

## **“Searching for the Letters Swallowed by a Ghost”**

Mixed-media Installation

Sound 53 min 30 sec

wood, motor, LEDs, Arduino, kraft paper

Created 2023-2024

### Summary of Exhibition

The exhibition features the device of typewriter letters hitting the walls, pipes extending to the floor, ceiling, and various walls, along with electric units signaling Morse code.

The appearance of the spaces installed together, seemingly not connected, relates to a narrative structure, which is gradually revealed by the narrator's voice and sound.

### Inspiration

Kafka believed that if a letter did not arrive, it meant that a demon had seized it. When he needed to meet her, his anxiety about the meeting would cause him to throw himself onto the path toward her, only to collide with a cliff, necessitating the digging of a new path. When he felt deep doubts about his obsessive relationship with letters, he expressed that “the letter has always deceived me—especially the letters I wrote myself.

The ease of writing letters surely brings about a chilling confusion of the soul in a theoretical sense. This is a communication with a ghost, not just with the ghost as a recipient of the letter but also with one's own ghost.” He also stated that “the kiss written in a letter fails to reach its destination and is entirely consumed by a ghost along the way; the ghosts that devour the letters proliferate immensely, and humanity invents railroads, cars, and airplanes to combat this, yet the opposing force grows even stronger, leading to the inventions of telegraphy, telephony, and wireless telegraphy, ultimately resulting in the ruin of humanity.”

### Installation and directing

The installation begins with devices created solely from typing part of the typewriter. These are made on a large scale to match the number of characters, and each letter punches the walls, creating holes rather than printing.

While the devices do not break through the exhibition walls, it visualizes a pneumatic postal structure that connects passageways within the walls. This evokes an image of the burrow-like passageways through which Kafka, in his anxiety about meeting Milena, is thrown into the passageway to her, signaled “please don't come,” and forced to go back and dig another one.

In the artist's imagination, this burrow also serves as a wormhole capable of transcending time and space.

The exhibition incorporates excerpts from Kafka's letters to Milena, enriched with the artist's imagination—a narrative wherein Kafka/His ghost, enters the postal passageways in search of Milena in a world undefined by time and space, narrated by the voice of the narrator.

The spatial installation of the typewriter letter elements and the pipes, along with small LED lights transmitting Morse codes, combines with the sounds of the typewriter's operation, the narrator's voice, music, to create a bizarre stage setup. This setup becomes a dramatic tableau led by Kafka/His ghost.

Jungwha Jung 2024.

#### **Credits**

Mechanical Fabrication and Installation Team Leader : Sungjin Jang

Paper tube Fabrication : Kieun Baik

Narrator Actor : Myungwon Jung

Soundtrack and Music : Siegfried Koepf

Poster Design : Yongseok Park

People who helped : Kwon Namdeuk, Sooyeon Kang, Sungwon Park, Yongseok Park, Geunah Lim, Sangbin Im

#### **Source of some of the narration material used in the piece**

Letters to Milena, Franz Kafka, translated by Hwanduk Park, Beomwoosa

The Burrow, Franz Kafka, translated by Jeon Youngae, Minumsa