

PACIFIC
CENTURY

HAWAII TRIENNIAL 22

E
HO'OMAU
NO
MOANANUIĀKEA

Sung Hwan Kim

in musical collaboration with
David Michael DiGregorio

Sung Hwan Kim works in film, video, drawing, painting, architecture, literature, installation, performance, radio broadcast, and print publication. Adopting different roles—director, editor, writer, composer, performer, narrator, educator, researcher—Kim collaboratively explores marginal stories of peoples and places through his physical and psychological experiences.

For HT22 Kim and frequent collaborator composer David Michael DiGregorio present a new installation, *Hair is a piece of head* 머리는 머리의 부분 (2021). The installation includes a multilingual video of the same title, spoken in Mandarin, Korean, Hawaiian, and English, and is a portion of the larger multi-part research project *A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* (2017–), focused on undocumented Korean immigrant histories in the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century.

Hair is a piece of head features Suin Kwon, Yoon Jin Kim, Byungjun Kwon, local friends Geoffrey Farmer, Auli'i Mitchell, Ahukiniakealohanui Fuertes, and members of the Meyer and Broderick families. Commenting on familial bonds and facial resemblance with respect to the video, Kim states, 'I imagine the relation between head and hair as that between a mother and child, in the context of he pilinia wehena 'ole [unseverable association]. But I also wonder about what this deep bond looks like to someone who is outside of the connection.'

Hair is a piece of head makes use of the iPhone camera feature 'Live Photos' to quote documentation of 'picture' brides who, at the turn of the twentieth century, journeyed to Hawai'i through a matchmaking process dependent on exchanging and selecting photographs. In the video, Hawai'i is both an idea and a reality—an interstitial realm that has served for centuries as a point of passage for most, if not all, immigrants crossing the Pacific. Ironically, many oral-history accounts of migration, even those

b. 1975, Seoul
lives and works in New York

b. 1979, Boston
lives and works in New York

that are lesser known, are often oblivious to the dwindling fate of another nation—in this case, that of Kānaka 'Ōiwi, Native Hawaiians. This harsh reality is also an integral part of the work and is reinforced through a sound 'haiku' composed by DiGregorio that quotes a guitar strummed by George Helm, a beloved Hawaiian musician and activist.

Kim identifies three significant pieces of imagery which provided motifs for the video:

1. Choi Ik-Hyun, a traditionalist from the terminal Korean dynasty, who, in 1896, said, 'I would rather have my head cut off than cut my hair', a statement against the republican revolution that ultimately forced all male adults to modernize their hairstyle. The quote has been co-opted by both right- and left-wing groups since then (pride; tradition; education; glory).

2. A photograph taken by Ed Greevy of an activist, Terrilee Keko'olani, her hair blown by the wind around microphones in the Save Our Surf demonstration at Wāwāmalu, O'ahu, in 1972 (justice; reason; tradition).

3. A song taught in an American school in California circa 1910, as documented by Mary Paik Lee (education; pride):

'Ching Chong Chinaman
Sitting on a wall
Along came a white man
And chopped his head off'

Originally commissioned by Gwangju Biennale Foundation, Kim and DiGregorio collaboratively produced the video in O'ahu and Kaua'i across 2019 and 2020, with additional support from TRADES Artist in Residence, Pu'uho'ou Society, and Koa Gallery, Kapi'olani Community College. The installation for HT22 includes a new formation of drawings created in Wilhelmina Rise, Honolulu, and other elements previously fabricated for exhibition at Kravis Studio, Museum of Modern Art, New York. **DKB**



FROM TOP

Sung Hwan Kim, *a seat for one person*, 2021, painted plywood, silver leaf, and aluminum, 114 x 112 x 68 cm; Drew Kahu'āina Broderick carries the head of Maile Meyer, his mother, Sierra Drive, Wilhelmina Rise, Honolulu, Kona, O'ahu, Hawai'i, *Hair is a piece of head* 머리는 머리의 부분, 2021, book, pp. 20–21, sunghwankim.org/study/gbcommissionbook.html. Courtesy of the artist. © Sung Hwan Kim.

