Earl Park,
Media Artist

Portfolio / CV / Critiques

Portfolio

Works

The Electric Halo Project
- Halo Augmenting Machine
- DIY Portable Halo
- Halo Box

Try Triangle

'The Machines on the Verge of Nervous Breakdown' Series
- Escape from Freedom
- Imprinting

'The Walking Man' Series
- The Walking Man
- The Walking Man II

PITAKA

Mr. Kongdak

Frog Xylophone

TimeSpace

The Electric Halo Project (2020~2021)

Halo Augmenting Machine

Halo has conventionally been widely used as a metaphor for divinity or authority. Interestingly, the halo of powerful and sacred men in the history deprives them of their personalities and transforms them mere metaphors of authority. The light of the halo, which was supposed to make you stand out, ironically removes your details and creates hollow black out of you in reality. The Electric Halo Project is a work to visualize this antinomic essence of the halo behind its existing concept, and attempt to demystify it through the materialization of an idea.

The 'Halo Augmenting Machine' is a wearable mechanical armor equipped with a halo generator, which is used to augment the reality by materializing the halo, conceptualized light. It is an image of Homo sapiens who is armed with technology and dreams of Homo deus.

LED, Aluminium, Steel, Synthetic resine, Fabric
450 x 450 x 745 mm, 2021
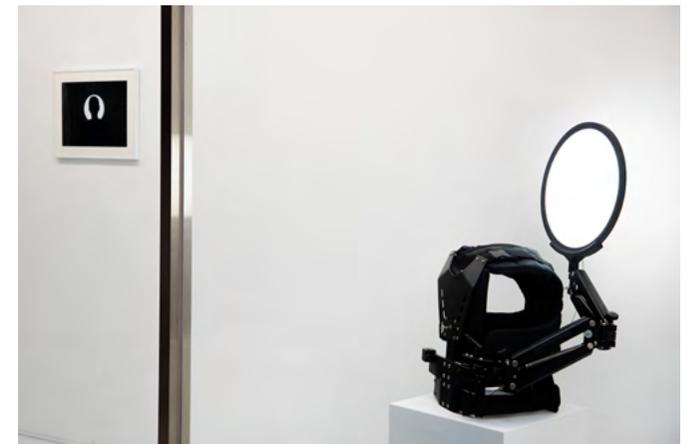
DIY Portable Halo

For centuries, humans have visualized halos as a golden ring in paintings, or as a disk behind the head in sculptures. In modern times, it became possible to easily visualize the light of a halo as light itself. Light in the present age is no more something special with as much authority as in the past, nor is it a possession of a few. The universalization of matter through technology has diluted the quality of divinity and authority based on scarcity of matter.

The artist created the 'DIY Portable Halo' with a work lamp and a harness vest that he has been using. By creating a halo using lighting equipment that is commonly seen around us, he poses a question if the conventional concepts such as divinity or authority symbolized by the halo are still valid in the present age, when light is materialized and universalized.

Lighting lamp, Harness vest, Synthetic resine, Steel
dimension variable, 2021
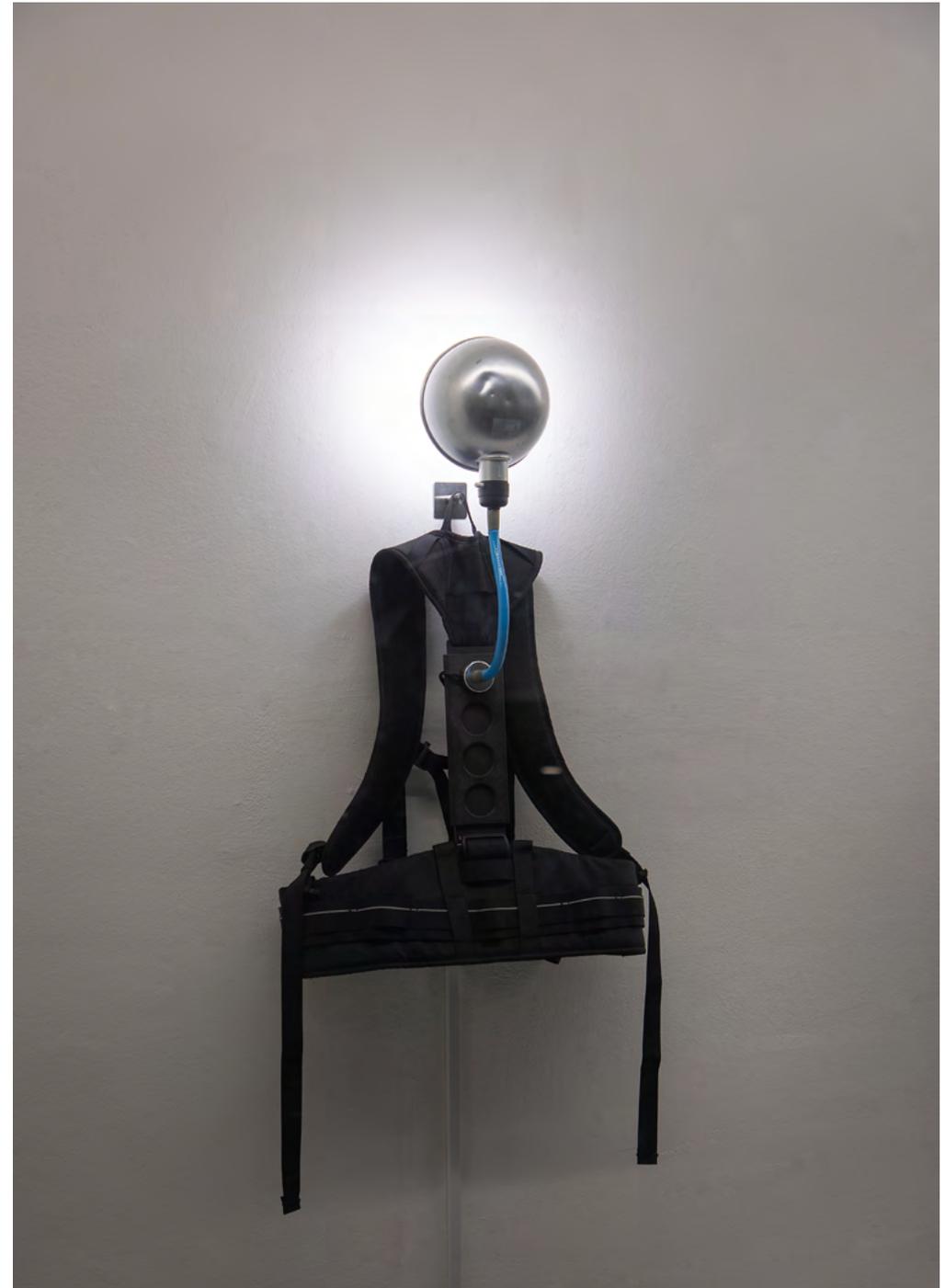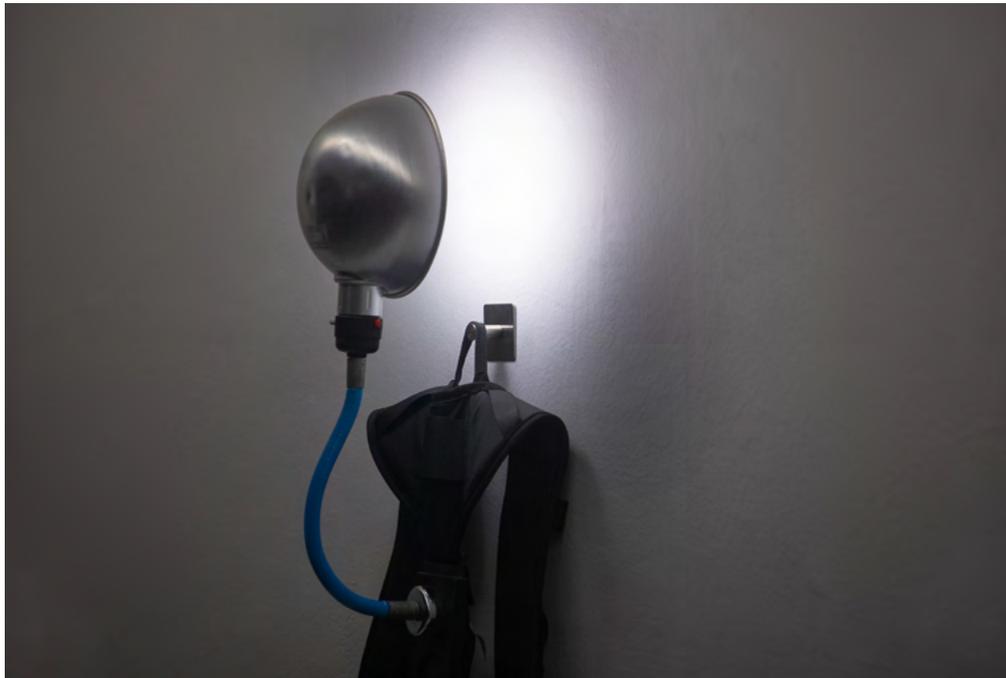
Halo Box

'The show must go on' is an overseas exchange program that Total Museum of Art has been running since 2012. It was designed, under this corona pandemic situation where personal exchanges in the art world have become difficult, with the intent to introduce artists' works by sending bags (cases) containing their portfolios and small-scale works to overseas curators. The curators keep the bags for a month before they send them back, exhibiting, taking pictures of or reviewing them.

The 'Halo Box' started with an idea of 'a bag containing light' connecting two somewhat heterogeneous images. A circular lighting as materialized light replaces the concept of light in a halo in an old hatbox for travel. The old hatbox is expected to be evocative of traveling different eras. For example, the halo in a hatbox in the Rococo era might have been used with a glamorous and exaggerated wig or dress to stand out human beings. It is exciting to imagine how the metaphor of light could be accepted and perceived by people when the bag is opened in the changing backgrounds traveling through times and cultures.

