

Franz Kaka

NICOLE JI SOO KIM

Head Help Heart

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July 7 - August 5, 2023

Nicole Ji Soo Kim's *Head Help Heart* begins by stretching a mark into a line, which is used to construct a grid, that becomes the ground upon which a series of instructional procedures are enacted. Drawing from a lineage of artists who utilize texts, scores, and instructions in their work, Kim reimagines the cold and distant grid, a hallmark of last century's conceptual practices, as a potentially subjective space that can instead be ordered by intuition and infused with care and comfort. Here, the cyclical exchange between head and heart dances across a set of fragile coordinates whose reported objectivity crumbles under the weight of struggle or deep loss. Kim's interest though is not to dwell upon the gap between these duelling states but to instead allow them to co-exist simultaneously; sentiment and logic, chaos and control, connection and detachment, contingency and necessity. Kim's drawings investigate the ongoing exchange between these poles to question the complex set of relations used to find balance and regain agency.

Presented at Franz Kaka as a series of framed diptychs, Kim's drawings employ a notational system — developed as a personal language during a time of anguish and uncertainty — composed of coded numbers, degrees, directional arrows, and abbreviations to find control and meaning in the face of the unknown. In her drawings, these markers, ordered as a chronological sequence aimed toward the drawing's completion, indicate both the passage of time and a commitment to repetition and transparency as meaningful expressions of vulnerability.

Head Help Heart delves into the distance between intellect and emotion in the aftermath of loss. In whatever form loss might take — be that of identity, a connection, one's innocence, control — it also must inevitably be confronted. Kim's drawings offer a space of introspection, while laying bare the procedures discovered through her own reflections on these tribulations. Once written, these can be revisited again and again, echoing C.S. Lewis in *A Grief Observed*, "One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if a spiral, am I going up or down it?"

Nicole Ji Soo Kim (b. 1994 Seoul, KR) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Toronto, Canada. Her art education began at School of the Arts Institute of Chicago, before completing her BFA at Ontario College of Art and Design University in 2020. Kim has recently exhibited at New York Art Residency and Studios Foundation (New York, US), the plumb, Whippersnapper Gallery, Xpace Cultural Centre, and Beaver Hall Gallery (all Toronto, CA). She has previously participated in Roundtable Residency (Toronto, CA) and the NARS Foundation International Residency (Brooklyn, US) and recently completed Grief Education at OISE Continuing and Professional Learning at the University of Toronto. Her work has been published in *The Six Hundred and Hyperallergic*. *Head Help Heart* is her first solo exhibition at Franz Kaka.

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