

AHL Foundation

Archive of Korean Artists in America (AKAA)

Interview

- Interviewee: Jinyoung Koh
- Interviewer: Dr. Sunggwe Kim
- June 9, 2024 via Zoom
- Recorded and transcribed by Jinyoung Koh (AKAA Research Fellow 2022-2023)
- Video files
- This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity
- Open for research use

Use of Interview Transcript of Archive of Korean Artists in America (AKAA)

The Archive of Korean Artists in America (AKAA) provides our interview transcripts for non-commercial purposes. The following interviews were conducted by various curators, artists, and scholars and were recorded and transcribed by AHL Foundation's Research Fellow. We ask readers to know that the written record is a transcription of the spoken word, which has been edited for continuity and clarity and reviewed by the interviewee and the interviewer.

Quotes must be cited as follows: Interview with _____, date of interview. Archive of Korean Artists in America (AKAA), AHL Foundation.

For commercial or reproduction use, including reproduction, quotation, publication, and broadcast in any medium, distribution, derivative works, public performance, and public display, prior written permission must be obtained from AHL Foundation.

Permission will comply with any agreements between the interviewee and the interviewer and may be withheld in the AHL Foundation's sole determination. Please direct any questions or inquiries for the AKAA to archive@ahlfoundation.org.

© 2024 AHL Foundation, Inc.



Sunggue Kim (SK): **Can you tell us about your journey as an artist and educator?**

Jinyoung Koh (JK): My journey has been deeply intertwined with both my artistic practice and my role as an educator. I completed my Doctor of Education in Art & Art Education at Columbia University, which provided me with a strong foundation in both theory and practice. My Master of Fine Arts in Photo & Media from the California Institute of the Arts and my Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago shaped my approach to art-making. Currently, I serve as a graduate program director and assistant professor at Towson University in Maryland, where I am passionate about guiding students in their artistic endeavors.

SK: **How does your background influence your art practice?**

JK: My diverse educational background has significantly influenced my art practice, allowing me to explore various mediums and concepts deeply. My work often reflects my academic interests in identity, existence, and the interplay between tradition and modernity. My experiences as both a student and educator continually inform my creative process, fostering a sense of curiosity and exploration.

SK: **What inspired your oil painting "Realistically Impossible to Make a Pure Straight Line Outside of Scientific or Mathematical Parameters"?**

JK: The inspiration for this painting came from my fascination with the concept of perfection and its limitations. I wanted to explore how striving for perfection in something as simple as a straight line can reflect broader themes of identity and existence. This piece delves into the idea that perfection is often an unattainable goal, much like the concept of home, which can transcend physical boundaries and take on various forms.

SK: **Can you elaborate on how your work addresses the concept of home and identity?**

JK: My work often explores the fluid and multifaceted nature of home and identity. In "Realistically Impossible to Make a Pure Straight Line Outside of Scientific or Mathematical Parameters," I use the metaphor of an imperfect straight line to discuss how our understanding of home and identity is constantly evolving. The notion of home is central to my work, as it is a place of comfort and belonging, yet it can also be elusive and changeable. Through my art, I aim to capture this duality and the nuanced experiences that shape our sense of self.

SK: **How do you incorporate elements of Korean culture into your art?**

JK: Korean culture plays a significant role in my art, providing a rich tapestry of traditions and values that I strive to honor. Through my brushstrokes, I aim to

encapsulate the timeless essence of Korean culture, blending traditional techniques with contemporary themes. This cultural heritage informs my exploration of identity and existence, allowing me to create works that resonate with both personal and universal themes.

SK: What message do you hope viewers take away from your work?

JK: I hope viewers come away with a deeper appreciation for the complexities of identity and the impermanence of existence. My work is an invitation to reflect on our own experiences and the ever-changing nature of home and self. By engaging with the ambiguous symbols and reconstructed meanings in my art, I hope to inspire viewers to consider their own journeys and the intricate layers that make up their identities.

SK: How does the motif of light and color play a role in your series "Light Casts No Shadow"?

JK: In "Light Casts No Shadow," I explore the interaction between light and color by creating paintings with trembling white lines in a grid pattern, emphasizing the tension between colors. This series reflects my fascination with the scientific principle that light sources cannot cast shadows, as they emit light waves that move away from them. By using different levels of translucent layers and structuration, I experiment with how light passes through and interacts with various colors, creating a dynamic and immersive visual experience.

SK: Can you discuss the significance of the non-straight lines in your work?

JK: The non-straight lines in my work symbolize the inherent imperfections and vulnerabilities in our perception of reality. These lines, as if viewed through distorted lenses, reflect the idea that achieving a pure straight line is realistically impossible outside of scientific or mathematical parameters. This imperfection creates a sense of friction and tension, which resonates with the themes of insecurity and vulnerability that I often explore. These trembling intersections of lines on the canvas become tools for the viewer to see light and experience the nuances of color.

SK: How has your background in color photography influenced your painting techniques?

JK: My background in color photography has profoundly influenced my painting techniques, particularly in my understanding of light, color, and the concept of layers. The process of developing film in a darkroom taught me the nuances of mixing light

through magenta, cyan, and yellow prisms. This experience helped me appreciate how reflections of light can capture floating hues and how these can be translated into painting. In my paintings, I use translucent brush strokes of white lines, creating different saturation levels to reflect light and evoke atmospheric presences and absences.

SK: What do you hope to convey through the combination of scientific observation and artistic expression in your work?

JK: My work explores the intersections of spatial and temporal elements in our environments, raising questions about the meaning of existence. Through metaphorical connections between insecurity, vulnerability, and the physical properties of light and color, I strive to convey the complexity of our perception and the intricate layers that define our experiences. This blend of science and art allows me to delve deeper into the essence of reality and life.