



IN-BETWEEN PLACES 사이에 머물다 KOREAN AMERICAN ARTISTS IN THE BAY AREA



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Korean American Artists
in the Bay Area**

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Jung Ran Bae
Sohyung Choi
Kay Kang
Miran Lee
Young June Lew
Nicholas Oh
Younhee Paik
Minji Sohn

Curated by:
Linda Inson Choy
Hyonjeong Kim Han

Mills College Art Museum
Oakland, California

This catalogue is published on the occasion of *In-Between Places: Korean American Artists in the Bay Area*, an exhibition organized by the Mills College Art Museum from September 13 through December 10, 2017. The exhibition is curated by Linda Inson Choy and Hyonjeong Kim Han.

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KOREA  FOUNDATION

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Minji Sohn, *Turn Left*,
Turn Right, 2017,
courtesy of the artist

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

Stephanie Hanor, Ph.D.

MILLS COLLEGE HAS A LONG HISTORY of championing Asian artists and art traditions. Since the 1920s, Mills has demonstrated a strong commitment to studying and collecting Asian art, offering the first advanced courses in Asian art history in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Mills College Art Museum was also founded by Asian art collector Albert M. Bender, whose significant holdings of Japanese prints and Chinese artifacts formed the initial core of MCAM's Asian art collection.

The close relationship between Korea and the Bay Area was established more than a century ago, resulting in a unique cultural identity that is reflected in the local art community. As a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices, MCAM has supported new work by Korean artists through exhibitions such as *The Offering Table: Women Activist Artists from Korea* and most recently, *Can We Live Here? Stories from a Difficult World*, featuring commissioned photographs by Korean-born artist Young Suh.

The artists featured in *In-Between Places* reveal the reality and complexities of being Korean artists in America. Since the beginning of the Korean diaspora, Korean Americans have continued to occupy the in-between spaces of ambiguous identity. Existing bi-culturally, without the affirmation of belonging or permanence, Korean Americans are only now beginning to strive for prominence with art that is definitive in stating that Korean-Americans are still Korean. This exhibition formulates a new strategy to acknowledge Korean American experiences of history, culture, and art in the Bay Area, a location that has served as a gateway for Korean culture and a bridge between Korea and the West.

The exhibition showcases the artists' diverse range of media, including: painting, sculpture, ceramics, video, performance, textiles, and installation art. Keeping true to their unique identities, the works created for the exhibition have led to new definitions of the artists as Korean Americans working in Northern California, and allow visitors to reflect on the intricacies of cultural identity.

The exhibition showcases the works of Jung Ran Bae, Sohyung Choi, Kay Kang, Miran Lee, Young June Lew, Nicholas Oh, Younhee Paik, and Minji Sohn. The exhibition curators and I are grateful for each of the artist's participation and support of *In-Between Places*. Each have created thoughtful and ambitious work for this project.

In-Between Places is curated by independent curator Linda Inson Choy and consulting curator Hyonjeong Kim Han, Associate Curator of Korean Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Their various curatorial practices have focused on the presentation and examination of Korean and Korean American art. Together, they have done an outstanding job of bringing together a compelling group of artists to create new work that illuminates the issues of being a Korean American artist in the Bay Area. I appreciate their insightfulness and dedication to this important project.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the help of many people. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker, Professor of Asian Art History at Mills. In her myriad roles as educator, mentor, and administrator, Dr. Milford has supported the work of Asian artists, art historians, and curators. Through her research, writing, and advocacy, she has demonstrated her interest in the role of artists as observers and critics of social and political situations, whose visual interpretations give insights into the complexity of their cultures. Her essay for this publication contributes to the larger understanding and appreciation of contemporary artistic practices by Korean American artists in the Bay Area.

I am indebted to the museum's staff, Luke Turner and Jayna Swartzman-Brosky, for their valuable input, creativity, and ability to manage the multitude of tasks and details needed to successfully create this exhibition and publication. The skills of our talented art preparators, Joe Melamed and Eli Thorne, ensured a smooth and beautiful installation. I am particularly grateful to graphic designer John Borruso for his thoughtful publication design and to Jayna for her thoroughness and critical eye in editing the catalogue.

Many people have contributed to the success of this exhibition, including Kyung Yoon and Wayne Snyder who hosted the public launch of the exhibition. The curators and I would like to thank Consul Sungdo Lee, Consul Sanghun Oh, and Deputy Consul General Jimin Kim from the San Francisco Consulate General of the Republic of Korea for their support and partnership in developing public events.

This exhibition and publication would not have been possible without the generosity of The Korea Foundation. Many thanks go to the foundation for supporting this important project. In addition, I would like to thank the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation for their sponsorship. My gratitude extends to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Choy for their contributions toward realizing this exhibition. The financial contributions of these foundations and individuals make a significant impact by bringing awareness to the unique culture of Korean American artists in the Bay Area who strive to define their own positions and identities in the global art scene.

In-Between Places

Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker, PhD

IN-BETWEEN PLACES IS A PROFOUND STATEMENT that all of us as immigrants face in the United States. For innumerable reasons, we have all made decisions to leave our homelands to find another way of life. We are filled with hope for the future, yet we find ourselves faced by unimaginable hurdles that cross culture, race, gender, caste, class, religion, politics, and language lines. Today, California—not even two hundred years old—is an immigrant state. We who live here now, have mostly come from elsewhere, including large numbers of people from Asia propelled into this mix by the Gold Rush in the mid-19th century wars and now by the technology industry. This population brings with it, distinctive cultural beliefs, rituals, celebrations, and values.

Many Koreans, including artists, have made Northern California their home. Creative people—whether writers, poets, musicians, or visual artists—often present nuanced perspectives on the reality of life, and this is the case with the eight artists in this exhibition who are addressing questions of identity, belonging, inclusion, and exclusion. The exhibition *In-Between Places* addresses the basic human need to know and to belong—to know where one is in the maelstrom of identity and social politics. In this respect, the artists in this exhibition address concerns that are universal.

When asked how her art might be different if she were an artist in Korea, Minji Sohn replied, “I can only imagine vaguely that if I had remained in Korea and became an artist, I would at least be making art dealing with different issues that would be important to me in the moment.” Her response brings to mind the art of most immigrant American artists, in particular, that of Hung Liu, who left China in 1984, after surviving the Cultural Revolution. Since she came to California, Liu has resolutely critiqued the Chinese political system, often through veiled analogies that carry unprecedented weight because she is Chinese. Now, after many years, she is turning her brush to critique the American social system. The question, of course, is what

Miran Lee, *Black Mountain*, 2008, silk,
courtesy of the artist





Jung Ran Bac, *TEAter-Totter*, 2014, porcelain.
Photo courtesy of Michael Rauner Photography

would Liu, like Sohn, be doing if she had remained in her homeland? Sohn, through her performance pieces depicts herself as betwixt and between. *Turn Right, Turn Left* shows her at the cross-roads, or the turning point of her life: should she move or stand still; join the crowd or remain isolated; dress in black or white. Sohn is obsessive by nature; she is constantly questioning and searching. Her acts are repetitive whether through enumeration or through endlessly, mindlessly counting, printing, assembling, erasing.

The intensity experienced in Sohn's performative art is muted by Younhee Paik's hanging forest of monochromatic charcoal drawings on rice paper. Who living in Northern California hasn't gazed up through the high canopies of redwood trees searching for their tops? Although Paik has drawn different trees, she captures the magic of walking through forests and groves of trees. One can almost hear the wind blowing through their branches, and birds calling to each other. Paik recalls that one of her first impressions of California was that of intense light and dark shadows so different from her native Korea, and evident in the silhouetted trees that she now encounters. Her response to Nature is a universal one that crosses cultures. Yet the long hanging scrolls covered in black and white charcoal drawings reflect a distinct East Asian aesthetic wherein vertical scrolls are meant for public viewing, as opposed to small, intimate hand scrolls. Thus, viewers are invited to wander through these lofty trees. Unlike her floating celestial banner paintings, they are accessible and recall nights spent under the stars.

Unfamiliar Mountains and Water is the title of a popular Korean song that, for Miran Lee, summons up emotions when coming to terms with the golden, dry California summer landscape. Like Paik, Lee finds solace in Nature. Having left Korea in mid-life she had to start again, forging new ways of being. She talks of *le mal du pays* or suffering from homesickness, and describes the deep sorrow felt in an unfamiliar landscape. This sense of loss is evident in the two silk and *ramie* (recycled bed linens) pieces in the exhibition. They are made from old fabric that belonged to her mother that was wrapped in paper bearing the name of the person who wove them. Lee has carefully stitched the translucent sections together, their edges delicately overlapping, recalling the exquisite layering of *hanbok*, traditional Korean clothing. The colorful blues and greens of the sky and sea are sewn together in a turbulent way that is countered by the natural flax color of the sedentary rocks and mountains. Although the symbolism is evident, the manner in which the fabric is sewn directly relates to the styles of *hanbok* and *bojagi* (traditional wrapping cloths). Thus, this installation becomes an interpretation of California through a Korean perspective.

Young June Lew is also affected by the brilliance of California sunlight evidenced by the rich gold backgrounds in her art that set off the cool stony-grey pagodas. She recognizes that being an artist is a lonely, isolating experience. For her, Buddhist monuments form a bridge to the

world of God, frequented by winged angels, that recall ancient memories of the Noontime Pagoda in Korea. In Lew's art one perceives a deep sense of loss and longing.

Nicholas Oh, a ceramicist, creates life-size figures that question his constant experience of otherness. In several works he has made life-size ceramic self-portraits in which he is seated in the lotus position eating take-out food with chopsticks. Like the Buddha who during his meditations was attacked by evil forces, Oh has been faced with discriminatory insults, and has covered his body with racial slurs. This sculpture calls to mind the work of the Chinese artist Zhang Huan, who also used his body as a canvas for political messages. In the standing portrait in the exhibition, Oh has painted on his back an auspicious blue dragon a symbol of strength and fortitude, and on his torso Chinese hexagrams and symbols of good fortune, portraying a certain hopefulness. In *Justice or Else*, Oh has created eight life-size headless figures dressed in military fatigues, each holds a billy club that reinforces a menacing sense of being surrounded by negative forces. Oh served in the United States Marine Corps where he came face-to-face with racism, and the inevitability of having to deal with thoughtless, ignorant stereotyping, which may account for the missing heads. As a Korean American artist, Oh does not avoid discrimination, rather he explores it with a certain amount of removed objectivity as he “. . . realizes that certain situations are caused through the prejudice of those who act.”

