

# Teaching

---

# Modern and Contemporary Asian Art

---

GUGGENHEIM

# Artists

Surnames are capitalized to differentiate them from given names. In many Asian countries, surnames are commonly listed first. When these names are transliterated in Western publications, some are converted to the Western name order, with given name first, depending on the artist's preference. In each section, a colloquial phonetic pronunciation of the artist's name is included, rather than a version in the standard International Phonetic Alphabet, to help teachers pronounce names that may be unfamiliar.

9 **AI Weiwei**  
Ai is an artist-activist whose practice questions existing power systems and reflects his advocacy for human rights and free expression.

17 **CAI Guo-Qiang**  
Cai is known for large-scale projects with unique materials such as gunpowder, which present subtle allegories about modern history and contemporary Chinese culture.

25 **CAO Fei**  
Cao's artwork exists at the intersection of reality and fiction, and uses new media to reflect on contemporary conditions.

33 **DUAN Jianyu**  
Duan's paintings and sculptures show ordinary people, animals, and nature in surreal landscapes.

41 **HA Chong-Hyun**  
Ha creates mixed-media artworks that challenge the traditional boundaries of painting and sculpture.

49 **On KAWARA**  
Kawara is a Conceptual artist who employs ritual and repetition to investigate the passage of time.

59 **LEE Bul**  
Lee creates sculptural installations that investigate the ways that modern art, architecture, and technology shape our world.

67 **Nikki S. LEE**  
Lee uses photography and performance to explore the layered aspects of personal identity.

75 **LEE Ufan**  
Lee's Minimalist art emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the body, materials, and space.

83 **Vincent LEONG**  
Leong uses photography and video to investigate the construction of nation, identity, ethnicity, and culture.

91 **Kamin LERTCHAIPRASERT**  
Lertchaiprasert is influenced by his Buddhist beliefs and considers art a way to understand the relationship between humanity, society, and nature.

99 **Isamu NOGUCHI**  
Noguchi is a critically acclaimed sculptor, well known for his use of natural materials and simple yet expressive forms.

107 **Kenzo OKADA**  
Okada paints abstract compositions inspired by meditations on nature, process, and chance.

115 **Nam June PAIK**  
Paik, known as the "father of video art," creates immersive installations that illustrate connections between technology and human experience.

123 **Sopheap PICH**  
Pich's sculptures are made of rattan, bamboo, and other common materials that reference his memories and connections to Cambodia's landscape and history.

131 **QIU Zhijie**  
Qiu uses traditional art techniques, such as calligraphy, to map history, religion, and philosophy.

139 **Navin RAWANCHAIKUL**  
Rawanchaikul's work is inspired by his personal history of migration and the ways we connect to family and friends from diverse cultures.

147 **Hiroshi SUGIMOTO**  
Sugimoto uses photography in his Conceptual art practice to question visual truths and investigate the passage of time.

155 **Do Ho SUH**  
Suh's portable sculptures and life-size installations explore personal identity and the idea of home.

163 **SUN Xun**  
Sun is known for artworks that mix traditional mediums, including ink painting, with contemporary practices such as animation.

171 **SUN Yuan & PENG Yu**  
Sun and Peng, an artist duo since 1999, use unconventional methods to create works that raise questions about modern and contemporary times.

179 **Arin Dwiheartanto SUNARYO**  
Sunaryo applies industrial methods and innovative techniques to create abstract landscape paintings.

187 **TANG Da Wu**  
Tang creates artwork in a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, and performance, to comment on societal and cultural values.

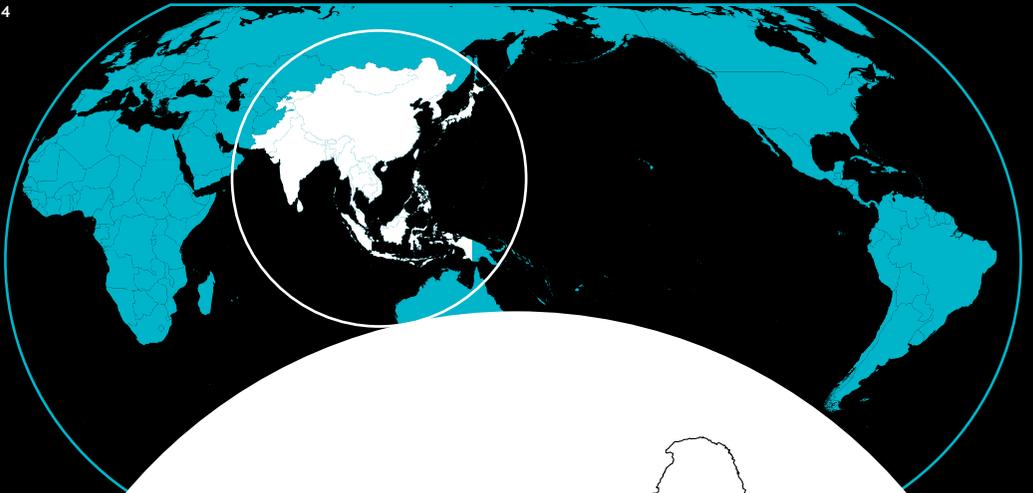
195 **Rirkrit TIRAVANIJA**  
Tiravanija's artwork invites viewers to participate in social interactions within constructed environments.

203 **TSANG Kin-Wah**  
Tsang's multimedia installations feature the interplay of text, pattern, and space.

211 **Danh VO**  
Vo uses appropriated materials, objects, and ideas to question historical truths and narratives.

219 **WANG Jianwei**  
Wang's experimental art practice employs a wide range of mediums to explore abstract concepts, such as space, time, and social reality.

227 **Key Terms**  
238 **The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Project Team**



# A Note to Teachers

*Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art* is a resource that features twenty-seven artists in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's collection. The artists in this resource are from countries across East Asia and Southeast Asia, but many live and work between two or more cities around the world. With the launch of the Asian Art Initiative in 2006, the Guggenheim has actively expanded its program beyond Europe and America to include the study, presentation, and acquisition of modern and contemporary art from Asia. Our approach, known as global art history, seeks to integrate art from Asia within an international purview while illuminating its specific meaning and context.

By showing how artists work between local, regional, and global currents, this resource seeks to provide a new understanding of the multiple histories of the art of our time. With these materials, we hope to introduce teachers and students to artists and artworks beyond the Western canon, as well as support those who want to broaden the narrative of art history in the classroom.

Visit [guggenheim.org/teachingmaterials](https://guggenheim.org/teachingmaterials) for downloadable PDF files of this resource, along with additional high-resolution images, audio, and video.

This map provides geographical context for the artists included in *Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art*.

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 Kingdom of Cambodia   | 8 Republic of Korea (South Korea)  |
| 2 People's Republic of China  | 9 Lao People's Democratic Republic |
| 3 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China | 10 Malaysia                        |
| 4 Republic of India   | 11 Islamic Republic of Pakistan    |
| 5 Republic of Indonesia   | 12 Republic of Singapore           |
| 6 Japan   | 13 Republic of China (Taiwan)      |
| 7 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)                       | 14 Kingdom of Thailand             |
|   | 15 Socialist Republic of Vietnam   |

*Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art* was made possible through the generous support of The Freeman Foundation.

# Introduction

---

## What Is Modern Asian Art?

---

Modernism developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, amid the throes of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of progressive political movements. Industrialization, urbanization, rapid social changes, and advances in science and the social sciences overthrew established systems of order and meaning around the world, from Paris to New Delhi to Tokyo. In the arts, modernists and the avant-gardist idealized personal freedom and individualism, advocated the destruction of traditional orthodoxy to create radically new forms of culture, and championed the spirit of self-expression and experimentation.

In Asia, modernism developed in a myriad of ways. Across countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, artists' experience and expression of modernism were shaped by particular historical contexts. These included colonialism and indepen-

dence struggles, World War II and the ensuing Cold War between Western democracies and the Eastern Bloc, and various national movements promoting indigenous cultural identity.

For modern Asian artists coming of age in the postwar period (1945–1989), the central question was, how to be *modern* without being *Western*? Artists used or challenged the international languages of modernism to forge unique world views, often drawing from premodern and non-Western ideas and practices to inspire new forms of self-expression, political protest, and cultural critique. Their work expands our understanding of global modernism and the power of art in times of turbulent change.

# What Is Contemporary Asian Art?

---

Contemporary art is made by artists who are living and working today. As a global art movement, it coincides with the rise of globalization that was triggered by the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the invention of the World Wide Web. Time sped up, distances collapsed, and international trade enabled by the “borderless world” ushered in decades of unprecedented economic growth, rapid social changes, and mass migration. Societies across Asia, especially in China, were radically transformed.

Contemporary art from Asia is often characterized by engagement with social and political issues related to globalization, including the proliferation of digital technologies in the twenty-first century. Identity politics and postmodern critiques of dominant Western cultural narratives have also inspired artists to make work that tackles the urgent topics of the day.

Many contemporary Asian artists use experimental media such as installation art, performance, photography, animation, and Internet-based and video art. Working in their native country or on the international circuit, their art sheds light on murky truths of history or conflicts in today's world. Others create art to document and express their personal stories, including experiences of war, immigration, and spiritual longing.

This resource introduces artists whose creativity and thinking have established the field of Asian art in a global context. Their work offers new perspectives on our understanding of contemporary life and world affairs.

# Teaching

---

Ai Weiwei

# Ai Weiwei

(i way-way)

## 艾未未



Ai Weiwei, 2012

1957, Beijing

Beijing, Berlin, & New York

History  
Materials and Process  
Symbols

“Creativity is the power to reject the past, and to change the status quo, and to seek new potential.”<sup>1</sup>

Sculpture

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Ai Weiwei was born in Beijing, the capital of the People’s Republic of China, which had been founded as a communist state by **Mao Zedong** in 1949. Ai Weiwei’s father, Ai Qing, was a revered modern poet who ended up being branded as “anti-revolutionary” during the **Anti-Rightist Campaign** to purge intellectuals in 1958. The entire family was exiled to a labor camp in a remote region of the country, and Ai moved back to Beijing after his father’s standing as one of China’s greatest poets was reinstated by the Communist Party following Mao’s death in 1976.

Ai enrolled in the Beijing Film Academy in 1978, but in 1981 he moved to New York to attend Parsons School of Design. Like many artists of his generation around the world, Ai was interested in **Conceptual** practices, such as the Duchampian idea of the readymade. He also was drawn to the language of appropriation used by Pop artists such as Andy Warhol, whom he knew in New York’s downtown scene. When Ai returned to Beijing in 1993, China was in the throes of accelerated industrialization, which paralleled the speed of industrialization during the American Industrial Revolution in the early 19th century. Beijing’s art community was also reeling from the crackdown on political expression following the June Fourth Incident at **Tiananmen Square** in 1989. Upon his return, Ai helped establish Beijing East Village, a community of experimental artists, and later immersed himself in social activism, championing human rights

and freedom of expression within China’s authoritarian regime.

*China Log* (2005) is built from ironwood—or *tieli mu*, a wood that was traditionally used in Chinese furniture—which was salvaged from a demolished Qing-dynasty temple. Due to rapidly expanding urban developments during the 1990s and 2000s in Beijing, it was common to find old cultural and heritage sites hastily torn down to make room for new construction.

Ai expands on the logic of the readymade by repurposing the ironwood to create an eleven-foot-long sculpture with the shape of the map of China running through the entire length. To create the effect, Ai employed a team of woodworking artisans to join eight carved logs with interlocking dovetail joints, which hold the pieces together without any nails or glue. This appropriation of materials and technique, both symbols of China’s quickly disappearing past, critiques the progress-oriented future of modern-day China and calls attention to the importance of not forgetting the growing nation’s recent history. Ai’s map of China includes the contested territories of Hainan island and Taiwan, calling attention to China’s political ambitions in the age of globalization.

<sup>1</sup> Ai Weiwei, “We Have Nothing,” in *Ai Weiwei’s Blog: Writings, Interviews, and Digital Rants, 2006–2009*, ed. and trans. Lee Ambrozio (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), p. 140.



Ai Weiwei, *China Log*, 2005. Ironwood, 57.8 × 337.5 × 55.2 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Lybess Sweezy and Ken Miller 2012.138

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculpture *China Log* (2005).

What do you notice about the shape of this sculpture? Its title is *China Log*.

What do you notice about how this sculpture is made? *China Log* was created with different pieces of wood, combined with interlocking dovetail joints. How is this process different from other ways of joining wood?



Ai Weiwei, *China Log*, 2005

Looking at the work from the side, you can see the shape of the map of China, including the contested territories of Hainan and Taiwan in the lower-right corner.

→ To build *China Log*, Ai worked with a team of artisans trained in traditional woodworking techniques. These labor-intensive methods have largely become obsolete in a world of industrialized processes that focus on mass production, efficiency, and speed.

→ *China Log* was made with reclaimed wood. The pillars of wood in the sculpture were originally columns in a centuries-old Qing-dynasty temple, and Ai purchased them from an antique-furniture dealer after the temple was demolished.

Why do you think Ai chose to use these particular processes to create his artwork?

Why do you think Ai chose to reuse old materials instead of purchasing new wood?

How is this sculpture a comment on Chinese politics and its identity as a nation?

# Classroom Activities

## Create a Readymade

“Readymade” is a term coined by French modern artist Marcel Duchamp in 1915 to describe common, everyday objects or mass-produced materials that an artist chooses to reuse for the purpose of art. Ai spoke about using reclaimed materials to create a readymade: “For example, an old, destroyed temple: you know the old temple was beautiful and beautifully built. We could once all believe and hope in it. But once it has been destroyed, it’s nothing. It becomes another artist’s material to build something completely contradictory to what it was before.”<sup>2</sup>

What do you think about this statement? Based on *China Log*, do you agree or disagree—why? Challenge your students to use reclaimed or recycled materials to create a readymade.

## Past versus Present

In this work, Ai assigns value to handmade objects rather than to those made using modern modes of mass production. Ask students to compare furniture items that have been traditionally constructed versus furniture items that have been mass produced, e.g., a wooden antique chair versus a plastic chair from Ikea.

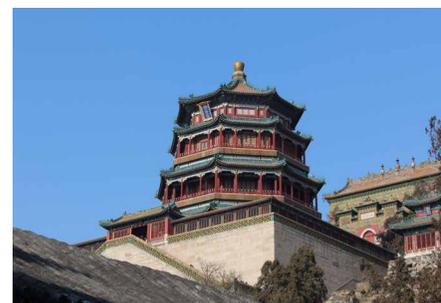
Which object has more value in our society—why? Which object do you value more—why?

# Classroom Activities

## Compile a Time Capsule

*China Log* criticizes how urban development in Beijing has led to the erasure of its rich cultural past. By salvaging materials to create artwork, Ai preserves a piece of China’s history.

Brainstorm with your students: If you were to create a time capsule about the history of your neighborhood, what would you choose to preserve? What is in danger of being lost? What objects, artifacts, or documentation of historical sites would you want to preserve for future generations?



Tower of Buddhist Incense, Summer Palace, Beijing, a Qing-dynasty temple supported by eight ironwood pillars

## Research Political Culture

Ai said, “I’m interested in all of the value judgments we make. . . . In Chinese history, there are so many dynasties, and each built the most beautiful Buddhist sculptures or temples. Yet the next dynasty immediately destroys everything. So, you can see in the changing of political power, those aesthetics also change dramatically.”<sup>3</sup>

Ask your students to research the impact of politics on cultural movements and aesthetics. How have cultural tastes changed in our country in the last fifty, one hundred, two hundred years? How does the culture of the American colonial period differ from the culture of the country after the Revolutionary War?

<sup>2</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Ai Weiwei Speaks with Hans Ulrich Obrist* (London: Penguin UK, 2011), p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Rhine, “Ai Weiwei,” *Miami Rail*, November 2013, <https://miamirail.org/visual-arts/ai-weiwei/>.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Ai's Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/aiww/?hl=en>.
- Ai's Twitter. <https://twitter.com/aiww?lang=it>.
- Ai's Website. <http://www.aiweiwei.com/>.

### Videos

- *Art in the Twenty-First Century*. Season 6, "Ai Weiwei in 'Change.'" April 14, 2012. <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s6/ai-weiwei-in-change-segment/>.

### Articles

- Kunzru, Hari. "Ai Weiwei: The Dissident Artist." *Guardian*, May 17, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/may/28/ai-weiwei-artist-hari-kunzru>.
- Rhine, Patrick. "Ai Weiwei." *Miami Rail*, November 2013. <https://miamirail.org/visual-arts/ai-weiwei/>.
- Sorace, Christian. "China's Last Communist: Ai Weiwei." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2014). [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/674120](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/674120).
- Stevens, Mark. "Is Ai Weiwei China's Most Dangerous Man?" *Smithsonian Magazine*, September 2012. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/is-ai-weiwei-chinas-most-dangerous-man-17989316/>.
- White, Mason. "Ai Weiwei: Fragments, Voids, Sections and Rings." *Architect*, December 5, 2006. <https://architect.com/features/article/47035/ai-weiwei-fragments-voids-sections-and-rings>.

# Teaching

---

# Cai Guo-Qiang

# CAI Guo-Qiang

(tsai gwo-chiang)

## 蔡国强



Cai Guo-Qiang

1957, Quanzhou, China

New York

**History**  
**Materials and Process**  
**Symbols**

**Sculpture**  
**Installation**

“My father is a calligrapher; he makes traditional paintings, and he also studies Chinese history. My home was always full of traditional artists and a love for traditional Chinese art. . . . I wanted to follow the Western tradition of oil painting and sculpture and be influenced by Western thought. Now, looking back, I see I’ve inherited some of my father’s scholarly thinking; Chinese cultural tradition is part of me.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Cai Guo-Qiang was born in 1957 in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, China. Even as a child, he was interested in art and sketched landscapes around his house in watercolor, later using oil paint. In 1984 Cai began using **gunpowder** in his work, a material invented in China, to create allegorical, sociopolitical commentaries that draw on its associations with ancient medicine, ritual fireworks, and violence. Proficient in a variety of mediums, Cai draws freely from military history, **Daoist** cosmology, Maoist revolutionary tactics, **Buddhist** philosophy, and pyrotechnic technology. Cai lived in Japan from 1986 to 1995, after which he moved to New York, where he currently resides. Cai was a core member of the creative team that planned the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 **Beijing Olympics**.

*Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan* (1996) is an **installation** that descends from the ceiling in the form of a dragon, culminating at the floor with three running Toyota car engines. An allegorical play on Asia’s rising influence, the work also features contemporary news clippings documenting the rise of China in the age of globalization.

The artist has often used allegory as a point of entry to consider larger issues. For this installation, **Genghis Khan**’s reputation as a skillful warrior and conqueror of Eurasia was adroitly appropriated, along with the cautionary tale “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” to address contemporary Western fears of Asian dominance. Asia’s expansionism—an actuality

in terms of the region’s growing economic power—is pointedly, and humorously, emphasized through the artist’s choice of symbolically loaded materials. The work is formed from large branches affixed with inflated sheepskin bags, which were traditionally used by ancient Mongol warriors alternately to hold drinking water and, when inflated, as components of rafts for crossing rivers.

At the lower end of the installation, three Toyota engines remain running, signifying the power of Japanese automobile companies to overtake automakers from the United States. An earlier version, *The Ark of Genghis Khan*, was realized in 1996 for a group exhibition that originated at the Nagoya City Art Museum, which is located near the city of Toyota, where the automaker has its headquarters. As part of the installation, the ephemera that line the gallery wall document the mutual dependence—characterized by attraction and repulsion—between East and West in the era of globalization.

<sup>1</sup> Dana Friis-Hansen, Octavio Zaya, Serizawa Takashi, and Cai Guo-Qiang, *Cai Guo-Qiang* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2002), p. 10.



Cai Guo-Qiang, *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*, 1996. 108 sheepskin floats, branches, wooden paddles, rope, three Toyota car engines, and photocopies of various magazine covers and article clippings, dimensions variable. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and Executive Committee Members: Eli Broad, Elaine Turner Cooper, Beat Curti, Ronnie Heyman, J. Tomilson Hill, Dakis Joannou, Barbara Lane, Robert Mnuchin, Peter Norton, Thomas Walther, and Ginny Williams, with additional funds contributed by Peter Littmann 97.4523

## View and Discuss

→ This work is made from unusual materials, including 108 sheepskin floats, branches, wooden paddles, rope, and three Toyota car engines.

Ask students to find these materials in the image. What thoughts do these materials evoke?

→ Cai titled this work *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan* (1996). To understand the title and the work, students will need to know something about these references. Read to your students the section of the text above that explains some of Cai's symbolic references.

With this information, what additional connections can your students make between the title of this work, the installation, and its meaning?

→ Cai uses materials symbolically to comment on contemporary issues. In this work, he employs sheepskins that are traditionally used to keep river rafts afloat (see photo). In Cai's work, these sheepskins have been configured into an abstracted flying dragon, a symbol of China. Compare the photo of the sheepskin raft with Cai's work.



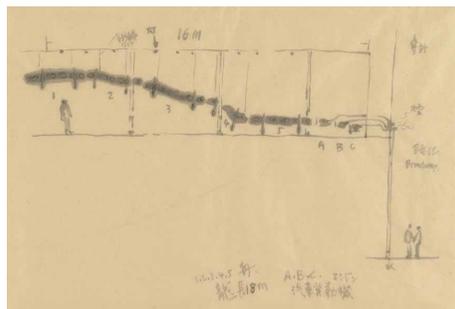
Sheepskin rafts are an ancient means of transportation in northwestern China. Sheepskins are sewn, sealed, inflated, and then fixed with a rope onto sticks.

How has Cai transformed this ancient, traditional means of transportation into something that comments on contemporary global economics and politics?

# Classroom Activities

## Visualize Through Drawing

Drawing continues to be an important way for Cai to visualize new works. For *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*, he produced six relatively simple ink-on-paper studies that diagram the forms and various parts of the installation, and he added written notations to further describe his vision.



Cai Guo-Qiang, Study for *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*, 1996. Ink on paper, 33.1 x 48.3 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Gift, Hong Hong Wu 97.4524.5

Have students look carefully at Study for *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*, and identify places where they can see the preliminary drawings manifested in the final installation.

## Plan an Installation

Have students plan their own installation using preliminary drawings to help them envision a novel way to rearrange their classroom. Make a series of sketches to plan a new configuration of classroom furniture (chairs, desks, etc). Decide on the most interesting design, then produce the new arrangement and document the transformation through photographs.

Once the project is complete, talk about how using preliminary drawings was helpful. Then discuss the problems that were encountered during construction that students did not foresee in their preliminary drawings.

# Classroom Activities

## Use Materials as Symbols

Look closely at the Toyota car engines in *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*. Cai uses materials symbolically. Discuss how a material can carry multiple meanings. Study common objects, such as a book, a boat, a traffic sign, or a fallen tree.



Installation view, *The Hugo Boss Prize 1996*, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, 1996

How many possible symbolic meanings can students associate with each object? Challenge them to create individual sculptures that consider these symbolic meanings.

## A Class Debate

The transformation of China into a major economic power within a time span of only three decades is often described as one of the greatest economic success stories in modern times. The emergence of China as a major commercial superpower has prompted concern among many U.S. policymakers, who worry that China's rise might result in the relative decline of the United States. Cai's work playfully explores the economic competition between the two countries.

Discuss and debate: Do you think China is an economic threat or ally to the United States?

## Resources

### Websites

- Cai's Website. <http://www.caiguoqiang.com>.
- The Kennedy Center, "Science Meets Artistry: The Work of Cai Guo-Qiang." [https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade9-12/Science\\_Meets\\_Artistry#Overview](https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade9-12/Science_Meets_Artistry#Overview).

### Videos

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Cai Guo-Qiang: *Inopportune: Stage One*." February 22, 2008. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/cai-guo-qiang-inopportune-stage-one>.

### Articles

- *Art in the Twenty-First Century*. Season 3, "Cai Guo-Qiang in 'Power.'" September 16, 2005. <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s3/cai-guo-qiang-in-power-segment>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Cai Guo-Qiang's *Cry Dragon/Cry Wolf: The Ark of Genghis Khan*." Accessed August 2, 2019. <https://www.guggenheim.org/conservation/cai-guo-qiangs-cry-dragoncry-wolf-the-ark-of-genghis-khan>.

### Books

- Krens, Thomas, and Alexandra Munroe. *Cai Guo-Qiang: I Want to Believe*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2008.

# Teaching

## Cao Fei

# CAO Fei

(tsow fay)

## 曹斐



Cao Fei

1978, Guangzhou

Beijing

Place  
Symbols

“You can peek into the digital world. Everything is much more intense than the real world. It’s much more unbridled and wild.”<sup>1</sup>

Video  
Internet Art

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Cao Fei was born in 1978 in Guangzhou, the heart of China’s **Pearl River Delta** and an international commercial hub. Cao witnessed the birth of Internet culture in China, and in her words, “learned a great deal through TV.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast to older generations of artists, Cao and her technology-savvy peers did not feel bound to nationalistic ideals or restricted by politics. Instead, they embraced a global culture fueled by access to new forms of communication. As a young artist, Cao immersed herself in the flows of global pop—Cantonese pop, Japanese anime, and American hip-hop—and became fascinated by local youth subcultures. Since then she has used photography, video, and digital mediums to expose the dramatic changes to her everyday environment due to China’s rapid growth that began in the 1990s.

In 2006 Cao discovered Second Life, an online game where users can build, create, and participate in a free-market economy. *RMB City: A Second Life City Planning by China Tracy (aka: Cao Fei)* (2007) is a city of Cao’s invention that exists only in Second Life. To fund the construction of RMB City in Second Life, however, Cao sold imaginary plots of land to stakeholders in the art world, thus appropriating the buying power of the contemporary art market to purchase virtual real estate. In process and in name, RMB City (named after China’s national currency, the renminbi, or “the people’s money”) exemplifies the blend of capitalism, socialism, and communism that drives

China’s modern economy. RMB City exists only in the virtual world, but following its construction in Second Life in 2007, the project has taken on a variety of other mediums and forms.

RMB City includes many recognizable monuments from China’s urban skyline. Cao produced a prominent recreation of **Tiananmen Square**, an important and historic public plaza in Beijing, turning it into a swimming pool that functions in Second Life as a city hall and a meeting place for the citizens of RMB City. A replica of the Beijing National Stadium, designed for the 2008 **Beijing Olympics**, became the “People’s Park,” and the Oriental Pearl TV Tower of Shanghai was transformed into the “People’s Tower.” In redesigning reality, Cao repurposed historic cultural sites and replaced past symbols with charged new meanings.

<sup>1</sup> *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, season 5, “Cao Fei in ‘Fantasy,’” October 14, 2009, <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/cao-fei-in-fantasy-segment/>.

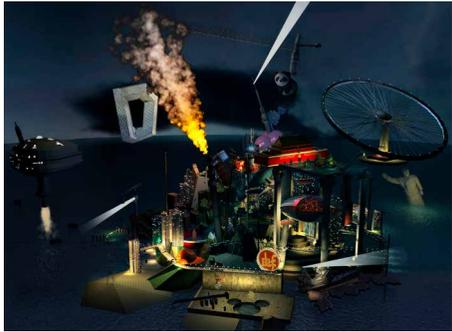
<sup>2</sup> Cao Fei, “Your Utopia Is Ours,” interview by Jordan Strom, *Filip 4* (Fall 2006), <https://fillip.ca/content/your-utopia-is-ours>.



# Classroom Activities

## Design a Utopian City

Cao described RMB City as a “utopia in the making.”<sup>4</sup> What is a utopia? Research the definition and other examples of utopias in art, architecture, film, literature, and online gaming. Draw your own version of a utopia based on the examples you find.



Cao Fei, *RMB City: A Second Life City Planning by China Tracy (aka: Cao Fei)*, 2007

What would your ideal city look like? Experiment with designing your city in various 2-D and 3-D art mediums: pen and paper, paper or cardboard models, or on computer modeling programs, such as Google Sketchup.

## Design a Virtual Avatar

China Tracy is Cao's avatar in Second Life. China Tracy is an active participant in RMB City, organizing events, coordinating photo shoots, and collaborating with other members to host exhibitions at virtual art galleries. Invite students to design, draw, and name their own avatar. What would your avatar in virtual reality be like? What part of your personality would it reflect?

# Classroom Activities

## Explore RMB City

To learn more about how this online city was made, watch this video: [art21.org/watch/extended-play/cao-fei-building-rmb-city-short/](http://art21.org/watch/extended-play/cao-fei-building-rmb-city-short/). In the video, Cao describes the process of creating an urban plan for RMB City as combining different images into a digital collage. Ask students to experiment with creating a digital collage using only images from the Internet, social media, and other found sources.

What are the challenges of using online mediums and appropriated images to create art?

## Popular Icon

In RMB City, an image of **Guanyin**—a female bodhisattva traditionally known as a goddess of mercy and compassion in East Asian culture—appears inside a shopping cart, right next to the “People's Shopping Center.” By including a religious icon in this context, Cao critiques our contemporary consumer culture. Ask your students to research a popular icon in American history.

What are the icons that represent our current popular culture? How do these compare with icons of the past?

<sup>4</sup> Cao Fei, “Coming Up Hip-Hop and Questioning Utopia,” interview by Philip Tinari, *Art 21*, December 2013, <https://art21.org/read/cao-fei-coming-up-hip-hop-and-questioning-utopia/>.

## Resources

### Websites

- Cao's Website. <http://www.caofei.com>.
- Net Art Anthology, RMB City. <https://anthology.rhizome.org/rmb-city>.
- RMB City's Website. <http://www.rmbcity.com>.
- RMB City's Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/user889612>.

### Videos

- *Art in the Twenty-First Century*. Season 5, "Cao Fei in 'Fantasy.'" October 14, 2009. <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/cao-fei-in-fantasy-segment/>.

### Articles

- Cao Fei. "Cao Fei: *A Bridge between Art and Pop Culture: That's What I Want to Be.*" Interview by Oyama Hitomi, 2007. <http://www.caofei.com/texts.aspx?id=13&year=2007&aitid=1>.
- Cao Fei. Interview by Izabella Scott. *White Review*, June 2016. <http://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-with-cao-fei>.
- Cao Fei. "Q. and A.: Cao Fei on Art, Motherhood and Walking the Political 'Red Line.'" Interview by Amy Qin. *Sinosphere* (blog). *New York Times*, April 7, 2015. <https://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/07/q-and-a-cao-fei-on-art-motherhood-and-walking-the-political-red-line/?mtrref=undefined>.
- Cao Fei. "What's Next?" Interview by Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2007. <http://www.caofei.com/texts.aspx?id=19&year=2007&aitid=1>.
- Chang, Charlotte. "Art Basel Hong Kong 2015: Conversations with Cao Fei." *Art Radar*, March 20, 2015. <http://artradarjournal.com/2015/03/20/art-basel-hong-kong-2015-conversations-with-cao-fei/>.
- McDonough, Tom. "The Chinese City between Dream World and Catastrophe." *Parkett* 99 (2017), pp. 18–35.
- Pollack, Barbara. "As China Evolves, the Artist Cao Fei Is Watching." *New York Times*, April 1 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/02/arts/design/as-china-evolves-the-artist-cao-fei-is-watching.html>.

