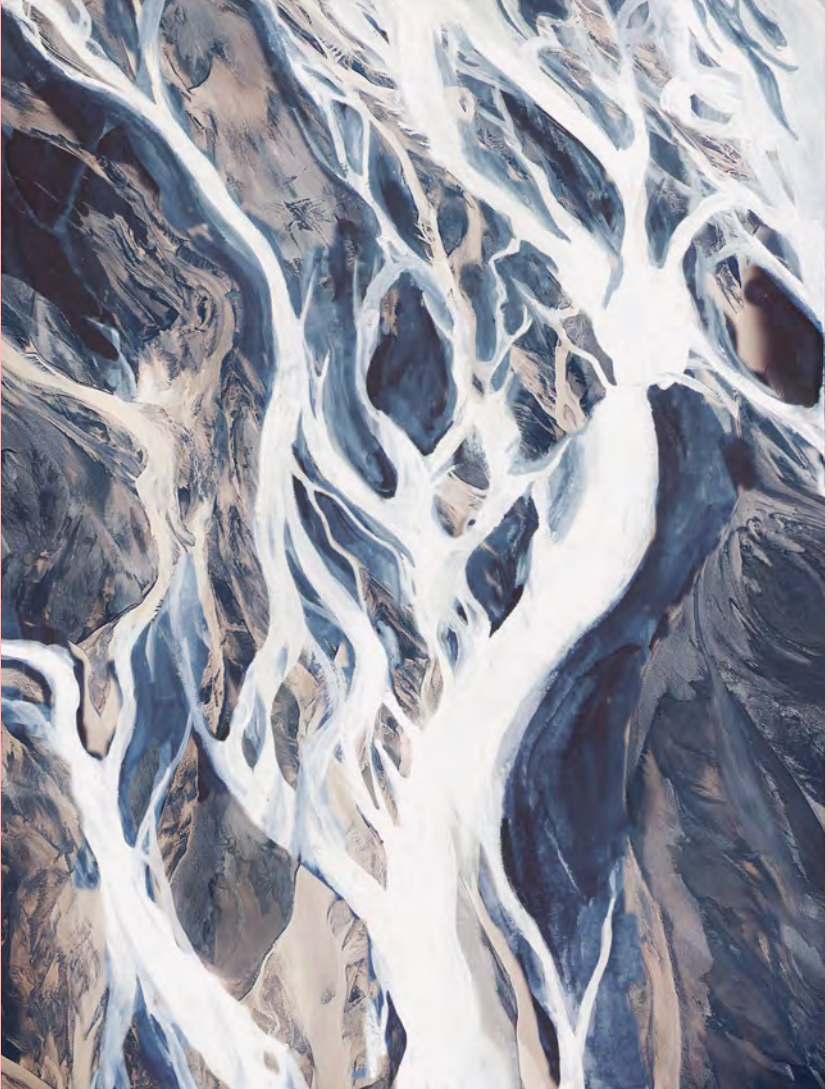


P U
L S E

2017- 13TH ISSUE



CATS LITERATI

EDITOR'S NOTE

A pulse is the sign of life. In the back seat of an ambulance or by a hospital bed, the jump start of a heartbeat is the start of a new lifetime. A pulse is also the central sign of love, happiness, anxiety, frustration, and anger. It is what keeps us alive and going; as is art and literature.

We've had quite an emotionally packed past year. With the tragic passing of many artistic creators, tumultuous fights for rights, and bleak politics, 2016 reminds us how important it is to make ourselves heard. Whether in loving memory of our creative heroes, or as an untiring protest against injustice, or an outlet for our inner voices, art and literature is the pulse of this century. It is a pleasure to bring together creative submissions into yet another issue of Literati.

This issue is also a new chapter for the CATS team. With the graduation and departure of our beloved past collaborators, this issue almost never got made. As a newcomer and editor, I send thanks to my artistic friends who boldly stepped in to share their work and make it part of this new edition. Thank you Jina for always sending support and ideas. And as always, we send special thanks to our talented submitters and readers.

Eunwon Cho

Literati is a biannual arts & literary magazine put together by the Cultural Arts & Theater Society (CATS) at Yonsei University.

2017 13th Issue [Pulse]

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POETRY

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A BURGER ON A MOUSE'S RIBS

Daniel de Cullá

Here's coming "The Sozzleder", an altar boy, as people names acolyte, injured by Life. He's coming aching because from his birth he hasn't been graceful by Luck and Fortune. When his mother, so pretty, did birth to him, put bad fate on him as appearance, because the kid had born by arse, and the midwife came running to see the kid's face.

-I'm going to enter to see the newly calving, that I want to see the new born' face.

What handsome kid j what face so nicej

-This baby, midwife, the tearful mother exclaimed, is unlucky to Life.

-Why?

-Because he has come to life by Arse.

He's not coming with a bread under arm, but with a burger on a fucking mouse' ribs yes.

DEMAGOGUE

Brandon Marlon

Witness the insolent upstart
swollen with self-importance
nonchalantly rouse the rabble,
bloviating magniloquent bombast
around the clock, calibrated to shock
sophisticates and gull dupes into doing
his bidding for the sake of satiating
an overweening egomania.

