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Eye On: Byung Hoon Choi

Megalithic forms known as Dolmens inspire Byung Hoon Choi's current series of benches on display through March 29th, 2014 at Freidman Benda Gallery, New York. The show *In One Stroke* collapses design and sculpture into eleven elegant gestures. In this work, Choi uncovers textural subtleties innate to the material, Basalt, which forms from centuries of cooling hot molten lava. This rock is nothing short of otherworldly, it can be found on the surface of the Moon, Mars and even Venus.

Treated in a variety of ways, this specific stone allows for a change in the consistency of the surface of his sculptures; at one moment, long smooth onyx-like "strokes" curve in an arc and at another moment, a lustrous limb rests its weight on the ground beneath it, with its other portion supported by a boulder-like form of basalt expressing a completely different frothy and rough texture. Carved entirely out of this dark, volcanic rock known as basalt, Byung Hoon Choi demonstrates a mastering over the nuanced qualities inherent to the material.



Is the element of "play" involved in your work?

I think my works include the element of "play" by inviting people to experiment and enjoy different positions to sit on.

Your work is in part inspired by ancient megalithic tombs known as Dolmens. What about these structures inspire your work?

Korea has over 40% of the world's ancient dolmens, and they were listed as UNESCO world heritages. I get many inspirations from their structural beauty— from the texture to the weight to the different expressions that were created throughout time.

You grew up and work in Gangwon-do and Ganghwa provinces. What do you find is special about these places?

Gangwon-do is a region of a dense forest with deep valleys and rivers. [Growing up], I was surrounded by natural stones and they were important objects of my childhood. Gangwha Island, where one can find a number of ancient dolmens, is where I get a lot of inspirations for my work. It only takes me 30 minutes by car to get there from my studio.



What is one of your favorite artworks by another artist that you continue to return to?

In 1988 when I was staying at Aalto University in Finland as a research professor, I carried out research work on the architecture and furniture designs of Alvar Aalto and became interested in his design philosophy. I also feel an affinity with the world of works by Isamu Noguchi.

How do you see architecture in relation to your sculpture?

Since I see architectural works as spaces where humans live and exist, these mediums should be ecologically friendly structures. I hope my work, as elements that create that ecologically friendly space, perform both aesthetic functions and practical functions.

