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Andersen Award
Nominee

Kwon Yoon-duck

Republic of Korea

ILLUSTRATOR



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1. Biographical Information



Photo by Haeran

Kwon was born in 1960. Ever since she was young, she liked drawing and she dreamt of becoming an artist. She studied industrial art in graduate school and studied drawing on her own.

Inspired by the works of Käthe Kollwitz and Chinese woodcut prints, she became interested in art as a socially engaged practice and worked together with other artists who had similar concerns and interests in art and social issues. She studied traditional art forms such as Korean folk art, seal carving, and Buddhist painting for seven years starting in 1987 while participating in art organizations working for communities or social issues. These unique experiences shaped her aesthetic and artistic vision as a writer and illustrator.

Her first experience in picture book were the design for *Sapsali from the Land of Darkness*(1994) written by Jeong Seunggak, who was also a member of an art organization dedicated to social change. From this experience, Kwon realized that she was able to share and convey her ideas to readers through illustrated books, and that illustrations have just as much artistic value as paintings do.

In her thirties, Kwon published her first children's book, *Manhee's House*(1995), while raising her own children. A house and things in the house which people use every day are the subject of this book published in 1995. She uses the multi-point perspective so that every character and every item in the house is given its own story, which was possible because of her expertise in Korean

traditional art as well as in other Asian traditional art.

Because Kwon did not receive any formal training, her stories and illustrations are innovative and free from conventional styles. Published in her thirties, *Manhee's House* and *Mommy, I Like These Clothes*(1993, revised in 2010) have been much loved by readers from all different age groups for their exquisite and detailed depiction of personal and meaningful things found around a house. In *Manhee's Letter Bugs*(2000~2002, revised in 2011), *There Dangles a Spider*(2003), *My Cat Copies Me*(2005), and *Tools at Work*(2008), she deals with children's interests and daily concerns in illustrations which she created by experimenting with traditional painting techniques mixed with modern sensibilities. After turning fifty, she wrote *Flower Granny*(2010, revised in 2015), *Pikaia*(2013), *Wooden Seal*(2018), *Sixteen*(2019), and *Brave Mr. Tiger*(2021). In these books, she tackles historical tragedies, and by highlighting different views of the events and the stories of the different characters, she helps readers to understand the events from the view of everyone involved.

Even in a tragic story, she delves deeply into the social background and system behind it, and by continuing to probe and ask questions, she shares with readers her faith in hope and goodness in humankind. She confronts violence and oppression head-on, but instead of foregrounding the details of violence, she conveys the importance of justice and peace through layered and beautifully expressed metaphors in her stories.

Kwon also communicates constantly with the public not only by writing books but also by holding exhibitions, lectures, and educational programs. She wants to bring down the different walls—the walls between countries, the wall between adults and children, and the wall between the disabled and the abled. By meeting with different readers, Kwon listens to the different voices of people and decides on her next story. She is a writer who has redefined picture books by suggesting a new vision for their role. For her contributions, she received the first Korean Publication Award in 2010 and the seventh Woman Artist of the Year Award in 2014.

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Tools at Work

2. Kwon's Contribution to Literature for Young Readers

● Diversity realized through the multi-point perspective

From her late twenties to early thirties, Kwon focused on learning traditional Korean and Asian painting techniques as she participated in art organizations dedicated to social change and reform, and these experiences later became the source of inspiration for her illustrations. The multiple-point perspective used in her picture books, coupled with the traditional painting techniques she acquired, plays an essential role in Kwon's storytelling. By using this perspective, she imparts equal importance to each object depicted in her books, regardless of how insignificant it is, which is an effective manner of storytelling to express the value of diversity.

From her first work *Manhee's House* followed by *Mommy, I Like These Clothes*, *My Cat Copies Me*, and *Tools at Work*, she has given equal importance, love, and affection to every object in her illustrations. To readers who are used to projection and one-point perspective, which is used more often in Western art, the layout of her illustrations, with every item drawn with equal importance, can seem unconventional and unfamiliar. Instead of a realistically laying out items in a given space, she uses the multi-point perspective for her illustrations because she believes that the story hidden in each item is important and that those stories should be expressed.

The characters in her stories bring their own perspectives, and not only the



Manhee's House



In *Tools at Work*, the illustrations show tools floating in the air not as the writer sees them but as workers see them or as the tools see the world.

main characters but also the other characters contribute to the narratives in their own unique ways, which is especially evident in her illustrations for *Manhee's House* and *Tools at Work*. In *Flower Granny*, *Pikaia*, *Wooden Seal*, *Sixteen*, and *Brave Mr. Tiger*, she also uses the multi-point perspective to reveal the conflict between the characters and the changes that take place in them. For example, she has humans change places with animals and plants in *Pikaia*, and she expresses how perpetrators are also victims at the same time in *Sixteen* and *Brave Mr. Tiger*.

In Kwon's books, not only people but also things such as houses, clothes, animals, plants, and tools play an important role. In *Tools at Work*, for example, the illustrations show tools floating in the air not as the writer sees them but as workers see them or as the tools see the world. The multi-point perspective is an effective way of presenting an inclusive narrative of outsiders as well as non-living things.

Picture books usually convey simple stories, but in Kwon's picture books, she makes daring choices to fully disclose historical and cultural backgrounds instead of simplifying complicated issues. And for Kwon, her usage of multi-point perspective is also her statement that she refuses to present one view of historical incidents and of the world.



● Children who grow up together outside the boundary of their families

In Kwon's early works including *Manhee's House* and *Mommy, I Like These Clothes*, she introduces characters who grow up in their families with the support and love of their family members, friends, and pets; however, in her books after 2000, Kwon writes about children who grow up by supporting one another outside the traditional family.

In *Manhee's Letter Bugs*, letter bugs that grow and evolve by eating letters are like children who grow up by learning to be themselves and live their own lives. In order for the letter bugs to grow up, they have to find other letter bugs, connect with them, and enter a world of new learning. In this book, the letter bugs represent children who grow up by playing with one another and learning from their failures.

In *There Dangles a Spider* and *My Cat Copies Me*, children grow up by supporting and learning to understand one another. In *There Dangles a Spider*, the main character is a girl who leaves home with one boiled potato to look for her mother who is working in the sea. On the way the girl meets a crow, a rabbit, and a large boulder who become her friends. She needs their help to get to where her mother is. In the story, nature takes care of people, and people take care of nature. The story also includes the little girl's mother, who is raising her girl all by herself. With illustrations of the wide and open beach, the book shows how the little girl grows up by interacting with other animals and things in nature on her own without the help of adults.

