



Translated Vase_2016 TVWG 1 (detail), 2016.
Ceramic shards, epoxy, 24K gold leaf, 175x125x110cm
Photo: Kwack Gongshin ©Yeesookyung.

Yeesookyung

Born in 1963, Seoul, Korea / Lives and works in Seoul

Website: www.yeesookyung.com

Yeesookyung has steadily expanded the spectrum of her work into diverse areas, including installations, sculpture, performance, video art, painting, and drawing, based on a rich narrative imagination. She has established her own world of art while exploring the themes of the fundamental questions we have such as the past and present; life and death; reality and unreality; secular or sacred things; individuals and others; society and systems, and cultures of different countries. Yee has unfolded her unique artistic universe in connection with her own experiences and inspirations from ancient mythology and stories.

Yeesookyung has solidified her position on the international stage by holding multiple solo exhibitions, including *Nine Dragons in Wonderland*, The Page Gallery, Seoul (2022); *I am not the only one but many*, Massimo De Carlo Galley, London, UK (2020); *Whisper Only to You*, MDRE & Capodimonte Museum, Naples, Italy (2019); *Saint Breeder*, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2015); *When I become you*, *Yeesookyung in Taipei*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, Taiwan (2015). Yeesookyung was also invited to the 57th Venice Biennale, titled *VIVA ARTE VIVA* curated by Christine Macel, in Arsenale (2017).

Her works are in the collections of museums overseas, including The British Museum, London, UK; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA; Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul; Salama Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kyiv, Ukraine; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; ARCO Collection, IFEMA, Madrid, Spain; Bristol Museum, Bristol, UK and Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA.

Selected Works

Translated Vase (2002-ongoing)

The *Translated Vase* series consists of sculptures reconstructed from discarded ceramic fragments. Skillful ceramic masters reproduce traditional Korean ceramics, and the vases with minor defects are destroyed to keep the rarity and value of the surviving masterpieces. I piece these destroyed pots back together in the manner of three-dimensional jigsaw puzzles, covering the cracks in gold. From the moment of destruction, I obtain a chance to intervene and fabricate new narratives with my own translation.



Translated Vase_Nine Dragons in Wonderland, 2017
Ceramic shards, stainless steel, aluminum bars, epoxy, 24K gold leaf
492(h)x20 x190 cm

Installation view, *VIVA ARTE VIVA*, 57th International Art Exhibition, Arsenale, Venice, Italy, 2017



Translated Vase_Thousand_2012, 2012
Ceramic shards, 24K gold leaf.

Installation View, *Constellation Gemini*, Korea Artist Prize, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, 2012
©National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea



Translated Vase_2012 TVW The Moon 1, 2012
 Ceramic shards, epoxy, 24K gold leaf, 155x155x155cm.
 Collection of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea



Translated Vase_2008 TVW 1, 2009
 Ceramic shards, epoxy, 24K gold leaf, 170x80x8cm.
 Collection of Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, USA
 ©Museum Schloß Oranienbaum, Dessau, Germany



Translated Vase_The Other Side of the Moon_ 2014 TVB 2, 2014
 Ceramic shards from North Korea, epoxy, 24K gold leaf, 138x143x141cm
 Collection of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
 ©Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art



Detail

Moonlight Crown (2019-ongoing)

Crowns evolve into bodies, too large and heavy to be worn on the head. I question the meaning of a lustrous “crown”, a symbol of absolute power. Strongly influenced by the beauty of Baekje-era gilt-bronze incense burners, I would often study these relics and imagine the vitality and dynamism of the ancient Korean peninsula where there were various forms of cultural exchange along the Silk Road and the Steppe Route. These moments are ingrained in the ***Moonlight Crown*** series.



Installation views, *Whisper Only to You*, 2019, MADRE · Museo d'arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, Italy, 2019



Moonlight Crown_Oh, Rose!, 2023
Epoxy, resin, brass, steel, glass, pearl, 24K gold leaf, 79x34x35cm



