



Not too hot, cold  
Not too hot, cold

Sophia Park

Cover Image

Nuraini Juliastuti

*The big circle meeting during KUNCI's 20th birthday, Yogyakarta, 2019*

Photo taken by Nuraini Juliastuti

Image courtesy of artist

# Not too hot, Not too cold

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Acknowledgments                             |
| 6  | Somewhere between not too hot, not too cold |
| 12 | I'll see you in the group chat              |
| 15 | The 40,000 pictures on my iPhone            |
| 20 | Bibliography                                |
| 21 | Artist biographies                          |



# Acknowledgments

The gratitude expressed here is both for the catalog and the entire graduate school process.

Thank you to Steven Henry Madoff for guiding research direction. I am truly grateful for Sara Reisman whose suggestions and edits gave life to this catalog. David O'Neill, thank you for making sure the details were caught. A big thank you to Re McBride for the often hidden and great labor of organizing and managing all of our exhibitions. The same goes for Ricky Li and Lorel Easterbrooks. Noam Segal, thank you for your support and encouragement throughout the past two years. Brian Kuan Wood, thank you for all the conversations. I am grateful for Caroline Taylor Shehan, a partner in curatorial pursuits, for the endless text exchanges and chats. Thank you to the Joe Coffee baristas for the tasty, much needed caffeine.

To the whole Casco team, I cannot state enough how much my time spent with you has transformed my position and dreams for the art life I'd like to help build. Thank you to Binna Choi, Marianna Takou, Kihyun Park, Luke Cohlen, Victoria Raffy, Leana Boven, Erik Uitenbogaard, and the ecosystem. Binna, thank you for being the best mentor I could have asked for. Another thanks to the Nina bell F. House Museum friends for sharing your knowledge and care: Wan Ying Que, Nuraini Juliastuti, and Donghwan Kam.

My wonderful colleagues and pals at Fractured Atlas: without your support and trust I could not have finished this degree. Thank you Vicky Blume, Nina Berman, Lauren Ruffin, Geo Ong, and Taji Senior. As we know, artists are not isolated in the art world but live within society. I'm inspired by the work you do day in and out to care for artists as humans who deserve to thrive.

Immense gratitude to Sammy Kim for taking care of my soul and wellbeing as I made my way to this project. Thank you to the ultimate group chat characters, Mary Heatwole, Christina Marano, and Kayla Smith for making this ride a joyful one. A big thank you to my mom and grandparents for sharing their warmth from across the Pacific Ocean. And thankful to Opus and Shiru, the most curious cats, for their emotional support.

Last but not least, thank you so much to the artists and participants: Armando Guadalupe Cortés, Furen Dai, Nuraini Juliastuti, Christina Yuna Ko, Karl Orozco, Alex Paik, and Hyeree Christina Mary Ro. Without you there is no curatorial project or exhibition. I am grateful for your generosity, care, and enthusiasm for this project and I can't wait to grow with you beyond this project. Thank you.

To all of the friendships in my life from past to future that has made this whole project possible-- thank you! As ruangrupa shared with us, "Make friends, not art" (But let's make art too).

# I. somewhere between not too hot, not too cold

1 Céline Condorelli, "Reprint,"  
*Mousse* 32, 2012, 222.

## Friendship and Love

The story, as it frequently does, starts from the home. I was contemplating the challenges of understanding other humans, a problem compounded by the chaos of being in my twenties and living in a big, busy city. My mom messaged me about a passage she read in a book written by a Korean Buddhist monk, who advised that relationships should be treated like you would a furnace. If you are too close to it, you burn. If you are too far from it, you'll freeze. You need to find the right spot next to the furnace. The balance of being somewhere not too hot and not too cold would strengthen the relationship with another person and delineate your own boundaries. To understand how to find one's position in this slow, imperfect dance is to understand how to live.

Like any other relationship, friendship is defined by the constant negotiation between individuals to maintain some form of balance. While a furnace is stationary, humans are not, thus making the delicate dance even more complicated, requiring a type of calibration at each point of contact. To engage in the dance of friendship takes time and care. At any moment, the balance can become unsteady. Friendship asks for an understanding of how the Self operates in relation to the Other,

whether through physical distance or an intangible feeling. Because even reaching a place called "friendship" requires an intimate understanding between two individuals, the subject of friendship can be tough to explore from a curatorial perspective.

While each friendship will define its own specific details, common elements can make up this relationship, such as the passage of time and quotidian efforts to build said friendship. The action of friendship—as opposed to the static situation of it—is in constant flux depending on the circumstances and who is involved, thus making it hard to define. Artist Céline Condorelli offers one understanding of friendship as a "specific model of relationship in the large question of how to live and work together—autonomously—towards change, as a way to act in the world."<sup>1</sup> This framework bridges the individualized elements of friendship with one that proposes it as a vehicle for social change, a change that can exist across varying scales and types of impact.

Writer, theorist, and educator bell hooks links this potential for social change to the bonds we experience in different communities of belonging and expands the scope of friendship to include love. For hooks, "When we see love as the will to nurture one's own or another's spiritual growth, revealed

through acts of care, respect, knowing, and assuming responsibility, the foundation of all love in our life is the same.”<sup>2</sup> Love is not limited to romantic relationships, and is practiced in all relationships. The everyday efforts that we develop while practicing love are present in friendships. Philosopher Jacques Derrida also noted that “the act of loving, the action of it versus the situation of love, is proper to friendship.”<sup>3</sup> Experiencing this love in friendship enables us to identify it in other relationships, which is especially important for those who experience love for the first time outside of traditional filial relationships. Friendship is a vehicle within which love can ferment and care for others can be learned and practiced.

Derrida identified friendship as a relational framework with political ramifications stemming from its ability to align individuals outside conventional lines of filiation. hooks also considered friendship as a means to better understand the complexities of being in traditional filiations of the nuclear family or romantic relationships. Friendship takes place when one experiences—or develops—affinities with others who are not family over time. This ability of friendship to create connections beyond family lines is a critical element of friendship’s political role for Derrida, specifically in creating and maintaining a democracy. He wrote that “there is no democracy without respect of irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the ‘community of friends,’ without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal.”<sup>4</sup> To be in friendship requires acknowledging the importance of the Self separate and in relation with the surrounding community. Being in communion asks us to build healthier relationships so that we can live better together. Friendship in larger society is demonstrated through the structures,

like democracies, that we communally establish.

