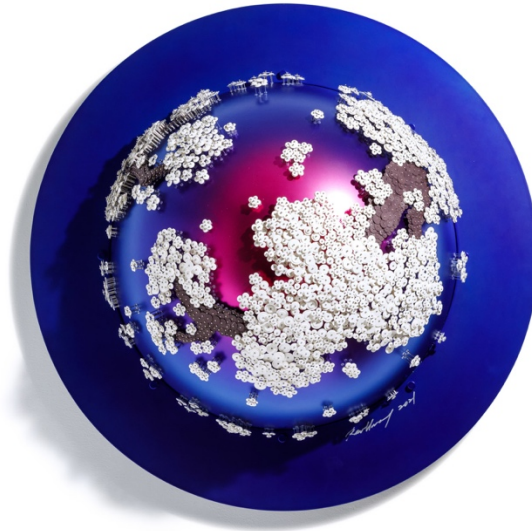


LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

'ALL THAT CASCADES'

By

Ran Hwang



Nothing Forever_PB, 2021, Paper buttons, beads, pins on acrylic dome, 80 x 80 x 30 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce artist Ran Hwang's solo show 'All That Cascades' opening on 28th February 2023.

Hwang's Korean heritage as well as her experience living and working in the United States influence her art-making. Instead of painting on canvas, she adheres buttons, beads, crystals, pins, and threads to Plexiglas and wooden panels. Ran's work is both conceptual and practical, as she engages with Zen Buddhist ideology of repetition through the execution of her artistic process. For the most part, Hwang's choice of materials allows her audience to become engaged in both viewing and sensorially exploring these assemblages at the same time.

Made of thousands of tiny buttons, crystals, beads, and threads on pins, rising just above the magnificent surfaces from which they protrude to cast shadows and paint pictures with pointillistic mastery; Ran Hwang's work cascades. As they cascade, they charm, educate and surprise the onlookers. Her creations can be characterized as a series of isolated actions, often on walls, that combine to form larger works. Single particles join hands to meditatively create greater cascading movements or motion, waves of substance, fully present and somehow alive. Each piece is carefully placed to depict something like motion, with one layer positioned over another as intricate sub-events endlessly combine for an overall effect that is euphoric, transcendent and whole.

Hwang has transcended the meaning of "everyday use," as she employs materials such as paper buttons to create intricate yet powerful depictions of natural beauty. Moved by the tragedies of 9/11 and more recently the Pandemic, Ran Hwang constructs imagery out of microcosms just as magically. She literally hammers together beaded visions driven by a personal mythology manifesting her own vision out of her own ideas, the Buddhist teachings and calligraphic skills that she observed in her father as a youngster merge with her need, in the wake of tragedy, to release emotion and potentially healing forces—an artistic balm for herself and for her audience—for what ails us all in the complex 21st century.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in the Republic of Korea in 1960, Ran Hwang currently lives and works in both Seoul and New York City. . Before coming to NY in 1997 to pursue her education at the School Of Visual Arts, she trained as a painter in Seoul. So, with a strong start in the fundamentals, she started grad school in NYC as a painter, working as a designer for an embroidery factory in the garment district to make ends meet. While there, she discovered boxes of unused buttons, and was struck by the lack of attention they received. Her engagement with materials became increasingly sculptural as she moved from small collage pieces with buttons to her first large installation in Soho on her studio wall. These works charted a path forward for Ran. In 2001, at her studio in Dumbo, Hwang observed the twin towers collapse during 9/11 from her own window. This left a great impression on her, leading her to contemplate ideas of life, death, and rebirth that would translate in her work for years to come.

Today she has also expanded her work to include multimedia. several large and elaborate installation pieces built out of the everyday materials she loves, innovative production methods, and is rooted in budding 21st-century global contemporary art practices. Hwang's motifs of intricate blossoms and Buddha's - which appear across a variety of media - stem from her fascination with Zen Buddhism. Buddhism is integral to Hwang's creative process and labor-intensive execution. To construct much of her work, Hwang creates paper buttons by hand, hammering each one approximately twenty-five times until it is secure. Her process requires the utmost concentration and discipline, recalling the meditative state practiced by Zen masters.

Ran Hwang has exhibited at several international institutions including the Queens Museum of Art, New York; The Hudson Valley Center for the Arts, New York; the Chelsea Art Museum, New York; The Seoul Arts Center Museum; and The Jeju Museum of Art, Jeju Island. Hwang's work is also a part of numerous private and public collections including The Brooklyn Museum, New York; The Des Moines Center for the Arts, Iowa; The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul; and The Hammond Museum, North Salem, NY.

She is best known for her large-scale wall installations in which buttons, beads, pins, and threads on wood panels form images of falling blossoms, vases, Buddhas, and birds. Hwang's installations have also taken on more current themes, exploring the fashion industry and female identities in popular culture. Drawing from Eastern philosophies, Hwang's method is a meditative ritual in which she first projects an outline onto the wall, then traces its contour and painstakingly fills in the image with her materials, a process that can take up to a month. "The process of building large installations [is] time consuming and repetitive," Hwang has said. "And it requires manual effort, which provides a form of self-meditation."

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East.

In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world-renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogues and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.

For any press enquiries please reach out to ankitagarg.lhgd@gmail.com.