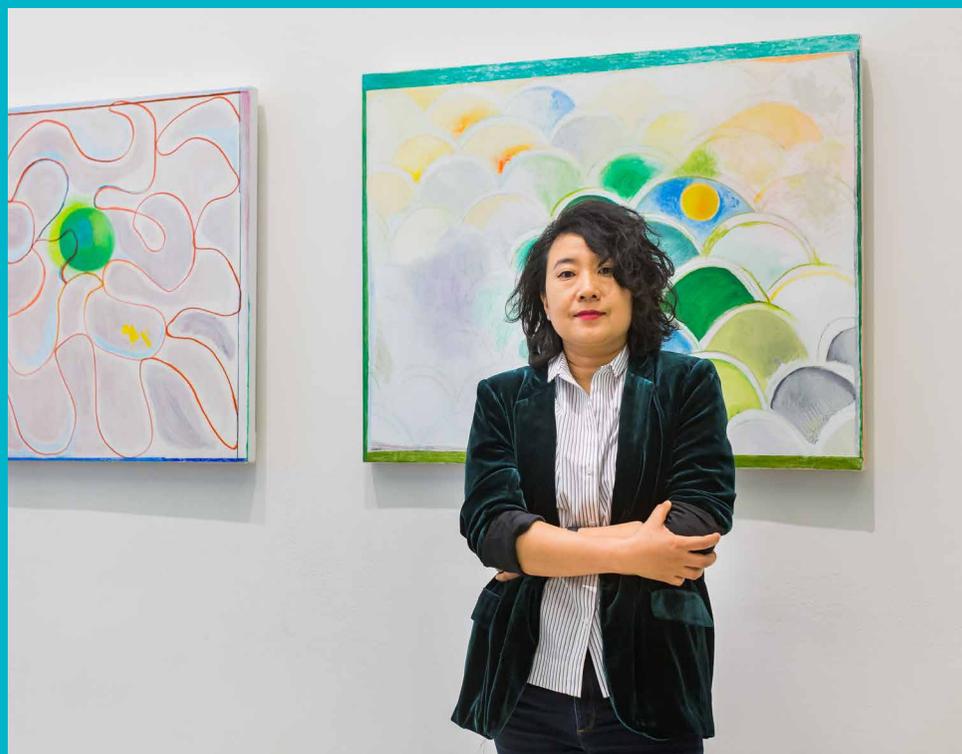
# Teaching

## Duan Jianyu

# DUAN Jianyu

(dwan jen-yu)

## 段建宇



Duan Jianyu

1970, Zhengzhou, China

Guangzhou

History  
Place  
Symbols

Painting  
Sculpture

“Whether it’s the simple and honest countryside in the North or the delicate and beautiful scenery in the South, both landscapes are facing significant change; the old China, made up of lots of rural towns, each rich in its own folklore and local custom, is slowly ebbing away.”<sup>1</sup>

### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Duan Jianyu was born in 1970 in Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan Province in China. Henan is located in the central part of the country and was once considered the birthplace of ancient Chinese civilization, but it was largely left behind during China’s rapid industrial growth in the 1990s. In 1995 Duan moved to the city of Guangzhou in southern China, where she currently resides, to study oil painting.

Duan’s hometown forms the central theme of many of her works. *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night I* (2017) depicts a pastoral scene but includes details that reveal social commentary. A kneeling woman in the center of the composition carries a “red-white-blue bag,” a cheap and durable tote used to carry commercial goods by rural workers in Guangzhou. Two figures lie on a wheeled pallet, a tool that commonly is used in warehouses and that serves as a makeshift means of transportation in urban centers for people who are homeless. Duan’s work connects present-day marginalized figures to mythical figures in Chinese art and literary history. A woman in the foreground has long, flowing black hair—a symbol for a fairy, ghost, or magical being—and the leaping rabbits at the bottom of the canvas suggest she might be Chang’e, the goddess of the moon. Also influenced by classical styles of **Chinese painting** and **Socialist Realist** propaganda, Duan creates fantastic characters who are models of resistance to systems that seek to eliminate misfits from society.

The sculpture *Picnic 1* (2018) was made to be shown with paintings from the series *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night* (2017–18). In the sculpture, the carrots take on humanlike forms and sprawl leisurely across the gallery floor, further confusing the boundaries between human and nature, rural and urban, real and imaginary. The series title was borrowed from the seventh-century Chinese poet Zhang Ruoxu’s poem of the same name—an influential classic that is frequently adapted into Chinese music or dance to evoke nationalist sentiment. Duan’s appropriation of the title hints at the way culture can be packaged, circulated, consumed, and recycled: “Appropriating popular culture is a technique you often see in my work. The lowbrow sometimes serves as a kind of optimism.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Duan Jianyu: An Equivocal Status Quo.” Sotheby’s, catalogue note, September 30, 2017, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.1043.html/2017/modern-contemporary-art-evening-sale-hk0736>.

<sup>2</sup> “One Hand Clapping: Duan Jianyu.” Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, July 2, 2018, video, 0:59, <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/one-hand-clapping-duan-jianyu>.



Duan Jianyu, *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night I*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 180 × 250 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2018.14

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the painting *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night I* (2017). Look closely at the figures in the painting.

What do you notice about their poses, clothing, or expressions? Duan often paints fictional characters inspired by literature, history, and mythology. Which figures look fictional? Why?

→ Examine the background of the painting, paying close attention to the following symbols:

### MOON

A large full moon occupies the upper third of the painting. What do you notice about the moon?

### HAIR

The long, weaving strands of black hair form an important visual connection in this painting between the figures and the landscape. What does the hair make you think of?

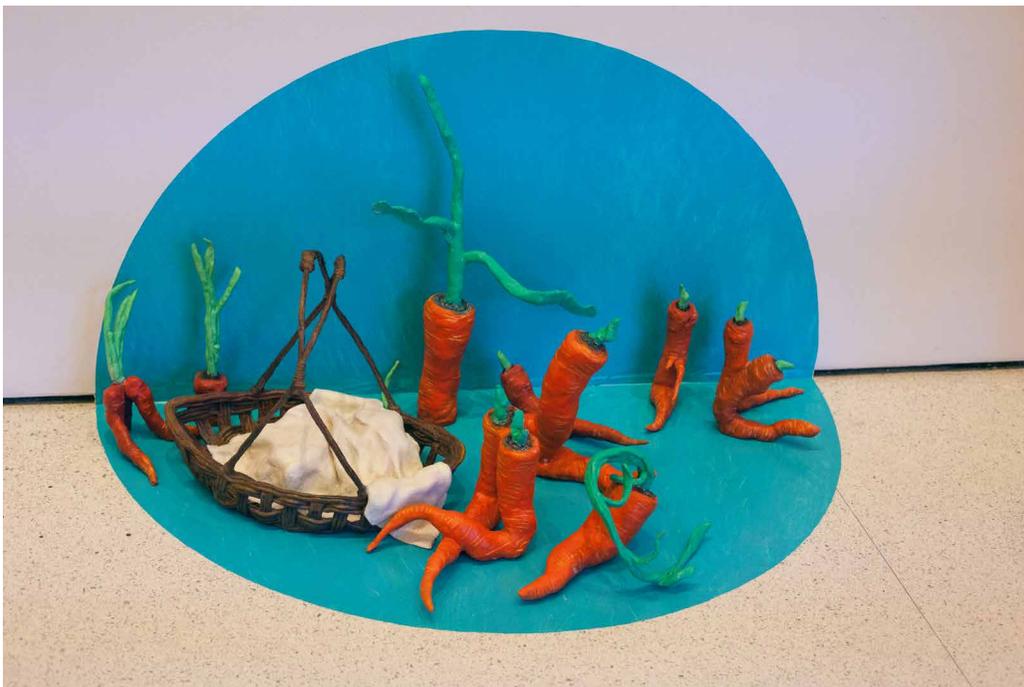
### INSTRUMENTS

There are two figures playing Chinese musical instruments in this painting. One holds a *pipa*, or a lute made with four strings. The other has a *dizi*, a flute traditionally constructed with bamboo. What do you notice about the figures playing these instruments? Why might the artist include ancient or outdated objects in her painting?



Chinese *pipa* ("lute"), from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

## View and Discuss



Duan Jianyu, *Picnic 1*, 2018. Bronze with acrylic, dimensions variable. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2018.15

→ Look at the sculpture *Picnic 1* (2018). Duan envisioned this work as part of “a public square with people roaming about.”<sup>3</sup>

Ask students to imagine the carrot sculptures as people. What do they notice about poses of the carrots? What might they be doing? Share the title, *Picnic 1*. How might this title add to or change the narrative?

<sup>3</sup> “One Hand Clapping: Duan Jianyu.”

## Classroom Activities

### Community

Duan depicts her hometown, comprising a rural population left behind in a rapidly changing, urban society.

Create a list to compare and contrast: What are the ways that rural areas are different from urban areas in your region?

### Write a Story

In *Picnic 1*, Duan uses anthropomorphic carrots to tell a story. Define anthropomorphism: presenting a nonhuman thing with human characteristics.



Duan Jianyu, *Garden of Secrets No. 9*, 2017 (study for *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night*, 2017–18). Acrylic on paper, 38 x 26.2 cm

Choose an object or group of objects and write an anthropomorphic narrative. Look back at *Picnic 1*. What are the benefits of using anthropomorphic objects, instead of human characters, to tell a story?

### Chinese Mythology

Duan’s works draw on Chinese mythical folklore, intertwining it with an imagined future. One folk reference is the mother goddess Nüwa, who is often depicted as a serpent with a female head. Another mythological allusion is to the moon goddess Chang’e, who, according to legend, swallowed an immortality elixir and fled to the moon, where she is often depicted with her companion, the Jade Rabbit.

Look at the images of the Chinese folk goddesses and compare to Duan’s figures. What commonalities do you see?

### Popular Culture

Watch a video about Duan on the Guggenheim’s website: [guggenheim.org/video/one-hand-clapping-duan-jianyu](https://www.guggenheim.org/video/one-hand-clapping-duan-jianyu). In the video, Duan talks about appropriating from popular culture in her work.

What sources from popular culture do artists use today? Ask students to make a list, including, for example, comic books, music lyrics, and video games. Challenge them to create an artwork inspired by a resource from popular culture.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Duan's Website. <http://www.duanjianyu.cn/>.

### Videos

- SinoVision. "One Hand Clapping." May 9, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjnjTrk5Mu4>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "One Hand Clapping: Duan Jianyu." July 2, 2018. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/one-hand-clapping-duan-jianyu>.

### Articles

- Dematté, Monica. "Apotheosis of the Imagination: Duan Jianyu's Approach to Painting." June 4, 2011. [http://www.duanjianyu.cn/article\\_view\\_en.asp?sort\\_id=30&id=180&displaypage=3&aa=1&url=index\\_en.asp?id1=30@sort1=2](http://www.duanjianyu.cn/article_view_en.asp?sort_id=30&id=180&displaypage=3&aa=1&url=index_en.asp?id1=30@sort1=2).
- Pu Hong. "Duan Jianyu: Attaching Reality to Surface." *LEAP*, no. 19, May 20, 2013. <http://www.leapleapleap.com/2013/05/duan-jianyu-attaching-reality-to-surface/>.
- Smith, Karen. "A Potent Force: Duan Jianyu and Hu Xiaoyuan." 2013. [www.duanjianyu.cn/article\\_view\\_en.asp?displaypage=1&sort\\_id=30&id=180&url=index\\_en.asp?id1+30@sort1=2](http://www.duanjianyu.cn/article_view_en.asp?displaypage=1&sort_id=30&id=180&url=index_en.asp?id1+30@sort1=2).

### Books

- Weng, Xiaoyu and Hou Hanru, eds. *One Hand Clapping*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2018.

# Teaching

---

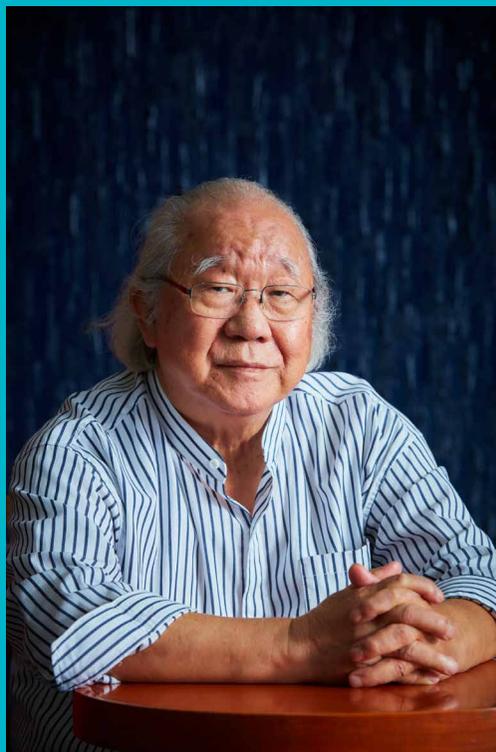
# Ha Chong-Hyun

ARTIST

# HA Chong-Hyun

(ha jong-hyon)

## 하종현



Ha Chong-Hyun

BORN

1935, Sancheong, Korea

LIVES &amp; WORKS

Seoul

THEMES

**History**  
**Materials and Process**

“My studio practice continues to be based on experiments with processes and new techniques through which to create work.”<sup>1</sup>

ART MEDIUMS

**Mixed Media**  
**Painting**  
**Sculpture**

ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

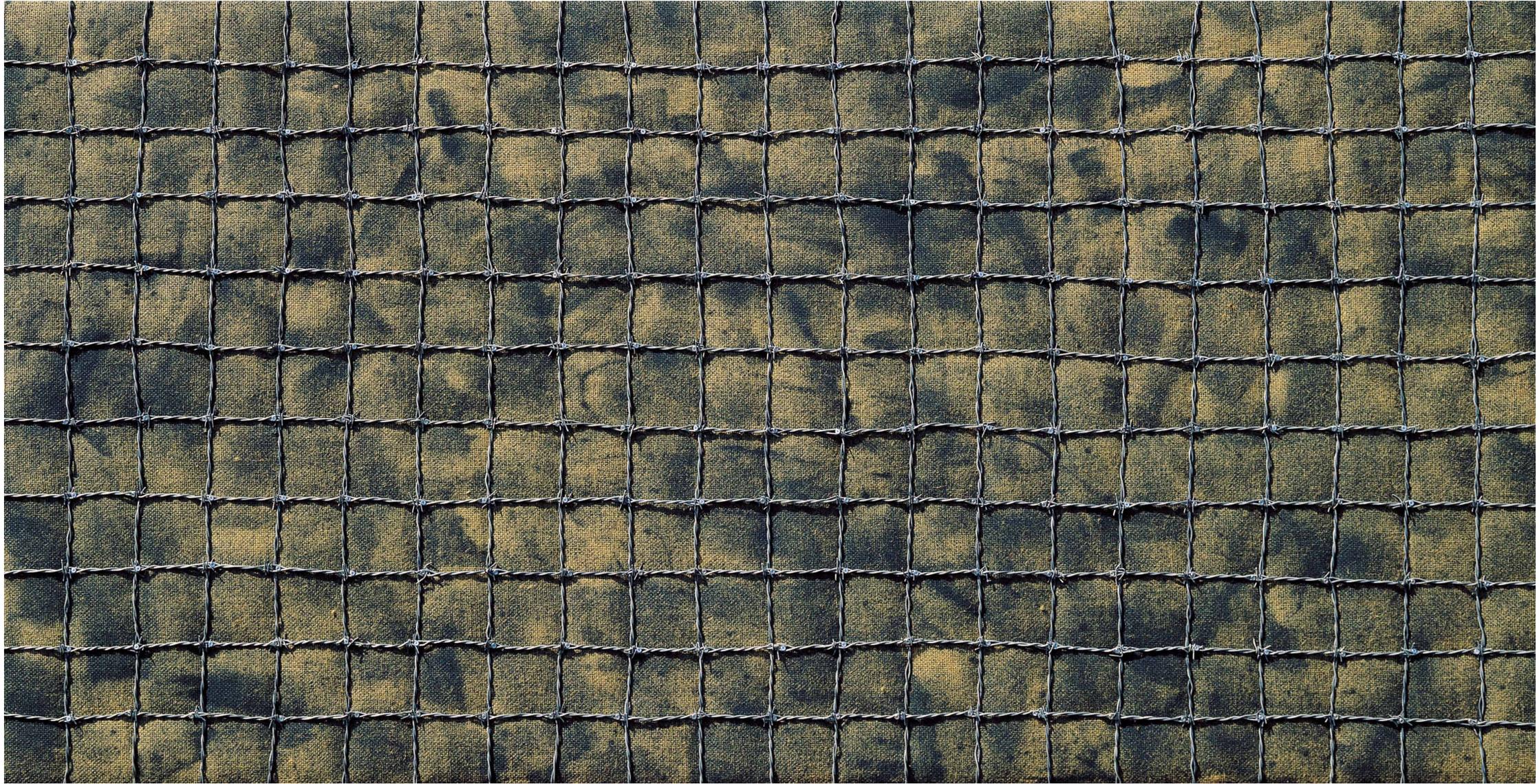
Born in 1935 in Sancheong, Korea, Ha Chong-Hyun is recognized in South Korea as one of the most important artists of the postwar and contemporary eras. He was trained in oil painting and became a professor at one of the leading fine arts universities in South Korea. As a painter, Ha experiments with the canvas's surface; his signature technique involves pushing oil paint through the back of the work, instead of brushing it onto the front, and embedding the surface with nontraditional materials. These explorations established him as a critical figure in **Dansaekhwa**, also known as the Korean Monochrome school, which emerged in the early 1970s.

Ha's investigations in the early 1970s yielded surfaces juxtaposed with materials that had radically different physical properties. He often used rough hemp canvases and lined them with gridlike formations of barbed wire, metal springs, nails, and other common industrial materials. These grids and repeating structures recall **Minimalism**, an artistic movement characterized by extreme simplicity of form, often as serial geometries. His materials, which were easily accessible at the time, represent South Korea's rapid modernization process and, according to Ha, take on metaphorical and political significance. For instance, hemp refers to the products shipped in large sacks from the U.S. Army that were a staple of postwar life in South Korea.

Ha created *Work 73-13* (1973) during the military dictatorship of **Park Chung Hee**, who had

tightened his grip on all aspects of life in South Korea. The way in which the cagelike barbed wire entraps the hemp and physically presses into the fleshlike surface provokes a visceral reaction and alludes to the onset of Park's reign of terror during which he declared martial law and installed a repressive authoritarian regime. With the **Korean War** and the division of the peninsula, South Korea functioned as a military station for the United States throughout the **Cold War**, while the North was sanctioned by the Soviet Union. The barbed-wire fence that protected the U.S. Army bases was a familiar sight for many living in Seoul, as were American soldiers. In this sense, *Work 73-13* is a powerful reminder and embodiment of the Korean War and its long, conflicted aftermath.

<sup>1</sup> Tina Kim Gallery, “Ha Chong-Hyun: Conjunction,” press release, October 28, 2015, <http://www.tinakimgallery.com/exhibitions/ha-chong-hyun/press-release>.



Ha Chong-Hyun, *Work 73-13*, 1973. Barbed wire on hemp, 120 × 240 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, the Samsung Foundation of Culture 2015.51

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the mixed-media composition *Work 73-13 (1973)*.

Describe the materials, colors, and shapes in this work. What do you associate with these elements?

→ This work is made with hemp punctured by a grid of barbed wire. Examine samples of hemp or burlap and describe their texture. Compare and contrast hemp to barbed wire.

What are your associations with each? What do you think about how the two materials interact in this object?

→ Rather than just painting on the hemp, Ha explored it as a three-dimensional object.

Debate whether you think this work is closer to a painting or sculpture. Explain your point of view.

→ Barbed wire has significance to Ha. When he created this piece, South Korea was under a military dictatorship and martial law. The country also had endured decades of Japanese colonization (1910–45) and the Korean War (1950–53), resulting in the significant presence of U.S. Army bases in and around Seoul—all of them fenced in. The artist explained that he chose this ubiquitous material to comment on South Korea's political situation.

How does his use of the material communicate this critique? How would it be different if it were combined with another material?

## Classroom Activities

### Material as Critique

For Ha, barbed wire draws associations with South Korea's military dictatorship, war, and the division of the country during the twentieth-century. For this activity, encourage each student to think about a political or social issue that they are passionate about. Ask them to write for one minute about their opinions on the issue. Next ask them to brainstorm materials that could represent this issue and/or help them explore it visually. Finally challenge them to make a sketch of a potential artwork using that material in a critical way.

Ask students to share their sketches and discuss the issues they are critiquing.

### The Grid

Ha is among many modern artists who have employed the grid as a structure for their compositions. What do students associate with grids? Have them research the grid and its mathematical and scientific applications, as well as other artists who have used it in their work, including Lee Ufan, Sol LeWitt, and Agnes Martin. Share these findings as a group and discuss the grid's significance.

As an extension, you can assign students to write poems or make artworks inspired by their research.

### Experiment with a Canvas

Ha experimented with the traditional surface of a painting: stretched canvas. For this activity, challenge students to transform the canvas in a way other than the conventional method of brushing on paint. Give each student a canvas that has been stretched. Then, as a class, brainstorm ways in which it can be altered, including tearing, cutting, reweaving, puncturing, and combining it with other materials. Encourage them to think of it as a three-dimensional object and produce something that feels sculptural. Share the results.

In what ways did students alter the canvas? What was challenging about their experimentation? How do the products differ from traditional painted surfaces?

## Resources

### Videos

- TEFAF. “Meet the Expert—Tina Kim Gallery.” May 6, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4S8GA-TOKjT8>.

### Articles

- Artsy. “Amid Renewed Interest in Korean Dansaekhwa Art, Ha Chong-Hyun Continues to Experiment.” November 16, 2015. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-amid-renewed-interest-in-korean-dansaekhwa-art-ha-chong-hyun-continues-to-experiment>.
- Degen, Natasha and Kiburn Kim. “The Koreans at the Top of the Art World.” *New Yorker*, September 30, 2015. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-koreans-at-the-top-of-the-art-world>.
- Gleadell, Colin. “The Dansaekhwa Bubble? 1970s Korean Art Phenomenon Sees Meteoric Rise.” *Telegraph*, June 6, 2017. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/luxury/art/dansaekhwa-bubble-1970s-korean-art-phenomenon-sees-meteoric/>.
- Min, Ines. “Ha Chong-Hyun in Conversation.” *Ocula*, July 13, 2017. <https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/ha-chong-hyun/>.

- Morgan, Robert C. “Korea’s Monochrome Painting Movement Is Having a New York Moment.” *Hyperallergic*, December 2, 2015. <https://hyperallergic.com/258279/koreas-monochrome-painting-movement-is-having-a-new-york-moment/>.

### Books

- Kee, Joan. *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Lee, Yongwoo, ed. *Dansaekhwa*. New York: Tina Kim Gallery, 2015.
- Sup, Yoon, Alexandra Munroe, and Sam Bardaouil. *The Art of Dansaekhwa*. Seoul: Kukje Gallery, 2015.

# Teaching

# On Kawara

# On KAWARA

(on ka-wa-ra)

## 河原 温



On Kawara's studio, 13th Street, New York, 1966

1932, Kariya, Japan

2014, New York

**Identity**  
**Materials and Process**

**Painting**  
**Conceptual Art**

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

On Kawara devoted his life to exploring ideas of place and time with art based on language and numbers. Most of his works are parts of series that catalogue his daily life and routines in existential and meditative ways. He is recognized as a pioneer of **Conceptual art** of the 1960s.

Born in Kariya, Japan, in 1932, Kawara was raised in an intellectual family and exposed to the country's modern, cosmopolitan culture. He was only thirteen years old when World War II ended with the **atomic bomb** attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Living in Tokyo in the early 1950s, Kawara studied philosophy as well as political and psychoanalytic theory. Kawara settled in New York in 1964, where he developed several series of works devoid of imagery and instead featuring plain language and information systems.

On January 4, 1966, he created the first of his Date Paintings—monochromatic canvases of red, blue, or gray upon which only the date is painted in white—which together constitute the *Today* series that he would continue to produce throughout his life. These works range between eight sizes, from eight by ten inches to sixty-one by eighty-nine inches. They were produced meticulously, according to a series of steps that never varied. If a painting was not finished by midnight, he destroyed it. Kawara fabricated a cardboard storage box for each Date Painting. Many boxes are lined with a cutting from a local newspaper, juxtaposing the deadpan sign of the date with the

hurly-burly of that day's events. Over the course of forty-eight years, Kawara produced several thousand of these paintings in more than one hundred thirty places around the world.

For the series *I Got Up* (1968–79), Kawara sent two postcards every day to friends, family members, collectors, and colleagues. On each card, he stamped the date, his name, his current address, the name and address of the recipient, and the phrase **I GOT UP AT** (always in English and capital letters) followed by the time he rose from bed. Tourist picture postcards were always used, and the text was aligned in a similar way each time. The mass production of postcards and mechanical stamps contrasts with the handmade nature of the work.

On Kawara died in the summer of 2014. His official biography consists solely of the sum total of days he had been alive. At his death, that number was 29,771.



On Kawara, Nov. 1, 1996. From *Today, 1966–2013*. Acrylic on canvas and artist-made box, 33 × 43.2 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with funds through prior gift of Daimler-Benz in honor of Thomas M. Messer 2016.19

TEACHING

# View and Discuss



Installation view, *On Kawara—Silence*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, February 6–May 3, 2015

← Look at the work *Nov. 1, 1996* (from *Today, 1966–2013*). This painting is part of the *Today* series, or Date Paintings.

What do you notice about this work? What do you think the challenges would be in making a painting like this?

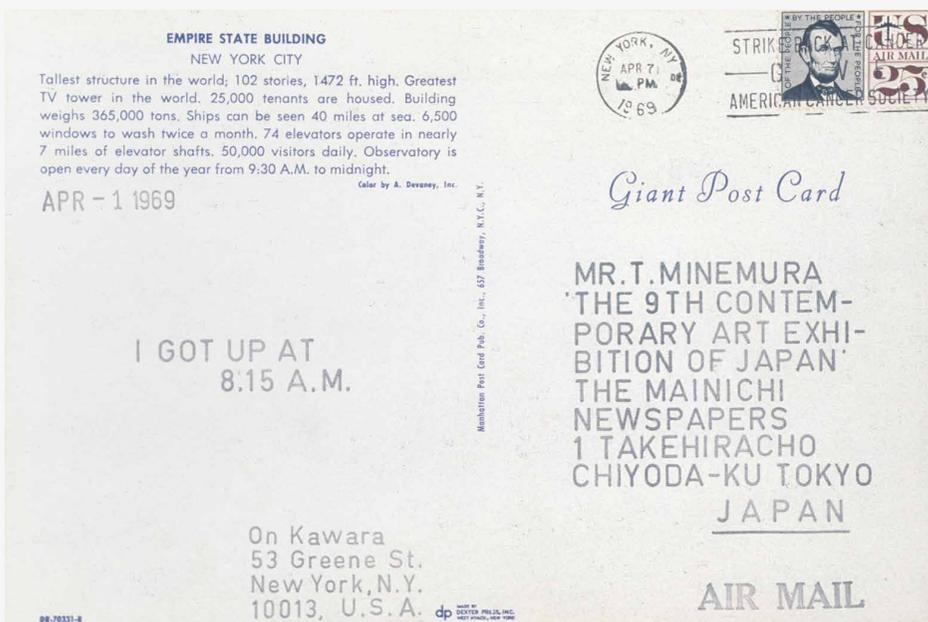
→ Watch the video “How On Kawara Made His Date Paintings” at [guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/how-on-kawara-made-his-date-paintings](http://guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/how-on-kawara-made-his-date-paintings).

What additional thoughts do you have about the piece after viewing the video?

→ Many Date Paintings are accompanied by a newspaper cutting from that day. Look at the cutting in *Nov. 1, 1996*.

How does it shed light on this date in history? Which date would you choose to paint and why? What news story from that day would you choose to line the cardboard box?

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

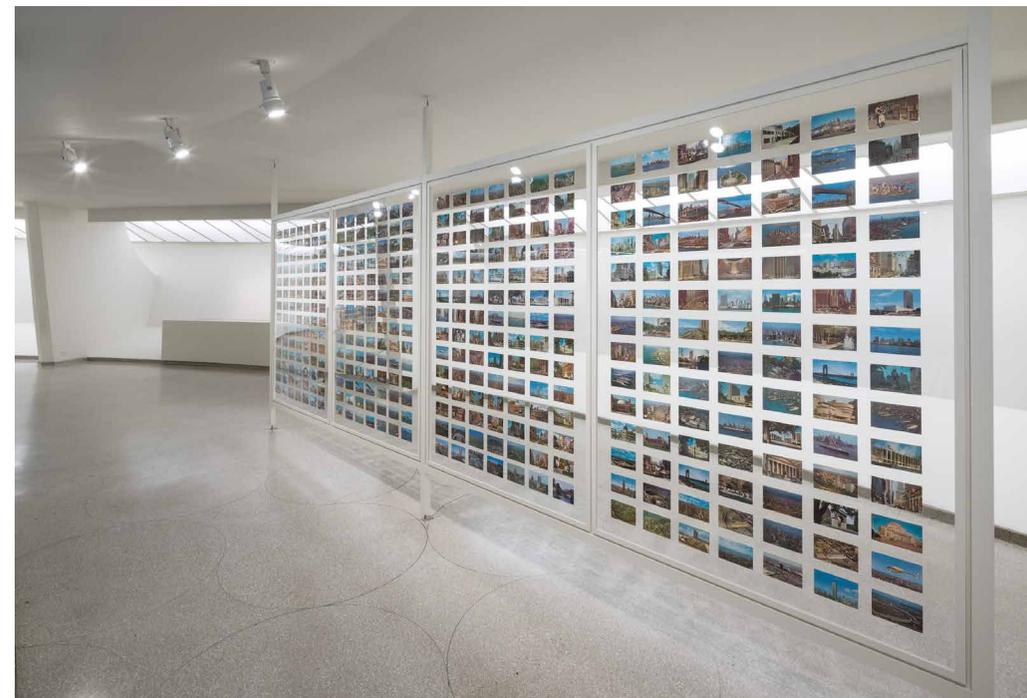


On Kawara, *Postcards to Toshiaki Minemura, April 1969* (details). From *I Got Up, 1968–79*. Stamped ink on thirty postcards, 15.2 × 23 cm each. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Toshiaki Minemura 2015.21

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the work *Postcards to Toshiaki Minemura* (from *I Got Up, 1978–79*). Kawara sent postcards to friends or colleagues every day for nearly twelve years. He always followed the same format, down to the placement of the stamped text.

Do you do anything the same way every day? Why? How does it feel to keep up this routine? How would it feel to break the routine?



Installation view, *On Kawara—Silence*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, February 6–May 3, 2015

→ This work is part of the series *I Got Up*. What do you notice about it? Watch the video “On Kawara: Self-Observation” at [guggenheim.org/video/on-kawara-self-observation](https://guggenheim.org/video/on-kawara-self-observation).

What additional thoughts do you have about *I Got Up* after viewing the video?

# Classroom Activities

## Paint Precisely

Despite their mechanical appearance, Kawara's Date Paintings are meticulously handmade in multiple layers. Kawara's tools included tapered brushes, a ruler, a set square, an X-acto knife, and a brush for dusting. He rotated the canvas throughout the process in order to paint from all sides and thereby achieve exacting results.



Process of a Date Painting. On Kawara, *5. SEPT. 1994*, Düsseldorf. From *Today*, 1966–2013. Acrylic on canvas, 25.4 × 33 cm. Private collection

Try painting in a precise way. Produce a word, date, or another type of text on paper or canvas board with tools such as a pencil, tapered brushes, a ruler, and a set square. Reflect on the difficulties you faced while making such a precise painting.

