

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS //

MINJA GU

Pasta Nowadays

H ART, p 4

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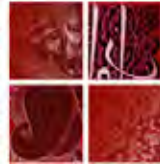
Ingredients (for 10 people)

Feta 10g	Leek 3.4g	Salt	Anchovy 0.42 piece	Cabbage	Lemon Juice
Goat Cheese 40g	Basil 0.85g	Mustard	Clam + Mussels 35.8g	Pumpkin 52g	Diced bread
Mozzarella	Chervil	Allspice	Seafood Mix 75g	Black Olive 1/10 handful	Milk 0.2 cup +2.6L
Parmesan 12.8g	Parsley 1/20 cup	Red Onion	Bacon	Mushroom 26g	Flour 15g
Ricotta 20g	Chives	Onion 7/20	(10g crispy, 20,8g diced)	Zucchini 0.7 piece+15g	Olive oil
Gorgonzola 14.6g	Celery Powder	Chopped Onion 15g	Veal Medallion 126g	Broccoli 1/10 piece	Butter 25.2g + 3 knobs
Pecorino 0.3cm+13.8g	Nutmeg	Garlic (Garlic clove) 1.1	Diced Ham 35g	Asparagus 1.04 piece	Chorizo oil
Comté 20g	Thyme	Shallot 0.1	Chorizo 10.41g	Rucola 2g	Cream 1/10 cup +2g
Roquefort 20g	Bayleaf 1/4	Trout 0.41 piece	Lettuce 10g	Red Pepper 0.05 piece	Chicken Stock Cube 1/10
Fontana 9.8g	Paprika Powder	Smoked Salmon 0.4 piece	Cherry Tomato 8	Red Paprika	Caper 0.2 table spoon
Half matured cheese 9.8g	Allspice	Scampi 2.6 pieces	Tomato 1	Yellow Paprika	Egg
Grated Cheese 15g	Marjoram	Cod 60g	Peeled tomato 130g	Corn Salad	Tomato Concentrate 10g
Gruyere 20g	Sage Leaf	Scallop 2.5 pieces	Carrot 0.6	Frozen peas 10g	White Wine 8ml
Mint	Pepper	Crumbled Tuna	Spinach 14.6g	Lime 1/10	

- Clean all the vegetables and measure out the suggested amount.
- Dice pumpkin and paprika. Julienne carrot and zucchini. Cut asparagus and broccoli into small pieces. Slice cabbage. Blanch all of them in salted water. Leave them out to drain on paper towel.
- Season Cod fish, Trout, Scallop, Scampi, and Veal medallion with salt and pepper.
- Chop garlic, shallot, onion and red pepper. Slice red onion.
- Mix red pepper with anchovy fillet in oil. Add paprika powder, garlic, ground parmesan, allspice and olive oil.
- Cut the goat cheese into equal pieces. Finely chop the chives. Mix them with olive oil and lime juice, season with chives, salt and pepper.
- Grill veal medallion, fish, scallop and scampi in butter in the pan. Grill diced bread and sprinkle with parsley.
- Fry onion(sliced red onion and chopped onion) and garlic(chopped, whole), leek (cut into ring and julienne), chopped shallot, cubed cut pepper in olive oil. Add chicken stock cube. Season with salt and pepper. Put bacon and chorizo, fry them until crispy.
- Add tuna, and seafood mix, mussels, clam and chopped anchovy. Add bay leaf and white wine. Sauté until the clam shells open. Put all the vegetables(zucchini, carrot, broccoli, mushroom, cut spinach) into the pan. Add tomato, tomato paste, peeled tomatoes and cream. Simmer, then place aside.
- Boil water for pasta.
- Melt the butter in the pan and stir in the flour. Put egg, milk, comté cheese, diced ham, feta cheese, green peas, salt and pepper. Put gorgonzola, fontina and pecorino as well. Then simmer to reduce to half.
- When water starts to boil, put pasta noodles following their suggested cooking time, from 12 minutes to 3 minutes.
- Mix all the prepared ingredients for sauce.
- Put all the rest cheese, all the rest of herbs and let it simmer. Then put lettuce, rucola and bread on it.
- When pasta is ready, drain.
- Take some pasta, put some sauce on it.
- Add ground cheese. Ready to serve.

