

TATE FILM

**EMBEDDEDNESS: ARTIST FILMS AND VIDEOS
FROM KOREA 1960S TO NOW**

Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium
18 – 19 September 2015

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Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium
£5/£4 per screening

The first survey in the UK of Korean artists' films and videos attempts to unwrap the particularity of experimental film and artist moving-image making over five decades from 1960s until now. The series focuses on the ways in which artists in South Korea have addressed the intrinsic conditions of cinema - namely duration and the collective viewing experience - and the changing social and political context that have defined the ways artists have been able to work. These screenings will attempt to map the continuities across various generations and the crucial role of artists organisations from the pioneering groups such as AG (Avant-Garde), The Fourth Group and Kaidu in the 1960s and 70s to the ongoing activities of the EXIS (International Experimental Film Festival in Seoul) that continues to support artists' practice with film and video in South Korea.

Curated by Hangjun Lee (EXIS), with Hyun Jin Cho (KCCUK) and George Clark (Tate Modern).

Organised in collaboration with the Korean Cultural Centre UK, EXIS and supported by LUX.

Tate Film is supported by LUMA Foundation.



Im Heung-soon, *Sung Si (Jeju Symptom and Sign)* 2011, video still. Courtesy the artist



Lee Nan *Swing Diary* 1996, film still. Courtesy the artist



Park Donghyun, *Circulation* 1998, film still. Courtesy the artist



Lee Jang-wook *Surface of Memory, Memory on Surface* 1999, film still. Courtesy the artist



Yeondoo Jung *The Hanging Garden* 2009, video still. Courtesy the artist

PIONEERS: FROM AG TO KAIDU

Friday 18 September, 19.00–21.00

The opening programme focuses on pioneering works from the 1960s and 1970s including Kim Ku-lim's *The Meaning of 1/24 Second* 1969, considered the 'first experimental film' work from Korea and Lee Ik Tae's *From Morning and Evening* 1970, considered the country's 'first independent film'. Working under restrictive political conditions, state censorship and with limited access to equipment or resources, artists either had to self-organise - such as the groups AG (Avant-Garde) and Cinepoem coterie / 시네·포엠 동인회, The Fourth Group / 4집단, and Moving Image Research Group / 영상연구회, or work within the academy - such as women's film group Kaidu / 카이두 founded at the Ewha Womans University.

Founded on 20 June 1970, The Fourth Group aspired to create 'happenings', a synthesis of fine art, music, film, theatre and dance. Members included visual artists and filmmakers included Kim Ku-lim, Chong Chan-sung, Bang Ka-ji, Jung Kangja, Kang Kuk-jin, Choi Pong-hyon, Lee

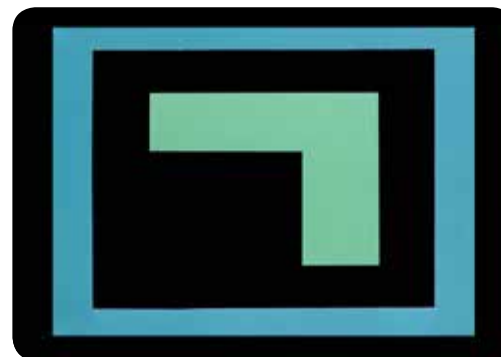
Ik-tae as well as fashion designers, journalists and a monk. In July 1972 Ik-tae Lee formed Moving Image Research Group with Hyun-joo Kim, Hwang-lim Lee and Sang-cheon Park that consisted mainly of university students influenced by French New Wave and New American Cinema. Han Ok-hi and Jeomseon Kim made the experimental films *A Hole* 1973 and *Film 73* 1973 that premiered at a Moving Image Research Group screening and went on to form the Kaidu group of women filmmakers.

Despite these activities the 1970s proved to be a difficult time for many artists in Korea particularly following the declaration of martial law that lasted from 1972 to 1979. During this time various artists began to turn to performance art as a means of making work, often utilising film and photography as a medium to record and document their actions. Most prominent amongst the generation of artists who turned to performance in this period was Lee Kun-yong who realised over 50 performance events between 1975 to 1979.

