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TEXTE //
JIHEE KIM

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY JIHEE KIM

Jihee Kim (born in 1983) currently lives and works in Seoul. Kim's work usually focuses on lifting the boundaries of the customary concepts in the society that surround people and seeking the possibility of new discourses in-between. She attended Dongguk University in Seoul, and received her MA and BA in Western Paintings, and her MFA in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths College, University of London and she got her Doctor of Fine Art degree in Ewha Womans University in Seoul. Kim has recently solo-exhibited at ThisWeekendRoom, Seoul (2022), Soorim Cultural Foundation Art Centre, Seoul (2021), Gallery SoSo, Paju (2019), out_sight, Seoul (2018), Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul (2018), Songeun Art Cube, Seoul (2017), and participated in several group exhibitions, including SOMA I Seoul Olympic Museum of Art, Seoul (2021), Tokyo Arts and Space Hongo, Tokyo (2020), OCI Museum of Art, Seoul (2019), Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul (2019), Songeun Art Space, Seoul (2018), Suwon iPark Museum of Art, Suwon (2017), Taipei Artist Village (2016), Asia Art Centre Taipei I + II (2016). Her artworks are part of public collections and awarded the *15th Kumho Young Artist Prize*, and the *Wardens Purchase Prize* from Goldsmiths College.

GENERAL WORK JIHEE KIM

In my work, I propose to think about replacing the fixed, unchanging and stereotyped considerations about the body offered by society and history with a fluid, evolutionary or even liquid mentality, this mentality being the central part of my work. I express this fluid state of the body by pouring shapes on the canvas with viscous liquid. In my painting, the forms of the images come from the chaos created by dislocation and destruction. However the colors that cover the cracked forms, ensure a new unity. Here, the colors unify the scattered forms, and connect them visually and encompass everything. The first impression that my painting is like a comedy thanks to the bright and clear colors. Nevertheless, at the same time, the spectator, because of the grotesque of unusual forms, finds himself in front of tragic feelings like sadness and fear, behind the bright colors, this constitutes in my opinion an unlikely force of my practice.

Jihee Kim

BOOK DRAWING PROJECT
TEXT BY JIHEE KIM

The language barrier I had experienced, back when I was studying abroad in the UK, allowed me to reflect on the use of the 'objet' of a book, not as a medium for conveying knowledge, but as a tool for art. The *Book Drawing Project* began with me translating incomprehensible signifiers into images, and was hence completed by allowing the drawings birthed from my intimate trips down memory lane to invade and enshroud the signifiers that lay across the pages of the books. By erasing and eradicating the language of reason, embodied by the rigid signifiers set up by history and culture, with my language of emotion, embodied through my drawings, I was thus able to bring out my own identity.

The books that I used as material for my drawings were books that were going to be discarded, and were donated from libraries and anonymous donors across London, Seoul, Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Tokyo. These dying books, that had reached the end of their original service, had come into my possession as a kind gesture from citizens across the world, and in my hands their lives are prolonged with a new purpose as a work of art. In this way, by virtue of the books acting as a platform, we draw for ourselves a new topographic map based on a relationship of 'Citizen - Book Author - Artist', and we thus form new relations with each other, across our different cities and our different languages.

Jihee Kim

COVERED IMAGES; STRANGE BODIES
TEXTE BY JIHEE KIM

In my drawings, bodily elements appear not in their entirety but as amorphous masses of severed, damaged, altered and distorted bodies. Questioning the definition of the perfect body that is fed into our consciousness, I examine images of physical distortion in search of an answer to the question: Why should we always yield before beautiful bodies? By presenting such images, I cast doubt upon the longing for “perfect beauty” and the definition of the heroic, perfect body that has reigned supreme in society from Ancient Greece until today. My works propose adopting a kind of fluid and changeable ‘liquid thought’ in order to reconsider the fixed and sclerotic perception of the body that society and history present to us; this liquid thought constitutes a core part of my work. I express this fluid view of the body through forms of sticky bodily fluids splashed across my entire canvases. The injured, bleeding tigers, bleeding crotches, moving octopuses leaving soft trails, severed hands and feet, laser-shooting eyes and bullet-holed faces in my works are closely entangled, oozing stickily across the walls.

The forms of images in my drawings are a mess of dissolution and destruction. But the colors covering the works bring a new unity to the ruptured forms. Here, colors visually connect the split forms, joining the body drawings into a whole. By coincidence, the two English words “carnival” and “cannibal” are spelled and pronounced the same in Korean; these two meanings hover together in my works, creating a sense of tension. The bright colors evoke the ambience of a carnival, while the dismembered body parts hint at the cruelty of cannibalism. With their bright colors, my works give a first impression of comedy. At the same time, however, the strange bodily forms bring viewers a sense of tragedy as they come face to face with the fear and horror behind the color.

Jihee Kim

HANDS DO, IMAGES PLAY, COLORS COVER AND WORDS ARE SILENT.
FOCUSING <WHEN BLOOD AND FLESH COVER YOU 1~10> SERIES
ARTICLE BY HYOSHIL YANG

In an intricate canvas, women without a neck or lower body and hands cut out from a wrist caught our eyes. Jihee Kim's works which are often mistaken as printmaking are accurate and repetitive as if they all were editions printed from the "original". Kim does not contrast subjective and personal seeing with collective and social ones, nor does she put a self-conscious perspective at the forefront to replace the former with the latter. Her images painted on Arches papers using gouache were perfectly drawn as if they were created by machines and easily understood as if the images were meant for social and collective exchanges. Kim does not use an aesthetic (modifying) process to edit collective images or symbols. The contoured female images and symbols appear to be easy, making you feel that you have seen them before, but in fact, these are unique "figures" that reveal Kim's own style, and "subjective" images, pretending they are just a deindividualized symbol. Women-faces in Kim's works are standards and quintessence of "beauties" who look all blank, pretending not to notice but fully aware that they are seen by others. Sometimes, they mimic female images that are exchanged in a patriarchal society, reminding us of pictures that are shown in front of plastic surgery clinics and their advertisements. On Kim's canvas, symbols of women are entangled with hands cut off from wrists in disarray. And these symbols, being emptied while painted, represent the emptiness of "familiar" women who give an impression we have seen them in movies, deprived of their own face impression-desire and objected because they are forced to be a subject of desire for all. Symbols that become vacant while painted represent the status of women whose face-desire have been deprived because they were forced to be a subject of desire thereby becoming a mere subject and empty. However, faces drawn on a flat surface, and the cross section of the severed hands with all kinds of postures still vaguely reflect a three-dimensional volume and corporeality of bodies. If they were expressionism or hyperrealism drawings that deliver illusory senses of the real bodies, viewers would react with subtle unpleasantness, but if viewers flinch at the factuality sneakily added to the edge of symbols-images, we will call it overreacting. Dissected parts bleed blue and yellow blood. Before disguise, camouflage, and a straight face presented by Kim, a master of "pretending", emotions that tried to appear will draw back or be kept in ambiguity, eventually. Images in her paintings which have universal forms we all know and can use, lying somewhere between drawings and shallow images, not being overly nor deeply painted, include surpluses, or remains that wish to be ignored or pretend not to be seen even after being already seen, as an extra. Looking into these thick and firm hands that make continual appearances here and there on her canvas will lead you to a conclusion that these are weird hands that require interpretation.

The severed hands do not "speak", but "do". A visage is often the center of the human form and hands, and feet are treated and painted as supplements to faces, or extremities of the body. As if Kim wanted to show otherwise, the hands in her works reveal the unique character of self-regulating, moving "locality" without central control. The expression that I said earlier that "the severed hands do not speak but do", is a conclusion I have reached after a long observation, seeing of these hands that are bizarre but unique. These hands are a body figure as moment-immersion rather than direction-function. Although the hands bring déjà vu, they clutch a knife or rose and they are also depicted in several momentary shots showing a hand that grasps a match and a burnt one, and some are spread or clenched hand are juxtaposed with a bulging bicep, or they appear as two straight arms. Hands do not replace faces nor are they included as a part of the face. Independent hands that do not require a face to exist carry on their roles. The hand is placed side-by-side with the images of females that continuously appear on canvas, but still, we cannot say it is a hand/hands of men or women, or even they can be considered as that of men, as they violate the gender customs when it comes to their sizes and strength. The hands are not pretty but strong, enough to break anything when being clasped, and show dedication that they obviously won't comprise for their own desires. All the large and firm hands that are in parallel with typical femininity exist as situation, or the present, going beyond the gender convention and resist the typicality of exchangeable social symbols. Juxtaposition of females, as an abstract symbol without desires and hands that are devoted only to themselves right here-now naturally invites tensions to the canvas.

Jihee Kim explained the representative images in her works as below:

"The slashed faces are the question on why we surrender to a beautiful façade. The body parts that seemingly shed body fluids are a testimonial statement that something that we do not consider beautiful can come out even from the body parts that are already succumbed to beauty. Hands are on a different level. I personally believe that they speak volumes about a personal identity following the face. That's why I put an emphasis on the impression of hands. A hand is one of the body parts that I focus on."