In *My Cat Copies Me*, the main character is a girl who is always home by herself for some reason. By playing and interacting with her cat, she discovers her inner strength and courage to go out into the world. The cat is a loving pet, but when the cat gets angry, it curls up its body and protects itself. The shy little girl learns from the cat and finds courage to fight against her own fears. In the colorful and eye-catching illustrations, the girl and the cat take care of each other and grow up together.



There Dangles a Spider



Kwon criticizes not only Japan's inhuman violence against comfort women but also Korea's patriarchic system which placed the blame on the women.

● Kwon Confronts Violence

Since writing *Flower Granny* in 2010, Kwon has dealt with violence and brutality in modern Korean history in her books including *Pikaia*, *Wooden Seal*, *Sixteen*, and *Brave Mr. Tiger*. In her stories, she presents historical atrocities from the victim's perspective. The themes are quite challenging for a picture book writer to tackle, but Kwon believes that in order to prevent those atrocities from repeating themselves, there should be reflection and understanding of history regardless of readers' ages.

Rather than simply exposing the brutality or tragedy of historical events themselves, Kwon's picture books introduce people who survived them without compromising their human integrity, with a message that everyone can be a perpetrator or a victim. In *Flower Granny*, Kwon criticizes not only Japan's imperialism and inhuman violence against comfort women but also Korea's patriarchic system which placed the blame on the women and denied their existence. Her message is expressed using beautiful metaphors to gently nudge readers to think more about this issue.

Before writing her books, Kwon collects and researches information, and tries to understand the events as well as the picture of human nature exposed by them. She also pays attention to young readers' reactions and opinions before deciding on the final story and pictures as a way of expanding the literary and social role of picture books.

● Communicating with Young Readers

Her communication with young readers does not stop only at publishing picture books. She meets young readers by holding interactive exhibitions, organizing educational programs, and staging theatrical adaptations of her books.



Young readers open the drawer and find pictures, information, and different materials related to the book *There Dangles a Spider*.

The background of *There Dangles a Spider* is Jeju Island. A multi-sensory exhibition of *There Dangles a Spider* was held at Jeju's Miracle Library, which specializes in children's books. The exhibition included a drawer which young readers could open and find pictures, information, and different materials related to the book. They could also find and play with finger dolls resembling the characters in the book. Kwon participated in the adaptation of her book into an animation as well as a documentary film about Jeju Island folksongs and haenyeo, traditional women divers who collect clams and seaweed.

Kwon also produced a theatrical adaptation of *Flower Granny* and staged it as one-actor play. The entire drawing process of the book was also made into a documentary film titled <The Big Picture> and produced by Kwon Hyo in 2012. *Flower Granny* was published in Korea, Japan, and China as a part of a picture book series which was conceived and organized by writers from the three countries, but there were many obstacles to publishing it in Japan. Before its publication, Kwon shared the book in progress with young readers in Korea and Japan and reflected their thoughts and ideas in the final book. With the support of readers in Japan, the book was finally published in the Japanese translation, and after that, Kwon held public readings, showed the documentary of it, and participated in symposiums in order to convey the voice of peace and solidarity. From 2019 to 2020, Kwon organized educational programs for children on Jeju



Kwon invited children to express themselves and voice their concerns about the climate crisis.

Island. The program was called "Nature and Me," and children were invited to express themselves and voice their concerns about the climate crisis. Kwon encouraged the children to make closer observations of their surroundings and to express themselves freely. She recorded the entire program, and she published her essays along with the children's pictures from the program in the book *I Want a Little More Blue* (published by Bomnal Publishing House in 2022). In the book, she shares the message that life in the forests and oceans, including all human lives, will disappear if human greed and indifference continue.



3. Essay on Kwon's Work

The Multi-point Perspective in Kwon's Picture Books



Book Street Painting
19th century. Colors on paper.
Four-paneled screen.
Each 55 cm x 35 cm. Private collection



Tools at Work
Various tools are painted out of proportion,
and in the reverse perspective for viewers to see them clearly.

Tools at Work and Book Street Paintings

In Korea before the modern era, books were treated with respect and considered a tool to seize power or to realize one's ambition; therefore, the drawing of daily items with books in the center called Book Street, symbolizing the hope for wealth and prosperity, was much loved by people. Like surreal paintings in the West, Book Street drawings were colored paintings done in the reverse perspective layout with a complete disregard for realistic proportions to invoke the imagination of readers.

In the drawing above(left), a little child reads Elementary Learning, the first classical text children read during the Joseon dynasty. The child looks smaller

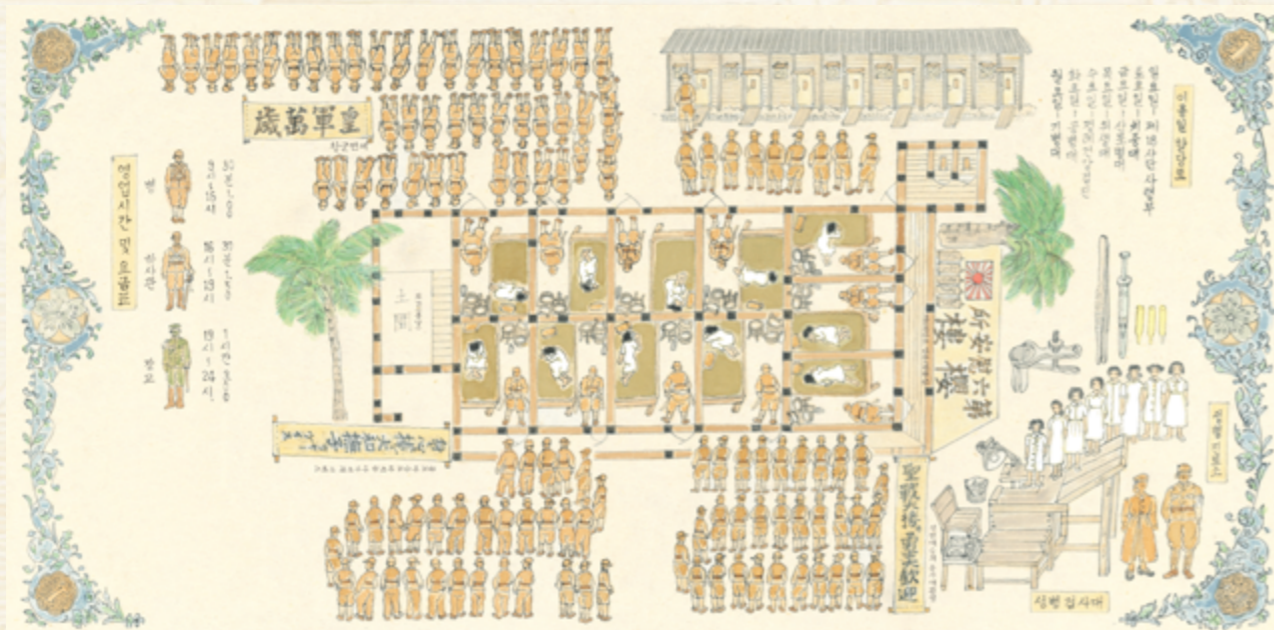
than the book in the painting, as if the book is more important than the child. The painting looks strange when viewed from a one-point perspective; the bookshelves in the back are painted out of proportion, and in the reverse perspective for viewers to see them clearly.