Lighting equipment, Velvet Fabric, Cotton, Suitcase
457 x 407 x 610 mm (open), 2020
Project Page: https://www.theshowmustgoon.co.kr/earlpark
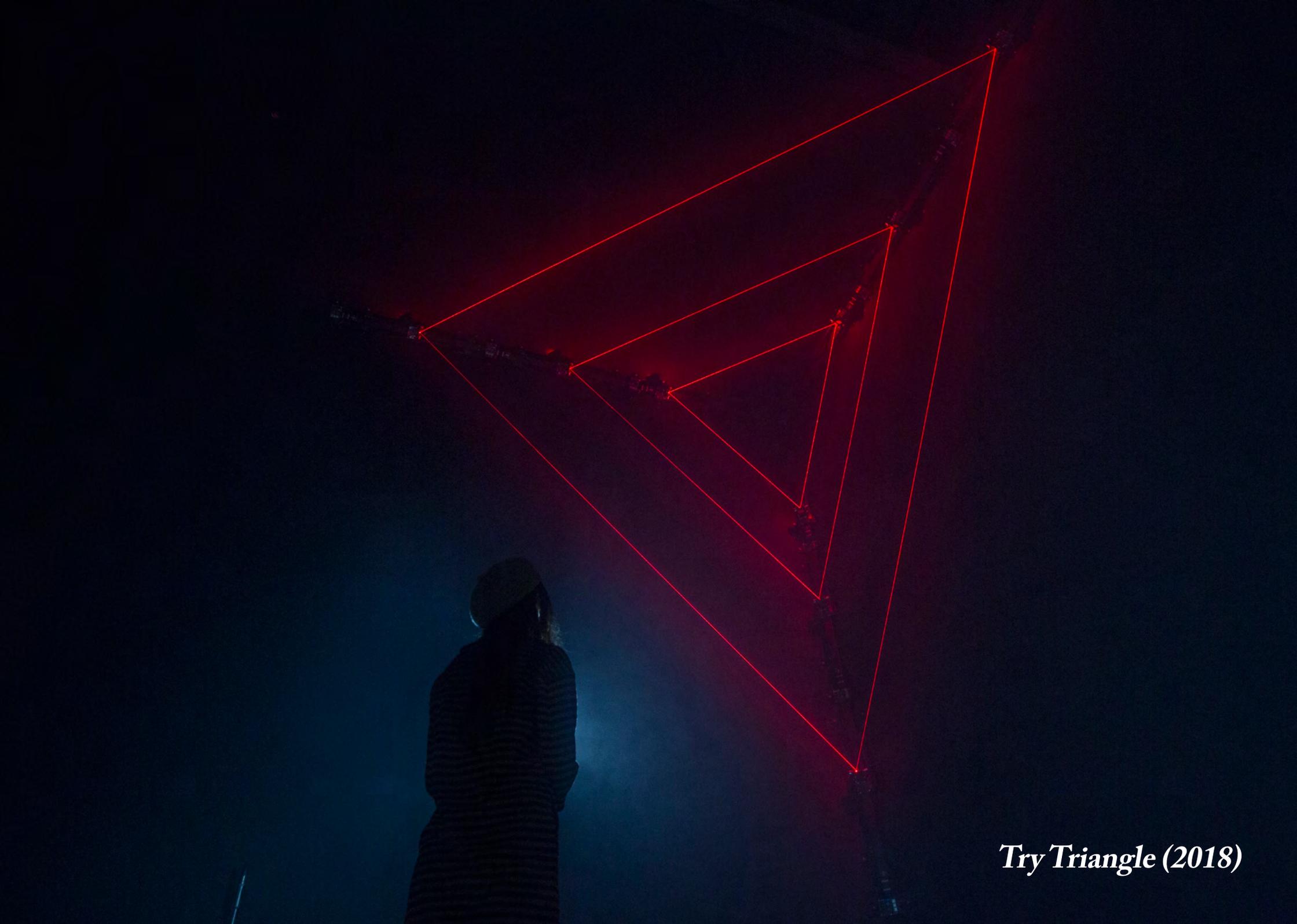
Try Triangle (2018)

Try Triangle

Kinetic-Audio Installation,
Laser, Front Surface Mirror, Custom 3-axis Actuator & Motor Unit, Haze Machine, 7ch Sound System
6 x 6 x 6 M, 2018

<Try Triangle> is an elaborate kinetic installation where viewers experience various combinations of three moving triangles made of laser beams and accompanying tangible sound in a dark room. The triangles are created by reflecting the light on the finely controlled running mirrors. The viewers are expected to actively compose their own experiences through the generation and disappearance of the three triangles in the darkness. This work is an attempt to connect two mutually exclusive concepts of 'machines' and 'meditation' and create a space where the two concepts are organically fused.

Video : https://vimeo.com/322913212
© Earl Park, Saza Kim, Jeongsik Bae(sound)

'Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown' Series (2017~2020)

Escape from Freedom
(2017 ~2020)
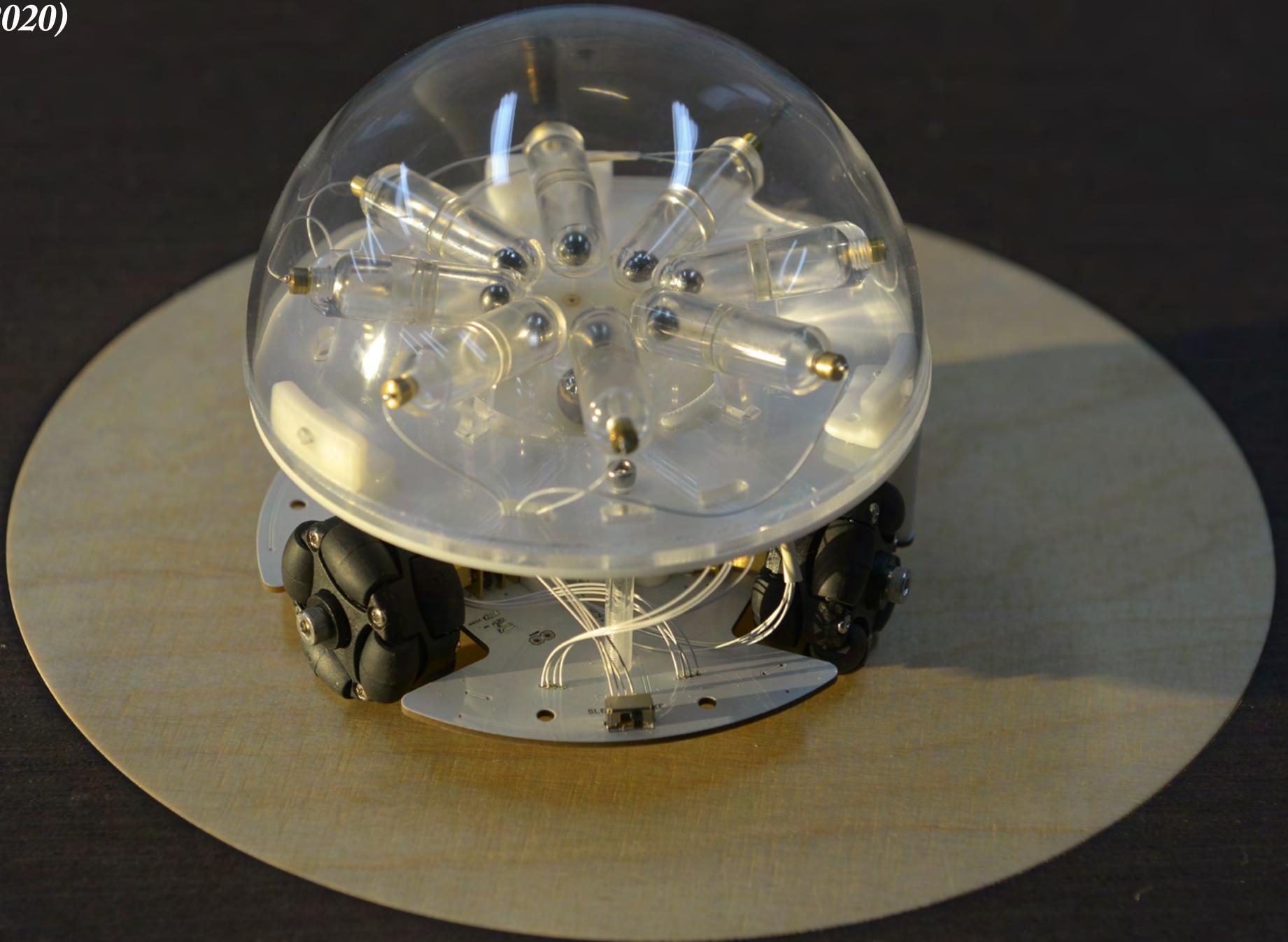
Escape from Freedom

Robotic Installation,
Wood, Acryl, Steel, Brass, Neodymium Magnet, Omni-Wheel, Motor, Custom Sensor, Custom PCB, Lithium-Polymer Battery
0.9 x 0.9 x 1.1 M, 2017~2020

In this series, <Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown>, machines with simple logic circuits make an attempt to simulate some of human neurosis that is supposed to be painfully human. This series, through the paradoxical association of neurosis and machines, is questioning about the relationship between humans and machines and exploring the boundaries between them. The first work of this series, <Escape from Freedom> comprises a table with a moving top and a robot trapped in a circle in the middle of the table top. The table top is devised to be tilted by pushing and then restored its original position. A viewer interacts with the robot by pushing the table and inducing the robot to escape beyond the confines of the circle. However, trapped in its own 'unreasonable' algorithm the robot cannot escape from.
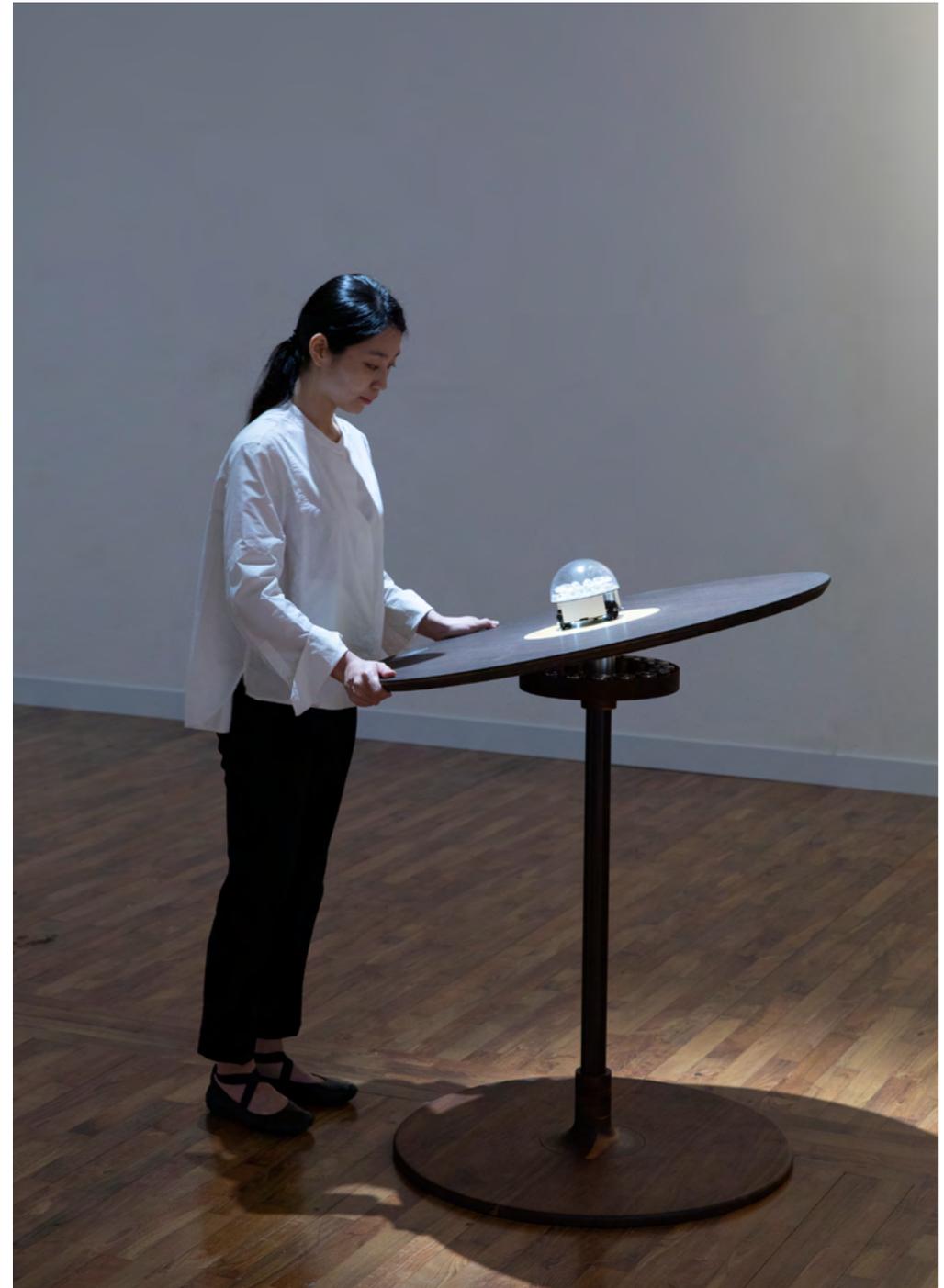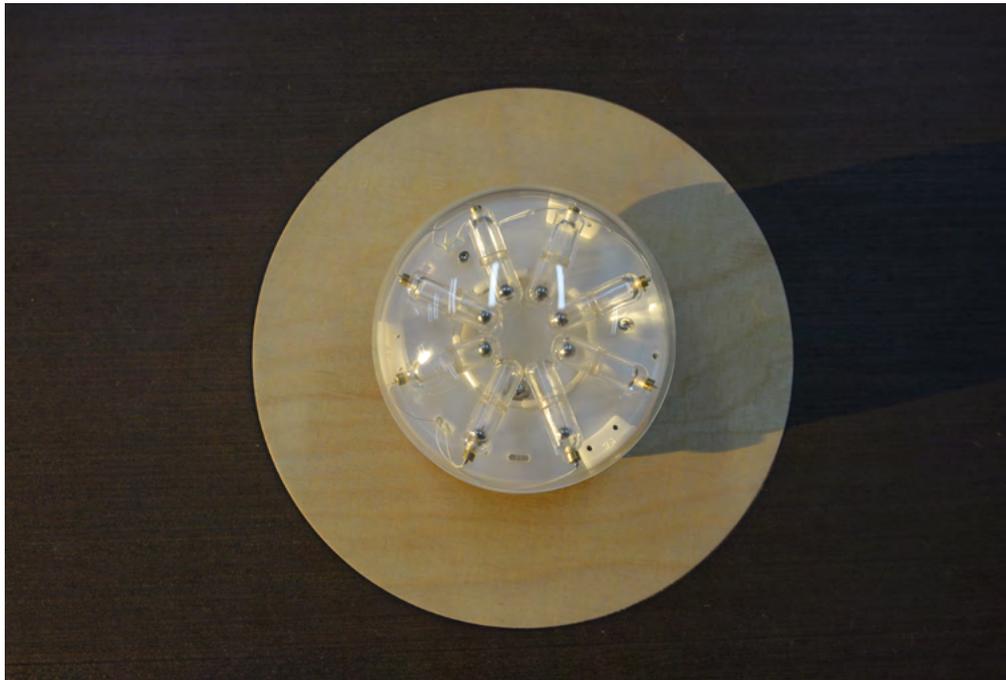
Imprinting (2017~2020)

