The Dialectic of Landscape and Face Aesthetics of Relationality: The Affective Turn in Woosung Lee's Painting and the Genealogy of East Asian Art

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Fig. 1
Nobody Listen to My Sorrow, 2011

In late autumn of 2019, at an exhibition held at the Daegu Art Museum, I encountered for the first time Woosung Lee's 2011 painting *Nobody Listen to My Sorrow* (fig. 1). This encounter became the point of departure for a sustained personal interest in and scholarly engagement with the whole of Lee's practice. In that sense, it functions as a kind of personal methodological origin in appreciating Lee's works. To briefly describe the experience here, then, is not merely anecdotal; it is preparatory work that anticipates the concerns to be developed in the body of this essay.

The painting, hung on one wall, was modest in scale. On its canvas, a single duck boat floated on a lake, burning quietly in the dead of a midnight stillness. Flames had wrapped around part of the hull, but there was nothing dramatic about the combustion. The fire read as a condition rather than an event, as though the boat had always been this way: alight, and silent. Against the surrounding dark, the flame was vivid, almost surreal. Yet what seared itself into memory was not the fire but the face. Even as the hull was consumed, the duck-head of the pedalboat held an expression that can only be called gentle, something approaching a smile, and it seemed to belong less to the object burning than to whoever stood watching it burn. That face harbored either a guileless unawareness of its own predicament or a Zen-like (禪, *seon*) composure that had passed clean through it.

The contrast was severe: kinetic flame against frozen serenity, and it charged the entire canvas with a tension that refused to resolve. The smile never reads as ironic or satirical. It operates, rather, as a visual mechanism that lays bare the paradoxical layering internal to sorrow itself: destruction and stillness, loss and acceptance, suffering and transcendence, all held in a single surface. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this is the moment when the expressive binary enforced by the machine of faciality (*visagéité*), where sadness must grimace and joy must smile, comes apart. The smile amid flames is the emergence of something *non-facial*, an affect that no prescribed marker can fix, and it may be read as the originary scene of the defacialization strategy Lee's subsequent work would pursue.

What this painting demonstrates is the reach of Lee's early pictorial thinking: the capacity to convert deeply private emotion into something universally communicable through oblique figuration and the collision of contradictory affects. As Seung-Oh Shin has noted, while the subjects Lee paints are drawn from "the actual surroundings," audiences "have no difficulty reading the work, whether or not they know those subjects"; they need only "summon their own lost memories and recollections."[1]

The burning duck boat acted as a catalyst of precisely this kind, compelling each viewer to locate in their own past the moments when beauty and anguish had occupied the same space. At the time, I had not yet turned sustained attention to Lee's practice, and could not have guessed that this painting was already foreshadowing the decisive turn his work would take: the passage from *figure* to *landscape*. Approaching the 2026 Gallery Hyundai solo exhibition now, however, recalling the 2011 canvas carries a weight beyond retrospection. It prefigures both the defacialization strategy and the construction of emotional space as *inner landscape* that would come to define his later work.[2]

To return to Deleuze and Guattari: the painting catches the moment at which the affect of a subject, having slipped free of the social signification that the duck form's built-in *faciality* prescribes, is projected onto the object.[3] The burning duck boat becomes an emotional surface that stands in for the human face. Here, in nascent form, is the micropolitics of relationality that Lee's practice would

go on to explore at full scale. The work also demands rereading through its dialectical relationship to landscape. In *No One Listen to My Sorrow* (2011)(fig. 1), the lake and the nighttime dark are not merely spatial context; they function as an *affective landscape* that amplifies the figure's emotion, whether we understand that figure as the duck, or the feelings of the person before it, or their face. This was an early signal of the process by which landscape would claim the status of autonomous subject in the 2023–2024 body of work. The dialectic between figure and landscape, in other words, was already running beneath the surface of this painting.

The questions that single canvas posed to me at the Daegu Art Museum in 2019 reduce to three. How does personal emotion, routed through the representation of an object, acquire universal resonance? How is the particular shape of sorrow made visible in the form of a burning duck boat? And what relationship does the painting's landscape, night and lake, bear to the emotion carried by its figure? This essay is a first attempt to follow those questions, and the pursuit will arrive at a provisional resting point with the new works Woosung Lee presents at Gallery Hyundai in 2026.

I. The Horizon of the Gaze:
A Genealogical Reframing of Korean Contemporary Painting and Its East Asian Context

Woosung Lee's 2026 solo exhibition at Gallery Hyundai is more than a presentation of new work. It marks a transitional moment in Korean contemporary painting. Born in Seoul in 1983, Lee studied painting at Hongik University and visual arts at the Korea National University of Arts, and has established himself as one of the defining figures of contemporary Korean art. Over the past decade, the gravitational center of his practice has shifted gradually from figure to landscape, and this shift provides an unusually instructive case for examining how the legacy of Minjung Art, one of the pivotal currents in Korean art history, is being reinterpreted in dialogue with the present.

The transformation, however, is not confined to the internal logic of Korean art. It connects to a broader regional question: how the artistic manifestations of East Asian democratization movements since the 1980s are being reconstituted under twenty-first-century neoliberal conditions. Minjung Art in 1980s Korea, the nativist literature debate (*xiangtu wenxue lunzhan*)[4] in late-1970s Taiwan, the underground (*angura*) movement[5] in Japan, the New Generation Sculpture movement[6] in China: these resistant practices followed divergent historical trajectories yet shared a central task, the critique of state-driven modernization and the reconstitution of popular subjectivity.

Lee's work takes the formal and spiritual inheritance of Minjung Art as its departure point (the mobility of the *geolgae-geurim*, the possibility of art's intervention in society, the figuration of collective sentiment), and transforms that inheritance, under contemporary conditions, into a micropolitics of personal relationality and an expanded affective landscape. In the artist's own words:

> "To me, everything about a person is expression and message. My work is to transfer that into painting. What matters is that we are living in the same time. That is the thread that connects us."[7]

This transformation is bound up with a fundamental reflection on how *the face* is represented in his work. The concept of faciality (*visagéité*), which Deleuze and Guattari elaborated through the notion of the identity machine (*machine d'identité*), identifies the face not as biological given but as a surface of signification (*surface de signification*)[8] upon which social meaning is inscribed and the subject determined. Read through this lens, Lee's early figure paintings emerge as a strategy of intentional dislocation from prescriptive faciality. This essay seeks to explore how that strategy can be situated within the broader current of *dismantling identity* and *aesthetics of relationality* that has gained momentum across East Asian contemporary art beyond the Korean context.

