

Homepage

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And, It last part 1 2024 / Chinese paper, wire, projection mapping. / Variable installation

With the memory of escaping from that 'anxiety of oblivion', I am going to meet you that I never knew before and remember you in my way through my art.

Now, to you in front of me

When I was just starting to work as an Artist.

I had nothing left but a friend who was willing to spend his time at any time. Every night during that time of the year, without knowing what to do, I dragged a cart that had broken even the wheels along a dirt road without streetlights and collected abandoned woods to make something.

Although it was boring and painful to continue something without purpose. If I didn't do that, I endured the time to escape from oblivion by myself with daily labor because I felt like my existence would disappear without a trace in this world.

As the time of such patience approached for a year, I challenged Taiwan's residency, which I was knew by chance with only one of the first works I wanted to express about my "anxiety of existence," and across the sea, PAIR readily told me that they willing to give me their place.

And the era of Covid-19 that followed gave me four years to grow as an artist, who was immersed in vague expectations. In the meantime, I spent the given time for refined my own world through various art projects in various residences that gave me opportunities in Korea.

And then, I start a three-month period in Kaohsiung where remembered me who was nobody.

With the memory of escaping from that 'anxiety of oblivion', I am going to meet you that I never knew before and remember you in my way through my art.

And I hope that you will meet another you in the exhibition hall and that moment will be left as your new memory.

At the end,

The moment you and I met in this strange place,

And the minute you face that memory,

I hope it will be left as a warm memory to you

I will

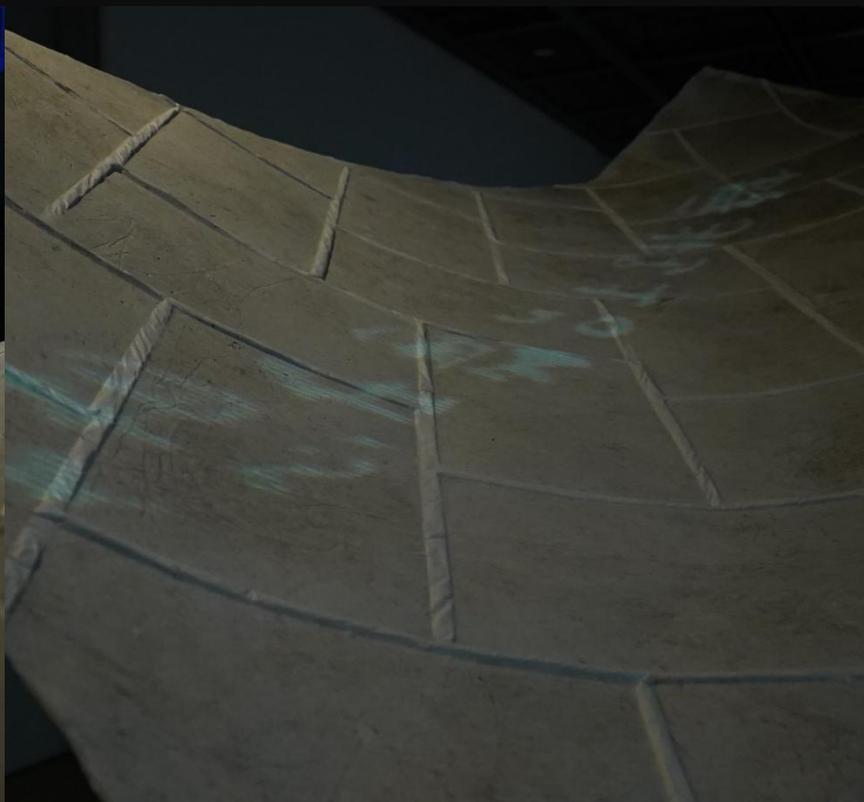
remember you.







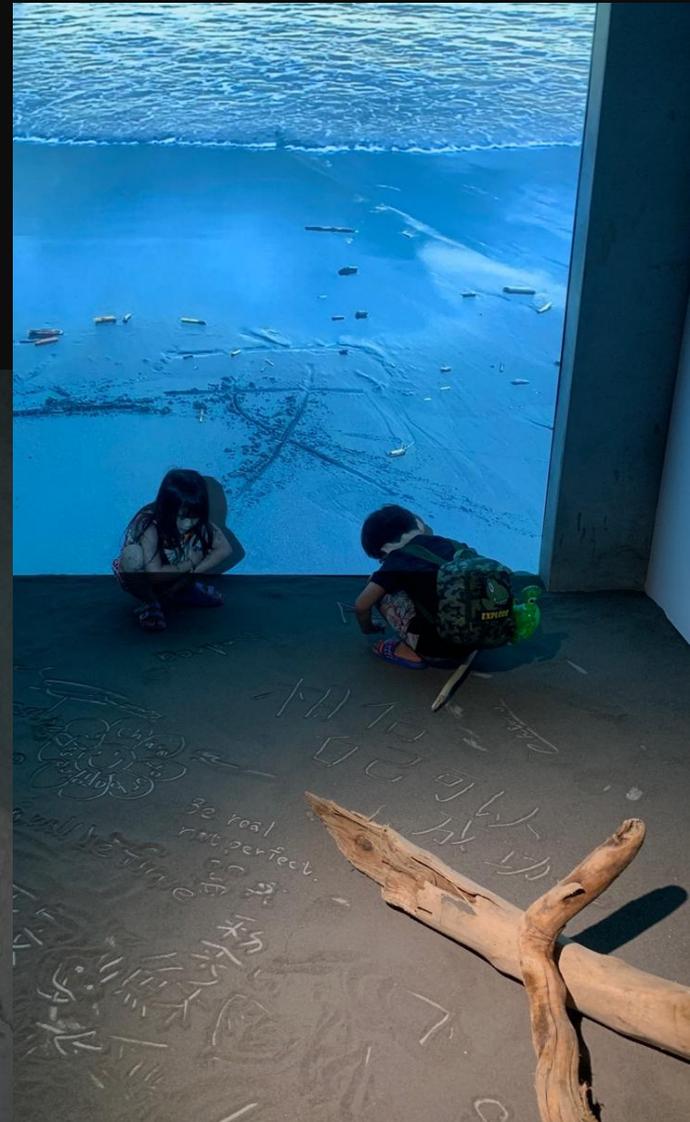
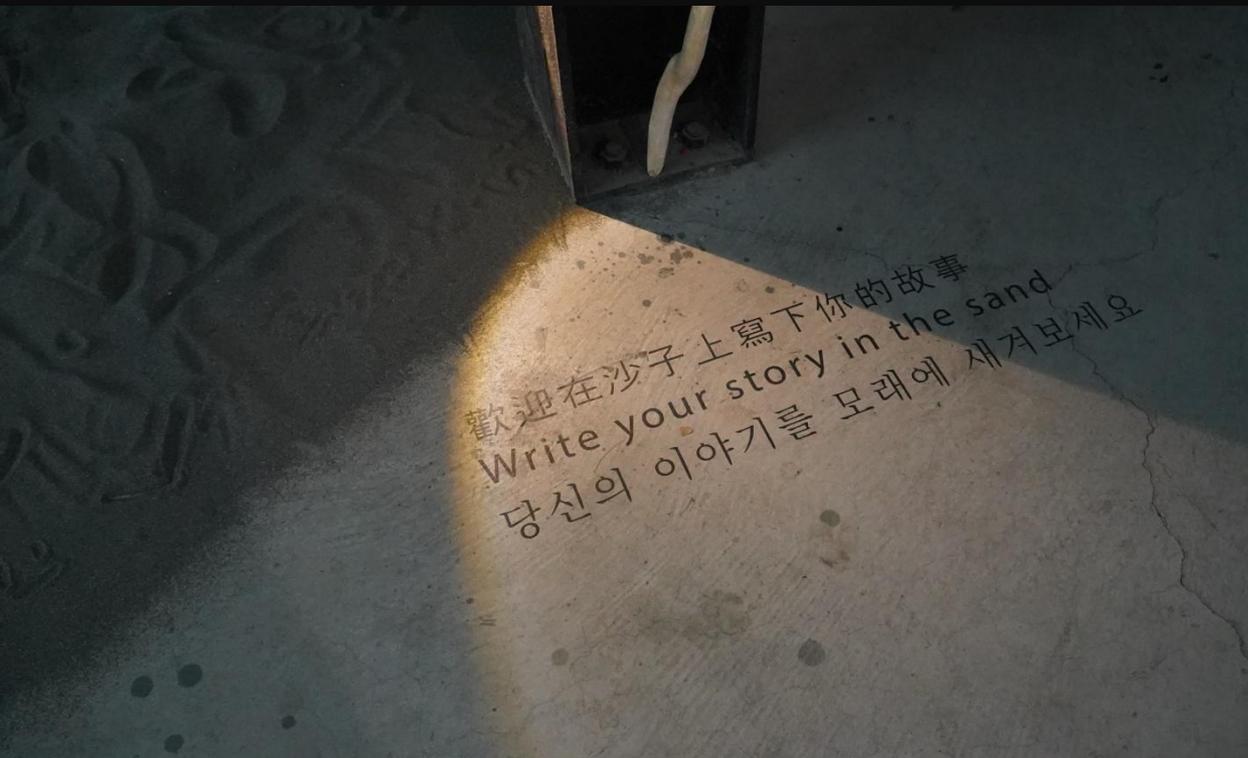