Sohyung Choi also grapples with what it means to be an immigrant artist, and in particular her sense of responsibility to her Korean heritage. In accepting who she is, she recognizes the need to bring together the different parts of herself—the Korean and the American—to represent the hybrid of both cultures, the reality of who she is. In video installations, using time-based technology, she superimposes images that fade and change, stirring poignant memories of bygone times and people. They impart a sense of longing for what can no longer be, and hence a sense of loss—the loss of culture, connections, and family that all immigrants experience to a greater or lesser degree. In her video, *Repetitive Dream*—she runs and runs and runs—we never see her face; is she chasing or being chased? The repetitive dream seemingly turns into a nightmare from which she cannot escape—she endures in a dream-like state of being in between places, in between cultures, in between identities.

Jung Ran Bae, a performance artist and sculptor who works primarily with clay, uses the figure to create a visual autobiography. She is known for her whimsical constructions that allude to home and the contents of home such as *TEAter-Totter*, 2014, that consists of crazy off-balance towers of white porcelain teapots, teacups and saucers, that emerge from beds of ceramic shards. Delightful as these installations are, the inevitable breakage that occurs is a routine domestic occurrence, whether it be in a Korean or American kitchen. In her performance *Fish Salt*, Bae is blindfolded and dressed in a traditional Korean *dopo* (robe); this allows her to travel the fine line between her different identities, one she treats with

a certain amount of humor, and the other evokes a deep sense of loss, which she describes as “identity instability.”

This same sense of memory, history, and loss is evident in the art of Kay Kang whose feminist leanings have led her to chafe at the restrictions of Korean and Korean American patriarchal traditions. She openly admits that living in the Bay Area has allowed her to express herself in ways that would still not be tolerated in Korea. Yet despite her newfound freedom of expression she, like so many immigrants, is drawn back to her roots in Korea, inspired by nostalgia for a life she once had. Her long scroll-like collaged painting, *Bhaljachi (The Journey)*, is the story of immigrants’ journeys and also of domestic pattering feet. It consists of many *beosun* (socks) that were worn by Korean women to cover their feet, and one can sense them walking, moving constantly. The reference is particularly poignant for Kang as she made them from ramie that her family used during the hot, humid Korean summer days. She claims that “These linens are over 40 years old, and as much as they were a functional use for my artwork, they were sentimental.” The *beosun* remain a touchstone for Kang’s identity, yet speak to the universal immigrant experience.

Kang’s painting, *Guests Missed*, truly speaks to the immigrant experience. It is a poignant work that shows *beosun* inscribed with letters and records of visitors who attended her grandmother’s memorial in 1974 and her father’s memorial in 1975. Her family in Korea chose not to let her know about these deaths, supposedly for the fear of upsetting her. Such retention only added to her grief and sense of isolation and alienation. Zarina Hashmi, noted international artist who was born in India and lives in New York, experienced a similar sense of distancing from her family, when her parents passed away. In *Letters from Home*, a series of lithograph prints, Zarina has printed letters written by Rani, her sister, over ground plans of their homes. The letters written over several years describe heartbreaking decisions to sell their family home, and accounts of their ailing parents, but her sister never sent them. Both Kang and Zarina have moved from their homelands. They are no longer part of the families and culture that were once theirs, and now their grief is one of silence, isolation and loneliness.

What is evident in looking at the art made by these eight Korean American artists is that there is a deep longing for cultural roots. Each artist is coping with identity, isolation, and alienation. They are expressing the immigrant experience, of the need to belong to a society. They are *in-between places*, belonging to neither their home country, in this case, Korea, nor their adopted country, America. As Minji Sohn so thoughtfully expressed it, “Who knows what my art would have been like if I’d stayed in Korea.”

Curators in Conversation

Following the format of the artists' interviews in this catalog, the two curators of In-Between Places: Korean American Art in the Bay Area—Hyonjeong Kim Han and Linda Inson Choy—sat down for an informal conversation about Korean Americans, art, artists, and the exhibition.

Hyonjeong and Linda met on an unseasonably warm Saturday afternoon in May at Café Borrone's in Menlo Park to share stories and talk about their upcoming exhibition at Mills College, In-Between Places: Korean American Artists in the Bay Area.

Linda Inson Choy: It has been more than two years since we began working on this exhibition. It's hard to believe!

Hyonjeong Kim Han: This is almost like collecting memories and that is kind of how it evolved! I really enjoyed the process, working with each artist, Mills College Art Museum, and you, Linda. So far, it has been an ideal, dreamlike process in mounting this very special exhibition.

LIC: It morphed into the exhibition because I think the first time we began talking about a project was after my exhibition at Los Gatos Art Museum (*It's Personal!* in 2012), which I curated. At one of the post exhibition dinners we talked about Yoong Bae (1928–1992), whose work you were including in the rotation for the *In-Focus* exhibition, *Yoong Bae: Continuity and Pursuit* in 2015 at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

HKH: Right, I had often thought about bringing together a core group of Korean American artists and felt that there seemed to be very little focus on Korean American artists, as a group that lacks connections. Your exhibition in Los Gatos featured two Korean American artists, Kay Kang and Jung Ran Bae, whom we had known for years. We wanted to bring



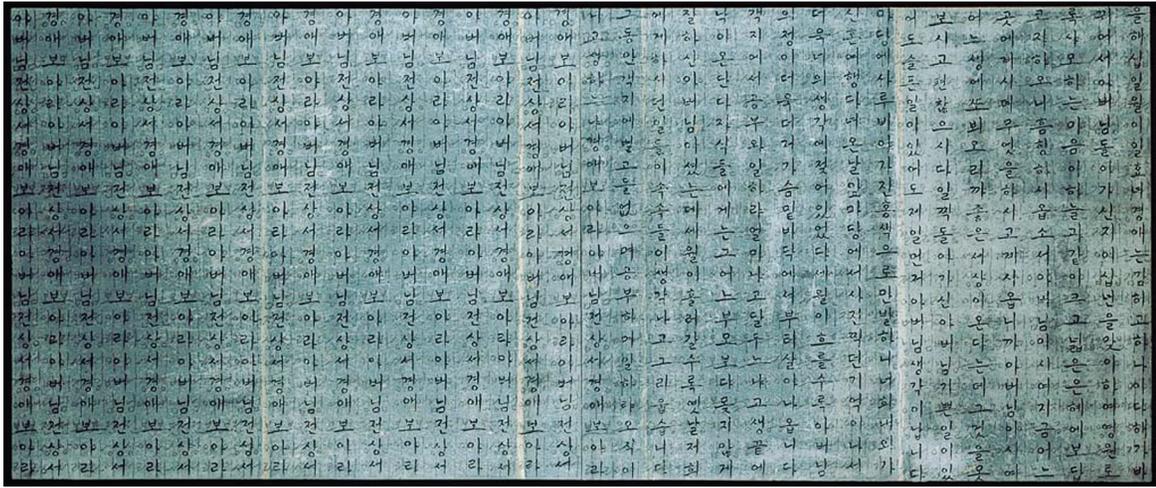
Yoon Heesu, *Offering*, 2008, Mills College Art Museum for the exhibition *The Offering Table*. Photo courtesy of Paul Kuroda

more focus on and highlight Korean American artists in the Bay Area. Based on historical facts, we knew there were few Korean American artists such as Yoong Bae, who was a mentor to younger artists. We heard stories like Bae used to arrange picnics with local artists and hosted dinners at his home for lively discussions about art and place. It was the mentorship of Yoong Bae (1928–1992) that we thought was interesting and a way to highlight locality and art.

LIC: I always felt that we didn't recognize his contribution to Korean American art in the Bay Area enough. After all, quite a few of his works are in the collection of the Asian Art Museum. I think it was in talking about him that we realized there were many more local Bay Area Korean American artists who were quietly working and creating amazing works. Over dinners and casual get togethers, we started to form an idea that we must showcase more Korean American art!

I remember one particular dinner in a restaurant in Hayes Valley in San Francisco, and the wild brainstorming session where we came up with the vague concept for the show. I always found those evenings exhilarating! I drove home that night with all these ideas dancing in my head! The affirmation that we shared a similar enthusiasm for Korean American art was amazing!

HKH: From there we talked about collaborating on a special exhibition on Korean American art in the Bay Area. We both felt the urgency.



Kay Kang, *Conversation with My Father*, 1997, two-panel painting, courtesy of the artist

Automatically and naturally, we found ourselves constantly brainstorming about exhibition ideas.

LIC: But then how did we ultimately meet all the artists?

HKH: I already knew Younhee Paik, Young June Lew, Kay Kang and Jung Ran Bae. As a Korean who is dealing with Korean art (mostly traditional Korean art) outside of Korea, I have pondered about the Korean artworks in museums. I sometimes wonder about how they came to be in the Bay Area after hundreds years of their creation. I questioned whether the artists in the past could ever imagined that their works would be in San Francisco in the 21st century? I always discuss this question with contemporary artists because their work will be viewed hundreds of years from now, too. Also, there have been many times when working with local contemporary artists, my specific questions are solved. For example, if I wonder about technical processes in making certain ceramics or paintings, I go to artists. Sometimes, they could tell me the challenges and tactics used to create works in the past. It is exciting to work with artists who are able to transcend the limitation of time in their work by tapping into the past for inspiration.

Exploring artists' points of view is important for a culture. I think it's fascinating how philosophical artists are when they must face being out of the context of their Korean origin.

So, I felt local Korean American artists needed to be included in the Korean art collection at the Asian Art Museum. I wanted to explore the randomness of how we all came to be in the Bay Area and how the second-generation artists are impacted by the work of the first-generation artists.

LIC: I think what is interesting is how they express their individual identity.

