

**2020
KCCUK
ARTIST OF
THE YEAR:
JEWYO
RHII**

**28 OCT
2020–
23 JAN
2021**

**LOVE YOUR
DEPOT_LDN**

LOVE YOUR DEPOT

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DEPOT_LDN

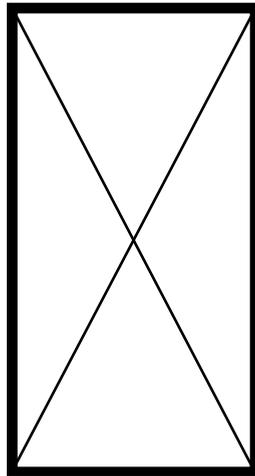
The Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK) presents Jewyo Rhee's exhibition, *Love Your Depot_London*, marking her nomination as 'KCCUK Artist of the Year', an annual award programme that aims to introduce a key aspect of Korea's vibrant contemporary art scene. Following her 2019 Korea Artist Prize at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul, *Love Your Depot_London* is part of ongoing project of Rhee's which challenges the conventional notion of producing an exhibition.

Much of Rhee's work, which encompasses a multi-media platform of installations, publications, drawings and performance, is inspired by the rather personal, at times sensitivity towards her surroundings and frequent nomadic status. Her constant movements between cities within Western Europe, the USA and Asia and her encounters with other artists and collaborators from various backgrounds form the basis of her works. As an international artist, Rhee is often faced with the issues beyond the 'presentation', such as storing works after an exhibition has been concluded. This task is in many cases left to the artists to handle, whereas the process of creating visual artwork and making an exhibition is often created hand-in-hand with an institution. Rhee's project takes its starting point from this question of untouched stories behind the artworld and the process of delaying the death of works by artists.

'Love Your Depot' is a visionary project which ultimately forms a prototype storage system for artists. By placing artworks within the industrial racks and fragmented sculptures, Rhii proposes a kind of social experiment to prolong the lifespan of artworks and to test if the action of storing can be expanded to an act of performance in the arts. This way, Rhii further investigates the dynamics of the contemporary art world and the invisible power relations embedded within the art community.

Bringing together many of her works long-archived in the UK which couldn't be included in previous shows in Seoul, *Love Your Depot_ London* transforms the KCCUK into a vast and repurposed storage space, through which we are invited to engage with this working hub of creative activity. Also, by developing a unique online platform for this exhibition, Rhii's prominent thoughts further explore the tradition of artistic practice to rely on the space, materiality, and the physicality of an artwork, which might be challenged soon in these contact-free, socially distanced times.

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5 **MORE IN STORE:
JEWYO RHII'S
LOVE YOUR DEPOT**
Peter Suchin

Jewyo Rhii's *Love Your Depot* is a highly ambiguous object. Being the latest rendition of the artist's developing practice, the exhibition nevertheless includes a number of artworks made and shown at an earlier date. But this display is not a "retrospective", nor does it merely demonstrate a canny and practical way to fill out what is, after all, a fairly substantial space with works from different series or periods of time. The paradox of *Love Your Depot* is that it *simultaneously* presents new and historical work, combining an innovative display mechanism with individual pieces from an earlier stage in Rhii's artistic itinerary. A third important component of the show is the inclusion of a performance area, a space which is, in the spirit of collaboration, open to contributions from invited artists. There are therefore three chronological periods or "potentials" being staged here, the past, present and future components of a complicated and uncertain operation, that of being an exhibiting artist at the present time. The artworld's unspoken but insidious focus upon novelty and individualism at the expense of all other values is destabilised by this juxtaposition. Rhii encourages the viewer to consider the structures of contemporary art's presentation and how powerfully these conventions constrain, and even "construct" what we naively perceive as the independent, fully autonomous work of art. A dedicated digital platform designed by the artist

accompanies and expands the exhibition from a material to an “immaterial” form.

