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December 3, 2024 –
January 26, 2025

The starting point for *ikkibawiKrrr: Rocks Living in Rewind* by the visual research band ikkibawiKrrr(Gyeol Ko, Jungwon Kim, and Jieun Cho) is the figure of Maitreya. In the East Asian tradition, Maitreya is a bodhisattva symbolizing the future. His presence established itself as part of the Korean landscape through the influences of the Donghak, Buddhism, and Muism. Over time, however, sculptures of Maitreya were relegated to forgotten places on the margins of Buddhist temples or survived only as abandoned stones at village entrances and in fields. The Maitreyas found beside ruined sheds and sunlit abandoned schools seem to emanate all the more vitality for no longer being cared for. Taking note of this irony, ikkibawiKrrr focuses new attention on Maitreya as “stone surviving the past” through the new film and sculpture work *Rocks Living in Rewind*, which is about the landscapes where Maitreya is present and the landscapes where we are a part.

As a figure living in the past, Maitreya does not simply date back in time. He suggests a journey of recovery that proceeds at a tempo connected to nature, rather than the sorts of speeds sought in modernity. For ikkibawiKrrr, Maitreya is a medium for exploring ways of forming new relationships with mountains, the wind, the sky, and the earth. This recalls the concept of “borrowed scenery” from traditional East Asian landscape painting, as a metaphor for human beings living as one with nature. Maitreya is able to exist freely because he has been abandoned, and he speaks to us of the potential for deeper connection with our landscape through



abandonment.

Rock n' Feel shares the experiences encountered by the artists while running their hands over Maitreya as they used charcoal to feel a cold, solid statue. This approach elicits a sensory connection with an alienated landscape and sculpture, allowing for the rediscovery of the forgotten presence of art in life. *Rock n' Feel* presents the curves and marks of the statue that ikkibawiKrrr's ran their hands over, showing that the reality of a Maitreya who appears two-dimensional to the naked eye is actually a quite dramatic mass. Yet that fineness is more tactile than visual, and the continuous flows of the mass result in similarity and distance intersecting in the process of exploring that relationship and form. Perhaps what the artists felt was not simply the statue's body but the textures of time entangled with it. Ironically, what allowed them to run their hands over the Maitreya statue in the first place was the fact that it was abandoned and unvisited.

Finally, the exhibition presents a video work entitled *Dances with Trash*. It shows dust and pieces of garbage dancing in ruins untouched by human hands. In that untouched dust, it shows a new relationship of harmony with nature, while posing questions to us about the meaning of coexistence.

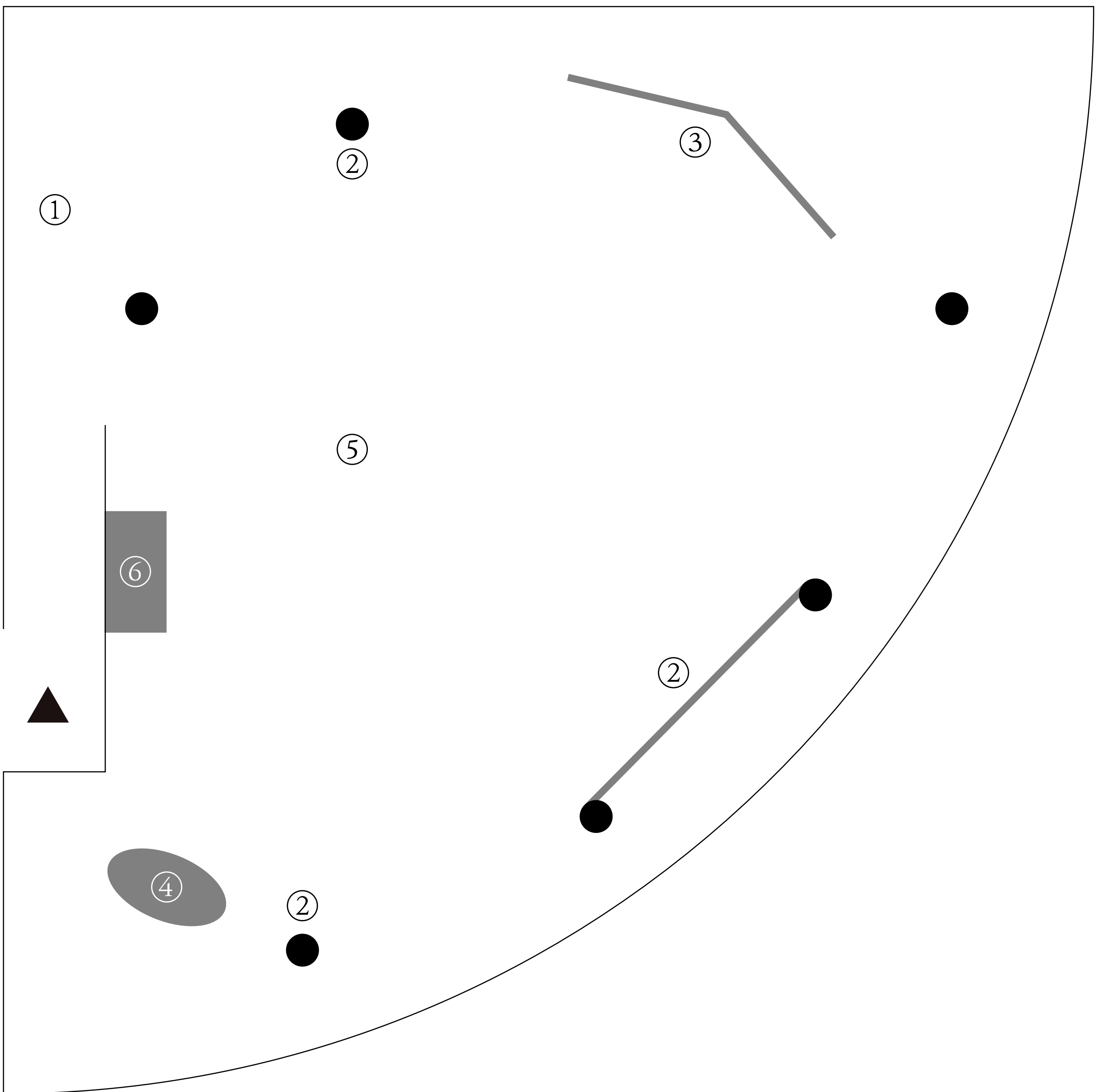
ikkibawiKrrr: Rocks Living in Rewind reflects on the everyday landscapes to which we belong, looking to abandoned stones and landscapes to find the solace and hope that Maitreya offers as one "surviving the past." One may imagine the new connections we can form in ecological landscapes when we have Maitreya's "courage to be abandoned."