As stated in the announcement of Lee's collaboration with Gallery Hyundai, the artist "takes as models close friends, parents, the spread of dishes at a local restaurant, a bus stop, the scenery of a Han River Park, and other subjects that hold a personal connection, broadly surveying everyday life through themes such as youth, solidarity, humor, travel, family, and queer romance."[9] These subjects extend well beyond the documentation of daily life. Taken together, they constitute the construction of an emotional topography of people living in the contemporary moment. This essay traces the contours of that topography and explores how it acquires new coordinates on the genealogical map of Korean contemporary art.

II. The Politics of Medium:
Formal Variations on the Minjung Art Legacy and the Discovery of the Everyday

The foundation of Woosung Lee's practice lies in the formal and spiritual dialogue it maintains with the Korean Minjung Art movement. Lee defines what he does not as painting (*hoehwa*) in the narrow sense but as *picture-making* (*geurim*), a deliberately more open category. This aligns with the practical attitude of Minjung Art, which sought to push art beyond institutional boundaries and into the sites of everyday life and struggle.[10] A similar impulse can be found in the way Japan's Mono-ha (もの派) turned away from Western modernist frameworks in the 1960s and 70s to attend to the sheer presence of materials, or in Taiwan's alternative-space movements of the 1980s, including the Diaoyutai movement (釣魚臺)[11]. Lee's approach, however, differs from these precedents in emphasis. Where they gravitated toward political declaration or the investigation of material essence, Lee places the weight on picture-making as everyday practice. This is the decisive variation: the transposition of Minjung Art's collective-resistance narrative into the domain of personal everydayness.

In 2015, for the exhibition *Pulling from the Front, Pushing from Behind*, Lee carried large-scale *geolgae-geurim* painted in water-based paint on fabric through central Seoul on foot, temporarily affixing them to empty walls along the way. The act explicitly referenced the immediate, mobile communicative function that Minjung Art's banner paintings had served at protest sites and workplaces during the 1980s. Lee's version, however, carried no ideological payload. In his own description, the practice was "neither rooted in an ideological background nor focused on mere formal experimentation. Rather, it originated from an attitude that was personal and modest, yet practical."[12]

Sunghee Lee's detailed account of this practice reveals that the changes began at the level of production and materials. "Instead of a framed canvas, he used fabric that was easy to transport; freed

from the burden of pigment intensity, he used inexpensive water-based paint; and he folded a two-meter-square cloth several times, placed it in a bag, and traveled by public transit."[13] The choice of folding rather than rolling was critical. "When a painting is carried folded, crease marks remain on the surface and the paint risks cracking and other damage. Rolling, on the other hand, would require hiring a vehicle each time, since the painting exceeds the artist's own height, and enlisting the help of a third party. In that case, the original intention of walking the streets without burden alongside the painting would be undermined."[14] By accepting the risk of damage and choosing to fold, Lee chose "not the painting as an exclusive commodity separated from the artist for the purpose of market exchange, but a modest painting that remains with the artist's body from production onward, one that carries intact the marks and wear incurred in transit, rather than the lavish effort to prevent them."[15]

Where Minjung Art represented the *minjung* as historical subject through collective portraiture, Lee focuses on individuals who bear specific names ("Jeahoon," "Yoonjung"): people who can be painted. As Gallery Hyundai's official statement confirms, "the artist employs the figurative depiction methods of Minjung Art, expressed through his distinctive mode of picture-making, humor, and cartoon-inflected style." And: "Where Minjung Art utilized banners as tools for propaganda and social movements, Lee's works, with their bright and buoyant palette of everyday images, depart from revolutionary pathos and collective subjectivity to reveal a we that is loosely yet persistently connected."[16]

This shift in focus intersects with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of faciality, but it also connects to a broader discursive turn visible across East Asian art since the 1990s: the return to the individual and the everyday. Set against the way China's New Generation painters rejected grand historical narrative in favor of ordinary individual experience, or the way Murakami Takashi reprocessed postwar Japan's collective trauma through otaku culture, Lee's approach stands apart in one respect: it retains a warm, unembarrassed gaze toward communal relationality.[17] As Woong Nam has observed, the homogeneous stare of the young male group in the early representative work *People who are Staring Straight Ahead* (2012) can be read as "a subcultural landscape of homosociality, even homoerotic desire," at once exposing the mechanism of standardized faciality and gesturing toward the possibility of intimate solidarity beyond it.[18] Woong Nam's analysis of this work is worth quoting at length: "The crowd, which had been dwelling in darkness, appeared as if exposed to a flash directed at the canvas. They emerge simultaneously with the light, as though summoned by a single call. Where they had been and what they had been doing, the space-time before the light was shone, is impossible to gauge. Only this: the gaze from outside the frame announced its presence in their domain, and they, as if already prepared, hold torches or candles and glare back at the canvas. The tension of their flushed bodies transmitted like a message: they would hurl themselves into a pit of fire if that is what it took to set something ablaze."[19] The work inherits Minjung Art's spirit as "a howl at society, a scream, a fight," but its object has been concretized. The abstract minjung gives way to the identity anxiety and relational hunger of a contemporary younger generation.[20]

III. The Dismantling of Faciality:
Aesthetic Resistance to the Identity Machine and Strategies of Representation

Fig. 2
Face with No Shadow, in Mid-Tone Gray, 2023

Fig. 3
Two People and Bright Blue, 2023

Fig. 4
Red Color and Orange Lights Silhouette, 2023

Fig. 5
The Disappearance of the Self on the Mirror, 2023

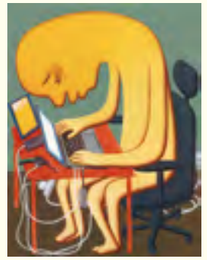

Fig. 6
I Am Still Working, 2023

Woosung Lee's figural representation operates as a strategy of deliberate deferral, dislocating the prescriptive mechanism Deleuze and Guattari analyzed under the concept of faciality. The face, as they argued, is a privileged surface where signifiance and subjectivation intersect.[21] Lee's simplified, flattened figural idiom can be read as an attempt to arrest that system of signification at the threshold. As Jee Young Maeng has noted, the idiom is one in which "light exists within the canvas, yet the shading it produces is minimized, and background or detailed description is either omitted or simplified."[22] In works such as *Face with No Shadow, in Mid-Tone Gray* (2023)(fig. 2) and *Two People and Bright Blue* (2023)(fig. 3), the face is no longer a marker that fixes identity. It becomes an emotional surface undergoing continual variation in its relationships to light, color, and the space around it. This is Lee's aesthetic response to Deleuze and Guattari's proposition that "the face itself is an abstract machine"[23]: the fixity that machine produces is replaced, painting by painting, with the fluidity of relationality.

