

Press Release

Title	Nam June Paik Art Center Special Exhibition <i>Common Front, Affectively</i>	
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Nam June Paik Art Center Special Exhibition

Common Front, Affectively



■ Overview

- **Exhibition Title:** Nam June Paik Art Center Special Exhibition - *Common Front, Affectively*
- **Period:** 22 March, 2018(Thur) - 24 June, 2018(Sun) (95 days)
- **Venue:** Nam June Paik Art Center 2F
- **Opening:** 22 March 2018 (Thur) 4pm
- **Curated by** Hyun Jeung Kim(Curator, Nam June Paik Art Center),
 Seong Eun Kim(Chief researcher, Samsung Museum of Art, Leeum)
- **Artists:** Hyewon Kwon, Daum Kim, Ragnar Kjartansson • The National, Rosalind Nashashibi, Bojan Djordjev(with Katarina Popović and Siniša Ilić), Cécile B. Evans, Ed Atkins, Ignas Krunglevičius, Yunjung Lee, Everyday Practice, Femke Herregraven, Yang Ah Ham, Minki Hong
- **Organized and Hosted by** Nam June Paik Art Center, Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation
- **Supported by** Sandoll Cloud, Perrier

■ Exhibition Related Programs

[Performance]

Program		Date	Venue
Between Spot and Spine	Yunjung Lee (Artist)	March 22(Thur) 16:30	Nam June Paik Art Center 2F
The Discreet Charm of Marxism	Bojan Djordjev (Artist, in collaboration with Katarina Popovic and Siniša Ilic), Prof. Namsee Kim (Studies in Visual Arts, Ewha Womans University)	May 17(Thur) - May 19(Sat)	Nam June Paik Art Center
PP World Open Beta Service	Minki Hong (Artist)	March 24, April 7, April 21, June 9, June 23 14:00 - 18:00	Nam June Paik Art Center

[Talk]

Artist and curator talk program will be held between April and June.

* For more information and reservation, please check the homepage. (www.njpartcenter.kr)

■ Introduction

In the rapid development of digitally networked environments, we are participant observers who at once go through and bring about social and political changes that might not have been anticipated. Some of the changes are triggered by the emotional flow which makes you feel pain about the sufferings of others, rage against social injustice and violence, and finally take some actions collectively. This is particularly driven by the fact that social media become part of everyday life, and the arena of public discussion is situated to link online and offline, which make social emotions to take on a new form, and sensorial perceptions to follow a new course.

Common Front, Affectively is to show different standpoints of contemporary art about the propagation of emotion and sensation. Thirteen artists(teams) working in video, installation, sound, performance and design, capture different formations and movements of affects. Their works of art pose questions as to how discrete individuals transpose their feelings to common values, whether individuals not only burst out into a public forum, but build it up inside themselves. These works also turn to a world transformed by technologies on an emotional level and probe the ways technologies affect the mind in responding to social issues and rethinking the self-other relationships. What are featured in the exhibition seem to tell us that the vulnerable, precarious, helpless minds notwithstanding, we may perhaps be able to generate a certain undulating and intermingling movement by murmuring what we feel and what we think, even if this sounds undecipherable and incomprehensible at first.

In *Common Front, Affectively*, the relations between the individual and the collective with regard to connectivity and isolation, between the affects manifested and controlled, come to the fore on the waves of a multitude of voices. Whenever the waves are shattered, the realities-yet-to-come are evoked out of a common front, affectively constructed in between and cumulated beside you.

■ Participating Artists and works

1. Everyday Practice(Korea), *Common Front, Affectively*, 2018, exhibition identity design, graphic installation, publication



Everyday Practice (EP) is a graphic design studio tackling the role of design: what can design do for today's realities? Primarily based on graphic designs, EP does not limit itself to two-dimensional works searching for different design methodologies. In parallel, EP carries out a series of self-initiated projects, from a poster work *I Don't Care* (2013) to the exhibition *Means of Movement* (2017). They are concerned with boundaries between 'you' and 'me,' and with how design can establish a connection between people; and they seek to find a new way of life in which design is instrumental as one of the ways of social movement. In this exhibition, EP creates an identity design that combines a human face represented as a place to exchange an emotion and make up a sense of community, with emotions in a state of flux whose uncertainty is represented by the material texture of flowing and meandering. A set of variations on this identity design is then to intervene in the exhibition space in the form of moving images and prints. The design concept is also applied to the exhibition catalog which unrolls *Common Front, Affectively*, in a specific manner to the platform of publication.

