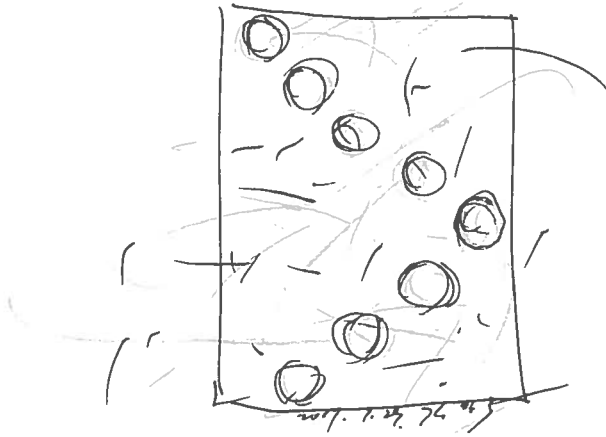


# Spike Island

## Translation of works

*I Believe My Works Are Still Valid* by Kim Yong Ik



*Untitled* (1990)

Pencil, plant juice on paperboard

Work number 12

I created this work after Shin Yong-deuk's persuasion. I believe a good artwork would cost less money to produce. These very stains on the surface are not made of paint I have bought but are made of plants (zebrine for bluish hue, garden balsam for reds, grass for everything else) that are found outside of the school courtyard. The cost is not the sole reason for using plant extracts

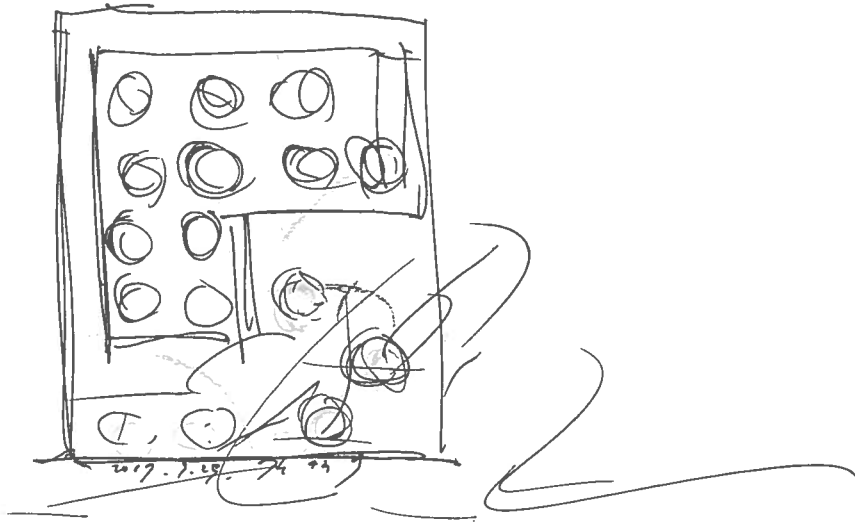
... action is an impulsive one, but... clear, a clear reason or cause must exist. What kind of origin would be there for this use of plants? When it comes plant extracts, I am particularly interested in the dried leaves left on the surface.

I'm erasing ... All is meaningless.

This meaningless task, however, must be respected very secretly. Without this meaninglessness we might be doing something dangerous. So, today I will continue on this meaningless task to share it with those who agree with my sentiment. Share what? A sense of camaraderie... (I wouldn't think those who are looking at this work would share my sentiments but perhaps Hong myeong-seop and ...)

I would hope for an environment and a few who...

*Untitled (1990)*  
Pencil, plant juice on paperboard  
Work number 13

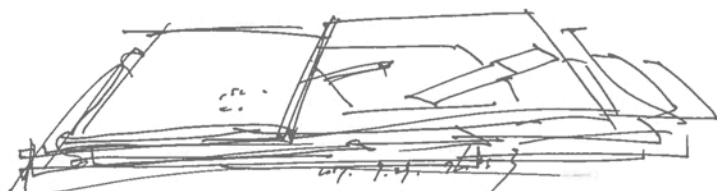


I do not throw away any pieces that have been cut away from my work, not only as a means to conserve but also to serve another purpose. If I were to state all the reasons behind this other purpose some would snort, some would take pity upon me, some would find it difficult, and some would agree completely.

From afar, this work would come off as a simple pictorial composition and only those who look close enough would be able to read this text. They would struggle to make sense out of the text among these piercing dots.

