



Hanna Hur, *The Wheel*, 2019, colored pencil on silk, 48 × 36".

## Hanna Hur

BEL AMI

Hanna Hur's meticulously crafted geometric paintings and handwoven chain mail are generated through repetitive, often laborious processes essential to her spiritual practice. Making a work can become a ritual in itself, as with her recently completed chain-mail sculpture *The Gate iii*, to which she had been adding since 2014. The piece reveals its age through the contrast between dull and shiny clusters of metal links. Hur's two-dimensional works are elaborate as well—often so detailed that, when looking at them from afar, the eye glazes over subtle shifts in tone and mark-making, simplifying patterns and colors by grouping them into larger, solid forms. *The Gate iv*, 2019, is especially misleading from a distance. Three columns of red circles gently frame a central semitransparent green rectangle whose proportions mirror those of a door. The copper tone of the circles closely resemble that of Hur's chain-mail sculptures. This design appeared to be superimposed on a light-gray background, but closer inspection reveals the ground to be not solid but beige-and-charcoal

checkered and inlaid with lime-colored circles. *The Gate*, 2019, is similarly compositionally underpinned by a grid of small squares that alternate in color from tan to gray. Layered within and above them are again circles of varying sizes, some merely outlines and others shaded light blue. One noticeable disruption to the repeating patterns occurs where two of the larger rings overlap next to the only section of squares tinted red. Drifting below this block is the rough outline of a floating figure, colored lightly and semitransparently in the same red. These color-coordinated forms seem to carry a magnetic charge. The reclining silhouette's legs are outlined by thin strokes that delineate their wide, leaflike shape. The arms are disproportionately thin. One hangs from the body limply and ends in a point instead of a hand, resembling the long leg of an insect. Perhaps the red block above it is another incarnation of the titular gate, but the figure's posture suggests it is not in a rush to reach it.

These and many of Hur's other drawings in this exhibition at Bel Ami were conceived after a recent trip to Seoul, where she participated in a seven-hour ritual described as a journey to the mountains during which she appeased her ancestors. The depiction of this experience was most apparent in *The Wheel*, 2019. Wooden stretcher bars create a grid of four quadrants visible through the lightly applied colored pencil on transparent silk. Four fluid, faceless figures hover at the cardinal points around the center of the work, which is marked by a cluster of nine circles. Behind them, large planes of color indicate a room, but the shallow bodies are not grounded within its volume. Their forms seem to defy gravity, suggesting movements that are echoed by green, glowing lines swirling behind what could be the floor and two opposing walls. The body closest to the floor is rendered in a neon, alien green and rests in a position similar to that of the figure in *The Gate*. It is the only body in the composition that looks relaxed or passive. The others seem more active—two appear to be standing with their heads slumped forward, shoulders hunched, conjuring something with their delicate hands; the fourth's lengthy arms extend in a wise arc to surround its squatting body. Oriented toward the circles, their postures seem reverent.

The works that contained these ambiguous and unidentifiable spirits (or, perhaps, ancestors) were the most intriguing components of the exhibition. In some of the drawings, the figures were cloaked, their faces hidden by hoods; elsewhere, they were visible only from behind. They left the viewer wondering what realms they came from, and where they might lead us.

—[Erica Rawles](#)

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