Partly through her own experience Rhii recognises that a problem regularly faced by artists is that of storing work. Galleries and other professional institutions provide funding and expertise to facilitate the realisation of exhibitions, but unless the work is sold, or is of a kind that can be easily taken apart when the exhibition ends, the artist is stuck with the burden of finding a way to store it. This a costly and worrying concern, especially as many artists live on notoriously small incomes. Even if work has been made for a specific venue it has an implied afterlife, and may be shown again at a later date, perhaps even purchased if the artist’s status increases over time. Meanwhile, the work must be preserved. In *Love Your Depot* Rhii has overcome this disadvantage by using her own older artworks as the “content” of her current show, an action which throws attention onto the question of what exactly a contemporary art exhibition is, and what are its constraints and operational conceits. She does this by turning the gallery into a storeroom or “depot”, a nondescript functional space set up to protect precious goods. With this bold gesture, public and private functions of storage and display are vividly reversed. The merely serviceable metal shelves and wooden pallets become readymade sculptural props, oddly relegating the “real” but aging artworks to a theoretically subsidiary position. In placing together these physically and conceptually distinct objects, the roles of container and contained become fluid and confused. It is as if an art historical point is being reiterated through this placing together of “art” and “non-art” entities, between works in traditional media and those we would label “installations” or “found objects”. Furthermore, once recognised, this systematic reframing may be extended, like a clutch of Russian Dolls, to the very space of the gallery itself, which is, as Rhii’s action indicates, as much a mental as a physical thing, a kind of grid or network of perceptions affecting what we see, or don’t see, as art.¹

To make one group of works the “subject” of another is to highlight the function

1 Mentioning this Russian folk object recalls the exhibition *Russian Doll*, curated by Chris Hammond (MOT, London, 2004), whose premise was the metaphorical insertion of the contributors’ works into the show in, insofar as possible, a manner paralleling the structure of a Russian Doll. The participating artists were Martin Creed, Liam Gillick, Elizabeth Price, Giorgio Sadotti, and Peter Suchin. On the importance of the grid in terms of its wide deployment within Modernism, see Rosalind Krauss, “Grids”, *October*, No. 9, Summer 1979, and Andrew McNamara, “Between Flux and Certitude: The Grid in Avant-Garde Utopian Thought”, *Art History*, Vol. 15, No. 1, March 1992.

of the frame (actual or implied), which is, as Jacques Derrida has pointed out, an essential element in the constituting of art.² The frame may be trivialised as merely supplementary but without it the physical limits of the artwork are impossible to determine. In the present case, Rhii has taken this realisation a step further in that the implied frame itself becomes an artwork. In his *Elements of Semiology* Roland Barthes considers a well-known linguistic operation, that of *metalanguage*, in which one set of signs is systematically reframed by another: “Let us now suppose”, Barthes writes, “that such a system... becomes in its turn a mere element of a second system, which thus is more extensive than the first: we then deal with two systems of significations which are imbricated but are out of joint with each other, or staggered.”³ Although Rhii is reframing individual artworks and their institutions and not language as such, the operation Barthes describes perfectly parallels that of her elaborate procedure. But perhaps it is not so much this process that is elaborate as its implications in terms of examining important aspects of the institution of art.

What is also shaken up by *Love Your Depot* is the boundary between established artworld roles, especially those of artist and curator, but that of technician or storehouse manager too. Give that the exhibition involves the input of several exhibiting and organising institutions – Locust+ and the Globe Gallery in the north east of England and the Korean Cultural Centre in London – there’s something amusing about the artist herself also acting as a curator of her own work. But what’s implied by *Love Your Depot* is that artists are *inherently* “curatorial” in relation to their own practice. Rhii has pushed this concern to a deeper level than most, but these kinds of decisions – what to show and where and how to show it, for example – are now everyday issues for the practicing artist. Bringing together a concern for storage with an understanding of curatorial issues takes one in the direction of the archive.

