

KEEM JIYOUNG:

Breath of the Month

Nov 16 – Jan 18, 2025

We are proud to present the first solo exhibition with Keem Jiyoung outside of Korea. Since the Sewol ferry tragedy in 2014, Keem has been delving into socio-political defects of the current world that contemporary disasters bring to light. As an attempt to perceive the contemporary era in a historical sense, Keem's work focuses on social incidents and evokes a sense of connection between individuals and society.

The title of the exhibition *Breath of the Month* alludes to the calendar year with all its recorded dates that we mustn't forget. In this way, they allow us to contemplate the interconnectedness of both death and birth, loss and gain. Moreover, the title alludes to the breath we have left every month to think deeply in silence and to meditate.

Central to the exhibition are 18 recent paintings of the *Glowing Hour* series. Each canvas depicts a captivating meditation on the fragility and warmth of life, symbolized by the flickering flame of a candle. They offer a vivid commentary on the universal human experience, bridging the intimate narratives of individual lives with the collective resilience demanded by man-made disasters. In the second space, 10 candle sculptures are found, carefully placed on a plinth. The works are titled *Look at This Unbearable Darkness* and evoke the solemnity of memorials. They resemble hands clasped in prayer at various stages of melting and they symbolize a collective plea for understanding, and empathy in the aftermath of a disaster. Conversely, these works offer a counterpoint of Keem's exploration of light. As candles, extinguished midway through burning, within the artist's practice, they become a study of darkness, a contemplation on illumination and obscurity. This examination of light and shadow underpins the artist's approach throughout, evident in the blurred oscillation between figuration and abstraction, as well as the delicately layered transition between hues of pinks, yellows, oranges, and reds in the paintings.

This multi-disciplinary presentation serves as a potent social critique, providing a perspective and framework for comprehending the cyclical nature of man-made disasters and their lasting repercussions on humanity. Its relevance extends to conflicts and disasters globally, both contemporary and historical. These works compel viewers to act, urging accountability for those responsible for such senseless loss of life. Additionally, prompting a reconsideration of how we memorialize and honor the victims of such tragedies.

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Keem Jiyoung was born 1987, and she is based in Seoul. She received her BFA in painting from Kookmin University and her MFA in Fine Arts from Korea National University of Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include at P21 (Seoul, 2024 & 2022); WESS (Seoul, 2020); Sansumunhwa (Seoul, 2018) and O'newWall E'Juheon (Seoul, 2015). She has participated in numerous group shows, such as at Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (Ansan, 2024 & 2021); New Spring Project (Seoul, 2024); PARK SEOBO FOUNDATION (Seoul, 2023); SONGEUN (Seoul, 2023 & 2021); DOOSAN Gallery (Seoul, 2022); Korean Culture Center (Hong Kong, 2020) and at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Gwacheon, 2019). Keem Jiyoung's work is included in the collection of PODO Museum, SONGEUN, PARK SEOBO FOUNDATION, Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.