

- 01 [Slide guitar green digital backdrop. head of a young asian man appears in frame. there is a transparent screen between the video camera below and the man above. there is a voiceover. sometimes, the same phrases that we hear in the voiceover are printed on cut-up pieces of transparency, which the man places and removes in synch with the words we hear. when he is not placing phrases, the man illustrates the story as it is narrated, appearing to outline and embellish his own body by drawing with erasable marker on the transparent screen.]
- 02 [titles and voiceover] I KNOW THAT / IT DOESN'T MATTER / IF THINGS ARE TRUE OR NOT/ BUT THIS IS A TRUE STORY / I KNOW THIS WOMAN
- 03 [voiceover only] *she doesn't tell anyone. but she had a third ear. on top of her head* [appears to give himself third ear] *normally it is hidden under her hair. but when it rains* [draws rainy streaks] *she needs to plug it with her finger* ["plugs" drawing with actual finger] *if she doesn't. water leaks into her head. water gathers on her eye nose and mouth* [appears to fill own eyes, nose with marker] *and pours out washing away her make up*
- 04 [screen wiped clean, start again. from now on, scenes cut between titles and pictures. voiceover and hand-made titles]
- 05 SHE HAS A VERY LONG / BEAUTIFUL NECK
- 06 [man places a peach-colored transparent cut-out of a head and long neck on transparent screen. positions own body to overlap with the cut-out. exposes shoulders. back to voiceover and hand-made titles:] IT IS SO VOLUMINOUS THAT / HER VOICE ECHOES / INSIDE HER THROAT [touches throat.]
- 07 [hand-made titles and voiceover] WHEN SHE WAS CAMPING OUT / A FAMILY OF SNAKES THOUGHT / IT WAS A SMALL CAVE
- 08 [voiceover only] *and crawled in and stuffed themselves in it*
- 09 [transparent neck and head, with man's body real body fit inside the outlines. six snakes drawn inside the throat]
- 10 [voiceover only] *She lost her voice since then the only way to get them out was to bite snakes' heads off* [places drawing of snakes' severed heads on screen. all snakes are removed. neck and head alone alone again, with man behind them]
- 11 *the decapitated bodies were still inside her neck. from the outside people could see the snake scale patterns through her skin. they thought it was a cool jewelry or a good ornamentation* [fits himself exactly within the drawn head and neck. green digital backdrop. voiceover continues] *she was ashamed of this pattern. she always turned away when she had to talk with people*
- 12 [an indistinct image of a woman with her head turned away has been laid the screen. the man "faces" her rather than fitting himself within her outlines] *she only talked through the reflection of a mirror and she occasionally touched her neck unconsciously* [using his hand, he touches the neck of the turned-away woman on the transparency, partially overlapping her]
- 13 *I didn't see this but my friend told me. Once he saw a long green snake slip out of her mouth* [man lays three cut-out green snakes onto transparent screen so that they appear to be coming out of his mouth]
- 14 [voiceover with titles] HE SAID / SHE SPEAKS SERPENTINE [green digital backdrop]
- 15 SHE ONLY HAD ONE FRIEND / AN EVIL MAN [now our man is an evil man: lowering his face to show only half, looks upwards]
- 16 [voiceover only] *He was so evil that when he was upset, a stick of bloods split out from his head* [draws streaks from his own head, green pen] *He was a cold man. even his blood was green. sometimes they would drool down his face* [draws lines down his face, then colors in eyes] *She had to lie down with her belly on the floor* [places a paper doll of the snake woman above him on transparent screen]
- 17 [lays down handmade title] AN EVIL MAN [places several paper dolls]
- 18 *he liked to touch her hair. and blow on her back* [long-necked woman is backed by

The title of Joan Didion's *Where I was From* made me think: Is it possible to have been from somewhere once, and one day, not be from there any more?

In *From the Commanding Heights...*, the artist's mother recounts a long-ago rumor of an affair between the dictator and a movie star neighbor, triggered when their apartment complex began experiencing unexplained blackouts. It sounds just like a fairy-tale: To conceal his trysts with a beautiful commoner, the king brings night to an entire village. At the end of her story, Mom tells how she was taken in for questioning by the secret service. This is what they asked: "So you never heard this story right? / you never saw this happened right?/ so this never happened right? / so you never told anyone of this story right?" Her conclusion: "this is what they wanted from us / that nothing happened."

