

Spawning Scenery
Ram Han

27 May – 2 July, 2022

The emergence of the new technology and media known as NFT is shaking up the topography of contemporary art once again. Although there are mixed views on it with regard to the value of art, artists using the digital environment as their primary source anticipate its new attempt at the format of art's existence and how it provides the authentication of originality to digital works.

After working as an illustrator, Ram Han debuted in the domestic art scene in 2017. Before her work was first shown in museum galleries (*Phantom Arm*, Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, 2018), the artist began to receive attention by posting her images on social media, permitting easy public access to her work through mobile devices, and even unauthorized ownership of it. Through the exhibition, Ram Han equips the digital work with physical properties and qualifications equivalent to the original. Occasionally, there are questions about whether her work should be printed and viewed in real life. However, in this solo exhibition *Spawning Scenery*, her tackling of physical communication of the sensual experience evident in digital work is clearly visible.

The title of the exhibition *Spawning Scenery* refers to images and landscapes appearing randomly and in parallel inside a virtual space. The title reveals the artist's perception of the landscape, and spawning is close to the manner of objects pouring out of a computer program. Ram Han asks, "Is the familiar landscape not a familiarity of the real thing, but a recollection of constructed images from exposure to movies and games?"

Han grew up under the worldview of so-called JRPG games and anime and is interested in console games, AR, open-world games, and AI-generated art. To conclude Ram Han's work as a generational theory might narrow the scope for criticism. However, how she selects the subject matter and composes the narrative powerfully reveals the common interests of the same generation.

Meanwhile, the artist has presented the *Object* and *Souvenir* series, illustrating faint memories and collected objects. For Han, memory is exaggerated and beautified, and the articles appearing in her work serve as a medium connecting the real and the virtual world. In particular, the *Souvenir* series shows "the desire to have the experience firsthand." The artist speaks of "illusion" when describing the work, as the digital painting itself is nonmaterial, and the objects she aims to portray are also imaginary, derived from experience.

In Ram Han's compositions, cute and beautiful animals, plants, and people appear. Expressed in brilliant colors, they are entangled by and wiggling together with an unknown sticky and shiny substance. Unlike paintings or sculptures, it has no smell or volume, but it is a texture easily imagined based on experience. She concentrates on depicting sensory elements such as color and surface to maximize the characteristics of a smooth digital screen.

The artist's brilliant landscapes are often cruel and tactile. Interest in intangible shapes and forms has led to organ drawings first realized in 2020 (Busan Biennale, 2020). On display, *I am relieved* (2022) stems from a bizarre experience encountered since the pandemic. Scanning one's own mucous membrane every day and raising questions about body conditions and the physical symptoms chattering across various media made her contemplate the internal tissue that is invisible and impalpable.

Creatures made by Ram Han seem fragile. Most of them are small, fluffy creatures that resemble rabbits and cats. These covert animals appearing in the images are the main characters guiding and leading the work's narrative. *Save our souls* (2022) is a series that faces these animals created so far on one-on-one. The miniature monsters that seem unexpectedly high in combat power are placed throughout the exhibition space.

