

Naeun Kang  
CHECKING IN  
Centralbanken  
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I made the first version of Crying Choo Choo in 2020, two years after graduating from art school in the Netherlands. My post-art school studio set-up was surreal: I shared a room with a programmer in an office filled with small start-ups, near The Hague train station. I was the only artist there.

I was working as an English-Korean consecutive interpreter, a job I accidentally discovered I could somewhat do. Lacking friends and other hobbies, I still went to the studio often. With no opportunities on the horizon to show them, making only meant more inventory. So I only made tiny paintings.

There were other tiny paintings featuring emotionally multitasking figures from this time: Crying on a Roller Coaster and Crying in a Rocking Chair. Continuing to go through the motions while being overwhelmed by emotions, unable to stop either process. You would look silly to others, so it creates this chasm between internal experience and external perception, which, I guess, makes you feel even more lonely.

The majority from my old class were either slowly quitting art or moving back to their homelands, and then quitting art. I felt that my art education had taken away four years of my life, only rendering me heavier and slower. And I was moving through the world inefficiently as an untrained interpreter. I felt anxious about not being on any sort of track, just in the middle of somewhere that wasn't even a road.

I gave away that first tiny crying train painting when I was moving to Oslo three years ago. Now in a new landscape, I found myself (I seem to 'find' myself often – I've always had an aptitude for misplacing things) feeling lost in different ways with new set of reasons. Apparently, it's all part of the process. So it's okay. I think. Maybe.

Naeun Kang (b. Changwon, South Korea) is an artist based in Oslo. She works with painting, drawings, sculpture, and ceramics. She is interested in exploring the nuances of human experiences and dynamics, everyday dilemmas, different coping mechanisms, personal dysfunctions, the general messiness and awkwardness of life. She often pulls from personal interactions, social observations, bodily experiences, and eavesdropped anecdotes. She holds an MFA (2023) from the KHiO (National Academy of the Arts in Oslo) and a BFA (2018) from the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague, Netherlands. She has been exhibited at Nevven gallery, (Bologna, 2024), Galleri LNM (Oslo, 2024), Kunstnerne Hus (Oslo, 2023), Centralbanken (Oslo, 2023), Northing Space and Entrée (Bergen, 2023), among others.