

Autumn Ahn

on the genealogy of forms

March 13th – May 5th, 2024

The work of interdisciplinary sculptor Autumn Ahn is deeply informed by expanded notions of materiality and performance. For Ahn, the performative serves as a departure point, both a system of navigation and a discipline of temporality that guides her engagement with materials such as metal, stone, paper, and light. Through the lens of her practice, mark-making, natural physical processes, the occupying of space by a body, and even static objects are revealed as events—occurrences that hold, shape, and gather time.

Emerging from an inquiry into body-centered thinking and an interest in the overlap between eastern and western conceptual art, Ahn's practice is continually sensitive to the subtlest of material and perceptual conditions. Rather than completions or stopping points, her works operate as open-ended conceptual meshes—phenomenological arenas that invite co-authorship from external forces such as shifting paths of light, air currents, the pull of gravity, and the transient passage of viewers through space.

During her residency at lower_cavity, Ahn developed *on the genealogy of forms*, an exhibition composed of a collection of new works. The central of these is *a score, a landscape*, an expansive time-based sculptural intervention presented in lower_cavity's main project space. Working with Scott Reilly, a co-owner of the Wauregan building (the former paper mill that houses lower_cavity), Ahn diverted a section of the property's steam-based heating system—which normally operates as a closed loop—into the project space, creating an open flow of low-pressure steam that interacts with an arrangement of suspended steel rods, dyed sheets of handmade mulberry paper, and river stone. Through this choreography of non-human agents, *a score, a landscape* enchains manifold systems—durational, observational, infrastructural, atmospheric—within a complex circuit of interaction and change.

curve, event, another new work produced during Ahn's residency, employs a single, 20' long steel rod to delineate an arc in space, its shape held in tension by the floor and support columns of the project space. The metal is coated with a high-visibility powder made of glass particles—typically used for highway striping—which strongly reflects light back along its angle of incidence. The result is that the arc (along with a scattering of the reflective powder on the floor around it) only becomes visible when viewed from the same angle as the light source illuminating it, making its perception a localized, durational event that prompts viewers to a more active awareness of their own engagement.

Ahn also produced a set of three spatial drawings made of thin steel rods, part of a series of works that reflect the artist's ongoing investigation into gestural notation of movement. Installed in one of lower_cavity's annex spaces, these works—*window, fold, and turnstile*—become subtle perceptual events that shift in and out of visibility against and within the

volume of the space, flattening and expanding between two- and three-dimensionality depending on distance and viewing angle.

With its fluid negotiations between the material and immaterial, Ahn's work invites viewers to engage in a more embodied form of seeing and sensing. By foregrounding temporality as a condition of perception, her installations push against conventional notions of static or fixed presence, emphasizing the transitory and relational exchanges through which form emerges into being. Her practice eschews hierarchies between artist, material, environment, and viewer, recasting each as elements in a collaboration of which the act of observation itself constitutes an integral component. Through this framing, *on the genealogy of forms* operates as a continuum of evolving encounters that resist definitive boundaries, instead offering themselves as sites of continual emergence and transformation.

—Anthony Disenza

Autumn Ahn (b. 1986, Philadelphia, PA) is an interdisciplinary artist whose sculptural practice is informed by expanded conceptions of performance, landscape, and time. Emerging from her interest in the areas of overlap between Eastern and Western conceptual practice, Ahn's installations, sculptures, and drawings function as phenomenological sites shaped by exchanges between materiality, duration, and embodiment. Ahn has exhibited at venues including The Chimney (New York, NY), False Flag Gallery (New York, NY), Ryan Lee Gallery (New York, NY), AIDS Action Committee at Art Basel (Miami, FL), Cinema Tonalá at ArtBO (Bogotá, Columbia), Contemporary Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey), and Selebe Yoon Gallery (Dakar, Senegal). Her work has been featured by ARTE (FR/DE), the Emergency Index, and Boston Art Review. Ahn is currently a Visiting Artist Fellow at Bard College and was recently a Visiting Fellow to the Department of Philosophy at Harvard University. She holds a BFA from Boston University and an MFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

lower_cavity

Checklist

resting landscape

2024

Steel, pigment, plywood

a score, a landscape

2024

Steel, paper, river stone, facility steam system

curve, event

2024

Steel, hi-vis pigment, lighting

two windows

2024

Steel

fold

2024

Steel

turnstile

2024

Steel