

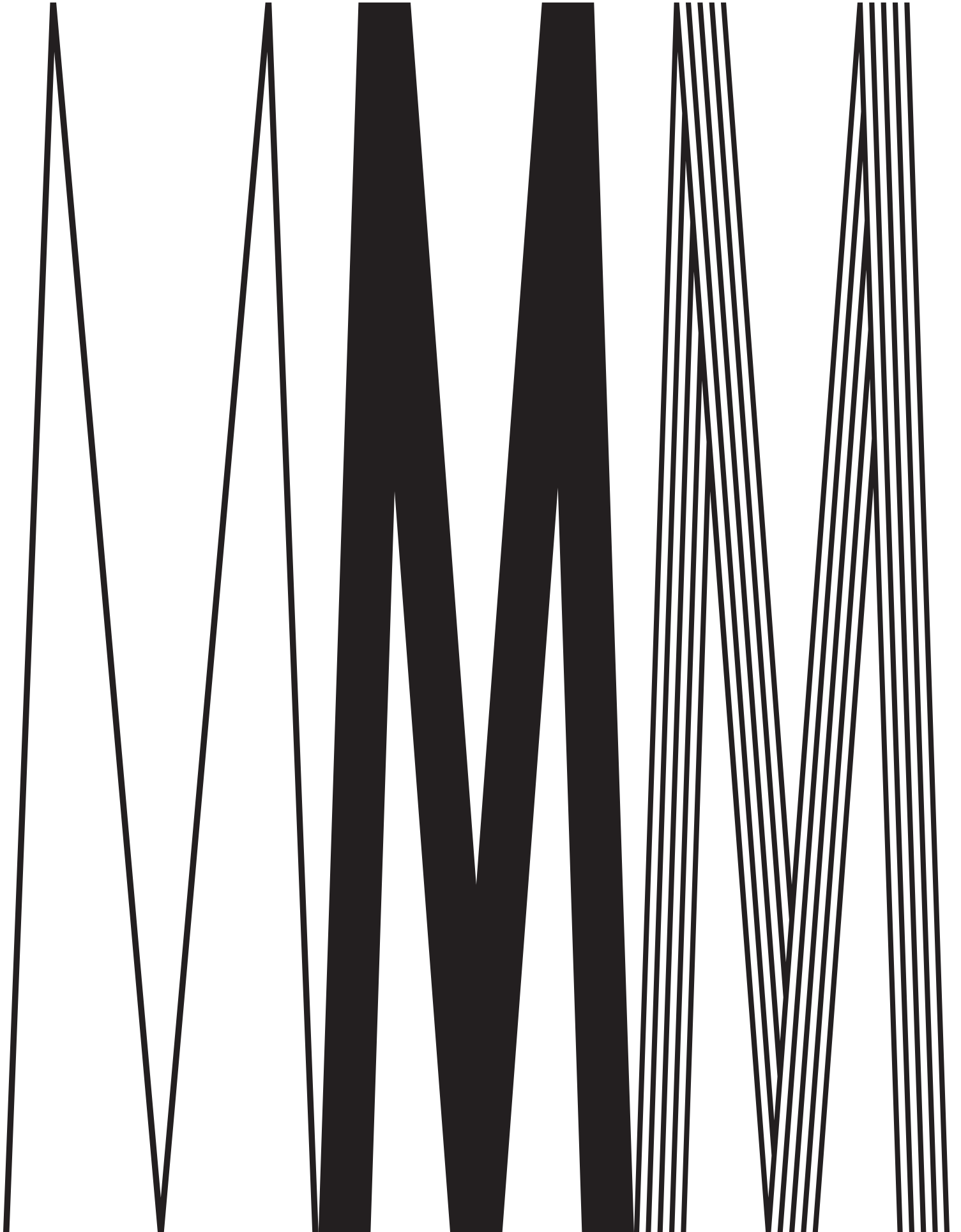
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2022. 1. 20 – 3. 6  
Art **Sonje** Center

SJ

Minimalism–**Maximalism**–Mechanissmmm  
Act 1–**Act 2**

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Artists

Act 1: Asger Dybvad Larsen, Fredrik Værsløv, Kang DongJu, Monica Bonvicini, Oso Parado, Pernille Kapper Williams, Silas Inoue, and Tony Lewis.

Act 2: Expansion Colony, Heo ChanMi, Kent Iwemyr, Li Ran, Nho Wonhee, Suh Yongsun, and Trevor Shimizu.

Curated by Jacob Fabricius (Director, Art Hub Copenhagen)

Exhibition Management by Heehyun Cho (Curator, Art Sonje Center)

Assisted by Eunhae Cho (Curatorial Assistant, Art Sonje Center)

Organized by Art Sonje Center and Kunsthal Aarhus

Supported by Art Hub Copenhagen, Augustinus Fonden, Danish Arts Foundation, Embassy of Italy in Seoul, Italian Cultural Institute in Seoul, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Knud Højgaards Fond, and V1 Gallery

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Thanks to Rose Tytgat

The exhibition *Minimalism<sup>1</sup>-Maximalism<sup>2</sup>-Mechanissmmm<sup>3</sup>* Act 1–Act 4 is conceptualized in four acts by Jacob Fabricius, and one of four acts, Act 4 is curated by Mikkel Elming. Act 1–Act 2 from 20 January to 6 March is followed by Act 3–Act 4 from 17 March to 24 April at Art Sonje Center.

The exhibition will stage traditional expressions in a non-traditional and experimental setting. With clear curatorial intent, the exhibition examines how artists select, use and work with materials. *Minimalism-Maximalism-Mechanissmmm*'s four acts develop from a traditional setting and physically, static display to a participatory, relational, and activating exhibition. Through the series of four acts the audience will encounter multiple ways of disseminating, experiencing, utilizing, viewing, and questioning curatorial methods and institutional approach to presenting works.

Act 1 will present minimalistic works. Embedded in the works are traces of making them, and the process is a fundamental element of the works. The works materiality is mainly influenced by the way they have been touched by nature and/or urban settings. Act 1 mainly consists of tactile and sensual works on canvas and paper, while Act 2 will present paintings, where the artists are creating narrative stories from urban and rural areas. In Act 2 the storytelling is generated through the artist's memory, and the works materiality can be experienced through the canvases, and their real and fictional characters. Act 1 and Act 2 will generate contemplative relationship between the artwork, their making, and the observer. Act 3 and Act 4 on the other hand invite the audience to interact and actively participate with their bodies.