What is an archive? There is no simple answer to this question, but, once again, Derrida can help us. When, in his *Archive*

2 “But this frame is problematical. I do not know what is essential and what is accessory in a work. And above all I do not know what this thing is, that is neither essential nor accessory, neither proper nor improper... Where does the frame take place. Does it take place. Where does it begin. Where does it end. What is its internal limit. And its surface between the two limits”. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.63 (question marks absent in the original). For a wide-ranging discussion of the history and function of the frame see Paul Druro (Ed.), *The Rhetoric of the Frame*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

3 Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, Hill and Wang, 1979, p.89.

Fever, he writes of how one function of the archive is that it “marks this institutional passage from the private to the public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret”, he might almost be discussing Rhi’s moving of her older work out of the limbo of storage into the public space of the present display, especially since, as the work had been shown before, it is neither “secret” nor unknown.⁴ One might also, without irony, call *Love Your Depot*, “a ponderous archiving machine”, since the show is not so much a static ensemble of objects as a process-in-motion. Quite apart from the industrial feel of the shelving units and their rigid, geometric arrangement one senses, as it were, that a meaningful operation is continuously occurring. This is the transference or modification of meaning taking place as a result of placing together the old and the new, the sensuous and the industrial, the finished and the still-to-be-concluded. The procedure is not a one-way street: the older pieces take on a new lease of life within *Love Your Depot*, and the new components are similarly “charged up” by the juxtaposition. The earlier material was in any case simply lying dormant; its inclusion here is a form of reactivation, with its presence inevitably colouring the environment in which it is placed. This too fits in well with what one may expect from the archive, which is, unlike the museum (the place of dead things) a site in which “frozen” objects are retained with the express idea of them being one day brought back to life.⁵

Love Your Depot alludes to a tradition of artworks which include within them other works, whether by the same or a different author. In 1884 Joris-Karl Huysmans published the novel *A Rebours*, in which the misanthrope Des Esseintes withdraws indoors with the express intention of never again leaving his house. The novel details the various paintings and books Des Esseintes has ensured will accompany him in his isolation, among these being pictures by Moreau and Redon, and, in the imagined library, volumes by Baudelaire, Mallarme and Poe.⁶ In the visual

4 This and the following quotation are from Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp.2-3 and p.8 respectively.

5 On the relationship between the museum and mausoleum see “Valery Proust Museum” in Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, 1983. Derrida, in the opening pages of *Archive Fever* (see Note 4) discusses the archive as the place in which the laws are kept so that they may be consulted for present-day application. That *Love Your Depot* is in part an archive therefore suggests, alongside the inclusion of the active performance space, an openness to future developments. The project is expected to last for three years.

6 The book is available in English translation as *Against Nature*, Penguin, 1959. The relevant sections are chapters V and IV.

7 The standard study of Duchamp’s seminal hybrid (i.e. part-museum, part-work of art) is by Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp: The Portable Museum*, Thames and Hudson, 1989. The number of reproductions included in the Box varies throughout the separate editions of the work. As T J Demos points out in his *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp* (MIT Press, 2007), Duchamp first worked on the Box in the 1930s and ‘40s when much of Europe was in disarray and millions of people were displaced by the effects of two world wars. Duchamp himself was an itinerant figure at this time, even producing a work entitled *Sculpture for Travelling* in 1918. Rhi has remarked on how her own work is strongly affected by travelling and influenced by the particularities of the place she is visiting. Duchamp’s curatorial contributions to, for example the international Surrealist Exhibition held in Paris in 1938, and to *First Papers of Surrealism* (New York, 1942) are generally acknowledged as important milestones in the development of the idea that the material staging of an exhibition is as important as the artworks it includes.

