



LEILA HELLER GALLERY



RAN HWANG

The image is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of an artwork. It features numerous thin, silver-colored pins or needles standing upright from a white, porous foam base. The pins are topped with small, circular, metallic-looking discs in various colors, including red, pink, and teal. The discs are arranged in a way that creates a textured, almost fabric-like surface. In the background, more of the same artwork is visible, with some discs appearing to be in different colors like green and yellow. The overall lighting is soft and diffused, highlighting the metallic sheen of the pins and the vibrant colors of the discs.

Evanescence and Regeneration

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
RAN HWANG, *Evanescence and Regeneration*
October 15 - December 6, 2024

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

22 East 80th Street, First Floor
New York, NY 10075
T. +1 (212) 249-7695
www.LeilaHellerGallery.com

RAN HWANG

All artworks by Ran Hwang,
Copyright © 2024 Ran Hwang. All rights reserved.

CATALOGUE

Catalogue Design by Valeria A. Morris and Marvin Doctor
Images by Haeyoon Park, Youngha Jo
Essay by Lilly Wei

Cover Images:

Front Cover: Detail of *Beyond the Serenity*, 2024

Back Cover: Detail of *Becoming Again_AA2*, 2023

RAN HWANG



Ran Hwang working in her studio, 2024

Evanescence and Regeneration

Written by Lilly Wei

Entering Ran Hwang’s exhibition of recent work at the Leila Heller Gallery in New York is like wandering unexpectedly into an enchanted grove spilling over with plum blossoms. The illusion is so persuasive that you can almost smell their fragrance; you might even try to pluck a flower or two. The nearly twenty works, almost all from the past two years, are arranged as an installation of sorts; I say of sorts because each relief is an independent object, not part of an ensemble, the placement contingent upon the space and will change the next time they are hung, which includes not only the placement, but the works themselves. It is not surprising that installation is often her default mode, since Hwang is best known for sweeping, site-specific projects and is often commissioned to create immersive multimedia spectacles of astonishing complexity.

The scale of her installations is even more astonishing when you realize that they are made from tiny buttons, beads, sometimes crystals, and pins which are used in copious quantities to build her reliefs, the process extraordinarily labor-intensive. The repetitive process and the concentration that it requires—or induces—are also a form of meditation, adding a sense of ritual to the meticulous crafting that was once considered merely domestic art—which was hardly considered art at all. Usually relegated to women, it therefore had little value (Think of the hugely popular South Korean novel, *Please Look After Mom* (2009) by Kyung-Sook Shin that dramatically underscored how women’s essential labors are taken for granted and dismissed). That, however, has changed in recent years, such work finally given its critical due, its monetary value consequently also increasing.

The largest work here is *Becoming Again_ETBF* (2024), a resplendent six-panel Korean folding screen stretching nearly 12 feet across. Made of Plexiglas (which she began to use in 2006 for its transparency and sturdiness, shifting from a vinyl support), she perforates its surface with a laser and then fixes pins into the holes with resin, to firmly secure the blossoms. The ground is an azure that represents either sky—of the most limpid blue you can imagine—or its reflection in the clearest of water, which also reflects clusters of delicate white blooms clinging to gracefully arched branches, loose petals swirling about like a spring snowstorm.

Plum blossoms, a frequent motif in East Asian art, are hardy despite the fragility of their appearance, and one of the earliest trees to flower, even if snow is still on the ground. Because of that, they are perfect symbols of resilience and rebirth, representing the joyous return of spring. The theme of this show, which is clearly stated in its title, *Evanescence and Regeneration*, is about the eternal cycles of the seasons, and that there is, paradoxically, constancy in transience, in its reassuring turning and returning.

From the same series are a half dozen Plexiglas panels that are approximately the same size as a single panel of the folding screen. All are a deep midnight blue, nocturnes that twinkle with crystals in contrast to the screen’s clear daylight. The blossoms in these panels are also more colorful, ranging from white against the translucent dark blue ground to rose and white, yellow and green, updating the hanging paper or silk scrolls that are a format characteristic of traditional Korean and Asian painting. They glow with a beckoning light, illuminated internally, and, seeming to cross cultures, the elongated panels might also be compared to Western stained glass windows.

