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Do-Ho Suh
Serpentine Gallery, London
By Chloe Kinsman

Those who saw Do-Ho Suh's *Floor* (1997-2000) last year at the Venice Biennale will already have experienced this work's ability to effectively transform its viewer into a clumsy-footed Gulliver. Stepping our onto his platform, it takes a moment, and a shift of perspective, to realize that the surface underfoot, which initially resembles mottled pink granite, is braced by thousands of tiny plastic figures, their palms valiantly pressed against glass panels. If the minimalist multiple emptied meaning to make way for the viewer, Suh uses repetition here to broach the relationship of the individual to the collective. The effectiveness of this dynamic is partly due to the impressive exactitude of Suh's craft, which allows the works to be seen initially as a coherent whole. *Some One* (2001), a coat of silver armor rising from the floor like a headless samurai terminator, is, on closer inspection, constructed from thousands of overlapping military dog tags. As disciplined as the works' fabrication may have been, their message remains engagingly open-ended. Suh's warrior speaks of both individual sacrifice and impressive military might, while *Floor* may be interpreted equally as paean to the downtrodden masses or a celebration of the collective.

If these works are most powerful in their initial viewing, Suh's replicas of domestic environments in stitched silk or nylon have an haunting presence; one parts company with them reluctantly, craving a return visit. A replica of a room from the artist's parents' house in Korea was conceived as a home away from home to counter and communicate the dislocation symptomatic of a nomadic lifestyle. Suspended from the ceiling high above viewers' heads, this architectural second skin functions as a paradoxically delicate safe house or parachute. The tactile interior of his New York studio apartment comes complete with gently sagging door handles and transparent, immaculately crafted light switches. Suh's achievement is most explicit in these environments, which go beyond an illustration of notions of site-specificity or displacement to create vivid experiences, in this instance the uncanny effect of being in two places at once.