To overturn disposable female images, she chooses to indiscriminately possess or pretends to possess such “beautiful” images rather than suggesting positive and active female figures, thereby opening a possibility for (mis)interpretation of the painting-components. Introduction of genderless hands that defy gender convention provides a logic within the canvas that they belong to a female, but they are deemed to be seen as that of male when viewers encounter them. This presentation induces flexibility between female-face and part-body. When Kim said that hands represent “personal identities” and she tries to capture impressions of hands, she has connected non-binary, gender-neutral, identity-collapsed “real hands” that do not belong to male nor female, with identities thereby escaping from both patriarchal conventions and new norms in images of feminism. As we know, positive female images in feminism do not show a stark difference from “well-received” female images in patriarchy. This is also why many female (or feminism) visual artists had given up on their strategy of visibility since they had already enlightened and realized the fact that no matter how hard they try to suggest new female images, they cannot go beyond, or escape from the already objectified female image of now. Kim’s juxtaposition of “their” female images with her own ones is a part of her unique artistic composition to focus on “another direction”, not the reactive direction that suggests positive female images, a gap that a slip between the two occurs, confusion or hybrid, or rather, to visualize them. For Kim who is aware of the slip, it is not a trap that she sets for ignorant viewers. Rather, it is a bet that the playful artist proposes to viewers who take a peep, therefore it appears “seductive”. As you may already know, artists are driven by desire and negotiate between the desire and a container-which can be big or small, broken, bottomless, or even it is not a container at all-that can hold their desire. Kim said hands that move ahead to the head, slashed hands that do not serve as extremities of the body but exist only as joints or knuckles, and hands that become thick and firm due to jolly labor are a personal (or her own?) identity. As she spoke in the third person, not in the first, the non-binary hands-identity of her who conceals her own desires, and the binary world of faces-identity are presented side by side. As the part-signifier of desire represented as moments-shots, hands emerge from the empty world of images. While the hands immerse themselves solely in the now-present time, not considering (or maybe without having time to consider) the possibilities that they could be possessed or used for representational interpretation that rules the typicality of their own resistance and violation, they appear here and there in her works. If her work-canvas were to be a place or a temporary “square” allowed by the authorities, we could even call the part-body actions that fill the place a “political” revelation. Even though the hands seem to be those of laborers, the action done by these hands is barely detected with “eyes” which read and make a judgment since it is not grandiose. Kim even attached her “doing hands” to objectified/beautiful women. During this process, a slip that the binary dichotomy such as flatness-volume, symbol-corporeality, and concept-performance becomes non-binary, constantly occurs.

Her method of filling relatively big canvases with drawings from massively replicated paintings and precisely drawn design like-images, is free association. The way of usually starting from the right to the left and moving from one image that first comes to her mind to the next one is proceeded in cooperation with the hands that transcribe their memories and the part-image of them, without knowing the entirety, just like the slashed hands focus on what they are doing now. For example, when Kim elaborates on how the images in her book drawings have appeared, she used the words that captured her eyes from the pages of an open book such as “mother” opened up a gate of “travel to memories” and told us her free association started from “Hawaii that mom and I visited together, to a shell necklace that I saw in Hawaii, to my grandmother who loved the necklace, and finally arrived at the dress that her grandmother loved to wear. The word, “mother” is a symbol, also an easy typicality that Kim read in “the flatness” – just like female images.

Two women and a sunny place appear, and female accessories and clothes provide a sort of “interior” to this random association game. As clothes that were loved by a woman “beloved” more than a mother, are placed on the canvas, to be more specific, the sentence with a word, mother, a fear of unknown contents-characters is subdued as a part-image of good memories. This analysis may provide intellectual interpretation on a visual canvas but does not deliver rhythm nor happiness residing on canvas (we might start to ask what critic is...). In her work <Travel to memories>, she attached a relatively big paper (130x242cm) on the wall in her studio, drew images-symbols, or signifiers that came to her mind first, and then let her hands follow the automatic, unconscious chains of the signifiers. In other words, it is Kim’s subjective way of work to allow herself to be used by the images that come out and are replaced, as a drawer or a pipe, or some kinds of a repository. Where do these faceless, headless hands of Kim belong? In other words, where do the hands that can be drawn or played with without supervision because they do not have a face, or a head belong? Do they belong to Kim? Do these paintings belong to Jihee Kim? Unconscious desires that move ahead to her (or the faces?) intention, coordination/negotiation of hands, lightness on the playful canvas, and composition of two-dimensional images are a one-off structure like shots starting from the right to the left in an orderly manner, but still remaining chaotic, just like scattered seeds or petal patterns. At a first glance, it may appear a woodcut print edition. However, if you closely looked into them, each work that has nothing in common, and untitled components are a series of her works, and repetition and difference of her works exhibited in many places so far. A dress flutters when worn but can be flat when thrown. It could also fly for a brief second when thrown, and sometimes, it pretends to be a flower showing off its fancy colors. That’s why the dress is placed at metaphorically the same dimension as butterflies, birds,

flowers (rose), balloons, dots, and various sizes of circles. Her canvas is also a trail to remind us of Jacques Lacan's belief: "The unconscious is structured like a language".

While dismantling conceptual totality, the artist reserves corporeality of the body at the same time and this way of her work, as I mentioned earlier, is presented by visualizing slashed body parts and female faces as symbols while leaving room for three-dimensional visualization. As quoted above, while crossing among beautifully drawn lines, body fluids that fill the body as a shell are visualized by leaning on the property of paints, the canvas gets dirty, and the corporeality earns a haptic characteristic. If I may use her own words, the body fluid is "not something we think beautiful". Beautiful shells (such as peels and dresses) and ugly contents coexist on a single canvas as well. The body fluids are closely related to and replaced with many things such as an octopus that makes a trace with goop, a mouse which is synonymous with germs, disgusting animals, a snake that is often used as a metaphor of a seductive and destructive woman, slippery intestines, and eyeballs. The "remaining" quality of paints that defiles a clean, well-drawn canvas, or rather, supplements it assumes full charge of visualization of the body fluid. As you may all know, body fluids are a part of our body and a fundamental that makes a body as it is. However, as they are also close associations of death, stink, germs, and contamination, they, part of us, become others as soon as they appear. Kim who strives to find certain survival and negotiation within the world of images, rather than providing criticism, adds the hands (+) first and body fluids (+) later onto her canvas. It is maybe because she tries to give back corporeality to the world at least using the parts-images. Spraying and dropping paints on her well-made drawings and designs, thereby adding ugliness might stem from her exceptional enthusiasm to translate the balance, the truth of our lives. The co-existence of the beauty and ugly may hamper cleanliness but that is also a lively scene and a part of our real lives which cannot be distinguished by the dichotomy between good and bad. Nahyung Kim, a director of this exhibition and long-time supporter of Kim emphasized that her work is "a chunk of messy unconsciousness", or "a layer between images and the body where boundless stories lively exist". Maybe my review is just a longer version of what the director had said so that I can confront and play with it. The artist explained her dirty, untidy, and messy canvases of her own with the words that "art is bound to be layers of metaphor". She added art is not a plan, accumulation, nor message. It is images-riddles, autonomous rhythms or it can even be life when we take a close look.

However/Therefore, slashed feet – a foot wearing an unmatching school shoe, a pile of feet, a severed foot of a young girl who collapsed in a pool of blue blood on the left side of a woman fully stretching her hands but is depicted only by her school shoe– and a hand tightly holding a knife imply some tragedies or incidents that cannot be invited as artistic play, while transcending ongoing intrinsic interpretation. Even though they sit together in the play of metaphor and metonymy and are also a part of the play of drawings and colors, the slashed feet distinctively a certain violence or events that occurred in a more specific and circumstantial way. Like the heavy-weighted hands on the canvas that seem like a light play, the scenes of violence and sorrow nudged into an artistic composition are painted together with a black balloon with a crying face, smiling teeth, or smiling (derisive) doodles that seem to be drawn by kids on the wall, as if they should not be understood with the emotions that we have when we are actually encountered those scenes and they need a certain counterweight.

Jihee Kim said, "I am dealing with a tragedy, but in fact, it is a tragicomedy." As a tragedy is represented like a scene in tragicomedy, its interpretation become neutralized, making viewers cannot laugh nor cry. It is diluted and weakened by the Kim's perspective that the truth of life is non-binary, and it is lying somewhere in between. We cannot undo the tragedy. However, the hands that can move ahead to the eyes, by making them cross-eyed and hijacking their ability to see, re-locate us to the "truth" of life, which is a tragicomedy. Hands are capable of doing so. Strong hands can point out/cover such things, not with words but with actions. Art is not part of reality. Nor is it expansion or repetition. Rather, it is an exit from the reality. Art is not talking about reality per se. It is an assumption and a tool to re-write, defile, and multiply the reality. Art adds complexity and duplexity. Michel Foucault[uses the word "Eventualization" to describe such execution.

"Eventualization means rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal, and necessary. In this sense, one is indeed affecting a sort of multiplication or pluralization of causes. As a way of lightening the weight of causality, "eventualization" thus works by constructing around the singular event analyzed as process a "polygon" or, rather, "polyhedron" of intelligibility, the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite. This operation thus leads to an increasing polymorphism as the analysis progresses." (Foucault, 226-227)

Delivering events with verisimilitude, is not eventualization. Eventualization is a movement to approach the corporeality of events that cannot be read or seen with a single eye. While doing so, many eyeballs, witnesses, and perspectives that observe the slashed body parts remained then and there, disturb, and mess up the events. We could say that

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this is the optimism of the one who can transform a tragedy into something enjoyable. "The act" of transforming a tragedy into a tragicomedy is jouissance of Kim, an artist-subject, an artistic subject, and a female subject whose sign of genders is blurred. The "layers of metaphor" or "messy canvases" are one way to translate the truth of life and a gerund, thereby approaching closer to eventualization in a metaphorical way.