In Roberto Bolaño's *By Night in Chile* a dying Opus Dei priest and literary critic recalls his (and Chile's literary and political) life as it flows out of him in a fantastical, self-justifying rant. Here's how it starts:

"I am dying now, but I still have many things to say. I used to be at peace with myself. Quiet and at peace. But it all blew up unexpectedly. ... One has to be responsible, as I have always said. One has a moral obligation to take responsibility for one's actions, and that includes one's words and silences, yes, one's silences, because silences rise to heaven too, and God hears them, and only God understands and judges them, so one must be very careful with one's silences. I am responsible in every way. My silences are immaculate."

Under oppressive regimes, everything of importance circulates quietly underground. Bolaño's (and Kim's) larger project is how to communicate what an individual can know, do it with an awareness of its limits and its potential for transcendence, and to, finally, touch other realms—go from fact into truth. In one segment that feels like Surrealist detective-fiction, our priest meets the frightening Mr Raef and Mr Etah (notice what their names spell backwards) who send him on a trumped-up-sounding mission to Europe to do

research on using falcons to solve the problem of pigeon droppings on churches. When he gets home, "In Chile things were not going well." To avoid the upheavals he buries himself in reading the Greeks ("Chile restored relations with Cuba...an pro-Allende general was killed...I read Tyrtaios of Sparta..."). In the end, Allende commits suicide and Pinochet is in power. Then, "I sat there in silence, a finger between the pages to mark my place, and thought: Peace at last."

Chung Yoon Hee appears four times. First, she's only a shadowy transparency, part of a an invented fairy-tale about a woman with snakes in her throat who "HAD ONLY ONE FRIEND/ AN EVIL MAN." Her head is turned away, like Richter's *Betty*. This shot reappears full-screen semi-frozen in a few repeated frames captured on a VCR, appearing eerily, perpetually about to turn around. There's another clip in which she faces us directly, also slowed and repeated, in which the simple gesture of raising her hand to her throat takes on incredible emotional weight; finally we see her free, skipping through a forest, in a Korean country-style jumpsuit. Kim took these dreamlike snippets from a 1980 film called *Does the Cuckoo Cry at Night*, a melodrama set during the Japanese occupation of Korea, in which our heroine plays an orphan girl become a charcoal-burner's wife who is exploited by a Japanese colonial official and ends with her murdering him, and self-immolating, in the forest. One of her only period films, *Cuckoo* swept Korea's Grand Bell awards the year it was released. It was a highlight of a career built on films with titles like *Sleep Deeper than Death*, *I am Lady Number 77*, *When Love Blossoms*, and *High School Champ*.

"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" is a slightly reworked quotation from French theorist Paul Virilio. In the original essay, after "... the field of perception" comes the line "Eyesight and direct vision have gradually given way to optical or

- 34 [on recording, the listener laughs]
- 35 YOU NEVER SAW THIS HAPPENED RIGHT? / SO THIS NEVER HAPPENED RIGHT? / SO YOU NEVER TOLD ANYONE OF THIS STORY RIGHT? / THIS IS WHAT THEY WANTED FROM US / THAT NOTHING HAPPENED
- 36 [black-and-white footage of young man, eyebrows raised. voiceover, no titles]
- 37 *One. I didn't really know this woman* [turns away, followed by shot of turned-away chung yoon hee. this time, she almost turns towards us]
- 38 *Two. She lived nearby me* [overhead shot of map of Amsterdam, with buildings reflected on it. man leaning over it, points.]
- 39 [footage of movie star skipping through forest, birds chirping, in traditional garb.]
- 40 [back to drawing box. voiceover while writing words in marker:]
- 41 *Three. In 1979, in my village, there were many blackouts* [dramatically dons transparent mask, which has small tree cut from plastic growing from it]
- 42 [chung yoon hee, standing and facing us this time, in a few frames captured from tv. korean traditional garb. camera moves in closer, electronic music starts, dogr sings]
- 43 *We didn't know her. But how we knew her face. We didn't know this woman. What was she what was she wearing? Something so white and pearly. Whose woman was she?* [she moves her hand to her throat] *Oh these days!* (3x) [green] *She doesn't pass by. Oh these days* (3x) *She doesn't pass by*
- 44 [sequence in 16mm film. titles, no voiceover. birdsong]
- 444 A VIEW FROM MY APARTMENT [Amsterdam rooftops shot from high window] OFTEN IT RAINS OR SNOWS / LIKE THIS [snow] MY HOUSE / ME [young white man coming out of house] I TAKE A WALK IN THE BOTANICAL GARDEN [young white man in warm hat and coat, camera pans up a giant fern] STRANGE PLANT / WILD DOG [seven or eight passes of a wild dog pacing, trapped; quiet sound of its rapid footsteps] I LIKE THIS [at the aquarium, shots from indoor windows onto aquatic habitat, seals passing by] SOME PEOPLE THINK THIS IS CRUEL / TO HAVE BUTTERFLIES INSIDE / I DON'T THINK SO / THEY ARE HAVING A GOOD TIME [shots of butterflies drinking nectar from a plate, sound of wings amidst roof of butterfly shed] I LIKE TO EAT CAKES AT POMPADOUR [at a café] AND HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE / IT IS DELICIOUS [young man has cake and coffee in café, slight slurp] I WANT SOME MORE [he points at cakes, chocolates, gets out credit card] GOODBYE [leaves with goodies in bag]
- 45 [sound of wind. overhead view of map of amsterdam.] FROM THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS OF / THE EARLIEST NATURAL FORTIFICATION [shots of ceramic figures in wall niches looking down] THROUGH THE ARCHITECTONIC INNOVATIONS / OF THE WATCH TOWER / OBSERVATION BALLOONS [shots of large decorative bronze globes, on roof of Amsterdam building] SATELLITES / SURVEILLANCE [nighttime shots with mysterious light on steel arm appearing and reappearing] WHETHER I KNOW YOU OR NOT MATTERS LESS THAN [lightning, then silence, with crickets] HOW YOU APPEAR [blinding light bulb] TO THE OBJECTIVE EYE
- 46 [camera pans down a line-drawing of a figure, "FALL" written at his feet. the following sequence is videotaped from above, apparently through a cracked screen as though via surveillance camera. a light bobs

