

Press Release

Title	Nam June Paik Art Center <i>Tactics</i>	
Inquiry	Curator : Lee Chaeyoung, t. +82-31-201-8542, chaeyoung@njpartcenter.kr PR Manager : Jang Hyojin, t. +82 -31- 201-8552, press@njpartcenter.kr	
Press Release	Attached files or the download link in a email	
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Nam June Paik Art Center *Tactics*



■ Exhibitino Overview

- Title: Tactics
- Period: 2021. 2. 25. ~ 2021. 6. 3.
- Venue: Nam June Paik Art Center Gallery2
- Curator: Lee Chaeyoung (Nam June Paik Art Center Chief Curator)
- Coordinator: Kim Sun Young(Nam June Paik Art Center Curator)
- PR Manager : Jang Hyojin(Nam June Paik Art Center Curator)
- Artists: Gu Minja, Laure Prouvost & Jonas Staal, Song Min Jung, Jun Sojung, Johanna Billing, Bad New Days, Park Sunmin, Park Seungwon
- Hosted and Organized by Nam June Paik Art Center, Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation
- Sponsored by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Supported by Sandoll Cloud

Nam June Paik Art Center Tactics

Humankind is going through an unprecedented experience because of the pandemic. It began in 2020 when the whole people felt that they could freely go around the globe as if it were their own home, which might be the peak of ‘globalization.’ Philosophers and futurologists warn that the pandemic would bring us back to ‘society for survival’ like the primitive times. They also say that wealth inequality would become more polarized in the face of death and affect us undemocratically. It alerts us of the necessity of reminding of the situation where micro-fascism prevails, in which people make a racist or hate speech as if the virus assigned a license to detest them.

In this context, we face the question of how to live ‘together’ seriously, which came from the pit of our stomachs. Individuals and communities would have to grope for new tactics to survive and resist. Those tactics are about monitoring digital surveillance, detecting fake news, fighting the irrational and indiscreet violence caused by hatred, disturbing the capital market more polarized after the virus outbreak, talking to a thing, and recognizing its history. They also mean thinking practically about the coexistence of humankind, nature, and things, tuning daily life in a surveillance system to the rhythm of a festival, and converting the fear of others into the possibility of solidarity and empathy.

The exhibition Tactics contemplates the art and life tactics to respect and consider diversity, by which nature, things, and humankind can coexist. The term ‘tactics’ used in the exhibition is borrowed from the French scholar Michel de Certeau’s concept. He utilizes it to discuss the ‘performativity of the subject,’ a method of practice by which the excluded others resisted concentrated power in everyday life in modern society. The participating artists are making a gap by small physical performances in this wartime-like period. This exhibition tries to observe a movement by which others refuse to be a target of suppression and surveillance and create a crack in the system continuously using little stories. It cherishes the slight hope that it might poke a hole in the solid world with these small artistic practices and look inside of it.



Johanna Billing, *In Purple*, 2019, 00:12:00, HD single-channel video, color, sound
Film production by HER film, Produced by Public Art Agency Sweden, Partners by Mix Dancers, the municipality of Jönköping © Johanna Billing

In Purple is a performance video in which Johanna Billing and a dance community 'Mix Dancers' based in Råslätt, a suburb of Jönköping, Sweden, experimented on the possibility of public choreography. The movie begins with young women carrying large and heavy purple glass sheets. They slowly cross the streets and parks in the city and hand them to young girls. The women move carefully, concentrating on these delicate pieces, not to drop and break them.

In this performance, the 'fragility' caused by the unstable operation of the local women's community 'Mix Dancers' run on a voluntary basis is mingled with the 'expectation' about the continuous operation and the generational shift of 'Mix Dancers,' which has operated for 12 years and received attention as a major local community. The glass sheets are modeled after the windows of the recreation center in Råslätt, in which the practice room of 'Mix Dancers' is located, and the purple is also the color of its studio wall. The architecture in this area is famous for brutalism designed by Lars Stalin. The structures made of concrete blocks have been 'softened' due to painting the surface of the building in pastel colors by Jon Pärson and Lennart Joanson. While the glass sheets are delivered, the colors of the surrounding concrete buildings that the dancers pass by, which are pink, green, and purple, resonate with their movements and mediate the place and the action. The public choreography, which combines a local community, architecture, dance, and a story about generations, is conducted in this way.



Laure Prouvost & Jonas Staal, *Obscure Unions*, 2021, installation, dimensions variable

Photo Credits: Laure Prouvost & Jonas Staal, *Obscure Union*, 2019, installation view at Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada.

Commissioned by Mercer Union, Toronto, 2019, Curated by Julia Paoli, Photo © Jonas Staal

“This Union is not made for humans whole, but for the partialized. For the tentacle and the arm, the wedge and the sign, the branch and leg.”