In *Tools at Work*(right), a tiny cook looks almost hidden among the pots and pans. In the top right corner, a pot and a steamer look as if they are about to fall to the floor; a cutting board, knives, ingredients, spices, and a large pot are drawn at different places in the kitchen. The illustrations in the book are done in the distinctive style of traditional Korean folk art which enables viewers to quickly attain information from the picture.

In a typical Book Street painting, things are piled up and look like one huge bookshelf, but in Kwon's *Tools at Work*, she creates a sense of wide space by drawing the floor and walls—a witty, modern reinterpretation of the traditional painting style.



Royal Ritual Procession of King Seonjo Colors on paper. 499.9cm x 36.1cm.



an illustration from *Flower Granny* Colors on silk.

A painting such as this is drawn not from what the artist sees but from what the artist knows about the subject, as in the Egyptian mural *The Gardens of Nebamun*(below), which was drawn from the multi-point perspective.



The Gardens of Nebamun, Egyptian mural

Flower Granny and Paintings of Royal Ritual Processions

During the Joseon dynasty, every court or state event or ritual was recorded and published as *Uigwe*, also known as Royal Protocols, which detailed the events with texts and drawings. Recognized for its historical and cultural importance, *Uigwe* was inscribed in the UNESCO's Memory of the World Program in 2007. Among the drawings in *Uigwe*, *Banchado* are the paintings of royal ritual processions, and these paintings provide realistic records of procession scenes and the people and items in a procession as well as their rightful positions. What makes *Banchado* special is the usage of the multi-point perspective, which brings viewers' attention to the center as well as to the surrounding view.

If one applies the one-point perspective to view *Royal Ritual Procession of King Seonjo*, for example, the people at the top part of the canvas look as if they have their heads pointing to the ground and the people in the middle part look as if they are lying down. At the same time, the palanquin carriers are drawn in a usual layout. A painting such as this is drawn not from what the artist sees but from what the artist knows about the subject, as in the Egyptian mural *The Gardens of Nebamun*, which was drawn from the multi-point perspective. For example, in traditional Korean paintings, artists used the three-far-aways view (*samwonbeop*): the three meaning *gowonbeop* (meaning the tall is far away), *simwonbeop* (meaning the deep is far away), and *pyeongwonbeop* (meaning the level is far away). The three-far-aways-view was used so that the subject of a painting would not be distorted by the singular perspective of an artist.

In *Kwon's Flower Granny*, she uses the multi-point perspective in her illustration of the comfort stations, where the women were confined, to present different characters in the story. She divides the canvas into three parts, and in the top part, the characters are drawn as if they are doing a handstand. In the lower part, the characters are drawn from the artist's perspective. *Kwon* used the bird's eye perspective to illustrate what must have taken place inside the confinement. Just as *Banchado* details an event as if to re-enact the parts as well as the whole in front of viewers, *Kwon* illustrates the confinement with detailed information about the place, time, and people.

Kwon continues the tradition of paintings used as records and uses the multi-point perspective not only to express in pictures a complicated issue with many different parties and people involved but also to effectively convey the history behind it.

_Written by Lee Soyeong, Ph.D. in art history from Hongik University

4. Interview with Kwon Yoon-duck

Interviewer Kim Youngwook (Children's Book Author)
from *List, Books from Korea* vol. 23, Spring 2014

Kwon Yoon-duck has made her mark on the picture book world with her bold foray into realistic Subject matter once thought too serious for children. With original illustrations inspired by traditional East Asian painting techniques, Kwon's thoughtful artwork complements her playful expression of how a child sees the world.



Photo by LEE MIN JEONG

Kim Youngwook :

It's been almost 20 years since *Manhee's House* was published in 1995. You were an activist for community art from the late 1980's to early 90s. How has that experience informed your work with children's book

Kwon Yoon-duck :

After graduate school, I chose to focus on community art rather than fine art painting or the applied arts. That decision was based on my belief that there should be no boundaries between art and everyday life. I wasn't very happy at the time about how the industry moves art, how pictures are hung primly in art galleries. I wanted for anybody to be able to enjoy art in their daily lives, so I started drawing with the general public in mind. During that time I also grew to believe that children's books should not ignore the very real problems that exist in society. Children's book authors should be able to pierce through the web of society cast by the state, power, and institutions—and create something new. I remain confident that Children's books have the power to change society. *Flower Granny* stands for that.



Kim Youngwook :

Flower Granny also became the subject of a documentary <The Big Picture> that was shot over the course of the five years you were working on the book from 2007 to 2012. How did that come about?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

At the time, I was writing to Japanese publishers about publishing *Flower Granny* in Japan when a friend of mine, a documentary writer from Jeju Island, introduced me to her nephew, director Kwon Hyo. When I was first approached with the project, I had my doubts, but it seemed like a good idea to have a record of the process, so I agreed. I didn't think back then that it would become a 90-minute feature film.

Kim Youngwook :

Could you tell me how you came to make the book about Sim Dal-Yeon?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I was involved in a collaborative project between Korean, Chinese, and Japanese authors called *Picture Books for Peace*, and I wanted to do a story about the women who were forced into sexual slavery during World War II, so I read the transcripts of oral testimonies. Sim Dal-Yeon's testimony was the one that painted the most specific picture for me. Afterwards, I met the transcriber, and later Sim Dal-Yeon herself. I found that even though Sim was not formally educated, she was a born storyteller, but Sim says that when she first came forward as a "comfort woman," she was confused and could not express herself properly. She had become withdrawn from blaming herself for the tragedy and avoided contact with other people. While she has not gotten the apology or restitution she deserves, she has regained her positive energy by working in pressed flower crafts, as suggested by a nonprofit organization, which was also featured in the book.