In her critique of the 2023 solo exhibition Come Sit with Me at Hakgojae Gallery, Jee Young Maeng traces the evolution of this figural expression with considerable precision. According to her, "in works such as *Face with No Shadow, in Mid-Tone Gray* (2023)(fig. 2) and *Two People and Bright Blue* (2023) (fig. 3), the face is presented not as a fixed marker of identity, but as a surface of affect constantly modulated through its relationship with light, color, and the surrounding space." The figures of this period, she observes, subtly deviate from Lee's earlier flatness:[24] "With the exception of *Red Color and Orange Lights Silhouette* (2023)(fig. 4), which renders silhouettes, and *The Disappearance of the Self on the Mirror* (2023)(fig. 5), in which the figure is absent, the figures on canvas show a markedly different intensity of representation from the familiar Woosung Lee idiom, yet they do not stray drastically from it either."[25]

The simplification at work here carries a resonance with modes of figural representation in East Asian traditional painting, particularly the flat, contour-driven expression of Joseon-era minhwa (folk painting) and Japanese ukiyo-e. In Lee's hands, however, simplification operates less as inheritance than as a tactical choice aimed at dismantling identity's fixity. Maeng notes that "the impression the artist received at the time of meeting each subject, the atmospheric feeling of the situation, is expressed differently in each painting through tone, palette, composition, and degree of description," and emphasizes that "the artist's tireless effort to reveal the most luminous aspect of each figure through carefully calibrated omission and focus is felt in the hands, in the hair, sometimes in the depiction of light falling on a face, in the direction of a figure's gaze."[26]

The self-portrait series *I Am Still Working* (2023)(fig. 6), also shown in the *Come Sit with Me* exhibition, takes a diaristic turn. It depicts the artist in states of anguish across a succession of ordinary settings: bathroom, meal, car, studio, *noraebang*, with his most intimate self reduced to something resembling an animation character. Maeng's reading of this series is incisive: "[...] a figure who does not resemble the artist but stands in for him appears within the painting and begins cautiously to speak. Unlike the other figure paintings in this exhibition, the self-portrait figure, though bowed in anguish, revels in a freedom from representation, roaming freely across the canvas and pouring out his suffering without restraint."[27] The "freedom from representation" that Maeng identifies signifies a temporary departure from what Deleuze and Guattari term the "abstract machine of faciality." According to them, the face operates through the system of the "white wall/black hole," ceaselessly signifying (meaning-assigning)

and fixing the subject. Lee's simplified self-portrait removes this white wall and dismantles the determining power of the black hole (the eyes), opening a field where the body before the face, the emotion before the expression, may emerge.

The oscillation between registers calls to mind the "art shift" technique that the Japanese animation director Takahata Isao employed in Pom Poko (Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko, 1994). Takahata maintained precise, realistic rendering for serious narrative passages and deliberately dropped into simplified, cartoon-like rendering for humorous or emotionally heightened moments. Lee's movement between idioms functions in a comparable way: it modulates the viewer's emotional distance and enables a multilayered reception of narrative. One composition in the self-portrait series is particularly arresting. A modern figure crouches over a mobile phone against a background that evokes prehistoric cave painting. Maeng describes the work: "Against a background of animal imagery and palm-print silhouettes evoking prehistoric cave paintings, a figure crouches and peers into a mobile phone screen, with a few crumbled fragments of stone placed before him, as though someone had used them to paint the background images. The cave-painting imagery may feel like the immeasurably distant past, but what collapses that distance and returns us to the present is the heart symbol among the painted images and the figure with head bowed over the phone. The origin of painting is connected to a primordial, distant past, yet the artist's anguish over painting exists in the present of 2023."[28] This is the most vivid instance of what Seung-Oh Shin has called Lee's method of *temporal distancing*:[29] not a simple separation of past and present, but the superimposition of heterogeneous temporal layers through which the universal emotions of the present, isolation and loneliness, are rediscovered. The juxtaposition of cave wall and smartphone screen is a temporal version of the *sliding* between registers that characterizes the work at every level.[30] Seung-Oh Shin's temporal distancing is not simply a separation of past and present but a process of rediscovering the universal emotions of the present (isolation, loneliness) through the superimposition of heterogeneous temporal layers.

The strategy Lee chose for expressing the diaristic self in this series, simplifying himself into an animation character, parallels the exaggerated simplification Takahata used for the tanuki's comic scenes in *Pom Poko*. As Williams (2024) has argued, Takahata intended these visual shifts to forestall the audience's "complete immersion" and maintain a critical distance from which the characters could be observed.[31] Lee's simplified self operates along similar lines: the viewer is discouraged from empathizing directly with the artist's particular anguish and invited instead to reflect on the universal existential condition of selfhood. Simplification performs a dual function, heightening the intensity of emotion while simultaneously producing distance.

Running alongside these self-portraits are large-scale works such as *Tumbling Around* (2023)(fig. 7), in which remnant fabric is reassembled by patchwork to depict a group of family and friends, materially embodying the process by which individual identities merge into overlapping fragments of time and memory. As Maeng describes it: "As if to intimate the overlapping time spent with them, when paint is applied to the multi-pieced fabric, the seams disappear beneath the image. Only on the reverse side of the painting can one glimpse the invisible traces of time."[32] The technique shares territory with the work of East Asian women artists since the 1990s, notably China's Lin Tianmiao and Korea's Kimsooja, who have used fiber and fabric to represent communal memory and feminized labor.[33] In Lee's case, however, patchwork functions less as a representation of gendered labor than as a formal device for

Fig. 7
Tumbling Around, 2023

Fig. 8
We Talked and Talked, and Laughed and Laughed Until Dawn, 2026

Fig. 9
We Held Each Other Beneath the Waterfall at Dawn, 2025-2026

Fig. 10
We Were There Until Sunset, 2025

Fig. 11
In The Sunset and Friends, 2023

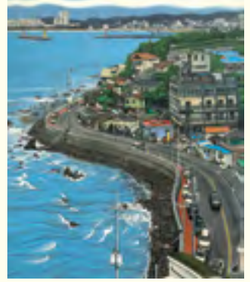

Fig. 12
Would I See It If I Stand on Jumunjin Lighthouse?, 2025

Fig. 13
Hangang Bridge on the Way Home, 2025-2026

making visible the multilayered network of relationships themselves.

