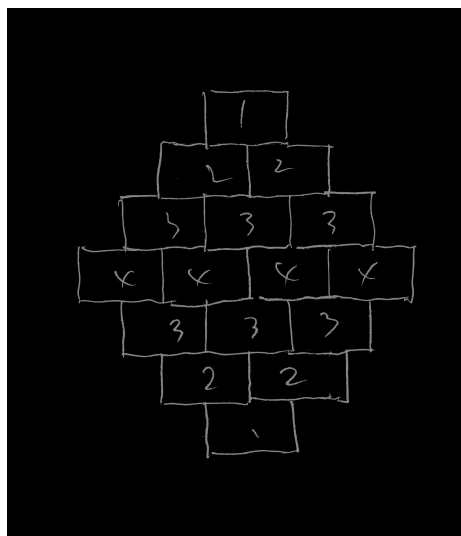


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Mind - Language - Numbers:

Photographs and Paper Works from the 1980s (2024)



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Works by PARK DooYoung

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About the book

Mind - Language - Numbers: Photographs and Paper Works of the 1980s (hereafter referred to as *Mind - Language - Numbers*) is a collection of works by conceptual artist Park DooYoung, presenting a series of photo-based works created in the early to mid-1980s.

Born in 1958 in Uiseong, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Park studied Western Painting at Keimyung University and established himself as a contemporary artist in Daegu. As the Japanese art critic Shigeo Chiba notes in his writing on Park, Daegu was a center of contemporary art in Korea before this influence spread to Seoul. This environment played an important role in Park's exploration of avant-garde contemporary art. Through interactions with fellow artists and mentors, he delved deeply into art theory, naturally incorporating photography into his practice.

It was during this period that Park conceptualized the idea that "the world comes from the mind and the mind is ruled by language", which became the philosophical foundation of his artistic vision. The works included in *Mind - Language - Numbers* reflect the manifestation of these early ideas at the intersection of photography and contemporary art.

Through early series such as *I Draw*, followed by *Where Is the Moon*, *Page 45*, *Mountains* and *About Numbers or Mind*, Park explores the act of 'seeing', human perception, and the meaning of photography. Among these, *On Numbers or the Mind* and *Loushu* series stand out as representative works that reflect Park's interest in numbers and language. These works recontextualize the photography as a system of meaning and its operational mechanism. Park's approach, particularly his focus on the 'numbers' within photographs, raises questions about the referential nature of photography. This investigation is both playful and humorous.

The book features 25 photographic and paper-based works created by Park between 1981 and 1986 (with some projects extending to 2005), accompanied by the artist's brief reflection. At the end of the book is a revised version of an essay by artist and critic Park Chang-seo, originally written for Park DooYoung's exhibition 2023 at Shilla Gallery in Daegu. The publication also comes with a set of 62 photo cards that allow readers to engage in a playful 'language game' around Park's concepts of numbers and language.

Park DooYoung's photos and paper works from the early to mid-1980s represent a rare conceptual approach to photography in the context of modern Korean art history. They also capture a dynamic moment of contemporary art in Daegu.

In the book

Even after graduation, I struggled to settle down in society and spent my time, wandering from one studio to another like a nomad for a while. Still passionate about art, I trained myself by participating in exhibitions and reading clubs with older colleagues who shared similar aspirations. I realized that "The world comes from the mind and the mind is ruled by language" and deeply resonated with contemporary conceptual art or the humanistic values of tradition. My curious mind, searching for anything that interested me, sometimes through physical activity and sometimes through science or philosophy, manifested itself in a series of random works that were either forgotten or lost in countless moves. A studio fire in the winter of 2011 made me realize their value and I began to reproduce them.

The works showcase my "initial motifs." To give them meaning, there are paper-based works such as *Text-Sculpture*, which purely represents concepts without any physical mass, *Seascape*, which conceals illusion and presents written language as an

artistic message, drawings that question the meanings of images as symbols and *Page 45*, a series of 'page 45' from various books, which represent various desires and symbols, ranging from humanistic values to greedy capitalist consumerism. There are photographic works such as *I Draw* series, which include videos taken with a shaking body, and works that reconstruct language or concepts into actual images. The photo series *Number Concept*, which were presented alongside other installation works at the time, examine the idea of perception through a mystical lens of number concepts as something that emerges from the mind rather than from objects and the external world.

- from Park DooYoung, "Looking Back at Works from the 1980s"

Park DooYoung used photography to create drawings that reflect physicality. The series *I Draw*(1981) feature blurred and shaky images that resemble either accidentally taken or developed photographs, but are works that use the camera and the development process as drawing material. The artist's belief that "Art is the creative result of my physical movement" resonates with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the Japanese Gutai Group's then-popular interest in physicality, but also stems from his upbringing in a Confucian family, which naturally led to his academic interest in theology and the afterlife. It is also a reflection of his existential will not to separate the questions of art from the questions of humanity.

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About Three(1984) from the series *About Numbers or Mind* (1985-1986) presents photographs in which various objects are grouped in groups of three, such as three people, three trees, or three airplanes. Different types of photographs were used,

including photographs of real objects or three people on a television. The original narrative or content of these ordinary photographs gave way to the indexicality of the number chosen by the artist. In other words, the medium of the original photograph is deconstructed by the set of numbers, and the narrative of the photograph is lost or suppressed by the concept of numbers that make all objects equal.

- from Park Chang-seo, "From Concept to Existence and Back Again"

About the artist

Artist Park DooYoung was born in 1958 in Uisung, Gyeongsangbuk-do. He grew up and worked in Daegu, and has been living and working in Gyeongju since 2020. He received his BFA and MFA from Keimyung University in 1982 and 1984 respectively. In 1983, he held an exhibition titled *Anti-Photo* in which he tore or picked out the outlines of photographic images, and has since held 16 solo exhibitions in Daegu, Seoul, and Tokyo. In her early career, he made experimental works and installations using paper and photographs, and since 1992, he has been focusing on vertical and horizontal striped paintings. Since 1981, he has participated in various group exhibitions such as *December-Donsung Street*(Street Performance, Daegu, 1981), *Daegu Art Today*(Soo Gallery, Daegu, 1984), *The Rising Generations*(Soo Gallery, Daegu, 1984) as well as *Independents*(MMCA Seoul, 1981-85), *Seoul Contemporary Art Festival*(Art Center, Seoul, 1986-88), *Hard Core 20 Daejeon Connection*(Hyundai Gallery, Daejeon, 1987-88), *Seoul, March of 1987*(Art Center, Seoul, 1987-88), *TA-RA group exhibition*(Inkong Gallery & Gallery THAT, Daegu, 1987-90), *Daegu Independent Artists' League Exhibition*(Taebaek Gallery, Inkong Gallery, Daegu, 1992), *Daegu Contemporary Art: 14 Artists' Viewpoints*(Daegu Culture & Art

Center, 1995) *Caravan-Daegu-Paris Exhibition*(Daegu Culture & Art Center, 1996)and *Made in Daegu II*(Daegu Art Museum, 2020).

About the contributor

Park Chang-seo holds a Master of Fine Arts in Plastic Arts and a Doctor of Fine Arts from Paris 1 University and has been working as a writer, critic, and exhibition curator after returning to Korea.