

## Press Release

Title	[Nam June Paik Art Center] Special exhibition <i>The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes</i> on view online	
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### [Nam June Paik Art Center] Special exhibition

#### *The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes* on view online



#### ■ Overview

- **Exhibition Title:** *The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes*
- **Period:** February 27, 2020 - June 28, 2020
- **\*The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes will be available for online viewing at [njpartcenter.kr](http://njpartcenter.kr) from April 8, 2020.**
- **\*Nam June Paik Art Center has temporarily closed until further notice to reduce the risk of the COVID-19.**
- **Venue:** Nam June Paik Art Center 2F
- **Artists:** Woojin Kim, Lawrence Lek, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Jaye Moon, Angelica Mesiti, Ji Hye Yeom, Juho Lee & Juseung Lee, Jesse Chun
- **Curator:** Yoonseo Kim
- **Organized and Hosted by** Nam June Paik Art Center, Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation
- **Supported by** Munhakdongne, Sandoll Cloud

## ■ Introduction

Nam June Paik Art Center unveils its first special exhibition in 2020 titled *The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes* online at njpartcenter.kr from April 8, 2020. This exhibition was scheduled to open on February 27, but Nam June Paik Art Center has temporarily closed from February 24 to reduce the risk of the COVID-19. Now, Nam June Paik Art Center opens the exhibition to the public ONLINE with a guided tour of the curator, you will see the exhibition at home.

*The Future of Silence: When your tongue vanishes* examines language as spoken and written, as body and mind, as the corporeal and the conceptual, and as systems and cultures, based on the writer Kim Aeran's novel of the same title. It also reveals the hierarchy and alienation created by the dominant language and the power of language directly connected to human rights as a tool for survival. The exhibition evokes these issues that permeate our everyday life, and thereby sheds new light on the reality and diversity of language, invisible but present.

The eight artists focus on an endangered language with fewer users or, on the contrary, raise a question about the power of a certain dominant language and give new status to diverse languages. Furthermore, they emphasize that non-verbal communication also has specific forms, rhythms and voices. In this way, they prove the existence of the community using such languages. Their attempts to look into the change of language and attitudes towards life, interlinked with technological advancements, show the prejudice and hatred hidden in our mind, the bright and dark sides of polarization prevalent in the whole civilized society. "Any media study should start with the languages" said Nam June Paik. From his experience of living in Korea, Japan, Germany and America, he could see how the power system of language controls human bodies and thoughts.

"Who am I and what will I be like?" Starting from the question of a tongue asking its own whereabouts, the exhibition ultimately seeks to recognize the existence that is different from oneself. Do our anxieties really come from other beings, other species and other languages? Would the anxieties be dispelled if we had only one tongue left in the future? We hope this exhibition will provide you with an opportunity to meet with a different beings of the world in the landscape of vanishing languages.

## ■ Participating Artists and works

### 1. Jaye Moon, *The Wizard of Oz*, 2020

lego, soho bricks, 358x307cm, commissioned by Nam June Paik Art Center



Jaye Moon created a new work, inspired by Paik's insight to break the boundaries of difference based on digital networks. Moon's work can be experienced both visually and tactilely by turning the movie's Korean script into Braille with approximately 50,000 Lego and Soho bricks. This piece can look like a colorful painting and serve as a subtitle to read with fingertips for some people at the same time.

### 2. Juho Lee & Juseung Lee, *Two Different Eyes*, 2020

single-channel video, 10min 50sec, commissioned by Nam June Paik Art Center



*Two Different Eyes* is a documentary about a visual impairment caused by an imbalance of vision in both eyes and the two eyes looking at it. During his school days, Juseung Lee experienced a society where being different - for example, "his father always made an enlarged copy of the textbook" or "he was able to read the copied textbook, which was much bigger than a desk, by keeping his eyes very close to the paper - was considered unusual or was subject to discrimination and ridicule. Meanwhile, while following his dream to be an artist, he faces the

frame that he has made a sublime achievement to "overcome" an obstacle. Through this short documentary, the two brothers pose a question between the two eyes and the two perspectives on the basis of their experiences.

### 3. Jesse Chun, *enunciating silence and*, 2019

graphite, silicone, wood, paint, steel trestles, dimensions variable



*enunciating silence and* is an installation work using children's English educational toys consisting of English alphabet letters. Chun uses these alphabet toys as a mold to cast sculptures instead of its original educational use. The artist manipulates the fixed, English-alphabetic forms into soft and abstract silicone sculptures, which are part of the installation, by pouring a liquid agent into alphabet molds. These silicone forms are further abstracted through folding, tucking and dangling gestures that mimic the shapes of our body parts and tongue. This work is based on the artist's experience and exploration of the corporeal and incorporeal ramifications of the English language, the most widely used and dominant language in the world, particularly on non-native speakers.

### 4. Lawrence Lek, *Geomancer*, 2017

single-channel HD video, 48min 15sec, courtesy of the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London.



