

## **Artist Statement**

“A thousand water drops can break a stone.”

Epitomized by this Korean proverb, the belief in the hidden power of small, seemingly insignificant entities is central to my process. My soft sculptures composed of thousands of miniature pillows grow into a monumental presence through strength in numbers. Each of the pillow forms, painstakingly made using abandoned traditional Korean blankets and garments, treasures and holds a dream, hope, or desire. They then accumulate together to create profound constructions. By going through my work process, the delicate and fragile pieces of fabric defy their once forsaken fate and transform into a solid, commanding presence.

In my cast series, this stark contrast between raw material and final form is mirrored. The pillow forms are instead made of solid, hard bronze and resin, while their compositions now seem impossibly balanced and fragile. Delicately stacked one on top of the other, initially the viewer may assume that these are made of soft cloth as well, perhaps using exquisite gold fabric. However, in reality these pillows are sharp and cold to the touch, and completely unforgiving in form. They will not bend or break.

These explorations of dichotomies between structure and material, reality and assumptions continue to develop in my work as I seek to transform the weak into the strong, and bring out the soft from the hard. Soft is never weak.

## **Artist Bio**

Hyemin Lee's work begins with the study of everyday objects. She continually finds inspiration through her conversations with these seemingly mundane objects. Trained in sculpture, painting, video arts, and music, Lee is a truly interdisciplinary artist. As she is not limited by medium, Lee allows her work to develop in various forms and techniques.

Lee seeks to heal people's souls and minds through her art practice, providing solace and comfort for her viewers. This is especially present in her earlier works, where she uses abandoned and discarded materials to create her compositions. With a loving touch, she succeeds in transforming them into beautiful works of art.

Hyemin Lee studied Sculpture at Seoul National University, after which she completed her MA at NYU. She has held solo exhibitions at a number of galleries and museums in several countries, including Young Eun Museum of Contemporary Art (2016), Gallery EM, Seoul (2016), Art Mora, NY (2015), TENRI Cultural Institute, NY (2014), and Coohaus Art, NY (2015). She has also participated in group shows at Art Basel Hong Kong (2016), Jeonbuk Province Art Museum (2016), Sylvia Ko Gallery, NY (2014), and more. Lee travels frequently and works in both Korea and the US.