

About the Artists

Mackerel Safranski (b. 1984) reconstructs sensations and events from everyday observations into an ambiguous yet strange pictorial surface. Having consistently explored pencil drawing as a medium for expressing the artist's perception of the body through densely composed graphite lines, Safranski began to fully embrace painting four to five years ago, expanding her practice beyond drawing. In this painterly shift, she experiments with the possibility of a more descriptive and original portrayal of a scene through the materiality of the paint.

She has been using graphite to express her delicate sensitivity and perception regarding the body through firm, densely composed lines. The *Body Image* series, a representative work of her career, is an imaginary depiction of multilayered conditions concerning the female body. While her early drawing repetitively featured imagery of body parts exposed to danger, this eventually evolved into a female imagery in search of the unknown or embarking on a journey. The imagery of the body, previously illustrated in black and white, has morphed into a more intuitive vocabulary using color and materiality as she embraces the medium of paint.

The new works presented in this exhibition extend the work showcased in her recent solo exhibition *Room Tone* (2024). Listening to various room tone sounds that fill interior spaces, she imagined a spatial environment and bodies placed in it where a "room" is also a space for the body that undergoes the cycle of birth, life, and death. Imbuing the enigmatic scene with powerful palette and tactile materiality, Safranski develops a painting animated by vital energy.

Seeun Kim (b. 1989) has captured the ever-shifting environment, constantly transformed by new urban planning announcements, through a visual-perceptual and embodied experience on large-scale paintings. Kim's work reflects her consistent inquiry into a painterly method for conveying an environment undergoing artificial changes over time. In particular, she has focused on the space of a tunnel. The tunnel serves not only as an intriguing motif for the embodiment of the dramatic changes and kinetic movements generated by the redevelopment—through the physical experience of entering a tunnel—this space also reveals that contemporary landscapes are no longer mere visual objects but a sensorial fabric that encircles the whole body.

In this exhibition, the artist presents a series of works revolving around the tunnel connecting Bundang-gu and Pangyo and a hanging garden formed above the

structure. Observing the long process of moving a part of the highway underground and transforming the upper part into a garden, Kim reflected on how she could convey the environments undergoing artificial changes over time through her painting. This involved attaching transfer papers on canvas to directly reflect the information or images related to the redevelopment project; elsewhere, she employed bold and dynamic compositions of the picture plane to reveal the embodied space.

Meanwhile, three large-scale paintings—*Tunnel* (2022), *Collected sinew* (2022), and *The face of flipping torso* (2022)—are painterly translations of the artist's inquiries into the body, where she explores questions concerning inaccessible places by focusing inversely on the internal organs of the body. Arranging body parts such as ribs, shoulders, and organs and a portion of a skeletal frame in a way reminiscent of urban infrastructure, Kim creates a unique pictorial scene in which the external landscape overlaps with a visceral portrait. Also, using images of organs or the interior of blood vessels as a kind of a tunnel, her work examines the intersection between the body and the urban environment.

Sinae Yoo (b. 1985) has worked across painting, sculpture, and video that interweave intricate narratives around the themes of the machine, technology, spirituality, and the body with issues of alienation and subjugation under capitalism. She regards painting as a medium that evokes the senses of the "real object" in the age of hypermedia. Painting conveys a sense of "real-ness" as it is created by hand at a slow pace and is rooted in embodied tactile materiality. Seeking to highlight this quality, Yoo has continued to develop a classical style that reflects rigorous craftsmanship.

In her work's narrative, emotions that contradict each other—such as profanity, abjection, cynicism, sublime, and humor—multiply and intersect, probing the sentiment of anxiety shared by contemporary man. Centered on the imagery of hybrid body, the *Petrichor* series (2023) envisions a powerful, transcendental figure that defies the constraints of capitalism. The *Pocalyeap* series (2024-) tackles head-on the phenomenon of "post-truth" found increasingly within an environment where the production, distribution, and exhaustion of images are accelerated. A fictitious fashion brand that the artist devised for her video work *Derivative Messiah* (2024), "Pocalyeap" appropriates the cult-inspired aesthetics of merchandising.