2. Yunjung Lee(Korea), *Between Spot and Spine*, 2018, performance, video documentation



*Previous work, Yunjung Lee(Korea), *1 and 4*, 2017, performance, video documentation, 49:37

Choreographer and dancer Lee performs different ‘in-betweenness’: between the body and space, between the body and time, between the body and language, and between bodies. Through the friction of bodily contacts in dancing, she explores the relations between self and others, between individual and society, between minority and majority, and between parity and disparity. *Between Spot and Spine* started with her life-long source of trouble, a lateral curvature of the spine and a large brown spot on the arm. She pursued a personal investigation into these abnormalities, to realizing that she was oppressed under the social gaze. Her distress about her own body is in fact precipitated by how a majority views it in the society.

Representing the introspective process and consequently feeling liberated from the gaze of others, she was encouraged to reflect on whether she herself belonged to the social majority. Her research on these issues was rendered in her previous works *Seventy-Fifth Second* (2015), *1 and 4* (2017) and in this new solo piece.

3. Ed Atkins(United Kingdom), *Hisser*, 2015, 2-channel HD video installation, color, sound, 21:51 (Images are courtesy of the artist and Cabinet Gallery, London.)



How an equivocal sense of disquiet holds power over the body in the digital age preoccupies Atkins, and he infuses meticulously constructed high-definition images with poetic and literary qualities. *Hisser* draws inspiration from a real story of a man in Florida, whose house was said to be swallowed by an enormous sinkhole. A hyper-realistically created CGI character seems to be infected with sadness, loneliness and desire, in an eerie and sorrowful room. At one moment, he is trying to sleep in the bed, and at another, is fiddling with Rorschach cards in the corner of the room. At yet another moment, he shows himself in the whitened space inside a computer screen, roaming nakedly and repeatedly muttering, "I'm sorry, I didn't know," "I don't know what to say." This avatar-like figure in the virtual world utters anxiety and confusion, as if he encounters these feelings for the first time in his life, in a mixture of singing and sighing. "It took me so long to get my feet back off the ground," "I can feel it coming round inside me," "I didn't know her life was so sad, I cried." With a roar, then, his room collapses to vanish in a flash.

4. Ignas Krunglevičius(Lithuania)

4-1. *Interrogation*, 2009, 2-channel video, sound, 13:00



Sound artist Krunglevičius made this work out of his interest in psychological patterns arising in power relations. *Interrogation* draws on text materials from the police transcript of a murder investigation in the US after a woman called Mary Kovic was arrested for killing her husband. The text basically consists of a police officer's questions and her answers, and with all visual information removed, is condensed into lines written in bold white on two black screens alternately. This is synchronized with the electronic soundtrack reinforcing the conversation's strain and uneasiness. At the time of interrogation, the police offer mobilized REID, a technique to capitalize on the suspect's psychological state. Red and blue screens on and off swiftly and intermittently stand for hesitation and delay. A sharp tone and a crescendo of pulsation are so intense to engulf the audience viscerally in the tense relationship between the two. Krunglevičius applied sonic intonation, rhythm and melody to each word so that the typed-out text could be felt as human.

4-2. *Confessions*, 2011, 8 single-channel videos, sound, 55:00



Similarly to *Interrogation*, this work is based on the court transcripts of confessions by eight convicted serial killers. Removing the part recounting an actual criminal act, the scripts are reduced to only those sentences where the criminals confide what they felt on the very moment they committed a crime. Krunglevicius pays attention to the fact that the most inhuman act of violence contains something that we can recognize in ourselves: reasoning and justification, remorse and/or the lack of it. The sentences are not presented for proper reading. Flickering white invades the silence-like black screen; vertical and horizontal white lines move across; and a block of white noise flows in and out. In varying font sizes, some sentences race past in a twinkle, and others come up word by word and stay on the screen for a while. All this is accompanied by techno-like thumping beats, which may sound grating and irritating, and the pace and texture of sounds have an effect of inscribing certain emotional veins on the text. This exhibition shows each single channel video of eight confessions consecutively.

