young-jun tak street religion

august 17 - september 30

Young-jun Tak's exhibition aptly titled "Street Religion" opens with the sculpture "Their Presumption of Our Filling," a work that holds common and religious symbols, with the intention of welcoming passersby into the gallery. The sculpture of two røde pølser (red sausages, or hot dogs, to this American) bear the hand-carved visages of Saint Nicholas in early and old age. Originally the patron saint of ending hunger, Saint Nicholas in many contexts of course also implies the patron saint of milk, cookies, and the raging capitalism of Christmas presents. The two Saint Nicholases nuzzling together with ketchup and mustard in their metal cradle bring this beloved childhood street food, its attendant local nostalgia, and an introductory queerness into the gallery.

Once inside, the visitor encounters a second sculpture, "Our Holding in Their Gaze," Tak's metal and ceramic Christmas tree that dominates the space.

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When I was a young child, my family would drive across what felt like an interminable swath of the eastern United States to visit extended family for Christmas. We would pack up suitcases and bags of beautifully wrapped presents, each labeled for the branch of the family we were going to visit—Grandma & Grandpa, Uncle or Aunt so-and-so, Cousins such-and-such.

I remember my parents' stress at buying the right presents, and my own anticipated comfort at the familiar decorations in each house, the Christmas tree taking central pride of place with gifts abounding underneath, always the same year after year.

A true carefully orchestrated American dream.

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"Our Holding in Their Gaze" is a different kind of Christmas tree—a bare metal frame echoing orthodox crosses, from which hang pine green cast ceramic body parts, instead of decorations and living greenery. His tree speaks to the interruption of queer experiences—intimacy, celebration, protest, marriage—by religious groups convinced that the control of others will lead to their own righteousness. Individuals who take ancient texts read through the lenses of zealots and myopic scholars to hand pick the list of those who are allowed into society and salvation from the fear of death—and those who are not.

* * *

I remember the time there was no Christmas tree at my one house on our Christmas pilgrimage. Whether it was the first time I noticed—my expectation of presents and decorations surpassing the attention of my cousins—or the first time it had been absent, I'm not sure. But I do remember my uncle's disdainful explanation that the Christmas tree was a pagan symbol that distracted from the true message of Christ's birth.

I was shocked—at first, at his refusal to participate in this ritual I had never before seen rejected. And then at the possibility that this simple tree had a much more complicated history than I had yet imagined. Where, actually, did this "pagan" ritual come from that made its way to every living room and shopping mall I had ever visited in suburban America?

As we know well, the symbols of most religions can be wielded to welcome some, while casting others out. Over centuries, each branch of the major monotheistic religions we live with today have found their ways to create codes, hierarchies, and outsiders. Today is no different, with political and economic interests casting allegiances with religious ones to determine the legal and social structures within which we are all permitted to live.

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In all of his works, Tak imagines the ways that different shared spaces impact the queer body. These spaces can be domestic, religious, or civic—all overlapping forms of public and private that play out opportunities for control in different ways. Tak has said that the queer body is particularly attuned to the social, political, and moral structures embedded into architectural choices, be they public or domestic, and the edges of these spaces—as they are not commonly built for the queer body. It is easier to see the embedded choices if it is not built for you.



Young-jun Tak Our Holding in Their Gaze, 2023 Ceramics, rusty metal, brass wire, oil Approx. H255 x Ø155 cm



Young-jun Tak Our Holding in Their Gaze, 2023 Ceramics, rusty metal, brass wire, oil Approx. H255 x Ø155 cm Detail



Young-jun Tak Our Holding in Their Gaze, 2023 Ceramics, rusty metal, brass wire, oil Approx. H255 x Ø155 cm