Followed by discussion with Kim Ku-lim



Ku-lim Kim, *The Meaning of 1/24 Second* 1969, film still (detail). Courtesy the artist



In-tae Kim *Korean Alphabet* 1967, film still. Courtesy the artist

KOREAN ALPHABET

In-tae Kim / 김인태, Canada 1967, 16mm, colour, sound, 7 min

In-tae Kim began his career by producing a number of cultural and educational films including *Transportation and Postal Service* 1958, *Teeth and Health* 1961 and *Discussion Group for Farm Broadcasting* 1962. He studied filmmaking at the National Film Board of Canada between 1967-68 with a grant given by UNKRA (United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency). While at NFBC, he produced *Korean Alphabet*, an educational film designed to teach the Korean alphabet with a soundtrack created by Norman McLaren. Through this work, (which received the Golden Prize for Educational Films at the Tehran International Film Festival in 1968), we can get an impression of the scope of cinema in Korea during the 1960s, and glimpse how new technologies and experimental techniques were used to explore cinematic concepts, in this case within a pedagogical setting.



Kim Ku-lim, *The Meaning of 1/24 Second* 1969, film still. Courtesy the artist

THE MEANING OF 1/24 SECOND / 1/24 초의 의미
Kim Ku-lim / 김구림, Korea 1969, 16mm, colour, silent, 11 min

Taking the basic structure of film, that consists of 24 frames per second, *The Meaning of 1/24 Second* expresses the harsh reality faced by modern humanity and the sense of alienation that comes from uncontrollable speed. Duration was a key concept in Kim's artistic journey and the cinematic shape of this film was based on editing every second. Unable to be make a finished film print at that time due to technological limitations, Kim was so worried about the fragile nature of the print given it's many splices, that he prepared many additional elements for the premiere, including dancers and multiple slide projectors. These elements turned the film premiere into a multi-projection performance, more of a 'happening' than a film screening. The event was held at the Academy Music Hall in Seoul on 16 July 1969 when the media was filled with news of the imminent Apollo 11 moon landing. This artistic gesture is considered to be one of the first non-normative cinematic interventions in Korean moving image history. Although the original film was lost in 2001, a digital video copy remained and this was used to create a 16mm print of the film for Kim Ku-Lim's retrospective at the Seoul Museum of Art, Korea in 2013.

FROM MORNING TO EVENING / 아침과 저녁사이
Lee Ik-tae / 이익태, Korea 1970, 16mm, black & white, sound, 20 min

Although the situation of the Korean film industry at that time was positive, it was no doubt full of confusion and perversion. This movie was made to find a breakthrough in that situation. – Lee Ik Tae, *50 Independent Films*, Korean Film Archive

Film critic and former head of Korean Film Archive Yi Hyo-in called Lee's *From Morning To Evening* Korea's 'first independent film' due to its shocking images, modernist techniques and rare insight into the lives of young people at the dawn of the 1970s. The film follows a young man who wakes to find a woman in his bed, he ventures out into the city where he first seduces a woman in a park. Later he meets and has sex with another woman near the Seoul Train Station only to return to his apartment with a gift for the woman in his bed. *From Morning To Evening* premiered in May 1970 at YMCA Hall during a self-proclaimed avant-garde cinema screening, alongside other presentations and discussions. Lee founded one of the first independent production companies in Korea and produced several short films such as *Whereabout of Light* 1973 and *Boring Afternoon* 1973.

SECRET SPILL
Teresa Hak Kyung Cha / 차학경, 1974 USA, video, black and white, sound, 27 min

It murmurs inside. It murmurs. Inside is the pain of speech the pain to say. Larger still. Greater than the pain not to say. To not say. Says nothing against the pain to speak. It festers inside. The wound, liquid, dust. Must break. Must void. – Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*, 1982, p3

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982) was an influential Korean-American conceptual artist and novelist. Her work in performance, video, installation focused on the connection between

language, memory and meaning. She was born in Busan, during the Korean War and in 1964 Cha's family relocated to California. While studying at UC Berkley she attended Bertrand Augst's class on structural and semiological film analysis, where Augst's frame by frame analysis of films greatly inspired Cha's own works. *Secret Spill* documents one of Cha's early performances in the winter of 1974. The work posits the installation as a site of secrets, from which something spills in the form of vision, sound and touch. This is a transitional work that marks Cha's gradual shift from performance art to cinematic expression.