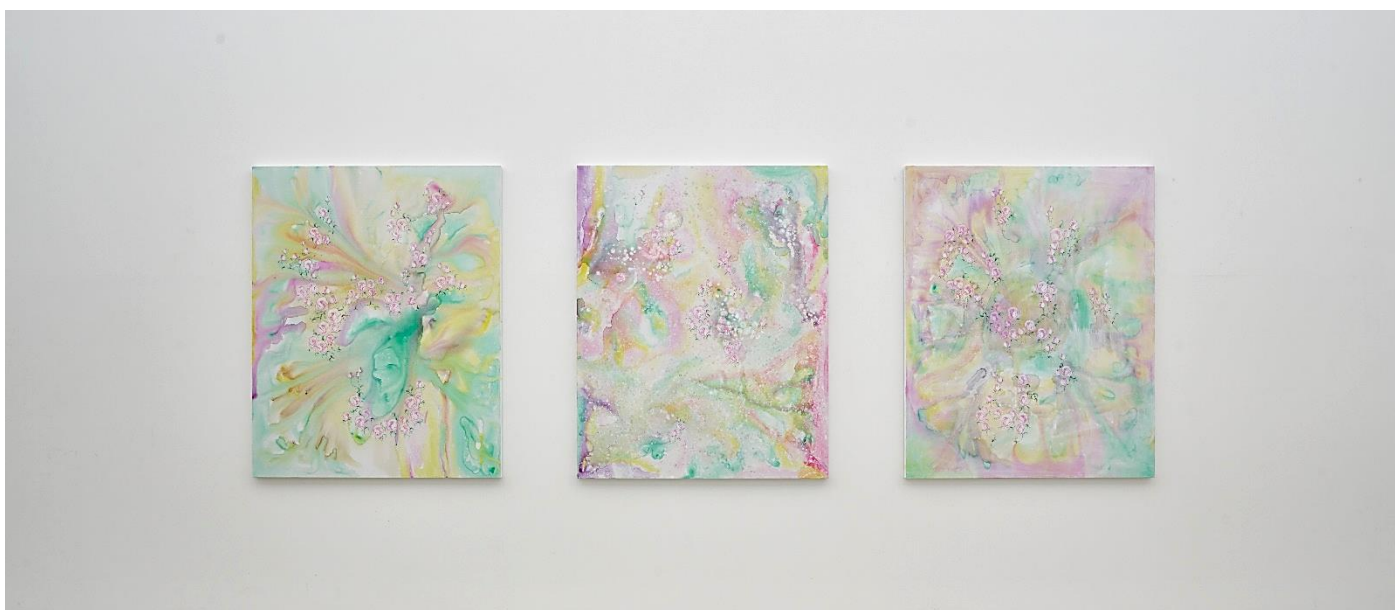
Details

Oh, Rose! (2022–ongoing)

Rose is a compelling subject through its retrograde connections with my experiences in previous lives. A symbol of love and beauty throughout different times and places, *Oh, Rose!* leads me to a new life each time in this special journey.



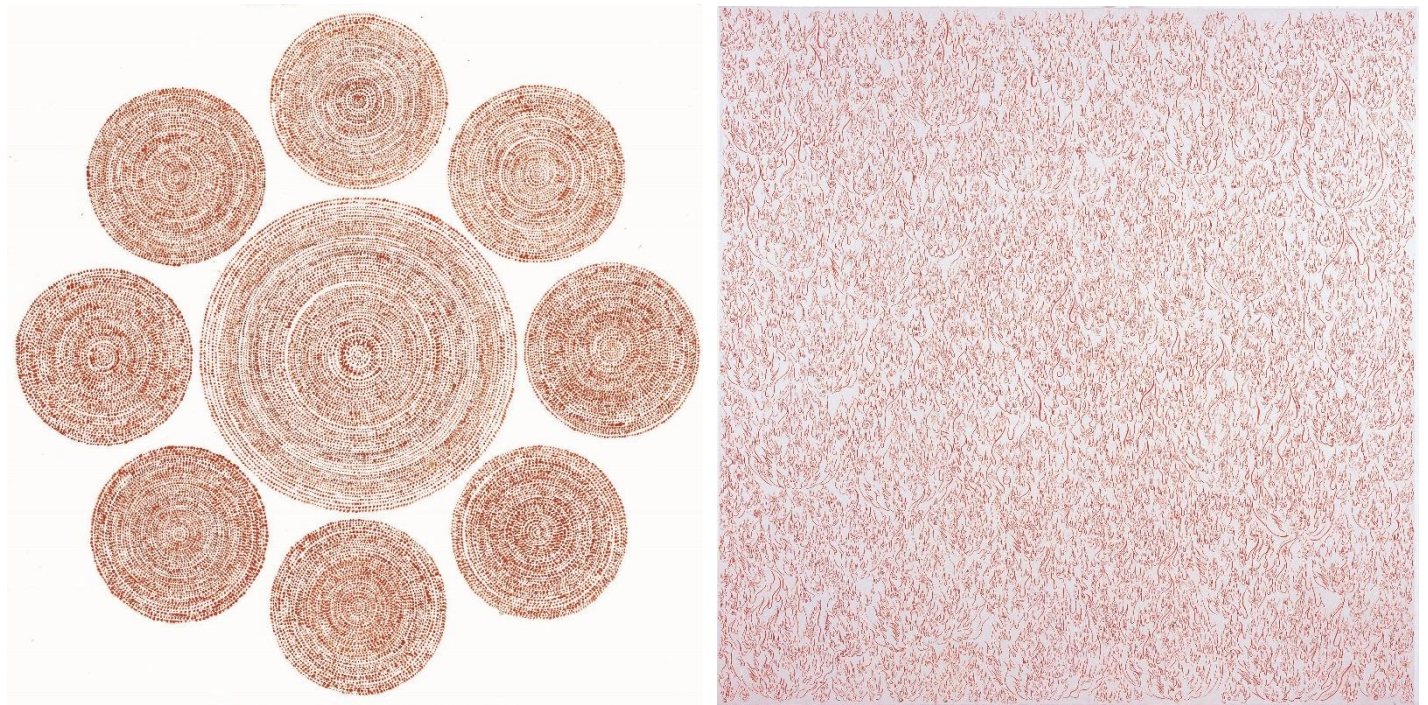
Oh, Rose_as if it was alive, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 227x181cm



Installation views, *Yeesookyung: Nine Dragons in Wonderland*, The Page Gallery, Seoul, Korea, 2022

Flame (2005-ongoing)

Flame is painted on Korean paper and drawn with cinnabar – a commonly used material in Korea, Japan and China, mainly for talisman or Buddhist paintings. I kept asking myself "what is flame?" while working on this painting just like a Buddhist holding on to a single question until reaching enlightenment. I often experienced that the brush stroke moved automatically and generated images continuously as if by itself.



