



Jong kuk Lee Mabuel

<https://www.facebook.com/mabuelleejongkuk>

<https://blog.naver.com/mabuel>

Jong kuk Lee is the current head of Mabuel Gallery and a nature artist who creates crafts using *hanji* (Korean paper) from his home-grown paper mulberry trees. He also utilizes other natural materials such as bamboo and silvergrass (common reed) to talk about the environment. In the late 90s, he settled in Bulat Village, a town in Cheongju, South Korea, famous for its *hanji*, and has been carrying on the tradition of *hanji* making ever since. Since the late 1970s, Bulat Village has been losing its tradition as the demand for *hanji* has decreased due to urbanization and industrial development, but since he moved there in the 90s, the village has revitalized once again.

What fascinates him about *hanji* is that the process of making it and the paper itself resembles nature. He believes that in order to get to know an object, whether in nature or in a social context, you need to spend enough time with it, observe it, and slowly immerse yourself in it, which is what *hanji* does. In other words, the process of growing trees, peeling and soaking them to make *hanji* implies a symbiosis of byproducts from all of our nature, including humans.



Hanji is not just a tool for inscribing, but a living organism that transforms and develops into various forms. Looking back at the past uses of *hanji*, when a child was born in Korea, a string was hung on the doorstep in front of the house, and a golden cord was attached to it with chili peppers, pine branches, and *hanji*. And when a person dies, the body is wrapped in *hanji* for funeral ceremonies. In addition to being used in important rituals, *hanji* was also used in everyday life to make windows, wallpaper and baskets. The properties of Korean paper, that can be both soft and strong, have endless possibilities, giving it more than just a traditional value.

It can be said that the discovery of the *Jikji: Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests 'Zen Teachings* – the world's oldest extant book printed with movable metal type-section – is due to the durability and preservation of *hanji*. Nevertheless, since the development of digital printing, *hanji* has been discarded and abandoned because it leaks ink, makes the writing blurry, and damages the printing press. Even non-*hanji* paper is losing its function and importance as it is being replaced by e-books. Lee emphasizes that we should honor *hanji* and allow it to continue its own life, not just treating it as mere paper for writing purposes. He also stresses that the direction of *hanji* in the future lies in highlighting its healing elements and observing the connection between past, present, and future.

Hanji

Manufacturing process of *hanji*





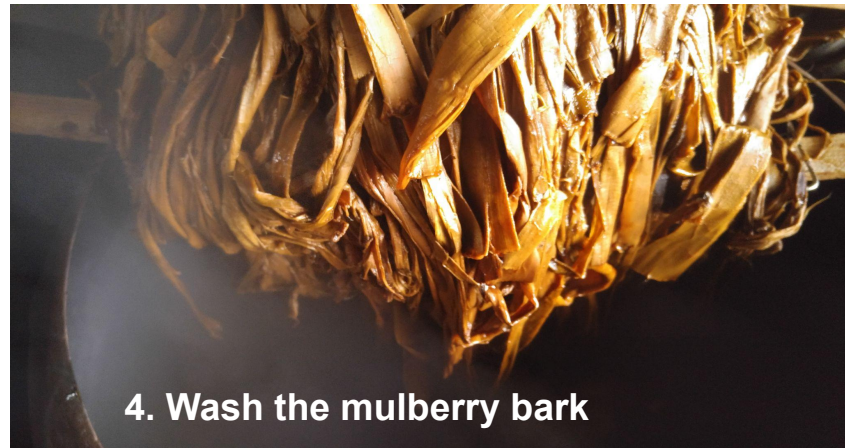
1. Harvesting mulberry trees



2. Peel mulberry trees



3. Boil the mulberry bark



4. Wash the mulberry bark



5. Disintegrating mulberry fibers and dissolving "mulberry starch" (darkpul)



6. Forming the wet sheet



7. Drying the sheet



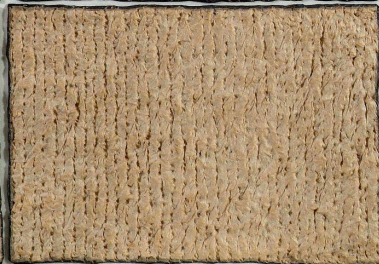
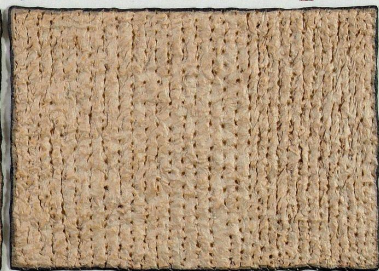
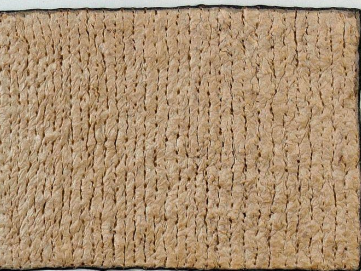