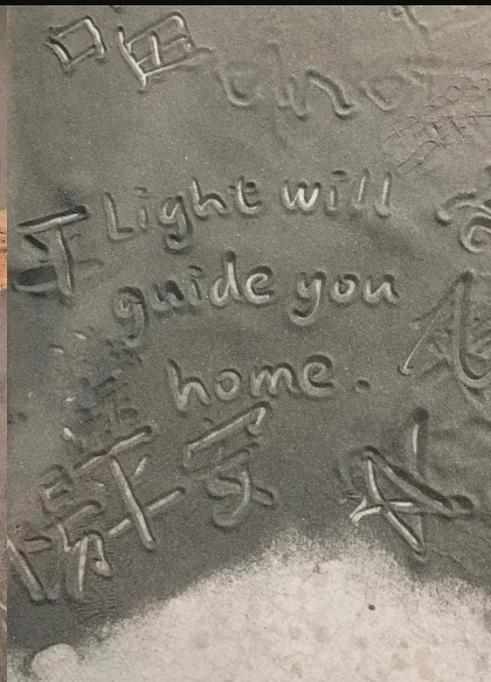
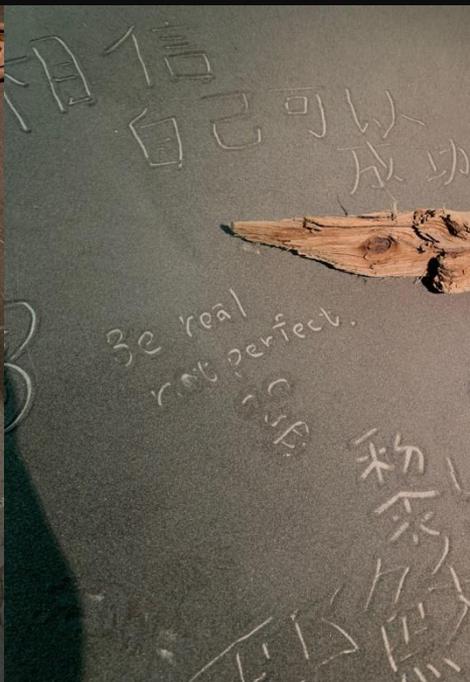
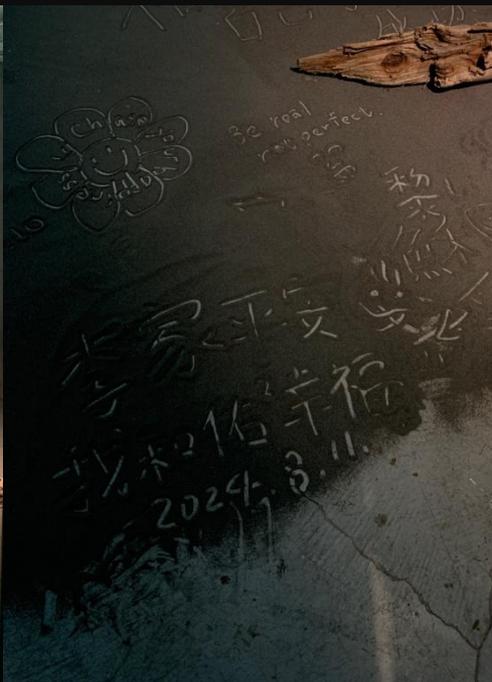




And, It last part 2- 2024 / Single channel video, sand and wood collected from Qijin island, / Variable installation
Your story may quickly disappear in the endless waves. However, you will try not to forget it. Just as it used to be and will be.

Video link https://youtu.be/_KFRwoyVpPk





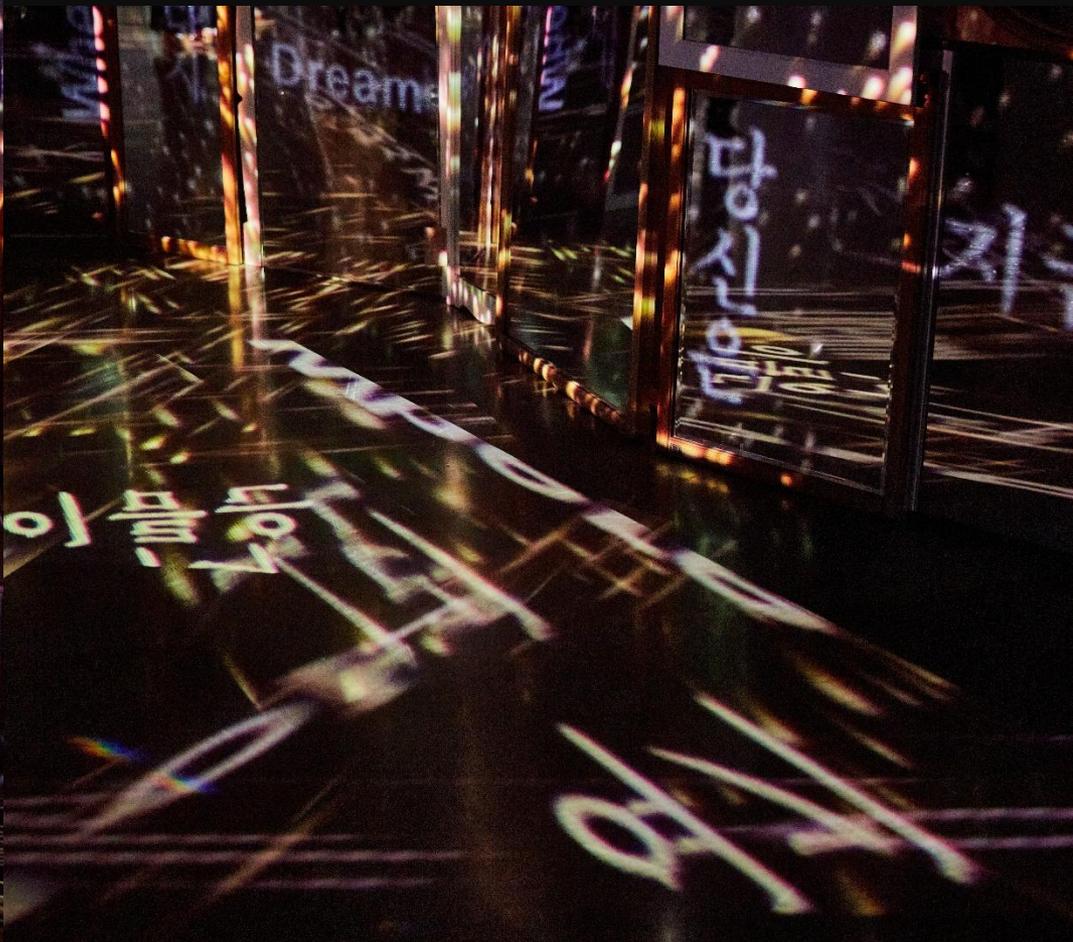
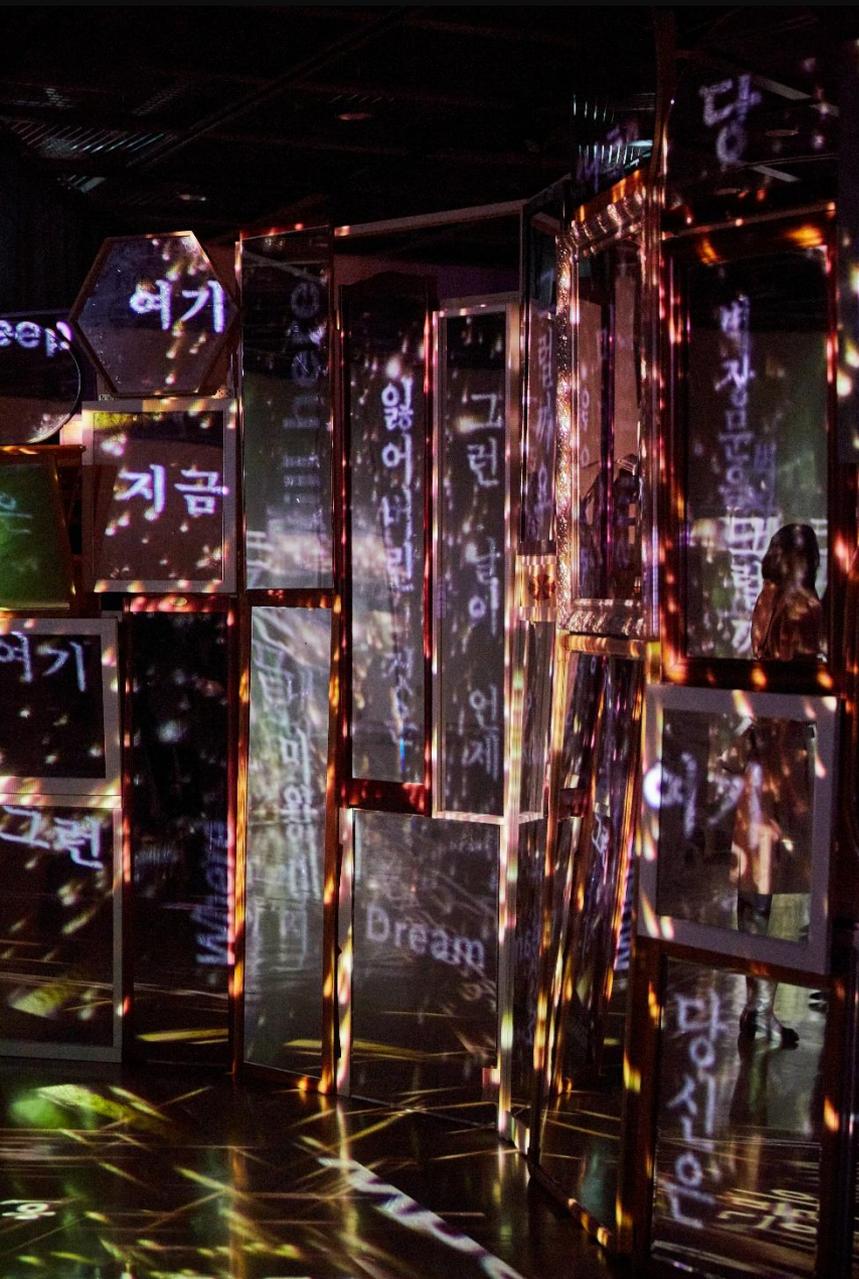


Oblivion,Imprinted- 2021 / Projection mapping on 150 mirrors collected from citizens, stories. / 20MX18M H=3M

The frame that contained someone's present flashes the signal of existence and fills the space. Various life around us passes through our bodies without being recognized.