Kim Youngwook :

I understand that many mock-up books of *Flower Granny* were made for Japanese publishers. There must have been some negotiation there. Was there a scene or detail you felt you absolutely could not compromise?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I think that children have the right to know what's going on in the world where they live. That is the only way they can be prepared to face the inequality of society. By learning about the wrongs of history, they will learn how to cope with the injustices of the world and still hold onto their dreams. With *Flower Granny*, the scene I defended to the end was the floor plan of the "comfort station," where the sex slaves were raped by Japanese soldiers. Ultimately, my purpose was not just to expose the issue of sexual slavery, but also to emphasize the fact that this kind of tragedy can repeat itself at any time, in any part of the world.

Kim Youngwook :

In the book, the victims' faces are drawn, but the Japanese soldiers' faces are blurred. What was your intention with this?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I think that the soldiers were also victims, in a way, to the ideology or system of military totalitarianism. I do not think they enlisted and committed evil deeds because they personally wanted to. So that's the reason that I drew the uniforms, but left the faces as a tan-colored blur. I wanted to call attention to how anonymity acts as a shield for the mindless spread of evil. This kind of thing should never happen again, but there will be people who are capable of such atrocities when they are clad in uniform, when they are at war. We need to know the true faces of those who commit these crimes. It is only then that those who repent can hope for our forgiveness.



Photo by LEE MIN JEONG

Kim Youngwook :

Let me ask you something a bit different. Working on children's books must remind you of forgotten memories from your own childhood. What sort of memories have resurfaced for you?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

Memories of the past make up who I am now whether I like it or not, consciously or unconsciously. I draw upon that past in one way or another when I'm working on a children's book. For me, it's things like flowers, lace, feathers, marbles, bits of glass, jewels. These are the things I admired as a child, and I liked to draw the beautiful princess dresses that girls wore in comic books when I was growing up. I love Angela Barrett's work because of her attention to the smallest detail in clothing or interior decorations.

Kim Youngwook :

Your first work, *Manhee's House*, shows the interior of a hanok, a traditional Korean house, laid out in a single horizontal line when you open the book. The old furniture and household objects are drawn similarly to how they appear in traditional Korean folk paintings, with great attention to detail. I felt this perspective was quite unusual. Could you elaborate on that?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I always wanted to show what a hanok looks like in a children's book. But it didn't seem like there was much point in showing it as is. I gave it a great deal of thought and decided to show how tradition lives on in our culture today. I was living with my in-laws at the time and they had that kind of house, with a mixture of old and contemporary objects. In the book I wanted to give the impression that the objects were telling their own stories and I wanted to show how time affects the relationship of the family by changing the position of objects in subtle ways. So I made full use of the very subjective, multiple point perspective. Our eyes are not like a camera; they are attached to our faces. The typical perspective is not the right way to express something as we see it with our eyes. When we're looking at something we turn and twist and sometimes even hop up and down to get a better look. I thought that composing the frame so that the objects were scattered here and there from a multiple point perspective, as if the onlookers were turning their head this way and that, would give the reader a more playful sense of space.

Kim Youngwook :

My Cat Copies Me has already been published in the U.S., France, and Spain. The little girl and the cat's identical poses are presented side by side of an invisible vertical line, and the color scheme feels very restful. You've studied gong bi hua, Chinese landscape painting, and even Buddhist painting; have any of these techniques found their way into this book?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

The little girl in this book stays home by herself all day and imitates her cat, but tells everybody else that the cat copies her. When I was illustrating this book, I did not use shading, which makes things appear as they do in reality. Instead, I drew upon the coloring methods of Buddhist painting, using delicate motifs and bright colors.

Kim Youngwook :

Working on the Picture Books for Peace project, you must have had many encounters with Chinese and Japanese authors. How do you think Korean children’s books are different from Chinese and Japanese children’s books, from an artist’s point of view?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

It’s a matter of taste, but I feel like Chinese painting emphasizes elaborate technique and a very tight structure and Japanese painting feels very intricate. Korean painting, on the other hand, is more relaxed. Or to put it another way, it feels comparatively free from rules and is relaxed in a way that suggests intentionally avoiding perfection.

Kim Youngwook :

In there Dangles a Spider, it feels like different colored spaces of many sizes are being pulled in different directions. I felt there was an abstract conciseness to the way the screen was divided, so to speak. What was your main point of focus there?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

Those are lyrics from the “Tail Song” from Jeju Island; the song lyrics are full of wordplay, so I wanted the pictures to reflect the abstractness of the poetry. And the lyrics gave me many colors to work with: the black crow, the with rabbit, the blue sky, and so on. I was most concerned with how to express those things abstractly, while ensuring that the colored spaces would convey a sense of rhythm that complemented the lyrics.



from the documentary film "The Big Picture"(2013)

Kim Youngwook :

Man-hee’s Latter Bugs also deals with wordplay and playfulness. Where did these wonderful ideas come from?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I got most of my ideas when my son, Manhee, was young. Once, on the first day of sunshine after lots of rain, he said that he couldn’t bear the grating sound an umbrella makes when it drags on concrete. His reaction to such a specific sound gave me an idea, so we made up a game using bright vowels and dark vowels, onomatopoeia, and mimetic words.



Photo by LEE MIN JEONG

Kim Youngwook :

To wrap up, what kind of books do you want to write in the future?

Kwon Yoon-duck :

I am interested in structural injustice and the power relationship between countries, and I believe that children’s books should contribute to building new values by calling attention to that injustice and absurdity. With this in mind, I am working on a book that deals with the historical Jeju 4-3 massacre. I would also like to do a book on the Vietnam War. I went on a monthlong research trip to Vietnam, but I have set it aside until I am able to fully process the material. It is only then that I think I will have fully told the story of *Flower Granny*.