*Minimalism-Maximalism-Mechanissmmm* Act 1–Act 4 examines how artists use materials to tell stories about their surroundings and daily life. The exhibition creates connections between the artworks and the observer, and examines how the curator can affect the aforementioned relationship between works and audiences. The four acts can be experienced as individual shows, but the exhibition's plot-twist evolves across the different acts through public interaction – direct and indirect. As a whole, *Minimalism-Maximalism-Mechanissmmm*'s four acts are presented as thematic of how the institution presents itself, the art and the observer, to give the audience the experience and knowledge of, how meaning and connections are created spatially.

In addition to this folder there are extended captions. The artists have been asked to make an instruction of *How do you make the work?* in Act 1 and *How do you tell the story?* in Act 2. The following instructions could inspire to think and rethink the process of making art. The conceptual instruction approach is inspired by the exhibition *Art by Telephone* that took place at Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 1969. The wall labels are meant to activate the viewer, so they tap into a discussion about original versus copy, copyright versus copyleft, and Do-It-Yourself audiences. We hope these instructions and artist's vision of making work will encourage and inspire the visitors. Welcome to *Minimalism-Maximalism-Mechanissmmm* Act 1–Act 2.

1. Minimalism refers to the art movement that began in post-World War II Western art, mostly visible and connected to the American art scene in the 1960s and early 1970s. The genre is spare or stripped to its essentials and is often interpreted as a reaction against abstract expressionism and modernism.

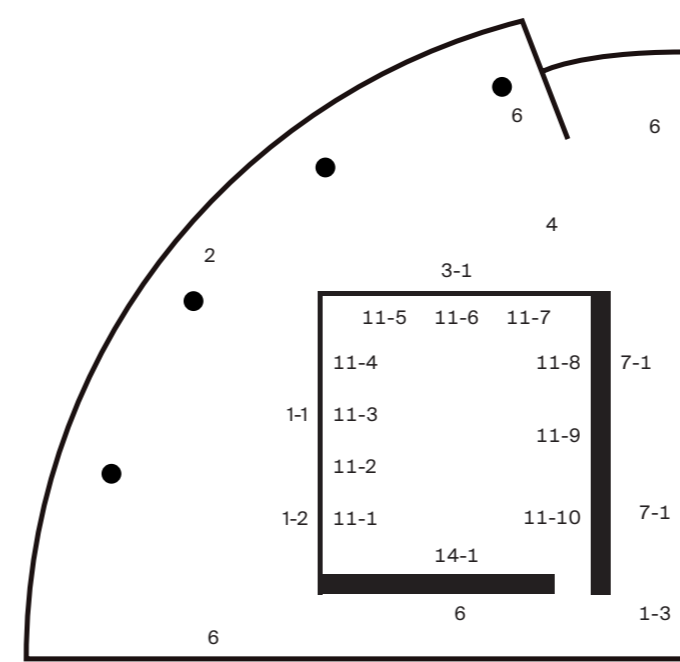
2. One movement is often a reaction to other movements in the arts. Maximalism is a reaction against Minimalism, an aesthetic of excess. The philosophy can be summarized as "more is more", contrasting with the minimalist motto "less is more".

3. A mechanism is usually a piece of a larger process, known as a mechanical system or machine. Sometimes an entire machine may be referred to as a mechanism; examples are the steering mechanism in a car, or the winding mechanism of a wristwatch. However, typically, a set of multiple mechanisms is called a machine. In the arts, there are also a set of multiple mechanisms, which may be called the art machine.

4. Ssmmm is a purposefully misspelling and should be read as a stutter (talk with continued involuntary repetition of sounds, especially initial consonants) or as a machine getting stuck, making repeated mechanical noises. The audience may ask themselves how they can have an influence on the institution, and if the museum that they frequently visit is stuttering, repeating itself and seem stuck. It can also be experienced as the sound of pleasure like the song *Mmm Skyscraper I Love You*, which Underworld's Karl Hyde described as stream of consciousness.

Act 1–**Act 2**

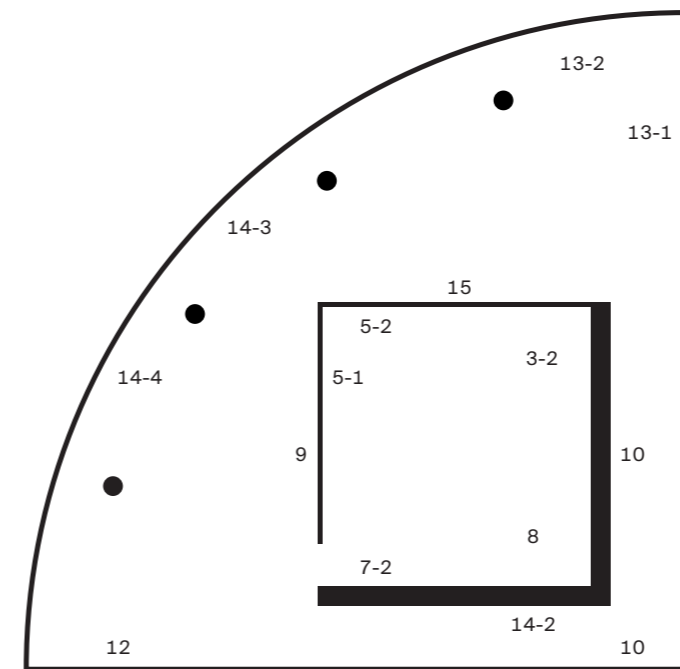
Minimalism–**Maximalism**–Mechanissmmm



2F

**3F**

**3**



Act 1

- 1-1. Asger Dybvad Larsen, *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 200x180cm.
- 1-2. Asger Dybvad Larsen, *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 250x195cm.
- 1-3. Asger Dybvad Larsen, *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 187x68cm, 1.5x12cm.
- 1-4. Asger Dybvad Larsen, *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 30x24cm. (Installed on a pillar on the 2F staircase)
- 2. Frederik Værsløv, *Untitled*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 7 pieces, 190x150cm each.
- 3-1. Kang DongJu, *Night Walks #1-#10*, 2021, pencil on paper, 10 pieces, 30x30cm each.
- 4. Monica Bonvicini, *Plastered*, 1998-2022, drywall panels, styrofoam, dimensions variable.
- 6. Pernille Kapper Williams, *Untitled (Seoul #1-#6)*, 2021, contemporary Korean make-up on canvas, 6 pieces, diameter 30cm each.
- 7-1. Silas Inoue, *Untitled*, 2021, mold on wood hermetically sealed by acrylic glass, 2 pieces, 57x47x7cm each.