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Space 2 (3F)



1. *Buddha High Five*, 2024, Cement, steel, 38×19×70cm
2. *Rock n' Feel*, 2024, Charcoal on paper, 15 pieces, 420×140cm, 390×95cm, 390×95cm, 210×140cm, 195×95, 145×175cm
3. *Rocks Living in Rewind*, 2024, Two-channel video, 4K, sound, 10min 50sec.
4. *Rocks Living in Rewind*, 2024, Mixed media, rubber base, 170×140cm
5. *Everybody Mountain*, 2024, Mixed media, 105×255×141cm, 96×165×74cm, 78×70×30cm
6. *Dances with Trash*, 2024, Single-channel video, 4K, sound, 3min 20sec.

1. *Buddha High Five*

2024, Cement, steel, 38×19×70cm

The viewer is presented with the palm of a hand with its five fingers stiffly raised. The shape in *Buddha High Five* is reminiscent of abhaya-mudrā, one of the mudras through which a bodhisattva's enlightenment is symbolized through the hand. The meaning of abhaya-mudrā is one of taking away fear and comforting living beings. ikkibawiKrrr associates this hand shape with the gesture of a high five. Derived from a stone Maitreya statue with its hands missing, *Buddha High Five* evokes the imaginary scenario of one of those lost hands unexpectedly greeting viewers within the gallery. Like the gesture of sharing feelings with someone else by slapping palms together, the viewer enters the world of “Rocks Living in Rewind” as their eyes meet the Buddha's hand.

2. *Rock n' Feel*

2024, Charcoal on paper, 15 pieces,

420×140cm, 390×95cm, 390×95cm, 210×140cm,
195×95cm, 145×175cm

The drawings in *Rock n' Feel* were made by placing hanji over a statue and rubbing it with charcoal. Consisting of 15 drawings in all, *Rock n' Feel* allows the viewer to see detailed individual elements of the statue, including its hands, ears, and garments, which would be difficult to grasp all at once due to the immense size. The charcoal marks on the paper are the results of feeling over Maitreya's

surface, leaving an intricate pattern due to the uneven surface of the granite. The viewer gains a tactile view of the Maitreya statue through the folds of the hands, the shape of the ears, the curves of the garments, and the mild expression, which are depicted in pronounced fashion in black and white. As they feel Maitreya with their eyes, they may imagine being in contact with a religious presence.

3. *Rocks Living in Rewind*

2024, Two-channel video, 4K, sound, 10min 50sec.

