

The work of Koo Jeong A incorporates objects with the capacity for transformation, still and moving images, sound and scent. These disparate mediums are combined with elements such as wind, gravity, and site-specific reconfigurations and interventions into architectural space. Often using commonplace matter in order to conjure alternative realities, Koo Jeong A traces a certain poetic within the nature of forms that permeate the universe. What underpins her transient approach to making is an interest in the minute details of our earthly environments and the cosmic constellations that simultaneously connect and expand them. Koo Jeong A traverses these details with a flexible, rational movement where order and disorder, perception and memory, beauty and practicality are always oscillating.

At König Galerie, Koo Jeong A presents a selection of her recent magnet artworks. The artist's interest in this material is part of a ten-year exploration into its properties and potential uses. From an architectural tool to a relational object of healing, the magnet's humble form is embedded with an expansive set of possibilities, which Koo Jeong A draws upon in her subtle sculptural pieces. Displayed in the gallery is a series of installations and paintings, each of which is meticulously configured out of commonplace, pre-cut sized magnets. Koo Jeong A recasts these everyday items into arrangements of varying scale, resembling provisional architectural models or minimalist geometric compositions. In spite of their ostensible simplicity and compact form, each work holds within it the vibrational energy inherent to the artist's chosen medium. Situated and compacted in space, the magnetic building blocks of Koo Jeong A's works create an expanded energy field throughout the gallery, connecting and affecting each discrete object and the bodies of visitors to the exhibition.

Koo Jeong A is interested in the tension between what might be visible and invisible within a certain space; in this instance it is the micro-scale of each magnetic configuration and the macro-field of its architecture. This relationship of bodies to their environments arose through the artist's research into magnets and the radical proposals of architect Cedric Price. Price's unrealised project, *Magnets* (1997), imagines ten mobile structures installed above pieces of city infrastructure, such as roads, railways or parks. These structures would incorporate walkways, staircases, elevators and piers and be hired as required by the public on a temporary basis. In Price's words, 'magnets are both pragmatic and polemic...unlike conventional architecture, they are not an end in themselves but encourage the continual necessity for change'. His radical proposition for an architecture that is mutable rather than static is a key informant to Koo Jeong A's interest in magnets as relational objects. Following Price, she asks with these works how their intrinsic energy has the potential to stimulate patterns of movement between bodies and architecture.

The transfer of energy between bodies, architecture and cities implied within Koo Jeong A's works is also related to a further property of magnets, as healing objects. Magnetic therapy is thought to date back at least 2000 years; folk healers in Europe and Asia are believed to have used magnets to treat ailments by drawing disease from the body. Today this practice often focuses on an individual's bioenergetic fields that surround and penetrate the body, commonly referred to as life force, chi or energy flow. During her research, Koo Jeong A came across the work of Swiss researcher, Emma Kunz, who used healing practices in order to activate latent power contained within bodies, simultaneously recounting these processes in books, such as *The Miracle of Creative Revelation*, which Koo Jeong A cites as foundational to her thinking around this topic. In 1941, Kunz discovered the healing properties of the Würenlos rock, which she named AION A and developed into a therapeutic remedy that is still available to buy in Swiss pharmacies today.

'Aion' comes from the Greek, meaning 'without limitation', and it is this idea of shifting seamlessly between the physical and the immaterial, the macro and the micro, the body and the universe, which Koo Jeong A traces poetically through her magnet artworks. For the artist, this material is a portal to 'realities that exist beyond the tangible ... geo-spatial systems of collective intelligence ... different atmospheric pressures ... [and] ... various sensorial quietness'. By placing each magnet into delicate tension, Koo Jeong A's installations trigger a certain energy in their encounter, which the viewer must decipher and unravel.

Koo Jeong A lives & works everywhere.

She has had solo exhibitions at Artsonje Center, Seoul (KO), Yuz Project Room at Yuz Museum, Shanghai (CH), ICA Art Night, Charing Cross Station, London (UK), Kunsthalle Dusseldorf (DE), Ile de Vassivière, region Limousin (FR) and Dia:Beacon, Bridgehampton (US) including the publication *Constellation Congress*. Works by Koo are held in public collections worldwide including the Guggenheim Collection, New York (US), LVMH Collection, Paris (FR), evnart collection, Vienna (AT), Astrup Fearnley Collection, Oslo (NO), Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (KO). In 2019 Koo will participate in the Seotouchi Triennale (JA) presenting an outdoor project.

Text: Joseph Constable

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