**Act 2**

- 11-1. Kent Iwemyr, *The Day Before Midsummer, Pouring Rain!*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 46.5x55cm.
- 11-2. Kent Iwemyr, *As Jesus Takes Care of His Own*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 39x45.5cm.
- 11-3. Kent Iwemyr, *With Lust and Great Beauty*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 39.5x45.5cm.
- 11-4. Kent Iwemyr, *Hold Your Horses*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 33x40cm.
- 11-5. Kent Iwemyr, *Daughter of the Undertaker*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 46.5x55cm.
- 11-6. Kent Iwemyr, *Not Afraid of the Reaper Himself*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 47x55cm.
- 11-7. Kent Iwemyr, *Hemingway's Library*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 33.5x40.5cm.
- 11-8. Kent Iwemyr, *A Sailor Goes Ashore*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 61x72cm.
- 11-9. Kent Iwemyr, *Kissing Wind*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 61x72cm.
- 11-10. Kent Iwemyr, *Jump Pekka, We have a Fire Sail!*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 69x82.5cm.
- 14-1. Suh Yongsun, *Swanson St. Melbourn*, 2011-2020, acrylic on canvas, 194.7x130cm.

Act 1

- 3-2. Kang DongJu, *Night Walks in White #1-#2*, 2021, paper on carbon paper, 2 pieces, 109x78.8cm each.
- Kang DongJu, *Night Walks in White #3*, 2021, paper on carbon paper, 78.8x54.5cm.
- 5-1. Oso Parado, *Indigo Entropy 001*, 2021, Indigo pigment, bee wax, dirt, coconut oil, urin, salt water on canvas, 210x200cm.
- 5-2. Oso Parado, *Ontological entropy 000*, 2020, Oil stick on raw Belgian linen, raw coconut oil, activated charcoal from ashes of coconut, salt water, GPS detector, 145x160cm.
- 7-2. Silas Inoue, *Future Friture-Turritopsos dohrii*, 2021, sugar, Isomalt, silicon and cooking oil in an acrylic aquarium on concrete plinth, 50x50x60cm.
- 8. Tony Lewis, *Untitled 7*, 2016 – ongoing, graphite powder, paper, paint, masking tape, dimensions variable.

**Act 2**

- 9. Expansion Colony, *We just make a forever stew*, 2022, indigo print, adhesive sheet, acrylic, emulsion paint, 350x970cm.
- 10. Heo ChanMi, *The words of city*, 2022, paint, acrylic gouache on paper and wall, twig, variable installation.
- 12. Li Ran, *Waif*, 2021, oil on canvas, 150x120cm.
- 13-1. Nho Wonhee, *Cluttered Mind*, 2019, oil on canvas, 132x230cm.
- 13-2. Nho Wonhee, *Time That Speaks Peace*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 90.6x116.7cm.
- 14-2. Suh Yongsun, *King St., Alexandria 2*, 2017-2018, acrylic on canvas, 80 x73.5cm.
- 14-3. Suh Yongsun, *Incheon airport*, 2012-2015, acrylic on canvas, 293x205cm.
- 14-4. Suh Yongsun, *Neue gallery*, 2012-2020, acrylic on canvas, 193x144.3cm.
- 15. Trevor Shimizu, *Coastal California* (circa 1981), 2021, oil on canvas, 241.3x480cm.

## Asger Dybvad Larsen (Aarhus, Denmark, b. 1990)

- 1-1. *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 200×180cm.
- 1-2. *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 250×195cm.
- 1-3. *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 187×68cm, 1.5×12cm.
- 1-4. *Untitled*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 30×24cm.

Courtesy of Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Geukens & De Vii Gallery and Gether Contemporary

Asger Dybvad Larsen works with a limited and specific range of materials and tools: raw canvas, acrylic paint, thread, sometimes plastic, bubble wrap, and paint trays, to which he attributes a great conceptual value. The outcome of his works is close to sculpture or patchwork, but remains the product of a deconstruction of the act of painting.

Dybvad Larsen's artworks are referring to art history. A key component of Dybvad Larsen's work is the references to minimalism, abstract expressionism and artists such as Agnes Martin, Ad Reinhardt or Frank Stella. He refers to the latter by working with acrylic castings of paint trays that produce geometries close to those painted by Stella. A metaphor Dybvad Larsen uses to illustrate the way he weaves references into his painting is the family tree. The ordinary paint tray as a tool constitutes the trunk of the tree. From there sprouts a first generation of paintings, represented by casts of paint trays. Then comes a second generation based on the first one: prints of the paint tray cast paintings. Then comes a third generation. Let us call them 'leftovers'. All these works are somehow connected to art history and are related to one another, as every painting is a 'mutated' descendant of another. The link between all his paintings is reinforced by the fact that he constantly reuses the same materials, and sometime the exact same process, in order to explore growth through repetition.

While Dybvad Larsen is well known for his muted palette, he also goes back and forth, using colours either to reveal more clearly the structural aspect of his paintings and their references or to introduce some 'noise' in his work. At Art Sonje Center Dybvad Larsen will show several new paintings, including a sculptural object - shaped as a person sitting on the floor constructed by paintings.

## Fredrik Værsløv (Drobak, Norway, b. 1979)

2. *Untitled*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 7 pieces, 190×150cm each.

Courtesy of Andrew Kreps Gallery and Gió Marconi

Fredrik Værsløv's work is centred on the concept of painting, of which he explores the possible limits. Several of his paintings echo the semiotic triangulation between object, sign vehicle and interpreter. His *Flags* series, which comprises large painted reinterpretations of national flags, illustrates his intention to play with our perception of images as images or as representations. The artist's *Terrazzo* paintings, which evoke the terrazzo material - a blend of granite, marble, glass and quartz chips typically used in Italy to make floors - take viewer on a similar journey, while also referring to the well-known drip and splattering techniques of the abstract expressionist art movement. Quoting art history is actually another way for Værsløv to focus the attention of the viewer on the concept and act of painting. His *Canopy* series, inspired by his childhood home, points unambiguously at modernist, striped paintings and refers to such artists as Daniel Buren.