—“Obscure Union, Declaration”

Obscure Unions is the third chapter in the collaboration between artists Laure Prouvost and Jonas Staal, that was preceded by *The Aube's cure Parle Ment* (KADIST Art Foundation, Paris, 2017) and *Obscure Union* (Mercer Union, Toronto, 2019). The works take the form of sites of assembly conceptualized by Staal in which anthropomorphic entities, plants, arms, branches, tongues, toxins, breasts and signs created by Prouvost gather as political actors.”

After passing through a gate where branches, arms, and plants are mingled, you enter a parallel world. A number of fragmented others are listed there and you stand in the world of ‘Obscure Unions’ while walking on the sticky floor covered with squid ink and listening to whispered words and signs declaring “WE ARE IN UNION WITH YOU” and “BECOMING ALL BECOMING YOU” The artists define the “obscure” as a “relational process” arguing that it “is through unscripted, rogue relations that emerge in assembly between branch and toxin, between tongue and sign, that normative reality is torn and the obscure manifests as a political, transformative force.” The work demands us to reconsider who or what we should be in solidarity with and join the “object-as-comrade” in this union encompassing human and non-human actors.

Production in Korea

Kwon Yongju



Park Sunmin, *All about Trembling 2*, 2018, 00:36:26, single-channel video, color, sound © Sunmin Park

Park Sunmin, *All about Trembling 3*, 2020, 00:08:53, single-channel video, color, sound © Sunmin Park

It does not matter where you start to see the works. Birds sitting on a wire disappear, gather and disappear again. The sunlight gets colored by the sunset and disappears. We gaze at them. We sense the tremble of the wire every time birds sit on it and see that disappeared birds return. The tactic suggested by her work for survival in this era is “silent gaze.” The artist, who presents the experience of seeing the world and herself, guides us to the path to reach the inside of ourselves by gazing silently. She asks whether it is possible to find the essence in “a time that we turn our head and gaze at things that seem meaningless when the fear growing in a rapidly changing world strikes aggressively on the other and the fear bigger than the substance becomes a ghost and sweeps.” What answer do you can find while gazing at birds on a wire and the beautiful stems and leaves of plants which come up with vitality all over Jeju island? We might experience a little change of thought and write a new poem by gazing at animals and plants that exist and live together in this world where we mistakenly think that it solely belongs to human beings and by staring at the environment around us.



Jun Sojung, *La Nave de los Locos (The Ship of Fools)*, 2016, 00:20:50, single-channel video, color, sound, space installation
Produced by the Han Nefkens Foundation © Sojung Jun

La Nave de los Locos (The Ship of Fools) begins with a painting of the same title by Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516). The ship carrying fools, which sails from city to city, arrives at the square in front of the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art with huge waves. The work consists of three parts. One part is about the process that a skateboarder who arrives at the museum riding the waves goes about the streets reconstructing his or her way. Another part is the sequence of reciting phrases in four languages that describe Bosch's painting *La Nave de los Locos (The Ship of Fools)*, which portrays the medieval allegory the ship of fools humorously. The last one is about a blind dancer who listens to the recitation and dances in the dark as if swimming in the water.

"Don't oppress strangers. You, you, yes, you."

"A voyage. a floating territory, yes, it is you, you, you."

The voyage of a skateboarder crossing streets overlaps with strong phrases mixed with the artist's writing and the sentences in the Uruguayan writer Christina Peri Rossi's autobiographical novel *La Nave de los Locos (The Ship of Fools)* that is the motif of the work.

It draws an analogy between a 'ship of fools' and a "ship of refugees." We all are travelers, movers, and strangers. In this work *La Nave de los Locos (The Ship of Fools)*, we watch the process that the skateboarder, who is a stranger and an outsider, redefines the streets by his or her "enunciation." Furthermore, the action is translated and expressed by a gesture. The unfamiliar and dark gesture, we look at his or her inner side, "an intruder, a fugitive."



Bad New Days, *Streaming/Cutting*, 2021, 4-channel live streaming performance, color, sound © Bad New Days