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© 2022 Mari J. Matsuda and Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, 'Art, Politics, Survival: An Intergenerational Conversation'.

© 2022 Léuli Eshraghi, 'Mo tu'ā māo'i o le Vasalaolao, Dear Indigenous Ancestors of the Great Ocean'.

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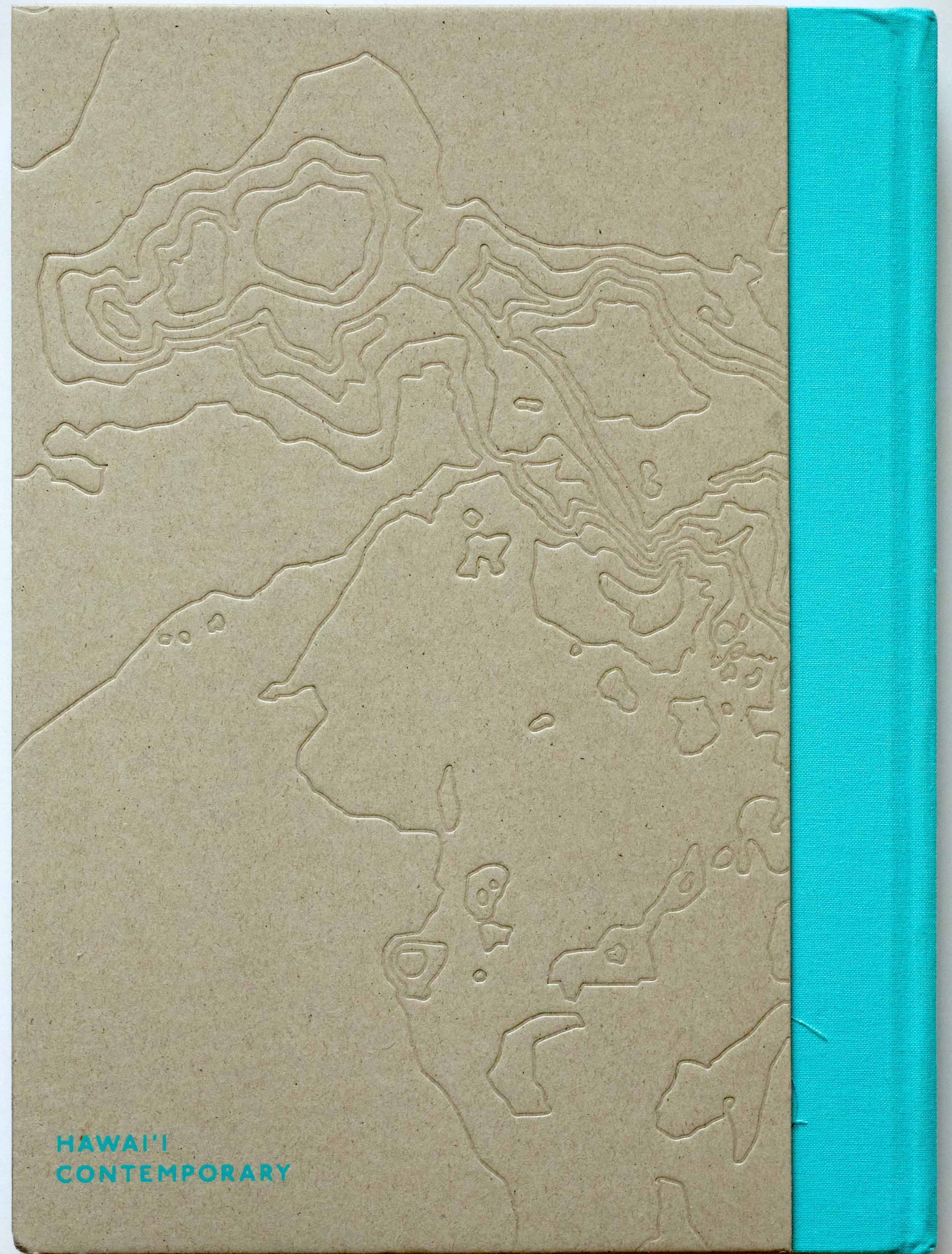
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