Hyoshil Yang (art critics)

AN ARTIST'S DIARY SATURATED WITH DEFIANT GESTURE
TEXT BY SUNGWOO KIM

Eroticism, sexuality, visual expressions of secret sexual desire. These are some terms to describe Jihee Kim's works of art. The first impression on encountering her works is generally summed up in two ways: provocative pictures made up of sexual images and a feminist point of view. These reactions to her work point to its source as Kim expresses her struggle against socio-cultural repression and her desire against taboo. Those coercions are presumably unavoidable to her as a woman in specific society. However, she attempts to extend beyond the specific level of female sexual resistance; her art practice takes universal meaning in the light of visualisation of the act to defend oneself and one's identity as an individual. In other words, her work is a psychological vehicle to overcome reality that is too difficult to bear and, by extension, an act of resistance itself against uncompromisable surroundings. This work appears as a visual diary which is written in Kim's idiosyncratic language, documenting deviation from everyday life what can be possible only in her imagination. Thus, this visual diary is full of her personal experiences, subjective interpretations thereof, and wicked gestures regarding the deviant imagination she cannot easily reveal to the outside world; this possibly as a result of her cultural background as a Korean woman forced by social constraints to occupy a virtuous role. However, this rather maximise Kim's imagination and enable her visual expression to be more appealing.

Breaking the boundaries

In terms of being a personal and internal documentation of daily life, a diary operates as a powerful analogy for Kim's work which records her imaginations from daily experiences in her own visual language. However, her works carry ambivalence in terms of what they simultaneously expose in public domain, while being based and hidden still in the private one. Within Kim's work in fact, the boundary between 'private' and 'public' is erased, and, through visualisation, private documentation turns into something which demands public viewing and interaction. For her, 'boundary' is an enforced frame constructed by an external hand, a subject to be removed, and a factor which interrupts the source of her works 'imagination'. In a series of book drawings, "Communication Model", she tries to traverse the boundary between 'public' and 'private'; public books from libraries are adapted into private objects decorated with her personal memories and fantasies, and these are then exhibited to the public again in the gallery space. On the other hand, in her wall drawing, "Shhh, Don't tell mom", consisting of fragmented images, the physical frame such as drawing papers or even an exhibition space become meaningless. Every image freely cuts across the given frames and intertwines with the others, like they are floating in space. These organic drawings, and this space of blurred physical boundaries, turns into a visual space saturated with the lines and colours of her fantasies.

Symbolic Images, Fetish Object

Actual space and time filled with gestures of the artist's fantasy, this is a physical space where infinite imagination multiplies. The exhibition space is ornamented with symbolic signs. For Kim, a variety of symbols such as hair, hand gestures and sexual images represent her rebellious gesture and defense mechanism against repressive reality. The repetitive images of 'long and beautiful' hair in the series "Show me your Love" are the metaphor of ideal female figures, at the same time implying these could hardly be free from the male-gaze of social production systems. Her concern about how fragmentary and superficial our perception is, in terms of images of women within social notion, is embodied into these hair images. And they exist as fetish objects to resolve the tension between the images Kim dreams of and those which are socially demanded.

As previously mentioned, the boundaries of existing physical and socio-cultural frames are rendered ambiguous in Kim's work. The frames of the exhibition space, the books from libraries and the drawing papers are no longer there only to physically accommodate her works of art. They are where her fantasy floats by, between reality and imagination. Within them, each of her drawings could be regarded not separately, but as a whole. They make up an artist's fantasy in unison, interweaving organically with each other and with spaces surrounding them. On this note, Kim's work is personal fantasy embodied by symbols and signs. And this is naturally initiated from an ontological question on the basis of artistic contemplation towards reality - as not only individuation but also a member of the society prior to artist. Consequently, what she visually materialises is the document in regard to anxiety of vulnerable human existence, which cannot be articulated by other languages.

Sungwoo Kim (curator)

TEXT BY MYUNGJI BAE

A large majority of the main characters represented in Kim Ji Hee's paintings are not only the images of women, but women with the heads of horses. The almost obsessive repetitive images of the zebras on top of women's bodies are emblematic of sexual desire in reference to the artist herself.

Horses in the context of art history have been signified as the symbols of sexuality. They are a metaphor of animal nature and brutality, and sometimes as the scion of mysteriousness and sacredness, especially from post-renaissance era to the 20th century. The therianthropic image is an amalgamation of human and animal portrayed to speak for humans' animal-like attributes against rationalism, logic, and wisdom. It is true that the therianthropic creature represents a personality that implicates lust and eroticism, as Femme Fatale that intends the traits of the power of temptation and destruction, and as means of hedonism and barbarity like seen in the images of a Centaur or Satyr, and sometimes the Sphinx or Minotaur.

The therianthropic creature's animal sign, which is empty of clear category and border between the human and an animal, is the anxious sign of vulnerable human existence between the perpendicular rationalism and parallel animal nature. Although Kim's images of Horse-headed women have the primary colored pop-art like nuance, the reason why they recall unknown anxiety is probably because they are an obscure synthesis that crosses the borders and disrupts identity and system as well as class and order.

Kim's forming of the characters that amalgamate the horse-heads and the female bodies that reveal the explicit femininity grasps the meanings within the significance of such historical context that therianthropic creatures have brought. The synthesis of horse-women simultaneously makes it unable to disregard the contemporary context while adhering to the historical coherence, because it is a social subject matter about the hedonism of women. The artist has stated the following: "I wanted to be free of the self who, because of the social atmosphere for a Korean woman, is forbidden to reveal desire and urge." The proposal of her female-self, about sexual necessity that has been prohibited under the names of fathers, was carved into the anterior images of zebras and her images of horse-women observe the female gaze. Her paintings bear the ambivalence of the gazes simultaneously; they do not exclude the male-gaze of production system and does not diverge completely from the erotic glare that reminds the codes of mainstream culture.

For the artist, the head of a zebra is a mask that she hides her figure behind. A mask plays the role of shield that blocks another person's gaze and isolates personal expression. The artist who became free behind the safeguard of the zebra mask is able to execute the impossible, gutsy deviation that camouflages the threats of social glare. Therefore, the core of the artist behind the mask does not disappear or collapse; it rather reinforces, and in that event, Kim's image of Horse-headed femininity is a sort of a self-portrait.

Both the painter and the model for a self-portrait are the artist herself, and the subject of drawing and the one that draws are identical. A self-portrait is the artistic sign that archives the effect of the artist's psychological transition, and always infused is the artist's desire. Kim's horse-woman, which integrates personal desire and manifests an obscure identity that is not ensnared by the boundaries of social standard, is itself her self-portrait, her place of combat, and the representation of an era that realizes mixed opinions and crossing confines.

Myungji Bae (curator at Koreana Museum)

SIGNS UNDER SKIN
TEXT BY SANGJIN KIM

She has been playing a subtle game with her memories. The artist calls this process 'a private game that is triggered every moment'. According to her statement, it started from a series of unintended misuse of narratives. Due to her unfamiliarity with the foreign language during her study in the UK, words on pages of books often shifted into signs of alien shapes and contexts, which in turn provoked random memories that were then captured by Kim to be drawn over the letters. These random memories, crash landing over the orderly narratives of the literary signs, do not pay attention to the narrative of the book; so the chain of meanings that were meant to explain everything cannot hook on the arriving memories but keep sliding away. In *A Night is Feeling* (2017) and *Signs under skin* (2018) series, she extends the operation range of the misinterpretation from a book as a system of a narrative to the reality, another system of narratives. She continues to fetch those alien things and to document them.

She does not talk much about body (bodies) in private nor in her works. However, these alien things are all bodies after all. A silent celebration of bodies. Cut hand, chopped foot, dangle heads, people, a dog, a fish, and secretion. Secretion is everywhere. In fact, in her writings and in her words, stories about bodies are absent. A name called memory is the only thing that is found there. However these memories are clearly bound to bodies. Fragmented bodies. Empty bodies. Bodies that can be cut and pasted. Self-injuring bodies. Blank bodies pretending to be alright. People without expressions. The things with colours (the things that are not empty) which drain, permeate, and ooze all over inside and out of the cut bodies. Bodily fluids. Blood. Colour. Breast milk. Alien crushed juice. Tears. Things that just flow. The things that fill up the empty spaces Kim has left.

Whether the bodies are remembered or imagined doesn't seem very important. Our reason might desire to verify the memory, but an embellished memory and an imagination built on a memory stand on the other sides of a very thin (obscure) line, therefore making it very difficult to identify if the triggered images originate from her memory or from her instant imagination. And because even an extreme imagination cannot exist on a pure blank paper with no memory, her images must have fled from her time deeply sedimented. Often we don't understand the sudden emergence of unexpected memories. We only know that the memories have arrived, and so does Jihee Kim. However Kim constantly allows the impulse that is not wholly hers: and it is important that she, unlike most of us, listens to the drive of her memories.

The bodies have fled from the cave of her memory, ran beyond the coordination of reality; and are now marching up to the stage. The topics of the stage are as follows. Nightmare - the ambiguous contour that the pieces of memories build up eventually. And tragedy - the topic only capable under trivial, meticulous, and tranquil control. The stage is directed as follows. Keep calm so nobody notices. Be silent. Sing only in whispers. Eros over all these bodies - the empty bodies that let the warmth permeate all over. Finally the grand theme of the stage - the protagonist. The joy of her rolling and snatching the marbles called tragedy. The game she plays with her eyes closed. The pleasant colours flooding on the mucus. The bodies obsessively displayed according to her order of her game. Signs under skins are suddenly all over the screen.