Within the *Pocalyeap* series, the acrylic and watercolor drawings titled *Art Student (POCALYAEP)* borrows the ways in which animation and game culture consumes the seductive body and pose of a female figure. Yet,

on closer inspection, a deformed and damaged body subversively unveils the grotesque faith in female sexuality and physical beauty. While the figure placed in front of a pastoral background evokes the conventions of the Virgin Mary or portraits of the Renaissance period, the grotesquely deformed female body recalls the mutated version of the 21st century Messianism in *Derivative Messiah*—a portrait of contemporary man on the verge of collapsing under the pressure of secularization.

Eunsae Lee (b. 1987) has sought a painting that overcomes monolithic narrative by looking critically at figures and events routinely objectified by the media. Living and working in the Netherlands for the past few years, the artist experienced an emotional shift in the process of acclimating to the new environment. When faced with an unfamiliar environment, she realized that she was drifting—perceiving only the surface of things rather than forming a deep understanding of or connection with them.

Taking this as her cue, she began collecting all of the remnants—a stain, a misunderstanding, a bruise, a scar, traces or spilled crumbs, and leftover food—and translating them into paintings. Objects and moments easily objectified by media still frequently appear as subjects of painting. Yet, while Lee's delicate brush strokes depict these clashes and slippages on the surface, they delve into the origin of these emotions such as rage, frustration, and boredom that lie beneath.

Meanwhile, the ceramic work that she began in the Netherlands reveals the artist's working process that involves creating a skull and letting the glazes flow and pool. This offers a new way of presenting smooth surface quality and sensations different from paintings that emphasize the texture of paint through gentle brush strokes. Iconographically, the skull symbolizes *vanitas*, or the transience of life. Connecting this to today's everyday waste that is so easily consumed and discarded, Lee hints at the fleeting cycle of existence and inevitable disappearance of things. On her canvases, iconic symbols such as a skull, fruits, water, and debris are often juxtaposed or layered as images of death and consumption. Meanwhile, in her *Mite* series, Lee conveys a trivial yet tenacious sense of survival.

Byungkoo Jeon (b. 1985) captures familiar yet subtly strange quotidian moments and scenes and transfers them to his paintings. In his early works, Jeon expressed melancholic emotions in images collected from movies, the internet, and magazines, as well as photographs containing the artist's personal memories or experiences, through acrylic paintings composed of quick brushstrokes. The generally subdued tone and calm, somber palette accentuated these emotions. Focusing on the composition

of a pictorial plane based on basic formal elements and the flatness of the canvas, Jeon adopts the environment and situation surrounding the work, and the emotions they evoke.

Recently, he has explored oil paintings that build up multiple layers as a means to visualize the flow of time. Through this accumulation, he transforms fleeting emotions into materialized time that appears permanently fixed. As he spends more time with his works, the artist focuses more on the moment of looking at the subject and his own subjective senses rather than the object of the painting.

While Jeon's paintings often start from a photograph, he reconstructs the subject as a new object in space imagined anew by the artist rather than a faithful reproduction. In other words, even a subject with specific characteristics—from the form and color to the space in which it was originally placed—becomes recontextualized through the artist's subjective interpretations. This trait is also manifested in *Her* (2023), which depicts a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois that he encountered at an art museum in Berlin. In this work, Bourgeois's sculpture serves less as a work of art that exists for the public than as a unique object that has been personalized and reinterpreted through Jeon's senses.

Yiji Jeong (b. 1994) seeks to understand life through painting. While the artist consistently asks herself what and why she paints, her goal is clear, which is to make images that move the heart. She captures the landscapes and objects she has seen, as well as thoughts and stories about the people around her, creating them on her canvases with straightforward yet whimsical compositions and animated brushstrokes. Notably, Jeong first captures fleeting emotions concerning her subject with her smartphone camera and then translates them onto paintings. While her paintings start from snapshots, she strives to reach painterly authenticity by pursuing lively yet decisive brushstrokes and a solid quality of formal completeness. Often using bold framing or maximal scale, Jeong's paintings reveal the artist's candid emotions through simple yet bold brushstrokes that shun technical artifice.

The large-scale work *It's tomorrow* (2025), measuring 460 cm in width, depicts the overwhelming emotions and anticipation of the future upon witnessing the sunrise over the East Sea with her family. Explicitly expressing the joy of sunrise using a simple gradient over a large canvas, the work reveals Jeong's unique sense of emotional authenticity and pictorial condensation.

Text by Sunhui Lee (Curator)