



BEYOND BOUNDARIES: PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT ON KELLY HAEJUNG PAIK

October 8, 2025

*Today we're sitting down with artist Kelly Haejung Paik. Through the Seattle Restored program, Kelly is exhibiting her work, **Beyond Boundaries: Surreal Visions**, as a window art installation in Belltown in partnership with previous program participant Mixed Pantry.*

Q: TELL US ABOUT YOUR ARTISTIC FOCUS. WHERE DO YOU DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

My artistic focus is rooted in forms, shapes, objects, and colors —sometimes drawn from direct observation, other times from memory. In recent years, I have been especially drawn to Asian aesthetics: the rounded purity of moon jars, the geometric color harmonies of bojagi, and the symbolic motifs of folk painting.



Photo by [GrowingBoyMedia](#)

Through abstraction, simplification, and a surreal lens, these traditions evolve into new visual languages. I am inspired by color theory, tessellated patterns, and the shifting interplay of light, shadow, and dimensional surfaces. Vessels, grids, and natural rhythms recur in my work as containers of memory and transformation.

While I remain active in gallery exhibitions, I feel an ever-stronger pull toward public art — responding to the spaces that shape me, and returning my work to the environments where its inspiration first originated.

Q: WHY DID YOU APPLY FOR SEATTLE RESTORED? HOW WILL THIS OPPORTUNITY HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS?

I have always understood art as something public rather than private. Its value deepens when it speaks to a broad community, not just those who enter galleries or museums. Seattle Restored embodies this vision by transforming empty storefronts into sites of shared experience — a democratic gesture that allows art to live where people pass, gather, and look.



*Photo by **GrowingBoyMedia***

To contribute to the vitality of a neighborhood, to bring life back into neglected spaces, and to create a moment where someone pauses and sees differently — that is profoundly meaningful. This opportunity aligns with my present goals and strengthens my path toward creating art that belongs to, and circulates within, public space.

Q: TELL US ABOUT YOUR CONNECTION TO THE SEATTLE ART SCENE. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES, AND WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT CREATING ART IN SEATTLE?

Seattle's art scene is rich with diversity, innovation, and a spirit of experimentation that I deeply value. As a Korean American artist, I find inspiration in the city's cultural openness and in its natural rhythms of light, water, and season.

At the same time, the challenges are real: limited visibility for mid-career and immigrant artists, and the high costs of space and materials that make it difficult to sustain a practice. Yet what I treasure most is Seattle's commitment to public art and to creating platforms where art and community can meet. It is this intersection — between people, place, and creativity — that makes Seattle a meaningful home for my work.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE OUR READERS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU OR YOUR ART?

I believe art belongs in everyday spaces, not only in galleries or museums. My practice is rooted in creating work that enlivens

neighborhoods, transforming overlooked places into moments of color and reflection. Seattle Restored has given me the chance to share my work more openly with the public, expand my reach beyond traditional art spaces, and grow as an artist in dialogue with the city. I was also able to receive feedback from neighbors and nearby business owners — real, positive, and encouraging responses that affirmed and deepened my sense of purpose as an artist. This experience has been both grounding and inspiring, and I am grateful to be part of a program that values community as much as creativity.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY EVENTS OR COLLABORATIONS COMING UP?

You can view more of my work in person at **public exhibitions** in and around the Seattle area, and view upcoming projects on my website.

Seven Korean Vessels – Public art installation at Bethany Presbyterian Church, Queen Anne, Seattle, WA (July 1 – November 30, 2025).

A Thousand Words – Women Painters of Washington at Columbia Center Gallery, Seattle, WA (July 8, 2025 – October 3, 2025).

Charm of Korea – Public art installation at Seattle Convention Center, Seattle, WA (August 20 – December 4, 2025).

Q: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SEATTLE RESTORED ACTIVATION, AND WHY?

My favorite Seattle Restored pop-up is my current storefront exhibition, **Beyond Boundaries: Surreal Visions**, in Belltown. The neighborhood is young, full of energy, adventurous, and experimental with new ideas and style, which makes it the perfect context for my surreal paintings. The space has allowed me to explore dreamlike imagery that resonates with the neighborhood's creative spirit, while also transforming an empty storefront into a site of curiosity and exchange. I value how Seattle Restored creates opportunities like this, where art is not only seen but becomes part of the everyday rhythm of the community.



Photo by **GrowingBoyMedia**

Q: IF YOU COULD GIVE A PIECE OF ADVICE TO LOCALS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Slow down and take in both the natural rhythms of this city and the creativity of its people. Whether by walking around Green Lake or exploring a neighborhood art walk, Seattle is best experienced when you stay curious, connected, and open to beauty in unexpected places.

Q: WHERE WOULD YOU TAKE VISITORS OR A GROUP OF FRIENDS FOR A FUN, RELAXED EXPERIENCE IN SEATTLE?

I'd take them to Belltown first — the neighborhood is young, full of energy, and experimental in style, with great food, art, and music. From there, we'd walk along the waterfront, stop at the Olympic Sculpture Park to enjoy art and views, and wander into Pike Place Market for its color and bustle. A stop in Pioneer Square and downtown makes the day feel complete, mixing history, culture, and Seattle's creative energy in one relaxed experience.

Q: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST IN THE COMING YEAR?

I'm most looking forward to sharing my work more widely — from my current **Seattle Restored exhibition** in Belltown to future public art projects. I'm excited to see how art can live alongside Seattle's landmarks and neighborhoods, helping to revitalize the city by drawing people out to explore, connect,

and engage with both art and community life. My hope is that art encourages us to spend less time on our cell phones and more time in genuine human interaction.



Stepping Stone, 40x30x1.5 (inches)
Oil, Acrylic on Canvas by Kelly Haejung Paik

VIEW BEYOND BOUNDARIES: SURREAL VISIONS

Address:

Mixed Pantry

2233 1st Ave

Seattle, WA 98121

Open hours: Window Art Installation – viewable anytime

Dates: July 10, 2025 – January 15, 2026

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