


Making it steady / unsteady -  ihu

"How can it be steady?"

"Why does it have to be steady?"

My artworks are an exploration of the built environment and objects surrounding me, with these questions.

Answering the first question involves mechanism of steadiness in built environment: scaffold, crane, barricade etc. Maintaining the built environment is what I call a passive creation. All I need to do is follow the rules that already exist.

The second question is related to works, or situations where I introduce unsteadiness or disorder into a street scene or a venue. Making something unsteady requires active creation because I need to generate a disparate world and concomitant rules that sustain the alternate sphere.



Making it steady / unsteady - Hhu

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Making it steady: Tempermanent



It's been two years since I started living in New York City. I am still surprised by things created by the massive number of people. Since so many dwellers are squeezed into a limited space, a lot of fixing up and maintenance is required. That's why I witness myriad repair and construction sites whenever I saunter on the street. Though the sites will be there only ephemerally, they keep popping up one after another, never disappearing from my sight. In the end, the city is never in a perfect or complete condition but just remains in constant flux. I believe this eternal process somehow includes people's desire for permanency in general and even of themselves. Similar to the aim of people who believe in religion: Eternity of soul

I am interested in the structures that changes form to maintain the steadiness on the street. For most people, the edifice looks lackluster and meaningless, but for me the tectonic configurations look like an altar for religious purposes.



Stonehenge



Dolmen



-107(minus 107)
dimension variable
rag, wood, burlap,
2015



"Tempermanent": -107

-107 is an installation work that represents a religious altar like Stonehenge and Dolmen. Ancient people wished their permanence in front of the alters. However, this group of cold and to some extent characterless wooden structures are fetishized forms of temporal scaffolds and fabric that is found at construction sites. The title, **-107** (minus 107), refers to the period of a group exhibition it was part of. This piece was dissembled and removed 107 days after the opening. In this sense, my installation work has both temporal and permanent characteristics at the same time. I would call this is a **'Tempermanent'** structure.

Tempermanent is the term that I created to describe my sculptures.

Tem-per-man-ent [tép3:rmenənt]

Adjective,

1. Combined term of temporal and permanent: continuing or enduring fundamental or marked support or efforts



Cleaning makes things dirty: 169x419

Cleaning frees people from dirt, contamination and disease, which make it an important undertaking to maintain society. However, ironically, cleaning sacrifices other things to be dirty. For an object to become clean, something else has to absorb its dirt. That said, the clean state of an object merely indicates transfer of material. I focus on this transfer, and I choose to embrace this concept by making the cleaning a task. I remove dust and dirt on the floor. I turn a filthy, lackluster space into a pristine and purposeful place.

