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CASE STUDIES

01

Oct 24, 2019–
May 8, 2020

Curatorial Research Bureau
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA

*the unfurling of a book into an exhibition,
intermingling and complicating notions of
publishing and reading*

Na Kim

Set V.19: graphic

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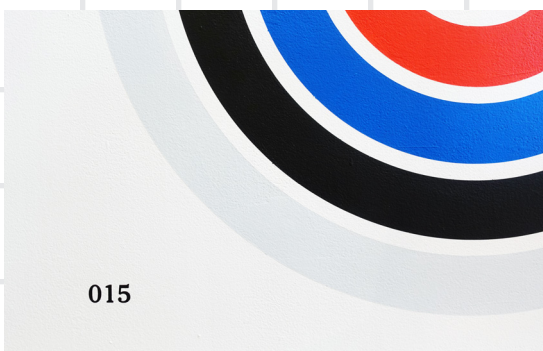
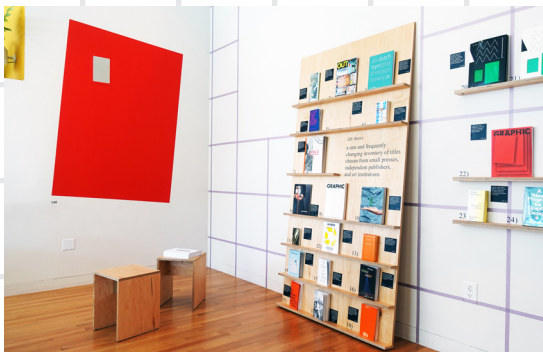


CASE STUDIES 01

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Welcome to a Na Kim exhibition.

A set is a combination of objects, images, sounds, and actions with distinctive yet complementary characteristics. A set is also a backdrop against which something is placed or something takes place. A set is a stage where the other kind of set—the musical performance or a dance—happens. The exhibition, too, is a set for a set, a curated selection of objects, images, and actions organized around a theme or to make an argument.



Na Kim makes sets in every sense of the word.

Kim is a designer, curator, archivist, and educator whose work inhabits and draws upon, indeed relies

on the spaces of publications and exhibitions. This exhibition SET v.19: graphic is 19 in an ongoing series titled SET. The series draws from the catalogue of visual iconography in her 2015 monograph of the same title published by Roma Publications. She uses formal design elements – color, pattern, geometry, typography, and text – from the monograph as a kind of graphic manual, a collection of signifiers each referring to previous visual moments in the Na Kim cosmology. The elements occasionally reassemble as graphic objects in the present reality of exhibitions, books, and performances – like this exhibition.

With each signifier, then, pointing to another place and time, *SET v.19* has ten graphic objects referring to visual moments in past issues of *GRAPHIC* magazine published while Kim served as chief editor and art director from 2009 to 2011. Here, visitors find an aesthetic correlation among the bold graphics, each accompanied by a number. The numbers (like pages of a book) suggest that the elements are part of a larger collection – a set – and serve as practical references to an index in the monograph-manual-archive *SET*.

Painted on the focal wall of 100 Books, for example, a tilted red rectangle hails from the cover of *GRAPHIC #17: When Design Becomes Attitude* (2011). The title refers to Swiss curator Harald Szeemann's exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*. In 1968, Szeemann invited artists to use the galleries at Kunsthalle Bern – tear them up, turn them into a studio, make a mess – in a curatorial gesture prioritizing artistic processes and methodologies over final product in order to challenge the why, what, how, where and who is exhibition. Kim used this legendary exhibition as a departure point for *GRAPHIC #17*. She profiled ten designers and studios whose dynamic and unconventional approaches to all-things design similarly embody challenges to, in this case, ingrained professional parameters of the field by redefining the why, what, how, where and who is graphic design in their practices.

Other Na Kim graphics at 100 Books: a large “X” marks a wall. The hand-drawn contours

are more informal and spontaneous compared to the other formal geometric forms, such as a large yellow circle nearby, above the display of books. The circle looms overhead with a totemic presence while a blue square is literally painted into the opposite corner. These three visual elements can be found on the cover of *GRAPHIC #18: Workshop Issue* (2011).

That issue is a paean to the workshop, a pedagogical model with a long and rich history in the field of graphic design. The workshop is often led by visitors for a small a group of participants or students who are required to make something within a limited framework and in a condensed timeframe. *GRAPHIC #18* has profiles of several outstanding workshops – from those organized by Åbäke, Julia Born, and James Goggin, to Min Choi, Our polite society, and Radim Peško – along with commentary by facilitators, teachers, and students.

And, then, there is the vivid color spectrum gradation painted on an 11-foot column in the center of 100 Books. The gradation is a kind of signature element for Kim. In her archive, spectrums range from a few colors like red gradating into magenta into blue, to graphics with more complex spectrums. The gradation in *SET v.19* has five colors. It originates from the cover of *GRAPHIC: #15: Printing Journal* (2010). This issue features profiles about noteworthy studios and printers such as Extrapool, Karel Martens, and Ana Vahtra. In addition, Kim deployed the actual printed pages of the magazine to experiment with different and sometimes challenging printing processes and techniques – like gradations.

Seven more visually seductive graphic element-objects and their corresponding indexical references await the attention, discovery, and deciphering by the reader-spectator, spectator-reader, performer-time traveler in *SET v.19: graphic*.

Welcome to the set of a Na Kim exhibition.

Na Kim

Na Kim is a graphic designer currently based in Seoul and Berlin, as a member of Table Union. She has focused on the visual language on autonomous works as well as various cultural commissioned projects. She was responsible for concept and design of *GRAPHIC* magazine from 2009 to 2011 and has initiated, since 2015, a series of projects based on her monograph *SET*. Her solo exhibitions include *Black and White* (2019), *Red, Yellow, Blue* (2017), *SET* (2015), *Choice Specimen* (2014), *Found Abstracts* (2011), and *Fragile* (2006). Kim has served as curator for Brno Biennale, Chaumont Festival, Seoul International Typography Biennale, and Fikra Graphic Design Biennial. She has worked on projects with COS, Hermès, ÅLAND and other commercial clients, as well as shown work at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Victoria & Albert, London, MoMA, Milan Triennale Museum, and Die Neue Sammlung Design Museum, Munich. Na Kim is a member of AGI since 2016.

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a rotating inventory of 100 books with a global perspective on curating, design, and the archive in contemporary art

100 Books is a Bureau for Open Culture initiative curated by James Voorhies and designed by Nate Padavick.

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