Memory is an essential mechanism for everyone in sustaining life. Recalling things to do every morning, or remembering the 'I' who had lived the time of yesterday for granted, is a ritual repeated again and again because we cannot live the ceaselessly arriving moments of today with nothing to hold on to. Memory is always fictitious, but we have no choice. Memories just arrive. Surprising is that we are oblivion to the fact that the ritual of remembering is being repeated. Perhaps we, who return from the realm of no memory every morning, might be mere replicas of our untrustworthy and withering memories. If so, the accidental memories of these bodies that occupy Kim every moment, and the capillary memories of tragedies among them, could be simply returning as such. As life returns every morning, the memories without memories are returning as such.

Sangjin Kim (director of the art center out_sight, Seoul, South Korea)
Translated in English by Jinho Lim

JIHEE KIM'S EXHIBITION, RISING HANDS, FLOWING BLOSSOM
TEXT BY GAHYUN LEE

Jihee Kim's exhibition, *Rising Hands, Flowing Blossom*, begins by reading the title with heart and out loud. With reading the title, audiences spontaneously conjure up certain images-which could be a kind of organized scenes, multiple images that are naturally overlapped, or a cluster of images occurring consecutively at a short interval. (Or an empty canvas filled with specific colors without images or implicit words may arise as well.) Imagery is a natural outcome from the train of thoughts going with our reading and Kim has induced audiences who take the first step in a space to have their imagery by themselves, just as she had, while reading the title of her exhibition. And by doing so, she prepares them for consecutive appearances and the disappearance of the imagery that they would encounter throughout the exhibition.

OTHELLO (2021), a piece from one of her book drawing series, is the next that the audiences face after the title. The series consists of images drawn with the free association technique since 2011 on the books that lost their original meaning. Kim borrowed a page from a book about Othello, a tragedy by William Shakespeare, but nullified a function of books of "being read", by threading every single sentence in it with a red string. As can be seen in other works of the artist, this work implicitly presupposed that it is, too, derived from a core narrative which is a background, but rather than showing it in detail, she replaced it with "unknotted, flowing red strings". Jihee Kim placed layers of spontaneous images arising from the free association on the book and the paper. As imagery and memories all inherently are, these images are clear but faint, independent but connected at the same time, and flowing over the canvas in the form of thick liquid which emotions and inspiration from various moments are condensed into, rather than a frozen single scene.

When Blood and Flesh Cover You (2021), one of her other drawing series, shows it more as it is accompanied with images that have shapes and forms. Each broken body part that is cut or erased has its independent narrative. As Kim passed colors among every single side of images, both parts that have become ambiguous within the imperfect memory so that even facts cannot be recognized and that have been embodied and become clearer and as time passes are equally shown in one canvas. Hyosil Yang, a critic, referred to Kim's words and wrote "when body fluids that fill the body, the exterior, are visualized through a physical property that paints have, the canvas becomes dirty, and corporeality starts to acquire a haptic characteristic." in her review on *When Blood and Flesh Cover You*.

In this exhibition, Kim put weights on images of thought that used to flow only on a flat canvas and installed the images on a ceiling as if the thick liquid was dropping from there. Kim dusted off twenty pieces of her paintings created from 2017 through 2021 just like "excavating" relics and gave another look at accumulated independent layers of imagery that she had accumulated thereby finding hidden images that were not even recognized by herself. The artist gave new names to those excavated images and brought them a third-dimensional volume so that they could carry more significance than they were on the plane. The newly named images then are disorderly and non-linearly placed in a part of the exhibition space. The real forms and shapes of these figures that could be a collection of fragmentary thoughts or their fractional imagery resemble the original form that the "image of mind" that has never been in a form of flatness.

In Kim's works, the one energy trying to maintain a definite form and the other created from broken balance always cause tension. The tension is not only created within the works but is developed once again when the layers of imagery that audiences created while encountering the exhibition are met with those of Kim's. In this exhibition, Kim puts "a stage of objects" next to books and papers and connects the stage to those, adding variations in an existing plot. While gradually and rhythmically filing layered "flows of tension" on variations like creating musical chords, Kim has opened possibilities for images to evolve, be transformed, and reinterpreted as her images did not become complacent to given forms and existing relations.

Gahyun Lee

IF THE WHOLE WORLD WERE TO BE A GARDEN:
WHILE CLOSELY LOOKING IN TO BY JIHEEKIM
TEXT BY JIHYUNG PARK

A garden and a personal library have many things in common. The two are manmade and people have embraced them as part of life while decorating and maintaining the spaces. Interestingly, these spaces always bear contexts that go beyond our scope of perception. For example, a personal library is not a space where multiple books are simply gathered as a mere object. Rather, it hides personal secrets or stories that reflect characteristics of the owner. Also, a garden appears to be a place where part of nature such as flowers, trees, bugs, and birds simply stay. However, the truth is, countless birth and death as well as collision and connection that could not be detected with our bear eyes are concealed within the place. The two spaces offer a conceptual and symbolic background for by Jihee Kim and become a preemptive tool, so that Kim could pursue variations in narratives on a freer ground.

Her works focused mainly on lifting the boundaries of the customary concepts in the society that surround people and seeking a possibility of new discourses in-between. For a long time, her works had appeared to be firmly tied to esthetic and philosophical languages that cope with critical awareness on issues that were inferred from her personal experiences – such as a social stereotype on gender, rebellious corporality, and identities that blur boundaries. On the contrary, her recent works attempt to actively build a passage between a definite space of 'oneself' and multiple perspectives that reside outside of that space. This change can be seen both in an intrinsic thinking process of absorbing the world with her own perspectives and an extrinsic process of representing actual images. To do so, the artist has imagined daily lives of 'someone' who could exist, or she might have created, and then she put it in sentences. It is like a secretive and exciting experience of groping the overgrown garden to go on a treasure hunt, looking for gems that might be hidden in there. Kim puts out multiple variations of emotions and decorates her canvas while imperfectly passing the times which penetrate them.

At the entrance of the viewing room, multiple unfolded books with drawings that Kim painted on are displayed. Book drawing series is a painting that the artist draws on randomly donated books and, the beginning of this work, by its nature, must rely on others. It can be uttered only on the assumption of other's participation and attention, and it is like a journey to an unknown place, beginning with unexpected forms and contents of the books. Kim willingly accepts these adventures and continues the experiment by connecting oneself with countless others without being bounded by formality. What's interesting is that Kim does not consider these texts in randomly selected books as inevitable conditions for communication nor semantic interpretation. The given signifier has been sufficiently liberated from existing meanings and a pure background where narratives created by next users can penetrate. As mentioned earlier, making a place where it is more open to subjects escaped from the existing network of meanings such as objects, human, and a form of nature has been a focal point in sustaining her works. For example, the books from all over the world could be random worlds and memories of others and latent possibility to Kim where she can build up layers of subjective contemplation.

Hues and their shades that are generated when existing texts are covered reflect emotional waves various in size that 'someone' Kim thought of might have felt. However, interestingly enough, no hues were given to discursively scattered figures such as cats, butterflies, octopus, chandeliers and cherries. This seems to show Kim's sensitive and caring attitude that while putting daily lives of others on the same level of that of hers, she tries to avoid misinterpreting or dismissing their territories them as a single voice and making hasty errors by objectifying them. In the meantime, viewers could experience a boundless visual and conceptual stroll while going back and forth between figures of objects suggested by the artist and texts that are written by someone else. Active reading of symbols produces sensory experience in the present by linking the past with uniqueness of the time and space they connect, instead of accepting given information as it is. Kim's book drawing series encourages viewers to carry on this practical process between the text and image.

When viewers walk past the personal library where small-sized black-and-white drawings are hanging and go down the staircase toward the hidden room, they will encounter a garden surrounded with bursting colors. Grasses and flowers painted with strong colors that show a stark contrast against simple outlines will catch viewers' eyes. Rare plants that Kim saw in a botanical garden near her studio were reborn as these figures which have become subjects for a playful exploration. Each canvas was formed individually, but at the same time, it connects with other canvases, thereby linking disconnected times. As if they completely disregard the edges of canvases that are separated by the frames, flowers, and grasses with vitality thickly stretch out their stems and leaves, in and out of the canvases. Unknown creatures appear to vividly spread atypical energy just like ever-changing shadows with time. Also, butterflies on the plants, fluids dropping from the leaves, skeletons and spiders transform the garden which appears to be a mystical and beautiful place into the one where threats and tension coexist.

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If we take a closer look, we could recognize that each plant that forms the garden has various adjectives that explain states of our minds as its name. Kim attempts to show the characteristics of the elements in the garden through an implicit medium that represents the inner side of each individual. Solitude, bitterness, and times that bring you outburst of rage and exultation sometimes are pieces of emotions that are universal. Kim detects conflicting branches of senses that are mixed into our chaotic life and brings them to a garden, a space of nature that is artificially created. Sensing the vibration of subtle psychologies and sympathizing with them are like watering plants that are just sprouting, trimming full-grown grasses, and enjoying fragrant flowers in their full bloom. The artist invites viewers to an unacquainted scene created when a pallet of primal senses that human beings have overlap.

