

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN



SEED PODS OF DEMOCRACY: DESIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

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ABSTRACT | The so-called Namyong-dong Anti-Communist Interrogation Office Building in Seoul, South Korea, was designed as a place for the torture of pro-democracy activists in the 1970s and '80s. Since 1987, as the subsequent effort to address a history of state violence and to put democracy into practice, the Anti-Communist Investigation Office transformed into the Human Rights Center of the National Policy Agency in 2005 and became the Democracy and Human Rights Memorial Hall in 2018. The Korea Democracy Foundation, which oversees the management of the hall, began preparations in 2021 to reopen it in 2024 as the National Museum of Democracy and Human Rights. This new setting aims to serve as a space for memory, reflection, communication, solidarity, and human rights education—something akin to an organism that the public can sense and connect with directly.

In 2022, Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights was designed to support these changes in the memorial hall. It consists of three parts: poster designs, a publication, and an exhibition for democracy and human rights. This project aimed to collect and preserve artistic work related to the democratization movement and human rights while sharing issues related to democracy and human rights to enhance broader awareness. Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights used posters as a medium and tool to investigate incidents and issues involving resistance to state abuses, anti-democratic activities, and human rights infringements—events that persist in a world of intensifying polarization and domination by corporate interests.

This project explored how visual language maximizes the effectiveness of democracy and human rights discourse and practice by inviting 51 international artists and designers: Guerrilla Girls, Jonathan Barnbrook, Garth Walker, Roshi Rouzbehani, Everyday Practice, etc. Some artists created work in environments and wars where actual state violence occurred, while others told stories relating to multinational and multiple identities. To enable viewers to comprehend the state and problem areas of global democracy today, these artists juxtaposed or connected two newly created posters. These posters explored and expanded on incidents related to systems and critical values of democracy, acts of state violence, and human rights within their historical temporal and spatial contexts.

In the process, artists used dynamic visual languages to interpret such intangible values as dignity, empathy, memory, critique, dialogue, boundaries, resilience, future, sustainability, and solidarity. Those visualized values have raised questions about the present and future of democracy and the creation of new civic spaces. It has resulted in 100 posters shedding light on the suffering experienced by the vulnerable in society and visualizing the power and importance of solidarity. Lastly, as an expansion of this project, a publication and exhibition, Seed Pods of Democracy, are work in progress to guide audiences not toward some stale version of enlightenment but rather a dynamic and organic future; they will take place in the National Museum of Democracy and Human Rights in 2024.

WAYS of LIVING TOGETHER

Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights

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Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights

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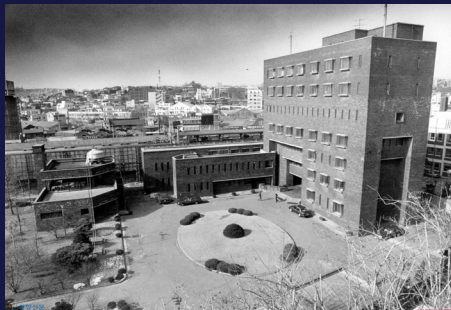
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The History of the Namyeong-dong Anti-Communist Investigation Office

A “perfect torture chamber” in 1976



In 1970s and 1980s

The National Museum of Democracy and Human Rights
in Seoul, South Korea in 2024



In 2024

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Photos by Suh Youngkul



According to the testimony of victims, they shivered because they felt as if the illuminated orange tiles were stained with blood.

The staggered entrance doors of the investigation rooms on the 5th floor. Even when the door was opened, the victims did not see anything and could only hear screams from the hallway.

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Photos by Moon Jung Jang



Façade of the Namyong-dong Anti-Communist Investigation Office. The 5th floor, where the interrogation rooms were located, was designed with thin vertical windows 300 mm wide, too narrow for a human head to fit through, to prevent victims from escaping or harming themselves. Currently, this building is being prepared to be reborn as a new space.

Perforated wooden boards used on the walls of the investigation room for soundproofing. The victims could not be heard from outside, but the high-pitched screams were transmitted through the walls to adjacent rooms, instilling endless fear.

Objectives (Design for Human Rights)

1) To support the inauguration of The Democracy and Human Rights Memorial Hall in South Korea
 2) To investigate incidents and issues involving resistance to state abuses, anti-democratic activities, and human rights infringements—events that persist in a world of intensifying polarization and domination by corporate interests

3) To investigate how visual language can maximize democracy and human rights
 4) To take action on improving social justice through visual communication design / graphic activism
 5) To envision the future design tasks and responsibilities for human rights

Research

1) Democracy: Persistent questions for Freedom, Peace, Equality, Equity

No War
No Coup

No
Abuse/Torture
Violence

No
Discrimination

No
Racism

The Right
to Vote

No
“ecocide”