## Subtitle Your Day

Many of the Date Paintings have subtitles. Some of these record personal anecdotes, such as "I played 'Monopoly' with Joseph, Christine and Hiroko this afternoon. We ate a lot of spaghetti" (January 1, 1968). Others record current events, some of them momentous, such as the *Apollo 11* moon landing in 1969. Still other subtitles refer to the Date Paintings themselves; one reads, "I am afraid of my *Today* paintings" (May 29, 1966).

For this activity, record a subtitle every day for two weeks. They can be personal, historical, or even arbitrary. What is it like to capture a day with a subtitle?

# Classroom Activities

## Freedom within Constraints

Kawara often constrained his series with self-imposed protocols and systems. Many artists find rules and systems to be a source of creativity rather than limitation.

Have students research an artist who imposed rules or systems on his or her process and have them attempt to recreate these systems. Examples of artists include John Cage, Sol LeWitt, Piet Mondrian, and Ad Reinhardt. What did their systems help them produce? Why do you think they stuck with these systems? How did their systems reflect their philosophies about art?

## Mail Art

Mail art is a radically democratic art form that emerged in the early 1960s and continues to the present day. It aims to strip away the value of fine art and make the everyday, ordinary acts of living and communication the substance and theme of art. While Kawara's work is not technically considered Mail art because he was not part of a group, it does share the purpose to make art a living practice of everyday life.

As a class, research approaches to Mail art and plan a school-wide exhibition that embraces some of the ideas behind the movement.

## Resources

### Websites

- David Zwirner. <https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/kawara>.
- Museum of Modern Art, *Analog Network: Mail Art 1960–1999*. <https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2014/analognetwork/>.

### Videos

- AV Festival. “On Kawara: *One Million Years*.” April 16, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baQr2SxMJz4>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “Everyday Meditation in *On Kawara—Silence* at the Guggenheim.” December 16, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/everyday-meditation-in-on-kawarasilence-at-the-guggenheim>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “On Kawara: *Date Paintings*.” February 6, 2015. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/on-kawara-date-paintings>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “On Kawara: *Self-Observation*.” February 6, 2015. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/on-kawara-self-observation>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “*On Kawara—Silence*.” February 13, 2015. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/on-kawarasilence>.

### Articles

- Allen, Greg. “On Kawara Today.” *Greg.org* (blog), July 10, 2014. [http://greg.org/archive/2014/07/10/on\\_kawara\\_today.html](http://greg.org/archive/2014/07/10/on_kawara_today.html).
- Dover, Caitlin. “How On Kawara Made His Date Paintings.” *Checklist* (blog). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, March 9, 2015. <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/how-on-kawara-made-his-date-paintings>.

### Books

- Weiss, Jeffrey with Anne Wheeler. *On Kawara—Silence*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2015.

# Teaching

## Lee Bul

# LEE Bul

(lee bul)

## 이불



Lee Bul, 2015

1964, Yeongju, South Korea

Seoul

Materials and Process

“The moment I decided to reject accepted conventions and definitions I was free to question everything.”<sup>1</sup>

Mixed Media  
Installation  
Sculpture

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Lee Bul's childhood in South Korea was deeply affected by the military dictatorship of President **Park Chung Hee**, whose authoritarian regime targeted political dissidents, including Lee's parents. Her family was not able to settle in one place or work steadily, and her parents were in and out of prison. “You can say that all my life and work is founded on that experience,” said Lee.<sup>2</sup> She discovered art as a way to deal with these hardships: “I had this idea that to survive the oppressive censorship of ideology, artistic expression would be the only way out for me.”<sup>3</sup>

Lee received a BFA in sculpture from Hongik University, Seoul, in 1987. But she did not feel she had enough freedom to experiment. “At my university, I thought there would be stimulating arguments about art, but the reality was art schools in the 1980s were rather conforming to the system,” she said.<sup>4</sup> This led to early radical performance art and sculptural works that explore how power systems, technology, and postmodernist thinking have shaped history and humanity.

Lee's multimedia works examine the ways modern society pursues perfection but fails. She explores how technology is used to achieve utopia but often leads to dystopia. From sculptures of human bodies merging with robots to architectural constructions of a future world, her practice bounces between the beautiful and the grotesque, dreams of a future and ruins of the past, and real and imagined worlds. She is influenced by film,

literature, modern art and architecture, anime, manga, science fiction, and European and Korean political and cultural history.<sup>5</sup>

The sculptures *Against Oblivion* and *Drifting Ashen Flake Opaque* (both 2008) depict urban environments in states of collapse. Lee uses architecture as a way to track the changing ideals of a society, especially within the context of the dramatic developments in South Korea over the past few decades. “What interests me is how people in the past envisioned their utopian future. I am interested in how such utopian ideals have persisted or failed to persist,” she noted.<sup>6</sup> For these sculptures, Lee used an array of materials from wood and mirror to chrome plating and glass beads.

1 “Pushing the Boundaries of Korean Art: Lee Bul,” episode 16, *Brilliant Ideas*, Bloomberg, December 29, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Whyey13fKY8>.

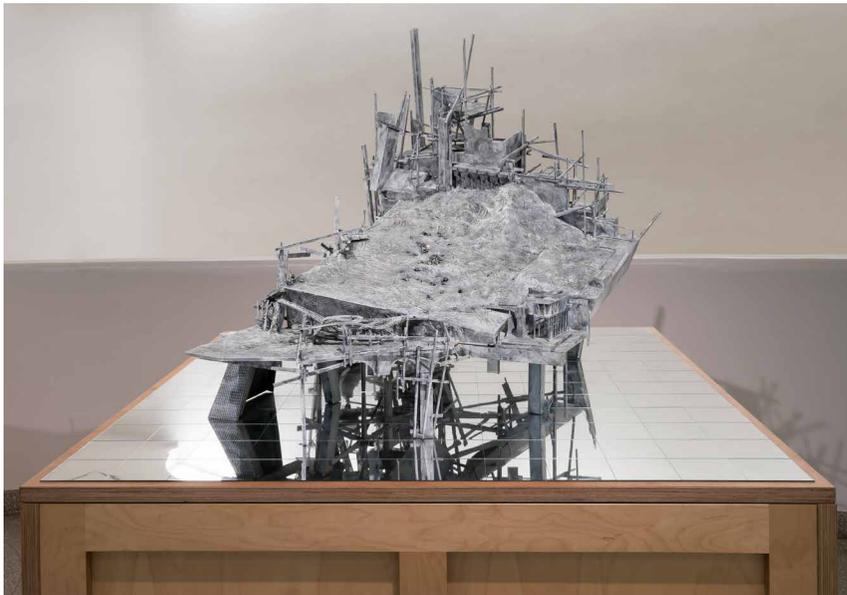
2 “Pushing the Boundaries of Korean Art.”

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Skye Sherwin, “Floating Cyborgs and a Mutant Octopus . . . the Grotesque, Gorgeous Art of Lee Bul,” *Guardian*, May 28, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/may/28/cyborgs-gorgeous-art-lee-bul-south-korean-artist-seoul>.

6 “Pushing the Boundaries of Korean Art.”



Lee Bul, *Against Oblivion*, 2008. Wood, acrylic mirror, polyurethane, acrylic paint, and chrome plating, 138.7 × 100 × 100 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2013.10



Lee Bul, *Drifting Ashen Flake Opaque*, 2008. Wood, acrylic mirror, polyurethane, paper, glass beads, and acrylic paint, 158.8 × 121.9 × 121.9 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2013.9

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculptures *Against Oblivion* and *Drifting Ashen Flake Opaque* (both 2008).

Ask students to describe these two sculptures. Record words that come up on the board. What are they reminded of when they look at these works?

Discuss the following “opposing” words in terms of these sculptures. How do they relate to words students have already brought up?

Utopia ————— Dystopia  
 Beautiful ————— Grotesque  
 Future ————— Past  
 Real ————— Imagined  
 Monuments ————— Ruins  
 Humans ————— Technology  
 Individual ————— Collective

→ Lee thinks architecture is a good way to track the changing utopian ideals of a society. “What interests me is how people in the past envisioned their utopian future. I am interested in how such utopian ideals have persisted or failed to persist,” she said.

Have students think about their own utopian ideals. How can you imagine them represented in architectural form?

→ Look back at Lee’s sculptures.

What utopian ideals do students think the buildings they depict could embody?

# Classroom Activities

## Word-Pair Sculptures

For this activity, return to the list of “opposing” words on the previous page. Ask students to pick one pair and make a sculpture that captures or addresses the tensions and oppositions between the words.

Students can experiment with some of the same materials Lee uses, including balsa wood, acrylic mirror panels, beads, paper, chains, screens, fabric, and paint.



Installation view, *Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, June 5–September 9, 2015

When students are finished, ask them to try to identify which words pairs go with which sculpture and explain why.

## Questioning Technology

Lee is interested in how modern society seeks progress but fails—and how technology is often part of this accelerated pursuit.

Ask students to think about ways they see our society striving for technological progress. Answers could include topics such as cryogenics, robotics, artificial intelligence, and smartphones. Now ask students to pick one subject and write an essay about it. How might their example improve society, or lead to utopia? How might it cause problems?

# Classroom Activities

## Science Fiction

To extend the last activity, ask students to write a science fiction short story or make a painting of a place in which their example of technological progress goes to an extreme.

Would they like to live in a world like this? How does this extreme version help them explore notions of utopia and dystopia? Or have students write a short story in which Lee’s sculptures are part of the setting. In what ways do students incorporate these works into their narratives?

## Utopian Architecture

Tell students that Lee thinks architecture is a good way to track the aspirations of a society because it embodies “all the idealistic visions of the time.”<sup>7</sup>

Ask them to discuss their own utopian ideals. What elements would they want to have in society (e.g., equal rights for all human beings or housing for all)? How could architecture manifest these goals? Challenge students to use paper and thin cardboard to create an architectural model that embodies one of their ideals.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- IKON Gallery, *Lee Bul*. <https://www.ikon-gallery.org/event/8091/>.
- Lehmann Maupin Gallery <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/lee-bul>.
- Mori Art Museum, *Lee Bul: From Me Belongs to You Only*. <https://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/leebul/introduction/index.html>.

### Videos

- Biennale of Sydney. "2016 Artist Interview Series: Lee Bul." May 20, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiALXRUv9Y>.
- Lehman Maupin Gallery. "Lee Bul: 20th Biennial of Sydney." 2016. <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/video/lee-bul>.
- Southbank Centre. "Beauty and Horror / Lee Bul." June 15, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS5di0wCD1I>.
- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 16, "Pushing the Boundaries of Korean Art: Lee Bul." December 29, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Whyeyl3fKY8>.

### Articles

- Hedges, Phoebe. "Lee Bul: Crashing at the Hayward Gallery." *London Magazine*, June 7, 2018. <https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/review-lee-bul-crashing-at-the-hayward-gallery/>.
- Revely-Calder, Cal. "The Monstrous Bodies of Lee Bul." *Apollo*, July 10, 2018. <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/the-monstrous-bodies-of-lee-bul/>.
- Sherwin, Skye. "Floating Cyborgs and a Mutant Octopus . . . the Grotesque, Gorgeous Art of Lee Bul." *Guardian*, May 28, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/may/28/cyborgs-gorgeous-art-lee-bul-south-korean-artist-seoul>.

# Teaching

---

## Nikki S. Lee

---

# Nikki S. LEE

(nik-key s. lee)

## 이승희



Nikki S. Lee

1970, Kye-Chang, South Korea

Seoul

**Community  
Identity**

**Photography  
Performance**

“The work I do always needs to involve others, and that’s mainly because of my views about my own identity. I realized I couldn’t understand who I am without the people around me. I believe that it is only through my relationships with others that I can see myself.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Nikki S. Lee grew up Lee Seung-Hee in the small village of Kye-Chang, South Korea, where she learned about foreign cultures through television, magazines, and music. As a child, Lee dreamed of being a movie actress. She developed an interest in filmmaking, but her parents encouraged her to pursue photography instead. Lee received a BFA from Chung-Ang University in Seoul in 1993. She moved to New York City in 1994 and changed her name based on a list of names a friend compiled from that month’s issue of *Vogue*. In New York, Lee studied fashion and commercial photography and worked as an assistant to fashion photographer David LaChapelle.

One of her earliest works is perhaps her most famous. In *Projects* (1997–2001), a series Lee started while she was completing her master’s degree at New York University, she transformed herself through clothing, makeup, gesture, and posture into an individual from various social communities and ethnic groups. The first project in the series was *The Drag Queen Project*, and after that she completed *The Punk Project*, and *The Young Japanese (East Village) Project*. In some cases, such as *The Seniors Project*, Lee worked with a professional makeup artist to transform her face and body, and in other cases, such as *The Skateboarders Project*, she had to learn new skills to adapt to the selected group. In making the series, Lee acted as part sociologist and part **performance artist**, with ties to other contemporary artists such

as photographer Cindy Sherman, who also explores the constructed nature of identity and representation by transforming herself into different personas.

With each new *Project*, Lee began by observing people, noting how they presented themselves and behaved. She then introduced herself as an artist and spent several weeks with each group. A friend or member of the group took photos with a simple snapshot camera to achieve a low-tech rather than professional look. Lee intentionally made these choices to raise questions about assimilation, cultural identity, and social behavior. She believes that individual personalities are fluid and that her explorations of other identities are extensions of herself. She noted, “Essentially life itself is a performance. When we change our clothes to alter our appearance, the real act is the transformation of our way of expression—the outward expression of our psyche.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Photographer Nikki S. Lee Can Turn Into Anyone,” The Creators Project, July 21, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol8xpJItPVI>.

<sup>2</sup> “Lee Can Turn Into Anyone.”

## View and Discuss



Nikki S. Lee, *The Punk Project* (6), 1997. Thermal dye transfer print, 76.8 × 102.2 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Marsha Lynn Gordon 2001.3

→ Look at photograph *The Punk Project* (6) (1997). For this series, Lee observed self-identifying communities then transformed herself into a member of it through dress, makeup, and behavior. She hung out with the group and had others take photos of her with them.

How would you describe the group in this photograph? What has she done in order to appear like a member of it?



Nikki S. Lee, *The Tourists Project* (9), 1997. Thermal dye transfer print, 40 × 59.7 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Danielle and David Ganek 2003.95

→ Look at photographs *The Tourists Project* (9) (1997) and *The Seniors Project* (14) (1999). Born in South Korea, Lee became interested in different groups of American people through magazines, television, and music. One critic noted, “Her work is also unmistakably informed by Asian notions of identity, where identity is not a static set of traits belonging to an individual, but something constantly changing and defined through relationships with other people.”<sup>3</sup>

→ These photographs were taken by a passerby or group member with an everyday camera rather than professional equipment. Snapshots are casual, quick pictures that often use automatic settings for flash, focus, shutter speeds, and other functions. They predate the iPhone camera.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



Nikki S. Lee, *The Seniors Project* (14), 1999. Thermal dye transfer print, 59.7 × 40 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Danielle and David Ganek 2003.97

What is your reaction to this quote? Do you agree with this idea of changing identities for yourself? Why or why not?

What do you notice about the elements in Lee’s photos? One critic said that Lee’s “snapshot aesthetic is partly what convinces us that she belongs—along with her uncanny ability to strike the right pose.”<sup>4</sup> What do you think of this idea?

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# Classroom Activities

## Debate Identity

For *Projects*, it was important for Lee to have all of the photographs taken by a member of the group that she chose to spend time with for each work. She said, "In Western culture, identity is always 'me,' in Eastern culture, the identity is 'we.' Identity is awareness of others."<sup>5</sup>

Challenge students to debate the benefits and pitfalls of identity constructed as an individual versus identity constructed as a collective. How do these two perspectives differ? How might the two perspectives overlap?

## Curating Snapshot Photography

With a snapshot or smartphone picture, one click produces the image. These types of photographs are often taken quickly, without much preplanning or setup. Lee's images look casual and not like those made by a commercial or fashion photographer. She does choose, however, when they will be taken and curates the final images—deciding which ones become final artworks.

For this project, assign students to take at least thirty snapshots with an instant camera or a phone camera. When they are finished, ask students to discuss the elements of these pictures, including cropping, composition, focus, and lighting. Then challenge them to select three photographs to show to the class. Why did they choose those images?

<sup>5</sup> William Hamilton, "Shopping With Nikki S. Lee: Dressing the Part Is Her Art," *New York Times*, December 2, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/02/style/shopping-with-nikki-s-lee-dressing-the-part-is-her-art.html>.

# Classroom Activities

## Trying on a New Identity

Trying on a new identity is more than just putting on a costume. Try thinking of yourself in a different way. If you are naturally introverted, try taking on the role of an extrovert. If you love jazz, take a day to be an enthusiastic country music fan. If you have a favorite sports team, try rooting for their opponent. In short, see what it feels like to temporarily change an aspect of your own identity.

Write a short essay about how it felt to take on and truly embrace this change, even if only for a short time.

## Taking a Selfie

The proliferation of selfies indicates that we may all want to be able to "try on" a new image and imagine how we would feel as that part of ourselves. The act of taking a selfie allows us to play, to have fun, and even poke fun at ourselves. They can enable a brief adventure into a different aspect of self.

Imagine yourself with a trait that you aspire to have. Take a selfie of what it would not only look like but also feel like to acquire that trait. Examine that photo and consider how it projects this new and expanded sense of self.

## Performance Art

Performance art involves an action or series of actions orchestrated by an artist with an established beginning and end. Due to the time-based nature of performance art, works are ephemeral, but documentation of them live on through photos, audio recordings, videos, or artifacts.

As a class, research different examples of performance art and compare the documentation of each piece.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- International Center of Photography. <https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/nikki-s-lee?all/all/all/all/0>.
- Museum of Contemporary Photography. <http://www.mocp.org/detail.php?type=related&kv=6722&t=objects>.

### Videos

- The Creators Project. "Photographer Nikki S. Lee Can Turn Into Anyone." July 21, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol8xpJltPVI>.

### Books

- Godfrey, Mark. "Nikki S. Lee." *Frieze Magazine*, May 5, 2000. <https://frieze.com/article/nikki-s-lee>.
- Hamilton, William. "Shopping With: Nikki S. Lee; Dressing the Part Is Her Art." *New York Times*, December 2, 2001. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/02/style/shopping-with-nikki-s-lee-dressing-the-part-is-her-art.html>.
- O'Sullivan, Michael. "Nikki S. Lee: New Guises, New Gazes." *Washington Post*, July 16, 2004. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51828-2004Jul15.html>.

# Teaching

---

## Lee Ufan

# LEE Ufan

(lee oo-fan)

## 이우환



Lee Ufan

1936, Kyongnam, Korea

Kamakura, Japan, & Paris

**Materials and Process**  
**Nature**

**Sculpture**  
**Installation**

“I restrain myself and limit the methods and motifs of my art making as much as possible. Also, I simplify my materials and ideas and use them repeatedly with physical action. Something different always appears.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Lee Ufan was born in 1936 in a rural village in Korea, then under Japanese colonial rule. At age twenty he moved to Japan, where he studied philosophy and aesthetics. This training has been crucial to his artistic practice and the many critical and philosophical writings he has produced.

Lee rose to prominence in the late 1960s as the leading theorist and practitioner of **Mono-ha**, a Japanese art movement related to international **Post-Minimalism** that grew out of the antiauthoritarian and anticolonialist tumult of the 1960s. By juxtaposing natural and industrial materials, he developed a radical sculptural language revolving around the notion of encounter—seeing the bare existence of what is actually before us and focusing on “the world as it is.”<sup>2</sup>

Lee’s series *Relatum* (1968– ) features elements often arranged on the floor in site-specific **installations**. The series title, Latin for “relation,” is a philosophical term denoting objects or events between which a relationship exists. The sculptures consist of dispersed compositions of stones together with industrial materials, such as steel plates, rubber sheets, and glass panes, placed in a space to interact with the viewer. The steel plate—hard, heavy, solid—is made to build things in present times; the stone, in its natural, as-is state, “belongs to an unknown world” beyond the self and outside modernity, evoking “the other” or “externality.”<sup>3</sup> This radical approach—treating the work not as an object but as a network of relationships—

emphasizes the artistic experience as an encounter, an occasion that unfolds around the viewer in a particular time and space.

*Relatum—dialogue* (2002/10) includes two steel sheets laid on top of one another, slightly askew, and flanked by two large rocks. With such works, Lee does not seek to create permanent monuments but rather spaces for engagement through minimal human intervention and disciplined acts of arrangement.

Consisting of two steel rods and two small stones, *Relatum—dissonance* (2009/11) illustrates how, through a subtle shift in positioning (the stone and rod touch in one instance and lie separate in another), the dynamic of the composition changes. In one situation, there is mutual interdependence and in the other, a detached coexistence. For Lee, restraint in producing art—even letting what has been created disappear—shifts the status of his works from that of material objects to fleeting experiences.

<sup>1</sup> “Lee Ufan’s Works on Paper and Artistic Practice,” audio guide for *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011, <https://soundcloud.com/guggenheimmuseum/lee-ufans-works-on-paper-and-artistic-practice?in=guggenheimmuseum/sets/lee-ufan-marking-infinity>.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Munroe, “Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity,” Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2011, <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/lee-ufan-marking-infinity>.

<sup>3</sup> Munroe, “Lee Ufan.”



Lee Ufan, *Relatum—dialogue*, 2002/10. Steel and stones, two plates, 3 × 120 × 100 cm each; two stones, approximately 50 cm high each. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Lisson Gallery, in honor of Lee Ufan 2011.4



Lee Ufan, *Relatum—dissonance*, 2009/11. Steel and stones, two poles, 300 × 4 cm each; two stones, approximately 25 cm and 30 cm high. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, in honor of Lee Ufan 2011.5

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculptures *Relatum—dialogue* (2002/10), and *Relatum—dissonance* (2009/11).

Ask each student to write five words in response to these two works. Combine the word lists, noting which words are listed numerous times.

→ These two works have different subtitles: *dialogue* and *dissonance*. Look up the definitions of “dialogue” and “dissonance.” Discuss how the meaning of these words are conveyed in these works.

If you were to provide different subtitles for these works, what would they be?

→ These works are made from only a few elements: steel poles, steel plates, and stones. According to Lee, “The point of the work is to bring together nature and industrial society. . . . The viewer is to experience the tension between the rock and the steel plate.”<sup>4</sup>

Do you think the artist has been successful in making this point? Explain your response.

→ Look at the installation views of the artworks.

What do you notice about the placement or arrangement of the steel poles, steel plates, and stones in relation to the Guggenheim Museum?

<sup>4</sup> Ted Loos, “Squeezing Essence from a Stone,” *New York Times*, June 22, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/arts/design/lee-ufan-squeezes-essence-from-a-stone.html>.

## Classroom Activities

### Descriptive Writing

Each time Lee shows works in the *Relatum* series, he visits local quarries and selects rocks from that particular place. Lee said, “The rocks in Tuscany, France, or England are all different and a reflection of that place.”<sup>5</sup> He aims to capture local resonance wherever he is, even if the differences among the stones in question aren’t appreciable to the untrained eye.

Be aware of the rocks you encounter in your everyday life. Have each student select one no bigger than the palm of their hand and write a detailed description of it on an index card. Once the descriptions are complete, collect the cards and place the rocks together on a table. How many of the rocks can be identified by reading the written descriptions?



Lee Ufan installing work for the exhibition *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2011.

### Scale Models

Works in the *Relatum* series focus on the relationships between the objects, the space in which they are shown, and the viewer.<sup>6</sup>

To experiment with the possibilities of the different configurations that can be created from a finite number of elements, create scale models that will allow you to easily manipulate the elements. A convenient scale is one half inch equals one foot ( $\frac{1}{2}":1'$ ).

The “gallery” can be created from a cardboard box with an open top, painted white or covered with white paper. The sides of the box should be at least four inches high. Also create a “viewer”—a scale model of a person or multiple people. Create a model for a *Relatum* work using both natural and machine-made materials.

Once complete, discuss the configurations you experimented with and how you decided on your final presentation. Note: The Guggenheim Museum uses a process similar to this to decide on the installation of their exhibitions.

<sup>5</sup> Loos, “Squeezing Essence from a Stone.”  
<sup>6</sup> To see more works in the *Relatum* series, visit <http://www.studioleefan.org/main/>.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Lee's Website. <http://www.studioleeufan.org/>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity*. <http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/leeufan/overview/>. See also <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/lee-ufan-marking-infinity>.

### Articles

- Loos, Ted. "Squeezing Essence From a Stone." *New York Times*, June 26, 2011. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/arts/design/lee-ufan-squeezes-essence-from-a-stone.html>

### Books

- Munroe, Alexandra, ed. *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2011.

# Teaching

---

# Vincent Leong

---

ARTIST

# Vincent LEONG

(vin-cent lee-ong)



Vincent Leong, 2013

BORN

1979, Kuala Lumpur

LIVES &amp; WORKS

Kuala Lumpur

THEMES

**History**  
**Identity**

“I proudly call myself Malaysian, but my government still calls me a Chinese Malaysian. That is problematic. . . . I think this is important, to build a national unity, a national identity.”<sup>1</sup>

ART MEDIUM

**Photography**

ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Vincent Leong’s work comments on Malaysia’s complicated history and diverse population. Over the centuries, original Malays have lived with immigrants from the Arabian peninsula, India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and Europe, mixing their cultures into a collaged national identity. While outsiders may perceive a tolerant, multicultural society, ethnic and religious loyalties among Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians remain strong, and there are undeniable tensions that still challenge the idea of a unified national identity. The ethnic and cultural differences within Malaysia have created both cultural richness and conflict, and remain a sensitive topic that threatens to surface in political, religious, and economic conflicts.

While at first glance, *Keeping Up with the Abdullahs 1* and *2* appear to be from an earlier era, they were actually produced in 2012 and digitally “aged” to suggest a historical origin. The shots mimic turn-of-the-twentieth-century photographic portraits of the Malay royal family that typically included traditional dress and conspicuous parasols. Leong, however, substitutes Chinese and Indian families for Malay royalty. To those born in Malaysia, the symbolism here is clear, and the artist’s statement on otherness and discrimination resonates.

Leong has said, “time and time again, we are told that we live in a multi-cultural nation, although it is mainly governed by and focused on only three groups of people: The Malays, Chinese and Indians (and sometimes ‘Others’). We learn that it is always

important to know ‘who you are’ and ‘who they are.’ I would like to believe that it wasn’t always like that.”<sup>2</sup>

Leong emphasizes the Malaysian predicament by titling his work *Keeping Up with the Abdullahs*, a playful twist on the well-known idiom “keeping up with the Joneses.” To further the political and cultural critique, a small plaque on each of the photographs’ frames pegs the figures depicted as conclusively “Malaysian” in the languages of Cantonese and Tamil, the caption written in an all-embracing Arabic script Jawi.

- 1 Vincent Leong, interview by Asia Society, Hong Kong, published January 29, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdjDr3gWvIo>.
- 2 RogueArt, Vincent Leong: *Hari Ini Dalam Sejarah (This Day in History)*, exh. cat. (Singapore: Silverlens, 2014), p. 2. Available online: [https://issuu.com/silverlensgalleries/docs/20141208\\_vl\\_catalogue](https://issuu.com/silverlensgalleries/docs/20141208_vl_catalogue).



Vincent Leong, *Keeping Up with the Abdullahs 1*, 2012. Chromogenic print and plaque in artist's frame, 83.2 × 120 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2012.151



Vincent Leong, *Keeping Up with the Abdullahs 2*, 2012. Chromogenic print and plaque in artist's frame, 83.2 × 108.3 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2012.152

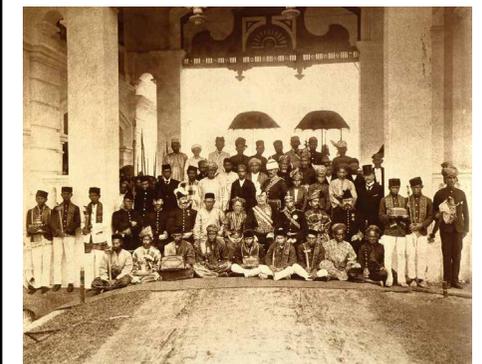
## View and Discuss

→ Look carefully at Leong's *Keeping Up with the Abdullahs 1* and *2* (both 2012). Although he created these works using digital technology, what characteristics suggest that they might be from a significantly earlier period?

How has the artist achieved the feel of an aged, historical photograph? What clues has he included to that let us know that these are actually contemporary?

Do these photographs remind you of any you have seen? What is familiar about them? Where have you seen similar images?

→ Leong's work references a historical photograph of the First **Durbar** (conference of rulers) held in Malaya (now Malaysia) in 1897. The council was assembled under the British colonial regime and was comprised of Malay rulers and governors whose main responsibility was to elect the king.



First Durbar, Malaya, July 14–17, 1897

Compare Leong's work with the vintage photo. What similarities do you see? What differences? How does seeing this historical photograph change your reading of Leong's work?

# Classroom Activities

## Social Class and Status

The Malays are predominantly Muslim, and the name Abdullah (meaning “God’s servant”) is one of the most common names in the Islamic world. Leong uses the name Abdullah to signify social, economic, and political aspiration. Even before the reality television show *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, the phrase “keeping up with the Joneses” referred to using one’s neighbors’ material possessions as a benchmark for social status. To fail to “keep up with the Joneses” is to reveal one’s socioeconomic or cultural inadequacy. While this phrase was coined years ago, it’s probably more relevant now than ever.

What are contemporary pressures your students feel they must “keep up” with?

## A Class Portrait

Create a collaborative class portrait. Research online the way such photos are typically composed. Brainstorm a list of attributes that you would like to project, then devise a strategy aimed at producing that result.

- What type of clothing will be worn?
- What poses and relationships will be depicted?
- What setting and lighting will you choose?
- What angle or point of view best reflects your collective vision?
- What additional props will you add?

Once the photo is taken, it can be further altered and customized using image-editing software or websites such as Instagram.

# Classroom Activities

## Favored Citizens

In the 1970s the Malaysian government implemented the New Economic Policy, which initiated “affirmative action” rules favoring **bumiputera**, a controversial Malaysian term to describe Malays and other indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia. In an effort to reduce interethnic tensions and economic disparity among the country’s native people, these rules assist those deemed bumiputera in education, land ownership, and public-sector employment. The word “bumiputera” (or “bumiputra”) comes from Sanskrit and can be translated literally as “son of the land” or “son of the soil.” These policies have been met with resentment by Chinese and Indian Malaysian minorities, who are excluded.

More recently many Malaysians argue that these rules are unfair and racist, and many are calling for the repeal of these laws. In your classroom, debate this issue as it applies to both Malaysia and to affirmative action rulings in the United States.

Is favoring one group of citizens within a nation ever justified, and if so, under what circumstances?

<sup>1</sup> James Chin, “The Costs of Malay Supremacy,” *New York Times*, August 27, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/28/opinion/the-costs-of-malay-supremacy.html>.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Leong's Blog. <http://somethinginnothing.blogspot.com/>.

### Videos

- Asia Society, Hong Kong. "Interview: In Conversation with Vincent Leong." January 29, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdjDr3gWvlo>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Artist Video: Vincent Leong." November 7, 2013. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/artist-video>.

### Books

- RogueArt. *Vincent Leong: Hari Ini Dalam Sejarah (This Day in History)*. Exh. cat. Singapore: Silverlens, 2014.

