

INTERNATIONAL

INNOVATION

PROLIFERATION

YEON SHIM CHUNG  
SUNJUNG KIM  
KIMBERLY CHUNG  
KEITH B. WAGNER

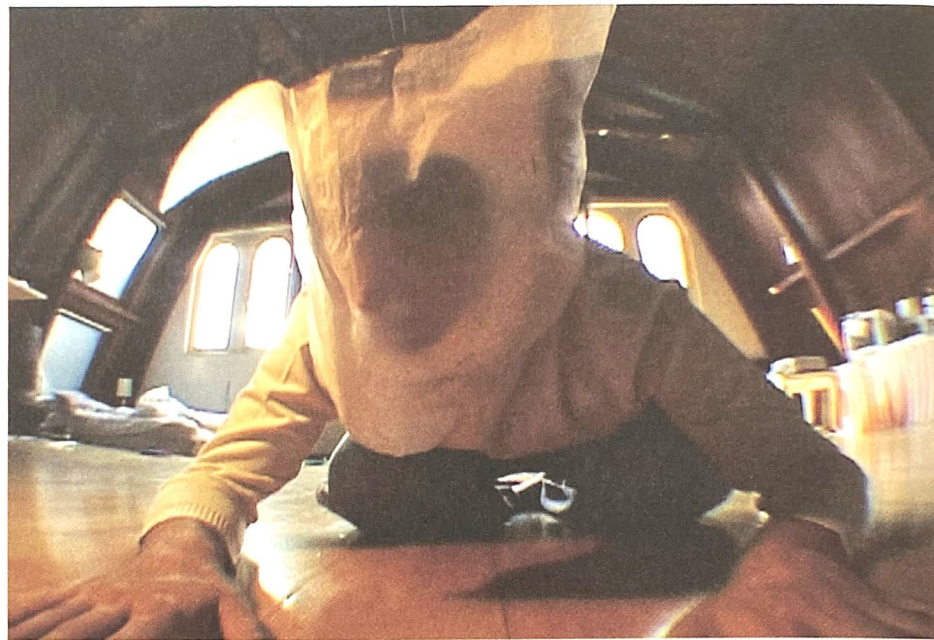
FROM 1953

KOREAN ART

PHAIDON



19 Sung Hwan Kim  
*Dog Video*, 2006  
 MiniDV to DV/DVCPRO NTSC file,  
 4:3, colour and stereo sound in  
 musical collaboration with David  
 Michael DiGregorio aka dogr  
 6 mins 55 secs  
 Installation view at The Tanks,  
 Tate Modern, London, 2012

