

Queer

bird

faces



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faces

Edited by Hayoung Chung
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Queer bird faces

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Edited from the lands of the Munsee and Muhheaconneock people.

Faces Hayoung

In-Between Chung

00.

In 2021, at the Gwangju Biennale, I first encountered Sung Hwan Kim's film *Hair is a piece of head* (2021). Commissioned by the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, this film marks the first part of Kim's research project *A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* (2017–), which is still in progress. In the film, Kim employs English, Korean, Mandarin, and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (the Hawaiian language—once banned and now reviving) to shape a nonlinear narrative about early 20th-century Korean immigrants to Hawai'i, such as the so-called picture brides. Particularly notable is the artist's idiosyncratic juxtaposition of multilingual subtitles and voice-over—a technique that recalls Akira Kurosawa's 1950 film *Rashomon*, which famously presents multiple perspectives on a single event through various narrators.

Around the midpoint of *Hair is a piece of head*, the Hawaiian narration continues while the Korean and English subtitles suddenly drop away. For viewers without knowledge of Hawaiian, the minutes-long narration by Ahukiniakealohanui Fuertes—Kim's Hawaiian-language teacher—ceases to be comprehensible.¹ Instead, it becomes an unfamiliar sound in itself, filling the gallery space. This moment of creating varied information gaps, conditioned by the viewer-recipient's cultural background, informs *Queer bird faces*, an exhibition that begins by probing such intentional breakdowns in translation.

01.

Is this omission necessarily a failure in translation? In early 20th-century Hawai'i, past events involving speakers of multiple language were often recorded or transmitted in specific languages. As a result, these events inevitably exist in fragmented forms that present a limited viewpoint—such as this English-language article from *Life* magazine: “How to Tell Japs from Chinese.”² For instance, when a contemporary Chinese speaker attempts to read and reflect on the phenomenon described in this article in its entirety, translation inevitably emerges as a mediating force. But Kim's translation does not limit itself to faithfully rendering content for viewers; indeed, the sudden removal of subtitles suggests another aim altogether.

Here, cultural critic Rey Chow's note on translation is particularly relevant: “translation is primarily a process of putting together,” and so the process of literalness also shows that the “original” is something that was itself assembled.³ This notion implies that what we call an original text or original event is hardly static or pristine. Translation, thus, can reveal concealed intentions or bring to light nuances lost in a single language. In Kim's practice, which activates multilingual storylines rather than a singular, cohesive narrative, translation illuminates and breathes life into the faces that exist between lines and words, as well as within words—faces that might otherwise remain hidden.

The exhibition builds on these ideas through two of Kim's films: the aforementioned *Hair is a piece of head* and *By Mary Jo Freshley* 프레실리에 의(依)해 (2023). Each work demonstrates how translation extends across media and cultural registers.

For example, the title *Hair is a piece of head*, when literally converted into Korean, collapses “hair” and “head” into the single word 머리 *meo-ri*, producing “머리는 머리의 부분” (“The head is a part of the head”)—a paradoxical statement that provokes visual and linguistic tension. In *By Mary Jo Freshley 프레실리에 의(依)해*, choreography that originated in Korea is transplanted and transmitted within the context of Hawai‘i. It becomes another metaphor for translation, embodying cultural and temporal differences. Kim’s approach—aiming for neither perfect clarity nor a singular meaning—treats translation less as an endpoint and more as a generative beginning, a space where new interpretations might emerge.

02.

Beyond translation, Kim draws on memoirs, newspaper articles, museum archives, and oral histories, as well as knowledge, wisdom, and relationships formed during his residence in Hawai‘i since 2019. These sources appear not only as texts with traditional references but also as visual and aural fragments woven into his films. For instance, Kim inserts into his films re-photographed black-and-white images of unidentified women from the Palama Settlement Archives, as well as sounds mimicking the call of the now-extinct Kaua‘i ‘ō‘ō bird—interlacing archival traces with random, poetic gestures.

This exhibition adopts a similar methodology, presenting a cross-section of Kim’s ongoing *A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* project. Following a meeting with the artist at his 2024 solo exhibition *Ua a‘o ‘ia ‘o ia e ia* at the Seoul Museum of Art

(SeMA), I have excerpted and re-presented a portion of the exhibited works, annotating them to form another exhibition. Alongside two complete films, reproduced images and texts function as excerpts of Kim’s ongoing research, also tracing his thought process as reflected in “Lessons of 1896–1907” (2018–), an archive he shares online and has partially presented in Seoul.

Texts by historian Noelani Arista, scanned calligraphy from artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s 1982 book *Dictée*, and footage of Korean dancer Kim Cheon-Heung⁴ appear alongside Kim’s notes and films, forming a constellation of meaning. Their coexistence echoes Japanese haiku, which Kim describes in his 2019 project statement as a “discrete presentation of anonymous, quotidian, natural movements that manifest themselves as historical.”⁵ So, too, by allowing these seemingly disparate materials to coexist, does the exhibition capture a moment in Kim’s ongoing process of making unseen historical figures visible.

03.

In the exhibition space, *Blue Stand* sits next to these materials, layering images and multilingual texts—whether wall-mounted or freestanding—within a blue rectangle. *Blue Stand* materializes the idea of footnotes as put forward by gender studies scholar Katherine McKittrick: the role of footnotes is “not to master knowing and centralize our knowingness, but to share how we know and share how we came to know.”⁶ Individually, each blue rectangle performs the excerpting, highlighting, translating, and bullet-pointing of source texts and images, combining acrylic sheets and digital and inkjet

prints. Collectively, these citational objects engage with other archival materials, photographs, and films, creating an intricate network of references that challenge didactic texts, which often aim to convey a single, clear interpretation of a work.