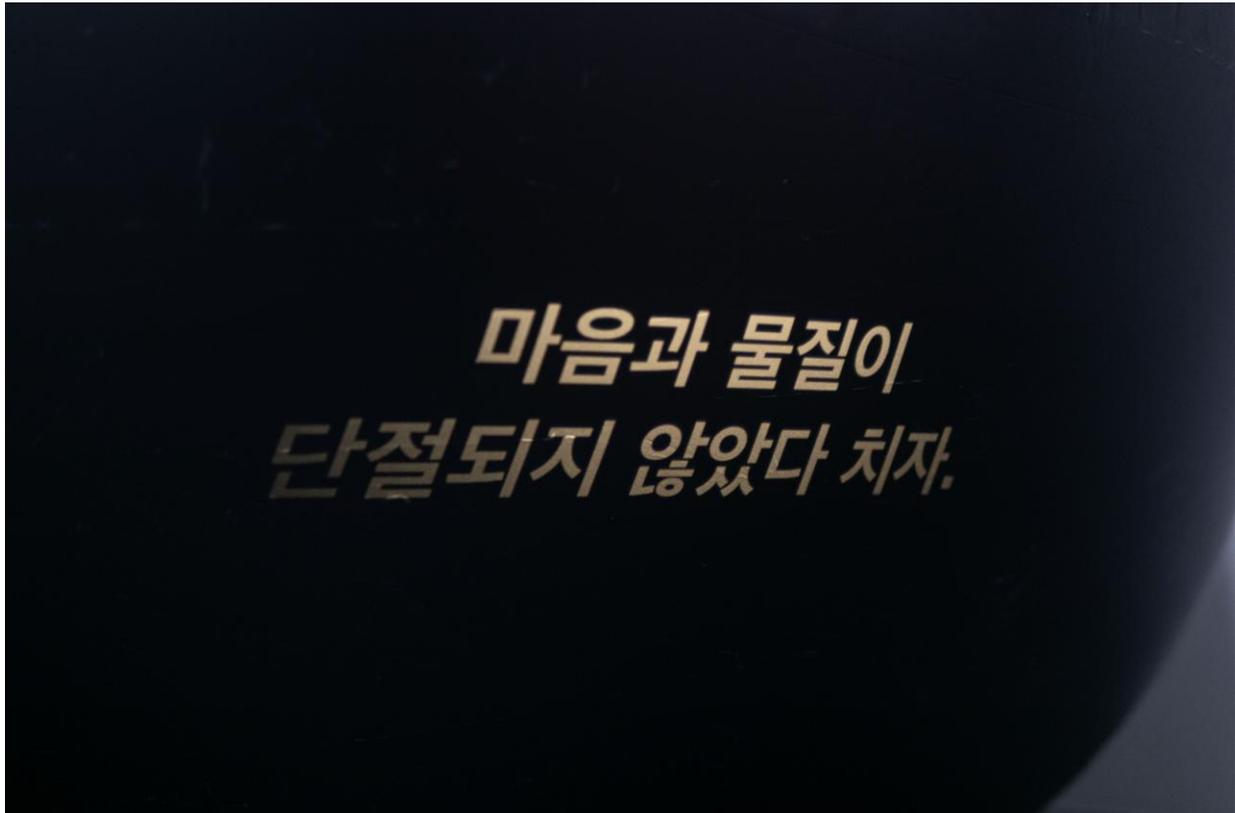
Streaming/Cutting is a recording of a real-time live performance filmed by the five-member artist group 'Bad New Days' while the group was driving a cargo truck along the route that the cargo workers union went through for a strike on its major days of struggle. The artists conducted interviews and research about the process of its 19 years struggle since its organization. They also recorded a journey of its struggles and protests in different regions on the 4th, 8th, 25th, and 30th of March. The screens and monitors of the exhibition hall play a new journey respectively by the artists' live performance during the exhibition period.

The artists borrow the format of 'trucker vlog,' a lorry driver's real-time driving live. *Streaming/Cutting* reorganizes the 'strategy' and 'system' of cities built by the system into the workers' routes, retracing the workers' historical journey in the present. They create a journey of unfamiliar landscapes by overlapping two different time zones, in which they release voice records of the past struggles on the current road scenery.



Park Seungwon, *Macrology*, 2021, 03:23:25, 4K single-channel video, color, sound
Actor Ha Sung Gwang, Filmed by Lee Seongtaek, Recorded by Kim Jinhak © Seungwon Park

