Home is everywhere and nowhere. . . . When I was growing up in my home in Korea, I never thought about it twice . . . After I left . . . home started to exist as an issue . . . and started to occupy me.

—Do Ho Suh, 2001

Do Ho Suh’s art invites us to enter his home and private world. With colorful, diaphanous fabric, Suh creates intricately detailed, life-size re-creations of places he has lived from cities around the world. His work is intimate and expansive, exploring the character of space, the persistence of memory, and the global nature of contemporary identity.

Suh considers his work a “suitcase home”—a collection of light and portable structures that can be erected at any time, in any place. His desire to capture his past and forge a connection between the places he’s left and the life he leads today stems from his own history of migration. Born in Korea in 1962, Suh moved to the United States at the age of twenty-nine and currently spends his time between New York, London, and Seoul. Although at different times in his life he has been seen as Korean, American, and European, ultimately he exists between cultures, altering his perspective with each home. The work he makes is an attempt to reckon with community, tradition, and human experience within his evolving sense of identity.

Do Ho Suh: Almost Home presents a sequence of spaces and objects from the artist’s previous homes. Intended to be seen up close, by walking in and around them, they are at once ghostly—as if a manifestation of a memory—and grounded in specific physicality. Minute details, such as the height of a ceiling, the shape of a doorknob, and the chipped edge of a door, emerge as the portals through which we come to know a place. Taken together, the collected and scattered bits and pieces of the artist’s life reveal the way space becomes a part of us, and we become a part of it.

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**Hubs**
Do Ho Suh refers to his large fabric sculptures of hallways, corridors, and passageways as Hubs. The Hubs here represent spaces from three of his previous homes, each made in a different color. Suh’s apartment in New York, where he lived from 1997 to 2016, is pink; the corridor from his 2002 Berlin home is green; and the hallway from his childhood home in Seoul where he lived with his family until 1982 is blue. Although the Hubs represent particular places, identifiable through their own worn doors and narrow stairwells, they embody structures easily recognizable to anyone in nearly any place. As spaces of transition, they are familiar and alien, granting entry into someone else’s private world and providing passage into a different time and place.

**Specimens**
Hanging on the wall, Suh’s Specimens represent objects, appliances, and architectural details from his past homes using the same translucent material as the Hubs. Many of the Specimens in this exhibition, including the pink steam radiator from New York and the collection of ornate green door handles and hinges from Berlin, are from the same places represented by the Hubs; others, such as the bright orange fire extinguisher from London, come from his other previous residences. The act of recreating his surroundings in such intricate detail is part of Suh’s quest to live in the presence of his memories, and to construct a—knowingly impossible—perfect version of home.

**Do Ho Suh’s Materials**
Suh’s collapsible fabric architecture and object-based Specimens are designed to become a “suitcase home” that he can carry with him and resurrect anywhere. The translucent polyester fabric he works with is used in traditional Korean summer wear. He chose the material because “it was cheap and readily available,” and he did not want “to give too much value to the fabric itself.” His craftsmanship, however, represents years of study with Korean artisans, who taught Suh the intricate stitching that allows him to create his packable structures. Drawing from these traditional Korean techniques as well as advanced 3-D modeling technology, Suh’s works join ideas of old and new within their very substance.

**My Homes – 2**
2012
pencil and colored pencil on paper
Collection of the artist
The phrase “my home” conjures a particular, personal place. However, the title of this drawing is expressly multiple, and home is not pictured as a single residence but instead as a series of spaces meant to be travelled through. This idea is central to how Do Ho Suh understands his life, and mimics his own journey from Korea to the United States and Europe.

In Suh’s eyes, home is an endless passageway with no fixed destination. Each past home exists alongside the next, and all retain a distinct—if ethereal—presence.
My Homes
2014
thread embedded in cotton paper
Collection of the artist
When he first moved to New York, Do Ho Suh found himself longing for the familiar surroundings of his childhood home in Seoul. He recalled the Korean expression “walk the house,” referring to the traditional practice of disassembling one’s home and bringing it with you to a new place. The experience inspired him to begin recreating places he has lived in fabric—reinventing them as moveable, wandering homes.

Here Suh pictures houses quite literally walking, as well as being dragged and parachuted through space. On the move and everywhere at once, the houses have lives of their own yet are inextricably entwined with the human form. For Suh, the memory of his past homes is akin to a physical presence that he carries with him across continents and over decades.

Blueprint
2013
thread embedded in cotton paper
Collection of the artist
Blueprint is a visceral portrait of private life within a home. With thread embedded in handmade paper, Suh illustrates the facade of the three-story New York townhouse that he called home for many years. A lone figure stands in a writhing sea of scarlet thread in its shadow, undercutting the assumed order promised by the architectural structure.

The drawing contradicts its title; while a blueprint is used to render an exact plan of a building, Suh’s drawing breaks down its precision by showing the uncontainable feelings behind a home’s constructed walls. Whipping around the figure and through the doors and windows of the facade, the waves of thread evoke the loneliness, fragility, and chaos within. In this scene, Suh reveals the emotional stakes at the heart of his reconstructed homes.