The soi-disant populist insists
on his lips outpouring hyperbole
at every possible opportunity;
enamored with his own extravagance,
he ostentates and gasconades
with neither scruple nor shame,
echoing Hellenic foregoers,
a Cleon or Cleophon incarnate.

Noisome in tone and temperament,
he inveterately tergiversates
and showers dispraise upon his foes,
unable to refrain from a fatuous affray.
Now he enflames passions,
now he exploits grudges,
inciting simmering mobs to seethe
and masturbate their grievances in public,
airing bitterness and resentment
like dirty laundry.

Don't bother reminding him of the fate
that awaited Hyperbolus and Androcles;
he pays no mind to hard-won wisdom
disturbing his dreams of being wreathed in bay.
The swine with his snout in the trough
errs in his belief that a golden nose ring
can disguise a hog from the sty of hubris,
and retard the advance of comeuppance.

MAN IN THE TOWER

Eunwon Cho

The great
man
sits
at the very top

creams gold

in his pants

TROPICS

Brandon Marlon

Ships furrow the waters out at sea
while civilization's refugees
anneal on the beach,
their pestering cares a world away.

By the quay a lone stevedore ignores
heat and thirst, dragging hawsers
along the towpath to moor crafts
gently yet securely, his funicular expertise
accrued over many seasons in austral regions.

Below the surface, migrating turtles pause
to munch on seagrass meadows
rich in essential nutrients
while lemon sharks chase rays
through the mangrove's red roots
growing in tidal shores and deluged
twice daily with saltwater.

Aloft the torrid orb parches
equally, the clime's merciless overlord
punishing by its very presence,
conferring both favor and wrath,
defiantly resisting twilight till
the decisor nightfall settles the struggle.

REQUITAL

Brandon Marlon

Unbeheld, we stealthily insinuate ourselves
amid predawn darkness, our crepitating footsteps
muffled by waves lapping the littoral
as we secure a beachhead on the foreland
of enemy territory, mounting a crag and ducking
in the swale, counting breaths, gauging adjacency,
then littering the road with caltrops as we advance
to buffet a cell of unsuspecting reprobates
hunkered down in their seaside bunker.

We espy their guidons and divide into two
as we close in to root out the most wanted,
tossing grenades into embrasures then enfilading
dodgers as they scramble and flee in disarray,
felling the lot as mowers would weeds.

We sweep the shelter room-to-room then
detonate the structure in a controlled blast
that rouses roosters penned on adjoining farms,
echoing beyond the sea to the crepuscular horizon.

By twilight we are airlifted back across the border
to safety, where we decompress during a post mortem
before tomorrow's headlines holler of special operations,
elite units, commandos, and daring raids under cover of night.

LAST WORD

Them Averick

After the last word left
your mouth empty, what
silence haunts my soul
like a phantom song.

There's no denying
the flight of geese
traversing the edge
of your universe unhinged
with so much sadness.

That sparrow born yester-
year left the nest and never
came back. Not a single word
found its way home
to that table by the window
where you waited for news
watching people go by.

I can't comfort the light left
in you but I have tried.
The wind has changed and I
little to say to heal that wound
you never could lick:

But I choose us.

DRUNK

Them Averick

What if I could lie here with you
on this bed of thorns late into the night
certain that the ghosts won't come
crawling back from the ocean wet
with shiny teeth.

What if that train never leaves
midnight and the dark side of the moon
feels like a crater of unadulterated angst
to which I cling as the hangman
at the end of his rope.

What if i placed my head upon
your shoulder gently, fell asleep to the
rhythm of your breath safe in my dream
that I will wake up to your open eyes
watching over me as I am slowly born
again drunk with love.

THE HUNT

Misol Kim

You and I are the needles in a clock,
You desiring for midnight, I fearing the o'clock
When the tips of the clock meet at last,
I quiver as the race begins from my tainted past,

We are the tips of the polar ends,
North and South aren't rounds nor bends,
I cower in fear that you might prowl around
A tiger at poise, a deer's trembling the end

The hunt goes on, the prey is near
You come with bow, arrow, and spear
Though I cannot mask my growing fear
The running begins, I am the deer

My soul bursts as the distance closes in,
The world explodes around as I give in,
Finally the moon and the sun collide
and rules are gone,
And there was nothing, yet another to begin.

LE PAPILLON

Nguyen Thi Lan Phuong

Once there lived a majestic butterfly
Soaring freely on the vast blue sky
Her velvet wings brighter than sunset
Stealing eyes from all human she met
Once there lived a hopeless romantic
Who lost legs in Battle of Atlantic
Day by day he licked his old wound
With eye fixed on those velvet appendage
'Be my wings' he told his butterfly
But his avarice craved more than that
In a hype he captured his beloved
And mount her on the last page diary
Once there was a crimson butterfly
Who was hid in her lover's diary
He ended her life just as she ended his
For such desire that noone could've satisfy
Once there lived a man who always grieved
Now he is with his butterfly miss
Six feet underground, deep they sleep
Along with pain that was never relieved.