Hanji Art





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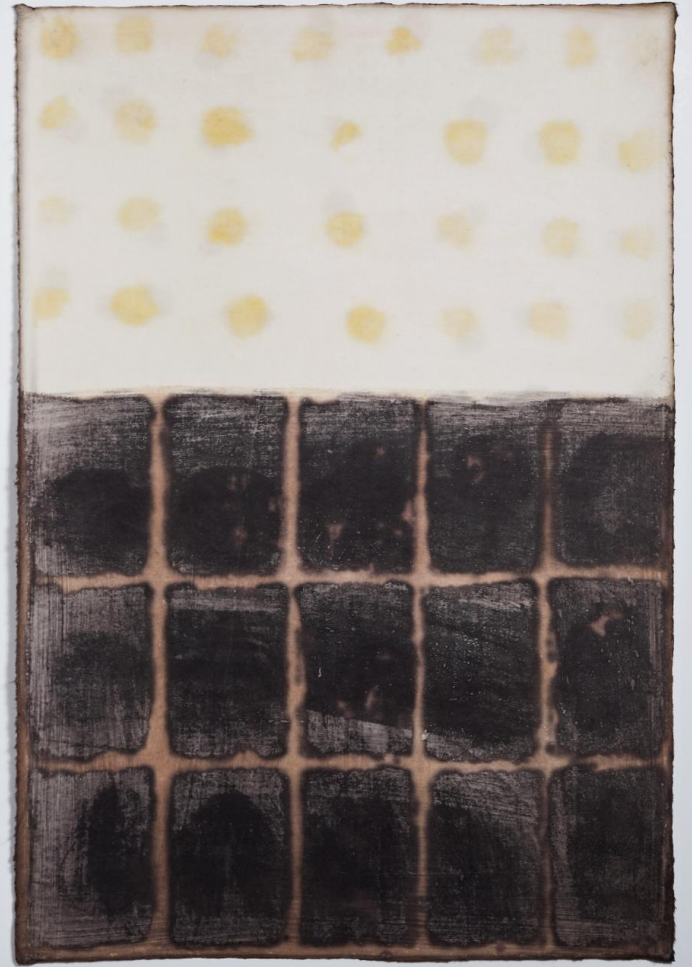
Drawing