IV. The Passage into Landscape:
Spatial Expansion of the Aesthetics of Relationality and the Construction of Emotional Geography

This strategy of *defacialization* prompts a full-scale shift toward landscape in his 2023-2024 works. The work list for the 2026 Gallery Hyundai solo exhibition confirms that shift: from their very titles, new paintings such as *We Talked and Talked, and Laughed and Laughed Until Dawn* (2026)(fig. 8), *We Held Each Other Beneath the Waterfall at Dawn* (2025-2026)(fig. 9), and *We Were There Until Sunset* (2025)(fig. 10) declare the coexistence of figure and landscape. Landscape is no longer backdrop. It has become an autonomous space capable of holding emotion and memory on its own terms.
The exhibition preface for the 2023 Hakgojae Gallery show identifies Woosung Lee's work as being "driven by the concept of the relationship between the part and the whole. Each individual painting has meaning as a part, but when all the painting entities gather to form a whole, the meaning of the era and of life is revealed. The artist presents a narrative structure where all parts meet to form a totality, and he represents the lives and aesthetic consciousness of young adults living in our time."[34] This dialectic of part and whole sharpens considerably through the passage into landscape. *In The Sunset and Friends* (2023)(fig. 11), the fading light of day is not backdrop but substantive presence: it colors the friends' faces, saturates the space, and acquires an agency of its own. Here the binary between face and space collapses, a process Deleuze and Guattari describe through the concept of the *face-landscape* (*visage-paysage*). Under the authority of faciality, they argue, "landscape itself becomes facialized (*visagéification*)."[35] Lee's work performs the inverse: the face becomes landscapified (*paysagification*). Individual features dissolve into the movement of color, light, and texture, and that emotion diffuses into an expanded spatiality.

Placed within an East Asian context, this passage opens dialogue with several aesthetic genealogies at once: the unity with nature pursued by Korean Dansaekhwa (單色畫), the material-spatial investigations of Japan's Mono-ha, the philosophical cosmology embedded in the Chinese shanshui tradition.[36] Lee's landscapes, however, are distinguished apart from those genealogies by several characteristics. First, rather than pursuing the sublimity of nature or the essence of materiality, they are closer to what might be called *experienced landscape*, in which specific place and personal memory are fused. *Would I See It If I Stand on Jumunjin Lighthouse?* (2025)(fig. 12) and *Hangang Bridge on the Way Home* (2025-2026)(fig. 13) acquire their meaning only within a relationship to a particular time and space, and to the figures who were, or will be, present there.

A second distinguishing feature: Lee's landscapes often harbor traces of *failed presence*, of *frustrated participation*. As Sunghee Lee observed, what the artist came to realize through his 2015 street performance was that this undertaking was a repeated failure. "For busy passersby with no foreknowledge and no preparation to appreciate a painting, his pictures were no different from a meaningless billboard; amid the massive architecture, his paintings looked thoroughly wretched. Of course, those paintings occasionally gave elderly people passing time in a park something to talk about, and offered a grandmother idling in an alleyway something to look at, but that was not all there was to it. Why was he carrying these heavy paintings, walking around, sometimes pleading to

hang them on walls, engaging in an act that no one cared for? Asking himself this over and over, he returns to the question: what is a painting?”[37]

That experience of failure gives the subsequent landscape works their distinctive emotional charge. In the series *We Were There Until Sunset* (2025)(fig. 10) and *We Stayed Until Nightfall* (2025)(fig. 14), or in *We Dance in the Rain at Dawn* (2025-2026)(fig. 15), the relationship between natural phenomena and the figures carries a note of metaphorical consolation: that paintings once ignored on city streets might find, in rain or fading light, a form of communion unavailable among passersby. Woong Nam locates this experience of frustration at the very engine of Lee’s practice. “Woosung Lee’s *geolgae-geurim* evaporate the weight of the world into the secular realm. The process of recording dissonance and alienation from a distance may appear detached, but it is actually an active shift in stance for reading the world. His practice, which uses instability as its engine to grasp at its subjects and pursue the world, now accumulates vulnerable forms to build structure and reflect the world. The architecture of the *geolgae*, which does not hide its ungainly form and adjusts its size and purpose to the topography, is the other face of a community where unstable scraps of fabric, fluttering without a fixed direction, press against, tangle with, clash with, and separate from one another in perpetual repetition.”[38]

Read through the lens of emotional geography, Lee’s landscape work reveals how the frustration the artist encountered in urban space is reconstituted through communion with nature. The indifference of “nobody listening to my sorrow” which Woosung Lee met during his 2015 street performance was a direct encounter with the emotional coldness of the city, and his subsequent turn to landscape works—such as *We Were There Until Sunset* (2025)(fig. 10), *We Stayed Until Nightfall* (2025)(fig. 14), and *We Dance in the Rain at Dawn* (2025-2026)(fig. 15)—represents the reconfiguration of that frustration into new affective terrain. Woong Nam’s formulation, “accumulating vulnerable forms to build structure and reflect the world back,” captures the core principle of this emotional geography: relational vulnerability. The scraps of fabric that tangle and separate on the *geolgae* stand in for the emotions and experiences of different individuals, testing the possibility of an affective community. Rain, sunset, and wind are cast not as scenic elements but as co-subjects that respond to human feeling, extending into the expanded natural world the paradoxical serenity that the burning duck boat possessed in the 2011 work *Nobody Listen to My Sorrow* (fig. 1). The materiality of the *geolgae-geurim* itself—with its tendency to flutter in the wind and interact with its surroundings—connects to the concept of a *tactile topography* in which the viewer encounters the painting not merely as visual representation but as a being that exchanges emotion and shares the same space. Lee’s landscapes, in this respect, function as maps of emotional-geography: sites where the isolated affects of contemporary life meet nature, are healed, and expand outward. This is the spatial extension of the defacialization strategy discussed earlier: an artistic practice in which the subject, having departed from prescribed identity, seeks a new relational network with the world.

Fig. 14
We Stayed Until Nightfall, 2025

Fig. 15
We Dance in the Rain at Dawn, 2025-2026

V. Queer Spatiotemporality: The Temporality of Juxtaposition and the Topography of Intimacy

Any topographical account of the expansion from figure to landscape in Woosung Lee’s work would be incomplete without addressing the queer sensibility and spatiotemporality that runs through it. His practice moves beyond figurative painting or the documentation of relationships to construct what may be called *queer spatiotemporality*, in which identity, desire, and intimacy flow as sub-currents troubling traditional binaries: interior and exterior, private and public, nature and culture. Gallery Hyundai’s official announcement states explicitly that Lee “has broadly surveyed everyday life through themes such as youth, solidarity, humor, travel, family, and queer romance.” Queer sensibility is not incidental to the work. It is one of the essential coordinates for reading it.

