

In “Pure War”, first published as a paperback in 1983, Paul Virilio shed light on the invisible bond between modern society and military technological progress. The assertion being that after World War I, in order to continue the economic acceleration which occurred during wartime, the distinction between war and peace was decidedly dissolved. Technological progress thus became an instrument to continually produce an increase in speed and performance as it directly related to more effective instruments of war. This militarized science so to speak enabled the evolution of specialized mass production fueling a dynamic industrial system eventually evolving into accelerated communication, transportation and information. A global economy dependent on the perpetuity of conflict; a technocratic political system implementing warfare strategies at the expense of real societal progress; a neverending condition of pure war.

Eponymously titled “Pure War”, Hun Kyu Kim’s inaugural exhibition at High art presents a series of paintings depicting war as a historical protagonist. Using the evolution of weaponry (stone, metal, fire, mechanical, industrial, biochemical, nuclear, technological and gene) as a guideline and the Chinese Zodiac (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig) as a source the works craft vast intricate narrative universes laced with intense imagination reflecting upon a post-globalized world grabbling with the effects of technological neoliberalism. Deep hierarchical structures, extreme belief systems and political polemics are on full display through detailed narratives often driven by a frenzy of anthropomorphic proxies. Time and space conflate, portraying an eternal state of emergency, where violent outbursts aren’t merely accidents but normative traits of social interaction. Commercial commodities and pop cultural tropes (from pokemons to selfies to art) lace the landscape in an ostensibly fantastical world grounded in the realities of the contemporary condition. Kim’s work functions as an anomaly of sorts, that which is simultaneously illustrative but emblematic, detailed but diagnostic, cute but critical.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*