FREEDOM TOWER

Brandon Marlon

i
n
s
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i
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e

One World Trade Center (1 WTC)
Lower Manhattan, New York City, NY/October 2014
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey/The Durst Organization
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill/David M. Childs/Silverstein Properties
the Western Hemisphere's tallest building/an iconic New York landmark
a shining beacon for the new downtown/a bold skyline addition
tallest in new WTC Complex/104 storeys/1,776 symbolic feet
3 million rentable square feet of space/55-ft high office lobby
54 high-speed destination dispatch passenger elevators
spine of top-grade concrete trucked in from Brooklyn
life-safety systems far exceed NYC building code
safe, sustainable, aesthetically dynamic
bound by West, Fulton, Washington, & Vesey Streets
entrances on all 4 building sides are designed
to smoothly integrate traffic of visitors & office tenants
the cubic base has a footprint identical to the original Twin Towers
base surface clad in 2,000+ pieces of shimmering prismatic glass
edges chamfered back form 8 elongated isosceles triangles
a perfect octagon at its middle
culminating in a glass parapet whose plan
is a 150-ft-by-150-ft square, rotated 45° from the base
its crystalline form creates a vibrant effect/light refracts like
a kaleidoscope changing throughout the day
as the sun moves through the sky or pedestrians around the tower
One World Observatory = enclosed observation deck
rising 1,250 feet above street level
the crown of One WTC is a 408-ft spire consisting of a mast and
communication platform ring
each night, a beacon at the top sends out a horizontal light beam
seen from miles away
reasserts downtown Manhattan's preeminence as a business center
reclaims New York's skyline
connects seamlessly to the city with linkages to an extensive underground
transportation network
extends the long tradition of American ingenuity in high-rise construction
evokes the slender, tapering triangular forms
of NYC icons such as the Chrysler Building and Empire State Building
an innovative mix of architecture, structure, urban design, safety,
and sustainability
replaces almost 1/4 of the total office space lost on 9/11 in a single
building
a bold icon in the sky acknowledging the adjacent memorial
looks to the future as it climbs in a faceted form filled with, and reflecting,
light
[fortituderesilience dedicationdeterminationperseverancerenewalhope]

ALLADDIN'S LAMP

Daniel de Cullá

Walking a day by Almeria's desert
Where are shot Western films
And other variegated games
Suddenly I put mine's right foot
In the Alladdins' mouth lamp
And, in a flash, I heard a voice saying:
-Shocking mistake! During I was sleeping
On a bed with two mattresses
One step on my "so longi", to me
That was dreaming with a black cat
Falling in love with a greyish she cat
Near the door of a convent
Where a friar piss on the twos
And the rabid black cat
Leaping from his beloved greyish she cat
Scratched the friar' tail
The friar, who, now, cry and cry:
-Mamma mia from the Sky
That the cat scratched my clapper!
I saying to Alladin
Asking to him thousand forgivenesses:
Do You know to play guitar?

He answering me singing:
-Ouch, squid, squid
Your mother bad and you queer
You put oneself apron up
Your love looking at the North, at midday
And Your father is called as "SliceMelons"
Woolly dog, dog without teeth
Don't ask to me Your three whises
Because I'm giving these to You just now:
To Your father, the peach
To Your mother, the pear
And to You, the pepper
And know that now and ever
The hare runs by the sea
The sardines by the hill
The fishes by the stubbles
And the shares are made with peel of bacon.
-As You, I said to him
At the top of one's voice
Taking out the foot from the lamp
And with a kick, putting it
Below his chin.

Equant

Eunwon Cho

A
Spray of asteroid
In the room
The silence has
everyone frozen
the neon switch
is left

on

POOL

A sick green
Pool
No, blue
With milk

The sun falls in and drowns

The CALIPH'S SISTER

Brandon Marlon

The callipygian princess twines
the circlets in her tresses,
fidgeting with her nacre necklace,
longing for her forbidden husband,
a mawla unfit for her pure Arabian blood.

She paints her face with fard
and scents her skin with pomander,
imagining him now in her bedroom
full of appetite and desire,
willing to defy her bellicose brother.

With eyes shut she caresses the contours
of her nubile figure, like that of a living houri,
as if her fingertips were his own,
anxious and ambitious,
spelling the name Abbasa across her smooth back.

Tonight she will conceive bold dreams
of descending from palace chambers
to a gravel of pearls upon a ground of gold,
sneaking away upon her palanquin,
stealing through the night to her lawful lover.

A HORSE-CHESNUT TATTOOED

Daniel de Cullá

Crossing Columbus Square, in Burgos
I see in front of me a nice girl
As an Eden' fruit.
Smiling, she stop me, asking:
-Where do you go, Darling, so early?
I stop smiling her and looking at her eyes
An eyes plenty of Sky
Although she'll say to me later
That she gives drops on her lacrimal.
She say to me:
-Come j Sit on this wood bench
Of the Espolon avenue
If do you have time, of course;
We have to talk.
-Yes, naturally. I want it.
We sit. Talk. She, first:
-I remember ever what well we enjoyed
The last feast of Villarcayo
Being me the sweetheart of a King
Or a Head of Governemnt.
I was hesitant
without she would be given account, answering:
-Oh, Yes, Yes, Oh, no, no, go pretty girl
Follow, follow, my Love.
-Well made me love, Lovej
-It's the truth, Rachel, I said to her, lying

And trying to get out of my memories.

