

DAWOONI PARK

A multidisciplinary artist in every sense of the word, Dawooni Park's work seamlessly blends media technology—as both her method and subject—with Japanese animation and illustration. In the past few years, Park has participated in several exhibitions, including "HERE I AM" at SEUM Art Space and a solo exhibition titled "#GIRLCRUSH" at Drawing Blind, all while amassing a social media following from posts of her work. More

Let's start from the beginning. How did you first become interested in art, and in particular, graphic arts? Did you always know you wanted to be an artist?

I'm not too sure when I became interested in graphic design. Ever since I was little, I liked to draw



Uninvited Girl, video still, 2016

characters from television and comic books and my friends would often request for me to draw their favorite characters. Also, when my school asked for parents' signatures on forms, I would replicate my friends' parents' signatures for my friends (not the best way to realize that I was good at art). I really didn't think much about me being an artist, it was so natural to me that I became one, so I decided to go to art school.

What does your creative process look like?

My creative process looks different for every work but I usually start by jotting ideas that come to my head on a notebook, sometimes I save reference images.

For the group exhibition "HERE I AM," your work deals a lot with screens—people looking at screens, people within

recently, Park produced an animated music video for guitarists Kim Saehwang and Kim Jungmo's SM Station track, "Nostalgia." Depicting the contemporary through nostalgic means, her work explores what it means to live and participate in a social media-obsessed world, and the layers of mediation that come with it. Speaking through an email exchange, we discuss her artistic influences, relationship to social media, and future plans.

screens, people looking at screens within a screen, or the interface of the screen itself. How do you understand your artworks' relationship to screens? Why is it important to bring attention to the screen?

Rather than the exhibition being about bringing attention to the screen, I wanted to portray the irony of the exhibition's topic, "HERE I AM." I wanted to show people's obsession with smartphones, Instagram, selfies, etcetera—how people put on a fake demeanor on social media and, through their fake selves, receive emptiness and satisfaction. The reason I dealt with a lot of screens is because screens are the medium through which we reveal our social media selves.

You sometimes post your work, or clips of your



media (how many likes, how many followers). I'm not completely free from that behavior, but I also think that that's what makes social media fun. In the future, I want to incorporate social media's many functions (diffusivities, ability to send and receive feedback quickly) as a part of my work.

A lot of your art mixes traditional ukiyo-e painting, 8-bit graphics, old technology, video games, Japanese animation, and contemporary South Korean imagery. You even display contemporary media through old technology. How do you see this particular mixture or collaging of temporalities and influences interacting with one another to form a narrative?

I don't intentionally try to combine or collage these materials to form a narrative. I often think about adding fun touches to a work—as long as it doesn't disturb the work—and my favorite things naturally come into place. And you mentioned contemporary South Korean imagery—I often wonder about portraying it. I'm still contemplating what "contemporary Korean imagery" is—and it will possibly show up in my future works as well.

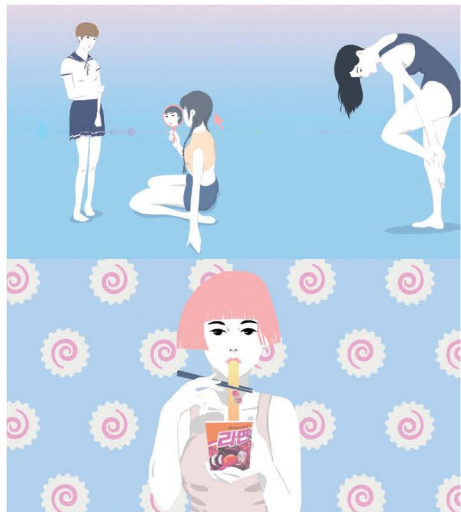


#GIRLCRUSH, 2015

work, on social media, and have a following online. Considering how you deal with it in your work, how would you describe your personal relationship to social media?

I believe that there definitely are positive factors to my relationship with social media. I can show my followers my work without the limitations of time and space. Because of this, I tend to be sensitive to numbers on social

The figure of the female and shoujo imagery appears frequently in your work, from your earlier "#GIRLCRUSH" exhibition, Soul One's 재미없어(Boring), and even your personal branding. You often make visible the technology that mediates the image of the girl—whether it be a computer screen, video game, other girls, or the male gaze. Why represent



재미없어 (Boring), video still, 2016

the female this way?

Because I am a woman myself, the theme of “women” is something I can naturally sympathize with, and it’s always a fun and imaginative theme to deal with. There are many ways for a woman to express her personality—I may be expressing myself with my work on the subject of women. In addition, the women in each work are slightly different: in the “#GIRLCRUSH” exhibition, I portrayed a woman from a female perspective—a girl boss. In Soul One’s 재미없어(Boring), I portrayed a woman from a male perspective—a more sexual woman. The representation of the female changes in each work.