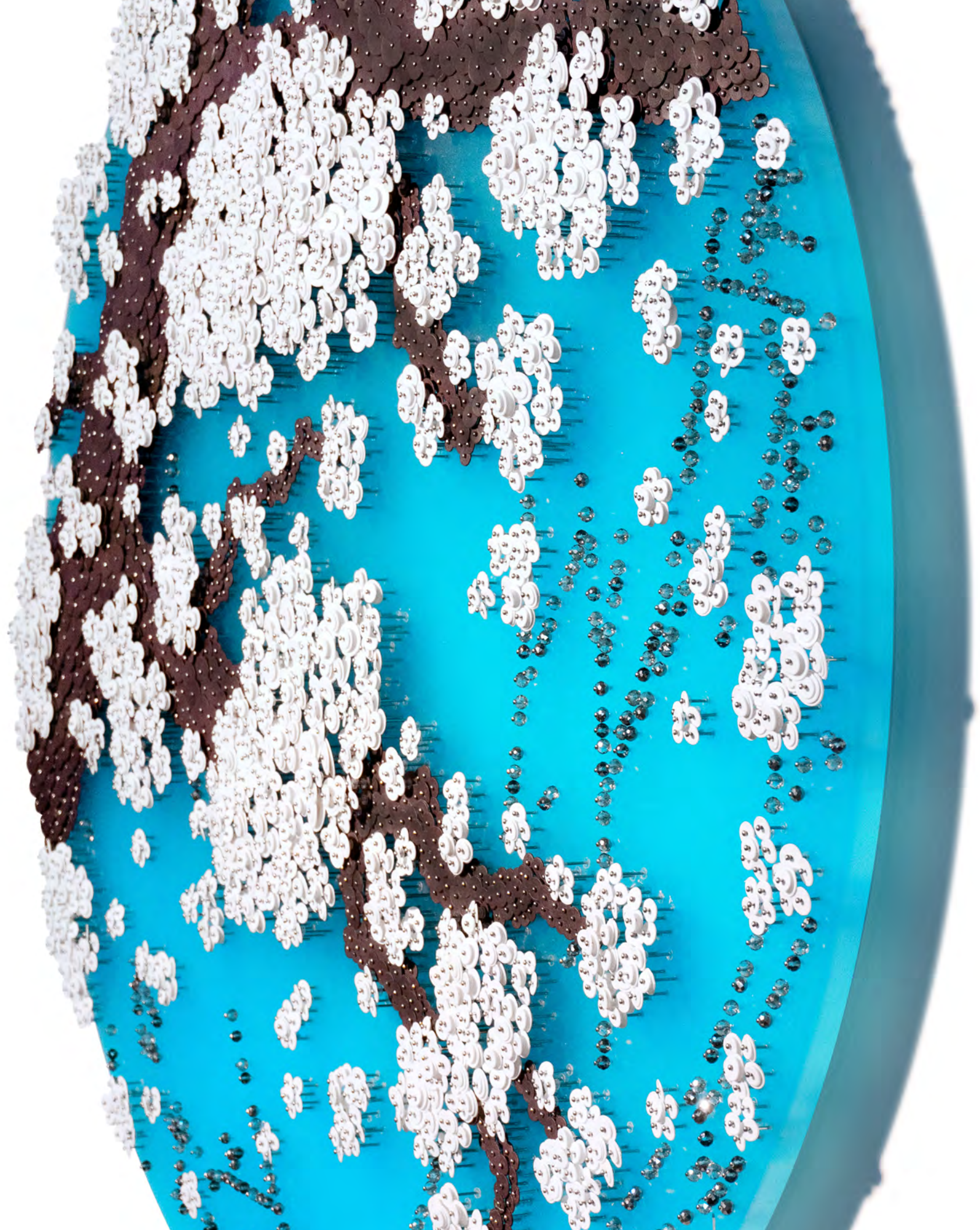
The remaining works are more intimate in size. There are several from another two series, *Ode to Full Moon* and *Beyond Serenity*, that are formatted as 12” tondi, circles symbolic of the cyclical and the generative as well as of unity and completion: the perfect form. In these series, slightly raised white flowers are bunched against white, black and candy-colored grounds that look remarkably, temptingly munchable, like a Ladurée confection. The two called *Beyond Serenity* are monochromatic, Hwang’s version of Daesaekhwa, perhaps. One is a fiery red, the other hot pink, and both pack a visual and tactile punch, as all her works do.

A new relief introduces the urgent environmental concerns that have captured not only Hwang’s attention, but that of the entire world, although much more needs to be done if we want to avert disaster and sustain our habitat, scientists warn us. In *Healing Oblivious Aqua* (2024), a radiantly colored, deceptively beguiling work, she has focused on the death of coral reefs, decimated by the disruption of the ecosystem that includes rising temperatures in our oceans as well as by pollution by plastics and other discards, for which we are the culprits. On a softly shimmering, over six-foot wide ellipse, she juxtaposes the images of the dying coral with flourishing plum blossoms, symbolizing the “transition from life to death,” and hopefully back to life. Is this a new direction for Hwang? If so, she should be applauded. It would be a tragedy of incalculable proportions to lose the reefs and their myriad benefits, not least among them their irreplaceable beauty.

Lilly Wei is a New York-based art critic, art writer, journalist, and independent curator whose primary area of interest is contemporary global art. She has published extensively in the United States and abroad, regularly authoring articles, reviews, interviews, essays and monographs on modern and contemporary art and artists. Wei was born in Chengdu, China, and has an MA in art history from Columbia University in New York.



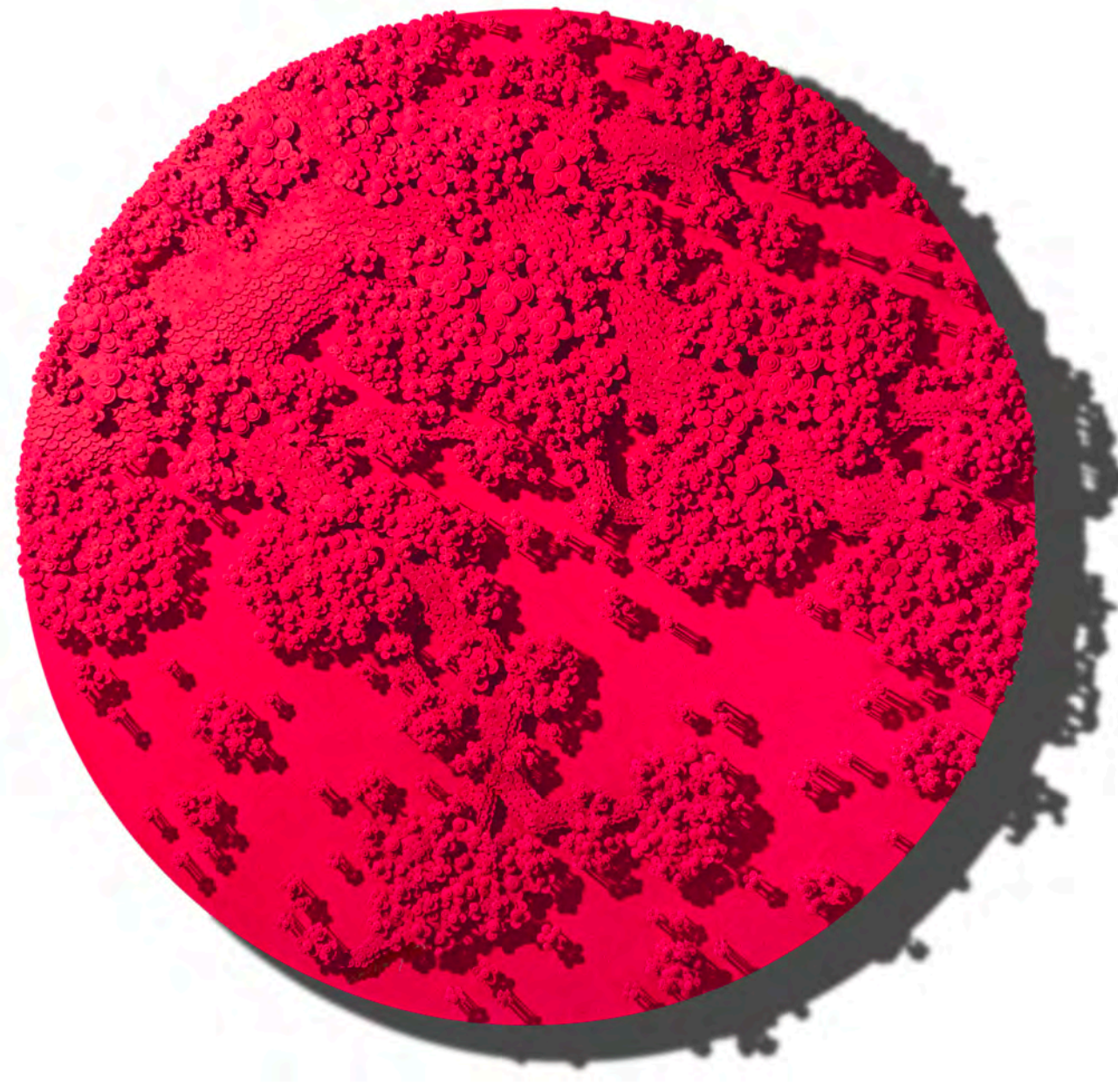
Ode to Full Moon_TWK, 2021
Paper Buttons, Beads, Crystals, Pins on Plexiglass
29.5 x 13 in / 33 x 33 cm





