

Wendy Park

OFF THE CLOCK

August 6 - September 10, 2022

Opening Reception August 6, 6-8pm

Various Small Fires (VSF) is pleased to present *OFF THE CLOCK*, a solo exhibition of new work by Wendy Park at the gallery's Los Angeles location.

The exhibition brings together ten paintings and debuts an augmented reality experience (AR) that investigates and reconstructs Park's childhood memories of growing up as the daughter of Korean immigrants in Greater Los Angeles during the 1980s-90s. Her works pay homage to her late father, mother, and Southern California's indoor commerce culture. The new works feature humble objects that highlight her parent's fleeting moments of leisure as working-class vendors.

Accessories from the Park family businesses juxtapose objects of self-care, as seen in paintings *Tiger Balm Register*, *Levis Inventory*, and *Heart Apples and Hangars*. Park vividly remembers witnessing her mother standing on her feet all day behind the register or running around to refill the clothing inventory. She recalls the scent of Tiger Balm used to soothe her mother's aching muscles, the abundant fresh fruit on a table that underlined her mother's love, and an open register that was accessible for other vendors to break change for their businesses.

Savored moments of rest and connection are also shared in Park's new body of work. The exhibition's titular work, *OFF THE CLOCK*, captures the artist's father's post-work routine. He would return home, sit on the Korean silk floor pillow next to the abalone shell table, and turn on the TV to Korean news. Rounding out his evening routine, her father enjoyed a cigarette and nightcap of Crown Royal, which Park recalls always had three ice cubes. *Crown Royal Supplies* depicts the whiskey's iconic purple bag repurposed as a pencil pouch, a nod to her family's resourcefulness, immigrant habits, and Park's continued approach to reusing and recycling in her practice.

Park's new body of work provides an added layer of nuance by recreating memories that extend beyond her subconscious and personal narrative. In *Poker Story*, she illustrates her father's experience during the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, when neighboring Korean vendors would take shifts on the roof to guard the swap meet building against looters. Between their brief periods of rest and action, they would engage in poker games to pass the time. The three works from the *Hwatu* series speak to the Korean flower card game she learned from her father. Park remembers playing the game on her father's wool blanket and recalls the stark contrast between the red cards and army green fabric. Shin Raymun and cigarettes accessorize the card game, speaking to the relaxing mood of the gathering and moments of comfort. Her experimental AR project invites you to join in the fun.

OFF THE CLOCK reveals a collection of work that feels familiar yet distant, as large-scale compositions become fractured into bright, colorful windows of Park's childhood memories. Her works introduce specific social and cultural backdrops of growing up as an Asian-American in Los Angeles during the 1990s. By

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bringing everyday objects and familial routines into central focus, Park weaves an intimate narrative, paying homage to her parents and reminding the viewer of the power of one's own story in shaping how we understand and appreciate the everyday.

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Wendy Park (b. 1986, Los Angeles, California, lives and works in Los Angeles, California) received a BFA from Otis College of Art & Design. She has held solo exhibitions at the Kantor Gallery, Los Angeles and Bill Brady Gallery, Miami, Florida. She has also exhibited her work at KIAF Seoul, South Korea; Frieze Los Angeles; Half Gallery, Los Angeles; and The Pit, Los Angeles. Park will participate in VSF's presentation for 2023 Independent Art Fair in New York.