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Haegue Yang: Leap Year

Saturday, 27 September 2025 to Sunday, 18 January 2026

The exhibition “Leap Year” is about four important topics:
Movement, spirituality, community and domestic life. Domestic life means life at home.
Haegue Yang also deals with art history and folk art.
The title of the exhibition “Leap Year” is a play on words. A “Leap year” is a year with 366 days. But “leap” can also mean “major development”. So a leap year is also a “year of major development”.

About the artist Haegue Yang

Haegue Yang is an artist born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1971. Today, she lives in Berlin and Seoul.

“Leap Year” is Yang’s first solo exhibition in Switzerland: The Migros Museum only shows artwork made by Haegue Yang.

How is the exhibition organised?

The Hayward Gallery in London has organised this exhibition, together with Kunsthal Rotterdam and the Migros Museum. “Leap Year” is a touring exhibition. This means: The exhibition is not always in the same place. It travels from one place to another. “Leap Year” was first shown in London and Rotterdam. Now, the exhibition is in Zurich.

The exhibition has been curated by Dr. Michael Birchall with Paula Thomaka as assistant curator. Linda Addae and Mirta Gianocca have helped with the organisation.

Text in Plain English: Lorenz Mohler, Winterthur, 2025

What is the exhibition about?

How do we move and feel in different situations? Where is the line between abstract art and concrete art? This is what Yang looks at with her art: She looks at moving transitions

- between nature and technology
- between folk art and modern art
- between concrete things and abstract things
- between this world and the spiritual world.

Yang has created different works of art: For example, she has made sculptures that remind us of the human body. But she also makes installations, videos and texts.

The exhibition shows work of art made over the last 30 years.

The Artwork

Here is some information on a few works of art. They are just examples. We are not describing every work of art here.

The Randing Intermediates – Underbelly Alienage Duo

“The Randing Intermediates” is a series of sculptures. These sculptures are about topics such as “movement” and “rituals”. The sculptures connect traditional handicraft with materials from industry. For this artwork, Yang has teamed up with craftsmen and craftswomen from the Philippines.

The sculptures can be moved. But only the people who work at the Museum are allowed to move the sculptures at certain times.

The sculptures “The Randing Intermediate – Underbelly Alienage Duo” look like sea creatures or like mushrooms. They are decorated with fake plants, and they have handles. This makes them a mix between living creatures and industrial objects.

The sculptures “The Randing Intermediate – Underbelly Alienage Duo” were made in 2020.

Mesmerizing Mesh

“Mesmerizing Mesh” shows several works of art made of paper. An important topic of these art pieces is spirituality.

Yang uses traditional paper from Korea. Every region has a different name for paper: *Hanji*, *Washi* or *Sangpi*. The paper is made from the bark of the mulberry tree. In the past, shamans in Korea used the paper for rituals. In colonial times, people almost forgot these rituals. But the paper is still important for the community in Korea.

Yang uses techniques from different cultures:

- *Seolwiseolgyeong*, a painting technique from Korea
- *Wycinanki*, a paper cutting technique from Poland
- *Papel Picado*, a paper cutting technique from Mexico
- The paper altars of the *Hmong*, an indigenous people in Southeast Asia.

Yang shows how you can express yourself with paper. Paper is interesting and can be used for many different purposes.

The artwork “Tutting Seasonal Soul Glyph – Mesmerizing Mesh #183” is part of this series of works. The artwork was made in 2023.

Storage Piece

“Storage Piece” is a work of art about the community. It is linked to Yang's own history. As a young artist, Yang had no place to store her works. Many artists have the same problem. So, Yang wrapped up her pieces of art and stacked them all on pallets. This way, the stacked pieces together become a work of art, which solved the storage problem. With this artwork, Yang also says: Look at how difficult life is for artists.

The artwork was made in 2004.

Non-Indépliables, nues

This piece of art is about domestic life. Yang has turned drying racks for clothes into sculptures. Objects of everyday life become art.

This artwork was made in 2010 and 2020.

Sonic Arch Rope – Gold Hexagon Light und **Sonic Droplets in Gradation – Water Veil**

For this exhibition, Yang has created two new works of art. They are about movement and spirituality. The tiny metal bells remind us of rituals at religious ceremonies. We feel the sound with our body and with our soul.

- “Sonic Arch Rope – Gold Hexagon Light” is a rope made of small bells. The rope has the shape of the letter “U” and hangs from the ceiling. It refers to a Korean tale:

  Two children, brother and sister, run away from a wild tiger. A rope appears from the sky, and the children climb the rope. In heaven, they are safe. There, the sister becomes the Sun and the brother the Moon.
- “Sonic Droplets in Gradation – Water Veil*”* is a curtain made of little bells. You can walk through the curtain.

Both art pieces were made in 2024.

Quasi-Yves Klein Blue

Yang also looks into the art history of the Western world. She is interested in what modern art has left us.

Her work “Quasi-Yves Klein Blue” is about the French artist Yves Klein. Klein was famous for his special blue. He even had this blue patented and called it “International Klein Blue”. Yang had the ground floor of the Museum painted blue. But first, the staff at the museum held a vote: The staff were asked to choose a blue that was as close as possible to Klein Blue. But Yang did not use the real Klein blue. How do we view art? What power do museums have?