Derrida’s definition of friendship includes a sort of ideal balance between the Self and Other; however, in practice, friendship cannot always maintain this ideal state given individuals’ different sociopolitical positions. Within the context of complex hegemonic dynamics, friendship becomes a space to hold contradictions and to problematize these contradictions. Literary and cultural theorist Leela Gandhi asks, “Can I oppose radical individualism with community while opposing communitarianism in such a way that I don’t return to a position of radical individualism/autonomy?”<sup>5</sup> One of these contradictions is navigating the innate tension between the Self and Other that friendship should hold space for.

As an example, Gandhi questions these tensions between the individual and collective by asking how those with power inherited through colonization can extend their genuine solidarity with the oppressed. When a person crosses the national agenda of colonialism to stand in solidarity, often-times at great cost, friendship could take shape. Friendship can also be a way to understand how these boundaries are crossed to begin with. What is the relationship between this type of friendship and an alliance built on similarity? Is friendship really possible across lines of vast differences?

Arguably, the post-internet condition we are living in and its consequent potential for building connections in the digital world should mean that this is a time in which friendship could thrive. However, these technological tools are built in a capitalist-dominant condition in which relationships, and the inner workings of these relationships—like time spent together and the feelings required to sustain them—are easily commodified, making “true” connections challenging to identify.<sup>6</sup>

2 bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow, 2000), 136.

3 Jacques Derrida, “Oligarchies: Naming, Enumerating, Counting,” in *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 2005), 8.

4 Derrida, “Oligarchies,” 22.

5 Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 25.

6 Alva Gotby uses the term “emotional reproduction” in *They Call It Love: The Politics of Emotional Life* to describe the work of emotional labor that is so easily commodified in our economic systems. Gotby describes it as “the everyday work that we do for our family members, friends, co-workers, and others—cheering up those who are feeling sad or lonely, creating emotional warmth.”

Perhaps this is exactly the reason for reconsidering friendship and what it means to engage in the act of friendship to build true solidarity with each other.

### **Not too hot, Not too cold**

It should already be obvious that friendship is capacious and slippery, making it difficult to define. To aid in focusing the scope of this curatorial project, *Not too hot, Not too cold* examines the role of friendship more specifically within collectivity. Collectivity, the state of being collective, refers to individuals united by shared ideologies, aesthetics, goals, and political beliefs, among other affinities. Friendship and collectivity are intertwined in multiple ways. It can be argued that a form of friendship is required to build collectivity. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle proposed three types of friendship: friendship built by utility, pleasure, or for the good.<sup>7</sup> In collectivity, it is possible to see variations of these types of friendship, making it an appropriate space to further understand what being friends can mean.

A group of artists was asked to participate in *Not too hot, Not too cold* and to spend time thinking through the role of friendship and collectivity. Each artist is leading a project that contains elements of friendship and collectivity; however, not all identify as part of an official collective. Understanding collaboration as part of collectivity, artists working with deeply collaborative approaches, whether with other humans or nonhumans, were asked to participate. Many of the included projects stem from friendship and do not necessarily address it as a concept. Instead, friendships exist in the unspoken, impalpable spaces where relationship building takes place. Friendship is one of the material manifestations of their projects.

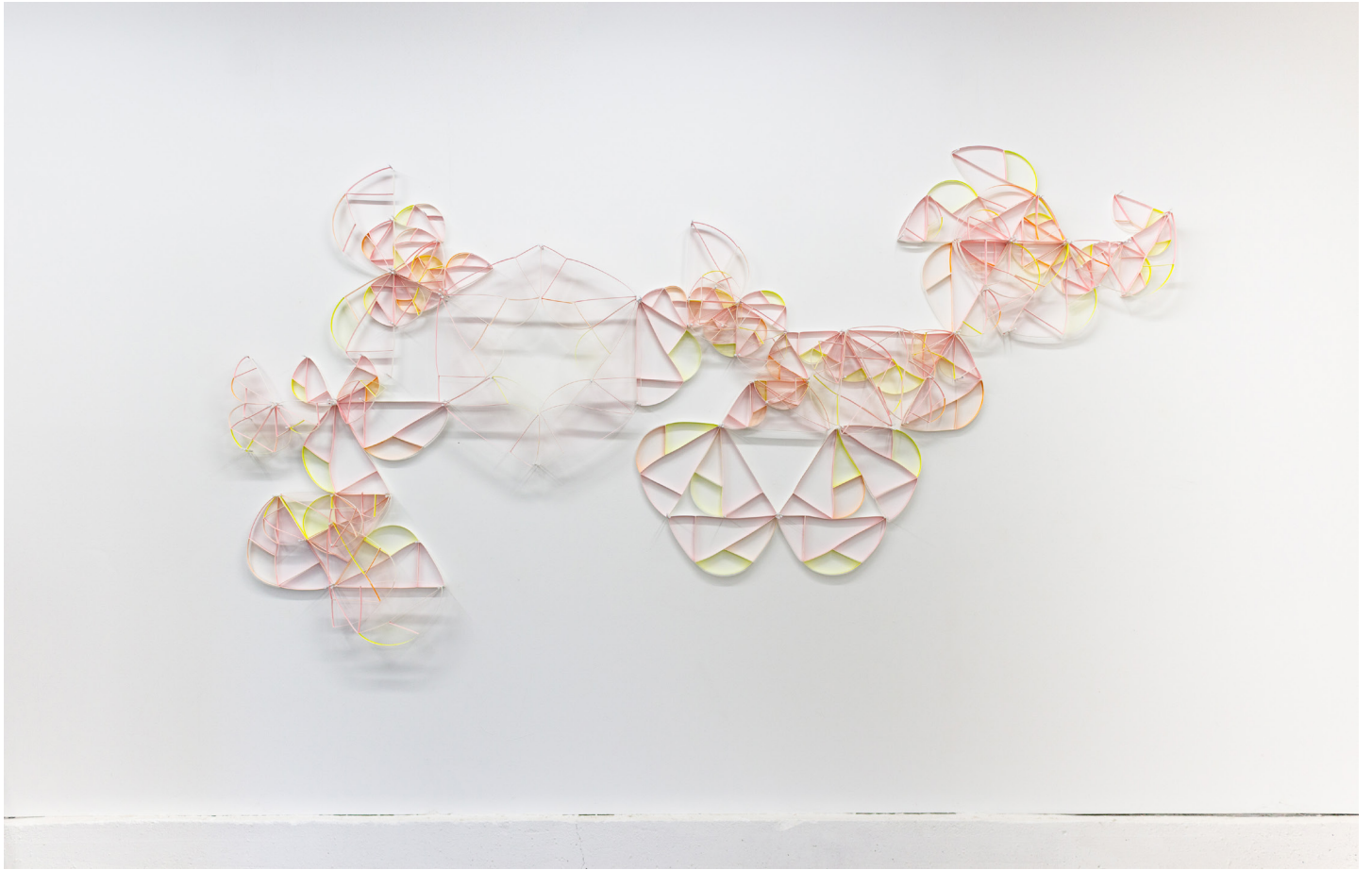
A noticeable throughline is that each of the projects addresses a certain structural concern. Correspondence

