

Media Art and the White Cube

August, 2020 | Simone Schultz

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Kukje Gallery's collaborative partnership with digital design company d'strict marks a first for the gallery



Installation view of WAVE, 2020, Coex Artium, Seoul, South Korea

Contemporary art has long gone beyond the confines of gallery walls or art fairs, with big-name corporations, fashion labels and all manner of brands calling on artists to collaborate and add a fresh and relevant perspective to an overcrowded consumer landscape.

In the Korean context, experiential design studio d'strict is a case in point. The studio's awe-inspiring installation WAVE was initially conceived as a promotional advertising display, but its prominent position in Seoul's K-Pop Square, the SMTown Coex Artium in Gangnam, meant the piece soon became a public work of art, exposing the broader public to the possibilities that lie at the intersection of art and technology.

It's these possibilities that Bo Young Song, managing director of Seoul- and Busan-based Kukje Gallery, is now seeking to explore in the gallery's new partnership with d'strict's newly founded contemporary art unit a'strict.



Installation view of WAVE, 2020, Coex Artium, Seoul, South Korea

While d'strict's portfolio includes media projects for clients such as Incheon International Airport, Lotte World, the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, Porsche and Samsung, artist unit a'strict will focus more on contemporary art projects than commercial endeavours. 'Our decision to collaborate with a'strict came from the fact that this team is one of the foremost pioneers working at the intersection of contemporary art and technology, which we see as a relevant and necessary endeavour in our current digital milieu,' Song explains. 'It's an opportunity for us, as gallery and artist unit, to explore how the heretofore conventional mediums of art can be translated in this day and age, and how our audiences will react to or accept these changes in the art world.'

And for d'strict CEO Sean Lee, the decision to partner with Kukje was a natural progression as the studio branches out into the contemporary art world. 'Our expertise is the integration of art and technology, and this strong visual impact serves as an intuitive and universal form of contemporary art for the general public,' he says. 'We wanted to showcase this to a broader audience in the art world, which is why we formed a'strict.' And in order for a'strict to segue into the contemporary art scene, the unit needed the support of a reputable international gallery. 'Kukje Gallery has a proven history of helping position emerging artists in the contemporary art scene and providing wider exposure for them,' Lee says. 'And the gallery is also already active on the digital front, with an established digital archive and viewing room, so their clear understanding of digital platforms makes them a perfect partner for us.'



Installation view of WAVE, 2020, Coex Artium, Seoul, South Korea

First up for the new partners is a solo exhibition beginning this month, which will see Kukje's K3 space transformed into a black cube housing a surreal landscape of luminous, surging waves. Titled *Starry Beach*, the installation has been specially designed as an immersive experience that will engulf the gallery space. Looking ahead, Kukje and a'strict will work together on Jeju Island's ARTE MUSEUM, slated to open in September 2020. Set to be the country's largest permanent media art display, the multimedia environment will make use of projection mapping to exhibit interactive, high-definition scenes of nature.



Installation view of *WAVE*, 2020, Coex Artium, Seoul, South Korea

'While the promotion of more intuitive forms of art on digital platforms remains highly necessary, in navigating our new reality mid- and post-COVID-19, I think that it's also necessary to spotlight digital art itself,' says Song. 'Digital and video art might be one of the most accessible and identifiable mediums in our world today, as no other medium is so easily adaptable to the myriad digital platforms that are available to us.'



LIVE PARK – NOI LIVE, KINTEX, Ilsan, Korea



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CAFÉ.BOT, Seoul, South Korea



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LG CNS "BEAT" COMMUNICATION CENTER, LG CNS Communication Center, Seoul, South Korea



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SLS HOTEL GX DESIGN, Las Vegas, United States



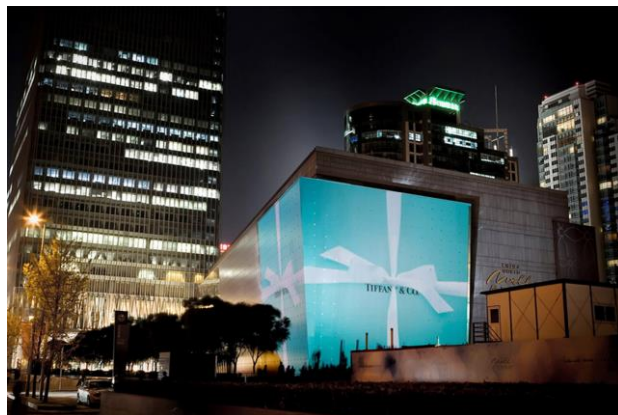
SLS HOTEL GX DESIGN, Las Vegas, United States



