations and desires are formed and enacted in a modern culture. The artist's work cultivates and thrives on the productive tension between what first draws you into the work, and what occupies you once you are engaged.

Benjamin Godsill, Contemporary Art Specialist

**History Is Optional**

In the ongoing series of works, 'History Is Optional', Sonne addresses the construction of history and (lost) memory, morphing past and present, old and new, then and now. Through a re-contextualization of works from earlier stages of his own artistic practice and exhibition history - sometimes building figurative paintings into hermetically sealed black boxes, or veiling the depictions on large canvases and photographs behind a monochrome layer of paint - Sonne introduces a secret to the object, a past now hidden from the spectator. Thus embedding each work in a strong sense of nostalgia - an emotion that seems to be both typical and consequential of life in a modern society - each of the old artworks can, however, actively be freed and brought back (or forth) into plain view, but not without the destruction of the new.

And so each piece in the 'History Is Optional' series functions as a 'crystal image' with their - in the words of Vincent Honore on Gilles Deleuze's theory - "multiple, contradictory

and simultaneous layers of history, **fluctuating between actual and virtual**

, recording or dealing with conscious or involuntary memories, confusing mental and physical time." The crystal-image, which forms the cornerstone of Deleuze's time-image, is a shot that fuses the pastness of the recorded event with the presentness of its viewing. The crystal-image is the indivisible unity of the virtual image and the actual image. The virtual image is subjective, in the past, and recollected. The virtual image as "pure recollection" exists outside of consciousness, in time. It is always somewhere in the temporal past, but still alive and ready to be "recalled" by an actual image. The actual image is objective, in the present, and perceived. The crystal-image always lives at the limit of an indiscernible actual and virtual image. The crystal-image shapes time as a constant two-way mirror that splits the present into two heterogeneous directions, "one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time consists of this split, and it is ... time, that we see in the crystal".

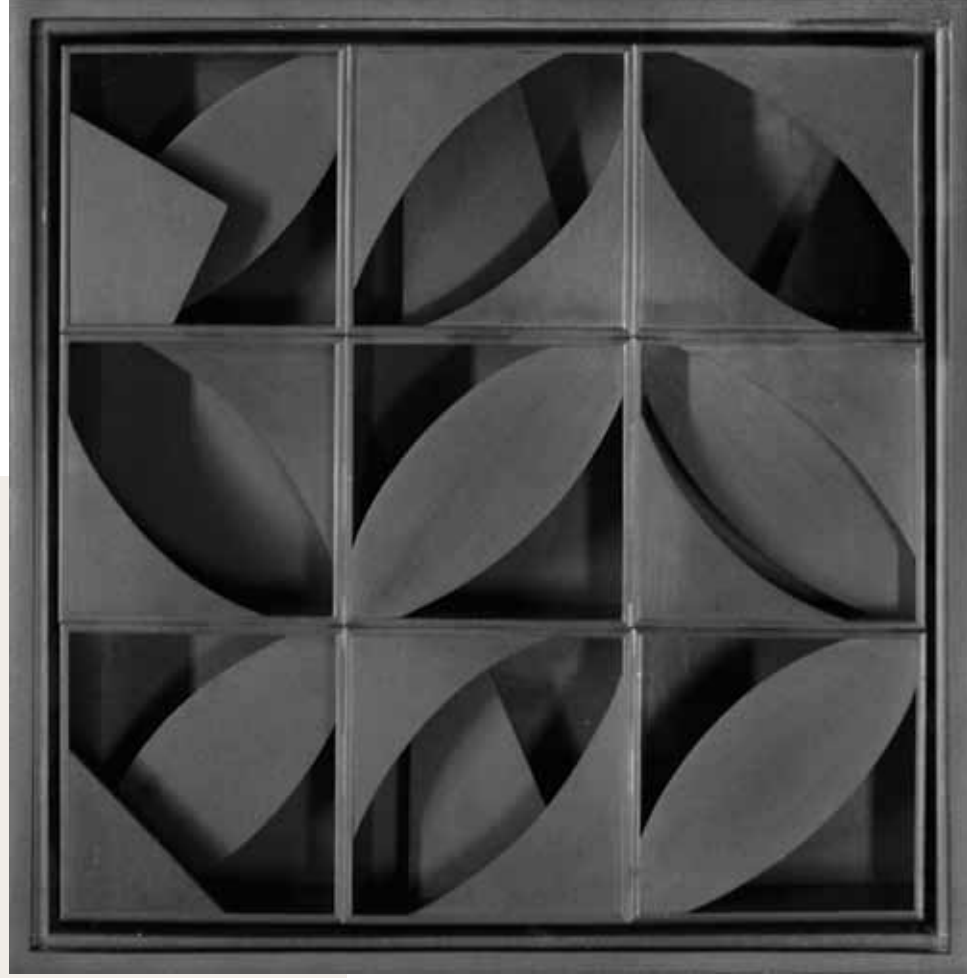
Provided by the artist studio and partially based on a text by Vincent Honoré, a Paris based independent curator



