



Taewon Ahn Sync

*Homeward bound
I wish I was homeward bound
Home, where my thought's escaping
Home, where my music's playing
Home, where my love lies waiting silently for me*

Simon & Garfunkel, *Homeward Bound*¹

Here lies an image on which life is based, rather than an image based on life. A world where life and its vicissitudes becomes an image.

In his practice, Taewon Ahn has repeatedly depicted living, breathing beings, surviving if not thriving, within the uncertainties and uncanniness of the world. Hiro, the artist's muse and the central figure in the exhibition, *Sync*, becomes the vector through which the artist views his daily life and the digital world. Hiro is both Ahn's world-image and simultaneously a transformational being which the world-image reflects. The boundary between what is inhabited in the real and what is represented as an image no longer carries a particular meaning. Instead, Ahn embraces the spaces to which each resides, and materialises their parallel existences, synchronising them.² The images of Hiro and the Seoul home where the artist and Hiro live, if not the exhibition itself, are overlayed in the new paintings and sculptures. These three spaces, placed within reach, invite viewers to the waypoint where Ahn will continuously return, heading homeward.

The process of translating the image of the real Hiro into paintings and sculptures is similar to capturing the materiality of the image. It begins with photographing and then distorting the texture, curvature and appearance of the image, similar to the process of making a meme. Hiro can indeed be 'anywhere'. The layering of the image onto the surface of the object is primarily done using an airbrush. Here, 'object' refers to a real target of specific width, volume, and weight, and 'surface' refers to the exterior face of that object, encompassing various categories from canvas to wooden panels, epoxy, and urethane foam. However, while past works transformed Hiro into a two or three dimensional object, with the form following the image, the new works capture Hiro's appearance whilst incorporating integrated accidents. For example, in the series, *Hiro 1-14*, Ahn utilises soft urethane foam, which has a varied expansion rate, and builds up multiple layers of thin acrylic paint. The surface naturally forms an undulating flow-like texture as it dries, where the artist then lays Hiro's appearance like a veil over the accumulated surface shapes.³ Each artwork's finished result is dependent on the time it took for layers of urethane foam and paint to dry, each layer mixing or separating in different ways.

¹ *Homeward Bound* is a song from the folk rock duo Simon & Garfunkel's second studio album, *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme* (1966). Paul Simon, the composer of the song and a member of the duo, wrote this song while touring in England, longing for his hometown of New York.

² Here, 'synchronisation' means making two or more systems match in time, state, etc. Through his work, Ahn synchronises his world-image in different spaces and objects. The exhibition title *Sync* was also used in this context.

³ *Gap* (2025) exposes the understructure composed of urethane foam and paint layers before Hiro's image is applied. What one sees here remains up to the place each person wishes to return to.

Ahn refuses to appropriate existing images; rather he seeks to see what does not yet exist. He gathers rather than collects, editing what is found, rather than creating images with intent and purpose as a prerequisite. This process arguably is closer to the mundanity of a life lived scrolling. The work *Fluorescent lamp* uses an image of his home as background, generated through Polycam, a 3D scanning application. Whilst *Hiro 1-14* was based on the material contingency of paint particles, *Fluorescent lamp* actively embraces errors that occur due to the mechanical limitations of printing and scanning processes. Polycam cannot decipher between flat surfaces, like shadows, and three-dimensional forms like furniture, resulting in an image that is inherently flat. Unless you are familiar with the artist's living room, it is difficult to differentiate between the glass door and the shoe rack. What the discovered image lacks, demands a different approach to perceiving the image.^{4 5}

In Ahn's world-image, what the artist wishes to see becomes precisely what he sees. The place he yearns to return to is, in fact, where he already stands. On the path leading to Hiro and the home where Hiro dwells, the paintings and sculptures they have migrated into and the exhibition space where these works rest — this is where '*my thought's escaping*', and the world — the image — ceases to slip away.

Written by Mohee

⁴ *What do images want? Where do images take us? What is lacking in images that they ask us to fill? What desires do we project onto images?* Mitchell, W. J. T. (2010)

⁵ *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, Yu-kyung Kim, Trans. Greenbee. (Original work published 2005)

Taewon Ahn's (b. 1993, Seoul, South Korea) labor-intensive works are pulled from the lexicon of digital exoticism, transience and spectacle, upended with emancipatory promises through analogue processes. Born during the unruly and rapid moment when analog turned digital, his anomalous sculptures and paintings act as a contemplation on the consumption of images. Taewon Ahn majored in painting at Chung-Ang University, Seoul. Selected solo and group exhibitions include P21, Seoul; Project Native Informant, London; Cylinder, Seoul; Gallery Stan, New York and Seoul; CON __, Tokyo; MoCA Busan, Busan; The Hole, New York; Everyday Gallery, Antwerp; SeMA Warehouse; Seoul; Chang Uchhin Museum of Art, Yangju; Soorim Cultural Foundation, Seoul.

List of Works

Clockwise From Entrance

Scratcher, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
27 × 45.5 × 3 cm (10 5/8 × 17 7/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 15, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Scratcher, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
27 × 45.5 × 3 cm (10 5/8 × 17 7/8 × 1 1/8 in)

In the box, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on PLA
12 × 12.5 × 19.5 cm (4 3/4 × 4 7/8 × 7 5/8 in)

Hiro 6, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 8, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 12, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 11, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 7, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 10, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 9, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Fluorescent lamp, 2025

Acrylic and resin on canvas
50 × 190 × 3 cm (19 3/4 × 74 3/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Fluorescent lamp, 2025

Acrylic and resin on canvas
50 × 190 × 3 cm (19 3/4 × 74 3/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 3, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
21 × 29.5 × 3 cm (8 1/4 × 11 5/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 1, 2024

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
21 × 29.5 × 3 cm (8 1/4 × 11 5/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 2, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
21 × 29.5 × 3 cm (8 1/4 × 11 5/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 4, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
21 × 29.5 × 3 cm (8 1/4 × 11 5/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 5, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
21 × 29.5 × 3 cm (8 1/4 × 11 5/8 × 1 1/8 in)

The colossal, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
38 × 45.5 × 3 cm (15 × 17 7/8 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 13, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 17, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

Hiro 14, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

In the box, 2025

Urethane and acrylic on PLA
18 × 13 × 19.5 cm (7 1/8 × 5 1/8 × 7 5/8 in)

Hiro 16, 2024

Urethane and acrylic on wood panel
29.5 × 21 × 3 cm (11 5/8 × 8 1/4 × 1 1/8 in)

On the floor

Hiro is everywhere, 2025

Acrylic on resin
37 × 26.5 × 60 cm (14 5/8 × 10 3/8 × 23 5/8 in)

Hiro is everywhere, 2025

Acrylic on resin
39 × 24 × 66 cm (15 3/8 × 9 1/2 × 26 in)