This methodology also mirrors the approach of this publication in two primary ways. First, an interview with Kim—conducted in Room 3 of the SeMA exhibition, where the artist pointed out for me the various materials surrounding his film *Summer Days in Keijo*—written in 1937 (2007)—serves as a textual reference, introducing the “grammars” the artist has been developing for years. Like an exercise in a language textbook, unrelated artworks at a glance gradually converge around *청출어람* *cheong chul eu ram*, a four-character idiom Kim has adopted as a conceptual anchor.⁷ Second, the section of poems stands as a literary homage to Kim’s visual grammar. Here, I have chosen nine historical Korean poems that haunt me with their diverse voices born of political turmoil or their portrayal of everyday fragments that only those who have crossed borders can sense. They range from courtesans’ yearning for independence to a writer’s discovery of his less-contoured facial profile. The poems were originally published in early 20th-century Korean newspapers of various political orientations across the United States, including *The Korean National Herald* (국민보, 1913–1968), local to Hawai‘i, and *The New Korea* (신한민보, 1909–1980s). Transplanting them into an exhibition publication from their original context through excerpting, translating, and editing raises the questions: What does this process erase and add? And what does it mean on its own?

04.

The exhibition title, *Queer bird faces*, derives from one of the rectangles of *Blue Stand*, which addresses art historian Ann Gibson’s commentary on how American artist Isamu Noguchi’s work was received in limited ways. Kim excerpts, bullet-points, and translates Gibson’s text, reflecting on how an artist’s identity—gender, race, or otherwise—can limit a work’s “universal” reception.⁸ And the face of the artist—or that of a musician, curator, or any agent—is not the only factor that can distort dissemination.⁹ Beyond the title and wall text on the temporary wall, an iPhone Live Photo of a bird that Kim took in Amsterdam loops continuously—an excerpt from an untitled installation displayed in Room 2 of the SeMA exhibition. Meanwhile, in the hallway, visitors can hear recordings of the now-extinct Kaua‘i ‘ō‘ō bird from the same installation.



No single closure suffices for these drifting records. As writer Édouard Glissant states, “the text passes from a dreamed-of transparency to the opacity produced in words.”¹⁰ Or perhaps there was no absolute truth from the beginning. The exhibition paves the way for exploring how a story is constructed and shared—through translating, referencing, citing, and other actions—and how viewers might navigate its multiple layers. As these layers accumulate, eventually forming *queer bird faces* that embrace this opacity, we may finally be ready to meet their real faces.

¹ Janine Armin, “Body Double: Sung Hwan Kim’s A Record of Drifting Across the Sea,” *Afterall*, no. 57 (2024): 150–169.

² “How to Tell Japs from Chinese,” *Digital Exhibits*, accessed February 2, 2025, <http://digitalexhibits.wsulibs.wsu.edu/items/show/4416>. Originally published in *Life* magazine, December 22, 1941.

³ Rey Chow, “Film as Ethnography; or, Translation Between Cultures in the Postcolonial World,” in *The Rey Chow Reader*, ed. Paul Bowman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 143–62.

⁴ In the show, his name appears as “Kim Chun-Hung,” as per the suggested credit line from the National Gugak Center, Seoul.

⁵ Sung Hwan Kim, *Hair is a piece of head* (Gwangju: Gwangju Biennale Foundation, 2021), 2–15.

⁶ Katherine McKittrick, “Footnotes (Books and Papers Scattered About the Floor),” in *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 14–34.

⁷ See page 19 for more on the definition, usage, and interpretation of this idiom.

⁸ The text of this *Blue Stand* reads:

Queer bird faces (이상 아릇한 새들의 얼굴)

Amy Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi’s Modernism Negotiating Race, Labor, and Nation* (1st ed.), 1930–1950, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2018, p. 161

- As the art historian Ann Gibson explains, women, artists of color, and
 - homosexuals could not do this “because their audiences would not accept their work as universal.
 - Even if they wanted to be universal and said so[.]....
 - the dominant society did not read the work that way.”
- 미술 역사 학자 앤 김슨 Anne Gibson 이 설명하듯, “[여성, 유색 인종 작가, 그리고
- 동성애자의 작업은 범세계적일 수 있다고 관객들이 받아들이지 않기 때문에
 - [다른 부류처럼 진보적이고 열린 문화적 관점을 가졌다는 칭송을 받을 수 없다]. 그들이 아무리 범세계적이고 싶고 그렇다고 스스로 말을 해도...
 - 사회의 주도권은 그들의 작업을 그렇게 보지 않았다.”

⁹ During the exhibition, on April 26, 2025, David Michael DiGregorio—a musician and Kim’s long-time collaborator—will present a concert piece demonstrating how a musician’s face can do this.

¹⁰ Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (1990; repr., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 115.

Room
Sung
in

Hwan

3:
Kim
Response

00.

There is knowledge, and there is wisdom. Knowledge does not necessarily become wisdom. I wondered what it might mean to distinguish between the two within the framework of an exhibition as a cultural form. Over five years of research and exhibition and film production [within the context of the series *A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* (2017–)], I began to differentiate between them—knowledge as yellow-green blue; wisdom as bluish blue. From the start, there were distinctions for things that were unclear, but the justification for making those distinctions at that time have now also been forgotten.

This conversation between Sung Hwan Kim and curator Hayoung Chung took place in Room 3 of Kim's solo exhibition *Ua a'o 'ia 'o ia e ia* at the Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), Korea, on December 20, 2024. It represents Kim's answer to a single question: *How are knowledge and wisdom different?* Originally conducted in Korean, the conversation was edited and translated by Chung. Additional information from beyond the artist's conversation is provided in editorial brackets.



01.