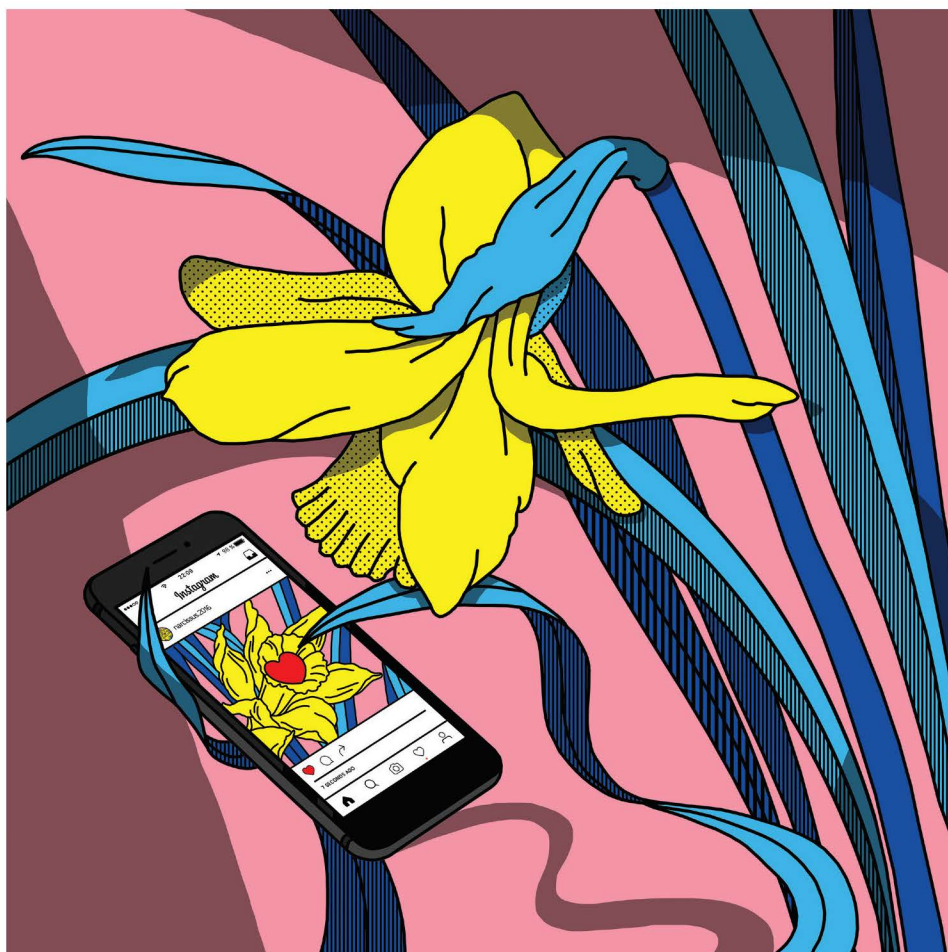
You’ve worked with a lot of different people, from idol groups to hip hop/ R&B labels and commercial brands. How do you approach creating work for other people?

Normally, after getting a request, I have a meeting with the client. The most important things to know are how the song and the brand came to be, and what they desire or prefer. After figuring these things out, I think about how the idea could be portrayed visually to make a board with sample images. We then discuss and plan the official visuals. Sometimes the client has a clear idea and a board so I create visuals with their references, but I don’t enjoy that

as much as when the client and I plan together.

Some of your work reminds me of Kon Satoshi’s thought process. Who or what are some of your influences or inspirations?

To be honest, I cannot sympathize with Kon Satoshi’s sensitive, almost obsessive way of continuously, emotionally developing his work from the beginning to the end. However, there are a lot of excellent animation directors—the visuals of director Makoto Shinkai, for instance. I enjoy the clean, refined feeling of Japanese media (not only animation, but also music and art). There coexists a beautiful and psychotic feeling... As for inspiration, I’m also inspired by friends, things I see in the street—everyday life is what inspires me more. Ah, recently, I’ve been into 80s and 90s fashion, music, and work made back then.



Narcissus 2016, Here I Am, 2016

What are some themes you’re interested in exploring next with your work?

Actually, I’ve been meaning to say that I won’t be working on work for myself or exhibitions for a while. I will still sometimes take commercial work and work on some things with social media, though. I want to build more skills, so I’m preparing to study abroad at a graduate school.

Ultimately, what do you hope your art is able to do?

This is a hard question. Not too long ago (a couple of years ago), I wanted to become an influential artist. Now, I think of art as a learning process and because of that, my desire to become “influential” died down a bit. It would be a successful life if an artist could make one work that they are completely satisfied with within their lives. I wouldn’t



Narcissus 2016, Here I Am, 2016

disagree if someone said that there’s a greater chance of an artist not making work that they are completely satisfied with. I’m not the adventurous type, but art is the core of what makes me explore.

Anything else you’d like our readers to know about you or your work?

Although I haven’t been working as an artist for a long time, my style

has changed quite a bit throughout the journey. I still want to try many genres and learn a lot of things—so I’m not sure how my works’ direction will change. It is my pleasure to showcase my work—I hope to have more opportunities in the future. Soon, I will have a period of time where I focus on accumulating more skills. Thank you.