8 See Art & Language, *Homes from Homes II*, JRP/Ringier, 2003. For images of Soane’s Picture Room see Tim Knox, *Sir John Soane’s Museum London*, Merrell, 2009, pp. 84 and 93-95. Two other projects carrying a family resemblance to *Love Your Depot* are *Self Storage*, curated by Laurie Anderson and Brian Eno (Acorn Storage Centre, Wembley, London, 1995), and *Planchette*, curated by Peter Suchin (2007). This involved a portable display cabinet containing the work of ten artists being inserted into two other exhibitions (*Spector Versus Rector*, curated by Marc Vaubert de Chantilly, *The Residence*, London, 2007, and *No Letters*, curated by Leigh Clarke, *Nettie Horn*, London, 2008).

arts, important examples include Marcel Duchamp’s pioneering *Box in a Valise* (1935-41) containing over sixty miniature reproductions of his own works.⁷ More recent examples include Art & Language’s *Homes from Homes II* (2003), a gallery-based billboard onto which is mounted a collection of earlier pieces by the group, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov’s multi-part installations (in which smaller artworks by the couple are often included), and Goshka Macuga’s *Picture Room* (2003), a constructed display of contemporary artists’ works based on the clever storage device for paintings invented by Regency architect John Soane for his museum-house in London’s Lincoln’s Inn Fields.⁸ Following the recursive logic of the exhibition, it might be claimed that *Love Your Depot* conceptually contains these other containing forms.

De-installing the show and packing away the work: these should suggest conclusion, stasis, a final fixed form. But beneath the busy umbrella of *Love Your Depot*, an exhibition only apparently at rest, a great deal indeed is quietly going on.

Peter Suchin is an artist, critic and curator. He has contributed to *Art Monthly*, *Art Press*, *Frieze*, *The Guardian*, *Here and Now*, *Mute*, *Variant*, and many other journals. His visual work is discussed in Paul Crowther, *Theory of the Art Object*, Routledge, 2020.

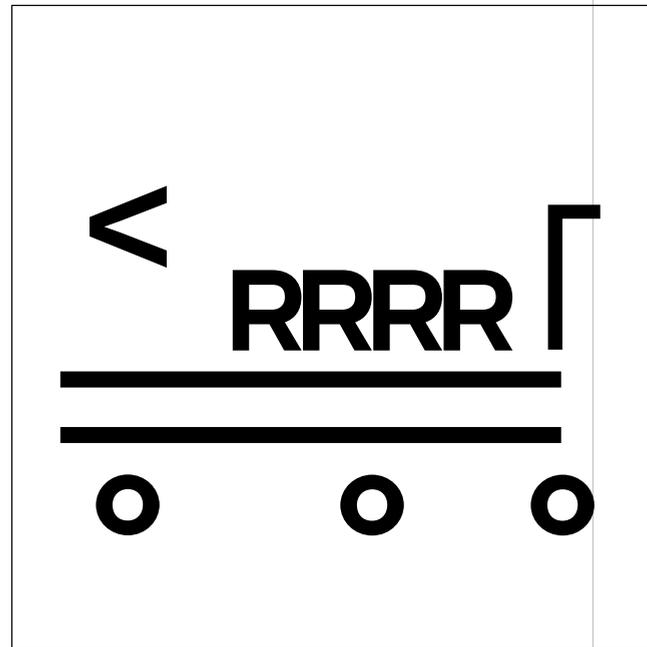
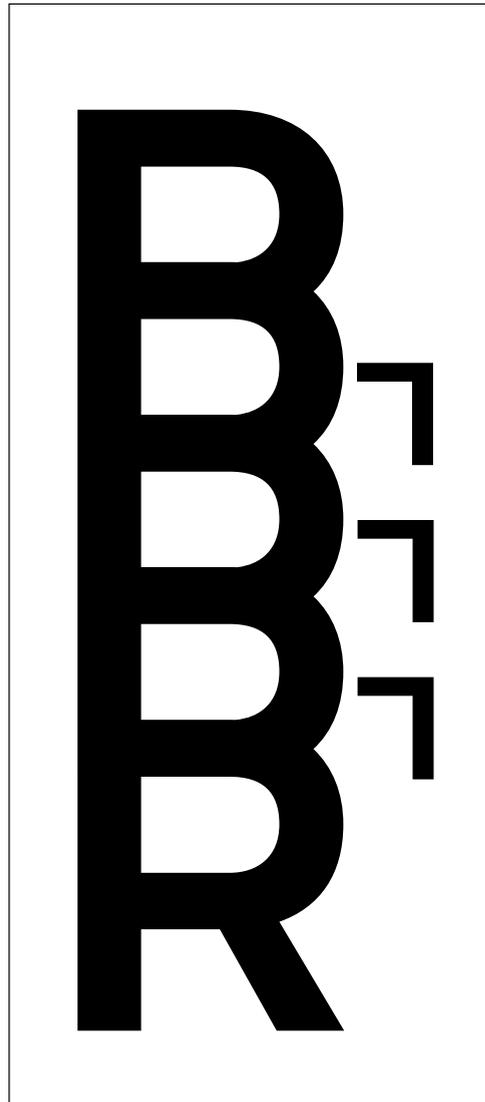