*The Point of Being Pointless* 2006  
Neon, converter, electrical cords  
40 in / 100 cm diameter  
Edition 1 of 5, 2 APs  
Courtesy of Charles Bank Gallery

*History is Optional (Black box)* 2003-2009  
Mixed media on canvas, wood, industrial paint,  
mirror glass, euro-pallet  
27 x 39 x 31 in / 70 x 100 x 80 cm  
Courtesy of Charles Bank Gallery

Louise Nevelson constructed her sculpture much as she constructed her past: shaping each with her legendary sense of self as she created an extraordinary iconography through abstract means. Nevelson (1899-1988) was recognized during her lifetime as one of America's most prominent and innovative sculptors. The sculpture for which she is best known was made of **cast-off wood parts** - actual street throwaways - transformed with monochromatic spray paint. Through her elegant room-size works, Nevelson regularly summoned themes linked to her complicated past, fractious present, and anticipated future. Whether expressed literally or metaphorically, in representational paintings or outsize abstract sculpture, in early self-portraits or edgy

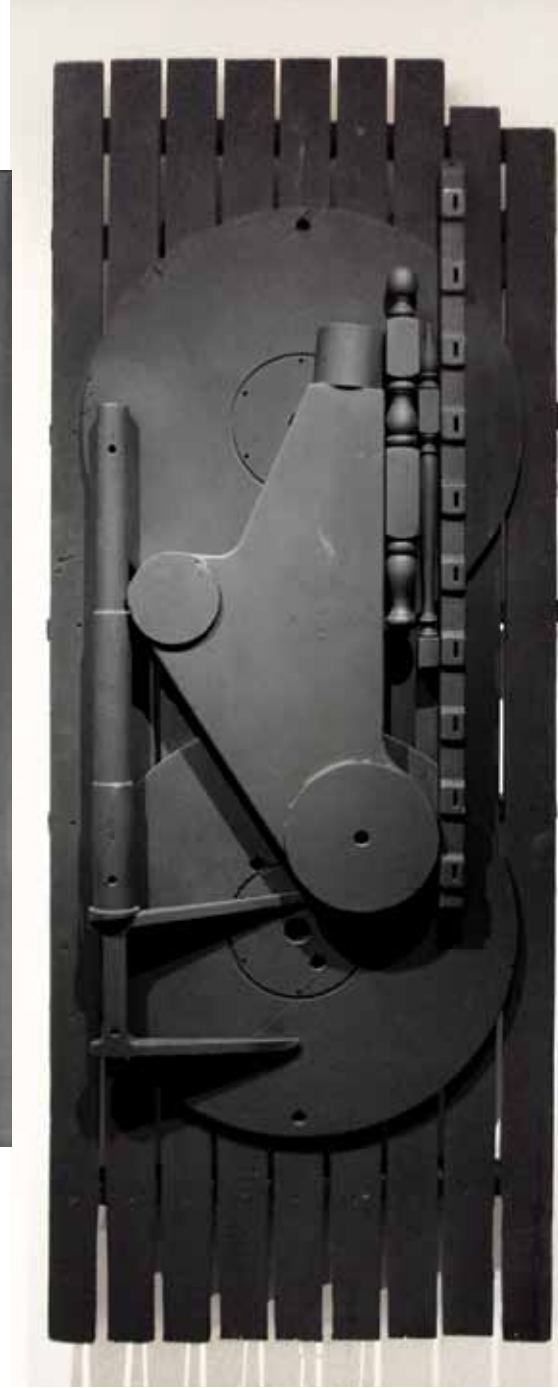


*Night Leaf*, 1969-74  
Plexiglas multiple in black  
12 x 12 x 2 in / 31.8 x 31.8 x 5 cm  
Edition of 150  
Courtesy of Laura Maloney

Opposite page:  
*Untitled*, 1981, Wood painted black  
92 x 35 x 3.75 in / 234 x 89 x 9.5 cm  
Courtesy of Laura Maloney

middle-year projects, Nevelson's sense of selfhood was a force that propelled her work.

From the curatorial statement of the exhibition *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend*. Curated by Brooke Kamin Rapaport



The sculptures from the 1950s to 1980s mark a period in Nevelson's work that encompasses her signature black monochrome wall reliefs, surrealist free-standing pieces, and mixed-media collages. Working in New York contemporaneously alongside the Abstract Expressionists,

Nevelson produced a body of art that is difficult to pigeonhole yet to this day exerts a **profound, almost**

**mystical presence**. Nevelson often built her works from wooden detritus - banister fragments, dowels, rejected moldings - that she found on the street and then painted them a rich matte black that she considered to be the color of peace, totality, and greatness. In such works, the paint becomes a unifying, beautifying material that neutralizes details and obscures the commonplace previous function of the elements. The paint's transformative power over objects is apparent: it brings out the beauty of the form of the objects that is not as easily seen when their history and previous function obfuscate it.

Ashley Eldridge-Ford, New York and London Based independent art critic and writer