This queer relationality manifests with clarity in the treatment of time and memory. At the core of Lee’s method is temporal distancing: collecting past private experiences and, after an interval of months or even years, reconstituting them before transferring them to canvas. Seung-oh Shin explains: “According to the artist, the temporal gap between the moments of collection, seleciton, and contemplation can range between a few months to several years. His practice, therefore, is not spontaneous. And although he posts drawings that resemble *manhwa* on social media to communicate with his audience, this too proceeds with a delay rather than in real time. This temporal distancing creates a period of maturation in which the subjects the audience see in the work, however intensely personal, are transformed into something that transcends the merely personal.”[39]

This amounts to a form of resistance against the linear, productivity, future-oriented *heteronormative temporality* of birth, growth, marriage, reproduction, and inheritance.[40] Lee fragments time, summons past moments into the present, and creates new emotional combinations from them. It resonates with the “time of juxtaposition” concept of queer temporality.[41] The most vivid realization of this temporality was the 45-meter strip of drawings arranged across the exhibition space in the 2017 show *Quizás, Quizás, Quizás* at Amado Art Space. Sung Woo Kim’s in-depth analysis is worth quoting at length. “A series of drawings traverses the partitioned exhibition space at will. Physical supports constructed running along the interior walls or dividing the space bind numerous drawings into a single strip, conferring upon them a certain directionality and kinetic quality. The enforced path of movement and line of sight prevent the eye from taking in all the drawings in the space at once, and thus do not permit the image before the viewer to be fixed as a single entity in relation to the space. The strip, approximately 20 centimeters wide and installed at eye level, dismantles spatial concepts of vertical and horizontal, compelling the viewer to comprehend the space as a distance of 45 meters. The drawings arranged on this structure do not present themselves as snapshots that have snagged and frozen an instant of passing time; instead, they ceaselessly demand the viewer’s physical act of walking, producing a single linear flow. Because they cannot be apprehended by a suspended sense of arrested space-time, a sort of narrative structure takes shape. Yet the drawings, which cross the exhibition space without indicating a beginning or an end, demand of each viewer an individual narrative carried in their own rhythm and stride.”[42]

The non-linear narrative structure dismantles fixed identity and the singular narrative of truth, proposing instead an open field in which each subject composes relationships at their own pace. Sung woo Kim addresses the exhibition title as well: “The title *Quizás, Quizás, Quizás* is borrowed from a song whose lyrics describe a yearning for love yet failing to receive a clear answer from the beloved. Without revealing the substance of the desired object, a hollow sentiment of reaching yet being unable to touch, of wanting yet remaining unfulfilled, underlies the exhibition. Three keywords—*night,*

memory, and *steps*— orbit one another, expanding fragments of memory into a single narrative and, from there, into each viewer's own story. *Night*, with its poetic suggestiveness, becomes a space of negative capability; its depth and breadth are impossible to measure, and for that very reason, it can be filled with anything."[43] The full-stride into landscape endows this queer spatiotemporality with a new dimension: a *topography of intimacy*. The title *Hot Wind* (2024)(fig. 16) directly invokes tactile warmth while serving simultaneously as a metaphor for passion and longing. Cloudlike quilting and mirror fragments physically transform the surface of the canvas, converting the flatness of painting into what aspires to be a touchable surface. This is a formal exploration of queer intimacy: the wish for the viewer to move beyond gazing and to be touched by it, to emotionally penetrate it.

These material experiments have grown increasingly refined in his 2024-2025 body of work. The use of quilting and mirrors tested in *Hot Wind* (2024)(fig. 16) appears to converge in subsequent works toward more traditional media—canvas and acrylic or acrylic gouache—yet the results gained from those experiments have been absorbed into a new sensory approach to landscape. In *What If I Painted This City in Pink and Gold?* (2025)(fig. 17), bold use of color achieves a sensory immediacy not previously seen in Lee's work, while in *The Sunbathers* (2025)(fig. 18), the relationship between the sea and the figures explores a new possibility of post-anthropocentric intimacy.

Fig. 16
Hot Wind, 2024

Fig. 17
What If I Painted This City in Pink and Gold?, 2025

Fig. 18
The Sunbathers, 2025

VI. The Conditions of Post-Minjung Art:
The Reorganization of the East Asian Art Field and the Reconstitution of Identity

The genealogical significance of Woosung Lee's practice comes into full relief only when the broader institutional and historical context is taken into account. During the heyday of Minjung Art in the 1980s, the Korean art field was organized as sites of resistance against the military regime, in alternative spaces, universities, and workplaces. Democratization in the 1990s, globalization, and the expansion of neoliberal cultural policy from the 2000s onward brought rapid institutionalization and commercialization. The legacy of Minjung Art was inherited along two opposing lines. Major institutions such as the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art recognized its historical value but effectively embalmed it as art-historical heritage. Commercial galleries, meanwhile, repackaged it as a consumer good of retro sensibility. Against this backdrop, Lee's approach offers an intriguing third path. As Gallery Hyundai's statement indicates, the artist "employs the figurative depiction methods of Minjung Art, expressed through his distinctive mode of picture-making, humor, and cartoon-inflected style," while his "bright and buoyant palette of everyday images" departs "from revolutionary pathos and collective subjectivity to reveal a we that is loosely yet persistently connected."

This is not to deny the political character of Minjung Art, but an effort to expand the domain of the political itself: a transition from the macropolitics of direct resistance to state power toward a micropolitics operating in the realm of everyday relationships and affect. The transition sharpens when set against analogous currents elsewhere in East Asia. In China from the 1990s onward, Political Pop and Cynical Realism appropriated the forms of Socialist Realism while replacing their content with irony and cynicism.[44] In Japan, Neo-Nihon line of artists reinterpreted traditional painting styles and infused them with contemporary sensibility.[45] In Taiwan, the tensions between regional identity

Fig. 19
The Sea and Sun Were Looking After Me, 2025

and globalism were explored persistently amid debates over "Taiwan consciousness."[46]

What distinguishes Lee from all of these cases is a fundamental trust in relationality. Political cynicism and historical irony are largely absent from his practice. In their place we find affectionate records of relationships that persist despite frustration and failure. Seung-Oh Shin analyzes this aesthetics of relationality through the dialectic of "I" and "you".

> "For Woosung Lee, the method of depicting individual people is to re-record what has passed from the vantage of the present. Each person lives with their own temperament and thoughts, shaped by the environment and experiences they have undergone. Yet what the advent of the online world has changed in our anonymized modern society is the attitude of wanting to communicate with anyone and everyone by displaying one's own uniqueness. This overheated phenomenon, however, produces things that are unstable and uncertain, their authenticity nearly impossible to discern. Paradoxically, in a world brimming with platforms for self-expression, the individual grows ever more faint."[47]

Lee's practice seeks alternatives within these conditions. As Seung-Oh Shin continues: "The artist mingles with his subjects in reality and sees the world alongside them, yet at the same time discovers that, once that fleeting time has passed, it is no longer the world of tangible substance. And while ruminating on the past, another reality suddenly becomes discernible and visible in the present, and he realizes that everything there is newly vibrant and replete in itself, and he records that in his work. This is the manner of his record-making of the present, and at its center lie 'I' and 'you,' and 'we.'"[48]

The title of the new work *The Sea and Sun Were Looking After Me* (2025)(fig. 19) intimates the stakes: connection that remains possible even in an era of isolation. Seung-Oh Shin summarizes: "In his work, rather than a solitary figure, two or more individuals tend to appear, and even in scenes where a figure stands alone, the narrative title accompanies someone else. That title is ultimately the artist himself. For Lee, what must precede any depiction of the world is the depiction of the self. And that leads inevitably to a story about relationships formed through the bonds between individuals. He shows tied hands or a cord binding 'I' and the 'other.' Thus, 'I' and 'we' are both one and separate; they cannot be understood as wholly discrete. The others referred to as 'we' or 'you' are not mere strangers; they may be another version of the self."

