

Young In Hong:
**Five Acts &
A Monologue**

홍영인:
다섯 극과 모놀로그
2025. 5. 9. - 7. 20.

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Space 2, Art Sonje Center

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This exhibition brings together two major works: *Five Acts* (2024/2025)—featuring a circular embroidered tapestry, sculptures resembling animal toys, and five live performances—and *Accidental Paradise* (2025), a newly commissioned sound installation. This exhibition unfolds a ritualistic space through the perspectives of women and animals—figures historically marginalized within patriarchal narratives. Here, ritual is not a mere reenactment, but a sensory act of reimagining and reconfiguring suppressed memories and vanished presences. Through tapestry, objects, sound, and performance, the artist activates collective gestures and shared sensations, opening a temporal threshold where history and the present converge.

Five Acts begins with overlooked stories from Korea's modern and contemporary history of women's labor, revealing that women's bodies and labor have never been peripheral - even as their stories have long been excluded from dominant historical narratives centered on heroes. Figures such as Hyun Kyeok, a former *gisaeng* turned independence activist; Bu Chunhwa, a *haenyeo* who led anti-Japanese protests in Jeju; and Shin Soonae, a leader in the Cheonggye Garment Workers' Union, are among those whose struggles Hong brings into focus. Key moments from these histories are embroidered onto a 40-meter-long tapestry, offering a charged site of rupture—a surface for activation, brought to life through five performances held during the course of the exhibition.

On the inner side of the tapestry, abstract and geometric shapes are embroidered on hemp fabric. These forms are inspired by the petroglyphs of Bangudae Terrace in Cheonjeon-ri, Uljoo, where elements of nature—wind, clouds, and the sun—are carved into stone. These shapes are echoed in handcrafted sculptures made of willow, fabric, and ceramic, creating a rhythmic visual language throughout the space.

Inspired by animal behavior enrichment tools observed in a zoo, the

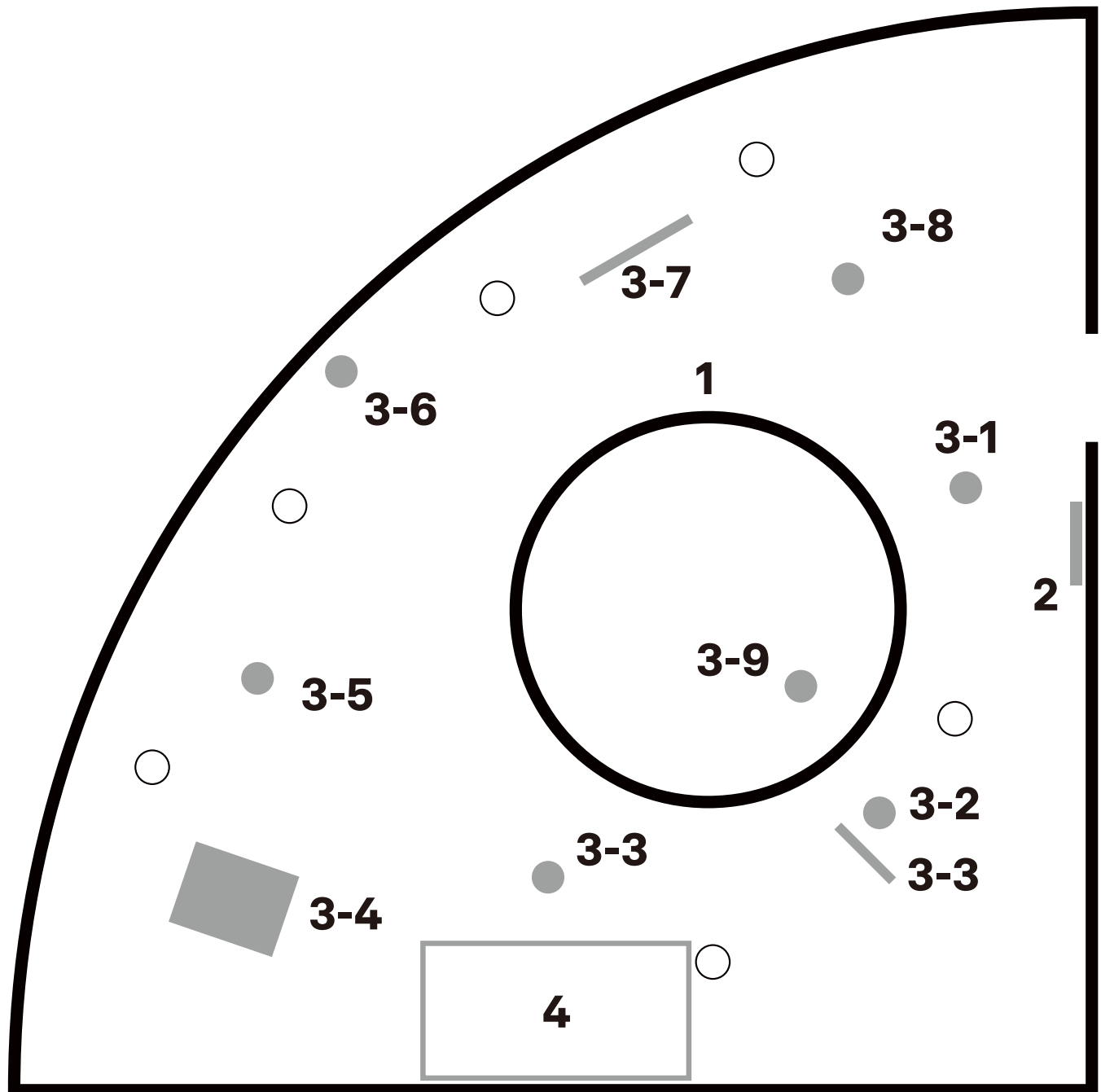
sculptures resemble playground equipment like hoops or ring tosses. During performances, they serve as instruments and props, enabling performers to respond to embroidered scenes and compose new gestures in the sensory present. A drummer accompanies them, improvising rhythms guided by animal-shaped scores stitched along the lower edge of the tapestry.

