

About The Artist



Park Yunji (b.1990) is a Seoul-based artist whose work delves into the interplay of light, shadow, and the transient essence of fleeting moments. Her distinctive style balances the tension between abstract forms and realistic expression, prompting contemplation of the everyday. Park employs traditional Korean materials such as Jangji (mulberry paper), natural pigments, and watercolor to create layers of subtle, organic textures that capture the ephemeral qualities of time and space.

Her process involves repeated applications of pigments onto Jangji, allowing the paint to naturally seep, settle, and dry. This technique mirrors the passage of time, with each layer reflecting a moment in flux. The result is a body of work that transforms familiar imagery into surreal compositions, bridging the gap between realism and surrealism while inviting viewers to reflect on their own perceptions and experiences.

Park earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Oriental Painting from Ewha Womans University in 2014 and completed her Master's degree in 2019. Since graduating, she has consistently presented her work in both solo and group exhibitions, sharing her evolving vision with audiences. She is currently represented by Gallery Playlist as one of its exclusive artists. Last year, her works began to be collected internationally, with pieces acquired in South Korea, the United States, France, Germany, and China, marking the start of her entry into the global art scene.

When encountering Park Yunji's work for the first time, one might feel a sense of familiarity—scenes that evoke fleeting moments of light and shadow often witnessed in everyday life. Her natural depiction of light and shadow, combined with calming tones, invites viewers into a sense of accessibility and connection to the everyday.

However, as one delves deeper into her paintings, layers of both realism and surrealism begin to reveal themselves. For instance, is the white rectangle in her painting truly a wall? Judging by the angle of the shadow cast on the floor, if it were a wall, the shadow could not fall in such a way unless the wall were paper-thin. Likewise, the tree depicted in her work exists in a place it logically could not inhabit. The buildings, landscapes, and spaces in her paintings form structures that would be impossible. Vertical and horizontal frames divide the canvas into architectural grids, while color blocks hint at walls or windows. Sharp, defined shadows abruptly end, blending seamlessly into soft, hazy ones that seem to dissipate like smoke. Together, these elements form a surreal and enigmatic visual language.

These deliberate juxtapositions of the impossible are a product of the artist's intent. Park's architectural renderings are guided by the grid-like structure of her canvas, a method rooted in East Asian traditional painting techniques for depicting dimensionality. The outer edges of her compositions—left bare or coated in Ho-Bun (a traditional white pigment)—adhere to the vertical and horizontal axes of the frame. These edges sometimes form window frames, while also revealing the materiality of the paper and pigments. In contrast, the shadows of objects are meticulously rendered with varying density and tone, offering a level of realism that brings depth to the composition. Park masterfully navigates the space between construction and representation.

Her exploration of shadows is particularly noteworthy. Historically, shadows were often omitted as subjects in East Asian traditional painting, as their transient nature was seen as contradictory to truth. Yet, despite her roots in traditional Eastern painting, Park boldly places shadows at the center of her artistic inquiry. To her, shadows embody the impermanence of life, reflecting the ever-changing nature of existence. Paradoxically, the fleeting nature of these shadows reveals a deeper truth, a glimpse into the transient yet authentic reality of the world. Although her perspective differs from that of traditional artists, Park remains deeply connected to traditional Korean materials. She approaches light and shadow through the delicate use of Jangji, a traditional Korean paper made from the long fibers of mulberry bark, and traditional Korean pigments. This combination allows her to create subtle and organic tonal variations that capture the transient qualities of light and shadow.

The Jangji absorbs pigments into its fibers, creating a flat yet richly textured surface. By spraying water onto the paper and layering water-based pigments, Park achieves a soft diffusion of color that mirrors the natural interplay of light in space. This technique lends her shadows a nuanced and fluid quality, evoking both the impermanence of light and the depth of the spaces she depicts. Her approach transforms traditional materials into tools for exploring a contemporary visual language, resulting in works that are both understated and deeply resonant.

Park Yunji's paintings compel viewers to question what they are truly seeing. Her surreal compositions evoke moments and places that seem to exist nowhere, eliciting a sense of strangeness and wonder. They remind us of the nature of paintings as paintings, bringing attention to the act of viewing itself.