SLS HOTEL GX DESIGN, Las Vegas, United States



TIFFANY FLAGSHIP LAUNCHING SHOW, Beijing, China



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TIFFANY FLAGSHIP LAUNCHING SHOW, Beijing, China



LOTTE WORLD "MAGIC CIRCLE", Lotte World, Seoul, South Korea



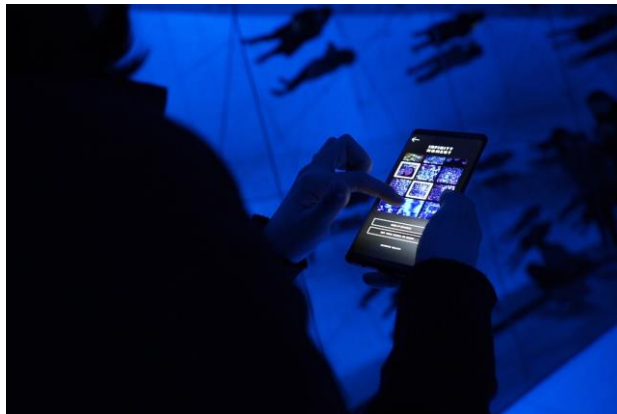
PLAY KPOP – JEJU, PLAY KPOP, Jeju Island, South Korea



PLAY KPOP – JEJU, PLAY KPOP, Jeju Island, South Korea



SLS HOTEL GX DESIGN, Las Vegas, United States



SAMSUNG GALAXY BRAND STUDIO, Gangneung, Gangwon-do, South Korea



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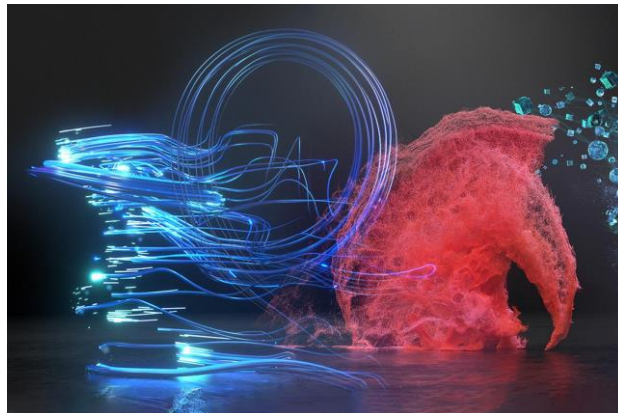
SK CES 2020 LED FAÇADE, Las Vegas, United States



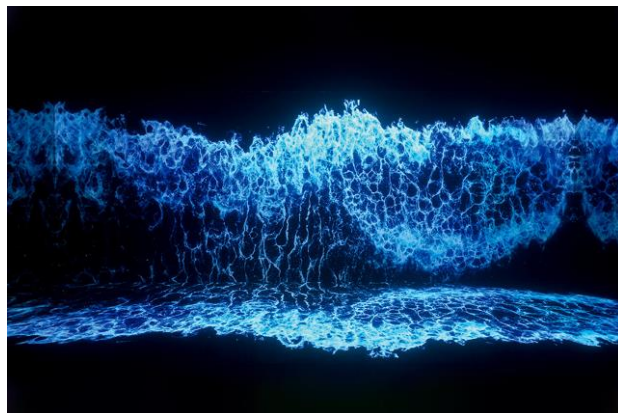
SK CES 2020 LED FAÇADE, Las Vegas, United States



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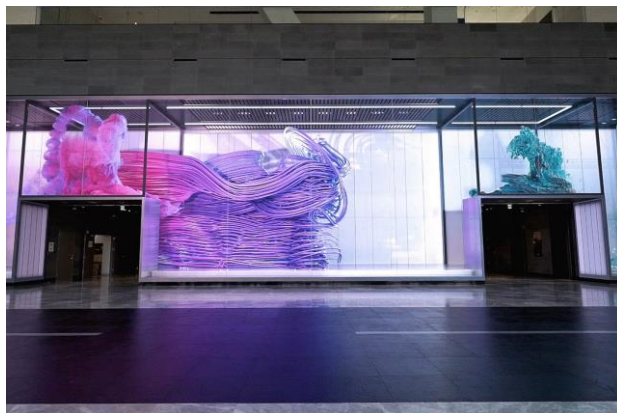
Starry Beach, 2020, Multi-channel projected installation with sound. Dimensions variable



NEXEN UNIVERCITY "THE INFINITY WALL", NEXEN univerCITY, Seoul, South Korea



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