HKH: I've lived in California for more than 10 years. I feel that my identity is still more Korean-Korean than Korean American, and I have wanted to embrace and understand a Korean American point of view. But is it important to talk about Korean American identity?

LIC: I think it is very important, because it has a unique perspective in terms of being in between places—like the title of the show—because as a Korean American, I never seem to quite fit in.

HKH: Really? What do you mean by that? You seem very settled and comfortable in your environment to me!

LIC: Yes, I know, mostly I am, but in the United States I still feel after 43 years of living here that I don't completely belong. People still ask me, "where do you come from" purely based on the way I look, i.e. I represent the ubiquitous "other." You would think that I would fit in better in Korea when I travel there, but Koreans ask where do you come from, because of some certain mannerism and my speech pattern, my non-Korean accent!

HKH: Then where do you feel most comfortable?

LIC: Nowhere at 100%!!! Most days I don't even think about it but sometimes . . . it's noticeable. It is disturbing that some of the artists in the show still experience racial discrimination, which they deal with in their work.

HKH: For an artist though, I think there is an advantage of not being 100% comfortable, so they can find themselves in a more creative place by exploring that discomfort. They can tap into both places and identities for a more critical look at race relations in America.

LIC: Do you feel that you have more Korean identity because you have only been in this country for 11 yrs. Does length of time really matter?

HKH: Both. Korean and Korean American identities—and how they are perceived—are very different. But both bring an interesting perspective to the exhibition. Artists in the exhibition can see from both sides of their bi-cultural experiences. It can be difficult to express in words, but artists are able to solve the complexities of their multi-identity through the making of art.

LIC: I think Korean American artists are very individualistic. For instance, in interviews with the artists for this catalog, most artists identified themselves differently, and some refused to be even classified with any particular identity! Identity as a Californian and nothing else, was one of the most memorable comments one artist made!

HKH: I remember that comment. It is amazing how diverse the artists' works are. That is one of the most fulfilling aspects of this exhibition, and is enjoyable to experience!

HKH: Speaking of enjoyable, I know that you have enjoyed working with me (*winks*), but what was your most enjoyable moment or accomplishment?

LIC: I really enjoyed watching your creative processes over the past almost two years, your ideas are extraordinary and we are able to understand each other and I find that amazing. Although I must tell you, that sometimes your ability to come up with new ideas for programs made me a bit afraid—to think, all that work!

LIC to HKH: What about you?

HKH: A few times, I realized that I am stricter toward artists, so I appreciated your patience and willingness to work with artists, even when I thought some requests were unreasonable. I tend to make quick decisions, I think. I learned from you how to encourage living artists in creating their works and in describing them.

LIC: You were afraid I was too tolerant, you can ask Ran about that one! Looking back, it's fascinating how we each deal with artists. We definitely have very different ways of working with artists, we complement each other well.

HKH: What other memorable aspects did you find during the exhibition development process?

LIC: Developing an exhibition is always an exciting process, especially since the artists were all asked to make new works. The uncertainty of what work would emerge is a bit of a gamble, but knowing the quality of artistic output of each artist is helpful. Phew!

HKH: I learn a lot from contemporary artists. Challenges for artists have been universal throughout the ages, but the challenges that Korean American artists are more complex due to the issues that rise from having to assimilate in multiple nations that are called home.

HKH: What else was memorable for you during this exhibition process?

LIC: There were so many! But one aspect of planning for this exhibition that I liked the best is how we seamlessly compromise and agree on issues. For instance, when I proposed this format for our joint interview, you readily embraced the concept! We were both excited about the prospect of just talking and recording our conversation. We both agreed



Miran Lee, *Rainbow Fish*, hand-stitched silk, courtesy of the artist

that the traditional methods didn't quite fit our concept for the catalog since we wanted to explore new ways to communicate with our audience. This format allows us to freely share our own personal journeys to this point.

HKH: I think we were both very pleased to have fresh new art for the show. Cohesive and most of the work is newly made. You even came up with a list of words or concepts for the artists to think about, do you remember that?

LIC: I thought it would help the artists to focus on what it meant for them to be in this place, at this time considering or not considering their identity, but what impact the Bay Area had on their work. In the end, I think they found their inspiration! The works in the show are amazing!

LIC: I know that the artists are incredibly talented but what about all the amazing food we've had?

HKH: I know! They are truly artist chefs. Each one has a very different strength in their style of cuisine. Younhee Paik—innovative, while embracing the traditional; Young June Lew—extreme planner down to the last detail; Jung Ran Bac—whose cooking is another form of art all together; and Miran Lee—a new generation of chef, she cooks very smartly but amazingly. This is part of the reason why we enjoyed the exhibition development process. These were meaningful gatherings because the artists all have different reasons for being here and what impresses them. They individually express themselves and their inspiration while somehow incorporating aspects of their Korean-ness.

LIC: The Korean-ness the artists embrace in their unique ways manifests in ways that are subtle or clear. Like the ways they are able to hybridize their cooking styles, they have come to express the confluence of cultures and locality into their works as well.

HKH: I agree that it is about different aspects of the artist's expression. Like Young June Lew whose work is impossible to classify, but more about universality of questioning that defies simple identity while incorporating traditional Korean pagoda or stupa into her work. Whereas Younhee Paik has chosen to depict native California trees, with which she feels a close affinity and she is ultimately emulating a forest. Miran Lee spent copious hours—months—fashioning in the tradition of Korean *bojagi* (wrapping cloth). The works depict water and the gentle hills that she sees from her home in Fremont but that also allude to her old home in Korea. Lee's work expresses the foreignness of her surroundings which is vastly different than the landscape of

Korea. You see how differently the artists represent their own ideas and identity in different places?

LIC: For me, Jung Ran Bae's work clearly shows how we change throughout our lives. Working in the very difficult medium of clay, she has masterfully captured the essence of herself in various stages of her life represented by a specific symbolic element on her autobiographical figures. I think the audience will identify with Bae's final presentation of one woman's journey as both Korean and Californian. Journey is the key element for Kay Kang's work as she figuratively conveys the process of physical movement that it takes to immigrate and the constant effort to be in multiple locations. The *beosun*, or traditional socks, festoon her canvas, suggesting great movement, creating a sense of backwards and forwards and a state of flux. The cast foot and beosun further emphasize heaviness and groundedness, as if landed.

HKH: Speaking of migrations, the younger generation artists seem to be able to embrace nomadic existence. Minji Sohn was born in Japan, raised in Korea, and then lived in various locations in the United States. Her work is grounded in finely tuned conceptual performance art that explores issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Her video piece for the show, *Turn Right, Turn Left* is another "investigational work . . . that questions categorization itself by constantly shifting in between two options."

LIC: Art is one of the most direct mediums to convey potential politics. Artists have always served as messengers with their art, and both Sohn and Nicholas Oh tackle politics head on. Oh's works in clay depict the clash between racially charged authorities and their targets—often minority figures. The interpretation is complex and left to the audience to decide. I think Oh's work is a direct challenge to engage them in a dialogue.

HKH: You are right about an artist's ability to engage audiences in political discussions. What about Sohyung Choi? Her work in the show is also a video—*Repetitious Dream*—that shows her running—kind of like running as a metaphor for how we live our lives. Constantly in a harried and hurried state, feeling chased by time or running out of time, is what her work conveys to me. That, and, all in our lives can be just a dream.

LIC: Sohyung Choi and I are both alumnae of Mills College! I completely identify with her work because I often feel just as hurried through life and time.

HKH: Feeling rushed with too much to do all the time is the life story of all women. What do you most like about this exhibition?

LIC: I feel more passionate about this exhibition, maybe, because I identify myself as a fellow Korean American with many of the same



Young June Lew in her studio, courtesy of the artist and Andrew Bac

experiences and thoughts. I especially like the fact that we have multi-generational artists from their 20s to their 70s!

HKH: I really like that aspect of the show as well. Getting a multi-generational perspective is really important. Also, I think I understand Korean Americans better since collaborating on this exhibition and I'm getting better perspectives on Korean American characteristics and struggles. Korean American artists in the Bay Area are making great works, but I feel they do not receive that spotlight, so our role as curators is so important. Also, preparing a show with the artists at various ages is actually a benefit to them too. The older artists learned about the younger generation's life styles, while the younger ones could be excited to hear the senior artists' stories of their own experiences in the past. The artists in the show have created a positive energy with each other, and sometimes I feel that we are a big family.

LIC: I completely agree! I think it's time you start identifying yourself as Korean American, no?

HKH: Yes, you are right. I think we both felt that Korean American art is really under-represented. While talking about how to give Korean American artists a platform for their work, you wanted to approach Mills College Art Museum for venue.



Nicholas Oh, Installation view of *Justice or Else*, 2015–16, courtesy of the artist

LIC: Mills College Art Museum has always been very supportive and encouraged me in my endeavors as an independent curator.

HKH: You are very fortunate to have had exhibitions here. Not to mention attending the college as a student. It has been an enjoyable process organizing an exhibition here, almost effortless, with a positive and supportive environment. Being a college art museum, we want this exhibition to inspire the next generation of students and greater community, but particularly people of color from different backgrounds.

HKH: To sum up, any challenges come to mind?

LIC: There are almost always challenges when proposing an exhibition. Invariably, there is the issue of limited or available funding but it is also most rewarding when funding is secured. I was especially pleased when we were able to convince the Korea Foundation to fund this worthwhile exhibition of Korean American art!

HKH: Korean American art is definitely underestimated and underserved. It's difficult to raise funding here and adding to this difficulty

is the fact that in Korea, Korean American art is considered American art, again falling in-between places. But the art work is simultaneously Korean and American. Fortunately, the Korea Foundation came through for us. Perhaps for the first time for Korean American art?

LIC: I think so, it's a groundbreaking exhibition!

HKH: I think this is a great start!

LIC: I totally agree. I think there is a great potential for more exhibitions about *In-Between Places*?

HKH: We can have many more *In-Between Places* exhibitions: one on the East Coast, in the Mid-West, etc. . . . as an independent exhibition talking about being Korean American—not just as part of Asian American art. The general public needs to understand that Asian is not one ethnicity and Asians are not at all the same, that it is very diverse. Understanding both the differences and similarities is very important at this time in history.