From left to right: *Untitled*, 2005, Cinnabar on paper, 30x30cm ;
Flame 2006-1, 2006, Cinnabar on Korean paper, 100x100cm



Flame 2021-1, 2021
Cinnabar on Korean paper, 3.8x151x101cm

Flame Variation (2012-ongoing)

Taking some existing images from *Flame* drawings completed between 2005 and 2009, *Flame Variations* were painted by digitally reflecting some of the details with a mirror tool. The results are uncanny yet sublime images that emerged from my mind in the strict form of a Buddhist altar painting.



From top to bottom: Installation view, *Constellation Gemini*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea, 2012 ;
Flame Variation 1-1, 2012, Pigment on silk, Painting 70x120cm / Scroll 195x138cm

***Whisper Only to You* (2019)**

Whisper Only to You is a video work closely filmed details of a painting entitled *Flame*. While the camera moves around of the drawing depicted uncanny and mysterious figures, I kept on improvising a never-ending story in whispers. However, the story is not delivered clearly to the audience since I whisper in Korean without any subtitle. I hope the audience to excavate the hidden narratives and multifaceted meaning by using their own senses and imaginations from this work.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/363078377>



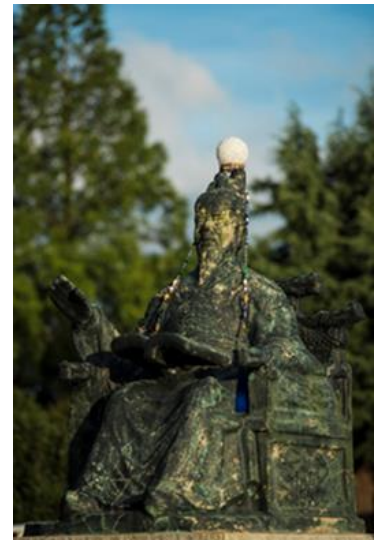
Whisper Only to You, 2019
Single-channel video, color, sound, 9:30 minutes

The Crowning Project (2016-ongoing)

The Crowning Project is a project which crowns sculptures in public spaces, especially in closed elementary schools. The sculptures that were once used for political propaganda were mostly removed or destroyed but there are a few surviving sculptures from the 60s, 70s and 80s, and most of them have been removed or destroyed now, but some of them have survived from the 60s, 70s, and 80s, a period of military dictatorship in Korea. These sculptures deserve the authority of a crown because they have survived and received much adoration from the innocent minds in the past. With the coronation, I would reminisce the past that we have tried to erase and the context of those surviving statues, which is obsolete just like the crown.



Installation view, *The Crowning Project* : Haenam Samsan Elementary School, Samsan Elementary School, Haenam, Korea, 2016





The Crowning Project: Installation views and the crowns, 2016

You Were There 2015 (2015)

In *You Were There 2015*, I gilded 24k gold to two stones I found in a quarry. Gilded in the same manner and technique as gilding a Buddhist statue, I offered one of them to a Buddhist monk. I also gilded two stones which I received from the monk as his gift. I kept one of them, and the other was sent to another monk through the original monk. This act of exchange will be repeated in this manner.



You Were There 2015, 2015
24K gold leaf on stone, 20x19x20cm (Left), 13x33x20cm (Right)
Installation view, *Saint Breeders*, Atelier Hermès, Seoul, Korea, 2015
© Fondation d'entreprise Hermès



Yildahm-Snim carrying *You Were There* to Sinjungdahn in Baekryunsa, Gangjin, Korea, 2015

You Were There 2017 (2017)

This project begins by collecting stones from conflict zones including the DMZ of Korea, the Tibetan borderline with China, and the Syria-Turkey border. The stones are gilded using Korean traditional techniques for gilding Buddha statues.