He also reflects on the relationship between paintings and objects. His exhibition *All Around Amateur* at the Bergen Kunsthall and Le Consortium, Dijon, comprised two series of works: one in which paintings were treated as objects (*Sunset Paintings*); and one in which the artworks were objects - wooden shelves decorated by Værsløv's friends. The paintings are gradients evoking sunsets, made with a machine used to create painted lines on roads and sports venues, based on smartphone pictures the artist took of sunsets while on airplanes. The shelves, on the other hand, are the outcome of a discussion between the artist and his mother who expressed the wish of having shelves on which she could put her son's paintings as well as other nick-nacks. *All Around Amateur* thus triggers reflections on the contemporary conditions and status of painting, and on domesticity, functionality, and appropriation.

The use of a machine to create the paintings, and his collaboration with friends for the shelves are ways for Værsløv to distance himself from authorship, which is another characteristic of his work. By stepping away from his own signature, the artist gives the power to others, whether people or nature. For example, the artist often leaves his paintings outside for long stretches of time, to let time and weather influence, and 'sign' them for him. The series of seven paintings that Værsløv is presenting at Art Sonje Center belong to the latter category. These seven paintings were placed outside the artist's studio in Vestfossen, Norway, from August to December 2021. Here they were influenced by the sun, rain, birds, snails and other natural elements. In this way Værsløv has stepped back as an artist and let coincidence and the natural environment 'marinate' the works.

## Kang DongJu (Seoul, South Korea, b. 1988)

- 3-1. *Night Walks #1-#10*, 2021, pencil on paper, 10 pieces, 30×30cm each.
- 3-2. *Night Walks in White #1-#2*, 2021, paper on carbon paper, 2 pieces, 109×78.8cm each.
- Night Walks in White #3*, 2021, paper on carbon paper, 78.8×54.5cm.

Kang DongJu's practice is centred on photography and drawing time in relation to space. The artist's interest in space and time emerges from the idea that the passing of time is the binding agent that organises and maintains the relationships between the different elements of a place.

With a limited palette of materials, consisting mainly of paper and pencil, and a range of experimental techniques, Kang thus poetically archives temporal and spatial samples of Seoul. Rather than freezing the city in time, her works capture subtle aspects of the evolution of the metropolis. She materialises neglected, disappearing environments, in-between spaces, light and shadows, gaps between herself and her subjects: any subtle hint that reveals time within space and space within time.

Her night trips are a great source of inspiration for her process-oriented work. *Subcenters* (2013), for example, depicts the time she spent one night while driving on a road around Seoul. This journey resulted in the artworks, *The Moon of 324 Seconds* (2013), *The Sky of 155 Minutes 37 Seconds* (2013) and *Light Drawing* (2015). On another trip, Kang documented three-night journeys that had the same point of departure and arrival by filming what she saw and stopping every 100 steps to record her surroundings, including the surface of the ground on paper. These trips led to the new series *Light Drawing, Time Signature* (2015), and *Ground Drawing* (2015). These works were made by pressing a sheet of paper onto a small area of the ground to capture its texture. The size of the paper was carefully chosen to render the relationship between the scale of her own body and her surroundings. Kang then carefully filled the wrinkled surface with a pencil to recompose the ground below her feet. The artist then drew on a sheet of paper layered on top of carbon paper before placing it on another sheet of paper. In other words, three works were created from one single act of drawing, depicting in different ways the light and the darkness of the nightscape the artist gazed at. One of the drawings is a rendering of what she has seen, whereas the others highlight the margins of her perception and "the other side" of what she has seen.

The new series *Night Walks* at Art Sonje Center are an extension of this *Ground Drawing* series. But instead of designating her practice as centred on drawing, Kang considers her works as a continuous questioning of the process of painting. She also started to explore how the nature of a flat surface changes in relationship to the position of the observer. So, her more recent works also introduce the notion of movement as a complement to her reflection on space and time. Kang DongJu tends to select and use paper in an appropriate size that expresses the scale of her body in relation to the space surrounding her. *Night Walks* is a series of pencil drawings recorded and made during her nightly walks in October through December 2021.

## Monica Bonvicini (Venice, Italy, b. 1965)

4. *Plastered*, 1998-2022, drywall panels, styrofoam, dimensions variable.

Monica Bonvicini addresses issues such as gender inequality, and matters of space and power through installations, sculptures, videos and drawings. She is known for reconfiguring the position of museum spectators with large-scale, site-specific, discursive artworks that enter into dialogue with the space in which they appear.

*I CANNOT HIDE MY ANGER* (2019), a sculpture Bonvicini produced for an exhibition at Belvedere 21, is one of these monumental artworks. The massive cube made of aluminium sheets deprived its audience of more than 1,600 m<sup>3</sup> of moving space, disrupting the architecture of the art institution, the reflection of the visitors contemplating it and their path. The use of such industrial materials is common in her feminist, queer, political practice, as she often uses architectural approaches or scrutinise them to highlight their complex relationship with behavioural control and, more broadly, with social roles. Bonvicini also made a renowned iceberg-like sculpture titled *She Lies* (2010) that floats in front of the Oslo Opera House in Norway. This artwork addresses space, power and humans, but from the perspective of climate change. The work alludes to Caspar David Friedrich's painting *The Sea of Ice* (1824). The use of *references* to artistic or historical periods is embedded in her practice. She often alludes to minimalism, modernism or conceptual art. *Fleurs du Mal (droop)* (2019), for example, is a sculpture composed of flaccid hand-blown glass penises hanging from a metal bottle rack. It is a contemporary and ironic twin of Marcel Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914) readymade which is a metaphor for heterosexual, dominated penetration.

Bonvicini compels us to reflect on the meaning of making art and language, and pushes the limits and possibilities attached to the paradigm of freedom, and the limits of cultural institutions. *Plastered*, exhibited at Art Sonje Center, perfectly illustrates this statement. By placing a new floor on the exhibition space, composed of dry wall and polystyrene panels, and allowing visitors to disfigure it by stepping on it, the artist subverts the predominant 'white cube' exhibition model both metaphorically and literally. The installation is affected, altered and destroyed by the audience, so the institutional floor symbolically cracks and falls apart from within.



## Oso Parado (Chiconcuac, Morelos, Mexico, b. 1986)

5-1. *Indigo Entropy 001*, 2021, Indigo pigment, bee wax, dirt, coconut oil, urin, salt water on canvas, 210x200cm.

5-2. *Ontological entropy 000*, 2020, Oil stick on raw Belgian linen, raw coconut oil, activated charcoal from ashes of coconut, salt water, GPS detector, 145x160cm.