LIC: I look forward to working on future exhibitions with you whether it is *In-Between Places 2* or some other meaningful, history making project. It was an amazing experience.

Jung Ran Bae

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

If I had not immigrated to California, most likely, I would not even have begun the process of becoming a visual artist. In this new environment, I found myself encouraged to pursue my personal dreams. Emboldened, I decided to continue my education. Freed from societal demands, I was able to pursue my genuine interest in visual art. I cannot even fathom what I would have been if I had remained in Korea, since I had studied creative writing with aspirations to become a novelist. There would have been limited opportunities for a woman in my circumstances as a married woman and a mom. However, I found my creative writing education helpful to my visual art process; it is just a different form of art. In hindsight, California's nature had a very different influence on me than my native land. The variety of natural elements found here became a new source of inspiration for my work. By including these local elements in my clay sculptures, my work reflected the environment around me.



Jung Ran Bae, *The Days
Like Feathers*, 2017,
detail view, clay, feathers,
Plexiglass, wood, courtesy
of the artist and Michael
Rauner Photography



Jung Ran Bae, *Human
Betweens*, 2014, ceramic,
courtesy of the artist
and Michael Rauner
Photography

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

Life in California had a gradual impact on the development of my identity despite having grown up and been educated in Korea. Surprisingly, even after thirty years of living in California, language, cultural, and societal differences still reside on my consciousness. One of the elements is the underlying racial discrimination existing in this culture that continues to present a difficult problem for me to comprehend. To better understand this societal and personal issue, I researched and informed myself on the historical aspects of the issue, which has expanded my understanding. Political and racial issues understandably have a large impact on one's identity. However, I have found that not all identity conflicts arise from politics or society. Life changes can also spark reflections on identity.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

My work in *In-Between Places* is a type of visual autobiography made into clay figures. Each piece has an added symbolic element that contains a

specific period in my personal experience. Beyond my own life, I feel it also represents a shared experience among women. This exhibition features artists whose ages range from 20s to 70s and I fall more or less in the middle. This gives me the perspective to relate to the entire spectrum of life stages, and I feel that my fellow artists are my inspiration for this project; I see myself in each of the other artists in their respective stages. The symbolic elements on the figures represent these stages in life.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

I strongly question whether there is an ideal environment for an artist. If there is an ideal environment, it would provide sufficient financial freedom, physical space, time, education, community, and peer support. In my experience, I've found that the most important thing is to possess an artistic desire. That desire will naturally and intentionally develop the ideal environment for that artist, shaped by their personal conditions. I believe the artist's desire is the fundamental source of an ideal environment.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

As a Korean American and a female artist, there are many obstacles to face and overcome. Gender roles, cultural differences, and language differences have all impacted my identity in their own way. On the other hand, it is important not to become constrained by cultural backgrounds and gender stereotypes. Identity can be powerful and inspiring but one needs to be cautious not to be trapped by identity. I encourage young artists to faithfully explore art as one whole being, not as a collection of identities. This is as much of a life process as it is an art process.



Jung Ran Bae

Jung Ran Bae was born in Seoul, South Korea. Bae has a background in creative writing and received a Master of Fine Arts in ceramic sculpture from California College of the Arts, San Francisco. After college, she continued to work on installation and performance projects at the Headlands Center for the Arts, California. Bae works primarily in large clay sculptures that often extend to large-scale installations incorporating various media. Bae has exhibited at the Triton Museum and the Newport Art Museum in California among numerous other galleries.



Jung Ran Bae, *The Days Like Feathers*, 2017, detail view, clay, feathers, plexiglass, wood, courtesy of the artist and Michael Rauner Photography



Sohyung Choi, *Looped Memory*, 2010, video installation, courtesy of the artist and Phil Bond

Sohyung Choi

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

I decided to pursue fine art as soon as I immigrated to the United States. This cultural shift definitely changed the direction of my work, which became an introspective exploration. My cultural understanding is dictated by and based on how I see objects, whether it is new/old type of detritus materials, or discarded. I am influenced by my background as a Korean, where I grew up, therefore, my perception of America and the Western society and culture is different than someone who was born and raised here.

I was educated in fine art in the United States, completing my MFA program at Mills College in 2011. However, I studied textile design in Korea which was more about industrial/commercial art. It is difficult to compare the two different fields of education but there are some overlapping characteristics in both discipline. I would say that the only purpose



Sohyung Choi, *Repetitious
Dream*, 2010–17, video
still, courtesy of the artist



of commercial/industrial art is to sell products whereas fine art, on the other hand, is about creating an artwork that is aesthetically appreciated, containing all the unique qualities drawn from artist's personal perspective and theory.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

I feel that I represent Korea while living in the U.S. because people judge Korea/Koreans based on what I do. However, it is more important to be a good person than to be a good Korean American wherever one lives. And yes, my work is influenced by being Korean American because I'm looking at cultural references and still melding Eastern and Western cultures together that represent a hybrid of both cultures. My work still references Korea in some way simply by the fact that when people actively participate and see my work, I expect them to have different influences and feelings based on their individual backgrounds.

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

run away from
I see light shining from a
That's the ONLY way to
RUN FASTER!!!
They are too close

Sohyung Choi, *Repetitions
Dream*, 2010-17, video
still, courtesy of the artist

My video work in *In-Between Places*, is *Repetitive Dream* and it explores the frightening aspect of our lives as we continuously move, run in circles as if chased by an invisible force, pervasively, even while I sleep. Struggles are common to all people but as an immigrant artist in a foreign land, it is ever present. In the video, I am running through the streets of my neighborhood without pause, because that is how life is for me. I would like the audience to know me as an active artist who will continue to work very hard to achieve all that I can.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

I am currently struggling with health, struggling with working full time, struggling with paying bills, etc. Despite all that, I want to make art full time, want to travel, explore the world out there, that would be my ideal. Personally, as an artist, I think that gaining lots of life experiences would help to develop my work.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

For the next generation of Korean American artists, my advice would be to keep making work, work, work, and explore who you are, as a person, and as an artist. Do not be afraid to listen to other's negative comments because you may grow because of it.



Sohyung Choi

Sohyung Choi is a native of Seoul, South Korea. After working as a textile designer for five years, she immigrated to the United States in 1996 to study fine art. Choi attended Cosumnes River College in Sacramento to focus on her artistic career. After earning an A.A. degree, she enrolled at the University of California, Davis and received a B.A. in studio art. In 2011, she earned her M.F.A. from Mills College in Oakland, won the Headlands Center for the Arts Graduate Fellowship Award and was later awarded a position in the Affiliate Program at the Headlands Center for the Arts.



Kay Kang

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

Living in California has shaped my artistic work in countless ways. California, and in particular the Bay Area, is a much more diverse environment than Korea (or the Midwest, where I first emigrated to). I found life in California encouraging and it allows me to think outside the box in general. This environment has inspired me to really challenge my thoughts and emotions, and has allowed me to be much more exploratory and expansive in my art. Until recently, Korea has been (and still continues to be) a much more homogeneous and uniform culture. It would have caused me to be narrower in my expression. Some of the

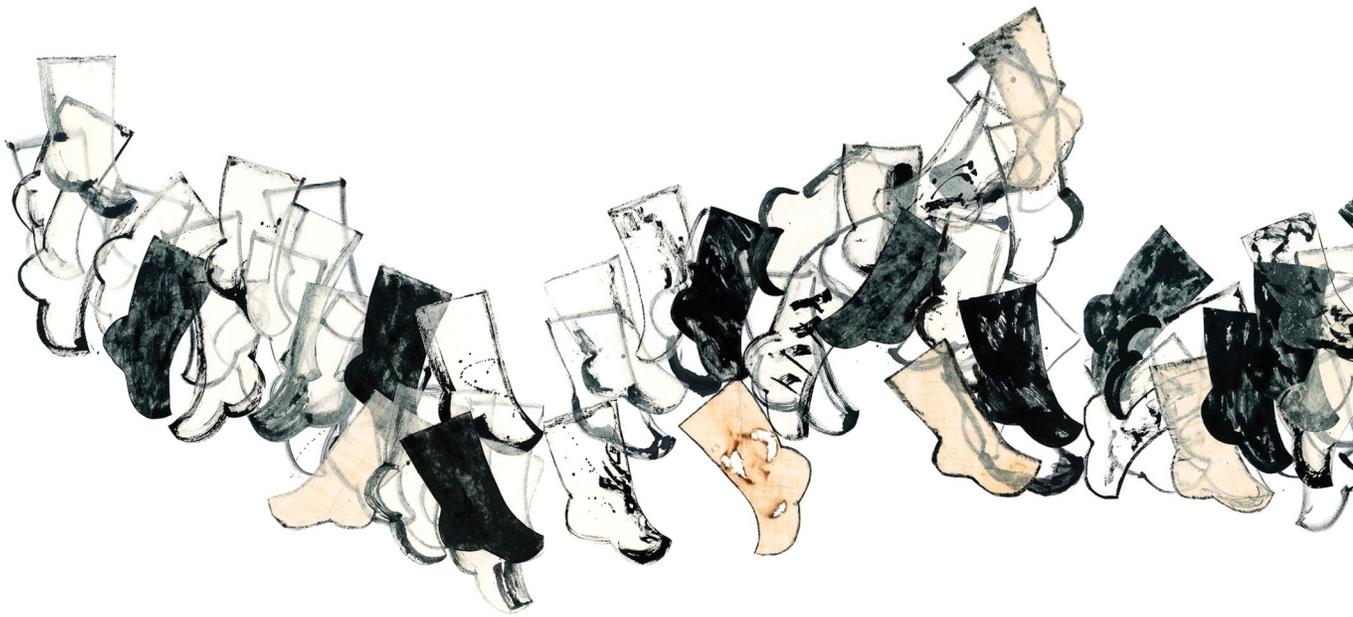


Kay Kang, *From East to West*, 2017, cast ceramic, courtesy of the artist

feminist concepts in my work might not have been received as well in Korea, and perhaps I would not have had the courage to express them in that environment versus here in the Bay Area. Additionally, had I remained in Korea my work would likely have been more influenced by European art, as much of the focus in Korea was (lesser now) focused on the European traditional art.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

There are a couple of themes underlying the body of my artwork and they are both strongly influenced by my identity as a Korean American. First, much of my art is inspired by my nostalgia for the life I had in Korea. My memories of life in Korea have inspired me to include images and relics from traditional Korean life and art, which you can see throughout my pieces. The use of the traditional *beosun*, or sock, speaks of my longing for my family. For these *beosun* I recycled Korean bed linens, or *ramie*, which my family used during the hot and humid Korean summer days. These linens were over 40 years old, and as much as they served a functional use for my artwork, they represent sentimentality for Korea. You can even see burnt areas on the fabric since *ramie* sheets had to be ironed in those days. I collaged the burnt part for the



Kay Kang, *The Journey Began/The Trace of My Journey/Baljachui*, 2017, Sumi ink on Hanji Korean paper collaged on canvas, courtesy of the artist

sad memories like losing my father and other moments. The use of the traditional celadon green as a backdrop in some of my paintings is another example of Korean influence in my art. The second concept that is prevalently woven throughout my art is conflict—a clash of cultures and the struggle to find my own voice somewhere in between my Korean and American selves. I express this explicitly and implicitly in my artwork. For example, my piece *Junghwan*—a collection of numerous male names given to Korean females—is an explicit expression of my objection to the Korean male-centric culture. A subtler expression of this culture clash is in the strong and one might say “angry” colors I used in my earlier days as an immigrant, which was an expression of my frustration and anger with the limitations I felt were put on me as a Korean woman (even as a Korean American).