Exhibition VR link <http://my.matterport.com/show/?m=zYoQr46qeMf>



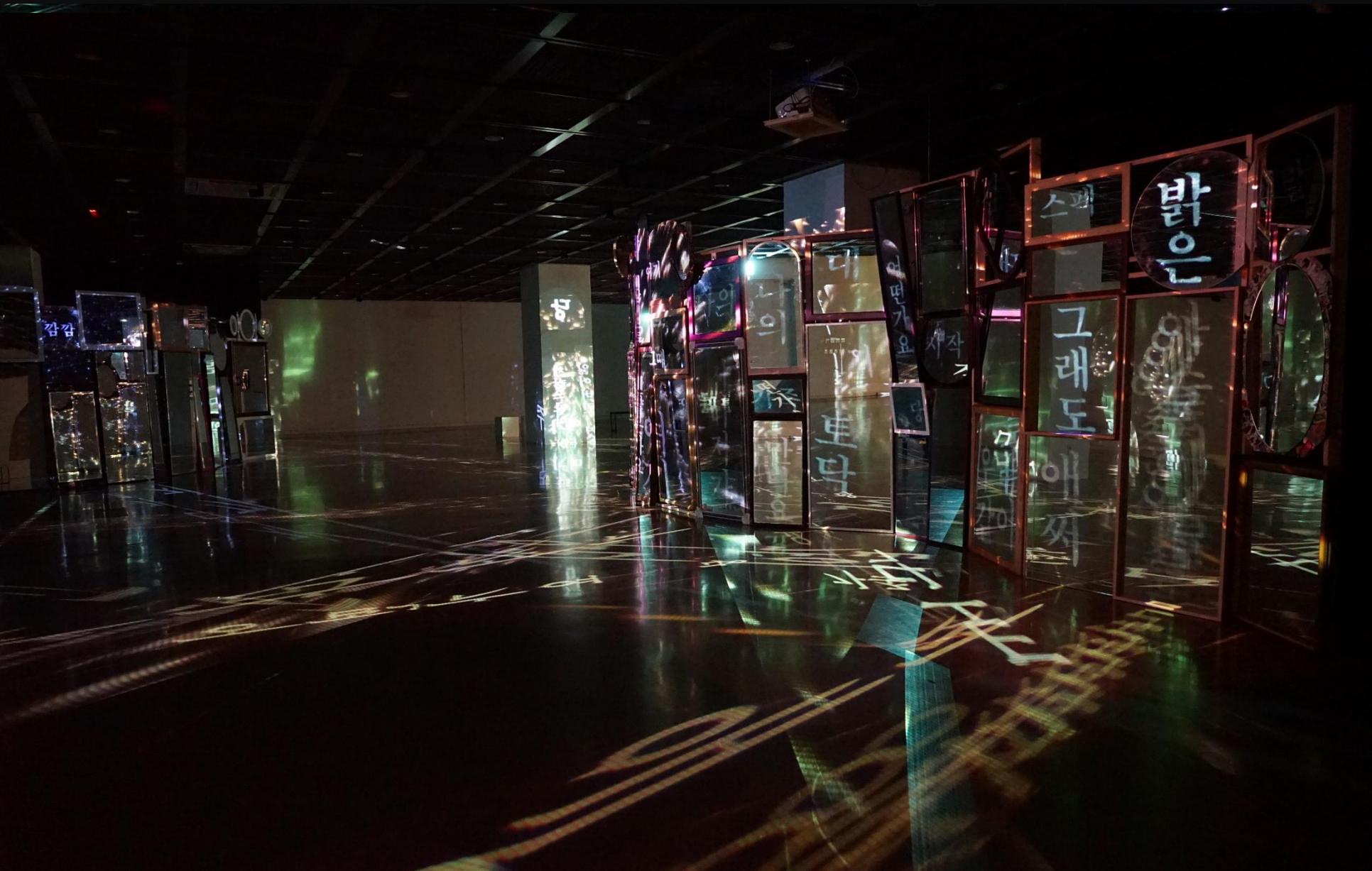


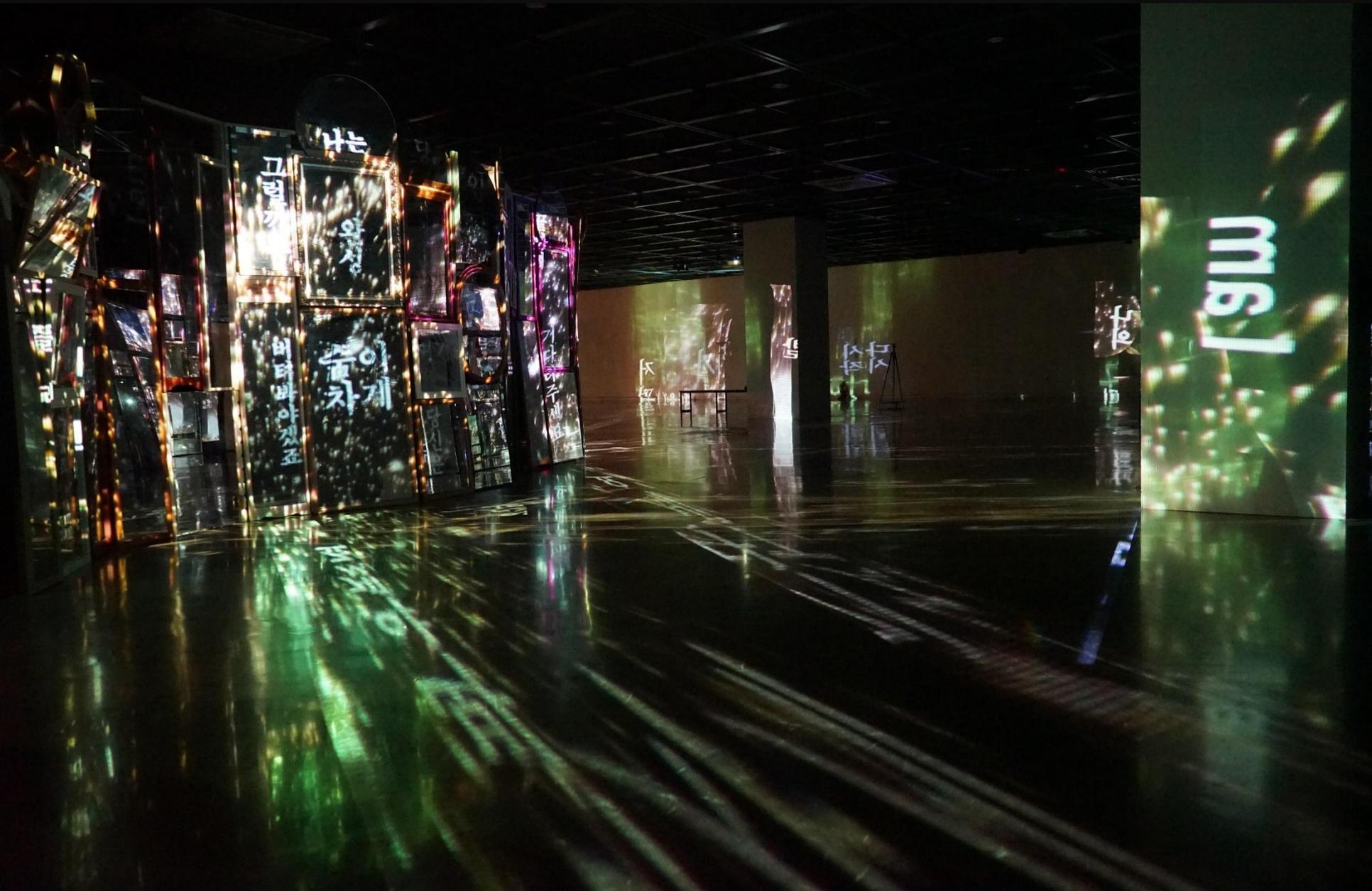


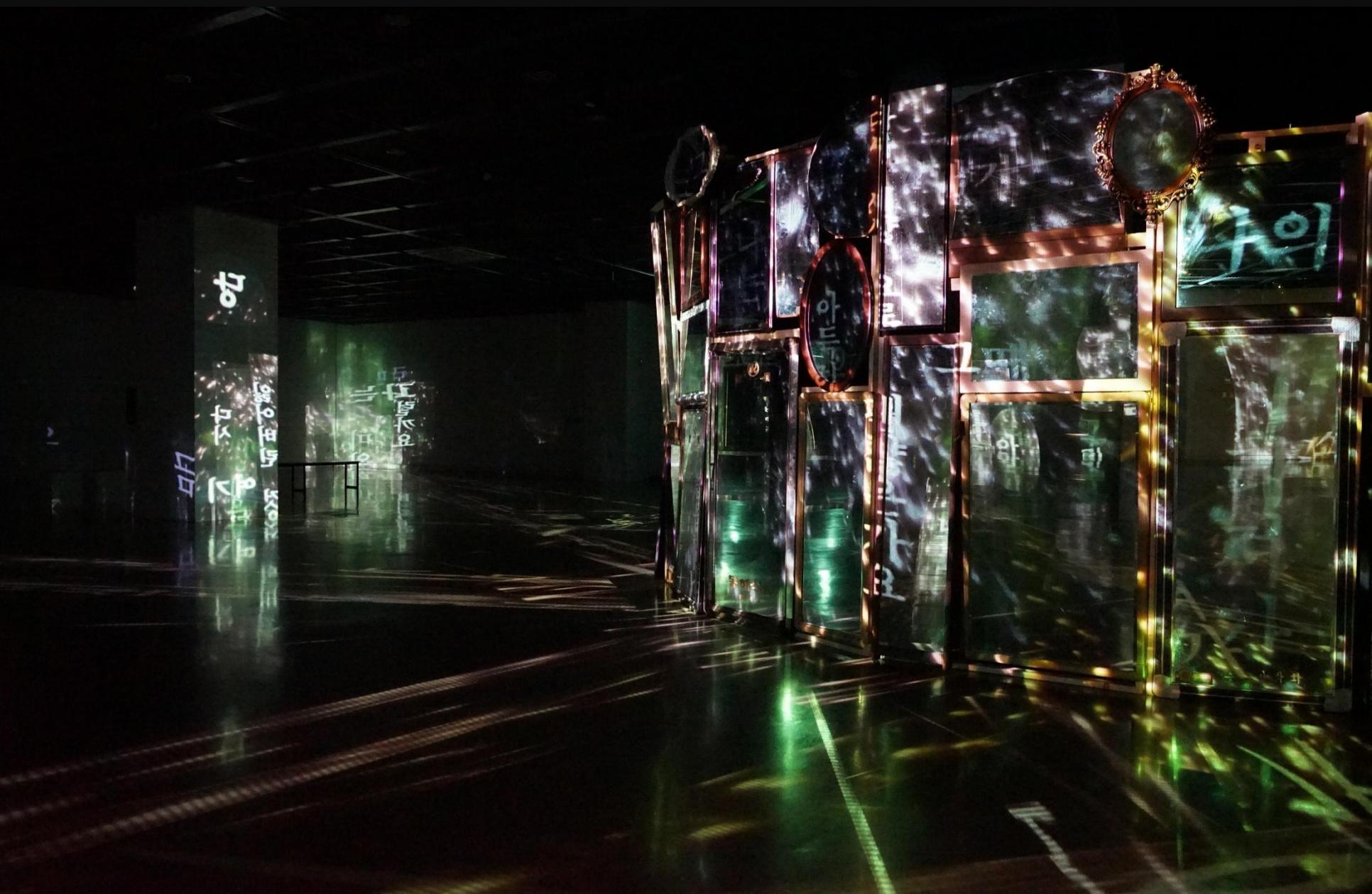
Oblivion, Imprinted- 2021 / Projection mapping on 150 mirrors collected from citizens, stories. / 20MX18M H=3M