Archive (CA) is an ongoing compilation of long-form conversations between artists of color that is cared for and organized by Alex Paik. CA operates as a communal resource for artists of color at all stages of their careers, which helps them understand that their art practice matters and to explore ideas with other artists. Many of the conversations occur between artists who are also friends and have often been part of each other's art careers as supporters for a long time. Friendship becomes a springboard for creating meaningful space to talk about one's art practice in perhaps a more intimate setting than conventional interviews. A spider web forms with each conversation, a diagram of sorts to connect artists further exemplified in *Not too hot, Not too cold* through the presentation of the art works of Christina Yuna Ko and Furen Dai who contributed conversations to CA. Generosity is built into the conceptual underpinning of the project and is continuously practiced by each of the conversations and through Paik's care for CA.

Responding to the needs of the community is also evident in Risolana, founded by artists, friends, and educators Karl Orozco and Michael López. Risolana is a risograph studio based in Albuquerque, New Mexico; it offers a variety of services and programs to Albuquerque residents, including printer access, workshops, and an artist residency. The studio is unique because it offers direct, hands-on access to a risograph printer to those who may not be conventionally trained in the arts. Typically, printers are costly and are reserved for usage by those who are highly skilled already through formal educational training or have the funds to access one. Informed by Orozco and López's teaching background, knowledge sharing and increasing access is a critical part of how Risolana operates. How Risolana is structured to interact with the local community is in itself

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), 121.





Alex Paik  
*Partial Equilateral Triangle (Brilliant Pink)*, 2023  
Gouache, colored pencil, paper, nails  
Dimensions variable  
Image courtesy of artist



Friend of a Friend  
*big, big grocery runs* '동료의 동료'를 위한 장보기, 2022  
Photo taken by Hyeree Christina Mary Ro  
Image courtesy of artist

a manifestation of a type friendship that can also fall under the umbrella of socially-engaged practice.

More obliquely addressing a structural concern of the art world, Friend of a Friend (동료의 동료) is an annual gathering that brings together artists and writers who are connected by mutual association (but may have never actually met before the gathering). Initiated by Armando Guadalupe Cortés and Hyeree Christina Mary Ro, the latest gathering took place April 21–25, 2022, in Austin, Texas. Throughout the gathering, participants shared their respective art practices with each other, led workshops for the group, and lived and cooked together. While not a formal collective, a type of collectivity sprouted from what friendship brought together. Still in its early days, Friend of a Friend proposes one way of coming together to figure out what support structures look like in a challenging art world.

While Friend of a Friend is at the beginning of understanding what form it can take, KUNCI Study Forum & Collective is an established collective that has been operating since 1999. Largely based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with members living and working globally, KUNCI initially formed as a cultural-studies study group. Their current practice emphasizes collectivizing study through space-making, discussions, a library, research, publications, and organizing. Membership is based on friendship and informality; collaborative and self-organizing principles influence their practice. One such member is Nuraini Juliastuti, who is participating in *Not too hot, Not too cold*, and a co-founder. The longevity of KUNCI's presence in the Indonesian art ecosystem and beyond is important to be aware of for those who look towards collectivity as another mode of working in the normally individual-oriented Western part of the art world. The learnings that KUNCI nurtures is also evident

in Juliastuti's personal practice, which includes Reading Sideways Press and publication project *Domestic Notes*.

Whether intentionally or not, each participating collective and collaborative practice stemmed from a need to create sustainable support structures. Depending on the locality these collective practices are rooted in, each demonstrate the importance of friendships, even if being friends may not always be a "positive" trait. Additionally, friendship, in this case, may seem like just friendships built on utility and not "true"—referred to as "primary friendships" by Aristotle. *Not too hot, Not too cold* asks, Are these merely friendships of utility? How do friendships traverse and commingle between utility, pleasure, and the good? Can a more expansive reimagining of "what" friendship enables define what relationships are forming? If so, what does that mean for the possibilities of exhibiting these practices with care for their work and the individuals that form them?

## II. I'll see you in the group chat

### Caring for the alternative(s)

One central curatorial question underlying *Not too hot, Not too cold* is, How do we care for *and* present collective practices and the friendships that sustain them? Potential answers to this question have been posited throughout art-exhibition history.

Alternative Art, active from the 1960s through the 1980s, is one reference for the current efforts in exhibiting collectives. Similar to the current moment of political and economical instability, the conditions in New York City and the United States at large during this time made evident that “alternative” structures were needed, especially in the art world. Artist and curator Julie Ault proposes a broad categorization of alternative structures as organizations that were trying to fill a void or were addressing the needs of artists, including guerrilla-type collectives and larger institutions.<sup>8</sup> Many groups that were part of Alternative Art focused on finding space in creative ways to forefront artists' works.

The legacy of these efforts and the various strategies of exhibiting these alternative art structures demonstrates that perhaps not much has changed in the art world's game of inclusion and exclusion. However, the focus is shifting away from the sole pursuit of

identity-focused representation to more tangibly addressing the economic conditions that artists face as denizens of a capitalist-dominant society. The financial strains artists face are exacerbated for artists from marginalized communities; this inequity presents a structural concern that continues to be addressed within contemporary art practices and outside of the studio by various institutions.

