

Forest is the Artist

an exhibition of artworks
by Gomsil Forest



with Patrick M. Lydon
(assistant to the forest)

2019. 2. 9 - 2. 24

placeMAK gallery
Seoul, Korea

This exhibition begins and ends with a forest named Gomsil, in the northeastern mountains of Korea's Gangwon province. For a decade, Gomsil has been a friend of mine. She has inspired much of my work. At the same time, Forest has never been given credit for that role.


Perhaps, I am not the only one, who thinks this way about a forest; or who wonders how we can better listen to their voices, or credit them for their role in our lives. This exhibition, by and for Gomsil Forest, is one attempt.

We're not used to curiously interpreting nature, but we are used to curiously interpreting art in a gallery. Here, we can do both. Each canvas is a little doorway. A possibility. One hope for this show, is that a curiosity about nature's voice can begin to grow in our minds. Ideally, it should also ripple beyond these white walls, and into our everyday lives, too.

Patrick M. Lydon
assistant to the forest



installation view (main gallery)
PlaceMAK gallery, Seoul, South Korea



The exhibition “Forest is the Artist” features multiple works on canvas, all of them created by a South Korean forest, over the course of a year.

The show’s coordinator, American ecological artist Patrick M. Lydon calls himself the ‘assistant to the forest’. He has known Gomsil since 2011, and visits multiple times a year. Having spent much of the past decade exploring the relationships between East Asian farmers and the environment, he thinks the question of how we can listen better to nature is one too rarely asked in the environmental movement, and that art can help us.

In the Fall of 2017, Lydon visited Gomsil Forest with ten blank canvases. He asked the farmer who owns the land if he could place the canvases in the forest for one year. The farmer, Choi Seong Hyun, being a writer himself, was enthusiastic about the idea. A year later, Gomsil Forest revealed seven artworks to be exhibited, keeping three hidden. These works are on view in the gallery.

To finalize the project, all of the artist’s profit will be delivered to Gomsil Forest in Korean Won.



Untitled #6, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



Untitled #1, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



installation view (main gallery)
PlaceMAK gallery, Seoul, South Korea

*Empty squares are drawn by Lydon, to represent the artworks that
Gomsil Forest did not wish to exhibit.*



Untitled #2, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



Untitled #7, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



installation view (film screening gallery)
PlaceMAK gallery, Seoul, South Korea



Untitled #4, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



Untitled #5, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



Untitled #3, 46x38, forest on canvas, 2018
Gomsil Forest



Visitor Commentary

숲에게 인사하고 기도하고 대화하는
모습이 너무 좋아요 _ 시와
Greeting, praying, talking with the forest,
I really enjoy to see this. _ Siwa

자연의 신성한 소리를 피부로
함께 듣고 갑니다. 감사합니다. _ 수진
The sacred sound of nature, I could listen
to it through my skin. Thank you. _ Sujin

'생태'가 트렌드가 되어 돈을 만드는 시대.
다소 공허함에 시달리고 있는 요즘에 만난
자연스러움이 감사한 전시였습니다. _ 서연
These days 'eco' is a trend, and a way to make
money, and it makes me feel empty. So, I truly
appreciate this 'natural' exhibition. _ Seoyeon

인류가 처음으로 숲에 붓을 넘긴 놀라운
전시회네요. 이 전시회의 메시지가 널리
퍼졌으면 좋겠어요. 세계 미술사에 새 역사가
쓰여지는 전시회입니다. _ 개구리
It is an amazing exhibition, when humankind passes
the paintbrush to forest. A new art history is written
here, and I hope this message spreads widely.
_ Gaeguri

installation view (main gallery)
PlaceMAK gallery, Seoul, South Korea





film still from 'Gomsil Forest is Artist'
8' 05", single-channel video and sound, 2019
Patrick M. Lydon & Suhee Kang

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