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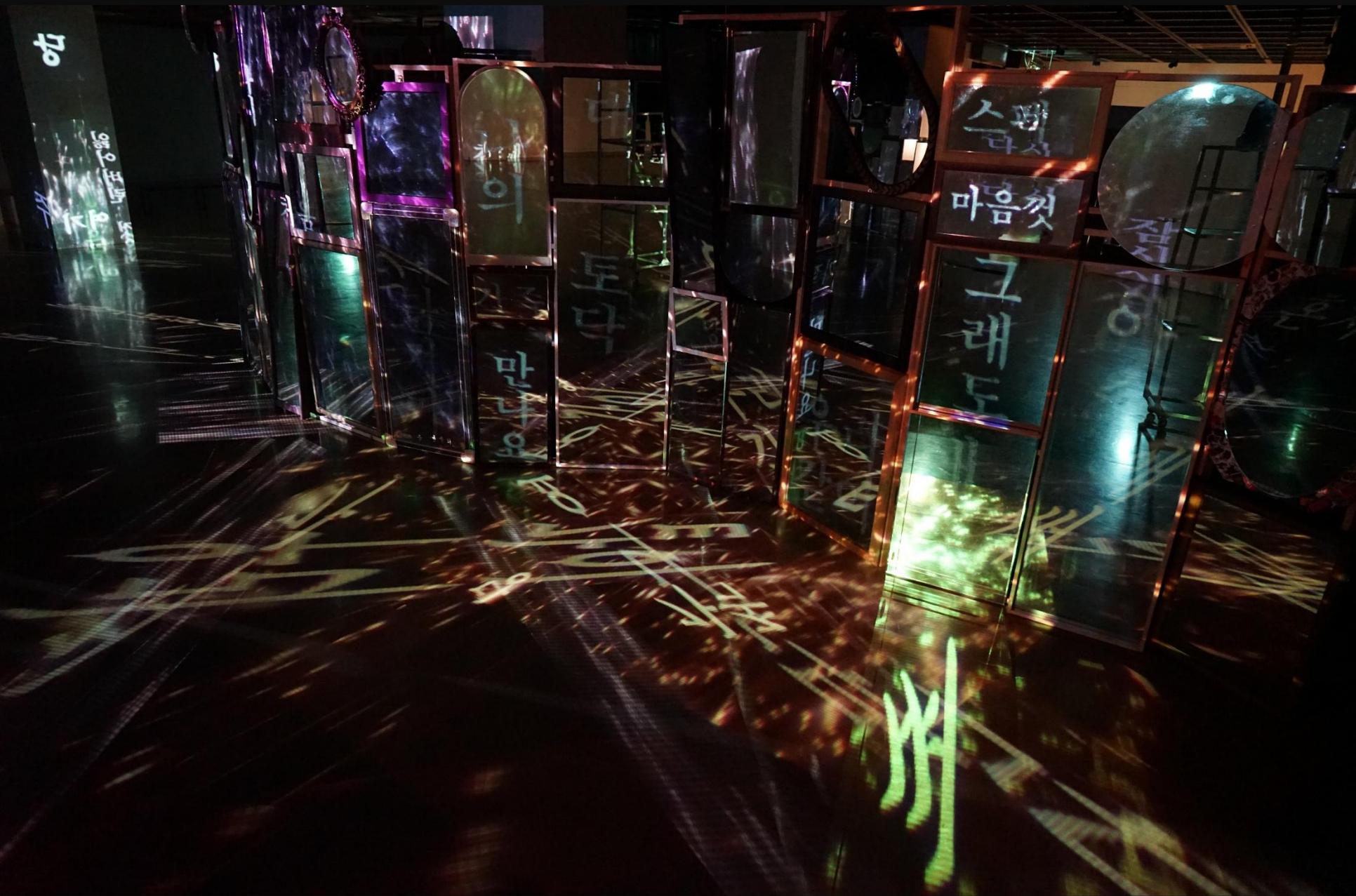
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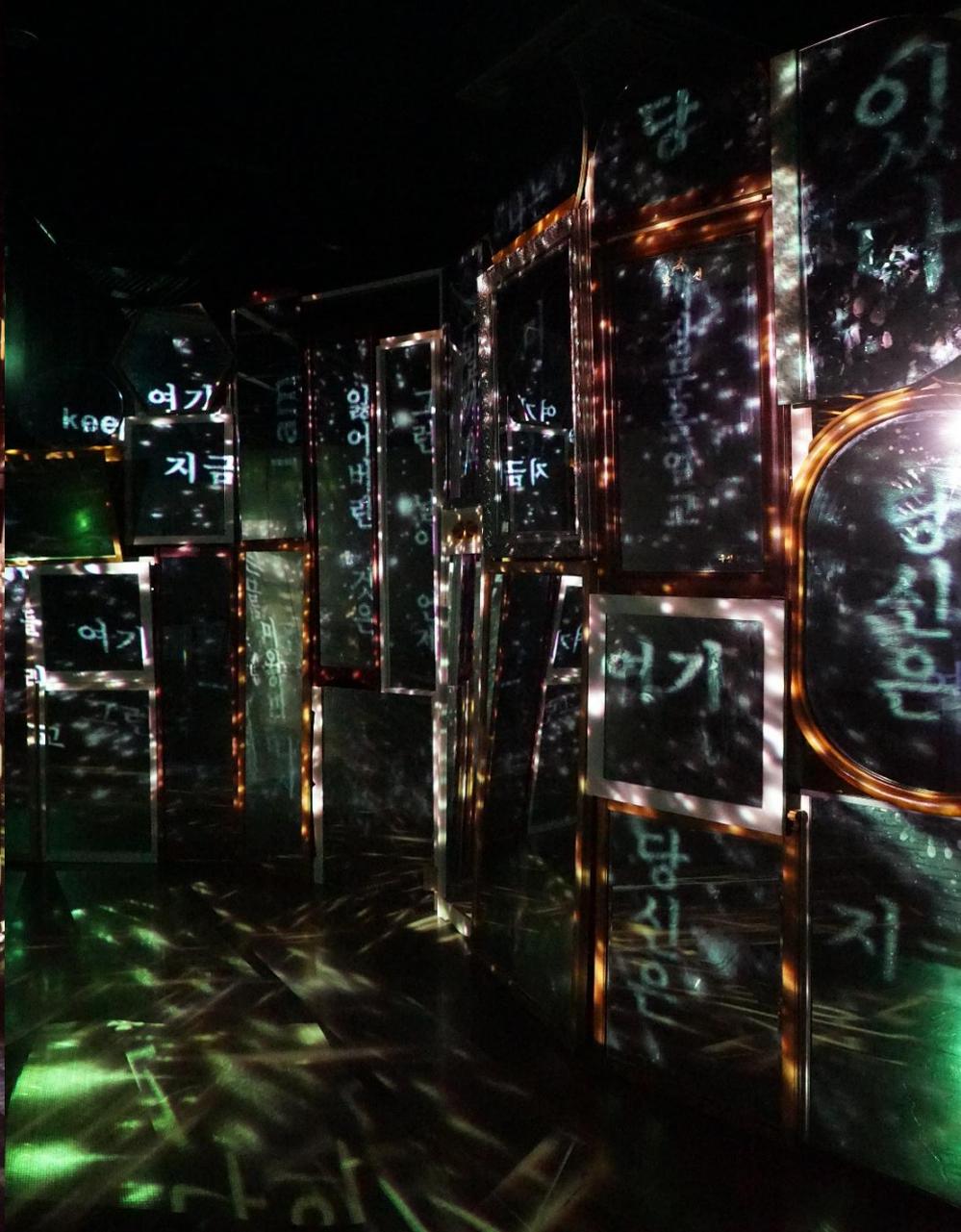
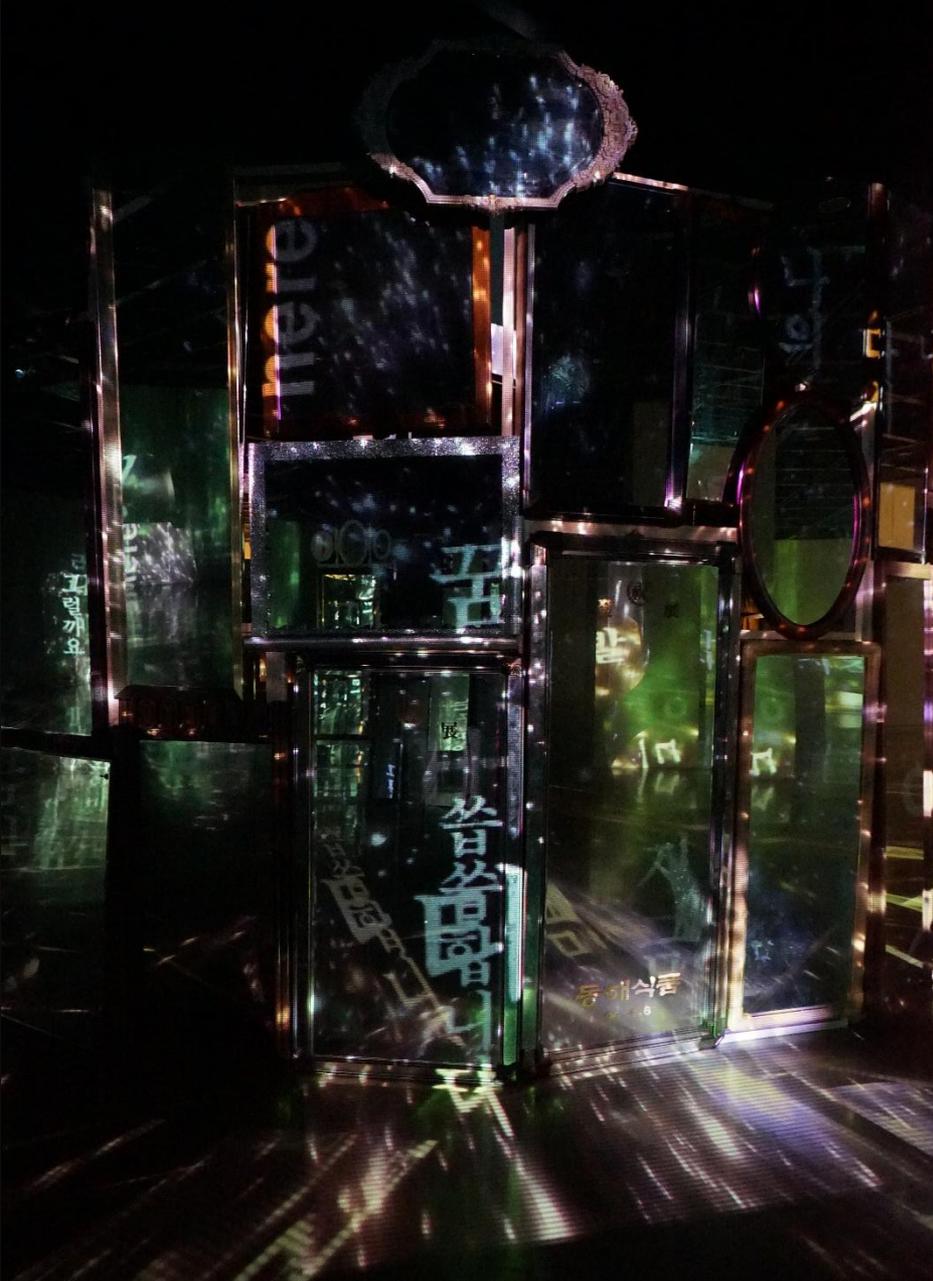














