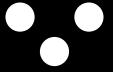


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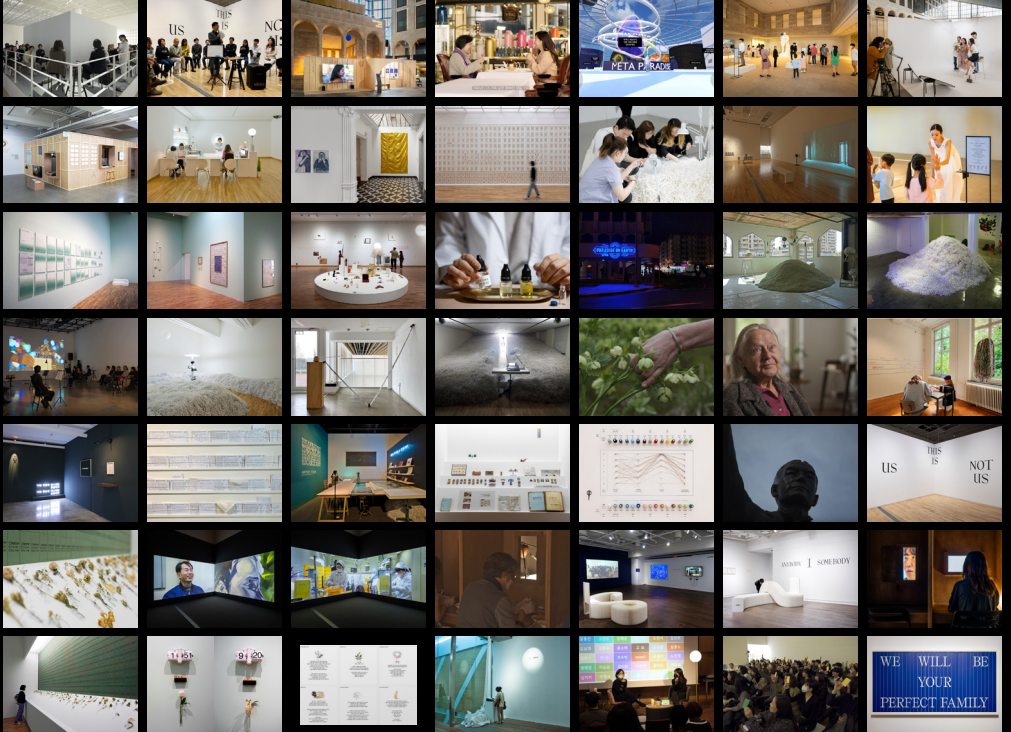
Artist Park Hyesoo: A Critical Study

[A Questioner](#)



Brochure

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INTRO	<p>Preface — Nam Woong, Lee Mia Kyoungmi</p> <p>Artist Park Hyesoo and her artworks — Lee Mia Kyoungmi</p>	<p>Park Hyesoo is a visual artist from South Korea who works widely in a range of media based on sculpture and installation, but also including video and performance. She is renowned for her multidisciplinary participatory art projects.</p> <p>Through exhibitions such as What's Missing (2008-), Dream Dust (2009-2017), The Definition of Botong (2011-2021), Now Here is Nowhere (2016), Our Unknown Country (2017-), and Monophobia (2022), the artist has focused on concepts found throughout our society: time, dreams, the ordinary, community, relationships, and more. Questions arising from specific scenes and moments drawn from her personal experience, such as the death of someone close, her sojourns through domestic and international residencies, or a conversation overheard at a nearby table, have led to her profound explorations on the themes of community and individuality, dreams and reality, life and death, and loss and mourning.</p>
TEXT	<p>In Support of the Efficacy of Useless Art that Draws People Together and Reconstitutes Society by Penetrating Subordination and Cynicism - An Essay on the Art of Park Hyesoo — Nam Woong</p> <p>Centripetal Force and Centrifugal Force - The Aesthetic and Political Aspects of Art After the End of Art' — Ahn Jinkook a.k.a Lev AAN</p> <p>The Art of the Sociological Attitude of Identifying Isolated Lives and Seeking Connection - On Project Dialogue — Kim Jiyeon</p> <p>The Last: A Critique of the Our Unknown Country - the Outside Story presented in Sharjah Biennale 15 — Carmen Lorenzetti</p> <p>An Aesthetic Experiment with the Ethics of Looking into One's Heart and Weaving Together Community - On Mourning project — Kim Dongil</p> <p>Art as Existential Solace That Pacifies the Discord in the World around Us - On Forum Theater: URI — Lee Mia Kyoungmi</p>	<p>The process of development is a unique feature in Park's oeuvre that creates the foundation of the themes and forms of each work. It begins with surveys carried out both on and offline to collect social perceptions and individual experiences related to the pertinent theme. She conducts the surveys in collaboration with experts from various fields in accordance with the circumstances. The various conflicts and inconsistencies that arise in the gaps between perception and experience are then visualized in her installations and videos, which are in turn brought into the public discourse through lectures, experimental theater, open forums, and/or publications. Since there is room for audience participation and interaction with the work to some extent, they can explore their own personal issues within a societal context and derive existential solace that assuages some of the discord found in life.</p>
ARCHIVE	<p>Conversation: different perspectives on 'love' and 'we' - On Goodbye to Love — Nho Myungwoo & Valentijn Byvanck</p> <p>Park Hyesoo Collection 2000-2023 and Artist Annals — Yang Junjung</p>	<p>Park studied sculpture at Ewha Womans University and holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from its graduate school. Since her first solo exhibition in 2000, she has held over twenty further solo exhibitions. She has also participated in a number of exhibitions in both domestic and international venues, including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), the Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), and the Museum of 21st Century Arts (MAXXI) in Rome. She recently took part in the 15th Sharjah Biennial in 2023. She won the grand prize in the Songeun Art Award in 2014, and was selected as a finalist for the Korea Artist Prize 2019 organized by the MMCA.</p>