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

As an émigré to the United States from Seoul, Korea, the story of the journey of the immigrant in American society is of special importance to my work and me. My images are a universal language that convey concepts and emotions that people from any culture can read, feel, and interpret based on their own personal experiences. My work in



In-Between Places is a series of footsteps representing every significant step in my journey over the 46 years since immigrating to the United States—a journey filled with myriad of hopes, joys, sorrows, fears, and expectations. I use beosun to create paintings which describe the life journey and evolution of women. Korean women used to wear white cotton socks not only for warmth, but to make their feet appear daintier. Bare feet weren't feminine enough, particularly in front of older people and men. My beosun *Footstep* piece is a representation of the transformation of a Korean woman from a protected woman to a bare-footed, independent, strong-minded woman in America.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

My dream of an ideal environment is for more opportunities for immigrant women to find art and utilize it as therapy, activism, or other avenues for expressing their beliefs. Now more than ever, we need to support immigrant women in America.

I feel very fortunate to be an artist in the Bay Area, however, my dream as an artist living in the Bay Area, is that there will be more galleries representing a broad range of Asian artists—traditional and contemporary. I have been living in San Francisco for more than 33 years, but there are

IT'S A GIRL!!



Kay Kang, *It's A Girl!*,
2009, mixed media,
courtesy of the artist

still very few Asian galleries representing Korean and other Asian artists. The Asian Art Museum implemented a contemporary Asian art program recently, and I am hoping that they will do more in the future. I am excited for the opportunity to be among fellow Korean American artists in the *In-Between Places* exhibition, and to see how our experiences are similar (or different), and how that has inspired and influenced our artworks.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

I would advise young Korean American artists that as immigrants, they should deal with alienation and use their artwork to express themselves, and as a tool to reconnect and create awareness in the community. Without the reconciliation of the self to community, we cannot invent ourselves. Young Korean American artists, raised in two cultures, have a powerful advantage that allows them to bring unique perspectives that can raise awareness about Korean culture in the United States and bridge the cultural divides.



Kay Kang

Kay Kang came to United States in 1971 as a student, landing in the Midwest. In 1983, her family moved to San Francisco and she finished her master's degree in printmaking in 1986. In 2001 she was awarded a one month artist's residency in Frans Masseurel, Belgium. Kang draws inspiration from patterns found in century-old Korean Buncheong ceramics, silk fabrics, and the Korean alphabet. Her paintings were shown at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, in conjunction with *Poetry in Clay: Korean Buncheong Ceramics*. She was one of fifteen U.S. women artists to participate in *Half the Sky: Intersections in Social Practice Art, Cultural Exchange and Exhibition* at the Luxun Academy of Art in Shenyang, China. The purpose of this exhibition was to create a forum for cultural exchange between women artists from all backgrounds.

Miran Lee

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

Miran Lee, *The Country of Red* (detail), hand-stitched ramie, courtesy of the artist

There is an old saying in Korea: “unfamiliar mountains and water.” This saying describes the feelings of foreignness in an unfamiliar place—not the place of my birth—which is Korea. I initially thought this feeling was due to the constant worries of living in a foreign country and learning a new language with new people and culture. I thought that the old saying is symbolic of all the changes of living circumstances. Now that I have been in this place (San Francisco Bay Area)—different than from the place of my birth—I think that phrase strikes me as exactly right.

Silicon Valley is actually a valley, which I discovered is a long stretch of region running north and south surrounded by fences of rolling hills. The lowest part, in the middle, meets to make San Francisco Bay, which is why this area is called the Bay Area, where the Pacific Ocean flows and the sun sets over the white salt flats.

When I first arrived here, and driving along the highway, it was the yellowed hills surrounding the city that caught my attention. To my eyes, from a distance, as a person from another country where it rained



in the summers and with green mountains, the golden hills in the midsummer made me think of buff and barren hills. Strange . . . that's exactly what I felt.

Even after seeing the hills turn green in the short rainy winter, when I realized that they were green and grassy hills and not exposed barren hills, I still find the landscape unfamiliar. Although I am still adapting to this new place, the golden hills—rolling hills—always catch my eyes whether at a quick glance or over the horizon. The water at the end of the Pacific Ocean reaches the land where I was born, but I remain feeling the unfamiliar and alien. I would have never known all the new shapes and colors of a new land if I had stayed in Korea, where my environment that I knew from birth—like a sponge in water—was familiar to me. I realize that these feelings are possible only because I moved to a new place leaving all that was familiar, which enabled me to create my work.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

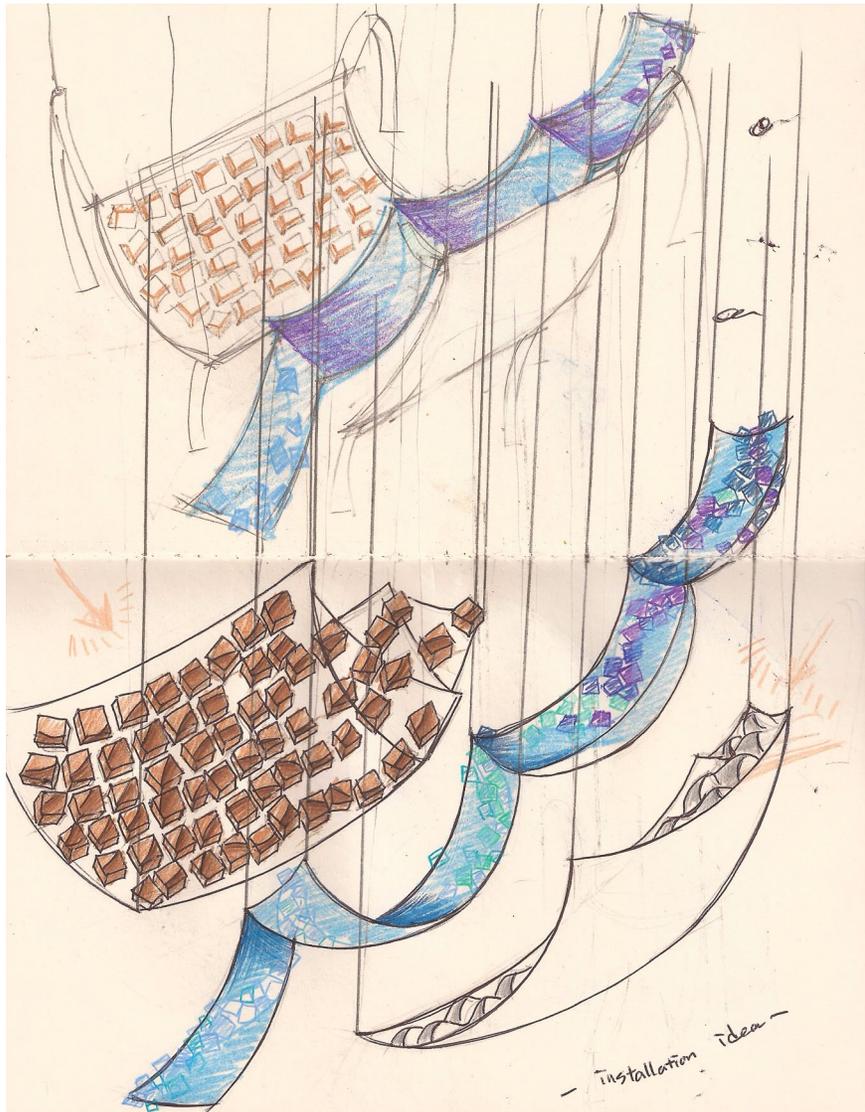
Although I am called an artist, I don't see myself as one. First, I am not soulful nor sensitive but pragmatic and not always empathetic and somewhat indifferent to my environment. I felt courageous since, as always, I thought I would continue to care for my family and work in my workroom cutting silk and sewing. I was able to move to a foreign country in my middle years. Therefore, since the move, my social activities significantly decreased from the volume that they were when I lived in Korea, and the pace of my life became slower regardless of the rest of the world. My life now lacked the drama of social life and became simpler and quieter. I feel that I have more time now and I am able to relax here. Instead of meetings and events to attend to almost every day in my previous life in Korea, my life was replaced with walks around the neighborhood, traveling, and concentrating more on my family and myself. Gradually I adapted to the hot summers and the bleached look of the neighborhood and hills with the long reaching sunsets over the indifferent blue ocean. The landscape no longer feels strange and foreign—and feels more familiar—but I continue to be very conscious of the difference. Immersed in this new environment, I discover my own feelings of relief within the loneliness. The change of locality has allowed this opportunity for me to become more introspective and reflect on my life away from the societal demands of my previous life in Korea. I discover myself thinking about my personal identity as an individual—who I am, how I feel—rather than being self-conscious of others.

