

WON LEE

ARTIST STATEMENT / BIO

Won Lee (1946 - 2021) is a Korean-born sculptor whose work is primarily focused on the figure. Lee spent time drawing and modelling the figure in clay, often refining the shapes into abstract forms before firing them in his studio kiln. When he wasn't working in his studio, he travelled to China or Mexico to cast his figures in bronze. He was a highly prolific and energetic artist, despite the fact that he was afflicted with polio while growing up in Korea. The effects of this disease have never stood in the way of his highly charged production. When constructing a two-meter-high clay model, he worked without hesitation, without a break, and often without assistance. Like the early Abstract Expressionist sculptor, Reuben Nakian, Lee belongs to a heroic tradition in sculpture. Less a classical formalist than Nakian, Lee kept an intense eye on each manoeuvre as he modelled the clay, working in direct response to his models. Each detail is attenuated, the treatment comparable in some ways to the late existentialist work of Giacometti. Lee's figures are focused on a holistic pattern involving texture and exaggerated mannerisms of scale and proportion. He inscribes the ambient parts with a subtle, yet assured tactile resonance and, in doing so, manages to accentuate a faceting of the surface that enhances the feel of the material. Although Lee began as a figurative painter, his move into sculpture within the past decade, after an interruption in his work of several years, offers a forceful interplay with the plasticity of the medium.

"On one level, his sculpture equivocates between a type of expressionist realism and an abstract formal style. They are energetic forms that express the artist's feelings toward art and life. Rather than imitating appearances in the external visual world, they seem to emerge from an experience with the void, as if to suggest the Zen Buddhist concept of sunyata... In contrast to the "expanded field"- a term introduced by the art historian Rosalind Krauss and widely employed in defence of installation strategies used by postmodern artists in the eighties - Won Lee has once again gone in an opposite direction. Here I would argue that some of the most interesting sculpture, since the eighties, has moved away from Krauss's concept of the expanded field, particularly as architects have usurped this position from sculptors (with the exception of Richard Serra). Instead, sculpture is moving toward a more confined psychological space, a space of anxiety, that searches for another type of intimacy..."

- Robert C. Morgan is an international art critic, lecturer, artist, and curator.

Lee received his B.F.A. at Pepperdine University and his M.F.A. at Johnson State College. He also attended the Otis Art Institute. Won's sculptures have been featured in numerous magazines including Sculpture magazine. He lectured on postmodern art theories and practices around the world. Internationally acclaimed Lee has a vital body of work that continues to make an impact wherever his work is exhibited.

SELECTED EXHIBITION HISTORY

SOLO SHOWS

2018	Muse Gallery, Toronto, Canada Isabella Garrucho Fine Art, Greenwich, U.S.A Solo Exhibition at IGI Fine Art Gallery
2017	Muse Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2016	Francisco Goita Museum, Zacatecas, Mexico Peter Gray Museum, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
2015	Aimer Museum, Beijing, China IGI Fine Art, Westport CT, U.S.A.
2012	Mark Christopher Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2011	Omar Alonzo Gallery, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
2010	Muse Gallery, Toronto, Canada Kyung Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2009	Thierry Blouet Gallery, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
2008	Thierry Blouet Gallery, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
2007	Muse Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2007	The Loft Gallery, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
2006	Dibden Centre for Arts, Vermont, U.S.A.

NOTEWORTHY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EDUCATION

Johnson State College, Vermont, USA (M.F.A)

Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, USA (B.F.A)

ACOMPLISHMENTS

Permanantly exhibited internationally with Global Affairs Canada's Visual Art Collection

Board Member of Sculptors Society of Canada (Canada)

Board Member of Peter Grey Museum (Puerto Vallarta, Mexico)

A Professional Circle Member of International Sculpture Center (USA)

Advisor of Zwolle International Sculpture Space (Zwolle, Netherlands)

Former Board Member of Vermont Studio Center (Vermont, USA)