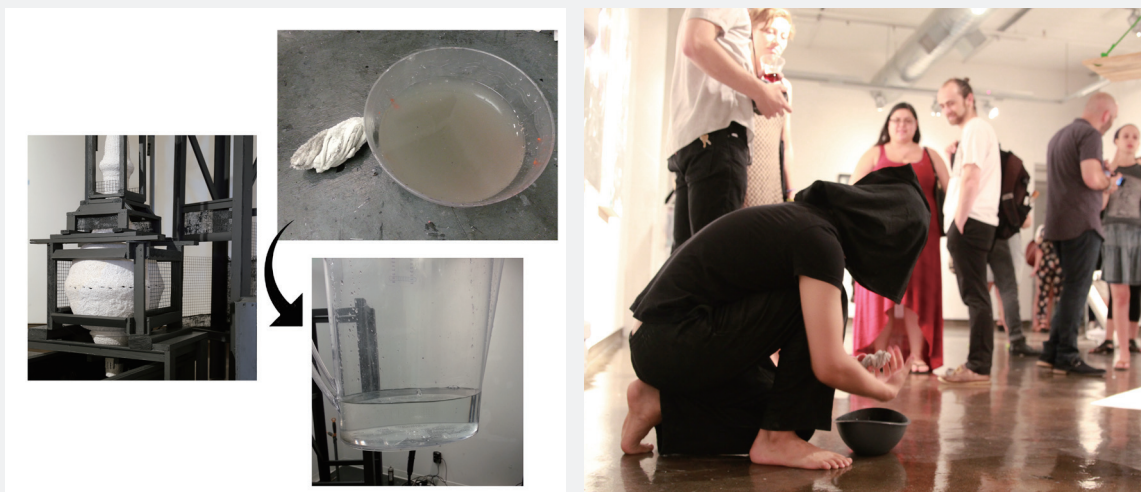




169x419
dimension variable
rag, wood, soil
2015

I build a sculpture that filters water. When I pour dirtied mop water into the sculpture, it provides me filtered water, enabling me to continue cleaning. I wash the space over and over again, transferring dirt collected from the **169 x 419** inches of space to the cleansing sculpture. However, as people come and go, the dirt piles up, even in the middle of the cleaning process.

This sculpture called **169 x 419** is a trial intending to stem the snowballing of dirt in this exhibition space. As it turns out, in the end, the filter in the sculpture runs down, failing in its futile quest to purify overwhelming amount of water and only achieving temporal clearness.



Tem-per-man-ent [tép3:rmenənt]

Adjective,

1. Combined term of temporal and permanent: continuing or enduring fundamental or marked support or efforts
2. Endless act of venting/containing spite of someone or something to satisfy certain temporal condition

Growing sculpture: TORA TORAH_sinkhole filler

A Sinkhole is a depression or hole in the ground caused by some form of collapse of the surface layer. The problem of the sink hole is that it can occur unexpectedly anywhere and whenever, which causes loss of lives.

The size of sinkholes ranges from as tiny as a car to as big as a small city. Depth of it is as deep as an empty puddle to as tall as a cliff. In nature, this phenomenon appears as underground rocks (mostly limestone) melt down and underground caves collapse.

Sinkholes appear in cities, largely because people consume too much water or resources from underground. Another reason is drainage. Modern city architecture, side walks, roads are made up of materials like concrete and asphalt, which is high in surface vapour resistance. These materials occupy most of the surface and decrease the influx of underground water. As a result, the upper layer of ground can no longer endure the weight, and thereby collapses, rupturing the surface of the ground and opening up an abyss.

In this sense, sinkholes are man-made disaster.



The modeled sink hole



TORA TORAH_sinkhole filler is a sculpture that virtually fills in a sinkhole, redressing the disaster and preventing further accidents. I modeled a sinkhole which appeared in An-sung, Korea(remote countryside). In order to adjust to the sinkhole that gets constantly and gradually deeper, the sculpture is designed for one to manually extend and fill in the new gap, maintaining the flatness of the ground. In exhibition space, I put the filler upside down from how it would actually be installed in the sinkhole. The sculpture grows taller, resembling the movement of humanity establishing glorious civilizations. However, the structure's heightened victory in fact indicates the deeper hole.

Since the hole gets deeper every moment, in order to maintain the flatness, someone should always be inside of the sculpture to raise the structure. In the end, this work implies futility as a result of endless effort.



TORATORA_sinkhole filler
174x156x161(inch)
wood, burlap, jack, soil
2016

Tem·per·man·ent [tép3:rmənənt]