2) Human Rights: Everyone’s story

BIPOC
APPI

Women &
Workers

LGBTQ

People with
disabilities

Refugees
Immigrants

Methodology and Creative Works

1) 100 Posters newly created by 51 international artists who were invited to Seed Pods of Democracy:

- Everyday Practice, Jonathan Barnbrook, Karo Akpokiere, Chris Burnett, Cristina Daura, Garth Walker,
- Pracha Suveeranont, Design & People, Viktoria Cichoń, Bernhard Lenger, Mykola Kovalenko, Kateryna Korolevtseva,
- Chris Lee, This Ain't Rock'n'Roll (Charlie Waterhouse and Clive Russell), Mark Gowing, An Mano, High on Type,
- Elliot Stokes, Aaron Nieh, Good Question (Yuni Ooh and Sun-ah Shin), Kyungmin Lee (flagflag), Shin In-ah,
- Minho Kwon, Jiwon Lee (archetypes), Saehan Parc, Guerrilla Girls, Roshî Rouzbehani, Anina Takeff, Melinda Beck,
- Raven, Jaeyoung Lee (6699press), Yeji Yun, Elmer Sosa, Luis Mazón, Frenci (Francesca) Sanna, Luca Soncini,
- Jieun Guk, Yudai Osawa, Mun Sang, Golden Cosmos (duo Doris Freigofas and Daniel Dolz), Saki Ho, Sebastian Curi,
- Fahmi Reza, Diana Ejaita, Elaine Lopez, cement (Hyojung Yang and Park Yonghoon), Elaine L, Studio Half-bottle,
- Kim Albrecht, Studio Rejane Dal Bello, and Moon Jung Jang

2) A publication including research, 100 posters, and articles

3) An exhibition, Seed Pods of Democracy, at the National Museum of

- Democracy and Human Rights, Seoul, South Korea in 2024

Themes and Visualized values

Themes

- 1) Democracy: Persistent Questions
- 2) Human Rights: Everyone's Story
- 3) Seed Pods: Empathy and Solitude

Visualized Values

Dignity, Empathy, Memory, Critique, Dialogue, Boundary, Future, Resilience, Sustainability, Solidarity



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Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights

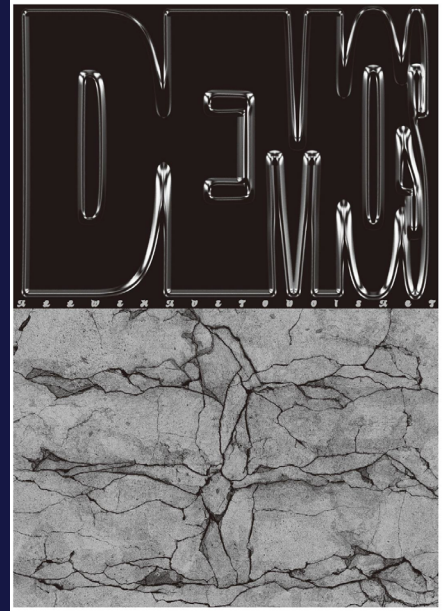
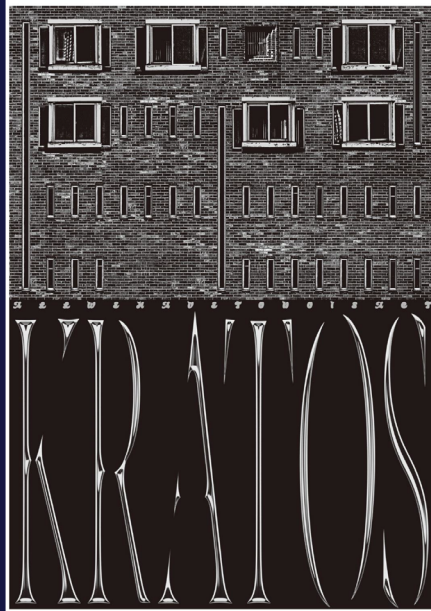
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1

