

Seong Gwang Yun Solo Exhibition: 『Yearbook』 26. 2. 14. – 4. 4.

Seong Gwang Yun's practice begins with the experience of "living through years of suppressed emotions." His work moves beyond a purely personal psychological narrative to visualize emotional states compressed through the structures of discipline and self-regulation demanded by contemporary society. Words that had to be swallowed, impulses that were restrained, and emotions that could not be directly expressed no longer remain abstract in Yun's paintings. Instead, they are distilled into monstrous faces, disguised through layered colors, humor, and exaggerated forms.

This approach resonates with art-historical trajectories following Expressionism, which sought the direct articulation of emotion. As seen in the works of James Ensor and Jean-Michel Basquiat, faces and masks have repeatedly functioned as devices to reveal suppressed inner states and social tension. While Seong Gwang Yun's monsters adopt a playful, cartoon-like visual language, beneath their surfaces lies an accumulation of repression, anxiety, and traces of self-censorship.

Each portrait operates as an autonomous entity, yet when assembled within a single frame, they form not merely a group of figures but a collective emotional cartography. This suggests that emotions are never confined to the individual alone; rather, they are shared, circulated, confirmed, and reproduced through social environments and collective experience. In this regard, Yun's work aligns with Michel Foucault's analysis of subject formation within disciplinary societies, as well as Sara Ahmed's examination of the social circulation of emotion.

This exhibition presents such an emotional map under the title *Yearbook*.

Conventionally, a yearbook records narratives of growth, separation, and new beginnings. Seong Gwang Yun's *Yearbook* follows this structure, but with a crucial shift: here, it is not individuals who grow, but emotions themselves, and what departs is not a school, but an unspoken version of one's past self. In doing so, the exhibition subverts the yearbook as an archival medium of memory and identity, echoing strategies found in Alain Resnais's explorations of memory and contemporary artistic practices that reconstruct the archive.

The twenty-seven faces appear both similar and distinct, lacking fixed identities, each standing with an open mouth. These mouths seem to hover between a scream and a swallowed laugh. The moment the viewer imagines what these mouths might be trying to say, a silent dialogue with the monsters has already begun. While the vivid colors and playful forms draw the viewer in, what ultimately lingers is the layered density of emotion beneath the surface.

Ultimately, *Yearbook* becomes a "graduation album of emotions" that we all carry within us: emotions we could not express, moments we were forced to swallow, or expressions too honest to reveal. This exhibition offers a space where such emotions can finally be taken out and confronted—a site of collective confession.