Adjective,

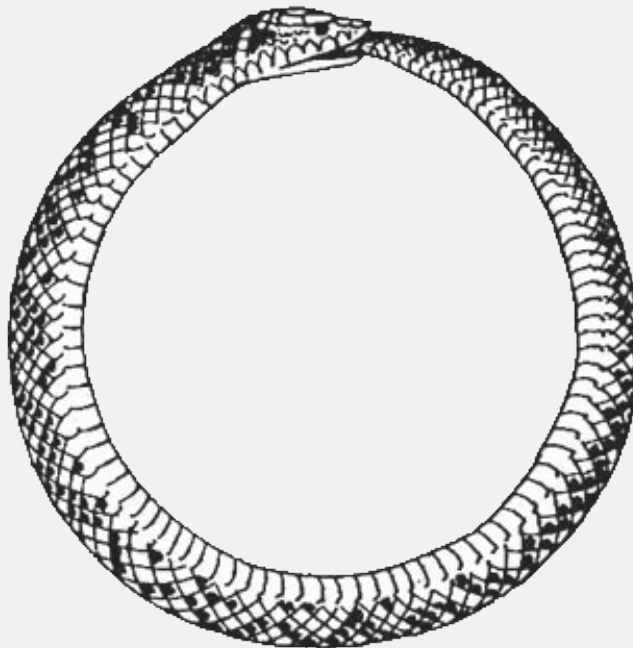
1. Combined term of temporal and permanent: continuing or enduring fundamental or marked support or efforts
2. Endless act of venting/containing spite of someone or something to satisfy certain temporal condition
3. State of being futile, as a result of endless endeavor for creation

Full definition of Tempermanent

"Ouroboros" is an ancient, quintessential, alchemist symbol depicting a snake or dragon swallowing its own tail and forming a circle. The circle represents the endless cycle of life and death, beginning to end and around again.

All skyscrapers eventually crash to the earth, becoming dust that keeps accruing on the ground again and again. But all those disturbances embody a new life. Like this, Ouroboros symbolizes self-reflexivity or cyclicity, especially in the sense of something constantly re-creating itself, the eternal return, finding other forms in archetypes such as the phoenix which operate in circles that begin anew as soon as they end. This entire cycle becomes perfection itself in an odd way. However, since the rotation never stops without spawning a counter-result, from the viewpoint of individual, the circulation brings futility.

The adjective "**Tempermanent**" refers to a brake of the wheel stopping the eternal cycle of Ouroboros. The brake seems to halt the wheel only momentarily, but the parts of the brake eventually wear out, or disintegrate, losing their function of stopping. Tempermanent refers to every trial of human beings to cease the circulation of Ouroboros to avoid futility.



Symbol of Ouroboros



Used rag

En·tro·py [[entrəpi]

Noun

a measure of the unavailable energy in a closed thermodynamic system that is also usually considered to be a measure of the system's disorder, that is a property of the system's state, and that varies directly with any reversible change in heat in the system and inversely with the temperature of the system.

-Definition from Merriam Webster

Making it unsteady: Entropy

Our universe has a limited amount of usable resources. As we exploit the resources and turn them into unusable chaff, eventually, the earth will be filled up with non-usable things. We call this increase of non-regenerating materials and systems, entropy.

For example, part of a broken glass becomes an entropy. No one is able to restore the original, usable state of it. Though we put 100% of work in a task, the outcome is just 30% or 40%. The other 60 - 70% irreversibly disappears as useless heat, light and dust etc. Vanished and unusable substance, heat, light and dust in this case, is called entropy. Raising 1% of work efficiency is the primary job of engineers, the aim towards which they invest all their efforts.

Even if I impeccably clean up a space, making it look dustless, it does not mean that entropy has disappeared. In fact, the entropy constantly increases from the viewpoint of the universe. Ultimately, the term entropy implies that humanity is walking slowly to its termination. Someday people will have used up all the resources, and the universe, as we know it, will end.

Of course, humans need to find a way to reduce entropy. However, for my creation of artworks, something needs to be messy, crooked, and decadent.



I am an entropy-smith

I am an entropy-smith. I think in entropy, I play with entropy and I concoct certain values and possibilities on the street or abandoned venue with MY ENTROPY.

As an artist, I have my own universe. In this galaxy, my sensitivity and logic is entropy. I see the external universe through my entropy. In the real world, entropy is released as heat or light, but in my cosmos, it is released as my sensitivity.

While looking around the infinite unfolding of construction sites in NYC, I muse on mechanical, insensitive alternations of entropy in this huge human hive. My works are trials to invest my determination in these volition-less changes on daily landscapes.