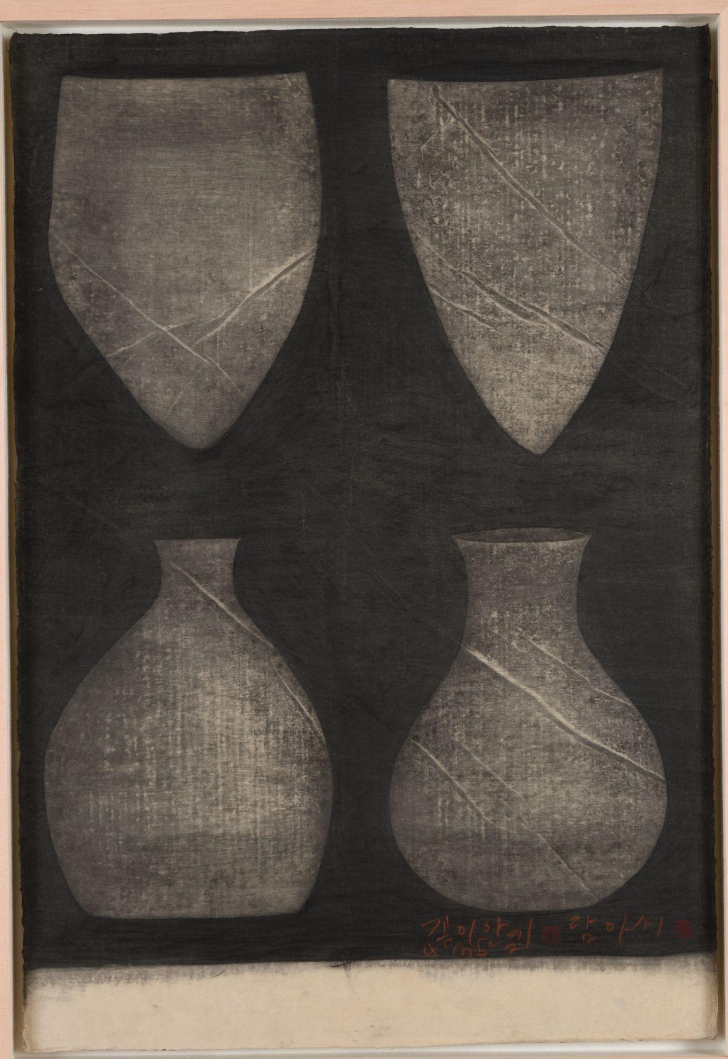












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4월 5일

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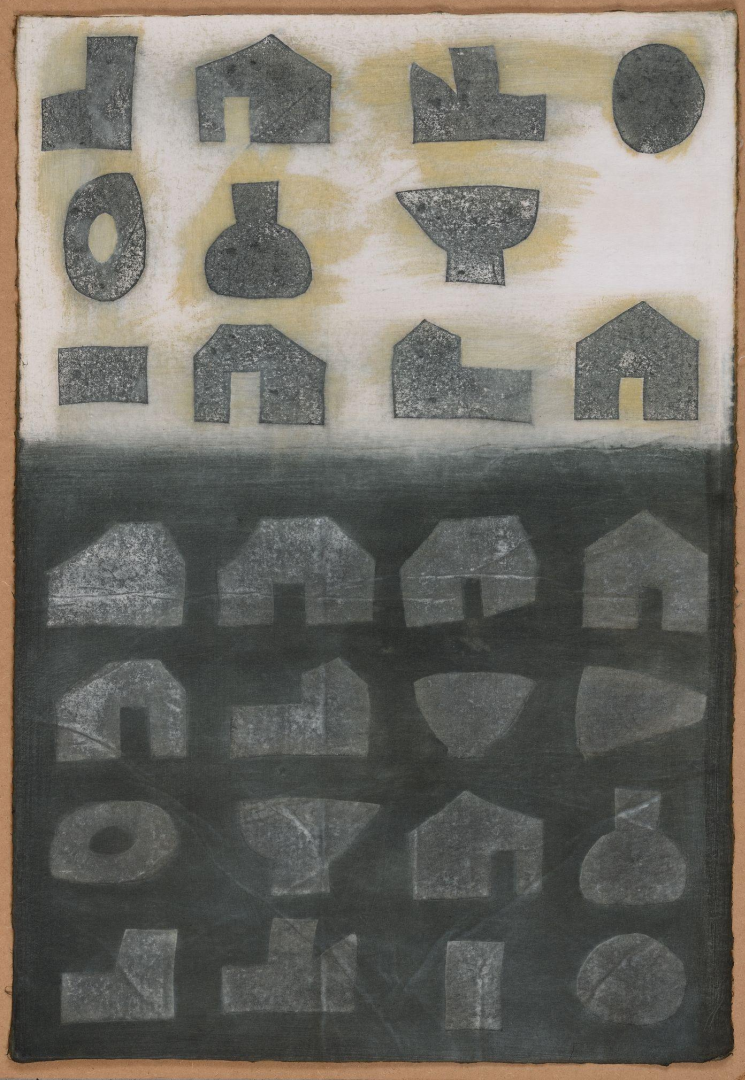
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Handicraft







Performance

















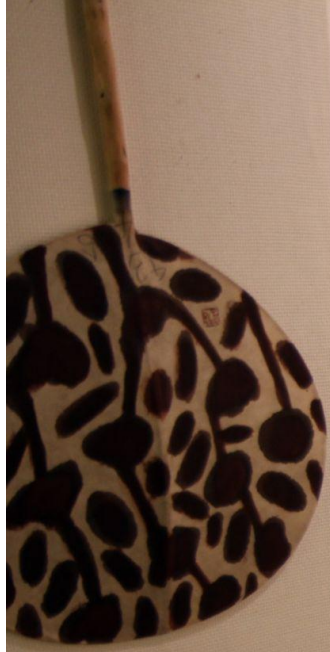


Solo Shows





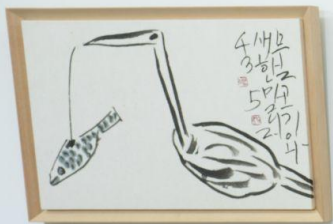












Main Exhibitions (2018-2022)

2022 반상전, 꽃 피고 새 올면, 바람을 담다, 상스러운 물빛, Cheongju, Korea

2019 청주 국제공예비엔날레 기획 전시, 종이를 품은 달, 서울영인문학관,
Cheongju, Korea

2022 한지의 향연, 구름에 달 가듯이(영담한지미술관), 달의 곁(원주한지테마파크),
Wonju, Korea

2021 대청호 환경미술 프로젝트 '떠오르는 섬'(대청호시립미술관), Cheongju, Korea

2020 대청호 환경미술 프로젝트 움직이는 물(대청호시립미술관), Cheongju, Korea

2019 Chicago Art Fair, Chicago, USA

2018 한국문화교류전시 (태국 한국문화원), 한국문화 초대전(호주 한국 문화원),
청주시립미술관기획전 '10년의 기억(청주시립미술관)

Press

2023 [Goyang International Flower Festival - Interview](#)

2023 [다큐 '자연의 철학자들' 45회 '벌갓의 햇살처럼 바람처럼' | KBS1](#)

2021 [《2021 대청호 환경미술 프로젝트》 티저영상 #2 이종국 Lee
Jongkuk | 대청호미술관](#)

2021 [대청호 예술가의 봄-한지공예가 이종국 작가 인터뷰 | 대청댜물문화관](#)

2021 [대청호를 품은 예술가들-이종국편 | 한국수자원공사](#)

2020 [이 길에 서서/유영선이 만난 사람-한지 예술가 이종국 | 동양일보](#)

2019 [문화다이어리-닥나무 작가 이종국의 'Spring Season' | 충북 현대hcn](#)

2018 [녹조로 한지를 만드는 벌갓한지 마을 | 안녕!MBC충북](#)

2018 [대청호를 품은 대지와 사람들 | 마불갤러리](#)