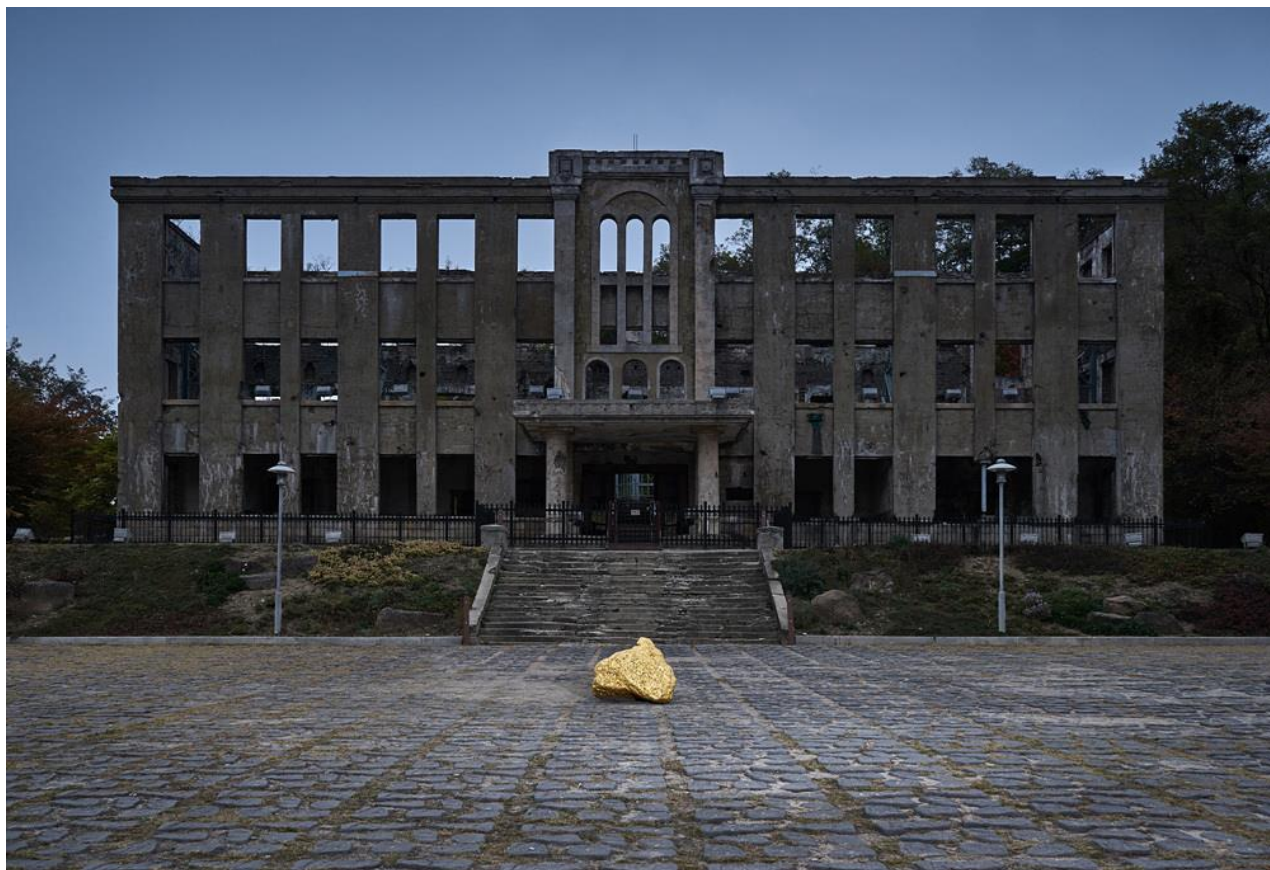
In ancient times, big stones were believed to be sacred and many rituals took place centered around them. There are many tales about sacred stones or rugged cliffs. However, during industrialization, those stones and rocks became obstacles and were removed from cities; as a result, cities became flat.

Nevertheless, rocks and stones are often very visible in photos capturing tragedies in conflicted areas where villages are bombed and places look desolate. These images caught my attention and I am always drawn to the stones and rocks in those areas.

In ever changing perilous situations in those conflicted areas, rocks are just lying there, unable to move. Rocks are one of the oldest materials containing strata of Earth's history. *You Were There*, is created by gilding the rocks in the conflicted zones and pays homage to the people who live there and experience the painful times stacking up and fossilizing inside themselves.



Suggested installation view. *You Were There: DMZ Project 2017* : DMZ Peace and Culture Square, Cheorwon, Korea, 2017



Installation view. *You Were There: DMZ Project 2017 : DMZ Labor Party Office*, Cheorwon, Korea, 2017
Rocks, 24K gold leaf, urethane paint, 60x75x63cm



Detail

My Asian Modern Masters (2015-ongoing)

In this project, I have been learning how to make paintings from Asian painters. Ideally, the painters I emulate must be born before 1934, have their own command of unique technique, and above all, must not have had an art education in Western countries. The process of the project is to choose one piece from the artist's oeuvre and copy it to learn how to paint. Imagining that I have become the painter while I am copying their paint is critical to this work.



My Asian Modern Masters *FahrelnissaZeid: Divine protection* (1981), 2015
Oil on canvas, 206x130cm

Shadow Dance (2015)

Shadow Dance is a project which shows a short performance by a traditional performer. I dance simultaneously with the same music, but from a distance far away. In the video, Taiwanese opera was performed at MOCA Taipei in 2015. Above the performer is installed, *When I Become You* (2015), two magnificent chandeliers that mirror each other.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/151764474>



Shadow Dance, 2015
Single-channel video & sound, 5 min. 46 sec.
©Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taiwan

Cinema Silencio (2016-ongoing)

Cinema Silencio is a roughly 30-minute-long video work with sound and a black screen. For this project, I selected movies from the Korean Film Archive YouTube Channel, representing Korean commercial films during the military dictatorship in the 1970s and removed all the scenes with any dialogue. Then I deleted all the images from the remaining scenes and left only the background noises and sound effects. I put these pieces of sound together. With this project, I hope to explore stories we might have lost or hidden within the movies because of the censorship of that period, as if reading between the lines.