Park Hyesoo's work stems from questions that can seem both ordinary and bold, such as "What is missing from your life?" *What's Missing*; "What dreams have you left behind?" *Dream Dust*; "Are you 'normal'?" *The Definition of Botong*; "What is the scope of the term 'we'?" *Our Unknown Country*; "What was your first romantic relationship like?" *Goodbye to Love*; "Shall we live together?" *Perfect Family Inc.*; and "How many friends do we need?" *Forum Theater: URI*. Each project has been evolving over a considerable period of time, some spanning more than a decade. Going through a number of phases and changes in form, the projects develop in ways that enrich the themes and expand their scope based on a methodology of mutual complement between different projects.

One of Park's early major works, *What's Missing* (2008-) consists of the two derivative efforts *Shadow Drawing* and the *Mourning project* series. Exploring themes of loss and of life and death along with the emotional reaction to loss from both personal and societal perspectives, the works shed light on places where mourning occurs — including through the death of her father and stories of family members of COVID-19 victims. *Project Dialogue* (2009-), which is composed of five affiliated works, holds major significance within Park's work. In *Dream Dust* (2009-2017), she peers into the lives of individual members of society, tracing dreams that were abandoned or eliminated in order to address the realities of a situation. Derived from this series, *the Ancient Pharmacy* (2011, 2021) deals with time and the emotions of individuals. A fortuneteller, psychiatrist, perfumer, and others participate as performers. *Goodbye to Love* (2013-2023) collects individuals' memories of their first love— including from broken-hearted people, factory workers, and Dutch seniors — through objects, texts, interviews.

Definition of Botong (2011-2021) reexamines the contradiction inherent in the notion of 'average' that serves as social standard. It focuses on elements that have been taken away or deliberately left behind for the sake of an average life. *Our Unknown Country* (2019-) was conceived to explore personal experiences with collectivism in South Korea. Two projects spun off from *Our Unknown Country*, *Perfect Family Inc.* (2019-) and *Forum Theater: URI* (2019-), criticize the prospect of a transition toward a society of solitary death and emotional outsourcing. The projects feature participatory public forums in various formats such as 'lecture performances' and experimental theater in which discussions may take place. The other series

affiliated with *Project Dialogue* are *Surviving as an Artist* (2010-) and *Dialogue Archive* (2008-2011).

In her practice, Park applies four methodologies: surveys, research/collaboration, interpretation/expression, and publishing/education. Each represents a different stage of development, which is how her projects evolve. She serves as an artist, researcher, and curator all at once, and presents each phase of development as an exhibition or as some other type of project in an exhibition space.

Public surveys collecting stories and investigating related data and materials constitute the first stage of Park's work and are considered indispensable to its later progression. The findings from this stage often lead to collaboration with other artists in order to further analyze and deepen the research and then evolve into additional multidisciplinary artistic experiments. The project comes to completion when the artist produces a 'work' embodying her own interpretations. Finally, she creates platforms for public discourse in which she can interact with audiences at different types of events such as lectures, experimental theater, and publication. Taking the project *Goodbye to Love* as an example, the exhibition entitled *The Phenomenon of the Mind: Facing Yourself* (Museum of Contemporary Art Busan, 2019) was designed as a survey, *'Post-Breakup' Workshops* (Art Centre Art Moment, 2021) functioned as the research/collaboration, the solo exhibition *Monophobia* (Art Centre Art Moment, 2022) provided her interpretation/expression, and *Goodbye to Love* (Wishful Books, 2023), a collection of diverse writings produced in the course of the project, constitutes the publication/education stage.