Courtesy of Annika Nuttall Gallery

Oso Parado is half Mexican and a descendant of the Native American Hopi tribe, from which he got his name which means 'standing bear'. Parado's work revolves around the contradiction between humans' hyper connectivity through technology and deep disconnection to nature. Through colourful mixed-media, collages and paintings composed of fragments of newspapers or advertisements, he highlights and questions troubling aspects of our post-Internet era such as social media addiction, standardisation of tastes and habits, and the contemporary American Dream lifestyle.

Parado's more recent works reflect his interest in spiritual connection to and through nature. The works he has created during quarantine are very minimalist paintings with single strokes or colours, focusing on what is left out rather than what is represented. The artist also explored land art through a series of spatial interventions, which he designated 'invisible writing'. For him, writing is not reduced to an archiving function, it has a relational dimension and is deeply performative.

The work exhibited at Art Sonje Center reflects on the artist's idea that the world is made of words and that language is connected to our perception. Parado was inspired by a study conducted by the researcher Jules Davidoff on a tribe from Namibia, using the colour blue. The study suggests that it is harder for humans to identify visual elements if words have not been created for them. It also reinforces the hypothesis that humans did not see blue until modern times. These findings led Parado to go for trips in the desert, dye found bones and canvas blue, and to let the local environment such as water, fruits, and animals affect the works.

Oso Parado's works are made with, and by nature during his long stays in the desert or by the sea. Coincidence plays a major role in the process of making these works. Canvases like *Indigo Entropy 001* are left in deserted areas of the desert for days or – in the case of *Ontological Entropy 000* – left floating in the ocean until they are located again, though the GPS chip attached to the raw material. The two works shown at Art Sonje Center were created on two separate expeditions in Mexico in 2020 and 2021.

## Pernille Kapper Williams (Odense, Denmark, b. 1973)

6. *Untitled (Seoul #1-#6)*, 2021, contemporary Korean make-up on canvas, 6 pieces, diameter 30cm each.

Pernille Kapper Williams's work is not bound by any specific medium, but reflects an on-going conceptual approach and examination of materials. The works are reflections on the production of signification in the cultural and artistic realm and to a systematic process of de-contextualisation. Her works often take the shape of ready-mades made out of ordinary objects such as door handles, door stoppers, dusters, cooking tools, bathroom mirrors, sponges, massage tools, and perfume. This can be seen in a work like *Matter upon Matter* (2008), where two Royal Copenhagen porcelain soup bowls are cupping each other. She plays with the ambiguity of our relationship to reality, she juxtaposes familiar everyday objects, hovering on the thin line between expression and content through reinterpretation, in a quest for new meanings. The titles of the works usually involve puns and invest objects embedded in her work with new meaning.

Pernille Kapper Williams has made several series of make-up 'paintings', using ordinary eyeshadow and rouge to create abstract paintings on canvas. The paintings follow the modernist tradition of monochrome paintings, but depart from the male-dominated tradition and deconstruct the meaning of painting and its cultural codes. The paintings appear delicate, light and fragile, and by painting with make-up – a material that is meant as a second skin to make a face more attractive – Kapper Williams dolls up the canvases – lending them a face so to speak – and plays on the idea body beautification. She takes a swipe at the minimalist tradition of painting and gives new meaning to the idea of making a work pretty, adding new layers to art history and cosmetic anthropology. The fragility of these works and resemblance to skin is obvious - in *Everything must change* (2019) Kapper Williams partially remove layers of the applied make-up with a make-up remover.

For the exhibition at Art Sonje Center, Pernille Kapper Williams has created a new series of six make-up paintings. She has used make-up from high end, luxury brands like Shiseido, Chanel, YSL, Hermès, but also budget cosmetic products that you can find in cheap dollar stores. For Art Sonje Center Pernille Kapper Williams has used a selection of Korean make-up companies, hence the title *Untitled (Seoul #1-#6)*.

## Silas Inoue (Copenhagen, Denmark, b. 1981)

7-1. *Untitled*, 2021, mold on wood hermetically sealed by acrylic glass, 2 pieces, 57x47x7cm each.

7-2. *Future Friture-Turritopsis dohrnii*, 2021, sugar, Isomalt, silicon and cooking oil in an acrylic aquarium on concrete plinth, 50x50x60cm.

Courtesy of Marie Kirkegaard Gallery

Silas Inoue's body of work is centred on the intricate relationship between humans and nature, and in his sculptures and paintings Inoue often works with natural and organic material. The artist addresses key environmental and economic topics of our time, such as globalisation, consumption, climate change, and evolution. By combining intuition and analytical approaches, Inoue addresses nature through nature. He uses mold, wood, sugar, algae and oil along with more conventional materials to create sculptures, installations and drawings. On the basis of a very personal style, which he refers to as 'quasi-Asian' (a reference to his Japanese roots), he depicts aspects of the Anthropocene Epoch, a proposed unofficial unit of geological time used to designate the contemporary period in which we live, characterised by the unprecedented impact of human activity on the planet's climate and ecosystems.

The topic of immortality is at the core of Inoue's *Future Friture* series, some works of which are being exhibited at Art Sonje Center. In this series, the artist uses the *Hydra* genus and the *Turritopsis dohrnii* jellyfish as symbols of eternal life. This jellyfish reverses its growing process after a certain stage of development, in order to grow again. As these organisms have the ability to repeat this process indefinitely, they are designated as immortal. Inoue's *Future Friture* sculptures are representations of this creatures, composed of acrylic bases covered in boiled sugar and dextrose, combined with tentacles created with a silicone gun. These sculptures are placed in aquariums that are then filled up with cooking oil. Sugar is used because of the strong associations it generates with artificiality, superficiality, lust or unhealthiness, the same words often used to refer to human beings' quest for eternity.

**7** *Untitled*, the two mold paintings in the exhibition, have been placed in dialogue with pieces addressing the opposite of eternity: decay. Inoue cultivated his molded landscapes by smearing dairy products on wooden plates and exposing them to air for a few hours. The plates were then encapsulated in a box as the mold spores started battling for space and nutrition. A ventilation mechanism fixed to each box enables the mold to sustain itself, while preventing the exhibition space from being contaminated by toxic spores or mycotoxins. These abstract organic paintings direct the audience towards a reflection on nature's cycles and collapse, phenomena tangled with paradigms such as the increase of population and resource scarcity, human versus nature dualism and microbial and human preservation, which are topics the artist also explores in a variety of other artworks.

## Tony Lewis (California, USA, b. 1986)

8. *Untitled 7*, 2016-ongoing, graphite powder, paper, paint, masking tape, dimensions variable.

