

MO RUM



— Cho Sejin
— Choi Kyeong Hwa
— Chung Sun Kyung
— Hyun Sujin
— Jiôn Kiim
— Kim Hana
— Bae Gong Joo
— Summer Cho

Exhibition by Korean Artists in Portugal

A group of Korean artists living in Portugal set out to bring their works together in an exhibition. From this shared diasporic condition — a common origin, a shared destination — the exhibition 모름 / *Morum* arises as an opportunity to experiment with plays of proximity and distance, to seek echoes and divergences. What persists from their origin? And how does the place they now inhabit shape their artistic expression? Bringing together distinct methodologies, materialities, and concerns, this exhibition presents works that, in some cases, renew the Korean craft tradition, and in others, explore contemporary visual languages. In common, these works question fixed notions of identity and affirm geographic and cultural displacement as a generative movement — one that produces meaning. Rather than proposing definitive answers, the exhibition offers a visual dialogue in which identity asserts itself as a constant becoming: a fluid, hybrid movement.

Although we live in increasingly globalized — and thus homogenized — societies, it is still possible to find certain cultural specificities that act as points of resistance. The thread that guides this exhibition is the concept of *Morum* (모름). Unlike contemporary European languages, where terms such as “ignorance” (from Latin *ignorantia*) or “unknowing” are formed through negation — *in-* and *gnarus*, *un-* and knowing — Korean language offers positive, self-contained terms like *Morum* (모름) and the conjugations of the verb 모르다 (“to not know”). Here, not-knowing is affirmed as a dynamic state: an opening toward the unknown, a fertile ground for possibilities yet to be imagined. In the mythology of European rationalism, not-knowing came to be seen as a provisional deficiency — a temporary failure to be overcome by the advance of reason. This philosophical, scientific, and cultural revolution sought to banish the darkness of ignorance, believing that sooner or later the lights of Enlightenment would dispel the unknown. If the Enlightenment inaugurated a universalizing logic in which all things must be known, in the Korean language the dignity of not-knowing endures — a natural, honorable, and even elevated state of being.

Lu.Co — the Group of Korean Artists in Portugal — aims to create a platform for support, exchange, and dialogue among Korean artists living in Portugal, promoting new perspectives on Korean culture with a particular focus on contemporary art and traditional crafts. This first exhibition presents works by Cho Sejin, Choi Kyeong Hwa, Chung Sun Kyung, Hyun Sujin, Jiôn Kiim, Kim Hana, Bae Gong Joo, and Summer Cho. This initiative is supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Portugal, the Overseas Koreans Agency, and the Faculty of

Lu.Co — the Group of Korean Artists in Portugal

An “Aside” reflecting on 모름 (Mo Rum),
an open invitation

Claudia Pestana

Translated by Maria de Lourdes Watson

How should an invitation be understood?” What kind of insights might such a question elicit while an exhibition? Whether we have company or are on our own, when we visit an exhibition we often play interlocutor to the works on display, the premises of the exhibition, and the numerous contexts involved, of which we may or may not be aware.

Given that we are also often accompanied by expectations, prior knowledge, affinities and predispositions, this question can allow us to better accommodate the fact that our perception only builds approximations to things, interacts with them, but never fully possesses their essence. This is because everything — everyone, ourselves included — exists as a dynamic complexity endowed with an opacity that resists capture.¹

An invitation led to this “Aside.” In turn, this invitation was possible because of a meeting, years ago, also at an exhibition, between Sejin, from South Korea who had started living in Portugal, and Claudia, from Portugal who had lived in South Korea. This invitation is a new beginning, the rekindling of an initial familiarity interrupted by distance and time, both exacerbated by the pandemic. Thus, a new dialogue emerges — the people who met at that time are joined by these people they have become in the meantime — a getting to know each other again.

Despite being presented in a single voice, these words are the distillation of the dialogue between the two about the establishment of the Lu.Co Group and the circumstances that gave rise to the exhibition 모름 (MORUM): an opportunity for Korean artists living in Portugal to showcase their work, but also the creation of a transformative reciprocity between a group of people and the context in which they find themselves and to which they also begin to contribute.

“Preface” - “Opening Note” - “Preliminary Words”: these types of texts are usually addressed to presumed future readers, whether they are directly or indirectly related to what is addressed in the text, or come across the text at another time or context. In the case of these specific words, the object/subject of the text would be the exhibition visited at the location where the text is available or in the catalogue about the exhibition where the text will be inserted.