An Aesthetic Experiment with the Ethics of Looking into One's Heart and Weaving Together Community - On Mourning Project

"Park Hyesoo pulls knowledge from the swamp of 'same old-same old' life. She cuts away the calluses on her heart to reveal the torn and wounded flesh underneath. Healing begins once she starts to explore her state of mind. The theme of mourning in Park's work does not simply represent personal pain. It is an aesthetic experiment with an ethical focus that weaves the victims of disasters, audiences, and members of the broader public together into a community. The more we intertwine, the stronger and more resilient we become."

— Kim Dongil

Kim Dongil received his doctoral degrees in Sociology from Sogang University. After working as a research professor at the Sogang Institute of Social Sciences, he is currently a professor in the Department of Global Cultural Contents at the Catholic University of Daegu. He was awarded the Newcomer Award in Art Criticism by the Korean Art Association with "*Oh Yun, and Art as Will to Life*"(2002) and the *Prize of the Korean Sociological Association*(2009) for "*A Sociological Study on the Style War between Abstract and Figurative Style after 6 · 25 Korean War.*" He won the Prize for Academic Criticism for *Sociology of Seducing Art: Reading Culture with Bourdieu's Social Theory*(Galmuri, 2010) from *Monthly Art Magazine*. *The Sociology of Symbolic Struggle: How Artists Change the World*(Communication Books, 2020) was selected as an excellent book in the field of social sciences by the National Academies of Korea. He explores artistic phenomena through a sociological perspective and is interested in aestheticizing sociological concepts. He investigates the possibilities of sociology as criticism at the intersection of Adorno and Benjamin, Bourdieu, Latour, and others.

The Art of the Sociological Attitude of Identifying Isolated Lives and Seeking Connection - On *Project Dialogue*

"Hyesoo Park's inquiries fearlessly expose the vulnerable powerless beings in the lower strata of society, but they are not driven by a sense of justice in terms of unleashing stark truths nor do they pursue vague ideals. Instead, they seek communication with individuals and interconnections that can save the people of today from the unspoken agony of being left alone by ultimately developing solidarity."

— Kim Jiyeon

Kim Jiyeon graduated from Hongik University with a B.A. in Art and received her M.A. from Kyungpook National University School of Law. She is currently working as an art critic and columnist, and is a member of the editorial board of *Critique M*, a cultural criticism magazine. She has written for the monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *MEN Noblesse*, the art magazine *Gravity Effect*, the webzine *Channel Yes*, and the culture archive FIGK, and has published numerous critical articles on art and culture in various other media. She is the author of *Coincidence Toward the Inevitable*(Graphite on Pink, 2023), *Behind Things That Glitter*(Sundry Press, 2022), *Eyes of the Ordinary*(Sundry Press, 2020), *Marina's Eyes*(2020), and co-author of *P.S. You Make Me Feel Understood*(Sundry Press, 2023). In 2024, her writing titled "*The Racing World, Yet the Body 'Being' Here Now*", was selected for visual art criticism hosted by the Chosun Daily.



In Support of the Efficacy of Useless Art that Draws People Together and Reconstitutes Society by Penetrating Subordination and Cynicism
- An Essay on the Art of Park Hyesoo

"Park Hyesoo creates a sort of circuit of social boundaries by searching out people such as hikikomori, factory workers, North Korean defectors, the funeral directors and cleaners who specialize in managing the situation following the lonely deaths of individuals without family and friends, and family members of Covid-19 victims who were stigmatized and whose remains were quarantined even after death. The process of listening to their stories seeks to embrace and support people who have long been neglected by a society that only seeks what is considered valuable."

— Nam Woong

After studying art and aesthetics, Woong Nam writes about social and cultural issues, including art criticism. He is also a human rights activist focusing on LGBTQ, HIV/AIDS, and refugee issues. He is interested in contemporary bodies and subjectivities, gender and sexuality, society and community, media and skinship, and combines criticism and social activism. He won the 4th Platform Cultural Criticism Award in 2011 in the art criticism category for "Discussions on the Representation of Homosexual HIV/AIDS - From the HIV/AIDS Crisis to Today's Korean Society" and the 2nd SeMA-Hana Criticism Award in 2017 for "Today's Art Collective - We see the present through the eyes of the past, but as long as there is light for a while, we are connected to each other." He participated in publications including *Infectious Diseases and the Humanities*(Gang, 2014), *Meta-Universe - Generations, Regions, Spaces, and Media in Korean Art of the 2000s*(Mediabus, 2015), *Korea's Debates 2017*(Bookbybook, 2016) and *Encore*(Total Museum of Contemporary Art, 2022). Recent major art criticisms are "About the difficulty of the sentence "I support you""(SeMA Coral, 2022), "Fever of Pleasure, Following the Soot of Community-Walking at queer art"(Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea Webzine, 2023). Currently, He is a member of the Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea.