5. Complete Bibliography

As an Author-Illustrator



Manhee's House

Gilbut Children Publishing
Korea, 1995



Mommy, I Like these Clothes

Gilbut Children Publishing
Korea, 2010



Manhee's Letter Bugs

Gilbut Children Publishing
Korea, 2011



There Dangles a Spider

Changbi Publishers
Korea, 2003



My Cat Copies Me

Changbi Publishers
Korea, 2005



Tools at Work

Gilbut Children Publishing
Korea, 2008



Flower Granny

Sakyejul Publishing Korea,
2010 (revised edition 2015)



Pikaia

Changbi Publishers
Korea, 2013



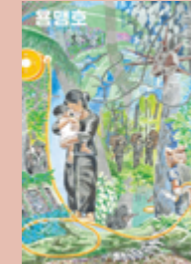
Wooden Seal

Peace Books
Korea, 2018



Sixteen

Peace Books
Korea, 2019



Brave, Mr. Tiger

Sakyejul Publishing
Korea, 2021

As an Author



My Small Drawing Board

Dolbegae Publishing
Korea, 2020



I Want a Little More Blue

Written by Kwon Yoon-duck
Illustrated by 33 Jeju Children,
Bomnal Publishing House
Korea, 2022



6. Representative Books

Manhee's House

Gilbut Children Publishing, 1995
Translated into Japan, China, France

“Tradition is something that flows into our everyday life and accumulates every day without our being aware of it, and it flows into our children and their children. We can find it at home, in the alley, on the street, and at a marketplace. One day when our houses and villages are torn down for the sake of redevelopment, then where will tradition flow to and accumulate again?”

– *My Small Drawing Board* by Kwon Yoon-duck



In *Manhee's House*, Manhee is a little boy who moves into his grandparents' two-story Western-style house after living in a small house. As soon as Manhee comes back home from her preschool, he goes to every room and every corner of the house, and as readers follow Manhee, they are given a chance to tour the house. As they turn each page, they are presented with a space illustrated with different colors, and on each page, there is a corner colored gray which leads readers to the next space on the next page.

Manhee's House helps readers to rediscover their own house and the things in it, a space that is so familiar to us that we do not know its true value. In the story, a mother spends every day taking care of her children and the house which Kwon has illustrated with love and affection. This book was praised for the never-seen-before illustration technique and layout for an everyday space.



| Review |

A Father Raises a Child Too * by Nakagawa Motoko **

A Picture Book Is a Small Gallery translated into Korean by Shin Myeongho and published by Gimmyoung Publishing Company in 2006.

In the story, Manhee is not a boy who is pampered by his family. His family members do what they are supposed to do, and while they are doing that, Manhee naturally interacts with them. The family's love and affection are expressed in small details and scattered throughout the illustrations. For example, the shoes in disarray by the front door during the day become nicely organized in the evening. From a window in the den, you see the laundry line and clothespins. The mother has done the laundry for the family. From every little thing that readers see in the pictures, they can guess the daily life of the people who live in this house.

When Kwon shows someone's room in a picture, she always includes a glimpse of someone else's room as a way of providing a sense of security and togetherness. In the picture where Manhee is asleep, his dog is also asleep by the front door, and his grandpa is in his room, enjoying a watermelon by a fan.

In the last picture, Kwon shows readers the entire layout of the grandparents' two-story house and the family in it: Manhee and his dad playing badminton in the alley, his grandpa watering the garden, and his grandma taking a nap. The dog has wandered off, and Manhee's mother is drawing in a room alone. She is doing her own work, not house chores.

This book introduces not only the structure of popular houses in Korea at the time but also conveys the meaning of family. A house is an architectural space where a family lives together; it's a house and a home. It is also interesting to study the illustrations from a social studies perspective. From this perspective, readers will rediscover picture books. They are not just books for children; they're also a literary medium that helps readers rediscover themselves and their society.

* from *A Picture Book Is a Small Gallery* translated into Korean by Shin Myeongho and published by Gimmyoung Publishing Company in 2006.

** Japanese Picture Book Critic, Emeritus Professor of Bunkyo University



There Dangles a Spider

Changbi Publishers, 2003
Translated into Japan



“A little girl leaves home to look for her mother, and on the way, the girl meets a rabbit and a crow, and she sees a huge spiderweb and a tall boulder by the beach. She climbs to the top of the boulder, shares her boiled potato with the crow, and flies on top of the crow to look for her mother working out in the sea. Her mother is haenyeo, a traditional woman diver. The little girl sits on a small rock and waits by the shore where she can see flotation balls on the water. The story begins from something small and leads to something big, and from something specific to something abstract, and it ends with the biggest and most abstract idea, a mother’s love.”

– *My Small Drawing Board* by Kwon Yoon-duck



A children’s folk song from beautiful Jeju Island, located at the southernmost part of Korea, is reborn as a picture book. On Jeju Island, many women have worked as haenyeo, traditional women divers who make a living by gathering a variety of mollusks and seaweed. In the story, Kwon reworks the folk song to tell a modern narrative of a working mother and her brave daughter.

There Dangles a Spider presents to readers the clean and beautiful nature of

Jeju Island in bright and intense colors, and it tells the story of a woman who works to support her family, and a little girl who grows up by making friends and learning about the world on her own. This story is included in a Korean textbook for elementary school children, and it was also made into a musical and an animation.

| Review |

Take a Deep Breath Here *
by Choi Hyeonmi **

Holding hands with a rabbit, a little girl stands on a crow whose black wings are spread wide as it flies across the blue sky and sea. This is the climactic illustration in *There Dangles a Spider*. In this book, the pictures tell more stories than the words. One summer day, a little girl leaves home to look for her mother. On her way, she meets a spider, a rabbit, and a crow, and the little girl plays and becomes friends with them. It is only in the evening that she finds herself in the loving arms of her mother. What makes this book so wonderful is how it conveys the little girl’s feelings in the pictures and in such short words. The words are at the bottom of the page, and the pictures show how far the road must seem to the child, physically and psychologically. When the girl meets the crow and the rabbit, they are much bigger than her and are drawn above her. The pictures make obvious the child’s fear at seeing something unfamiliar. But those pages are immediately followed by the picture of the girl, the crow, and the rabbit drawn in the same size as they walk together with arms around each other’s shoulders. The book makes it clear that time has passed, and they have become friends with one another.