1st trial: 153x154

My performance, called **153x154**, raises a question about the act of cleaning. I clean up one block of concrete sidewalk.

However, my performance has limitations. Even though I am cleansing the area, my cleaning disturbs the entire system. I am just polishing up a single tiny square of numberless grids. How can I say that I shine things up to diminish trashy clutter and control grime? In the end, my performance just spawns another layer of disturbance on the street.

New York City is full of opportunities, which means it is full of desire and agony. As I scrub the hard concrete surface, I lay down my desires in the city of desire, just as Jesus washed feet of his disciples with water.

Water: Saints washed feet of their disciples with water.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples with water as did Siddhartha(Buddha). Water has been a religious substance because it washes impurity away and helps maintain an unadulterated state.

However, in fact, the water just removes grime from our sight. In my works, water is a material that amplifies the cycle. Because of water, the filter of **169 x 419** can work, I can clean up one block of concrete on the sidewalk, and **3375** number of glued pennies on a crosswalk vanishes after a heavy snow.



2nd trial: 3375, \$33.75 of entropy

"Every American has a penny jar in their home....."

"No one cares about peeling stripes on the crosswalk....."

"The American dream is not a truth anymore."

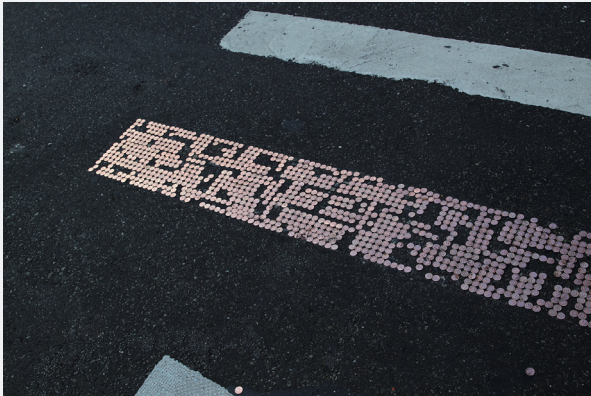
– Hhu, conversation with cops during 3375 performance. Oct 21 2015



"The streets of America are paved with gold." This is an old saying originating from people who had an American dream. I tried to forge a perfect America on the street with pennies and my volition. I filled out one damaged stripe on a crosswalk with pennies. The stripe looks like gold from a distance, but in reality, it is nothing but spare currency, pennies.

I have seen a lot of foreigners who are used by American companies and then exiled because the company does not care about employees' visas. One of my friends had dedicated himself to a company for more than four years, but then was banished from the corporation. Though my friends are kicked out of this country, the company still insists that they are an international company with international workers.

Perhaps the pennies stick there to maintain a so called "country built by immigrants" and make it glistening, but the value of pennies and the period they stay on the crosswalk might be analogous to the situation of foreign workers in this country. I, as a foreigner in America, try to raise a question regarding what is a true, perfect America, on its street.



3rd trial in progress: Entropy makes possibility: shelter_H



Here is a 12-year-old entropy in Incheon, South Korea. This abandoned venue is called 'room salon', which is close to what they call a hostess bar in America. These bars are places where women, mostly prostitutes, serve drinks to male customers, and in many cases, they chat, flirt, touch each other, do body shots and have sex. There are various levels of performances and sexual services available. They have been places to conduct political and business deals for centuries. They have always been at the center of our society but in the shadow.

The original dwellers in this abandoned hostess bar including pimps and prostitutes were forced to leave by a police raid. In 2004, the government passed a law to eradicate sex industry in Korea. This venue was one of the targets of police raids, but all they did was push it underground.

The reality of the Korean sex industry makes me sad. The burst of the sex business started when the country was colonized by Japan. Encouraging the sex trade was one of the Japanese policies to corrupt the Korean spirit. At that time, Korean men visited the brothels, which was their distorted way to get compensated for betrayal and abandonment by the Korean government. They had a feeling of being wronged because they loved their country and their old-fashioned values, but how about now? The male customers are merely fulfilling their sexual desire, blindly following old Japan's encouragement. Also, since Japan took everything away from the Koreans in the colonial period, Korean women had no choice but to become prostitutes. However, right now, over 50,000 Korean women voluntarily travel to Japan to sell themselves. What a depressing situation.

