Shadow of a Pine Tree
A glimpse of Korean Contemporary Art
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Featuring
Lee Gil Rae
Suh Jeong Min
Bahk Seon-Ghi
One of the Asian powerhouses for technology, fashion, music and pop culture, Korea has always been at the forefront of innovation. In recognition of this defining trend influencer of Asia, Opera Gallery Singapore is proud to present ‘Shadow of a Pine Tree’, an exhibition that illustrates the ingenuity and originality of Korean artists as they reshape the landscape of the contemporary Korean art scene.

A country known for both its technological innovation and cultural heritage, contemporary Korean art has also evolved in tandem as its artists challenge the boundaries of art exploration from composition to medium, method and representation. For this exhibition, we have selected the representative works from three renowned and celebrated Korean artists that reflect their quest for progress and development in art, artistry, technique and creativity as they seek reconciliation and balance between man and nature, history and modernity.

Lee Gil Rae derived his creative inspirations from his examination of man and nature. Through the use of copper piping, these humble minute elements are skilfully soldered into grand and graceful pine trees of steel and copper. Lee’s majestic metal pines proclaim with elegance the artist’s view on the inevitable and unavoidable devastation of nature by man in the name of progress and industrialisation.

From the lament of the loss of nature, its subtle beauty and versatility are demonstrated in the sublime wall sculptures of Suh Jeong Min. Harnessing the rich artistic culture of Korea, Suh’s intricate artworks are created with handmade paper from the Mulberry tree, using traditional techniques whilst reinterpreting and reintroducing this classic medium in a contemporary expression.

Nature is also the cradle of ideas, imagination and art for Bahk Seon-Ghi who expresses his philosophy of humanity and nature through his fascinating sculptures that seem to defy gravity. A sculptor and an installation artist, Bahk redefines the functionality and beauty of natural materials with his ethereal installations of suspended charcoal pieces levitating in space within their own surrealistic realm.

Join us on this journey of art and beauty as Korea bears its creative soul in art and leads us into its exciting universe of visual treasures and fascinating imagination.

Gilles Dyan
Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Stéphane Le Pelletier
Director Asia Pacific
Opera Gallery Singapore
Lee Gil Rae graduated from Kyunghee University after studying at the department of art education, before he passed his master’s in sculpture. For twenty years, Lee Gil Rae has used nature as his muse to craft sculpture from steel and copper pipe. With rapid deforestation, Lee Gil Rae’s trees narrate the artificial nature that city dwellers so closely identify with.

The man-made and constructed simulation of nature is apparent in all towns and cities. Nature is removed and confined to make room for the ever expanding population. In his persistent need to create organic forms, Lee Gil Rae takes it one step further in creating man-made nature. He constructs enormous forests of steel and copper, capturing this rapidly depleting resource for eternity.

His works construct a surreal leafless forest that one can meander, spiralling branches unnaturally in structure but organic in aesthetic, drawing the viewer to witness the intricate exterior that mimics the curves and notches of aged tree bark harmoniously. His sprawling branches fan out, tipped with wisps of copper representing the needles of the pine trees in true homage to Mother Nature.

Lee Gil Rae has participated in several exhibitions in Korea, America and Japan and he features in numerous permanent collections.

**Education**  
Graduated from Dept. of Art Education, Kyunghee Univ.  
M. A. Dept. of Sculpture, Kyunghee Univ.

**Solo Exhibitions**  
2015  
The 9th Solo Exhibition, Gyumjaejungsun Museum, Seoul  
2012  
The 8th Solo Exhibition, Galerie BK, Seoul  
2010  
The 7th Solo Exhibition, Savina Museum, Seoul  
2008  
The 6th Solo Exhibition, Savina Museum, Seoul  
2007  
The 5th Solo Exhibition, Art-space Camerata, Seoul  
2003  
The 4th Solo Exhibition, Galerie Bhak, Seoul  
2001  
The 3rd Solo Exhibition, Galerie Bhak, Seoul  
1997  
The 2nd Solo Exhibition, Kum-Ho Museum, Seoul  
1991  
The 1st Solo Exhibition, Gallery Ye-Hyang, Seoul

