0.1s Disrupted Apparatus, Park Namsa's photo experiment, 22.4.-18.5.2026, Look-in-Side gallery, 30-1, Dosan-daero 17-gil, Gangnam-gu, Seoul[1]

Park Namsa 0.1s Homo Ludens

According to Vilém Flusser, photography is paradigmatic for new technical cultural practices which not only begin to dissolve the distinctions between science and art, but also that between art and philosophy. By playing with and against the apparatus, Park Namsa's exhibition (fig. 1) of painterly new photographic series convenes us to interrogate our technical condition of being integrated with apparatuses which intensify our experience of the world together.

"The gesture of photographing is a philosophical gesture, or to put it differently, because photography was invented, it is possible to philosophize not only in the medium of words but also in that of photographs." (Flusser 2014:76) This is a contention that Flusser returns to repeatedly, extending it to claim that in our age of rapid technological advance, "technical images" such as photographs are more adept in grasping our condition. But what is this grasping of our condition grasping for?

In the title of his exhibition "0.1s disrupted apparatus," the photographer Park Namsa appears to be referencing Flusser's concern that we are being so conditioned by our technologies that we are in danger of becoming mere appendages of the apparatuses we have invented, rather than the other way around. "We should not allow the tools to sit in the saddle and ride us." (Flusser 2014:74) For Flusser, this danger is entropic, if we just use our apparatus uncritically, we risk simply producing redundant information, images, texts which are already "pro-grammed" in the apparatus.

This redundancy will hasten the entropic dissolution of the human project on Earth. According to Flusser, only human beings are capable of producing unlikely "neg-entropic" information "against the 2nd law of thermodynamics", which is the true expression of our freedom and our only guarantee for survival in the face of technological catastrophe. In this vein, Flusser implores his readers to "play with and against the apparatus" producing information not already programmed in it, thereby also learning what the apparatus actually is, as it has already grown too complex to be understood empirically and rationally as we are accustomed.

Park's photographs are the result of him setting up his smartphone to take sequential photographs while he throws the smartphone into the air. The motion of the smartphone is translated

[1] https://www.photoart.co.kr/bbs/m/mcb_data_view.php?type=mcb&ep=ep1260394525d70b6363602a&gp=all&item=md88524738269df396626c82

into painterly strokes in the colours of the environment where the photographic act takes place. In this sense, we have photographs which are variably indexical, but not completely intentional, and therefore seem to depart from the program of the apparatus which was designed to take conventional photos. This work recalls Andreas Müller-Pohle's early work "Transformance," where Müller-Pohle takes photos without looking through the viewfinder. Flusser was so stimulated by Müller-Pohle's practice that he wrote the foreword to the publication of the images. Park's photos are even more unlikely, giving the openness to chance which letting go of the smartphone entirely affords.

Perhaps some of the charm of these images lie in the fact that Park is an amateur camera thrower. He has not perfected his throw or become an expert. Of course, he is not the first to have the intuition to take photographs by throwing a camera in the air. In issue 6 of JPG Magazine titled "Oops!" published in 2006, Ryan Gallagher even offered a how-to guide to Camera-tossing accompanied with some of the results of his experiments. To some degree, the intuition to throw the camera while shooting seems built-in to the device itself, recalling Flusser's warning about exhausting all the possibilities of the apparatus, the important thing is to articulate the contours of what apparatus is actually being played with here, merely the camera, or something more extensive. Sometimes, in order to ensure that the photography remains unexpected, Park's smartphone needs to be stuck in the tree and dislodged by throwing a stone at it. Luckily the stone doesn't hit and break the lens, and we can see the recorded trajectory of the compound apparatus gesture, arm-hand-tree-stone-camera.

Eventually Park can consider all manner of Rube Goldberg inventions which will extend or elaborate his gesture with unexpected results. Or he can engage his wife or son or a friend to play catch with the phone or invent a new game which is played by tossing the phone (fig. 2), and in the process generates photography. Their "play" indeed seems to be a kind of child's play, the innocent way a child discovers the meaning and purpose of things by using them the way they were not intended. Flusser seems to entreat us all to become childish with regard to technology to radically rediscover our purpose from first phenomenological principles. This provides an answer to the common concern that technology infantilizes us, with the affirmation that we are indeed children with regard to understanding our technology and therefore should embrace a child's process of learning to discover their true purposes and uses.