Dongyeon Koh, *Against exotic objects: the recent direction of conceptual artistic practices in contemporary Korean art: Wan Lee, Minja Gu, and Junebum Park*
Modern Art Asia, n°16, p 26 - 30
November 2013

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DIGITAL MEDIA, EXOTIC OBJECTS ISSUES IN RECENT DISPLAYS OF ASIAN ART



SALLY CLARKE ON URBANISATION AND NEW MEDIA IN CHINA
ANKITA KAPOOR ON DIGITAL ART IN INDIA
DONG YEONKOH ON OBJECT-BASED PRACTICE IN KOREA
NANCY MINSHULL BEECH ON FRIEZE
ALISON MILLER, CECILE LALY, BANSIE VASVANI

**modern
art asia**

issue sixteen, november 2013

AGAINST EXOTIC OBJECTS:
THE RECENT DIRECTION OF CONCEPTUAL ARTISTIC
PRACTICES IN CONTEMPORARY KOREAN ART:
WAN LEE, MINJA GU, AND JUNE BUM PARK

DONG-YEON KOH

Critical interpretations of ready-mades in non-Western contexts, particularly in the globalized art world, are often confined to the exotic, local thematic meanings of those objects. Art criticism of Ulfan Lee's works related to the Monoha movement and Sungtaek Lee's conceptual art in Tate Modern are no exception, as most of their works are overly associated with, in a way, an orientalized image of spirituality, alternative religions, and "local" artistic traditions. In lieu to this critical concern, exhibitions of the ready-mades adopted by three Korean artists will serve as useful examples in calling our attention to the diversified and shifting trends in the reception of ready-mades utilized by artists in non-Western contexts. The works of Wan Lee (as show at Daegu Art Museum, Korea, 13 March-30 June, 2013), Minja Gu (at the National Museum of Modern Art, Korea, March, 2013, and Geumho Art Museum 13 June-31 August 2012), and Junebum Park (at Art Sydney and Nikolaj Kunsthal, Denmark, 17 February-14 March, 2013) demonstrate their conscious efforts to move away from the exotic and materialized notion of ready-mades to the recent conceptual practice of using objects to intervene and interrupt the aesthetic, economic, and scientific systems of our societies.

In *Products from Labor & Profit* (2012-13), Wan Lee exhibited two of the same ball pens, yet a crucial aspect of this project is how the artist procured his ball pens, rather than the materialistic component of his objects. The artist both worked at the company making the ball pens and invested in the stock of the same company. He then purchased ball pens; one with the profits that he made working at the company, and one with his investment earnings. The two identical ball pens, were supposed to challenge how certain value systems have been created in our society. Lee's installation is comprised not of only the ball pens as the artist's ready-made, but the record of the market's fluctuation while he was investing as well. Lee also transformed the raw materials of a chicken into a baseball. The weight of a baseball is roughly the same as that of one package of chicken sold in his neighborhood supermarket. He then sold his "chicken" balls on eBay. Here, his carefully constructed baseballs would serve as the means for the artist to

observe people's perception of the artist' labor and materials, rather than being art works in their own right.

Minja Gu's project, included in the National Museum of Modern Arts' group show presenting new talents in contemporary Korean Art, is equally notable for her usage of consumer products in dealing with how the values of certain objects are decided upon by the viewer's perception of "exotic" cultures. Her project *Atlantic-Pacific Co.* (2012) began during her residency at The International Studio & Curatorial Program in New York. During her residency, Gu gathered a massive amount of exotic consumer products from Atlantic and Pacific Avenues and sold them for nine percent more than their original prices as a way to reflect the time and labor she had invested to search for, purchase and display these products.



Minja Gu, *Atlantic-Pacific Co.*, as installed at Moore Street Market, New York, 8th-31st December, 2011. Image courtesy of the artist.

Products at *Atlantic-Pacific Co.* were attributed with different personal, artistic and educational values. An old lady from Trinidad at the Moore Street store was, for instance, surprised to find coffee imported from her home country in Gu's *Atlantic-Pacific Co.*, whilst at Geumho Art Museum in Seoul, most visitors regarded these exotic food products as educational references through which they could learn about an unfamiliar culture. Gu's tentative company and her objects implied not only how globalization makes objects from different cultures interact with communities, but also how the difference of perspectives can produce an array of interpretations about the same "exotic" products. Moreover, Gu's object, not unlike the case of Wan Lee's products, points to what Lucy Lippard has called the "dematerialization of art". As an active community artist, Gu appropriated these consumer products as an important initiator for stimulating and expanding the viewer's interaction with her project.