VII. Place as Affect:
Emotional Geography and the Reorganization of East Asian Structures of Feeling

Another defining feature of Woosung Lee's new body of work is its attachment to specific place. The work list for the 2026 exhibition includes a litany of Korean locations: Mokpo, Jumunjin, Gangneung, Suncheon, Odaesan, Gyeongpo Beach, Ttukseom Resort. These are not mere settings. They are sites of emotional geography, where personal memory and collective sentiment are superimposed. As the Hakgojae Gallery exhibition preface notes, "contemporary signs are layered onto paintings of historical places, unfolding new stories not previously seen."[50] Place has become central to the practice.

This approach connects to a concept of placeness that has carried particular weight in East Asian visual discourse. In *Climate and Culture* (trans. from *Fūdo*), the Japanese philosopher Tetsurō Watsuji (和辻哲郎) argued that human existence is always formed within specific climatic and environmental conditions.[51] The Taiwanese-American scholar David Der-wei Wang (王德威) theorized, through the concept of native soil (xiangtu, 鄉土), the attachment to traditional modes of life vanishing in the process of modernization.[52] In Korea, scholars such as Won-sik Choe and Nak-chung Paik explored the specificity of national sensibility through the concept of "Korean structures of feeling."[53] Lee's work shares certain points of contact with all of these discussions while sidestepping the essentialist trap of national specificity. His places are located within the borders of the Korean nation-state, yet the emotions experienced there are universally resonant. In the title *We Held Each Other Beneath the Waterfall at Dawn* (2025-2026)(fig. 9), the temporality produced by dawn generates an emotion closer to the universal tension between human finitude and the permanence of place than to anything specifically Korean. Woong Nam analyzes this mode of place-making with precision: "Beside a macro-historical landscape surveyed from afar, he casually paints in a landscape of encountering a colleague, or a face and place from memory not too distant. Landscape is privately processed. Relationships are grounded in memory, yet memory flutters like a weightless skin. Public events and landscapes, such as marches and rallies, are filtered through the artist's gaze, and the weight of meaning and narrative is stripped away. Light landscapes drawn on a light medium suggest, rather than volatilizing, the possibility of being processed and connected at any moment."[54]

More crucial still is that Lee's landscapes always carry what may be called a relational placeness. They are not spaces of the sublime in which a solitary individual confronts nature; they are experienced within relationships to others. Titles such as *Two Figures Down the Alley* (2024-2026)(fig. 20) and *You Will Find Me at Jongno 3-ga Station Exit 5* (2024-2026)(fig. 21) hint that the place exists in order to meet someone, in order to walk alongside someone. This relational placeness connects to the geographer Doreen Massey's concept of a "progressive sense of place," which redefines place not as a fixed boundary or essence but as a meeting ground where social relations intersect and interact.[55]

Lee's alleyways, bus stops, and subway exits are relational places in precisely this sense. They carry no essential Koreanness. They function as open fields where diverse subjects pass, encounter, and wait for one another. Seung-Oh Shin explains: "In works such as *Jaehoon, Waiting for a Bus in Sinchon* (2017)(fig. 22), *While Having a Cup of Coffee with Yoonjung* (2017)(fig. 23), and *Yeojin, Please Light Up the Flashlight on Your Phone* (2017)(fig. 24), the artist paints actual people around him, yet audiences have no difficulty appreciating the work whether or not they know those individuals. Everyone has friends and has likely had similar experiences. You need only summon your own lost memories and recollections."[56]

For Lee, place is not a geographic coordinate but an affective field where emotion, memory, and relationship crystallize. The Mokpo, Gangneung, and Suncheon on his canvases are not attempts to represent some essential Koreanness residing beyond their place-names. They are reconstituted as relational spaces, experienced within a meeting, a parting, or the act of waiting. His work converts the ontological weight of Watsuji's climate and culture (*fūdo*) into a relational lightness and replaces the melancholy of loss embedded in Der-wei Wang's xiangtu discourse with the present-tense possibility of connection through personal history.

Fig. 20
Two Figures Down the Alley, 2024-2026

Fig. 21
You Will Find Me at Jongno 3-ga Station Exit 5, 2024-2026

Fig. 22
Jaehoon, Waiting for a Bus in Sinchon, 2017

Fig. 23
While Having a Cup of Coffee with Yoonjung, 2017

Fig. 24
Yeojin, Please Light Up the Flashlight on Your Phone, 2017

This is the crux of Lee's variation: the transposition of the macro discourse of national sentiment into the micro emotional geography of personal intimacy. It is what enables his landscapes to function not merely as pictures but as topographies of relationship. The alleyways, bus stops, and subway exits he has painted are, for some viewers, places where lost memories are summoned. For others, they remain liminal spaces holding the possibility of an encounter that has not yet arrived.

VIII. The Allegory of Materiality: Media Experimentation and the Haptic Turn

In Woosung Lee's practice, the choice of medium carries political significance that extends beyond formal experimentation. The water-based paint and fabric he chose for the 2015 street performance, inexpensive and portable, were an expression of the practical attitude of resistance to the commodifying logic of the art market. This attitude inherits the Minjung Art tradition of rejecting art's elitism through the use of cheap materials, while generating an aesthetic meaning that surpasses mere economic efficiency.

What is particularly noteworthy is the risk of damage he accepted by choosing the method of folding his paintings during the 2015 performance. As quoted earlier, transporting the paintings folded meant he had to "risk damage such as crease marks remaining on the surface and the paint cracking." Yet, by choosing to fold rather than roll them, he opted for "a modest painting that fully retains the traces and damage incurred during transit."[57] This decision reveals an attitude that prioritizes the authenticity of the process over the physical integrity of the work. In subsequent works, this media experimentation evolves in various ways.

The patchwork technique used in *Tumbling Around* (2023)(fig. 7) and *The Sunset and Friends* (2023)(fig. 11) integrates and absorbs, from the outset, the very creases and marks of damage that had previously been a byproduct of folding, as compositional elements. As Jee Young Maeng explains, "when paint is applied to the multi-pieced fabric, the seams disappear beneath the image. Only on the reverse side of the painting can one glimpse the invisible traces of time."[58] This technique physically materializes invisible relationality and temporality.

