

**Kukje Gallery Group Exhibition *A Snowflake***

Press Conference: May 25 (Thurs.), 2017, 1PM at Kukje Gallery K1

Exhibition Dates: May 25 – July 2, 2017

Venue: Kukje Gallery K1

Guest Curator: Seewon Hyun (Co-Director of Audio Visual Pavilion, Seoul)

Participating Artists: Choi Yun, GIM IKHYUN, Mire Lee, Junghae Park



*The real magic isn't the snowflake itself. What's truly fascinating is that our cosmos doesn't stop at creating a handful of mildly complicated forms—it is rich enough to enumerate countless complexities and our planet is merely a speck in this universe.*

– Ian Stewart

Kukje Gallery is pleased to announce *A Snowflake*, a group exhibition featuring four emerging artists, from May 25 to July 2. Beginning with the 2013 exhibition *The Song of Slant Rhymes* Kukje Gallery has been dedicated to curator driven shows that present young, up-and-coming artists, fostering their growth and encouraging their activities.

In keeping with this tradition, Kukje Gallery presents *A Snowflake*, an exhibition devoted to four exceptional young artists: Choi Yun, GIM IKHYUN, Mire Lee, and Junghae Park, and organized by guest curator Seewon Hyun, Co-Director of Audio Visual Pavilion. An exhibition catalogue will be published in collaboration with Audio Visual Pavilion and Moonsik Kang, a graphic designer based in New York.

*A Snowflake* is inspired by the book *What Shape is a Snowflake?* (2001) by Ian Stewart, a British mathematician and popular-science writer. A pioneer of catastrophe theory, Professor Stewart is also well known for his research into symmetries of dynamical systems, such as pattern formation in nature and chaos theory.

Stewart is the author of *Nature's Numbers* (1995), *The Collapse of Chaos: Discovering Simplicity in a Complex World* (1994) and *What Shape is a Snowflake?*, among other publications. *What Shape is a Snowflake?* analyzes the hexagonal patterns found in snowflakes and their molecular structure—a phenomenon he compares to the growth principles seen in spider webs.

In his analysis, Stewart takes a step beyond merely analyzing the snowflake's shape, inquiring after the true nature of its diverse structures and questioning how it is possible that every flake is unique. His conclusion is that, after all, "a snowflake is just snowflake-shaped." The shape of each snowflake is affected by an infinite number of conditions, but the lesson of Stewart's observation is that life is symbolized by the delicate structures of the crystalline and how they dictate form. Through his metaphysical question, "what shape is a snowflake?," Stewart examines his own role as an observer, underlining how the process of investigation becomes an analogy of time and curiosity.

Each of the four artists participating in *A Snowflake* – Choi Yun, GIM IKHYUN, Mire Lee, and Junghae Park – will introduce both new and important works that reflect their generation through their unique empirical and experiential observations. The curatorial framework of this exhibition closely examines how young contemporary artists "perceive the world" and furthermore, "how an object is perceived" and "what shape an object takes."

According to the curator, the snowflake in the title of the show stands in contrast to "a snowman," a familiar object understood and recognized by all. Whereas a snowman is an object that symbolizes charm and seasonal festivities (and is an instantly recognizable icon), a snowflake is a fragment and an impalpable substance, a material and a metaphor for something that cannot be intuitively identified. It is this balance between the familiar and intangible that frames these young artists.

The conceptual ideas and practices used by each of the four artists rest on their common approach to observation in the lived world. The artists' unique methods for creating their individual methodologies are based on these experiences and empirical analysis. *A Snowflake* examines the ways in which conceptual paradox manifests in the contemporary world, for example, how fragments constitute a whole.

**Audio Visual Pavilion** (hereafter AVP) is an independent exhibition venue located in the Jongno district in Seoul. The space, a *hanok* (Korean traditional house) renovated in 2013, is jointly directed by editor Inyong An and curator Seewon Hyun. The pair met as founders of *Walking Magazine*, an independent magazine launched in 2006. In exhibitions such as *no mountain high enough* (2013) and *MOVE & SCALE* (2015), the collaborators have created a visual art program where ideas generated by artists are in dialogue with curators.

**Seewon Hyun** is the curator of AVP, as well as an independent curator. She graduated from Ewha Womans University with a BA degrees in Korean Language and Literature and Art History, later receiving an MA from Korea National University of Arts with a thesis on Korean contemporary art. She launched the independent publication *Walking Magazine* with Inyong An and Sara Hwang in 2006, and published seven issues of the magazine. As a curator, Hyun curated exhibitions including *Museum Route* (2016) at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Gwacheon, *Human Scale* (co-curator, 2014) at Ilmin Museum of Art in Seoul, and *Chunsoo Mart 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor* (2011 and 2012) at National Theater Company of Korea and Festival Bom in Seoul. Hyun has also published several books on curating and contemporary art and image, such as *Extremes of Design* (2010), *Object Excursion* (2014) and *Speaking with Empty Hands* (2017).