EVENT LOGICAL
Lee Kun-yong / 이건용, 1975 Korea, Super 8mm transferred to video, colour, silent, 12 min

A member of the AG (Avant-garde Group) as well as leader of the group Space & Time (S.T.) 1969-1980, Lee Kun-yong helped to open the horizon for contemporary art in Korea through his experimental approach to conceptual art, performance and installation. When Lee attended the 8th Paris Biennale in 1973, the experience deeply changed his thinking, and he began to consider that the body can be an artistic medium in itself. He focused on performance related to space, situation, site and the body, giving it the name 'event'; drawing a line between 'happenings' which caught on during that period (after Allan Kaprow) and his own practice. From 1975 to 1979, Lee presented about 50 'events' in different locations and exhibitions, although documentation of Lee's performances is extremely rare. *Identical Extent* and *Indoor Measurement* were originally presented as part of 'Today's Methods' group exhibition at the White Deer Gallery in April 1975, while *Rope* and *Two Peoples* (originally titled as *Meeting*) were first presented as part of 'An Event by Four Artists' at the Seoul Gallery in April 1976.

COLOR OF KOREA / 색동
Han Ok-hi / 한옥희, 1976 Korea, 16mm, colour, sound, 7 min

I wanted to explore the colors of Korea through this short movie. Koreans are called, 'The White Clad Folk,' and many people believe that white is the most Korean of all colors. But I wanted to question this thought and wanted to combine images with a variety of colors in an intensely personal manner. That's why I searched for the colors of Korea in the colorful traditional clothes of children in their movement and play. This was my attempt 30 years ago to make a movie about the colors of Korea free from the limitations of form. – Han Ok-hi, *50 Independent Films*, Korean Film Archive

Kaidu / 카이두 was founded in 1974 by six artists who all studied at Ewha Womans University - Kim Jeom-seon, Lee Junghee, Hang Soo-ae, Jeong Myosook, Wang Kyuwon and Han Ok-hi who acted as the president. The name Kaidu is taken from the name of the legendary Mongolia heroine, a granddaughter of Genghis Khan celebrated for her beauty, intelligence and excellency in martial arts. The members of the Kaidu sought to problematise the way women were depicted as passive and negative objects in Korean cinema. Kaidu held experimental film screenings and symposia between 1974 and 1975 at Goethe Institute Seoul and USIS Korea. From 1976 onwards, each member carried out her independent art practice. Han went onto produce various documentaries and industrial films, including one of the first 70mm films made in Korea for the 1993 EXPO in Taejon called *Running Korean / 달리는 한국인*.

Programme duration: 85 min



ECSTATIC VISIONS**Saturday 19 September, 16.00–18.00**

This programme features key works that show the opening up of artists' film production in Korea, following the democratic movements of the 1980s and 90s, a period which emerged after the 'Uprising in Gwangju' in 1980 and the 'June Democracy Movement' which led to the establishment of the Sixth Republic of Korea in 1987. Artists featured here arrived at experimental film from a number of different trajectories - as a form of rebellion against conventional film-making or having returned to Korea from studying overseas bringing a new awareness of international art and theory. The 1990s saw the founding of numerous festivals and organisations such as Indiforum, Korean Independent Film Association, Korean Experimental Film Institute and the 1st Experimental Film Festival in 1994 held under the title 'Ecstatic Visions: The Aesthetic of New Media Film'.

