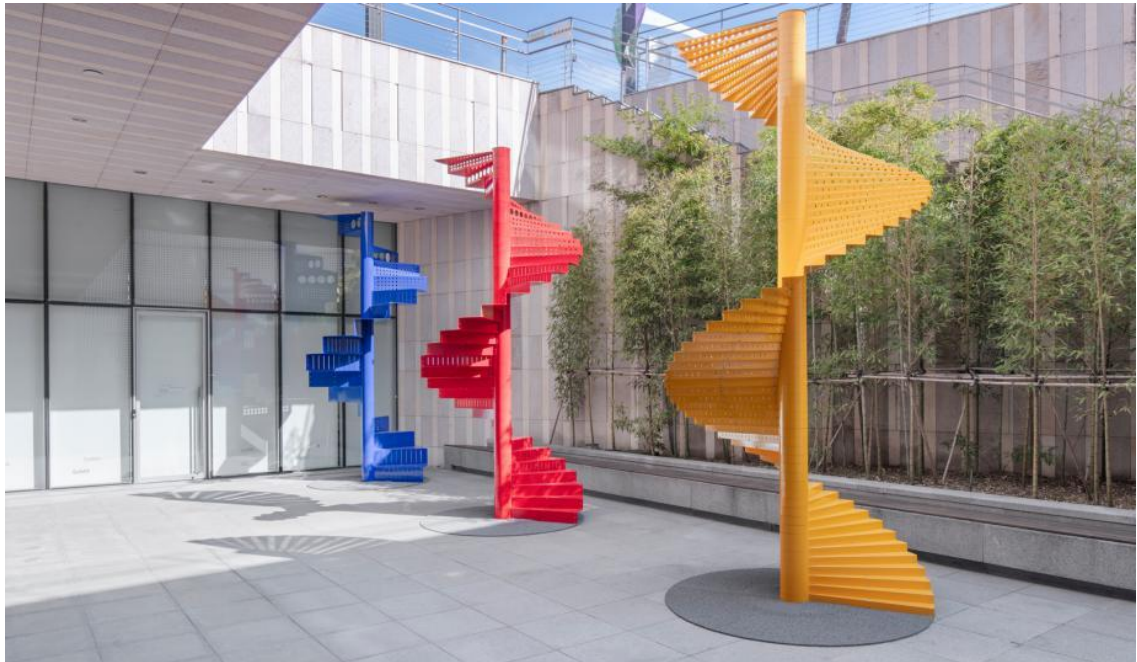


Inside Na Kim's vibrant playground for all ages

April 19, 2020 | By Andy St Louis

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South Korean graphic designer Na Kim's 'Bottomless Bag', installed at Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, is a vivid, geometrical exploration of memory and everyday objects. We offer a virtual tour and find out how the concept came to be



Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul Museum. 'Art Bottomless Bag' installation view. © 2020. Seoul Museum of Art all rights reserved. Photography: Unreal Studio. Image provided by Kukje Gallery

When I was in elementary school, we always had to buy this bag,' begins the Korean-born, Berlin-based graphic designer Na Kim when I ask about the concept behind her latest exhibition. She tells me about this simple, small bag that in the 1980s and '90s was sold at stationery shops across Korea, and contained a number of ambiguous objects that were often used as teaching materials at school. 'I remember some images of individual objects,' she continues, 'but more strong are the memories attached to these objects.'

In 'Bottomless Bag,' Kim's new solo exhibition at Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, the designer's distinctive visual vernacular forges a framework for considering images as networked components within a relational system of organisation as well as discrete, subjective sites of

memory. This unorthodox presentation of Kim's elemental sense of colour and geometry engages with her longstanding interest in recontextualising forms and patterns found in everyday objects and proposes alternative approaches to graphic design based on dynamic logics of spatial organisation.



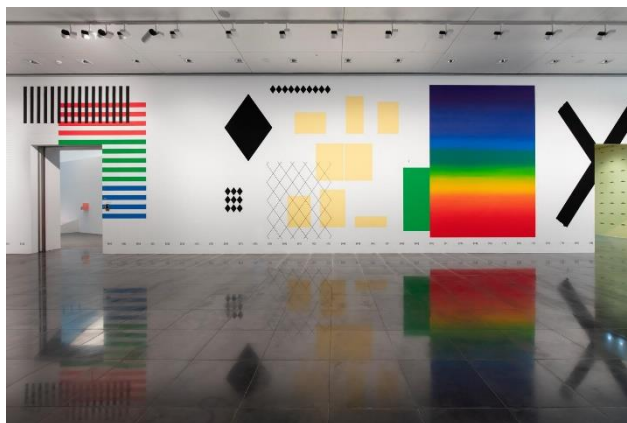
Na Kim artist portrait © 2020. Seoul Museum of Art all rights reserved. *Photography: Siniz Kim. Image provided by Kukje Gallery*

Anchoring the exhibition is the most recent iteration of Kim's installation series *SET* (2015-present), which reinterprets a range of two-dimensional design elements as physical objects. 'In many cases of previous *SET* series it was built up as a wall painting' she recalls, 'but here I want to bring these shapes and colours into the space, and that could be a sort of playground for children.'



