

PKM GALLERY

Jungjin Lee: *Unseen/Thing*

April 15 – May 23, 2026 | PKM & PKM+

40, Samcheng-ro 7-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul | T. +82 2 734 9467

- ▶ PKM Gallery presents Jungjin Lee's solo exhibition *Unseen/Thing* across its entire exhibition space
- ▶ First domestic premiere of the latest series *Unseen* (2024), originating from the primordial landscapes of Iceland (PKM) / Rare works from the *Thing* (2003–2007) series, produced through analog techniques, including *hanji* printing (PKM+)
- ▶ A focused look at the artist's singular practice that expands photography beyond documentation and representation into a medium of contemplation and meditation

PKM Gallery is pleased to present *Unseen/Thing*, a solo exhibition by Jungjin Lee (b. 1961) from April 15 to May 23, featuring her meditative photographic works, which have garnered significant international acclaim. Marking her return to the gallery for the first time in six years since *VOICE* in 2020, this exhibition occupies the entire gallery space and focuses on her latest series, *Unseen* (2024), which originates from the vast landscapes of Iceland, alongside the *Thing* (2003–2007) series, which captures the intimacy of everyday objects.

Jungjin Lee has long captured the revelatory moments in which a subject unveils its essential nature. For Lee, photography is far more than a tool for documentation; it serves as a window where the external world and the artist's inner self meet in a fleeting instant. The absorbent texture of *hanji*, the traces of brushstrokes from applying photosensitive emulsion, and the density of her monochromatic tones all add an abyssal depth to her work.

The *Unseen* series, presented in Korea for the first time as a sequence, captures Iceland's awe-inspiring nature. For the artist, Iceland was a place of vibrant vitality with ever-changing weather, dynamic air, and rough waves—unlike the silent, time-stilled deserts of the American continent. Surrendering both body and spirit to this unfamiliar space-time, Lee captured the process of landscape passing through her being. Thus, the images of black volcanic rock, white snow, and frothing tides in *Unseen* are not mere reproductions of scenery, but visualizations of an 'unseen' inscape—an abstraction of the resonance felt upon encountering nature. This series received critical acclaim last year from major international media, including *The Guardian* and *FT Weekend Magazine*, and was described as a landscape that resonates with all that lies within us.

While *Unseen* gazes toward the vastness of distant nature, *Thing* offers a zoomed-in perspective on the familiar and humble objects nearby. As Lee's only studio-based series, it began with her photographing the everyday items within her personal space. Sharing a long period with these objects to build a relationship, she

PKMGALLERY

waited for them to shed their surface beauty and humbly reveal their essence. At the intuitive moment of connection, she pressed the shutter. These still lifes, delicately arranged within the composition's negative space, are liberated from their original purposes or conventional concepts, acquiring a unique soul and vitality. This series was produced entirely through analog methods, including *hanji* printing, and this exhibition features particularly rare works, including last editions.

Although a twenty-year gap exists between *Thing* and *Unseen*, both series point toward a single essence, much like the obverse and reverse of a single garment. While *Thing* offers an insightful gaze into the life inherent beneath form, *Unseen* subtly reveals the energy hidden within unknown landscapes. This exhibition highlights Jungjin Lee's lifelong pursuit of expanding photography into a medium of thought, bringing the invisible world beyond the visible into our presence. The artist will visit Korea for the exhibition, and an Artist Talk, moderated by Song Su Jong (Curator at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea), will be held on Saturday, April 25 at 2 PM.

Jungjin Lee, who studied ceramics as an undergraduate, initially entered the field of photography through documentary practice. After moving to the United States in 1988, she developed her signature process—most notably seen in her *American Desert* (1990–1995) series—which involves manually brushing photosensitive emulsion onto traditional *hanji*. In 2010–2011, she gained international attention by participating in the *This Place* project, joining twelve world-renowned photographers including Thomas Struth, Stephen Shore, Josef Koudelka and Jeff Wall. She subsequently held a major retrospective at Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland in 2016, which later traveled to the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea in 2018. Her work is included in prominent public collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Fonds national d'art contemporain in Paris, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, and the Seoul Museum of Art.