However, this text is presented as an “aside” — it was developed as a dialogue between two interlocutors — one with direct participation in the exhibition and the other foreign to it. As such, it does not focus on the exhibition itself, but addresses the participants of an exhibition — artists, curators, organizers, promoters, hosts and visitors, to propose a reflection on what is unknown: 모름 (MORUM).

Unknowing - anchored in the Korean expression “MORUM” is not simply “not- knowing” but a dynamic state that implies the process of discovery itself - the possibility of a whole world that has not yet been reached by the subject.²

What can this text, which is unfamiliar with the artists, their work and the exhibition itself, propose? It can be an invitation to embrace that state of “not knowing” as an opportunity to look and actually see. Here, “to see” does not imply immediate knowledge, it is an approximation of what is before the eyes, perhaps a first approach, among many, of what something seems to be, of the layers and contingencies that constitute it, and of the contours that it may come to have as it becomes more familiar. This could create an affinity between visitors and works, one that is built as a bridge to new and unexpected realities and experiences.

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1 Pestana, Claudia. “IN SUSPENSION: a CARRIER BAG of HEADINGS, DIALOGUE FROM a FILM, REFERENCES, and a NOTE.” In *One Escape at a Time*, eds. Jungmin Lee and Andrew Maerkele, 297-305. Seoul: Seoul Museum of Art, 2021.

https://www.mediacityseoul.kr/2021/media/pages/publications/ce6e08544f1674634777/smb11_catalogue_digital.pdf

2 2 – This approach to MORUM derives from the presentation PDF of Grupo Lu.Co and the 모름 (MORUM) exhibition proposal.

Claudia Pestana Claudia Pestana Claudia Pestana was one of the curators of the 11th Seoul Mediacity Biennale *One Escape at a Time* (2021). Other exhibitions Pestana has curated include *Cut Down The Middle* (Galeria da Avenida da Índia, 2021) in Lisbon; *What should I do to live in your life?* and *Pilot Micro Multiplex Mall* (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2012) in the UAE; and, as one of the co-curators, *City Within the City* (Art Sonje Center, 2011) in Seoul. Pestana was co-editor of Musa paradisiaca’s *Views on Misunderstanding* (2018) and has contributed to publications including Jun Yang’s *The Parallax Hanok: A Café/Bar* (2016), Heman Chong’s *The Part In The Story Where We Lost Count Of The Days* (2013), and *Paintings against Painting* by Hugo Canoilas (2013).

Across the Unknowing

João Pedro Amorim

(Curator)

« The universes which are amenable to the intellect can never satisfy the instincts of the heart. » — Anonymous English author, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, 14th century

The unknown is always the site of an abyssal vertigo: what separates us from it seems insurmountable. It is through an effort that exceeds our capacity for anticipation that we learn to speak, to write, to know the world around us. Yet, there is always something that persists beyond our horizon of understanding. A crucial tension that has run through science, philosophy, and religion for centuries is how we position ourselves before what is unknown: before the chaos –of the senses, of matter, of the body, of the unconscious— that constitutes reality. The modern attitude is to impose an order upon it. But we cannot exclude the possibility of opening ourselves to that unknown and contemplating it, as one contemplates a dark abyss. A plunge into chaos, from which we might draw a rhythm.¹

The concept of *Morum* (모름), which gives this exhibition its title, affirms the radical power of the unknown and the possibility of not-knowing. It served as the starting point for bringing together a dialogue among a diverse range of practices. In this spatialization of not-knowing, we seek to acknowledge the importance of a way of interpreting reality that neither dominates nor controls, nor serves a utilitarian purpose. Rather, it appears as a complete openness to the world. In the exhibition, we can identify artists who work directly with the renewal of practices grounded in Korean artistic and craft traditions. But also artists who, while not detached from that tradition, move through contemporary expressions and materialities. This discreet disciplinary distinction does not prevent dialogue between these objects, from which new potentials emerge—potentials that contextualize the contemporary plastic search within the history of forms and the birth of art as the birth of the human.

Bae Gong Joo draws from the Korean pictorial tradition of Minhwa to propose an updated version of the Maenghodo (Fierce Tiger) (2024) theme—a figure traditionally placed in homes as a talisman to ward off evil spirits and attract good fortune. The artist works with high-quality jang-ji — traditional Korean mulberry paper — which she produces herself using the ancestral baejeop method, applying layers of hanji with starch glue. She also uses natural pigments made from flowers, fruits, insects, soil, and minerals, prepared by hand with animal glue (agyo), in a practice that demands technical precision and deep attention to materials of natural origin.