WET DREAM**Kim Yoon-tae / 김윤태, Korea 1992, 16mm, colour, sound, 15 min**

This film was made at an experimental film workshop (run by Goethe Institute Seoul / Korean Film Council supervised by experimental filmmaker Christoph Janetzko) and attempts in many ways to maintain a purely experimental spirit. It was made without a script like an improvisatory painting. We decided not to be limited by chronology and the continuity of temporal space within our storyline and character and therefore, the film was made through imaginative experimentation, producing inherent and subjective images. The film is structured to resemble the traditional three day funerary proceedings of Korea and it deals with corpses, obsessive carnal desire, the oppressive society, as well as claustrophobia. – Kim Yoon-tae, *50 Independent Films*, Korean Film Archive

Kim Yoon-tae *Wet Dream* 1992, film still. Courtesy the artist**OVER ME / 오버 미
Lim Chang-jae / 임창재, Korea 1996, 16mm, black and white, sound, 18 min**

[*Over Me* is] a movie about the ghosts of memory which are trapped in the fragmented time of a woman, and the images of expressionless and lonely people which have been engraved in my memory. This was done through experimentation, by creating a labyrinth of images and meanings within the film. I constructed the movie by tracing the vestiges left by the spirit within that labyrinth. I constructed the movie by tracing the vestiges left by the spirit within that labyrinth. And what I felt was lacking in the construction of the movie, I filled in with my imagination [...] My film, which ends with a sense of incompleteness, was constructed through mere imaginative speculation, of the fragmentary pieces of a puzzle that the spirit left behind [...] This film is a requiem for all the working men and women who have died in support for labour rights. This requiem, however, is sung in order to be not disheartened. – Lim Chang-jae, programme catalogue, *17th independent film meet the audience*, Independent Film Association, November 2000

CIRCULATION / 회**Park Donghyun / 박동현, Canada / USA
1998/2015, 16mm loop, colour, sound, 4 min**

This film is a Möbius strip that consists of 365 frames. The actor (played by fellow Chicago Art Institute student Apichatpong Weerasethakul) is actually moving in one direction but appears to swing like a pendulum on the screen. Sporadic booms on the soundtrack reveal the relationship between the human pendulum movement, the rhythm of the soundtrack and its perforations, and the object split into individual frames. – Park Donghyun, *Counter Production* exhibition catalogue, Audiovisual Pavilion & EXIS 2015

SWING DIARY**Nan Lee / 이난, Korea 1996, 16mm, colour & black and white, sound, 13 min**

During planning for a documentary on Korean jazz, I discovered analogies between swing and improvisation and documentation and fiction, and found myself wanting to unite the 'real' and the 'fictional,' [...] I attempted to reveal the truths of life through strict temporal-spatial divisions and formal structuring. The movie shows how we subconsciously improvise our way through our lives while 'swinging' to the rhythm of those around us. – Nan Lee, *50 Independent Films*, Korean Film Archive

Swing Diary juxtaposes scenes of musical performances with fictional drama following a self-absorbed young man who is desperate for money and takes a role as a porn actor. Through a range of techniques merging documentary and experimental film with staged scenes and artificial confessions by the main actor, the film attempts to show the agony of survival.

Lim Chang-jae *Over Me* 1996, film still. Courtesy the artist**SURFACE OF MEMORY, MEMORY ON SURFACE
Lee Jang-wook / 이장욱, Korea / USA 1999, 16mm, colour & black and white, silent, 23 min**

This film is based upon the form of an individual's diary. I created new images using several chemical treatments on the film surface, multi-printing, etc. using footage of daily life recorded on film. This serial works were begun from trials that I had communicated seeking to re-construct my own memories, memories deeply connected with memory on film and with the film itself. The film is a conversation with personal documentary and everyday practice at darkroom. – Lee Jang-wook, *EXIS 10th Anniversary Special DVD catalogue*, 2013

1998**Suk Sung-suk / 석성석, Germany / Korea 2002, 16mm, black and white / colour, silent, 6 min**

The short experimental film *1998* is an edited compilation of different films made in four different places - Berlin, Paris, Daegu and Oksan between February and October 1998. [...] The film is mostly about family, family-related places, unfamiliar sceneries that were seen while taking a walk with a friend, scenes of my hometown, Daegu, airport and streets of Paris while transiting a flight to Korean life of Berlin. – Suk Sung-suk, *EXIS 10th anniversary screening catalogue*, 2013

