



The Asian American Arts Centre
in collaboration with
The Korea Society
presents

The 12th Annual Exhibition

CONTRARY Equilibriums

OCT 4th – NOV 22nd, 2002

SEONGMIN AHN
SUSAN CHOI
PHUONG M. DO
C.J. LEE
EVA LEE
ASUKA OHSAWA
SARA CHING-YU SUN
NOELLE TAN
MARY TING
KAORI UKAJI
KATARINA WONG

*Illustrated catalogue is available
with essay by Tricia Paik.*

OPENING RECEPTION @ AAAC

Friday, Oct 11th • 5:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

ARTISTS TALK @ The Korea Society

Seongmin Ahn, Eva Lee, Sara Ching-Yu Sun, Mary Ting, and Katarina Wong.
Friday, Oct 18th • 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

**Slide review of artists works
available for viewing at
The Korea Society.**

Monday – Friday, Oct 4th – Nov 22nd
10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

INTRODUCTION

Artists in the Annual are selected by a panel of Asian American professionals in the field. It is a rare opportunity to be seen by such a group and artists selected are likely reflect the current field of Asian American concerns whatever they are. The Annual is meant to be a process that privileges those concerns.

As one of the few diverse arts organizations in the country and one of the very few Asian American visual arts organizations, we accept that racism is a fact of American life. It has left its impact on the Asian American experience, on every being in the US, if not on those well beyond its national borders. The idea that self segregated events like an Asian American exhibit perpetuate this condition rather than provide opportunities to get to know others who may be different, this idea can be attributed to those who are uncomfortable with any deviation from the value of individualism, wishing to avoid the issue of race by emphasizing a preference for the merits of an individual's character.

But the impact of racism cannot be so easily side stepped, particularly since it involves the issue of power. It is another fact of American life that power impacts every aspect of how we live and cannot be ignored. One response, perhaps the most viable response, is to build an Asian American infrastructure, a network of institutions that can further Asian American access to power. Then the point of view of this particular group will have a framework enabling greater effectiveness in reaching people in the marketplace of ideas. Without power an ethnically diverse group cannot hope to compete in the American marketplace where accessing resources for combat is essential to its nature.

Those Americans who are sensitive to the position ethnically diverse peoples are placed in America, their strivings towards clarity and independence, should welcome the opportunity to join and associate with diverse people on their own terms. They should support the growth of diverse organizations like AAAC so that the institutional infrastructure of diverse people can develop the power to be an effective participant in the American marketplace shaping our culture and our ideas.

It is likely that those who are not comfortable in associating with people on their own racial terms have a different vision of America. They do not see America as a multiracial, multicultural nation and they cannot countenance the idea that people of color could indeed acquire substantial power in America. They may have difficulty envisioning the world as a family of nations and cultures, each with their own offerings for our budding global sensibility. I do not apologize for the Annual Series nor under most circumstances feel any need to justify it. I do not see any merit in the arguments of those who would disparage the gathering and the celebration and the maintenance of diversity. I believe the Annual Series is an appropriate tact given the nature of American life.

ROBERT LEE

Executive Director/Curator

REVIEW PANELISTS

MIHEE AHN

An Independent Curator, has curated Apt # 3F at the Asian American Arts Centre, NY; *Lost & Found: Reclaimed Moments* at Rotunda Gallery, NY; and *Now & Then: Asian Presence of Difference* at Oella Mill Gallery, Baltimore. She also co-curated with Hyunjin Shin *WATERwalks* at the ISE Foundation Art Gallery, NY. She is a contributing writer for *Art World*.

TIMOTHY LIU

An author of four books of poems, most recently *Hard Evidence* - Talisman House, 2001. He is also the editor of *Word of Mouth: An Anthology of Gay American Poetry* - Talisman House, 2000. A frequent contributor to *Art Papers* and *Publishers Weekly*, Liu lives in Hoboken, NJ.

MARGO MACHIDA

A New York-based educator, independent curator, researcher, and writer specializing in Asian American visual art. She is a faculty member in the Department of Art and Art History and the Asian American Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, CT.

TRICIA PAIK

An art historian and educator at the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Morgan Library. She writes reviews for *Art on Paper* and was previously the Arts Calendar Editor for *A. Magazine*.