Thus, I decide to turn this 12-year-old entropy into a shelter for female homeless teenagers in order to express my sadness and depression. In Korea, one-fourth of female homeless teenagers had at least one experience of prostitution. Statistically, there are more than 5,000 female homeless teenagers who are involved in the sex trade every year. Since they have no place to stay overnight, they need help desperately. They post their situation online.

"Female, 16, need a place to stay" "Female, 15, homeless"

Men who see these posts call them and bring them to a motel, to fulfill their hunger in pretension of providing a one-night shelter. The teenagers cannot resist the offering, and in fact, most of these girls become prostitutes in the future.

I want to give them a second chance. What if I contact the teenagers in the same way as the hungry men? What if I invite them to a caring heaven, heal their mind and guide them in a proper way - at the real estate, used for prostitution.



Teenagers on the street: Relation of pimps and prostitutes

Not only older men contact the female teenagers but male homeless teenagers reach out to them too. Female and male homeless teenagers get together and eventually build a relationship as pimps and prostitutes.

Why does this distortion cloud the at-risk teens' minds? I conclude that this distortion is rooted in their sense of insecurity. In 2014, I worked as a volunteer who educates teenagers on the street. I had expected that I would be trained. However, the attitude of the counselors was upsetting. All they did was scold the teenagers. People taking charge of education should not let fragile teenagers be stigmatized as a bad person but instead should apprise them that they can be better. If they want to instruct them in an effective way, they should create conversations on a horizontal level. However, as most Korean old men do, they always ignored my "naive" opinion.

This is why I decided to work alone. Teenagers on the streets already have a history of being abused and oppressed by their parents, school and peers. Since the teenagers are too young to take the abuse, they repudiate all these groups. Hence, my duty is not only to invite them into a concrete external space but also to heal them to some degree on the inside.

So I designed a two-month program aiming to heal the teenagers. In this project, I need to hire teachers from music, arts, and sports education departments, two psychotherapists, a cook, and a security guard. Each member has specific roles towards healing and guiding the teenagers. There will be no more compulsion to the teenagers. If they do not want to participate in certain programs or leave the place in the middle of the project, I will respect their decisions.

I am frustrated by the fact that there are a lot of national facilities that take care of the vagrant teens. However, unless the teenagers reach that place by themselves, the facilities are empty and useless. This project will be a bridge between the homeless and the facilities.

The alumni of the project will be sent to proper facilities with a more positive mindset, and strong body which is the grand goal of this **shelter_H** project.

I have been proving that the act of cleaning can be an art. This project called **shelter_H** is another cleaning. In this case, however, I remove societal dirt instead of physical dirt.



- 2-month program
- Nothing to rush
- No compulsion for teenagers
- No physical results are required
- All aspect of the program are for healing the teenagers mentally and physically
- 24-hour security is available.
- 24-hour food is available.
- 24-hour counseling therapy available

우공이산

In Korea, there is an idiom "**우공이산**". It is related to a tale of a silly person gradually moving a mountain. An old man who wanted to move a mountain in front of his house. He moved soil from it little by little, everyday with his son. Everyone around him said his trial was absurd. However, he said "I have a son and he has his son. After I die, my descendants will accomplish my aspiration." The Great Emperor was impressed by his integrity and sincerity and got his servants to move the mountain. This story has a lesson that, if someone is determined and dedicates himself, he/she can eventually accomplish the goal, no matter how much it takes.

The hostess bar transforming into a shelter project can be like the performance **153x154** in that the project directly engages 'a single miniscule square of numberless grids.' However, I believe that small gestures like this will generate a butterfly effect and free young teenagers from the vicious cycle.



The 4th floor of this building is the hostess bar