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GIM IKHYUN, *Raptured*, 2016, digital inkjet print, sound, 40 x 50 cm (8 pieces)  
Courtesy of the artist. Image provided by Kukje Gallery.

**GIM IKHYUN** (b. 1985) uses research and archival practices utilizing smartphones and apps as well as photography. The artist takes photographs that serve as archives for the luminescent materiality that exists on screens, utilizing specific places and events in order to capture the national identity reflected in Korean society. According to the artist, these online images frame “what actually exists—what is seen and what is not?”

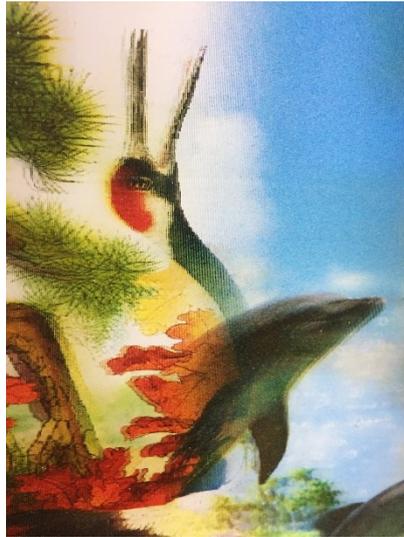
In the exhibition, GIM IKHYUN exhibits his series titled *Raptured* (2016) along with new works. In *Raptured*, GIM uses photography to explore the often invisible, eschatological beliefs of religious movements in Korea, focusing on the 1990s. The artist probes the psychological underpinning of what people of the time wished to see; he likens this desire to a “vanishing point” that remained a dormant fixture in a series of historical events in Korean society of the 1990s. GIM attempts to capture what emerges and becomes visible through these events, and what remains veiled. *Raptured* suggests a reinterpretation of GIM’s earlier series titled *LINK PATH LAYER* (2016). In his own writing, the artist reflects on the series:

*From the 1980s to the 1990s in Korea, a series of events resulting from eschatological beliefs occurred. The best-known example is the prediction of the Rapture of Dami Mission. Those awaiting the Rapture established and believed in a spatial-temporal dimension that was different from that of reality, but the future they wanted never came to be. “The world was the same as the day before the Rapture, but many things happened.”*

*The collapse of the Uam Apartment in Cheongju, the derailment and overturning of the Mugunghwa train at the Gupo Station, the crash of Asiana Airlines flight to Mokpo, the sinking of the MV Seohae in 1993, the breakdown of Sungsu Bridge, the Chungju cruise ship fire, the Ahyeondong city gas explosion in 1994, the Daegu city gas explosion, the Sampoong Department Store collapse in 1995, the Incheon hof fire, the Sealand Youth Training Center fire in 1999...*

*Can the Rapture of Dami Mission be merely considered a public outrage caused by deluded believers? Wouldn’t unconditional belief be a predictable outcome based on the communal sentiment of a marginalized group in any society or large church? What would the future look like if everything happened as they predicted?*

– excerpt from KIM IKHYUN’s writing



Choi Yun, *liquid crystal bubble future display* (detail), 2017, lenticular, aluminum, enamel paint, PET film, 122 x 244 cm  
Courtesy of the artist. Image provided by Kukje Gallery.

**Choi Yun** (b. 1989) appropriates images collected by Koreans in the present day as well as materials taken from the on/offline worlds. Her works span video, performance, installation and sculpture, mapping a unique spatial-temporal realm with signature speed and clarity. For this exhibition she has created a two-dimensional work consisting of smaller lenticular images in order to illustrate a point where the “past” and “online” worlds converge. The artist employs the technology of the lenticular image, capturing the phenomenon where a two-dimensional image becomes a three-dimensional; challenging human perception of imagery, her work explores how archetypal images of nature, animals and artifacts reverse from one to the other.