Imprinting

Robotic Installation,
Wood, Acryl, ABS, Omni-Wheel, Hacked IR Camera, Motor,
Custom PCBs, MCU, Lithium-Polymer Battery
180 x 180 x 10 cm, 2017~2020

In this series, <Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown>
, machines with simple logic circuits make an attempt to simulate
some of human neurosis that is supposed to be painfully hu-
man. This series, through the paradoxical association of neuro-
sis and machines, is questioning about the relationship between
humans and machines and exploring the boundaries between
them.
Its second work, <imprinting> shows a group of robots moving
around. Yet one of the robots is compulsively attached to an-
other specific robot in the group, following it blindly wherever it
goes, which is reminiscent of obsessive-compulsive disorders
such as obsessions or fixations.

Video : https://vimeo.com/257330850
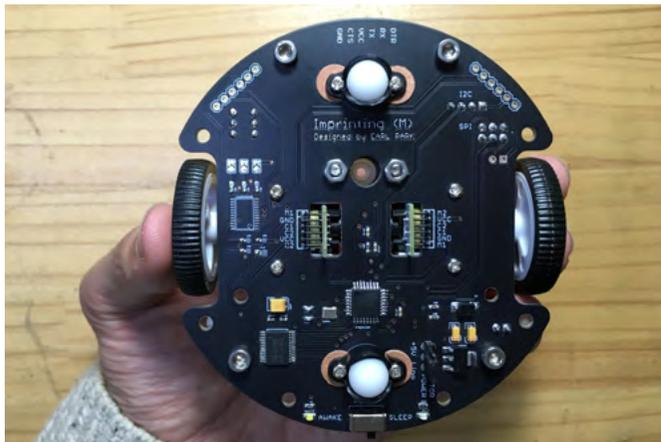
'The Walking Man' Series (2016~2018)
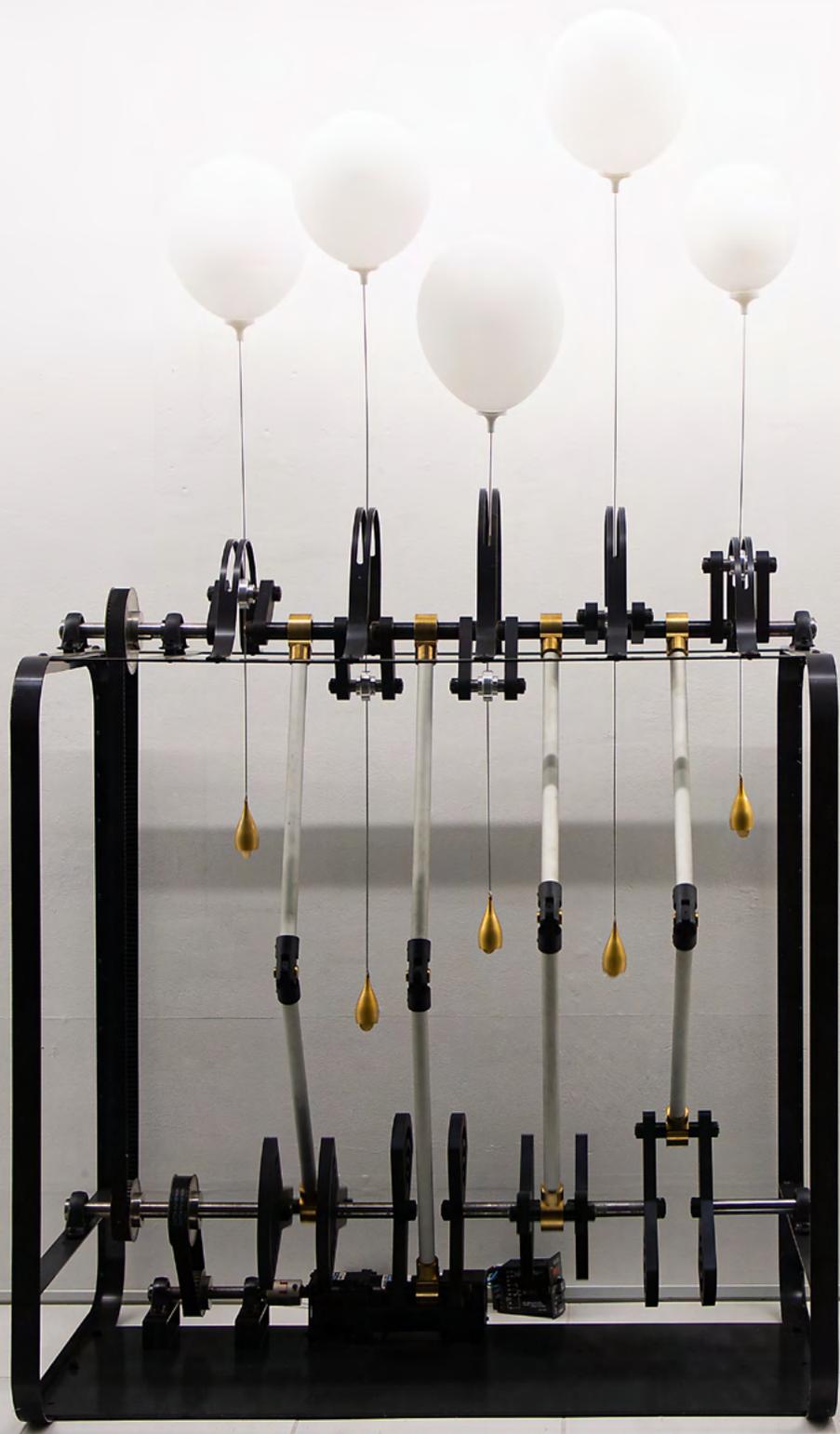
'The Walking Man' Series (2021 ver)

The Walking Man (2016)

The Walking Man

Kinetic Installation,
Anodized Aluminium, Brass, Steel Frame, Balloon, Timing Belt & Pulley, Reducer, Motor
1.2 x 0.65 x 2 M, 2016

It is a kinetic installation that is designed to imply human movements of walking pulling a heavy cart with its simple mechanism, which consists of cranks and motors. This work was commissioned to produce as a part of a work installed in the Gentle Monster Hongdae flagship store.

Video : https://vimeo.com/258555257
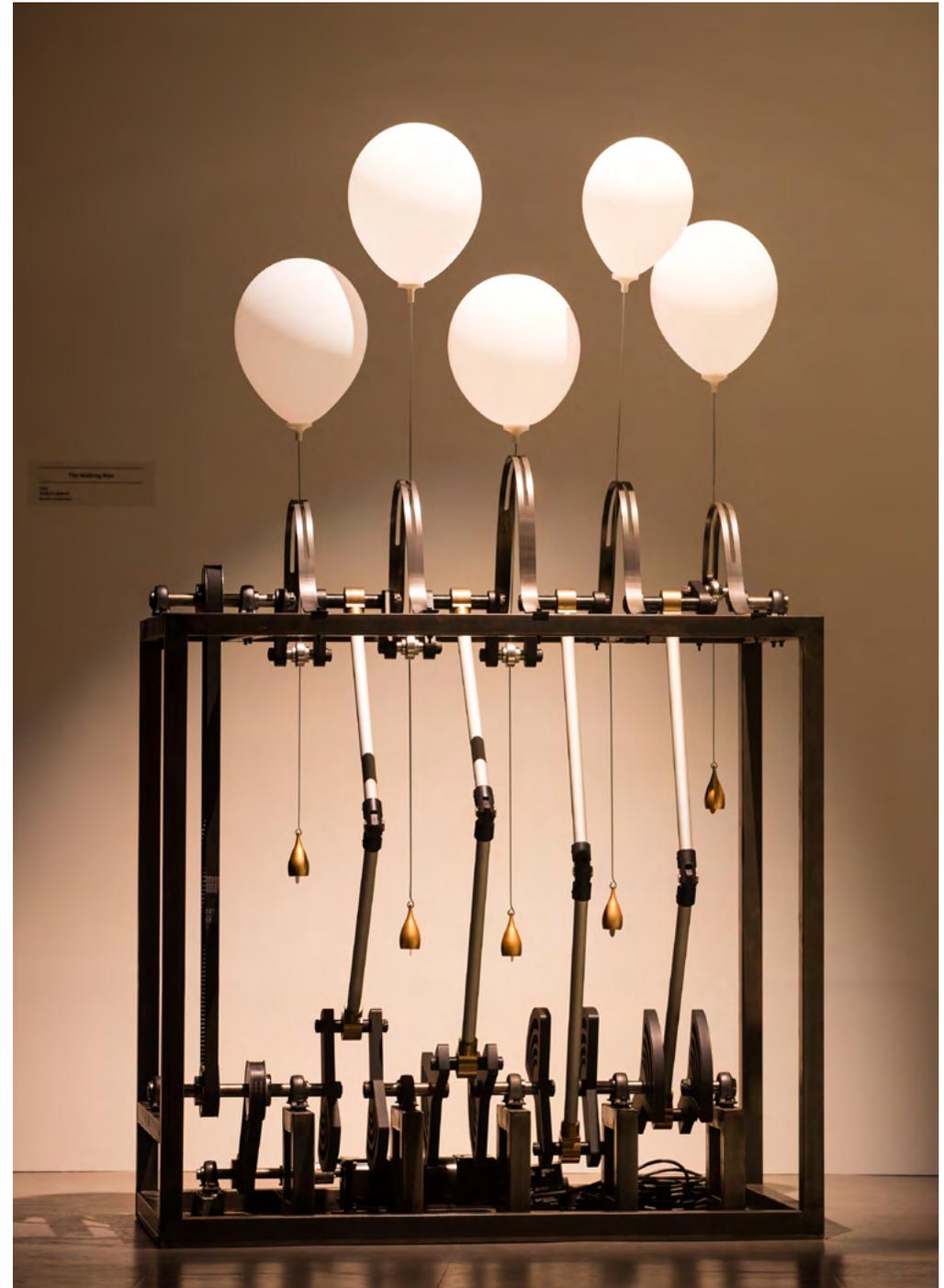
The Walking Man II (2018)

The Walking Man II

Kinetic Installation,
Anodized Aluminium, Brass, Steel Frame, Timing Belt & Pulley,
Reducer, Motor
1.1 x 1.1 x 2 M, 2018

This is a kinetic installation that embodies the most human behavior, 'walking' behavior with the most mechanical mechanism. So-called 'upright walking' involves a very insecure and complex mechanism that you have to maintain balance on one leg to in order to take a step forward. This walking method is highly associated with being human. This work is a visual exploration that tests the boundaries of perception of 'humanness' through a simple mechanism consisting of cranks and motors.