Is child's play Flusser's model for the philosophy of the future? And if we are all to be children, does this mean there are no more parents making sure we are washed and fed and can play without care? Flusser's anarchistic utopia assumes at once that the techno-social apparatus will run efficiently such that all players are provided for and that none need necessarily be consigned to a meaningless life of merely serving the apparatus. Flusser makes this jump by asserting that we

already exist in a post-historical condition of technical sufficiency but we merely have not noticed it yet.

"The apparatus is the end of history, an end that was always already foreseen by all utopias. It is existence without work, an existence given over to art for art's sake, it is the consuming and contemplative existence. The fullness of time. We live in it. Or just about. But we don't recognize our situation as utopia. For although we are already beyond machines, we remain incapable of imagining life without work and without meaning. Beyond machines, we are in an unimaginable situation." (Flusser 2014:18)

The images in Park's exhibition are the products of the gestures of a man playing with his smartphone, playing with the camera, experimentally to see what kinds of unintended images can be produced through a process where not every aspect of the gesture of photographing is controlled by him. He purposefully leaves space for the aleatory. Maybe because he has seen too many purposeful images, and they are not adequate for his curiosity. Or maybe because the adequacy of images hides an essential dimension, the rigour, both technical and human, which underpins and makes possible the freedom of the photographer. Thus the commitment to the indeterminate may be an oblique way to attend to taboo aspects of our reality.

Park searches for the unexpected image. Yet, necessarily, these are images of the world. Unexpected images of our world, the indexicality of the world in the images helps us appreciate them. Necessarily, Park needs help in his search for meaning in post-history, his images are made to draw us to him, into what Flusser calls "inter-subjectivity." The "place" of Park's images is the place where we meet to find meaning together.

"This "place" is the basis for a consensus, for intersubjective recognition. If we encounter the man with the apparatus on this basis, we don't see the situation "better"; rather, we see it intersubjectively, and we see ourselves intersubjectively." (Flusser 2014:76)

Today photography is implemented into manufacture, commerce, athletics, or into other activities in order to optimize performance within strict expectations. But this is not what Park is seeking. Park wants beauty, the beauty of the unexpected. As with his earlier archival work, the unexpected image is more eloquent to speak about our highly technologized condition than the posed one. But what is there to say, what is there to discuss? That there are so many possible outcomes of technological advance that we have barely scratched the surface of being able to explore, and that it takes time and leisure to explore these many modalities. And the question inevitably arises, wouldn't it be better if not only Park, a gentle professor, but everyone had the leisure to play so efficiently with their cameras, and generate together a ludic philosophical culture of technical images? What then? Would we then really advance?

In order to fulfil Flusser's expectation that neg-entropic new images would bulwark humanity against dissolution, the images alone are not enough in themselves, they must be seen and discussed. This is where it becomes possible not merely to publish the photographs but to present them in a space where people can encounter them and each other. They must serve to bring us together into "close packing of intersubjective relations" (House of Colors, p.2) -as Flusser suggested, in order for us, human beholders of the technological condition interpreted the apparatus, to generate new unlikely information between us, the information which will redeem all the threats and damages of technological advance. And this information will be genuinely new to the degree that the people "closely packed" who behold and discuss the aesthetic product are equally at leisure to do so, exploring themselves and each other in unexpected ways through the prompt of the technical image gesture. In other words, to explore the social and cultural apparatus which brings them together in the first place is to understand and transform their technological condition through sensuous, spontaneous and carefree play.

Park Namsa's work points us to the recognition that the negentropic freedom which can redeem technological revolutions requires, for the peace of mind of its playful participants, a sort of stability and care afforded by what might be called a parent or adult function. Flusser's anarchic ludic utopia takes such stability for granted, which is why he also considers it extremely unlikely. The technical solution for this, developed and never perfected over millennia, is an apparatus, always disparaged as undesirable yet necessary, even a "necessary evil,": the state. Human survival thus requires us to develop cultural forms of playfully and dynamically redistributing the adult and child function so none of us ever become mere functionaries but also actively participate in the vital play of producing unlikely information as part of the revolutionary renewal of the state.