*It can be said that computerized images or the lenticular, where multiple images display repetitive movement, are the smallest unit of animation. In both cases, miniscule fractions of time infinitely repeat themselves, which allude to a closed circuit, a snare, a hamster wheel, a state of walking without moving, a living body without a soul, a taxidermy, a lag. Yet, people are still enchanted by this repetitive A-to-B movement.*

*The lenticular sets itself apart from computerized images because it is able to shift the audience's gaze. It is in a state of immobility, but manually comes to life with a gaze in motion. Is the instance of moving a stagnant object an illusion, or a deception? A subject can be seen in countless different ways, depending on external factors such as light, or the angle from which it is viewed. Despite all this, the fascinating human ability to see and perceive objects helps to realize that there is only one subject being looked at. However, human vision is profoundly limited and challenged. This is the reason why the lenticular's shallow betrayal, indicating what you've seen is not what you've seen, results in perpetual surprise.*

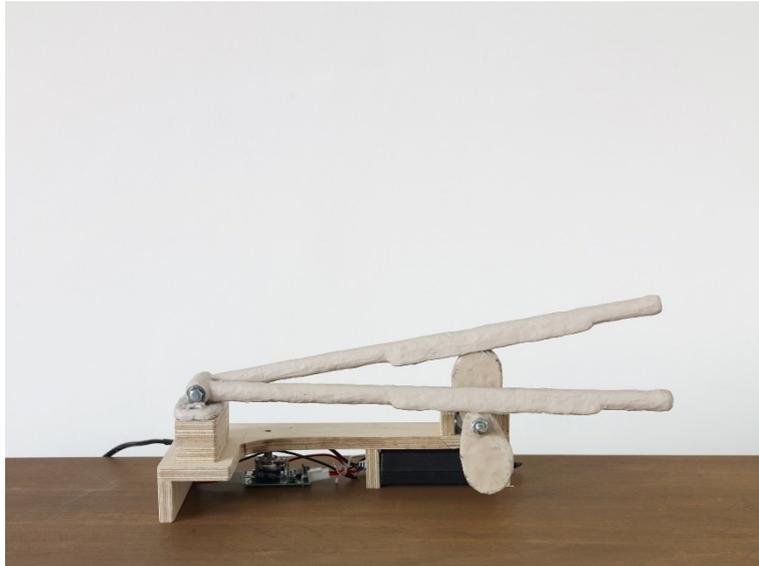
– excerpt from Choi Yun's writing



Junghae Park, *No desert & no cry (#2)*, 2017, acrylic on linen, 162.2 x 130 cm  
Courtesy of the artist. Image provided by Kukje Gallery.

**Junghae Park's** (b. 1989) practice is based on the question, "how can we construct and maintain an ecosystem in a world of artificiality?" Organizing a set of narratives that refuse to coexist on the same canvas, the artist begins her compositions by placing points, lines and planes in a way that predicts how these stories will evolve together. The straight lines, curves and frames adhere to the surface, minimizing their three-dimensionality. Her new works can be seen as a substitution for what she calls a "slow and detailed" depiction of the movements in the artist's desired world. Park's canvases initially seem to be organized around a selection of narratives but the possibility of the narrative lasting is slim, just as a film can be cut into pieces.

In her new piece *Kommt!+* (2017), the artist imagines a scene where the painting speaks to its audience, instead of the audience approaching the painting. In another painting titled *Friends* (2017), Park's friends, who are outside of the frame and therefore unseen to the viewer, are walking towards a tree in the center of the canvas. The artist has also depicted fragments of the information her friends are about to encounter during their walk, encouraging the audience to "find hidden pictures" within the work. Familiar symbols such as a drop of water and a tear symbolize a carnal and physical metaphor in an artificial world, asking how humans can manage to continue to embrace visual meaning when our reality has been denuded by the onslaught of online imagery.



Mire Lee, *Things with Bones*, 2016, plasticine, motor, and various mixed media on found object, 15 × 7 × 38 cm  
Courtesy of the artist. Image provided by Kukje Gallery.

**Mire Lee** (b. 1988) explores the inner motives that exist in the properties and materials of sculpture as well as the kinetic energy they contain. By experimenting with the drive and vitality, charm and sentimentality, and volatility of three-dimensional works, her sculptures frame the question of how to solve the problem of the “self.” In this exhibition, the artist will display her acclaimed work *Thing with Bones* (2016-2017), along with newer works *Hysteria*, *Elegance*, *Catharsis: the Islands* (2017) and *My Dog* (2017), which depict a mental imagery where the “self” collides with the energy of the other.

*Hysteria*, *Elegance*, *Catharsis: the Islands* is a series of sculptures that shows the artist accepting the challenge of “creating/sculpture,” experimenting with how each of these sculptures reveals specific concepts and sentiments. The sculptures, each an expression of sentiments indicated in the title, will be placed throughout the exhibition space, evoking a grouping of small islands. The work includes *Elegance* – expressed in a trajectory of a curved line – *Hysteria* – a nimble arrangement of ironwork – and *Catharsis* – an illustration of human sensation and its fluctuation as seen through a selection of signage extracted from an erotic Japanese cartoon. The three chapters of this series are revealed in different forms, suggesting the moment when creative “energy” is harnessed and its subsequent distortion.