5. Bojan Djordjev in collaboration with Katarina Popović and Siniša Ilić(Serbia),
The Discreet Charm of Marxism, 2013-ongoing, discussion performance, mixed media, 120mins



The title is borrowed from Luis Buñuel's 1972 film *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. The main theme of this film satirizing the hypocrisy of the bourgeois class is a dinner that protagonists keep attempting to arrange only to fail for different reasons. Djordjev brings the dinner motive to this performance, whose menu is contemporary Marxist discourses. *The Discreet Charm of Marxism* is a 6-course meal hosted by the artist, and the invited audiences read and discuss together Marxist texts on class struggle and revolution and their present-day significances. The entire discussion is little academic at all; because it takes the form of dinner, a social event that can be completed by the participation of audiences, what is dealt with and digested here depends of the mood of the event and the chemistry among participants. Produced by Serbian theater-maker Djordjev in collaboration with graphic designer Popović and visual artist Ilić, this work was premiered in Amsterdam in 2013, and was subsequently staged in Geneva, Belgrade, Berlin, Brussels, Lisbon and Shanghai. Marking the bicentenary of Karl Marx's birth, this theatrical dinner table at the Nam June Paik Art Center will play a role of another public forum.

6. Hyewon Kwon(Korea), *See You at the Barricades*, 2016, 8-channel HD video installation, color, sound, 10:47



Kwon undertakes research into historical events and places, and seizes upon the stories of people and spaces concealed in authoritative records, enacting and re-enacting them in her moving images. *See You at the Barricades* recasts the temporal and emotional experiences embodied in resistance songs and barricades structures. The eight monitor-speaker sets stage popular songs and architectural barricades employed by protesters with different issues across the globe. You can be engaged in the lyrics from *Do You Hear the People Sing?*, a musical number of *Les Miserable*, to *Into the New World* by a Korean pop group Girls' Generation, conjoined by the structural formations of different barricades, respectively and as a whole. The historical and contemporary contexts of protest are interwoven into a diachronic narrative. This work sings out a possibility of solidarity in which the bodily movements of people explode emotionally to assume collective intensity and unleash the force of a spontaneous community.

7. Cécile B. Evans(United Kingdom), *What the Heart Wants*, 2016, single-channel HD video installation, color, sound, 41:05 (Images are courtesy of artist)



Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna and Barbara Seiler, Zurich
Commissioned by the 9th Berlin Biennale with the support of Schering Stiftung
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Evans asks the question of what it will mean to be human in the future, or even who will be considered a person. Part of this interrogation is about how emotions are circulated and exchanged, how they are valued in regard to our humanity. In *What the Heart Wants*, the narrator is a system called "HYPER" living in an era called "after K". She introduces the viewer to some of the inhabitants of her world, such as a partially animated lover characters, a workers' collective of disembodied ears, a spam bot, children living in a lab with their robot caregiver, an immortal cell, and a memory that has outlived the humans that remember it. They have exchanges about their own ability to be considered "human", covering vast subjects like politics, geography, and love. Visitors watch from a "black box" platform overlooking a reflective surface, the video becoming its own double.

8. Ragnar Kjartansson•The National(Iceland), *A Lot of Sorrow*, 2013-2014, single-channel video, color, sound, 6:09:35 (Images are courtesy of the artists, Luhring Augustine, New York and i8 Gallery, Reykjavik)



On 5 May 2013, there was an unusual concert of the indie rock band The National at the MoMA PS1 VW Dome, New York. Their repertoire consisted of only one song: *Sorrow*. In front of a live audience, they performed the three-and-a-half minute ballad in a continuous loop for six hours without a break. The baritone lead vocalist began to sing, "sorrow found me when I was young, sorrow waited, sorrow won." He seemed to fill a not wide span of notes with the sediment of sadness and melancholy. Over time, however, the band played variations on the song with fatigue setting in, and the sentiment of sorrow spread into the whole space all the more powerfully. Engrossed in the atmosphere, the musicians and the audience also supplied certain vitality to each other incessantly. Kjartansson filmed the *Sorrow* concert with multiple cameras, and editing it into *A Lot of Sorrow*, he sculpted the presence of sound so that physical and emotional transformations can be perceived through temporal endurance and musical repetition. A 6-hour single playback runs from 11am to 5pm in this exhibition.

