

Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

Press Release 2019/04/16

The Nature Rules 自然国家 Dreaming of Earth Project

Directed by Jae-Eun Choi

April 13 (Saturday) - July 28 (Sunday), 2019



[1] Jae-Eun Choi, *hatred melts like snow*, 2019 (reference image) ©Kim Taedong

The Nature Rules: Dreaming of Earth Project is an exhibition that gives form to the concepts behind the *Dreaming of Earth Project* launched in 2014 by Jae-Eun Choi. This project places a spotlight on the rich ecosystem that has emerged within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the Korean Peninsula during the 65 years since the armistice and how humans may protect it and co-exist with all the creatures within it. In her career, Choi has focused her gaze on the phenomenon of life from the perspective of art, as she did in the exhibition *Forests of Asoka* held at the Hara Museum in 2010. This project with the DMZ as its stage may be considered a culmination of this interest. The aim of this exhibition is to spur the eventual realization of the project and through the collected wisdom of like-minded artists and architects in this exhibition shine a light on the possibilities for peace through art.

Dreaming of Earth Project (2014 ~)

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was established in 1953 as a result of a peace agreement between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a strip of land spanning two kilometers both north and south of the ceasefire line that runs roughly along the 38th parallel. Although no military activities have been allowed since the ceasefire, tension between north and south has continued unabated. The area has been crisscrossed with many layers of steel netting and high-voltage lines, while an estimated three million landmines have been laid. As a result, the area has become a human-free zone inhabited by 5,057 species of animals, including 101 endangered species.

Born in the same year as the DMZ, Jae-Eun Choi has used the medium of art to explore the nature of life at a very deep level. In her study of the DMZ and its thriving ecosystem, it became apparent to her that any action (artistic or otherwise), as well as non-action, could have a devastating effect on the working of nature within the area. That is to say, action that improves the political condition could lead to the opening of the area to development, while non-action could lead to further conflict and war. The inevitable result in either case would be the destruction of the ecosystem.

How can art provide insight into how this nature may be protected? How can harmonious coexistence with nature be attained with minimum intervention? These and other questions are explored through the works of Choi and a number of like-minded artists and architects in the *Dreaming of the Earth* project. These include a sky garden for migrating birds to rest, a raised passage to protect the ecosystem from humans, and a seed bank to preserve plant species facing extinction.

The Nature Rules—From a Place of Conflict to a Place Where the Living Can Flourish

This title describes Choi's ideal state in which Nature, not humans, rules. Within the ecosystem of the DMZ where such a state exists, the introduction of art, no matter how small, comprises an intrusion into the workings of Nature. Doing nothing, on the other hand, leaves the rich ecosystem open to destructive encroachment by society. Choi's conclusion: To transform a place of conflict into a place where the living can flourish requires the "creation" of "rules" that govern the relationship between humans and the ideal state.

In this exhibition, Choi, along with collaborators from the fields of art, architecture, literature, philosophy and science,* ponder such "rules" for harmonious co-existence, rules that would exist as a part of Nature like birdsong and the rustling of grass.

*The list of collaborators include Ahn Soyeon, Choe Jae Chun, Minsuk Cho, Gimhongsok, Keiichiro Hirano, Lee Eun Ju, Lee Ufan, Daniela Morera and Keiko Nakamura.

hatred melts like snow

For almost seven decades, multiple layers of barbed wire fences have demarcated the 248km of DMZ that separates the Korean Peninsula in two. The fences signify the hatred between the two parties that were once one nation but now stand at one another's gunpoint. With scalding heat, I melted down the fences retrieved from the borderline. And used the metal to make stepping stone that people can walk on. Fences can transform into any other thing. A heart, confession, pedestal, shelter, etc... In the face of love, hatred melts like snow.

Jae-Eun Choi

Exhibition Details

Title: *The Nature Rules: Dreaming of Earth Project*

Dates: April 13 (Saturday) – July 28 (Sunday), 2019

Supported by: Korea Foundation

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

Cooperation provided by: DMZ Ecology Research Institute, The War Memorial of Korea, DMZ Museum, SHIRATAKEGAMA, Korean Air

Directed by: Jae-Eun Choi

Participating Artists: Shigeru Ban, Minsuk Cho, Jae-Eun Choi, Jaeseung Jeong, Tadashi Kawamata, Kim Taedong, Lee Bul, Lee Ufan, Seung H-Sang, Studio Mumbai, Studio Other Spaces: Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann

Venue/Organized by: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

4-7-25 Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 140-0001

Tel: 03-3445-0651 E-mail: info@haramuseum.or.jp Website: <https://www.haramuseum.or.jp>

Hours: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm, Wednesdays until 8:00 pm (except May 1) (last entry 30 minutes before closing)

Closed: Mondays (except April 29, May 6 and July 15), May 7 and July 16

Admission: General 1,100 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 term; 100 yen discount per person for groups of 20 or more.