The text in my 2007 film *Summer Days in Keijo*—written in 1937—is drawn from [Swedish zoologist] Sten Bergman’s records, written between 1935 and 1936 and published in his book *In Korean Wilds and Villages* in 1937, 1938, and 1999, in Stockholm, London, and Seoul, respectively. While Bergman did visit the Korean Peninsula during the 1930s—at the time, for him, part of the Empire of Japan—when I filmed at the locations he described in 2007, none of the places matched what he documented. Over such a temporal gap, places, objects, buildings, and sociocultural phenomena could not remain the same. Yet, when his text is seen alongside my footage, the viewers of this film assume the two are identical. This is the fundamental problem with film, and with this film of mine from 2007.

For instance, in the film, a shot of a building looking north from Sejongno [the central avenue] in Seoul is paired with the [Korean] subtitle and narration: “Keijo’s most impressive building is the Governor-General’s Palace.” However, when the film was made, the Governor-General’s Palace that Bergman saw and described in his book no longer existed. And [the main gate of Gyeongbokgung] Gwanghwamun, which is now visible from that perspective as of 2024, was temporarily disassembled for restoration during the time of filming. Viewers who are unaware of the historical context will recognize the building in this scene as the Governor-General’s Palace. The ignorance the viewer held prior to watching the film thus generates a new—albeit incorrect—piece of knowledge through the film. Through their acceptance of this knowledge, they come to think they have achieved a so-called understanding.

This is also a problem of text. Most readers overlook the temporal gap between when Bergman wrote the text and when they are reading it. They read it through the lens of their current knowledge and perspectives, simply because the words remain the same and the geographic sites he describes are still locatable today. Same for translation. Situated in entirely different space-time, the source and target languages occupy inevitably differing positions; yet the translator substitutes sentences using only a limited set of predetermined word choices. The culture of exhibitions and education, of which we are a part, similarly notices this gap but often disregards it, citing constraints of time and budget, and seals the gap in simplistic and incorrect ways—constantly proceeding without addressing the issues inherent in the various mechanisms of the process.

02.

In this film, *Summer Days in Keijo*—written in 1937, the camera follows [the protagonist, who is Kim’s friend and artist] Mieke Van de Voort. When I was filming in 2007, the city of Seoul had announced that the Sewoon Arcade would be demolished the following year. I thought that, after its demolition, people who have only seen or remembered the building through facade photographs would neither be able to see its interior nor imagine the people who “moved through” it. As you know, the figures, buildings, and cities that society remembers is mostly their surface. While I was shooting this film, the places, phenomena, and objects listed in the records are transformed into my film’s subjects—most of them are only superficially recorded in the film as a facade. However, Sewoon Arcade (set to disappear in 2008) is an existing building in 2007, and it was the only space in this film where the camera could enter the interior of a soon-to-disappear subject and follow along a person’s trajectory. Thus, I shot the scene in which Mieke enters and moves inside the arcade in addition to its facade. In other words, I wanted to document the fact that people can enter history and live in it.

But by 2008, Namdaemun, which appeared in the film, was wiped out by arson. It was unexpected. Similarly, Mieke passed away in 2011, and in 2024, so did my father. Even though aforementioned disappearances might have been documented outside your work on their own terms, the very devices of these documentations will begin to disappear. Like this, things happen outside the work— substituting the past with new knowledge and wisdom—but the work doesn’t show them. Artists document through their work, but the contents within the work may grow or disappear outside of it. Then, to what extent should an audience encountering this work know? And to what extent should they not?



03 쪽물들인 명주 널기. 쪽은 염색할 때 신소에 노출되는 신화와 맑은 물과 만나는 환경 조건에 따라서 녹색, 옥색, 청록색, 청색으로 변화되는 특징을 띠게 된다. 04 쪽밭. 쪽밭을 가꾸 쪽임을 따는 것이 쪽 염색의 시작이다.

03.

청출어람 *cheong chul eu ram* [is a four-character idiom]. From 쪽 *jjok* (the plant *Polygonum tinctorium* Lour), the 쪽빛 *jjok-bit* (indigo hue) is extracted [during the dye-making process]. This idiom refers to when “blue is obtained from the green grass but is bluer than the grass itself.” It is used to describe when a student surpasses their teacher. During the extraction, the hue changes. Let’s call it “knowledge” to know the literal meaning of this idiom. If one reflects on their own life and infers from this knowledge, then they might think of the relationships between teacher and student, educator and educatee, or ancestor and descendant. Some may consider it wisdom, as they are experiencing life by seeing the plant. Yet another perspective lies outside the boundaries of knowledge and wisdom. In *Blue Stand*, I added the footnote: “Does the grass feel injustice when they see the blue after being deprived of what was once theirs?” This is neither knowledge nor wisdom, but it is a message expressing curiosity about

the possible psychological responses that may arise in the transactional realm between knowledge and wisdom. How might a teacher feel if a student takes their idea, creates something better, and the recipient of the information, such as the student or descendant, is then celebrated as 청출어람?

Similarly, when audiences see a work, they see its subject, material, message, or something else. Is what they understand knowledge, wisdom, or a message? Should audiences be aware of their own psychology as they import, accept, understand, correct, or reject information? And should these questions be documented in words—or shown instead?

04.

[In front of the three film extracts on pedestals, next to the screen playing *Summer Days in Keijo*—written in 1937:] This is a scene from Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985). Often hailed as a masterpiece [of Japanese cinema], how many audiences know that Kurosawa couldn't have made it without foreign capital? Does knowing that make it more interesting? The film adapts William Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. The film's protagonist, modeled after Lear, divides his inheritance among his children and plans to coexist with them until his death, but the children resent even his presence in the castle. If the predecessor stays in the same castle as the successor—two leaders in one place—would the soldiers follow the successor's orders? Likewise, at the time of production, Kurosawa, born in 1910, was already 75 years old and had garnered international fame, sustaining his reputation since being awarded for *Rashomon* (1950). But those who live long

lives inevitably experience changing eras: by the 1980s, a new generation of Japanese filmmakers was producing entirely different types of films. Kurosawa needed foreign funding because domestic investors were no longer willing to support the films he intended to make.