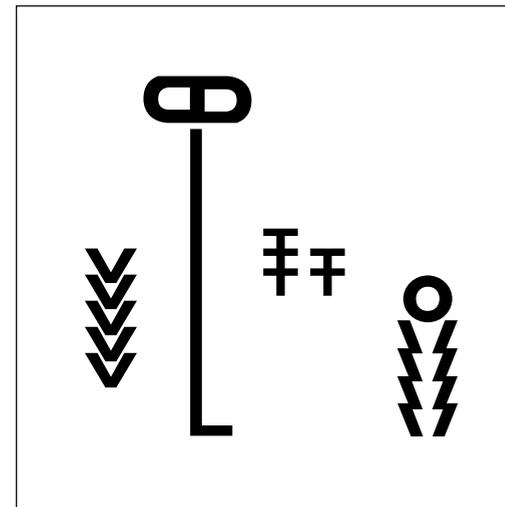
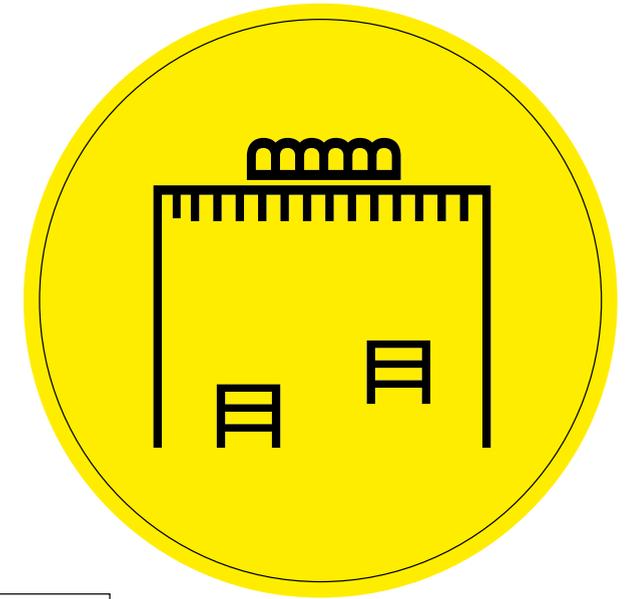