Some of the most well-known Korean films from the '70s are sampled for this project, including *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (1974), *The Road to Sampo* (1975), *Crazy for You* (1977) and *Winter Woman* (1977). These movies have been reborn as an approximately 30-minute-long video work.

This work will be screened in a movie theatre, with a black screen at the front.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/202020940>



White Shadow (2015)

In 2015, I travelled to places where traditional, local, or religious events were held in Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. In the video, I appear on the left side of the frame as a figure immersed in my own music and dance. Dressed in white, my face is disguised by a white veil. I end up being a participant of a local traditional event instead of a spectator.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/153679757>



White Shadow, 2015
Single-channel video & sound, 8 min. 13 sec

***Past Life Regression Painting* (2014-ongoing)**

Once a month, from January 2014 onwards, I experienced past life regression through hypnosis with the help of a professional hypnotherapist. It is an attempt to find and express what is oppressed in the unconscious. Based on this thought, I cross-examined my own visions of reincarnation and past life, which, for better or worse, is a central aspect of East Asian thinking. Images and narratives I see during every past life regression are captured in these paintings.



From *Past Life Regression Painting Series* (2014 -)

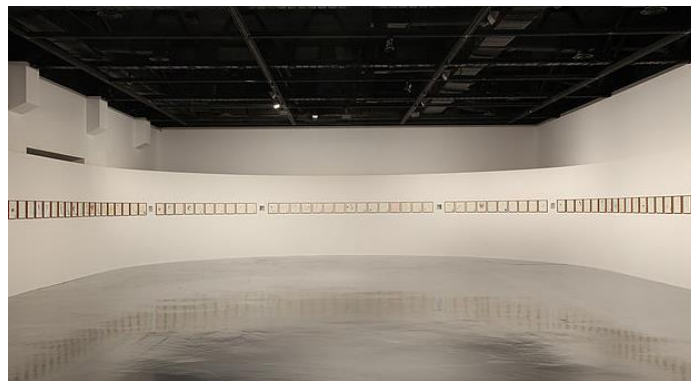
Clockwise from top left: *Oh Holy Night* (2016) ; *All the Survived in that Perilous Flood* (2016) ; *I am Not the Only One, but Many* (2014) ; *Two Different Possibilities* (2016) ; *Wedding in the Middle Land* (2014) ; *Saint, Making a Crystal Ball with the Impurity of the World* (2015) ; *Soon He will Pursue Enlightenment* (2015) ; *You Will Find a Way* (2014) ; *A Moment of a Deer Hunter, My Baby Deer and Me Reborn as a Bear* (2014)

Daily Drawing (2005-ongoing)

In 2004, I learned about Mandala art therapy. By drawing an image into one circle each day, one may ease my depression. I did this each day since then. During 2010, I drew while listening to Gregorian Chant. The drawings were hung in an oval shaped exhibition space, with curved walls. Four different versions of Stabat Mater music played from 4 speakers and mixed in the gallery space with a total of 176 drawings.



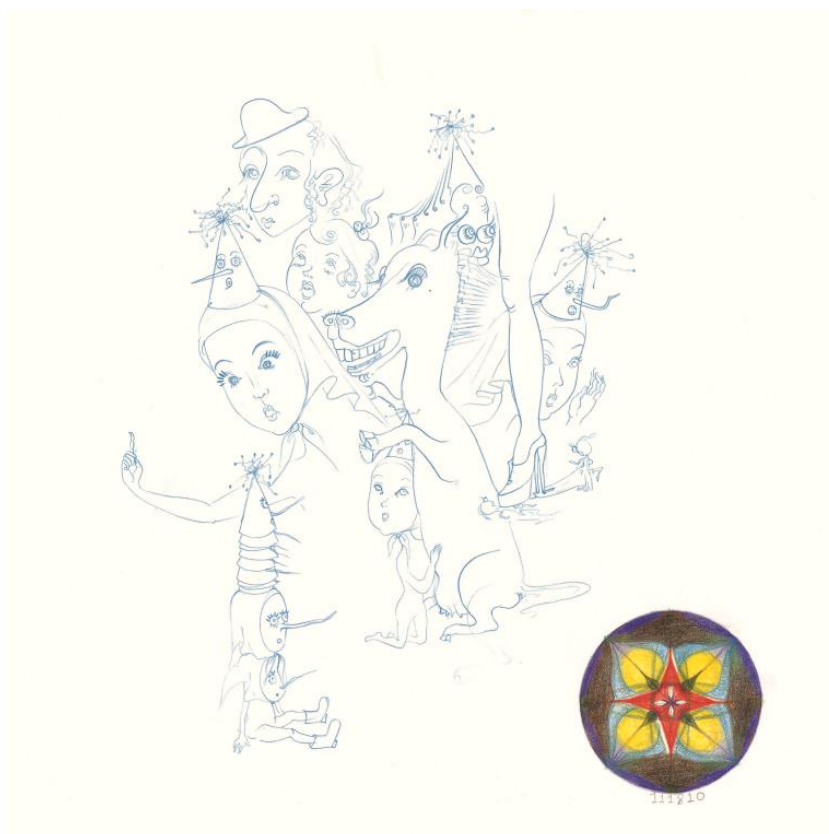
Daily Drawing100223, 2010
Color pencil on paper, 30x30cm