The question of what is possible in presenting a collective's works in a curatorial context and how to honor the art practices, archives, and relationships that exist within collectives was also present and challenged in the 1998 exhibition *Urban Encounters* at the New Museum, curated by then Curator of Education, Gregory Sholette. The exhibition aimed to “challenge conventional views of contemporary art.”<sup>9</sup> *Urban Encounters* featured six artists' collectives: the Guerrilla Girls, ABC No Rio, Godzilla, REPOhistory, Bullet Space, and World War III. An *Artnet* review of the exhibition pointed to the temporal problem of presenting collectives as historical objects: “If you were there you'll care, if you were not it has to appear to be your kind of fable.”<sup>10</sup> There are myriad factors that could have resulted in the confusion around the exhibition and whether it was “art” or if it could be read as such. Thus, if not cared for, when translated to

8 Julie Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective* (New York/Minneapolis: Drawing Center/University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 14.

9 Gregory Sholette, *Urban Encounters* (New York: New Museum, 1998), 2.

10 Alan Moore, “Urban Encounters at the New Museum,” *Artnet*, Accessed October 8, 2022, <http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/reviews/moore/moore8-5-98.asp>.

the exhibition space, collective practices can be read as alienating the audience, which contradicts the radical openness for which these collectives advocate. This very openness is complicated by the innate tension of what it means to be in friendship as a system that is predicated on drawing clear boundaries between who belongs to the network of friends and who does not. Friendship can serve as a metaphor for the whole collective or collectivity in itself because of its ability to include and exclude.

Fast forward to 2022, a moment when collective practices came to the forefront on one of the largest art-world stages, *documenta 15*, curated by Jakarta-based collective ruangrupa. The premise of the exhibition was characterized by the idea of *lumbung*, which is an Indonesian agrarian term that refers to a rice barn where a village community stores their harvests together. The *lumbung* is managed collectively to prepare for any future possibilities that the village may face together. The *lumbung* as structure and as metaphor sprouted into a *documenta* that was formidable in the number of participating artists—an impressive number of more than 1,500 at the exhibition’s opening—and in its ability to confuse the Western-centric art world. Importantly, ruangrupa noted that *lumbung* is not the “theme” of this past year’s *documenta*, as past exhibitions relied on a thematic curatorial approach. Instead, as a manifestation of the commons in practice, *lumbung* could not necessarily be “showcased” in an exhibition.<sup>11</sup>

Because of the invocation of the commons and the many, the curatorial logic required working in a decentralized manner. Many of the presentations focused on doing things together and the act of archiving. The emphasis on friendships and *nongkrong* (Indonesian for “hanging out”) meant the typical “artwork” that was expected was not clearly visible because the artworks

were predicated on the intangible relationships, not objects. ruangrupa was balancing the desire to support and care for each other, as is often demonstrated in collective practices, with the opportunity to present the collectives’ works. Collectivity is mutable by nature because it is not consolidated in individual terms, but is distributed, presenting an exciting challenge to the exhibition of these collectives’ practices within a major curatorial platform.

### **The circumference of friendship**

Writer and translator David Wills asks, “What does any friendship look like? . . . How do we know that such a thing exists, and what would the sense of it be, outside of its performance: outside of a frequentation (seeing two people, say, corresponding or keeping company), or outside of an exchange (of embraces, of gestures, of tokens, and so on)?”<sup>12</sup> The ability to identify what this friendship looks like, the phenomenological representation of it, is linked to how friendships can be presented through a curatorial lens. The challenge is that what friendship can look like will differ dramatically depending on the circumstances, just like the shifting, slippery nature of friendship itself.

*Not too hot, Not too cold* implements a praxis element of exhibiting friendship and collectivity. If exhibitions, as we know them, cannot fully hold and make space for presenting relational practices, what other form can we adapt to? ruangrupa’s desire for the *lumbung* to not just function as a theme but to manifest as an active practice that all were engaged in together, is a critical influence on this curatorial project. In the spirit of throwing boundaries out the window, the question is, What can happen to exhibition-making when the notion of the thematic exhibition is challenged? What kind of space can be imagined and constructed that would

11 A. K. Kaiza, Alvin Li, Andrew Maerkle, Ann Mbuti, Annie Jael Kwan, Ashraf Jamal, Wong Binghao, et al., *Documenta Fifteen Handbook: English* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2022), 30.

12 David Wills, “Full Dorsal: Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship*,” *Postmodern Culture* 15, No. 3 (May 2005): <http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/issue.505/15.3wills.html>.

instead really engage in interrogating structures to further acknowledge and allow experimentation in the exhibition of relational practices?

To care for friendship and collectivity in art practices necessitates the unlearning of the boundaries between “programming” and “exhibitions.” The relational aspect of programming, especially under the umbrella of “community engagement,” has meant that it can easily be used as a marketing or promotional tool for exhibitions to mark whether a specific demographic has responded. Instead, programming can take on a more active role to become more integral to the exhibition planning, creating the possibilities for operating more than a promotional tool to get people in the door. The structures within art institutions do not make it easy to close the gap between exhibitions and programs, especially for larger institutions with distinct departmental divisions. If we can bend the expectations around these two engagement modalities, there will be more possibilities to present or enact care for socially-engaged practices and embodied practices.<sup>13</sup>

Curatorial work often includes elements of education and translation for a larger public that may not be familiar with theoretical concepts or aware of contemporary art practices at large. Introducing pedagogical tools intentionally to an exhibition practice can help us recognize that one of the benefits of being in collectivity is sharing knowledge. Learning together also offers another activity to form a type of friendship with others. One such tool is the fishbowl method, which is perhaps most commonly used in organizing and in workshop-style events. The structure involves a fluid method of keeping a conversation going that requires contributions from all participants, in contrast to a structure like a traditional artist talk or a panel discussion, in which

information moves in one direction. While sharing individual experiences is critical, the conversation between the participants is equally important.

In addition to the fishbowl method, acknowledging the importance of the process as part of friendship and collectivity can present an exhibition that does not depend on a grand opening at the front end. Instead, a more fluid form can arise where the artwork presented in an exhibition space is interdependent with what is taking place in any form of programming beyond the physical boundaries of the exhibition space. In this case, the boundaries between life and art are further blurred.

