

WONMIN PARK ON EARTH

20 OCTOBER – 7 JANUARY



CARPENTERSWORKSHOP GALLERY

In his solo show, *On Earth*, at Carpenters Workshop Gallery Paris, Wonmin Park explores a new relationship between humans and nature.

Nature has reached a new age of abstraction amid its co-evolution alongside humanity, breaking the binary understanding that humans and the natural world are somehow distinct from each other. Its meaning has evolved beyond the image of an untouched, wild, environment, and now encompasses the hybrid and technological ways we engage with our planet.

Wonmin seeks to find a way to trace and explore our current, often paradoxical, natural existence. *On Earth* investigates the presence and balance of competing forces through Wonmin's latest collections, *Plain Cuts_Stone&Steel* and *Plain Cuts_Remediated*. Whereas *Stone&Steel* demonstrates a juxtaposed material encounter of nature against man, Wonmin develops his *Remediated* series as an expression of a new nature humans have created.

The volcanic rocks of *Stone&Steel* form the core of the exhibition, representing the Earth itself. The *Remediated* artworks, reproduced in coloured resins and glass plates, are transparent, a phenomenon rarely experienced in nature, and act as a negative balance of *Stone&Steel*. The molecular transformation creates a parallel form of each stone, and allows for an unexpected perspective within the stone itself, displaying simultaneous depths and surface reflections.

On Earth envisions the land and oceans that encompass the surface of the planet, as seen from a great distance. Each chisel mark on the stone creates a miniature mountain range; each polished resin aperture translates to an in-land sea. The South-Korean artist illustrates the interconnections between nature and artifice through his choice of materials: natural stone, sculpted by human hands; resin, imitative of stone; steel and glass plates, their shapes dictated by that of each stone.

Through a minimalist framework, Wonmin states that everything on Earth, even man-made creations, is in fact a product of nature, as we ourselves are. Harnessing the natural and technological forces at his disposal, Wonmin reconciles many dualities into materially succinct artworks, unique products of nature and man together.

WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS_REMEDIATED_SS1901
2022

COLOURED RESIN, GLASS
39 × 175 × 94 CM
15 3/8 × 68 7/8 × 37 1/8 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





Wonmin Park's Plain Cuts_Remediated series sees his original Stone&Steel sculptures duplicated, but with their stone bases rendered instead in coloured resin, and their sheets of steel transformed into planes of glass.

The evolution is paradoxical; each sculpture has undergone an irreversible, molecular change, and yet its form and nature have remained identical.

Wonmin hand finishes each base with the same textural carving techniques he used on the volcanic stones of stone and steel, rather than achieving the same effect through a generic mould. Through this process the artist imparts his affinity with nature onto the man-made material.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS_REMEDIATED_SS1902
2022

COLOURED RESIN, GLASS
45 × 134 × 120 CM
17 3/4 × 52 3/4 × 47 1/4 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





Each resin base of the Plain Cuts_Remediated sculptures represents water, a parallel version of the original stone each was modelled on.

The clear pool of resin in the centre of the glass aperture resembles a still lake, as seen from miles above the Earth. Just like with still water, the viewer perceives a surface reflection off the polished resin as well a view through its surface and into its depths. The idea is to be able to see inside the stone, offering a view of its inner nature.

The chromaticism of each resin base is augmented by its surrounding colourless glass. Each pane underwent a long process to arrive at its white frosted finish.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS_REMEDIATED_SS1903
2022

COLOURED RESIN, GLASS
37 × 176 × 103 CM
17 3/4 × 52 3/4 × 47 1/4 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP





The Plain Cuts_Remediated sculptures invert the exhibition On Earth. The identical duplicates resemble negatives of their Stone&Steel counterparts, yet their coloured resin bases fill with natural light, expressing a levity that counterbalances the weight of the originals. Within these transparent versions of the rock we can see its internal, soulful qualities.

Wonmin develops Plain Cuts_Remediated past the binary proposition that nature is always contrasted against mankind. These sculptures take inspiration from the Earth, responding in equal part to the artist's creative vision and the alchemical creation of the universe itself.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS_REMEDIATED_SS1904
2022

COLOURED RESIN, GLASS
105 × 50 × 60 CM
17 3/4 × 52 3/4 × 47 1/4 IN
EDITION OF 8 + 4 AP



Wonmin Park's collections, from Haze, through Plain Cuts, to Stone & Steel, are not distinct from each other but follow a sequential development. His latest, Plain Cuts_Remediated, draws upon aspects from all of them.