opto-electronic processes, to the most sophisticated forms of "telescopic sight." Kim has replaced this with "whether I know you or not matters less than how you appear to the objective eye." This rephrasing makes this technological shift personal and links it back to dogr's lament for Chung Yoon Hee—"We didn't know her. But how we knew her face..."

In a recent talk, art historian David Joselit declared he was abandoning the term "medium" for the word "format." In *From the Commanding Heights...* Kim is always reminding us of information's physical ground, combining 16 mm film (transferred to video obviously), PAL with NTSC (the former has a higher line count), leaving visible the shivery blackish streaks on the edges of a repeating video image, and contrasting the different sonic qualities in a long-distance phone call in which his mother's far-away voice is interrupted by his own brief laugh, very close to our ear. Although shot through with longing, the work avoids nostalgia because of the way Kim treats technology—as different formats existing simultaneously, instead of one representing a time past, another the future. As our narrator says in *Dog Video*, we bring them with us, we transfer between them, and we record this transfer, as we move from HERE to THERE.

- (18) cut-out pieces of green paper, which the man blows on from behind—the pieces of paper move, and reveal his face.] *she had to lie down with her belly on the floor. At first she felt the wind on her back. a few seconds later she saw the dust blow away around her head*
- 19 [voiceover and hand-made titles] WHEN SHE DIED / PEOPLE STILL / THOUGHT ABOUT HER / *the black hill in my village* [draws a tree, a moon overlooking a black hill, which is the top of his head] *reminded us. of her long black hair when the wind blew* [runs his fingers through his hair. suddenly a sturdy tree atop his head; continues running fingers through hair]
- 20 *They blew as if some hand was blowing the hill* [singing begins, with piano. man remains behind transparent screen]
- 21 Song: *I am a man* / LIVING ON EARTH / LIKE SUN UNDER THE SKY [a concentrated light is focused on the transparency] IN THE SAME AIR (x2) [moves transparency, and with it the "sun" slowly away from the video camera and screen up towards his face; he "blows" it away]
- 22 [dreamlike beat with flute. the concentrated light continues to move]
- 23 [a voice sings. titles] THERE IS A PLACE / A PLACE ON THIS EARTH [draws black lines from his eyes as if they were tears, outlines hairline] LIKE HIDDEN FROM THE SKY / SHE IS HIDING THERE [now he holds hand-made title in his mouth] IN THE DEEPEST WELL. [man pushes transparency with words "everything I say is real" onto the surface with his mouth]
- 24 [green backdrop, voiceover with titles]
- 25 AND NOW / I'M GOING TO TELL YOU / A STORY / AND PLEASE DON'T / PAY ATTENTION / TO WHAT'S GOING ON / INSIDE THIS ROOM / ONLY PAY ATTENTION TO / THIS SCREEN / AND MY STORY / IN WHERE I LIVED IN THE 70S / ELECTRICITY WENT OUT QUITE OFTEN / THIS IS WHERE I LIVED / HYUNDAI APARTMENT [still shot of Hyundai apartments] [back to green] IN THE LATE 70S / WHEN MY PARENTS MOVED / ONE OF THESE UNITS / COST 2000 EUROS
- 26 [two still shots from another direction] [back to green]
- 27 IN 2006 / ONE OF THESE UNITS / COSTS 3 MILLION EUROS [another view, and another, then close up of a single window]
- 28 [titles and voiceover, now over video] SHE ALSO LIVED HERE [even closer. then back to green]
- 29 THIS IS HER NAME / CHUNG YOON HEE / I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW / THAT WAS HER / SHE WAS / WATCHING OVER HER KID / I COULD ONLY SEE HER BACK / AND THEN / A MAN NEXT TO ME / WHISPERED / THAT IS CHUNG YOON HEE