The quilting and mirror fragments introduced in *Hot Wind* (2024)(fig. 16) push the experimentation further. Quilting physically deforms the fabric surface, disrupting the illusionism of the painted image and converting the painting from a visual object into a tactile one. Mirrors fold the viewer's own figure into the canvas, dissolving the boundary between subject and object, inside and outside. Together, these experiments declare that painting is not mere representation but a field of material and sensory negotiation with the world.

Woong Nam theorizes Lee's media experimentation through the concept of "the world of membranes (*pimak*)." "The specific faces of others drawn on the membrane foreshadow that the works that follow are cross-sections of a world where concrete lives intersect, a single world constructed by membranes. The viewer, maintaining a loose tension so as not to brush against the *geolgae*, will pace the exhibition space beneath the gaze of figures rendered larger than life-size, and this series of acts appears to be an attempt to expand the reach of the work by connecting a specific community, which maintains

intimacy while keeping its distance, to the macroscopic world."[59]

Woong Nam's analysis of the relationship between temporality and materiality in Lee's work is equally precise: "The canvas compresses three-dimensional space into flatness, and the narrative context is stripped away, yielding a response to, and an intervention in, the world's incongruities and maladjustments, and at times a technique for adaptation. Yet matching one's breathing to the speed of the world necessitates the work of processing and compressing the landscape through the artist's own breath. Under a condition where the volume of information exceeds consciousness, the artist processes and stages disparate memories and times, conferring a sensory rhythm upon them. Paintings are traces on a flat surface where imagination and desire have been projected through the fingertips."[60]

Lee's media experimentation, in the end, is a practice of converting materiality itself into allegory. Fabric, water-based paint, patchwork, quilting, mirrors: these are not mere materials but ontological devices that determine the manner of relating to the world. The damage incurred through folding refuses the illusion of perfect representation while inscribing the passage of time and movement onto the painting's body. Patchwork seams vanish beneath the image on the surface yet remain visible on the reverse, materializing the dialectic between what is seen and what is concealed in any relationship. Quilting dismantles the painting's flatness and confers a tactile depth, converting what was an object of gaze into an object of touch.

Mirrors invite the viewer into the canvas, dissolving the boundary between painting and world, subject and object. All of these experiments are material embodiments of what Woong Nam has termed "the world of membranes": a mode of being that is vulnerable yet open to the world. For Lee, the materiality of painting is no longer a matter of form. It is an allegorical surface upon which relationship and time, memory and emotion, are condensed. His painting exists as an open practice, ceaselessly negotiating with the world upon that surface.

Fig. 25
We Are About to Start the March, 2025

Fig. 26
We Were There in Silence on the Verge of a New Beginning, 2024-2026

IX. Coda: The Reinvention of Genealogy and an Open Ending

Woosung Lee's solo exhibition at Gallery Hyundai in 2026 will mark an important milestone. The artist's own words, quoted in the Gallery Hyundai announcement, offer a compressed articulation of his philosophy:

> "To me, everything about a person is expression and message. My work is to transfer that into painting. What matters is that we are living in the same time. That is the thread that connects us. I wish you happiness and health. I hope these images, drawn on thin fabric, may reach your heart. The paintings still feel too small to contain all that I have seen."[61]

What this confession reveals is that the practice originates not in aesthetic inquiry alone but in a desire for connection. The 2026 exhibition will be the site where the dialectical synthesis of figure and landscape is manifested in concentrated form. As titles such as *We Talked and Talked, and Laughed and Laughed Until Dawn* (2026)(fig. 8), *We Are About to Start the March* (2025)(fig. 25), and *We Were There in Silence on the Verge of a New Beginning* (2024-2026)(fig. 26) intimate, the exhibition constructs a new type of narrative at the point where personal relationality and expanded landscape converge. It is no longer the outcry of collective resistance, yet neither is it confined to the interior of an isolated individual. It is both consolation and proposition for contemporaries still searching for a way to remain together.

Lee's canvases are a record of a process: departing from the prison of identity prescribed by the machine of faciality, seeking a new relational network through the juxtaposition of queer temporality and the expansion of emotional geography. His landscapes convert Watsuji's ontological *fūdo* into relational place and reconstitute Der-wei Wang's mourned *xiangtu* into a present-tense space of encounter. His *geolgae-geurim*, which "use instability as their engine" to pursue the world, dissolve the heavy legacy of Minjung Art into the lightness of personal daily life, yet that lightness does not easily volatilize. The world of membranes, where vulnerable scraps of fabric press against, tangle with, and separate from one another, may be the most precise figure we have for the conditions of affective community in our time: vulnerable yet open to the world, isolated yet still dreaming of connection.

Woosung Lee's practice is, finally, a demonstration of what becomes possible when Korean contemporary art enters into genuine dialogue with its own legacies rather than embalming or discarding them. It is also, and perhaps more importantly, a response to questions that no single national tradition can answer alone: how regional specificity translates into global resonance; how political commitment survives the passage into aesthetic autonomy; how the weight of collective inheritance can be carried in a single, personal voice.

Through his genealogical reworking of Minjung Art, Lee has not revived a tradition so much as changed the conditions under which it can be heard. The result is a painting practice in which Korean structures of feeling and the discourse of global aesthetics generate something neither could produce on its own.

All of this remains an unfolding journey. The 2026 Gallery Hyundai exhibition will not deliver conclusions, but pose new questions, and the most pressing of them are deceptively simple: Where does the dialectic of figure and landscape go from here? How will the contours of we be redrawn? And those paintings, drawn on thin fabric and carried folded against the artist's body: will they reach us? The questions are Lee's. Holding them is ours.

1.
Seung-Oh Shin, “A Story of I and You” essay, Cheongju Art Studio, 2017, p. 2.

2.
Jee Young Maeng, “Now, People,” in *Come, Sit with Me*, Hakgojae Gallery exhibition catalog, 2023, p. 6. In her 2023 critique, Jee Young Maeng analyzed Lee’s figure paintings as the product of “the artist’s tireless effort to reveal the most luminous aspect of each figure through carefully calibrated omission and focus.”

3.
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 167.

4.
The nativist literature debate (*xiangtu wenxue lunzhan*) that unfolded in Taiwan from April 1977 through early the following year was an arena of ideological confrontation expressed through literary form. It also constituted the second major intellectual struggle waged under the banner of *xiangtu* (native soil) in Taiwan. In the first nativist literature debate, sparked in the 1930s, xiangtu referred to colonial-era Taiwan, and the primary target of contention was Japanese imperial colonial power. By contrast, the 1977 debate revolved around three ideological axes: anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, and nationalism. The debate directly challenged the anti-communist and pro-American line espoused by the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) regime.