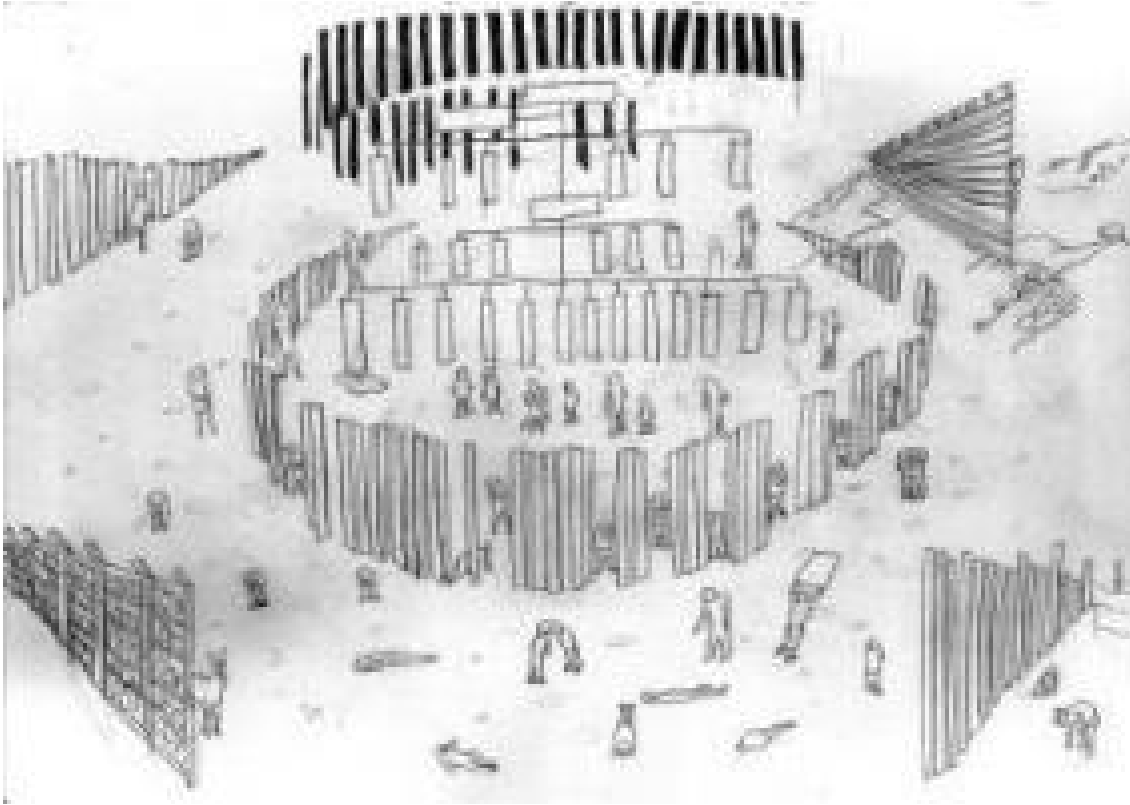
9. Yang Ah Ham(Korea)

9-1. *The Sleep*, 2016, two-channel video installation, color, sound, 08:00



The gymnasium is a facility for public events and physical activities; and when disasters occur, it serves as a temporary shelter. In *The Sleep*, the gymnasium is a metaphor for the social system. It is filled with people sleeping on black mats placed at random across the floor, people sitting on chairs to supervise the sleeping people and falling asleep themselves, and people who stand trying to organize or control the situation. Ham struggled with the aftermath of the Sewol ferry sinking such that she was not able to produce any artwork for some time. With this work, she alludes to the tragedy that should have not taken place, and loads it with fears and anxieties of individuals confronted with catastrophic breakdown of the society itself. Far from being protected and consoled appropriately, the social bodies are enveloped in the gymnasium, whose emotions are neither manifest nor monolithic. Asking herself “whether it is possible to explore people’s emotions, but to express this in an unemotional way,” Ham sets forth *The Sleep* as an “abstract reality” whose portrayal of our society lays bare its emotional realities.

9-2. *A Sketch for an Undefined Panorama*, 2018, single-channel video, color, sound, 10:00



A critical awareness of the social conditions that gave birth to *The Sleep*, led Ham to combine research for alternative social systems with her art practices. An urgent sense of crisis for the society that would be sinking with current political and economic problems, has wrought changes to her art-making. At the core of this lies her belief in the role of art that can transform an individual's life, as one of the ways to fulfill a life. In order to actualize an alternative social system, there need to be changes of individuals who have to operate the system. "Individuals who are able to view the entire society insightfully as well as their personal problems, who can respect others and are capable of living together with others, and who can open up their own lives and society creatively." A new work featured in this exhibition is indicative of her transition to the next stage in the experimental journey of putting into practice her thoughts about these issues. This is a video sketch for the process to define a panorama to look at, in which you coexist with others within the very panorama.