- 30 [silence. a few repeated video frames of a young woman with head turned away, hair in thick red ribbon. footage is apparently recorded from a tv screen. same image as the transparency in previous scenario. foreboding music.]
- 31 [back to green backdrop] THE FOLLOWING / IS WHAT MY MOM / LIVING FAR AWAY / TOLD ME / OVER THE PHONE
- 32 [faraway sound of maternal voice speaking in Korean; subtitles against green; state-ments scroll upward]
- 33 CHUNG YOON HEE WAS A FAMOUS ACTRESS / IN THE 70S SHE LIVED IN HYUNDAI APARTMENT TOO / THERE WERE SO MANY BLACKOUTS IN THE APARTMENT / EVERYONE WAS COMPLAINING AND WONDERING WHY THIS WAS HAPPENING / LATER ON THERE WERE RUMORS THAT PRESIDENT PARK WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH CHUNG YOON HEE / AND HE MADE SURE THE ELECTRICITY IN THE WHOLE TOWN WENT OUT BEFORE ENTERING HER HOUSE / SO NO ONE CAN SEE HIM / WE HAD FIDELITY LAW IN THOSE DAYS SO PEOPLE HAVING AN AFFAIR WERE PUT INTO CONFINEMENT / SO THIS RUMOR ABOUT THE PRESIDENT SPREAD AROUND / YOUR AUNT TOLD ME / AND I TOLD THE OTHER AUNT / ONE DAY I HAD THESE MEN OUTSIDE MY DOOR FROM 220 SECRET SERVICE / THEY CAME TO TAKE ME AWAY TO THEIR BUILDING TO TRACE THIS RUMOR / YOUR AUNT WAS TAKEN TOO WE WERE THERE ALL DAY LONG WE COULD NOT CONTACT ANYONE FROM THERE / QUESTIONS / SO YOU NEVER HEARD THIS STORY RIGHT?

- 46 at the center of the spider-crank. A figure, with a white harlequin mask worn on top of his head, performs various activities: lifts glass up to and away from camera, creates shadows, unrolls tightly rolled-up paper, moves hands and face closer and further away from camera, lifts panel off floor, amidst repeated video interference. feet move, there are mysterious round objects in a line, a shiny bar is shaken to create a mirroring effect. figure moves off screen, dragging elements with it. over this sequence fearful sounds emerge and clapping starts, quickly at first, then slows down until a sorrowful pop tune with piano begins.]
- 47 Song: *O how this city has changed / finding your way around just to reach me / has never been so complicated / As the highways shift / and the byways make it impossible to move*
- 48 [titles scroll up screen, like karaoke. landscape, a clip from the same film as above, appears, as clapping comes in and out of rhythm:]
- 49 THE TERROR OF KNOWING YOU'RE WITH ME / THE TERROR OF KNOWING YOU'RE NOT / IF I GET PULLED UNDER THIS CITY / MAY THE SNAKES CONSTRUCT ALL OF MY THOUGHTS / O HOW YOUR FACE HAS CHANGED / DID YOU FIGHT YOUR WAY THROUGH ALL THOSE YEARS OF ACTING? / HIDING BEHIND THAT LONG BLACK HAIR / O AS THE BUILDINGS FALL / AND THE SANDS SWALLOW UP THE AUTOMOBILES / THE DIN OF THE TRAFFIC BELOW YOU / THE DUST BLOWING OVER YOUR HEAD / THOUGH I NO LONGER KNOW YOU / PLEASE SWADLE ME IN YOUR HAIR WHEN I'M DEAD
- 50 [chorus against green digital backdrop. instrumental, wordless voices. picture of park jung hee. composition continues: slide whistle, kazoo, tissue paper sound and synthesized pipe organ. draws video slowly to a close]

I transcribed these shot list/scripts of Sung's videos so I could see how they were made. Then we decided to include them here. About half of the accompanying notes expand on or refer to what Sung was reading and watching while he was making the videos, a source of interesting conversations between him and me. The others tell you about the cinematic source material. There could, and should, be many, many more.—Larissa Harris

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Admission is by suggested donation.

This leaflet was produced as part of the exhibition Sung Hwan Kim: *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*. Open March 6 – August 14, 2011.

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