

ASIAN ART NEWS

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QUARTERLY

KIM BONG-TAE



**Urban China, Design Culture & The
Next Economy * Daniel Eskenazi ***
**Captain Baudin's Voyagers * Roby
Dwi Antono * Cui Ruzhou * Reviews**

"The Imaginary and The Mystical," *Asian Art News*, October 2016.

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THE UNITED STATES

The Imaginary And The Mystical

Friedman Benda will present *Water Meditation*, Byung Hoon Choi's second solo exhibition in New York, November 9 through December 17, 2016. For over 35 years, the Korean artist has built a unique oeuvre drawing on Zen Buddhist notions of introspection and the Taoist notion of balance. Known for his play between natural and fabricated elements—the rough beside the polished and old against new. Choi consistently uses the word “afterimage” in titling his work in reference to what he calls “an imaginary and mystical encounter with a previous world not yet experienced.” He returns with new work in traditional lacquer and basalt-centered on the theme of water.

This exploration of lacquer is a first for Choi. Inspired by his Korean heritage, he draws on traditional craftsmanship in East Asia, where lacquer techniques have been widely practiced for over 2,000 years. In his experiments, Choi mixes pigments into lacquer, especially apparent in the red undertones of *afterimage of beginning 016-459*. The polished lacquer reflects like liquid surfaces, a metaphysical ode to the exhibition's title. Still water fills a number of the larger pieces, a literal leitmotif.

The fountains represent a progression of Choi's work in basalt, growing vertically, resembling a scholar's rock or a naturally grown accumulation. Juxtaposing the resting water of the lacquer works, the fountains evoke the notion of a moving, living sculpture. Emphasizing the rougher parts of the stone, Choi is seen exploring the affinity of polished basalt as allegorical liquid surfaces.



Byung Hoon Choi, *afterimage of beginning 016-469*, 2016, basalt and black granite, 196 x 116 x 116 cm.



Byung Hoon Choi, *afterimage of beginning 015-450*, 2015, traditional Korean lacquer on red oak, 51 x 88 x 64 cm. Images: Courtesy of Friedman Benda and Byung Hoon Choi.

A pioneer of modern Korean craft, Byung Hoon Choi's (b.1952, Gangwon-do, Korea) work is both aesthetically pleasing and functional. He uses numerous natural materials such as wood, clay, granite, and natural stone to make minimal furniture that is seen as both object and art. Choi's work is held in numerous private and public collections. In 1989, he received the annual award from the Korean Craft Council. He is currently a professor at the College of Fine Arts at Hongik University, Seoul.

Friedman Benda presents works by designers who make historically significant work and are at the forefront of their practice. It is at 515 W.

26th St, New York, NY 10001.
Tel: (1-212) 239 8700. For further information, please visit www.friedmanbenda.com.

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