

Dong-Kyoon Nam is energetically developing a diverse body of work that addresses the complexities of selfhood in the second decade of the 21st century.

Born and raised in South Korea before moving to Canada in 2003, Nam has a unique viewpoint regarding the international flow of goods and resources, having experienced firsthand South Korea's large export economy as well as North America's insatiable desire for mass-produced goods. For him the spell is broken on what might previously have been an idealized view of a dominant North American culture. Attuned not only to the material products around him but also to their increasingly elaborate methods of presentation and display in the home, mega store and gallery, Nam's work offers us an insightful critique of our modern relationship with consumer goods.

In Canada, Nam has lived in Kingston, Montreal, Windsor, Victoria, and now Winnipeg, re-establishing a home with his wife and child each time he moves. He states, "My art stems from my everyday life and my regular routine: looking after my daughter, cooking, shopping for groceries and everyday household items." His work explores the complexities contained within ostensibly simple activities, considering how mundane chores such as washing, vacuuming and cooking are intertwined with emotions of laziness, depression, anxiety and confinement.

In his shopping trips to Walmart and Home Depot, Nam observes elaborate and inventive methods of displaying products: clocks stacked to the ceiling, bins of masking tape, shelves upon shelves dedicated to different lengths of extension

cords, highly designed boxes of fans, bins of light switches, and so on —ornamentations that, in Nam's words, "are very ordinary in a certain way, yet extraordinary in another."

By removing the products from their customary surroundings, thereby depriving them of their mobile positions in the market, Nam undertakes a deconstruction of each object's basic nature and appeal, revealing new and unexpected meanings. Through excessive stacking, wrapping and various forms of entanglement, Nam transforms vacuum cleaners, light switches and fans into unfamiliar forms, undermining the objects' conventional utility in a determined and persistent way. His work corporealizes and makes explicit the actual or perceived danger of electrical cords, moving fans or precariously placed objects, encouraging his audience to regard them as threatening and malevolent rather than useful or passive.

For this exhibition, Nam continues to examine the underlying nature of daily life, this time challenging our overlapping and parallel consumptive tendencies, both of art in galleries, and of household furnishings in megastores blurring the boundary between the private space of the home and the public space of the gallery.

With its vibrant physical and psychological tension, Nam's work addresses the anxiety and paranoia of mass production and consumption in our over-designed, hyper-commodified world.

Lynda Gammon is an artist and Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Victoria.

/ DONG-KYOON NAM

/ VACANT LIVING

/ November 21 - December 20, 2014
Installation



Dong-Kyoon Nam's artistic practice is founded on basic principles of formal structure, utility, repetition, and spatial experience in time. Using mundane, often overlooked manufactured product, his work is often site-specific and marked by architecture, while recurring linear and helical motifs imply continuity and endlessness.

Nam's sculptural installations often explore our general sense of paranoia regarding a potential breakdown in the glut of mass-produced items around us by juxtaposing, stacking, layering, and repeating objects to create assemblages of excess. For this exhibition, he relocates domestic elements from our interior environment on to the pedestal and into the frame, deliberately adopting the typical state of the gallery installation. Through this, Nam challenges and unsettles the notions of both the 'idealized home' and the 'abstract' gallery space, in an attempt to de-familiarize our customary gaze and behavioral patterns in both domestic interiors and public spaces.

Dong-Kyoon Nam currently lives and works in Winnipeg, Canada. He holds a MFA from the University of Victoria, BC in 2012. His previous exhibitions include *Vacant Circumstances: this and something else*, a solo exhibition at the Ace Art Inc, Winnipeg (2013), exhibitions include *An Entwined Present*, a two person exhibition at the Truck Contemporary Art Gallery, Calgary, MB (2014), and *WorkPLACE*, a group exhibition at the Open Space Gallery, Victoria (2014).

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