The physical presence of objects is less prominent in Junebum Park's work. The diagrams, signs, logos, and maps that the artist preferred to use as a kind of ready-made are adopted to refer to underlying aesthetic and social structures, systems, and knowledge. During his residency in Australia, Park developed his project out of his research on construction plans of dams in Australia and Korea (the Korean government is proceeding with its controversial project of establishing dams in the four major rivers, and the Australian canal is one of the models that the Korean government initially looked up to for inspiration). His archival materials, ranging from maps in different sizes and perspectives, attest to his process of simultaneously working with different and sometimes contradictory ways of representing natural realities. Park's artistic process resembled that of a pseudo scientist as he researched and gathered information about natural landscape and the route of canals, in addition to his given knowledge of dam engineering. The focal point of Park's project has, again, less to do with the physical presence of his archive than his awkward endeavor in embarking on his project of creating a dam.

Lee, Gu, and Park appropriate the ready-made not merely to signify distinctively "Asian" or "local" qualities, but also to proceed with their sophisticated and critical approach toward existing systems in the art, economics, and scientific knowledge. Such critical revelations are important to recognize the increasingly conceptual and immaterial nature of ready-mades and objects introduced by the younger generation of contemporary

Barbara Adams, *Old New Territories : ISCP at Moore Street Market*
ISCP
2013

Old New Territories:

ISCP at
Moore Street Market

That “artists have the capacity to condense, anatomize, and represent symbolically complex social and historical processes,”¹¹ is certainly the case with South Korean artist-in-residence Minja Gu’s *Atlantic-Pacific co.* In this project, Gu allegorizes ocean exploration in the age of discovery through a local expedition along the corridors of Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street in Brooklyn. Here, the mode of participation is mediated through exploration and exchange. Gu’s project resonates with the power relations of imperialism as participants embark on voyages into unknown territories to collect rare and exotic products. These explorations reveal how the sovereign powers of imperialism have given way to globalized economic and cultural configurations without clearly identifiable territorial power centers, and without fixed boundaries and borders. This disjuncture is evident in the mélange of commodities that accumulate in *Atlantic-Pacific co.*

Although the commodity takes center stage, the conditions of exchange are not defined by economics alone. Rather, the commodity is rearticulated as a mediator to activate social and cultural dialogue. Gu creates a market within a market at Moore Street, and like the Greek agora, it functions as a composite of social, cultural, economic and spatial relations, posing a fragmented narrative and critical commentary. The company’s “rare products” assembled at Moore Street as an interactive installation act as a parable of the existing booths at the market and its exotic persona. These artifacts, the plunder and booty of adventuresome explorers, are assembled in a functional store alongside a logbook and map that tells the stories of the voyages. Collecting items from Brooklyn thoroughfares creates a fictional, subaltern version of historic colonial trading companies. Gu gives the same care to record keeping as her predecessors, yet the trajectory of the cultural commodity is disrupted and re-sited, resulting in shifts in terms of value and meaning. The acts of consumption along which

11 Martha Rosler, “Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Political Art ‘Survive’?” *e-flux Journal* 12, January 2010, accessed December 21, 2012, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/take-the-money-and-run-can-political-and-socio-critical-art-%E2%80%9Csurvive%E2%80%9D/>.



Minja Gu, *Atlantic-Pacific co.*, 2011, Installation view (detail)

these commodities move, reflect broader patterns of migration and show how the mobilities of goods and people transfer objects from one repository of memory and context of ordering to another.