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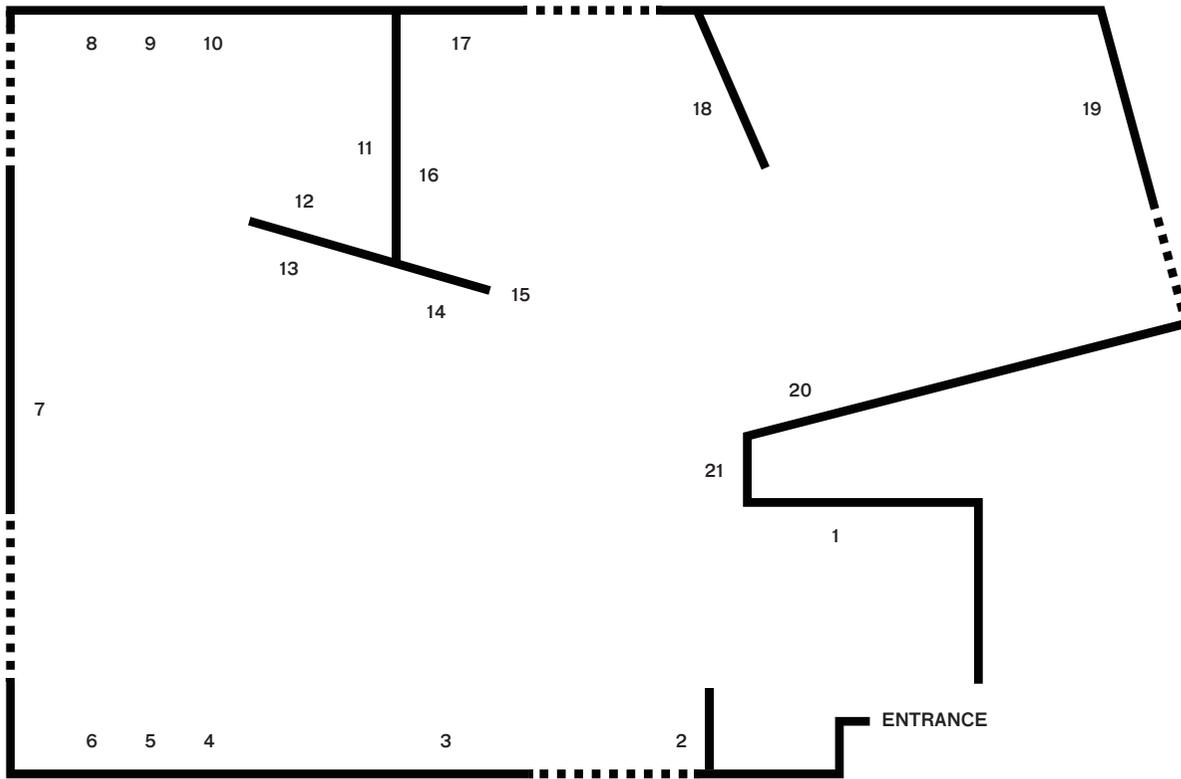
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The artist's interest in the virtual world and fantasy is delivered more concretely through VR and 3D sculptures in this exhibition. The VR work *Uninvited-Tamagotchi* (2022) transfers the audience to the digital world. Sitting in the room generated by the artist and fumbling for the creature makes us wonder if this could be the actuality of digital painting. The 3D series *morph 01-04* (2022) morphs animals, plants, and objects and combines piercings that symbolize the confrontation of different physical properties. Through this solo exhibition, Ram Han proposes a quest to the audience. Within her rendering 'the scattering landscape,' we will contemplate the presence of digital painting and the significance of the original.

Soohyun Kim (Whistle, Curator)

Ram Han (b. 1989) is a Seoul-based digital painter who takes a strong interest in the fantasy inherent to media and old pop/subculture. She believes that the essence of memory is the ambiguity between the virtual and the real, and through her work, she shares her personal and unique memories of places and experiences with the viewer. Ram Han studied Animation at Korea National University of Arts and held her first solo exhibition *Nightcap* at YOUR MANA in 2017. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions notably at SeMA, Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Busan Biennale, D Museum, Audio Visual Pavilion, Culture Station Seoul 284, and Whistle, while she is a frequent collaborator with a variety of fashion brands and companies including Apple, Big Hit Entertainment and SM Entertainment.





- 1 *Sky (repaint)*, 2022, Light panel, archival pigment print, 80×80cm
- 2 *Save our souls_06*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 14×28cm
- 3 *I am relieved*, 2022, Light panel, archival pigment print, 130×85cm
- 4 *Souvenir study (pool)*, 2022, Light panel, archival pigment print, 20×20cm
- 5 *Souvenir study (spoon)*, 2022, Light panel, archival pigment print, 20×20cm
- 6 *Souvenir study (bell)*, 2022, Light panel, archival pigment print, 20×20cm
- 7 *Souvenir study (hatchery)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 103×210cm
- 8 *morph-04*, 2022, 3D print, resin, 30×24cm
- 9 *morph-02*, 2022, 3D print, resin, 30×29cm
- 10 *morph-03*, 2022, 3D print, resin, 30×10cm
- 11 *Paraparaparadise 파라파라파라다이스*, 2022, Light panel, UV print, 80×60cm
- 12 *Save our souls_01 (moth)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm
- 13 *Save our souls_03 (yorkshire terrier)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm
- 14 *Save our souls_04*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 14×28cm
- 15 *Save our souls_02 (seal)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm
- 16 *Uninvited-Tamagotchi*, 2022, Oculus, Unity app, Size variable
- 17 *Save our souls_07 (cat)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm
- 18 *morph-01*, 2022, 3D print, resin, LCD, Raspberry Pi, seamless loop video, 23×20cm
- 19 *Save our souls_05*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 14×28cm
- 20 *Save our souls_09 (stare)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm
- 21 *Save our souls_08 (mew)*, 2022, Archival pigment print, 15×15cm