# Teaching

---

# Kamin Lertchaiprasert

---

ARTIST

# Kamin LERTCHAIPRASERT

(ka-meen ler-chai-pra-ser)

## คามิน เลิศชัยประเสริฐ



Kamin Lertchaiprasert

BORN

1964, Lop Buri, Thailand

LIVES &amp; WORKS

Chiang Mai, Thailand

THEMES

Materials and Process

ART MEDIUMS

Sculpture  
Installation

"I consider my current practice 'life-specific.' This means I focus on searching for the meaning of life and trying to understand the truth of nature from my own experience by using art and culture as methods."<sup>1</sup>

## ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Kamin Lertchaiprasert was born in 1964 in Lop Buri, Thailand. He completed a BFA in printmaking at Silpakorn University, Bangkok, and earned the institution's Young Artist of the Year Award in 1987. He then moved to New York and from 1989 to 1992 and attended the Art Students League. During a visit to Bangkok in 1990, Lertchaiprasert entered a **Buddhist** monastery and became a monk. Thai Buddhism is closely connected to the Thai state and culture, and the short-term ordination of Thai men as monks is a common practice. He remains a committed Buddhist to this day. He returned to live in Bangkok in 1992 and moved in 1996 to Chiang Mai, a city in northern Thailand, where he cofounded with artist Rirkrit Tiravanija the Land Project (now the Land Foundation), two years later. This involved the conversion of rice fields in Thailand into a destination for site-specific art and architectural projects, creative residencies, and agricultural and artisanal workshops.

*Sitting (Money)* (2004–06) consists of 366 papier-mâché figures seated in meditative poses, their number representing the days in a year. Inspired by his own collection of **Lao Buddhist** wood carvings, these folk-style figures reference craft, contemplation, and the historical nature of production. Composed of decommissioned Bank of Thailand banknotes previously slated for recycling, *Sitting (Money)* points to the constant volatility of the Thai economy. Lertchaiprasert's unique figures, while depicted as busy with everyday activities,

convey a meditative posture that references the Buddha. They embody a tension between Buddhist ideals and the realities of ordinary daily experience, appearing materially, spiritually, and physically connected. By transforming currency, the artist further calls attention to contradictions of Thai Buddhism in contemporary society, in which spiritual well-being and material wealth are often conflated.

But making the familiar figure of the Buddha from cash—the lifeblood of a nation's economy—is not a simple indictment of contemporary materialism. Rather, it is a meditative response to the realities of the artist's environment. This work is not only linked to Thai life and religious beliefs but also suggests universal human truths and experiences. Conveying attentiveness to material and spiritual change, as well as an understanding impermanence as a human condition, the work transcends the limits of religion and nationhood.

Lertchaiprasert emphasizes the necessity of perseverance and practice in art and life. Through his work, he seeks to achieve a greater understanding of oneself, nature, and the world as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> Kamin Lertchaiprasert, "Q & A," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, <https://www.guggenheim.org/map-artist/kamin-lertchaiprasert>.



Kamin Lertchaiprasert, *Sitting (Money)*, 2004–06. Papier mâché, 366 parts, 30 × 20 × 10 cm each; overall dimensions variable. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2013.2. Installation view, *Buddhas Spur-Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Asien*, Kunstmuseum Bochum, Germany, August 28–November 13, 2011



01–01–04  
Give as much as you have, get as least as you need.



07–02–04  
The more you talk, the more you are at risk. Dhamma needs practicing.



12–03–04  
Greed destroys the goal.



24–04–04  
The bird has feathers. The man has friends.



14–05–04  
Attempting to make art, it becomes artless.



08–10–04  
Happiness is all around.

Kamin Lertchaiprasert, *Sitting (Money)*, 2004–06 (details with dates and inscriptions noted)

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the **installation** *Sitting (Money)* (2004–06). This work presents 366 papier-mâché sculptures of seated figures. Although they bear a resemblance to Buddhist figures, they are not religious but rather show people doing everyday things.

→ When considering this work, try a visual-thinking strategy called *See/Think/Wonder* that was developed by Project Zero at Harvard University. Responses can be written down and recorded so that a group chart of observations, interpretations, and questions are listed for all to see. Many free *See/Think/Wonder* graphic organizers are available online.

→ The inspiration for this work came from the artist's collection of Laotian wood carvings of the seated Buddha figure.



Laotian wood carving of Amitabha Buddha, ca. 19th century

How are Lertchaiprasert's sculptures similar to such objects? How are they different?

To appreciate this work, look at images of both the room-sized installation and details of individual figures.

First ask students what they see (observations) and record their responses. Next ask them what they think (interpretation) might be going on in the work. Encourage them to back up their interpretations with evidence cited in the work. Lastly ask the class what they wonder (remaining questions) based on what they have observed and interpreted.<sup>2</sup>

→ These papier-mâché sculptures were created from Thai currency that was due to be recycled.



Thai baht, the currency of Thailand

How does knowing that they were created from money contribute to their meaning?

<sup>2</sup> "See Think Wonder," Visible Thinking, accessed June 27, 2019, [http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking\\_html\\_files/03\\_ThinkingRoutines/03c\\_Core\\_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder\\_Routine.html](http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03c_Core_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder_Routine.html).

## Classroom Activities

### Papier-Mâché

Papier-Mâché is a compound made from paper or paper pulp mixed with glue and other materials. It is moldable when moist and becomes strong and hard when dry. There are various recipes for papier-mâché depending on how it will be used. For the classroom, one of the most attractive attributes of this medium is that it is both inexpensive and versatile.

Lertchaiprasert created 366 figures for his installation, each under a foot tall. From January 1 until December 31, 2004, Lertchaiprasert produced a single piece each day. They resemble the way Buddha is frequently depicted, but their poses were modeled after those of the artist and people he knows.

Create sculptures and arrange them into a group installation. Decide on a single moral theme and have each student make a papier-mâché sculpture to contribute to the collective work.

Lertchaiprasert wrote statements directly on the figures, including "A house will be a good place to live if the members are united," and "Family is an important part of success." What statement would you add to your work?

### Seriality

This is not the first time that Lertchaiprasert produced a group of works in a series. Between 1993 and 1995, he created *Problem-Wisdom*, which yielded another installation of small papier-mâché objects. For that project, Lertchaiprasert selected a newspaper article each day for a year that focused a societal problem. He cut the article out of the newspaper and used the remainders of the page to sculpt an object that expressed that issue. The following year, he returned to the objects and wrote a solution on the surface of each—he called this "the wisdom."<sup>3</sup>

Propose an art-making project that will take place over a year and require daily attention. It can be as simple as drawing, taking photographs, or writing a line of poetry but must continue for 365 days. At the end of the year, share the body of work you have created and discuss the process and what you learned.

<sup>3</sup> Soo-Min Shim, "Problem-Wisdom: Thai Art in the 1990s at Queensland Gallery of Modern Art," *Artling*, June 7, 2018, <https://theartling.com/en/artzine/2018/6/7/problem-wisdom-thai-art-in-the-1990s-at-queensland-gallery-of-modern-art/>.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Lertchaiprasert's Website. <http://www.rama9art.org/kamin/>.
- Thailand 4.0 Cyber Museum, *Sitting (Money) 2004–2006*. [http://www.rama9art.org/artisan/2006/december/sitting\\_money/concept1.html](http://www.rama9art.org/artisan/2006/december/sitting_money/concept1.html).

### Videos

- Asiola. "Universal Connections Documentary 2017 by Pete Phornprapha and Kamin Lertchaiprasert." October 30, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FpFAvjwK0>.
- Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. "Kamin Lertchaiprasert: What Is Art?" November 7, 2013. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/what-is-art>.

### Articles

- Rothstein, Scott. "Kamin Lertchaiprasert—*Sitting (Money) 2004–2006*." *Art Found Out* (blog), January 20, 2009. <http://artfoundout.blogspot.com/2009/01/kamin-lertchaiprasert-sitting-money.html>.

# Teaching

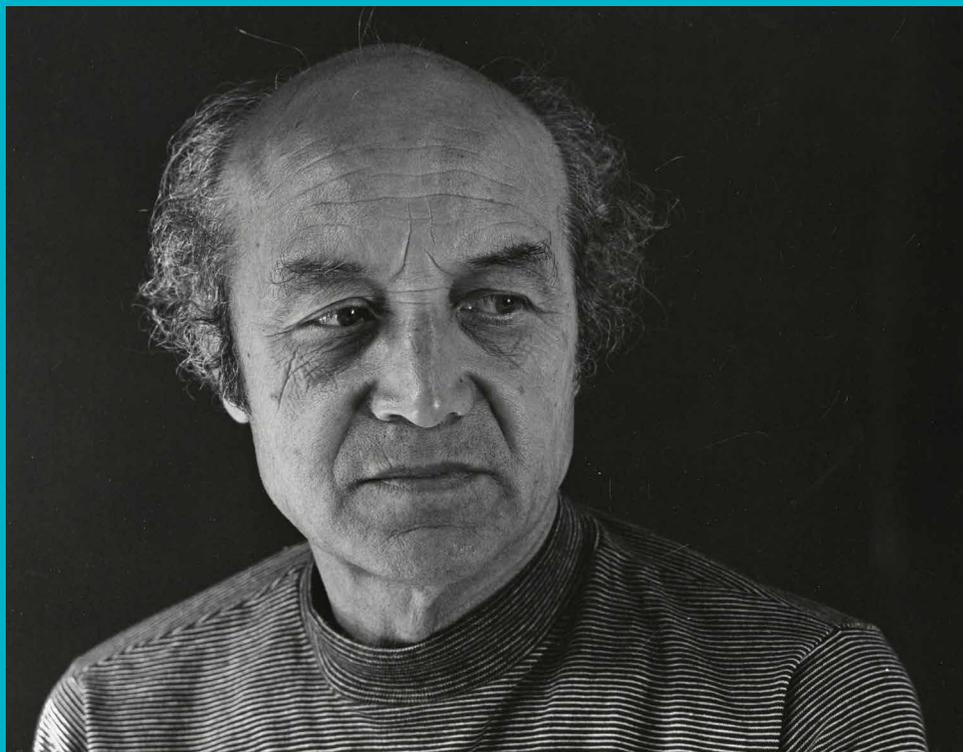
---

# Isamu Noguchi

# Isamu NOGUCHI

(ee-sa-mu no-gu-chi)

## 野口 勇



Isamu Noguchi, ca. 1975

BORN 1904, Los Angeles

DIED 1988, New York

**Materials and Process**  
**Nature**

“Everything was sculpture. Any material, any idea without hindrance born into space, I considered sculpture.”<sup>1</sup>

**Sculpture**

### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Isamu Noguchi was born in Los Angeles in 1904 to an American mother and a Japanese father, who was a celebrated poet. He lived in Japan until the age of thirteen, when he moved back to the United States. Noguchi’s biracial and bicultural upbringing made him feel as though he were living in between the East and West; the balancing of this tension became the subject of his art.

In 1926 Noguchi saw an exhibition in New York of the work of the modernist sculptor Constantin Brancusi and from 1927 to 1929 worked in Brancusi’s studio in Paris, where he began to create his own language of simplified abstract forms. Throughout the 1930s he traveled extensively through Asia, where he studied ink painting with the great painter and calligrapher Qi Baishi in China. Around this time, he also explored Surrealism and set up a studio in New York’s Greenwich Village.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the subsequent backlash against Japanese Americans had a dramatic effect on Noguchi, motivating him to become a political activist. Exempt from **internment** because of his New York residence, Noguchi volunteered his services at a camp in Arizona to improve conditions there by teaching ceramics and Japanese painting. But he left discouraged.<sup>2</sup> The political divide between the two countries he called home would trouble him throughout his life.

Noguchi returned to Japan in the immediate postwar period and kept a studio near a granite quarry on the island of Shikoku until his death in 1988. Fascinated by traditional Japanese architecture, gardens, and crafts, he was drawn to the Japanese reverence for nature and, especially, for stones. He was also inspired by **calligraphy**, the way black strokes activated the empty white space of the paper, and by the **Zen Buddhist** concept of void (*mu*), which sees substance and nothingness as interdependent states of reality.

Noguchi’s sculpture *The Cry* (1959) evokes calligraphic brushstrokes in space and is made from balsa, among the lightest of woods. Its title brings to mind a human cry and invites us to see the work as an attenuated, abstracted human figure, with its mouth open and hand raised. This work reveals Noguchi’s abiding anguish as a witness to the many horrors of the twentieth century while also demonstrating his attempt to transcend them by making simple, often symbolic forms.

<sup>1</sup> Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor’s World* (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2004), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> “Isamu Noguchi: Biography,” Noguchi Museum, accessed July 31, 2019, <https://www.noguchi.org/noguchi/biography>.



Isamu Noguchi, *The Cry*, 1959. Balsa wood on steel base, 221 × 85.1 × 47.6 cm, including base. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 66.1812

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculpture *The Cry* (1959).

Before showing this work, measure a vertical line eighty-seven inches tall on a classroom wall (or have students do the measuring) to get an accurate sense of its scale.

Ask students, “What do you notice about this work?”

→ Noguchi titled this piece *The Cry*. How does the sculpture connect to its title?

Is this the title you would give the work? If not, what would you call it?

→ *The Cry* is an abstracted representation of a human scream, an attempt to give the expression of an emotion physical form.

Think about how you might show a scream, and then make some sketches of your ideas. Is your conception similar to or different from Noguchi's?

## View and Discuss

→ Noguchi was interested in nature and, particularly in this sculpture, the wind.

→ Noguchi produced this work in wood in 1959. A few years later, it was cast in bronze. This edition of six works is in museums and private collections around the world.

How might this have affected his creation of this piece?



Isamu Noguchi, *The Cry*, 1959–62. Bronze, 221 x 85.1 x 47.6 cm, including base. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands

How does the change of material and setting change the impact of the sculpture?

## Classroom Activities

### Balsa-Wood Sculptures

Although Noguchi frequently worked with marble, granite, and other dense and heavy materials, for this sculpture, he chose balsa, one of the lightest woods, so that he could create a nearly weightless solid sculpture. Balsa is a very user-friendly wood to work with. It is light, soft, and easy to carve, with no need for heavy-duty power saws or sanders.

With the adult supervision and proper instruction, students aged eleven or twelve can experience this medium. There are many websites and instructional videos available on the Internet aimed introducing young people to carving.

### Natural Forces

In addition to conveying an emotion, Noguchi's work is responsive to the wind. He selected a very light material, balsa wood, and connected the parts of the sculpture so that they would move with the breeze.

Consider how you might create a work that responds to the wind or another natural force, such as gravity, magnetism, friction, erosion, decay, etc. Sketch your idea and then share it with others.

### Activism

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, not only brought the United States into World War II but also set off a wave of fear and mistrust toward Japanese Americans, many of whom were placed in internment camps presumably for reasons of national security. As an act of solidarity with other Japanese Americans, Noguchi volunteered to live in a camp in Arizona, where he stayed for seven months. In the Arizona desert, amid thousands of Americans deprived of their freedoms, Noguchi, a child of an American mother and Japanese father, wrote, "To be hybrid anticipates the future. This is America, the nation of all nationalities." He added, "For us to fall into the Fascist line of race bigotry is to defeat our unique personality and strength."<sup>3</sup>

Discuss this quote. Do you think a similar injustice could ever happen again in the United States? What would you write in defense of Americans deprived of their freedoms?

### Evoke Emotion

*The Cry* abstractly evokes a human scream.

Choose another emotive action and represent it in any three-dimensional medium. When finished, see if your classmates can guess which emotion and action you tried to depict.

<sup>3</sup> Isamu Noguchi, quoted in Amy Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi's Modernism: Negotiating Race, Labor, and Nation, 1930–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 215.

## Resources

### Websites

- Noguchi Museum. <https://www.noguchi.org/>.
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Isamu Noguchi, Archaic/Modern*. <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/noguchi>.

### Videos

- HiHo Kids. "Kids Meet a Survivor of the Japanese-American Internment." November 29, 2018. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_e1s2kwSPwU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e1s2kwSPwU).
- Indermühle, Aly. "Noguchi: The Life of a Sculptor." April 27, 2015. <https://vimeo.com/126101868>.

### Articles

- Gharavi, Maryam Monalisa. "Citizen Noguchi." *Art in America*, December 1, 2017. <https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazines/citizen-noguchi/>.
- Urist, Jacoba. "To Bear Witness to Japanese Internment, One Artist Self-Deported Himself to the WWII Camps." *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 19, 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/bear-witness-japanese-internment-one-artist-self-deported-himself-wwii-camps-180961853/>

### Books

- Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1995.
- Hale, Christy. *The East-West House: Noguchi's Childhood in Japan*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2009.

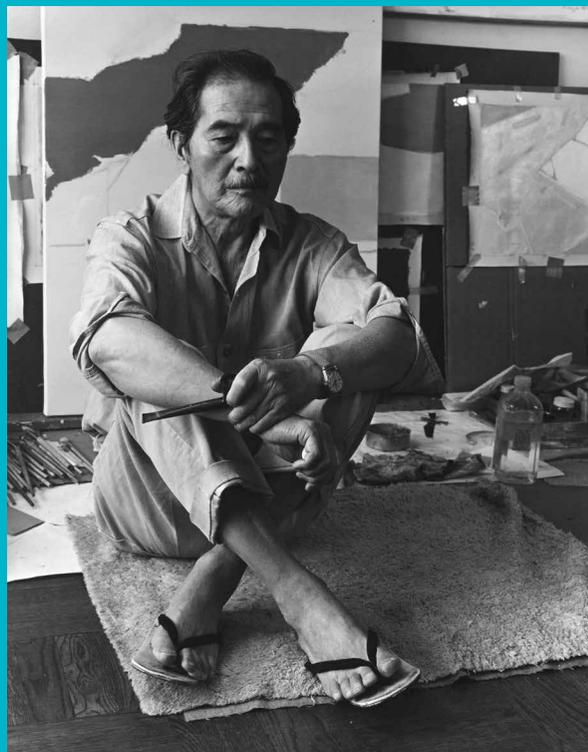
# Teaching

# Kenzo Okada

# Kenzo OKADA

(ken-zo o-ka-da)

## 岡田 謙三



Kenzo Okada, 1981. Portrait by Arthur Mones. Gelatin silver print, 35.6 x 27.2 cm. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Gift of the artist, 1997

1902, Yokohama, Japan

1982, Tokyo

**Nature**  
**Materials and Process**

“My trouble was that when I was in Japan I was always thinking about Western things. That trouble is gone because I am here in the West.”<sup>1</sup>

**Painting**

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Born in Yokohama, Japan, in 1902 to an affluent family, Kenzo Okada wanted to be a painter from a young age. In 1922 he enrolled at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, but just two years later, his fascination with Western art movements led him to Paris, where he briefly studied with the Japanese artist Fужita Tsuguharu (Léonard Fужita). Following his return to Japan in 1927, Okada spent the next twenty years building a successful career as a painter and a professor.

After World War II, there was a revival of avant-garde art in Japan, but Okada became frustrated with the infighting in the art community and moved New York in 1950. He quickly became part of the group of artists known as the **Abstract Expressionists**. Inspired by the radical shifts in the idea of what painting could be—a gestural, nonrepresentational form on canvas rather than a neat depiction of reality—Okada abandoned figurative painting and began to create abstractions. During this time of experimentation, he forged a unique identity by evoking Japanese aesthetic sensibilities while working loosely within the Abstract Expressionist style. He drew on eclectic Japanese sources, including the classical aesthetic of **yūgen**, which describes the beauty of transient forms like clouds of the flight of geese, and called his style “yūgenism.” Many of his paintings evoke the natural world, either by suggestive forms of mountains, mists, and the moon, or by the titles. His dry, matte, flat surfaces and his application of

thin oil paint—diluted to look watery like sumi ink—reference the torn-paper collage techniques that served as ground for the art and **calligraphy** of the Heian period (794–1185 CE)

Okada shared the Abstract Expressionists’ interest in tapping into the subconscious. While in New York, he often recalled his old home in Japan and drew from memory. He painted without preconceived ideas, often developing images by first composing with natural materials, such as sticks and stones. Okada was highly experimental in his techniques, which included scraping away paint and splattering paint onto a dry surface.

Created soon after his arrival in the United States, *Solstice* (1954) is among Okada’s early forays into abstraction. While it is not completely representational, it evokes nature through the sunlike imagery in a patch of black sky and through its palette of earth tones. The title, referring to either the longest or shortest day of the year, suggests themes such as seasons, change, and ephemerality.

<sup>1</sup> Kenzo Okada, interview with Forrest Selvig, November 22, 1968. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-kenzo-okada-12022#transc>.



Kenzo Okada, *Solstice*, March 1954. Oil on canvas, 145.5 × 179.4 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 54.1407

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the painting *Solstice* (1954).

What do you notice about the colors, shapes, and composition of the work?

Thinking of the painting, complete this sentence in several ways:

This looks like \_\_\_\_\_.

→ The title of this work is *Solstice*.

What do you think of when you think of solstices? How do you think the title relates to this painting?

→ Okada was trained in depicting landscapes and people exactly as they looked, but for this work, he experimented with techniques of abstraction.

Where do you see realism and where do you see abstraction? Why might an artist choose to use abstraction?

→ Okada tried many different methods of applying paint. Sometimes he splattered it on. Other times he scraped it away. Look back at the painting with this in mind.

What techniques do you think Okada used? How do they relate to the subject?

# Classroom Activities

## Compose with Natural Materials

Okada often developed his compositions by placing natural materials, such as sticks and stones, on a canvas.

For this activity, challenge students to create compositions using only natural materials they have collected. They do not have to glue these down but rather can create several different arrangements by moving the materials. Next, challenge them to choose a composition to translate into a drawing or painting. What did they have to change in order to create a two-dimensional translation of their composition?

## Abstract Expressionism

When he moved to the United States in 1950, Okada became friends with Abstract Expressionist painters such as Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. His work differed from theirs, however, in that it retained some imagery from the natural world.

Challenge each student to research one Abstract Expressionist artist. They should investigate how their chosen artist developed their style. What materials and techniques did they use? What did they make as a younger artist, and how did their work change over time? What was their philosophy behind their approach? How does their work compare to Okada's?

# Classroom Activities

## Tap into the Subconscious Mind

The Abstract Expressionists were influenced by the gestural expressionism of sumi-e, or Japanese ink painting, and the Zen Buddhist approach of "letting the mind go," a way of forgoing conscious control in favor of direct action and even chance. By adopting such attitudes, they believed they were able to make work that arose from the subconscious levels of their brain. Okada also explored this approach.

For this activity, offer students some methods for tapping into their subconscious while painting and then ask them to create some of their own. For instance, students could splatter paint rather than applying it to the canvas with a paintbrush. How does this act introduce chance and free up conscious control? What other methods could they use for applying paint to canvas that would introduce chance? Allow them to experiment and then share as a group. What did it feel like to not be in total control of their work? Do they believe these techniques tapped into their subconscious? Why or why not?

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Phillips Collection. [https://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american\\_art/bios/okada-bio.htm](https://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american_art/bios/okada-bio.htm). See also [https://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american\\_art/artwork/Okada-Footsteps.htm](https://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american_art/artwork/Okada-Footsteps.htm).

### Articles

- Okada, Kenzo. Interview by Forrest Selvig, November 22, 1968. Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art. [https://www.si.edu/object/AAADCD\\_oh\\_216545](https://www.si.edu/object/AAADCD_oh_216545).
- Waggoner, Walter H. "Kenzo Okada, Painter, Dead; Noted for Tender Modernism." *New York Times*, July 28, 1982. <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/28/obituaries/kenzo-okada-painter-dead-noted-for-tender-modernism.html>.

# Teaching

---

## Nam June Paik

# Nam June PAIK

(nam june peck)

## 백남준



Nam June Paik, 1976

BORN

1932, Seoul

DIED

2006, Miami

THEMES

**Materials and Process**

ART MEDIUMS

**Installation  
Film and Video**

"It's all your life in one. Our life is half natural and half technological. Half-and-half is good. You cannot deny that high-tech is progress. We need it for jobs. Yet if you make only high-tech, you make war. So we must have strong human element to keep modesty and natural life."<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

No figure had a greater influence in revealing the artistic potential lurking behind television's flickering facade than Nam June Paik. Commonly hailed as the "father of video art," Paik reshaped perceptions of the electronic image through a prodigious output of manipulated TV sets, live performances, global television broadcasts, single-channel videos, and video installations. Paik's complex media-based art grew out of his early interests in electronics, as well as his foundations in music and performance. His career took him from Asia through Europe to the United States.

Paik was born in 1932 in Seoul, during the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Paik and his family fled to Hong Kong, and later, Japan, where he settled to study. Following his graduation from the University of Tokyo in 1956, Paik moved to Germany and studied musical composition.

Arriving in New York in the mid-1960s, he joined a new generation of artists that were altering the ways in which one interacts with the moving image. Paik became a prominent member of the avant-garde **Fluxus** movement, whose aims included the transformation of everyday actions into art. Quickly emerging at the forefront of this international group, Paik also sought to involve the viewer as an active participant in his performances and **installations**, often introducing surprising, unfamiliar elements.

*TV Garden* (1974), one of Paik's seminal installations, illustrates his profound grasp of the capacity of video technology and demonstrates the new aesthetic discourse that he helped to create. To enter the piece is to experience an uncanny fusion of the natural and the technological. Hidden amid undergrowth of living plants are video monitors of various sizes. All are playing the artist's 1973 collaboration with the engineer John J. Godfrey, *Global Groove*, a pulsating pastiche of performers, pop iconography, traditional Korean dancers and other cultural references, and even Paik himself.

*TV Garden* set a new standard for immersive, site-specific video installations with its invitation to visitors to recalibrate their senses in this lush technological jungle of color and sound. Restaged for the artist's solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in 2000, it is a powerful reflection on how technology and media have enabled new possibilities for global communication, radically reshaping our understanding and experience of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Nam June Paik, quoted in Douglas C. McGill, "Art People," *New York Times*, October 3, 1986, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/03/arts/art-people.html>.



Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974 (2000 version). Color video, with sound, 29 min., with minimum of 30 television sets, and live plants, dimensions variable. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and Executive Committee Members: Ann Ames, Edythe Broad, Henry Buhl, Elaine Turner Cooper, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Harry David, Gail May Engelberg, Ronnie Heyman, Dakis Joannou, Cindy Johnson, Barbara Lane, Linda Macklowe, Peter Norton, Willem Peppeler, Denise Rich, Simonetta Seragnoli, David Teiger, Ginny Williams, and Elliot K. Wolk; and through prior gift of The Bohem Foundation 2001.6

## View and Discuss

→ Look at images of the installation *TV Garden* (1974 [2000 version]). It is difficult to comprehend an artist's life work by looking at any one piece. This may be especially true of Paik, who explored so many artistic paths.

To get a better understanding of his work, you may want to view these websites with your students:

- Artsy: [artsy.net/artist/nam-june-paik](https://www.artsy.net/artist/nam-june-paik)
- Gagosian: [gagosian.com/artists/nam-june-paik/](https://www.gagosian.com/artists/nam-june-paik/)
- Smithsonian American Art Museum: [americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/paik](https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/paik)

How does *TV Garden* fit into the arc of Paik's work?

→ *TV Garden* was shown at the Guggenheim as part of the retrospective exhibition *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* in 2000. Each of the screens played Paik's 1973 collaboration with John J. Godfrey, *Global Groove*—a whirlwind, multimedia piece and one of the most influential works of video art. Woven into *Global Groove* are films and videotapes by other artists, interviews and voiceovers, pop music, appropriated commercials, and broadcast breaks.

View a segment of the work at [medienkunstnetz.de/works/global-grove/video/1/](https://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/global-grove/video/1/). Discuss student responses, keeping in mind that this video was made nearly four decades ago.

→ In 1989 Paik said, "Skin has become inadequate in interfacing with reality. Technology has become the body's new membrane of existence."<sup>2</sup>

Discuss this quote. In what ways do you agree or disagree with his statement?

<sup>2</sup> Nam June Paik, quoted in Eva Respini, *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today*, exh. cat. (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 78.

# Classroom Activities

## The Power of Video Art

Paik envisioned that video was a medium that could support a new art form. He is therefore frequently referred to as the “father of video art.” In 1969, before the Internet, cell phones, and cable TV, Paik wrote:

“I want to shape the TV screen canvas as precisely as Leonardo, as freely as Picasso, as colorfully as Renoir, as profoundly as Mondrian, as violently as Pollock and as lyrically as Jasper Johns.”<sup>3</sup>

He also claimed:

“As collage technique replaced oil paint, the cathode ray tube will replace the canvas. Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors, and semiconductors as they work today with brushes, violins and junk. There are 4,000,000 dots per second on one television screen, just think of the variety of images you can get. It’s so cool. It’s like going to the moon.”<sup>4</sup>

Read and discuss these quotes. Do you feel that Paik’s vision has been realized or not? Support your responses with examples.

<sup>3</sup> Nam June Paik, “Versatile Color TV Synthesizer” (1969), quoted in Edith Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill, 1998), p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Nam June Paik, “Manifesto” (1965), quoted in Jasia Reichardt, *The Computer in Art* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971), p. 95.

# Classroom Activities

## Create and Recycle

In 2009 the Smithsonian acquired Paik’s archives from his estate. It filled seven tractor trailers. During his lifetime, Paik traveled the world collecting things, including televisions, video projectors, radios, record players, cameras, toys, games, and folk sculptures.<sup>5</sup> His interests were vast, and each object held the potential of finding its way into a future work.<sup>6</sup> Today, laptops, mobile phones, and other discarded electronic goods are the world’s fastest growing waste problem, and the amount of technological junk continues to rise, with only about 20 percent being recycled.<sup>7</sup>



Nam June Paik's studio

Collaboratively collect discarded electronics and other materials to use in new works of art. Once works are completed, be sure that students learn how to responsibly dispose of any unwanted or unused components.

<sup>5</sup> The Nam June Paik Archive, Smithsonian American Art Museum, <https://americanart.si.edu/research/paik>.

<sup>6</sup> Jon Anderson, “Nam June Paik: Preserving the Human Televisions,” *Art in America*, February 5, 2013, <https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/nam-june-paik-smithsonian/>.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Knapton, “Discarded Phones, Computers and Electronics behind World’s Fastest Growing Waste Problem,” *Telegraph*, December 13, 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/12/13/discarded-phones-computers-electronics-behind-worlds-fastest/>.

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Gagosian. <https://gagosian.com/artists/nam-june-paik/>.
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Nam June Paik: Global Visionary*. <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/paik>.

### Videos

- Asia Society. "Introducing *Nam June Paik: Becoming Robot*." August 28, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmkYjGVVRFa>.
- Munroe, Alexandra. "Nam June Paik: The Father of Video Art." August 20, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIK1mfLmYto>.

### Audio

- Reed, Josephine. "Nam June Paik: The Artist Who Invented Video Art." National Endowment for the Arts, 2013. <https://www.arts.gov/photos/nam-june-paik-artist-who-invented-video-art>.

### Articles

- Hanhardt, John. "Rediscovering Paik: A Chat with Smithsonian Curator John G. Hanhardt." Interview by John Anderson. Smithsonian American Art Museum, March 31, 2011. <https://americanart.si.edu/research/paik/resources/hanhardt>.

### Books

- Hanhardt, John. *Nam June Paik*. Exh. cat. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982.