**PAPER**



Hadieh Shafie's scroll paintings ride a curious line between the sublime and the quotidian. The works carry specific markers of the political as they manage to focus on so much historical and wide-ranging mystical material into a personal, and personally altered, experience. She cites Rumi and Sufism, and the "search for the dervish within," as sources of inspiration in her work, but her deployment of those ideas is far from traditional. Likewise, although she selects a word with its own emotional and spiritual connotations, she leaves out key vowel markers and piles it into overlapping layers, essentially rendering it illegible. The phrase becomes a carrier of a different kind of meaning, one that is personal, intense, and in many ways opaque.

This illegibility lends allure to Shafie's pieces, but it also points to their limitations, for they veer dangerously close to solipsism. The scroll paintings are a case in point:

**peering at them up close**, the bits of phrases peeking out along the trunks or half-submerged in inky dyes convey not so much transcendence as someone else's search for it, the visual remainders of an interiority we'll never grasp. For all their preoccupation with the divine, these works underscore most strongly the stakes of being human and the boundaries that seal us off from one another.

Emily Warner, New York Based Art Critic and writer



*20900 Pages*, 2012  
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed and hand written Farsi Text Esheghe "Love"  
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 122 x 122 x 9 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

Opposite:  
*21600 Pages* (detail) 2012  
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed and hand written Farsi Text Esheghe "Love"  
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 122 x 122 x 9 cm  
Courtesy of the artist



*20900 Pages* (detail) 2012  
Ink, acrylic and paper with printed and hand written Farsi Text Esheghe "Love"  
48 x 48 x 3.5 in / 122 x 122 x 9 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

Shafie's ink and paper paintings are the end result of tightly scrolled and brightly colored rolls of paper which often hide handwritten text by the artist. While one is initially tempted to associate her work with Op-Art, Hadieh's intelligent and coherent marriage of pure color with a deeply personal cultural branding, pushes her artwork beyond the

### pure eye candy

of that mode and begins to explore the process of adding a new contemporary dialogue to what can be loosely described as Islamic-influenced art. There's something powerful in these works — the tightly coiled colored rolls hide words, much like women in the tightly coiled world of many Islamic nations are forced to hide their words and opinions, especially in the brutal theocracy of her native Iran. There's an Orwellian aspect to these works with a touch of Washington Color School that makes them deliver a unique perspective to the spectacular artistic diversity of the nation's capital. It is no accident that Hadieh's works have come to national prominence originating from the DMV.