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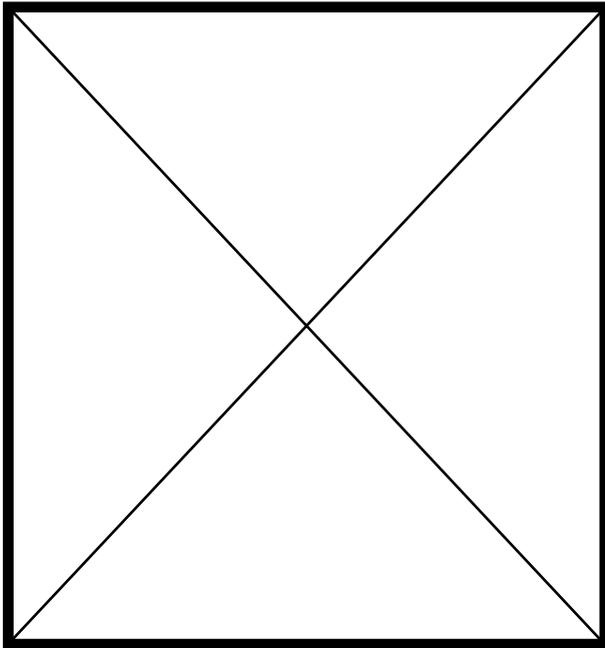
LOVE YOUR DEPOT











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Installation view of the Painting Plate in the Depot, Works of Jina Park (left), Hyein Lee (right), Courtesy of the artist, MMCA

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Installation view of the Pallet in the Depot, Minouk Lim (left), Woojin Jeon (top-center), Seunghye Hong (right), Courtesy of the artist, MMCA

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Installation view, 2020 Artist of the Year: Jewyo Rhee (2020), courtesy the artist and Korean Cultural Centre UK. Photograph by Dan Weill

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Installation view of the Pallet in the Depot, Works of Seoyoung Chung (left and bottom-center), Hye Jin Kim (top-center), Courtesy of the artist, MMCA

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Installation view, 2020 Artist of the Year: Jewyo Rhee (2020), courtesy the artist and Korean Cultural Centre UK. Photograph by Dan Weill

JEWYO RHII ARTIST INFO

Jewyo Rhee (b.1971) currently lives and works in Seoul. From 1998-2003 Rhee's artistic practice was manifested in the form of books. Publishing three art books during this period – featuring photography, humorous drawings and other forms of art making – they focused on the provisional, urgent efforts by people to improve the physical and mental environment of our everyday lives.

Rhee now engages across many exhibition activities, working in response to the locations, spaces and the events she encounters. Having lived abroad alongside many different cultures, her interests are now rooted in the ephemeral; she creates objects with temporary materials and quick drawings that deal with the insecurity and vulnerability of an individual existence.

Exhibiting internationally, selected solo exhibitions include at: The Showroom, London (2017); Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, London (2017); Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2017); Galerie Ursula Walbröl, Düsseldorf (2015); and the Queens Museum, New York (2014). Rhee's work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Gwangju Biennale (2016); South Korea; the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2014); the Kunstmuseum Basel (2013); and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012), amongst others.

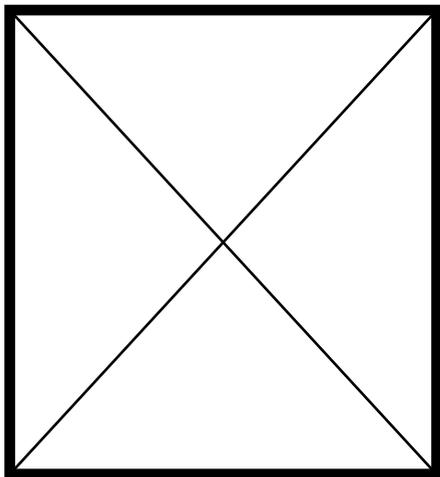
GALLERY INFORMATION

KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE UK

The KCCUK (Korean Cultural Centre UK) operates as an organisation promoting Korea's vibrant cultural scene to UK audiences. Through hosting exhibitions, events, performances and film showings, alongside a series of education programmes, KCCUK seeks to develop knowledge of Korean heritage, history and culture. With its art gallery based just off London's Trafalgar Square, the visual arts department at the KCCUK introduces some of the most exciting contemporary artworks by both emerging and well-established Korean artists through exhibitions and associated projects. In recent years, the KCCUK has been acting as a platform for collaboration, conducting projects with major UK arts institutions including Art Night, FRIEZE, the ICA, Liverpool Biennial, Hayward Gallery, Serpentine Galleries, Ikon, Spike Island, Somerset House, Delfina Foundation and the V&A to name but a few.