Democracy: Persistent Questions

Everyday Practice

民×KRATOS
DEMOS×主
2023



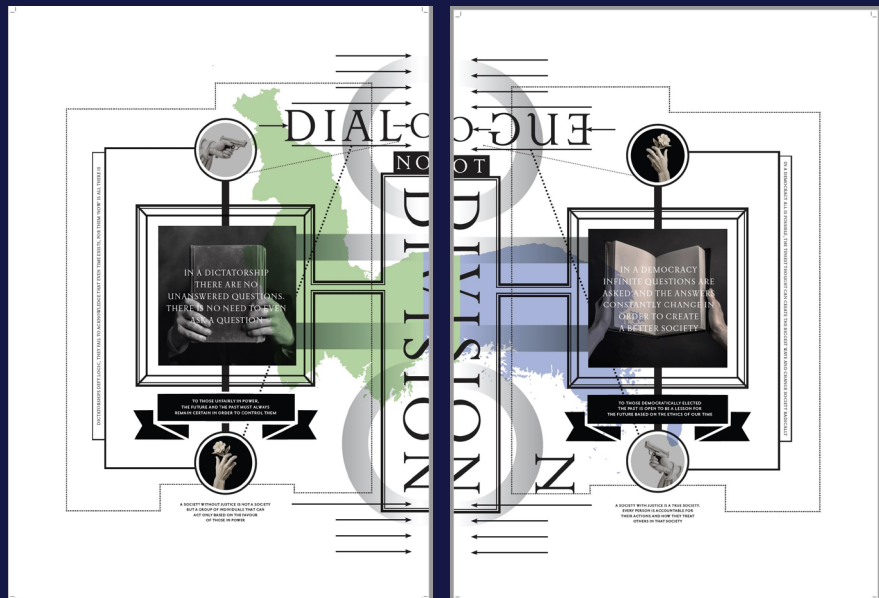
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Jonathan Barnbrook

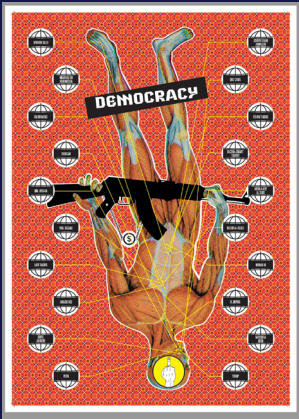
Dialogue Not Division
2023



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Garth Walker
Democracy Upside Down
AMANDLA!
2023



Chris Lee
A Settler's Land Acknowledgement—
Public Space as Colonized Space
2023



Kateryna Korolevtseva
Never?
AGAIN
2023



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2

Human Rights:
Everyone's Story

An Mano
Modu
Mosim
2023



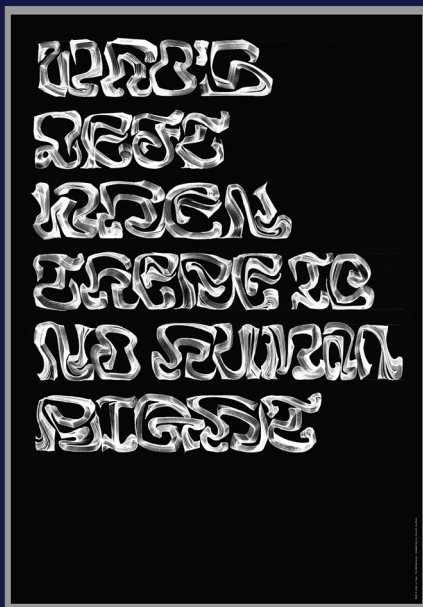
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High on Type

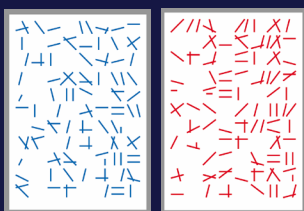
Who's Left?
Who's Right?
2023



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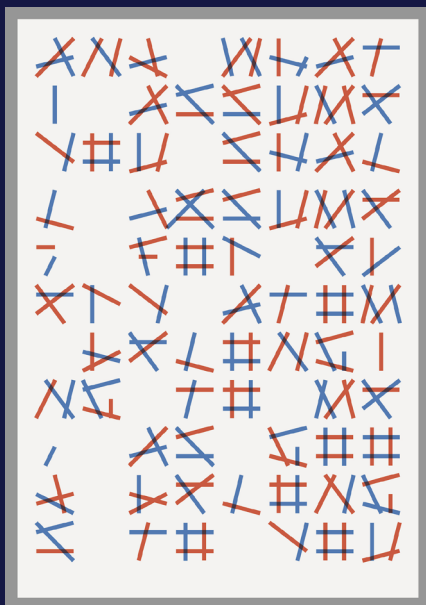
Seed Pods of Democracy: Design for Human Rights

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Mark Gowing

Language System of Overlapping Lines
(And what I assume you shall assume)
2023



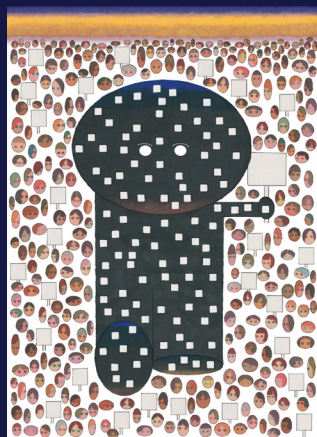
Minho Kwon

Unpicked Shell
2023

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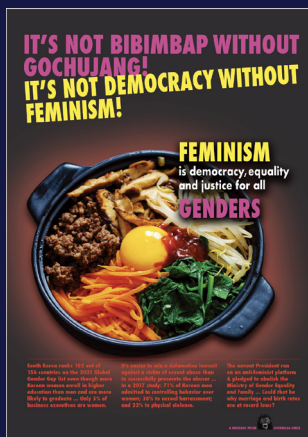
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Saehan Parc