-It had to be in the convent of the Mount of the Abbess
I said to her.

-Thus, she replied
On Earth we see ourselves before in Heaven.
The two smile.

- We have to love ourselves, she suggested me
Smiling again and again.

-It's ok, I replied; asking to her:
-Now, what do you do?

She explained:

-Now I'm working in a dental clinic
Very close to here.
-Nice, I replied to her
It has to be interesting to go to your surgery.
-What a fool you are, she said.

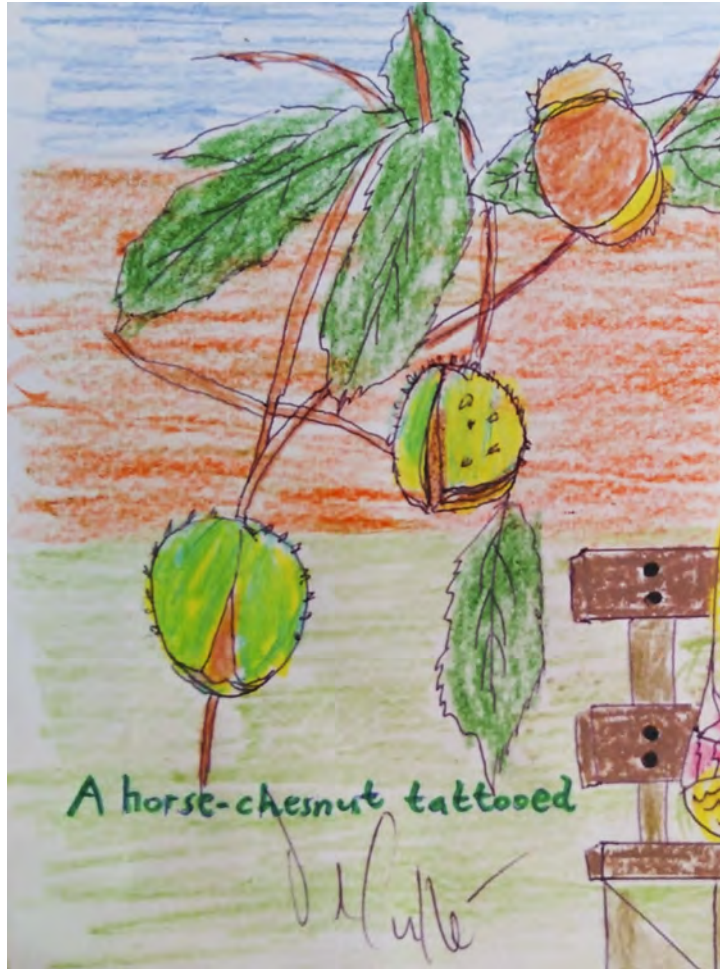
Paused a moment, and laughing, continued:

-I have to show You one thing that You gave to me
Because you've been the leading man who adored
But you not showed up, until today, greenhornj
-Oh, Yes, Yes, Oh, no, no, I replied to her

Being my color doubtful.

-Yes, cute, she replied.
You gave to me a horse chestnut
Of the two in which You drew an Eros
Front of me
And in the convent of the Mount of the Abbess

Do You Remember?, loving ourselves.
An Eros tattoo with indelible ink
Saying to me: "this for you, my Love
That this one I'll send
To the Museum of Miniatures from Mijas, in Malaga.



-Oh, Yes, Yes, Oh, no, no, I replied to her, smiling
And ordering:

-Get up, Rachel, my White Pigeon
And walk by the Arlanzón River
With kisses.



Artwork by Daniel de Cullá

PHOTOGRAPHY

KIJEONG HWANG

TU NGOC THU TRANG

CLAUDIA ANDRADE

EUNWON CHO

MEMORIES OF A LOST CHILDHOOD

Kijeong Hwang



I visited my elementary school firstly after I had graduated the school 10 years ago. I expected to retrieve my old childhood memories in the school, but I couldn't at all. There was barely anything left the same way. Everything had changed; buildings, playgrounds, gardens and people.



This is how I felt after encountering new places of the new school.
I felt like I lost my childhood memories.

Kijeong Hwang

I WAS LOST AND GRADUALLY BEEN FOUND

Tu Ngoc Thu Trang



I used to suffer from depression for roughly two months.

Psychologists address it as a mental disease, while I prefer calling it an extroverting sign of a completely normal person. I refused to be called abnormal, but rather just a person going through many crises. Psychologists gave me neurological boosting pills to make me feel alive and encouraged me to participate in speech therapies to share my issues.

Typically, they would be extremely helpful, coming up with solutions to cope with stress, terminate my destructive habits, make sense of my past traumatic experiences and improve my relationship with family and friends.

However, these supporting words, reassuring explanations were not much practical since I did not want to be treated as a patient listening to metaphysical assumptions. Instead of looking at a colorful yet unrealistic sketch, I strongly believe the only way to overcome insecurities and find out my personality was to completely trust myself, embrace each difficulty and try to come up with solutions by myself.

