

CAMELLA DA EUN KIM

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ARTWORKS

The Ballad of East and West

Mixed media, 10 days live performance, 91,5 x 122 cm, 2014

The Ballad of East and West started as a participatory performance work that transformed into a textile installation. The title does not only reference Rudyard Kipling's poetry but it also reinterprets his poetry in contemporary context. The performance by the artist communicates beyond her personal struggle to find her identity in Western society. By encouraging her audience to sit across her to sew and finish the piece, it suggests many elements of human interaction with others such as understanding, compromising, adopting and forgiving. In fact, engaging with others develops a dialogue that facilitates the creation of a shared identity (much as the work of art is a shared production). When the performance is finished, the work becomes an installation, which consists of 8136 holes, 4068 rows and 200 yards of thread. Threads are used to conceal words on the paper but is also identified as a symbol of connection, of binding, of tying together.

The Ballad of East and West was the artist's very first live performance piece in her series of interactive works.

Unique piece 1/1 edition.

Ours (Jeong/情)

Mixed media, performance, installation, 122 x 183 cm, 2016

Ours (Jeong/情) is an installation with an interactive performance by the artist. As she struggles to sew through the paper suspended from the ceiling, visitors are invited to sit across and exchange the needle with her. By encouraging her audience to sit across her to sew and finish the piece, it suggests many elements of human interaction such as understanding, compromising, adopting and forgiving. All these are part of defining the title of the work, Jeong in Korean. Engaging with others develops a dialogue that facilitates the creation of a shared identity (much as the work of art is a shared production).

Ours was previously exhibited at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (Barnsdall Art Gallery), which has large number of people coming from various walks of life. It is still in process for completion and waiting for new audiences from Belgium to be part of it!

Unique piece 1/1 edition

Ours, No One will Ever Love You Like Your Mother Loves You (Mo-Jeong)

Thread on Hanji Paper, 94 x 135 cm, 2016

Literal translation of Mo-Jeong is going of a mother towards her child. Making this work was personally a meaningful experience for Kim as her mother joined her to exchange the needle to complete the piece in South Korea, Summer 2016. After years of radio silence between Kim and her mother, Kim decided to invite her mother to her studio in Seoul. Sewing began with very few words and nearly after 120 hours of sewing, Kim decided to title the piece, «No One will Ever Love You Like Your Mother Loves You.»

Unique piece 1/1 edition

The earliest time when an individual is exposed to the experience of jeong is when a baby is held and carried by his or her mother. As the mother's warmth radiates to and is felt by the baby, jeong begins to permeate the baby's entire being. This type of jeong is called "mo-jeong." This total trust of life and of the Other, without logic or reason, begins with the earliest experiences of life, comparable to Freud's "basic trust" during the oral stage. But jeong is also experienced and expands as the child grows older and begins to develop a relationship with his or her father, other relatives, friends, neighbors, and members of the community.[1] As the child passes through the various developmental stages of his or her life, new forms of jeong evolve, such as "bu-jeong" (jeong between father and child) and "woo-jeong" (jeong between friends). These forms remain with the individual throughout the remainder of his or her life.

References

Christopher K. Chung and Samson Cho. "Significance of Jeong" (paper presented at the 10th Scientific Meeting of the Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists, Melbourne, Australia, October 6 – 9, 2001).

STATEMENT BY THE ARTIST

My work draws on visual, auditory, and tactile fragments as symbols for language. Since relocating to North America from Korea as a child, I have become familiar with the concept of the Other. My departure from the land of my birth marks the beginning of a seemingly endless quest to find a socially acceptable identity, despite having successfully negotiated language and cultural barriers. This transition from East to West has helped me discover the power of language, and the extent to which culture is delivered, filtered, and received through language. The fabric of language is fragile: it can be easily manipulated, but, equally easily, it can lose its meaning as a result of inadvertent and/or unconscious alterations to surface forms in linguistic exchanges.

This linguistic fragility is what has motivated me to address issues of cultural erasure, authenticity, (mis)communication, transition, translation, and transformation with a view to achieving mutual understanding and more effective communication. My goal is to arrive at a “common language” between individuals and cultures, echoing the voices of Others/outsiders who occupy the same social position as I do, where, despite having assimilated into the mainstream language and cultural norms, we are still often classified as the Other. It is my hope that critically investigating communication and its gaps will deliver a common humanity and facilitate a dialogue that transcends the limitations of language.

Finding an optimal terminology, a mode of expression, or a vehicle that can encapsulate and convey my notion of mutual communication has been a major challenge. The closest I have been able to come to identifying a suitable vehicle is the culture-specific emotion recognized in Korean culture and designated jeong in the Korean language. The notable absence of jeong in Western society, an absence that was largely responsible for accentuating my feelings of alienation and invalidation, is what led me to adopt jeong as my core concept. With the emergence of digital culture, the presence of jeong is becoming increasingly attenuated, even within Korean society, where it was once deeply rooted.

Even though it continues to be a vexing exercise to convey the concept of jeong to non-Koreans, my thesis uses it as an analytical tool to raise the possibility of an alternative perspective. I believe jeong can serve to redefine what and how we communicate with others in digital culture. Since jeong embraces a much broader range of meanings and subtle nuances than can be obtained through traditional disciplines, such as art history, I have chosen to use it as the lens through which I will examine how human connections and relationships are redefined in traditional and contemporary art and digital culture.

A transcultural approach to art can have wide-ranging benefits. The concept of jeong is not an exclusive feature of Korean culture, or of Oriental culture in general. It expresses an interpersonal attitude that is accessible to other cultural groups as well in understanding human emotions and the social structures that come into play in twenty-first century digital culture. This understanding, in turn, can assist in discussing how an individual, especially an artist such as myself, can work in and with these structures.

BIOGRAPHY

Camella DaEun Kim is an artist and educator who moves fluidly between different media such as performance, installation, gaming and new media to address the problematics of communication and interpersonal relationships under conditions of globalization and technological ubiquity.

Kim often allow for intuitive response, experimentation, playfulness, and humor in her work. Such exploration plays a key role to arouse the audiences' imagination and provoke people to think more critically and creatively about sensitive or controversial issues and concerns that she often raise: what it means to be connected, how we relate and/or ought to our environments and people, especially in the digital age. Kim has had recent exhibitions at the New Wight Gallery, Los Angeles; Barnsdall Art Gallery, Los Angeles; Fellowship of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Somerset House; London, Rabindranath Tagore Centre, Kolkata; and she was one of the laureates of International Emerging Artist Award 2016 in the Gallery Award Show at TAG bxl, Brussels.

She is born in South Korea and currently lives and works in Los Angeles since completing her MFA in media art from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

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