**Group Exhibitions**  
2015  
Art, Show, Space art1, Seoul  
2014  
2 Exhibition, Blue Square Ne mo Gallery, Seoul  
2010  
Art Night in Korea, Opera Gallery, Dubai  
2004  
2 Exhibition, Blue Square Ne mo Gallery, Seoul  
2002  
Conversion of recognition, Seo-Ho Museum, Gyeonggi, Namyan-gu Art of Singapore city, Singapore Orchard Street, Singapore  
2000  
Art Show Busan 2015, BEXICO, Busan  
1997  
Regeneration - Art Korean Contemporary, Opera Gallery, Paris  
1994  
Metropole d’Art, New York  
1993  
Arts and Culture in Korea, Opera Gallery, Paris

**Permanent Collections**  
Kwachon National Museum of Contemporary Art  
Seoul Museum of Art  
Savina Museum of Contemporary Art  
Samsung Foundation of Culture  
CJ Foundation of Culture  
Daegu Health College  
Seoul Supreme Prosecutors Office Memorial Sculpture  
Asneong Memorial Sculpture Park  
Yeongdong Sculpture Park  
Jinhae Jangbok Mountain Park Outdoor Sculpture  
Bucheon dodang Park  
Seoul Hanjin Haemoro  
Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Office Building  
Seoul Mariott Hotel  
Gapyung Ecopia  
Daegu Banwoldan  
Moonkyung STX Resort  
Pohang Vaulplus  
Nampo Art Museum  
Seoul Plaza Hotel  
Hanwha Galleria Forêt  
Pohang Museum of Art  
Mario Seoul

**Awards**  
2015 Korea Association of Art Critics Award  
1995 Special Award in Jung-Ang Biennale  
1990 Dong-A Art Award in the Dong-Art Festival  
1989 Special Award in the 8th Great Art Exhibition of Korea  
1988 Participation Award in the 11th Jung-Ang Great Art Exhibition  
1987 Special Award in the 5th Great Art Exhibition of the youth

Lee GIL RAE
B. 1961
A view from ‘Gyeomjae’, 2015
Copper welding
290 x 224 x 13 cm - 114.2 x 88.2 x 5.1 in.

Human-shaped Pine Tree, 2014
Copper welding
131 x 59 x 28 cm - 51.6 x 23.2 x 11 in.
Human-shaped Pine Tree, 2015
Copper welding
200 x 80 x 73 cm - 78.7 x 31.5 x 28.7 in.

Old Pine Tree, 2015
Copper welding
212 x 170 x 20 cm - 83.5 x 66.9 x 7.9 in.
Pine Tree, 2011
Copper welding
67 x 87 x 4 cm - 34.3 x 34.3 x 1.6 in.

Pine Tree, 2013
Copper welding
104 x 110 x 7 cm - 40.9 x 43.3 x 2.8 in.
Pine Tree, 2016
Copper welding
84 x 115 x 24 cm - 33.1 x 45.3 x 9.4 in.

Pine Tree, 2013
Copper welding
204 x 115 x 59 cm - 80.3 x 45.3 x 23.2 in.
Born in Korea, Suh Jeong Min passed his BFA at Chosun University and his MFA at Kyonggi University. He is known for his use of hanji, or traditional Korean paper made from the inner bark of Mulberry trees, to create elegant and somewhat imposing works that are neither painting nor sculpture, yet have properties of both. His artwork employs the timeless structures of geometry while simultaneously pursuing an idiosyncratic aesthetic that combines cultural references with unusual formal techniques.

Suh uses hanji originally used for calligraphy, tightly rolled into tubes or overlaid so that they resemble thin blocks of wood, and cut into small pieces by hand to finally be affixed to the support with a rice-based glue. Arranged in concentric circles, in rows, or set on top of each other like stacks of lumber, these paper units have a dense bodily presence. Cut horizontally, vertically or diagonally, they produce light and shade on canvas as existing calligraphic letters form black lines on the surface.

The artist said his works are the result of coincidence and inevitability. ‘Instead of drawing my own lines with meok (ink), I find the lines from what others already wrote’. What appears to be a severance from Asian painting in Suh’s work is instead a continuity of the practice in a new guise. As a craft unique to Korea, hanji is considered integral to the culture. Suh’s use of the traditional material can be seen as an acknowledgment of this craft, while showing how an aspect of culture long superseded by technological changes can be transformed from the commonplace to the exceptional through an artist’s innovative methods.