Installation view, *Jung Marie's Jeongga, Yeesookyung's Devotion*, Arko Art Center, Seoul, Korea, 2010



Daily Drawing 101023, 2010
Color pencil on paper, 30x30cm



Daily Drawing 101118, 2010
Color pencil on paper, 30x30cm

Bone Tear (2011)

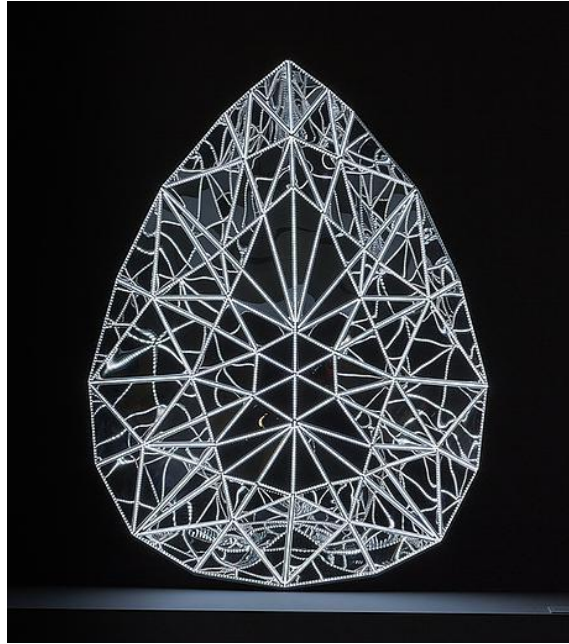
Bone Tear was installed in a former chapel for women inmates in a prison in Sydney. I produced a sculpture based on one image from the Daily Drawing Series alongside a candle sculpture in the form of praying hands. The candles were burning during the whole exhibition period. In addition, Gregorian chant, sung by priests, was played on a loop.



From top to bottom: Installation view, *Tell Me Tell Me: Australian and Korean contemporary art 1976-2011*, Darlinghurst Prison, Sydney, Australia, 2011 ©National Art School Gallery, Sydney, Australia ;
Bone Tea, 2011, Poly resin, fabric, paper clay, 70x30x28cm

Tear Drop (2012)

I presented this work at the Korean palace Deoksugung in 2012. This work is made of reflective stainless steel and LED lights. On account of the concaved shape, the LED light is reflected on each mirror surface infinitely. It is my homage to Queen Inmok who was placed under house arrest in Seokeodang in the palace by the king, her step son.



Tear Drop, 2012
LED, stainless steel. 170x110x60cm

Polaris (2012)

Polaris was created through the 3D modeling and 3D printing of figures seemingly reflected in a mirror. The girls depicted in this series are from my *Daily Drawing* series (2004-ongoing) who are actively transforming themselves. All the figures are spiritually concentrating on their inner immersion.



Installation view, *Constellation Gemini*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea, 2012
3D print, Dimensions variable; 3D modeling: Nho Wan, 3D printed: Hoseo University.
©National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea

All Asleep (2015)

All Asleep is a 3D printed sculpture constructed in a 3D modeling program.

I have positioned the same figures from the *Polaris* series (2012) sleeping to show inner peace.



From top to bottom: Installation view, *When I Become You*, Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, Korea, 2015 ;
All Asleep, 2015, 3D Print, Various size

All Asleep: Princess Bari, Xiwangmu and Tara (2015-ongoing)

The ***All Asleep*** series is a work created through 3D modeling and 3D printing with pairs of female figures positioned as if reflected in a mirror. In this work, females from Asian mythology let go of their burdens in sleep. They are “Princess Bari”, “Xiwangmu,” and “Tara.” “Princess Bari” is the ancestor of Korean shamans, a character from folklore passed down from the area of Gwanbuk. “Xiwangmu,” is a goddess of life capable of immortality and eternal life to overcome death, while supervising death as she lives in Kunlun Mountain on the western tip of China. “Tara” is the incarnation of tears shed by the Goddess of Mercy, who either guards followers of faith (Green Tara) or supervises the life extension of the commoners (White Tara).

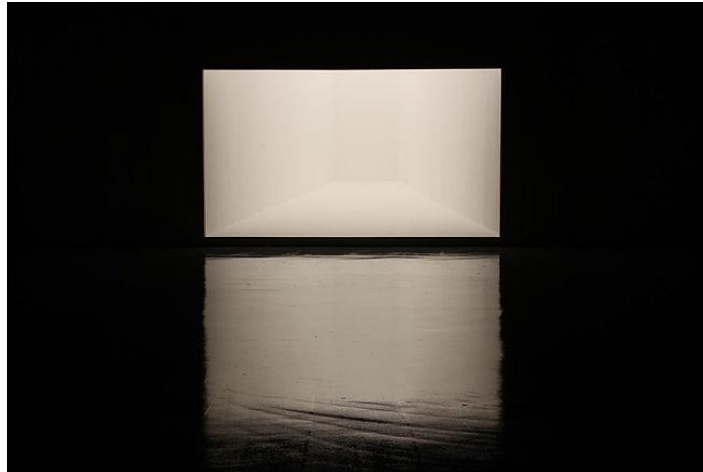


From top to bottom: Installation view, *Saint Breeders*, Atelier Hermès, Seoul, Korea, 2015 ;
All Asleep_ Princess Bari, 2015, 3D Print, 20x50x21cm (each) ;
All Asleep_ Xiwangmu, 2015. 3D Print, 22x50x26cm (each)
©Fondation d'entreprise Hermès