Programme duration: 77 min

ARTISTS' FILMS SINCE 2000**Saturday 19 September, 19.00–21.00**

This screening celebrates works produced by contemporary Korean artists within a wider global context, featuring works by the generation who came of age during the social and political opening up of Korea in the last twenty years. These artists have enjoyed unprecedented opportunities and cultural mobility. As well as utilising new technologies these works also explore political subjects from the Iraq War to the suppressed uprising and massacre in 1948 known as the 'Jeju 4.3 Incident'. These works reflect on the original concerns of early experimental films, yet they are produced and screened within the various new media exhibition platforms of the contemporary Korean and international art world.

Followed by discussion with Im Heung-soon.

FORWARD, BACK, SIDE, FORWARD AGAIN
Seoungcho Cho / 조승호, USA 1995, video,
colour, sound, 11 min

[In] *Forward, Back, Side, Forward Again* people moving quickly past on a New York street at dusk are transformed, through long exposure and slow motion, into ghostly paths of light that swirl through the space of vision. The luminous images evoke the loneliness of a person in a crowd, the thousands of missed encounters leaving their traces on consciousness. An embodied view is encouraged, strangely perhaps, by these disembodied and floating images, for they approach the viewer not through the eyes alone but along the skin. – Laura U. Marks, 'Video haptics and erotics, *Screen*, Winter 1998, p331

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Seoungcho Cho *Forward, Back, Side, Forward Again* 1995, video still. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York / Park Chan-kyong *Power Passage* 2004/2014, installation view. Courtesy the artist / Koo Donghee *Overloaded Echo* 2006, video still. Courtesy the artist / Im Heung-soon *Jeju Symptom and Sign* / *Sung Si* 2011, video still. Courtesy the artist

POWER PASSAGE / 파워통로
Park Chan-kyong / 박찬경, Korea 2004/2014,
2 channel HD video, colour, sound, 15 min

I imagine that one day movies like *Marooned* directed by John Sturges and Robert Altman's *Countdown* are screened in the underground tunnels of Korea, and then the world tourists are going to see some marooned spaceships at the artificial cave as experiencing both digging toil and high-end technology. Perhaps, the tourists would enjoy Korean Sci-fi films instead of US ones. To apply the US Sci-fi film chronology literally, the film about the space rendezvous between two Koreas will be produced in around 2010. (The Korean War occurred in 1950, South Korean satellite were launched in 1995 and 2004, and North Korea claims the launch of satellites in 1998 and 2009.) – Park Chan-kyong, 'Drama of the cold war,' *Hermes Korea Missulsang* catalogue, Hermes Korea & Artsonje Centre, Seoul, 2004

OVERLOADED ECHO
Koo Donghee / 구동희, Korea 2006, video,
colour, sound, 8 min

A mysterious group of men and women have gathered: members of a secret society or participants in a reality show game, they become spectators and protagonists of a production that is at once absurd and disturbing, evolving the violence of certain images in the media, particularly those of the Iraq War. – Koo Donghee, *EXIS 2014* festival catalogue, 2014

THE HANGING GARDEN / 공중정원
Yeondoo Jung / 정연두, Korea 2009, HD video,
colour, sound, 15 min

This work, where the real and fake are mixed up, depicts a reality, in which both sides co-exist. It also experiments with how believably this fake story can be conveyed to the audience,

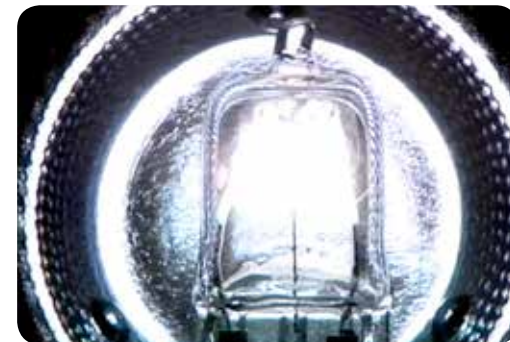
who is accustomed to receiving controlled, manipulated images or videos through the broadcast media. Though the unusual images all look like something made with advances in technology such as a 3-D computer simulation, they are, in fact, done through great manual labor. The images of the announcer walking gracefully on the stage with the old palace in the background is achieved by the relay-like effort of many people carrying pieces of the stage setting and simultaneously following the camera's movement. – Yeondoo Jung, *Platform in Kimusa*, Platform Seoul, 2009