F. Lennox Campello, author of the book *100 Artists of Washington, DC* and founder of the online art project *Alida Anderson Art Projects*





Visually striking with a compelling physical presence, the works of Kim Chun Hwan are also formal in nature although not wholly predetermined. He is extremely sensitive to the relationships between color and shape and responsive to process and chance. Some of his works are almost monochromatic in coloration, their undulating patterns evoking those of natural forces, such as the rippling of water or the effects of wind, resonating between the abstract and the representational, the literal and the conceptual. Others are more varied in color. One such is covered with little tubes of paper, suggesting hundreds of littered cigarettes affixed to a ground, except the all-over pattern is ordered, arranged in a cross-hatched design that suggests certain Jasper Johns'. Another is free-style, its splotches of wadded papers more expressionistic, the surface pulsating. In addition to being a critique of current issues, they are also embedded in a selected history of modernist/postmodernist art, from abstract painting, collage, assemblage, arte povera, process and conceptualism to today's green art. As artists like Kim know, the art object is itself multifaceted, simultaneously subjective, impassioned achievement, ineffable embodiment of culture, and

## the ultimate consumable product.

Such artists are both critics and defenders, provocatively negotiating the divide between art and commodity, connoisseurship and consumerism, the inspirational and the market.

Lilly Wei, Art critic and independent curator



*Sean Connery* 2011  
39 x 39 in / 100 x 100 cm  
Paper, wooden panel  
Courtesy of the artist



*Marilyn* 2010  
39 x 39 in / 100 x 100 cm  
Paper, wooden panel  
Courtesy of the artist



*A La Mode* 2007  
Paper, wood panel  
39 x 39 in / 100 x 100 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

For many if not most artists, there tends to be a close correlation between their process and their sense of themselves. To his credit, Kim has not opted for simplification of his methodology; rather, he has introduced the world into the strategies he uses to make his work. It is not particularly relevant that we see the images in their entirety; it is far more important that we know that they are there—representing those aspects of the human, in the advertising images, whereby we find and define ourselves. Even so destructive an action as the cutting of the papers plays a role in Kim's mind; he believes that his deed opens up the interior of his art, submitting his material to a certain kind of violence that leads to imagistic freedom (and we remember that Kim includes the verb "enjoy" as part of the actions of everyday life). It can also be said that Kim's works are archives of memory, for they store, on an individual basis, the ephemera of our culture in its momentary present. Trying to transform the ordinary into a thing of beauty, he alters his method and addresses the (often hidden) forms themselves. Sometimes his method looks like it owes something to the assemblages of the French artist Arman, who filled limited spaces with heaps of detritus or even valued objects such as violins. But in his quest for a language that would be equally given over to social commentary and esthetic statement, Kim has created an independent place for himself in contemporary art.

The intensely textured surface of Kim's collages presents an abstract element that is in equal amounts provocative and reassuring. The textures challenge Kim's audience by creating a **seemingly aimless, even anarchic surface**, although it is also clear that the individual papers have often been arranged

to create an overall gestalt, in a recognizable pattern such as a circle, a spiral, or a spiky puzzle of diagonals. The sheer ingenuity of Kim's visual intelligence cannot be denied, but he is asking, I think, for something deeper: a work whose very materials reflect the current state of social reality. The actual images may be hidden to us, but they are certainly there, caught up in their function as elements of a larger work of art. What we don't see becomes as important as what we do look at—thus, from the experience of Kim's art we may extrapolate to the experience of ourselves, with our inner self, its thoughts and emotions, disguised by our public demeanor and symbolic actions. That Kim has been able to build a body of work that does speak to the inner lives of people defines him as an explorer—someone for whom art is not only a physical process but also a private endeavor meant to investigate. Thus Kim invites the contemplation of physical space shored up by the treatment of throwaway articles, which become more than things and edge their way toward the articulation of notable insight.

