



## Art & Design

[Print](#)  
[E-Mail](#)  
[Feeds](#)



Haegue Yang with *Storage Piece* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

# Haegue Yang

By [Kevin West](#)

Photograph by [Amanda Marsalis](#)

November 2009

Visitors to the opening of “Your Bright Future,” a recent exhibition of contemporary Korean artwork at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, entered a large gallery to find a pile of sealed crates on a platform of wooden pallets. Had they returned to the same gallery on closing day, they would have encountered a very different scene: the contents of the boxes—including prints, paintings, collages and sculptures—arrayed around the space. Such are two incarnations of *Storage Piece*, by Haegue Yang. Over the course of a *Storage Piece* show, Yang, who represented South Korea at this year’s Venice Biennale, visits the piece periodically to unpack its parts, thus revealing what she calls its “potentiality.”

The idea originated in 2004, when Yang was faced with two dilemmas: what to make for an upcoming exhibition at London’s Lawrence O’Hana Gallery and where to warehouse her earlier works. She realized there was a single answer—to pack her past creations in crates and stack them in the gallery. “It was a temporary solution for the storage problem,” recalls Yang, a slight 37-year-old who speaks English with the quiet precision of an academic. “And it also abused the gallery’s idea of commercial value.”

A German collector bought the work and asked the artist to unpack it, thus transforming the sculpture into a sort of performance. Energized by the collaboration, they agreed to send *Storage Piece* on a tour of art fairs. Along the way, it grew to include an explanatory audio recording and an ever-accumulating heap of used packing materials. (Yang adds with the barest hint of humor that *Storage Piece* grew again when objects belonging to another artist were accidentally loaded with it and became part of the inventory.)

Yang graduated from Seoul National University with a B.F.A. and immigrated to Germany in 1994 to continue her studies. Her spare but poetic installation in Venice combined venetian blinds and fans to make the viewer aware of light, shadow, smell and even humidity. Still, she continues to tend to *Storage Piece*. “It is completely absurd that it gets so much attention,” she acknowledges. “Its attitude is that of artists who wear shabby outfits but still go to the penthouse.”

### Keywords

[2009 Art Issue](#), [Young Artists 2009](#)

[Print](#)  
[E-Mail](#)  
[Feeds](#)  
[Share](#)