

## ETERNITY SHOP

a solo show by **Namhee Kwon**

July 08th – August 05th 2023

I feel I discovered the past of the artist **Namhee Kwon** on the day of my visit to her exhibition “ *A Writer’s Diary* ” at the Cité des Arts in Paris in 2015. I had noticed her project “ *A Writer’s Diary* ”, which is a 295-page manuscript, in which she reproduced Virginia Woolf’s (1882 - 1941) first diary. Indeed, Namhee Kwon read many works, lived close to where Woolf lived, and through her readings, she found similarities in the appreciation of life and in thoughts, despite the temporal and physical distance between her and the writer. Kwon had thought of reliving her life, from 100 years ago, and so began to follow her way of writing her diary. It took her 8 months to complete it. Later in 2019, she published the book - diary with a purple ink writing on white paper with a publishing house.

DHLEE

### **An interview was held with Namhee Kwon on her solo show “ *Eternity Shop* ”**

DHLEE : What are the intentions of the exhibition title “ *Eternity Shop* ” ?

NH KWON : As an artist, I find the theme of time and eternity a challenging one to translate into something tangible. We might venture to the edge, but penetrating through the membrane that’s piled up like soap bubbles, and extracting something touchable, requires substantial experience and contemplation. I wanted to materialize time into something that could be physically felt. A significant part of this exhibition is akin to a store displaying fragments of time and eternity that have been transformed in this manner. Visitors can touch them, peel them away, and if they find a piece compelling, they even have the option to purchase and keep a slice of that time and eternity.

DHLEE : Your practice is in line with conceptual artists doing minimalist works from the 60’s and 70’s or surrealists of the 30’s. So what does time mean for you ?

NH KWON : To me personally, time is something that exists unchanging and undisturbed in its place. Time just is. It stands still, with no sound or scent. If you rest your thoughts, still your body, and simply gaze at the space in front of you, you can sense this unmoving time. The subtle sensation of time that does not flow as if it were flowing, seems to pass through me and also seems to go around me. I once had an international residency in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2021, where the theme was “ *Home: Being and Belonging* ”. At that time, I treated time and eternity as a home in the broader sense in my work. In a profound sense, time is our eternal homeland, where we can find comfort, our home.

DHLEE : You are a conceptual artist and what is your involvement in public artworks ?

NH KWON : I have never consciously considered that I was walking the path of public art. As an artist, I don’t deliberately work with the public message in mind. Rather, I choose the best materials, methods, and mediums that can deliver the message I want to convey. In fact, my work starts from very mundane, personal places, yet these messages often bear universal characteristics, leading them to be perceived as public messages that speak to everyone.

# galerie dohyanglee

DHLEE : Concerning the artworks “ *Days and Days* ” ( 100 issues, 2023 ) and “ *Empty Notes* ” ( Sewing and drawing on fabric, 50 pieces, 2001-2023 ) could you please describe them ?

NH KWON : Starting with my work “ *Empty Notes* ”, this piece was first created in 2001 for my Master's degree graduation exhibition at Goldsmiths College. Because I began art with a major in fiber arts as a beginner artist, I am sensitive to the emotions that fabric materials convey. I wanted to express the emotions emitted by the paper notes we use, and how the act of writing on them opens up the possibility of human thought interaction into eternity. “ *Days and Days* ”, on the other hand, is a recent work, a result of 20 years since then, presenting another impression of mine on eternity. As I mentioned before, time, to me, seems to flow but is actually something that remains unchanged in its place. As can be seen in these two pieces, my personal time over the past 20 years converges here, and they all become the present again.

DHLEE : What are your main areas of interest for now and could we know more about them ?

NH KWON : A theme that continues to attract my interest, including recent times, is something beyond the phenomena presented to us by the ever-changing and moving material world. That could be eternity, time, or inherent nature when it comes to humans or nature.

**Namhee Kwon**, born in 1971, is a Korean conceptual artist who lives and works in Paris. She graduated in 1997 from Hongik University in Seoul and then graduated from Goldsmiths College in London in 2002. She has exhibited at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris for the exhibition “ *A Writer's Diary* ”, in 2015 and 2019 at the Tenderbooks in London and as well as at the inaugural exhibition “ *Rencontrons nous à la gare* ” at the MUDAC PLATEFORME 10 in Lausanne, Switzerland in 2022. Namhee Kwon is interested in the literary representation and poetic impressions of everyday life through a visual language, and using text and symbols to alter the visual perceptions of her environment.

This exhibition has been realized with the sponsorship of Gangwon State and Gangwon Art & Culture Foundation in South Korea.

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