The Hanging Garden presents a pseudo-history as an authentic looking TV narrator tells the secret story of the Hanging Garden of the Joseun dynasty. Originally presented as a two screen installation, with one image presenting the history and the other revealing its fabrication.

SUNG IS (JEJU SYMPTOM AND SIGN)
Im Heung-soon / 임흥순, Korea 2011,
HD video, colour, sound, 24 min

This video is inspired by the phrase 'two omens: bamboo blossom and the morning star' (*4.3 Speaks*, Vol. 4, pp. 341-342). Rather than deliver the mere historical factuality of Jeju 4.3, my intention, with a minimum of information through images and sounds, is to generate a situation of sympathy with human existence and its emotions, as it helplessly faces historical tragedy. In *Sung Si*, I wanted to depict situations at that time where happiness and safety were suddenly removed and anxiety and fear fully took control, and the desperation of survivors, whose lives could only to be lived through 'praying hearts' and forbidden mourning. *Sung Si* means disaster and omen in Jeju dialect. – Im Heung-soon, *EXIS 2015* festival catalogue

Programme duration: 74 min





Kim Ku-lim, shooting scenario for *The Meaning of 1/24 Second* 1969. Courtesy the artist

CONTEXTS AND TRANSFORMATIONS: KOREAN FILM AND VIDEO SINCE 1950

Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations. – Mark Granovetter, ‘Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness’. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 1985 p487

The term ‘embeddedness’ is borrowed from economic historian Karl Polanyi who argues in *The Great Transformation* 1944 that human economy is not autonomous but subordinated to and constrained by institutions such as in politics, religion and social relations. The term is one of the core concepts of economic sociology as such it is salient to this series and our attempts to trace the history of artist moving image practices in Korea where early forms of mass media were employed as a means of social control and artists films with seemingly individual expressions were embedded within these social conditions. So much so that it is very difficult to find personal forms of expression in the medium of film

until early 2000. Largely dependent upon film technologies supplied by the US and Japan, the Korean Film Industry has slowly developed from its beginnings during 1950s and the Korean War, through to the introduction of audio-visual education at Ewha Womans University with help from the US Information Service, to early 2000 when filmmaking classes opened in numerous universities and the Korean film industry established its current position as one of the central film and media industries in Asia.

As interest in new filmic languages grew during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of film groups and collectives were established. Amongst the most important of these were Cinepoem coterie (est. 1964), Film 70 (est. 1968), the Small Gauge Film Club (est. 1970), Image Research Group (est. 1972) and Kaidu (est. 1974). Many artists and filmmakers sought to find new modes of expression through utilising newly available 16mm and super 8mm cameras. At the time, only films made by government-recognised production companies could be screened in cinemas, so these collectives instead held their screenings at foreign cultural centres.

Due in part to censorship in Korea at that time, as well as the absence of established networks for presenting experimental film, many of the artists who had begun experimenting with film and had produced pioneering works in the 1960s and early 1970s such as Kim Ku-lim, Lee Ik-tae and Han Ok-hi later returned to other art forms. The late Kim Jumsun, who took part in experimental filmmaking workshops at the Goethe Institute during the 1970s, stated that it was very difficult to access information on contemporary western visual art and film during this time. One of the pioneers of video art in Korea, Park Hyun-ki (1942-2000) first came across the work of Nam June Paik, who primarily worked outside of Korea, in the archives of the American Cultural Centre the in 1970s. Throughout this period the European cultural

center played a key role as alternative cinema space for screenings, discussions and workshops.