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?



Miran Lee, Detail of *Hills* and *Water* in process, 2017, courtesy of the artist

The title of my works in *In-Between Places* are *Hills* and *Water* which comes from the words of a popular song: *Unfamiliar Mountains and Water*. The words in the song bare more emotions than simple unfamiliarity. The word ‘unfamiliar’ is not enough or adequate to convey the meaning of a strange new place. (There is no direct English translation for the Korean word *nat seol* for unfamiliar and strange place.) I would instead propose a French phrase that says it better: *le mal du pays*, which describes suffering from homesickness. (Both Korean and French share similar nuance and difficulty in English translation.) It describes the sorrow felt by unfamiliar landscape. My works for this exhibition are made of my feelings over the past few years.



Miran Lee, Sketch for *Hills and Water*, 2017, courtesy of the artist

I present two works using Korean silk and *ramie* (Korean linen is silkier than average linehnen) which I collected for over a decade. Each fabric has a story. This is especially true for *Hills* which is mainly made with two rolls of fifty-year-old ramie that I inherited from my mother. They were wrapped with old Korean papers noted with 310-21 Anbyeong-dong Andong-si, Lee, Janghee: the name, address and telephone number of the person who made them fifty years ago. The two rolls of ramie were starched and stained with patches of loose thread and uneven strands from hand-weaving; but the “face” of the old fabric is precious to me. I have spent most of two years touching the translucent ramie that traveled across the broadest water in the world, which stretches from the west end of the land where I’m living to the east end of the country where I am from.

Nat Seol or *Le mal du pays* is not an emotion that surges for a time then becomes faint, to be overcome, going away after sometime. I would say

it gets stronger and deeper as years go by, if anything. Even now the hills that I see and the ocean that I came across, to be here for the past two years; I have been hand-stitching like a busy ant. I realize what I just admitted has always been with me and will always be a part of me as happy sorrow.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

I create every artwork by hand-sewing and stitching. This takes a lot of time. As an artist, I long for the life where I can devote all my time and labor to art because daily life is filled with countless chores for myself and family. I spend much time at home in my workroom, which is my everyday life. I am not very involved with outside activities and know few artists in the Bay Area, including the fellow artists in *In-Between Places*.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

As an artist born and raised in Korea, then later moving to the States, my experience is different than those artists who have lived only in one place. Changing physical location is different for those simply traveling than actually living in one place, giving me a unique identity and richness to my thoughts and expression. The world is now getting smaller and narrower as we can simply connect with each other over the internet through social media. It is easier to utter an individual voice as much as to get information. In this new world, we imagine a world more diverse with more active interactions. However, on the other hand, in this new world our thoughts are easily manipulated by the unilateral flow of information. Like a frog in a well, we may lose our own identity, and our thoughts get caught up in the big waves of the world. As much as we care about how the world goes, we have to look at our own selves more. I remind myself of this, always.



Miran Lee

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Lee began painting when she was five years old. Lee turned her attention to design and majored in product design as both an undergraduate and graduate student at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, South Korea. She worked as both a designer and arts and crafts teacher, traveling extensively to over twenty-five countries. After the birth of her son, Lee went back to work in the field of arts and crafts and started working in traditional Korean needle work. Lee moved to the U.S in 2010, settling in Silicon Valley. Her work has been exhibited in numerous Bay Area and South Korean galleries.

Young June Lew

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

In general, California living has expanded my spatial consciousness. In particular, living in California renewed my sensibility toward the tones of the sun, which is expressed in my work.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

Being a Korean American definitely influences my artwork. When and where an artist exists must be a significant factor, especially for a figurative artist like myself. While residing/living in America, I have traveled all over the world for inspiration. My consciousness reflects the cosmopolitan effects of my travels. While working, however, I exile myself into a deep cave-like place, plunging into the inner depth of my consciousness. The process is partly due to my ethos and due to my inability to deal with the dizzying speed of the contemporary, now. I ruminate deeply on



Young June Lew,
Midday Encounter #3,
2017, mixed media,
courtesy of the artist



Young June Lew,
Untitled #1, 2017,
charcoal, acrylic on canvas,
courtesy of the artist



Young June Lew,
Journey 17-1, 2017,
charcoal on canvas,
courtesy of the artist

the ancient archetypes of humanity, while meditating on symbolism and mythology. These are classic traditions I draw from and have formed an inseparable bond with in the contemporary world. If I remained in Korea, the influence of when and where on my art, as well as my psyche, must by necessity have been different due to the simple fact of location.

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

My works for the *In-Between Places* exhibition stem from the sealed time in my memory. It's an ancient memory about the noontime pagoda in Korea. To me, a pagoda is a portal to the other world and a bridge between God and human. Additionally, the rocky tone of the human face connotes for me that every immigrant is an island, as a foreign sojourner—an especially apt metaphor for an artist mostly working in solitude. The sizzling sun persevering in time through deep freedom and isolation.

The resilient spirit of the individual as a rocky island manifests itself in my painting of the human face, intimating the desire to express the ancient human archetype.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

After all, art is transferred from one who is lonely to another. Every artist in every age must have gone through the same ordeals of today. There is no such thing as an “ideal” milieu for art. Every artist strives to find the highest good in any given environment. Art is difficult regardless of circumstances. Art is transcendental expression beyond the self and ultimately a tool to overcome the age we are in.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

Above all, inner strength must be diligently cultivated for an aspiring artist. Intimate understanding of humanities (liberal arts) is an absolute must because the foundation of art is humanism. An artist must work really hard—as if a daily wage earner desperately working to make ends meet. As a painter, I attest to the fact that painting requires truly a long time to arrive at a certain level. I would suggest to the younger artists to self-inquire, “Why do I want to do it? Do I really have to do it?” If you could answer, “I cannot help but do it!” then you must bet everything on it. If you consider fame or mundane success, that’s a big mistake. Or if you want to pursue the latest trends that is even a bigger mistake.



Young June Lew

Young June Lew received her B.F.A. from Ewha Women’s University in Seoul, South Korea, and her M.F.A. from California State University in Los Angeles. Lew’s work epitomizes the powerful transcendental nature of beauty through the human body and face. She translates this optimistic philosophical approach to a style of painting that evokes pure expression and meditation. Lew’s work has been exhibited at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul; the Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, California; and the National Museum of Mexico, Mexico City, among many other galleries and museums.



Young June Lew, *Journey*
08-9, 2008, mixed media,
courtesy of the artist

Nicholas Oh

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

I was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, moved to Korea when I was seven years old, and moved back to the United States when I was 15, to Eugene, Oregon. The early years of my life have had a profound impact on me. Until the age of seven, I did not speak any Korean. Being in Korea for the first time, I felt lost and confused while being surrounded by people that looked like me. I experienced this once again when I moved back to the United States except this time I had forgotten all my English and was surrounded by people that did not look like me. During both times, I was conflicted by my two identities and didn't truly belong to either place; I was neither a real Korean nor a real American.

When I moved to the Bay Area to attend college, I witnessed for the first time a collective mix of different cultures that created its own



Nicholas Oh, *Justice
or Else*, 2016, ceramic
sculpture, courtesy of
the artist

sub-culture. I met people like me while I was living in San Francisco: Asian Americans still carrying their own heritage that came from their parents and ancestors, and proud of being a mix of different cultures. I found confidence in my identity, and inspired by the people I met in San Francisco, I was given an opportunity to truly be myself without someone questioning who I am or where I came from. I have always valued this experience, not only being able to experience both cultures but also the struggle of not being completely part of either one. As an artist, I think it is important that you find yourself while also being confident and comfortable about your identity. In my opinion, great artists show that quality through their work as a journey of life. Had I not had my experiences I would not be who I am now, nor would I have even chosen the path to be an artist. Art gave me an opportunity to express my journey of life and share it with people, both those around me and those I've never met before.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

Being a Korean American has a direct influence on decisions I make every day. Being Asian in America, I'm often faced with racism whether it is direct or indirect. This means some people may think I am a foreigner; they may enforce stereotypes, such as the assumption that I don't speak English; some may think I'm Chinese; and some may completely overlook my existence because they think I am less than them. Despite all those things, what it comes down to is that I'm still part of this country as an American. I go out and vote. I served in the United States Marine Corps. I talk about political and social issues such as Trump tweeting or racism and injustice by mainstream media. I have to make conscious decisions for every action I take, forcing me to question whether certain things happen to me because of my identity. Some people may think it's funny or I am paranoid but this is my reality. When things happen to me personally like someone shouting at me 'go back to your country!', I realize that certain situations are caused through the prejudice of those who act and force their ideals onto others. These are the things I explore as a Korean American artist—the racism, the constant stereotypes, and social and political problems that create these prejudices.

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

What I want the audience to focus in my work is the fact that social issues in America are real and present. That racism is real, injustice is real, segregation is real and these issues impact all of us, not just one particular group of people.



Nicholas Oh, *Asian American Series*, 2014, ceramic, courtesy of the artist



Nicholas Oh, from
Rocket Series, 2012,
ceramic sculpture,
courtesy of the artist

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

My dream as an artist is to bring more people from different communities together to start dialogues— dialogues of race, gender, status, class, or even environment. I want to bring enough people together to draw attention to issues so that someday we can make a change that would impact society as a whole. Furthermore, I strive to shine some light on issues that I feel passionately about—predominantly racism. As an artist working in the Bay Area, the main struggle is that despite the number of talented Asian American artists here, I rarely run into those who actively pursue political art. This aspect is personally discouraging and has always caused difficulties to pursue some of the issues that I feel strongly about.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

Being an artist is not only just about the studio practice of art, but it's also about reflecting what's going on around the artist. Being actively aware of what's going on in the community we belong to is as important as creating art. In my experiences, a lot of art students (especially international students) overlook what's around them and don't try to learn about the local communities and the history of the Bay Area. Korean Americans or Koreans in America often turn a blind eye towards political or social issues in America. I find it important to not only try and benefit from education but also to learn about the predecessors who came before us, and their impact on art and the community of the Bay Area. With my art I want to contribute to the discussion socio-political issues prevalent in my environment that will benefit generations of people.