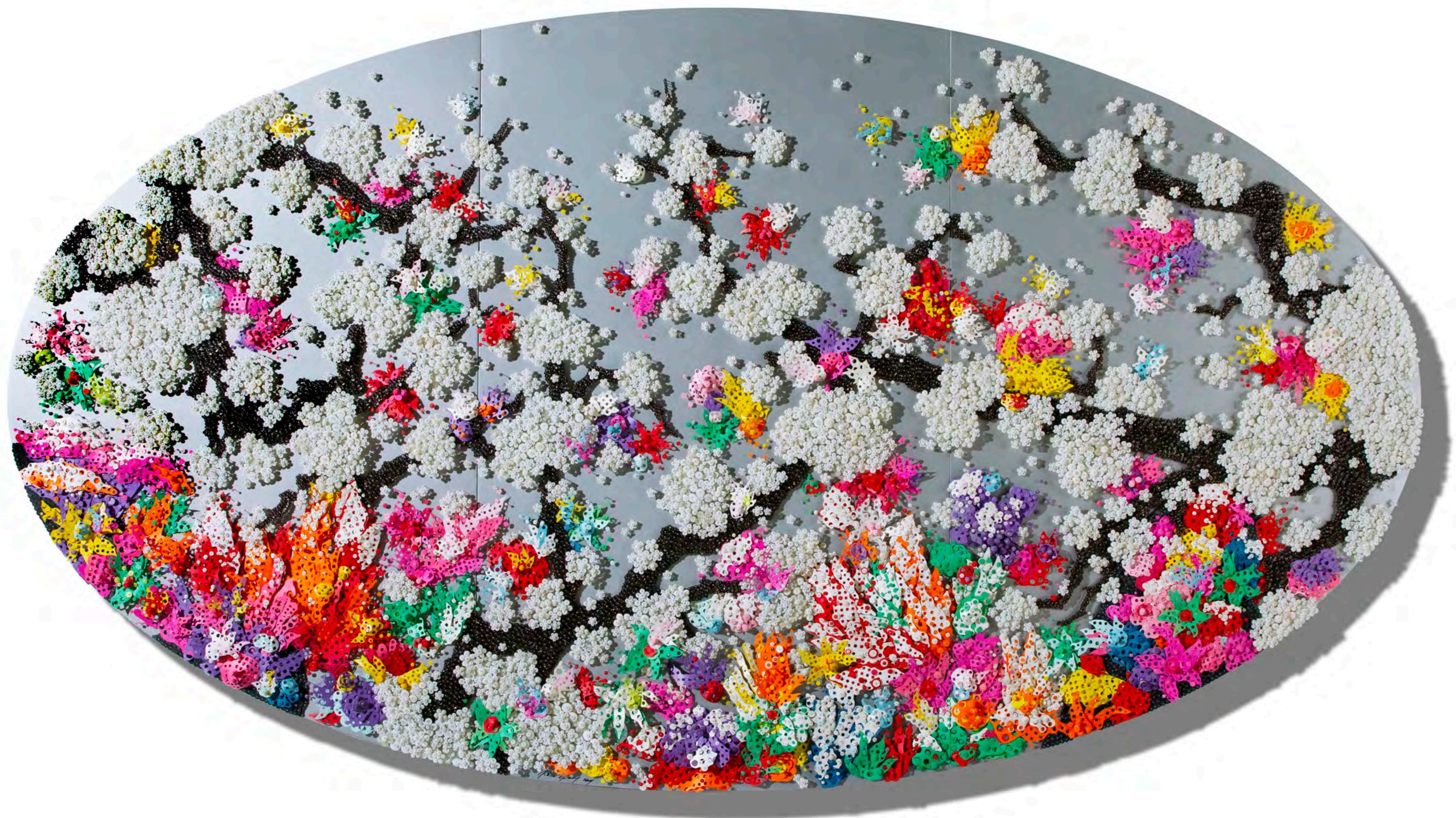


Beyond the Serenity_P, 2024
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on Plexiglass, Painting
 39.3 x 39.3 in / 100 x 100 cm



Beyond the Serenity, 2024
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on Plexiglass, Painting
 39.3 x 39.3 in / 100 x 100 cm