This scene, where the protagonist is expelled from the castle, is depicted as an allegory. I view Kurosawa's production based on my interpretation of 청출어람. They constructed the massive castle for real and burned it down for real, leaving only one chance to shoot the scene. The male actor, alone inside the castle, had to walk out flawlessly on cue. This is a case where materials are created to depict disappearance, and through those resources, the psychology of destruction is portrayed. Viewed through the lens of production, capital, and its influence, what appears to be a fictional film becomes a real-world phenomenon—not a world of metaphor, allegory, or symbolism. They brought in real money, really built it, burned it for real, and, potentially, real people could have died in the process, making the event really happen. Many may see [King Lear's] capital within the narrative of the classic [play], but, in this scene, as shown in the SeMA exhibition, someone might instead see the capital itself.

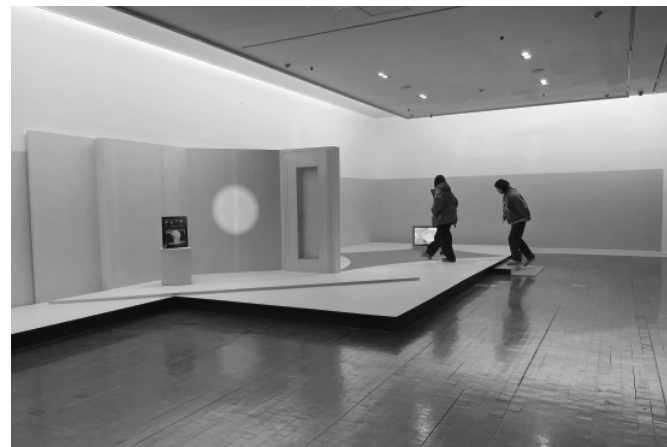
05.

Behind [the monitor playing] *Ran*, I juxtaposed [a monitor playing] the final scene from Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* (1986) with [a monitor playing] a scene from Chris Marker's *One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich* (2000)—with the latter scene exploring Tarkovsky's precision in addressing the mistakes in the production of the final scene of *The Sacrifice*, along with the budgetary scale and tension that precision entailed. For its pivotal sequence, the scene from *The Sacrifice* captures the burning of an actual house in a tracking shot. During the first take, however, the camera failed to roll. As a result, the house had to be rebuilt only for that scene and burned down again during the reshoot. This time, to prevent further mistakes, the director and cinematographer constructed two parallel tracking rails and filmed simultaneously on both.

As I discussed [my interpretation of] 청출어람, there is a message still distinct from *jjok* (the plant), *jjok-bit* (indigo hue), knowledge, information, or translation. Here, too, the scale and psychology of the production were created to capture disappearance within the space of knowledge and wisdom that the film seeks to convey. In 2024, juxtaposing fragments from these three films, I noticed that film media and its culture—which reached its heyday in cinemas and on television—is already disappearing. How, then, are the messages it carries to be transmitted? The disappearance of the film apparatus itself—as is the case of disappearance of Mieke, Namdaemun, and my father—is an event that occurred outside the film as documentation, after its production. Within the space created by these three films, disappearance is not merely an allegory or subject matter but something that happens to the three films themselves—an event or, perhaps, a premonition.

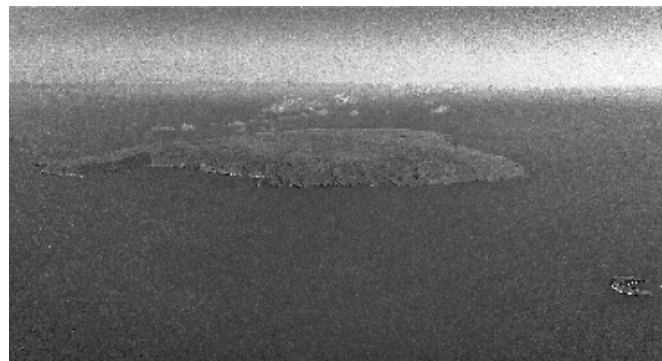
06.

I enjoy visiting the Horim Museum [in Seoul], known for exhibiting so-called antiquities. Classical art exhibitions, including the ones held at this institution, often follow a common grammar of display: the grammar of the diorama exhibition format. Antiquities are placed on pedestals, illuminated with spotlights and other lighting, encased in vitrines, and accompanied by didactic texts summarizing the significance of the staged scenes—often with additional lighting on the text itself. These grammatical devices teach us how to view the objects. I am observing these very “grammars.”



07.

In the exhibition space, from the audience's perspective, it's simply about viewing the work. But just as one might empathize with the plant and the color in the idiom 청출어람, what if we adopted the perspective of the people who once lived within the work? If those depicted in the work had lived in that place and documented their lives there, could they have imagined that a much larger "we"—existing far beyond the photograph—would one day peer into their world through it? [Hayoung, you and I] are now thinking about the work or the exhibition [at this moment], but what if, 500 years from now, someone far larger, like these audiences, were to peer into us? We don't think about that. This isn't a cliché about uncertainty after death. In this context, when the grammar of the work (for example, why the music in a film is composed that way, who composed it, or whose voice it is) is viewed from outside the scale of the work before us—in other words, from outside "us"—the complex elements within the work become much easier to interpret.



08.