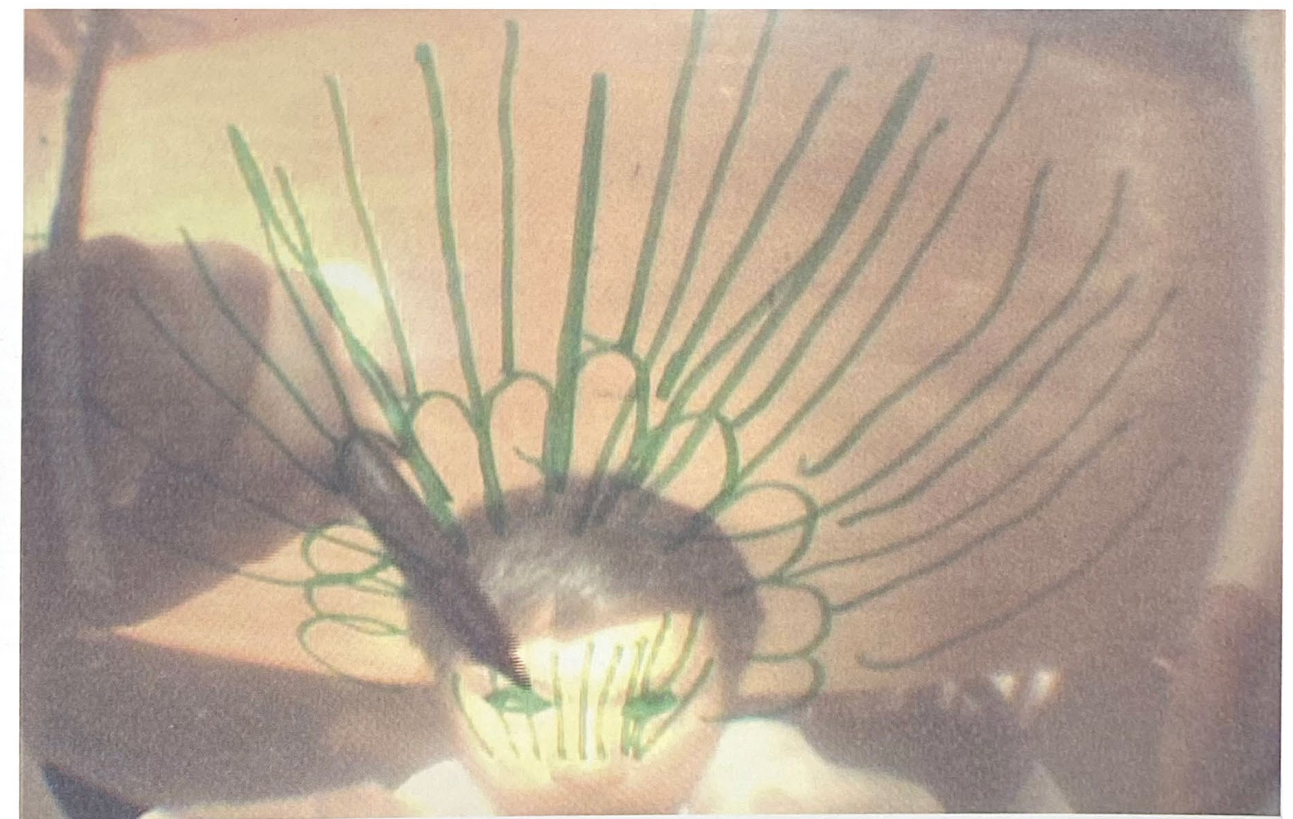


20 Sung Hwan Kim  
*From the Commanding  
 Heights...*, 2007  
 MiniDV and 16 mm to DV/  
 DVCPRO NTSC file, 4:3,  
 colour and stereo sound in  
 musical collaboration with  
 David Michael DiGregorio  
 aka dogr  
 26 mins 57 secs

works generate an anthropologically 'liminal' space, or 'intermediary position'<sup>40</sup> on the threshold of art and non-art, the sensory and non-sensory, political and non-political, civilization (the industrial) and non-civilization (the primitive/indigenous). Although Yang's works are fragmentary, indirect and metaphorical, mirroring an impossible resolution, they explicitly explore recurring subject matters of postcolonialism, geopolitical issues, diaspora, political displacement, social migration and mobility through interpretative critique. As curator Doryun Chong has noted, Yang seems to be 'attracted to under-recognized histories as an alternative narrative to our materialist understanding of art history'.<sup>41</sup>

Sung Hwan Kim (b. 1975) is a Korean-born artist who also explores the inherent paradox of individual and collective memory, through the intermediality of video and performance art.<sup>42</sup> In short videos like *Dog Video* (2006), *From the Commanding Heights...* (2007), *Summer Days in Keijo - Written in 1937* (2007) and *Washing Brain and Corn* (2010), Sung Hwan Kim writes, directs and choreographs personal stories that represent the mixture of real and fictional elements (figs. 19–21). In *Washing Brain and Corn* Kim recounts and distorts a particularly well-known story among the Korean post-war generations from the 1970s and 1980s, in which a boy shouts 'I hate the communists!' in response to the arrival of North Korean insurgents in northeast South Korea in 1968.<sup>43</sup> According to the tale, the boy's mouth was subsequently torn open by the insurgents and he was killed. This story became so renowned that it was included in Moral Studies textbooks in Korea, but it gradually faded from the South Korean public's collective memory with the end of the Cold War.

