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5 Korean photographers exhibit reflective self-portraits in Brussels

Photography season is back in Brussels in 2023 and the Korean Cultural Center participates in the annual PhotoBrussels festival by presenting the works of 5 Korean artists. The 40 works by Korean artists will be presented alongside artists from various countries around the world, under the theme of self-portraiture. We are delighted to take part in this event, in which more than 80 galleries from the Brussels region participate. Korean Cultural Center

The screenshot shows an Instagram post from the account 'koreanculturebrussels'. The post features a photograph of a person sitting on a large, white, cloud-like structure. The text on the post reads: 'Who Am I', '25. Jan. - 31. Mar. 2023'. Below the image, there are logos for 'The 6th Photo Exhibition: Korean Cultural Center Brussels', 'Photo Brussels Festival', and 'Kocis'. The post has 176 mentions and a comment section is visible at the bottom.

The 47 galleries and art centers in Brussels participate in the festival, which opens on January 26 and lasts a month. The 8 works by artist Jeong Yunsoon are displayed in the main exhibition hall, the Hangar Art Center. The “WHO AM I” photo exhibition organized by the Korean Cultural Center will continue until March 31, and anyone can see it for free by making a reservation on the Cultural Center’s website.

1. Bae Chan-hyo

Bae Chan-hyo expresses the alienation and prejudice he felt as an Asian male through well-known Western fairy tales. When studying abroad in England, he belatedly experienced some confusion about his identity. It is the experience of the feeling of exclusion from society as a foreigner that he had to live, especially as an Asian student. At the time, the idea occurred to him that Bae could minimize the feeling of isolation by resembling what made him feel apart.



© Bae Chan-hyo

The elaborate staging, like a scene from a splendid musical, is surprising. However, the artist goes further and presents a feminized version of himself in the works of Western civilization and fairy tales. Through these works, Bae Chan-hyo frees himself from culture and ideology by placing himself in the middle and being noticed as a being different from himself.

2. Ahn Jun

Ahn Jun’s work explores the boundary between fantasy and reality through dizzying moments where she captures

herself standing on the railing of skyscrapers. A woman sitting on the edge of a tall building and looking into the distance – Ahn Jun expresses the emptiness of the “border” in her own way. There is a moment for everyone

when we feel out of focus standing in a high-rise building or in a lofty observatory. When we think we are looking at a landscape but it is only an illusion. Between the inaccessible future and the irrecoverable past, there is a very momentary empty space, this is what we call the present.



© Ahn Jun

Ahn Jun replaces the “boundary” of the space she finds herself in with the psychological boundary that people face. We live in the danger of certain boundaries like life and death, ideal and reality, past and future. Ahn captures the emptiness of the frontier that cannot be captured visually in her own unique way, with a special performance that can only exist in photography.

3. Choi Young-kwi

Photographer Choi Young-kwi reveals her life on screen, keeping her husband’s place after his sudden death. It’s not just about living alone, but having to live alone for the rest of her life. Choi Young-kwi sinks into pain and struggles. However, just like Choi Young-kwi’s expression, the thrilling days will pass and we cannot cling to what has already passed. Choi Young-kwi calmly heals her wounds by thrusting her face into the white light along with other treasures the couple hold dear. By revealing the depths of her heart, the wounds begin to heal.



© Choi Young-kwi

Choi Young-kwi's work questions the existence of the inner self from loss, as a process of simultaneous creation and healing. She creates works that illustrate the process of overcoming the personal pain of losing a family member. For her, the camera is no longer a physical machine, but an instrument that helps overcome pain while being a life companion.

4. Lee Jee-young

Lee Jee-young's work uses objects and scenes as a way to reveal themselves. She analyzes and observes the self by projecting herself onto an artificially created scene. The human mind is often compared to space. The space of the mind, perhaps the most important question, lies in the question: "Who am I?" The photographer depicts the continuous exploration of this question in a "small room" made of a hexahedron cube. This small space is a unique place that visualizes emotions as a metaphor for the artist's own identity and various inner emotions, such as joy and sadness, pleasure and pain.



© JeeYoung Lee

Her work, reconstructed by breaking the limits of photography, is a psychological landscape in various contexts such as anxiety for the future, longing for love and frustration as an artist. It all started with a question: "What is my current state?" Lee's work reveals the journey of a person who seeks to find the value of life.

5. Jeong Yun-soon

Having experienced the pain and trauma of a traffic accident, Jeong Yun-soon highlights his determination to live through the image of a Rowing Arch crossing downtown, expressing that he can face the challenges. The work of photographer Jeong Yun-soon represents an escape from his traumatic experience.



© Jeong Yun-soon

Following an unexpected car accident, the photographer spent a long time in the hospital and he had sleepless nights, he suffered from anxiety and confusion. At that moment, what caught his attention was the fluorescent light on the ceiling. To represent the light that overcomes wounds and pain, Jung built his own ark, a canoe, with the intention of finding the path of hope through the pouring rain and the wind that life offers. Jung's message of weathering all of life's storms will become a beacon of hope for someone else. "The way to escape the dark cave of the car crash is to find my own light, and I decided to express my anxiety and emptiness through photography."