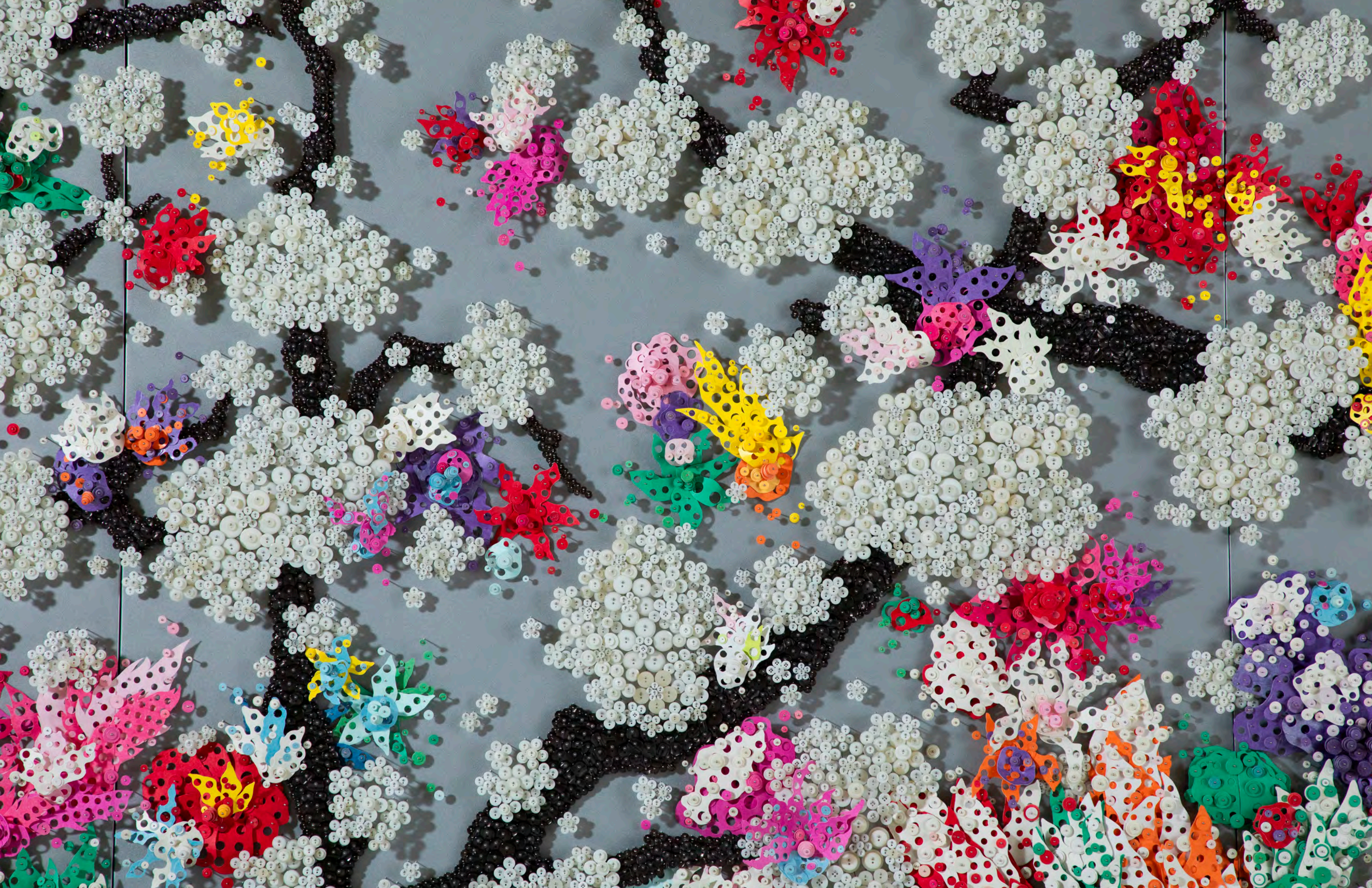
Healing oblivious aqua_OS, 2024

Buttons, Hanji Paper, Beads, Pins on Wooden panels

78.7 x 141.7 in / 200 x 360 cm









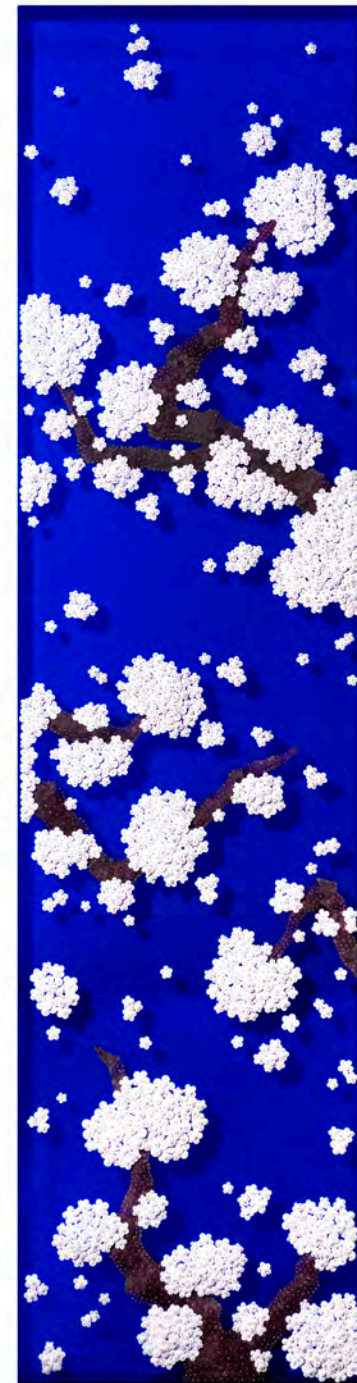
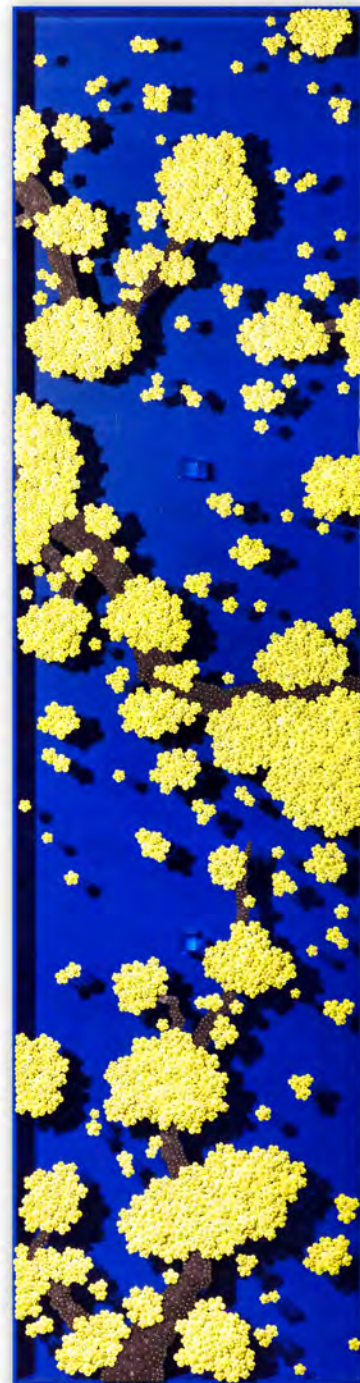
Becoming Again_ETBF, 2024
Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on Plexiglass
94.4 x 141.7 in / 240 x 360 cm