I feel more comfortable when doing self – conversations, playing as a third person to talk to myself or tranquilly sitting in my room, thinking about what I can do if I am different. As these two ways work effectively to help me overcome depression, I want to recommend these methods for anyone who does not want to depend on friends, family but conquer hardships on one's own.

I like the word “Kalopsia” which means a condition where one is deceived into thinking things are of higher quality than they actually are. Some people are lured by colorful yet counterfeit words which make them feel at east temporarily but do not bring long – lasting effects. Through this picture, I want to raise my biggest message about self – control. In this world, no one will understand yourself better than you, even your family. Be your best friend, spend extra time alone to understand you better, work on your problems, and never feel afraid of confronting obstacles alone. Gradually you will find your inner self and control yourself in different situations better. I'm also on my journey to find my inner self.





CANAL REFLECTION

Claudia Andrade





SELF PORTRAIT

EUNWON CHO



PROJECTS

JUYEONG PARK

SHANIL PATEL

EUNWON CHO

JIHO AHN

관

OBSERVATION /
/ VOYEURISM
JUYEONG PARK

찰

This video project was directed on September 30th, before accusations of the presidential government's attempted fraud and abuse of power rose to the surface of attention. It was also just before the chain of mass candlelight rallies caught momentum.

The project started from the thought that the spatial meaning of Jong-ro and the Gwanghwamun area is self-contradictory.

The key question was the following:

- 1) *What is the purpose of the heavy security around the Jongro and Gwanghwamun area, and the excessive number of policemen standing guard?*

And the two entailing questions on the nature of such heavy security were:

1-1. *Who are they protecting?*

1-2. *If their key objective is not protection, who are their objects of their surveillance?*

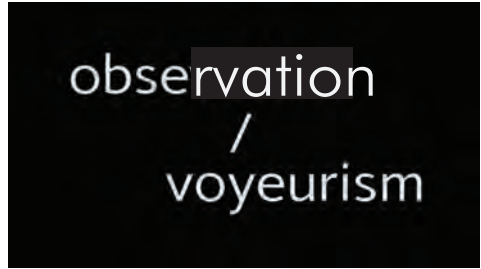


With these questions in mind, I went out to Gwanghwamun with a camera, only to realize that the area was even more self-contradictory than I had thought. For the project I used a hand-held filming method to convey the actuality and sense of realism.

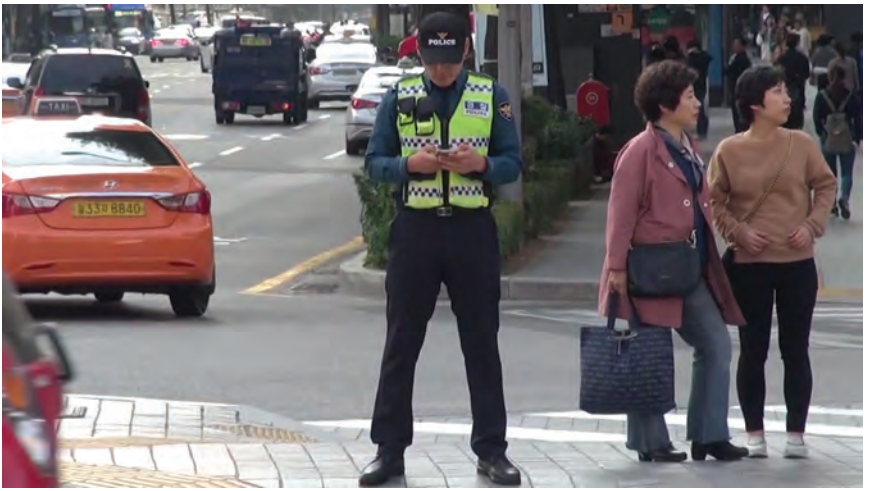
In the process of editing, I cross-compiled the filmed clips with a tense, rhythmic beat to portray the anxiety behind the contradiction of Gwanghwamun and the lies that it represents.



Much has changed from when I first directed this piece. Following the uncovering of government corruption in December, people have take over the Gwanghwamun area as a base for speaking out against government corruption, and as the beginning of a better society. Viewers with a more updated point of view may see Jongro and Gwanghwamun in a completely different light- of the call for truth and democratic freedom.