Plain Cuts_Remediated continues Wonmin's technical achievements working with resin from his Haze series to explore the inverted nature of his Stone&Steel compositions.

This sculptural chair's absorption and distortion of light produces a surreal, dream-like quality, but it is here interrupted and grounded by the vertical glass sheet.





WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #9 SS 2213
2022

STONE, DYED STEEL
97 × 105 × 55 CM
38 1/4 × 41 3/8 × 21 5/8 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





Wonmin does not like to work within too many rules, nor overthink his practice. Fulfilling the potential of his materials is his main focus, keeping the design as effective yet minimal as possible, always toying at departing from functionality.

Korean design always involves an element of nature, arriving at a final artwork that looks half formed by nature, half by man. Wonmin strikes a balance between the two, drawing on both natural and highly technical processes to create a sculptural form that necessitated inputs from both spheres of influence.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #9 SS 2214
2022

STONE, DYED STEEL
103.5 × 130 × 66 CM
40 3/4 × 51 1/8 × 26 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





The Plain Cuts_Stone&Steel #9 bench exemplifies the complementary qualities of its two component materials.

The smooth finish of the cut stone is highly polished, to achieve a jet-black marmoreal aesthetic. The high iron content of the volcanic stone is responsible for both its dark metallic interior, as well as its rust-like exterior. This natural patina is the result of air and moisture penetrating deep fissures in the Earth's crust and oxidising the iron.

Paired with the steel sheet, the metallic elements provide a smooth counterpart for the rough, textured surface of the stone.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #7 SS 2207
2021

STONE, DYED STEEL
84.5 × 144.5 × 45.5 CM
33 1/2 × 57 × 18 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





Wonmin treats every volcanic stone used in Stone&Steel as a substitute for the Earth itself. The textured surface of each stone equates to the Earth's crust, with minute cracks equivalent to vast crevasses, smooth planes becoming wind-blown deserts.

In this way Wonmin collapses the scale of the Earth in on itself, and distorts magnitude through perspective. Viewed up close, rough patches on the stone resemble mountain ranges, and with each hammer of his chisel, Wonmin creates further microscopic geological formations. The artist draws an atomic link between the stones and the Earth despite their vastly difference sizes, using each rock to magnify details on the other.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #5 SS 2105
2021

STONE, DYED STEEL
45 × 134 × 120 CM
17 1/2 × 53 × 47 1/2 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





Wonmin's choice to work with stone and steel intentionally pairs a natural and a manufactured material, contrasting imperfection against uniformity.

This combination adheres closely to the principles of Korean Minimalism, as well as the 1960s Mono-Ha movement in Tokyo. Mono-Ha proposed a reduction of materials to reconfigure art away from a flamboyant avant-garde catering for an increasingly industrialised society.

Wonmin has updated the tensions first addressed by Mono-Ha, combining these minimalist principles with cutting edge technology in his ultra-contemporary series.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #6 SS 2106
2021

STONE, DYED STEEL
78 × 260 × 90 CM
30 3/4 × 102 3/8 × 35 3/8 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





In this monumental desk, Wonmin builds upon philosophies of relative value, singling out and defining material qualities only in relation to their direct opposite. Linearity is mutually defined against volume, smooth planes against rough surfaces, nature against man, stone against steel.

Amidst their embrace of purity and subtlety, Wonmin intends his artworks to speak for themselves, engaging with their surroundings with a material clarity.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #8 SS 2210
2021

STONE, DYED STEEL

105 × 50 × 60 CM

41 17/50 × 19 69/100 × 23 31/50 IN

EDITION UNIQUE





At the heart of his Stone & Steel collection, is Wonmin's need to explore the full nature of his materials through their various changes of state as he works and processes them.

The stone base of these chairs is presented in three various states: its natural exterior, its cut and polished interior, and the elements that Wonmin has worked into its exterior crust, with carving techniques that add texture while retaining the stone's natural finish.

The natural beauty of each rock is augmented in the face of the human processes wrought against it by the artist.



WONMIN PARK

PLAIN CUTS STONE AND STEEL #1 SS 2206
2021

STONE, DYED STEEL
37 × 176 × 103 CM
14 28/50 × 69 14/50 × 40 11/20 IN
EDITION UNIQUE





Wonmin Park's Stone&Steel series reconciles the contrasting natures of primordial volcanic rock and modern industrial steel.

The steel plate of this low table is fitted around the cut stone with machine precision, epitomising the control of human manufacturing processes. Wonmin is intrigued however that each unique stone is the product of a geological accident millennia ago, created deep in the crust of the Earth. He brings this internal history the artwork, as evidence of forms and processes greater than himself and his art.



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