Video :
https://vimeo.com/284359841,
https://vimeo.com/284366862
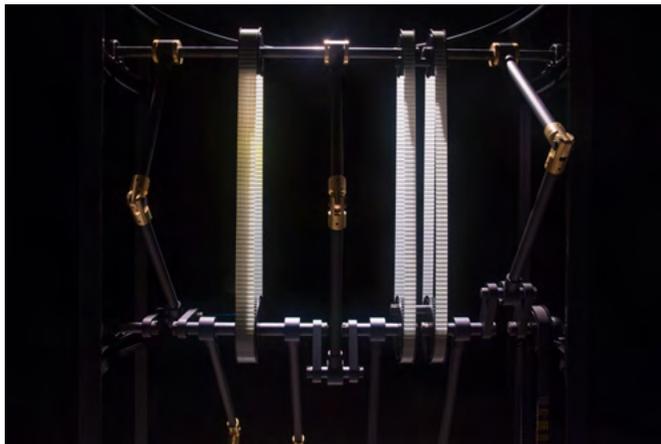
PITAKA (2015)

PITAKA

Robotic Installation & Performance,
Robot Arm, Acryl Plate, Anodized Aluminium, Steel Frame, LED Units, HD Digital Cameras, 3 HD Displays, Custom PCB, MCU
5 x 5 x 5 M, 2015

<PITAKA> is the name given to the robot inscribing the Goryeo Tripitaka into plastic panels. Beyond the apparent robot/machine the nature of PITAKA, the inscription medium becomes a personified icon of catechumen, a seeker of truth. PITAKA's performance produces a new form of manuscript for the Buddhist scripture, and by doing so, processes and transforms the symbolic aura of the historical relic Tripitaka into another medium.
This work uses the digital data provided by the Research Institute of Tripitaka Koreana.

Video : https://vimeo.com/157251428
© TRANSMEDIALAB (Taiyun Kim, Earl Park, Sookyun Yang, Jihyun Yoon)
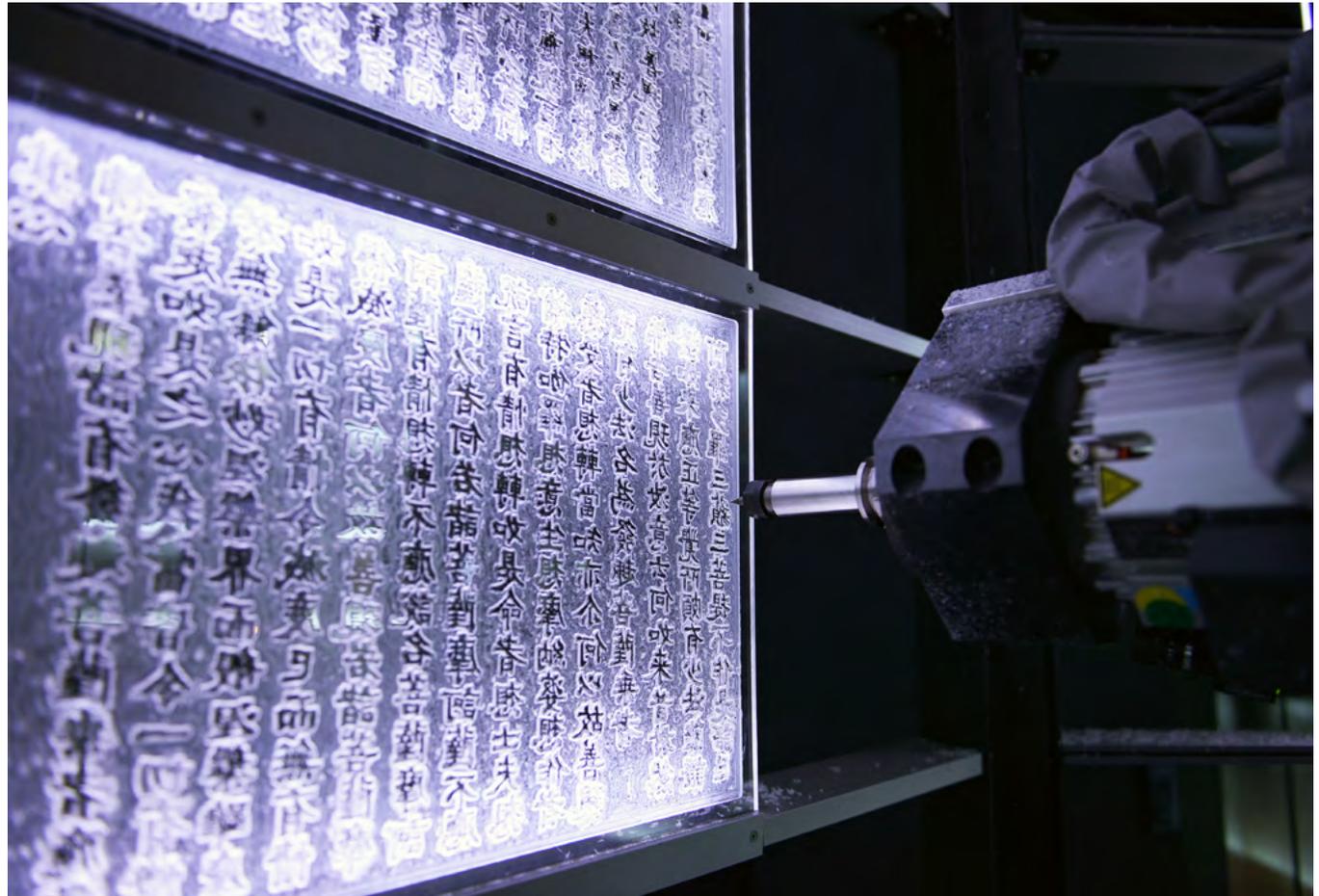
Mr. Kongdak (2011)
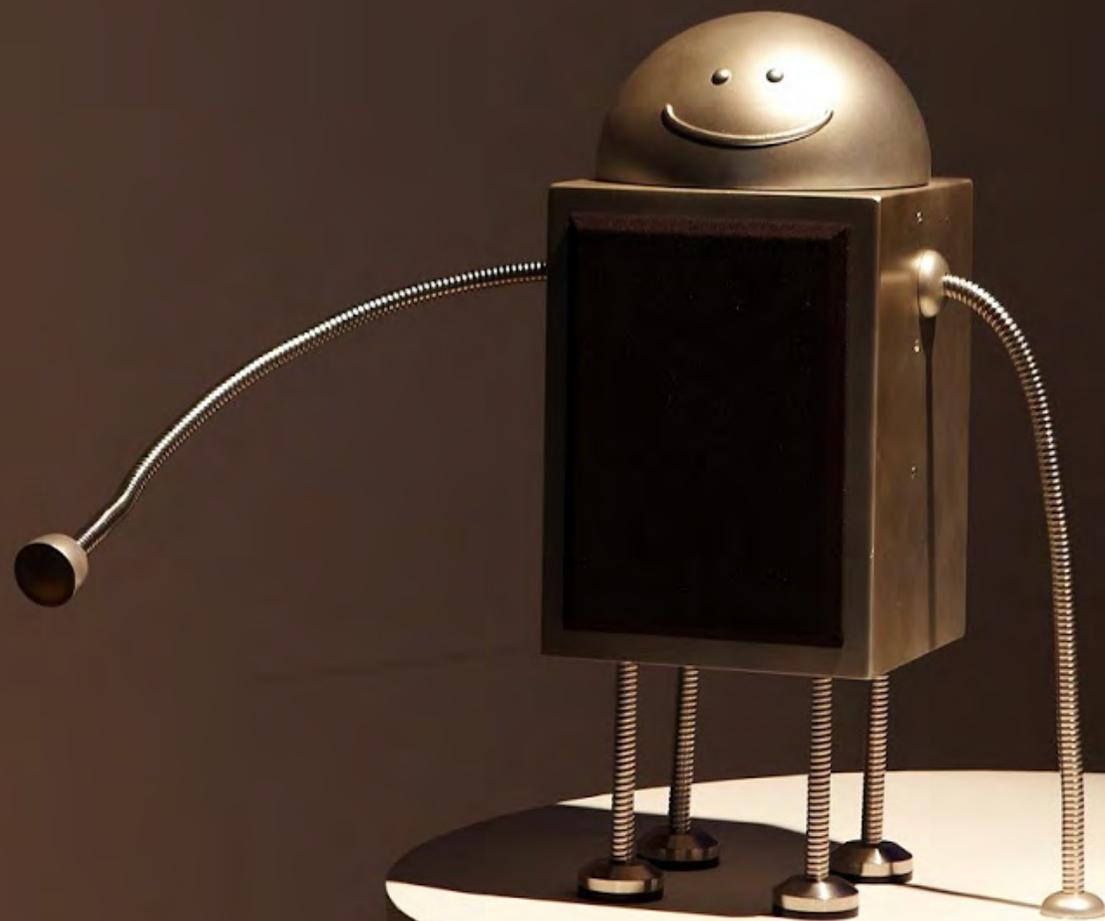
Mr. Kongdak

Interactive Installation,
Polycabonate, Aluminium, MDF, Microphone, Subwoofer Unit, Actuator, Photo Sensor, Custom PCB, MCU
50 x 60 x 80 cm, 2011