The climactic scene which was mentioned in the beginning also tells many stories. The girl stands on the crow with her feet apart, as wide as her shoulders, and her arms also spread wide. Her hair and dress are blowing in the wind as if she is standing her ground against the vast sea, and sky, and unfriendly world. With her longing for her mother, she stands, overcoming her physical fatigue from having traveled a long way and her fear of the unknown world. In this picture, readers see that the girl has grown up from the first page. The crow is looking down; it must have spotted the girl’s mother. The crow turns toward that direction, but it is interesting to see how the girl stays looking ahead. At this moment, she seems to have forgotten why she left home as she stares in front of her.

When I am reading this book with my little girl, I often tell her to take a deep breath as we turn to and look at this page. It is a picture that requires readers to spend a long time to take in everything. I hope my girl will see herself in the girl, and as my girl takes a long breath, I also take a deep breath, sitting next to her. Also a literary medium that helps readers rediscover themselves and their society.

* Printed in the first issue of *Bookpedem* magazine, 2005

** Journalist





My Cat Copies Me

Changbi Publishers, 2005

Translated into USA, France, Spain (forthcoming Japan)

“Like a cat which, faced with danger, curls up its body and gets ready to attack, every living being, no matter how small or insignificant it is, has inner strength to protect itself and grow.

When you eat and sleep well, your cells are regenerated and your body becomes renewed; likewise, we have resilience and strength to heal wounds on our body and in our heart. I worked on *My Cat Copies Me* with this belief, and I became more sure of it as I continued to write *Flower Granny* and *Pikaia*.”

– *My Small Drawing Board* by Kwon Yoon-duck



A girl is home alone, and a cat finds its way to her house, and they become friends. Her parents must be out working, for the girl stays in her room, folding laundry. While waiting for her mother, she falls asleep with the cat. She plays all day, imitating the cat, but she tells herself that it is the cat who imitates her. Suddenly, she decides that she will imitate the cat. And she takes the first step by finding an inner strength like the cat's and goes out to play with neighborhood children; then the cat leaves in search of another lonely child who might be in need of a pet.

The pictures in the book are drawn with bright colors and in a layout where Kwon uses the multi-point perspective. She also uses Buddhist painting techniques which she had studied for a long time. The bright patterns on the little girl's dress are created with powder paint, and the brightness and shade of the things in the illustrations are created with a varying density of colors. The pictures look bright, but because of the traditional painting techniques the artist uses, she is also able to express both the bright and dark inner state of the girl.



| Review |

An ebulliently illustrated South Korean import explores how a child and a beloved pet interact and enjoy activities together. Beautifully colored and textured in traditional Korean style and bursting with vitality, expressiveness and movement, this sweet but thin story captures the fun, solace and encouragement one lonely little girl derives from her adorable, spunky feline best friend. But who's copying whom? In the end, the girl draws courage from the cat's insouciance and feels enough confidence to explore the world outside herself and initiate friendships with neighborhood kids. The art is a solid draw, and cat lovers especially will appreciate how well the loving bond between child and pet is portrayed. (Picture book, 3-6)

– Kirkus Reviews (Feb. 1, 2007)

Kwon's brilliant colors, simple forms and meticulously drawn floral patterns render even common objects pleasing and gemlike in this tale of friendship. The artwork transforms piles of laundry, newspapers and sneakers into small treasures. "My cat copies me," says the girl narrator. "We help with the laundry, and chase after flies. Smelling the flowers, or watching bugs, she always copies me."

Kwon infuses the figures of the girl and the cat with a kind of magic—they play in ordinary surroundings, but strike poses that recall those of traditional tales, leaping and flying. Readers learn that the girl is timid by observing details in the scenes: although children play happily outside their window, she and her cat only sit and watch, and she is afraid of the dark. But her cat's fearlessness inspires her. "From now on," the girl vows, as Kwon paints her with green eyes that imitate her pet's, "I will copy my cat!... I won't be scared of anything!" Girl and cat crouch, poised for action. They walk outside on the street, with their hair wild and their postures taut, prepared for whatever may await them. "We'll make new friends, together!" she vows, and on the final page, she and her cat lead the children on a wild chase. Youngsters will be fascinated by the way child and pet influence each other, and impressed with Kwon's quiet powers of observation. Ages 2-6.

– Publishers Weekly (Feb. 19, 2007)



Tools at Work

Gilbut Children Publishing, 2008
Translated into China, Taiwan

“*Tools at Work* is a collection of realistic records of workplaces and the tools used at those places. Compared to *Manhee’s House* with its depiction of a house built in the 1970s and the life of a family, *Tools at Work* presents workplaces and the tools used at those places in the 2000s, observing tools used at specific workplaces and recording them in pictures, I am able not only to remember them but also to imagine more from experiences rooted in real life.”

– *My Small Drawing Board* by Kwon Yoon-duck



This is a nonfiction picture book about tools, the people who use them, and their workplaces where daily necessities are produced as well as an artist’s studio and a hospital. No one can live alone. We work and live with others, and numerous tools and machines make our job easier. We can say tools are like efficient comrades at work. In *Tools at Work*, Kwon draws readers’ attention to workers and their tools, and the relation between them at the workplace for readers to contemplate the meaning of labor.

The main character is a little girl who visits different workplaces including a farm, a hospital, and a kitchen, and as readers follow her curious eyes, the book imparts the important message that all labor is sacred.

The pictures were originally drawn not on paper but on silk with light and rich colors. The pictures have a consistent and subdued tone, but spots of bright color—red, green, blue, and black—are scattered in places to guide readers’ eyes in certain directions. As readers spend time looking at different tools, they will marvel at how realistically and meticulously each tool has been depicted and also at the workers who have been trained to work so deftly with different tools.



| Review |

Respect for the Tool *
by Kim Youngwook **

Tools at Work, an illustrated book, begins with a girl taking a walk with her cat in her village. A village map with winding paths shows the workplaces they will visit that day. They visit many places: a farm, a hospital, a shoemaking factory, a tailor’s shop, a Chinese restaurant, a carpenter’s shop, and an artist’s studio. At each place, the author first illustrates many tools. Looking closely at the pictures, we can see that the author intentionally adapted the composition of the pictures to catch readers’ attention and to draw their curiosity to the tools. Next, she shows people using these tools in each workplace. By walking through the pictures, the readers learn naturally how the tools are used.

In *Tools at Work*, Kwon Yoon-duck she showcases beautiful Asian colors by her mixed usage of half light and half deep colored hues from natural dyes. She drew them based on the Goryeo Buddhist painting techniques by applying mostly orange, patina, and navy blue colors on both sides of silk fabrics. Brushing these colors several times on both sides of the silk creates colors that are richer and deeper than those painted with different colors. Therefore, the colors of the tools are emphasized more than their details. After visiting nearby workplaces and interviewing people about the shape, name, and usage of their tools, Kwon depicted beautiful images of people working with the various tools. The readers experience the use of these tools in each workplace through the girl who makes things and proudly brings them home.