This is my father in *Mound of ash expressing an island* (2024). There is a saying that, when a person dies, they become ash. Though poetic, it is not confined to metaphorical expression—humans literally turn to ash. It is also the case that when a person dies, they are buried in the ground. In a time before movement and migration, everyone who lived on an island was buried there, and all those buried on that island shaped its land. Here, while we see nature, an island, or a beautiful beach, in reality, the land was made from human ash. Looking at the juxtaposed photographs, one might think, “The shape of the ash and the island look similar. Is this a representation of their similarity?,” as if the island’s shape intentionally resembles a grave. But, in reality, ash is land. Ash and the island grow and settle in similar ways. Yet they remain perpetually separate in our distorted knowledge system.

The island of Kaho‘olawe, shown in this photograph, was used by the US military in the 1950s for simulated bombings of the Korean Peninsula during the Korean War and was called a “target island.” Later, the US Navy’s Operation Sailor Hat, in 1965, even created craters on the island. The person who died trying to protect this island was George Helm (his guitar playing was included in the film *Hair is a piece of head* (2021)). For a South Korean, this island may appear as a fictional island simulated by the US military, but, for its inhabitants, it is reality and fact. It is the training on this target island that makes [Hawaiians’ lives] seen as simulation to others. When an artwork is created, it also becomes separated from reality. But from that moment of separation, events begin occurring in the real world. There is a connection between the land of Hawai‘i and the Korean Peninsula—a relationship like *jjok* (the plant) and *jjok-bit* (indigo hue). In the moment of asking “Does the grass feel injustice when they see the blue after being deprived of what was once theirs?” everything, even the psychology of many of those who look at ash, reveals itself.

p. 20

image

Momi Wheeler of Protect **Kaho'olawe**
'Ohana looks southwest from the air
towards Kaho'olawe, with the tiny island
crater of Molokini on the bottom right.
Image courtesy of Momi Wheeler (Protect Kaho'olawe
'Ohana)

text

Kaho'olawe

p. 21

image

Mound of ash expressing an island,
Seoul Memorial Park, Seocho-gu, Seoul,
March 20, 2024

text

Father (b. **1948**–2024)

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image

Utagawa Kunitaru, *Chūshingura*,
Ukiyo-e, 18th Century. Ritsumeikan
University, Kyoto, Japan

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image

Utagawa Toyokunin III, *Record of Heroic
Loyal Vassals (Chūyū Gishinroku Dai-San)*,
Illustration 3, Ukiyo-e, 1847. Tokyo
Shiryō Collection, Tokyo Metropolitan
Library, Japan

above

An eye of a flying squirrel, reflecting
the sun, magnified image from a page,
Sten Bergman, *In Korean Wilds and
Villages*, 1st Pub. London: Travel Book
Club, 1938

이미지

〈카호올라베 보전 가족 모임〉의 모미 휠러가
촬영한 하늘에서 남동쪽을 향할 때 보이는
카호올라베 섬과 새끼 섬인 몰로키니 섬의 분화구.
이미지 제공: 모미 휠러(프로텍트 카호올라베 오하나)

텍스트

카호올라베 섬

이미지

섬으로 표현된 잿더미, 서울,
서초구, 서울추모공원,
2024년 3월 20일

텍스트

아버지(b. **1948**–
2024)

이미지

우타가와 구니테루,
〈주신구라〉,
우키요에,
18세기. 일본, 교토,
리츠메이칸대학교

이미지

태양의 상을 반영한 하늘다람쥐의 눈,
지면을 확대한 이미지, 스텐 베리만,
『한국의 야생동물지』, 런던: 트래블 북 클럽,
1938년 초판

위의

이미지

우타가와 도요쿠니 3세, 『충의 의신록
제3권(영웅적인 충신들의 기록), 삽화 3』,
우키요에, 1847년. 일본, 도쿄도립도서관,
도쿄자료컬렉션

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image

Film still (00:06:59), *The 47 Ronin* (1941)
dir. Kenji Mizoguchi
Image courtesy of Shochiku co., ltd.
Film still (00:25:45), *The Loyal 47 Ronin:
Chushingura* (1958)
dir. Kunio Watanabe
Image courtesy of 1958 KADOKAWA CORPORATION
Film still (00:43:34), *Chushingura: Hana
no Maki, Yuki no Maki* (1962)
dir. Hiroshi Inagaki
Image courtesy of TOHO

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image

Hans Blumenberg,
*Care Crosses the
River* (1st ed.),
P. Fleming (Trans.),
Redwood City:
Stanford University
Press, 2010,
p. 52

pp. 34–35

image

Alberta Pualani Hopkins,
*Ka Lei Ha'aeo:
Beginning Hawaiian* (1st
ed.), Honolulu: University of
Hawai'i Press, 1992, p. 156

text

Blue is obtained from the green grass but
is bluer than the grass itself
[cheong] [chul] [eu] [ram]
Does the grass feel injustice when they see
the blue after being deprived of what was
once theirs

They learned from them
learned, by them, their teaching
They were taught by them
Ua a'o ia 'o ia e ia

이미지

영화 스틸(00:06:59), 〈겐로쿠 주신구라〉(1941)
감독 미조구치 겐지
이미지 제공: 쇼치쿠
영화 스틸(00:25:45), 〈충성스러운 무사 47인〉
(1958)
감독 와타나베 쿠니오
이미지 제공: 1958 카도카와
영화 스틸(00:43:34), 〈충신장〉(1962)
감독 이나가키 히로시
이미지 제공: 토호

이미지

한스 블룸베르크, 『보살핌이 물을 건널 때』,
폴 플레밍 번역, 레드우드 시티: 스탠퍼드대학교
출판부, 2010년 초판, 52쪽

이미지

알버타 푸알라니 홉킨스, 『카 레이 하아에오:
초급 하와이어』, 호놀룰루: 하와이대학교 출판부,
1992년 초판, 156쪽

텍스트

靑 出 於 藍
靑 出 於 藍
靑은 푸름을 갖아간 푸른색을 보면 억울할까

■가 ■에게 배웠다
배웠다 그에 의해 가르침을
그는 그에게서 배움을 얻었다
우아아오 이아 오 이아 에 이아

The Poems

이민선

타던

전날¹

The
the

Eve of
Immigrant

Boarding
Ship¹

가만히 도모하는 행리가 밝은 새벽 인데,
이밤 등불 앞에 만가지 생각이 새롭다.
조상을 모시는 정은 윤외로 배반하고,
춘규에 부부의 정은 꿈속에 친한 채
조소하는 것은 중인의 일을 피할 수 없고,
슬픈 눈물은 공연히 떠나는 수건을 적시네.
득실은 남아에 마땅히 있는 일이다.
돌아올 때에는 넉넉히 봉운한 몸을 지으리.