Courtesy of Blum & Poe

Tony Lewis' work is centred on two fundamental components: drawing and language. He composes his minimalist creations with graphite powder, pencils, oil and excerpts from found or personal texts to investigate the contemporary Afro-American condition in relation to its past and future. Sometimes he mixes notable sources into his works: for example, the Calvin and Hobbes comic strip; the James Baldwin/William F. Buckley debate on the American dream and Afro-American condition in 1965; and *Life's Little Instruction Book* by H. Jackson Brown Jr. The contrast between the book's light-hearted advice on life, which is supposed to guide the reader towards happiness, and its aggressive gender-, class- and race-biased language is an object of fascination that Lewis explores again and again.

In his work, sentences are isolated, dissected, sometimes hidden or distressed, used as titles or rendered as visual subjects. Shapes get blurred or covered in graphite powder, a material he uses as a metaphor for his body. Lewis is well known for his floor drawings, such as the one exhibited at Art Sonje Center, which sculpturally arranged large sheets of paper with graphite powder following a painstaking and specific process. These floor drawings emerge from his desire to commemorate his graphite-invaded graduate-school studio floor that had to be wiped out several years ago. He has tracked the trajectory of each floor drawing since 2011, the year in which he created the first one. After each show, the floor drawings are de-installed, stored and transported in order to be reinstalled in a different way in another exhibition.

**Expansion Colony (Kim Juwon, Seoul, South Korea, b. 1981 / Lee Eunsae, Seoul, South Korea, b. 1987)**

9. *We just make a forever stew*, 2022, indigo print, adhesive sheet, acrylic, emulsion paint, 350×970cm.

Kim Juwon and Lee Eunsae have worked together on several occasions. As Expansion Colony they create installations, in which they mix Kim Juwon's photographic records of everyday life in Seoul with Lee Eunsae's rough brush strokes.

Looking at Lee Eunsae's paintings is like looking at our contemporary society through a morphing, vibrant mirror. Behind the soft curves and colourful brush strokes lie boredom, anger or guilt, emotions she uses to fuel her creative energy and to produce artworks that either depict or rebel against sources of frustration and discontent. Lee's early works already featured her signature energetic, colourful brush strokes. But, unlike her current pieces, they were almost abstract. She used to borrow scenes from the media and depict them in a fragmented way, detached from their context. She zoomed in and deleted characters or backgrounds, emphasising emotions rather than figuration. Lee's more recent work takes a different turn, but remains a relevant reflection of our time. Her *As Usual* series (2020) explores lassitude, both through the way her subjects are depicted, and through the repetitive representation of the same subject, rendered through different methods or with a slightly different angle. Scrolling on the phone while lying in bed, a selfie with an Instagram filter, drinks, a calendar. She addresses the insignificance, the banality and the boredom of life as experienced during the Covid19 pandemic, but they are not the focus of the paintings. What Lee is really exploring in this new series is methodology and medium.

Kim Juwon works mostly with photography, texts, conceptual and narrative installations. Kim works on several collective projects simultaneously. He is part of the collective CO/EX with South-Korean artist An Chorong. CO/EX take photographs as a method of testing and questioning the overflow of images and their own generation of digital natives. In their installations, CO/EX always display a contract which details the process, schedule, plan and concept of the work being exhibited. By displaying the concept and the instructions, the process is transparent to the viewer of the work. Kim Juwon has a strong interest in urban environments, subcultures, and daily, shady experiences of everyday life in South Korea. His photographs depict body parts, graffiti, leftover food, street signs, buildings in urban settings and fragments of human presence.

With their respective methodologies and perspectives, Kim Juwon and Lee Eunsae (re)produce and exchange images as if jamming, and rearrange them by adding, subtracting, connecting, overlapping, erasing and layering. In this process, narratives and structures created by a chain of images collide within a single screen, causing a partial rapture and instantly generating a smooth flow. The ghostlike, desolate and uncanny feeling of the works connects them and generates a raw, urban, punk expression.

**Heo ChanMi (Busan, South Korea, b. 1991)**

10. *The words of city*, 2022, paint, acrylic gouache on paper and wall, twigs, variable installation.

Heo ChanMi's work highlights items from her city commonly considered as insignificant, trivial and ordinary. Making what is anonymous, banal and overlooked the centre of attention is a way for Heo to reflect on the fragility and ephemera of life. One particular body of work illustrates this brilliantly: the series *Little David* (2018). This title refers to David and Goliath, the biblical tale that describes a battle between the giant Goliath and a young human called David. Using this metaphor, Heo ChanMi painted weeds that grow at the side of streets or in the cracks in them, using dried plants she picked up from those very streets as brushes. Using dried plants as paint brushes generates paintings with a raw and abstract look. *Little David* is thus about nature, the fight for survival through subtle resilience, anonymity and the impression of the insignificance of personal existence.

Heo takes her own experiences and observations, and expands them into wider social contexts. Picking up minor materials and using them as tools is the artist's way of processing her surroundings and her way into the objects she depicts. This process is a poetic endeavour to take blurry snapshots of what fades from our memory.

*Samilgongsa* (2019) is a characteristic attempt to remember what has been forgotten. It is a reference to the *Samil Corporation*, a fictive organisation located in the Mangmi area of Busan, which was used to conceal the Busan branch of the Defence Security Command from the citizens. This deception unfortunately enabled the Defence to cover up abuse of authority against civilians in the name of national security. Heo ChanMi preserves the dissolution of the memory of these events by painting them using the blanket she used to cover herself during this period. The subtlety of the material Heo uses has embedded meanings, social, and political references.

At the *Busan Biennale 2020* she also revives history in a series of paintings inspired by the novel *Future Walking Rehearsals* by Bak Solmay. She walked on the path of the main character in the old town of Busan and depicted pieces of walls, ground, buildings and sky.

Heo ChanMi is working directly on the wall at Art Sonje Center. On top of the mural, she has placed painted works on paper nailed to the wall with found twigs. The images are recognisable, but painted with rough brush strokes that blur the line between nature and cityscapes, and between animals and industrial machines.

**Kent Iwemyr (Hallstahammar, Sweden, b. 1944)**

11-1. *The Day Before Midsummer*, Pouring Rain!, 2021, acrylic on linen, 46.5×55cm.

11-2. *As Jesus Takes Care of His Own*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 39×45.5cm.

11-3. *With Lust and Great Beauty*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 39.5×45.5cm.

11-4. *Hold Your Horses*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 33×40cm.

11-5. *Daughter of the Undertaker*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 46.5×55cm.

11-6. *Not Afraid of the Reaper Himself*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 47×55cm.