Kwon not only shows the relationship between the tools and their functions but she also shows how the artisans’ spirit and sweat are melded into the tools. It is pleasing to see people cut cloth with scissors, plane wood, and move frying pans over an open flame. After graduating from university, Kwon became active in a social movement through an art campaign. She planned to work on this illustrated book to show that all kinds of jobs are important, helping readers overcome prejudices about different kinds of jobs. She believes that young readers should learn how important people are in each workplace so that they can realize that even everyday objects are created by an individual’s devotion.

* from List : Books from Korea, vol. 2, Winter 2008, Literature Translation Institute of Korea

** Children’s book author



Flower Granny

Sakyejul Publishing, 2010(revised in 2015)

Translated into Japan, China, UK

“I believe my books should disclose the underlying social structures that control people’s lives, not just the story of an individual. I want to talk about the social structures and the people who live and interact in the structures, and the people who question and find themselves in conflict with those structures while being under their constant influence.”

– My Small Drawing Board by Kwon Yoon-duck



Flower Granny was published as the first picture book in the series titled Peace Picture Books, which was organized by 12 writers and their publishers from Korea, China, and Japan in order to promote a future of a peaceful world without war. Kwon decided to write about Ms. Sim Dalyeon who was a comfort woman, a topic which Kwon had wanted to write about since her college days. The story is biographical, and Ms. Sim’s testimony of the horrific experience is retold by the flower therapist who visits her to teach her how to press flowers.

Despite the story being about a historical atrocity, Kwon uses flowers as a metaphor to convey the beauty and goodwill in people. By meeting and sharing with the people who come to visit her, Ms. Sim finds healing, and she wishes for peaceful co-existence with her pressed flowers.



| Review |

A picture book about a comfort woman, was published in Japan *

by Kuboki Ringo **

Flower Granny, a picture book about a comfort woman, was published in Japan. Flower Granny was one of the picture books in a series organized by 12 writers from Korea, China, and Japan including Seizo Tashima. In 2010, Kwon published Flower Granny as the story of a comfort woman, and eight years later, it was published in Japan.

Kwon said that she found Ms. Sim’s statements to be slightly different from historical records, and when Kwon found this out, she redrew some pictures which ended up changing the whole ambiance of the book. Instead focusing on the sexual violence committed during the war, the writer fills the book with more sadness and tenderness for the victims. She does not narrow down the story only to the violence committed by the Japanese military. She makes it clear that sexual violence should not be discussed only as an individual crime, and that it can be committed anywhere by a political system or agenda. On the last page of Flower Granny, there are two girls—one dressed in the abaya cloak, the traditional Islamic dress, and the other girl dressed in the Vietnamese traditional dress, ao dai. The writer’s message is clear: there are women still suffering from sexual violence, not only on battlefields but everywhere around the world.

“The story of Ms. Sim and the story of those who were forced to work as comfort women are important because they force us to confront the sexual violence committed against women during war. Sexual violence is not only a crime committed by an individual; it is deeply connected to power and social structures, and therefore, the whole society has to be responsible for what happens to the victims.”

* from the interview published in Every Friday Magazine on August 10, 2018

** Freelance Journalist



Original article in weekly magazine Every Friday

7. List of Awards and Other Distinctions

- ◆ The third CJ Picture Book Illustrations Award for *Flower Granny* in 2010
- ◆ The first Korean Publication Award for *Flower Granny* in 2010
- ◆ The Merit Award from the Minister of Gender Equality and Family in 2013 for her work for “comfort women”
- ◆ The Woman Artist of the Year Award from the seventh Cheonggang Culture Award in 2014
- ◆ The Grand Prize from the first Lotte Publication and Culture Award in 2019

Title	Awards and distinctions	Year
Manhee's House	• Recommended by Seoul Children's Library	1996
	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	1998
	• Selected by the Research Institute of Children's Books as one of 100 Korean picture books for children around the world	2020
Mommy, I Like These Clothes	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	1998
	• Listed on the Best Books by the National Union of Media Workers	2003
Manhee's Letter Bugs	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	2012
Tools at Work	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	2011
There Dangles a Spider	• Recommended by the National Library of Children and Young Adults	2007
	• One of the recommended books of the year by Kyobo Books	2003
	• One of the recommended books of the year by Munhwa Ilbo	2003

	• Selected as book of the month by the Korean Publishers Association	2003
	• Selected as one of the best Korean picture books by the Frankfurt Book Fair	2005
	• Selected by the Research Institute of Children's Books as one of 100 Korean picture books for children around the world	2020
My Cat Copies Me	• Recommended by the National Library of Children and Young Adults	2007
	• Listed on Bookstart Korea	2015
	• Selected by the Research Institute of Children's Books as one of 100 Korean picture books for children around the world	2020
Flower Granny	• Recommended by the National Library of Children and Young Adults	2010
	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	2011
	• Selected by the Research Institute of Children's Books as one of 100 Korean picture books for children around the world	2020
Pikaia	• Listed on the Best Books by the Ministry of Culture	2013
Wooden Seal	• Selected for the One Library One Book Program sponsored by the Seoul Metropolitan Office	2017
	• Selected for the One City One Book program by Seogwipo City	2017
	• Selected for the peace and human rights education program of the Jeju Education Office	2018
	• Selected for the One Book Reading Program by the Jeju Public Library for the 70th commemoration for the Jeju April Uprising	2018
	• Selected by the Gyeongnam Education Office as one the best books of the year	2018
Sixteen	• Selected for the Book Sharing Program by the Arts Council of Korea	2019
Brave Mr. Tiger	• Recommended by the Research Institute of Children's Books	2022
I Want a Little More Blue	• Selected as the one of the best books of the month by the School Library Journal	2022