Directions: 5 minutes by taxi or 15 minutes on foot from JR Shinagawa Station (Takanawa exit); or from the same station take the Tan No.96 bus, get off at the first stop (Gotenyama), and walk 3 minutes.

Guided tours: Free Japanese-language tours are given by a museum curator every Sunday and national holiday, starting at 2:30 pm and lasting about 30 minutes. No reservation is required. Free mini-tours in English are also available upon request.

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한국국제교류재단

Participating Artists

Jae-Eun Choi

Jae-Eun Choi was born in 1953 in Seoul, Korea. In 1976, she moved to Japan where she studied the Sogetsu style of ikebana. From 1984 to 1987, she worked as an assistant to Hiroshi Teshigahara, the third-generation master of the Sogetsu school and film 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*. In 2010, she held *Forests of Asoka* at the Hara Museum, her first solo exhibition in Japan.

As a student of the Sogetsu school, Choi learned not only the surface aspects of the art, but also its spatial concepts and cosmic view. Combining this knowledge with her rich sensibility, Choi extended the art form into the realm of installation. In her early works, Choi adopted such materials as plants, water, air, fire and earth to superimpose onto human life the time flow of plants encompassing the change from growth to decay. In doing so, she took ikebana in terms of both concept and scale far beyond its traditional boundaries.

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 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.

Shigeru Ban

Born in Tokyo in 1957. In 1985, founded Shigeru Ban Architects. Became a consultant to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1995. In the same year, established the NGO Voluntary Architects' Network (VAN). Major works include the Nicolas Hayek G Center, Centre Pompidou-Metz and Mount Fuji World Heritage Centre, Shizuoka. Awards received include le grade de commandeur of the L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France (2014), Pritzker Architecture Prize (2014), the JIA Grand Prix (2015) and The Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice (2017). He is also a visiting professor in the Keio University Faculty of Environment and Information Studies.

Minsuk Cho

Born in Seoul in 1966. In 1998, founded Cho Slade Architecture in New York City with partner James Slade. In 2003, Cho returned to Korea to open his own firm, Mass Studies. Major works include the Pixel House, Missing Matrix, Bundle Matrix, World Expo 2010 Shanghai: Korea Pavilion, Daum Space.1 and the Daejeon University Dormitory. Cho was recently selected to design the new Seoul Cinematheque and the Danginri Culture Center. Awards received include the Golden Lion Award for the Best National Pavilion (while serving as the commissioner and co-curator of the Korean Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition organized by the Venice Biennale). In late 2014, his works were highlighted in the solo exhibition *Before/After: Mass Studies Does Architecture*, the first architectural exhibition to be held at PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul.

Jaeseung Jeong

Born in Seoul in 1972. Currently a professor at the Department of Bio and Brain Engineering, KAIST, South Korea. He received a Ph.D. in physics from KAIST, writing his thesis on computational modeling of Alzheimer's disease based on nonlinear dynamics and complex system modeling. He served as an assistant professor in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University and as postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University, School of Medicine. He is known for his writings and lectures in a wide range of areas such as science and humanities.

Tadashi Kawamata

Born in Hokkaido in 1953. He exhibited at the 40th Venice Biennale in 1982 and was later invited to participate in Documenta VIII and Documenta IX, São Paulo Biennale and other art fairs. He has had many solo exhibitions and completed projects throughout Europe, the United States and Japan. Major exhibitions include *Under the water* (2016, Centre Pompidou-Metz). He was the general director of the 2005 Yokohama Triennial General. Since 2008, he has served as a professor at the National School of Fine Arts, Paris. Awards received include the Art Encouragement Prize from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art (2013).

Kim Taedong

Born in 1978. He received a BFA and MFA in photography from Chungang University. He was selected as one of the three finalists for the SKOPF AWARD hosted by KT&G's Sangsang Madang in 2011, and has held a solo exhibition in 2012 under the auspices of Gallery Lux's Emerging Artist Support Program. Kim was a prize-winner at the 4th Ilwoo Photo Awards sponsored by the Ilwoo Foundation in 2012. He held the solo exhibition *Day-Break-Days* at the Ilwoo Space in 2013 and has participated in a wide range of group exhibitions, including *New Force of Photography* (2012, Goeun Museum of Photography, South Korea), *International Discoveries IV* (2013, Houston Fotofest, USA), *Dislocation/Urban Experience* (2015, Smith College Museum of Art, USA), *Photographic Messages From Korea* (2016, LA CHAMBRE, France) and *Civilization: The Way We Live Now* (2018, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea).

Lee Bul

Born in South Korea in 1964. She lives and works in Seoul. In 1998, she was selected as a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize. In 1999, she became the first woman to represent Korea in the Korea Pavilion at the Venice Biennale where she was included in the dAPERTutto international exhibition curated by Harald Szeemann. Since then, Lee Bul has had major solo exhibitions at museums and galleries across the world, including *Lee Bul: Live Forever* (2002, New Museum, USA), *Lee Bul: On Every New Shadow* (2007, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, France), *Lee Bul: From Me, Belongs to You Only* (2012, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo), *Lee Bul* (2013, MUDAM, Luxembourg), *Lee Bul* (2014, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea) and *Lee Bul: Crashing* (2018, Hayward Gallery, UK and 2018-2019, Gropius Bau, Berlin).

