

Between Man and Place – a cross-cultural exhibition of contemporary art from Korea and Israel.

Curators: Romy ACHITUV and JUNG Yunah
Dates: December 20, 2005 – January 12, 2006
Opening reception: Tuesday, December 20, 6:00pm
Venue: Ssamzie Space; Changjeon-dong, Seoul
Website: <http://m--a--p.net>

Between Man and Place, an exhibition of contemporary art from Korea and Israel, is due to open at Ssamzie Space on December 20, 2005. Featuring nine artists and one critic from each country -- twenty participants in all -- the show will be the first cross-cultural dialogue of its kind between the two countries.

Between Man and Place seeks to draw attention to the variety of ways in which its participants' relationship to the language, time, and space of their particular locale finds expression in a world undergoing rapid globalization. The juxtaposition of art works coming from dissimilar cultures offers a unique opportunity to explore this creative-cultural process. With cultures rooted in the distant past, both Korea and Israel embody, to some extent, the East / West cultural dichotomy; yet both are also deeply influenced by external global forces.

One of the chief objections to globalization is that it weakens local cultures, giving rise to homogenous, shallow, Westernized alternatives. Obviously, modern young Israelis and Koreans have far more in common than had been conceivable as recently as twenty years ago. However, the exposure to universal influences need not spell doom for local cultures. On the contrary, as this exhibit hopes to demonstrate, it may in fact serve an impetus for change and adaptation.

Through the juxtaposition of art works generated by different cultures but sharing aesthetic values and subject matter, we hope to highlight some elements that bind – or separate - contemporary artistic practices across cultural and personal divides. This show seeks to underscore expressions of locality that still seep into contemporary artistic practice, to expose the occasionally subtle and indirect impact that cultural heritage may have on contemporary artistic vision, and to provide a platform to those artists who directly and provocatively examine their social, cultural and political locale utilizing the global language, forms and concepts of contemporary art.

The exhibition title is offered as 'a way of seeing' that focuses on the means by which the works manifest, or refer to various facets of the artists' relationship to the idea of 'Place'. Some of the works on display are overtly social and political, others are private and intimate in nature. Some of the artists are concerned with unearthing an underlying social fabric, while others are engaged in observing the language of representation itself. The pieces include wishful fantasies concerning the DMZ; male socialization rites and feminist social commentary; lyrical and meditative intimate spaces, and enigmatic, angst-

riddled worlds. Yet inherent to all the individual visions and concerns are subtleties of dialogue with the cultures from which they emerged.

Two art critics have been invited to respond to the theme of the exhibition topic and works. Their texts will hopefully offer a comparative viewpoint by bringing to the fore various cultural determinants of viewership. The texts will be displayed as works of art, no different from any other on show. This incorporation of “the written art work” is meant to establish, albeit symbolically, the possibility of a reciprocal exchange between word and image – a dialogue in which Interpreter and Interpreted perpetually switch roles, reiterating and reflecting the dynamics of the floating signifiers which constitute our world with its diffused cultural and semantic boundaries, the world of contemporary human communication.

Participating artists:

Romy ACHITUV, Yael BARTANA, Amnon BEN-AMI, Guy BEN-NER, Aya BEN-
RON, Grisha BLUGER, Young Hae Chang Heavy Industries, Tirtza EVEN and Brian
KARL, HONG Young-In, KIM Sookang, KU Ja-Young, LEE Hyun-Jean, Doron
LIVNÈ, Orit LIVNÈ, OH Inhwan, OH Soon-Hwa, PARK Yoon-Young, SEO Hyun-Suk,
YOO Seung-Ho, Ouzi ZUR