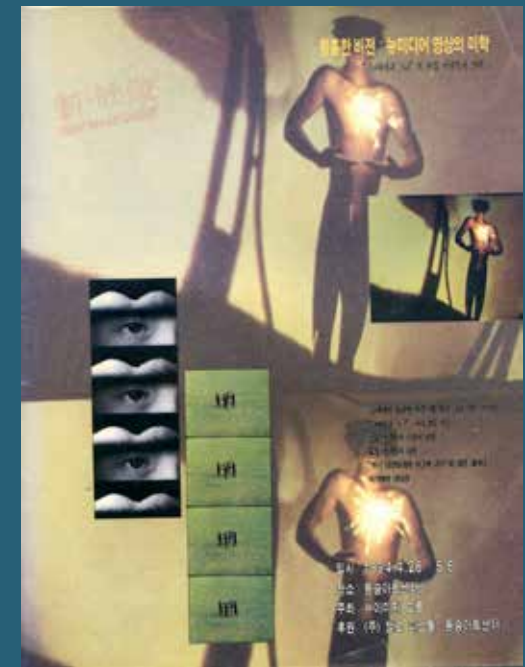
Until the relaxation of censorship at the end of 1980s, the majority of the South Korean population had their access to international mass media strictly controlled. Without personal wealth, or good political connections, it was extremely difficult for Korean artists to become part of international networks, and gain access to contemporary critical theories that would nurture their practice. A figure such as Kwon Joong-woon, who studied in New York during the 1990s, is therefore critical to the development of artists’ moving image practice in Korea. Having discovered media theory during his time in the US, Kwon returned to Korea and went on to lecture at several universities and established the Korean Experimental Film Institute / 실험영화연구소. Kwon’s work examined the history of American avant-garde and looked into the possibility of filmmakers utilising new media technology, as explored in Gene Youngblood’s *Expanded Cinema* 1970. In 1997 he published *New Media Aesthetics* and tried to create a form of continuity in the production, screening and archiving of work for artists based in the Korean Experimental Film Institute. Lim Chang-jae and Park Donghyun among others established their practice at this institute are still working in this field.

In the 1990s there were several production-based organisations such as the Underground Creative Group - Pajeok / 지하창작 집단-파적 and CP16R, which was connected to Culture School Seoul (now Seoul Art Cinema). These groups attempted to find an alternative meaning of cinematic expression, focusing on either ‘independent film’ / 독립 영화 or ‘experimental film’ / 실험 영화 and issues of production, screening, distribution or funding. Emerging around the same time, they provided a sense that film was beginning to become important in the Korean cultural scene. Despite this up until

the late 1990s, political and sociological interest and engagement was always deemed to be more important than personal expression in these alternative filmmaking projects.

During this period, the predominant view was that an alternative formal expression and exploration would detach independent films from the public. This led to a separation of ‘experimental film’ from the sphere of ‘independent film’ in Korea, leading to a number of film festivals no longer including video art and experimental films in their programmes.

Although there were various forms of experimental filmmaking practiced by artists/filmmakers such as Lim Chang-jae and Kim Yoon-tae, it’s a common perception that a significant proportion of experimental film *began* with the 1st Experimental Film Festival held in 1994 under the title ‘Ecstatic Visions: The Aesthetic of New Media Film’. The festival featured films by Hwang



Book cover for Kwon Joong-woon *New Media Aesthetics* / 뉴미디어 영상미학. 권중운 편역, published 1997



Cover for 인디포럼 / Indieforum Festival catalogue, 1996

In tae, Bae Ho ryong, Lim Chang-jae, Kim Yoon-tae shown alongside work by Kenneth Anger, Robert Breer, Su Friedrich, Doug Hall and Jane Campion. This confirmed for many the suspicion that experimental films made in Korea from the 1990s onwards were 'western' in conception, rather than works emerging from a process of self-invention within the specific sociocultural context of Korea. *Memory of Surface, Surface on Memory* Lee Jang-wook's graduation film became the centre of this debate along with works by Yang Min su, Koo Donghee, and Park Donghyun. These artists had returned to Korea from prestigious art schools abroad – The Art Institute of Chicago, San Francisco Art Institute and Yale University.