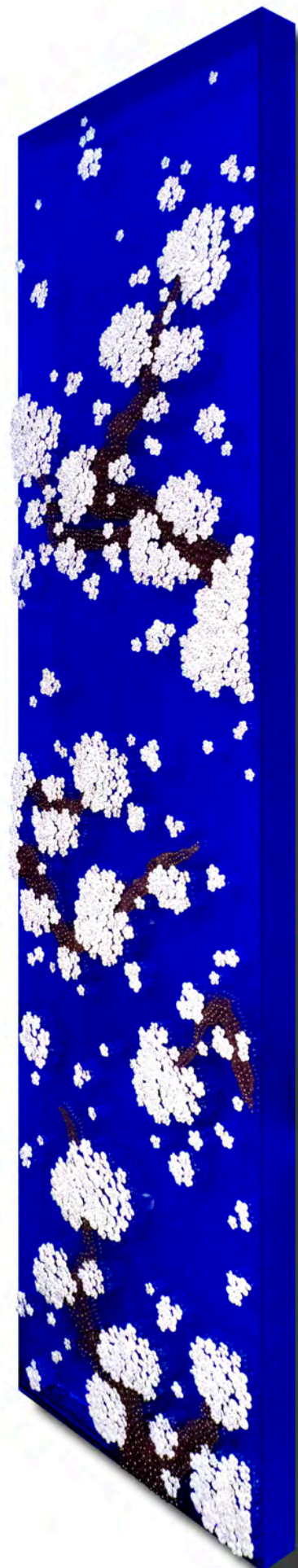
Becoming Again_ETBF, 2024

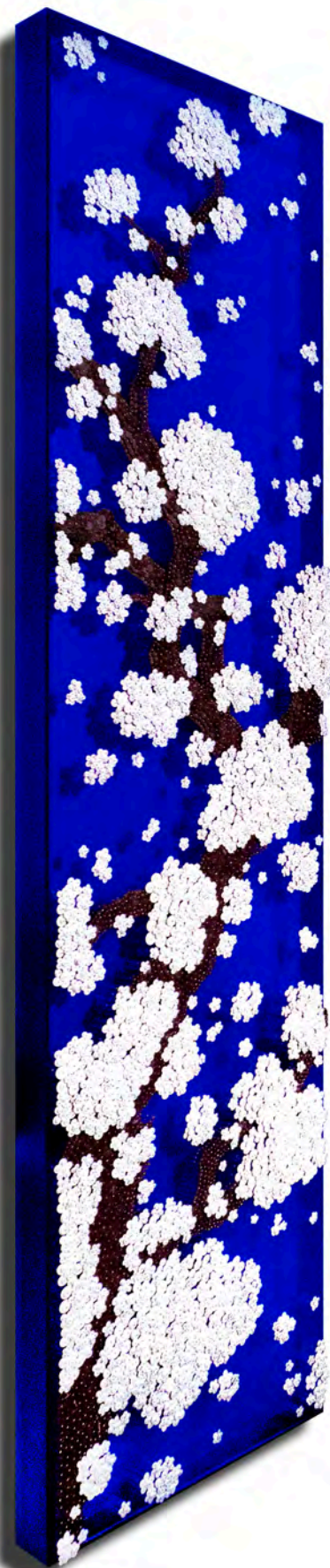


Becoming Again_BY3, 2021
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Crystals, Pins
 on Plexiglass, Plexiglass Frame
 95.2 x 24.4 x 4.7 in / 242 x 63 x 12 cm

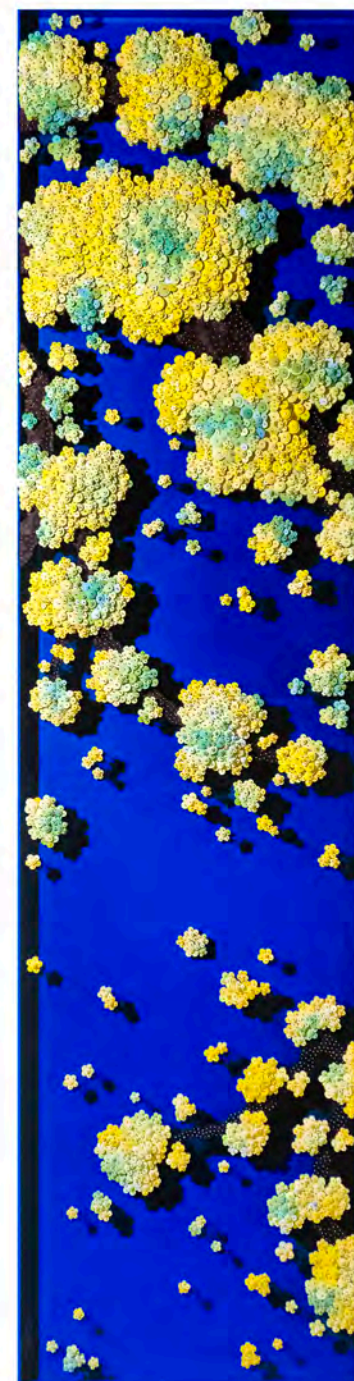


Becoming Again_BB4, 2024
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Crystals, Pins
 on Plexiglass, Plexiglass Frame
 95.2 x 24.4 x 4.7 in / 242 x 63 x 12 cm