"Kongdak" is a heart-beating robot that has an arm that can pick up the minute sound of a viewer's heart beating with a contact microphone and a body that can amplify and play the sound. The moment a viewer's heart contacts Kongdak's hand, Kongdak wakes up making his heart beat with the same frequency as the viewer's heart.
This interaction of physical touch and the propagation of vitality invites viewers to pay attention to their 'life', so important but easily forgotten, and at the same time invites to imagine new possible ways of relationship between humans and machines.
(Kongdak is the sound of heart beating in Korean.)
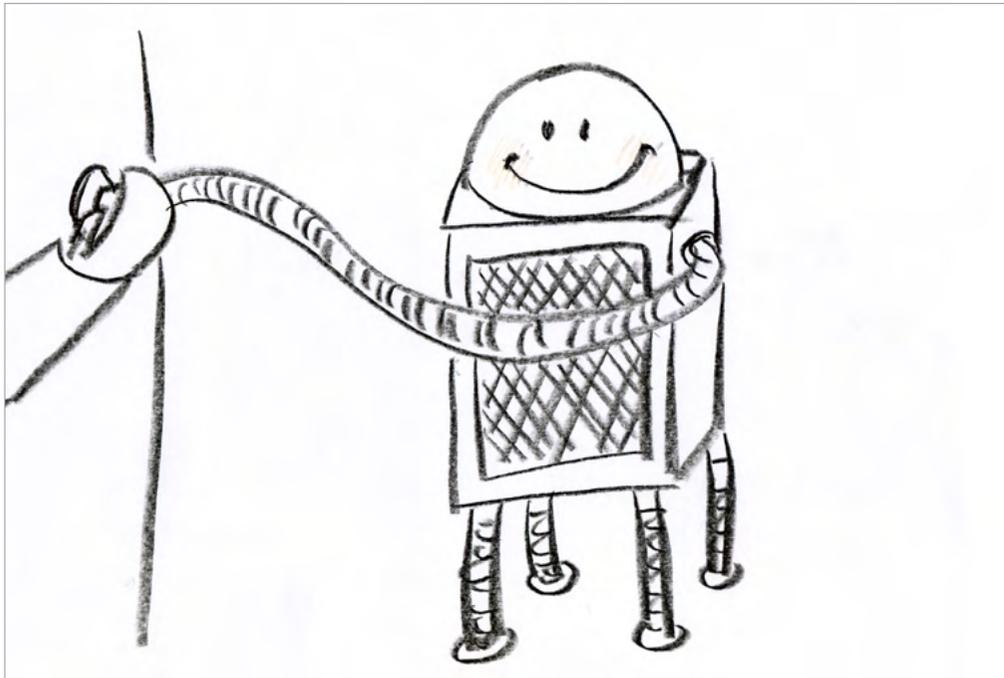
Frog Xylophone
(2010~2012)

Frog Xylophone

Wearable Device,
Resin, Touch Sensor, Speaker, Custom PCBs, SD card, MCU,
Lithium-Polymer Battery
20 x 20 x 5 cm, 2010~2012

The Frog xylophone, conceived from the idea of "a melody played with only the movements of the fingers," is an electronic musical instrument, wearable on the fingertips. It generates a total of 10 sounds by touching people with the finger tips. It can be easily played by anyone, anywhere and make a great performance tool.

© Earl Park, Sookyun Yang
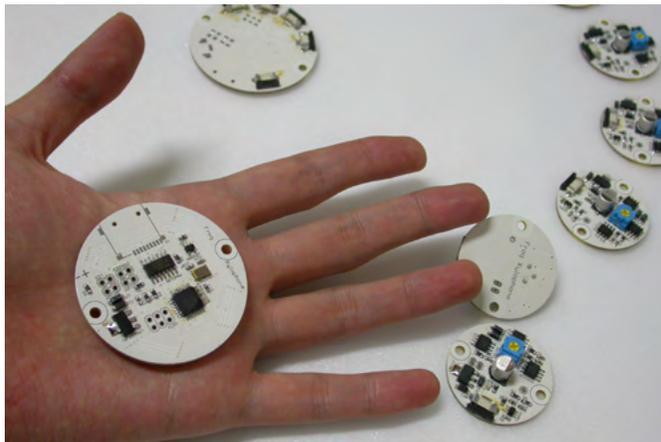
2011 Performance: Hyunsook Ahn & Lamu, Sound: Kharag Penpa
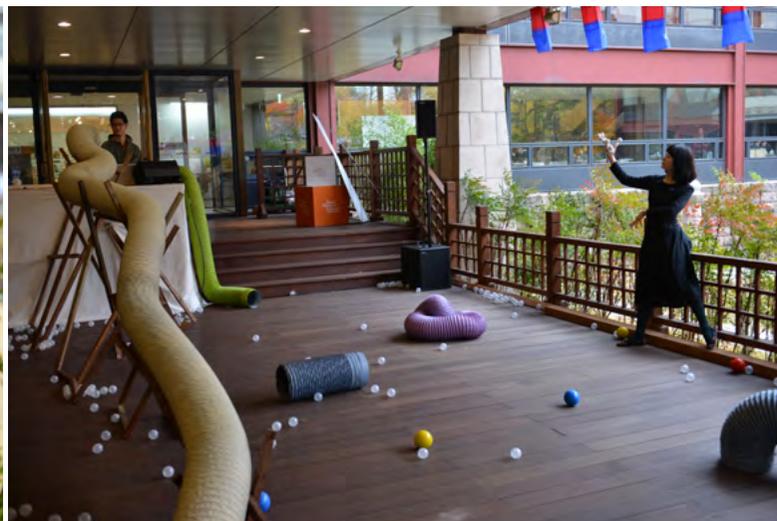
2012 Performance: Hyunsook Ahn, Sound: Taesun Yoo

TimeSpace

Interactive Installation,
MDF, Transparent LCDs, Web-cam, IR sensor, Wiring Board,
Computer
0.6 x 0.6 x 1.9 M, 2007

We live in the present, but the presents incessantly transform themselves into pasts in our brain constructing an inner world that gives us every meaning. In a sense, we live in that reconstructed world. This work pays attention to that transformation and reconstruction.

This work splits the flow of the present into layers and reconstructs the fragmented particle of time on the layers. The pixels of the images of a person received through an infrared sensor and a camera are processed and reconstitute themselves as our pasts on transparent LCD layers. Through repeated experiments, layered transparent LCDs needed to produce overlapping images could be created.
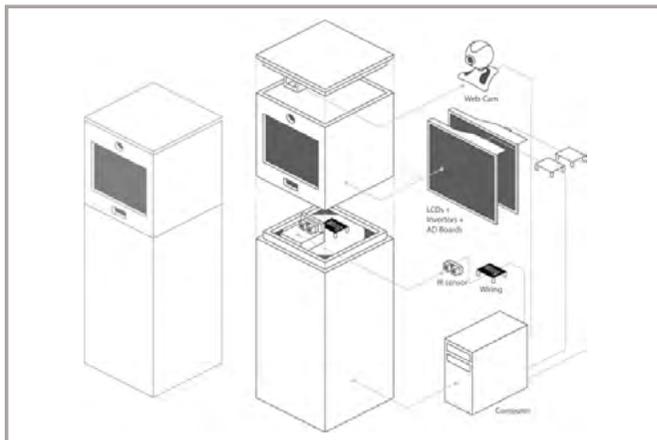
Portfolio

Collaborative Projects

Geum
Space Time 2019
Brilliant Cube
Hyper-Matrix
Noble Mono
The Knight of the Dining Table

Geum

homonym in Korean meaning gold, or crack

Performance,
Acryl, Aluminium, PVC Film, Roller, Motor, Electronic parts,
dimension variable, 2020

@ ARKO Arts Theater, Seoul

<Geum> is a performance work about organic change unfolded from an encounter of a body and a machine in a limited time. The two contrary concepts of 'universal' and 'subjective' were examined in the relation to "time" and found a possible solution in the notion of "time that does not exist". It is a process to contemplate the meaning of time and to face the emotions and sensations created through it.

Park Earl has created a freely moving mechanical device that interacts with the performer, which can wind up and unwind a film roll and be activated via Bluetooth.

© Choreographer: Soyoung Choi / Mechanical device designer: Earl Park
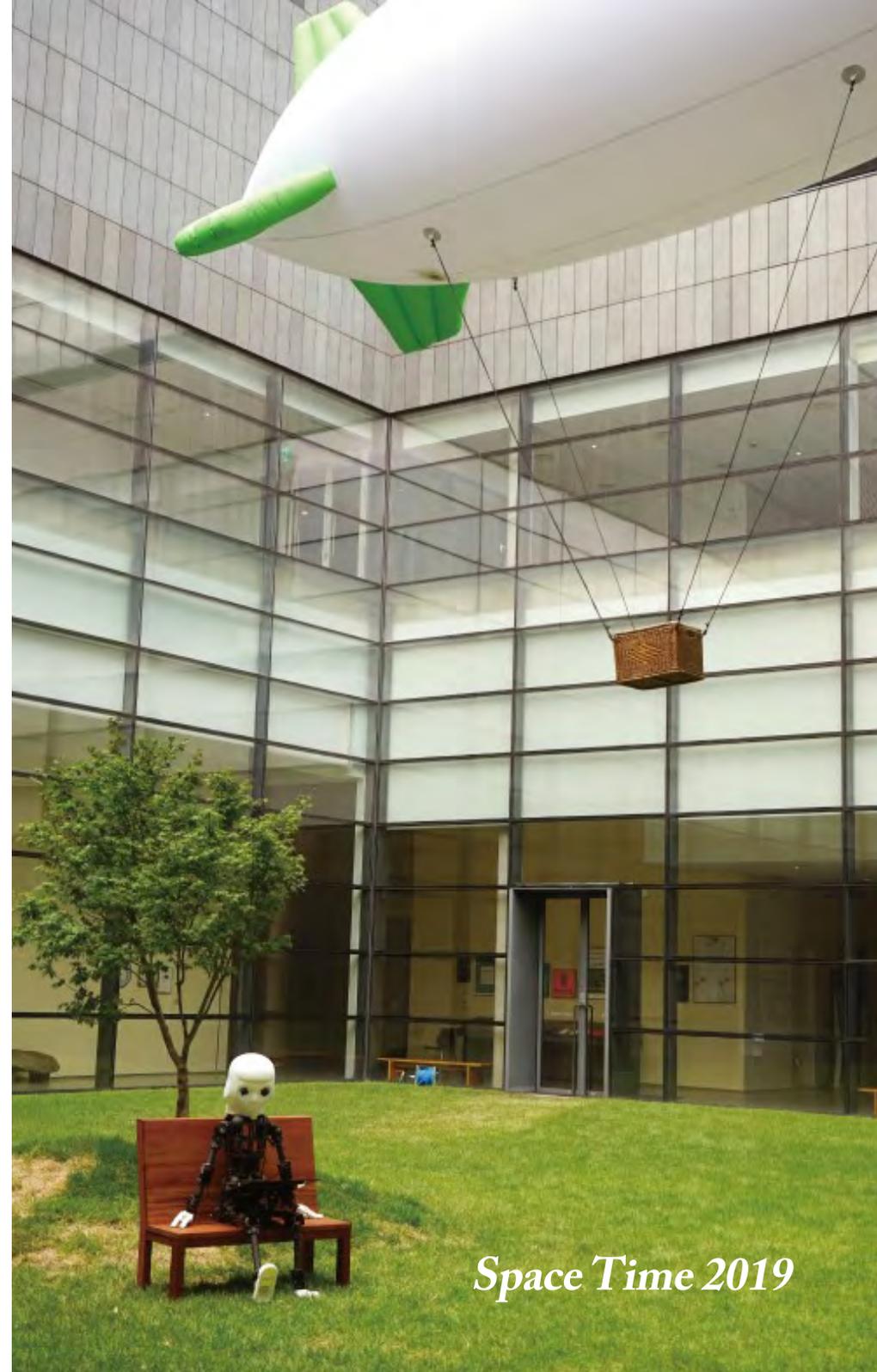
Space Time 2019

Space Time 2019

Robotic Installation & Performance,
Book, 3D printed Parts, HD Camera, Motor, Speaker, Mini PC,
dimension variable, 2019

@ National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul

<Space Time 2019> is a performance and installation work produced and presented by artist Soungui Kim with various collaborators. This work invoves as performers a robot, which is programmed and follows rules, and a shaman, who are associated with supernatural beings beyond the range of human reason. Younghee, lazy and bored robot, recites poems as a performer, mixed and harmonized with the sound from the shaman, the sound from an ad balloon moving up and down on the performance ground, and the sound of spinning bicycle wheels.
Earl Park participated in creating the robot, Young-hee, who recites poems while turning pages, and sometimes stares at people blankly.

