

S O R I a solo show by Sun Choi

May 28th – June 2nd 2022

The exhibition *S O R I* (sound) evokes the vividness of life via two routes: digital condensation of sounds of individuals pronouncing their own name and projection of landscape images taken through lens covered with the artist's blood drop. The Korean title refers to the human breath at the heart of their experience, from the most intimate to the most vast level (atmosphere), from being unscathed to being threatened (historical events), from the striking to the abstract (communication). *Sori* is given as a set of audible and visual facts of life which often escapes our habitual consciousness.

In 2021, with the artwork *Sori*, the Korean artist Sun Choi gave himself a particular task of gathering and assembling the voices of 20,000 inhabitants of Doksan district in Seoul pronouncing their own name. Although particular, its core idea is not new to him: allowing his works to extend the intensity of his primary aesthetic experience in reality and towards his audience and leading them to remain at the limits of metaphor. *Sori* (sound), which at the same time fills and disperses itself in the atmosphere, obliges him: the concentrated sound, emitted once every minute from 4 Bluetooth speakers, resembles the sound of thunder and falls down without any representative or favorable trace. These pronounced names speak only through the lives sensitized to sounds of life that are just as ephemeral as it is imperceptible.

Flower (2021) consists of a continued audiovisual projection of reddened images filmed with the artist's smartphone camera. Each of these images shows at different interval the progressive change of color resulting from clotting blood drop – simultaneously vivid and perishing – of the artist covering the lens. In front of the window next to the projection is the suspended transparent film sheet which eclipses the landscape of the declining district.

Butterflies (2014 - 2022) started out in 2014 as a project whose aim is to visualize each breath of immigrant workers that the artist met on the streets of Ansan, Korea. The work came about as a result of the artist's feeling of futility and nonsense regarding various social events. It brings forth a strong visual experience of human breath to do away with notional understanding of human affairs and has also been carried out in many parts of the world.

Very often Sun Choi would extract materials from real events and treat it as an undeniable fact to be brought directly into the exhibition space. The work requires our attentional and physiological engagement towards the material, allowing it to speak for the events they were extracted from. For example, in his *White Painting (Pig's Painting)*, he spreads gooey lard over multiple sheets of paper conjoined to form a large wall to tell a story of millions of pigs buried alive following the outbreak of African swine fever. Their existence having been reduced to serial numbers, Choi typewrites them in small magenta letters and lists them in his book *Magenta Painting* (2021). His insistence is upon his own inability to remain a mere spectator to the tragedy.

Hence his brutally realist view of art. Art, in his view, allows for exercising our capacities to establish a personal relationship with reality, to the point where it defamiliarizes and makes us rethink the status of our factual comprehensions of the world. Choi's method consists not only in expanding the threshold of his intuition, but also that of his understanding of the significations of the historical events whose truth can only be approached by the sense provided by the material medium as facts of experience. In his effort to extract a sense that does not lie, to do away with the idea that art and aestheticization can take precedence over experience, Choi visits the sites of real events, with the imperative of liberating himself from the phenomenological conditions to share the taste of their truth, presents and gives voice to the paradoxically aestheticized but never encrypted material of experience.

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« to where the flowers are blooming »

Collective exhibition curated by the Gwangju Biennale Foundation

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