Accidental Paradise, installed in a darkened room, is a sound installation in which a text written and read by the artist is transformed into a polyphonic composition that merges human and nonhuman voices. Collaborator Owen Lloyd developed a program that analyzes thirteen distinct characteristics of the artist's voice and matches each moment with over a thousand crane calls. Through this program, the artist's reading voice is transformed into a range of crane vocalizations with varied timbres and tones, evoking the effect of her voice being rearticulated as a chorus of cranes. The artist was drawn to the crane not only because of its symbolic status as an endangered species, but also due to its social nature and the multiplicity of sounds it produces when in groups. Recalling her first encounter with a crane in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), she attempts to interweave the presence of the crane with her own—bridging the two through a shared sensory and imaginative space.

In this exhibition, tapestry, sound, and performance are fluidly interwoven. Resisting linear narratives and vertical structures of authority, Hong offers an egalitarian field in which history is sensed through embodied gestures, rhythmic activations, and sonic transformations. Here, stories of resistance do not disappear—they wait, pulsing beneath the surface, until bodies, rhythms, and voices bring them back to life.

Floor Plan

Click on the artwork numbers on the map to access detailed descriptions via the links.



1.

A Performance Manual for Five Acts-exterior circle, 2024

Embroidery on hemp fabric, 8 pieces, 244x56x8cm each

Interior circle, 2024

Embroidered applique on hemp fabric, 8 pieces, 241x56x8cm each

A Performance Manual for Five Acts consists of eight tapestries. The figures depicted on the outer tapestry are from scenes that left a strong impression on the artist during her research on the history of women's labor. These include Hyun Kyeok and Jung Chilseong, two *gisaeng* (courtesans) who became independence activists; Kang Juryong, who initiated a solo protest by climbing onto the roof of the Ulmil Pavilion to protest against wage cuts; Bu Chunhwa, Kim Okryeon, and Bu Deokryang, a group of Jeju *haenyeo* (female divers) who fought for independence holding hoes in their hands; young female laborers who had to work in dangerous conditions to support their families from an early age; Lee Soseon, who fought for workers' rights; Lee Chonggak, who led the Labor Union at Dongil Textile Company; and Shin Soonae, who revealed the lives of female textile workers through her essay. The embroidery brings light to the stories of female laborers that have been marginalized by dominant patriarchal accounts of history. This method of narrating historical events through illustrations is inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry, created in the 12th century. Meanwhile, the lower part and the inside of the tapestry, inspired by the petroglyphs of Bangudae Terrace in Cheonjeon-ri and Daegok-ri, Ulju, feature abstract figures of animals and geometric patterns, expressed through embroidery and appliqué techniques. The tactile qualities of thread and hemp, and the labor embedded in acts of embroidery and stitching, recall the bodies and time of anonymous women workers. In this way, the tapestry functions not merely as a device for recording the past, but as a ritual space that summons erased histories and forgotten lives. Within this space—where symbolic imagery and handcrafted rituals converge—the artist evokes the histories of Korean women's labor across modern and contemporary times, inviting viewers to encounter them not as distant memories, but as vivid, embodied experiences in the present.