Centripetal Force and Centrifugal Force
- The Aesthetic and Political Aspects of Art After the End of Art'

"A refinedness can be observed in Park Hyesoo's work, a fundamental and intrinsic formal characteristic that immediately distinguishes the artwork from non-art and still persists in an era in which anything can be considered art. Park meticulously shapes, arranges, and records each of her works based on her aesthetic sense in order to ensure that her work does not evaporate into a mere fleeting moment of particular events. In Park's work, authorship is not reduced to a mere catalytic role, and aesthetic values are not downgraded to something secondary. Its density of concept and aesthetic considerations are not constrained by ethical judgments."

— Ahn Jinkook a.k.a. Lev AAN

Ahn Jinkook was honored with the art criticism award at the 2015 Chosun Ilbo New Spring Literary Awards for his writing titled "From Proposed Space to Proposing Space," marking the commencement of his career as a critic. From 2016 to 2017, he served as an editorial board member of the interdisciplinary political criticism journal *WordnBow*. Presently, he is a chairman at the publishing division of the Korean Association of Art Critics and imparts lectures on technical media and art theory at universities. Among his authored works are *Towards You: Your Direction*(co-authored, LPbook, 2022), *Burning Utopia: Society and Contemporary Art after 'the Return of Techne'*(Galimulri, 2020), *Korean Contemporary Prints 1981-1996*(Wooran Foundation, 2019), *Conditions of Criticism: Where Criticism Relinquishes Power*(co-authored, Galimulri, 2019), and *The Age of Diminished Expectations & The Shortsighted Art*(co-authored, Yellow Hunting Dog, 2017). His noteworthy academic papers include "The Meaning and Limitation of NFT in the Art Regime: Crypto Art in the Dialectical Movement of Digital Art"(Journal of Korean Modern & Contemporary Art History, Vol. 43, 2022) and "The Multilayeredness of Mobility and the Visual Art Language: The Material Turn, the Inequality in 'Mobility Capital,' the Hierarchy in Mobility, and Art"(International Journal of Diaspora & Cultural Criticism, Vol.12 No.2, 2022).



Art as Existential Solace That Pacifies the Discord in the World around Us

- On *Forum Theater: URI*

"You are about to experience being your own agency by recognizing yourself as an important participant and gaining a glimpse of the oppressive social structures surrounding you. You will come to contemplate the relationship between the community and the individual in the course of collaboration with other participants. By adopting the format of participatory theater, Forum Theater: URI(2019) encourages the audience to learn and produce empirical knowledge from which they can draw for themselves existential solace that pacifies the discord in the world around us."

— Lee Mia Kyoungmi

Lee Mia Kyoungmi graduated from Hongik University with a major of art studies and began her professional journey at the Kumho Museum of Art. Subsequently, she transitioned into the role of an independent planner, focusing on contemporary societal issues such as urban development, population decline, and energy transition. Through the conception and execution of participatory art projects and research endeavors, her aim is to delve into the sustainability of communities and urban ecosystems. She has served as the curator for *10000 Arts 10000 Acts* and currently holds the positions of co-director of *PUBLIC PUBLIC* and editor-in-chief of *Gemgemgem Press*. Additionally, she is collaborating with the artist Park Hyesoo on the joint planning of *Forum Theater: URI*. Among her published works are "*Living the Future of Cities Here and Now*" (Literary Magazine LITTOR, 2023), "*Encountering Emergent Moments*" (Space C, 2022), and "*Humans and Machines, Coevolving Agents*" (ZeroOne, 2021). Furthermore, she has contributed to academic discourse with a paper titled "*A Study on the 'Glass-Mirror Architecture' of Heterotopia*" (2018).

The Last — On Our Unknown Country

- the Outside Story presented in Sharjah Biennale 15

"I certainly think that the polyphonic and interdisciplinary understanding of the present, seen as the result of a complex process linked to the past, is peculiar to Park Hyesoo. In the interpretation of her own social, political and cultural context, she comes to compare Korea and the world, art and the art system - which is by no means a 'homogeneous and empty' space, but the result of a universalistic vision that actually conceals the ideological hegemony of the Western world, and the conflicts that take place in it for cultural and market domination."

— Carmen Lorenzetti

Carmen Lorenzetti graduated with honors from the Department of Art History at the University of Bologna and holds a Master's degree in Art History from the University of Milan. She is currently a full professor at the Academy of Fine Arts of the University of Bologna, where she teaches contemporary art history and latest trends in visual art. She founded *Le Guide D'Arte* and served as a director until 2004. She has been publishing since 1992, when she co-curated a catalog on 16th and 17th century sculpture for the Medieval Museum of Bologna, and has contributed to various journals such as *Stanza Rossa*, *My Media*, *Arte e Critica*, *Exibart*, *tropicodelcancro.net*, *ArtsLife*. She has organized various international conferences held in Italy, coordinated workshops and conferences at the Bologna Academy, and collaborated with the curators of *Documenta 2022*, *Ruangrupa*, in 2023 and wrote the essay *From I to us. The force of the collective and of relations* in the book *RiparAzioni*. Among her authored works are *Cuba. A voyage between images and words*(2015), *Imagining Italy*(2017) and the series of books *EX from 1 to 5, dedicated to Italian young and renowned artists*(2018-2023). Some recent art essays include *Art and Society: some examples*(2022) and *The psycho-sexual theater of Vito Acconci*(2003).