Oblivion, Imprinted 2021 / Flooring materials collected from living space of elderly people, wire, aluminum panel, wood / Variable installation

I would like to talk about the meaning of life by remembering the lives around me that pass me every day, but the ordinary life that is not recognized or tries to turn away because it is not revealed.



막창명 (74)

후회라니 후회지
 그저 자식들한테 더 해주지 못한게
 정말 열심히 살았더니까
 후회되는건 없지
 언제 그런날이 다시 올까 모르겠네
 참 좋은 시절이 많았는데



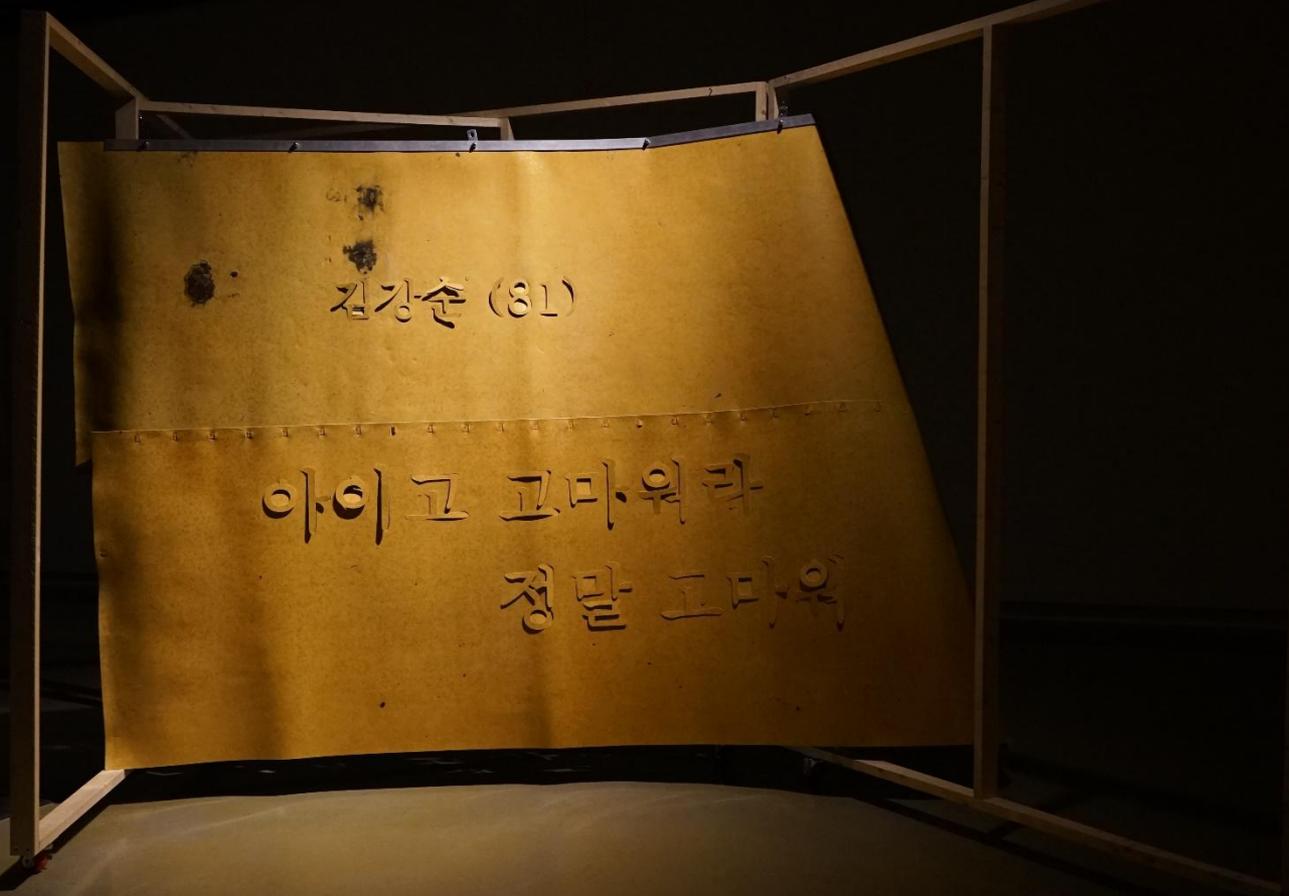
후회지

수들한테 더 해주

심히 살았더니까

는건 없지

그런날이 다시 올까



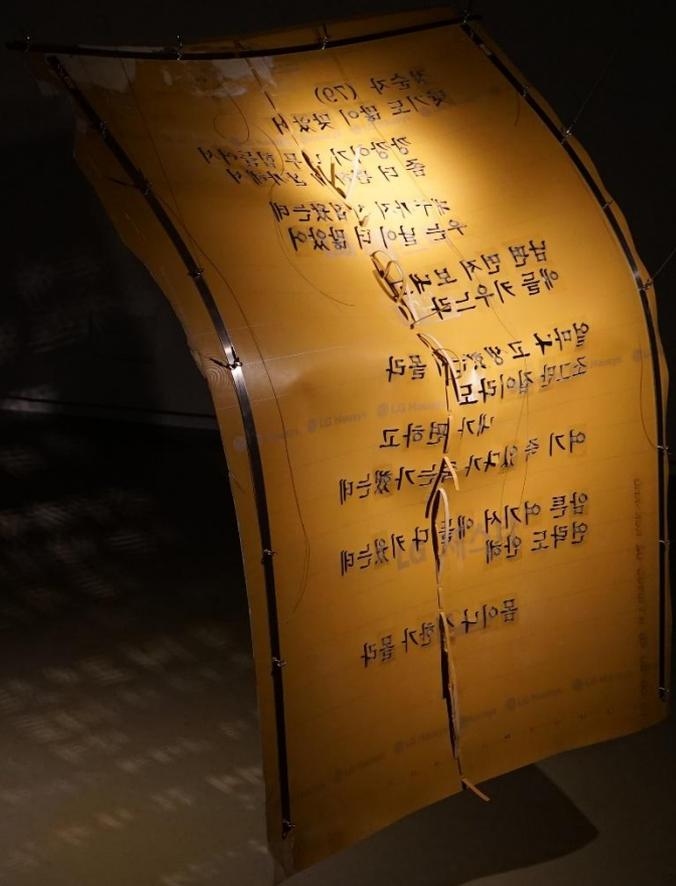
김강순 (81)

아이고 고마워라
정말 고마워

그걸 뭘 알고 싶어
정말 뭘 몰랐어

이름 석자는 알려줄게
이공백

이제 나 죽고 나서나
황이 권이 탁할거나



Critic

Compassion for All Living Beings

Choi Won-gyu "Engraving of Oblivion"

These 'Jangpan'-Korean traditional linoleum flooring- you are looking at was collected by Choi Won-gyu from various locations around the city after his residency at the Daegu Art Factory in 2021. Choi Won-gyu is the kind of person who, when he sees elderly people while walking, approaches them and starts a conversation. Whether it is someone spending the whole day in a park gathering slivers of sunlight, an elderly person sitting on the bare ground in an alleyway with no chair or bench, or a vendor selling bean sprouts and vegetables on the street—Choi Won-gyu sits beside them, helps sell the bean sprouts, and talks to them as if they were old acquaintances.

During his first residency in 2020, in a large-scale public housing complex in Busan, Choi followed a worker handling old flooring materials discarded during moves or demolitions. While helping out in the homes of elderly residents, he began listening to their stories and eventually conceived the idea of using 'Jangpan' in his work. He keeps these conversations in his heart until, like a living organism, they take shape over time, at which point he transcribes them in his own words. In this sense, the words written on the 'Jangpan' you see are both those of the elderly individuals and Choi Won-gyu's own.

Choi directs his attention to those whom no one notices, speaks to those to whom no one speaks. But as I, the writer, must put this into words, I asked Choi, "Why do you create this kind of work?" There could be many reasons, but fundamentally, he says, it is because he cannot stop thinking about these people. "Why do they stay on your mind?" I asked. "I don't know," he said. "If I had to answer, I suppose it's because I've never been able to simply pass by people like that." "Why can't you just pass by?" I pressed further. "Well," he replied, "I don't see them as 'others' but as people no different from me. Perhaps this way of thinking comes from remembering my grandmother and father, who passed away without much recognition." "Is this feeling related to your experiences in Ilsan, which you described as one of the hardest times in your life?" I asked. He paused. "Before Ilsan, I just 'thought' about these things. But after Ilsan, I started to 'act' on them, even in small ways—like feeding stray cats."

Now, I ask myself: *Why does Choi Won-gyu create this work? Or rather, was my question even the right one?* As viewers, how should we approach this exhibition?