© Soungui Kim / 'lazy, bored robot Younghee' : Jihyun Yoon, Earl Park, Donghoon Lee, Sound: Hangil Ryu

Brilliant Cube (2013)
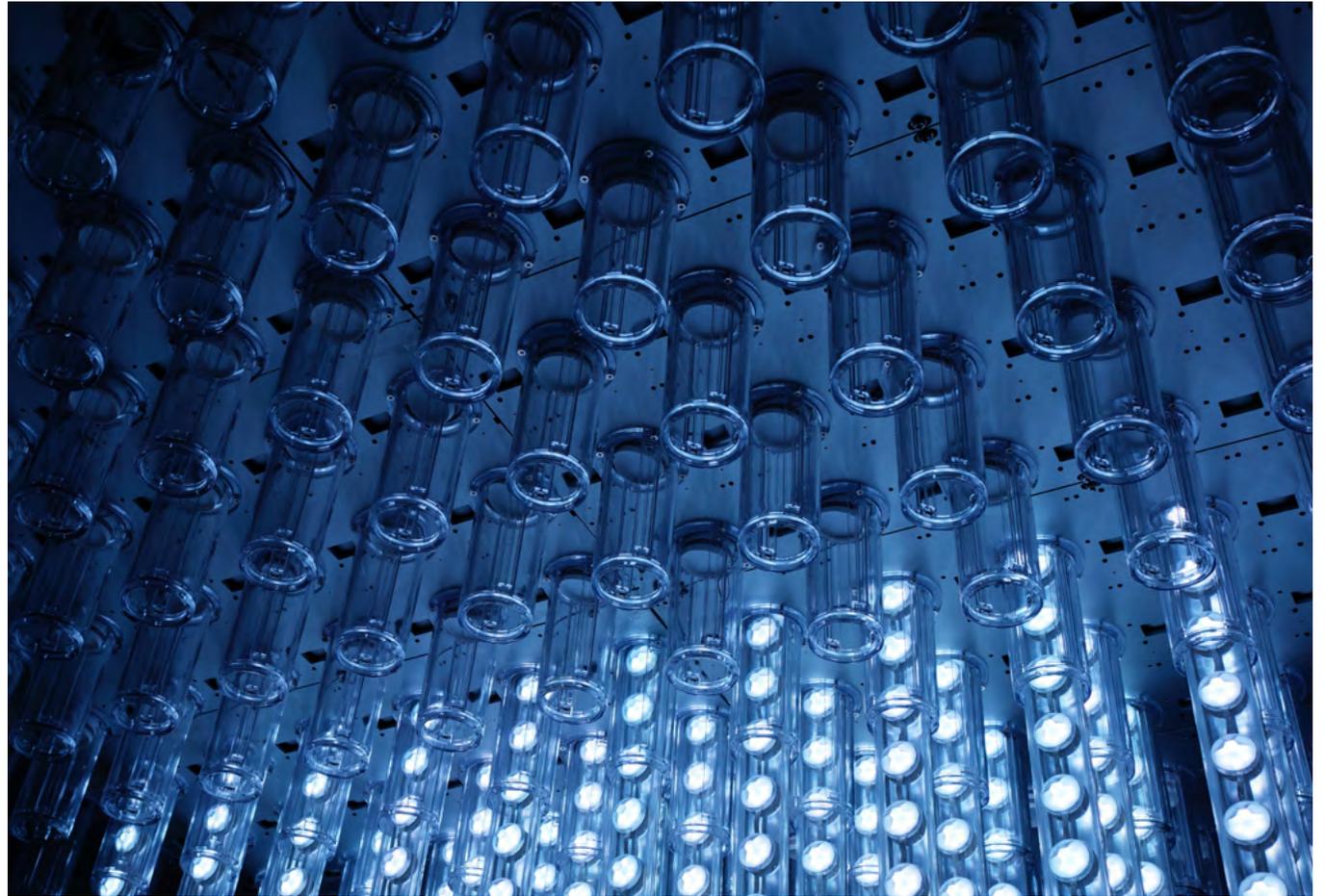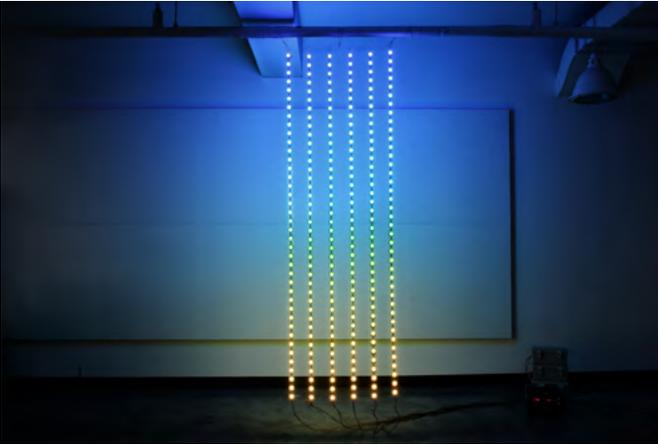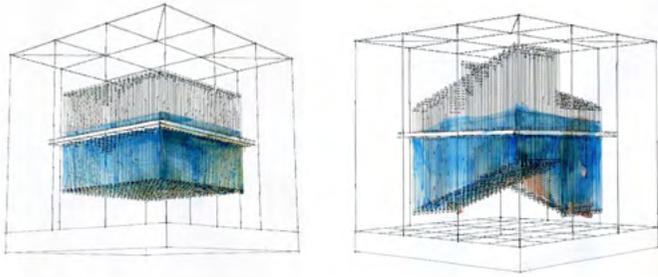
Brilliant Cube

Kinetic Installation,
Steel Frame, 3375 Custom-Made Boxes & Acuator Units &
Motors & Drivers & Powers, Custom-Made Software
6 x 6 x 6 M, 2013

@ Gangnam Station, Seoul

<Brilliant Cube> is a kinetic 3D matrix, comprised of 576 clear LED poles moving up and down. The dimension is 6M X 6M X 6M. It is located at Gangnam station crossroads, one of the most crowded spots in Seoul being a new landmark of Gangnam. With the theme of "Live Brilliant" each LED stands for the brilliant moment of our lives, and by the structure this shows the frameworks of our time that implies the social shift of each individual with equal capacity tiered in the same distance and depth.

Video : https://vimeo.com/90860365
© Media artist group: Jonpasang (Jin-Yo Mok, Earl Park, Sookyun Yang, Jinwook Yeo, Sangwook Yoo, Seonghun Bae), Client: Hyundai Motor Group

Hyper-Matrix (2012)

Hyper-Matrix

Kinetic Landscape,
Steel Frame, 3375 Custom-Made Boxes & Acuator Units &
Motors & Drivers & Powers, Custom-Made Software
25 x 15 x 10.5 M, 2012

@ Hyundai Motor Group pavilion, Yeosu Expo 2012, Yeosu

<Hyper-Matrix> is a kinetic landscape installation created for the Hyundai Motor Group Exhibition Pavilion in Korea, the 2012 Yeosu EXPO site. The installation consists of a specially made huge steel construction to support thousands of stepper motors that control 320x320mm cubes that project out of the internal facade of the building. The foam cubes are mounted to actuators that move them forward and back by the steppers, creating patterns across the three-sided display. Comprised of what at first appear to be three blank white walls, Hyper-Matrix installation quickly comes to life as thousands of individual cubic units forming a field of pixels begin to move, pulsate, and form dynamic images across the room, creating infinite number of possibilities in the vertical, 180 degree, landscape. In addition, as the boxes are arranged at only 5mm narrow intervals, the wall can also be a nice moving screen for the images projected on to it.

Video : https://vimeo.com/46857169
© Media artist group: Jonpasang (Jin-Yo Mok, Earl Park, Sookyun Yang, Sangwook Yoo, Jinwook Yeo), Client: Hyundai Motor Group

Noble Mono (2010)

Noble Mono

Media Facade,
Steel Frame, 12060EA 3 Layered LED Units
68 x 20 x 20 M, 2010

@ Shinsegae Main Department Strore, Seoul

<Noble Mono>, 3-layered LED Net-Matrix, installed on the facade of Shinsegae Main Department Store in Seoul,is a 3-layered media facade artwork composed of more than 10'000 LEDs. It creates elegant luxury impresssion by using refined monotone color differentiating itself from conventional showy building decorations. The images about 3 main themes - 80th Anniversary of Shinsegae, Christmas, New Year's Day - are rendered in totally unconventional and artistic way and have a firm three dimensional look through making the best use of the 3-layered hardware.

Video : https://vimeo.com/61515575
© Media artist group: Jonpasang (Jin-yo Mok, Earl Park, Sookyun Yang, Dae-ro Ra), Client: Shinsegae Group

The knight of the dining table

Interactive Installation,
Steel Frame, LED, DMX, Electronic parts,
2.5 x 2.5 x 0.3 M, 2010

@ The Creators Project : Seoul 2010, Kring, Seoul

<The knight of the dining table> is an offline game that participants can enjoy while using their body. The four knights (players) on as chess pieces play to become a knight of the table by pulling the sword first while obeying the rules of rotating the table or the chairs on the grid.

A mechanical device was installed under the game floor which indicates possible movements of the table and chairs according to the players' interactions and also the results of their decisions as a tool that organically connects the players and the game.

Video : https://vimeo.com/21425464
© Peter Lee & NOLGONG

Portfolio

Performances

Hybrid Lab Performance
j-th time

Hybrid Lab Performance (2018)
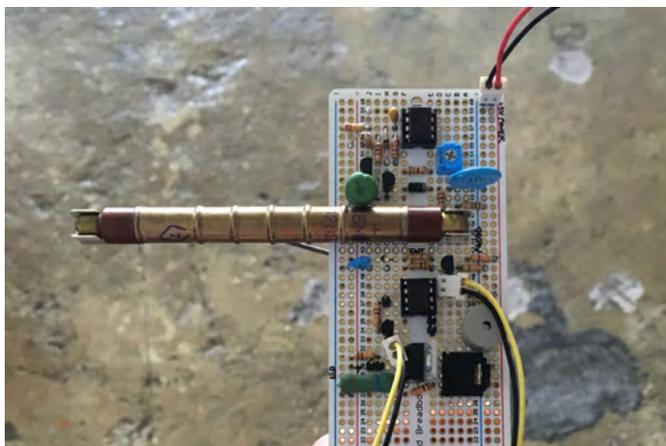
Hybrid Lab Performance

Performance,
Helium Gas, Balloon, Geiger–Müller Tube, Mini PC, Headphone,
Electric Parts
15", 2018

@ MatteReal: World of Matter through Matter, Asia Culture
Center Creation Space2, Gwangju

The International Convergence Symposium on Science and Arts, <MatteReal> was designed to share and discuss relevant knowledge for the fusion of art and science among scientists, artists, humanities scholars, and philosophers, domestic and foreign. Under its main theme 'the world of matter through matter', various programs such as symposium, workshop, concert, and hybrid rap performance were held.