The smudges made with flower and plant extract were intended to disrupt the reading of the text (or it very well could not be). The 'composition' would be less visible to those who are reading the text, and the text will be less visible to those who are looking at the composition. As I want... to be seen, I would hope that this will be read in that sense.

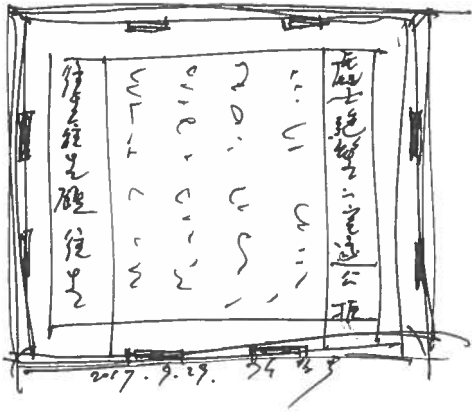
*An Installation Made of Damaged Two Pieces (1998) and Packed Materials (2016)*  
(second version 2017, after original of 2016)  
Paper collage, packing material  
Work number 15



The work above was made while I was dwelling on the idea of the “politics of ambiguousness.” The work consists of packaging material of other artworks, cardboard box that used to house my paper works, and the ill-kept drawings due to careless maintenance that can no longer be considered an “artwork” according to “normal standards.” However, as I have always paid my attention to abnormalities negated by the main boundaries, I decided to involve, but not entirely embrace in an ambiguous manner, these so-called ‘garbage’ resulting from the exhibition installation. The intention was to blur the lines between actual trash and an artwork as defined by the familiar language of contemporary art. In order to do so, at the Ilmin Museum of Art, the work was specifically placed on the floor at the secluded corner near the entrance of the white cube—a site with ambiguous identity that is not really part of the gallery yet still inside the museum space. Difficult to be immediately identified as an artwork, the ‘politics of ambiguity’ as embodied in this work could be a metaphor to my political stance that has long stood between socialist/populist art and modernism, never belonging to one or the other. My assertion is that it is also a metaphor for many of my parent’s generation who have crossed the line of life and death based on their decision to be a leftist or rightist, and those who kept a politically middle ground.

05.08.2017 Kim Yong-Ik

\*Please note, this is not a translation of text written on the artwork itself. It is a text about the work, written by the artist.



*The Coffin of a Hermit 'Despair Completed'*

(1993 – 2014)

Acrylic on canvas, wood,  
oil-based ink on acetate film

Work number 18

I sing the songs of my youth, instead of reincarnation songs, to my work titled *Despair Completed*, which is now ready to depart this world after serving its time.

**A Longing**

My friend who has gone far beyond to the unnamed star above the sky  
A real beauty were thy eyes  
An eternal parting that has left me with longing  
Thou remain silent and our memories swirl  
Following the lonely night  
The burning sense of longing  
I dream of you in tears  
Ah, ah, my dear friend.

**A Song for Parting**

When the moon in the west falls to the lake,  
the dawn breaks upon the far mountain.  
A fog of anxiousness  
clouds the eyes that have sparked with lights of adoration  
My dear friend, may the journey be a pleasant one.  
How could I part from thee?  
My dear friend, forget me not.

**Unknown Title**

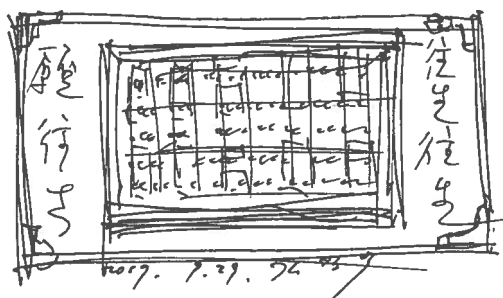
How quickly you have come,  
a parting in grief.  
A parting unforeseen,  
a grief indeed  
Adieu, my friend  
Adieu, my friend

**Unknown Title**

Oh, my dear comrade,  
setting sail for a hopeful journey beyond the harsh sea, be well.  
Adieu, adieu, I shall never forget your warm heart.  
Adieu, adieu.  
Never will I forget thee. Adieu.

