

Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Release 2010/10/26

Jae-Eun Choi

Forests of Aśoka

September 11 (Sat.) – December 26 (Sun.), 2010



A. *The Other Side of Illusion* 1003017080220, 2010, color photograph

The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art is currently holding the first solo exhibition in a Japanese museum by the Korean female artist Jae-Eun Choi. For her theme, Choi has chosen the image of the tree, inspired by the story of the great Emperor Aśoka of India. The famed propagator of Buddhism ordered each subject in his kingdom to plant and care for five trees, each with a different purpose: one for the curing of diseases, one for fruit, one for firewood, one for house building, and one for flowers. Aśoka called them the “five small forests.”

This image of the tree is one that transcends time. This tree is also a source of mercy that arises from the abyss to offer boundless serenity to all living things even as it reaches out towards eternity.

The relationship between humans and trees has not changed since time immemorial. Be that as it may, it underscores the change that all things in this world must undergo. Borges once said “all spiritual experiences of human beings are reduced to the experience of time.” It is in that sense that the tree is truly a spiritual intermediary.

—From the concept note of the artist—

Reflecting on the great flow of life which encompasses the forest and the eternal rapport that has existed between trees and humans, Choi has given birth to a “forest” within the museum.

List of Works

Gallery I: *Forests of Aśoka*, 2010, installation

Gallery II: *Forever and a Day*, 2010, video installation

Gallery III: *Since when has the forest been there?*, 2010, video installation

Galleries IV, V: *The Other Side of Illusion*, 2010, color photographs

Exhibition Data

Exhibition title: Jae-Eun Choi—Forests of Aśoka

Dates: September 11 (Sat.) – December 26 (Sun.), 2010

Organized by: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Under the auspices of: Korean Embassy in Japan, Korean Cultural Center

Supported by: MRA Foundation Japan

Sponsored by: SAMSUNG, Maeil Dairies Co., Ltd.

Cooperation provided by: Kukje Gallery



Place: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, 4-7-25, Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001

Tel: 03-3445-0651 Fax: 03-3473-0104 E-mail: info@haramuseum.or.jp

Website <http://www.haramuseum.or.jp> Mobile site <http://mobile.haramuseum.or.jp>

<http://www.art-it.asia/u/HaraMuseum/> (blog)

Hours: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm, Wednesdays (except November 3) until 8:00 pm *last entry 30 min. before closing

Closed: Mondays (open on September 20, October 11), September 21, October 12

Admission: General 1,000 yen; Students 700 yen (high school and university) or 500 yen (elementary and junior high); Free for Hara Museum members, students through high school every Saturday during the school terms. 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

Directions: 5 min. by taxi or 15 min. on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 min./ BloomBUS! free shuttle bus service is being provided between Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit) and the Hara Museum every Sunday (Sponsored by: Bloomberg L.P./ Artist: Yasuhiro Suzuki). Please check the Hara Museum website for further details.

Related events: September 18 (Sat.) 2:30-4:00 pm Dialogue between Jae-Eun Choi and Hiroshi Minamishima (Professor, Joshibi University of Art and Design)/ October 31 (Sun.) 2:30-3:30 pm Lecture by Keiko Nakamura (Director General, JT Bio-history Research Hall) *Please note that these events are given in Japanese only.

Reservations are required. Tel: 03-3445-0669 E-mail: info@haramuseum.or.jp

Choi, Jae-Eun:



Born in 1953 in Seoul, Korea, Choi first visited Japan in 1976. She became interested in ikebana, the traditional art of flower arrangement, and was attracted to innovative style of the Sogetsu school of ikebana where she became a student. From 1984 to 1987, she worked as an assistant to Hiroshi Teshigahara, the third generation master of the Sogetsu school and movie director. In the years that followed, her work began to appear in international art exhibitions, including the 46th Venice Biennale in 1995 when she was selected as Japan's representative. In 2001, she made her debut as a movie director with the film *On The Way*. The spatial concepts and philosophy of the Sogetsu school are reflected in Choi's installations, which take as their raw materials such things as plants, water, air, fire and earth. With these materials, she creates large works, both indoor and outdoor, in which human life is layered onto the life stages of plants. Choi began working on the *World Underground Project* from 1986 at various locales in the world, including Kyongju, Korea; Imadate in Fukui prefecture, Japan; and a number of places in Europe, the U.S. and Africa. *Homage to Mozart* (1988) in the Hara Museum's collection is one work from this revolutionary project in which *washi* (Japanese handmade paper) is buried within the earth for a period of time to allow the environment at each locale to take over the "completion" of the work, thereby striking a blow at the conventional idea of "art" as a product of human artifice. In later works, she used the microscope to explore motifs taken from the micro world. Through her career, the form of Choi's artworks has undergone unceasing change. What ties them together are her ideas about and concern for life, which have continued to be the underlying theme in all of her art.

【Images for Publication】

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- A. Jae-Eun Choi, *The Other Side of Illusion 1003017080220*, 2010, color photograph
- B. Jae-Eun Choi, *Forests of Aśoka*, 2010, installation Photograph by: Shigeo Muto
- C. Jae-Eun Choi, *Forever and a Day*, 2010, video installation Photograph by: Shigeo Muto

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*do not include above details as contact information in the article for publication.

*Click <http://www.art-it.asia/u/HaraMuseum/> to see the Hara Museum BLOG!