Jonathan Goodman, New York based writer, editor, and teacher



Rob Carter uses photography, stop-motion animation, and time-lapse video to spotlight buildings and their shifting political and historical significance. Architectural themes and histories are invented or modified using physically cut-up and digitally manipulated photographic images of specific buildings, towns and landscapes. This process simulates paths of urban development and recontextualizes cultural traditions such as sport and religion. The interaction of plant life with these photo-structures represents the

**irrepressible strength of nature** that our buildings attempt to shield us from, as well as the temporality and fluidity of the environs we inhabit.

This stop-motion video animation uses the architectural language of High Gothic and Modernism to invent a contradictory history of their evolution. The theme starts and finishes with the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. This vast anachronistic building lies unfinished and partially ruined after over a century of intermittent construction and restoration. The re-created 13th century medieval construction unintentionally symbolizes those eventful years of indecision, tragedy and changes in the meaning and purpose of the city's architecture and landscape, especially its religious buildings. It is contrasted with Le Corbusier's La Tourette monastery in France, completed in 1960. The video uses this anomalous but single-minded architectural vision as the foundation for a new emergence of Gothic expression, resulting in a complete and unified fantasy cathedral – akin to the building that the Church of Saint John the Divine might have aspired to be.

Text provided by the artist's studio



Top:  
*Stone on Stone (Aerial)* 2009  
Digital C-print  
10 x 11.25 in / 25.4 x 28.6 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

Bottom:  
*Stone on Stone (Monks)* 2009  
Digital C-print  
13.25 x 10 in / 33.7 x 25.4 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

Opposite page (video stills):  
*Stone on Stone* 2009  
Digital video projection,  
B&W/Color/Sound  
1080 x 1080 pixels  
Courtesy of the artist

Opposite page (bottom):  
*Stone on Stone (Sky)* 2009  
Digital C-print  
10 x 11.25 in / 25.4 x 28.6 cm  
Courtesy of the artist



Photographs are the lifeblood of Rob Carter's work, but **video is the beating heart** - it's the artist's principal medium and the animating force (quite literally) behind his evolving reflections on the "theatricality of architecture." Following recent pieces about sports stadiums, his latest video, *Stone on Stone*, uses Carter's signature stop-motion techniques to dramatize the politicized history of a different type of building: immense cathedrals. Tangible layers of meticulously cut-out photographs (depicting edifices, ornamentation, and the surrounding landscapes) pile up before your eyes or fall away into ruin. Visually, it's a captivating trick, but the method itself also neatly mirrors the architectural processes of construction, reuse, and demolition on which Carter sets his sights.

Rob Carter's videos and photographs examine paper as both a physical object and as a malleable document of the real. The work employs stop motion animation, time-lapse video and photographic 're-constructions' to spotlight the iconic and political structures in our urban environment, especially sports stadia, skyscrapers, churches, and other historical landmarks. Recent work draws parallels between the inspiration of the natural world and human manipulation and control of it in the past, present and future.

David Revere McFadden, Chief Curator and Vice President for Programs and Collections at the Museum of Arts & Design, New York City

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Many of Dine's prints consist of multiple printmaking techniques using copper plates and wood blocks. In *Tools and Dreams*, the two processes result in different effects of line and tone. In his dry point work, Dine often uses power tools to draw on the metal plate, and the explosive, splashy marks are sometimes achieved by "spitbite," a technique in which strong acid is applied directly to the printing plate. Dine is an accomplished printmaker and his final works achieve a full tonal range from light to velvety black, with marks ranging from soft smudged areas to hard lines. This image was printed from two separate plates that were printed simultaneously, and like much of his work, is spatially quite shallow, with marks that cover almost the entire surface. Dine uses the recurring symbol of the heart to represent his wife. Each heart is a little different, like a portrait. The tools reflect his childhood memories of the hardware store owned by his family in Cincinnati. The work is divided visually, and although both sides are not exactly identical, the overall impression is one of symmetry. It is quite unusual to see such obvious visual repetition in a work of art, but Dine frequently uses it in his prints. Pop artists, particularly, often repeated images in reference to mass production and consumerism. Perhaps it is an idea that originated from Dine's association with the Pop Art movement of 1960's New York. However, Dine has often noted his dislike of being lumped under the banner of Pop Art, which he felt categorized his work in a false context that is distracting to the viewer. The two halves of the image might represent two "selves," past and present, or simply be a reference to the printing process, which by its very nature is about repetition.