Conversation: different perspectives on 'love' and 'we' - On *Goodbye to Love*

— Nho Myungwoo

Nho Myungwoo received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Freie Universität Berlin, focusing on Theodor W. Adorno's reading of Arnold Schönberg's New Music Theory, and is currently a professor in the Department of Sociology at Ajou University. At the same time, he runs Nieuw Bookstore specializing in Social science & art books. His notable works include *Sociology of Everyday Life*(Sakyejul, 2013), *The Theater of Life(Theatric Mundi)*(Sakyejul, 2018), *The Second City, the Second Art(Book in the Gap, 2020)*, and *Lecture on Classics for Culture*(KL Publishing Inc., 2023), which he wrote while conceptualizing a school of thought. He researches the interpretation of the social context underlying art and is deeply interested in art as a sociologist studying mediated sociality. In 2019, he participated as a panelist in "Forum Theater: URI." He continues to write and explore autobiographical sociology related to observing and interpreting the lives of ordinary people. *Representative books related to art are Avantgarde*(Chaeksesang, 2008) and *Beyond the Dialects of Enlightenment-Adorno and Schoenberg*(Moonji Publishing, 2002).

— Valentijn Byvanck

Valentine Byvanck has served as the director of the Zeeuws Museum and currently is a director of Marres, House for Contemporary Culture in the Netherlands. He participated as a collaborative partner in the exchange cooperation program between Korea and the Netherlands under the Arko International Arts Fund in 2020 and 2021. He has curated numerous exhibitions primarily in the Netherlands and Europe, including *The Painted Bird: Dreams and Nightmares of Europe*(2017), *Dreaming Awake*(2018), *Museum Motus Mori*(2019), and *The Waves*(2020). In the latter half of 2023, he hosted an exhibition titled *Goodbye to Love: Conversations of Everyone with Sealed Lips*, which also featured works by artist Hyesoo Park.

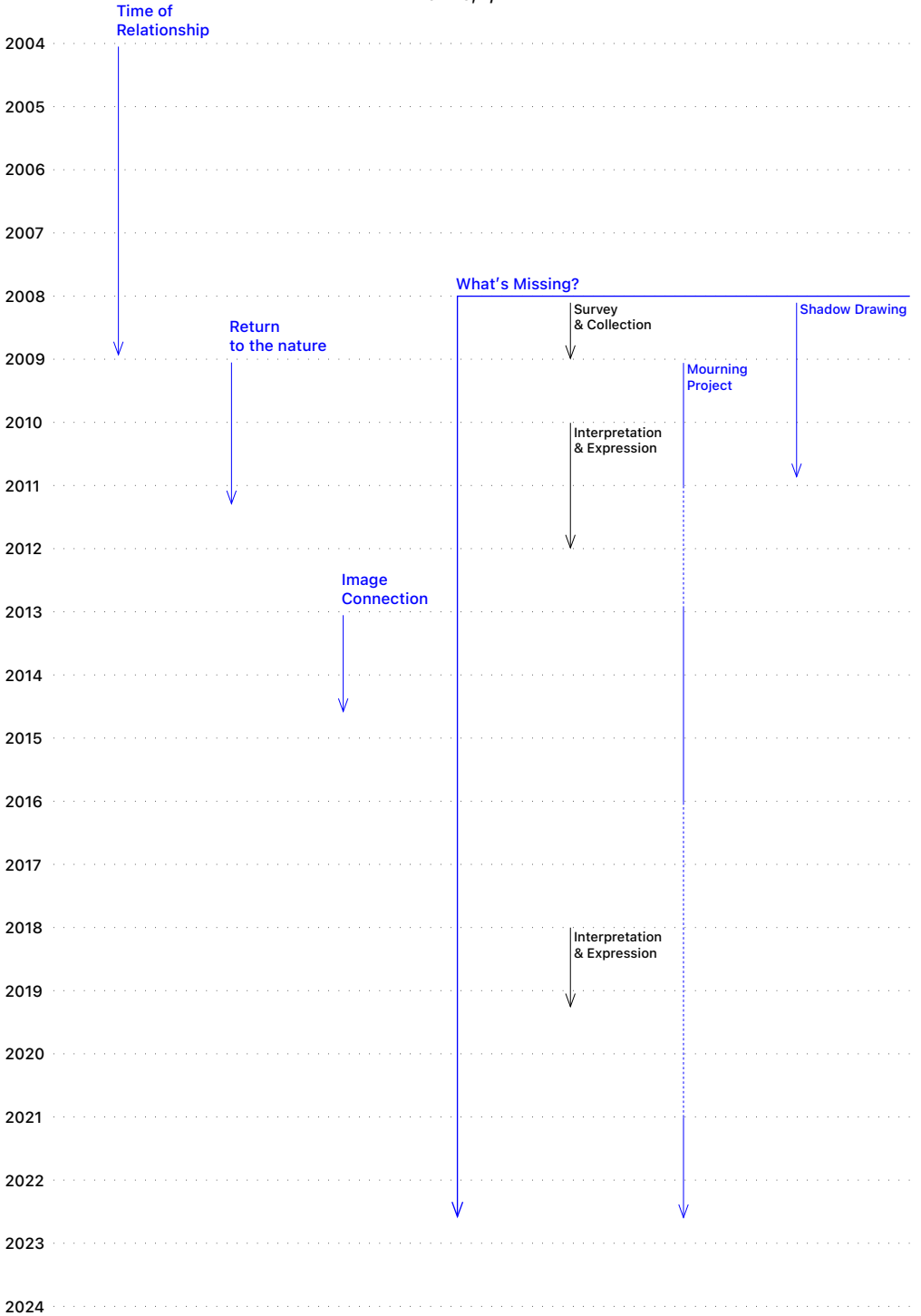
Archive: Park Hyesoo Collection 2000-2023

