

Kwon Jae Hyun



Kwon Jae Hyun's work demands attention with its size, simplicity, and focus on detail. He precisely cuts, arranges and connects individual pieces of plywood to form simplified versions of animals and objects. However, these sculptures are far more than just representations of familiar forms. "I do this [work] not simply to reproduce a cow or a fish out of wood," Kwon explains, "but to express the reflection of my consciousness and my feelings about society."

In Kwon's opinion, the basis of society is desire. He exemplifies this simplification of what it means to be human with his geometric sculptures. Kwon views ur-

ban society in particular as one "huge lump of desire," and feels that it can be either progressive or destructive. He portrays ruinous human longing in his piece titled *Bag-Impala*, which represents the things we take from nature to fulfill our materialistic wants. The sizeable *Hanging Cow* represents our society's desire for animal products and our disinterest in the effects that it has on our planet's well-being. Materialism's impact on the environment is the driving force behind Kwon's work.

While he sometimes adds a wash of color to his pieces, Kwon tries not to lose the feel of the natu-







ral material. In one such piece, *Modern Child*, Kwon focuses on another form of desire: modern society's self-obsession. This piece depicts a child that is capable of doing nothing but looking at herself endlessly. This could be a symbol of our current "selfie" culture or perhaps a representation of what has become ubiquitous in Korean society – we've all seen young girls with their faces in mirrors on sidewalks, on subways and in classrooms.

Desire motivates us just as it dementes us. It could be what paves the way to our success or what leads to our downfall. But as Kwon points out, it is certainly the motive behind almost everything we do. **[b]**

Lisa Highfill