Walking Together
2023

Melinda Beck

My Body, My Voice
2023

Guerrilla Girls

It's Not Democracy
Without Feminism
2023

Shin In-ah

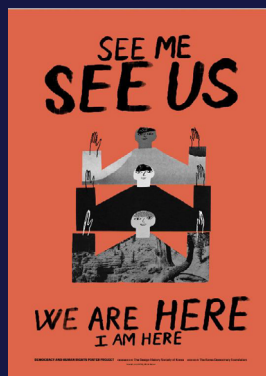
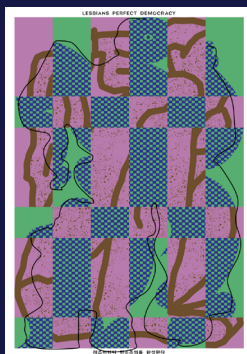
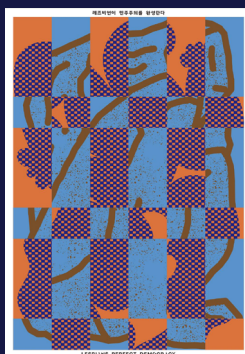
Equality for Life, When?
2023

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Good Question (Yuni Ooh and Sun-ah Shin)

Lesbians Perfect Democracy
2023

Elliot Stokes

See Me, See Us,
2023

Yeji Yun

Over the Bodies of the Immobalized
Over the Bodies of the Workers
2023

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3

Seed Pods:
Empathy and Solitude

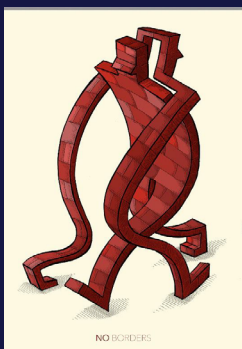
Elaine L

Protesters (1989)
Protesters (2022)
2023

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Elmer Sosa

No Border
2023

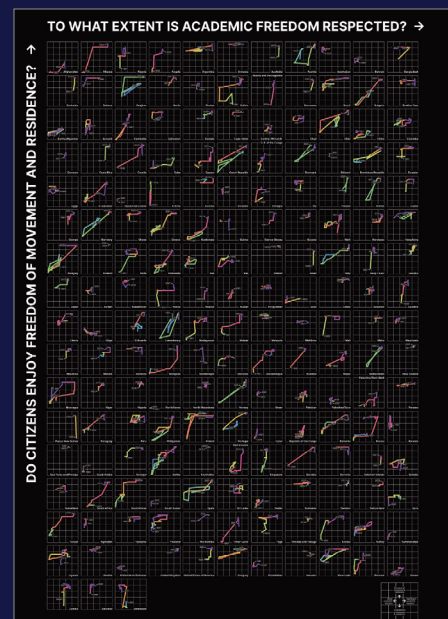
Diana Ejaita

To Move
2023

Golden Cosmos

Freedom of Speech
2023

Kim Albrecht

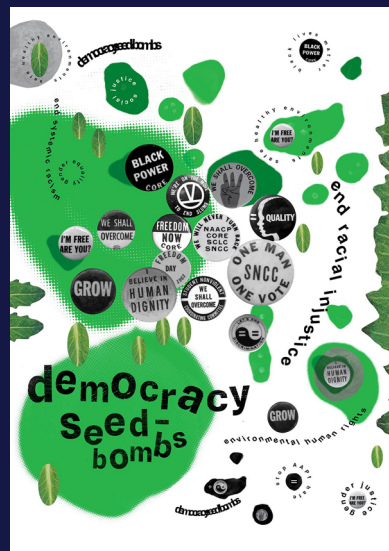
Empowered Women and
Political Corruption
2023

Expansion of the Project

Those visualized values have raised questions about the present and future of democracy and the creation of new civic spaces.

It has resulted in 100 posters shedding light on the suffering experienced by the vulnerable in society and visualizing the power and importance of solidarity.

Lastly, as an expansion of this project, a publication and an exhibition, *Seed Pods of Democracy*, are works in progress to guide audiences not toward some stale version of enlightenment but rather toward a dynamic and organic future; they will take place in the National Museum of Democracy and Human Rights in 2024.



Moon Jung Jang Democracy Seed-Bombs, 2023

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Conference Website

cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu

Conference Tracks

Centres and Peripheries
Converging Bodies of Knowledge
Redefining Data Boundaries
Bridging Design and Economics
Speculative Perspectives
The Power of Immersion
The Future of Well-being
Taming Entropy: Systems Design for Climate and Change
Ways of Living Together
Cumulus PhD Network

Full Conference Proceedings

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