13 There are smaller organizations that already practice a more flexible understanding of presenting art and engaging the public. Some include The Laundromat Project (Brooklyn, US), Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons (Utrecht, Netherlands), Recess (Brooklyn, US), and others.

### III.

## The 40,000 pictures on my iphone

#### Archives that are alive

A central participant of *Not too hot, Not too cold* is the archive. In his proposition of the “exhibition as cosmogram,” curator and writer Joshua Simon states that the compiling of an archive and its deployment make relations attainable between documents that are distant in time and space.<sup>14</sup> The archive, according to Simon, can include a variety of materials from historical artifacts to contemporary artwork, all of which informed the development of the conceptual framework for *Not too hot, Not too cold*. Archives make visible the relations between the objects at hand and the intangible, such as time and interpersonal relationships. Engagement in friendship and collectivity takes time and cannot be without time, so the archive is a critical space for engagement with collective practices. For exhibition visitors, the durational requirement of digesting an archive can function as a parallel for the time required to build collectivity and a relationship. Reading zines, closely observing photos, and noticing the materiality of artwork necessitates spending time with them.

Building relationships and spending time with archives can be seen in other projects such as the *Nina bell F. House Museum* (2022—), which is presented at the 2022 Singapore Biennale

(also known as *Natasha*). Nina bell F. is the being that manifested from the *Sites for Unlearning (Art Organization)* project, organized by Annette Krauss and the Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons (Casco).<sup>15</sup> The *Nina bell F. House Museum* presents an archive that traverses the enlarged ecosystem tended to by Casco. Using fermentation as one way of thinking and unlearning the institutional habits we have formed as we navigate the art world, the *Nina bell F. House Museum* is both localized in Singapore and extends beyond. The various ingredients that make up the archive brew together and a new possibility for a connection built on sustainability emerges. This understanding of archiving for the *Nina bell F. House Museum* is rooted in the Black, feminist works of Nina Simone, bell hooks, as well as the thinking of feminist scholar Silvia Federici; this cumulative perspective offers a more radical interpretation of archives than one that is perhaps more generous and organic in form.

#### The soft archive and its components

In *Imperfect Archiving, Archiving as Practice: For a Love of Softness*, writer, publisher, and facilitator Be Oakley explores the book as a form that is soft and expansive in nature. By asking what the

14 Joshua Simon, “The Exhibition as Cosmogram,” *Parse* 13, No. 3 (Summer 2021): <https://parse-journal.com/article/the-exhibition-as-cosmogram/>.

15 “Nina bell F. House Museum,” Singapore Biennale (website), Accessed March 1, 2023, <https://www.singaporebiennale.org/artists/nina-bell-federici>.

differences between a book and a zine are, Oakley illuminates the problematic hierarchy in designating something as a book versus a zine. They continue to expound on the book and the commonality of being a widely-disseminated and circulated object.<sup>16</sup> This intersects with the notion of imperfect archiving, which questions how knowledge is built in the first place and forefronts more liberatory archiving practices. All of this informs the soft archive and applies some of the ways of looking at books to the archive as an object itself.

A queer reading of the archive as one that is soft, gentle, and built together transforms it into a framework that can acknowledge and hold myriad ways of understanding knowledge building and sharing. As part of this soft archive practice—through the lens of understanding friendship and collectivity—the notion of commonality is a constant thread. The soft archive decentralizes what it means to hold knowledge, or the living components, of an archive. The soft archive acknowledges the power of the act of remembering and the resulting power dynamics that exist in the formation of an archive. The softness recognizes what is beyond the historical documentation of an exhibition or an art practice. If we take Simon's proposition to include contemporary artworks as part of an archive, a practice of the soft archive becomes possible. To be soft is to be able to accommodate multiple meanings and possibilities.

An archive presents one iteration of what has taken place. A consequent question is whether an archive is a performance of a specific, ephemeral event. Just like exhibitions—which can be a performance of an idea that a curator or a group of curators brings forth—the archive, in the exhibition context, can also take on a performative aspect. One central question is whether the archive is a performance of the surroundings or the ideas of the artists, and their respective collaborative practices, who were selected by the curator as participants. It is unclear

whether the archive's performance would take away from the "practice" element of a project like this. If we approach practice as connected—connecting art and life—this offers another way to approach the building of an archive.

The soft archive in *Not too hot, Not too cold* functions nominally as an exhibition. Akin to a thematic approach, affinities and connections were drawn across the selected objects. Taking on a soft approach allows those who engage with the included objects to problematize the architectural structures that make up an archive. The predominant understanding of the archive as anthropological is expanded to make room for other interpretations. Included in *Not too hot, Not too cold* are artists' artworks that question infrastructure and what relationship-making can look like, which is also evident in the collective practices each artist is building. These artworks are placed in relation to the various photos, zines, posters, and other printed matter generated during their collaborative projects.