1 Based on a reading of Gil, J. (2018). *Caos e Ritmo. Relógio d’Água*.

Choi Kyeong Hwa explores Korean textile tradition to give tangibility to Portuguese colors and light through a new interpretation of these techniques. Her practice of *bojagi*—the creation of wrapping cloths that protect objects and bring good luck—is reimaged in the series *Mute Breeze* (2023–25), a set of five suspended flags, whose lines suggest the movements of a silent breeze and a mysterious light. These Korean silk cloths are suspended above *Sweet Dreams* (2025), an installation inspired by the *jatssi*—the Korean word for “pine nut,” which also names a decorative element traditionally applied to the sides of pillows—where the physical movement of elements intersects with a dreamlike experience. These themes also appear in **Chung Sun Kyung’s** work with Korean knots, a technique that consists of creating complex weavings from traditional Korean cords. Resembling wind chimes, these suspended works are dynamic sculptures that move and transform in response to energy and air circulation in the exhibition space. In *Secret Garden* (2025), the artist explores the organicity of the growth of a plant, expressed here through multiple Korean cords that appear to bloom slowly. Her work also touches on more intangible forms, as in *Sound of Hope* (2023), where she gives shape to a message of hope. The transparency of the white cord shifts with changes in light, and the sound of hope is activated by a bell sensitive to the room’s vibrations. These are works that allow themselves to be affected by their surroundings, inviting us into a state of gentle contemplation.

These movements also animate the exhibition’s paintings. Kim Hana presents the drawing series *Home* (2025) and the painting *Hideout* (2022). Within an abstract register, undefined botanical elements emerge amidst chromatic expressions dominated by warm tones. In *Hideout*, we enter a form that suggests a refuge or hiding place, expressed only through the contrast between the central and peripheral colors. In *Home*, the drawings suggest the formation of a landscape in flux, animated by pulsating red tones. The title suggests an identification of “home” with the external and natural world, which could invite an ecological reading²—or at least recall Álvaro Lapa’s *Campéstico*³ series, which mixed the “rural” (*campestre*) with the “domestic.” This blurring of interior and exterior is also present in *Summer Memory* (2024) by Summer Cho, where the landscape seeps in through the window at the back of the room, diluting itself in the cozy whiteness of the painting, with the memories of a past summer reverberating into the present of the domestic space.

In the fruit bowl, an orange glows—it seems to be the only fruit whose color matches its natural hue. It is also an orange line that traverses the exhibition space and rises upward. *Skin* (2024), by Cho Sejin, is a sculpture made of orange peels and metal wire, measuring 8 meters long and 60 cm wide, describing an ascending line toward the light. The artist explores the same technique in the smaller sculpture *Pangea* (2025), in which the peel of a single orange decomposes like the tectonic shifts that formed (and dissolved) the ancient continent. Exploring the form of this fruit is akin to exploring the movements

of our bodies: through reassembly, redefinition, we may determine a greater or lesser openness to the outside, through which a line of fugue can erupt.

These biological forces encounter other natural forces: the grayscale paintings by Hyun Sujin are created through the interactions of natural materials—water, salt, charcoal—and Korean ink. It is through the passage of time and a set of reactions the artist cannot control, only guide, that the paintings take form. The artist becomes a receptacle that absorbs emotions, sensations, or ideas, which then mysteriously become the textures, contrasts, and compositions of her paintings. In them, we find gestures of a body in hiding, vital flows in circulation, and the encounter between the artist’s touch and the expression of matter. Her work also involves a transposition — or translation — of philosophical, social, or psychological questions which, in abstraction, are neither resolved nor directly intuited, but instead gain a mysterious formal expression.

Many of these works speak to journeys, to transformations, to the way our experience of time and space affects our bodies and minds. This is the case in *Through the Bamboo Ashes, Cosmic Entropy* (2024) by Jiôn Kiim, which suggests a crossing—just like *Passage* (2023)—where representation and abstraction meet, in a path we must take with our bodies. The abstract, entropic lines form a clearing of bamboo that invites us to traverse it to reach the cosmos. The video *Salt-man* (2015) by Cho Sejin documents a literal crossing: a body moves across a low-tide mudflat, carrying a heavy bag. At a certain point, the bag tears, tracing behind it, directly onto the landscape, a line of salt.

