

Yangbin Park's The Cover Story

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One of the most apprehensible means for artists to communicate to their artistic intentions is the process of 'making strange' the familiar whereby viewers confront disorientating experiences that beneficially create new perceptions of old objects. Such is the most recent art of Yangbin Park wherein his alterations in the scale, color, and texture of familiar hegemonic texts force viewers to reconsider our understanding of their contents.

In installations composed of digitally-reproduced, multi-plate (copper) etchings on vinyl paper, Park alters copies of such works as Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Jackie Battenfield's *The Artist's Guide*, Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, and Haruki Murakami's *Dance, Dance, Dance*, all of which have become monumentalized instantiations of truth, value, and memory. Park 'makes strange' their covers by juxtaposing familiar typography with unexpected textures and gigantic proportions hence disabusing the texts of the fictional relationship between external signifier and internal signified. Hence he opens to analysis the idea of these texts as voices of authority thereby challenging their apparent immutability and impenetrability.

Iterations vary but in at least one Park provides viewers with a small booklet (like a theatre handbill or libretto) to suggest the artist's role as coordinator of a *bildungsroman* of great complexity in its sensitive cultural breadth.

Park's ideologically-driven art may seem another attempt at post-modern artistic irony. But by playfully focusing on manifestations of aesthetic and historical canon formation with the levity of theatrical parody his art makes visible the contours of the epistemological ontology of an age.