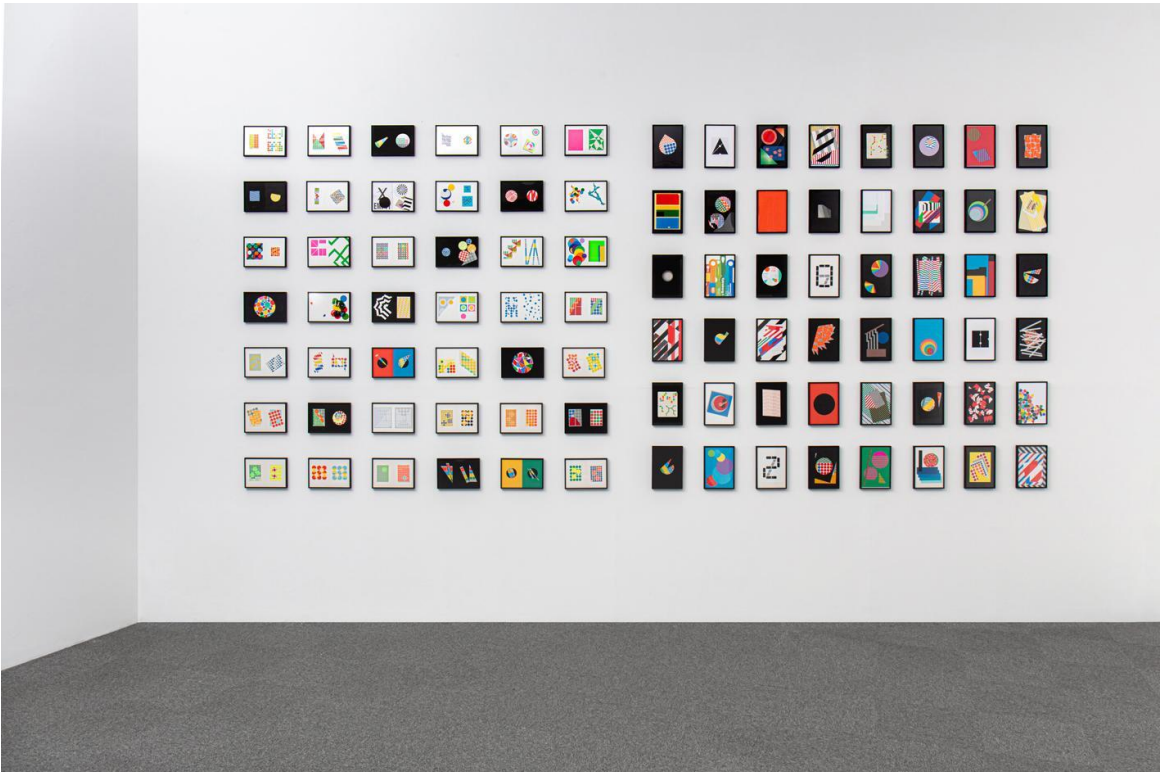
Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul Museum of Art. 'Bottomless Bag' installation view.
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As a commissioned artist for the museum's biannual Children's Exhibition Series, Kim had carte blanche to create a multilayered platform where visitors of all ages can freely interpret and interact with her work. An expansive playground installation at the core of 'Bottomless Bag' reflects the constantly-evolving rules of engagement that guide Kim's aesthetic decisions, enlarging shapes, blobs and squiggles derived from her visual archive to construct an immersive environment of colourful curtains, carpets, stairs and structures.



Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul Museum of Art. 'Bottomless Bag' installation view.
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The origins of these images can be traced to Kim's daily collage practice, in which she repurposes found objects and mass-produced materials – such as stickers, plastic bags and various papers – in a meditative process of discovery that yields a steady stream of inspiration. She calls these small works on paper *Found Compositions* (2009-present), explaining that 'most of them are based on the idea of how to find the hidden rules inside a composition.' Beyond addressing the impulse to communicate such rules and relationships, however, this methodology also invites the active reinterpretation of specific memories that she associates with each object. By imagining the gallery space itself as her own 'object bag,' Kim imbues her images with meaning as visual objects that evoke recollections of the past as well as tools for realising mindful designs that ontologically tether form and function.



Found Compositions, 2009, wall installation. © 2020. Seoul Museum of Art all rights reserved. Photography: Unreal Studio. Image provided by Kukje Gallery



Found Compositions, 2009, wall installation. © 2020. Seoul Museum of Art all rights reserved. Photography: Unreal Studio. Image provided by Kukje Gallery

INFORMATION

'Bottomless Bag' until 13 September, Buk Seoul Museum of Art. Sema.seoul.go.kr nkim.com

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URL: <https://www.wallpaper.com/art/na-kim-bottomless-bag-buk-seoul-museum>