Norae (2010, 2012)

For this art work, I directed a performance and designed a stage. This stage was created with the intention of delivering the beautiful traditional Korean classical music, called Gaggok. Generally Korean traditional instruments play along with vocals. However, I presented only female vocals to focus on delivering the delicacy of Gaggok. The stage was widened at the front in order to deliver great acoustics without electronic devises.

Exhibition video: <https://vimeo.com/31987004>



Norae-While Our Tryst Has Been Delayed, 2010

Stage design and performance directing: Yeesoookyung ; Producer: Kim Inseon, Willing N Dealing ; Performance: Jung Marie ; Stage Plan: Gim Youngjin ; Design Firm ; Film Editing: Kim Joonha ; Costume: Yeesoookyung

Twin Dance (2012)

Twin Dance is a performance and also a video work filmed in a white studio. Two dancers perform with the same gestures of Korean traditional dance as if reflecting each other in a mirror. The dancers were styled to look like dolls in a Korean souvenir shop to emphasize the uncanny beauty of preserved tradition.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/151764725>



Twin Dance, 2012

Single-channel video & sound, 11 min. 52 sec

Performance and video directing: Yeesookyung ; Performance: Lee Junghwa, Chung Song Ii ; Music: Jang Young Gyu ; Costume: Kim Youngseok ; Makeup: Soh In Gyeong ; Camera and video editing: Cha Eun Teak

Dazzling Kyobangchoom (2011)

This project commemorated the restoration of Seoul Station to its original 1920s period, from the construction changes made during the Japanese Occupation. I collected and restored some of the chandeliers that were discarded in the middle of the restoration process and lit them above a small octagonal stage. The dance performed at the opening presented the Joseon Danysty Gisaeng, female entertainers, who unfortunately had their tradition tarnished during the Japanese Occupation.

Preview: <https://vimeo.com/155521105>



From top to bottom: Performance scene of *Dazzling Kyobangchoom*, *Countdown*, Culture Station Seoul 284, Seoul, Korea, 2011
Stage design and performance directed: Yeesookyung ; Performace: Lee Jung Hwa ; Musical instruments: Lee sung jun, Lee Kwan Woong, Yoo In Sang, Shin Hyun Seok, Lee Jin Woo ; Costume design: Yi Seo-yoon
Collection of National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea

Portable Temple (2008-ongoing)

Portable Temple is a Folding screen based on existing Buddhist paintings, depicting the imaginary rear view of Buddha and Bodhisattva following traditional Buddhist altar painting methodology. By enclosing oneself in the folding screen, one can create a meditative space.



Portable Temple 2008, 2008
Mineral pigment on silk, 175x80cm (each panel)

Flag Chess (2006)

I produced *Flag Chess* by creating an interactive chess game outdoors by moving flags on an 8x9 meter square board. *Flag Chess* presents the long journey of, and transformation of the chess game from its origin in India and its travels to Persia, to the West and to the rest of the World. Flags that bear the symbolic images of various cultures and regions replace the original markers on the board.

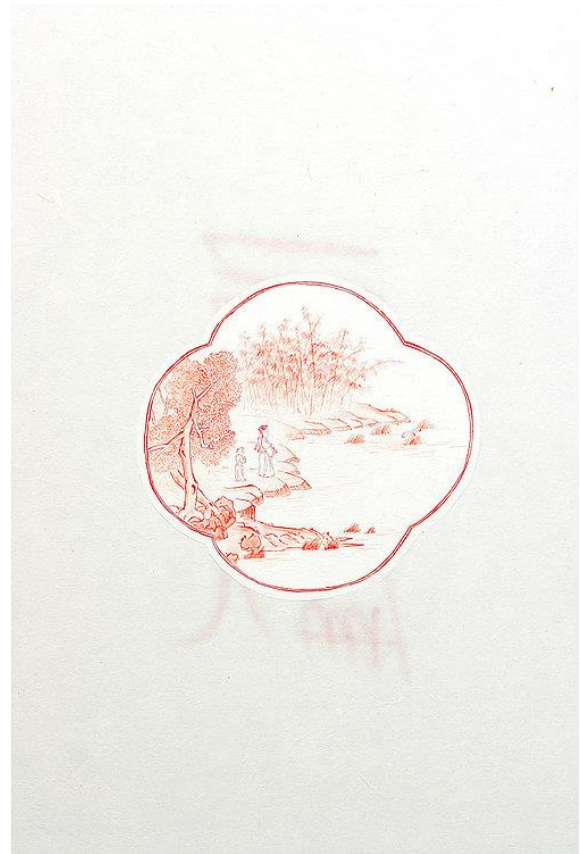


Flag Chess, 2006

Color digital print on fabric, color cone, bamboo stick, object, 250x800x900cm

Farewell (2005)

I depicted some scenery decoration from Joseon white porcelains on Korean paper with cinnabar. On the rear side of the work, I painted a talisman from the Joseon Dynasty, which is assumed to have the mystic power of leading one to complete their journeys securely. I adhered to the strict rules and processes of drawing the talisman.