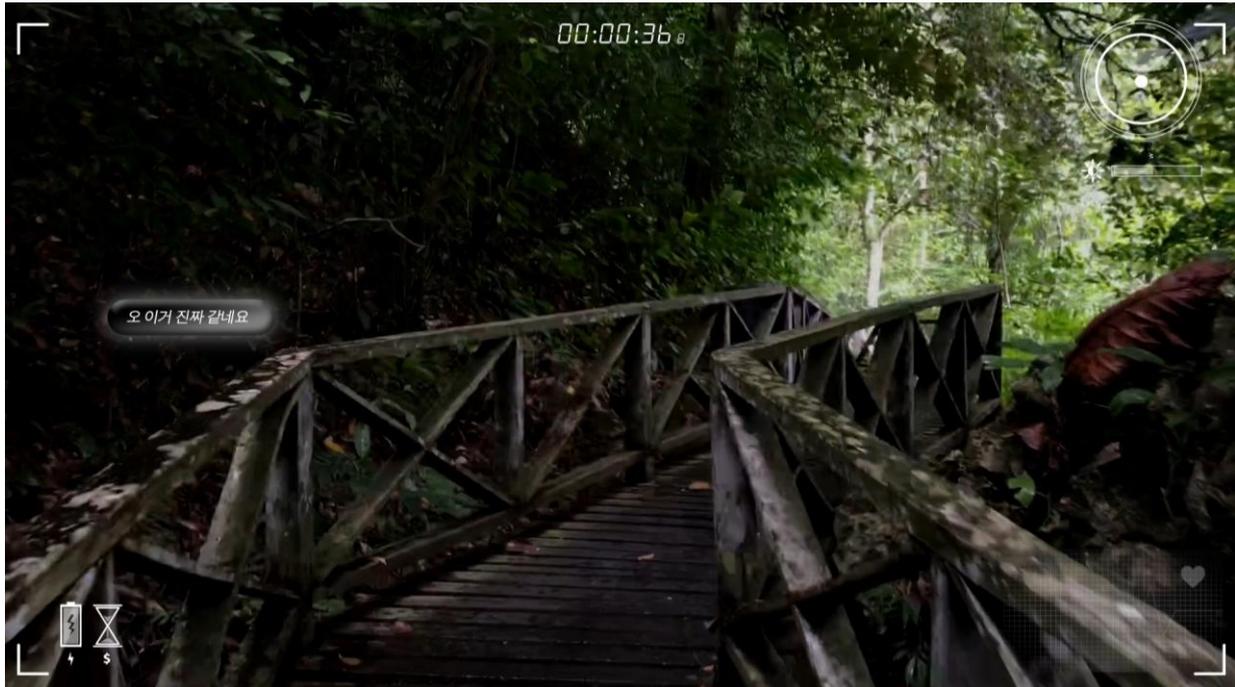
The artist reads Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in front of a parrot toy. This recital that begins in the daytime continues until the sun sets through the window and the toy stops to imitate it because of its battery depletion. The first act of *Macrology* ends with the record of the recital. Afterward, the second act begins at the exhibition hall. The actor reads the play script *Waiting for Godot* to a parrot. The recital, an about three-hour performance, invites visitors to participate in this 'long wait.' Samuel Beckett reportedly wrote this drama under the realization that the basis of life is 'wait,' recalling a memory that he waited for the end of World War II. And the artist began to read this book, which explores existence, waiting for vague answers under the situation where the paradigm of life is changing due to the pandemic. He asks under the status of 'absence,' in which only the question itself exists in front of the parrot machine that repeatedly answers with an empty response. What are we waiting for? What is the difference between a dead parrot toy and us?



Gu Minja, *Assume That ~*, 2021, object installation, dimensions variable © Minja Gu

Do you have any scientific principle of life that you think 'absolute truth'? If so, can you explain the essence of the principle? Or do you just believe and leave it as that? Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we have been going through the most radical changes than ever before. Therefore, even in today's high-tech world, we make and change rules for living to survive like primitive people. Is there any scientific truth that we can trust?

Assume That ~ exists in these questions. We face questions the artist asks in a black room which we enter wearing a headphone and open the entrance. "Let us say that the gravity in this room is disappearing." "Let us say that this room is expanding widely and endlessly without any boundary and corner." The series of questions about the assumption of scientific truths that we face in everyday life, which are presented on balloons, chalkboards, and slides outside the room, might be a fundamental question about the world we live in.



Song Min Jung, *AKSARA MAYA*, 2019, 00:18:49, HD single-channel video, color, sound © Min Jung Song

AKSARA MAYA means ‘virtual character’ or ‘virtual scenario’ in Malay. It is a work in the form of a role-playing game showing a conspiracy over ‘text’ between the narrator and the character named ‘Gang’ in a distorted time set as a dark age. It begins with the narrator’s gasping breath as if he or she is running away from somewhere in a dark space. At the end of the road he or she passes through, there is a ‘new’ dark age related to language and voice. He or she declares ‘grandly’ that “we infiltrate a new time zone from different real-life situations and become subjects who discuss for a new future.”

In the world where ‘text’ is continuously accumulated and has weight, the narrator distorts time frequently and steals, searches for, and monitors the texts of ‘Kang’ and ‘Kadua’ by making a detour. Will he or she be able to escape from the dark world using them? From the beginning, he or she paradoxically reveals that it is his or her story by saying, “This is not my story.” The world surrounded by scraps of texts, collecting texts, and the isolation in the dark space, what do they serve as a metaphor? Let us take a breather and enter this dark world again.

Nam June Paik Art Center
10 Paiknamjune-ro, Giheung-gu, Yongin-si
Gyeonggi-do 17068
Korea

press@njpartcenter.kr
<http://www.njpartcenter.kr/>