Earl Park produced a 15-minute hybrid rap performance session. We live in a great sea of microscopic particles, but it is not the world we humans can perceive and interact with in our mental model of the world. We can communicate with the world only in a macroscopic level. This performance was an attempt to produce a scene where we interact with the microscopic world in our daily lives through amplifying and transforming the data from a detector of some cosmic particles. In it, the performer connects a device that can detect some cosmic rays arriving from space to a helium balloon trying to leave into space using familiar props from our everyday lives. Then he tries to communicate this encounter with the microscopic world in visual and auditory forms that can appeal to our senses.
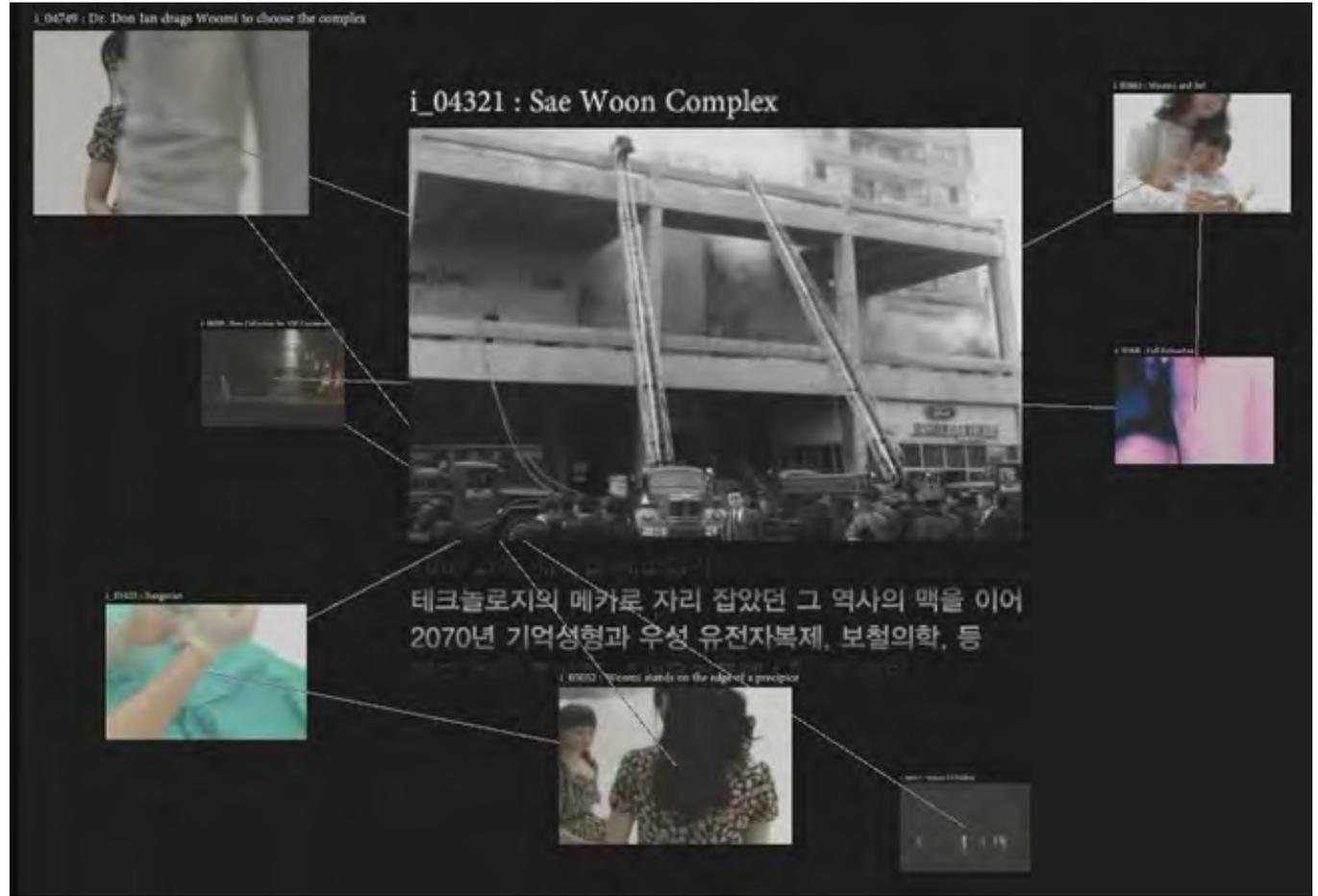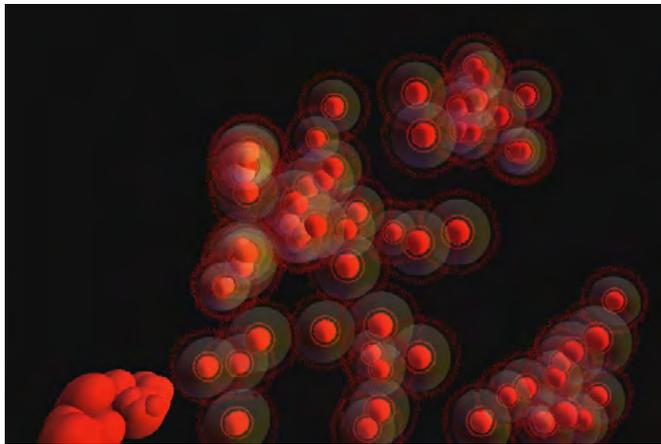
j-th time

Performance (Scene #1),
Visual Programming
10", 2009

@ Arko Art Theater & Korea National University of Arts, Seoul

<j-th time> is an interactive performance project, set in the 22nd century, an era where semi-machines and cyborgs coexist, at the Sewoon Complex, which is used by a medical science research institute specializing in customized memory surgery and gene development for human aging. With the concept of digital cinema used in the previous work, i-th Time kept, in the first act of the performance, a virtual world like an online game was formed in a hyperlink format based on a network environment. It was produced so that the performers behind the stage could freely browse the movies in the 3D space created by programming through their movements, which is shown to the audience through the screen of the performance hall.

© Intermedia Performance Lab

CV

Earl Park
b. 1980, Gwangju, KR
Lives and works in Seoul.

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website: http://heartpowder.com
video : https://vimeo.com/earlpark

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Education

2015   Master of Fine Arts, Interaction Design, Hongik University, KR

2008   Bachelor of Fine Arts, Digital Media Design, Hongik University, KR

Solo Exhibition

2021   Mechanics of Mythology, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR

Selected Group Exhibitions

2021   Fragments of Difference - Once upon a time in Seoul, AllTimeSpace, Seoul, KR

2020   The Show Must Go On, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR
Platform Artists: Questions for Now, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR
Daejeon Biennale 2020 A.I.: Sunshine Misses Windows, Daejeon Museum of Art, Daejeon, KR
Science in Art, GS Caltex Yeulmaru, Yeosu, KR

2019   Da Vinchi Creative 2019: Living Life, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR
Circulation Metaphor, Korean Cultural Centre, London, UK
What, Seongnam Arts Center Gallery 808, Seongnam, KR

2018   ACC_R Creators in Lab 2nd half Showcase, Asia Culture Center Creation Space2, Gwangju, KR
ACC_R Creators in Lab 1st half Showcase, Asia Culture Center Creation Studio2, Gwangju, KR
MatteReal: World of Matter through Matter, Asia Culture Center Creation Space2, Gwangju, KR

2017   ACC ACT Center Open Studio Showcase 2017, Asia Culture Center Creation Space5, Gwangju, KR

2016   Handcart Project, Gentle Monster Hongdae flagship store, Seoul, KR

2015   Plastic Myths, Asia Culture Center Creation Space2, Gwangju, KR

2012   Arts Walk, Seoul Museum of History, Seoul, KR

2011   Random Acess Black Box, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR
The Creators Project: Seoul 2011, Platoon Kunsthalle, Seoul, KR
Seoul Art Space Geumcheon 2nd Open Studio, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR

2010   Hello, World, Moonji cultural institute Saii, Seoul, KR
The Return of Techne, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR

2007   Visual media electrical imagination, IDAS, Seoul, KR

CV

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b. 1980, Gwangju, KR

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mobile: 82-10-8615-3566

website: http://heartpowder.com

video : https://vimeo.com/earlpark

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Collaborative Projects

2021	'Rest', Public Art Project, Sudoguksan Museum of Housing & Living, Incheon, KR
2020	'Geum', Performance, ARKO Arts Theater, Seoul. KR
2019	'Space Time 2019', Exhibition & Performance, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR
2016	Media Planning & Landmark Artwork Planning, Paradise City, Incheon, KR
2015	Art Exhibition Planning, Milan Expo Korea Pavilion, Seoul, KR
2013~14	'Brilliant Cube', Kinetic 3D Matrix Installation, Gangnam Station M-stage, Seoul, KR
2012	'Hyper-Matrix', Kinetic Landscape Installation, Yeosu Expo 2012 Hyundai Motor Group Pavilion, Yeosu, KR
2010~11	'Noble Mono', 3-layered LED Net-Matrix Facade, Shinsegae Department Store_Main Branch, Seoul, KR
2010	'The Knight of the Dining Table', Game, The Creators Project : Seoul 2010, Kring, Seoul, KR
2009	'j-th time', Performance, Daehakro Art Theater & Korea National University of Arts, Seoul, KR

Artist Residencies

2020	Incheon Art Platform, Incheon Foundation for Arts, Incheon, KR
2018	ACC_R Creators in Lab (Kinetic Art Lab), Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, KR
2018	ACC_R Creators in Lab, Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, KR
2017	ACC_R Visiting Creators in Lab, Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, KR
2015	ACC_R Creators in Lab (Transmedia Lab), Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, KR
2011	Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Seoul, KR

Artist Talks & Presentations

2020.10.29~30	'So Familiar, So Strange', Platform Open Studio, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR (online)
2020.10.09	Artist Talk, Daejeon Museum of Art, Daejeon, KR (online)
2020.07.21	Platform Salon, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR
2020.05.27	'Machinery & Imagery', CiTE Seminar, Postech, Pohang, KR (online)
2019.07.22	Artist Talk, Korean Cultural Centre, London, UK
2018.12.08	Idea Talk, Da Vinci Lab Live, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR
2018.09.06	Creators Talk, ACC Creation Studio2, Gwangju, KR
2018.05.30	Creators Talk, ACC Maker Space Community Lounge, Gwangju, KR
2017.11.30	Creators Talk, ACC Creation Center Theater Lobby, Gwangju, KR
2011.05.19	Open Studio Opening Presentation, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, KR

CV

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Awards & Grants

2018	Grant, Da Vinci Idea Public Contribution 2018, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture
	Showcase Grant(1st half & 2nd half), Asia Culture Institute
2017	Best Lecture Award (2nd Semester, 2017), Yonsei University
	Residency Grant & Creation Grant(2nd half), Asia Culture Institute
2016	Creative Mentoring Program for Young Professionals (Art Center Nabi), Korea Creative Content Agency
2015	Residency Grant & Digital Heritage Project Grant, Asia Culture Institute
2011	Grant, Da Vinci Idea Public Contribution 2011, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture
2010	Grant, Da Vinci Idea Public Contribution 2010, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture
2007	Outstanding Work for Seoul City Gallery Project, Seoul Design Foundation

Workshop & Mentoring

2020	Art+Tech Workshop, Incheon Art Platform, Incheon, KR
2017~18	Project Mentoring, Seoul Women's University, Seoul, KR
2016	Invited Lecturer, Seoul Women's University, Seoul, KR
	Arduino Basic Workshop, Artcenter Nabi, Seoul, KR
	ACT LAB DAY Workshop, Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, KR
2014	Wearable Computing Workshop, Sangmyung University, Seoul, KR

Teaching Experience

2019	Part-time Lecturer, Yonsei University, Wonju, KR
2014~17	Part-time Lecturer, Yonsei University, Wonju, KR
2011	Lecturer, Moonji Cultural Institute Saii, Seoul, KR
2011~12	Part-time Lecturer, Inchon Catholic University, Incheon, KR

Professional Experience

2012	Research Engineer, Hyper-Matrix Making & Installation, Yonsei University Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation
2009~17	Media Artist & Team Manager, Design & Manufacturing Team, Media artist group: Jonpasang & Jonpasang Inc.
2008	Designer, Ahn Graphics Inc.