10. Daum Kim(Korea), *Blind Land*, 2016, 4-channel HD video, 8-channel audio installation, color, sound, 9:00



Three friends in Hong Kong, Taipei and Seoul talk about their feelings about what happened to their houses recently, in the form of correspondence to each other. In a real estate transaction, a blind land indicates a plot of ground that is surrounded by lands of other owners and thus has no passageway to it. Kim's 'blind land' also means a psychological and social one, and is further expanded into the notion of interface, an area in which subjects can be interconnected in a different way. When Kim worked on *Blind Land*, the Asian countries had been in sociopolitical turmoil, symbolized by 'umbrella,' 'sunflower,' and 'candlelight.' The narrators apparently confess concerns and uncertainty about their personal lives; but along the images and sounds that enclose the audience, it can be felt that they suggest the situations they are faced with are historical and social as well. The voice saying that "you cannot go anywhere or do anything if you don't pass by someone else," seems to invite the audience into the dialogue too, constituting another interface as an invisible speaker.

11. Femke Herregraven(Netherlands), *Precarious Marathon*, 2015, time-based generative installation, color, sound



Panel discussions are common in contemporary museum programs where a range of experts display their knowledge. Herregraven, who specializes in graphic design, creates a discussion event on art, stock market trading, and play, whose panelists are not humans but chatbots. Four newly designed chatbots play the roles of moderator, high-frequency trader, insomniac artist, and art critic. On the basis of a personal database (memory) and rule set (behavior profile), each chatbot reacts and responds to each other, generating text and sound. The screen of a speaking chatbot turns black with text subtitles while the other three screens show abstract graphic patterns in different colors. They also have sonic attributes per character that resemble ambient sounds. Only run by algorithms, the result of this panel discussion is unpredictable, and because no human bodies are involved, it is unhindered by mental or physical exhaustion. This also implies the flexible labor in post-Fordism, which can continue online endlessly.

12. Minki Hong(Korea)

12-1. *NPC Tutorial*, 2017, 3-channel video installation, color, sound, mixed materials, 1:16:35



In the online platform of public discussion, you can pronounce an opinion immediately and join heated debates with little hesitation. On the contrary there are some drawbacks inherent online, such as ambiguity of information sources, confusion caused by fake news, and automated social media that give you selective access to information thereby resulting in polarization. A digital native Hong represents the on and offline characteristics of public opinions, in the form of game. An online game player is given graded information about issues and incidents of Korean society. With the given information the player steers the offline Non-Party Cheerleaders. The player should be acutely conscious that relying on which information taken up, the course of the game may be different. The NPCs are also Non-Player Characters who cannot be completely controlled by the player. In the neutral position performing an assistant role to provide on-site information to the player, they bring forward the voices of different people in Gwanghwamun Plaza, Jongno, Hannam-dong, Ewha Womans University, and Noryangjin Fish Market.

12-2. *PP World Open Beta Service*, 2016/2018, performance (sticker photo booth, application)



Hong developed *PP World Closed Beta Test* (v.17.02.16), a sticker photo booth and its application. The photo's background is composed of images that are reflective of social and political issues, and buzzwords appearing in related slogans and oft-mentioned by the press, all of which are colorful and cheerful like typical sticker photos. With updates of this application, Hong presents a performance *PP World Open Beta Service* in this exhibition. He will hang around with the movable booth in different places at Nam June Paik Art Center, to offer the museum audience a photo session. By means of the sticker photo which is an instant and popular medium, he intends to focus on having a conversation with the audience and inducing them to express their feelings and thoughts. When there is no performance, the sticker photos taken are posted at the *PP World* website as a photo album, and are also shared and displayed via the network of social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

13. Rosalind Nashashibi(United Kingdom), *Electrical Gaza*, 2015, 16mm film transferred to HD video, color, sound, 17:53 (Images are courtesy of artist, Animation by Visitor Studio, London)



In the Gaza Strip of Palestine, a land of conflicts for thousands of years, Nashashibi filmed something different from its familiar images you may learn from the media. The film begins with a scene of people flocking to Rafah Border Crossing and looking over the door to the side of Egypt, but the scene shortly cuts to an ordinary market district, kids playing in the alleyway, horses swimming in the sea, people chatting on the street, families and friends at home. Shot in a documentary style, the Gaza Strip retains an atmosphere of liveliness, excitement, boredom and banality of everyday life. As hinted by a large animated black dot floating on a backstreet, though, what hangs in the air at the same time is a sense of tension and terror derived from looming violence and tragedy and from sufferings caused by political containment. A few animated images are inserted in the video, inspired by the Japanese Ghibli Studio. Gaza in this film seems to embrace different worlds, or to transcend any temporal and spatial demarcation. Nashashibi whose father is a Jerusalem-born Palestinian, aimed to observe the Gaza Strip with an eye of childhood to express her own experience of the highly charged land.