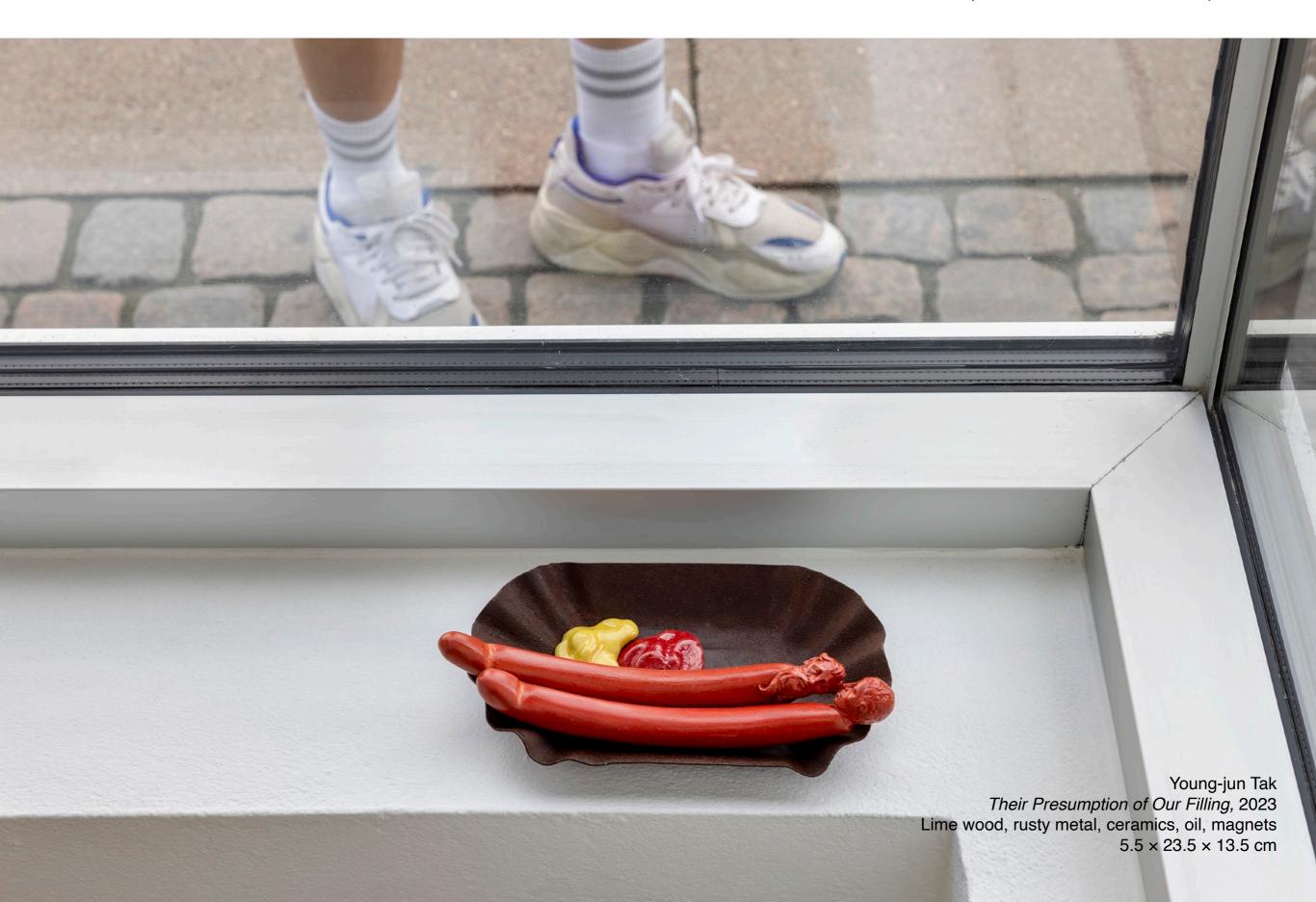


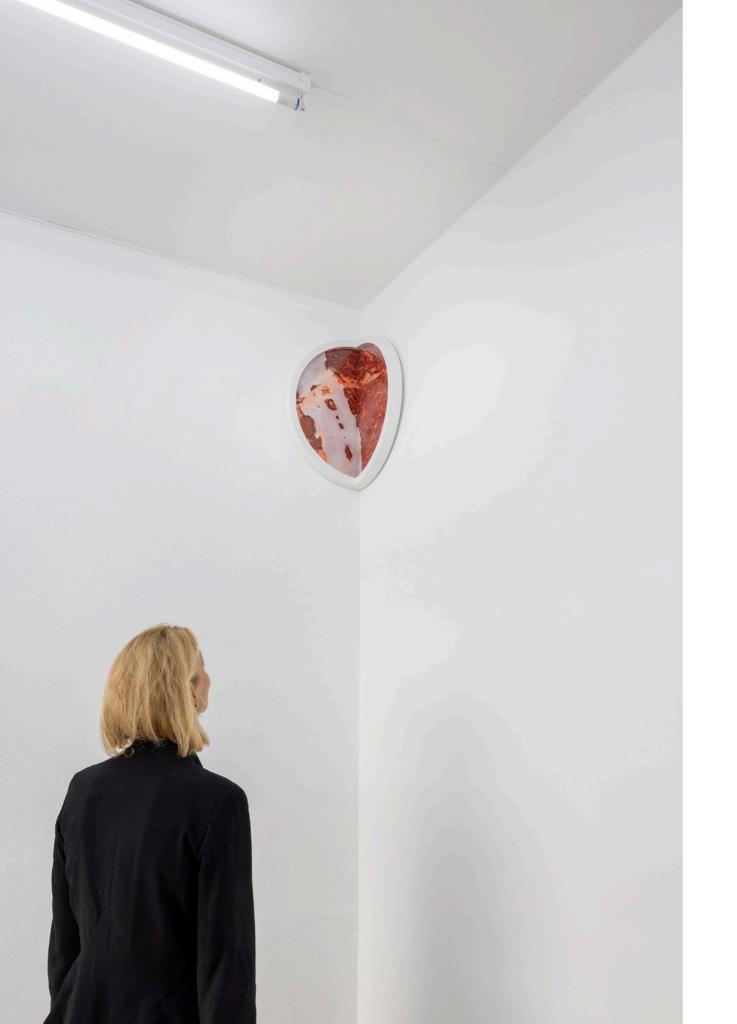
Young-jun Tak Our Holding in Their Gaze, 2023 Ceramics, rusty metal, brass wire, oil Approx. H255 x Ø155 cm



Young-jun Tak Their Presumption of Our Filling, 2023 Lime wood, rusty metal, ceramics, oil, magnets $5.5 \times 23.5 \times 13.5$ cm







Young-jun Tak Free Trade (Bent), 2021 Digital pigment print, beeswax, wood, acrylic museum glass, lacquer 54 x 29 x 4 cm



Young-jun Tak Free Trade (Bent), 2021 Digital pigment print, beeswax, wood, acrylic museum glass, lacquer 54 x 29 x 4 cm