# Teaching

---

# Sopheap Pich

# Sopheap PICH

(sop-he-yup pih-ch)

សុភាព ពេជ្រ



Sopheap Pich

1971, Battambang, Cambodia

Phnom Penh

**History**  
**Materials and Process**  
**Nature**

**Sculpture**

"I find that making sculptures, while utilizing various ways and techniques that are different from drawing, are in many ways—meditative. . . . Slicing rattan and bamboo strands with blades and tying wires for making sculptures is very meditative as well. You can also see that in the end, my work tends to have a kind of complete look to them, a kind of clarity in the forms; and this also requires a kind of meditation to arrive at."<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Sopheap Pich was born in 1971 in the agricultural town of Battambang, Cambodia. In 1979, when the Vietnamese invasion led to the ousting of the brutal communist regime known as the **Khmer Rouge**, he fled with his family to Thailand, spending four years in refugee camps before migrating to the United States. Pich remembers traveling vast distances on foot and witnessing the devastation of war—injured people, ravaged landscapes, abandoned artillery, and ruined buildings.

Pich went on to study painting in the United States, earning a BFA in 1995 from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and an MFA in 1999 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2002 memories of his childhood, as well as a desire to reconnect with his previous life and culture, drew him back to Cambodia. It was there that he turned his attention to sculpture. In 2005 Pich gave up painting altogether in favor of making three-dimensional objects using indigenous materials and weaving techniques.

In *Morning Glory* (2011), the common morning glory plant is rendered at a monumental scale. Some gardeners consider it a weed or a nuisance and generally regard it as unexceptional. Also known as water spinach or swamp cabbage, however, the plant is served as a green vegetable and is especially popular in East and Southeast Asian cuisines. During the Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodians valued it as a source of nourishment at a time when millions were threatened by starvation.

In his work, Pich work synthesizes the contemporary artistic methods he studied in the United States with aspects of his current life in Cambodia. He treats rattan and bamboo, materials used in Khmer crafts such as basket weaving and making fish traps, like lines to make drawings in space. By repurposing these basic components of everyday experiences in Cambodia, he instills them with renewed life.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Sopheap Pich, quoted in Naima Morelli, "The Importance of Craft: Sopheap Pich at the Venice Biennale 2017," CoBo, June 22, 2017, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/the-importance-of-craft-sopheap-pich-at-venice-biennale-2017/>.
- 2 See June Yap, "Sopheap Pich: *Morning Glory*," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, accessed July 31, 2019, [guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/artwork/31325](https://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/artwork/31325).



Sopheap Pich, *Morning Glory*, 2011. Rattan, bamboo, wire, plywood, and steel, 188 × 261.6 × 533.4 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2013.3

## View and Discuss

Before students look at *Morning Glory* (2011), have them brainstorm a list of qualities that are usually associated with sculpture. After compiling the list, show *Morning Glory*. How many of the words on the list can be applied to Pich's work? Now make a list of words that describe Pich's work. Compare and contrast the two lists.

→ Pich titled his sculpture *Morning Glory*. What does this work remind you of? Look at some photos of the common plant to which the title refers or, if possible, examine the plant in person.

How does Pich's work resemble its subject?



Morning glory flower

→ View a slide show about Pich's materials and process on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website: [metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/sopheap-pich](https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/sopheap-pich). In the slide show, Pich and his studio assistants bring one of his sculptures outside, placing it in the Cambodian landscape.

Where do you think would be the perfect place to install *Morning Glory*? Why?

→ Educated in the United States, where he studied theories of and approaches to contemporary art, Pich also wanted his work to connect to his Cambodian childhood and native culture.

How does *Morning Glory* synthesize these two influences? The morning glory flower is significant to Pich because it was a source of sustenance for his people during a very difficult time. If you were to choose a form, manufactured or natural, that has meaning to you, what would it be and why?

# Classroom Activities

## Weaving

Basket weaving has been one of the most widely practiced crafts in human history. Using carbon dating, scientists have found baskets that were made as long ago as ten to twelve thousand years.



Sopheap Pich working in his studio, Phnom Penh, 2009

Pich adapts this traditional craft to the production of enormous sculptures, but you can get a basic understanding of the weaving process yourself by trying some smaller, simpler projects. Paper weaving, building simple looms, and creating small baskets can provide insight into this ancient but still relevant global practice.

## Sopheap Pich's Art Assignment

In 2015, as part of a Public Broadcasting System (PBS) series *The Art Assignment*, Pich was invited to suggest an art assignment.

View the video at [youtube.com/watch?v=-eszUEdj-Hs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eszUEdj-Hs). Then see some of the submissions that were received in response: [youtube.com/watch?v=f55wHe-PfiE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f55wHe-PfiE).

# Classroom Activities

## The Khmer Rouge

For much of his childhood in Cambodia, Pich lived under the brutal Khmer Rouge, which ruled from 1975 to 1979. The regime murdered hundreds of thousands of their perceived political opponents. Ultimately, the Cambodian genocide led to the deaths of 1.5 to 3 million people, around 25 percent of Cambodia's population, from famine, disease, forced labor, executions, and purges.<sup>3</sup> The Khmer Rouge targeted groups that they believed were enemies of the state and murdered many artists and intellectuals—even individuals who happened to display stereotypical signs of learning, such as wearing glasses.

*Enemies of the People* is a documentary project by a Cambodian journalist who sought to investigate the genocide in the "killing fields." Much of the film is in Cambodian with English subtitles, and many scenes are quite intense. PBS has lesson plans and teacher resources at [pbs.org/frontlineworld/educators/history\\_cambodia.html](https://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/educators/history_cambodia.html) to guide learning and discussion about the Khmer Rouge and their brutal regime.

## Discuss Genocide

The organization Teaching Tolerance encourages educators to talk with their students about genocide and offers lessons that discuss its structure, analyze international responses, and provide students with the opportunity to read or listen to the testimony of survivors—in the hope that they will learn about this difficult subject and acquire the tools necessary to take an active role in preventing it.

Their website includes suggested lesson plans: [tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/tolerance-and-genocide](https://www.teachingtolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/tolerance-and-genocide).

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. "Khmer Rouge," last updated July 30, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmer\\_Rouge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmer_Rouge).

## Resources

### Websites

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Cambodian Rattan: The Sculpture of Sopheap Pich*. <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/sopheap-pich>.
- Asia Motion, *Sopheap Pich: Sculptor*. <https://www.asiamotion.net/photo-stories/stephane-janin/sopheap-pich-sculptor>.

### Videos

- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 42, "Sopheap Pich's Bamboo and Rattan Explorations." December 8, 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrUCuA\\_oAH8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrUCuA_oAH8).
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Cambodia Rattan: The Sculpture of Sopheap Pich." February 20, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byvonzo4POU>.
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Sunday at the Met: *Cambodian Rattan* Discussion." April 17, 2013. <https://www.metmuseum.org/metmedia/video/collections/asian/cambodian-rattan-discussion>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Sopheap Pich on Rattan, Sculpture, and Abstraction." April 2, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/sopheap-pich-on-rattan-sculpture-and-abstraction>.

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Sopheap Pich on *Morning Glory* as Food and Artwork." March 4, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/sopheap-pich-on-morning-glory-as-food-and-artwork>.

### Articles

- Dover, Caitlin. "Artist Sopheap Pich and the Making of *Morning Glory*." *Guggenheim UBS MAP* (blog). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, July 2, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/map/artist-sopheap-pich-and-the-making-of-morning-glory>.

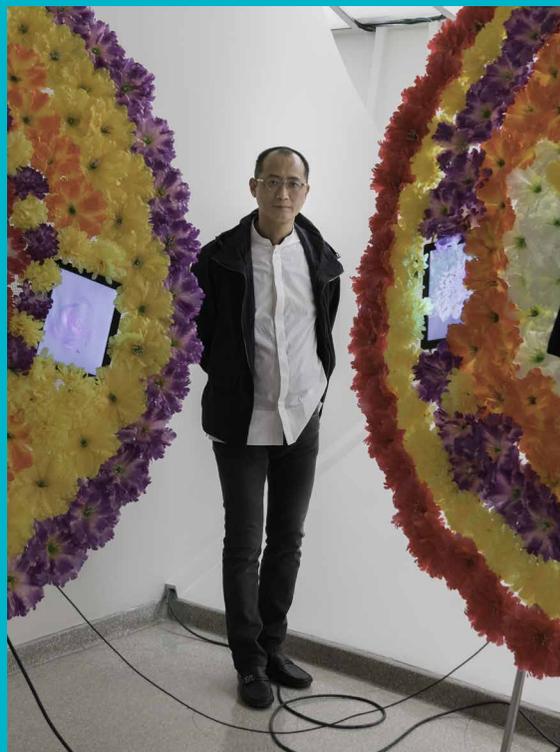
# Teaching

## Qiu Zhijie

# QIU Zhijie

(cho dsi-jeh)

## 邱志杰



Qiu Zhijie

1969, Zhangzhou, China

Beijing & Hangzhou

**History**  
**Materials and Process**  
**Narrative**  
**Place**

“All of us have a map in our heads of everything. For example, Hong Kong: if all of us were to commit to paper our personal maps of Hong Kong, [they] would all look as different as snowflakes.”<sup>1</sup>

**Painting**  
**Work on Paper**

Having practiced Chinese **calligraphy** since childhood, Qiu Zhijie has used this traditional art form as an important resource and subject in his practice, from his earliest work to this day.<sup>2</sup> Born in 1969 in Zhangzhou in China’s Fujian Province, Qiu is a leading figure in **Conceptual art** and new media. He studied in the eastern city of Hangzhou before moving to Beijing in 1994 to pursue a career as a contemporary artist. There, Qiu quickly established himself as an influential force in the contemporary art scene as he also took on the role of a curator, arranging groundbreaking underground exhibitions with other artists.

Qiu is known for his experimental multimedia practice, which encompasses painting, calligraphy, photography, performance, installation, and video. For Qiu, maps are a way to create order out of chaos—sometimes logically and, in other instances, playfully. His creations are less about the physical geography of a space than the relationships of historical, social, and cultural events. Over a period of months, Qiu researches a topic carefully, positioning concepts in relation to one another using sketches and mind-mapping software. Elements of traditional maps, such as roads, tunnels, railways, rivers, and peaks, also appear in his work, representing the connections between different ideas.

A virtuoso calligrapher, ink painter, and landscape cartographer, Qiu was commissioned to create a map for the Guggenheim Museum’s

exhibition *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World* (2017–18). The six-panel, ink-on-paper map charts specific Chinese and global political events, ideological currents, and contemporary movements structured around a giant river. In the mountainous peaks and valleys above the river, Qiu charts modern Chinese history: “The **Cultural Revolution**” and “Mao’s Speech at Yan’an Symposium on Literature and Art”; south of the river, Qiu labels world affairs: “Whirlpool of the Fake News” and “The Ocean Currents of Populism.”

Mapmaking is one of the fundamental ways humans have imagined the world. Through maps, information is made visible and understandable. Qiu uses the histories and techniques of mapmaking, together with an ancient Chinese tradition of charting imaginary places, to create a conceptual territory that represents events and ideas spanning the end of the **Cold War** in 1989 to the **Beijing Olympics** in 2008. Embedded in Qiu’s map are references to several of the historic artworks included in the exhibition, weaving these works into a global narrative of modern China.

<sup>1</sup> “Mapping the World: Hong Kong’s Spring Workshop Hosts Qiu Zhijie,” *Art Radar*, September 8, 2013, <http://artadarjournal.com/2013/08/09/mapping-the-world-hong-kongs-spring-workshop-hosts-qiu-zhijie/>.

<sup>2</sup> See Alexandra Munroe, ed., *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World*, exh. cat. (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2017), p. 108.

## View and Discuss



Qiu Zhijie, *Map of the Theater of the World*, 2017. Ink on paper, mounted on silk, five panels, 240 × 720 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Gift of the artist with additional funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2017.48

→ Look at the artwork *Map of the Theater of the World* (2017).

Compare Qiu's work to other maps you are familiar with. How is this work similar to or different from maps you have used?

→ The subject of this work is the very exhibition it appeared in, *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World*.

What names and events that Qiu included do you recognize? Which ones are unfamiliar?

## View and Discuss

→ With a history spanning more than six millennia, Chinese calligraphy is a revered art form in China. Qiu studied this ancient practice for many years but approaches it from a contemporary perspective. Instead of using calligraphy in a traditional way, he sees it as a time-based process, like a performance of putting marks on paper. In doing so, Qiu confronts a recurring question in contemporary Chinese art.

How does one successfully incorporate traditional Chinese culture into today's thought and practice? Discuss which aspects of his work seem traditional and which veer toward more contemporary thinking.

# Classroom Activities

## Mind Mapping I

Qiu takes concepts that are usually expressed in words and converts them into images that highlight hierarchies, dead ends, and ironies. This type of illustration of ideas is sometimes called a “mind map,” a visual tool that helps to structure information, gain fresh insights, and avoid linear thinking.

Have students select a topic they are interested in, such as a certain book, event, or idea. Then ask them to convey the things they know about this topic graphically to help others understand it. Using pencils and colored pencils, they should make these graphic visualizations on paper. When finished, share mind maps as a class. How successful were students in communicating their ideas?

## Mind Mapping II

Reread the opening quote of this section:

“All of us have a map in our heads of everything. For example, Hong Kong: if all of us were to commit to paper our personal maps of Hong Kong, [they] would all look as different as snowflakes.”

Choose a single topic—an upcoming event or holiday, healthy eating, or conserving energy, for instance.

Ask students to use paper, pencils, and colored pencils to map their ideas. When finished, share the mind maps. How do the results relate to Qiu’s statement? Discuss the similarities and differences among the different mind maps.

# Classroom Activities

## Collaborative Mind Mapping

In addition to making work on his own, Qiu has collaborated with other artists and offers workshops in which he invites participants to interact with maps that have moveable parts. These collaborative maps are intended to invent new ways of understanding the world.

Working in small groups, students should select a theme and create a map that depicts it graphically. This will require a discussion, planning, and revisions in preparation in order to turn preliminary drawings into a final draft.

## Chinese Calligraphy

In China children are taught from a young age to appreciate and respect calligraphy. Schools provide at least one calligraphy lesson per week, and each student has his or her own box of materials, including a soft-tipped brush and black ink.

The supplies needed to allow students to experiment with Chinese brush painting are widely available, and many instructive books and videos can provide students with a hands-on introduction to this enduring art form.

---

## Resources

---

### Articles

- Chung, Stephy. "Qiu Zhijie: 'I Plan to Map the World.'" *CNN.com*, October 9, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/guggenheim-qiu-zhijie/index.html>.
- Qiu Zhijie. "'The Biggest Taboo': An Interview with Qiu Zhijie." Interview by Ian Johnson. *New York Review of Books*, January 6, 2018. <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/01/06/the-biggest-taboo-an-interview-with-qiu-zhijie/>.

### Videos

- CNN. "Qiu Zhijie: China's Master Mapmaker." October 3, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/videos/arts/2017/10/03/exp-qiu-zhijie.cnn>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Artist Profile: Qiu Zhijie." November 27, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85fSM\\_tjVzQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85fSM_tjVzQ).

# Teaching

---

# Navin Rawanchaikul

---

# Navin RAWANCHAIKUL

(na-ween ra-wan-chai-kul)

## นาวิน ลาวัลย์ชัยกุล



Navin Rawanchaikul

1971, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Chiang Mai & Fukuoka, Japan

Community  
Identity  
History  
Narrative

“I don’t want to be anyone. I can be just Navin and Navin can be anywhere in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Painting

### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Born in 1971 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Navin Rawanchaikul seeks ways to connect art with the lives of everyday people. *Places of Rebirth* (2009) was inspired by the artist’s journey back to his family’s homeland, the region of India that became Pakistan in 1947. On his return to Thailand, the artist interviewed Indian immigrants of his parent’s generation who also now live in Chiang Mai, attempting to understand their move to Thailand and the process of making a new home there. Their stories illustrate how globalization has brought rapid and continuing change, often causing the idea of home itself to be detached from a fixed location. Rawanchaikul’s art often describes his own complicated childhood, using it as his motivation for creating art.

Painted in the style typical of Indian **Bollywood** movie posters, *Places of Rebirth* addresses the artist’s background as a son of the Hindu Punjabi **diaspora** and his cross-border, cross-cultural heritage. It blends depictions of Navin’s family and relatives, portrayals of people he encountered in Pakistan, and historical images from the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan. These portraits of a community’s passing through time and place are bridged through the imaginary journey of a Thai taxi (*tuk-tuk*) transporting Navin, his Japanese wife, and their daughter across the border of India and Pakistan. Spiced with a humorous critique of the fractious relationship between India and Pakistan, the narrative presents a rereading of

personal history while raising questions of contemporary nation and identity in South and Southeast Asia.

According to Rawanchaikul, his project is rooted in retelling stories from the past to his young daughter, Mari. “I think about what it is like for her to grow up as half an outsider in Japan. . . . Thinking about the future of my child also makes me think about how I grew up and who my ancestors are.”<sup>2</sup> Rawanchaikul finds himself repeating his parents’ advice to his daughter, who has been teased for her multiethnic identity: “Be yourself and respect your roots.”<sup>3</sup> Mari appears in her father’s paintings and sculptures, often imagined in places significant to their family history. *Places of Rebirth* presents an intimate look into familial relationships and a personal message to his daughter about her mixed heritage.

1 Shailaja Tripathi, “Looking for Navin,” *Hindu*, February 3, 2013, <https://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/art/looking-for-navin/article4375305.ece>.

2 Navin Rawanchaikul, *Places of Rebirth: Navin Rawanchaikul* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Navin Production, 2011), n.p.

3 Rawanchaikul, *Places of Rebirth*.



Navin Rawanchaikul, *Places of Rebirth*, 2009. Acrylic on canvas, triptych, 219.7 x 720.1 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2012.159

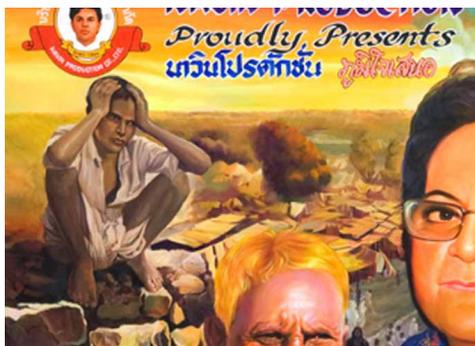
## View and Discuss

→ Before showing this work, measure a horizontal line 23 feet, 7½ inches wide on a classroom wall (or have students do the measuring) to get an accurate sense of its scale. Then look at the painting *Places of Rebirth* (2009).

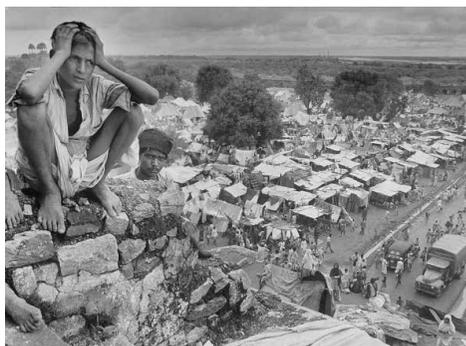
This complex painting is more than 23 feet long. Examine it carefully and make a list of all the things you notice.

→ This work includes images of Rawanchaikul and his family, as well as of people and places culled from news reports, historical records, and the artist's imagination. Find examples of each.

For instance, Rawanchaikul included a rendering of a 1947 photograph by American documentary photographer Margaret Bourke-White that depicts a young refugee contemplating his future.



Navin Rawanchaikul, *Places of Rebirth*, 2009 (detail)



Boy sitting on rock ledge above refugee camp in India, October 1947

→ In this work, Rawanchaikul took an approach reminiscent of a style of Bollywood movie posters.

Find examples of these posters online and list the attributes that *Places of Rebirth* shares with them. Are there also ways that this work differs from a Bollywood movie advertisement?

→ Rawanchaikul titled the work *Places of Rebirth*.

How might this relate to the mural he has created?

## Classroom Activities

### The Partition of India and Pakistan

Rawanchaikul has said that after hearing stories of the partition during his first trip to Pakistan, he understood why his family did not like to talk about that time. The 1947 partition of India and Pakistan sparked one of the largest population movements in recorded history; half a million people perished, and twelve million were made homeless.

Research this historic event. What circumstances led to the partition? What immediate effect did it have? What repercussions has it had over the decades? Report your findings.

### Family Interviews

As an artist who travels frequently, Rawanchaikul keeps in touch with his daughter, Mari, through long handwritten letters that chronicle his research and revelations about his family history. In one letter he wrote: "Let me tell you again what my mom taught [me] . . . she said, 'be yourself and respect your roots.'"<sup>4</sup>

Interview an older family member to find out more about your family's history. What did you learn that you did not previously know about your roots?

### A Family History Collage

*Places of Rebirth* presents an extended family tree culled from family photos, news events, and personally significant places. At the top center are the words "An Odyssey of Life."

What has featured in the odyssey, or the long and eventful journey, of your life? Create your own "Odyssey of Life" collage incorporating family photos both recent and older (be sure not to destroy original photos; photocopy or rephotograph them for use in your collage); images of places that are important to you and your relatives; news reports that relate to your family history; and writings, including names, slogans, and headlines. On an eleven-by-seventeen-inch sheet of illustration board, experiment with various possible arrangements of these materials. When you feel you have arrived at a composition that best expresses your family history, secure the images with glue. If possible, make a color photocopy of your collage to "knit" all the images together. This project can also be accomplished digitally by scanning images and using image-editing software.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

---

## Resources

---

### Videos

- Rawanchaikul, Navin. "A Tale of Two Cities." May 17, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWR3QW5QtRw&feature=plcp>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Navin Rawanchaikul: A Family Reunion with Grandma." December 11, 2013. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/navin-rawanchaikul-a-family-reunion-with-grandma>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "No Country at CCA Artist Talk: Navin Rawanchaikul." July 14, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/no-country-at-cca-artist-talk-navin-rawanchaikul>.

# Teaching

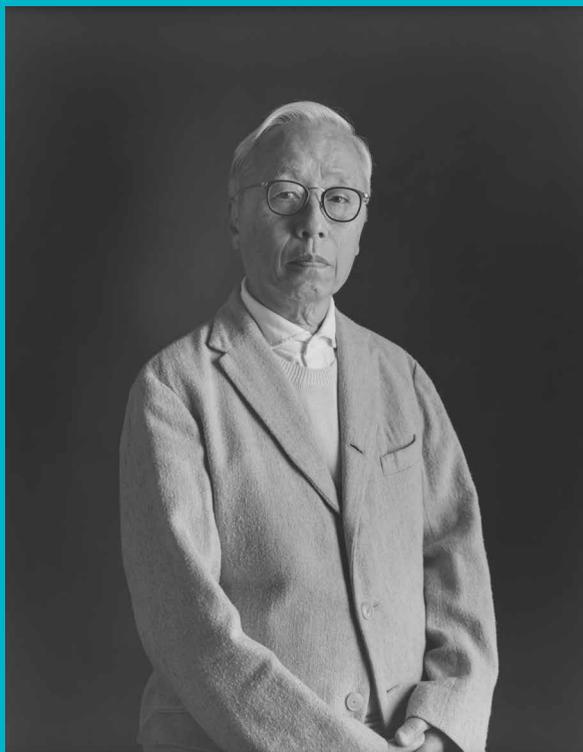
---

# Hiroshi Sugimoto

# Hiroshi SUGIMOTO

(hii-ro-shi su-gi-mo-to)

## 杉本博司



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Self-portrait*, 2019. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist

1948, Tokyo

New York & Tokyo

**History**  
**Materials and Process**

**Photography**  
**Conceptual Art**

“Photography is like a found object. A photographer never makes an actual subject; they just steal the image from the world. . . . Photography is a system of saving memories. It’s a time machine, in a way, to preserve the memory, to preserve time.”<sup>1</sup>

Hiroshi Sugimoto was born in 1948 in Tokyo. After finishing his college studies in Tokyo in 1970, he traveled west, through Russia and Poland, and later Western Europe. In 1974 he moved to New York, where his first visit to the American Museum of Natural History proved inspirational. Sugimoto was intrigued by the uncanny, realistic qualities juxtaposed with fabricated elements in the dioramas of animals, people, and ancient habitats. These provided the subject matter for his *Dioramas* series, which, along with *Seascapes* and *Theaters*, was conceived between 1976 and 1977 and has continued through the present. Using an eight-by-ten, large-format camera and extremely long exposures, Sugimoto has earned a reputation for his impressive technical ability. He is equally acclaimed for the **Conceptual** and philosophical ideas behind his work, which focuses on the idea that photography is a time machine, a way to preserve memories and histories.

For his *Portraits* (1999–), Sugimoto isolated wax figures from vignettes at Madame Tussauds in London, posed them in three-quarter-length view against a black background, and illuminated them to create haunting, larger-than-life portraits of the likenesses of historical figures, such as Henry VIII, Napoleon Bonaparte, Fidel Castro, Princess Diana, and Rembrandt van Rijn. Lush with detail, the photographs recall old master paintings, from which some of the wax figures were originally drawn. But Sugimoto’s choice to present them as

large-scale, black-and-white photographs transforms the images.

Drawing on the long-standing notion that black-and-white photography records truths, Sugimoto’s work reveals the illusion of this assumption. At first glance, his *Portraits* appear to be “evidence” of a photo shoot with these historical subjects, but of course they are not. Through layers of reproduction—from subject to painting to wax statue to photograph—these images point to the collapsing of time and how history is always retold. They also call into question our relationship to history and reality, encouraging us to contemplate how photography is employed as a tool for conveying narratives about the past. They also prompt us to think about what it means to “capture the moment.” As Sugimoto put it, “If this photograph now appears lifelike to you, you should reconsider what it means to be alive here and now.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Price, “When Art and History Combine Perfectly,” Huffpost, May 16, 2014, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-history-and-art-comb\\_b\\_5288959](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/when-history-and-art-comb_b_5288959).

<sup>2</sup> Hiroshi Sugimoto, “Portraits,” statement on the artist’s website, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/new-page-50/>.



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Rembrandt van Rijn*, 1999. Gelatin silver print, 148.6 × 118.7 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Commissioned by Deutsche Bank AG in consultation with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation for the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin 2005.103



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Diana, Princess of Wales*, 1999. Gelatin silver print, 148.6 × 118.9 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Commissioned by Deutsche Bank AG in consultation with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation for the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin 2005.94



Installation view, *Hiroshi Sugimoto: Portraits*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, March 15–May 14, 2000

## View and Discuss

→ Look at photograph *Rembrandt van Rijn* (1999).

Without telling them about the person pictured, ask students what they can deduce about him through this photograph. What details in the image support these conclusions?

→ For this work, Sugimoto photographed a wax figure of seventeenth-century Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn. In the *Portraits* series, many of the wax figures that Sugimoto photographed were based on paintings. This figure and the photo both reference *Self-Portrait with Two Circles* (ca. 1665–69).



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Two Circles*, ca. 1665–69. Oil on canvas, 114.3 × 94 cm. Kenwood House, London

Compare and contrast the two works created more than three hundred years apart. What do they have in common? How do they differ?

→ Look at photograph *Diana, Princess of Wales* (1999).

What are your first impressions of this photograph? If you were to visit the wax museum Madame Tussauds, your experience of this model of Princess Diana would be very different. This is not an image of a person but rather a photograph of a wax figure of a famous person. How does this information change your impressions? Can you now discern any telltale clues that suggest that this is not a photo of a living person but of an inanimate object? Why might the artist have made the choice to create portraits of wax figures versus living people?

# Classroom Activities

## Historical Figures

Sugimoto's *Portraits* include dozens of figures from the past three hundred years.

Who in history would you like to add to this roster? Provide a rationale for why this person would be an important addition to Sugimoto's series.

## Create a Self-Portrait

Sugimoto is aware that the wax figures he photographs are flattering depictions of famous people.

Create your own photographic self-portrait. Think carefully about what aspects of your persona you want to project. Then, through your choices about pose, lighting, and costume, create an image that highlights those traits. Share the photo with your classmates and see if their responses match your intent.

# Classroom Activities

## Historical Research

Look other examples of Sugimoto's *Portraits* on the Guggenheim's Collection Online: [guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/hiroshi-sugimoto/](https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/hiroshi-sugimoto/).

Select one of the photographs and, through research, find out more about the subject. How does this information provide additional insights about the person, their place in history, and the way they are depicted? Why do you think Sugimoto chose this person to include in his project?

## Photography and Reality

Sugimoto recalled, "When I first arrived in New York in 1974, I visited many of the city's tourist sites, one of which was the American Museum of Natural History. I made a curious discovery while looking at the exhibition of animal dioramas: the stuffed animals positioned before painted backdrops looked utterly fake, yet by taking a quick peek with one eye closed, all perspective vanished, and suddenly they looked very real. I had found a way to see the world as a camera does. However fake the subject, once photographed, it's as good as real."<sup>3</sup>

We have become accustomed to thinking that photography depicts reality, but Sugimoto takes inanimate subjects, such as dioramas and wax figures, and implies that they are alive. Construct a photograph that suggests a story or scene that in some way distorts reality.

<sup>1</sup> Hiroshi Sugimoto, "Diorama," on the artist's website, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/new-page-54>.

---

## Resources

---

### Books

- Sugimoto's Website. <https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/>.

### Videos

- Madame Tussauds, New York. "The Making of Beyonce's Wax Figure." August 29, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jijl3Ace6tl>.
- Strand Book Store. "*Hiroshi Sugimoto: Portraits*." May 9, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D73aqVJ9GrA>.

### Articles

- Shank, Ian. "The Grisly Origins of Madame Tussaud's Wax Empire." Artsy, March 8, 2018. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-grisly-origins-madame-tussauds-wax-empire>.

---

### Books

- Bashkoff, Tracy and Nancy Spector. *Sugimoto: Portraits*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000.

# Teaching

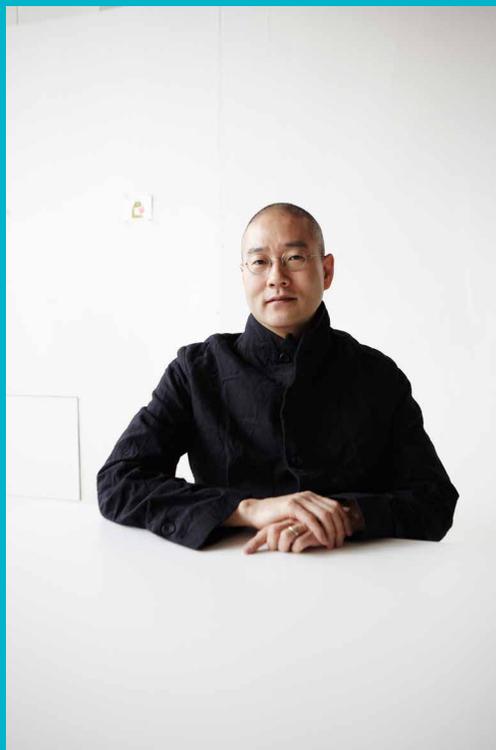
---

# Do Ho Suh

# Do Ho SUH

(do ho suh)

## 서도호



Do Ho Suh, 2013

1962, Seoul

New York, London, & Seoul

**Identity**  
**Materials and Process**  
**Place**

“From the shower, being naked, to outside, fully clothed, from my bed to studio, from yesterday to today, from Korea to the States then London: What is the continuity or the discontinuity of the space, both in time and space?”<sup>1</sup>

**Architecture and Design**  
**Installation**  
**Sculpture**

Born in 1962 in Seoul, Do Ho Suh believes he was destined to leave home. His father was a successful painter, and Suh said, “Somehow I felt that his fame overshadowed me, and I wanted to do my own thing.”<sup>2</sup> After earning degrees in painting in South Korea and completing mandatory military service, Suh moved in 1993 to the United States, where he pursued further studies in fine art.