This trail finds resonance in other works across the exhibition—inhabited by subtle movements and unseen bodies. Of these, we find only traces. In *Symbiosis* (2024) by Summer Cho, we see a body that moves through and fuses with the landscape in a flying motion—perhaps a body of air, or the memory we leave in the atmosphere when we pass through it. At the exhibition’s center, amid all the natural movements, a body takes on a spectral form—like our own body opening to the movements and flows of matter and energy. It is a fragmented collective body: a piece of found and peeled wood that assumes anthropomorphic shapes (*Still Life/Natureza Morta*, Cho Sejin, 2025)—reminding us of Courbet’s *The Origin of the World* (1886) —; a series of faces whose gaze mingles with our own (*Tableau Vivant*, Jiôn Kiim, 2023); from which a suspended, moving dream emerges (*Dream*, Chung Sun Kyung, 2022). In *Tableau Vivant*, Jiôn Kiim proposes a staged painting, a prolonged pose, a set of spectral bodies suggested by acrylic surfaces shaped like Korean beauty masks and other ancestral masks from diverse origins. These masks form a

3 The Greek word *oikos* (eco) meant house or home, and is the etymological root of both economy and ecology.

4 A series of works (1986–2004) in which Lapa blended elements of a landscape with those of his home’s interior in a single painting.

set of absent bodies. Just as our body is a receptacle for the world's flows, they retain the gestures of raw pigment and the vital forces that pass through artist and viewer alike.

Overall, the works on display—whether more abstract or more figurative—express a gesture of attention and openness to the world. In a 14th-century mystical text by an anonymous monk, God appears without a defined form—not as an entity, but as the totality of existence.⁴ The Cloud of Unknowing argues that the experience of God cannot be reached through labor or intellect, but through contemplation of His presence in the phenomena of the sensory world. This requires abandoning attempts to define His attributes and surrendering to “unknowing,” to forgetting. In the cloud that forms between us and God—or a certain experience of the totality of reality—we can only attempt provisional crossings.

Morum is made from this willingness to feel and register the movements of the world, without seeking to impose an order upon it, or projecting onto it a rigid interiority. What these artists share is a search for their specific expression through patient attention to the forms and materials they work with—and that surround their sensitive experience. Perhaps that is the condition of the artist: one who, in a given formal result, discovers—always in hindsight—an incommunicable meaning that startles them anew.

João Pedro Amorim

Visual artist and researcher at the Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts, at the School of Arts of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, where he also teaches. He holds a master's degree in Contemporary Artistic Practices and a bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences — Multimedia from the University of Porto. His texts have been published in academic journals such as *Membrana*, *oncurating.org*, and in indexed journals (SCOPUS and WoS), as well as in catalogues and artist books. He occasionally develops curatorial projects, such as the solo exhibitions of artists Jiõn Kiim (Dentro, INSTITUTO) and Yohei Yamakado (blackbox at the School of Arts of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa), and the online video art series *Techniques of Deconfinement* (for EA-UCP).

⁴ In a formulation that would later echo in Spinoza's definition: “By God, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence.” Spinoza, B. (2001). *Ethics*. Wordsworth. Originally published in 1677.