Shin Soonae and Lee Chonggak granted permission to include their portraits in the tapestry.

A performance *Manual for Five Acts* was first presented as part of the exhibition *Five Acts* at Spike Island, commissioned by Spike Island as part of the West of England Visual Arts Alliance (WEVAA) programme in 2024.

2.

Five Acts, 2025, Performance

Dates: 5/8 (Thu) 6pm

5/24, 6/14, 6/28, 7/12 (Sat) 2pm

Performance Producer: Jinyoung Shin(apparat/us)

Performer: Yoonju Nam, TaeJun Yoon, Yun Lee, Ghootree, Yuyoung Jin

Performance Schedule, 2025

Embroidered text on cotton fabric, wooden frame, 142x232x4cm

Five Acts, which takes place five times during the exhibition period, is an improvisational performance in which four movement performers and one drummer respond to the tapestry and the sculptures by creating improvised movements and sounds. The artist guides the performers to reenact the history of female laborers who have been marginalized during Korea's modernization process. The drummer sets the rhythm of the performance, taking the abstract shapes embroidered at the bottom of the tapestry as the score. The movement performers respond to the sound of the drum and embody the memories embroidered in the tapestry, improvising their movements. They also engage with *Prop*, using them as instruments, expressing the historical scenes through their gestures. The artist draws inspiration from the non-instrumental movements of animals observed in zoos—gestures of purposeless play—to propose an alternative way of engaging with the history of women's labor. Play, as a spontaneous and vital act of being, resists the demands of efficiency and control, echoing the animal's ungoverned gestures. These improvised performances, each taking a different form, call forth forgotten lives and stories, offering viewers an embodied and sensorial approach to the experiences of women laborers.

3.

Prop 1. *Ring Toss*, 2024

Wood, seven various size rings (Willow, natural dyed straw, cotton ropes, threads, metal, wood, plastic, metal bells), 80x80x75cm

Prop 2. *Sound Balls*, 2024

Willow, cane, metal bells, approx. 40cm diameter

Prop 3. *Net Screen*, 2024

Natural dyed sedge, approx. 130x5x540cm

Prop 4. *A Long Rope*, 2024

Jute, size variable

Prop 5. *Chime Machine*, 2025

Natural fibre, bells, brass, ropes, wooden sticks, wooden structure, 2 chairs, approx. 130x220x85cm

Prop 6. *Swinging Hoop*, 2024

Metal, colour strings, wood, 110x75x150cm

Prop 7. *A Wheel on a Stand*, 2024

Willow, cane, wood, Wheel: 89x89x30cm Stand: 45x37x40cm

Prop 8. *Bell Screen*, 2024

Straw, sedge, 14m ceramic bells, 315x20x110cm

Prop 9. *A Wheel on a Stand*, 2024

Willow, cane, wood, Wheel: 89x89x30cm Stand: 45x37x40cm

Prop series consists of nine handcrafted sculptures inspired by animal toys the artist saw at the zoo. To create *Prop*, the artist created sculptural interpretations of various objects, such as devices that enrich animal behavior, *gime*—objects traditionally used in rituals in Jeju Island—and *ttwari*—an item used for carrying loads on the head. Thin, long, and bendable materials, such as straw and textile, were woven and braided to create these three-dimensional sculptures. The intricately shaped props are strewn throughout the space surrounding the tapestry, diversifying the viewer's gaze and movement. The shapes of the sculptures evoke activities such as ring toss, net climbing, and bell-ringing, thereby evoking the play culture of

humans and animals. Meanwhile, these sculptures carry the potential for their significance to be activated through performances held during the exhibition. The movements of animals, in particular, are non-instrumental gestures not bound to a specific purpose. Their free and repetitive rhythms resonate with the essence of ritual, where the body's flow—detached from utility—becomes a conduit for repressed memories and sensations. *Props* activate this ritual space by linking the performers' interventions with the images in the tapestry, reanimating erased histories through embodied sensation.