Lee Ufan

Born in Gyeongsangnam-do in 1936. Graduated from Nihon University, Department of Philosophy, Tokyo in 1961. Professor Emeritus at Tama Art University. Lee Ufan was one of the leading figures of the *Mono-ha* school (School of Things), a contemporary art movement emerging in the late 1960s. Major solo exhibitions include *Lee Ufan* (2001, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany), *Lee Ufan: The Art of Margins* (2005, Yokohama Museum of Art), *Resonance* (2007, Venice Biennale, Italy), *Lee Ufan* (2008, Brussels Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Belgium), *Marking Infinity* (2011, Guggenheim Museum, USA) *Lee Ufan-Versailles* (2014, Palace of Versailles, France) and *Lee Ufan. Habiter le temps* (2019, Centre Pompidou-Metz, France). In 2010, the Lee Ufan Museum, a building designed by Tadao Ando, opened on the island of Naoshima, Japan.

Seung H-Sang

Born in Busan in 1952, graduated from Seoul National University and studied at Technische Universität Wien (TU Wien). Worked for Kim Swoo Geun from 1974 to 1989 and established his own office IROJE Architects & Planners in 1989. He was a core member of the 4.3 Group which strongly influenced Korean architectural society, and participated in the founding of the Seoul School of Architecture offering a new type of educational system. He was named Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 2002, and Artist of the Year by the Korea National Museum of Contemporary Art in 2002 where he held a grand solo architecture exhibition as the first architect to receive that honor. In 2007, the Korean government honored him with the Korean Award for Art and Culture. He was named commissioner of the Koean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2008 and director of the Gwangju Design Biennale in 2011. He has taught at Seoul National University, North London University, TU Wien and other institutions. He is currently Chair Professor at Dong-A University and serves as Chief Commissioner on the Korean Presidential Commission on Architecture Policy.

Studio Mumbai

Founded in Mumbai in 1995, India by the Indian architect Bijoy Jain. Studio Mumbai functions as a human infrastructure of skilled craftsmen who are directly involved in the design and building of works. The essence of the studio lies in the relationship between man in nature –nature in man. Works by Studio Mumbai have been presented at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition organized by the Venice Biennale and at the Victoria & Albert Museum. In Japan, Studio Mumbai has held the exhibition *Studio Mumbai: Praxisat* at TOTO Gallery MA and created the *MOMAT Pavilion* at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo in 2012.

Studio Other Spaces: Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann

Studio Other Spaces, founded by artist Olafur Eliasson and architect Sebastian Behmann in Berlin in 2014, is an international office for art and architecture. In pursuing an experiment-based approach to the production of space, SOS seeks to expand the practice of architecture and focuses on interdisciplinary and experimental building projects and works in public space. SOS has its origins in the multi-disciplinary projects undertaken at Studio Olafur Eliasson such as Fjordenhus in Vejle, Denmark and Facades of Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre in Iceland. It is currently working on projects in Addis Ababa, Paris and elsewhere.

Images for Publication

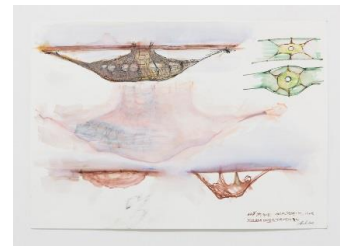
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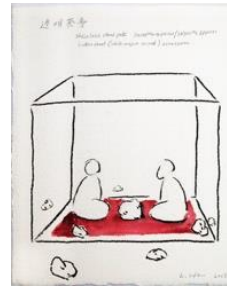
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[1] Jae-Eun Choi, *hatred melts like snow*, 2019 (reference image) © Kim Taedong

[2] Shigeru Ban Architects, *Bamboo Passage and Tower*, 2015, pencil on paper

[3] Lee Bul, *Study for DMZ Jung-ja Project 1*, 2017, pencil, watercolor ink, acrylic paint on paper, 30.5 x 45.5 cm

[4] Studio Other Spaces: Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann, *Condensation pavilion*

[5] Seung H-Sang, *Birds' Monastery*

[6] Lee Ufan, *Transparent Tea House drawing*, 2019, ink on paper

[7] Studio Mumbai, *Tazja*

[8] Minsuk Cho, *DMZ Vault of Life and Knowledge*, 2016

[9] Tadashi Kawamata, *Nest on the Cliff*

[10] Jae-Eun Choi, *Recurring Tree*

[11] Kim Taedong, *rifling-012*, 2017, digital-pigment print, 80 x 104 cm

*All reference images courtesy of the artists.

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