Michel Foucault once compiled administrative records of individuals imprisoned under the *lettre de cachet* system in 18th-century France—a system in which citizens could be arbitrarily detained by local authorities without trial at the request of their families. Most of these records, consisting of only three or four lines, documented those who were incarcerated and never returned. Foucault referred to this as a severe “*chronicle of existence*” populated by *les misérables*, individuals subjected to undeniable misery.

Of course, I do not wish to objectify these elderly individuals by labeling their lives as “miserable” or “harsh.” Such categorization is a form of “definitional violence,” an imposition of meaning for the convenience of the observer. The records of those imprisoned under the *lettre de cachet* were written in what Foucault called the “language of bureaucracy,” or, in Annie Ernaux’s words, the “language of violence.” Those in power define; those without power are defined. Those with power speak and dictate; those without power are perpetually spoken *about* and defined by others. These people are not simply *silenced*; they are those who *never had a voice to begin with*. (Recognizing the world’s suffering requires acknowledging the structural contradictions of a society that operates upon that very suffering—and acting accordingly.)

Choi Won-gyu collects ‘Jangpan’, converses with elderly individuals, and sometimes even replaces their old flooring with new materials—sometimes at his own expense, beyond the budgeted amount. The crucial point is that Choi engages in genuine conversation. He does not dominate the discussion, nor does he simply listen passively—he just listens *a little more*. He does not treat these individuals as mere “subjects” that provide material for his work. Choi is acutely aware of the risk of doing so and remains cautious.

The words inscribed on these linoleum floors tell deeply sorrowful and heartbreaking stories. One elderly woman, who moved from Busan to Daegu after marriage, spoke of being frequently beaten and shedding many tears. Another, suffering from cancer, resorted to using medicated patches as a substitute for treatment until they ultimately passed away alone. The numbers “21/19” written on one piece of flooring mark them as “the 19th unidentified deceased person of 2021.” Without Choi’s work, their lives might have left no trace on this earth.

Through his work 'Oblivion-Imprinted' and 'Oblivion-Reflected'series, Choi Won-gyu reveals the ethical, political, and social dimensions of our society with such precision that it is difficult to remain emotionally unmoved. Yet, his work never veers into self-righteousness or moralistic didacticism—it gracefully sidesteps such pitfalls.

Some believe that life and art are separate. But this is a mere illusion, a strategic misconception used to maintain dominant power structures. Life and art have never been, and can never be, separate. As Immanuel Kant pointed out, aesthetic beauty and ethical beauty often intertwine.

When Choi Won-gyu lays out these linoleum floors before us, what we come to realize is this: that life, and thus art, is always ethical, social, and political—while also being profoundly aesthetic.

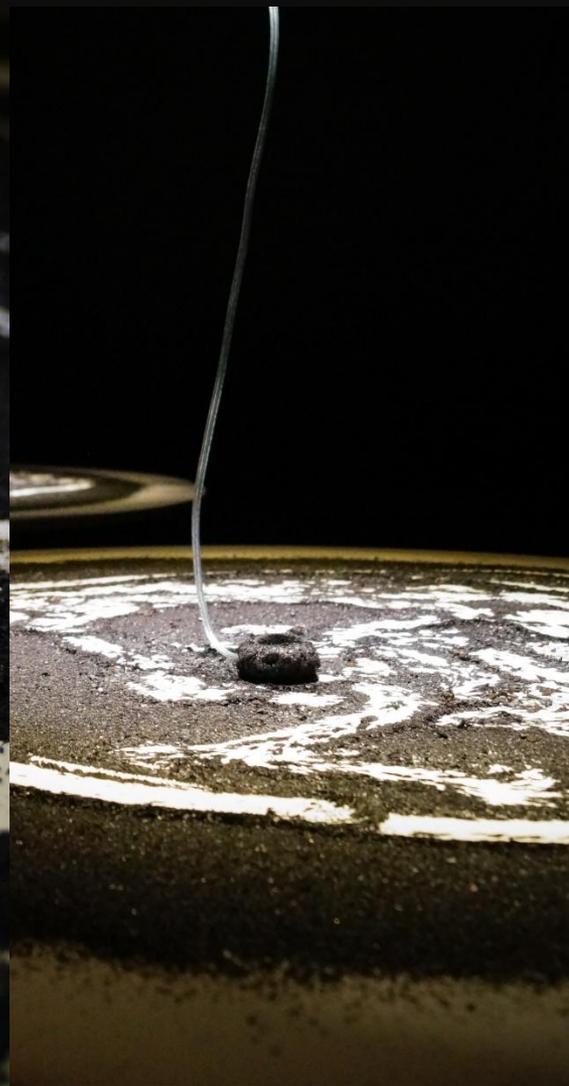
Heo Kyung (*Philosopher, Writer*)

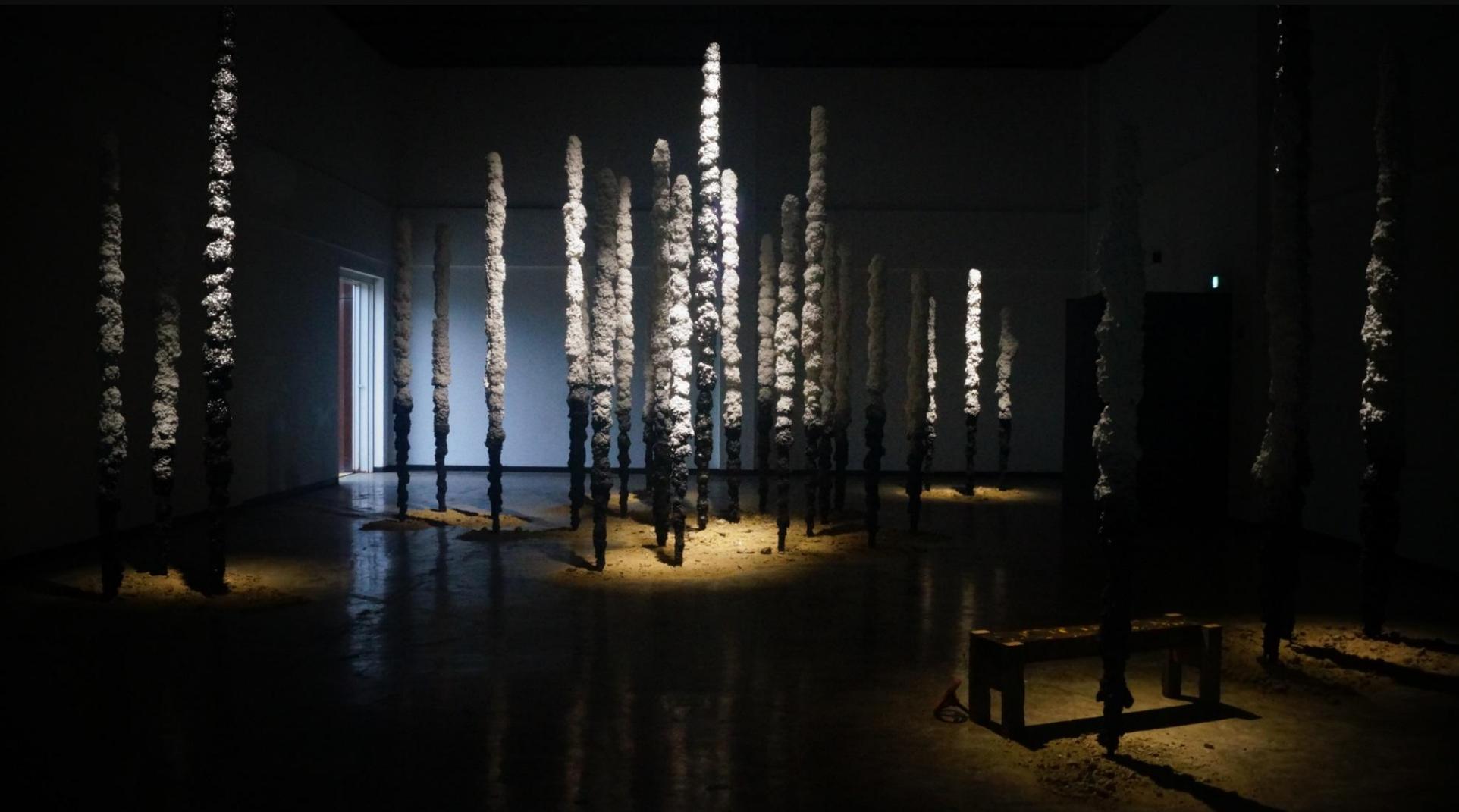


Breath-Lifescape III 2021 / Iron powder collected from ship repair complex, neodium, motor, motion sensor, wood panel, steel pipe

Iron powder collected from an industrial complex is a symbol of life and a realistic limit at the same time. The driving body, which moves constantly and vibrates while holding iron powder to the limit of its own power, is similar to the modern people who live every day with their own movements.