5.
The Japanese angura (アングラ, underground) theater movement of the 1960s through the 1980s was an avant-garde theatrical movement that grew amid the spread of left-wing student activism triggered by the Anpo struggle (*Anpo tōsō*, 安保闘争) against the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Rejecting both the Western-style realism of the established *shingeki* (新劇, “new theater”) and the ideological control of the Japanese Communist Party, the movement staged experimental performances in non-traditional spaces such as tents and streets. Angura placed political messages that questioned “the power of the state apparatus” at its core, and sought to critique Japan’s imperialist past by reconstructing collective memory and nostalgia for the prewar period (1910–1945), an era its practitioners had not themselves lived through.

6.
The practice of China’s New Generation Sculpture (*xinshengdai diaosu*, 新生代雕塑), or new-generation sculptors, emerged in the context of the country’s rapid incorporation into a capitalist market economy from the 1990s onward and the attendant social transformations. During this period, the sculpture world accelerated its “de-Sinicization” and commercialization through the indiscriminate emulation of “internationalized” Western contemporary art themes (political art, feminism, and so on), which paradoxically came at the expense of “individual bodily experience.” Against this backdrop, sculptors trained at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, including Liu Wei (劉威), Li Zhanyang (李占洋), and Jiao Xingtao (焦興濤), developed work that expressed urban culture and sought a new sculptural language. Their practice holds significance in that it moved beyond established political themes and formalist experimentation to focus closely on the everyday lives and psychological states of their contemporaries.

7.
Hakgojae Gallery, *Woosung Lee: My Dear*, press release, December 6, 2017, http://hakgojae.com/attach/artist_release/082821900151270137 3.pdf.

8.
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 167.

9.
GALLERY HYUNDAI, “Woosung Lee: Joins Gallery Hyundai,” May 17, 2025, https://mailings.artlogic.net/readonline/7a2861e8b5f340df96265fd85bdae4b5.

10.
Sunghee Lee, “Paintings in Circular Motion,” in *Pulling from the Front, Pushing from Behind*, Art Space Pool exhibition catalog, 2015, p. 41.

11.
The Diaoyutai movement (Baodiao yundong, 保釣運動) in 1970s–80s Taiwan was a nationalist social movement that arose in Taiwan in defense of sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands (釣魚臺列嶼; known in Japanese as the Senkaku Islands), a territory disputed with Japan. The movement extended beyond a mere territorial dispute, provoking criticism of the ruling KMT regime’s anti-communist and pro-American line and raising questions about a suppressed national identity. It exerted a significant influence on Taiwan’s democratization and nativization movements. In this regard, the Diaoyutai movement shared certain problematics with other resistant discourses in East Asia that opposed established power and state-driven modernization projects while seeking alternative subjectivities, much like Korea’s Minjung Art and Japan’s angura movement. It subsequently influenced Taiwan’s alternative-space movement of the late 1980s through the 1990s, a cultural and artistic movement that sought to establish independent exhibition spaces and pursue experimental artistic activity in opposition to the institutional art world and commercial galleries.

12.
Sunghee Lee, ibid., p. 41.

13.
Ibid., p. 42.

14.
Ibid., p. 42.

15.
Seung-Oh Shin, op. cit., p. 2.

16.
GALLERY HYUNDAI, “Woosung Lee: Joins Gallery Hyundai.”

17.
On China’s New Generation painters, see Gao Minglu, The *‘85 Movement: The Dawn of Chinese Contemporary Art* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2006). On the relationship between Murakami Takashi and otaku culture, see Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

18.
Woong Nam, “Reconstructing the World of Coating,” in *Woosung Lee: My Dear*, Hakgojae Gallery press release, December 6, 2017, p. 9.

19.
Ibid., p. 1.

20.
Woosung Lee, “Artist’s Notes”, 2017.

21.
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 181.

22.
Jee Young Maeng, op. cit., p. 3.

23.
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 181.

24.
Jee Young Maeng, op. cit., p. 3.

25.
Ibid., p. 3.

26.
Ibid., p. 3.

27.
Ibid., p. 3.

28.
Ibid., p. 3.

29.
Seung-Oh Shin, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

30.
On the way Takahata employed diverse visual registers in Pom Poko to make heterogeneous temporalities coexist within a single frame (tradition and modernity, myth and reality), Suzuki Katsuo (2019) has proposed the concept of a “sliding worldview” (*suraidingu sekaikan*). Suzuki Katsuo, “The Directorial Style of Takahata Isao: Aesthetics of Landscape in Animation,” in Takahata Isao Ten (Tokyo: NHK Promotion, 2019), pp. 232–236.

31.
Williams, Idris Kellermann, “Metamorphosis in Pom Poko (1994),” *animationstudies 2.0*, 2024.

32.
Jee Young Maeng, op. cit., p. 6.

33.
On the representation of fiber and feminized labor in Chinese contemporary art, see Wu Hung, *Contemporary Chinese Art: A History, 1970s–2000s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014). On the work of Korean artist Kimsooja, see Youngna Kim, *Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea: Tradition, Modernity, and Identity* (Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym, 2005).

34.
Hakgojae Gallery, *Woosung Lee: Come Sit with Me*, press release, August 9, 2023, p. 4.

35.
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 190.

36.
On Korean Dansaekhwa, see Kim, *Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea*. On the Chinese shanshu (landscape painting) tradition and its modern inheritance, see David Der-wei Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

37.
Sunghee Lee, op. cit., p. 42.

38.
Woong Nam, op. cit., p. 8.

39.
Shin Seung-Oh, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

40.
Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 6.

41.
Carolyn Dinshaw et al., “Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 13*, no. 2–3 (2007): 177–195.

42.
Sung Woo Kim, “*Quizás, Quizás, Quizás*,” exhibition essay, Amado Art Space, 2017, p. 2.

43.
Ibid., p. 2.

44.
See Gao, *The ‘85 Movement*.

45.
See Munroe, *Japanese Art After 1945*.

46.
See Chen Kuan-Hsing, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

47.
Seung-Oh Shin, op. cit., p. 2.

48.
Ibid., p. 2.

49.
Ibid., pp. 2–3.

50.
Hakgojae Gallery, see above press release.

51.
Watsuji *Tetsurō, Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study* (*Fūdo*, 風土), trans. Seo Dong-eun (Seoul: Philosophic, 2018), pp. 52–55.

52.
On Wang Der-wei’s concept of *xiangtu*, see David Der-wei Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 89–94.

53.
Paik Nak-chung, *National Literature and World Literature* (Seoul: Changbi, 1978); Choe Won-sik, *The Genealogy and Perception of Korean Nationalism* (Seoul: Changbi, 2015).

54.
Woong Nam, op. cit., p. 5.

55.
Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 155.

56.
Shin Seung-Oh, op. cit., p. 2.

57.
Sunghee Lee, op. cit., p. 42.

58.
Jee Young Maeng, op. cit., p. 6.

59.
Woong Nam, op. cit., p. 7.

60.
Ibid., p. 4.

61.
“Woosung Lee: Joins Gallery Hyundai.”