8. List of Translated Editions

◆ Manhee's House



マンヒのいえ
The Sailor Publishing Co.,
Japan, 1998



我的新家
二十一世紀出版社,
China, 2014



Ma maison en Corée
Editions du Sorbier,
France, 2008

◆ Tools at Work



工作與工具
Wisest Cultural Enterprise,
Taiwan, 2012



工作與工具
二十一世紀出版社,
China, 2014

◆ There Dangles a Spider



しろいはうさぎ
Fukuinkan Shoten(福音館書店),
Japan, 2007

◆ Flower Granny



花奶奶
译林出版社,
China, 2015



Grandma Flora
XANADU Publishing,
UK, 2017



花ばあば
コロから株式会社,
Japan, 2018

◆ My Cat Copies Me



My Cat Copies Me
Kane/Miller Book Publishers,
USA, 2007



Mon chat fait tout comme moi
Philippe Picquier,
France, 2007



El meu gat fa el mateix que jo
Lata de Sal gatos,
Spain, 2013 (Spanish)



O Meu Gato Sempre Me Imita
Lata de Sal gatos,
Spain, 2013 (Catalan and Galician)

*(forthcoming), Akane Shobo Publishing Co., Ltd., Japan

9. Exhibitions, Lectures, and Meetings with Readers

- Focusing on recent major activities

Kwon attends every event where she can meet her readers. By holding exhibitions and book talks, and giving lectures, she has been meeting with different groups of readers and working to expand their understanding of children's books. She hopes that her picture books will be a starting point for imagining more stories and broadening more horizons as she works ceaselessly to communicate with more readers.

Exhibitions

- Touring multi-sensory exhibition of *There Dangles a Spider* from 2004 to 2005
 - Miracle Library in Jeju, Cheongju, and Suncheon
 - Gwangjin Information Library in Seoul
 - Fairytale Bookstore in Heyri Art Village in Gyeonggi Province



In this multi-sensory exhibition, children and their parents experienced how one picture book can excite imagination and be the starting place for many more stories. The exhibition included a drawer which children could open and discover different materials the writer had collected to write *There Dangles a Spider*.



- Heeum Museum of Military and Sexual Slavery by Japan located in Daegu



_1 _2
_3 _4

The picture1 is from the preparations of the exhibition for *Flower Granny* which was held as the first exhibition to celebrate the opening of the museum in 2015. The pictures 2,3,4 are from the exhibition titled *In Remembrance* held at the Heeum Museum from May to July in 2018. The meeting with Kwon Yoon-duck the writer of *Flower Granny* was held as a part of the exhibition program called *Flower Granny* and *Peace*. In the meeting, Kwon discussed with readers the importance of retelling the sexual slavery committed by Japan, the message of peace in her book, and her experience writing the book.

Lectures and Meetings with Readers

• Kwon Yoon-duck's Picture Books from the Past 22 Years



The exhibition titled Kwon Yoon-duck's Picture Books from the Past 22 Years was held at the Suncheon Picture Book Library from March to June 2017.

The exhibition introduced Kwon's picture books from her first book *Manhee's House* to her latest one. This hugely popular and successful exhibition included Kwon's studio, which was reproduced for viewers to see and experience, as well as visual and musical adaptations of her books.

- A program titled 'Seeing the Jeju April Uprising through the Eyes of a Boy and a Girl' was included in the conference held to commemorate the 68th anniversary of the Jeju Uprising in April 2016.

— During the program, Kwon Yoon-duck and poet Kang Jung-hun, who had witnessed the massacre as an eight-year-old boy, discussed Kwon's recent publication of *Wooden Seal* about the Jeju April Uprising. The program also included an accordion performance of "A Song from Siri" by a twelve-year-old reader, and a short theater piece by the Olive and Steamed Beans Company.

- Celebrating the publication of Kwon's *Wooden Seal* around Jeju Island from March to April 2016.

— The dedication of *Wooden Seal* to the Victims Association of the Jeju Uprising at the Jeju Peace Foundation on March 26.

— A book concert held at the Jeju Halla Library on April 30.

— A book concert sponsored by the Hamdeok Youth Association on June 17.

- A lecture held at Chekccori Bookstore in Japan in June 2016

— Located in Tokyo, Chekccori Bookstore specializes in books on the topic of Korea, and it hopes to be a bridge between Japanese and Korean readers. Kwon was invited to hold a talk with readers about her book *Wooden Seal*. The talk included art prints of the illustrations from the book, and she shared how she had researched the topic and written her story.

- Celebrating the publication of Kwon's *Flower Granny* in Japan in April 2018

— The event was held to celebrate the translation of Kwon's *Flower Granny* into Japanese and its publication in Japan. The event and book talks were organized by Japanese writers Seizo Tashima and Keiko Hamada.

Educational Programs

- A talk held at the Toyonaka Campus of Osaka University, Japan on April 26 2018
 - The topic was how picture books can depict war and violence. Kwon discussed the artistic retelling of a historical atrocity through her book *Flower Granny* as a case study.
- Celebrating the publication of Kwon's *Flower Granny* in Japan at the Hachi and Seizo Tashima Museum of Picture Book Art on April 27 2018
- A book talk with Seizo Tashima and Keiko Hamada on the topic of Kwon's *Flower Granny* sponsored by Women's Active Museum on War and Peace, Japan on April 28 2018
- Celebrating the publication of Kwon's *Flower Granny* at Bookhouse, Japan on April 29 2018



Lecture after the publication of *Wooden Seal*, Books and Children's Bookshop in Busan.



From 2019 to 2020, Kwon held nature drawing classes for elementary school students on Jeju Island. Her experiences with the program led her to write *I Want a Little More Blue*.



From June to July 2019, Kwon held drawing classes for citizens

— An event was held to celebrate the publication of *My Small Drawing Board*, and Kwon Yoon-duck held open drawing classes with the theme of “Draw your first line on your small drawing board.”

Spokesperson for Picture Book Writers

Kwon is known as a writer who works for the good of the public and readers. She believes in the power of children’s books and the values they promote—diversity, equality, and peace. She contemplates and questions the role of writers, publishers, public institutions, young readers and their parents. As the spokesperson for picture book writers, Kwon organizes and sponsors events and venues to promote children’s books.



- **Korea-Japan Cultural Exchange Program for children, picture books, and libraries**

— A Talk with Writer Taro Gomi with Kwon Yoon-duck as presider at The Miracle Library in Suncheon

- **Talking Picture Books**

— Kwon organized and presided over the program from June to November 2017. The event was sponsored by the Gunpo Cultural Foundation. Kwon invited young picture book writers and worked as the presider for the event.

- **Village and Picture Books**

— In December 2019, Kwon held an international forum in which people shared and exhibited their own illustrations. During this event, people wrote picture books from their own life stories and learned to illustrate the books.

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