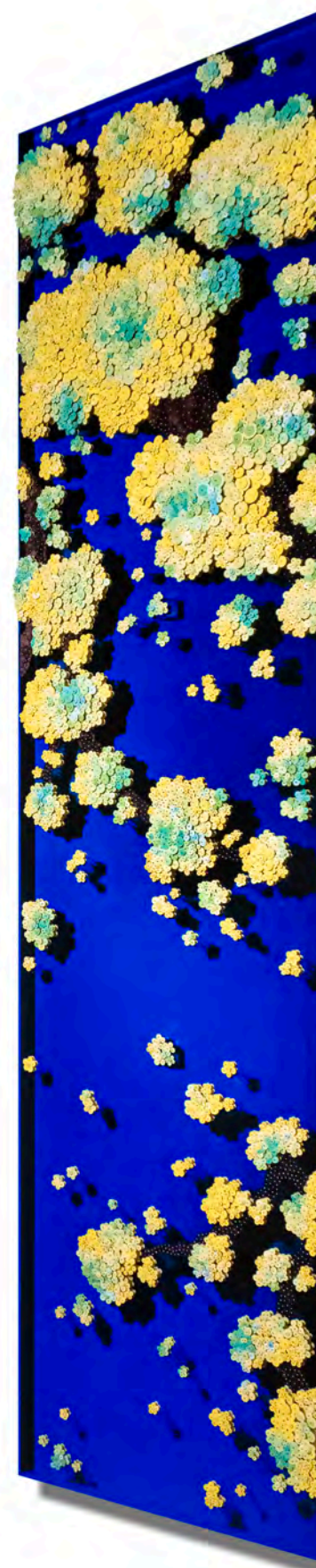


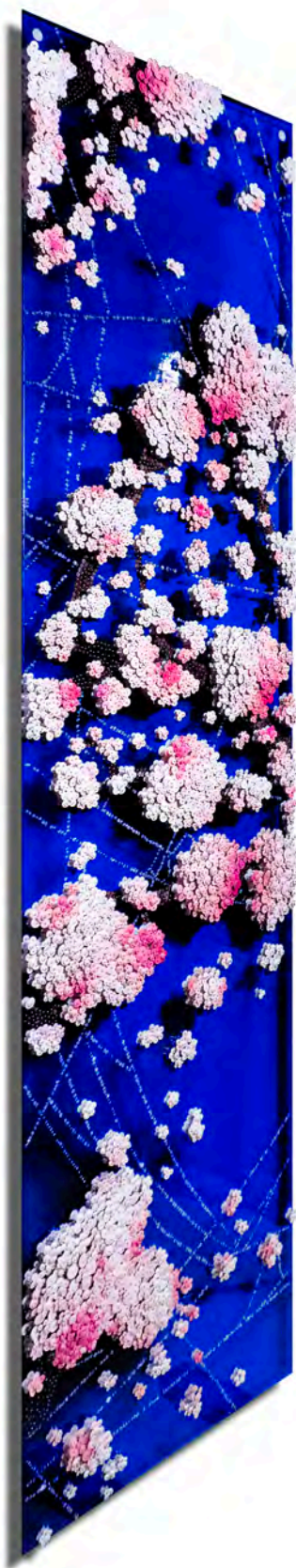


Becoming Again_BB5, 2024
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Crystals, Pins
 on Plexiglass, Plexiglass Frame
 95.2 x 24.4 x 4.7 in / 242 x 63 x 12 cm



Becoming Again_AA4, 2023
 Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on DIASEC
 94.4 x 23.6 in / 240 x 60 cm

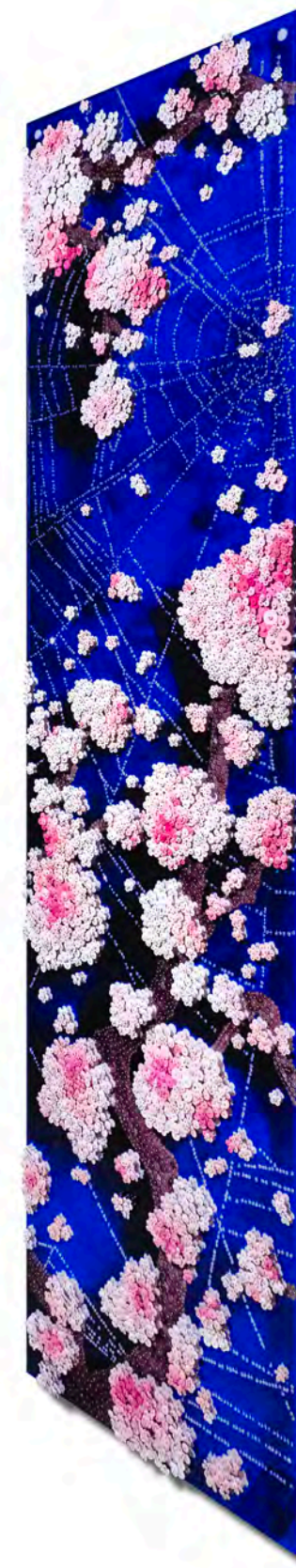


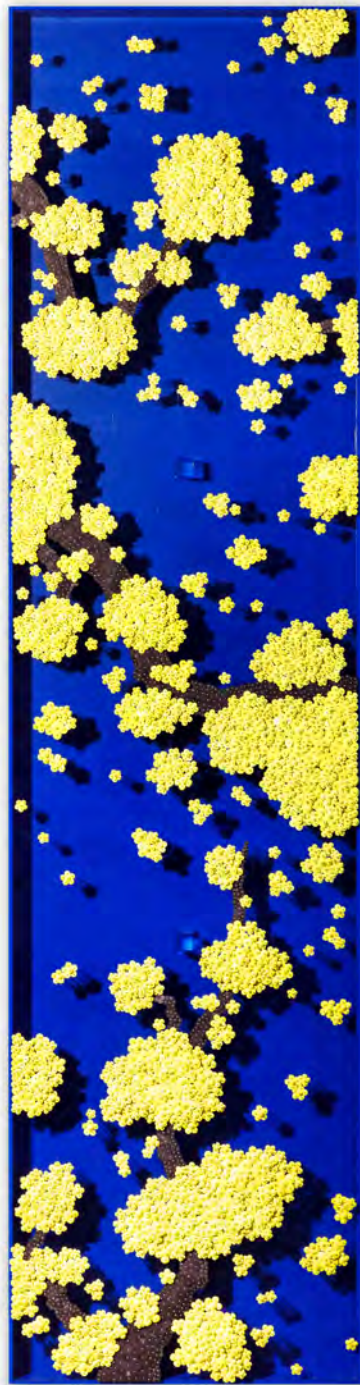


Becoming Again_AA2, 2023
Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on DIASEC
94.4 x 23.6 in / 240 x 60 cm