Nicholas Oh

Nicholas Oh was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin. When he was seven years old he moved to Korea, then returned to the United States when he was fifteen. Oh recently graduated from San Francisco State University with a B.A. in ceramics and is currently enrolled in the M.F.A. program at the Rhode Island School of Design. He has completed artist residencies at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan, and at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Colorado. He creates sculptures that are appealing yet contain brutal reality. He is interested in provoking and challenging an audience to question their own ideas about social issues that underline racism.

Younhee Paik

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

I graduated from Seoul National University with a degree in fine arts in 1968. After completing the degree, I moved to San Francisco. I instantly loved the Bay Area's strong sunlight and rich colors of nature. I remember being in awe as I climbed the hill to the San Francisco Art Institute to attend courses for my M.F.A. The open sky, with white clouds and dark green trees blowing in the wind, impressed me very much. I am always inspired by the flow of nature like water, clouds, trees blowing in the wind, etc. The light in California is so strong. This impression shows in my work as contrast of light and shadow. I traveled to India in 1990 and it was the turning point for my work. While traveling, I learned about "inner light" through the reality, poverty, religion and beliefs of the people of India. The "light" was not from outside sunlight, but rather from "inner light" radiating through the soul. Now,

Younhee Paik, *Chorus of Trees* (detail), 2017, charcoal on rice paper, courtesy of the artist





Younhee Paik, *Skylark*,
2008, acrylic on canvas,
courtesy of the artist

my work and vision have its own light evaporating, radiating, and glowing by itself. This was the inspiration and spiritual growth that has had a huge impact on my work, and it did not matter if I was living in Korea or in the United States.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

I walk in the park by the seashore as I contemplate nature in quietude. It is essential to my work that I find the true perception of the time and space to which I belong. Indeed, my own time and space seem far too limited when seen within the vastness of our universe. My eyes want to see further, and I wish to scale the awesome power which reigns over the universe and stimulates me to paint. Art is a matter of human existence versus universe, nature versus culture, limited versus infinite, and mortal versus immortal. Artists try and find the meaning and truth of these two opposite worlds, and deliver the beauty and freedom of new ideas. I consider myself and all human beings as particles of life in this universe. It cannot be divided by race and regional names. Therefore, I don't think I have been influenced by living in Western society—but a greater universe?

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

My choice of subject matter for *In-Between Places* is different than my previous work. Representational symbols like clouds, water, steps, ladders, and floor plans of churches on large scale canvas with big gestural brushstrokes and spilling oil and acrylic colors were the motifs I used to express my thoughts and ideas. I have also used oil with big rollers on aluminum plates. My paintings looked like space—unknown worlds with known symbols. Now my new pieces for this show are of trees in black and white charcoal drawings on rice paper. A tree is a universal symbol. Every individual tree has a unique way of growing and expression in each season. Trees have a spirit; I believe trees are our neighbor, friend, ancestor and descendant. I try to read their mind and wishes; what they are trying to express and what they are longing for: sunshine, wind and water. I have loved trees since I was young. I remember at five years old walking through the forest everyday with my father (he majored in Earth Science.) He would explain the phenomenon of nature. My curiosity and imagination started to expand. Now I have a big garden by my studio. I contemplate and find my peace in the garden. I learn through nature.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?



Younhee Paik, *Chorus of Trees* (detail), 2017, charcoal on rice paper, courtesy of the artist

I wish to give some messages to audiences, whoever they are. I want the subject, color, movement in my paintings to deliver the feeling of energy, freedom, and peace to the viewer. I want my paintings to be hung in public places. This wish is not for my own fame and success; I don't care about my name next to my paintings. Anonymous is still powerful to the viewer. Just like I feel so peaceful and fresh when listening to Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, etc., I hope my paintings can sooth and enlighten viewer's minds. This is my dream. The difficult thing is to find quiet time to paint with peace of mind and the physical energy to keep me going six to seven hours standing over paintings. Hardship as an artist lies in the struggle to find the right dealer that will promote my work. This is half luck and half an artist's ability to connect with dealers, politics, art markets, etc. My time is so limited to spend for this purpose. I spend sixty percent of my time in the studio



Younhee Paik, *Chorus of Trees*, 2017, charcoal on rice paper, courtesy of the artist

working, thirty percent for family, and one to five percent for the art market to promote my career. Some successful artists in New York said to me that I should spend seventy percent of my time socializing with art dealers and friends. I did not respect that idea.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

Someone said that to be a successful musician, he or she has to earn distinguished prizes in their twenties. For literature, one good book has to be published by their forties. For visual artists, no one knows who is a true great artist until they reach their sixties. That means it is a long journey. Never give up. Go to your studio every day. Pursue your art with your heart and soul. Believe it is worthwhile to sacrifice yourself.



Younhee Paik

Younhee Paik received her B.F.A from Seoul National University, South Korea and received her M.F.A from the San Francisco Art Institute. She has resided in the Bay Area as an active artist for over thirty years while continually revisiting her homeland. Paik has exhibited in New York, Seoul, and throughout the Bay Area, including at the Triton Museum, Santa Clara, California; the National Contemporary Museum, Seoul; and the Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University, New York. Her pieces are about transformation and transition between the material and spiritual worlds.



Minji Sohn

In what way, has living in California—and the Bay Area specifically—effected your artwork and ideas? How different do you think your work would be, for instance, if you remained or lived in Korea?

I used to associate California with only the most familiar images I had consumed from the media: palm trees, tanned people in bathing suits enjoying sunshine, Hollywood, and the Golden Gate Bridge. I am an artist born in Japan, raised in Korea, and I spent most of my life on the East Coast of North America. Despite the fact that I had never been to California and did not know a single thing about it, I decided that I wanted to come to this area for my graduate studies. It seemed like a completely new, foreign territory which was exactly why I knew I must come. Going into a graduate school in the Bay Area, I did not set any specific goals to achieve for myself; instead, I wanted to keep all possibilities open. I was ready to absorb my new environment, learn new lessons, and to be flexible with whatever changes the experience of San Francisco and graduate school would bring to my art practice and personal life.



Minji Sohn, *Night 1*, 2017,
courtesy of the artist

Coming from a painting background, the performative aspects of my art were just beginning to sprout, and the Bay Area ended up being the right place to grow. With a unique history of conceptual art, especially performance art dealing with issues of race, gender and sexuality, I felt like my experimentations were more easily accepted and embraced here, and even brought out nostalgia for the flourishing performance art of the 60s and 70s for some. A more dynamic dialogue about my work was made possible within this context, which allowed me to think about my art in new realms. I immersed myself as much as could in this capital of counterculture, social change, and electronic music, and my art practice evolved drastically.

Many Bay Area institutions, galleries, and alternative art spaces are open to emerging artists, and I was able to have space to take on new challenges and share them with others for a bigger conversation. Compared to any other places I have lived, people rarely judge others in the Bay Area; many kinds of people co-exist simultaneously, receptive of each other's differences. There is room to be, and to make whatever you would like, which I find to be certainly an important quality for the environment of an emerging artist. On the other hand, I cannot possibly foresee how my

work would have been different if I was born in a different place such as Korea—and remained there for a lifetime—or if I would be making any art at all. I can only imagine vaguely that if I had remained in Korea and became an artist, I would at least be making art dealing with different issues that would be important to me in the moment. It is always difficult to imagine what it would have been like if certain variables of one's life or a situation were different, since those are hypothetical questions and there is no way of confirming them. Is it nature or nurture? I also cannot say. All live in various locations and have their ups and downs which could both fail or inspire them in any direction, for any number of unknowable reasons. I have met many excellent young artists in Korea who stand up to the status quo and try to make art that matters despite social tendencies to oppress the different and marginalized, and limited support for the arts. They receive from their surroundings both inspirations and limitations.

What does being Korean American represent for you and does it influence your art? If not, why do you feel your work is not influenced by being Korean American?

I do feel, once in a while, that some American audiences search for “Asian inspirations” in my work by default, even in pieces where I would find them to be less relevant. Especially when I started performance art and my Asian body had entered or was incorporated into the work, my presumed racial, gender, or sexual identity became more of a focus in the works' reading. Being constantly labelled as an artist of color, Korean, Asian, woman, or gay artist can often feel discouraging and limiting. At the same time these experiences were an opportunity for me to become more aware about who I am, and to think more about my background and how it did, in fact, influence my interests and aesthetics in certain ways. It also inspired me to deal with issues of identity more aggressively in my work and bring them into the dialogue in a way that is in my control. All my life I flew between continents every few months or so, living in-between countries and cultures. This nomad-like experience and in-between-ness have played a major role in shaping my character and it is also a subject of many of my recent investigations and performances.

Looking back on my last 14 years in North America as a student, visitor, guest, foreigner, and outsider, I became interested in the phenomenon of early-age study abroad and its historical, financial, and social background. As a 12-year-old girl flies on an airplane from Korea to America, Canada, Australia or England to learn English, have the ghosts of imperialism been passed on and inscribed onto her mind and blood? Especially with South Korea's economic and diplomatic dependency on America after the Korean War, a national psyche of trauma, shame and a sense of inferiority surface throughout everyday life. Resembling Pauline



Minji Sohn, *Again, and Again, and Again (A Sea of Books)*, 2015, courtesy of the artist

from Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* who "never felt at home anywhere, or belonged anyplace," the obsessive behaviors presented in my performances can be read as a way to find comfort and escape from racial discrimination and self-loathing. The repetitive action, such as counting, is a way to forget, as well as a reminder of the limitations of my body and mind; it is both an active and passive-aggressive exercise to process, judge, highlight and embrace my experiences of both large and small, real and imagined oppressions. A body spinning, twirling, and walking or running in circles, is also a reoccurring motif in my performative work, which physicalizes the entrapment of a being in-between cultural demands and self-actualization.

What do you want the audience to know about the work you contributed to In-Between Places? What are the specific elements, processes or materials that you have focused on to create artworks for this exhibition?