First painted in 1993, repainted in 2005, buried in 2014

*Vowing Rebirth* (1993-2015)  
 Acrylic on canvas, wood,  
 oil-based ink on acetate film,  
 brass ornaments  
 Work number 19



On New Year's Day, 2015, I experienced alternating complications of diarrhea, stomach upset, and headache, bringing me down. Betraying my wish to create beautiful works with lingering resonance, a harsh reality ensued from day one. Illness has made me languid and lazy, and all I wish is to stay in bed. I should, however, steep myself in the collection of poems by Baek Seok, dreaming of a snowfall, Natasha, and the white donkey while patting my upset stomach.

*I was born to live a humble, solitary, lofty, and forlorn life. And to live in this world my heart overflows with so many passions, both love and grief.*

*When the Heavens bore the world, all the things that it most prized and adored were made to lead humble, solitary, lofty, forlorn existences in eternal love and grief.*

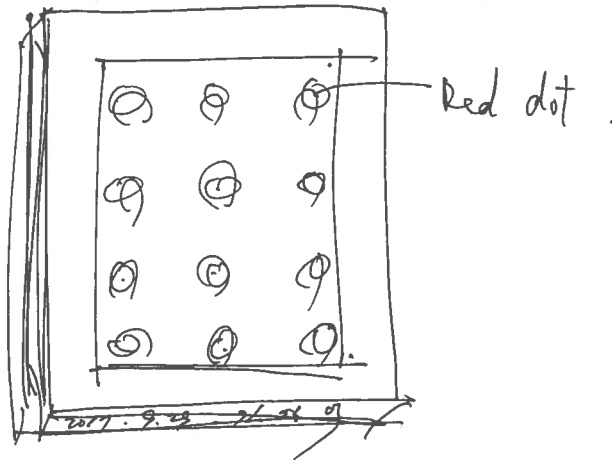
*Just like a crescent moon, a buttercup, a lonesome bird, and a donkey do;*

*And as 'Francis Jammes', 'Tao Yuanming' and 'Rainer Maria Rilke' have.\**

2015.1.2. Kim Yong-Ik

\*Translator's note: Extract from Baek Seok's poem *A white wall against the wind* (1989)

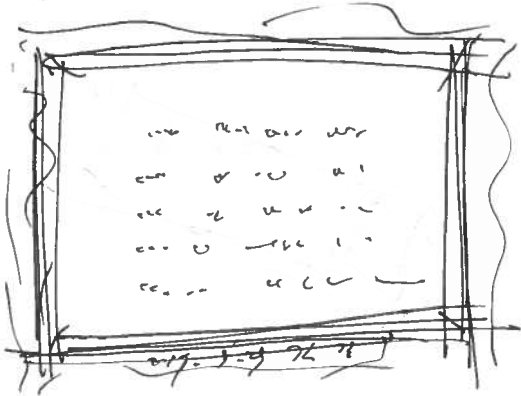
Untitled (2015)  
Wood, oil-based ink on acetate film,  
wine box package  
Work number 20



For a long time, I have sung for the new,  
looking down upon the beauty of a pause.  
Oh tree, and your spirit,  
let me rest my tired body, as light as a sparrow,  
on your humble branch for a little while.  
Progress is what the wise since Socrates have pursued,  
pause what the war-battered poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have accomplished.  
The tree, however, is still growing and so is its spirit.  
I still cannot forgive the excess of order in this age,  
an age of dark night that requires an excess of order.  
On such nights, I know how to sing the song of an owl.  
A tedious song,  
A detestable song, a listless song,  
Ah, the one order  
Ah, yet the order is still at once a part of and a hindrance for me.  
Tonight, I dream of India  
No, I dream of a girl that I used to love  
No, this is false  
I do not dream of India or the girl I used to love.  
Only letters are guiding me  
Guiding me to the obscure and the inscrutable.  
I yearn for the obscurer, even more inscrutable.  
Yes, this is my achingly sweet dream  
that I never wish to wake up from.  
Oh tree, and your spirit,  
let me rest my tired feet, as light as a sparrow,  
on your humble branch for a little while.

- Written with reference to Kim Soo-young's poem *Prologue*  
18.09.2015 Kim Yong-Ik

*Untitled (1982 – 2015)*  
**Drawing on Paper, wood,  
oil-based ink on acetate film**  
**Work number 21**



Was it made around 1982? There is no accurate date or a signature to be found in this work.

Never shown to the public, but look how well it has managed to survive being moved multiple times over the past thirty years or more. I must now let it rest in peace for good. Oh, my dear comrade setting sail for a hopeful journey beyond the harsh sea, be well. Adieu, adieu, I shall never forget your warm heart. Adieu, adieu, never will I forget thee. Adieu... (This is the song of reincarnation I dedicate to you...)