This image is charged with energy. Throughout the printmaking process Dine added gestural marks to the basic image building the background until he reached the desired visual and emotional effect. The softly drawn, solid-looking hearts are surrounded with a volcanic eruption of marks, which contrast strongly with the carefully drawn tools. So what is the artist trying to say? Is he simply describing his enthusiasm for life, or should the symbols be taken literally? Is the visual frenzy subdued or increased by the use of repetition? By repeating visual themes such as tools, clothing, and hearts in his work, Dine has made them a part of his personal iconography, and separated them from their normal context.

Andrea, C. "Artists Jim Dine Finds the Personal in the Popular," *Christian Science Monitor* (book review), 08827729, 2/21/96, Vol.88, Issue 59  
 Johnson, K. "From Modernism Backward: Jim Dine's Multiple Styles" (review). *New York Times*; 4/9/2004, Vol. 153 Issue 52814

*The Drawing Lesson* (1st Version) 2007  
 India ink, charcoal, acrylic, graphite,  
 black chalk and collage on paper  
 10 x 7.5 in / 25.4 x 19 cm, 4 sheets each  
 Photograph courtesy The Pace Gallery



Beginning in the early '60s, Dine used tools as subject matter for his art. The tools were both subject and matter, to the extent that the paints often had implements attached to their surfaces; in *Summer Tools*, 1962, a spool binder twine, a hammer, a pair of shears and a gardening fork are suspended over a surface of mixed blues, reds, yellows and greens that extends only a sixth of the way down from the top of the painting; in *Black Garden Tools* (also from 1962), three edgers, two shovels a rake and a pitchfork emerge like reversed shadows from the painting's black oil on wood ground.

In assemblages like these, Dine was both recognising a life lived with tools (his grandfather and father owned stores in Cincinnati) which sold hardware and in which the artist worked from the age of nine to 18) and rendering the life of the objects themselves in what amounted to a painted autobiography. "Like everything else I do," he said,

**"the tool paintings are self-portraits"** and in 1972 he produced a portfolio of drypoints called *Thirty Bones of My Body*, which made that anatomy hirsute and sexually polymorphous. Among the 30 tools in the series were a pair of needle-nosed clippers that nuzzled into a small, hairy cleft, and a cutting tool, the handle of which plunged downward with a fine phallic intensity. "A tool is like a bone," Dine remarked in 1999 and in his *New Tool Paintings* he seems intent on hauling the whole skeleton out of the workshop and giving it a renewed and turbulent lease on life.

Robert Enright, Art Historian and Cultural Journalist



Some of Bourgeois's works, as in the stitched three-dimensional sculptures, evoke the corporeality of the body and its fetishistic associations, while others, like empty dresses suspended from hangers, are ghostly in their absence of the wearer. Often incorporated within large-scale sculptural installations (*The Cell Series*, for example), fabric components contributed to a larger narrative. Bourgeois's two-dimensional fabric "drawings" are more abstract; made from discarded clothing, the deconstruction of the original garment eliminates an overt reference to the body. Instead, layers of color, texture and pattern are placed in careful, sometimes intricate, juxtaposition, the associations with Bourgeois's biography intertwined with the visual punch of their geometric compositions. Her concerns, however, remain recognizable: webs, spirals and vertiginous forms dominate, skewing the modernist grid. Allusion to landscape plays an important role (see "The Waiting Hours," 2007, and the cloth book titled "Dawn," 2006), as do the additions of orifices

and sac-like elements. **Color provides lyrical continuity**. As Germano Celant notes, the works also reference art historical precedents; he cites the craft-oriented explorations of the Russian Supremacists and the Italian Futurists, and the "rational formality" of modernist Bauhaus textiles, to which Bourgeois's woven works seem most closely aligned (Anni Albers provides an apt comparison).