What we can newly find out after setting aside existing rhetoric, which is used to represent Kim's works, was a spectrum of emotions that is more fundamental and universal. She carefully pulls out nonverbal reactions which are located at the very bottom of our body, an exterior shell. Humans are always imperfect, capricious, and fragile. A minor shock could push our body over to the edge of limit and the body, which is only ephemeral, could wither in no time. External forces could easily alter our mind as well, and it is very tricky to predict the state of the mind. However, nonverbal and unvisualized aspects of emotional reactions drive us to positively perceive and desire our own life. As such, Kim astutely observes the flow of energy that was obtained while people interact with reality and transforms her observation into substantial forms. Times that she collects books read by people she does not know and continuously unfolds unrealistic scenes while imagining 'someone' and their weekends that she could meet someday are her own way of affectionately embracing the world. While feeling vitality, love and energy that fill the library and the garden that Kim is tending, I am intrigued, once again, by the story about everyone that she is writing somewhere at this very moment.

Jihyung Park (curator at ThisWeekendRoom)

Translated in English by Habin Yang

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PLAYFULNESS AND PAIN: IMAGES OF IMPERMANENCE
TEXT BY DONGHEE YUN

Viewing an exhibition is not exceptionally fun, but it is a beautiful thing. A contemporary space silently filled by someone who creates art for a living. Those who have chosen a place to go on social media find it and re-affirm it, via social media. At some point, art started popping up all over social media in the form of a hashtag. It's "so hot" there. But those who regard viewing art as one of the duties of everyday life don't understand. They don't know that creating art is a thoroughly physical thing. "The task of art" is a labor of perception and feeling and the body. The world simultaneously demands hard hardware and soft software from artists. This is what it defines as beauty. Artists, unable to ignore the demands of the world, conceptualize themselves and the world and produce the most novel sensations possible through their physical labor. It is these physical and sensual extremes that pass for the concept of contemporary art.

Now I am writing for a single artist. Jihee Kim is one of those who keeps working, brush always in hand, to maintain momentum. Just because I met her through writing doesn't mean I am a particular fan of hers. And it certainly doesn't mean my text will have any dramatic effect on the exhibition. If points were awarded for exhibitions, and if this text would help this exhibition score a few more points than others, I would go at it with enthusiasm, but unfortunately an exhibition is not that kind of contest. All it is is a viewing of a temporary action by an artist that occupies a certain time and space in the course of our lives. When you think about it, art is an inefficient act. It's not as if a successful conclusion to this exhibition would give any guarantees for the artist's future path. On the contrary: the key to an artist's success seems to lie in what she does with the "gaps" between exhibitions. Which is not to say that gaps for an artist mean rest. The loneliness of an artist lies in never being able to put down her brush. Even in an era uneasy with atemporality and aspatiality; even when she is sad because the world refuses to acknowledge her, she cannot stop drawing. Yet to shout out, to make a noise and remind everyone that she is here, would be degrading. She'll be lonely whatever she does, so she just has to keep drawing. Keeping a balance between the exhibitions and the gaps. Exhaustively enduring the space between fame and anonymity. These things are the duty of the artist, and the simplest way of putting up with the world.

Of course, simply drawing with no purpose would be even less efficient. To those who create art, considering the state of contemporary drawing is an essential virtue. This is about asking, again and again, how drawings are experienced. Luckily, Jihee Kim's drawings are a valid litmus test for revealing the contemporaneity of drawing. Based on drawing, the artist has steadily built up her own visual language. This stability comes from a huge volume of work. Viewing her serial works, the cumulative product of several years, sparks curiosity about the immense imagery contained in the artist's small body. Everywhere her brush goes, grotesque images swarm and sophisticated graphics proliferate. A proliferation of images that follow no particular compositional flow but come bursting and seething out of the artist's desire. This is the virtue of Kim's graphic landscape.

Philosophy of happening and philosophy of the body: Contemplation

Kim's pictoriality features construction and deconstruction at the same time. Construction and deconstruction often reflect the artist's psychological state; Kim, too, appears to have taken the emotions from her personal life as platform for her work. But while works like this repeatedly apply and scrape off paint to and from the surface of the canvas, revealing the artists' neurotic motives, Kim stands out for her masterfully smooth and flat application of Pantone colors. These are her so-called "graphic drawings." But I prefer to call them "graphic graffiti." Many notable artists these days try to emphasize their pictoriality by taking not just canvas but wooden panels as their platform, adding more paint before the previous coat has dried, or repeatedly painting and erasing to gradually increase the thickness of the canvas. But Kim makes her bid for victory using huge canvases. Hers are bigger, wider and flatter than those of any other artist. Her field of vision encompasses not just the canvas but the entire space that the work will occupy. Huge canvases, almost as big as murals; lines and colors crossing them as if piercing through the canvas itself; printed exhibition material of a design quality that would not be out of place on sale in an independent bookshop. Kim is obsessed with mural scenes deeply infused with the properties of graphic design, creating sophisticated "productions" that join their before to their afters.

The artist begins her stories with dissected images. Of course, I use the word "stories" with caution. Fancy talking of stories in an age when we've gone from huge stories to tiny stories, or when stories have lost their usefulness altogether! So let's use the word "scenery" instead. The artist composes scenery from dislocated, severed fragments. I'm wary of being too direct here, but I wonder if these images reflect some kind of strong "desire" on the part of the artist. Kim wanders around in search of other images connected to her severed scenery. Her severed images

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are beautiful because they do not lapse into masochistic behavior but squirm around with dignity. Freely composed of contemporary Pantone colors, these images approach objects of longing, but without themselves sympathizing. Though they were born of deficiency, they possess a life-force that does not remain there. In the pathways of these images, viewers examine their own desires. Based on these, they confirm the objects of their longing and of their compassion. Some images remind them of themselves, flung into the world; others evoke the cloying realities that they themselves must fling. At these moments, the highlights of Jihee Kim's drawings begin stirring into life. Crossing freely back and forth between reality and fantasy, between the typical and the atypical, they annihilate the cloying-ness of the mundane. Impermanence! Japanese Buddhist thinker Shuichi Maida calls impermanence *anicca*, combining the Pali word *nicca* ("permanence") with the suffix *a-* to signal opposite meaning. *Nicca*, by the way, is an interesting word. Evoking the Japanese word *nekaneka*, meaning "sticky," it refers to something stuck fast or fixed down. Here, the suffix *a-* has been added to the *nicca*, a word meaning "fixed." Ultimately, impermanence is not firmly stuck in place but changing. It is within this change that we come face to face with the state of existence.

Jihee Kim's graphic images thus preach that all beings in the world are fixed, that nothing is permanent, and that change is therefore inevitable. All beings change. This change is movement. I am I and not-I at the same time. I am at the root of all things, an agent of independent eternity and an endlessly changing object of the world. My body, succumbing to the flow of time, is evidence. Our bodies, now, are the result of hundreds of thousands of cells dying and being replaced with equal numbers of new cells. There is nothing our minds can do to stop this; it causes our emotions and our spirits to change, too. It's hopeless. But I would not say that deep, profound teaching is hopeless or empty. Instead, I encourage waking up to the truth of changing existence and actively coping with it. This is why we must realize the impermanence of all action, and work hard to search inside ourselves. Isn't that it? The reason Kim never leaves her studio, never stops working? The graphic images on her highly sophisticated canvases were crystallizations of a type of drawing approaching a physical philosophy. It would be good to pause in front of Kim's images with an attitude of contemplation. Images we thought were simply created with no bearing on reality will make it clear what to keep and what to discard, bringing us face to face with reality while making us realize that it changes at every moment. That's a good thing. It's what happens when we appreciate art properly.

A system of images created by various lines and colors. Jihee Kim's images desire each other, becoming the building blocks for a canvas and forming a single medium. Some images lump together, coming and going between the viewer's perceptions and feelings; others demolish perception and feeling altogether. In the end, the intense movements of images destroy the surface, revealing the artist's inner depths and resulting in a situation where language malfunctions, or one before language is established. Schizophrenia! This is why we are unable to recall any unified language when we see Kim's drawings. There is nothing we can do. This is impermanence! But it's all right not to be able to feel anything when faced with the waves of drawings. To reiterate: recognising storytelling in an age when all stories are useless is "old." Haven't we now, at just the right time, encountered images with a solid inner system? Images that, because of this alone, become a genre in their own right, but whose system is undecipherable. We must accept Jihee Kim's drawings as themselves: images that operate separately from the world. These images simultaneously contain and give out birth and extinction, aura and duplication, sublimity and lightness. For these beautiful scenes of intersecting ambivalence, Kim keeps on and on drawing. For one reason: because she wants to! What a simple word. What a lively act it is to draw. How instinctive, the karma of drawing! It's exactly 93 years since Wassily Kandinsky introduced the theory of points, lines and planes to analyze the elements of painting.

*"The work of Art mirrors itself upon the surface of our consciousness. However, its image extends beyond, to vanish from the surface without a trace when the sensation has subsided. A certain transparent, but definite glass-like partition, abolishing direct contact from within, seems to exist here as well. Here, too, exists the possibility of entering art's message, to participate actively, and to experience its pulsating-life with all one's senses."**

Surely these words pinpoint exactly what Jihee Kim's images are all about.

Donghee Yun (Booknomad Director)
Translated in English by Ben Jackson

* Wassily Kandinsky. 1926. Point and Line to Plane: Contribution to the Analysis of the Pictorial Elements. Translated by Howard DEARSTYNE and HILLA REBAY.