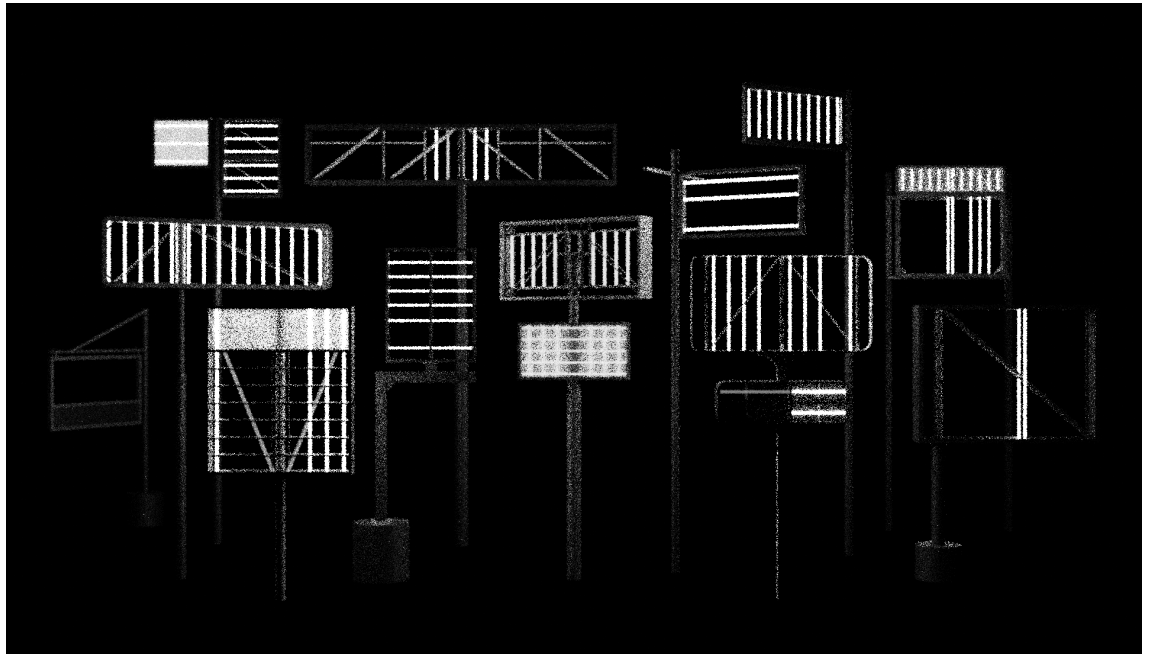
Alex Paik makes paper-based installations that are place-based and intuitive in nature. His installation is created in an improvisational manner while informed by certain boundaries set he has set forth in the install process. Paik's installations are linked to the work that he pursues outside of his studio practice as the Director of the arts organization Tiger Strikes Asteroid and as an organizer of Correspondence Archive (CA). *Partial Equilateral Triangle (Brilliant Pink)*—while it is the perhaps the most formal in approach and aesthetics, geometric, taking on multiple shapes—serves as one anchor to the archive presented in *Not too hot, Not too cold*. The smaller geometric shapes work together to inform the larger structure. Paik's installation encourages an exploration of structural change and the question of what is required when building relationships. The duality of the individual and collective nature of friendship can be felt through the installation and is ampli-

16 Be Oakley, *Imperfect Archiving, Archiving as Practice: For a Love of Softness* (Brooklyn: Gender-Fail, 2021), 13.



17 "Risolana," *Risolana* (website), Accessed November 15, 2022, <https://www.risolana.org/>.

18 Bethany Tabor, "New Mexico's First Risograph Studio Is All About Community," *Hyperallergic*, April 26, 2022, <https://hyperallergic.com/726256/new-mexicos-first-risograph-studio-is-all-about-community/>.



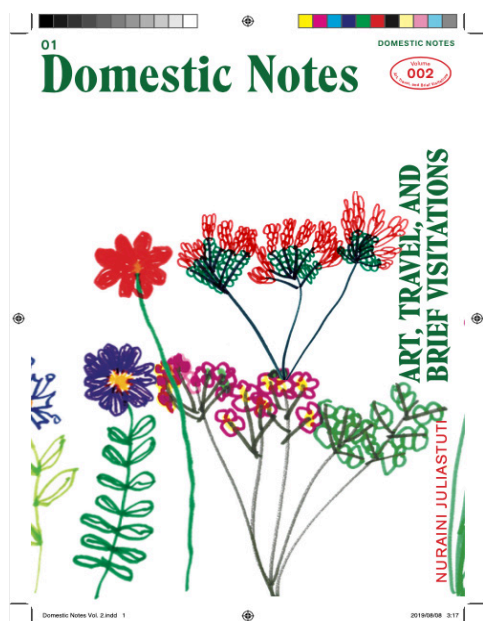
Karl Orozco  
*Signs of Life*, 2023  
Single-channel video  
Dimensions variable  
Image courtesy of artist

fied further in the rest of the archive, as demonstrated by Paik's selection of CA interviews as part of the soft archive.

An example of the structures that Paik imagines and explores may be evident in *Risolana*. As a community risograph studio, much of their structures are built outwards from the practice itself. *Risolana* is a term is a portmanteau of *risograph* and *la res-olana*, the latter being a colloquialism used to mean a south-facing wall where community members can gather to relax, share, and reflect.<sup>17 18</sup> The various flyers and posters that are part of the soft archive represent, perhaps in the most direct manner, what *Risolana* has produced and can archive. *Risolana*'s 30 *Under 30* series, initiated in 2022, represents the structure that Karl Orozco and Michael Lopez have created to practice the spirit of *Risolana*. For the series, *Risolana* opens its doors to the public for anyone to use the printer—no matter their skill level—embodying the possibilities that an open structure can create.

The selected prints from the 30 *Under 30* series often function as signage and posters. Visually they are linked to Karl Orozco's *Signs of Life* (2023), a single-channel video of 3-D animated empty signs that Orozco archived throughout New Mexico. Spinning in a loop, these mediative, haunting black and white signs point both to what came before and what is to come in both a tangible and metaphorical manner. They occupy a strange in-between space where they float between the end and new possibilities. The signs are empty and take on a ghost-like presence; they also function as remnants, memories of the persistence of life. Our relationship to these signs both makes and dissolves their potential as communicators. If *Risolana* proposes a radical exteriority in understanding relationships, Orozco's *Signs of Life* posits a radical interiority that emphasizes the potential for capacious joy and loss in our relationships.

Small exchanges and acts of care are part of Hyeree Christina Mary



Nuraini Juliastuti  
 Cover of *Domestic Notes V.002*, 2018  
 Reading Sideways Press  
 Image courtesy of artist

Ro's *flour hat (floor)* (2021). The parts, of all sizes, of the archive create a whole that makes it legible and, ultimately, a structure that can support the contents within it. In the video work, Ro, with two other participants of *Friend of a Friend*, Armando Cortés and Lucas Yasunaga, are loosely connected by an object resembling a hat. The three are also connected by a commonality of having long, black hair. In a touching scene in the video, the three artists sit in a row, still connected by the hat, and braid each other's hair. Through fashioning and handling a series of objects, including dough and a shell structure that nests into smaller versions of itself, Ro practices and demonstrates the efforts required in relationship building, not just between humans but also with non-human objects. In the soft archive, *flour hat (floor)* is accompanied by the shell structure that appears at the halfway mark of the video in the flesh. What memory and relational capacity does an object as material for perfor-

mances hold? How does it interact with a specific artwork when presented in its complete form? The shell from *flour hat (floor)* oscillates between a potential prop-like object used in the performance and a living archival manifestation of the work itself.