In the 1990s various events helped to introduce moving image into the context of contemporary art. These exhibitions opened this area of practice to a new new generation of artists, from the Whitney Biennial in Seoul at the The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, 1993 to the Taejon EXPO (1993), from 'The City and Moving Image / 도시와 영상' exhibition at Seoul Museum of Arts in 1998 to the first screening of video art at the Art Sonje center in November 1998.

By 2000 the film industry, both independent and commercial, had become fully acknowledged as a key component of Korea's creative economy, and universities began to provide training for people to work in the burgeoning film industry. In 2004 EXiS (International Experimental Film & Video

Festival in Seoul) was launched with a survey of the history of Korean experimental film. At the same time Spacecell, the first artist run film lab in Asia, was founded to support the film community, and has been organising handmade filmmaking workshops since 2004.

Several celebrated artists have emerged in the last decade such as Kim Kyung-man who has used the documentary form as a means of political expression, the video and installation artist Byun Jae-kyu explores the subject of memory and place in photography and Park Min-ha who focuses on the problems of materiality and space through the use of special effects borrowed from the mainstream film industry. Other artists/filmmakers such as Park Chan-kyong, Jung Yoon-suk, Im Heung-soon, to name but a few, are all primarily working within the arts yet exploring the potential of documentary film as a way to engage with contemporary politics and to reinterpret Korean history. They have looked at different social issues from Korea's recent past, such as the Jijon Clan case of the first serial killer that shook Korean society during the mid-1990s, to the development of the Chung-gye-chun area of Seoul, which has come to symbolise the modernisation and industrialisation of post-war Korea. Many prominent Korean artists now see film as their primary artistic medium, from the recent work of Park Chan-kyong, Yeondoo Jung, Koo Donghee and Im Heung-soon to the collaborative practice of Moon Kyungwon & Jeon Joonho, who represented the Korea Pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 2015.

– *Hyun Jin Cho, George Clark and Hangjun Lee, September 2015*



Suk Sung-suk 1998 2002, film still. Courtesy the artist



Lee Jang-wook Surface of Memory, Memory on Surface 1999, film still, courtesy the artist

EMBEDDEDNESS: ARTISTS FILMS AND VIDEOS FROM KOREA 1960S TO NOW

18–19 September 2015

Organised in collaboration with the Korean Cultural Centre UK, EXiS and supported by LUX.

Booklet edited by: George Clark with Hang jun Lee and Hyun Jin Cho.

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RELATED EVENT:

LUX SALON WITH HANGJUN LEE

Monday 21 September, 19.00

Hangjun Lee will discuss experimental film and video practices in Asia from the 1930s to now. Lee will present various key works including pioneering documentary films in 1930s by Liu Na-ou from China as well as introduce artist film lab movements such as Spacecell (South Korea, founded in 2004), Lab Laba-Laba (Indonesia, founded in 2014).

Hangjun Lee is the Program Director of EXiS, independent curator and filmmaker. He programmed *Letterist Cinema*, film performance and expanded cinema events and retrospective programmes of Ito Takashi, Okuyama Junichi, Michael Snow among others. He initiated Asia Forum 2009 at EXiS, an annual platform for Asian experimental moving images. He curated numerous screening programmes for international venues including Guling Avant-Garde theatre (Taipei), Green Papaya Art Project (Manila), Nanjing independent film festival (Nanjing) and OX warehouse (Macau). Recently he curated the opening commemoration screening programme *Cinematic Divergence 2013*, live film and improvised music festival *Mujanhyang (anechoic) 2014* both for National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) in Seoul. He performed with many musicians such as Jerome Noetinger (France), Hong Chulki (Korea), Dickson Dee (Hong Kong), Martin Tétreault (Canada), Sandra Tavali (Taiwan), Kracoon (Indonesia) to develop live filmic language as filmmaker. He edited *Anthology of Asian Experimental Moving Image 2009* and has written for several film and art publications in Taiwan, China, South Korea.



Kim Ku-lim, *Leader for The Meaning of 1/24 Second* 1969, off-set print. Courtesy the artist

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Thoughts, comments, reviews?

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