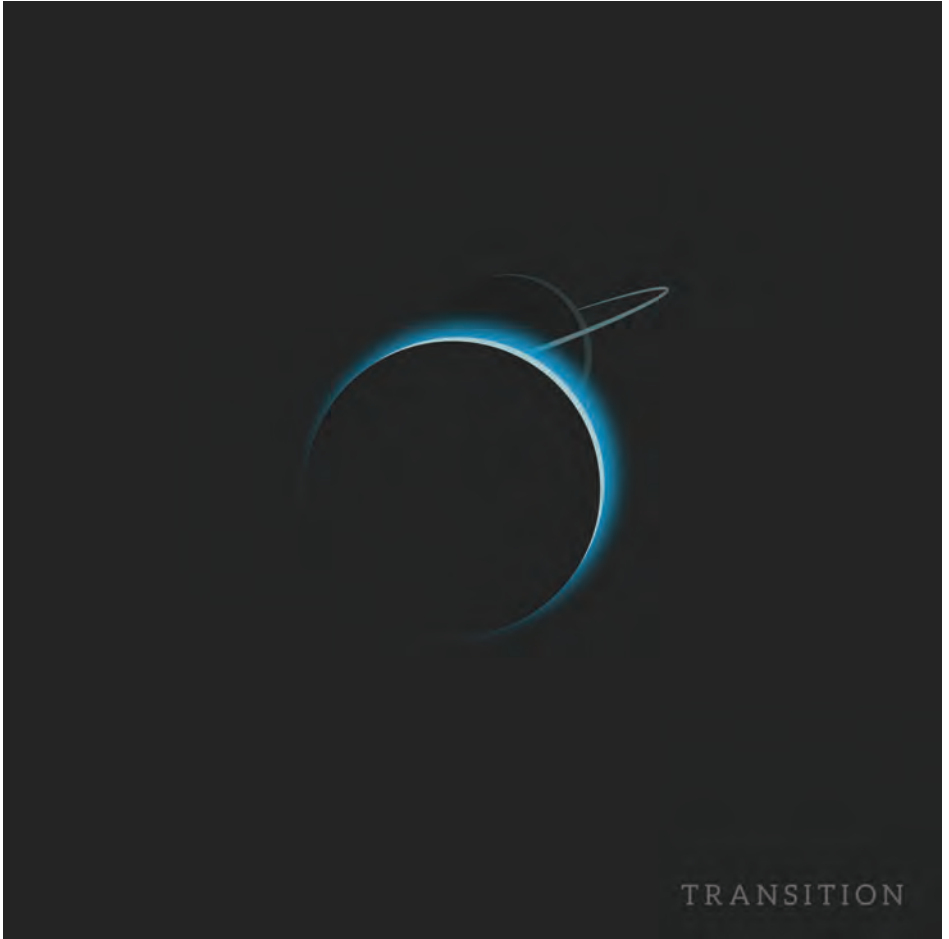


Screenshots from the video piece, *Observation / Voyeurism*.
Filmed in Seoul, Jongno and Gwanghwamun. Directed and Edited by Juyeong Park



SHANIL PATEL

1 DESIGN A DAY



TRANSITION

My name is Shanil Patel.

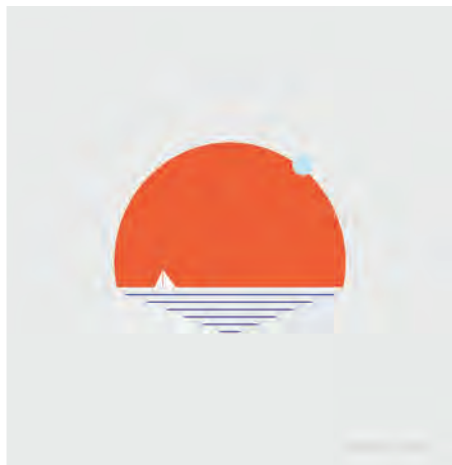
I come from Harare Zimbabwe and study Interaction Design in Toronto Canada.

I get my inspiration from my life and the events that take place through out the day.

I've decided to take on a challenge recently where I create one design a day.

These are my submissions, 1 Design a Day.

HORIZON



SHELL



LONELY



LIFE

FOREST FIRE OF THE MIND

Eunwon Cho

Forest Fire of the Mind is a metaphoric documentation of a crumbling mind. An innocent doubt enters the sanctum. Overthink it- feel it spread like wildfire. You are reduced to ashes by your own thoughts.

PROCESS

The plaster bust of Julian was chosen to represent the human mind.

Frail, beautiful, and narcissistic, it is susceptible to breaking.

The sculpture was carried up to a rooftop. It was then made flammable and set on fire.

The process was filmed and cross-edited with text and soft music.



Apart from the theme I wanted to convey, this was a very personal and liberating project. The process of carrying out and submitting this work as my semester finals was a personal protest against the work required in my major; I felt trapped and constricted working with precise grids and pixel-perfect layouts. I wanted to experiment with actual substance and action, things that were real and burning as a live presence. A fire has no designated size or path. There is no point in directing a flame how to move. It's unpredictability rouses caution and hypnosis at the same time.



*Photo selections from [Forest Fire of the Mind]
Directed and Edited by Eunwon Cho*



excerpts from

HUSH HOUR

*What is a **hot shower** for you?*

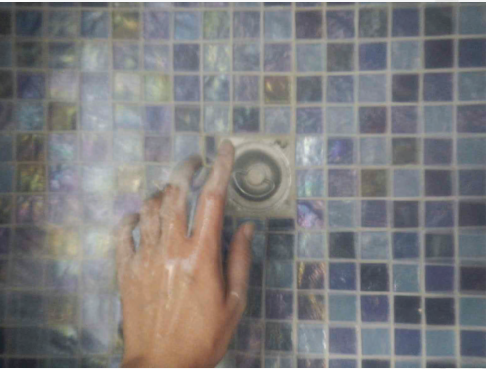
*Special thanks to everyone
who placed the comments*

Jiho Ahn

[Hush Hour] is an independent publication by Jiho Ahn, which documents a personal, special connection to hot showers. The chapters follow the steps and emotions that arise throughout the duration of a long, hot steamy shower - an experience that connects her with inner thoughts, childhood memories, and novel inspirations.