Established "Won Lee Fine Art Award" For OCAD University (Toronto, Canada)

Established "Won Lee Emerging Artist Award" for Sculpture Society of Canada(Toronto)

Established "Won Lee Sculptor Student Award" for Sculpture Society of Canada (Toronto)

Established "Won Lee Challenging Artist Award" for Tangled Art of Canada(Toronto)

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND INVITATIONS

- 2020 Invited "KUDO VI" Jan, 11-Mar,1, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, Canada
- 2019 Invited Tang Shan De Long International Sculpture symposium, Tang Shan, China
Invited "90th Still Going Strong" Sept, 6-28, John B. AIRD Gallery, Toronto, Canada
Invited "On The Move" Sept, 14 - Oct, 14, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto
Invited "LAUNCH" Mar, 30 - Apr, 28, Sculpture society Of Canada , Toronto,
- 2018 Lecture on Deluzian Aesthetics at Luxun Academy of Fine Art, ShenYang, China
Carusi Sculpture Studio, May, 17 - Jun, 20, Cararra, Italy
Invited KUDOS IV, Jan, 20 - Feb, 9, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, Canada
- 2017 Invited NAVY Museum, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- 2016 Art Nordic Exhibition, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2015 Vermont Studio Center Visiting Artist, Vermont, U.S.A.
International Sculpture Symposium, Quebec, Canada
Puerto Vallarta International Sculpture Symposium, Mexico
Award for Artist Emeritus by Art 21Century, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 2014 Le Carrousel du Louvre, Paris International Fair, Paris, France
Kasher & Potamkin Gallery Opening Show, September, Chelsea NY, U.S.A.
Exhibited at Ralph Lauren, Madison Ave, NY, U.S.A.
Canadian Sculpture Center Exhibition, Toronto, Canada
The TIA Competition 2013/2014 First Prize in Sculpture Category, Italy
- 2013 Johnson State College Visual Art Center, Sculpture Studio Named after Won Lee,
Vermont, U.S.A.
Invited to Exhibition of Monumental Sculpture in Avenida Reforma, Mexico City
Sabrina Falzone e Arte del XXI Secolo, Milano, Savona, Torino, Italy
- 2012 "Egypt to Rome", Embassy of Egypt, Rome, Italy
Padova Art Fare, Milano, Italy
Trevisan Art, Bolgna, Italy
Vermont Studio Center
Voce Di, NY, U.S.A.
- 2011 St Antonio Mexican Culture Museum, Texas, U.S.A.
"The Red Show", Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

- 2010 Presented A Family of Faces at Presedential Palace for “The Congo’s 50th Anniversary of Independence”, DR. Congo
 “Tultepec International Stainless Steel Sculpture Symposium”, Mexico
 “Puerto Vallarta Stone Sculpture Symposium”, Mexico
- 2009 Visiting Artist of Zhang Feung Sculpture Studio, Beijing, China
 Lecture on Deluzian Aesthetics in Qing Hwa University of Beijing, China
 Invited to The Florence Biennale, Italy
 Resident Artist, Zhang Feng Sculpture Studio, Beijing, China
 Lecture on Deleuzian Aesthetics at Luxan Academy of Fine Art, Shen Yang, China
- 2008 Master Achievement Award, Johnson State College, U.S.A.
 Featured Artist in Sculpture Magazine Published by International Sculpture Center
 Participated International Sculpture Symposium, Bundang Memorial Park, Korea
 Resident Artist, 21Century Studio, Mexico
- 2007 Resident Artist at Nanyang Academy of Fine Art, Singapore
 Participated at the “International Wood Sculpture Symposium”, Singapore
 Lecture on Deleuzian Aesthetics at Benini Foundation, Texas, USA
 Lecture on Deleuzian Aesthetics at Instituto Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico
 Resident Artist, Jin Wha Bronze studio, Dalian, China

RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRITICAL REVIEWS

- 2020 “Singular Magazine, Paris, France (Feb, 10, Featured interview – A Day with Won Lee)
- 2019 “Sculpture Magazine”, Shin Yang, China (March, #131, 22 page)
 “Artexpress Artrone”, Thang Shan, China(July, 31, Art Section)
 “Art Work”, Beijing, China (April, 22, 125 page)
- 2017 “The Korea Times Daily”, Toronto, Canada, (July, 18, Front Page)
- 2016 “Vallarta Opina” Newspaper, Gente PV, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (Mar,16, Page18, 21)
 “Bay Vallarta”, Magazine, Art Section, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico(Feb 16 - 29, Page 5)
- 2015 “The Korea Times Daily”, Newspaper, Toronto, Canada (Sept, 21, A6)
- 2014 Basement Medicine, Arts & Entertainment, Vermont, USA (Oct, 30, page 8)
 “Green Mountains Review”, Vermont, USA.(Winter, Cover Page & Page 86 - 98)
- 2013 “Art Park”, Published by Princeton Architectural Press, New York (Page,186)
 “CA Magazine”, Up Front, Canada (Nov, Page 8)
 “Reforma”, Mexico city, Mexico(Mar, 19, Culture p14)
- 2012 “Italian Art Journal Magazine”, Bologna, Italy (Dec, art journal 19-21)
 “The Korea Times Daily” Newspaper, Toronto, Canada, (Nov, 23,A2)
 “St. Louis Post” Newspaper, St .Louis, USA (Mar,18, M1)
- 2011 “The Korea Times Daily” Newspaper, Toronto , Canada, (Jun, 21, A6)
- 2010 “The Globe and Mail” Globe Arts, Toronto, Canada (Dec, 4, R18)
 “Chosun Daily” An Artist and his Life, “Why? Section”, Seoul, Korea (May, 22, p1-3)
 “Happy House” Magazine, Seoul, Korea, (June, p52 - 59)
 “Living Sense” Magazine, Seoul, Korea (June, p368 - 371)
 “Women Joong Ang” Magazine, Seoul, Korea (July, p492 - 495)
 “Sungshin People” Art section, Seoul Korea, (Summer, p8-11)

- “mbc Economy Magazine, Seoul, Korea, (July, p24)
- “Gamsa Weekly” Art section, Seoul, Korea, (April 16, p6, May 29, p7-8)
- 2009 Featured Artist in “Wolgan Visual Art Magazine”, Seoul, Korea (February, p145 - 147)
- “Bay Vallarta”, Puerto Vallarta Mexico, No. 130 (March 6 – 20 p. 22 – 23)
- 2008 Featured Artist in “Sculpture Magazine”, Published by International Sculpture Centre (May, P. 55-57)
- “Arquitectura Urbana”, Guadalajara Mexico (February, p. 54 – 55)
- “Puerto Vallarta Mirror”, Art and Culture, Art Shore (Nov, 20, p. 1 – 2)
- 2007 “SISA Journal”, Seoul Korea (April 17, p. 42- 45)
- “Johnson City Record Courier”, Texas, USA (Thursday May 24, p. B8)
- “Country Lifestyle”, Texas, USA (July and August, p. 19)
- “Weekly News Journal”, Seoul Korea (August 7, p. 78 – 79)
- “The Burlington Free Press”, Vermont, USA (Thursday, September 27, p. 27)
- “Banderas News”, Art Talk Sec; Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (Wednesday Dec 12, p.1)

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Woonsan Group

Namseoul Country Club

Kyong Gallery

National Seoul UNIV Hospital Bundang

Mexico

Macay Museum, Yucatan

Peter Gray Museum, University of Guadalajara

Bicentennial Park, Toluca

Viet-Nam

An Giang International Sculpture Park

USA

Benini Foundation Sculpture Ranch
Johnson State College

Singapore

Fort Canning National Park

China

Aimer Museum
Tang Shan De Long Sculpture Park