4. *Rocks Living in Rewind*

2024, Mixed media, rubber base, 170×140cm

The bodhisattva Maitreya is known as a figure who arrives in the human world to enlighten sentient beings 5.67 billion years after Sakyamuni entered nirvana. Systems of belief holding that Maitreya would someday arrive to rescue us resonated strongly with ordinary people facing an exhausting reality. Accordingly, stone statues of Maitreya have been built since ancient times in locations throughout villages, permeating the deepest reaches of people's lives. From the standpoint of the present, the places where Maitreya images remain are those that have not yet been touched by urban development: on the outskirts of the Seoul region and in rural locations such as fields and rice paddies. After traveling in search of Maitreya statues and remotely recording those landscapes, ikkibawiKrrr presented the scene as something resembling a landscape painting. Their

work shows all the vitality of Maitreya through an image of a Buddha statue that blends into its landscape without showing itself in reality. On one side of the gallery, the artists place *Rocks Living in Rewind*, an installation modeled on a statue found in a rice paddy. It affords a familiar sense with its large nose wings, curving eyes, placid expression, and large face. Through it, the artists attempt to transform the entire gallery into a landscape of “rocks living in rewind.”

5. *Everybody Mountain*

2024, Mixed media, 105×255×141cm, 96×165×74cm, 78×70×30cm

Everybody Mountain shows a landscape created by oddly shaped rocks and stones. The artists use paper clay and ink to vividly represent the strange rock and stone shapes that come together to form a single landscape on a large mountain. This sense of close connection is the result of ikkibawiKrrr focusing on landscape concepts in Eastern painting, where nature is not objectified. In the landscape, the human being is already part of nature. The landscape presented in the work thus encourages a realization that the environment and nature are always in a relationship with the people viewing them. *Everybody Mountain* effectively shows the enlightenment achieved by the artists as they traveled to scenes where Maitreya statues had been abandoned or forgotten.

6. *Dances with Trash*

2024, Single-channel video, 4K, sound, 3min 20sec. *Dances with Trash* imaginatively presents the image of garbage dancing against a backdrop of ruins produced by bankruptcy. In a world where human beings are no longer present, the masters are objects and abandoned buildings that have lived out their usefulness. The sight of the garbage moving rhythmically to sounds resembles the Maitreya statues discovered by ikkibawiKrrr: presences that permeate the landscape by virtue of being abandoned and forgotten. In these neglected presences, ikkibawiKrrr imagines possibilities for restoring connection to our ecological surroundings.

ikkibawiKrrr

ikkibawiKrrr is a visual research band consisting of members Gyeol Ko, Jungwon Kim, and Jieun Cho. Their name combines the Korean words for “moss” (ikki) and “rock” (bawi) with the onomatopoeic word “krrr”. Their artistic approach reflects aspects of moss as something that expands its world with its surrounding environment along the narrow boundary between land and air. As the members meet with farmers, divers, scholars, and many others, ikkibawiKrrr learns about plants, natural phenomena, human beings, and ecology through their ways of life. The band has also explored phenomena relating to tropical life and seaweeds, which grow independently while also expanding their boundaries to become part of the environment. ikkibawiKrrr major group exhibitions include *Forms of the Shadow* (Secession, 2024), *Breath(e): Toward Climate and Social Justice* (Hammer Museum, 2024), *Littoral Chronicle* (British Council in Korea, Korea Foundation, 2024), *Sending Love during Uncertain Time* (M+, 2024), *Yellow Memory* (K History Schoolhouse, 2023), *THIS TOO, IS A MAP* (The 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale, 2023), *soft and weak like water* (14th Gwangju Biennale, 2023), *Lumbung* (Kassel Documenta 15, 2022).



Exhibition-related Programs

Performance *Bring Me with You*

Dates: Tue, Dec 3, 2024 at 16:00,
Sat, Dec 7, 2024 at 14:00
Venue: Space2, Art Sonje Center
Performer: Agus Nul Amal

Artist Talk: ikkibawiKrrr

Dates: Sat, Dec 14, 2024 at 16:00
Venue: Art Hall, Art Sonje Center

Docent-guided Tour

Every Tuesday to Sunday at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
Duration: 40 minutes
On-site registration



ikkibawiKrrr: Rocks Living in Rewind

December 3, 2024–January 26, 2025

Curators

Sunjung Kim (Artistic Director,
Art Sonje Center)

Jina Kim (Project Director,
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Art Sonje Center)

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(Intern, Art Sonje Center)

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General Information

Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday, noon–7 p.m.
(closed Mondays)

Admission

10,000 KRW (25-64 years)

7,000 KRW (19-24 years, over 65
years, Art Pass cardholders)

5,000 KRW (9-18 years)

Free (8 and under, Visitors with
Disabilities, ICOM/CIMAM/
SCM cardholders)

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