If it is true that “commodities, like persons, have social lives,”¹² then the ways in which they travel and encounter struggles over their meaning, tells us something not only about the objects, but also about the cultural, economic and social values around which these objects circulate and coalesce. In Gu’s project the object’s value is reinterpreted through its out-of-placeness, through its imagined biographical tale, through its uniqueness, or through recognition of its simple utility, expressing the

12 Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

“commodity potential” that allows objects to change value and status at various points in their lives. In creating new trajectories for these objects, *Atlantic-Pacific co.* presents the conditions that now characterize a global economy. In this way, Gu’s project expresses a Benjaminian proclivity—that it is only when the object is ripped out of its normal context that we are able to clearly see the structures of which it is a part.¹³



Minja Gu, *Atlantic-Pacific co.*, 2011, Performance and mixed media installation

Belgian artist-in-residence Lotte Van den Audenaeren also plays with context and atmosphere in her work that was on view at the market. *Potentialis*, Dutch for “potential modus,” is an apt moniker for Van den Audenaeren’s project that is more suggestive than assertive, comprised of conceptual gestures and subtle interventions that shift along with the rhythms of the day. Each piece coyly provides just a glimpse or trace

13 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

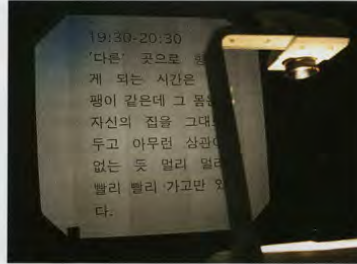
Daebum Lee, *Minja Gu*
February 2009

전, 시, 리, 부

구민자展

1. 9~24
스페이스크로프트

글 | 이대범 · 미술평론가



〈42.195〉는 마라톤 경기에 참가하여 42.195km를 완주하거나, 'Walking measure'를 통해 일상의 움직임 가운데 42.195km를 기록한다. 〈Air parcel〉은 어디론가 흘러가는(흘러간) 공기의 흐름을 기록한다. 〈향연: symposion〉은 달이 뜨는 시간부터 달이 지는 시간까지(2007년 12월 29일 밤 11시 5분부터 12월 30일 오전 11시 20분까지) 만 30세 6명의 남녀가 나눈 사랑에 관한 대화를 기록한다. 〈Identical times〉는 24시간의 시간과 장소를 관찰하여 만든 24개의 리포트와 서머타임과 관련된 비슷하면서 다른 두 개의 이야기를 병렬적으로 기록한다. 구민자의 작업은 무언가를 '기록'함으로 완성된다. 그렇다고 '기록'하는 행위 자체가 중요한 것은 아니다. 구민자에게 중요한 것은 기록의 끝 지점을 어떻게 설정하는가이다. 왜냐하면, 그에게 기록은 행위의 마침이 아니라 행위와 상관 없는 우연적 요소에 의한 일시중지이기 때문이다. 〈향연〉의 마지막은 '이제 일어날까'이다. 12시간 가까이 나눈 사랑의 이야기가 끝이 났기 때문에 일어나는 것이 아니라, 아무런 상관 없는 달이 지고 있기 때문이다. 〈42.195〉에서 'Walking measure'로 거리를 측정하고 있는 행위 역시 지속될 수 있는 것이지만, 일정한 거리에 도달했기에 마침표를 찍을 수 있는 것이다. 연속적으로 흘러가는 시간의 흐름을 임의로 분절하는 것은 일년을 365일(혹은 366일)로 하루를 24시간으로 나누고, 24시간을 다시 분으로 또다시 초로 나누는 것과 동일하다. 단지 차이가 있다면 그것은 절대적 규범으로 인지된다는 정도이다. 체계를 분절하여 규격화하는 기저에는 불필요한 것을 삭제하여 얻게 되는 편리함이 있다. 그리하여 모든 것을 명확하게 보이도록 한다. 그러나 이 분절은 실상 그곳에 내재되어 있는 미묘한 차이와 그것의 모호함을 차단하여 일관된 틀로 통합한다. 연속을 이야기하고 있는 것처럼 보이지만, 그 이면에는 연속을 가장한 분절이 자리한다. 이렇듯 쉽게 분절되는 체계에서 우리는 연속성이라는 불합리함(?)을 만끽하