이흥기
1905년 4월 6일

Though dawn breaks quietly as I plan my journey,
still, in the lamplight of this night, countless new thoughts arise.
In a way beyond what is right, I cast aside my devotion to my ancestors,
in dreams, I feel the warmth of the spring marital boudoir.
Ridicule from the crowd is unavoidable,
sorrowful tears needlessly soak the departing handkerchief.
Gains and losses are a true man's rightful burden.
Upon my return, I will be one whose life is filled in full measure.

Lee Hong Kee
April 6, 1905

[전략]

우리비록창녀로되
대한빅성다곳흐니
일춘단심기회보와
원슈갑고죽으리라
하디마라오입장아
이니몸이죽은뒤에
일흠기리밋나여셔
유방빅세호리로다.

鐵脚生

신한민보 1909년 9월 22일

[...]

Though we be but courtesans,
we, too, are children of Great Korea.
With one true, devoted heart, awaiting the chance,
I'll avenge my wrongs and meet my end.
Do not mock me, you philanderer.
When this body of mine is gone
may my honored name shine on,
its fragrance carried through a hundred generations.

Cheol Gak Saeng

The New Korea, September 22, 1909

나의 사랑한 반도야³

간다간다 나는간다
너를두고 나는 간다
잠시뜻을 엇엇노라
쌈을디논 이시운이
나의 등을 니밀어서
너를써나 가게하니
이로부터 여러히로
너를보지 못홀지나
그동안에 나는오직
너를위히 일홀이니
나간다고 설히말아
나의사랑 한반도야

[후략]

신도성
신한민보 1910년 6월 15일

My Beloved Korean Peninsula³

I go, I go, yes, I am leaving
—leaving you behind, I go.
For a moment, I found my purpose.
The swift tide of these times
shoves me from behind,
forcing me to part from you.
From this day on, for many years,
I may not see you.
But in that time, I will labor
solely for your sake.
Weep not for my departure,
my beloved Korean Peninsula

[...]

Shin Do Saeng
The New Korea, June 15, 1910

구름밖에 솟는 달빛
가을인가 하였더니
붉은꽃 푸른잎들
춘광을 자랑한다
아마도 별건곤인듯
사시장춘

우운
국민보 1913년 9월 6일

Moonlight rises beyond the clouds.
I wondered if it was autumn, but
scarlet flowers and emerald leaves,
they flaunt the splendor of spring.
Is it some new heaven and earth?
Eternal spring throughout four seasons.

Woo Woon
The Korean National Herald,
September 6, 1913

태평양 만경파에
태평히 돛을 달고
살 같이 가는 배는
향하는 곳 그 어디뇨
문노니 자유독립 실었거든
한반도로

一心生
국민보 1913년 9월 17일

Amid the boundless waves of the Pacific,
tranquil as it sets its sails,
the boat that glides like an arrow—
where is it headed?
I ask: if it bears freedom and independence
then set course for the Korean Peninsula.

Il Sim Saeng
The Korean National Herald, September 17, 1913

감 사 일 노 래 Song of Thanksgiving

화장실의 허스빈은
슈염 깎기 분주하고
키친 안의 와이푸는
찐너하기 결을엮소
테경 옆헤 누이들은
머리 단당 s자로
사치하난 오라비는
적은 신에 꼴룩꼴룩

[중략]

압 뒤 뜰에 피난 국화
식탁에서 간든간든
갓 구어넌 터키고기
은 장반에 김 서렸다
허스빈이 창과 칼을
좌우 손에 갈라 쥐여
숨씨있게 베여노코
머리 숙여 하느님께

[후략]

김창만
신한민보 1918년 11월 28일

The husband in the bathroom
hastily shaves his beard.
The wife in the kitchen
tirelessly prepares dinner.
The sisters by the mirror
style their hair into S-shaped waves.
The brother, extravagant,
limping in small shoes.

[...]

Chrysanthemums bloom in the yards
—the table is neatly set.
Freshly roasted turkey,
steam curling from a silver plate.
The husband, with sword and trident,
skillfully carves the meat.
We bow our heads to God.

[...]

Kim Chang Man
The New Korea, November 28, 1918



本國時事

소작령호소하는 민성

전국에서 농민들의 호소하는 민성... (Text continues with details of the petition and government response regarding land cultivation regulations.)

부영반포로소

부영반포로소... (Text discusses the return of land cultivation rights and its impact on farmers.)

기주예제연안공장

기주예제연안공장... (Text reports on the construction and progress of the Gijung Yeseon Industrial Plant.)

부영반포

부영반포... (Text provides further details on the land cultivation policy and its implementation.)

各地方會報

各地方會報... (A collection of news reports from various local regions, including agricultural updates and community events.)



國民會務

國民會務... (Official notice or meeting agenda for the National Assembly, listing dates and topics.)

자화상⁶

니 몸은 지금 다섯자 일곱치—
그만하면 큰 키로라.
히말금한 얼굴은 둥글고,
몸은 통통하지 안코 알맞노라,
손발은 적지 안코,
머리털은 곱실곱실하노라.