Baruch Gottlieb, 4.7.2026

References

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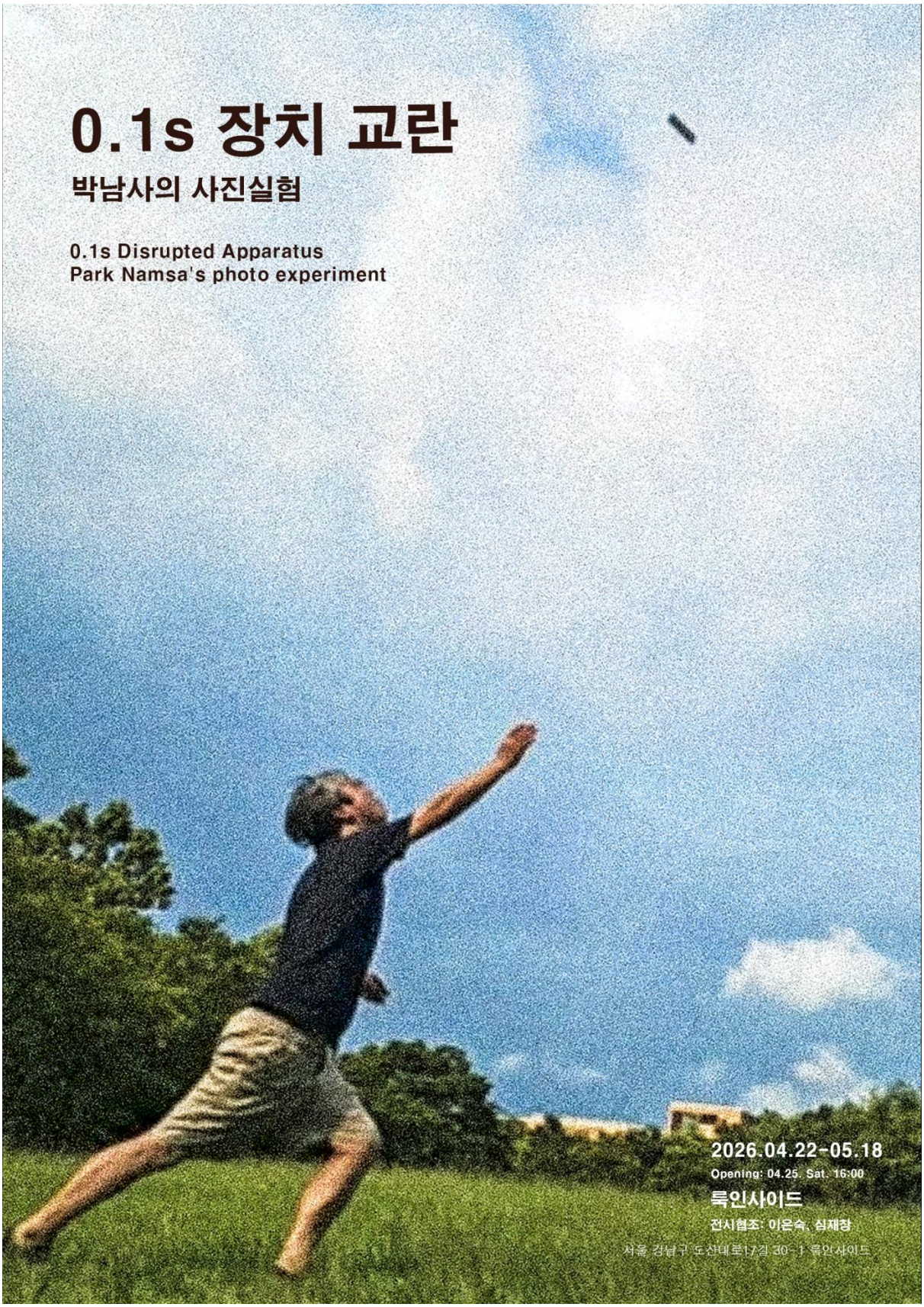

Figure 1: 0.1s Disrupted Apparatus

Figure 2: Park Namsa, Toss