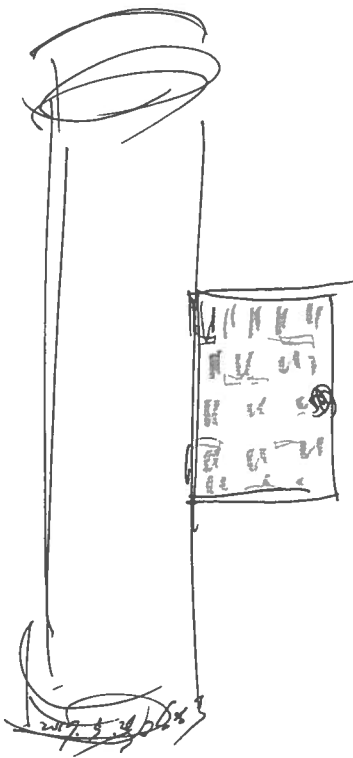
24.08.2015 Kim Yong-Ik

*Ksitigarbha-1 (1990 – 2015)*  
**Acrylic on canvas, silk, wood, oil-based ink on acetate film**  
**Work number 24**

(Text on the right) My aunt murmured over my father's dead body while it was being prepared after he had passed away, "Kid, all you need to do now is to call for the Ksitigarbha." Ksitigarbha Ksitigarbha Ksitigarbha I have always thought that Ksitigarbha was a bodhisattva who guides deceased spirits. Later I found out that Ksitigarbha is a bodhisattva of the Underworld who went to hell to save all suffering sinners from their sins and guide them to heaven.

(Text on the left) So, with the hope that Ksitigarbha will take my work that has served so faithfully to heaven, I have entombed my work inside a coffin and drawn an image of Ksitigarbha on it. They say that if you paint, create a sculpture, or mold clay in the shape of Ksitigarbha and keep it enshrined together with the deceased, they will be born again in Trayastrimsa for one hundred lifetimes or more, safe from the dark realm for a long while. So here I bid farewell to my work. "Kid, now that I have drawn the image of Ksitigarbha, you will be born again under a benevolent sky called Trayastrimsa. Adieu."

20.01.2015 Kim Yong-Ik



*Despair Completed*  
(original of 1993  
with additions made in 1998, 2005 and 2006)  
Mixed media on canvas, brass hinge, knob  
Work number 29

Dear future acquirer of this work,

Let me first explain how this painting was made. As seen, the green stain at the bottom is plant juice, from sun-berries to be exact. For the past months, I've been adding smudges of plant juice on the background and piling layers of black or white circles in orderly manner. I would say the background has turned out to be a success on this one. By success I mean that this ~~least~~ resembles a traditional notion of a painting. I would imagine this could leave you in doubt. What does he mean by 'not like a painting' and hence a successful one?

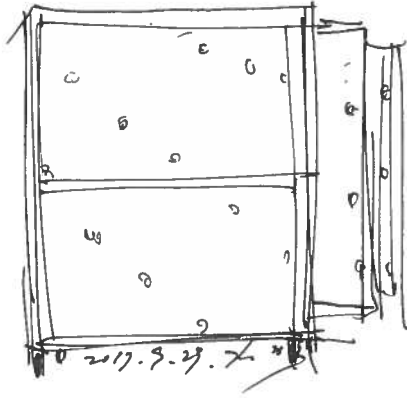
What I mean is that I've been adding plant juice but they ended up looking like an abstract expressionist painting. I hoped my works start independently from the traditional context of painting as a cultural experience. In other words, I wished for it to start as some stain with no clear intention. But this hasn't proved to be an easy task because our cultural blindness has cultivated us to see any kind of stain or mark making in relations to a painting. This painting is an attempt to work against the notion of it but it fails to completely go against it. Why do I struggle so to make it not look like a painting?

Have you not realized this already? Has your intelligence guided your readings of this? Have you not clearly understood what I have been subconsciously intending to convey? I would hope that you have been.

15.11.1993

P.S. I can write about this work from a completely different viewpoint.