Exhibition video link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgpGumJxdxE>



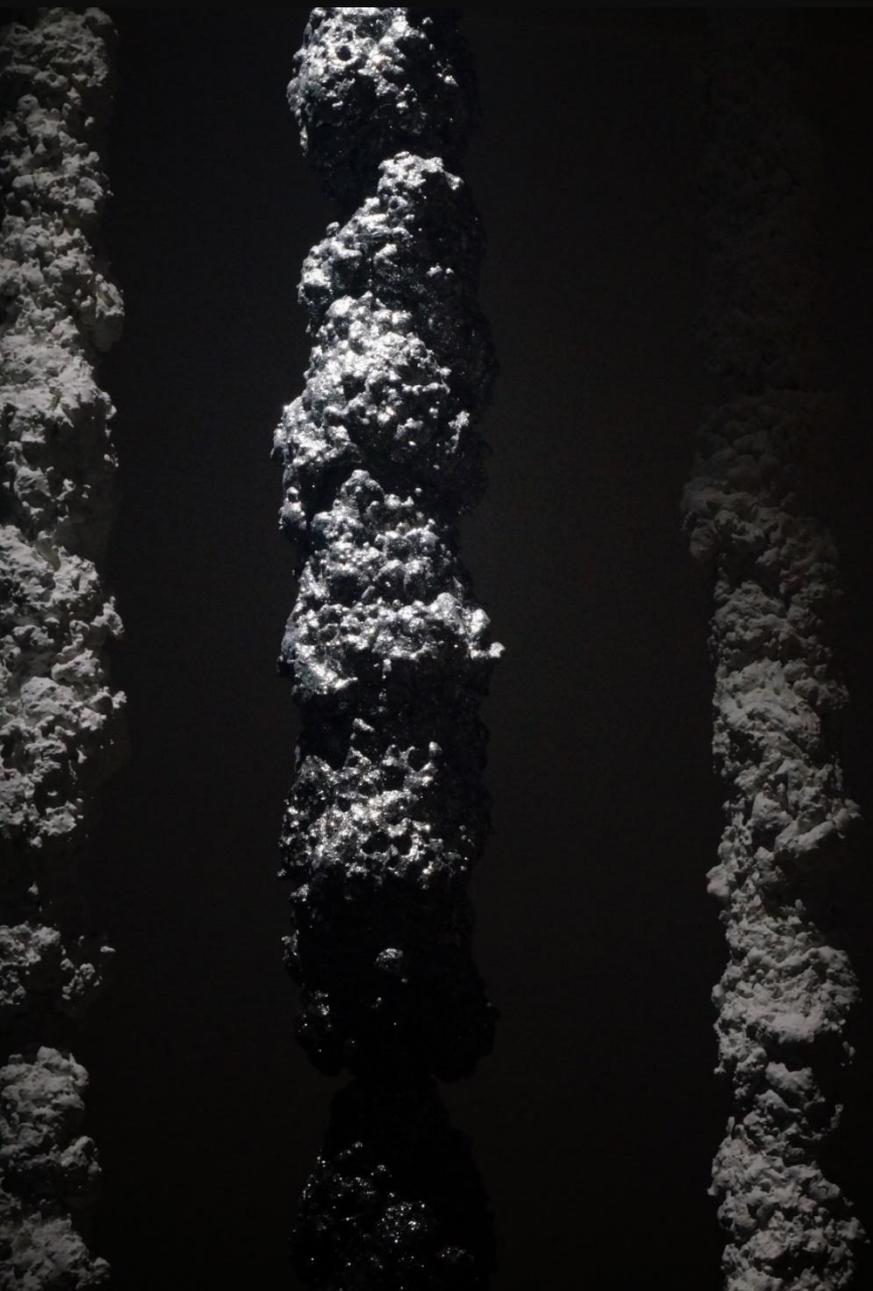


Breath-The forest of oblivion 2020 / Iron and zinc powder collected from ship repair complex, urethane foam, gypsum, acrylic paint, soil collected from demolished factory site / Variable installation

The shape of this breath, which gradually shines as it rises through the thick floor, is a tribute to all of us living fiercely today and their sparkling lives.

Exhibition book PDF link https://abf98e44-3bf8-48e6-970f-bc107e335498.filesusr.com/ugd/86cc23_ab23591535924e2a97da601bef94ca04.pdf







Breath-Lifescape II 2020 / Iron powder collected from ship repair complex, wood panel, neodium, motor, single channel video / Variable installation
Magnets that continue to move around draw iron powder attached to the limit of their magnetic force and record images on the panel.

Video link 'She just wanted to live' <https://youtu.be/jxrlEXoLhF0>



Just struggling to drag my heavy body back and forth with my helpless arms
그저 힘겹게 두 팔로 자신의 무거운 몸뚱아리를 이리 저리 끌며

Breath-Lifescape II 2020 / 3 channel video / 3min / Variable installation

The magnet, which has driven the iron powder to the limit of its magnetic force, sweeps the floor and cannot escape from the center, or hovers around the edge and moves between the left and right screens. This is a metaphor for various lives in reality.

3 channel preview video link

<https://youtu.be/h3VxO412jLQ>



Breath-Lifescape I 2020 / Iron powder collected from ship repair complex, linen, medium / 30X30

"In this dry society, is the image I made today only mine? Is it place to stand only with my will?"

Video link https://youtu.be/tG_wmFfPN8









FLOW-The mind gap 2019 / columns and beams collected from the demolished house site, led, acrylic paint, wire / Variable installation

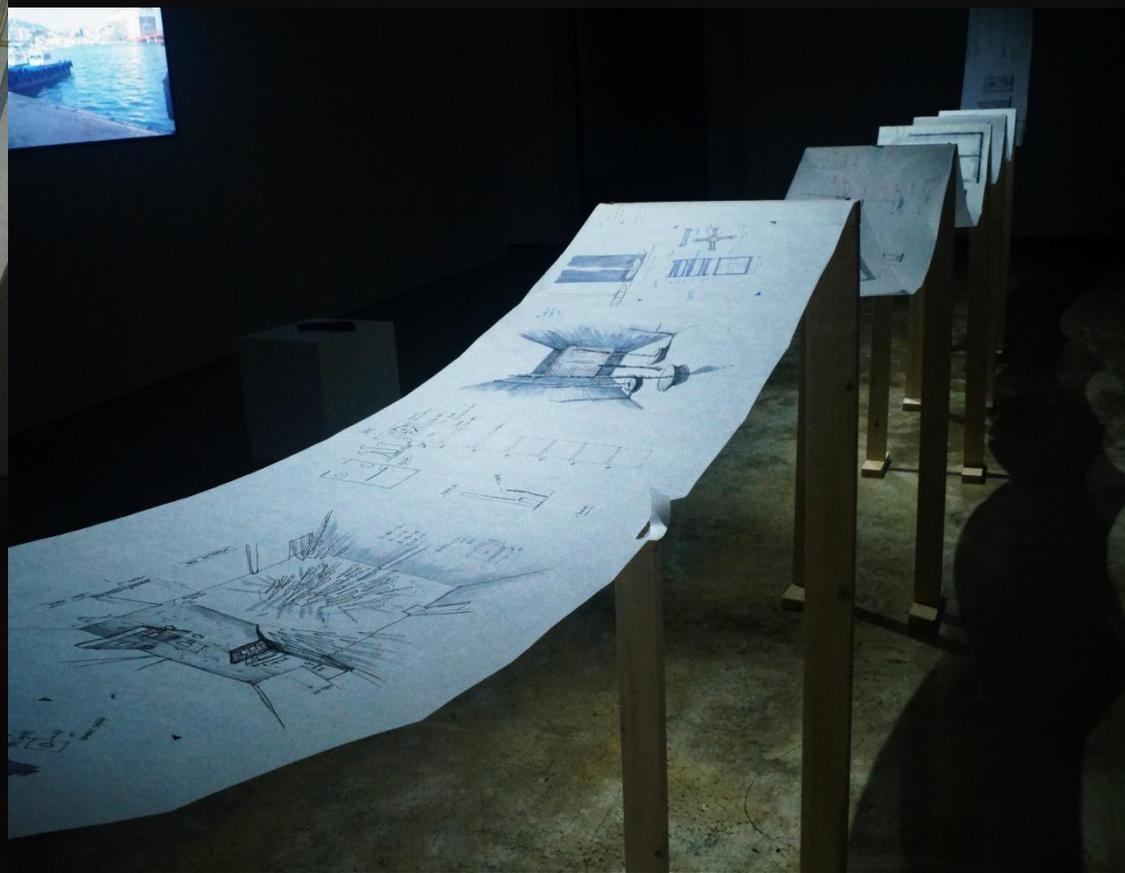
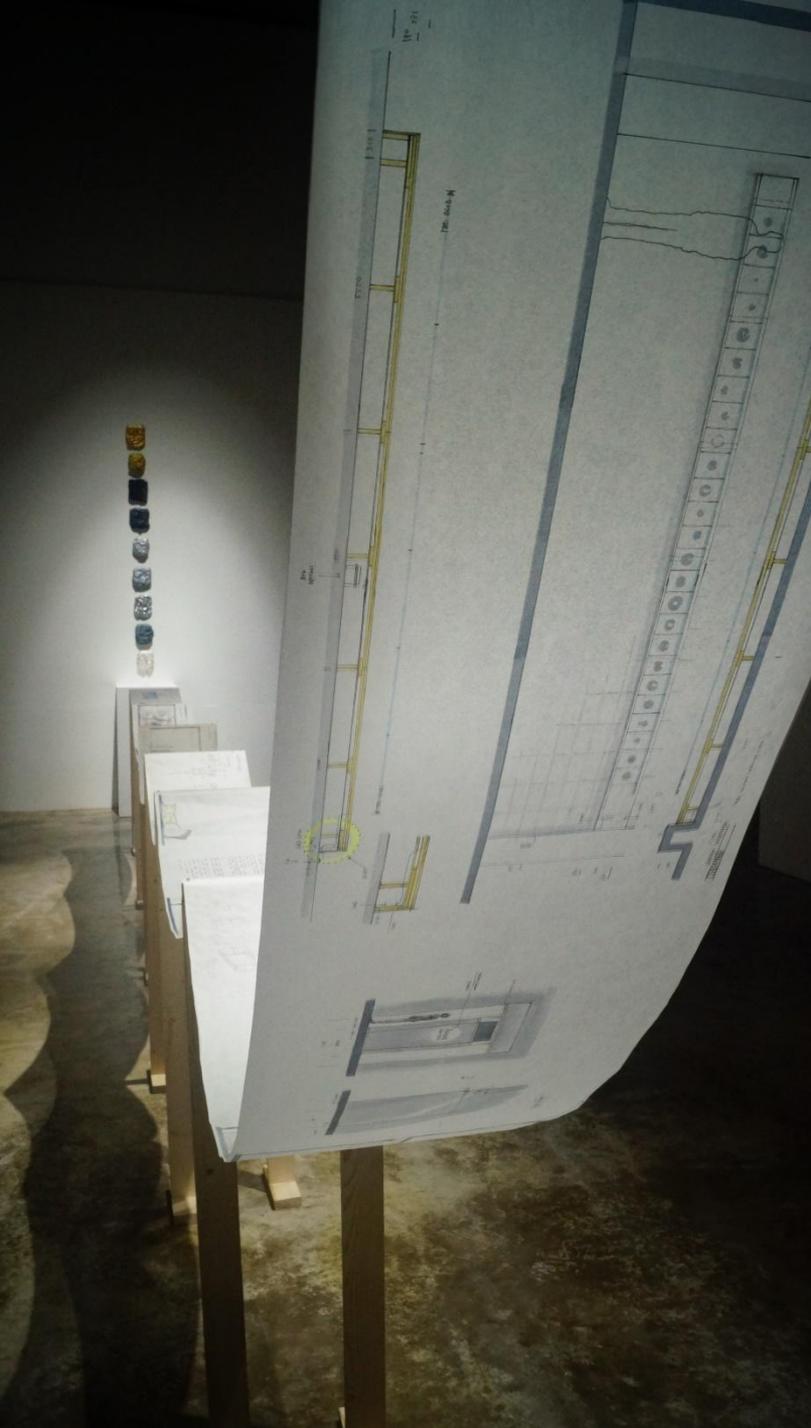
Everyday, I do something without the purpose of being something. I fill the gap and bury the feelings that I was trapped in, today, and my past together. And, it becomes a blue will and stands in front of me.