TEXT BY SOLA JUNG

In this exhibition, Jihee Kim's book drawing series and paper drawings will be introduced. The book drawing series entitled "Drawings swimming at Dawn" is the artist's works that she painted on 400 books that were donated by several libraries in Korea, Taiwan, and the UK. These drawings adopt certain words or sentences from a selected page in the book as the starting point. For example, an association effect starts from a certain text in the book, "urban society", developing into the idea of 'the inability to understand the meaning of loneliness - does it resemble the feeling of boredom?' and stops when it gets to "the character throwing himself into the cold sea in order to save his beloved" stage. Then, images are derived from these ideas. Accidental encounters between these words and texts summon the artist's inherent memories, and these memories narrate unexpected visual results and never-ending stories. Words and texts in old books ignite the artists' past memories and experiences in chain reactions, triggering her unconsciousness to evoke forgotten memories.

What is interesting here is that the main medium that accelerates the artist's works is not the meaning and context installed in these books by their original authors (mostly male) but the materiality of the books themselves. The books that were in danger of being discarded are revived in Jihee Kim's works, still keeping their physical property. Of course, the pages of the book, newly filled with images, no longer convey the meanings that the original authors intended to contain. Only a certain part of the contents has been left behind vaguely, transformed into the memories of Jihee Kim, no longer in its complete existence. However, the intention and stories of the original author are given another vitality by being transformed and expanded into other forms in the same medium. It seems to show that values that were about to be discarded or overthrown were able to be recycled to become new gestures. Jihee Kim's book drawings use one medium - "book" to cover a variety of comparisons such as immateriality & materiality, text & image, literature & visual art, death & birth, and male author & female artist. She prefers not to throw away but to reconstruct, reinterpret, and recycle to make new values.

Above all, 'memory' is an important keyword in Jihee Kim's works. The power of the typhoon, which was experienced on the first day of arriving in Taiwan for a one year residency, affected the artist to concentrate on the chain of thinking centering on memory. Afterwards the artist has been releasing her memories in series onto book drawings, papers, and other types of media. The act of memory, which summons the past to the present, often comes into consciousness and intervenes in all acts of rational judgment, emotional experience, and sensory perception of our present and future. Therefore, orientation toward the past is, ironically, an inevitable function for those living the present toward the future. For Jihee Kim, the memory of the past is felt as an act of offsetting the unknown fears and tremors of life moving forward or advancing. A memory brings up another memory, and by visualizing several times of associations, it connects the familiar past with the unfamiliar present. This process, as the artist expresses as "playing", is considered to be a kind of act to overcome the painful fate of human beings to accept a new present each moment.

Sola Jung (curator)

NAVIGATING. MEMORIES.
TEXT BY LEEJI HONG

Jihee Kim's book drawing started around 2012, when she began to receive donations of old books, which no longer had functions other than as objet or decoration. These books were thrown away to Kim as nobody read them anymore. But as she looks for pages she finds formatively beautiful and covers them with images derived from her own memories, the original value and contexts of the books are erased. Once a useless objet then becomes an objet d'art with a new meaning as a drawing and creates a new context. It is then exhibited with a new-found status, protected from touch.

Jihee Kim has been carefully avoiding confining herself to certain formats or materials of drawing, repeating visual integrity and copying herself. She continued to experiment with different media, such as canvas, magazines and books, and with various materials including acrylic, collage, paper and gouache. This journey of exploration has expanded her imagination, yet maintained continuity.

To keep the watchful eye over self-repetition and to expand the world of her artworks, she developed a manual for what she calls "a drawing of chain of thoughts" exhibited under the title at Amado Art Space in 2015. It was her new attempt to showcase the process of her work to the public and expand it. Such attempt took the form of a workshop in 2016, titled , which invited viewers to use her drawings to share their feelings with each other. Her drawing workshops are not information delivery sessions. They are a chance to communicate, and share time and feelings with one another. Jihee Kim changed the way of fine art appreciation, from observing artworks displayed in the gallery by the artist to gathering with strangers around the artworks to share their personal stories and experiences. The images and memories viewers collect through this process then get translated by the artist into new images, and recreated as a book with a completely different epic.

Jihee Kim talks fondly of how she was consoled and comforted by the participants' stories during workshops held in London, Taipei and Seoul over the last 2 years. Drawing workshops are a platform the artist developed to engage the audience to share thoughts with strangers and start a conversation. Her drawings, as images and symbols transcending the boundaries of languages, are a tool used to entice participants to start sharing. This approach is in line with her attitude towards books, of intentionally not reading the texts and perceiving books as a formative beauty of pieces and patterns. Then she goes on to weave other people's drawings and hers through the workshops to create a book shared and touched by all. French symbolist poet Mallarmé said "Everything in the world exists in order to end up as a book." Perhaps artists exist to explore the possibilities to extend their thoughts through their artworks, govern meanings through their visual language and transcend times.

Leeji Hong (curator at Buk Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea)
Translated in English by Hayley Hyojin CHUNG

SPACING BETWEEN WRITING, DRAWING, TIME AND PLACE TEXT BY SOYEON AHN

1. Prudent coincidence

Not even one aspect of Kim's prudent work is pushed out of sight and it receives devoted attention. Whether it be words, a painting, the color or texture, its name or size, there is space for attention on all of these things. Actually, these are my subjective feelings and therefore, I cannot force it upon anyone. The reason I think so is because the prudent voice, signs, movement and eyes included in her work in a latent state like the text of a play, has created before me a situation as clear as any other content. She always adds unexpected expression and text in her drawings and opens a path to fall deeply into a previously unknown ordinary moment. This may be something like that of a chain of logic from the coincidences she experienced alone during the creation of the work. In this sense, her prudence plays a crucial role in providing the logic of coincidental effects in her work. Prudence and coincidence, it sounds difficult for both of them to be present, but Kim possesses these two awkward senses at the same time. The phrase prudent coincidence seems quite appropriate.

2. Perfect text

Jiheee Kim's drawing implies the text in parenthesis. In other words, her drawing secures individual significance in special circumstances. In particular, her drawing has found context that creates incidents in specific circumstances through a type of work that uses books as a medium, which she calls book drawing. Books, which unexpectedly became a new basis for her drawing in place of the canvas, embody perfect meaning and have the flexibility to exist as a perfect image. This is because the meaning of the text and the structure and form of the text co-exist in a very special way in books. It seems like she has recently returned to drawing on paper, fabric, or on the wall, but book drawing, which she has been doing since 2012 until recently, has derived the context of the various layers of her work. To Kim, it most likely served as an opportunity to ask herself, "How will I draw?" and "How should I show it?" As a result, she has subtly inserted clues to these questions in various areas of her work like the text written in play scenarios. Books, in this sense, play the role of the perfect text among other text and show excellence that sustains numerous drawing forms.

3. Writing for images

If you read Kim's explanation of how she began to focus on books in the artist's notes, you can tell that her visual interest in books and writing began with the crudely perceived experience of reading a foreign language. {*The Typhoon Breaks Tonight* (2017) exhibition category} When Jiheee Kim read a book written in a foreign language, she focused on "chunks of characters, the moment they began appearing as one image". She perceived "a period as one huge circle" and eventually waited for "the moment when the period would engulf the text," immersing herself into her imagination. She puts her focus on the visual experience of "seeing" books, rather than words for reading, and strengthens the conditions of words being imprinted on paper as multiple images. This evokes the discourses of the last century in which text was read by readers as products of multiplicity without boundaries. Moreover, she also focuses on the chained flow of those images.

Jiheee Kim's book drawing was created in separate versions, seeking several changes. Among them, series, such as 2015's , in which the rapid and coincidental associations of drawings derived from writings are magnified as the process of the creation of the work, account for a large proportion. For example, when Kim was living in England, she received several donations of books that otherwise would have been thrown away from various colleges and local libraries. After sorting the foreign-language books related to various fields, she began creating associations with familiar words or sentences that were imprinted on random pages. Just as the discovered objet d'art helped surrealists associate free and compulsive thoughts, Jiheee Kim makes an attempt at multi-layered description with no beginning or end and decentralized connection of reason without boundaries by using words and sentences discovered from thick books as a medium. These connected, non-correlated languages eventually become a certain image. Jiheee Kim completes the "becoming" images through a type of play, the process of gaining connection of reason using language as a medium.

4. Writing for image

Kim's drawing, which she prudently placed on top of an open bookcase, follows a representation that is as fragmentary as the amount of two pages separated from the entire narrative. For example, the series of signifiers that began through words or sentences discovered on the open bookshelf by chance circulates her blurry memories. Rising uncertain narratives in her memory, Jiheee Kim holds onto the images that clearly break through the faint context. The uncertain context that the clarity possesses is similar to ghosts that wander around without their own territory rather than a unified narrative. As familiar things are repeated again and again, they become riddle-like images that become something else. Jiheee Kim's drawing holds onto the images that float around the space between writing and drawing. That's why

it is similar to writing and similar to drawing, but brings about an image of a state in between writing and drawing.