From left to right: *Farewell 13* (detail), 2005, Cinnabar on Korean paper, 50 x 50cm ;
Farewell 05 (detail), 2005, Cinnabar on Korean paper, 50 x 50cm

***Breeding Drawing* (2005)**

These paintings pay homage to Princess Bari from Korean mythology. I made one painting first, turned it upside down and copied it to another panel adding symmetrical images to the left and right. I produced a total of 12 paintings in this fashion. Her means “to be abandoned, cast away.” Bari was the seventh daughter of the King of the Bulak kingdom. Upset by the fact that the Queen kept giving birth to daughters instead of providing him with a son, the King ordered Bari to be abandoned. Later, the King and the Queen become seriously ill. Hearing this news, Bari travels to the realm of the dead in order to save them, and returns with an elixir plant. Bari is considered as the originating mother of all Korean shamans.



From top to bottom: *Breeding Drawing 3*, 2005, Cinnabar on Korean paper, 100 x 100cm, Collection of National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea ; *Breeding Drawing 13*, 2005, Cinnabar on Korean paper, 100 x 100cm, Collection of Ssamzie, Seoul, Korea

The Very Best Statues (2006-ongoing)






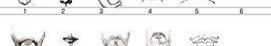


I disassembled images of Confucius, Lao-tzu, the Virgin Mary, Jesus, Buddha, and Ganesh into categorized their parts and colors. I presented these in the form of a questionnaire to residents in Japan, Korea, the UK, Ukraine, and Taiwan. People filled out the questionnaire on which detail was the most suitable for The Very Best Statue. From the results, five different *The Very Best Statues* were produced, each representing the results of the different place. This project was funded by each local community, and from this I crafted two statues – one I drew, and the other was installed in a public location. I will continue until I reach a count of 12 of The Very Best Statues.



The Very Best Statue Liverpool, UK, 2008
Color on poly resin, 195x95x60cm

survey sheet for the very best statue

Please choose one favorable part in each sections which you consider to be suitable for the very best statue

1. top head 	6. right upper half 	8. lower half 
2. eyes 	7. left upper half 	
3. nose 		
4. lips & chin 		
5. face shape 		
9. color of statue gold red white black blue realistic coloring transparent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
other suggestion? (please describe) _____		

The Very Best Statue survey sheet, 2006



The Very Best Statue Kyiv, Ukraine, 2012
Poly resin, fabric, mixed object, 88x67x45cm
Collection of Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kyiv, Ukraine



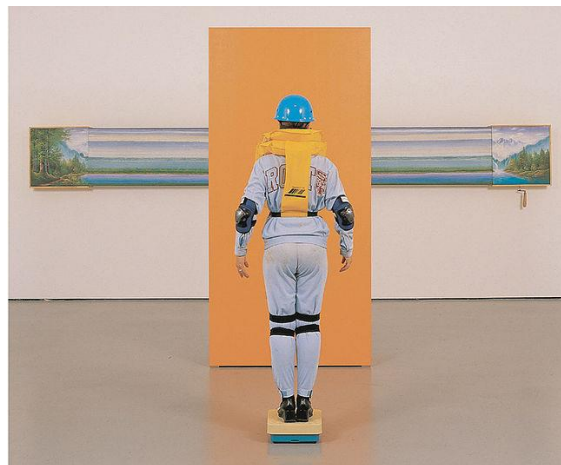
The Very Best Statue Echigo, Japan, 2006
Color on poly resin, 190x65x60cm
©Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial

***Painting for Out of Body Travel* (2000-2002)**

Painting for Out of Body Travel can be hung in different versions of length according to the size of the space available by turning a handle and unrolling the canvas. I found a common kitsch painting depicting scenery in a local market and cut it vertically down the center. The additional canvas connects these two halves with horizontal strips of color, as if it was stretched. In the instructions, I wrote “Relax and stare at the center of the painting until you feel dizzy. ... Someday it will appear to conjoin into one image and you will finally experience ‘Out of Body Travel,’ landing into the scene of the painting. When you practice ‘Out of Body Travel,’ it is possible to fall into the waterfall or lake in the painting. Therefore, I suggest you to wear a helmet, life jacket and elbow protectors.”



Painting for Out of Body Travel 2000-1 (detail), 2000
Found painting, oil on canvas, Dimensions variable from 70x110 to 70x570cm



Installation view, *Das Lied von der Erde - Song of the Land*, Museum Fridericianum Kassel, Kassel, Germany, 2000
From back: Painting (*Painting for Out of Body Travel 2000-1*, 2000), wooden bookshelf (inside: life jacket, helmet, elbow protectors), scale, the Traveler's Guide Book ©Museum Fridericianum Kassel, Germany