A sculptural installation from 2010 brings many elements of Bourgeois's fabric work together. Assembled in a large vitrine, as if on stage, an armless torso-like shape lays supine on a metal slab, its chest piled with several stuffed berets. The berets, punctuated by their pointed tops, resemble breasts, while their significance provokes multiple associations – referencing the beret's identification with intellectuals and artists, as well as with the French, Bourgeois alludes to her own history and homeland. Nearby, thread bobbins rest on a metal spooling tree, nodding to the process of sewing and reparation. Hanging from the same structure, a limp, dark, rubber form is evocative of Bourgeois's earlier sculptural works, and engages a dialogue with the symbolic and the psychological. At once anthropomorphic and abstract, the strength of the work's formal elements provides visual structure to a tableau suffused with enigmatic narrative. Bourgeois: "It is not an image that I am seeking. Its not an idea. It is an emotion you want to recreate, an emotion of wanting, of giving and of destroying."

Excerpt from Curatorial text of exhibition *Louise Bourgeois: The Fabric Works*, curated by Germano Celant



Untitled 2007  
Fabric  
14.5 x 17 in / 36.8 x 43.5 cm  
© Louise Bourgeois Trust  
Courtesy of Cheim & Read, New York

Bourgeois was born in Paris in 1911. She moved to New York in 1938 and lived in the city until her death last year at age 98. Her works on fabric are emblematic of certain themes: marriage, motherhood, sexuality, femininity, domesticity. This focus on the familial results in work of intense psychological complexity, exposing relationships and hierarchies related to female identity and its opposite (male/female, mother/father, organic/geometric, rigid/pliable). Coinciding with an inclination, at old age, to stay closer to home, Bourgeois's late fabric works provide a sense of introspection – her wardrobe and linen closet became representative of memory. As Bourgeois has stated, "Clothing is...an exercise of memory. It makes me explore the past...like little signposts in the search for the past." The re-appropriation of her husband's handkerchiefs, stained tablecloths and napkins, and worn dresses from all phases of her life infuses the work with a confessional, talismanic aura.

Bourgeois's use of fabric also references her personal history. She grew up in her parent's tapestry restoration business, her childhood surrounded by the reparation of 17th and 18th century textiles. Bourgeois's peripatetic, philandering father sought out fragmentary, often damaged tapestries, while her mother, patient, reasonable, and, as Bourgeois notes, more "scientific," would match their colors, dye new wool and painstakingly re-weave them. Bourgeois was a valued participant in the process – beginning at age 8 she drew in missing sections needing repair, and at 15 her parents took her out of school so that she could have more professional experience in the family business. Bourgeois's later fabric collages and assemblages – their many disparate pieces assembled and sewed together – attest to the early influence of this restorative process, as well as to the conceptual and psychological connotations of the words associated

with it: **unravel, weave, knot,**

**stitch, mend.** Bourgeois said, "I always had the fear of being separated and abandoned. The sewing is my attempt to keep things together and make things whole."

Excerpt from Curatorial text of exhibition *Louise Bourgeois: The Fabric Works*, curated by Germano Celant

Soonja Han displays substantial creativity, spontaneity, diversity, and energy when executing her drawings on thin paper or lightweight wood panels, when painting pictures with their painted or cutout shapes, or when creating sensuous, banal, and provocative objects made of various materials, with the physical process of making and of accumulating always being in full view. In her spatial installations, the sequence of accumulating and juxtaposing similar formations