"Are you on the South Korean army's side or North Korean army's?" Lee Chung Jun's 1971 novella, *The Walls of Rumor*, deals with the protagonist who was traumatized by this question, asked by an unknown person in the darkness behind a blindingly bright flashlight pointing at him. This would happen in reality during the Korean War, where citizens were suddenly interrogated by gunmen and could be potentially shot if they gave the wrong answer. What answer should he give to survive, which side is the questioner on? His fear is of a black and white dichotomy—a fear of binaries. The protagonist, Park Jun, later suffers from hallucinations due to this traumatic experience. Putting a spotlight on someone is a form of torture. The flashlight beams represent oppression and psychic terror. This terror exists because one cannot see the other side of the beam of the flashlight/the aggressor/the questioner. What



Minji Sohn, *Twirling Minutes*, 2015, courtesy of the artist

does it mean then, to put a spotlight on myself? During my performances, do I re-enact my relationship with the casual small talking audience who asks me which side of Korea I am from—North or South? From conversations in everyday life to going through airport security, we are constantly asked for disclosure of our identity. Mundanely, people are numerically defined by criteria of gender, nationality, race or even political beliefs, and this way of thinking is so internalized that we cannot conceive any other options to define our identities.

Turn Right Turn Left is another investigational work of mine that questions categorization itself by constantly shifting in between two options. Obeying the authoritarian voice, I turn right, left, right, then left again, however this action of compliance leads to no resolution or final destination. The action of turning is a physicalization of psychological conflict within private lives, but also an embodiment of society itself in agitation, which totters along with its members. Used to efficiently deliver messages or propaganda, digital media guarantees the anonymity of the questioner behind the spotlight, which further emphasizes the fear of the unknown. In *Turn Right Turn Left*, the two opposite forces of the right and the left exist side by side, overlap, and conflict with one another simultaneously. With repetition, the meaning of these distinctive words and one's sense of direction are lost and meditated on at the same time.

What are your dreams as an artist and for your environment? As an artist in the Bay Area what do you struggle with?

It is hard to imagine a perfect world when all known political systems have failed us. Many pioneers have tried to imagine and execute utopia, from Thomas More to even Kim Il-sung. Today in the first world, even with those who agree that things could be better, active radical thinking regarding social transformation is often considered a thing of the past, juvenile, or too extremist. In my work, I present the fantastical land of perfection as an object of both desire and mourning. Anne A. Cheng suggests in her groundbreaking work *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief* that “more than any other indemnificatory disorders, racial melancholia speaks of a dream of perfection,” and that this impossible dream of conforming to the white social standards of happiness and beauty provides the basis for melancholia and pathological anxieties. From a culture obsessed with betterment, I came to America to be better at English, to have a better education, and for a better environment for children to be raised. From this experience, I came to think of dreams as never being truly personal nor unique, but rather as being handed to each individual by their surroundings. Each day we are bombarded with images of what we must desire, from financial success and fame to the white picket fence of the American dream. However, once one finally arrives in the dream house, the inside can be different from what one had imagined it would be like from the outside. I think of progress—either personal, national, or global—as an intricate process that’s equation cannot be oversimplified. Much like evolution, history is often misconceived as a concise linear progression where mankind advances towards the better one step at a time. We feel a tremendous amount of grief when we see news of a hate crime or when a tyrant gets elected to be the president because the promise of this linear progression is broken. It would be very nice to live in a world where no misogynist, heteronormative, capitalist, racist, white supremacist, or colonial standards of value existed. Sadly, we do not live in that world and even the Bay Area has a long way to go. There is no one simple solution to solve it all, but I can only say that each small action individuals make, as much as free will allows, must count for something in determining one’s own future or society’s as a whole.

Any advice or thoughts you would like to share with the younger generation of Korean American artists, or artists who would like to practice in the U.S.? How do you understand the role of Korean artists in the 21st century?

In the current era of Trump in America and Park Geun-hye in South Korea (who has been impeached and a new president, Moon Jae-in, has been elected at the time of this catalog going to print), there is a heavy burden on the shoulders of the younger generation. Artists have already taken a major role in demonstrating against these administrations like they always have in times of crisis. By reflecting and responding to events happening around us in our everyday lives, artists are natural chroniclers who bring to surface each individual thought to make them available to

others in the future or the present; how this material is received and used is up to the rest. If the personal is truly the universal or political, being our individual selves and materializing ideas that are important to us is enough of a difficult role. As we enter the fourth industrial revolution along with deep ideological cultural differences between generations and classes, it is even more important now for artists to be the stable foundation of reason in this period of transition and provide opportunities for conversation and thinking to the public. As a young artist, who is still trying to find a sustainable way of living and art making, I consider the following to be a resolution or a manifesto to myself, rather than as advice to fellow artists: Let us not be bound by ideas of how we must be. Let us not be told to be or do anything that feels wrong. Let us define for ourselves what the right timing and the right places are. Let us speak the unspeakable and question the obvious. Let us not be afraid of being hated, disgusted, shamed or pointed a finger at. Let us not be limited by meaningless, quantifiable labels of age, sex and race or use them as excuses; or let us use those labels to empower and inspire us. Let us be and make only what is true to who we are. Let us just be. Let us make no compromises.



Minji Sohn

Minji Sohn is a performance artist based in Oakland, California and Seoul, South Korea. She was born in Japan, and raised in Korea and Canada. Sohn graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a B.F.A. in Fine Arts, and received her M.F.A. in Fine Arts from California College of the Arts. Sohn works in a range of media, including performance. Her work has been included in exhibitions throughout the Bay Area, including at the Asian Art Museum, SOMArts Cultural Center, and Southern Exposure.

Contributor Biographies

Linda Inson Choy

Linda Inson Choy received her B.A. from Mills College, Oakland, California and an M.A. from San Jose State University, California. She has worked as a Curatorial Assistant at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture, for the Korean Art Department from 1996 to 2004 where she held a major role in organizing several major exhibitions culminating in *The Age of Enlightenment: Art of Korea's Goryeo Dynasty* in 2003. Since 2005, Choy has worked as an independent curator specializing in contemporary Korean art and curated *The Offering Table: Women Activist Artists from Korea* at Mills College, Oakland, in 2008. Choy was invited to be Curator in Residency at Incheon Art Platform, Korea, in spring 2011, and was invited to be a research curator at Gyeonggi Creation Center, Korea, in fall 2011. Choy has presented papers and organized panels for numerous College Art Association conferences, including the 2012 topic of Asian American women artists and their role in the context of greater art communities.

Hyonjeong Kim Han

Hyonjeong Kim Han is associate curator of Korean art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. A specialist in Korean and Chinese painting, she joined the museum in 2010. During her tenure, she has organized five major special exhibitions on Korean art: *Poetry in Clay: Korean Buncheong Ceramics from Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art* (2011–2012); *In Grand Style: Celebrations in Korean Art during the Joseon Dynasty* (2013–2014); *Dual Natures in Ceramics: Eight Contemporary Artists from Korea* (2014–2015); and *Mother-of-Pearl Lacquerware*

from Korea (2016). She is also working on the upcoming exhibition on Korean fashion, *Couture Korea* that opens on November 3rd, 2017.

Hyonjeong Kim Han worked at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) as associate curator of Korean and Chinese Art and served as the acting head of the Chinese and Korean Art Department from 2006 to 2010. At LACMA, she oversaw the major reinstallation of the Korean galleries and was a consulting curator for *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea* in 2009. From 2004 to 2006, she worked as a senior researcher at the Institute of Korean Painting and was concurrently a lecturer of Asian art history at Seoul National University.

Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker

Dr. Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker is Professor of Asian Art History at Mills College and holds the Carver Chair in East Asian Studies. She is also Co-Chair of the Department of Art and Art History. She received her Ph.D. in 1984, from the University of California, Berkeley. Milford received senior fellowships from the American Institute for Indian Studies and the National Endowment for the Humanities to study contemporary South Asian art focusing on the work of women artists in India. She has curated numerous exhibitions for the Mills College Art Museum including, *Visions of Yin, The Art of Mayumi Oda*, 1986; *Women Artists of India: A Celebration of Independence*, 1997; *Zarina Hashmi: Mapping A Life*, 2001; and *Love and Betrayal: Bollywood Summer at Mills*, 2006. Among her publications are exhibition catalogues, articles and reviews that have appeared in *Artibus Asiae*, *Art Journal*, *Artweek*, *Woman's Art Journal*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, and *New Asia Review*. She has served on the Board of Directors of the College Art Association and the ASIANetwork. She has served on the Board of Directors of the American Council for Southern Asian Art and the Society for the Art and Cultural Heritage of India; she serves on the Advisory Committee for the Society for Asian Art and the Commission for Asian Contemporary Art, both at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

Works in the Exhibition

Jung Ran Bae

The Days Like Feathers
2017
Clay, feathers, Plexiglass,
wood
Courtesy of the artist

Sohyung Choi

Repetitious Dream,
2010–17
Single-channel
digital video
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Kay Kang

My Journey/Bahlybachwee
2017
Sumi ink, acrylic on
Hanji Korean paper
collaged on canvas
60 × 240 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Kay Kang

From East to West
2017
Cast plaster
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Kay Kang

Guests Missed
2017
Sumi ink, acrylic on
Hanji Korean paper
collaged on canvas
60 × 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Miran Lee

Hills and Water
2017
Hand-stitched ramie
and silk
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Young June Lew

Untitled #1
2017
Charcoal, acrylic on canvas
52 × 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Young June Lew

Midday Encounter #6
2017
Mixed media
78 × 132 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Young June Lew

Midday Encounter #2
2017
Mixed media
80 × 88 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Young June Lew

Midday Encounter #3
2017
Mixed media
80 × 88 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Young June Lew

Journey 17-1
2017
Charcoal on canvas
80 × 44 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Nicholas Oh

Justice or Else
2015–16
Ceramic, wood, paint,
patina
6 × 20 × 3 feet
Courtesy of the artist

Nicholas Oh

Chinksugi
2017
Ceramic, wood, resin,
paint
6 × 3 × 3 feet
Courtesy of the artist

Younhee Paik

Chorus of Trees
2017
Charcoal on rice paper,
acrylic on canvas,
Plexiglass
Each panel 52 × 30 inches
20 × 20 feet overall
Courtesy of the artist

Minji Sohn

Turn Right, Turn Left
2017
Four-channel video
installation
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist



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