머리는 크다고 하고,
리마는 버서져 싸지어 가고,
눈은 조금 적은 편이고,
코는 얼굴에 비히 적지 안노라.
입은 적고, 가늘고, 이덜흐게 싱기고,
귀는 크고, 광대 췌는 조금 나오고……
니 프로파일은 굴곡이 적노라!
그리도 나는 만족하노라!

니 웃음은 눈과 입에 뜨고,
니 설음은 짝 담은 입술에 나타나고,
니 번노는 머리털에 나타나노라.
니 욕망은 리마에 박혀 잇고,
오, 그리고 니 빈곤은 광대췌 우에 잇노라.

Self-portrait⁶

My body is now five feet seven inches tall,
that makes me tall enough.
My somewhat pale face is round,
the body is not plump but just right,
the hands and feet are not small,
the hair is wavy and wavier.

The head is said to be large,
the forehead is wide and receding,
the eyes are on the smaller side,
the nose is not small to the face.

The lips are small, slender, with a plaintive look,
the ears are large, and the cheekbones protrude slightly ...

My profile has little curve!
Still, I am content with myself!

My smile surfaces in my eyes and mouth,
my sorrow appears in my tightly pressed lips,
my agony appears in my hair.
My desire is lodged in my forehead,
oh, and my poverty rests upon my cheekbones.

곱든지 입든지
니 얼굴 우에는 표정이 써나지 안코,
니 맘은 얼굴 우에서
춤추고, 노리하노라－
그러나 나는 침통한 빛을 좋아하노라.

니 얼굴은
불타는 듯한 비경에 알맞고,
니 몸은
추식의 풍경화 비경에도 알맞노라.
「좀더 나 같았으면!」
나는 니 얼굴이 변하기를 원하노라!
알지 못할 그림이노라!

한흑구
신한민보 1933년 12월 28일

Whether beautiful or ugly,
emotion never leaves my face,
my heart, upon my face,
dances and sings.
Yet, I prefer a solemn light.

My face
fits against a fiery background,
my body
also fits a background of autumn color.
“If only it were more like me!”
I wish for my face to change!
What an inscrutable portrait it is!

Han Heuk-gu
The New Korea, December 28, 1933

제석

한등에서

Under a Lonely Lamp on New Year's Eve

단향산 그믐밤에
잠 못 이룬 두견새를
죽마고우 아니라기
발명할 곳 막연한 몸
태평양 물소리에
또 한 해를 보내면서
새해 온다 기뻐함은
할 수 없는 거짓이다.
인간의 모든 설움
제 아무리 쏘다 한들
이역 한창 저문 해에
나라 없는 한일거나

독사
국민보 1936년 12월 30일

On the final night of the year at Danhyangsan⁷
is the sleepless cuckoo—
not that it was my dear friend of youth.
My steps uncertain, my purpose unclear.
As the Pacific waves echo,
marking the end of another year,
the joy of the coming New Year
is a falsehood I cannot embrace.
Of all the sorrows of humankind,
none can match the anguish
of watching the sun sink low in a foreign land,
with no nation to call one's own.

Dook Sa
The Korean National Herald, December 30, 1936

왜적의

항복을

듣고

Upon
of

Japan's

Hearing
Surrender

붓대를 던지고서
엉덩춤 핫튼 노리

원수가 항복하니
김버셔 밋쳇노라

강산이 완정한 날에
니 나라로 갈게나

동해수부
신한민보 1945년 9월 6일

Hurling my writing brush aside—
a wild butt-dance, a silly song

The enemy surrenders
and I have gone mad with joy

When our mountains and rivers stand whole again,
I will journey back to my homeland.

Dong Hae Su Bu
The New Korea, September 6, 1945

¹ Lee Hong Kee's poem is often cited as the first Korean immigrant literature in the United States, but the original text, presumably published in a newspaper, remains unavailable. This version is excerpted from a publication that dates to April 6, 1905: Hawaiian Korean Literary Association, *100 Years of Korean Poetry in Hawaii* (Seoul: Gwanak, 2005).

² All the poems from *The New Korea* presented here are based on the archaic Hangul version in Kyu Ik Cho, *해방 전 재미 한인 이민 문학*, vols. 2–3 (Seoul: Wolin, 1999). The original text can be found in the National Library of Korea's newspaper archive: <https://nl.go.kr/newspaper/>.

³ This poem was published a second time in the same newspaper on November 11, 1915, under the title “Geogukhaeng” by Ahn Chang-ho.

⁴ The original section title “사조 (詞藻)” meant “poetry and prose,” not the poem's title. In this context, “Untitled” serves as the English title. All poems from *The Korean National Herald* were originally published in archaic Hangul. The modern Korean version and the original text are available in the Independence Hall of Korea's online database: <https://search.i815.or.kr/>.

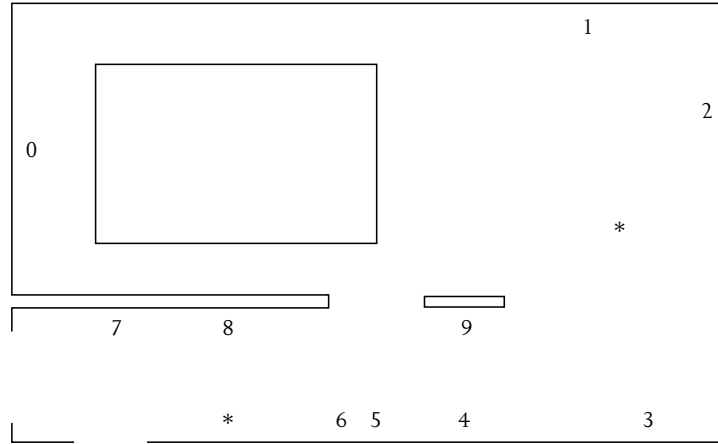
⁵ See endnote 4.