This move to the United States was one of the most difficult and important experiences of his life and led him to explore the idea of displacement in his artwork. Upon moving to New York, he couldn’t sleep well. The city was too loud and frenetic. Suh thought back to the last place he’d slept soundly: his family’s home in South Korea. To bring that space to him, he made a replica of his parents’ traditional Korean house using transportable, translucent, celadon-green nylon. It was measured exactly to match his home and could be folded to fit in a suitcase so he could bring it with him wherever he went. In this way, he was able to make sense of his new life in another country and culture.

Since then, Suh has continued to create facsimiles of the homes in which he has lived in New York, Berlin, and London. It is essential that the likeness is precise down to every detail—from toilet seats and ovens to light switches and door knobs. The transportability of his houses are significant, since they remind the viewer that the home is not just a material construction but the histories and

cultures people carry with them, often beyond geographical boundaries.

*Closet-I* (2003) is a reproduction of Suh’s closet in his New York townhouse apartment. Unlike his large-scale home **installations**, it is made of white translucent fabric and cannot be entered. Within this replication of Suh’s intimate private space are duplicates of Suh’s shirts and jackets that hang like molted skin. Their ethereal presence reminds the viewer of the intangibility and transient nature of memories and experiences. Suh said about his work, “Everything starts from an idea of personal space.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, season 2, “Do Ho Suh in ‘Stories,’” September 9, 2013, <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/do-ho-suh-in-stories-segment/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, “Do Ho Suh in ‘Stories.’”

<sup>3</sup> Julie L. Belcove, “Artist Do Ho Suh Explores the Meaning of Home,” *Wall Street Journal Magazine*, November 6, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/artist-do-ho-suh-explores-the-meaning-of-home-1383784860>.



Do Ho Suh, *Closet-I*, 2003. Translucent nylon and stainless steel tubes, 256.5 × 150.5 × 64.1 cm, edition 1/3. Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2016.21

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculpture *Closet-I* (2003).

Make a list of adjectives to describe this artwork. What kinds of words did you use? How do they relate to each other?

→ Imagine what it would be like to walk around this piece.

Discuss what moods it evokes and why.

→ *Closet-I* is a replica of the artist Suh's closet in his New York apartment. Hanging in it are duplicates of Suh's jackets and shirts, except, unlike his closet, everything is made from a white translucent fabric. The work is made from material that can be folded and carried around with Suh in a suitcase.

Look back at the images with this information in mind. What do you think about the artwork now?

What do you think about when you think about closets? What associations do you have with them? Look back at the list of adjectives describing the piece. Compare them to the words you brought up when discussing closets. Does Suh's sculpture create different associations than your own closets?

→ Many of Suh's artworks deal with notions of personal space—from the personal spaces we make for ourselves in public to private spaces, such as our homes.

Think about personal space in your life. What kind of personal space do you make for yourself (e.g., space you give others when walking down the sidewalk)? What does personal space mean to you? What images or symbols do you associate with personal space? Compare these responses to Suh's sculpture.

# Classroom Activities

## Create a Replica

In terms of dimensions, *Closet-I* is an exact copy of Suh's closet in New York. For another artwork, Suh created an exact copy of his parents' home in South Korea. Both artworks are made with translucent fabric, which is light and easily portable.



Do Ho Suh, *Closet-I*, 2003 (detail)

Ask students to think about how Suh's choice of material changes the original object or space. How would the sculptures be different if they were made with another material, such as steel or rubber? For this project, encourage students to make a replica of an object that is significant to them out of another material. Materials could include tin foil, clay, or fabric. As a class, compare the original objects to their replicas. How does the object change when constructed out of the different material?

## Home

When Suh moved to the United States, he missed his home in South Korea.

Ask students to begin this activity by writing about their homes. What do they think of when they think of home? What matters most? What do they long for? What images come to mind?

Suh said: "I want to carry my house, my home, with me all the time like a snail. . . . I just didn't want to sit down and cry for home. I just wanted to more actively deal with the issues of longing."<sup>4</sup>

Ask students to discuss this quote. Would they like to be able to carry their home with them and why? What could they create for themselves to carry with them to deal with longing for home? Encourage students to make either a drawing or a small object to respond to this question. Share the results. What did they choose to depict and why?

<sup>4</sup> *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, "Do Ho Suh in 'Stories.'"

# Classroom Activities

## Measuring Architecture

When Suh makes his replicas, he follows the exact dimensions of the original.

Challenge students to choose one room or space and measure the exact dimensions. They should then make a two-dimensional drawing of the space based on these measurements. Ask them to discuss what was challenging about this assignment. Then have them imagine adding the dimension of height and other details, such as doorknobs, to create a three-dimensional installation. What challenges do they think Suh encountered when making his artwork? What do they think he learned about the spaces he re-created? What do they think the process was like for him?

## Resources

### Websites

- Lehmann Maupin Gallery. <https://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/do-ho-suh>.
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Do Ho Suh: Almost Home*. <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/suh>.

### Videos

- *Art 21 Extended Play*. "Do Ho Suh: 'Rubbing/Loving.'" December 9, 2016. <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/do-ho-suh-rubbing-loving-short/>.
- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 38, "The Evocative Fabric Stylings of Do Ho Suh." October 10, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbL4jsC0itw>.

### Articles

- Brownell, Blaine. "Do Ho Suh and 'Unmeasurable' Architecture." *Architect Magazine*, June 29, 2016, [https://www.architectmagazine.com/technology/do-ho-suh-deconstructs-the-home-rethinks-the-constructed-environment\\_o](https://www.architectmagazine.com/technology/do-ho-suh-deconstructs-the-home-rethinks-the-constructed-environment_o).

- Designboom. "Do Ho Suh: *Home within Home* at Leeum Samsung Museum of Art." April 4, 2012. <https://www.designboom.com/art/do-ho-suh-home-within-home-at-leeum-samsung-museum-of-art/>.
- Suh, Do Ho. "Do-Ho Suh in Conversation," interview by Annie Dickie. Ocula, November 16, 2013. <https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/do-ho-suh/>.

### Books

- Koo, Joanne Bonhee and Rosemary Suh. *Home within Home: Do Ho Suh*. Exh. cat. Seoul: Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, 2012.

# Teaching

# Sun Xun

# SUN Xun

(sun shun)

孙逊



Sun Xun

1980, Fuxin, China

Beijing

History  
Narrative  
Symbols

“We are used to creating a boundary between the present and the past. But actually, history has no such boundary.”<sup>1</sup>

Drawing and Painting  
Film and Video  
Installation  
Work on Paper

Sun Xun was born in 1980 in Fuxin, which is located in Liaoning, a remote agricultural province in northeast China between Mongolia and North Korea. Fuxin was once known for its booming coal industry, but decades of overmining led to the eventual bankruptcy and closure of many mines. Sun's childhood experiences in his hometown led to an awareness of how time affects the rise and fall of powerful forces, a lesson that remains a strong influence on his artwork.

When Sun turned sixteen, he moved to Hangzhou to study at the China Academy of Art. Compared to progressive Hangzhou, Fuxin seemed stuck in the past, and Sun felt disoriented by how two places in the same country could feel worlds, or even centuries, apart. Sun has described traveling to the big city as feeling like being “being transported from Pyongyang, in North Korea, to New York in a single day.” Film quickly became Sun's preferred medium for exploring questions about how time and historical narrative can shape a place's identity. Because he was too poor to buy a camera as a student, he started creating hand-drawn animations, using hundreds of ink drawings and **woodblock prints** to create his films. When Sun graduated from art school in 2006, he opened Pi Animation Studio and has since produced many films that combine traditional materials with new techniques.

*Mythological Time* (2016) is a large-scale, site-specific **installation** created for the Guggenheim

Museum. The work includes an animated film that is projected onto mural-sized drawings, which cover the walls from ceiling to floor. The drawings depict characters from the film, bringing the animation's narrative into the space of the viewer. The film uses Fuxin and its coal mines as a starting point, and the image of a lump of coal appears throughout: at first, brought to life and given flight with a single feathered wing, then later on as a falling meteor, followed by a tail of fire. The work collapses past and the present, real and the imagined, as recent historical events are woven together with images of mythical creatures moving through a prehistoric landscape. Ultimately, the true significance of coal and the other symbols is left up to interpretation.

<sup>1</sup> Sun Xun, in Richard Vine, *Sun Xun: History as Myth*, exh. cat. (New York: The Drawing Center, 2009), p. 9. Available online: [https://issuu.com/drawingcenter/docs/drawingpapers85\\_xun/71](https://issuu.com/drawingcenter/docs/drawingpapers85_xun/71).



Sun Xun, *Mythological Time*, 2016. Color HD animated video projection, with sound, 12 min., 44 sec, and powdered pigments in gum arabic and casein paint on mulberry bark paper, two sheets: 4.7 × 15.6 m and 2.8 × 17.8 m. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2016.38.1-2. Installation view, *Tales of Our Time*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, November 4, 2016–March 10, 2017

## View and Discuss

→ Go to [youtube.com/watch?v=1ovLTZIZASM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=1ovLTZIZASM) to watch a thirty-second time-lapse video of the site-specific installation *Mythological Time* (2016). For this site-specific installation, Sun created a twelve-minute stop-motion animation and drawings on large sheets of tree bark paper.

What do you notice about the installation?  
How do the drawings relate to the film?

→ Sun often includes mythical characters in his artwork.

What characters do you see in the video?  
What is a myth? Define myth as a folk tale or legend that often explains historical events with supernatural, spiritual, or magical means. Did you see any characters that looked mythical or imaginary?

→ In one frame, eight figurines appear in an orderly formation that recalls the nine “crouching beasts,” statues of mythical creatures seen on the roof gables of Chinese imperial buildings. Sun depicted these creatures perched on top of the outstretched arm of Chairman Mao Zedong.



TOP: Imperial roof decoration in the Forbidden City, Beijing;  
BOTTOM: Sun Xun, *Mythological Time*, 2016 (detail)

Why do you think Sun might have combined these two images?

→ Go to [guggenheim.org/audio/track/mythological-time-by-sun-xun](https://guggenheim.org/audio/track/mythological-time-by-sun-xun) to listen to an audio clip about *Mythological Time*.

In the audio clip, exhibition cocurator Xiaoyu Weng says that Sun engages with “all different historical periods” in the artwork. Why might Sun mix references to the past, present, and future?

# Classroom Activities

## Draw through Observation

Watch a video about Sun's art practice at [guggenheim.org/video/sun-xun-ales-of-our-time](https://guggenheim.org/video/sun-xun-ales-of-our-time). In the video, Sun says, "Sketching in the field is different from using photos or other mediums. Because painting embodies the warmth of one's emotions."



Sun Xun sketching the landscape, Beijing

Draw or paint a place from a photograph. Then visit that same location and draw or paint from observation. How do your two artworks compare? Do you agree with Sun's opinion in the quote? Why or why not?

## Invent a Mythical Creature

In *Mythological Time*, Sun reinterprets mythical Chinese creatures, including a dragon, which commonly symbolized the emperor in traditional Chinese paintings.

What other mythical creatures do you know of from Western or Eastern mythology? Research one or more and create a creature inspired by what students learn.

# Classroom Activities

## Use Materials as Symbols

Watch this video created by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to learn more about Sun's relief-carving process: [metmuseum.org/metmedia/video/collections/asian/sun-xun-printmaking-demonstration-astor-court](https://metmuseum.org/metmedia/video/collections/asian/sun-xun-printmaking-demonstration-astor-court). To create unique three-dimensional effects in his animations, Sun first draws his image onto printing blocks and then carves it out.

Experiment with block printing by drawing an image onto a soft printing block, such as balsa foam or linoleum. Use a tool to remove or carve away all the negative space so your drawing becomes a raised relief that you can use to create a print.

## Magic Realism

The 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez was a source of inspiration for *Mythological Time*. Both the book and the artwork follow the tropes of magic realism.

What is magic realism? Define it as a genre that combines a realistic representation of the world with fantastical elements. Using a magic realist style, write or draw a story about a place.

---

## Resources

---

### Videos

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Artist Profile: Sun Xun." November 3, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/sun-xun-tales-of-our-time>.
- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 46, "Sun Xun: One of China's Most Ambitious Young Artists." January 31, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/260169077>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Time-Lapse of Sun Xun's *Mythological Time*." February 13, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ovLTZIZASM>.

### Articles

- Davis, Anna. "Sun Xun's Parallel Worlds." Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, June 21, 2018. <https://www.mca.com.au/stories-and-ideas/sun-xuns-parallel-worlds/>.
- Khong, En Liang. "Animator Sun Xun's Alternative Visions of New China." *Financial Times*, February 13, 2015. <https://www.ft.com/content/79380f78-b12a-11e4-831b-00144feab7de>.
- Lau, Joyce, "A Chinese Artist Consumed by the Idea of Inevitable Change." *New York Times*, December 1, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/01/arts/sun-xun-a-chinese-artist-consumed-by-the-idea-of-inevitable-change.html>.
- Pollack, Barbara. "Inspiration Far from Home." *New York Times*, November 27, 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/01/arts/design/a-chinese-artist-exploring-new-york.html>.

### Books

- Weng, Xiaoyu and Hou Hanru, eds. *Tales of Our Time*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2016.

# Teaching

---

## Sun Yuan & Peng Yu

---

# SUN Yuan & PENG Yu

(sun yuen) & (pung yu)

## 孙原 & 彭禹



Sun Yuan and Peng Yu

BORN 1973, Beijing

BORN 1974, Jiamusi, China

ESTABLISHED

1999

LIVE &amp; WORK

Beijing

THEMES **Materials and Process**  
**Narrative**  
**Symbols**

“More and more mechanical devices have entered our lives and even become part of our bodies. It is natural that they enter the art world.”<sup>1</sup>

—Sun Yuan

ART MEDIUM **Installation**

#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND WORK

Sun Yuan was born in 1972 in Beijing, and Peng Yu was born in 1974 in Jiamusi, which is located in China's Heilongjiang Province. Sun and Peng both attended the prestigious Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing at a time of radical experimentation in the Chinese art scene. Following a period of artistic repression during the Mao Zedong years and the Cultural Revolution, younger Chinese artists in the 1980s and '90s were beginning to pursue new forms of creative expression. They formed a collaborative partnership in 1999, and from early on, Sun and Peng used unconventional materials, such as blood, fat, and live animals, to test the boundaries of contemporary art, emphasizing real and sensational confrontation with their work.

*Can't Help Myself* (2016) is a site-specific **installation** created for the Guggenheim Museum. Sun and Peng were invited to create an artwork in response to ideas of territory, boundary, and borders. The result is a modified industrial robot that is caged within transparent walls and animated using visual-recognition sensors and software systems. The robot was custom designed to continuously sweep an oozing dark-red liquid so it remains within a certain circumference; when sensors installed in the ceiling detect that the liquid has seeped beyond an invisible boundary, the robotic arm carefully pulls the red fluid back into place. Once the intelligent machine has completed this repetitive task, it starts to dance,

randomly combining a sequence from thirty-two programmed movements that mimic human and animal actions, such as “scratch an itch” or “bow and shake.”

This installation examines our increasingly automated global reality, one in which territories are controlled mechanically and the relationship between people and technology is rapidly changing. During the exhibition, viewers were invited to gather outside the transparent enclosure and watch the machine inside, setting up a dialectic that reflects a moral question, “Who is more vulnerable: the human who built the machine or the machine who is controlled by a human?”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Azura Wannmann, “The Guggenheim's First Robotic Artwork Is Out of Control,” *Vice*, December 28, 2016, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/ez5y9z/guggenheims-art-robot-cant-help-itself](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ez5y9z/guggenheims-art-robot-cant-help-itself).

<sup>2</sup> Xiaoyu Weng, “Sun Yuan and Peng Yu: *Can't Help Myself*,” Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/34812>.



Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, *Can't Help Myself*, 2016. Kuka industrial robot, stainless steel and rubber, cellulose ether in colored water, lighting grid with Cognex visual-recognition sensors, and polycarbonate wall with aluminum frame, dimensions variable overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2016.40

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the photographs of the site-specific installation *Can't Help Myself* (2016).

What do you see in this site-specific installation?

→ In collaboration with engineers, the artists programmed the industrial robot in this installation to perform certain actions.

What do you think the robot was programmed to do?

→ Go to [youtube.com/watch?v=4ooVr6RZ\\_nw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=4ooVr6RZ_nw) to watch a one-minute video of *Can't Help Myself*.

Now that you've seen a video of the robot, how would you describe the way that it moves?

→ Sun and Peng programmed the robot to continuously sweep the red liquid on the floor until it is contained within a predetermined area. If the robot is able to complete its work, it can choose its next movement from a set of preprogrammed actions modeled after human and animal behavior.

What do you think about the artist's choices for the robot?

→ The programmed actions of the robot relate to the idea of control. The artists explained, "Human beings have to learn from machines in order to take control of them. . . . It is an endless interplay of entanglement and containment between human and machine: they both take advantage of each other and progress with each other."<sup>3</sup>

In this artwork, who do you think is controlling whom and why?

<sup>3</sup> Weng, "Sun Yuan and Peng Yu: *Can't Help Myself*."

## View and Discuss

→ Go to [youtube.com/watch?v=jRjrl42Wsh4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRjrl42Wsh4) to watch a thirty-second time-lapse video of *Can't Help Myself*. Notice that a room was built with Plexiglass walls around the robot. This was an intentional choice made by the artists for this site-specific installation, to mimic the environment of a science laboratory.

→ On the ceiling, the artists installed four visual-recognition sensors to create an invisible border around the robot. When the red liquid crosses the boundary, the sensors alert the robot that it must sweep.

Imagine yourself in this room. How would you feel? How would you feel differently if there were no barrier between the robot and the viewers?



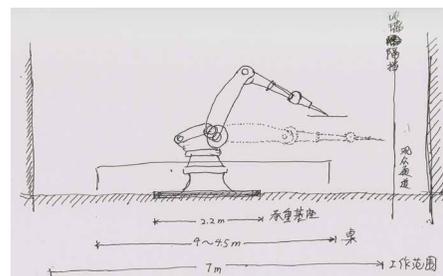
Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, digital rendering of *Can't Help Myself*, 2016

What is the significance of this invisible border? What might it represent?

## Classroom Activities

### Design a Prototype

Watch this video about Sun and Peng's art practice on the Guggenheim's website: [guggenheim.org/video/sun-yuan-peng-yu-takes-of-our-time](https://www.guggenheim.org/video/sun-yuan-peng-yu-takes-of-our-time). In the video, Sun says, "I think an artist's work is a reflection of his or her will. The artist doesn't need to be on-site physically. Instead, you rely on an agent to carry out your will. This is my agent. It has limitless endurance. No one can match its endurance. All you need to provide it with is your will."<sup>4</sup>



Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, sketch for *Can't Help Myself*, 2016

If the robot is a stand-in for the artists, what does it tell us about Sun and Peng's will? If you were to invent a robot agent to carry out your will, or wishes, what would it look like? What would your robot do? Sketch a design for a robot prototype.

### Freedom

In 2009 Sun and Peng created a work titled *Freedom*. In it, a powerful hose was tied to the ceiling, and a stream of pressurized water caused the hose to twist, slap, and dance forcefully around an empty room reinforced by metal walls.

Watch a video clip of *Freedom* at [youtube.com/watch?v=D3-56ofw\\_1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3-56ofw_1s). Compare and contrast *Freedom* and *Can't Help Myself*. What are the similarities between the two works? In *Can't Help Myself*, how do Sun and Peng expand on the theme of *Freedom*?

### The Future

With *Can't Help Myself*, Sun and Peng contemplate what the future might look like as the relationship between human and machines becomes more connected.

Research other forms of technology and artificial intelligence. How are these advancements already a part of our daily lives? How might they change our lives in the future?

<sup>4</sup> Wannmann, "The Guggenheim's First Robotic Artwork."

## Resources

### Websites

- Sun and Peng's Website.  
<http://www.sunyuanpengyu.com/>.

### Videos

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Artist Profile: Sun Yuan & Peng Yu." November 3, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/sun-yuan-peng-yu-theses-of-our-time>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Time-Lapse of Sun Yuan & Peng Yu's *Can't Help Myself*." December 29, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRjrI42WsH4>.

### Audio

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "*Can't Help Myself* by Sun Yuan & Peng Yu." October 28, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/cant-help-myself-by-sun-yuan-peng-yu>.

### Articles

- Wannmann, Azura. "The Guggenheim's First Robotic Artwork Is Out of Control." *Vice*, December 28, 2016. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/ez5y9z/guggenheims-art-robot-cant-help-itself](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ez5y9z/guggenheims-art-robot-cant-help-itself).
- Sun Yuan. "Sun Yuan on Seeing and Believing." Interview by David Borgonjon. *SCREEN*, June 23, 2015. <http://www.onscreentoday.com/conversation/or-else-its-not-utopian>.

### Books

- Weng, Xiaoyu and Hou Hanru, eds. *Tales of Our Time*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2016.

# Teaching

## Arin Dwihartanto Sunaryo

# Arin Dwiheartanto SUNARYO

(a-rin dwi-har-tan-to su-nar-yo)



Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo

BORN 1978, Bandung, Indonesia

Bandung

Materials and Process  
Nature

Painting

“At the moment resin is my driving force. So far, I have learned a lot from every pigment I have explored. . . . The choice of the pigments actually [opens] up a completely new horizon within my artistic works.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

Born in 1978, Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo lives and works in his hometown of Bandung, Indonesia, where he went to school and learned to paint. He later studied at Central Saint Martin’s College of Art and Design in London. Sunaryo’s approach and unconventional materials and processes sprang from his reconsideration of whether using the traditional Western technique of oil paint on canvas was the only way to make paintings. He began to experiment with liquefied pigments, directing them across the canvas using the movement of his whole body and allowing them to flow freely. While the process was rewarding, the layered oil paints took too long to dry on the canvas, and he began to look for other solutions.<sup>2</sup> By accident, he discovered resin.

Resin held many of the properties Sunaryo was looking for, allowing him to create extremely smooth and glossy colored surfaces. The direction and extent of its flow were unpredictable. Exploiting the element of chance allowed spontaneity, intuition, and accident to become part of his creative vocabulary. He never knew what the end result would be and found that volatility exciting. Once the resin hardened, it could be peeled off its base, and Sunaryo, finding the layer closest to the canvas’s flat surface to be the most interesting, “flipped” the layer of resin to reveal the previously hidden shapes that had been produced.

Another event would prompt change in Sunaryo’s work: the 2010 series of volcanic

eruptions that occurred at **Mount Merapi**, an active volcano near Yogyakarta, Indonesia, one of the world’s most densely populated areas. These eruptions caused over 350 deaths and many more injuries, including severe burns and respiratory damage. More than 350,000 people living in the danger zone were evacuated, and local authorities struggled to care for the injured and displaced.<sup>3</sup> Mount Merapi is only a few hundred miles from Sunaryo’s home, and the devastating eruption shocked and saddened him. He traveled to Yogyakarta to gather and preserve ash that he would later use in paintings commemorating the disaster; *Volcanic Ash Series #4* (2012) is one such work. Rendered in gradations of a single color, it conveys a sense of the artist’s empathetic response to the disaster, the addition of the ashes constituting a powerful emotional component.

<sup>1</sup> “‘The End Product Is Mysterious’: Indonesian Artist Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo,” *Art Radar*, June 26, 2017, <http://artradarjournal.com/2017/06/26/the-end-product-is-mysterious-indonesian-artist-arin-dwiheartanto-sunaryo-artist-profile/>.

<sup>2</sup> Carla Bianpoen, “Arin Dwiheartanto’s Artistic Exploration,” *Jakarta Post*, March 1, 2012, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/03/01/arin-dwiheartanto-s-artistic-exploration.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. “2010 Eruptions of Mount Merapi,” last modified June 2, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010\\_eruptions\\_of\\_Mount\\_Merapi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_eruptions_of_Mount_Merapi).



Arin Dwi Hartanto Sunaryo, *Volcanic Ash Series #4*, 2012. Volcanic ash and pigmented resin, mounted on panel, triptych, 146 x 547 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2012.161

## View and Discuss

→ Before showing this work, measure a horizontal line that is 17 feet, 11¼ inches wide on a classroom wall (or have students do the measuring) to get an accurate sense of the scale of this work. Then look at the painting *Volcanic Ash Series #4* (2012).

Have each student create a list of at least ten words that come to mind when they look at this work. Then compile a cumulative list of all the words and determine which were mentioned most often. Students may then like to create several alternative titles for this work based on the words they have chosen to describe it.

How do students think this work was made? Describe a step-by-step process that the artist might have used to achieve this result, then watch this short video about the artwork “Arin Dwihartanto Sunaryo on Materials and Process” on the Guggenheim website: [guggenheim.org/video/arin-dwihartanto-sunaryo-on-materials-and-process](http://guggenheim.org/video/arin-dwihartanto-sunaryo-on-materials-and-process). How is Sunaryo’s actual process similar to or different from what was imagined?

→ To make *Volcanic Ash Series #4*, Sunaryo used volcanic ash from the 2010 eruption of Mount Merapi, an event that devastated a part of his homeland, causing hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries, and widespread loss of property.



Mount Merapi, Central Java, Indonesia

How does this knowledge color your interpretation of the painting?

→ By incorporating actual volcanic ash and capturing the activity of the volcano, Sunaryo reimagines the definition of landscape painting.

In what ways does this work challenge these traditional requirements for depictions of landscapes?

## Classroom Activities

### Work with Nontraditional Materials

Sunaryo has continued to experiment with various materials and processes to achieve the effects he wants.

Are there alternative materials and processes that your students would like to experiment with? Make a list of nontraditional materials that might be used in the creation of art. (Make sure that the materials they select are nontoxic and safe to use.) Document these experiments using notes and photographs. Some materials may work better than expected, while others may disappoint. Share what has been learned—along with the most and least successful experiments.

### Chance and Control

*Volcanic Ash Series #4* includes both planned and unplanned elements, and Sunaryo needed to structure its creation while allowing for chance occurrences.

Think about making a work of art that requires the most stringent control. What material would you use? How might you go about it? Then envision how you would make a work that allows for the maximum amount of chance occurrence. What medium might you use? What would be your creative role? How might you include and balance these two approaches—chance and intention—when creating a work of art?

### Learn about Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago, a country comprised of approximately 17,508 islands. With more than 238 million people, Indonesia is the world’s fourth most populous nation. Sunaryo lives on the island of Java. With 135 million people, Java is the world’s most populous island and one of the most densely populated places on the globe.

Through research, learn more about Indonesia, its history, and its current place in the world. Share with the other students what struck you most about what you learned.

### Learn about Volcanoes

Mount Merapi (literally “mountain of fire”) is the most active volcano in Indonesia. It has erupted at least sixty-eight times since 1548. Recent eruptions occurred in 1994, 2006, 2010, and 2018. On the Internet, there are many arresting images of the devastation that was caused by the 2010 eruption. But Mount Merapi is not the only active volcano in Indonesia—its geography is dominated by volcanoes, serving as a vivid reminder that our planet is geologically active.

Learn more about the science of volcanoes at [naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/earth-science/volcanoes-and-plate-tectonics](http://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/earth-science/volcanoes-and-plate-tectonics).

---

## Resources

---

### Videos

- Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. "Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo on Materials and Process" November 1, 2013. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/arin-dwiheartanto-sunaryo-on-materials-and-process>.
- IndoArtNow. "Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo." February 9, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEAClmfbxJM>.

### Articles

- *Art Radar*. "The End Product Is Mysterious": Indonesian Artist Arin Dwiheartanto Sunaryo." June 26, 2017. <http://artradarjournal.com/2017/06/26/the-end-product-is-mysterious-indonesian-artist-arin-dwiheartanto-sunaryo-artist-profile/>.
- Dover, Caitlin. "Moving Materials, a Practice Rooted in Craft, and More" *On the MAP* (blog). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, December 20, 2013. <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/map/on-the-map-moving-materials-a-practice-rooted-in-craft-and-more>,

# Teaching

---

# Tang Da Wu

---

# TANG Da Wu

(tang da woo)

## 唐大霧



Installation view, No. Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, February 22–May 21, 2013

1943, Singapore

Singapore

**Symbols**

“[The] first thing to understand [is] the importance of art in the whole building of a nation. It’s important to its contribution. Artists are not anything like a commercial institution, supermarket, or like a decorative profession. Artists are philosophers and thinkers.”<sup>1</sup>

**Sculpture  
Installation**

Tang Da Wu was born in 1943 in Singapore, an island city-state in Southeast Asia. Growing up, he disliked studying English and mathematics, preferring to draw. He gained further confidence during high school when his paintings were accepted into art competitions.

In 1988 Tang founded the Artists Village, a contemporary art group in Singapore with the aim of encouraging experimentation. Tang mentored younger artists and shared his knowledge of aesthetic developments in other parts of the world. Members of the Artists Village were among the first nontraditional artists in Singapore and were also early practitioners of **installation** and performance art.

In addition to his work as an artist and activist for free-speech, environmental, and social issues, Tang teaches art education at the National Institute of Education. He has expressed great concern for the current state of learning, having encountered numerous young adults who are afraid to give the “wrong answer” and who retreat from experimentation and innovation. He wonders how to best nurture future generations to be fearless in their pursuit of knowledge and experience.

Tang works in many mediums, including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, and performance. The sculpture *Our Children* refers to a variation of Chinese opera popular in Teochew, a region in South China from which his family hails. The story focuses on the virtue of respect

for one’s parents, or filial piety, and the importance of cultural values. The sculpture represents an abstracted baby goat kneeling beneath its mother. The act of suckling is represented by a pitcher of fresh milk that sits atop the steel and glass table. In the Teochew parable, a young boy experiences a humbling moment of enlightenment at the sight of a kneeling baby goat being fed by its mother. In *Our Children*, the two figures, while stationary, also seem to be in dynamic tension. They resemble written Chinese characters, symbolizing the narrative in spare strokes and lines.

For Tang, aesthetic expression is not only representative of the world as it is but also has the potential to provoke individuals and collectives to act and make changes. *Our Children* demonstrates Tang’s skillful transfiguration of idea into form, and like much of his work, it aims to nudge society toward a greater awareness of environmental and social issues.

<sup>1</sup> Tang Da Wu, interview by Lee Wen, November 6, 2005, <https://news1984.tumblr.com/post/18360133189/tang-da-wu-interview-by-lee-wen-6-november-2005>.



Tang Da Wu, *Our Children*, 2012. Galvanized steel, glass, and milk, three parts: 157.5 × 227.3 × 59.7 cm, 66.7 × 113 × 30.5 cm, and 21.6 × 7.9 × 7.9 cm), overall dimensions vary with installation. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2012.147

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the sculpture *Our Children* (2012).

What is your initial impression of this work?

→ This sculpture consists of three different parts that together create a whole.



Tang Da Wu, *Our Children*, 2012 (details)

Look at the detail photographs. What do you notice about the three parts? How do they relate to each other?

## View and Discuss

→ Note that the forms in the sculpture evoke human gestures.

Recreate these gestures with your own body. How does it feel to be the larger shape? How does it feel to be the smaller one?

→ *Our Children* depicts an abstracted baby goat kneeling beneath its mother.

After learning about Tang's philosophy and work, what messages do you think he wanted to convey through the sculpture?

