



Park Dong Seok

Like all landscapes in nature, the biodiverse region of Korea's Eun Sook Do (은숙도) wetland has been continuously, albeit slowly, changing. The transformation had previously occurred naturally, but as industry and commerce in the ROK have grown over the years, more of these previously natural changes are being instigated by the addition of a human element.

Park Dong Seok's photo series, *Landscapes of Propaganda*, illustrates this global occurrence on a micro scale. By paring the natural with the man-made, Park shows us what unexpected beauty the combination can create.

While the wetland that Park captures is still a stopover for millions of migratory birds, the sky vistas now include commercial airplanes and tall metal cranes. Modern machinery crouches in the grass while solar panels stand alongside the trees. This area no longer presents the undisturbed attributes of nature. Park shows us that the man-made additions to 은숙도, and many areas like it, insert an anthropological history and culture to the once human-free environment.

Despite this intervention, nature still remains and

often dominates the view. In one photo, a man-made barrel has helped to form an accidental monument as years of natural erosion have washed away the surrounding soil. In another, the earth's elements have bleached and rusted a manufactured structure. The unnatural items have changed their natural environment, and mother earth has reciprocated. Park wants

us to recognize this "odd harmony between nature and the beauty of the artificial sculpture" that can be created.

Park's work is different from other artistic representations of humanity's impact on natural surroundings. While other artists might focus on the negative and overt messages of the undeniable, long-term environmental impacts of human sprawl, Park seems to neutrally

present the intermingling of the environment and our own additions to it. He points out the cohabitation of these two elements and presents to us "the beauty of the artificial sculpture" which is created in such a natural place. While not discounting the potential dangers of an industrial human hand in nature, Park identifies and displays the coexistence and the impact they both have on one another.





Park believes that a landscape can show us not only the beauty of the natural world, but also “how it can be distinguished from other parts of nature” due to the unique physical, historical, and cultural attributes of Man. Living in Busan, Park can see many instances of humans creating a physical and cultural space within nature, from Yonggung Temple protruding from the rocks along the East Sea, to the very clear human footprint of Gamcheon Village and its view of Busan’s modern commercial harbor. Park presents places like these that certainly aren’t untouched... but does that make the landscape any less beautiful, or just more interesting? **[b]**

Lisa Highfill