Exhibition view



Mute Breeze (2023-2025) e Sweet Dreams (2025), Choi Kyeong Hwa



Tableau Vivant (2023), Jiôn Kiim

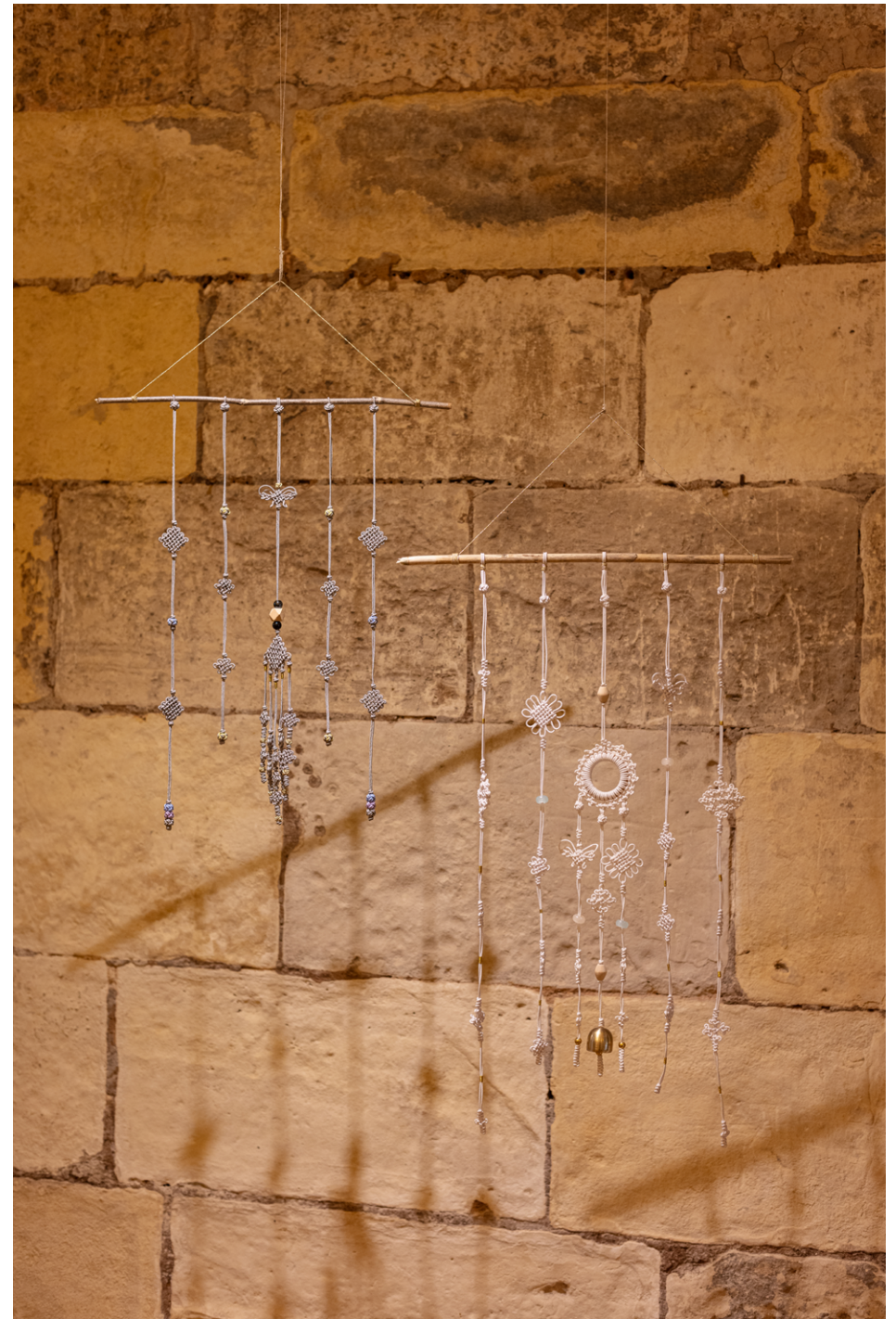


Untitled (2025), Hyun Sujin





Home series (2025), Kim Hana



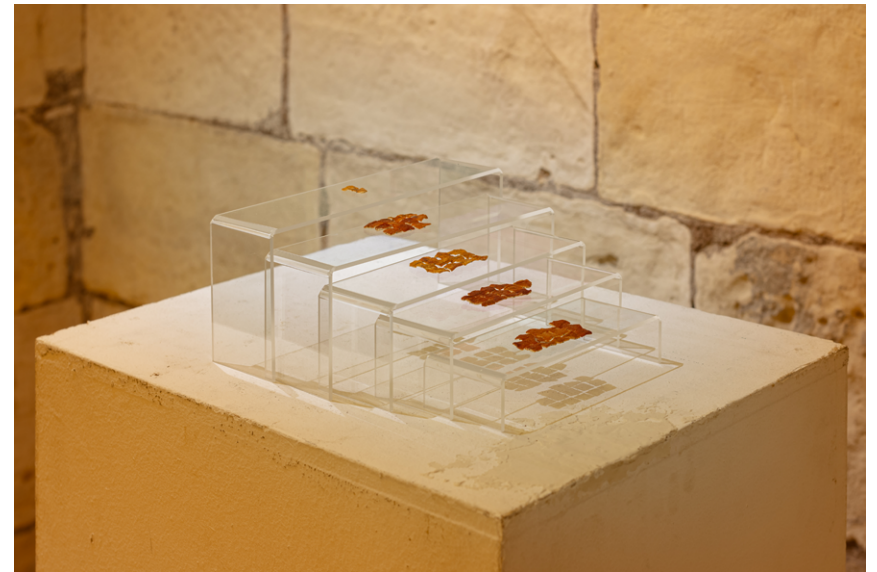
Dream (2022) e Sound of Hope (2023), Chung Sun Kyung