며 살아간다. 그렇다면 중요한 것은 분절되면서 사라진 것들은 무엇이고, 우리의 연속성이 담지하고 있는 것이 무엇인가이다. 이상에서 알 수 있듯, 구민자의 작업은 누군가가 임의로 규정한 틀을 자신의 신체(말을 포함)를 통해 새로운 규범으로 만들어 자신의 일상을 재맥락화한다. 구민자의 전시는 이 분절의 틈새를 비집고 나오는 다층적 말들의 집합이다. 〈향연〉은 6명의 사랑에 대한 기록이다. 이 대화에 참여하기 위해 제한된 요건은 '나이'이다. 즉 동일한 시기를 살아온 사람들이다. 그러나 이것은 일년을 체계로 보았을 때 이야기이다. 실상, 이들은 사회에서 동일한 분류로 구분되고 있지만, 그래서 비슷한 경험과 비슷한 감각을 가지고 있다고 판단할 수 있지만, 이들이 살아온 생애는 합일할 수 없는 지점들이 놓여 있다. 1년을 365로 분절했을 때, 이들의 생애는 결코 동일하지 않은 상이한 사람들이다. 단지 나이가 같을 뿐이다. 〈42.195〉에서는 같은 거리를 작가가 이동한다. 마라톤 대회이고, 하나는 작가의 일상이다. 상이한 목적을 가진 이동은 동일한 거리라는 체계에서 의미를 획득한다. 그러나 동일한 거리의 시간은 그 목적(혹은 수단)에 따라 17시간이 걸리거나 8일이 걸리기도 한다. 〈Identical times〉는 시간과 방위를 결합하여 장소를 정하고 그 시간에 해당 장소의 상태를 관찰하여 기록한 것이다. 여기서 시간은 하루를 균일하게 분절하는 규칙이 아니라, 방위를 나타내는 지표로 전이된다. 아무런 의미 없는 두 조합이 필연적으로 결합하면서 새로운 시각을 형성한다. 〈Air parcel〉에서 발생된 실제 공기는 현재 어디에 있을까? 그것은 구민자가 제시한 흐름을 따라 흘러간다고 단정할 수 없다. 그것은 구민자의 말처럼 "바람을 타고 계속 퍼져나가 지구 어딘가에 머무르거나 또 움직이고 있을 것이다."

전시 전경

Minja Gu
Taipei Biennial, Catalogue, p 17 - 18
2008

17

TAIPEI BIENNIAL

08
TB

Minja GU

b. 1977 in South Korea

Minja Gu lives and works in Seoul. Her works appear frail and intimate, and almost indistinguishable from everyday life. Gu is predominately interested in what society uses and then discards. She recycles back into presence and with grace, wit and poetry the many supposedly valueless remnants of daily consumerism, such as leftover coffee cups or plastic bags. In addition to her physical artistic production she also initiates activities that run in parallel, or could be considered parasitic to everyday participation in society. These have included running the marathon at her leisure to complete it in a day-and-a-half, a time-period too slow and also not

grandiose enough for the media to remain interested, and a 'symposium' on love that involved a quite plausible and again totally unspectacular 12 hour get-together for women of the same age on a roof-top.

Gu has recently participated in the Ssamzie Open Studio exhibition in 2007 and 2008, and in an exhibition at KNUA gallery in 2007. She will soon present a solo exhibition at the Croft Gallery, Seoul.



17.1 The World of Job

installation, 2008

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artist

Gu's second project for the biennial is *The World of Job*, an installation that is the outcome of performative, documentary actions based on the story to an aboriginal woman who arrived in Taipei 40 years ago to make a living. Without the benefits of being a local, or speaking Chinese, Gu uses the few Chinese characters she knows and proceeds to list her abilities looking for a job. The project raises questions of how it is to be an outsider or a foreigner, as well as the perception of an artist's condition as 'professional'. Does working as an artist imply an occupation? What kind of skills do artists have? How does an artist produce value in the form of a voluntaristic trivia and make meaning out of it?



17.2 Secret Garden

installation, 2008

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artist

One of the things a first-time visitor to Taipei notices are the ever-present 'anti-crime' windows that sometimes extend to the upper floors of buildings, at a height that even the most talented of thieves would find impossible to overcome. The local praxis of veiling windows and balconies upsets the standardised force of residential architecture by being 'customised' and allowing new adoptive functions. The contradictions between the original architecture and the lived-space that then takes over, are more inventive, varied and visible in non-western cultures and in buildings where people of lower economical means reside. Minja Gu transposes this vernacular tradition to the Museum which is one of the most well-regulated, institutional models in the world. Museums generally spurn additions to their architecture, but Gu undermines this rigid approach by transforming one of the bulky ubiquitous windows of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum into an 'anti-crime' window jammed with a collection of chachkas. She borrows from the everyday and gives back to it..