The first third of Nuraini Juliastuti's publication project *Domestic Notes Volume 2: Art, Travel, and Brief Visitations* (2019) ruminates on the meaning of travel in how we build relationships with each other, especially from the view of Juliastuti and her participation in KUNCI Study Forum & Collective. Through examining the usefulness of travel, especially as it is demanded in the art world as an artist grows their practice, Juliastuti inevitably links productivity with how relationships are built. What is important to note is that *Domestic Notes* was produced individually by Juliastuti, yet the material matter explored in the text is inextricably tied to her relationship with KUNCI and its members. The texts are written from the first-person perspective and are interspersed with photos and drawings that ruminate on quotidian life rooted in the home, which is entangled with the exterior environment. *Domestic Notes*, published through Reading Sideways Press, encourages thinking about the various places where friendship can show up in our lives beyond the art world.

With *Domestic Notes*, the archive returns to the home and all that sprouts from it, including the title and inspiration of this curatorial project. While each of the collectives and collaborative practices is seemingly disparate because of innate differences due to their particular context, aesthetics, and politics, they are threaded with an invisible, yet strong string of friendship. Not only does each of the works presented demonstrate the joys of being in friendship, but also the complexities that

are unavoidable in working and being together, which evolve over time. If an archive accommodates the fluid nature of what it means to be in friendship and collectivity, one form for it to take on is that of a living organism instead of a static object. When an archive that is in flux and growth is situated within an exhibition, room should be made for this expansion. The archive can be a space that encourages exhibitions to evolve, creating possibilities that are more organic and further bridge art and life.

Friendships change. That person whom you thought you couldn't live without talking to every day in college may now be just a blip in your Instagram feed that you quickly note and scroll past. Collaborators with whom

you developed meaningful professional projects transform into friends who participate in your life outside of work. If anything, friendship is an amalgamation of feelings, thoughts, and negotiations; friendship is malleable. While Aristotle outlined three types of friendship centuries ago in an effort to identify what it is, modern-day complexities mean that friendship occupies an in-between space linking the individual and the collectives that, hopefully, teach us how to coexist.



Nuraini Juliastuti  
*An afterlife of a mind-mapping session board, Yogyakarta, 2019*  
Photo taken by Nuraini Juliastuti  
Image courtesy of artist

# Bibliography

- 1 Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999.
- 2 Ault, Julie. *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*. New York/Minneapolis: Drawing Center/University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- 3 Condorelli, Céline. “Reprint.” *Mousse* 32 (2012), 222–227.
- 4 hooks, bell. *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: William Morrow, 2000.
- 5 Derrida, Jacques. *The Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins. London: Verso, 2005.
- 6 Gandhi, Leela. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- 7 Gotby, Alva. *They Call It Love: The Politics of Emotional Life*. London /New York: Verso, 2022.
- 8 Kaiza, A. K., Alvin Li, Andrew Maerkele, Ann Mbuti, Annie Jael Kwan, Ashraf Jamal, Wong Binghao, et al. *Documenta Fifteen Handbook: English*. Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2022.
- 9 Moore, Alan. “Urban Encounters at the New Museum,” *Artnet*. Accessed October 8, 2022. <http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/reviews/moore/moore8-5-98.asp>.
- 10 Oakley, Be. *Imperfect Archiving, Archiving as Practice: For a Love of Softness*. Brooklyn: GenderFail, 2021.
- 11 “Risolana.” Risolana (website). Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://www.risolana.org/>.
- 12 Simon, Joshua. “The Exhibition as Cosmogram.” *Parse* 13, No. 3 (Summer 2021), <https://parsejournal.com/article/the-exhibition-as-cosmogram/>.
- 13 “Nina bell F. House Museum.” Singapore Biennale. Accessed March 1, 2023. <https://www.singaporebiennale.org/artists/nina-bell-federici>.
- 14 Sholette, Gregory. *Urban Encounters*. New York: New Museum, 1998.
- 15 Tabor, Bethany. “New Mexico’s First Risograph Studio Is All About Community.” *Hyperallergic*. Accessed April 26, 2022. <https://hyperallergic.com/726256/new-mexicos-first-risograph-studio-is-all-about-community/>.
- 16 Wills, David. “Full Dorsal: Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship*.” *Postmodern Culture* 15, No. 3 (May 2005), <http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/issue.505/15.3wills.html>.

# Artist Biographies

**Armando Guadalupe Cortés** (MFA Yale School of Art 2021, BA UCLA 2012) was born in Urequíu, Michoacán, México and raised in Wilmington, California. He currently lives and practices in Brooklyn, NY.

Cortés' practice builds on storytelling, object making, and performance traditions. Merging forms and methods from his native México and broader Latin American literary traditions, Cortés contrasts and hybridizes them with elements of his life in the United States.

Through sculpture, installation, and performance, Cortés strives to propel and make believable narratives often overlooked. This propagation of story takes the form of myth building. This myth-making challenges concepts of spectacle and viewership while raising the question of myth as antonym to history. In questioning this dichotomy, He seeks to upend notions of myth and lore as fiction.

Cortés has exhibited at Jenkins Johnson Projects (Brooklyn, NY), MassMOCA (North Adams, MA), Space One (Seoul, Korea), ASU Art Museum (Tempe, AZ), Visitor Welcome Center (Los Angeles, CA), and Craft Contemporary (Los Angeles, CA) amongst others. He was the Saint Elmo Artist in Residence and Fellow at UT Austin 2021-2022 and a Franklin Furnace Fellow (2021-2022).

**Furen Dai** is an artist whose recent projects explore the origins of languages, categories and systems that speak to larger socio-political structures. Her work manifests these concepts physically through the exploration of material, display, lighting, architecture, and text. Dai's art practice is crossdisciplinary spanning across video, 16mm film, publishing, sculpture, drawing, and photography. She is also the co-founder of current press, an experimental platform that focuses on books and zine projects published by women. Selected exhibitions include: New England Triennial 2022; The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation (2021), National Art Center, Tokyo (2018); amongst others. She has participated in residencies, including International Studio and Curatorial Programs (ISCP), Art OMI, and MacDowell. She is also the recipient of The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation Fellowship (2017), ZK/U Berlin Fellowship (2021), and SMFA traveling Fellowship (2022). Dai holds a BA in Russian language and literature from Beijing Foreign Studies University and an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University.