5. Chain of discrepancies

Moreover, the drawing placed on top of the book shows the spacing between time and location at the point where the writing and drawing intersect. The serial connection of time and location that revolves as the author's time, reader's time and Kim's time intersect creates an uncertain flow. It is far from the logic of time and place that pass by, but breaks conscious speculations and draws out a "chain of discrepancies" that goes beyond the discipline of thinking. In her recent work, she has been drawing directly on paper, fabric or walls without using books as support. Most likely the unfamiliarity that foreign books provided had grown faint as time passed and she probably began to think that even if she didn't find words and sentences from books, the narrative that had been deposited in one place for a long time like books that were to be disposed of could be replaced by her "memories." Jihee Kim links the information she randomly draws out from her memories and (re)constructs the process on screen like an (inconsistent) event. In fact, it is hard to tell whether the process is construction or deconstruction, but the images that form her drawing are all a part of the logic of a "chain of discrepancies."

6. Action for images

I said that Jihee Kim's drawing implies text in parenthesis. In another sense, this gives birth to another act but it can also be seen as a type of tactic that generates not only the mobility, but the reason for the completed images through drawing. Jihee Kim has others participate as drawing agents through drawing workshops. These numerous actions create unstable events that consistently change and deconstruct the images. In addition, the chain of discrepancies of the images is activated through those uncertain conversations and actions. In this sense, the drawing workshops are quite tactful as an action for multiple images.

Jihee Kim showed quite a powerful attitude in her initial versions of book drawing. Her visual density was overwhelming too, but a meaningful and tactical attitude could be seen in her approach to drawing. (2013) delivers an exaggerated expression of pop-up images on top of a stack of books. When she first began book drawing, she noticed that the majority of the books she received from libraries were written by men and she approached the structural contradiction implied by this narrative. As a result, she randomly stacked books on top of each other and placed the images of women who are dominated by mass media on the top with the most honest attitude. This strong contrast is based on the tactic of trying to deconstruct or dislocate old customs or memory structures. She turned books into a support factor and placed the images of objectified women as tightly packed as letters for a tactic that interrupts the logic of reading.

7. Space between lines

Jihee Kim's drawing is elaborate. She is very prudent and logical. I have always wondered about her intention of putting herself in the process of uncertain reason, considering the space between the lines of things that exist. Looking at her , which she created through numerous repetitions of drawings on paper, I tried estimating the location of the numerous lines that she was trying to find as she continuously added in the same drawings. By repeating the drawing with the text "Damaged people are dangerous" and a pink hand with blue paint pouring out of it like blood, she strongly empties the space between the uncertain lines.

Soyeon Ahn (art critics)

Translated in English by BigtreesTranslation, LioNKOREA

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AN ERA WHERE A MAP IS TERRITORY.
THE DEATH OF PAPER BOOK IS WELCOMED.
-ABOUT JIHEE KIM'S BOOK DRAWINGS
ARTICLE BY YOUNGHA KIM

A Korean dictionary published by Korea University Research Institute of Korean Studies (RIKS) defines 'doodle' as follows: to write or draw something (on paper or a wall) for fun. Then, what if an artist devotedly draws something beautiful on ex-library books (which have been deemed no longer useful)? Can we call that a doodle as well? Despite all that, it is true that drawings on neatly printed characters make viewers uncomfortable. We have been taught that books are something sacred. Some of them are much, much more sacred than others. The Bible and the Qur'an are one of those. Translation of the Qur'an, originally written in Arabic, is disallowed under any circumstance. They said, no single word of the prophets shall not be changed. As only the meaning of it, not the exact sentences can be translated, it is published in Korea with the title of *Translation of the Meanings of THE NOBLE QURAN* in the Korean Language and the same rule applies to versions in other languages but Arabic. Although translation is allowed for the Bible, it is also specially treated to some extent. The U.S presidents use a Bible to take his/her oaths of office. Even though you are not Christian, you could not shake off unsettling feelings, if you used a Bible as a coaster for a cup of coffee.

I had tried my best for a long time not to leave any traces on books – no underlines, no dog-earing. However, things have changed at some point. I had considered books an asset. That is why I had tried to keep books intact. However, my perspective has changed, and now I see books as one of experience goods such as traveling. Books carry meaning while we read, but they slowly disappear from our memories anyway. So, I'm no longer obsessed with books that I won't read forever or left me with no impression at all. Too many books are published. Books that no one borrows already become a problem to a library, and apartment dumpsters are already filled with abandoned books. However, still, books have been fetishized for their materialistic values in many areas. For example, in antique book auctions, signed copies by well-known authors are sold at a high price. A small bookstore in England offers "an interior design consulting service for bookshelves". Its major source of income is to provide advice on which books to be displayed in newly opened hotels or restaurants. The era we are living in brought us mixed feelings toward books. Books, once considered as beautiful and authentic thereby guaranteeing the intelligence of the owners, have fallen into trash we have to deal with now.

Jihee Kim draws on books. Books that she works on are no longer a subject of fetishism. These are donated (actually, thrown away) from libraries. Because nobody reads these books anymore, they were given to the artist free of charge. Before they are completely discarded, Kim drew on the books, and grant them a new life. A life as an artist's object. "Death of books" is an inevitable subject when we discuss Jihee Kim's works. When painted, books cannot be read. One viewer even made a complaint to the artist saying, "why did you do such a thing on the book?". People might feel a sense of guilt when they encounter her works –as we do so to our neglected relatives or parents-- because books had long been considered divine. Kim's works make people face "the death of books" fair and square. It is uncomfortable. Yet, it is beautiful. That is why we cannot turn away from them. While doing so, the works remind me of "the books that I had thrown away". The very thought of the demise of books and the era of books has come to an end frustrates me. Cause changes are stressful, indeed. Why, now, during my lifetime, do I have to witness the funeral for books? I am tempted to deny the fact that books are dead. 'Hey, don't worry. I just lay down for a while taking a short nap, but soon, I'm going to wake up'. I do hope to hear from a book saying "See? I'm not dead. Who said such nonsense, huh?" Umberto Eco said that the book is like the wheel or a razor: Once invented, it could never be given up. We do not need any secondary tools such as power, battery, or monitors to read paper books. It is not like VHS tapes or floppy disks that immediately became useless when data storage standards changed. If preserved well, many books can be read even hundreds of years later. I agree with Eco. Paper books won't easily disappear just like that. If that is true, what we see now is not "the demise of the book". Rather, it is a process of the world becoming a book. In old days, "Books" only refer to paper books. We had strived to squeeze all valuable knowledge and stories into books. Now, the entire world is becoming a book. Stories and knowledge are everywhere, so much so that we need devices like smartphones, computers, electronic displays, or monitors to get them. When interesting things are discovered, we take a picture or video and save or share it with others. The world is swamped with things to read. The line between things to see and read is blurred. Jorge Luis Borges imagined the universe as a library. That is why many drew honeycomb-like rooms filled with bookshelves and called it, "the Literary Universe of Jorge Luis Borges". What he indistinctly predicted is the world that we are living in. The world already has become a vast book, and we are living in it. We pass through between texts and images while we go to work or school. On our way, we endlessly read or watch something. If someone does not glue their eyes to the smartphone but absentmindedly looks outside of the window on the bus, they might look odd as if they went something horrible and become unable to read smartphones. We no longer find a moment to "read" in

between work. Rather, we read the world continuously and work briefly in between.

In *The Map and the Territory*, Michel Houellebecq compares a map with territory. For sure, a map should be smaller than an actual territory. And that is where the scale of a map such as 500:1 or 100,000:1 comes in. What if the scale of a map is 1:1? Can we still call that a map? Or perhaps, are we living on map, not on a territory? If the world is a large book, can we still call it a book?

Kim's works are significant, especially in the world which has been turned into a single book. A paper book is too small for the artist to express whatever she desires. Already, it is not a book anymore. Rather it is our memories of books, or a sort of mementoes. We already knew that that book was dead, but it still seems too invasive to draw something on it. It is only natural that one might feel like yelling "Hey, Mortician! That one is still alive!". Nevertheless, Kim continues her work. By drawing something on the donated books she recontextualizes the original ones. It does not matter whether it is *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin or *How to Train a Hunting Dog*. Kim is erasing all the characteristics of paper books except the most essential one: "Materiality". Once the world has turned into a book, we can hardly experience the materiality of books. When the size of a map is equal to that of actual land, in other words, when a territory is a map, that map could not tell anything. The only choice we have is walking on the map. We are unfortunate generations who are thrown into the world where books are the world and vice versa. What makes it worse is that our generations still remember how paper books actually feel like: The smell of ink, the texture of the paper that we could feel through our fingertips, rustling sounds while turning pages, beautifully decorated book covers, firmly printed characters, and a strong impression there are a beginning and a definite end. We still live with paper books, but it takes only a tiny part of the books that we read all day long.

At first, I thought that Kim was paying tribute to the death of books. Now, I do not. It appears to me that the artist covertly welcomes the demise of paper books. When I met her at Incheon Art Platform, she said "I happen to learn that most of the donated books were written by male authors". That is true, indeed. The era of paper books was also an era of males. Male authors have written books and articles and published them. Once being printed, books have become authoritative, thereby becoming entitled to decorate public libraries, five-star hotels, and bookshelves of the wealthy. On this symbol of male authority, she draws something completely irrelevant to these books. She draws images she wants to draw, which are unlikely to be loved by male counterparts such as a woman bleeding from her vagina; a frog on a dissecting table; a face of a woman beaming tears or laser from her eyes; the back of the head of a faceless woman—which all are unlikely to be loved by males. She uses books not as a "memento" that commemorates the era of paper books but as a declaration of a new era. "When I was studying in London, I had to read books in English. At one point, books were seen as a mass of characters, and images not as a book itself." If books have become something else other than books, and characters are not just characters, we can do whatever we want with them. From that moment, she started her own "doodling" on books, showing that gone are the days when even indecipherable books were respected and worshiped because of the fact they are books.