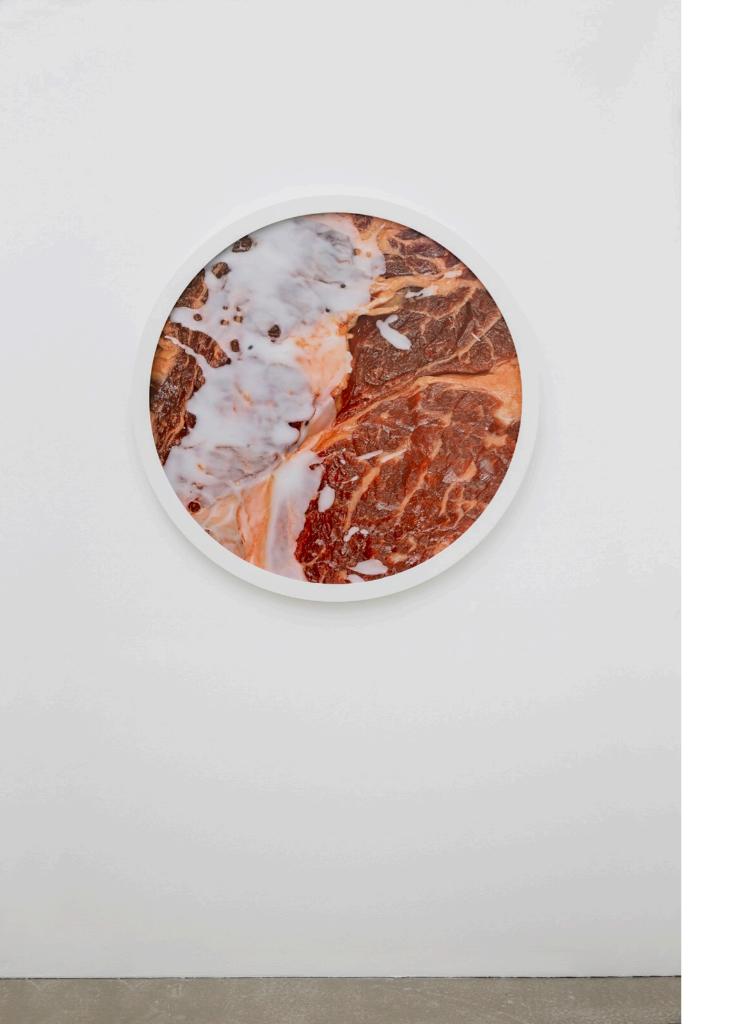


Young-jun Tak

Installation view, Street Religion palace enterprise



Young-jun Tak One More Please, 2022 Wooden milking stool, votive candles, silicone, paint, aluminum, glue 38 x 54 x 44 cm



Young-jun Tak Free Trade, 2021 Digital pigment print, beeswax, wood, acrylic museum glass, lacquer 96.5 x 96.5 x 4 cm



Left:

Young-jun Tak Free Trade #02, 2017 Digital pigment print, wood, glass, lacquer 54.5 (diameter) x 4 (depth) cm

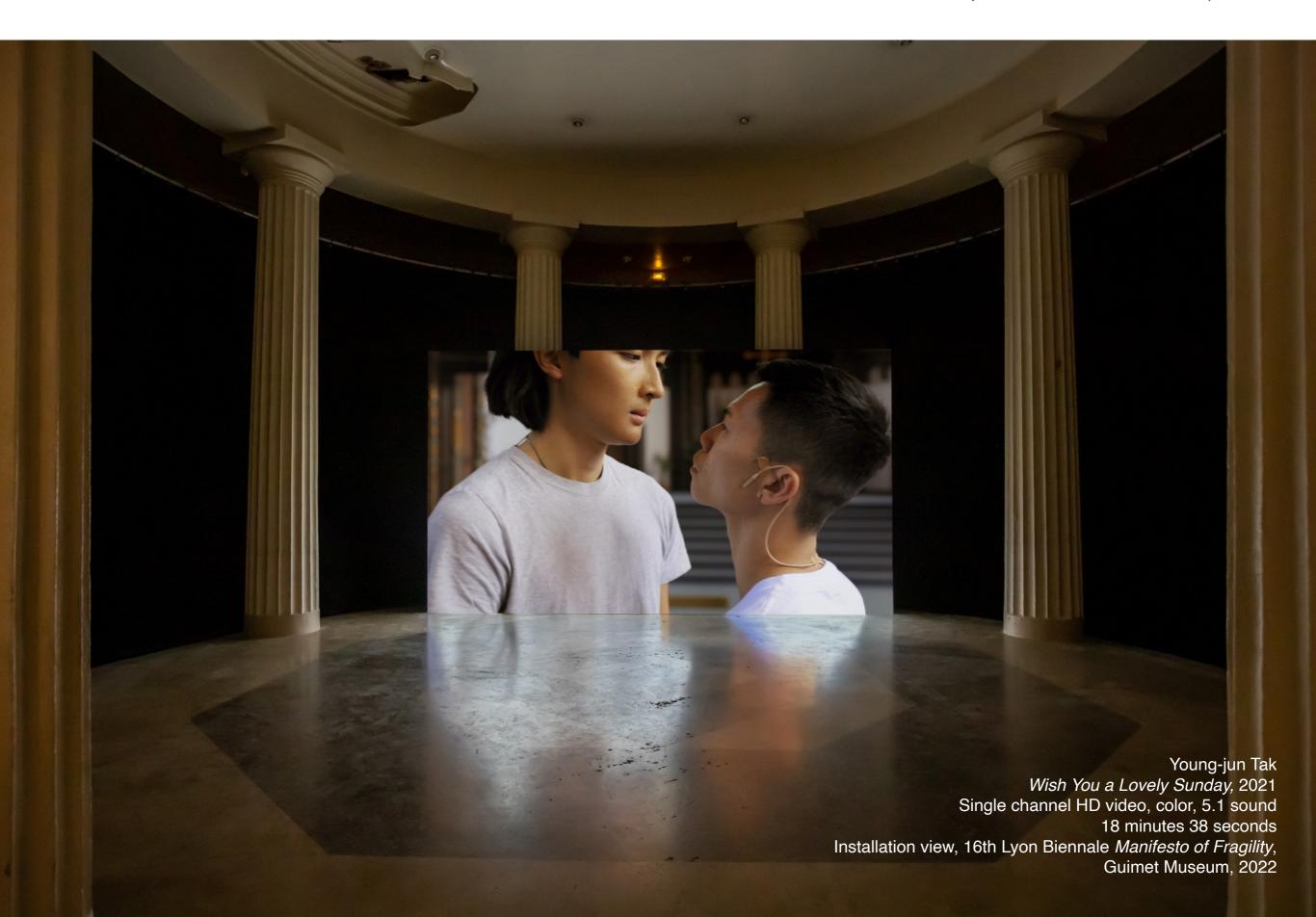
Right:

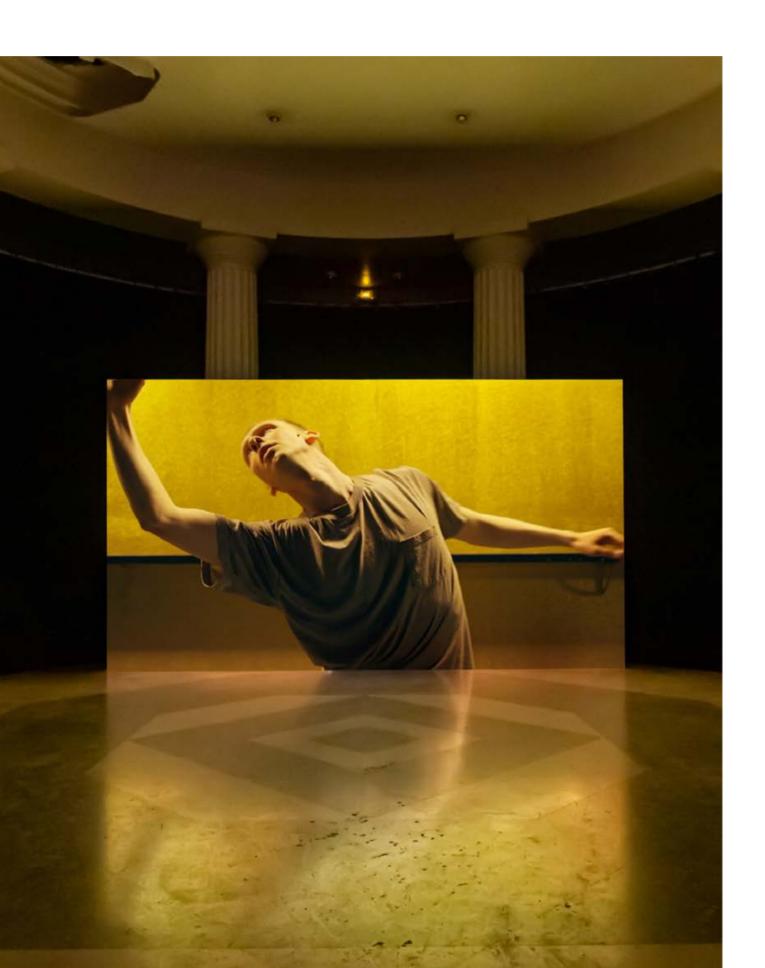
Young-jun Tak Free Trade #01, 2017 Digital pigment print, wood, glass, lacquer 54.5 (diameter) x 4 (depth) cm



Young-jun Tak
Installation view, Street Religion
palace enterprise

other works





The video boldly combines and juxtaposes two distinctive spatial settings—a church and a queer club. For this filmic work, two choreographers and two dancers were paired up to create a new choreography, for the church "Kirche am Südstern" and the queer club "SchwuZ" in Berlin respectively. Each pair was assigned to a different Bach piano piece for four hands. After days of rehearsals and when the choreography was complete, their designated venues were then swapped. The participants did not know the exact location they would perform in until the actual day of filming, and, therefore, they had to reprogram their choreographies according to the new architectural features and atmosphere of the changed location.

Although churches and queer clubs seem to function for starkly different purposes, both spaces share intriguing similarities as they both require specific rituals, behavioral norms, and attitudes closely linked to the space and its role. Both venues could be said to be fundamentally community-oriented spaces, which seek to offer comfort and welfare for either the visitor's mind or body. In the film, the continuous change of scenes between the two kind of spaces with the dancer's bodily presence, their movements, and dialogues, aims at achieving a sort of almost impossible mergence or coexistence of religious practice on one side and club culture on the other side. In this 17 minutes video, we follow the protagonists' struggles, passion, and commitment in trying to adjust their choreographies to fit into the new contexts.