Becoming Again_AA3, 2023
Paper Buttons, Beads, Pins on DIASEC
94.4 x 23.6 in / 240 x 60 cm





Becoming Again_BY3, 2021



Becoming Again_BB4, 2024



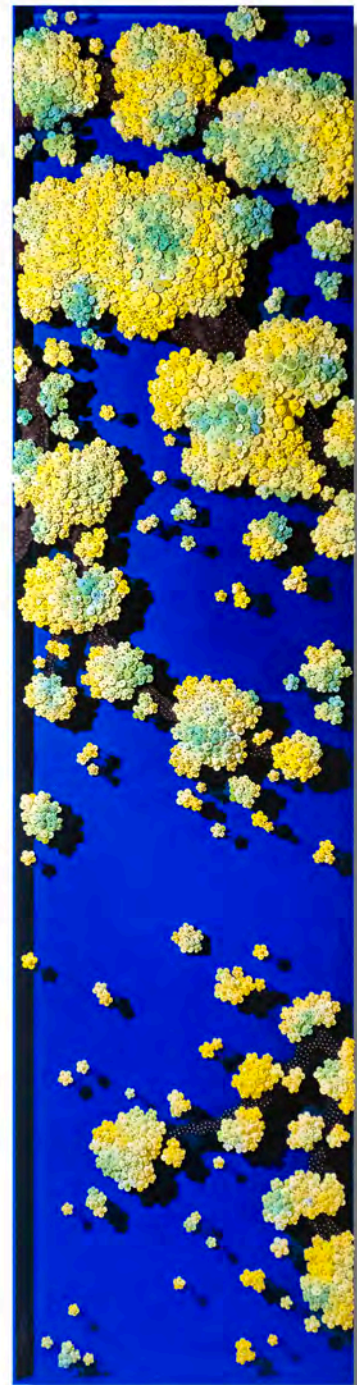
Becoming Again_BB5, 2024



Becoming Again_AA2, 2023



Becoming Again_AA3, 2023



Becoming Again_AA4, 2023

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

MPS	Studied in Art Practice, School of Visual Arts, New York,USA
BFA	Studied in Fine Art, School of Visual Arts, New York, USA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024	Leila Heller Gallery, NY Gallery Bakyoung, Seoul, South Korea AHL Foundation, New York, USA
2023	Asian Art Works, Busan, South Korea Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE Artfield Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
2022	The Baker Museum, Artis-Naples, Florida, USA
2021	Leila Heller Gallery, New York
2019	Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
2017	Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore Leila Heller Gallery, NY
2016	Asian Art Works, Busan, Korea
2015	UNESCO Paris Headquarters, Paris MASS MoCA, Massachusetts, USA International Museum of Art and Science (IMAS), Cardenas Gallery, Texas, USA
2014	Aloft at Hermès (former Third Floor-Hermès), Singapore Leila Heller Gallery, NY Asian Art Works, Beijing, China
2012	Leila Heller Gallery, NY
2010	Hakgojae Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2009	Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland
2007	2X13 Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2006	Haas Gallery, Bloomsburg University, PA, USA
2005	Open Studio, Vermont Studio Art Center, Jonson, Vermont, USA
2004	Hutchins Gallery, Long Island University, NY
2002	Hudson River Gallery, NY Yeemock Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2001	Hudson River Gallery, NY
2000	Artsnal Gallery, Paris, France
1999	Hudson River Gallery, NY

SELECTED TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2024	Anniversary Museum, Chavit some, Seoul, Korea
2019	Easel Gallery, Shenzhen, China
2016	Korean Cultural Service, NY
2015	Asian Art Works, Busan, South Korea
2005	2x13 Gallery, NY Space Shin Choi, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024	Lehman College Art Gallery, NY Savina Museum, Seoul, Korea Spazio Punch, La Biennale de Venezia, Venezia, Italy
------	---

2023	Switch B One, Parc.1 NH Finance Tower (Tower 2), Seoul, Korea Cheongju Craft Biennale 2023, Cheongju-si, South Korea Dior Seoungu, Seoul, Korea Gallery Simon, Seoul, South Korea Asian Art Works, Busan South Korea
2022	Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, USA Museum SAN, Wonju, South Korea Museum of Contemporary Art (MOT), Tokyo, Japan 2021 National Glass Centre, Sunderland, United Kingdom 2020 Art Appel Gallery, Athens, Greece 2019 Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai, UAE SA+ Gallery, Hong Kong Leila Heller Gallery, NY Hermitage Museum & Gardens, Virginia, USA Kang Collection Asia Week NY, NY
2018	Brooklyn Museum, NY AHL Foundation, Yonsei University Dental Hospital, Seoul Korea Cultural Center, NY
2018	Museum of Contemporary Art of Crete, Rethymno, Greece
2018	Asia Week New York, NY Korean Cultural Center of New York, NY Opera Gallery, Monaco
2017	Brooklyn Museum, NY Opera Gallery Beirut, Lebanon Mykonos Biennale, Mykonos, Greece Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
2016	Art Space Ben, Seoul, Korea Contemporary Calgary, Alberta, Canada Asian Art Works, Beijing, China The Surrey, NY Kang Collection, NY House of Dior, Seoul, Korea Doris McCarthy Gallery, Ontario, Canada KANEKO, Nebraska, USA
2015	Opera Gallery Paris, Paris, France Art Space Ben, Seoul, Korea Anya and Andrew Shiva Art Gallery, NY Leila Heller Gallery, NY Buk Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea Brooklyn Museum, NY Guangzhou Library, Guangzhou, China Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan
2014	Asian Art Works, Beijing, China Korean Cultural Service, NY Art Space Ben, Seoul, Korea The Watermill Center, Water Mill, New York Queens Museum of Art, NY Fabergè, New York, USA
2013	Guild Hall Gallery at Hammond Museum and Japanese Stroll Garden, North Salem, NY