Youngha Kim

THE TYPHOON BREAKS TONIGHT
TEXT BY JIHEE KIM

Landing at the Taoyuan International Airport in Taipei, Taiwan on a hot summer day in July, I was hit with a wave of sultry damp air that swirled past my face. News stations were blasting out repeated warnings over a large storm that was to hit Taiwan that night. Indeed the weather was far from calm. A fear I had known like no other was descending upon me, having come face to face with fast gushing wind and clouds, obscurely colored tumultuous river, heavy and viscid air, and hard pouring rain drilling into the ground.

Pass did those uncertain hours of daytime, and night fell following sunset. So starkly different is night from day, yet why do we choose to bind them together and call them “day”?* The storm’s night was entirely different from its day, rain pouring down in volumes so large you can’t help but wonder from where all those raindrops and wind are coming. The whirling wind of the dark abyss seemed to be swallowing all things in its path and the bizarre sight unfolding in front of me only added to my unfounded fears. The beating sounds of the gushing wind and the smashing raindrops against the thin rattling windows brought on an extreme kind of fear that would all of a sudden dissipate into an odd sense of serenity. Should day be the cold hours of reason, then night are those creeping hours at the bottom depths of darkness, those passing moments of heated imaginations. There I was in the eye of the storm. Fury roared outside the windows but my room and my night were entirely in serene darkness. That night, starting from pieces shed out from my conscious and unconscious mind I explored the boundless abyss called memory, much like a Proustian Madeleine moment, and came face to face with an array of past moments. I thus savored my night, exploring those once forgotten memories and bringing to light pieces that had long faded pale. The night of memories brought on by the storm did not conclude simply as a momentous event, but lead the way to explore and analyze the minute and detailed links between one memory to the next, as not only as a way of becoming acquainted with myself as a human being and experiencing a new kind of euphoria, but also serving as a starting point of expressing them as drawings. The fragments of my memory are of relationships that are dependent on familiarity, contrast, or arbitrary and shallow unions. And given that those memories drawn up form a kind of relationship with each other, their contents are immensely diverse and specific, being a mystic amalgamation of both pride and modesty.

1. The typhoon breaks tonight

That night, the train of memories became the spark that ignited a “typhoon of the night” event that continued on as a serial process of memories that floated to the surface like fish caught in a net. Long forgotten was the typhoon, the initial point and head of the chain, and as one memory lead into another all that stood out in my memory were such things as figures, events, smell, sound, conversations, sent and received texts, and scenes from a book or movie. It is in this manner that we endlessly mistake coincidence for truth, results for causes, means for an end, our body and mind for ourselves, and ourselves for something of the immortal.** The typhoon breaks tonight. #1 and #2 series set out an animation format that gives motion to my drawings, portraying a singular memory and event, and a particular moment grasped from the serial process of memories.

2. A Story about the Period

Having to read a book in a foreign language was the first moment when text began to read as images – a book was not a book but a lump of letters, being received as a single image. In that moment, text did not constitute a book and letters were no longer letters, and from within that image an element of usually meager presence was suddenly perceived as a definite large circular form: the period. When the inconspicuous period emerges as a complete, whole entity and overshadows the text, all things became possible. The period appeared as a changed form, sliding across the text as a bleeding period.

3. Drawings Swimming at Dawn

This series used the pages of books – donated through the university and regional libraries of London – as the base surface. Starting from print (words), I chained together my experiences/events into a sort of serial drawing process that weaves the memory pieces like a net, this being my pastime and amusement. For example, Urban Society departed from the word “Urban Society” chosen from the selected page of the book used in the work, following the thought process as shown below:

Urban Society The inability to understand the meaning of loneliness. – Does it resemble the feeling of 'boredom'? The image of an old couple blowing each other's frozen hands warm A line from a movie of a character saying he hopes to die one day after his beloved does The character throwing himself into the cold sea in order to save his beloved.

My train of thought stopped at the point where I found most intriguing and attractive, that being "The character throwing himself into the cold sea in order to save his beloved," and expressed this as a drawing on the pages of the very book from where I extracted the words "Urban Society." Memories and events entombed in my conscious and unconscious were uncovered in this manner, aiding the discovery process by drawing the sentences. The memories called forth by one sentence meet the memory of my present thus making the next memory, which then in turn transforms itself into a new and unexpected memory that consequently leads to the drawing moment.

Jihee Kim

*Kim Yeon Soo, Waves are to the Sea, Seoul, Jaeum&Moeum, 2012, p46.

** Daumal René, Le Mont Analogue, Seoul, Emotion books, 2014, p84.

ARTIST JIHEE KIM 'TRANSCENDING LANGUAGE BARRIERS, I COMMUNICATE THROUGH DRAWINGS.'

INTERVIEW FOR KF NEWS LETTERS

July 2020

Artist Jihee Kim is active in Seoul, London, Tokyo, and Taipei. Participating in residency programs overseas, she conducts drawing workshops for people with no professional training in fine art. Using drawings as an effective means of communication, a method that is more powerful than language, Kim not only showcases Korea's potential in the field of arts and culture, but also sets a good example of how an artist can bring people together in exchanges that transcend national boundaries.

How are you? You have had a busy first half of the year, holding a solo exhibition and earning your doctoral degree. How are you feeling these days?

Glad to see you. In April, I held a solo show titled *Your Hands Are Mine*. These days, I am preparing for my next exhibitions. I also meet college students, teaching contemporary art with a focus on drawings and paintings.

You usually introduce yourself as “a person who thinks through drawings.” Would you explain what that means?

The visual language of drawing is the core of my work. The natural spontaneity and sensitivity of drawings from the crucial areas of my creative life. I define myself as a person who thinks, remembers, and works through drawings.

Your studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, seem to have influenced your work. It was also the time when you began “book drawing,” a method that now forms the backbone of your artistic projects. How did that come about?

As you said, studying at Goldsmiths marked a turning point in my career. I am still inspired by my experience there—the unfamiliar environment, the people I met, the contemporary art of Britain, the beautiful museums and galleries, and the philosophy embodied in contemporary arts. I could concentrate solely on myself and my work, and develop on my own. In the case of book drawing, I open a book and select a word on a particular page. I then paint memories or feelings that the word evokes in me. I began book drawing sometime around 2011 and it was the first project for which I had to muster up some kind of courage. I left my studio, searched libraries in London, and then wrote to them asking for donations of books that were going to be discarded. It was quite an adventure for me to meet library staff, explain my project, and persuade them to donate the books to me. That was something I couldn't even imagine doing before starting the project. As I went through this process, I think it helped me develop my work.

After your studies in London, you took part in various overseas artist residency programs that promote exchanges and joint projects. Could you tell us about your latest residency program in Tokyo?

My days in Tokyo offered me an opportunity to take a fresh look at Japan. I used to think that I knew the country fairly well, but while living there I realized I was wrong. This year, I was able to study traditional Japanese arts in depth, and was especially amazed by the detailed methods of expression of Ukiyo-e, the genre of painting that was popular during the Edo Period. I was particularly inspired by the hands of the people in the paintings and interpreted them in my drawings. *Your Hands Are Mine* is an exhibition based on my new drawings of hands created while in Japan, as well as my previous works which centered on hands. Every time I participate in residency programs overseas, including in Tokyo, Taipei, and Kaohsiung, I gain new experiences. Rather than being brief visits for work, I experience life there, which in turn broadens the scope of my exchanges with foreign artists and other people in field.

You always hold drawing workshops in the cities of your residency programs. What are your expectations for those workshops?

The book drawing project I mentioned earlier can be said to have originated from my awareness of language barriers. As I encountered such barriers and acutely experienced exclusion from communication, I came to have a greater yearning to communicate through images rather than through language, and found new inspiration in that regard. I then planned and conducted drawing workshops in Britain, Taiwan, and Japan, in which communication was visual between people speaking different languages. In the planning stage I had certain expectations, but the actual outcome exceeded them. It was amazing that active communication was possible among people who could not understand each other's language. It was an interesting project that made me reconsider the power of drawing and the nature of communication.

Are there any national differences in the inclinations and characters of the participants in those workshops?

Over 90 percent of the participants did not have any professional training in the arts. The most wonderful thing about them was that they had no fear about expressing themselves in their drawings, even if they were not art majors. I was tremendously impressed by the participants in the Taipei workshop. They were truly bold and daring in expressing themselves through their drawings. It was intriguing that the methods of expression differed slightly from country to country. The participants in London liked simple, beautiful line drawings, while those in Taipei and Kaohsiung usually began by painting with bright colors. Those in Tokyo and Seoul tended to draw with an appropriate harmony of planes and lines.

Global exchanges in culture and the arts are a major direction of the KF's programs. Would you like to make any suggestions from the standpoint of an artist?

I would like to have an opportunity to develop my work by participating in a KF project someday. For an artist, the material and psychological support provides a tremendously important foundation for sustained work. Overseas activities offer a particular impetus to expand artists' visions and the scope of their work. For artists' home countries, such support augments the human resources in the arts and upgrades the national standard of cultural and artistic projects. A mature state of arts and culture is a solid source for public diplomacy. As an institution specializing in public diplomacy, the KF is in a good place to promote overseas activities in the arts, and to expand the range of arts and culture projects.