does not stress the monotony of the repetition but the **mercurial, vegetative, random**, and volatile variety of constellations. It is especially these works that refer to the dialect of the unbiased spontaneity and the intrinsic coherence of visual and plastic structural formation. Han's biological vegetations proliferate with seductive ease. They exude unexpected sensual wealth and boundless playful joy. In his Hanover apartment, Kurt Schwitters, by taking an entirely spur-of-the-moment approach devoid of any preconceived aesthetic notions, once turned pieces of waste and haphazardly collected, trivial objects of everyday use into a specie that had real plastic value and radiated contemplative, enigmatic, and poetic fragility and ephemerality. Likewise, Soonja Han, in her studio or in a gallery, creates incessantly proliferating vegetation by obsessively using circular shapes made of multicolored adhesive tape, or of a plastic bags or needles, that remind us of eggs, nests, or fruits. The Merz artist Schwitters latently but heroically revolted against classical aestheticism, the aristocratism and formalism of old art. He ushered in an era of unbiased, anarchic, spur-of-the-moment, random and spontaneous approaches to non-art, to worthless and trivial everyday reality. This resulted in the perception and recognition of the unfathomable enigma exuded by the fresh, unconventional, genuine, and poignant poetry of randomly built fragments of reality. Soonja Han's modest, serene, playful, tolerant and utterly open attitude has less of the emotional ardor typical of the avant-garde. All she wants to do is sensitize us, in a very unobtrusive and easygoing manner, to new perspectives and connections. The poetic efficacy of subversive spontaneity conjures up contemporary models of non-invasive interventions in concrete realities.

Lorand Hegyi, Director, Museum of Modern Art of St. Etienne Metropole



*Pink Flower* 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
59 x 71 in / 150 x 180 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

Opposite page:  
*Blue Flower* 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
59 x 59 in / 150 x 150 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

*Study for Circles* 2011  
Acrylic, ink, label, pencil,  
cutting, collage or print scotch  
on paper or print paper  
16.5 x 12 in / 42 x 30 cm each  
Courtesy of the artist

Soonja Han's work, creating a unique plastic space only with circles, can be, in terms of art history, categorised as geometric abstraction. The world of geometric abstraction, opened by Mondrian and Malevich in the beginning of the 20th century, is a field so meticulously explored that all possibilities seem to have been identified. Nevertheless, Soonja Han's work appeals to our senses with freshness and vitality, and adds to the genealogy of geometric abstraction "the Poetic Efficacy of Subversive Spontaneity" that is irrational, sensual and dynamic.

All these traits stem from the artist's cultural background and the recognition of her own personal experiences which are expressed in a superposition of colored circles. Her way of work that can be deciphered from the drawings - the process and records of conception of a work - is a course of finding the balance between the colored circles, each of which contracts, expands, opens, closes

and **emanates the energy of light** and temperature. Such work gives Soonja Han's work a dynamic touch, a trait rare to find, and with this dynamism trait the artist develops her work from canvases to installations, even to digital animation. The experience of such various media creates a stronger, a more solid and multi-dimensional pictorial space when she returns to the canvas.

Kim Ahyung, Independent Curator

In the work of Soonja Han, painting is reduced to its most elementary components. In each image the colours, used sparingly, are given no volume but most often applied flat. The compositions unfold on the plane of the picture, with no suggestion of depth. The works are quite simply arrangements of shapes and colours of a surface, arrangements which can at times play on a variety of different materials employed (papier collés, superpositions, cut-outs, hard edge etc.). The reduced plastic language and the resulting neutrality reflect a determination to control the forms themselves of the artwork, and to arrive at a language that is clear, simple and effectual, one purged of all affectivity and individualistic feeling. It is a geometric art which is voluntarily rationalist, and which tends to the universal.

Soonja Han, a faithful follower of the greatest masters of Abstraction, seeks out the **harmony that comes with geometric regularity**. She has abandoned the "vedute" of the Renaissance; painting is not a window open into space to be imitated. She eliminates all trace of subject, retains nothing but space. Her compositions are based on the tension existing between form, colour and line.

The circle (along with a few oval and void variants) constitutes the essential figure, the motif of her work. Kandinsky spoke of the point as the most concise shape that the painter has at his or her disposal. Once a point is placed on the canvas, the plane comes into being. It will develop according to its thickness, to its colour and to how it moves. If the point is placed again and again at the same regular distance, a circle is created. This simple choice of a continually repeated figure characterises the work of Soonja Han.

Gilbert Perle, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art, Nice



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Kasper Sonne  
*Nostalgia* 2009  
Brass sign  
1.5 x 9.5 x .5 in / 3.7 x 24.6 x 1 cm  
Edition 1 of 5, 2 APs  
Courtesy of Charles Bank Gallery



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