

Predicament of Contemporary Artists: Represent or Subdue Ethnicity?

AHL Foundation Public Lecture Series 2016 in Collaboration with Korean Cultural Center NY

Public Lecture by Kyunghee Pyun, Ph. D
Assistant Professor, Fashion Institute of Technology
Wednesday, November 30, 2016
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Korean Cultural Center
460 Park Avenue (57th Street), 6th Floor
Free admission; refreshments provided



Do Ho Suh, Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home, 2013, installation view at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul)

As contemporary art seeks a global dimension in its ambition and scale, many artists from Asia now work and live in two or three different countries. Identifying roles of race and ethnicity in contemporary art and lecture has been prominent in the past decade in related disciplines of art history, art criticism, comparative literature, and ethnic studies. In visual art as much as in film or literature, experience of growing up in an ethnic context has been represented and commented by its practitioners. In fact many critics focus on an artist's ethnic or racial background as a cause of celebration or considers it a crucial tool to interpret his/her artistic creations. This paper aims to problematize this trend by analyzing recent exhibitions held in commercial as well as institutional art settings. While the myth of "Western Art" and its universality has been challenged and overcome, art works with strong ethnic and racial background have been promoted. One may wonder how the future would shape the current categorizing of contemporary artists by its ethnic or racial affinities.



Kyunghee Pyun is an Assistant Professor of History of Art at Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She has written on Asian art as well as European medieval art. Her focus of Asian art is Asian-American visual culture and reception of Asian art in Europe and North America. "Collectors of Asian Crafts in North America: Passion for Porcelain." Journal for the Korean Society of Art and Design [Johyung Design Yeongu] (Dec. 2015) is one of many on collectors of Asian art. Her other research interests include Global trade of decorative arts in premodern Eurasia and Americas; usage and reception of visual art in context of religious performance and liturgy; interplay of word and image; and history of art collections. Her experience of teaching a diverse range of cultural exchange between Europe and Asia has become an article, "A Journey through the Silk Road in a Cosmopolitan Classroom" in Teaching Medieval and Early-Modern Cross-Cultural Encounters Across Disciplines and Eras edited by Lynn Shutters and Karina Attar (Palgrave, 2014). She was a 2015 recipient of the Field Research Grant Korea Foundation and a 2016 recipient of the SUNY Innovative Instructional Technology Grant (IITG). She is currently editing a book on dress reform in Asia in the early 20th century.

AHL Foundation Public Lecture Series 2016

Friday, September 23, 2016

Timed Realisms, Art in Korea, 1953-1995

By Joan Kee, Ph. D.

Associate Professor of History of Art at the University of Michigan

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

Sending Korean Buddhist Art to Nashville, Tennessee

By Katherine Anne Paul, Ph.D.

Curator of the Arts of Asia at the Newark Museum



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Korean Cultural Center NY



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