

N/A

*Hum Bomb, Hum Bomb, Hum Bomb Hum*

거상거상 거상거 居喪居喪居喪居

Yeonså Cha

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*Festival of Spirits, Garden Funeral*

Jaehun

Festival (2023–) is a relay work that began when the artist Yeonså Cha intercepted the series of the same name, Festival (2006–2017), which her late father, Korean painter Dongha Cha, had been creating. Yeonså cut the hanji that Dongha Cha had dyed for his Festival series with tailoring scissors, shaped it, and attached it onto panels covered with silk. The forms that the artist creates through collage have their origins. They are the unclaimed bodies in forensic book plates, the silverfish dried and stuck in damp and dark places, and the poetic words that relay scenes of endings in various ways.

If Dongha Cha's Festival prepared a poetic space for the dead or the left behind through the rhythm of colour planes rather than clearly showing the informational value of the represented subject, then Yeonså Cha's Festival gathered lives outside the unwritten rules and, by "transcribing", built her own lexicon of poetic words. (Yeonså Cha repeatedly visits rubbish dumps where all the dregs of the world pile up to find her "friends," and this image resembles a solitary spider cultivating its inner force through extreme (極) and poison (毒).) The translated originals, while maintaining only the minimum of their original form, gave the impression of shadows that had spread wide, and the artist always seemed excited at casting the actors for her "shadow play" drawn from the tragedy that is our world.

And in 2025, after Soman (小滿), the solar term when things begin to fill from small beginnings, director Jinhyeok Oh and I visited the artist's studios in Seoul and Namyangju in turn. There, I saw (perhaps the very works you are looking at now in this exhibition) Festival Wagon, Wet/Dry Wheel, Tower, Tree, and Spring Onion Flower. They were of a different nature from the Festival works of Yeonså I had followed until then, and they entrusted themselves to a procession that could not be caught by the words attached to earlier works. Newly born, newly cast friends of Yeonså. Chilly and warm at the same time.

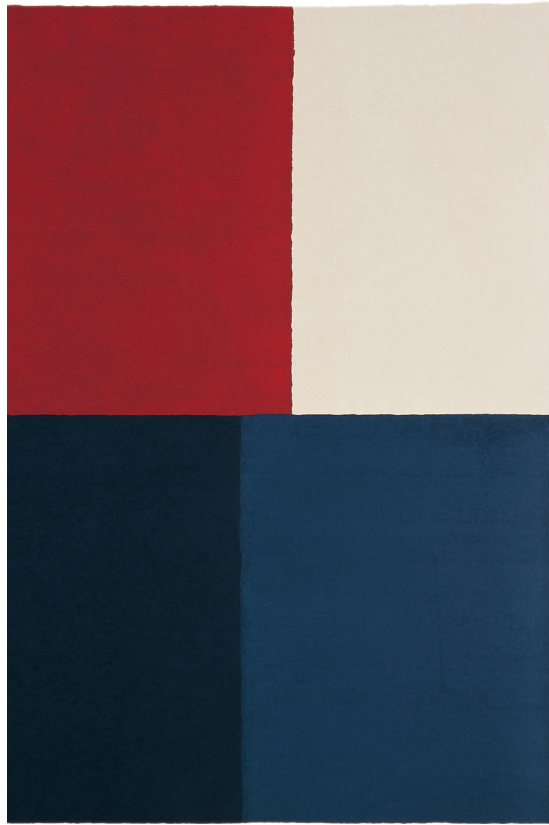
From these Festival works, similar yet different from the earlier ones, what I sensed was a spatiality I had never felt before. Unlike the earlier works, which drew particular characters, scenes, and gazes into the frame, the newly chosen subjects of transcription—stone pagoda, tree, spring onion flower—were breathing their energy into the space outside the frame. It was not difficult for me to come to the thought that this was Yeonså Cha's garden, and I noted that the newly chosen subjects were in fact the elements that make up the garden of Dongha Cha's (late) studio. (If in 2023 and 2024 the main imagery that composed Festival was corpses, then in 2025 the garden in Namyangju appears as another imagery.)

Because it takes place in the place the father left behind, and uses the materials he left, Yeonså Cha's Festival has often been regarded as a work of mourning for her father. But even if the death of Dongha Cha became the admission ticket to that world, it would be a stretch to read Yeonså's act of cutting hanji as a rite for him. Nor do the Festival works shown in this exhibition feel like actual acts of mourning for the souls of the corpses, as did those produced in 2023. Where, then, is the gathering point of Festival, which continues to unfold and transform?

Following the artist's consciousness, I encountered Zhuangzi's concept of Wu Sang Wo (吾喪我). "I have buried myself." And, "I have lost myself." This philosophy contains the meaning that one must lose the wo (我), the self created by society, in order to find the true wu (吾), the self. Seen through this principle, Yeonså's Festival was the building of the landscape that will surround her at the time of her death. Having encountered countless forensic plates, criminal profiling materials, and the poetry of Kim Eun-hee, she must have drawn her own death scene thousands of times; for her, the work is the translation of the house in her mind into reality. The orphans, each going their own way, pause for a breath in this garden punctuated by real images of death.



Yeonså Cha, *Festival 23 #5 Reservoir*, 2024, Papercut collage (Color on Dak paper: the late Cha Dongha), 89 x 108 cm



Dongha Cha, *Festival 06 #2*, 2006, Color on Dak paper,, 164 x 115 cm

As the artist once said, "Through my work I have repeatedly experienced reconciliation with hostile objects," the act of tending a garden also becomes a way of facing the pains of reality. Yeonså Cha cuts apart (1) the old version of Festival created by Dongha Cha, offering it to corpses and spirits, and (2) transcribes the garden in Namyangju, thereby expanding the space in which her friends' bodies can frolic. Recently, for the sake of her work, she has been residing for several days at a time in the house within the Namyangju garden. From there she has sent me images of newly made works or passing thoughts by text, and not long ago she told me that the seongjusun (the household god) inhabiting the house had begun to murmur again. To me, those words sounded like the sign of yet another Festival. For on her timeline, the image of the garden–Festival is like an unfixed casting mould, constantly changing.

A related, curious story: at present Festival is held by only two collectors besides the artist herself. After entrusting the works to these two collectors, the artist confessed that the corpses depicted within the frame soon began to feel like portraits of the collectors. By this account, Festival is none other than the collector's portrait or dress code. This exhibition, *Hum Bomb, Hum Bomb, Hum Bomb Hum*, serves as the introduction to the Festival in the form of a garden; until the artist's new Festival begins after this exhibition, we as viewers are free to devour this garden greedily or remain aloof, as if alone. That she has opened her garden as a park for our time to be possible, and that she regards Festival as the collector's portrait, calls forth the public dimension of the Festival Yeonså Cha organises.