Breath-1001000 2020 / Rolled paper, wood, magnet, wire, single channel video / Variable installation

Installation, which consists of a 100-day work process in residency with 10m (1000mm) rolls of drawing and 10 (10:00) minutes of archived images. It shows the artist's thought flow and work process through drawings and videos.





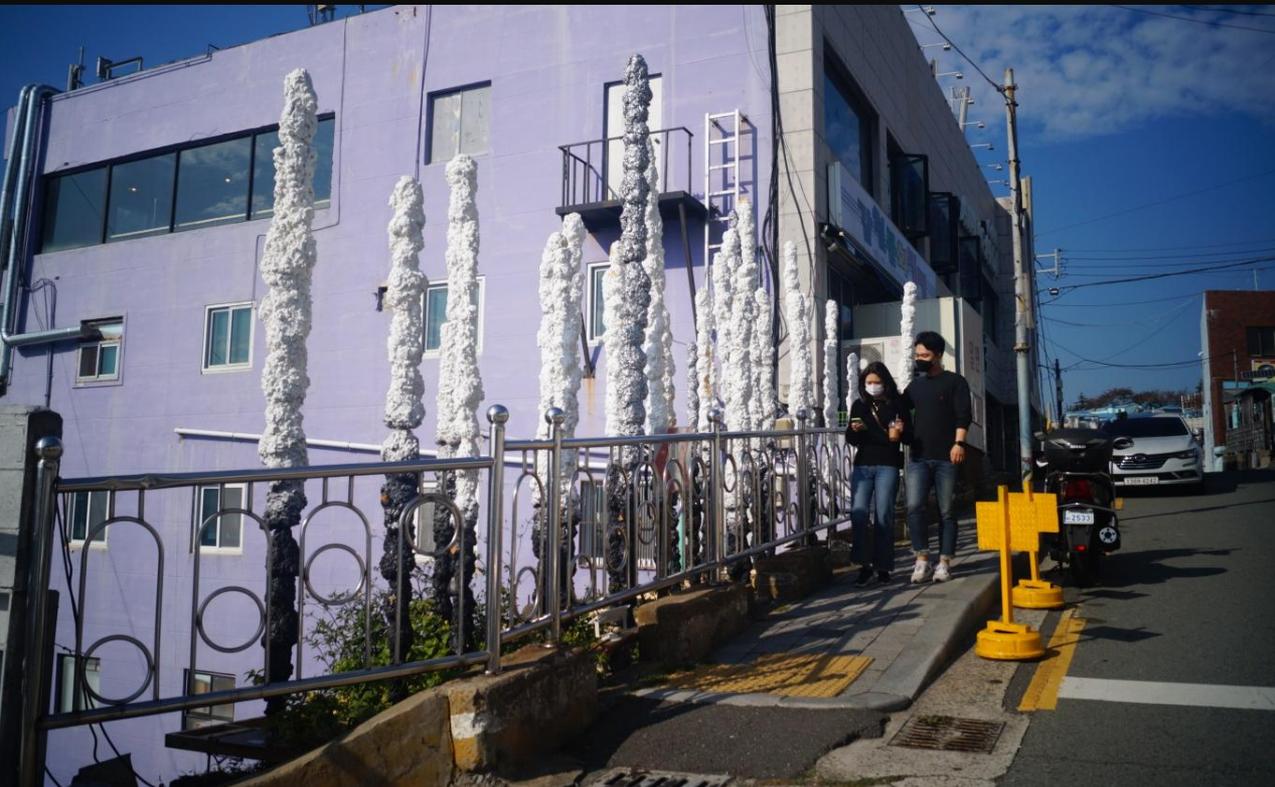
Breath-The way back 2020 / Iron and zinc powder collected from ship repair complex, urethane foam, gypsum, acrylic paint

I went back to where the story started and wanted to encounter with people. On the way back, I stayed in a place with similar stories, met and exchanged stories with various citizens.

Video link <https://youtu.be/EYsxngFFPbE>



아의 설치는 총 2회 진행 되었으며, 1회차(서부산 산업단지내 공원 / 설치기간 -25일)와 2회차(서부산 감천문화마을 내 사유지 / 설치기간 -60일) 로 공공장소에서 공개되었다.

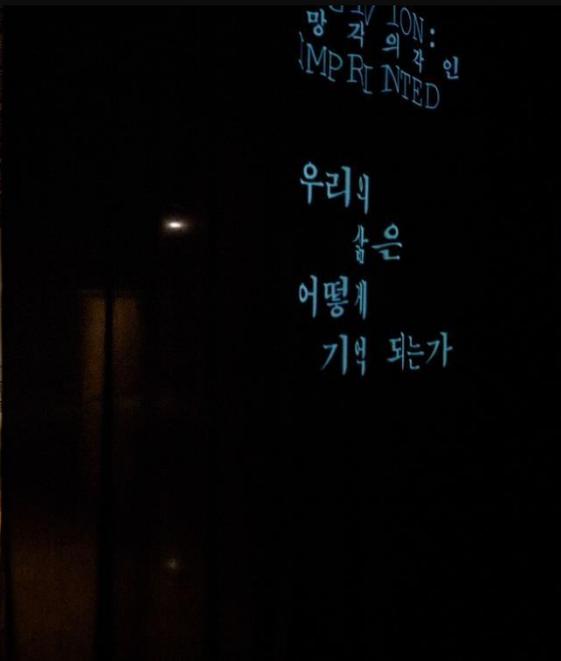


Collaborative work

Relative performance with [Oblivion;Imprinted]

Performer Lee Kahyun

Sound creator Lee Sookhyun



Performance video link

<https://youtu.be/BRqiq9qoxjo>

CV

Selected Exhibition

[Solo exhibition]

- 2024. 12 [Oblivion:Imprinted part III] / Space O / Seoul
- 2024. 8 [And, It last..] C6-2, Dayi Warehouse, Pier2 Art center / Kaohsiung, Taiwan
- 2023. 4 ~ 6 [Oblivion:Imprinted 2023] bongsan art center / Daegu. Korea
- 2022. 1 ~ 2 [Oblivion:reflected] Daegu art factory / Daegu. Korea
- 2021. 5 ~ 6 [Breath – Lifescape] / Space9 / Seoul. Korea
- 2020. 7 ~ 11 [Breath – The way back (Public art project)] / Busan. Korea
- 2020. 6 [Breath-forest of oblivion] / Hongti art center. Busan. Korea
- 2019. 8~9 [Bitter sweet symphony] / Studio B / Seoul. Korea
- 2018. 6~7 [Furry. The green] /Studio B / Seoul. Korea

[Group exhibition]

- 2024. 12 / Digital romance / Daegu art factory / Daegu. Korea
- 2024. 1 / Under the surface / Horanggasyamoo artpolygon / Gwangju. Korea
- 2023. 12 / Personal and close / Busan historical museum / Busan. Korea
- 2023. 10 / Hoppy together / Art district P / Busan. Korea
- 2022. 2 [Bookbyun diary] / BB gallery / Kimpo. Korea
- 2021. 10 ~ 11 [Hongti to hongti] / Hongti art village / Busan. Korea
- 2021. 10 [Light here, light now] / Gangnam-gu office / Seoul. Korea
- 2020. 11 ~ 12 [Rainbow wire] / F1963 / Busan. Korea
- 2019 7~9 [Inside out] / Soochang mansion of youth / Daegu. Korea

[Residency]

- 2024. Pier2 Artist In Residence / Kaohsiung, Taiwan
- 2022. Horanggasy artist residence / Gwangju, Korea-South
- 2021. Daegu art factory, Daegu
- 2020. Hongti art center. Busan

Artist statement

[From the Oblivion of Being]

Unfrequently, we go through life thinking of "the invisible" as "the nonexistent." Clearly there are things that "exist" but do so under the condition of invisibility, so in life we "forget" these "existent entities." What are the things that are everywhere but forgotten just because they are not visible? The oxygen-rich air we breathe, the white radiant light emitted by the light source we call the Sun, and the ultraviolet radiation that is not visible because of its shorter wavelength are a few examples. What about the kinetic energy possessed by an object or object system? They are not visible, yet they exist alongside us. For us to forget them despite their presence everywhere around us is the irony of the "perception of existence."

The act of breathing is hardly different. Even though breathing is an essential act that sustains the life of an organism, we forget it just because it is so easily maintained. As a living thing constantly inhales and exhales using its mouth, nose, and lungs, just as it forgets the value of the invisible air, it also forgets about this "act of constant will aimed at sustaining life." In my work 'breath' is such a thing. For my work, the irony of "recognition of existence" is based on "breath" and leads to a fundamental reflection on the life of human beings, starting from a gaze full of affection and compassion for real life, which is created in visual language.

The work begins by tracing the traces of forgotten breath. Such as a day of unknown old lady spent without a day at a some alley entrance, or looking into the story of a worker who lives every day buried in a red flash in a small factory where dust blows, and creating stories collected in the process as narratives to strengthen the foundation of creation. My work based on the installation work is completed by applying the by-products collected in the process of tracking life and sometimes the objects given to the subjects of the story—which contain their history—as the main material to form an imaginative scene. The object containing timeliness is a symbol of the "existence" of living in the present. The labor in the process of sorting waste byproducts into materials is also an important part of my work. This is because the 'existence of valueless' generated through primary transformation in the production process is applied to the work through several screening processes, and its value is also meaningful as a value confirmation process for 'exist but forgotten' stories.

"Traces of oblivion". I would like to collect such traces and apply them as materials for installational objects, and combine them into architectural elements to form a space to complete visual narratives and tell stories to people.

The various lives and values that exist within us to which "I" belongs. The art of talking about the present life in various life scenes. And art where i can talk about will and hope and check and share the value of life in a harsh and cold reality. Through such a process, the process of confirming the existence of me as an individual living in the era, and this is the expectation and motivation to live as an artist.