**Education**
- BFA, Department of Painting, College of Fine Arts, Chosun University
- MFA, Graduate School of Arts, Kyonggi University

**Solo Exhibitions**
- 2012
  - Solo show JanKossen Contemporary, Basel
  - NAGOYA International Design Gallery, Japan
- 2011
  - O’s Gallery Solo Exhibition, JeonJu O’s Gallery
  - The 9th Solo Exhibition, Paper Museum, Seoul
  - The 10th Solo Exhibition, J Gallery, Seoul
- 2010
  - The 9th Solo Exhibition In Sa Art Center, Seoul
- 2009
  - The 8th Solo Exhibition, KEPCO Plaza Art Museum
  - The 7th Solo Exhibition, La Mer Gallery, Seoul
- 2007
  - The 6th Drawing Solo Exhibition, Small-scale Works, Bokchon Gallery, Yeosu
  - The 5th Solo Exhibition, Small-scale Works, Bokchon Gallery, Yeosu
- 2006
  - The 4th Solo Exhibition, Gallery Montmartre, Busan
- 2003
  - The 3rd Solo Exhibition, Jinnam Culture and Arts Center, Yeosu
- 2000
  - The 2nd Solo Exhibition, KEPCO Plaza Gallery, Seoul
- 1999
  - The 1st Solo Exhibition, Inje Art Museum, Gwangju

**Art Museum, Goyang**
- 2011
  - Good morning 2011, La Mer Gallery, Seoul
- 2010
  - Korea Modern Artist Exhibition / Gallery Dimaca, Venezuela
  - 2 East Meets West, Los Angeles
- 2009
  - International Contemporary Art Gwangju Artvision, 1st and 2nd exhibition hall of Gwangju biennale, Gwangju
  - The Nature of Korea Spring. Summer. Fall. Winter Exhibition
  - Seoul Art Gong pyeong Gallery Invitation Exhibition
  - Seong nam Arts Festival
  - Gyeonggi Folk Artist Invitation Exhibition
  - The Four Seasons of Gyeonggi

**Master’s Thesis**
- A Study on Oil Painting Pigments
Korea House Roof - 13, 2015
Hanji paper
80 x 150 cm - 31.5x 59.1 in.
Line of Travel - 64, 2016
Hanji paper
162 x 132 cm - 63.8 x 52 in.

Mandala, 2015
Hanji paper
140 x 140 cm - 55.1 x 55.1 in.
Tao 7, 2016
Hanji paper
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in.

Festival 14-10, 2014
Hanji paper
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in.
Lines of Travel - 42, 2015
Hanji paper
182 x 150 cm - 71.7 x 59.1 in

Tao - 9, 2016
Hanji paper
110 x 110 cm - 43.3 x 43.3 in.
Bahk Seon-Ghi is an internationally reputed and established contemporary Korean sculptor and installation artist who lives and works in Kyeong Ki-Do, South Korea. Following his graduation from Chung-Ang University, Majoring Sculpture in the Fine Arts Department in Seoul, Bahk Seon-Ghi presents the viewers with a new perspective of human's relationship with nature. Bahk received the 2009 Kim Chong Yung Sculpture Award and has participated in solo exhibitions in Miami, Korea, Switzerland, Spain and China, to name just a few. His works are part of many prominent permanent collections worldwide.

Charcoal, his favorite material, is fundamental in his works with charcoal being the natural substance that holds traditional importance in Korean culture and heritage. Through these delicately suspended pieces of charcoal, Bahk Seon-Ghi presents the viewers with a new perspective of human's relationship with nature. Bahk received the 2009 Kim Chong Yung Sculpture Award and has participated in solo exhibitions in Miami, Korea, Switzerland, Spain and China, to name just a few. His works are part of many prominent permanent collections worldwide.

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Bahk Seon-Ghi is known for his ethereal installations using natural to create everyday objects such as tables, staircases, frames and circles, which appear to float through light and space. His floating charcoal works accumulate into forms that we perceive as familiar objects, delicately suspended on the edge of existence and obliteration. It questions how the object takes form through our own filters of perspective and memory.

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An Aggregate 201103, 2011
Charcoal, nylon threads, stone and mixed materials
270 x 60 x 60 cm - 106.3 x 23.6 x 23.6 in.

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Charcoal, nylon threads, stone and mixed materials
270 x 60 x 60 cm - 106.3 x 23.6 x 23.6 in.
Point of View 121212, 2012
Urethane paint on resin, edition of 6
141 x 57 x 31 cm - 55.5 x 22.4 x 12.2 in.

Slice of Sensitivity 120513, 2012
Urethane paint on resin, edition of 6
140 x 115 x 80 cm - 55.1 x 45.3 x 31.5 in.
An Aggregation 201301, 2013
Charcoal, nylon threads, stone and mixed materials
300 x 100 x 100 cm - 118.1 x 39.4 x 39.4 in.
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