



Cover Detail of Jae Ko's *Force of Nature*, 白 *Shiro* at Grounds for Sculpture, 2015–16. Recycled paper, dimensions variable. Photo courtesy the artist.

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Loya, Fayeze Sarofim, Robin and Andrew Schirmeister, and David and Marion Young. The Museum's operations and programs are made possible through the generosity of the Museum's trustees, patrons, members and donors. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston receives partial operating support from The Brown Foundation, Inc., Houston Endowment, the City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, The Wortham Foundation, Inc. and arMRKT Productions. CAMH also thanks its artist benefactors for their support including Michael Bise, Bruce High Quality Foundation, Julia Dault, Keltie Ferris, Mark Flood, Barnaby Furnas, Theaster Gates, Jeffrey Gibson, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Jim Hodges, Joan Jonas, Jennie C. Jones, Maya Lin, Julian Lorber, Robert

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Jae Ko

“

I am physically drawing in the space, using architecture as that blank backdrop to create a visual and physical drawing.”

Contemporary Arts  
Museum Houston

On View  
June 18–  
September 18, 2016

流  
*flow*



“I don't know at this point if I can work with anything except paper,” admits Jae Ko, a self-described paper obsessive.

In her site-specific installation *flow* 流, Ko creates a space that is about the force of gravity and the gradual, yet inevitable, shifting of geography. The work emulates the slow movements and process through which glaciers evolve. In response to inspirational visits to Newfoundland and the far northwestern regions of the United States, Ko mimics topographic and geologic forms and reframes them using paper. *flow* 流, the newest iteration in the series she calls “Force of Nature,” will be presented in the iconic architecture of CAMH's Zilkha Gallery.





Above and previous page Installation view of Jae Ko's *Force of Nature*, 2015–16. Recycled paper, dimensions variable. Photo courtesy the artist.

“ Ko’s power as an artist lies in her ability to transform ordinary material into extraordinary works of art.

”

Valerie Cassel Oliver  
Senior Curator at CAMH

Born in Korea (b.1961), Ko studied graphic and commercial design in Japan (1984–88). She often worked with paper as a designer, but her desire to push the medium to unexpected places was the catalyst for a shift in focusing on her art. As an undergraduate student, Ko began using rice paper as a creative material—building sculptures and installations using hundreds of thin sheets of paper by stacking them from floor to ceiling. After living and working in Japan for nearly eight years, she decided to travel around the world, landing in the United States and enrolling in a graduate program at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). During her graduate program in Baltimore, Maryland (1998), Ko shifted away from rice paper to more affordable, mass-produced, industrial paper products.

Ko’s first explorations of this more readily accessible material involved large brown Kraft paper rolls, discarded books, and small cash register paper rolls. She exposed the paper to the natural elements—burying it in the sand, exposing it to sunlight, or burning it—to see its metamorphosis. Ko also systematically dyed the paper using traditional and organic inks and graphite powder. As she continued to work with industrial paper, she challenged herself to push the material beyond its limits until it transcended

any recognition of its ordinary form. Ko says, “At times, I am able to transform the paper and at other times, the paper transforms itself.” For many years she created smaller scale works that took their formational and compositional cues from language characters, traditional women’s hairstyles, and cultural symbols. It was a natural progression for her to move into freestanding sculptural pieces, wanting viewers to see all sides of a piece of art. Ko then pushed this idea further by creating large-scale installations

to capture the majestic landscapes that she experienced on her pilgrimages into the west and northern regions of the United States.

To plan her installations, Ko creates models of the architectural galleries and then experiments with composing work in the space. She chooses the appropriate material to further engage the concept of the landscape, intentionally seeking an appropriate color palate and texture of the paper. Using a homemade turntable refashioned from a potter’s wheel, she unwinds each roll of paper, re-rolling it loosely, thereby giving her the flexibility to shape and arrange the rolls in the space. Once hundreds of rolls of paper have been prepared, she begins the process of “drawing” in the space using the lines created by the stacked paper. When the installation is viewed as a whole, the rigid tightness of the re-rolled and stacked paper changes into something entirely different—transporting its viewers into a given landscape. For Houston, Ko has created a fantastical winter landscape, hoping to suspend the reality of Houston’s notoriously hot summer.

## Public Programs

*These events are free, open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Seating is limited. Please check CAMH.ORG for the most current information.*

### OPENING RECEPTION

*flow 流*

*Friday, June 17, 2016 | 6:30–9PM*

Celebrate the opening of *flow 流*, featuring a new site-specific installation by artist Jae Ko. Cash bar.

### IN CONVERSATION: Artist Jae Ko and Senior Curator Valerie Cassel Oliver

*Saturday, June 18, 2016 | 2PM*

Learn more about the exhibition with the artist Jae Ko and organizing curator Valerie Cassel Oliver.

### OPEN STUDIO — \*New!

*Saturday, July 2, 2016 | 2–4PM*

Hands-on, drop-in, all-ages projects related to all things paper inspired by Jae Ko’s immersive installation.

### MUSEUM EXPERIENCE DAY

*Saturday, July 30, 2016 | 11AM–3PM*

Explore Jae Ko’s exhibition with your whole family: participate in hands-on activities, food trucks, scavenger hunts, and more!

### LECTURE: Kurt Cuffey, Glaciologist

*Movement, Beauty, and Change in Glacier Science*

*Saturday, September 10, 2016 | 2PM*

Kurt Cuffey, Professor and Martin Distinguished Chair in Ocean, Earth, and Climate Science at the University of California, Berkeley, will speak on the dynamics of glaciers and their effect on landscape.

### PUBLIC TOURS

*Saturdays, 1PM and 3PM*

CAMH’s dynamic FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) Team members offer free, guided experiences of the exhibitions on view.