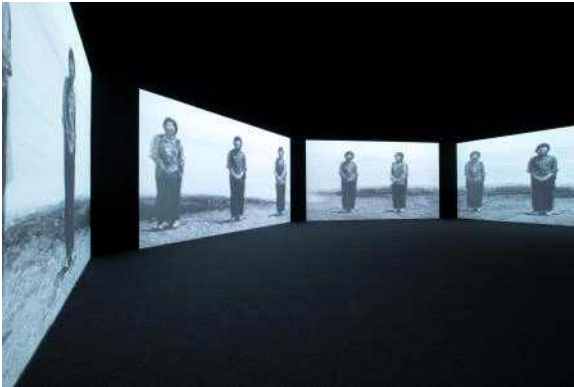
This work is a story about 'Geomancer'(nickname: Geo), an AI that dreams to be an artist, and its birth and extinction. Geo was created in 2045 in Singapore and has reconnoitered the South China Sea. In 2065, it comes down to Earth after finishing its original military activities in pursuit of its artistic vision. After arriving on Earth, Geo discovers a longstanding tension between humans and machines due to new forms of artificial intelligence that outperform human beings. Eventually, the barrier that humans built to differentiate themselves from AIs was 'art'. Encountering the boundaries set by humans, AIs that have no bodies suffer from mental illness and the loss of identity. Lawrence Lek's video that took motive from James Joyce's autobiographical novel, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"(1916), reflects the impact of the virtual and imagination of the future on our perceptions of reality and attitudes through a fictional scenario.

5. Ji Hye Yeom, *Current Layers : The Manner of a Photoshopping Life*, 2017  
moving image, 12min 16sec



"Click, cut, copy, paste, combine, apply, transform, select, save. Today, this is the way we work, think and exist." *Current Layers : The Manner of a Photoshopping Life* begins with a synthetic voice that introduces computer operating systems following an image of a person sitting in front of an early Macintosh computer. Wavy grids in Photoshop and exciting background music with drum beats guide viewers to the "fast-moving, weightless and invisible" world as if mesmerizing them. The artist translates 'current layers' into a 'golden spike' (an important marker that forms the basis for the division of geological time) representing our faces and features of the time" beyond a literal translation of 'layers of the present time.' A great narrative covering from the beginning of the computer to the death of a person sitting in front of it is a product of the artist's investigation of our way of seeing, hearing, speaking and expressing, connected to the computer operating system.

6. Woojin Kim, *The Perfect Harmony*, 2019  
four-channel HD video, 5min12sec



UNESCO has compiled a list of the world's endangered languages, providing their levels of endangerment. Korea's Jeju language is listed as a critically endangered language. *The Perfect Harmony*, a four-channel video work dealing with the subject of disappearing Jeju dialect, features the transmitters of 'Jeju Haenyeo' songs and the hanyeos of Gujwa-eup, Jeju. "There are no real Hanyeos anymore. Even they will be disappearing soon," as the hanyeos said to the artist during the shoot, this work is grounded in the reality that the forms of life of hanyeo are also disappearing together with the disappearance of the Jeju language. The sounds of the chorus by ten haenyeos gradually vanish, leaving almost one voice only. One can hear the voice of the leader of the chorus with no voices singing along. Soon the leader also disappears and the sound of the waves is left alone with nobody in the background in the end of the video. The song used in the video is part of "Ieodosana" that haenyeos sing while working. Kim does not use subtitles for the disappearing language to highlight that the cultural value and existence interlinked with the very language also disappear when a language disappears, while we do not recognize it in a paradoxical way.

#### 7. Lawrence Abu Hamdan, *Disputed Utterance*, 2019

14 laser-cut dioramas, c-prints mounted on cardboard with wooden cases, 7×10×6 cm  
courtesy of the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut / Hamburg



14 photographs in pairs are the records of 7 real cases resulting from different pronunciations of spoken languages and different interpretations of them. Abu Hamdan deals with 7 stories widely known as cases of disputed utterance, using the technique of 'palatography' utilized to identify utterances in linguistics. Palatography prints specific shapes onto the roof of one's mouth by putting a mixture of charcoal and olive oil on a tongue and pronouncing a word. This technique is used by linguists, language preservationists and speech therapists who, by learning to read these charcoal forms, can see exactly how their subject is pronouncing words. These brief moments of critical misunderstandings and misinterpretations are rendered as mouth-sized palatographic dioramas that prove how a moment of utterance becomes a crime scene.

#### 8. Angelica Mesiti, *The Colour of Saying*, 2015

three-channel HD video, colour, sound, 25min, courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery



*The Color of Saying* is a three-channel video by Angelica Mesiti who has continuously explored the possibilities of non-verbal communication. Mesiti examines various means of communicating and conveying meaning in collaboration with a choir, two percussionists and two dancers. Gestural languages that are the central focus of this work suggest new ways to think about a moving body, music and silence. A set of a monumental staircase-like sculpture built by the artist functions as both stage and seating. While the performances and the relationships between them unfold on three screens in the white space, visitors become the essential elements of creating and expanding storytelling, walking across the screens in the white exhibition hall.

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