22.03.2006. Exhibited at Gallery 175



*Special Offer Set (2011-2015)*  
Acrylic on canvas, wooden box,  
oil-based ink on acetate film  
Work number 30

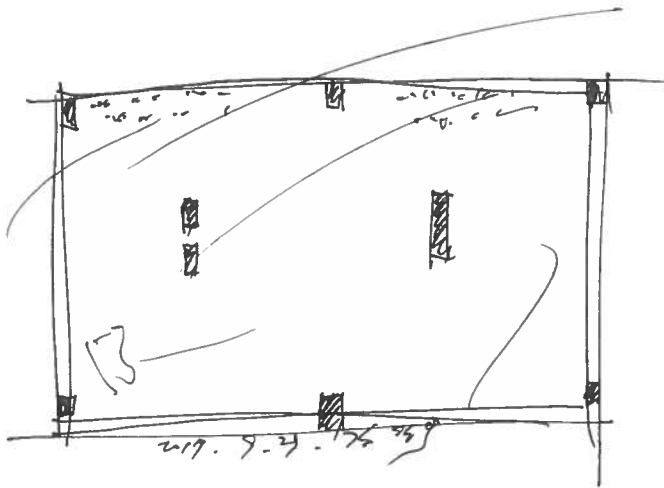
\* same text repeated on the back of each canvas

I had participated in an Art Fair in Gwangju in 01-04.09.2011. Two people were competing to acquire the small white-washed red polka dot painting.

I have made this set piece of five works for the client who couldn't buy the work and for any future interests. The price is set at 6,000 USD per piece as of late 2011 with 1,000 USD increment annually. If sold as a set, 20% discount is allowed.

2011.9.26. (resigned in 22.06.2015)

*Closer... Come Closer... , (1996 -2013)*  
Mixed media on canvas  
Work number 31



Text on the vinyl, top part in bold

Do not unwrap this vinyl. Leave it in its ragged state. It is an existence claiming for its position within the Symbolic Order. Don't see it as dirty or dangerous — No one would dare ask why a dirtied work is considered dangerous? Or might they? The soiled was seen as a challenge against and resistance to order, and hence considered dangerous, but today, dirtiness no longer imposes a threat, having been cornered by our society in defense for hygiene, manner, and order... 2012.10.20. Kim Yong-Ik — This much should be accepted by our society. I am never an aggressive type, as all avant-garde has been. Don't simplify the avant-garde as a radical revolution and severance from existing order. 2012.10.25.

Text on the second row, thin ballpoint pen

I should only do the things that I can manage to do at my age and under the given circumstances, not the things that I must do...

Text on the bottom left, on paper

This artwork is not considered a very good one, because it doesn't satisfy the five points I have set as a good artwork.

The five points I have set are:

Firstly, a good artwork should require the least amount of energy to produce.

Secondly, a good artwork should require the least amount of money.

Thirdly, a good artwork should not require any specific technique and should be easily reproduced by anyone.

Fourthly, a good artwork should be easy to transport.

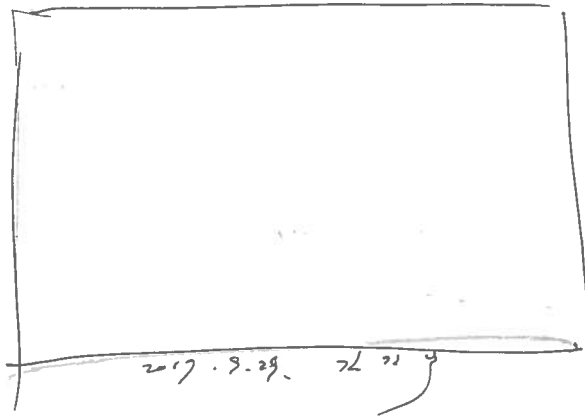
Fifth, a good artwork would be okay if it gets torn, crushed, or dirtied a bit.

This work fails to meet the fourth point, since I can't roll this up and carry around, or maybe it is also not meeting the third point.

25.05.2013 Kim Yong-Ik

This painting was first done on 21.09.1990.

*I believe my works are still valid (1997)*  
**Pressed writing on paper**  
**Work number 48**



To serve as an example for others with my own actions is the basis of a revolutionary, communist practice and art making.

My work fails to be revolutionary. As someone had said, these fail to meet the standards of a museum piece since they don't work in favor of social harmony and a pacifier...

I believe my works are still valid. I just have to decide to make a living with my monthly salary. One must work beyond self-consciousness and avant-garde traditions but... I think these works with placard are a good idea... placard, placard...