→ Although Tang pared down the bodies of his subjects to a series of lines, the relationship between them remains perceptible.

Take some time to look carefully at the interaction between any two living things—fish in a tank, squirrels in the park, your own pets. You may want to make some quick drawings that capture different moments of interaction. Then simplify those gestures into a series of intersecting lines by bending and connecting pipe cleaners to suggest the poses and relationships you have observed. When done, ask classmates to respond to your work. Are they able to sense the interaction you intended?

## Classroom Activities

### The Artist's Role in Society

Tang has participated in numerous community and public art projects, workshops, and performances. He believes that artists should introduce their experiences and perceptions to others—not with entertainment or decoration in mind, but in order to provoke thought.

What do your students think is an artist's role and responsibility in society? Write a paragraph that begins: "An artist should. . . ." Share your writing and discuss the variety of ways that artists can function in society.

### Play and Creativity

"I want you to know my way of working," Tang noted. "Playing is the most important part of my work. And when I grow up I still want to play."<sup>2</sup> Tang believes that children should be encouraged to play and has challenged educators and parents to foster creativity as ways of supporting the development of the whole child.

Do you agree with this philosophy? What do you think can be learned in the process of playing?

### Show Respect for Parents

**Confucian** philosophy stresses filial piety, the virtue of showing respect for one's parents and ancestors. Chinese children learn how to respect their elders through the text *The Classic of Filial Piety*, which includes one story about a fourteen-year-old who strangled a tiger to save his father, and another that tells of a boy who offered himself as a human sacrifice to swarms of mosquitoes so his mother and father would not be bitten. Although filial piety is central to Chinese culture, it is far less significant in American society, which emphasizes the individual and self-determination over family ties and responsibilities. Even in China, however, filial piety is a shifting concept. In 2011 the Chinese government released a new set of filial piety guidelines designed to encourage good behavior. The original text is full of heroic deeds performed by children on behalf of their parents; the modern version suggests more commonplace acts of kindness, such as: "Teach your mother and father how to use the Internet," "Visit them as often as possible during the holidays," and even "Listen carefully to their stories."

Add your own guidelines to these suggestions; what acts of kindness do you think would be most important to your parents and elders?

<sup>2</sup> Tang Da Wu, "Tang Da Wu and His Works," interview by Ushiroshoji Masahiro, n.d.

---

## Resources

---

### Articles

- Lee Wen. "Tang Da Wu: The Art of Apology." *Republic of Daydreams* (blog), October 10, 2014. <https://republicofdaydreams.wordpress.com/category/tang-da-wu/>.
- Quek, Bruce. "Tang Da Wu." National Library Board, Singapore, 2009. [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1541\\_2009-10-29.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1541_2009-10-29.html).
- Tang Da Wu. Interview by Lee Wen, November 6 2005. <https://news1984.tumblr.com/post/18360133189/tang-da-wu-interview-by-lee-wen-6-november-2005>.

# Teaching

---

# Rirkrit Tiravanija

# Rirkrit TIRAVANIJA

(ree-krit tee-ra-va-nit)

ฤกษ์ฤทธิ ติระวานิช



Rirkrit Tiravanija

1961, Buenos Aires

New York; Berlin; Hong Kong;  
& Chiang Mai, Thailand

Community  
Place

"It is not what you see that is important, but what takes place between people."<sup>1</sup>

Installation  
Performance

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

The son of a Thai diplomat, Rirkrit Tiravanija was born in 1961 in Buenos Aires and raised in Thailand, Ethiopia, and Canada. He studied art in Canada and the United States. With studios around the world, he has continued the nomadic lifestyle he experienced growing up, living in New York City, Berlin, Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, and Hong Kong.

Rather than creating objects for static display, Tiravanija focuses on the interactions between people and their surroundings. During the 1990s, he began producing works that revolve around his own personal history, taking everyday experiences and restaging them. By presenting such experiences from alternative perspectives, he turns life itself into a work of art. For instance, he staged events where gallery- and museumgoers participated in cooking and eating pad thai, a traditional Thai dish. These works seek to facilitate interactions between viewers that, although simple and playful, can demonstrate how to form the necessary foundation for community-based political actions. In his practice, Tiravanija encourages people to become active contributors rather than passive consumers of culture. He also often blurs the boundary between public and private. Other works have involved inviting audiences to take tea with him in a replica of his home, serving curry to gallery visitors, and welcoming them to sit at a gigantic picnic table and take part in assembling a jigsaw puzzle.

*Untitled 2002 (he promised)* (2002) is a chrome and steel structure inspired by the modernist architect Rudolf M. Schindler's Kings Road House in West Hollywood, which was completed in 1922. While Tiravanija's **installation** shares the spatial fluidity of Schindler's open-plan design, the reflective surfaces used to replace the wood and concrete of the original create what the artist has described as "a multifaceted image of reality,"<sup>2</sup> enlivening and multiplying the activities taking place in and around the work. When exhibited, it becomes an arena for a variety of programs, including DJ sessions, film screenings, panel discussions, and children's workshops. *Untitled 2002 (he promised)* embodies the experiential nature of his art, which requires the active participation of the viewer in order to be fully realized. Tiravanija is a gracious host, inviting the public to enter into and engage with his work and others. He provides the parameters and acts as a catalyst but never dictates outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> "Rirkrit Tiravanija: Tomorrow Is the Question," press release, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, May 12, 2016, <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/news/rirkrit-tiravanija-tomorrow-is-the-question>.

<sup>2</sup> "Rirkrit Tiravanija: untitled 2002 (he promised)," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, accessed June 30, 2019, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/13481>.



Rirkrit Tiravanija, *untitled 2002 (he promised)*, 2002. Chrome and stainless steel, approximately 2.9 x 12 x 6 m. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and Executive Committee Members, with additional funds contributed by American Express 2004.124

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the installation *untitled 2002 (he promised)* (2002).

Describe this structure. How do you think it might be used? How might it feel to step inside and explore it?

→ Many of Tirvanija's works focus on getting people who do not already know one another to participate together in everyday activities, such as sharing meals, working on puzzles, and playing ping pong.

What do you think about this way of creating art?

→ Tiravanija created this structure as a place for many different activities to happen. It has been the site of Thai massages, yoga, Pilates, film programs, music, storytelling, face painting, making balloon animals, and concerts.<sup>3</sup>

Create a weeklong schedule of what you would most want to see happen in this space. First brainstorm the variety of programs that might take place then plan a seven-day calendar and determine the length of each program and who might participate.

→ This work can be assembled inside or outside, in any environment.

Think about how it might function at different sites:

- In a school
- Outside, in the center of a busy city
- In a park

Where would you like to see this structure? Why? How might the participants and activities vary according to where this structure is?

<sup>3</sup> For more about what events happened when the work was installed at the Guggenheim in 2004, see <http://pastexhibitions.guggenheim.org/tiravanija/index.html>.

## Classroom Activities

### Artist's Inspiration

This work was inspired by the modernist architect Rudolf M. Schindler's iconic Kings Road House in West Hollywood, California. Completed in 1922 and acclaimed as a twentieth-century masterpiece, it was intended to be a communal, free-flowing home for two couples. The design includes open living spaces, a shared kitchen, four individual art studios, and "sleeping baskets" (open-air porches) instead of formal bedrooms.



Rudolf M. Schindler's Kings Road House, West Hollywood, California, 1921–22

Examine photographs of Kings Road House and compare it to Tiravanija's work. How are they similar? In what ways are they different?

### Relational Aesthetics

Gaining prominence during the 1990s and focusing on social interactions, relational art, or relational aesthetics, involves "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space."<sup>4</sup> Tiravanija and likeminded artists can be more accurately viewed as catalysts, rather than central creators, of their works.<sup>5</sup>

How might you create a space to bring people together for positive social interactions? Brainstorm a list of everyday interactions and think about how they might be shared in a public and inclusive setting. Where, when, and how could these exchanges be encouraged? Create and facilitate a work of relational art then discuss the outcome. What worked? What didn't?

<sup>4</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon, France: Le presses du réel, 2002), p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> For more on relational art, see [https://web.archive.org/web/20080704044202/http://place.unm.edu/relational\\_art.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20080704044202/http://place.unm.edu/relational_art.html).

---

## Resources

---

### Websites

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Rirkrit Tiravanija, untitled 2002 (he promised)*. <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/rirkrit-tiravanija-untitled-2002-he-promised>.

### Videos

- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 77, “Rirkrit Tiravanija.” April 16, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2018-04-16/rirkrit-tiravanija-on-brilliant-ideas-video>.
- Stokes, Rebecca. “Rirkrit Tiravanija: Cooking Up an Art Experience,” *Inside/Out* (blog). Museum of Modern Art, February 3, 2012. [https://www.moma.org/explore/inside\\_out/2012/02/03/rirkrit-tiravanija-cooking-up-an-art-experience/](https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/02/03/rirkrit-tiravanija-cooking-up-an-art-experience/).

### Articles

- Tiravanija, Rirkrit. Interview by Delia Bajo and Brainard Carey. *Brooklyn Rail*, February 1, 2004. <https://brooklynrail.org/2004/02/art/rirkrit-tiravanija>.
- Tiravanija, Rirkrit. “Rirkrit Tiravanija and the Politics of Cooking.” Interview by William Hanley. *Surface*, December 19, 2017. <https://www.surface.com/articles/rirkrit-tiravanija-talks-politics-cooking-ceramics/>.

# Teaching

---

# Tsang Kin-Wah

# TSANG Kin-Wah

(zung geen-wah)

## 曾建華



Tsang Kin-Wah

1974, Shantou, China

Hong Kong

History  
Narrative

“Text is also a visual language. Text and image, they have certain kinds of relationships that I can play with. That’s how I start to make some text, which actually looks like patterns.”<sup>1</sup>

Mixed Media  
Film and Video  
Installation

Tsang Kin-Wah was born in 1976 in China and immigrated with his family to Hong Kong in 1982. As a “mainlander” living in Hong Kong during its years as a British colony, he was seen as an outsider and grew up with a conflicted sense of identity that still influences his work.<sup>2</sup> In 2002 Tsang left Hong Kong for London to pursue a master’s degree in book art and began combining texts and images in his work. Over time Tsang started experimenting with video projection as a way to focus on how text could move or flow as part of an experiential space. Tsang reflected, “When a work is projected on the floor, viewers can actually interact with the projections and become part of the installation.”<sup>3</sup>

*In the End Is the Word* (2016) is a multichannel, site-specific **installation** comprised of edited found footage, animated text, and atmospheric sound. The film begins with a quiet image of the sea. A lone ship appears after a minute, prompting a battalion of other boats to follow and eventually intercede with projectiles and explosions. Eight minutes into the film, waves of words start to flow forward from the horizon and are project onto the gallery floor. The tide of words slows and loops back to the calm image of the sea.

The subject of the work deepens the significance of this repeated narrative. The film is created from found Internet footage of the **Diaoyu Islands** (called the Senkaku Islands in Japan), which has been disputed territory between China and Japan for over a century. These uninhabited islands are

important because they are in a strategic position and reflect the competition for maritime military strength among nations in Asia. *In the End Is the Word* reflects on the never-ending cycle of events and history. By editing the footage with image and text, Tsang suggests that this localized struggle represents a larger history of war and trauma, all of which is destined to repeat. At the same time, it also points to the constructed nature of history: when the physical experience of an event ends and memory fades, narratives are all that remain to create, disseminate, and contest the past.

<sup>1</sup> “Tsang Kin-Wah: *Tales of Our Time*,” Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, November 3, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/tsang-kin-wah-theses-of-our-time>.

<sup>2</sup> “[Hong Kong] locals refer to people from Guangdong as mainlanders, reserving the term ‘Hong Kongers’ for those born in Hong Kong.” Stella Fong, “The Invisible Struggle of Tsang Kin-Wah,” *LEAP* (Art Basel in Hong Kong Special), 2016, pp. 30–32. Also available on the artist’s website: <http://www.tsangkinwah.com/upload/215586/documents/E0D1E9F41D92199E.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Angel Li, “Tsang Kin Wah, His Constant Search for the Truth,” *A.M. Post 100* (November 2013), pp. 10–15. Also available on the artist’s website: <http://www.tsangkinwah.com/upload/215586/documents/295CEF9AE647055B.pdf>.



Tsang Kin-Wah, *In The End Is The Word*, 2016. Six-channel video installation, with sound, 10 min., 10 sec. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2016.41

## View and Discuss

→ Go to [tsangkinwah.com/work-in-the-end-is-the-word](http://tsangkinwah.com/work-in-the-end-is-the-word) to watch a ten-minute video of *In the End Is the Word* (2016).

What happens in the beginning of the film?  
What happens in the end?

→ This artwork uses archival footage of the Diaoyu Islands. Situated between mainland China and Japan, these islands have a long history of conflict due to their strategic location in the East China Sea.

How does this contextual information add to or change the narrative of the film?

→ Look at images of the site-specific installation *In the End Is the Word*. A site-specific installation is a mixed-media artwork designed for and with a focus on a specific space.

Why do you think this artwork is considered a site-specific installation? What do you notice about the room in which it was shown at the Guggenheim?

→ In this installation, Tsang projects lines of text that flow outward from the film and into the space of the viewer.

Read this text on Tsang's website: [tsangkinwah.com/writing-in-the-end-is-the-word](http://tsangkinwah.com/writing-in-the-end-is-the-word). How does this text relate to the narrative in the film?

# Classroom Activities

## Design a Calligram

Tsang often uses text and image in designs that are inspired by calligrams, images produced from arranging typed, handwritten, or calligraphic font.

Show your students different examples of calligrams and ask them to create their own, using the following steps:

- 1 Find a pattern or image. Tsang is inspired by images with historical or cultural significance.
- 2 Choose a text. Tsang uses a mix of original and found text, e.g., excerpts from a book, poems, or songs. He also often mixes languages, combining Chinese characters and English letters.
- 3 Arrange the letters, words, or sentences in your text to form your pattern or image. Be experimental with repetition, punctuation, and negative space!
- 4 Decide on the final format of your calligram. Will the final artwork be produced with pen and paper or typed on the computer? What size, type, and color of font(s) will you choose?

## Outsider Perspectives

Tsang's experiences as an immigrant and outsider have inspired him to question historical narratives. He said, "My work is focused on inclusion and exclusion, partly because I was an immigrant myself, but also because of a racist experience I had in London many years ago."<sup>4</sup>

Choose a historical event that you are familiar with. Decide on a culturally dominant narrative about it with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Think about this event again from a minority perspective and rewrite with a different beginning, middle, and end.

<sup>4</sup> Masha Rademakers, "A Scream for Tolerance—Tsang Kin-Wah's Canadian Debut," *Source*, May 30, 2017, <http://thelastsource.com/en/2017/05/29/a-scream-for-tolerance-tsang-kin-wahs-canadian-debut/>.

# Classroom Activities

## Explore Tsang Kin-Wah's Art Practice

Watch a video on the about Tsang Kin-Wah's art practice on the Guggenheim website: [guggenheim.org/video/tsang-kin-wah-voices-of-our-time](https://www.guggenheim.org/video/tsang-kin-wah-voices-of-our-time).



Tsang Kin-Wah working in his studio, Hong Kong, 2016

What are the common themes that Tsang explores in his art practice? How is Tsang's artwork influenced by history, politics, or religion? How is *In the End Is the Word* related to these themes or influences?

## Resources

### Websites

- Tsang's Website <http://www.tsangkinwah.com/>

### Videos

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Artist Profile: Tsang Kin-Wah." November 3, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/tsang-kin-wah-theses-of-our-time>.

### Audio

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "*In the End Is the Word* and *No(thing/Fact) Outside* by Tsang Kin-Wah." October 28, 2016. <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/in-the-end-is-the-word-and-nothing-fact-outside-by-tsang-kin-wah>.

### Articles

- Volk, Katherine. "*In the End Is the Word: Tsang Kin-Wah.*" *Canvas*, September/October 2018. See: <http://www.tsangkinwah.com/upload/215586/documents/8B951F9EDD938EBD.pdf>.
- Tsang Kin-Wah. Interview by Enoch Cheng. *Asia Art Archive*, July 1, 2009. <https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas/ideas/interview-with-tsang-kin-wah>.
- Tsui, Enid. "From Venice to Vancouver, Hong Kong Artist Tsang Kin-Wah Spreads Words of Wisdom." *South China Morning Post*, October 25, 2016. <https://www.scmp.com/culture/arts-entertainment/article/2039508/venice-vancouver-hong-kong-artist-tsang-kin-wah-spreads>.

### Books

- Weng, Xiaoyu and Hou Hanru, eds. *Tales of Our Time*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2016.

# Teaching

## Danh Vo

# Danh VO

(yon vo)



Danh Vo

BORN 1975, Bà Rịa, Vietnam

LIVES & WORKS Berlin & Mexico City

**History**  
**Materials and Process**  
**Symbols**

“History is important because it is about the present and shapes the future. Those who control history also control the present. I mistrust history because it is mostly the product of someone’s contemporary agenda.”<sup>1</sup>

**Sculpture**  
**Installation**

Danh Vo was born in Bà Rịa, Vietnam, in 1975. His family fled postwar Vietnam when the artist was four years old. A group of friends and neighbors led by Vo’s father left their native country in a handmade boat, hoping to find eventual refuge in the United States. After being rescued at sea by a Danish shipping freighter, Vo and his family settled in Denmark, where they were granted political asylum and citizenship. Vo later attended the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and pursued further studies in Germany. His work draws upon many individual biographies, including his own and his father’s, as well as upon facets of political history and social memory, to dissect the larger forces that affect our lives.

Vo uses various strategies to analyze the structures and processes that shape our identities, such as the American Dream, capitalist culture, civic bureaucracy, colonial history, migration, and religion. He reconfigures objects to create tableaux that probe the relationships among people, their belongings, and their identities.

To produce *Lot 20. Two Kennedy Administration Cabinet Room Chairs* (2013), Vo disassembled two chairs that once furnished the cabinet room of president John F. Kennedy. The artist purchased the chairs in an auction of items that once belonged to the late Robert McNamara—the former defense secretary for Presidents Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. McNamara oversaw the escalation of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and he

used these chairs when they occupied President Kennedy’s cabinet room. Later, they were gifted to McNamara by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis after President Kennedy’s death. Approaching the work, one can mistake the torn leather or wood for an abstract sculpture; the artwork’s material and its underlying historical significance is not immediately obvious. Parts of the chairs, such as the muslin lining, leather upholstery, or cotton stuffing, are refashioned into individual pieces and displayed as signifiers of a distant yet influential past.

In ripping apart these chairs, Vo creates what one curator calls “archaeological fragments”<sup>2</sup> of a complicated history. Yet as with all of Vo’s work, extended looking, examination, and discovery reveal convergent layers of historical and personal significance.

<sup>1</sup> Danh Vo, “Make History: Danh Vo in Conversation with Nora Taylor,” *Garage*, no. 8 (Spring–Summer 2015), p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Vo, “Make History.”



Dahn Vo, *Lot 20. Two Kennedy Administration Cabinet Room Chairs*, 2013. Leather, 259.1 × 73.7 × 43.2 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council 2013.13

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the artwork *Lot 20. Two Kennedy Administration Cabinet Room Chairs* (2013).

What do you notice with this work? What materials do you see? What do the materials make you think of?

→ This sculpture was created from disassembled chairs. The chairs were owned by Robert McNamara, who worked with former Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960s.



President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, 1962

How might these objects be displayed differently in another setting? What might they look like in a history museum or a house?

→ “These sorts of items never end up in public auction,” Vo stated. “It was purely by chance that I was able to get my hands on these objects because they are normally donated directly to Presidential libraries.”<sup>3</sup>

How does the artist transform and display the chairs? How does this knowledge affect how you see the work?

→ Vo thinks a lot about materials and objects that may look commonplace at first but have their own pasts and hidden meanings.

Think of objects that you own, which might have other unknown purposes or messages. How might an alteration to form or shape change an object's meaning?

<sup>3</sup> Danh Vo, interview by Timothée Chaillou, *Flash Art*, September 23, 2013, <https://flash---art.com/2013/09/danh-vo-24-09-2013-interview/>.

# Classroom Activities

## Silent Witness

Vo considers how objects are silent witnesses to important and complicated moments in our past. Sometimes these objects may not seem significant until their history becomes apparent, along with knowledge of the people that owned and used them.

While thinking about an important event in your life, what object was a silent witness? Would people be able to tell the object was important just by looking at it? Why or why not? If the object could talk, what kinds of things might it say?

Write a diary entry from the perspective of the object, thinking about how it might tell the story of an important life event. How might the object's perspective on the event be different or similar to your own?

# Classroom Activities

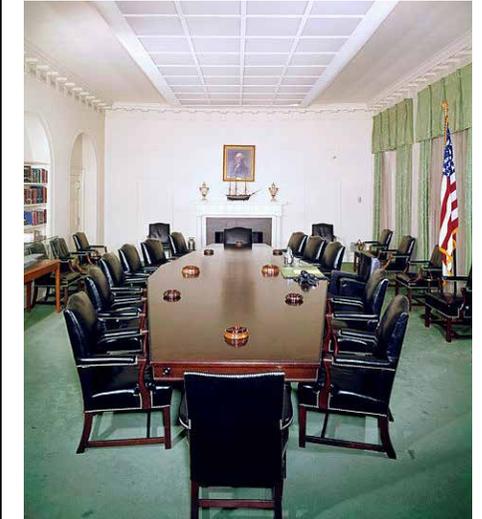
## Transform an Object

In *Lot 20. Two Kennedy Administration Cabinet Room Chairs*, a historical object is used as an unexpected art material. Vo completely transformed two leather chairs by disassembling them and using the pieces of leather upholstery to create a work that is confounding and sculptural.

Think about how you might completely transform an object that is used or about to be discarded. While the objects should have a history, they should also not be valuable. (Some examples include old toys or outgrown clothing.)

Before transforming your object, sketch out your ideas. How can you completely transform an everyday item? What tools will you need to disassemble and reassemble it? What would be an ideal way to display this work?

Why have you chosen this particular way of altering the object? How might that alteration change its meaning, and how do you see the object differently now? Do you have new ideas about Vo's work now that you have considered transforming an object like the artist?



The Kennedy Cabinet Room, 1962

## Resources

### Websites

- National Archives, “The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs.” <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos>.
- PBS Learning Media, “Teaching the Vietnam War.” <https://nj.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/teaching-the-vietnam-war/#.Wf5TIWhSwdU>.

### Videos

- *Brilliant Ideas*. Episode 66, “Danh Vo’s Use of Found Objects in Art.” January 19, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A-GKr1vRE0&t=264s>.
- Burns, Ken, and Lynn Novick, dir. *The Vietnam War*. Walpole, N.H.: Florentine Films; Washington, D.C.: WETA, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/the-vietnam-war/home/>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “Live from the Guggenheim: *Danh Vo: Take My Breath Away* Exhibition Tour.” May 4, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpRqxfpt1mE>.

- Morris, Errol, dir. *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*. Los Angeles: Sony Pictures Classics, 2003. <https://archive.org/details/TheFogOfWarElevenLessonsFromTheLifeOfRobertS.Mcnamara>.
- SMK National Gallery of Denmark. “Danh Vo about the Exhibition *Hip Hip Hurra*.” May 6, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOqXK2BHU-Q>.

- SMK National Gallery of Denmark. “Danh Vo—We the People.” May 27, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8glrGJxpo9A>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “Danh Vo, 08:03, 28.05, 2009.” March 15, 2018. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/danh-vo-0803-28-05-2009>.
- Teaching Channel. “The Vietnam War—How Is It Taught in Vietnam?” 2013. <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teachingvietnam-war>.

### Audio

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. “*Lot 20. Two Kennedy Administration Cabinet Room Chairs* by Danh Vo.” January 31, 2018. <https://www.guggenheim.org/audio/track/lot-20-two-kennedy-administration-cabinet-room-chairs-by-danh-vo>.

# Teaching

# Wang Jianwei

# WANG Jianwei

(wang jen way)

## 汪建伟



Wang Jianwei, 2014

1958, Suining, China

Beijing

**Narrative**

“I don’t think of myself as an artist, I think of myself as a sociological observer. I’m not interested in knowing if my work is that of an artist or not, but I am concerned with creating works that are forms of experimentation.”<sup>1</sup>

**Painting  
Installation**

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST AND WORK

One of China’s most important **Conceptual** artists, Wang Jianwei explores the themes of knowledge, society, and ideology. Born in 1958, he trained as a painter and became known for his investigations into the structures of time. Wang experiments with a range of mediums, including painting, sculpture, **installation**, and multimedia theater.

Wang came from humble beginnings; his father was a farmer who joined the army. As part of the **Cultural Revolution**, the government relocated people to remote rural areas in order to learn from workers and farmers. When he was only a teenager, in 1975, Wang moved to the countryside, where he spent two years working on a farm. He said of that time, “Life was really dull. Remember, no TV, no movies, no magazines. Not even any books. I had to find something to do. Art was . . . a resistance to that boredom.”<sup>2</sup> Wang began to study painting, perfecting **Socialist Realism**, a style that focuses on lifelike depictions of workers and farmers and that expresses optimistic societal and political attitudes. A major shift in Wang’s work occurred in the late 1980s, when he attended the prestigious Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou (today known as the China Academy of Art), and in the early 1990s he began to work more experimentally in video, theater, and socially engaged projects.

Painted in a photorealist style, *Time Temple* (2014) is a monumental canvas that depicts men and women in official, dark suits sitting around a

long, empty table with three attendants standing nearby. Slightly away from the group, a man sits in a chair by himself, his hands on his knees. At first glance the work seems to be a realistic representation of a physical space. On close inspection, however, it turns out to be a composite image made of four partially overlapping frames—some of the figures are doubled, others cropped. Wang has remarked, “Time is the biggest challenge of my experiment.”<sup>3</sup> Here we see the use of sequential scenes, as if a video camera took overlapping still shots of a frozen tableau, as one proposition on how to expand a single moment in time.

<sup>1</sup> Wang Jianwei, interview by Hans Ulrich Obrist, in Obrist, *The China Interviews* (Hong Kong and Beijing: Office for Discourse Engineering, 2009), pp. 274–85.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Napack, “Wang Jianwei,” in *Flying Bird Is Motionless* (New York: Chambers Fine Art, 2001), n.p.



Wang Jianwei, *Time Temple*, 2014. Acrylic and oil on canvas, four panels, 258.5 × 205.5 cm each; 258.5 × 822 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection 2014.97

## View and Discuss

→ Look at the painting *Time Temple* (2014). This is a very large painting measuring nearly thirty feet across and eight feet high.

To give students an accurate impression of this work, compare it to the length and height of their classroom. Ask them to imagine a place in your school that could accommodate this work and how it might feel to stand in front of it.

What do you think is happening in this painting? Describe what you see in each of the panels, starting from the left. Who might these people be? What clothing or accessories are they wearing? Why do you think they are meeting together? What are they holding in their hands?

→ This painting is based on a film still from an earlier video installation by Wang.

Describe the choices that the artist has made to create this work—its size, composition, colors, etc. Which part of the painting is your eye drawn to first? Why?

How are the people in this painting interacting or not interacting with one another? With a group, restage the scene depicted in *Time Temple*. Try to use similar furniture and arrange yourselves exactly as Wang arranged the figures. Then go around the table and have each person say a sentence that they think their character might utter. After each person has spoken, discuss what clues in the painting suggested each line together? What are they holding in their hands?

# Classroom Activities

## Wang's Concept of Rehearsal

Wang's artistic process involves revisiting and revising a work many times. He calls this process "rehearsal."

Select a simple object and draw it five times. Arrange your five drawings in the order of when you drew them. How are the iterations similar? How are they different? What did you learn by drawing the same object multiple times?

## Depicting Time

Wang has said, "Time is the biggest challenge of my experiment."<sup>3</sup>

Challenge your students to create a painting, drawing, or photograph that suggests the passage of time. What are some of the strategies they needed to employ or invent to suggest the passage of time in a static work?

<sup>3</sup> "Wang Jianwei," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/wang-jianwei>.

# Classroom Activities

## Use Color Symbolically

Wang has stated that *Time Temple's* grays and yellows represent ambiguity and a state of "in between."

What do you associate with these colors? Create a work such as a drawing, painting, poem in which yellow and gray have different symbolic meanings.

## Research Chinese History

Although Wang prefers not to be defined as a "Chinese" artist and is against notions of defining an artist by their nationality, the specific political and sociocultural climate into which he was born and grew up in has had a noted influence on his work.

Divide into four working groups and research one of the following events in modern Chinese history:

<p><b>1949</b></p> <p>The founding of the People's Republic of China [i.e., the development of a new nation]</p>	<p><b>1966–76</b></p> <p>The Cultural Revolution [i.e., changes in culture and ideology]</p>
<p><b>1978</b></p> <p>Chinese economic reforms [i.e., opening up of China to the world]</p>	<p><b>2008</b></p> <p>The Beijing Olympics [i.e., presenting the world with China as an economic superpower and showing the history of China through technological and cultural advancements]</p>

Have each group present its historical findings and consider how these historical events may have impacted what we know about China today.

# Resources

## Articles

- Liu Ding and Carol Yinghua Lu. "From the Issue of Art to the Issue of Position: The Echoes of Socialist Realism, Part I." *E-flux Journal*, no. 55 (May 2014). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/55/60315/from-the-issue-of-art-to-the-issue-of-position-the-echoes-of-socialist-realism-part-i/>.

## Videos

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Experiencing a Painting—Wang Jianwei: *Time Temple*." December 9, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/experiencing-a-paintingwang-jianwei-time-temple>.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. "Wang Jianwei: *Time Temple*." December 16, 2014. <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/wang-jianwei-time-temple>.

## Books

- Berghuis, Thomas J., ed. *Wang Jianwei: Time Temple*. Exh. cat. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2014.

# Key Terms

## ● Abstract Expressionism

An artistic movement characterized by loose brushwork and gestural lines, often considered connected to the artist's emotions or subconscious mind. The term "Abstract Expressionism" emerged after World War II to describe American painting that developed in New York in the 1940s. It was the first avant-garde art movement centered in the United States.

RELATED ARTIST: [Kenzo Okada](#)

## ● Anti-Rightist Campaign

The Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957–59) was a political effort led by Mao Zedong and others in the Communist Party of China to purge people and ideas deemed "rightist," including people who criticized the government or favored capitalism. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese intellectuals were killed, jailed, and persecuted during the campaign.

RELATED ARTIST: [Ai Weiwei](#)

## ● atomic bomb

Nuclear weapons were first developed by scientists during World War II. The United States became the first to use this technology in war on August 6, 1945, when the first atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan, killing eighty thousand people instantly and exposing tens of thousands to radiation. Three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing forty thousand people. Emperor Hirohito of Japan announced Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945. These remain the only two instances of its usage in war.

RELATED ARTIST: [On Kawara](#)

## ● Beijing Olympics

The 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing represented its superpower status to the world. The Beijing National Stadium, designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron in collaboration with artist Ai Weiwei for the Olympics, is seen as a symbol of China's rise on a global stage.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#), [Cao Fei](#), [Qiu Zhijie](#)

### ● Bollywood

Although films made in India date back to the early twentieth century, the word “Bollywood” was coined in the 1970s, referring to the Hindi-language motion-picture industry based in Mumbai. The word is a synthesis of Bombay (the former name of Mumbai) and Hollywood. Bollywood is the center of Indian cinema and is popular for its musicals.