This question of individual and collective memory also resonates in Kim's quasi-documentary work, *Summer Days in Keijo - Written in 1937*, first exhibited at Atelier Hermès, Seoul in 2007 and then at the 5th Berlin Biennale in 2008. The work is based on Swedish zoologist Sten Bergman's (1895–1975) travelogue *In Korean Wilds and Villages*, which, while examining various animal species, also included ethnographic detail of Korean life and culture in Keijo and the northern





province.<sup>44</sup> Kim’s work follows a protagonist, a Dutch woman, who walks through contemporary Seoul and recalls Bergman’s vision of Keijo (the Japanese name for Seoul in the colonial era). The work’s utilization of anachronistic ‘points of reference within a vast web of social, political and historical citation’ reminds us of the web of the past in the experience of the present.<sup>45</sup> It exemplifies the way in which Kim’s works explore personal and collective stories, tales, episodes, myth and memories through a lyrical and poetically confessional mode of presentation. In his use of a variety of mediums including video, music, poetry, architecture and performance, Kim deals with the postmodern transference of memory under contemporary media conditions, and ultimately, like Yang, suggests the indeterminacy of meaning in even the most mundane stories.



21 Sung Hwan Kim  
*Washing Brain and Corn*, 2010  
HD MiniDV to ProRes 422 (HQ) file, 16:9,  
colour and stereo sound in musical  
collaboration with David Michael DiGregorio  
aka dogr  
10 mins 22 secs

1 Lee Yil, ‘Benis biennale hangugkwang gaegwane zeuumhayeo’ (Around the Establishment of the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale), *Misulsegye* (Art World), (December 1994), pp. 84–5; for criticism of the architectural design of the space, see Kim In-kyum, ‘Benis biennale hangugkwang bipyeong’ (Criticism of the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale), *Space* (September 1995), pp 104–5.

2 Kim Won-hong, ‘Venice Biennale Korean Pavilion’, *Munhwa yesul, ARKO* (January 1995).

3 Terry Smith, ‘Introduction: The Contemporaneity Question’, in Okwui Enwezor, Nancy Condee and Terry Smith, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham, NC, 2008).

4 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983), pp. 1–35.

5 Terry Smith interrogates definitions of contemporary art and contemporaneity, leading to discussions and questions about the origin of contemporary art in art history disciplines; see Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago, 2009); see also Terry Smith, ‘Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Summer 2006), pp. 681–707.

6 Michael Baers, ‘Michael Asher (1943–2012): Parting Words and Unfinished Work’, *E-flux*, no. 39 (November 2012), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/39/60293/michael-asher-1943-2012-parting-words-and-unfinished-work>. Accessed November 2018.

7 Government and city funds – equivalent to about US \$10 million – supported exhibitions like Mediacity Seoul, directed by Misook Song. She noted in an interview that this media festival realized ‘the dream of Seoul with the digital world’ (Chang-ho Kim, 2000). Since the FIFA World Cup in 2002, which was held in South Korea and Japan, this international festival has had socio-political ambitions and globalizing goals. See ‘Art or Advertising? Either Way, Seoul Is Mesmerized’, *New York Times* (14 September 2000). For this festival, Barbara London, then an associate curator of MoMA, New York, organized ‘Escape’, referring to the Esc key on the computer keyboard; this was an important exhibition that included Nam June Paik and other international artists. Until the present day, this festival has been held biennially, but has suffered under decreasing city funds because there has been a rise in regional biennale exhibitions and festivals that also demand prefectural and governmental funding; the Busan International Film Festival is one example.

8 Okwui Enwezor, ‘The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a Constant State of Transition’, in Enwezor, Condee and Smith, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture* (2008), p. 224.

9 S. N. Eisenstadt, ‘Multiple Modernities’, *Daedalus*, vol. 129, no. 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 1–29.

10 Boris Groys, ‘The Typology of Contemporary Art’, in Enwezor, Condee and Smith, eds., *Antinomies of Art and Culture* (2008), p. 75.

11 Ibid., p. 76.

12 Enwezor, ‘The Postcolonial Constellation’ (2008), p. 208.

13 For issues of ‘contemporaneity’ in Korea, see *Art in Culture* (February 2013), pp. 126–60.

14 For more on Yook’s work, see *Yook Keun Byung: Survival is History* (Art Sonje Center, Seoul, 2018).

15 See Joan Kee, ‘Some Thoughts on the Practice of Oscillation: Works by Suh Do-Ho and Oh Inhwon’, *Third Text*, vol. 17, issue 2 (2003), pp. 141–50.

16 For the artist as nomad in the 1990s, see James Meyer, ‘Nomads’, *Parkett* (May 1997), pp. 205–9; Christine Starkman, ‘Longing for Place Elsewhere: Kimsooja, Do Ho Suh, and Bahc Yiso’, in Sunjung Kim, ed., *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea* (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2009).