"When I take a shower, I am relieved. I am released from all the works, roles, endless to-do lists, and all the "I should ..."s. I am the only one standing — being — in space. I only hear water or myself."

*The following excerpts of [Hush Hour] were re-arranged for Literati format.



When I take a shower, I am relieved. I am released from all the works, roles, endless to-do list, and all the “*I should ...*”s. I am the only one standing — *being* — in the space. I only hear water or myself. *I'm simply there in a private solitude.*

It's a ***hush hour.***

As water runs over my body, noises of minor thoughts and worries are washed off. Instead, things buried beneath rises up from deep inside. I dare to say that I get the most and the best inspirations during a shower.

not simply a convinient way of washing a body.

*hope you experience a hot shower
as you fly through the pages*

All the minor thoughts and worries
are washed out. From silence in my head,

there comes a room for inspirations. *0. Intro.*




*A real shower begins when I dive my head into the water.
Water running over my entire body,
wrapping from head to toes.*



Chapter 5
Excuse

The stability a shower gives

*When hot steam wraps my naked body,
it feels like none of the worries
would ever find me.*



*Taking a hot shower
makes me feel like
a kid,
time to fantasize all
my crazy dreams.*

by artist, Madeline

*melting butter
steam...
relieve*

*I spend my time thinking about what I could do today.
It's like a "reminder".*

*All the minor thoughts and worries
are washed out. From silence in my head,
there comes a room for inspiration.*

*Someone said,
I thought,*

*"your drawings have a feeling of 'shaaa...'"
'it may have come from the shower.'*

EXHIBITIONS

OLAFUR ELIASSON

The Parliament of Possibilities

V&A, TOKYO EXHIBITION

DAVID BOWIE IS



OLAFUR ELIASSON “THE PARLIAMENT OF POSSIBILITIES”

In “The Parliament of Possibilities”, his first solo exhibition in Korea, Olafur Eliasson throws intriguing topics to discussion; texture, light, substance, rhythm, and continuity. The Danish-Icelandic artist works with large-scale installations, optical illusions, and kinetic sculptures. The Seoul LEEUM museum showcases 22 of his works.

Stepping into the exhibition hall, the first work that meets the eye is a wall of moss. Here stands a small piece of Iceland itself : [Moss Wall] is made of *cladonia rangiferina*, a reindeer moss species that grows only in Nordic regions. The moss, shriveled and dead to the unknowing eye, comes alive and lets out an unnerving odor when the wall is sprayed with water.

Another wall shows a line of monochrome photographs of a river coiling across the land in each frame. From a wider view, each photoframe comes together and creates a satellite image of a large body of land. Directly above it hangs the entire color spectrum as we know it, with no way to define where red ended and orange started.

‘So,’ it seems to question the viewers, ‘what differentiates red from orange, from yellow, all the way to the deepest mauve, at the other end of the wall?’ The piece suggests that there is none.

“I want to expose and evaluate the fact that the seeing and sensing process is a system that should not be taken for granted as natural - it's a cultivated means of reality production that, as a system, can be negotiated and changed.” - Olafur Eliasson



[*Untitled (Stone Floor)*, 2004] and beyond it, [*Reverse Waterfall*, 1998]



[*Your Unpredictable Path*,



[*Rainbow Assembly*, 2016]



[*Moss Wall*, 1994]

The exhibition continues – I slowly walk past a reverse waterfall, a mural of scattered mirrors, and a room of gliding light sculptures. Finally, an escalator carries me into a darkened room of what seems to be a circular wall of Northern lights falling from the ceiling, created with mist and light. My mind is blown.

The Parliament of Possibilities is full of these ‘kinetic sculptures’ that tease the laws of physics in a beautiful and non-intrusive way. Many of Olafur Eliasson’s works are inspired by his Nordic background. His works resemble geysers, glaciers, and northern lights – the ethereal and less obvious sides of nature that the great Icelandic landscape nurtures. Olafur Eliasson brings them indoors, into a platform- or in his words a ‘parliament’- for visitors to view and discuss.

The message that the exhibition seems to convey is straightforward yet enigmatic. Nothing is permanent and everything is continuous.

And the only ‘real’ element here, in this parliament of possibilities, is ourselves caught in the moment of awe.