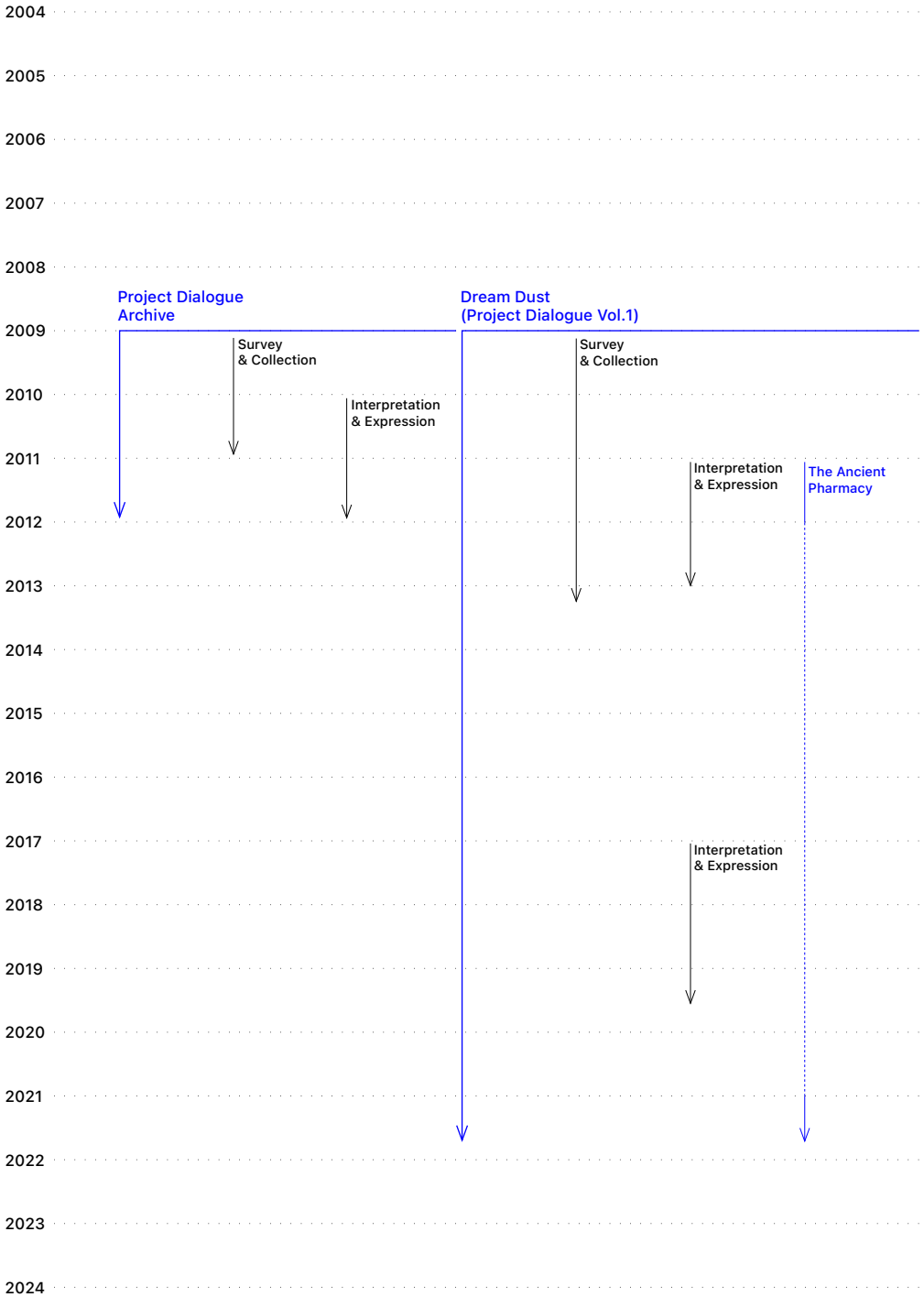
"In the Park Hyesoo's artwork archive that I have created, there is a comprehensive list spanning from the early career to the present (as of 2023), including representative images, themes, genres, media, and more. With over 200 entries, this list may come across as rather rigid to viewers. However, I believe that by integrating yearbooks, thematic catalogs, artist website information, and the archive itself, we can offer a more multifaceted understanding beyond the image-centric classification system. This approach would enable viewers to grasp the works and the artist in a more nuanced manner."