Production was supported by Sarah Jayne Edwards, Chung Kyung Lee, Kwon Kyu Taik, Milly Hardy and Copper Sounds.

4.

Accidental Paradise, 2025

5 channel sound installation, in collaboration with Owen Lloyd

Accidental Paradise is a sound installation that stems from the artist's autobiographical essay *Durumi and I*, written after her first encounter with cranes in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The essay features three narrators: the artist, the crane, and Faridoddin Attār, a medieval Persian poet who likened a bird's spiritual journey to human perception of divinity. The artist's voice, reading the interwoven stories of the three narrators, is transformed into the call of cranes and played in the dark room. This work is the result of a collaboration with Owen Lloyd, who developed a program that transforms 13 vocal qualities of the artist's voice into more than a thousand different crane voices. Four speakers positioned at the sides of the space play ambient nature sounds collected from the DMZ—where cranes return each year—such as wind, water, grass, and frogs. In *The Birds of Heaven*, American naturalist and novelist Peter Matthiessen described the DMZ as an “accidental paradise,” an ideal sanctuary for cranes. In the entanglement of the voices of the artist, the crane, and the sounds of the DMZ, *Accidental Paradise* interweaves multiple voices, dismantles the hierarchy between species, and dissolves the boundaries between fiction and reality, story and voice. *Accidental Paradise* suggests the possibility of a new sensory subjectivity—one that is neither the artist, the crane, nor the poet—emerging at the intersection where the human and nonhuman, past and present, fact and imagination converge.

Sound production was supported by Bath Spa University. Sound sources were supported by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Macaulay Library, DMZ Ecology Research Institute.

About the Artist

Young In Hong (b. 1972)

Young In Hong works across a variety of media and formats, including tapestry, sound, and performance. Through her practice, the artist seeks to dissolve rigid hierarchical structures by creating diverse relationships within her work, paying close attention to the voices of those pushed to the margins. Her solo exhibitions include *Five Acts* (Spike Island, 2024), *Animal Rings* (Kunsthal Extra City, 2022), *Play on the Moon* (Korean Cultural Centre UK, 2017), and *6/50 fig-2* (ICA Studio & Theatre, 2015). She has also participated in major group exhibitions at Secession (2024), Changwon Sculpture Biennale (2024), National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Deoksugung (2024), Museum of Contemporary Art Busan (2023), Art Tower Mito (2023), Seoul Museum of Art (2022), Asia Culture Center (2020), and Turner Contemporary (2017). Hong was selected as a sponsored artist for the MMCA Artist of the Year program in 2019 and has received the Kim Sejoong Sculpture Award (2011) and the Suknam Art Award (2003). Her works are part of public collections including the Arts Council Collection (UK), Karolinska Institutet, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Korea), Seoul Museum of Art, and Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art.

Performance

Five Acts

Dates: 5/8 (Thu) 6pm

5/24, 6/14, 6/28, 7/12 (Sat) 2pm

Performance Production Coordination: Jinyoung Shin(apparat/us)

Performer: Yoonju Nam, TaeJun Yoon, Yun Lee, Ghootree, Yuyoung Jin

* The performance is open to same-day exhibition ticket holders and does not require prior reservation.

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)

Korean Docent-guided Tour

Every Tuesday to Sunday at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Duration: 40 minutes

Young In Hong: Five Acts & A Monologue

May 9 – July 20, 2025

Curator Je Yun Moon

Coordinator Seunga You

Design Sungyoun Kang

Translation Shinu Kim

Installation Sungil Lee, Yunsu Yi

Artist Assistant Hanul Kim

Transportation Artin

Sound Installation Multitech

Photography Seowon Nam

Promotional Video Euirok Lee

Educational Programs Hyeonmi Kim, Yunji Kim

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Art Sonje Center

87 Yulgok-ro 3-gil Jongno-gu Seoul 03062 Korea

T. +82-2-733-8949 / F. +82-2-733-8377 / W. www.artsonje.org