17 Richard Serra, ‘Notes from Sight Point Road’, *Perspecta*, vol. 19 (1982), p. 180.

18 For a discussion on site-specificity, architecture and sculpture, see Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’, *October*, vol. 8 (Spring 1979), pp. 30–44.

19 See also *Do Ho Suh Home Within Home* (Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, 2012). For more description of Suh’s home installations, see Jie Un Rhee, ‘Community in Questions: The Installations of Suh Do-ho’, *Inmun gwahak yeongu nonchong* (The Journal of Humanities), vol. 32 (2011), pp. 353–68. See also Kim Jung-rak, *Diaspora: Korean Nomadism* (Seoul, 2011).

20 Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010), Helena Almeida (b. 1934) and Lygia Clark (1920–88).

21 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York, 1994), p. 17.

22 Seo Seong-rok, ‘The Grammar and Expression of “Sewing”’: On the First Solo Exhibition of Work by Kimsooja’, ‘The Horizontal and the Vertical Structure as an Essential and Universal Framework in which Nature and Man Meet’. Seo’s essays were written in 1988 and reprinted, <http://www.kimsooja.com/texts>. Accessed 15 January 2019.

23 Ahn So-yeon, *Mind Space* (Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, 2003). For Korean women artists in the global context, see Jin Whui-Yeon, *Coexisting Differences* (Seoul, 2011).

24 Kimsooja’s MA thesis, housed at the Hongik University Library, is also concerned with the geometry of the horizontal and the vertical, in an examination of modern abstract painting. If the vertical and horizontal grid is an important visual icon for modernist painting, Kimsooja dismantles the painterly grid in her bodily performance and related forty-five silkscreen works. Kimsooja, ‘Study on Universal and Hereditary Characters in Formative Signs’, MFA Thesis (Hongik University, Seoul, 1984); Suh Young-Hee, ‘Contemplating a System of Horizontals and Verticals’, in Vancouver Art Gallery, *Kimsooja: Unfolding* (Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, Germany, 2013), pp. 25–42. See also Rosalind Krauss, ‘Grids’, *October*, vol. 9 (Summer 1979), pp. 50–64.

25 The exhibition initially opened in 1997 and then travelled to CAPC musée d’art contemporain de Bordeaux in France (5 June–30 August 1998); MoMA PS1, NY (18 October 1998–10 January 1999); The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (29 January–21 April 1999); Hayward Gallery, London (13 May–27 June 1999); after this, it travelled to Bangkok and Kiasma in Helsinki in 1999.

26 About her use of cloth, which started in 1983, she recalls: ‘One day I was sewing up bed covers with [my] mother, when suddenly I experienced intimacy and amazing oneness in which all my thoughts, sensitivity, and gesture were all united and fused. I also found a possibility to embrace in it numerous long-buried memories and pains, and even the love of life.’ Quoted from Oh Gwang-su, ‘Recent Work of Kimsooja: A Return to the Archetype’, in *Soo Ja Kim* (Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, 1991); for Kim’s interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, see *Flash Art*, no. 192 (January–February 1997).

27 Sunjung Kim, ‘Interview with Kimsooja’, April 2008; [www.kimsooja.com](http://www.kimsooja.com). Accessed 10 December 2018. See also *Kimsooja: A Needle Woman* (Kunsthalle Vern, Bern, Switzerland, 2001). This catalogue publishes texts by Nakamura Kenji, Bernhard Fibicher, Robert C. Morgan and Harald Szeemann. Hans Ulrich Obrist’s email conversation with Kimsooja is in this catalogue.

28 David Harvey, ‘Time–space Compression and the Postmodern Condition’, in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge and Oxford, 1990), p. 284.

29 Part of this text on Minjung Kim is based on Yeon Shim Chung’s essay in the catalogue for ‘Faultlines’, one of

the exhibitions of the 2018 edition of the Gwangju Biennale, entitled ‘Imagined Borders’.

30 Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), pp. 4–6.

31 See *Rhee Seundja: Road to the Antipodes* (MMCA, Gwacheon, 2018). Seundja Rhee was a Korean abstract painter and female artist who, together with Na Hyeoseok, Park Naehyeon and Chun Kyungja, dealt with experiences particular to women; see Yeon Shim Chung, *Seundja Rhee’s Early Works: ‘Woman-Earth’ in the 1960s, Longing and Painting* (Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, 2018).