Critiques

Capturing, Representing, Recognizing:
3 art works at Daejeon Biennale 2020

Lev Manovich (professor of Computer Science
at the City University of New York)
2020

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Daejeon Biennale 2020 A.I. International Colloquium Program, Video Capture

<Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown: Imprintng>, Earl Park
Video Link (1:12:28~1:19:29)

Critiques

Human, and Mechanical

Kim, Hyunjeong (Curator,
Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art)
2020

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I remember moments, saying, 'human', or 'mechanical' when referring to certain people in our everyday conversations. Amongst the two characteristics, people inherent with only one aspect, whether it be human or mechanical, may be rare. Artist, Earl Park summons such habitual notions of ours and poses problems. Moreover, we are henceforth able to predict that he will constantly throw questions at us through his works. The existence of machines, which Park is trying to say in his works, can be said to be the place where machines themselves become the subject, transcending the existence of becoming the tool when producing other media. I wish to articulate the fact that Park's works enable us to think indirectly on how humans have limited the characteristics of heterogeneous existences, and at the same time, how they have attempted to connect different concepts that seem irrelevant from one another, in connection with Simondon's indetermination. Simondon's indetermination, in other words, can be accounted as 'openness.'

The most recent exhibition Park has participated in is the Daejeon Biennale 2020 <A. I., Sunshine Misses Windows>. Through this exhibition, he presented two works: Machines on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown: Escape from Freedom, and Machines on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown: Imprinting. Park's works where humans and machines are not separate entities but combined naturally permeating into one another, were moving rather silently than expected, even in the exhibition space. Had the condition of a human being who is on a nervous breakdown were to be expressed into sounds, I believe it would probably be sharp and keen 'notes' of 'scraping' - associating feelings of vigilance, defence, terror, compulsion, etc. - something, repeatedly, similar to those of Park's machines. I assume, in Imprinting, sounds on human obsession, movements of machines, and 'notes' of pursuing fantasy, endlessly challenging, even though they are aware that they cannot touch each other, would probably be so. It made me recall of an experience I had had.

It was interesting starting with the work's title because, like how Simondon had discovered the true character of machines from indetermination, the process of machines and humans going through constant connection, decomposition and convergence with one another have many similarities. This is so from the point that like how human beings are born in this world, make use of their potential abilities and develop, machines, too, evolve and are becoming diversified, not restricting to a single function. From this aspect, the potentiality of humans and machines is an infinite area that is unpredictable and interesting. Looking from this point of view, humans and machines, like Simondon's concept, "coevolve." They combine with one another, break up, and then, go other ways, searching for another point of contact. Simondon referred to this phenomenon as "transduction." I am one of those people who are afraid of the technology-predominant era where the coming machines which excel might take over humans. Simondon points out that the cause of such fear of humans derives from humans misunderstanding the existence method related with technological objects and adopting ways of establishing relationships with them inappropriately.

Park's Machines on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown series, also, throws questions at us, similar to that of indetermination and transduction of humans and machines which Simondon suggested. This is not merely on a level of comparing technology and humans, and even more so an attitude of criticism. In Park's works, from the process of engineers constructing and planning blueprints to installing it on the site as he had predicted and making it public, all of their processes seem alike. However, at this point, what differentiates his work from the former is that it entails agony on how form and movement of the machines he had planned is going to be received by people as an image. At the same time,

Critiques

Human, and also mechanical

Kim, Hyunjeong (Curator,
Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art)
2020

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the artist event takes into account of what people can experience as machines(work) move. The fact that Park plans 'adjusting, continuously, into a design in which everything can be in motion,' is particularly special. Even though I cannot analyze nor reinterpret the blueprints the artist had sent me, I became curious about them, which can be said to be the basic stage that is the key in the progression of his working process. I could picture, without difficulty, Park, as if operating a conveyer belt, spearheading the many processes based on those blueprints.

Putting aside the frustration of not being able to read the blueprints, my thought was, Park's machines are tests for 'evolution' for increasing the density of communication the moment (it seems chances of it being in the exhibition room are most high) they meet with humans. Machines can modify malfunctions or errors, but people are not beings possible for experiment. From this aspect, machines may be living the process of coevolution more actively than humans.

Park's work, which respects the reality owned by humans and the reality owned by machines, individually, and pays attention to the new reality which the two entities will create, thereby, suggests new reasoning on relationships. Like his explanation, the point where 'machines determine what they will perceive and accept in this world through various sensors and also determine on its means and response', secures persuasiveness with what Simondon has claimed, i.e., that machines are also human. A. I. today is susceptible to external information situation and its functions have become diversified. In addition, had we consider the evolution function of interaction, stage by stage, I believe that Park's work will form sufficient consensus as a medium of transduction which, rather than dominating and intimidating humans, communicate with humans and re-establish the human-human, and human-machine relationship.

Namjune Paik, who, like Simondon, took notice of information technology and predicted that formation of global village would become possible due to the development of the internet, comes to mind. He even said that he uses machines as a resistance on machines. As humans, machines and nature mediate with one another and come together to bring about beauty, I have great expectations on the moment which Park's new works, which go further, and where the dynamic sympathy and emotion spread, will commune with viewers, seeing them as 'aesthetics of ensemble' and 'amusement', going beyond the aura of humans and machines.

* Gilbert Simondon, 1924-1989
Gilbert Simondon is a philosopher, born in Saint-Etienne, and is referred to as the founder of "philosophy of machines." He earned a doctor's degree at Sorbonne University in 1958 and taught students at Sorbonne, Poitiers, University of Paris 4. His main work is his doctoral thesis L'individuation à la lumière des notions de Forme et d'Information(Individuation in the light of the notions of Form and Information) , and his complementary thesis, Du mode d'existence des objets techniques (On the mode of existence of technical objects) .

The core concept of Simondon's philosophy is "individuation." He completely changed the philosophy of science, philosophy of technology and the philosophy of machines, and based on them, developed his ontology. This attempt influenced numerous contemporary philosophers including Gilles Deleuze, and subsequently influenced greatly on the philosophy of politics of Antonio Negri, and also the philosophy of science such as Brian Massumi and Bernard Stiegler. (Source from http://nomadist.tistory.com/590)

Critiques

Human, All Too Human Machines

Shim, Hea-Ryun
(prof., Chonbuk National Univ.)
2019

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More than ever, the discussion over 'understanding of humans and machines' is hotter. How man and machine should coexist is at the heart of this discussion. With unprecedented scientific and technological advances, machines no longer remain tools. We have reached the point where machines define the nature and way of existence of humans, and where we have to worry about living with machines. It is from this context that 'post-human' or 'trans-human' is being discussed, leading to issues of 'mechanization of humans' and 'humanization of machines'. The key here is humans. This is because in order to humanize machines, first required is to understand humans. We need to know what is quintessentially human in order to create machines that can relate to humans. Compared to the humanization of machines, the mechanization of humans can be rather simple; we may just need to supplement, expand, or improve ourselves. And it causes relatively small anxiety among us. The problem is the humanization of machines, which is feared by many who have a sci-fi fear of being subordinate to the control of machines in the world where machines become masters. But technophobia will be of little help now that we have to think about new relationships between humans and machines. This is the time we need to try to understand machines from various perspectives. In order for humans and machines to coexist, the two must interact with each other. They do not interact just physically but need to 'relate' to each other. The prerequisite for such rapport is to first recognize the machine as another being, not just as a tool. When recognized as a being, a machine can be an end, not a means.

Earl Park's project, <Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown> is a very timely work now when humanization of machines is being discussed. First of all, Earl Park's way of understanding machines and his attitude toward them are interesting. Various machines appear in his work. He treats machines not just as a means, but for an end. His work centers on 'humanization of machines'. 'Robotic art' is one of them. However, there is something strange about the robotic art world he is building. He constantly asks and explores how and how different humans are from machines. However, the reason for asking these questions is not to show that humans are different from machines, but to show paradoxically that they may not be so different in the end. His works unfold in a way that shows that machines are no different from humans. The characteristics of his work come from the way he understands humans. As mentioned earlier, in order to humanize a machine, understanding 'man itself' must be preceded. Humanity is a necessary and sufficient condition. You need to know what humanity is to create a human-like robot. Imitation is not possible without an understanding of the object to be imitated. Earl Park also thinks about humanity before creating his robotic art as others who study and work around robots do. In the general process of humanizing machines, the emphasis is primarily on 'intelligence'. It is why we formed a concept of so-called artificial intelligence (AI). It is the mainstream that Machines are studied based on reason. However, Park Earl approaches humanity from a different angle; that is, an angle centering on emotions, irrationality and unconsciousness rather than on reason and consciousness. The result is <machines on the verge of nervous breakdown>. The machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown! Earl Park shows us these paradoxical works. He sees machines as psychoanalytic objects.

Critiques

Human, All Too Human Machines

Shim, Hea-Ryun
(prof., Chonbuk National Univ.)
2019

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As is well known, when Freud talked about psychoanalysis, it was never easily accepted. When he tried to analyze human mental world on the concept of unconsciousness, not of consciousness, many people at that time considered his arguments absurd. Unconsciousness literally means 'a state of not having consciousness. Therefore, it cannot exist and all the more cannot compose our mental world. Freud shocked the world with his claim that unconsciousness surely exists, though hidden, and reveals itself occasionally affecting human behaviors. He gradually refined his argument into an organized discipline developing various concepts such as neurosis, hysteria, obsessiveness, repetition, libido, and trauma. This does not just mean the emergence of a new science that can be used to understand humans, but also mean that the horizons of human understanding have expanded. These neurotic features, which were not readily recognized as human characteristics, are now accepted as one of natural and quintessential characteristics of human beings. Our irrational emotions, unpredictable mental world beyond intuition and neurotic features that unconsciously affect human behaviors became the measure of humanness besides computational and rational reason.

Earl Park attempts to 'humanize machines' based on this Freudian understanding of humans. Machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown are subject to psychoanalysis. Nervous breakdown refers to being overly sensitive to internal or external stimuli. As a result, nervous breakdowns cause emotions such as anxiety and restlessness. Freud analyzed ways of relating to dangers in neurosis into anxiety, fear, and fright. According to him, anxiety is expectation of an unknown danger. Fear has something dangerous. And fright is a condition where you are in danger when you are not ready. Perhaps anxiety, fear, and fright can drive someone into a nervous breakdown. If a machine is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, will it mean that the machine is in an unstable state and can experience fear and fright? Earl Park's machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown fear relationships. They fear not only relationships with humans, but also relationships with other machines. Just as modern people are afraid of social relations, so these machines react with fear to social relations. As you approach, they flinch with vague anxiety and fear. We are invited to imagine their hidden unconscious world. This point where 'unconscious world' meets machines are quite interesting as a way of 'humanization of machines'.

The machine with unconsciousness will not be accepted seriously. It was difficult to accept even the existence of the human unconsciousness. When Freud claimed that hysteria is not only a woman's disease, but that men can also have it, it was taken as nonsense at that time. But how about now? This paradoxical 'humanization of machines' centered on the neurosis that Earl Park is exploring is inviting us into uncanny imagination unfolding set in the coming future. His machines fearing social relations may be under great stress by exposing to the exhibitions. They, hurt by misunderstanding of them, may one day appeal to us for their trauma. They may even feel strange and absurd for these human beings familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. Then machines are now subject to psychoanalytic therapy. In the course of this treatment, we will have to find out what drives these machines on the verge of a nervous breakdown, what is oppressed in their unconsciousness. This imagination leads us to an strange and interesting world where other beings are allowed to have what we have so far restricted to only humans: intelligence, emotions, and even unconsciousness.