11-7. *Hemingway's Library*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 33.5×40.5cm.

11-8. *A Sailor Goes Ashore*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 61×72cm.

11-9. *Kissing Wind*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 61×72cm.

11-10. *Jump Pekka, We have a Fire Sail!*, 2021, acrylic on linen, 69×82.5cm.

Courtesy of Galleri Magnus Karlsson and V1 Gallery

Kent Iwemyr's paintings range from the intimate and funny to the satirical and grotesque. Most of them feature scenes from Hallstahammar, where he has lived his whole life. These glimpses of a disappearing rural lifestyle in Sweden are based on memories of the artist or stories that friends in Hallstahammar told him. From there sprouted the idea of combining this childish aesthetic with the deep understanding of art history he acquired during his time in art school.

Iwemyr composes his canvases by layering acrylic brushstrokes in a deliberately clumsy and raw manner. This way of painting evokes a sense of melancholy and absurdity triggered by the scale in which his characters appear against the wild nature in the backdrops. Iwemyr captures only a snapshot or each stories and characters, such as Greta Thunberg, a local poet who disappeared in the forest, and an abandoned iron ore mining village.

Behind these tales of local folklore, Iwemyr's paintings reveal glimpses of serious contemporary issues connected to globalisation and climate change. Some of his winter landscapes lack snow, the disappearance due to the global warming he has been witnessing gradually over the years.

Iwemyr has created ten new paintings for this exhibition at Art Sonje Center. One painting tells the story of a newcomer from Finland, Pekka, the gravedigger's daughter, and a third is about his neighbour, a loner, whom Iwemyr calls 'Hemingway' because of his way of using language and his knowledge about numerous languages. All the paintings are accompanied by texts that serve as the narrative of the paintings. The paintings thus present the heritage of, and everyday life in rural Sweden.

**Li Ran (Hubei, China, b. 1986)**

12. *Waif*, 2021, oil on canvas, 150×120cm.

Courtesy of Galleri Christian Andersen

Li Ran's work is a complex, dense mix of paintings, videos and installations, weaving together Chinese modern history and Western art history with reflections on otherness and propaganda.

The artist often uses a wide range of materials, including his personal photo archive, historical footage from Chinese or imported films, videos of his own performances, and interpretations of excerpts of texts, which he sometimes completes with his imagination. Ran uses parody and reproduction to trigger reflections on dominant narratives adopted without critical examination, in an effort to examine the concept of truth.

*Mont Sainte-Victoire* (2012) exemplifies Li Ran's approach quite well. It is both a denunciation of the blind adoption of Western ideas present in literature, philosophy or art theory by Chinese artists and intellectuals, and a dive into occidental modern art history. The name of the performance is a reference to the mountain that was a recurrent motif in Paul Cézanne's paintings from 1904-1906. *Mont Sainte-Victoire* is a schizophrenic performative narration, in which Ran impersonates a multitude of characters that emerge from a script he composed with excerpts from famous occidental essays – for example, by Roland Barthes or Michel Foucault – which he merges with his own writings. Ran layered the whole piece with poorly-translated quotes from these iconic essays and disrupted the continuity of his dialogues. *Mont Sainte-Victoire* is thus first and foremost a critique oriented towards the attitude of the Chinese and Asian artists who assimilated the dominant occidental perception of the arts. It also highlights a certain divide between orient and occident.

The artist regularly explores the theme of 'the other' and even exoticism, and is perhaps most evident in *Beyond Geography* (2012), a pastiche of a BBC Discovery travel documentary that examines China and the globalisation and economic growth the country has experienced since 2000.

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5. An artist belonging to the Minjung Art movement that emerged following the Gwangju Massacre in the 1980s, and until the 1990s aimed at promoting democracy through socio-political art free from occidental influence.

6. The sinking of a ferry on the way to Jeju Island that killed 304 passengers, the majority of which were high school students on a school trip, due to neglect and what has been designated as the national culture of obedience.

7. A scandal that gained attention in 2007 and that led to a formal recognition of the issue in 2014 by Samsung.

The two-channel video work *Persona Swap* (2017-2019) is also an example of the artist's extended exploration of the concept of foreignness. This work came about due to a series of nationalist propaganda campaigns – including political and cultural guidance – introduced by the new Chinese government after 2016. The issue of ethnicity is not the main point of this work, but the artist uses it to discuss questions about ideology. The work creates a parallel between Chinese films from the 1950s to the 1970s, which portray members of the Uyghur, Kazakh, Muslim minorities in China as villains. Ran produces re-enactments of extracts from these films. Historically, members from these minorities were hired because of their physical resemblance to Caucasians, systematically incarnating bad characters as part of a larger, anti-Western propaganda effort. Ran's recreation is a denunciation of the existence of similar contemporary propaganda mechanisms. It can be seen as a metaphor of the contemporary art world that reproduces dichotomous ways of thinking about its actors who, according to Li Ran, fight to become protagonists instead of being constricted to 'supporting roles'.

Acting permeates all aspects of Li Ran's work: scenography, stage make-up, theatre in general. He even deploys subtitles recurrently as sources of inspiration, materials or tools in his performative narratives. His paintings also tend to be arranged in exhibitions in ways that remind the viewers of stage design, while also containing references to acting.

At Art Sonje Center Li Ran is showing the new work *Waif*. A 'waif' can be defined as a living creature removed, by hardship, loss or other helpless circumstance, from its original surroundings. By painting a scene of four deprived, homeless people, Li Ran continues to comment on contemporary complexities and global problems.

### Nho Wonhee (Daegu, South Korea, b. 1948)

13-1. *Cluttered Mind*, 2019, oil on canvas, 132x230cm.

13-2. *Time That Speaks Peace*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 90.6x116.7cm.

Nho Wonhee's paintings are snapshots of our contemporary condition. As a 'Minjung artist'<sup>5</sup>, her work is rooted in societal critique and political change. Nho started to direct her gaze to social issues, while working as a journalist for the University Press in the 1960s. Her subsequent work as a teacher convinced her of the importance of critical thinking and of connecting art with reality. This realisation made her stop creating abstract works. Instead, she began to explore human lives and the struggle for survival. Trapped between the conservative gender roles, political hardship and expectations of a successful career that characterised the 1980s in a national context of political suppression, the artist found a welcome outlet in painting glimpses of everyday life and encounters with strangers that revealed these problematic socio-political structures. *People in the Square* (2018) is such an artwork. The painting, which looks innocent at first, features silhouettes of apparent strangers floating in an ocean of names. However, upon closer inspection, we discover that this work is not only a tribute, but also a political signal, as these are the names of the victims of the Sewol ferry disaster<sup>6</sup> and of the Samsung workers working with semiconductors who got leukaemia due to their working conditions<sup>7</sup>. *On Thin Land* (2019) is another political piece, in which Nho depicts a labour rights rally attended by the workers of Hyundai Heavy Industries.