32 Choi Soon-woo, ‘Chogaedului hwadan’ (Art Scenes of Early Autumn), *Chosun Ilbo* (2 September 1965).

33 Jori Finkel, ‘Bringing Storage to the Spotlight’, *Art News* (March 2010), pp. 66–9; see also ‘When Herman Met Haegue, Haegue Yang in Conversation with Herman Chong’, *ArtReview Asia* (Hong Kong Special Edition, 2015), pp. 36–41.

34 Korean-born Yang went to Germany in 1994 to study at the Städelschule in Frankfurt.

35 Suh Kyungsik, *Primo Levi e no tabi* (Tokyo, 1999); see also Leire Vergara, ‘Haegue Yang: Untimely Histories’, *Afterall* (Autumn/Winter 2013), p. 101. Yang’s work is titled *Accommodating the Epic Dispersion – On Non-cathartic Volume of Dispersion* (2012). See also interview with T. J. Demos in Julienne Lorz, ed., *Haegue Yang* (Cologne, Germany, 2013), pp. 56–84.

36 The French version *La Maladie de la mort* (Paris, 1982) was translated by Heekyoung Chung at the Insa Art Space of the Arts Council Korea (ARKO); see also *Haegue Yang: Voice Over Three* (Samuso: Space for Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2010).

37 Haegue Yang and Nicolas Bourriaud, eds., *Haegue Yang: Chronotopic Traverses* (La Panacée-MoCo, Montpellier, France, 2018).

38 The two published *Song of Ariran: A Korean Communist in the Chinese Revolution* (New York 1941; 2nd edn, 1972). Kim San’s real name was Chang Chi-rak (in Japanese documents it is written Chang Chi-hak). His only son, Ko Young-Gwang, was recognized in China as a person of national merit in 2005, but his mother had to adopt his Chinese stepfather’s last name to avoid any political backlash.

39 Taken from Leire Vergara, ‘Haegue Yang: Untimely Histories’ (2013), p. 102, footnotes 6–11; see also Doryun Chong, ‘A Small Dictionary for Haegue Yang’, in Karen Jacobson, ed., *Asymmetric Equality* (Los Angeles and Bilbao, Spain, 2008), pp. 149–50.

40 Paul B. Franklin, ‘Haegue Yang, at Chantal Crousel, Paris’, *Art in America*

(23 December 2012), <https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/haegue-yang>. Accessed November 2018.

41 Doryun Chong, ‘Movement Studies’, *Parkett*, no. 89 (2011), p. 72.

42 The Queens Museum, New York organized Sung Hwan Kim’s ‘From the Commanding Heights of the Earliest Natural Fortification to the Architectonic Innovations of the Watch Tower the Development of Observation Balloons Satellites Surveillance there has been no End to the Enlargement of Field of Perception Whether I know You or not Matters Less than How You Appear to the Objective Eye’. See Lauren O’Neill-Butler, ‘Sung Hwan Kim: From the Commanding Heights...’, *X-TRA*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Spring 2012), pp. 68–70.

43 Sung Hwan Kim, ‘Artist’s Note: *Washing Brain and Corn*’, in *Mediacity Seoul 6* (Mediacity Seoul, 2010), p. 182. The theme of ‘Trust’ of this biennale was curated by Sunjung Kim, Clara Kim, Nicolaus Schafhausen and Fumihiko Sumitomo. See also Sung Hwan Kim, ‘Line Wall’, in *Ki-da Rilke* (Kunsthalle Basel, 2011), pp. 14–27, 162–9.

44 Sten Bergman, *In Korean Wilds and Villages*, trans. Frederic Whyte (Worcester and London, 1938). The original publication is titled *I morgonstillhetens land; skildringar från en forskningsfärd till Korea, av Sten Bergman* (Stockholm, 1937). Kim collaborated with David Michael DiGregorio aka dogr on the soundtracks for all the works referred to in this chapter.

45 Nicholas Warner ‘Sung Hwan Kim: Tate Modern London, 18 July to 28 October’, *Art Monthly*, issue 360 (October 2012), p. 36.