RELATED ARTIST: [Navin Rawanchaikul](#)

### ● Buddhism

A range of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices originating in India between the sixth and fourth centuries BCE. In the later Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Buddhism spread to China, where it merged with Daoism, Confucianism, and local folk religions. In the fourth to sixth centuries CE, Buddhism expanded to Korea and Japan, and during the Asuka period (538–710 CE), Prince Shotoku established Buddhism as the state religion of Japan.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#), [Kamin Lertchaiprasert](#), [Isamu Noguchi](#), [Kenzo Okada](#)

### ● bumiputera

A term to describe people that are native or indigenous to Malaysia. The word *bumiputera* (or *bumiputra*) comes from Sanskrit and can be translated literally as “son of the land” or “son of the soil.” In 1971 the New Economic Policy was implemented by the Malaysian government to favor bumiputera in an effort to reduce economic disparity in Malaysia. These policies have been met with resentment by Chinese and Indian Malaysian minorities, who are excluded.

RELATED ARTIST: [Vincent Leong](#)

### ● calligraphy

In East Asian culture, calligraphy is a form of artistic writing traditionally created with a soft, fine-tipped brush and ink on paper or silk. In 221 BCE, the Chinese system was standardized into a common script, and since the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), calligraphy has been considered a highly revered visual art form. Value is given not only to the meaning of written script but also the aesthetic qualities with which the characters are composed.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Isamu Noguchi](#), [Kenzo Okada](#), [Qiu Zhijie](#)

### ● Chinese painting

Traditional Chinese painting, or *guohua* (“national painting”), involves calligraphy and is done on paper or silk with a brush dipped in ink. Chinese painting is one of the oldest art forms in the world, tracing back to 200 CE. During the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), known as a golden age in Chinese civilization, landscape and figure painting techniques developed dramatically.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Duan Jianyu](#), [Sun Xun](#)

### ● Cold War

The Cold War (1947–91) was a decades-long period of rivalry and hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War strategy of “containment” was adopted by the United States following World War II to limit postwar Soviet expansionism, and this strategy shaped subsequent foreign policy and military action.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Ha Chong-Hyun](#), [Qiu Zhijie](#)

### ● Conceptual art

An art form in which the primary intent is to work with a concept rather than to create an object, Conceptual art emerged in the 1960s, a time when both art institutions and the preciousness of the aesthetic object were being challenged by artists and critics.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Ai Weiwei](#), [On Kawara](#), [Qiu Zhijie](#), [Hiroshi Sugimoto](#), [Wang Jianwei](#)

### ● Confucianism

Confucius (551–479 BCE) was a Chinese philosopher, teacher, and political figure. His philosophy, known as Confucianism, emphasizes morality and the traditional Chinese values of family loyalty, conformity, and respect for elders and ancestors. *The Classic of Filial Piety*, a Confucian document dating to the fourth century BCE, has been used in China in elementary education to teach children basic moral values. After his death, Confucianism was adopted as the official imperial philosophy, and his principles are still widely taught and followed throughout East Asia today.

RELATED ARTIST: [Tang Da Wu](#)

### ● Cultural Revolution

Spanning 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution was a sociopolitical movement in China led by Chairman Mao Zedong. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao sought to extinguish public criticism of the government and impose communist ideology. To do this, Mao persecuted intellectual and financial elites, such as professors, landlords, business owners, artists, and writers. Millions were killed, tortured, or sent to the countryside to be re-educated through hard labor. The nation’s schools were closed and millions of young citizens, deemed “Red Guards,” were mobilized to destroy the “Four Olds”—old customs, culture, habits, and ideas—by burning, books, art, and religious buildings.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Qiu Zhijie](#), [Wang Jianwei](#)

### ● Dansaekhwa

An art-historical movement that emerged in South Korea in the late 1970s. The term *Dansaekhwa* translates to “monochrome painting,” and the artists involved in the movement rejected the realism and formalism of the past, instead shifting toward materiality, texture, repetition, layering, and mark-making.

RELATED ARTIST: [Ha Chong-Hyun](#)

### ● Daoism

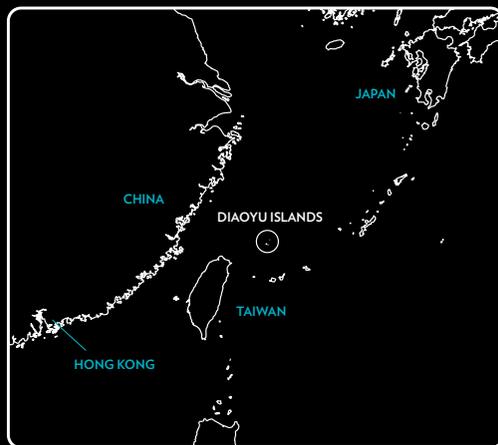
An ancient Chinese philosophy and religion based on the teachings of Chinese philosopher Laozi (ca. 500 BCE). Laozi’s teachings are drawn from an observance of the natural world and the cosmic forces that flows through all things, called the Dao, or “the way.” The philosophy of Daoism is embodied through the yin-yang symbol, which represents balance in opposing forces in life and nature.

RELATED ARTIST: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#)

### Diaoyu Islands

A group of uninhabited islands under disputed ownership due to their strategic location. The islands are known as the Diaoyu Islands in Hong Kong and China, as Senkaku Islands in Japan, and as Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan. Japan has stated claim to the islands since 1895, whereas China claims that the islands were Chinese territory that Japan stole during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). The islands were also occupied by the United States from 1945 to 1972, as part of Japan’s concession to return all the territories it had conquered after World War II. This has been used as supporting evidence that the islands had legitimately belonged to Japan. Starting in 2008 and as recently as 2016, China has increased attempts to assert control over the territory by entering disputed waters with naval vessels and airspace with military aircrafts, leading to a resurgence of tension in the area.

The Diaoyu Islands and their strategic location between China, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong



RELATED ARTIST: [Tsang Kin-Wah](#)

### diaspora

The movement, migration, or scattering of a people or communities away from an established or ancestral homeland. For instance, in August 1947, at the end of one hundred years of British rule in India, the nation was split into two independent states: Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. The hastily drawn partition created one of the largest diasporas in human history. By 1948 the great migration had created around fourteen million refugees and millions of deaths, particularly in the Indian region of Punjab, where Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs had lived together peacefully for generations.

RELATED ARTIST: [Navin Rawanchaikul](#)

### darbar

A term used for a meeting of kings or rulers. In British Malaya, the First Darbar was held in 1897. Under British colonial rule, it was a platform for Malay rulers to discuss state issues and policies with British officials. Darbars continues to play an important role in Malaysia’s current elective monarchy: a conference of rulers from each of the nation’s nine states is held to elect a federal constitutional monarch whenever a vacancy occurs.

RELATED ARTIST: [Vincent Leong](#)

### Fluxus

“Fluxus” means “to flow.” The term was adopted as the name of an international art movement to bring art to the masses and challenges institutionally framed understandings of art. The first Fluxus event was organized in New York in 1961, and the movement developed as a loose affiliation of international artists, with origins influenced by Asian philosophy such as Daoism and Zen. The collective is rooted in experimental music, performance, and other interdisciplinary art forms.

RELATED ARTIST: [Nam June Paik](#)

### Genghis Khan

Genghis Khan is the founder and leader of the Mongol Empire—the largest-ever contiguous empire, spanning widely across northeast Asia and parts of eastern and central Europe. Genghis Khan reigned from 1206–27 and gained a reputation as a skillful warrior and conqueror.

RELATED ARTIST: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#)

### Guanyin

A commonly appearing figure of a bodhisattva in East Asian Buddhism. During the Song (960–1279) and Yuan dynasties (1279–1368), representations of Guanyin transformed from male to female form. Guanyin is worshipped in many Chinese communities as a goddess of mercy, compassion, and salvation.

RELATED ARTIST: [Cao Fei](#)

### gunpowder

An explosive material discovered in China during the late Tang dynasty (618–907 CE). Originally developed by Daoists for medicinal purposes, gunpowder was first used for warfare about 904 CE.

RELATED ARTIST: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#)

### installation art

A term used to describe art that occupies an entire room or gallery space. Installation art is created with consideration to how a viewer experiences the work of art and often includes mixed-media components designed to be viewed as a unified whole. Installation art gained prominence in the 1970s and can be temporary or permanent. Many temporary installations are site specific, or created to have a relationship to a particular place or location.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Cai Guo-Qiang](#), [Lee Bul](#), [Lee Ufan](#), [Kamin Lertchaiprasert](#), [Nam June Paik](#), [Do Ho Suh](#), [Sun Xun](#), [Sun Yuan & Peng Yu](#), [Tang Da Wu](#), [Rirkrit Tiravanija](#), [Tsang Kin-Wah](#), [Danh Vo](#), [Wang Jianwei](#)

### internment

The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II involved forced relocation and incarceration in isolated housing camps across the United States. Intended to prevent espionage, these actions were authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, shortly after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. Internment affected between 110,000 and 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, 62 percent of whom were U.S. citizens.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Isamu Noguchi](#)

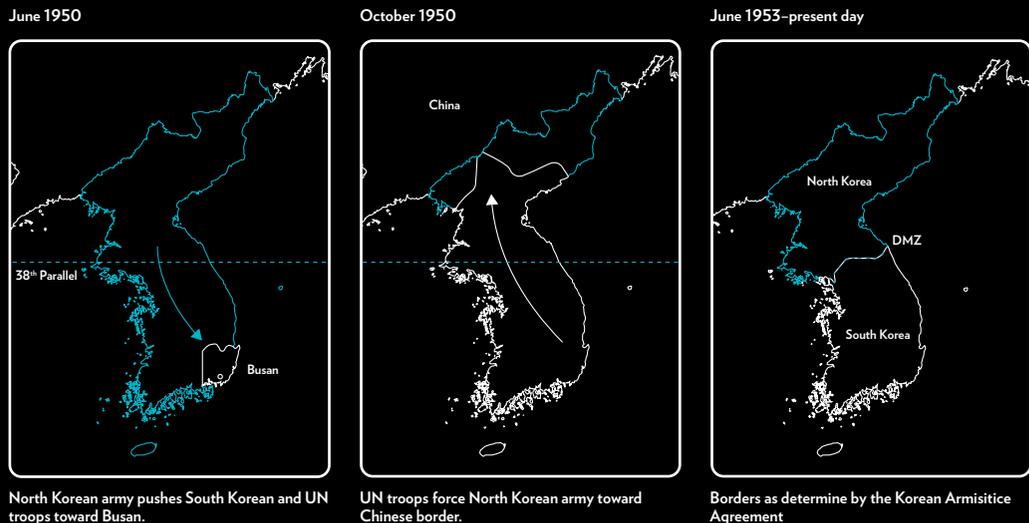
### ● Khmer Rouge

“Khmer Rouge” was the name given to supporters of the Communist Party of Kampuchea in Cambodia. Motivated by the spread of communist ideology in Soviet Union and China, the Khmer Rouge controlled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. During this time, they instituted communal labor camps, resulting in rampant disease, poverty, and starvation. Under leader Pol Pot, the state controlled all aspects of a person’s life, and mass executions of “undesirable” men, women, and children were ordered. The Khmer Rouge was ultimately responsible for the death of approximately two million people, or 25 percent of the population of Cambodia. After decades of trauma, the United Nations court found Khmer Rouge leaders guilty of crimes against humanity for their roles in the brutal political genocidal campaign they waged.

RELATED ARTIST: [Sopheap Pich](#)

### ● Korean War

The Korean peninsula was divided into North and South Korea beginning in 1945, as a result of the Cold War between Soviet forces in the North and U.S. forces in the South. In June 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea. The United Nations, including the United States, joined the war on the side of the South, while the Soviet Union and China allied with the communist-led North. At least 2.5 million people died by the end of the conflict in July 1953, with the peninsula still divided between the North and South. Even after the war, the United States has kept troops stationed in Seoul, approximately thirty miles from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates the two countries.



RELATED ARTIST: [Ha Chong-Hyun](#), [Nam June Paik](#)

### ● Lao Buddhism

Buddhism reached Laos—the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia—during the seventh to eighth centuries CE. Buddhism remains the center of life in Laos, and many Lao men join a monastery at some point in their lives. Laos is famous for its small, votive Buddhist images carved in wood. When creating a Buddha form, Lao artisans are expected to be in a spiritual state that enables them to visualize an ideal reality, and the resulting sculptures feature certain hand gestures, known as mudras, each with a specific meaning.

RELATED ARTIST: [Kamin Lertchaiprasert](#)

### ● Mao Zedong

The chairman of the Communist Party from 1935 to 1976, Mao was the founding father of the People’s Republic of China and declared its establishment on October 1, 1949. Mao’s campaign to transform China from an agrarian to industrial economy, known as the Great Leap Forward (1958–62), led to the deadliest famine in history and the deaths of forty-five million people. In 1966 he launched the Cultural Revolution, which sought to renew the spirit of the Chinese Revolution by uprooting all capitalist and bourgeois values, leading to the persecution of millions of people. His death in 1976 marked the end of the Cultural Revolution and a turn-about in Communist Party politics.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Ai Weiwei](#), [Cao Fei](#), [Sun Xun](#)

### ● Minimalism

A term used to describe painting or sculpture characterized by precise and simplified geometric forms that arose as a rejection of Abstract Expressionism’s gestural and emotive claims. Minimalist compositions are often based on a nonhierarchical and mathematically regular or repetitive structure, such as a grid. The development of Minimalism is linked to the emergence of Conceptual art in the 1960s.

RELATED ARTIST: [Ha Chong-Hyun](#)

### ● Mono-ha

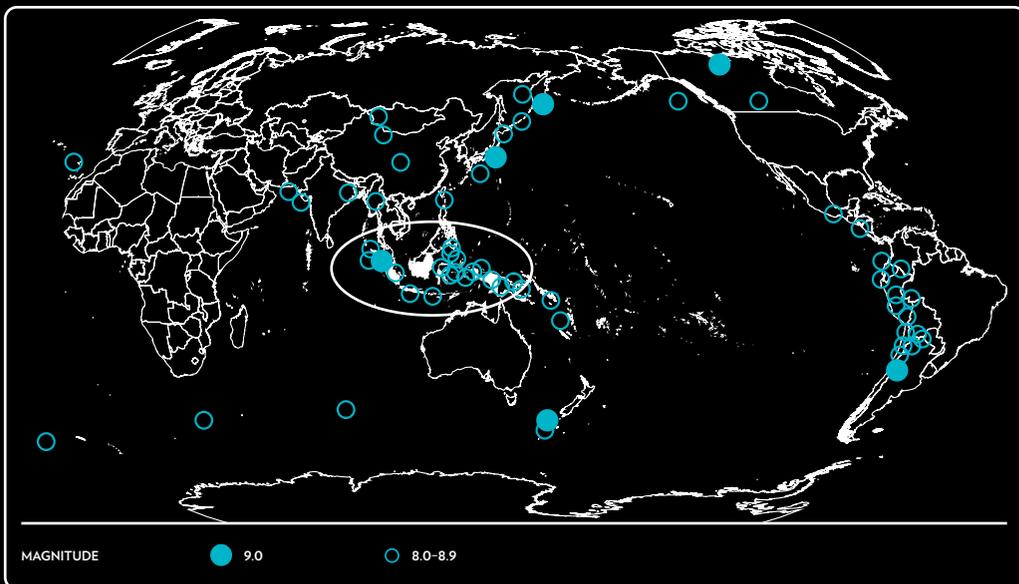
An art movement that emerged in Japan and lasted from 1968 to 1973. The term *Mono-ha* means “school of things” in Japanese, and practitioners emphasize the relational structure between *mono* (“things”), body, and space. Artist Lee Ufan produced many important writings on Mono-ha, proposing that objects gain meaning from how they are situated in a space, with emphasis on the dynamic relationship between the viewer and the work and an authentic encounter with the “the world as it is.”

RELATED ARTIST: [Lee Ufan](#)

### ● Mount Merapi

Mount Merapi is the most active volcano in Indonesia and located on the island of Java, the world's most populous island. Indonesia is an archipelago, comprised of approximately 17,508 islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, a highly unstable area where many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. Since 1548 Mount Merapi has erupted regularly, most recently in 2006, 2010, and 2018. The 2010 eruptions caused over 350 deaths, and more than 350,000 people were displaced.

Global Earthquakes (1900–2017), with Indonesia circled



RELATED ARTIST: [Arin Dwihartanto Sunaryo](#)

### ● Park Chung Hee

The president of South Korea from 1963 until his assassination in 1979. Park Chung Hee's rule was marked by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. The establishment of a developmental military dictatorship in 1972 led to restrictions on personal freedoms, suppression of the press and opposition parties, and control over the judicial system and universities.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Ha Chong-Hyun](#), [Lee Bul](#)

### ● Pearl River Delta

Surrounding the area where the Pearl River flows into the sea, this Chinese metropolitan region is the largest urban zone in the world in size and population. When Deng Xiaoping became leader of the People's Republic of China in 1978, he implemented economic policies that opened up the Pearl River Delta to foreign trade and investment. Deng's reforms established Special Economic Zones in the region with increased tax incentives and decreased government oversight for local governments and businesses. This generated rapid expansion in business, manufacturing, and infrastructure. Many younger artists and intellectuals moved to urban centers in the Pearl River Delta, hopeful for the promise of a new era of openness in China, while turning a critical eye to the impact of rapid change on everyday life.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Cao Fei](#)

### ● performance art

An art form that employs a combination of movement, theater, cinema, music, or other forms of expression, so as to act out concepts before an audience in a choreographed fashion. In the United States, performance art came to the fore during the 1960s with "Happenings," live events that combined elements of dance, music, and theater. In the 1970s and '80s, performance art evolved to engage and critique social realities.

RELATED ARTIST: [Nikki S. Lee](#), [Rirkrit Tiravanija](#)

### ● Post-Minimalism

An art term coined in 1971 to describe work that uses Minimalism as a reference point. Post-Minimalism rejected the geometric forms and rationality of Minimalism, instead focusing on irregular and organic forms, materials, and physical processes.

RELATED ARTIST: [Lee Ufan](#)

### ● relational aesthetics

A term that describes art focused on human interaction within a dynamic social context. Relational aesthetics gained prominence during the 1990s and frames art as an exchange between the artist and the audience. The artist is seen as a facilitator, rather than creator, for this social interaction.

RELATED ARTIST: [Rirkrit Tiravanija](#)

### Socialist Realism

An artistic style that utilizes realism to promote socialism. Socialist Realism was developed in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s and was adopted by other socialist countries to depict the ideal socialist society. In May 1942 the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art outlined Communist Party policy on artistic culture in China, encouraging artists to abandon traditional forms of Chinese ink painting and instead adopt oil painting that reflected the life of the working class. The style reached its height in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when it was the main creative method in all fields of art and used as a means to spread political propaganda.

RELATED ARTIST: [Duan Jianyu](#), [Wang Jianwei](#)

### sumi-e

Japanese ink painting, or sumi-e (*sumi* means “black ink,” and *e* means “painting”), is an art form traditionally associated with Zen practice. During the Kamakura era (1192–1333), sumi-e flourished as an art practice due to trade between Zen monks in China and Japan. In sumi-e, artists concentrate on expressing reality in its purest form by moving the hand in effortless way, without any hesitation or corrections. A master calligrapher must clear one’s mind and let the brush flow fluidly with clarity and confidence, reflecting a connection to spiritual enlightenment.

RELATED ARTIST: [Kenzo Okada](#)

### Tiananmen Square

In April 1989, following the death of Hu Yaobang, a former Communist Party leader who had pushed for democratic political and economic reforms, thousands of students marched through Beijing to Tiananmen Square, a public plaza in the center of the capital. Over the next few months, many people joined protests and hunger strikes to call for greater accountability in the Chinese Communist Party, assembling over one million people in Tiananmen at its height. In May 1989 the Chinese government declared martial law and sent the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to Beijing in an attempt to stabilize the situation and restore public order. On June 4, 1989, Chinese soldiers opened fire on civilians and students, crushing the demonstrations. The death toll is estimated in the several hundreds to thousands, but an official death toll was not released. The incident remains a highly censored subject in China today.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Ai Weiwei](#), [Cao Fei](#)

### video art

This art form involves videos or moving pictures. Video technology emerged in the 1960s and was a medium that allowed artists involved in Conceptual and performance art to record and document their work easily. Nam June Paik is widely regarded as the “father of video art.”

RELATED ARTIST: [Cao Fei](#), [Nam June Paik](#), [Sun Xun](#), [Tsang Kin-Wah](#)

### Vietnam War

The Vietnam War (1955–75) was a lengthy conflict between South Vietnam, which was supported primarily by the United States, and the communist government based in North Vietnam. It is considered a Cold War–era proxy war, fueled by U.S. foreign policies against communist expansionism. The Vietnam War was the second-longest war in U.S. history, costing the lives of more than three million people, including over fifty-eight thousand American soldiers.

RELATED ARTIST: [Danh Vo](#)

### woodblock printing

An art technique invented during the Tang dynasty (618–906 CE) in China, originally as a method of reproducing illustrated Buddhist texts. To create a woodblock print, a block is carved away with a chisel and the uncarved, raised area is inked and printed to reproduce the text or image. This technique became popular again as a method to disseminate artwork with social and political messages during the 1950s through 1980s among Chinese artists working in the Socialist Realist style.

RELATED ARTIST: [Sun Xun](#)

### yūgen

An aesthetic concept influenced by Japanese Buddhism, *yūgen* considers the beauty of the ephemeral in the natural world. Buddhism was introduced in Japan in 552 CE and remains a major influence in Japanese culture today. In the Buddhist tradition, the appreciation of nature as beautiful, transient, and imperfect is fundamental to many Japanese aesthetic ideals, and this mindful approach to the world is integrated into many aspects of daily life.

RELATED ARTIST: [Kenzo Okada](#)

### Zen Buddhism

A school of Buddhism that focuses on meditation, self-control, and spiritual enlightenment through practice. Zen originated in China, spread to Japan in the twelfth century CE, and gained popularity in the West during the mid-twentieth century. Zen teachings emphasize beauty in natural things that are imperfect and incomplete. Zen aesthetic is central to Japanese art forms such as calligraphy, ceramics, tea ceremony, painting, and martial arts.

RELATED ARTISTS: [Isamu Noguchi](#), [Kenzo Okada](#)

**Honorary Trustees in Perpetuity**

Solomon R. Guggenheim  
Justin K. Thannhauser  
Peggy Guggenheim  
Hilla Rebay

**Honorary Chair**

Peter Lawson-Johnston

**Chair of the Board**

William L. Mack

**President**

Wendy Fisher

**Vice-Presidents**

Robert C. Baker  
John Calicchio  
Dimitris Daskalopoulos  
Charles M. Diker  
Linda Macklowe  
Wendy L-J. McNeil  
Edward H. Meyer  
Denise Saul

**Director**

Richard Armstrong

**Treasurer**

Robert C. Baker

**Secretary**

Sarah G. Austrian

**Assistant Secretary**

Dana Wallach Jones

**Director Emeritus**

Thomas Krens

**Trustees**

Richard Armstrong  
Jon Imanol Azua  
Robert C. Baker  
John Calicchio  
Cindy Chua-Tay  
Paul Cronson  
Dimitris Daskalopoulos  
Charles M. Diker  
Carl Gustaf Ehrnrooth  
Gail May Engelberg  
Wendy Fisher  
J. Tomilson Hill  
Elliot S. Jaffe  
Rashid Johnson  
Francesca Lavazza  
Peter Lawson-Johnston  
Peter Lawson-Johnston II  
William L. Mack  
Linda Macklowe  
Wendy L-J. McNeil  
Edward H. Meyer  
Vladimir O. Potanin  
Stephen Robert  
Denise Saul  
James B. Sherwood  
Barbara Slifka  
Mark R. Walter

**Honorary Trustees**

Elizabeth Richebourg Rea  
Michael P. Schulhof

**Trustees Emeriti**

Mary Sharp Cronson  
Jennifer Blei Stockman  
John S. Wadsworth, Jr.  
John Wilmerding

**Trustees Ex Officio**

Tiqui Atencio Demirdjian,  
Chair, International Director's Council  
Pilar Crespi Robert,  
Chair, Executive Committee,  
Peggy Guggenheim Collection  
Advisory Board

**Curatorial**

Alexandra Munroe, Senior Curator, Asian  
Art, and Senior Advisor, Global Arts  
Kyung An, Assistant Curator, Asian Art

**Development**

Corinne Goodsall, Director, Corporate,  
Institutional and Global Partners  
Andrea Petrini, Associate Director,  
Institutional Development  
Kelly Kramps, Manager, Institutional  
Development

**Digital Media**

Laura Kleger, Director, Interactive and  
Digital Media  
Caitlin Dover, Associate Director,  
Digital Media  
Stephan Kneusel, Digital Media Producer

**Education**

Sharon Vatsky, Director of School, Youth,  
and Family Programs  
Queena Ko, Project Manager,  
Curriculum Development  
Isabella Caporuscio, Administrative  
Associate  
Jaclyn Delamatre, Educator  
Tzu-yu Chen, Education Intern

**Finance**

Lesley Lana, Director of Budgeting  
Anna Shadbera, Senior Accountant

**Graphic Design**

Jae-eun Chung, Director,  
Graphic Design

**Human Resources**

Sarah Rosen, Director of  
Human Resources

**Interactive**

Maria Slusarev, Associate Director,  
Interactive  
Josie Rubio, former Interactive Producer  
Matt Thomas, Web Developer  
Daniel Yang, Web Developer

**Legal**

Marianna Horton Mermin,  
Senior Associate Counsel  
Elena Kyriakides,  
Associate General Counsel

**Marketing**

Holly Campbell, Director of Marketing  
Alexandra Revans, Marketing Associate  
Harineta Rigatos, former Digital  
Marketing Manager  
Elizabeth Cosgrove, Digital Marketing  
Coordinator

**Media and Public Relations**

Sarah Eaton, Director, Media and  
Public Relations  
Kristina Parker, Senior Manager,  
Communications  
May Yeung, Former Publicist

**Publishing**

Diana Murphy, Publisher  
Elizabeth Zechella, Managing Editor  
Kara Largenton, Associate Manager,  
Rights and Reproductions

**Security**

Emily Schluter, Associate Director,  
Security  
Jonita Luti, Administrative Supervisor,  
Security  
and team

**Theater**

Brenda Gray, Director,  
Theater Operations  
Julia Hahn, Manager,  
Theater Operations  
and team

**Visitor Experience**

Brian Wilson, Manager,  
Visitor Experience  
Kai-Ti Kao, Associate Manager,  
Group Sales and Box Office  
and team

**Project Partners and Collaborators**

Claudia Ocello, Museum Partners  
Consulting, LLC, President and CEO  
Rob Strati, Echo Design, Co-founder/  
Head of UX and Research

**Teacher Advisory Committee Members**

Diane Berman, 4th-Grade Teacher, PS 87  
William Sherman  
Maria Bonilla, Middle and High School  
Visual-Arts Teacher, Veritas Academy  
Michael Elias, Freshman English  
Instructor, Westchester Community  
College  
Nancy Iannicelli, Art-History Teacher,  
Saint David's School  
Nick Kozak, Studio-Art and Art-History  
Teacher, Manhattan/Hunter Science  
High School  
David McDonough, Geometry and  
Algebra Teacher, Millennium Brooklyn  
High School  
Julia Munar, K-5 Visual-Arts Teacher, PS  
8 Robert Fulton  
Shani Perez, Pre-K-5 Visual-Arts Teacher,  
PS 51 Elias Howe  
Pamela Shipley, AP Studio-Art Teacher,  
The Hudson School  
April Tonin, former K-12 Art, Art-History,  
and Museum-Studies Teacher, The  
Nightingale-Bamford School

*Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art* © 2020 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. All rights reserved.

Published by  
Guggenheim Museum Publications  
1071 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10128

Design: Other Means  
Printer: Die Keure  
Editorial: Michael Ferut

Cover: Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974 (2000 version; see p. 118). Installation view, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, February 11–April 26, 2000

Unless otherwise noted, all artworks © the artists. Work by On Kawara © One Million Years Foundation; work by Arthur Mones © Estate of Arthur Mones; work by Isamu Noguchi © 2020 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/ARS; work by Hiroshi Sugimoto © Sugimoto Studio

*Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art* and the images, artworks, audio and video clips, illustrations, designs, data, and text featured therein, are proprietary to the Guggenheim or used consistent with the owner's permission or applicable law. Copyright and other proprietary rights may be owned by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, the Guggenheim. This resource is made available for limited noncommercial, educational, and personal use only, or for fair use as defined in the United States copyright laws. *Teaching Modern and Contemporary Asian Art* or any portion thereof may not be sold or otherwise commercially distributed.

Cover, pp. 18, 20, 26, 36, 38, 53, 79, 81, 121, 132, 166, 174, 198, 212, 214, 220: David Heald © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation (SRGF)  
p. 10: Courtesy Ai Weiwei Studio  
pp. 12–13, 62 (top and bottom), 64, 78, 102, 118, 158, 160, 172, 190, 191 (left and right), 206 (top and bottom): Kristopher McKay ©SRGF  
p. 15: Lucas Vandroux, Creative Commons  
pp. 21, 167 (top): Pixabay  
p. 23: Hiro Ihara, courtesy Cai Studio  
pp. 29 (left and top right), 37, 88, 96 (right), 127, 151, 201: Public domain  
p. 29 (center left top): Ronnie McDonald, Creative Commons  
p. 29 (center left bottom): Morio, Creative Commons  
p. 29 (center right): Arian Zwegers, Creative Commons  
p. 29 (bottom right): Jorgé Lascar, Creative Commons  
pp. 34, 166, 204: Scott Rudd © SRGF  
p. 39: Courtesy Duan Jianyu  
p. 42: Kim Sang-Tae  
pp. 50, 52, 56: Courtesy On Kawara studio and David Zwirner  
p. 55: Matt Carasella  
p. 60: Klaus Vyhnalek, courtesy Studio Lee Bul and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul  
p. 68: Courtesy Nikki S. Lee  
p. 76: G. R. Christmas, courtesy Pace Gallery  
p. 84: Jessica Hromas  
p. 92: Lee Dong Sheng, courtesy Kamin Lertchaiprasert  
p. 94: Courtesy Kamin Lertchaiprasert  
pp. 94–95 (bottom [all]): Ben Symons

p. 96 (left): Buddhamuseum.com  
p. 100: Michio Noguchi © 2020 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/ARS  
p. 102: Allison Chipak  
p. 104: Peter Horree/Alamy Stock Photo  
p. 116: Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Alamy Stock Photo  
p. 124: Courtesy Sopheap Pich Studio  
p. 126: Oliver Christie for Tyler Rollins Fine Art  
p. 128: Stéphane Janin  
p. 140: Courtesy of Navin Productions Ltd.  
p. 144 (right): Margaret Bourke-White/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images  
p. 150: Mathias Schormann © Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin  
p. 156: Ju Yeon Lee, courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul  
p. 164: Peng Peng, courtesy Sean Kelly, New York  
p. 168: Sun Shaoguang  
pp. 176–77: Courtesy Sun Yuan and Peng Yu  
p. 180: Andika Auditya  
p. 184: Crisco 1492, Creative Commons  
p. 188: Christine Butler  
p. 196: Courtesy Rirkrit Tiravanija and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York / Rome  
p. 209: © SRGF  
p. 215: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration  
p. 217: National Geographic Service © 1962 White House Historical Association  
p. 222: Will Ragozzino