[*The Color Spectrum Series*, 2006] & [*Jokla Series*, 2004]

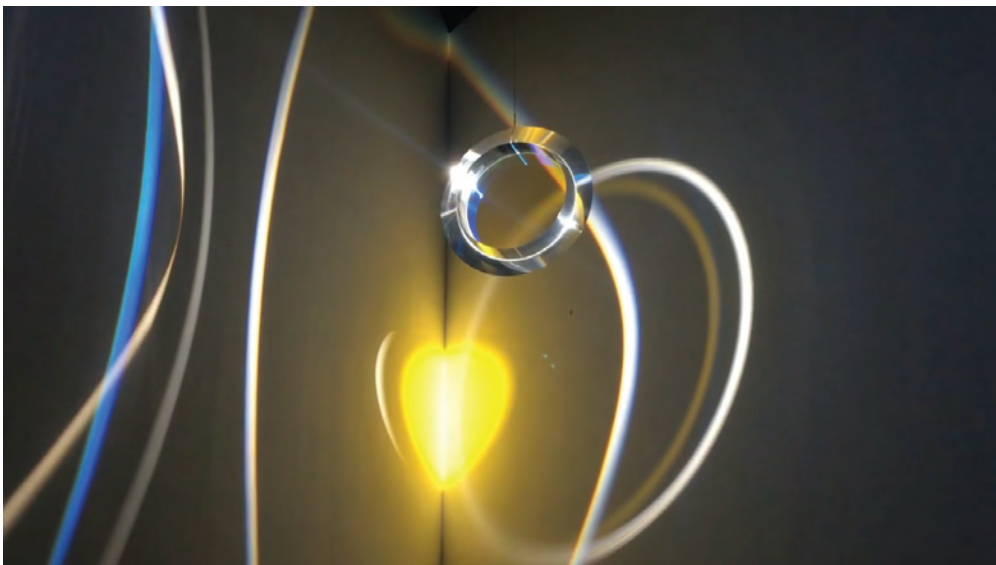
Olafur Eliasson, born in Copenhagen in 1967, grew up in Iceland and Denmark. His focus in art is of perception, movement, embodied experience, and feelings of self. He strives to make the concerns of art relevant to society at large.

Eliasson lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin.

LEEUM Exhibition "The Parliament of Possibilities"

28 September 2016 - 26 February, 2017

<http://olafureliasson.net/>



[*Your Museum Primer*, 2014]



V&A, TOKYO TERRADA “DAVID BOWIE IS”

On the night of January 10th, the world lost a visionary icon; the legendary David Bowie left us after months of battling cancer. Even after a year, it's still hard to swallow that the ever-changing musical legend is no longer with us. The only bright side of his passing is that now we've got a modern patron-saint for creative vision, watching over us with his wonderfully mismatched eyes.

Put together by the V&A, [David Bowie Is] exhibition first opened in London in 2013 and has since travelled around the globe, opening in Toronto, Berlin, Sao Paolo, Bologna, Groningen, Paris, and Chicago. Now it's landed in Asia for the first time, at Tokyo's Terrada Art Complex. The display features more than 300 objects from the David Bowie Archive: including handwritten lyrics, stage costumes, set designs, rare performance material, and quirker things –fanmail, original body measurements, and even his very own tiny cocaine spoon.

The exhibition spans the changing personas throughout Bowie's musical career; visitors will meet his glam rock portrayal of Ziggy Stardust, the chilling presence of the Thin White Duke, the blond-haired MTV heartthrob, and finally the agonizing artist who incorporates experimental rock with jazz and even new generation artists like Kendrick Lamar- all the while battling a cancer which soon takes his life. V&A has really gone beyond simply arranging a collection of rock 'n' roll memorabilia; it is a sound and vision experience into the life of an artist who pushed the boundaries of art itself. As you walk along the exhibits, the headset automatically receives frequencies from the walls and surrounds you with corresponding audio, allowing a full immersion into the life of a great artist.

The highlight of the show is a dazzling piece dedicated to his [Top of the Pops] appearance with hit single 'Starman', with a video footage of the show reflecting endlessly in mirrored walls.



"As he pointed at the camera singing 'So I picked on you', hundreds of teenagers answered the call..."

[Starman] exhibit, image from the V&A archives.

The show offers a look into the lesser-known sides of David Bowie. There's a nice documentation of his early days as an aspiring, nameless musician working with The Kon-Rads and The Supermen. There's also a display of his taste in fine arts, with his oil paintings of novelist Yuki Mishima and fellow rock-legend Iggy Pop, followed with a handful of self-portraits. Another delightful section is a collection of lyrics and storyboards, in surprisingly messy handwriting on pieces of scrap paper, almost tricking us into thinking that he's normal just like any one of us; then again, nothing would be more absurd than calling David Bowie normal.

Among all these, the beauty of [David Bowie IS] Tokyo curation is that it wonderfully showcases the Japanese influence within David Bowie's shimmering volume of work. There's an extensive collection of Kansai Yamamoto's collaboration with stage costumes, exclusive interviews with Ryuichi Sakamoto, with whom Bowie starred in his acclaimed film [Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence], and even a Kanji-based cloak that looms over the visitors in the highest corner of the room.

Whether you are a devoted Bowie-ologist or an absolute beginner, the venue will leave a lasting impression and totally immerse you in David Bowie's world. It's for every aspiring artist with a colorful mind.

"All art is unstable. Its meaning is not necessarily that implied by the author, There is no authoritative active voice. There are only multiple readings." - David Bowie



[Portrait of James Osterberg], 1976 / [Berlin Landscape with J.O.], 1978



From left: Materials from "Where are We Now" (2013), costume from "DJ" (1979), Pierrot costume from "Ashes to Ashes" (1980), Lord Byron costume from "Blue Jean" (1984)

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