2013	Asian Art Works, Busan, Korea Asian Art Works, Busan, Korea Leila Heller Gallery, NY Mass Moca, Massachusetts, USA Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA
2012	Asian Art Works, 798 Beijing, China Pagoda Paris Gallery, Paris, France Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, NY Mana Contemporary, New Jersey, USA
2011	Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul Arts Center, Seoul Amateras Foundation, Sofia, Bulgaria Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art, Jeju Island, Korea
2010	B.I.E.N.N.A.L.E + ONE, Gwang-ju, Korea Fokus Lodz Biennale 2010, Lodz, Poland
2009	Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay
2008	Seoul Art Center Museum, Seoul
2007	Hammond Museum & Japanese Stroll Garden, NY The Metropolitan Pavilion, NY
2005	Tenri Gallery, NY
2004	Gallery Korea of the Korean Cultural Center, NY

SELECTED GRANTS, AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2024	AHL-Founder S.N Kim Grant, AHL Foundation, NY
2021	FB Air Program, Facebook, NY
2017	AHL-Jason J. Kim Grant, AHL Foundation, NY
2015	Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, NY Artist in Residency, International Museum of Art and Science (IMAS), Texas, USA
2014	Selected for 2014 program, Third Floor-Hermès, Hermès Foundation, Singapore The Studios at Mass MoCA, Residency Program, Mass MoCA, Massachusetts, USA AAW Artist Studio Residency, Asian Art Works, Beijing, China
2011	PS122 STUDIO Residency Program, NY
2006	AAI-Artist Alliance, Lower East Side-Rotating & Long Term Studio Program, NY
2005	Full Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center Residency Program, Vermont
2004	Gold Prize, The 1st Contemporary Visual Arts Competition, AHL Foundation, NY
1995	Gold Prize, Korean Watercolor Association, Seoul

BIO



Photo by Haeyoon Park

As a Korean born, New York based artist, Hwang creates iconic figures that embody her preoccupation with the nature of cyclical life, non-visibility and the beauty of transient glamor. Her earlier career in the fashion industry and the personal memories of 9/11 attack have led her to adopt everyday materials into the delicate and dramatic works.

The work of Hwang Ran illustrates the term ‘Sangjeuk(相卽)’, the ‘relation’ means the ‘whole’, the world of pure network that each sides requires the other as long as one of any side is present. (Cheagab Yun, 2023)

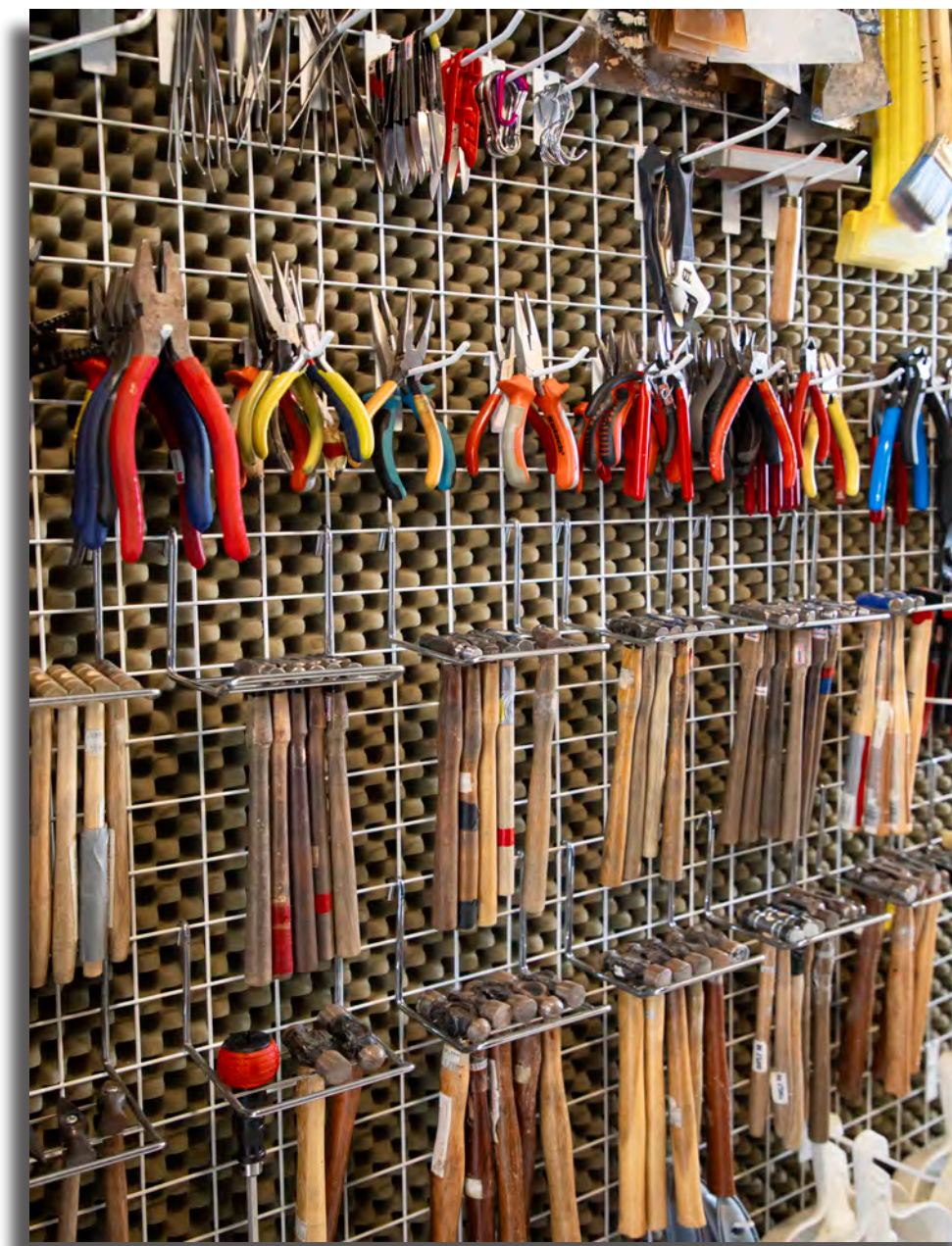


Photo of Ran Hwang's Studio