**Nuraini Juliastuti** has an untethered physical presence as the main medium for communication with families and a rich circle of allies in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This propels her to actively pursue creative ways of producing entanglements in contexts that are not limited by geographical presence. She sees publishing, networking, and organising collective solidarity as activities that nurture a sense of friendship. In this regard, maintaining a trans-local relationship with her comrades at Kunci Study Forum & Collective means sharing an inclination to embrace uncertainties as a productive zone in which one can reclaim the cultural field, deflating formal education institutions, and eschewing the professionalisation of intellectual thought.

Kunci is founded on the wish to make a critical intellectual contribution by developing an alternative space for collective learning and radical pedagogies. It reflects the spirit of the generation of 1998, who focused their democratic struggles by reclaiming various cracks in public spaces. As Nuraini has grown older with Kunci, it has become a gathering place for people from diverse backgrounds and generations: a space for listening to intergenerational social and political trauma. The question of how this can be directed to realise collective action is part of the ongoing conversation amongst Kunci members.

**Christina Yuna Ko** is a Korean American artist living and working in Queens, NY. Her work, grounded in painting and installation, attempts to reclaim the living language of the Asian diasporic experience as a site of potential imaginaries and make visible the richness present in persistent everyday practices. She received her BFA from Cornell University in 2013, and has since then shown her work in Los Angeles, CA, Washington D.C., and in NYC. Selected exhibitions include: "Étude for Some Place in Between", One River Gallery, Woodbury, NY; "Late Night Enterprise", Perrotin, New York, NY; "Bathing in Public", Selenas Mountain, Brooklyn, NY; "Night Scenes", Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Brooklyn, NY; "In Good Taste", Dinner Gallery, New York, NY; "Futures Ever Arriving", Chelsea Market, New York, NY; "Internal Arrangements", Trestle Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and "Downloading Place", Wave Hill, Bronx, NY. Her work has been featured in Artforum, Ballpit Magazine, Correspondence Archive, Gallery Gurls, Hiss Magazine, Mint Tea, The Arcade Project Zine, The Fader magazine and The Washington Post.

# Artist Biographies

**Karl Orozco** is a project-based visual artist who creates public installations that collaboratively investigate the cultural symbols and popular iconography of our material world. Orozco is the co-founder of Risolana, a community risograph studio located in South Valley, New Mexico. Inspired by the New Mexican concept of *la resolana* - a south-facing wall where community members gather, share, and reflect - Risolana is a non-profit social enterprise that prioritizes design education by allowing hands-on access to the risograph. In 2021, Orozco collaborated with Little Manila Queens and The Laundromat Project to create a public art activation in Woodside, Queens centered on basketball footwear, class, and histories of Philippine labor organizing. Orozco received the 2019 Art in the Parks grant for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, which he used to create a sculptural maize mosaic that served as a pixelated backdrop for Mexican Indigenous dancers to commemorate the death anniversary of Moctezuma II. He was the 2018 National Artist-in-Residence at the Neon Museum of Las Vegas, NV, where he transformed their expansive studio into an intergenerational, community gambling space influenced by his grandmother's underground Manila mahjong parlor. Orozco currently teaches high school visual art with a focus on graphic design and video art at Albuquerque Academy. His favorite riso color is federal blue.

**Alex Paik** is an artist, community builder, curator, and writer based in Los Angeles. His modular, paper-based wall installations explore the adaptability, impermanence and interdependence of forms, color, and structures. He has exhibited in the U.S. and internationally, with notable solo projects at Praxis New York, Art on Paper 2016, and Gallery Joe. His work has also been featured in group exhibitions at BravinLee Projects, Ruschman Gallery, and MONO Practice, among others.

Paik is Founder and Director of Tiger Strikes Asteroid, a non-profit network of artist-run spaces and organizes Correspondence Archive, an online series of conversations between artists of color.

**Hyeree Christina Mary Ro** is an artist based in New York and Seoul, primarily working with sculptural objects and multi-lingual fractured narrative-based performance. Her practice is informed by her experience as a child of an undocumented immigrant growing up in California as well as her subsequent returns to Korea as a teenager and then to the US as an international student. As a constant migrant passing through various immigrant statuses and encountering disparities in class and wealth, Ro interweaves her family history, memories, places, cities, language, body, movement, stories, and dreams into her practice.

Her objects take on forms that resist easy categorization in terms of their origin and function, yet they evoke a sense of familiarity and engagement. Ro's sculptures often employ rudimentary methods that emphasize the elemental qualities of the materials she uses. While her materials and methods of construction do not conceal anything, they possess an enigmatic quality that challenges quick interpretation, inviting the viewer to engage more deeply with her work.

Ro's performances are characterized by the use of broken, jumbled, yet poetic language, reminiscent of the speech patterns of immigrants, and functional movements that engage with the objects. The interplay of fragmented words and movements depicts scenes that avoid straightforward representation or illustration. Instead, they offer a means of re-living a moment in the present, inviting viewers to bear witness. Through her performances, Ro explores unanswerable questions, opening up new possibilities for understanding the complex, multifaceted experiences of migration and displacement.

Ro has exhibited at Leeum Museum of Art (Seoul, Korea), NARS Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Korean Culture Centre (Ottawa, Canada), Ilmin Museum of Art (Seoul, Korea), Akiyoshidai International Art Village (Mine, Japan) amongst others. She holds an MFA in Sculpture from Yale School of Art (2021) and a BFA from Korea National University of Arts (2017).

All bios are courtesy of the artists



"Once you've met someone, you never really forget them. It just takes a while for your memories to return."

– *Spirited Away*, Hayao Miyazaki

NOT TOO HOT, NOT TOO COLD  
By Sophia Park  
April 14 – 27, 2023

MA Curatorial Practice  
School of Visual Arts  
132 West 21st Street, 10th floor  
New York, NY 10011



Curatorial Practice | Master of Arts