

## Press Release

November 28, 2019

Press materials: <https://bit.ly/35FaCdR>

Contact: Hyo Gyoung Jeon (curator)

[press@artsonje.org](mailto:press@artsonje.org)

T. +82-2-733-8944

### *Deep in the Forking Tanks*

Heecheon Kim

November 29, 2019 – January 19, 2020

Art Sonje Center, 3F

Curated by Hyo Gyoung Jeon (Curator, Art Sonje Center)

Organized by Art Sonje Center

Supported by ISU Group, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture



Heecheon Kim, *Deep in the Forking Tanks*, 2019, Video Installation, stereo, color, 41min, Image courtesy the artist.

Art Sonje Center proudly presents Heecheon Kim's solo exhibition *Deep in the Forking Tanks* from November 29 to January 19, 2020. *Deep in the Forking Tanks*, the new video that provides the title for

this exhibition, has artist Heecheon Kim meeting with divers and venturing down deep into the water. Before entering the water, he goes into a flotation tank to experience a simulated dive. Also known as a “sensory deprivation tank,” it literally enables to cut off sense of sight, hearing, and smell. Inside one of these tanks, a person loses the sensations of their body and is capable of focusing fully on their mind. (Indeed, it is for this reason that athletes have sometimes used the tanks for “image training.”) But as the training goes on, one starts to become confused at whether they are in a simulation or actually diving. While they are being drawn into a state in which their consciousness of physical reality is unclear, another sensory stimulation from the tank itself gains momentum. The “tank” here is a kind of frame that can blur the boundaries between the real and unreal perceptions, and the same time accentuate those boundaries.

Heecheon Kim is curious about the process through which human cognition changes as a result of the invention of new devices and tools. That cognition and consciousness are not typically defined through things like language; Kim develops concrete hypotheses to surmise them in various ways. The ways in which he traces them are similar to a forensic investigation. Detecting those moments in a person’s consciousness where the physical reality is only dimly perceived, he identifies the technological elements that might have influenced that cognition and traces back the cognitive process. Just as a forensic examination traces patterns of criminal activity, he is hypothesizing patterns through which cognitive change arises. Once the artist has learned those patterns, he employs new elements into them to attest his hypothesis.

As he constructs his narratives in the video medium, Heecheon Kim applies his patterns and submits them to a testing process. First, he records an actual situation with documentary-like footage. This record is used as the “actual” material to support his hypothesis. The artist actively applies digital technology to his footage – GPS, VR, face swapping, games, and so forth – which becomes a set of tools for achieving somehow “unreal” layers within a real situation. In his artistic practice, these digital applications are one of his primary visual rhetorics and serve as media to stimulate different perceptions of reality. Through these methods, Kim presents us with an unusual situation in which no distinction are drawn between the virtual perceptions and reality that human beings are conscious of – where the boundaries between them disappear and reappear. Observing how developments in technology have resulted in technology becoming an invisible presence, he recognizes that this phenomenon is taking place at a far faster rate than human beings are able to calculate. He uses ostensibly “futuristic” digital technology and images to produce his artwork, but the “future” narrative he presents is a departure from our ordinary expectations when we imagine the future.

For human beings, cognition and consciousness can be as realistic as physical states. We sometimes experience how a perception can become immense that it blurs our awareness of the reality

that surrounds us. There are moments when theories and concepts of reality lose all meaning, when all that matters is the state we are perceiving. Historical time does not apply to the temporality of such moments, which can proceed toward any point at any speed. Heecheon Kim's narratives unfold according to this temporality. For the viewer, this comes across like an experience with a new world ahead of any interpretation of it as an object. Some people may perceive the temporality within Heecheon Kim's nimbly unfolding narratives as akin to a new experience – but it is actually similar to enter an incisive realistic device, like a lens offering an omniscient perspective on the human being inside of the “tank” as another temporal world without realizing it. As something all of us living in these times have arrived at ourselves, this odd temporality is utterly realistic.

### **About the Artist**

Heecheon Kim (b. 1989) makes video works based on various digital devices familiar to us in our daily lives and their interfaces. Using the interfaces through which this digital technology operates, he moves through a complex arrangement of narrative layers to produce images of the contemporary world. Heecheon Kim graduated from the architecture department of the Korea National University of Arts. He has held solo exhibitions at the Asian Art Museum (2018, San Francisco) and Doosan Art Center (2017, Seoul) and taken part in numerous group exhibitions at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (2019, Seoul), İstanbul Museum of Modern Art (2017, İstanbul), ZKM (2019, Karlsruhe), and the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (2019, Manila).

## ■ Installation Views &amp; Work Images



Heecheon Kim, *Deep in the Forking Tanks* (2019), installation view, Art Sonje Center, Photo: Yeonje Kim



Heecheon Kim, *Deep in the Forking Tanks* (2019), installation view, Art Sonje Center, Photo: Yeonje Kim



(still image) Heecheon Kim, *Deep in the Forking Tanks*, 2019, Video Installation, stereo, color, 41 min, Image courtesy the artist.



(still image) Heecheon Kim, *Deep in the Forking Tanks*, 2019, Video Installation, stereo, color, 41 min, Image courtesy the artist.

■ Poster image

**A FORKING TANKS SJ**

**김희천**  
2019.11.29—2020.01.19  
**HEECHON KIM**

주최: 아트선재센터  
Sponsored by Art Sonje Center

후원: 서울특별시장, 서울특별시, 서울문화재단  
Supported by SJU Group, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture

관람시간: 오후 12-7시 (입장료 없음)  
Viewing hours: 12-7 pm (Admission is free)

00002 서울특별시 중구 을지로3길 87  
87 Yulgok-ro 3-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul, 03062 Korea  
T 02 733 8949 / F 02 733 8377  
www.artsonje.org

**C**

**■ Outlines, Heecheon Kim: *Deep in the Forking Tanks***

**Artist** Heecheon Kim  
**Dates** November 29, 2019 – January 19, 2020  
**Venues** Art Sonje Center, 3F  
**Curated by** Hyo Gyoung Jeon (Curator, Art Sonje Center)  
**Organized by** Art Sonje Center  
**Supported by** ISU Group, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture

**Hours** Tuesday–Sunday 12–7pm

**Admissions** General 5,000 KRW  
Students 3,000 KRW

**Contact** +82-2-733-8944