⁶ This piece, part of the poetry anthology *Heuk-gu Sijip Pyeoncho* (흑구시집편초), was serialized over several days in the newspaper.

⁷ The transliterated name means “sandalwood mountain,” a known nickname for Honolulu among Korean immigrants at the time.

Sung Hwan Kim: Queer bird faces¹

April 5 – May 25, 2025, Hessel Museum of Art



0. Sung Hwan Kim (in musical collaboration with David Michael DiGregorio a.k.a. dogr), *Hair is a piece of head*, 2021, H.264 QuickTime 2160p on SSD, 16:9, color, sound (stereo), 22 minutes 59 seconds. Courtesy of the artist.

Sung Hwan Kim, *By Mary Jo Freshley* 프레실리에 의(依)해, 2023, H.264 QuickTime 2160p on SSD, 16:9, color, sound (stereo), 14 minutes 4 seconds. Courtesy of the artist.²

1. Untitled research material.³ Courtesy of Sung Hwan Kim.
2. Mound of ash expressing an island, Seoul Memorial Park, Seocho-gu, Seoul, March 20, 2024. Courtesy of Sung Hwan Kim.
3. Looking southwest from the air toward Kaho'olawe, with the tiny island crater of Molokini on the bottom right, 2024. Photo by Momi Wheeler, Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana.

4. Footage of Kim Chun-Hung's foot movement,⁴ filmed by Robert Garfias, 1966, H.264 encoding in QuickTime MOV file, monochrome, 4 minutes 6 seconds. Courtesy of National Gugak Center.
5. Man "nam" 男 and woman "nyo" 女, scanned page⁵ from Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (restored ed.), University of California Press, 2022, pp. 26–27. Courtesy of University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.
6. Transcribed from a page of Peter Hyun, *In the New World: The Making of A Korean American*, 1995, p. 33, Kaimuki, 2020. Courtesy of Sung Hwan Kim.
7. Korean waterfront worker in Korea, photograph of a photograph by R. J. Baker, Bishop Museum Archives, Kalihi/Pālama, 2019, 2022. Courtesy of Sung Hwan Kim and Bishop Museum Archives.
8. Description of the Bishop Museum Archives, from Noelani Arista and Sarah Kuaiwa, "Storied Places—Sites of Exhibition," *Hawai'i Triennial 2022* catalogue, p. 156. Courtesy of University of Hawai'i Press.
9. An excerpt from the song of the now-extinct Kaua'i 'ō'ō song, recorded by Thane Pratt on August 17, 1976, in Kauai, Hawai'i. © Thane Pratt; Cornell Lab of Ornithology | Macaulay Library.

¹ Sung Hwan Kim: *Queer bird faces* is curated by Hayoung Chung as part of the requirements for the master of arts degree at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. In addition to exhibition support provided by CCS Bard, the exhibition publication is made possible by BKCNC.

² *Hair is a piece of head* screens April 5–27, 2025, followed by *By Mary Jo Freshley* 프레실리에 의(依)해 on April 30–May 25, 2025. Except for the films, all research materials shown here are the curator's excerpts and representations from Kim's project exhibited at Sung Hwan Kim: *Ua a'o 'ia 'o 'ia e ia*, Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), December 19, 2024 – March 30, 2025. The * in the floor plan refer to *Blue Stand*. *Blue Stand*—the rectangles that sit next to these materials—has been reproduced based on the curator's experience of seeing these objects in person in Seoul, drawing from her memory as well as photographs and notes she took, in addition to basic design specifications from SeMA (original design by Johoon Choi).

³ iPhone Live Photo of a bird that Kim took in Amsterdam. This excerpt is from an untitled installation displayed in Room 2 of the SeMA exhibition.

⁴ Kim Chun-Hung (Kim Cheon-Heung, 1909–2007) is known as the last court dancer of the Joseon Dynasty. Beginning in the 1960s, he traveled to Hawai'i multiple times to teach and perform at the University of Hawai'i and the Halla Huhm Korean Dance Studio, both in Honolulu.

⁵ Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951–1982) was a Korean American artist who immigrated to the United States via Hawai'i. The two Chinese characters are borrowed from her book *Dictée* (1982). The front of the sheet features an image of the Korean independence activist Yu Gwan-sun; the back displays a petition that the Korean politician Syngman Rhee sent to US President Roosevelt.

Image Credits

The cover image is inspired by an illustration from *The Korean National Herald*, September 6, 1913.

Pg 11: Sung Hwan Kim (in musical collaboration with David Michael DiGregorio a.k.a. dogr), *Hair is a piece of head*, film still, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

Pg 16: Sung Hwan Kim, *Summer Days in Keijo*—written in 1937, film still, 2007. Courtesy of the artist.

Pg 19: Yun Yong-hyun, “Cheongchuloram in Indigo Dyeing,” *Korea Heritage Service Newsletter*, June 14, 2013, https://www.cha.go.kr/cop/bbs/selectBoardArticle.do?nttId=14377&bbsId=BBSMSTR_1008&mn=NS_01_09_01.

Pg 23: Installation view of Sung Hwan Kim, *Ua a’o ‘ia ‘o ia e ia*, at the Seoul Museum of Art, December 19, 2024 – March 30, 2025. Photo by Hayoung Chung.

Pg 25: Looking southwest from the air toward Kaho’olawe, with the tiny island crater of Molokini on the bottom right, 2024. Photo by Momi Wheeler, Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana.

Pg 28-29: Unpublished booklet for Room 3 of Sung Hwan Kim: *Ua a’o ‘ia ‘o ia e ia*, at the Seoul Museum of Art, December 19, 2024 – March 30, 2025. Photo by Hayoung Chung.

Pg 44-45: *The New Korea*, December 28, 1933. © National Library of Korea.

Colophon

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