English subtitled version: vimeo.com/581720894

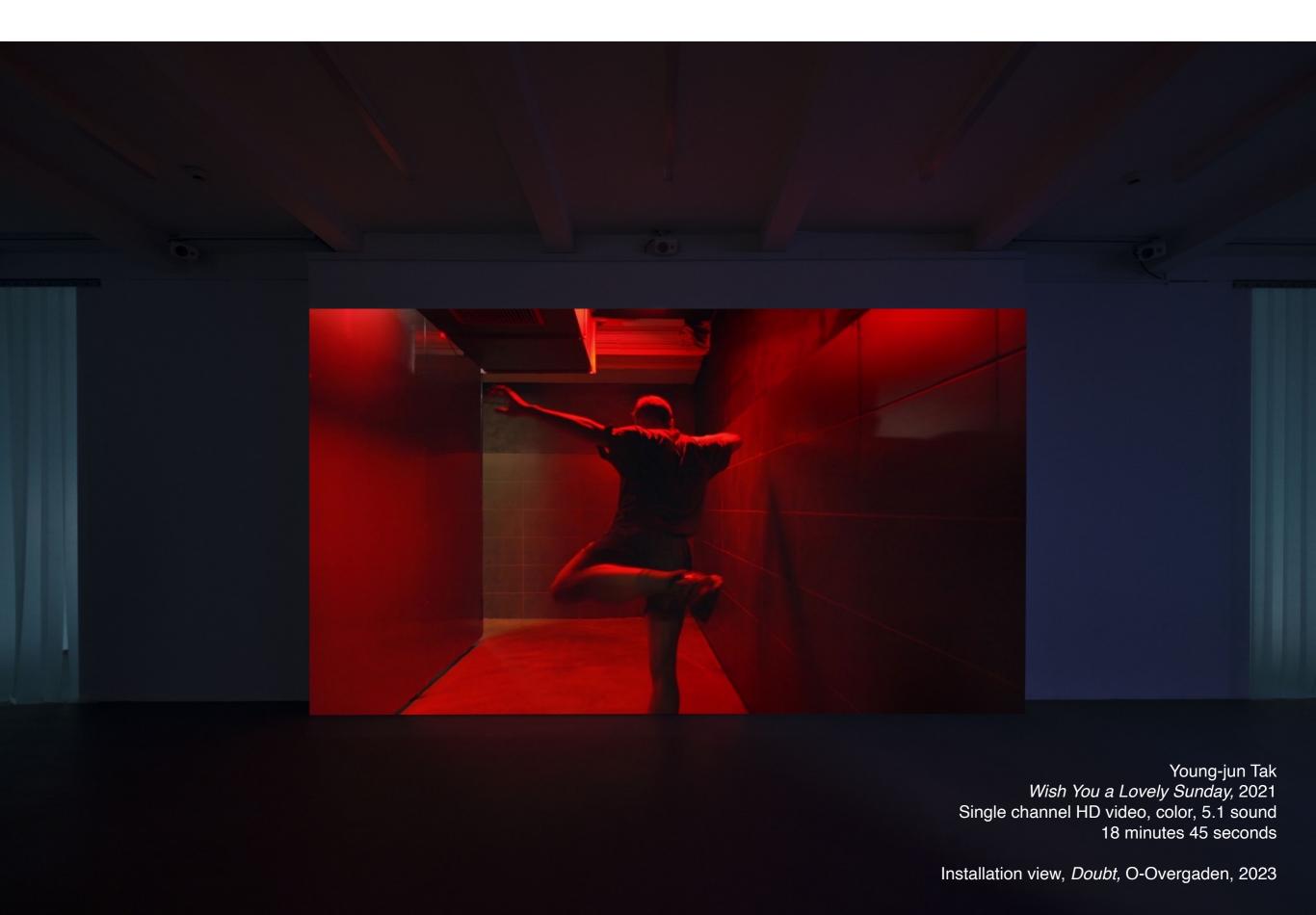
Password: WYLS2021YJT_EN Trailer: vimeo.com/577582959