Summer Cho



Maenghodo (2024), Bae Gong Joo



Pangea (2025), Cho Sejin



Cho Sejin

Paju-Lisbon. Bachelor's and Master's degree in painting, Hongik University. Cho Sejin expresses the essence of "being alive" through painting, video, and installation. Her work explores themes of existence, time, and the mind-body connection, drawing inspiration from life's resilience. chosejin.com

Choi Kyeong Hwa

Seoul-Barreiro. Bachelor's degree in Spanish, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Master's degree in Art History, Ehwa Womans University. I stand on the foundation of traditional Korean textile art techniques, crafting works that touch the light and colors of Portugal. Rather than simply disseminating the beauty of Korea, I prefer to share it. I have been running a sewing group in Portugal for 11 years. After working in book publishing, I settled near Lisbon via Madrid. I have published books on Spanish art, Portuguese culture and history, and Western art. Although I write in Korean, my writing chair, desk, and the sky I gaze at while writing are all Portuguese.

Chung Sun Kyung

Seoul-Lisbon. Sunhwa Arts School, Fineart. School of the Museum of Fine Arts [Boston, USA] Multimedia art. Bachelor's degree in Oriental Painting, Hongik University. Traditional Korean knotting is a new and exciting challenge for me. I strive to create a new artistic genre that moves beyond the typical "traditional" image by blending the inherent beauty of Korean tradition with my own unique personality and creative vision. My works are filled with the spirit of new challenges, positive energy, and hope, and I wish they could inspire hope in many people. [@hanttam_sun](https://www.instagram.com/hanttam_sun)

Hyun Sujin

Seul-Algarve. Licenciatura em Pintura, Universidade de Hongik. Usando água, sal, tinta da china e carvão para pintar, nas suas obras, o tempo, o momento e a interação dos materiais são importantes. Este processo torna-se uma metáfora para a própria vida - um fluxo constante de influência e de ser influenciado. Através desta exploração das interações naturais, Sujin aprofunda os temas profundos de identidade, paradoxo, dualismo e não-dualismo, o ciclo da vida e da morte.

Kim Hana

Busan-Lisbon. Bachelor's degree in Painting, Kyungsoo University. Kim Hana studied fine arts and worked in Busan. She later worked as a graphic designer in Seoul and now continues her abstract and graphic painting practice in Lisbon. kimhana.pt

Jiôn Kiim

Busan-Porto. Diplom (BA+MA) in Fine Arts, Dresden University of Fine Arts (HfBK Dresden). Erasmus, Fine Art, Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto (FBAUP). Guest Student Grant, Fine Art, State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart (ABK Stuttgart). BFA in Industrial Design, Hongik University, Seoul. Her practice is transdisciplinary and encompasses various media, with drawing at its core, as well as painting, photography and installations. The works of Jiôn Kiim appear to inhabit the interstice between language and the ineffable that defines the space of the artistic gesture and its form. Her work is often based on her surroundings, oscillating between chance and necessity, or ambiguity and clarity, to create forms and gestures that reflect contemporary times. cargocollective.com/jionkiim

Bae Gong Joo

Seoul-Brussels-Lisbon. Dong-guk University. Bae Gong Joo interprets the spirit of traditional Minhwa through a contemporary lens. Rather than simply reproducing folk paintings that embody the lives and hopes of nameless common people, she reimagines them in today's language. She reads beyond the shapes of objects to uncover their deeper meanings and symbols, capturing the free-spirited and joyful essence of Minhwa without being bound by convention. Her work offers comfort and joy through paintings that uplift life. While respecting tradition, she continues to create art that reflects the stories of our current times.

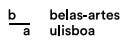
Summer Cho

Textile Arts and Design, Hanyang University. Completed certified courses in Bag illustration and Bag design at Central Saint Martins in the United Kingdom. Color is my deepest source of inspiration. I believe that color has the power to breathe life into the soul. Recalling the landscapes I have experienced, I express the emotions, light, sounds, and textures contained within through both representational and abstract images. Through this process, each work is born as a new expression that blends memory and sensation. My work goes beyond mere reproduction of landscapes. I dream of a world where nature breathes and coexists harmoniously with humans. I see nature not as humanity's possession, but as an equal being breathing together with us in the same rhythm.



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