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

The KCCUK's Artist of the Year project began in 2014. Each year, one Korean artist who has made a significant impact on the contemporary art world is selected and their works are presented as



a solo exhibition at the KCCUK's London exhibition space. Previous exhibitions have included Kang Jungsuck (2019), Yunchul Kim (2018), Kim Yong-Ik (2017), Koo Jeong A (2016), Sora Kim (2015) and Lee Bul (2014).

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LOCUS+

As an organisation Locus+ have an extensive track record of working in the arts and cultural sector, both in the UK and abroad to produce innovative and risk-taking projects. Locus+ was established in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1993 and has since delivered 142 projects, published 37 artists' books with world-wide distribution and managed the biggest time-based visual arts archive in Europe containing thousands of slides, video and ephemera (now hosted at the University of Newcastle). Locus+ pride themselves on commissioning, producing, and delivering exciting and ambitious artists' projects that push the envelope of expectation and practice that have a meaningful resonance with the public. All projects, by their very nature are socially engaging, diverse, conceptual and context related. Locus+ supports artists at early stages in their careers as well as enabling experienced and established artists to expand the horizons and practice.

www.locusplus.org.uk

GLOBE GALLERY

For the past 25 years Globe Gallery has offered valuable exhibition and learning opportunities for emerging and established artists, furthering Newcastle's connectivity with the arts by bringing national and international artists to the North East. Globe has occupied seven contemporary arts venues, testament to the collective efforts of a dynamic and diverse team of people committed to delivering powerful experiences and opportunities through involvement with art. Globe has worked consistently to engage people from all backgrounds by forging relationships with contemporary art and is committed to embedding into the community. Partnering with local authorities, national charities, universities, and commercial partners has enabled Globe to create engagement opportunities for a wide and diverse

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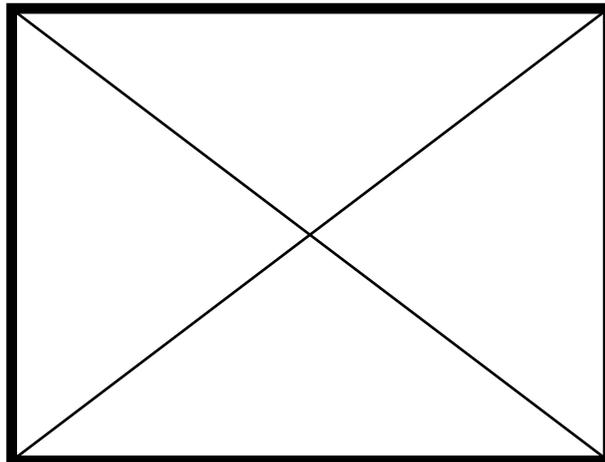
audience, particularly for those from marginalised, disadvantaged groups and individuals. Globe embraces the challenges of today's society and is committed to delivering innovative and challenging experiences through their exhibition and events programmes that stimulate diversity of thought, experience, and practice.

www.globegallery.org

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART (MMCA) & KOREA ARTIST PRIZE 2019

Korea Artist Prize is a prestigious art award and exhibition of Korea co-hosted by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea and the SBS Foundation, and it aims to support those artists who have explored and attested to the potential of contemporary Korean art. Since 2012 until today, Korea Artist Prize has presented visions for contemporary Korean art by fostering discourses in the contemporary art scene. The artists have been chosen based on the recommendations of the committee comprising art professionals such as curators, critics, and scholars and the first-round evaluation process done by a panel of Korean and international judges: Ayoung Kim, Hyesoo Park, Jewyo Rhii and Young In Hong.

www.koreaartistprize.org/en/



Organised by The Korean Cultural Centre UK and Locus+. Curated by Jae Min CHA (KCCUK), Jon BEWLEY and Jonty TARBUCK (Locus+).

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