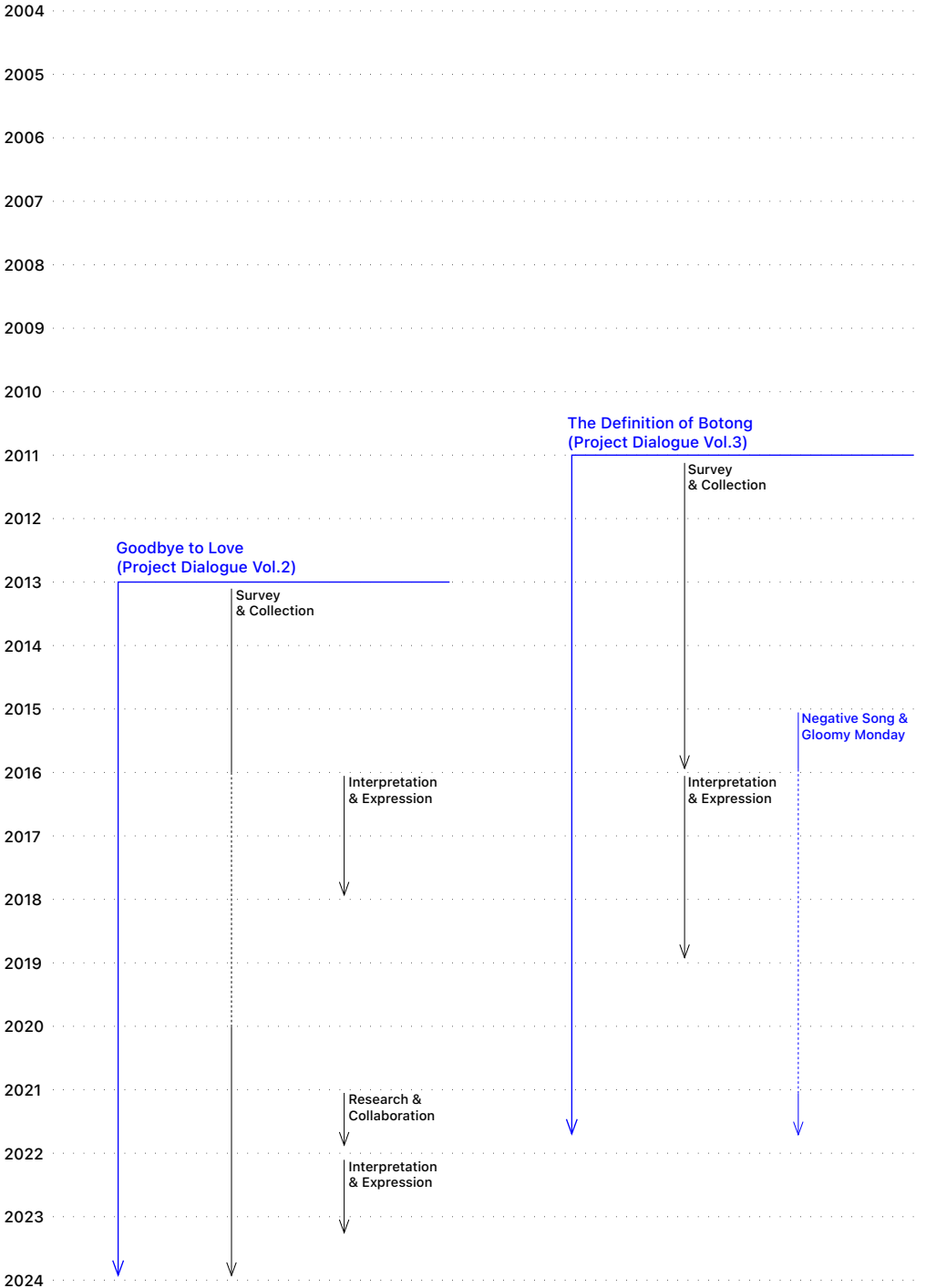
— Yang Yunjung

Yang Yunjung graduated from the Art Theory Department at the School of Art & Design, Korea National University of Arts. In 2017, she completed an advanced workshop program for cultivating professional personnel in art documentation at the Arts Data Bank of the Korea Arts Council and an internship at the Art Research Center of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. In 2018, she worked as a research assistant for the "Senior Artist Digital Archiving Data Collection Research Support Project - Artist Shim Moonseup Research Team" at the Korea Arts Management Service. From 2020 to 2023, she served as a research officer in the Modern Art Department at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. In this role, she was responsible for assisting in exhibition planning for *When Art Meets Literature*(2021) and *DNA: Dynamic & Alive Korean Art*(2021), *The Space Between: The Modern in Korean Art*(LACMA, 2022), *Moon Shin Retrospective: Towards the Universe*(2022), *The Most Honest Confession: Chang Uchhin Retrospective*(2023) as well as conducting research on modern art and archiving and digitizing art collection materials.