Her work closely follows the drastic economic development of South Korea, highlighting its role in the emergence of an underprivileged class. But her critique does not focus exclusively on external events. As a housewife and mother, she also examines topics related to domesticity, such as family, gender roles and daily life. Housework has been one of the roots of female oppression and works like *Taking Up a Weapon* (2018) focuses on the condition of women in South Korea. The cluttered arrangement of kitchen tools – as if they have collapsed – seems to express the dangers of reality where housework is still considered women's work. These works portray housewives brandishing cooking pans as a sign of rallying to the #MeToo movement.

At Art Sonje Center Nho Wonhee is showing two works that are characteristic of her practice. The colour scale is limited almost exclusively to shades of grey with a limited use of dusty browns, pale blues and reds. In her works, Nho Wonhee often paints with thin, almost transparent, glazes, juxtaposed with opaque, thick areas of paints, which generates a hovering drama and lightness at the same time. *Cluttered Mind* (2019) shows four women placed on separate rocks in a river flowing through a rural town. The women are faceless, isolated from each other with a yielding, depressed attitude. *Time That Speaks Peace* (2015) shows a bleak city shape with high rises and their alarming silence. In the foreground of the painting there is a block of 20 megaphones – often used by protestors – and piece of paper with red Korean words that reads 'Let's fight': a small protest, a piece of hope, that reminds the viewer of the possibility of opposing oppression, totalitarianism, governmental authority and/or cultural opprobrium.

Act 2

### Suh Yongsun (Seoul, South Korea, b. 1951)

14-1. *Swanson St. Melbourne*, 2011-2020, acrylic on canvas, 194.7x130cm.

14-2. *King St., Alexandria 2*, 2017-2018, acrylic on canvas, 80x73.5cm.

14-3. *Incheon airport*, 2012-2015, acrylic on canvas, 293x205cm.

14-4. *Neue gallery*, 2012-2020, acrylic on canvas, 193x144.3cm.

Suh Yongsun's paintings alternate between introspection – using self-portrait, external exploration of religious myths, geopolitical topics and Korean history – and portraits of city life in the East and the West. His colourful paintings feature vibrant, rough brushstrokes and bare traces of the influence of Fauvism, Cubism and Expressionism. Paradoxically, though, his practice also reflects the desire of the artist to develop a 'self-defined style' and to steer away from contemporary Western art influences.

A recurrent motif in Suh's exploration of the past is the overthrow of the ten-year-old King Danjong during the 15th century. It was a visit to Cheongnyeongpo, Yeongwol, the place of exile and killing of the young king initially triggered the artist's interest in this geopolitical history. Wondering why the episode had not been reflected in art, he decided to take responsibility for cultivating the memory of this tragic episode by painting scenes of the drama, producing works that include *People's thinking-Gyeyunyun and king Danjong* (1998-1999). The paintings of this incident do not merely focus on the King; they also underline the murder of the subjects of King Danjong who tried to defend him.

Depicting such injustices and the fight for survival has fuelled many of the artist's other works. *Visa Project\_Border* (2001-2002), for example, is a work that refers to the immigrant crisis. In another painting, *Brandenburg Gate* (2006), Suh created a collage of bloody historical episodes, juxtaposing references to the entrance of the Red Army in Berlin in 1945, and to the contemporary Guantanamo Bay detention camp. The special attention Suh pays to anonymous victims also led him to examine the history of the Cheolam, Gangwondo, mining region and to produce works such as *Anonymous victims* (2004). Suh Yongsun's four paintings shown at Art Sonje Center represent modern urban life. People are waiting, hesitating and wasting time in the solitude of the city. The titles *Neue Gallery* (2012-2020), *Incheon Airport* (2012-2015), *Swanson St., Melbourne* (2011-2020) and *King St., Alexandria 2* (2017-2018) reveal Suh Yongsun's passion for travelling – the titles refer to four different cities on four different continents – and indicate how he observes people and their boredom as he travels.

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### Trevor Shimizu (California, USA, b. 1981)

15. *Coastal California (circa 1981)*, 2021, oil on canvas, 241.3x480cm.

Courtesy of 47 Canal

Trevor Shimizu's videos, online interventions and particularly his paintings depict a bleak, yet humorous portrait of our contemporary society. He addresses the hidden, the embarrassing, the intimate, the mundane, fatherhood, stereotypical masculinity and pop-culture through a variety of motifs such as landscapes, commodities and self-portraits, which he often distorts into alter-egos. The works are often painted with fast, and raw brushstrokes, painterly with no regrets.

His first solo show in 2012 at 47 Canal, *Late Work* featured the last works depicting fictitious self, dating from 2052, that one would have supposedly found in an attic or basement after Shimizu's death. Such light, funny, anti-climactic narratives are characteristic of Shimizu's work. The *Made by Assistant* series, for example, was painted by an imaginary assistant and is a satirical take on the artist trope. The paintings reveal the assistant's infatuation for Shimizu's wife, the consequent hate for his boss and his interest in some obscure Internet sub-culture. In another series, Shimizu depicts himself performing all the non-artistic jobs he had. The *Lonely Loser Trilogy: Snowboard Gear, Mountain Bikes, Skate Videos* (2013) is about the artist impersonating a passive 'tech bro' mesmerized by extreme sports, while his *Trying to Be a Good Person* exhibition in 2015 at Rowhouse Project in Baltimore was a cynical story about a father eagerly attempting to become better, who ends up dying in a comically pathetic way.

There are more fragile pieces about fatherhood and the artist's own fears of it. The titles *Girlfriend Wants a Baby* (2010) and *Domesticated Man* (2016) are artworks just as explicit as their corresponding visual elements. The landscape painting exhibited at Art Sonje Center could be perceived as an extension of this more introspective approach. *Coastal California (circa 1981)* is based on a memory of Shimizu's time in preschool and is part of a new series of paintings that depicts nonfigurative landscapes. The pallet of pastel colours and lighter stokes creates poetic sceneries that mimic a romantic approach to nature. The work verges on pure abstraction, but if you look closely, you discern a small group of badly painted cows.

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