LYDIA YEE

A curator at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, where she has organized numerous exhibitions including *One Planet under a Groove: Hip Hop and Contemporary Art* - 2001, with Franklin Sirmans and *Urban Mythologies: The Bronx Represented Since the 1960s* - 1999, with Betti-Sue Hertz, among others. She also organized *Sites of Chinatown* - 1996 for the Museum of Chinese in the Americas.

SEONGMIN AHN

The subject matter of Seongmin Ahn's art works is spiritual transcendence and reaching higher mentality through physical and mental activity. She creates inter-mediating artwork, which makes viewers possible to experience, and imagine what exist more in invisible and metaphysical reality. Ahn folds Korean traditional papers and then dyes them several times in colored water or diluted sumi ink. In the works exhibited here, she tries to present unification of physicality and spirituality by drawing a circle on a square.

SUSAN CHOI

The work of Susan Choi is an investigation of conflicting desires. She aims to locate and empower Asian female sexuality by representing it and making it visible, and at the same time confronting and questioning her own desire that is trapped in representations and its ideology that she is critical of. In a photo series entitled *Orientalism*, 18th century European Orientalist paintings serve as a backdrop for the ritualized play of dominance and servitude between two "orientalized women" and their role reversal.

PHUONG M. DO

Phuong M. Do considers herself as the observer and the observed, the subject and the viewer, the self and the other, the colonized and the empowered. These diametrical relationships are within her and beyond her. They are intrinsic to her displaced history, culture, language, and self.

C.J. LEE

C.J. Lee's installation entitled *24/7* explores the convergence between playfulness and mad obsession. The continuous circular motion performed by the machines is compulsively repetitive and the linear process is exhaustingly endless. In motion they are by turns whimsical and infuriating, yet the results are delicate, fragile, colorful and infinite in their variability.

EVA LEE

Eva Lee is fascinated by nature—its structure, scale, and quantity. Her work highlights how we understand it through scientific paradigms and systems. Lee begins by making the most basic marks - a series of dots and lines. Soon, numerous small shapes emerge that become more complex. Many become embedded in, or surrounded by, larger shapes. The drawing then evolves into a diagrammatic image of something that can be cellular or cosmic, depending on how the viewer imagines its scale.

ASUKA OHSAWA

Japanese visual culture of the past serves as a rich repository of knowledge and inspiration for the construction of Asuka Ohsawa's work. Following the long-standing practice of studying, copying and

altering the works of old masters, Ohsawa takes some of the classical prototypes of Japanese art and translate them into a language that is familiar to the eyes of her own generation. During the course of reworking the images from the past, Ohsawa tries to gain better understanding of the cultural tradition she has inherited as her own, and of her position therein.

SARA CHING-YU SUN

The work of Sara Ching-Yu Sun includes the use of video, photo, animation, everyday objects, sensors, surveillant system and computer. Using technology's capacity to link, connect and build relationships, she creates spatial and temporal experiences unveiling a controlled and interconnected reality that is frangible, unsettled and indeterminate.

NOELLE TAN

The art works by Noelle Tan is one which pushes certain boundaries of landscape photography. Although the images are structurally formal and traditional, they defy being easily categorized as a landscape. These photographs are landscape photographs where the landscape barely exists.

MARY TING

Mary Ting, a second generation Chinese American, creates cut and burnt paper installations. The bird imagery, body parts and organic forms of Ting's visual language create abstract narratives, both metaphorical and allegorical. The work can be viewed as evocations to loss and the residue of experience and memory.

KAORI UKAJI

The art work of Kaori Ukaji presents a single defining concept, existence, and a single material process, graphite on paper. The process of drawing is Ukaji's process of getting rid of the outer part and finding the most inner part of her. Ukaji, immersed in private ritual action, repetitive minimal motion, rhythmic sound or archetypal form, opens the door to trance.

KATARINA WONG

In these series of site-specific installations, Katarina uses the language of migration, as she comes from a long line of migrants - Her father is Chinese and her mother Cuban. Wong mounts wax casts of fingertips directly on the wall mimicking migratory patterns, painting in their shadows with sumi-ink. The result is an ambiguous space in which it is hard to tell what floats above the surface and what is painted on it. Wong is interested in creating spaces of imminence, in which experience lies on the verge of becoming something familiar yet also remains unknown.

- Images on this poster are based on the works of Seongmin Ahn, Phuong M. Do, Eva Lee, Asuka Ohsawa, and Katarina Wong.