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Reviews
Do-Ho Suh
Lehmann Maupin Gallery New York
By Paul Laster

Do-Ho Suh hit the ground running with his New York artistic debut in 1997, and step-by-step, show-by-show, his work has grown in stature, institutional support and critical acclaim. The son of a famous painter in Korea, Suh journeyed to America in 1993 in search of his own artistic identity. Ten years later, he returned to Korea as a celebrated artist for a mid-career retrospective in Seoul. *Paratrooper-I*, the centerpiece of his most recent show in New York, was one of the new works he created for that important event. *Paratrooper-I* is a metaphoric self-portrait. A small stainless-steel paratrooper stands atop a concrete pedestal pulling in a deflated parachute. The long pink threads he tugs upon are connected to 3,000 signatures—including New York Times critic Roberta Smith and newly-appointed Whitney Museum curator Donna DeSalvo—that have been collected from personal journals and exhibition guest books, and then hand-stitched onto a linen chute that is suspended on the wall in an oval form. The lines do not touch each other until they are forcefully pulled through the paratrooper's hands, yet together they loosely form a singular cone of vibrant color, magically occupying space. On the opposite wall, Suh hung three small works on paper, rendered in the same simple style that he used when he first left home years ago. Using the color red to represent karma, he shows a man being blinded by the hands of a child perched on his shoulders in one work, and a muscular figure juggling the threads of life in another. The third drawing reveals a soldier falling from the sky with a multicolor parachute made from numerous shirts or uniform jackets. With an interest in "intangible, metaphorical and psychological" space, Suh's work is perhaps reflective of his own experiences. Dropped into a new terrain, Suh recognizes that he could not have survived without the support of countless others, and he remains eternally bound to this evolving history.