2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

Surviving as an Artist
(Project Dialogue Vol.5)

Survey
& Collection

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

Our Unknown Country
(Project Dialogue Vol.4)

The Outside
Story

Survey
& Collection

2018

2019

Survey
& Collection

Perfect
Family Inc.

Forum Theater:
URI

2020

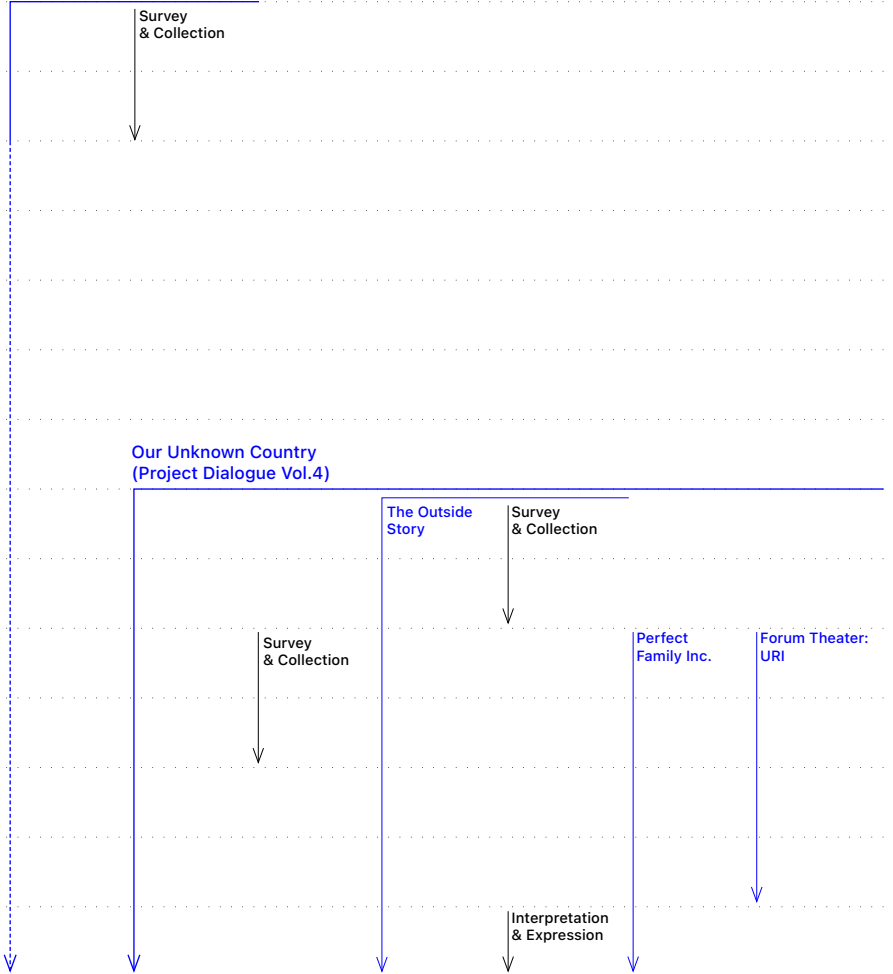
2021

2022

2023

Interpretation
& Expression

2024





For book purchases or information,
Please contact us at
gemgemgempress@gmail.com

Artist Website
www.phsoo.com



Producer
Lee Mia Kyoungmi

Associate Editor
Nam Woong

Advisor
Kim Jiyeon, Park Hyesoo,
Ahn Jinkook a.k.a. Lev AAN

Archivist
Yang Yunjung

Curatorial Assistant
Lee Heeok

Design
Kim Minjae

Writers
Kim Dongil
Kim Jiyeon
Nam Woong
Nho Myungwoo
Ahn Jinkook
Lee Mia Kyoungmi
Carmen Lorenzetti
Valentijn Byvanck

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The access to the online
archive *Park Hyesoo*
Collection 2000-2023 will be
announced in the catalog.

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