Young-jun Tak
Wish You a Lovely Sunday, 2021
Single channel HD video, color, 5.1 sound
18 minutes 45 seconds
Installation view, 16th Lyon Biennale Manifesto of Fragility, Guimet Museum, 2022



Young-jun Tak Wish You a Lovely Sunday, 2021 Single channel HD video, color, 5.1 sound 18 minutes 45 seconds

Installation view, Wanås Konst, Knislinge, 2023





Young-jun Tak My Expectation, 2023 Lime wood, rusty metal, beeswax, oil 25 x 11 x 10.5 cm Version 4/5



Young-jun Tak Once in a While, 2022 Lime wood, rusty metal, beeswax, oil $12.5 \times 37.8 \times 14.5$ cm Version 3/5

YOUNG-JUN TAK 탁영준 卓永俊

Born in 1989, Seoul, South Korea Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Schloss Hellenstein, Heidenheim, DE

EDUCATION 2008–2015 UPCOMING 2024	Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul BA, English Language and Literature BA, Cross-Cultural Studies	2022	CLUBS 2, Sala Apolo, Barcelona, ES 16th Lyon Biennale, Guimet Museum, FR Finger Bang, Perrotin, Paris, FR Forming Communities: Berliner Wege, KINDL – Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE Megan Dominescu, Lea Draeger, Nika Fontaine, Aviva Silverman, Young-jun Tak, Mauer, Cologne, DE
2023	Young-jun Tak (TBD), Philipp Zollinger, Zurich, CH (solo) Young-jun Tak (TBD), Fragment, New York, US (solo) Love Your Clean Feet on Thursday, Atelier Hermès, Seoul, KOR (solo) Double Feature: Young-jun Tak, Julia Stoschek Foundation, Dusseldorf and Berlin, DE (solo) Dancing About Architecture, High Line, New York, US (group) 5th Chicago Architecture Biennial, US (group)	2021	It's Just a Phase, Kjøpmannsgata Ung Kunst, Trondheim, NO 9th Berlin Masters, Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin Masters, Foundation, Berlin, DE Erschreckend aktuell / Frighteningly topical, Gabriele Senn Galerie, Vienna, AT LETTER (to us), a billboard project at Elsenbrücke, Diskurs, Berlin, DE Round 4, Art for Black Lives, Online
SOLO EXHIBITIONS		2020	11th Berlin Biennale, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, DE
2023	street religion, palace enterprise, Copenhagen, DK Wish You a Lovely Sunday, Wanås Konst, Knislinge, SE Doubt, Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK		Szene Berlin, Hall Art Foundation / Schloss Derneburg Museum, Derneburg, DE Locked in, BKV (Brandenburgischer Kunstverein) Potsdam, DE
2022	Wohin?, Efremidis, Berlin, DE Der Garten, Sox, Berlin, DE	2019	Show Me Your Selfie, Diskurs, Berlin, DE PRO-TEST, Seoul Museum of Art, SeMA Bunker, Seoul,
2021	Wish You a Lovely Sunday, Fragment, Moscow, RU	2018	KOR Show Me Your Selfie, Aram Art Museum, Goyang, KOR
GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS			Schrein der Freundschaft, BKV Potsdam, DE A Strong Desire, PS120, Berlin, DE
2023	Boobs in the Arts—Fe:male Bodies in Pictorial History,	2017	15th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul Modern, TR
	Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin, DE Paperworks, Kunstmuseum Heidenheim / Museum	2016	The Others, König Galerie, Berlin, DE

YOUNG-JUN TAK 탁영준 卓永俊

Young-jun Tak is a self-taught artist living and working in Berlin. He has studied English Language and Literature as well as Cross-Cultural Studies in Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, South Korea. Tak has participated in major international exhibitions such as the Lyon Biennale (2022), the Berlin Biennale (2020), and Istanbul Biennale (2017). He received the TOY Berlin Masters Award (2021).

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2023

Experimental Film Funding, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

NEUSTARTplus-Stipendium der Stiftung Kunstfonds, NEUSTART KULTUR der BKM

2021 TOY Berlin Masters Award, Berlin Masters Foundation, Burger Collection

International Exchange Program for Young Artists, Arts Council Korea

2020

International Exchange Program, Arts Council Korea

2016-2017

International Exchange Program, Arts Council Korea