

Narrativisation of Site and Spatialisation of Narrative

Practice based PhD

Department of Art

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'Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.'

ABSTRACT

Narrativisation of Site and Spatialisation of Narrative

This dissertation is a practice-based research project and consists of four video works (*Eight Men Lived in the Room - News* (2010), *Eight Men Lived in the Room - Filmset* (2011), *The Life of a Comedian* (2012), *Memory Museum - Guro* (2016)), an introduction with a contextualization and methodology of the field and four essays.

As the title *Narrativisation of Site and Spatialisation of Narrative* suggests, my subject matter and my research methodology are inseparable from each other and are also in an inter-reflexive relationship. In order to find out how sites are narrativised, I experimented with spatial structures in narrative. To investigate how narratives can be constructed by spatial forms, I specifically selected a few sites as the subjects of my narrative. How do the spatial forms and elements of the particular sites function as the subject, formal elements or formal constitutive principles in narrative? This question has developed into an exploration of the spatial perspective of narrative structures and its possibilities.

The places chosen in my research are places which have now been forgotten and have disappeared from the archives, where individual memories and collective memories intersect, and current places associated with them are unrecorded. These places were the actual places that were chosen to experiment with as many forms of narrative as possible, and these places contained different narrative forms and current situations which exist somewhere between memory and oblivion.

This research was to find alternatives to the problems in narration through analysing the places associated with past memories. The existing narratives based on the cultural forms – archive videos, photos, memorials, performances and so on – were still limited to incorporate contemporary temporality and diverse memories of the past. The linear narrative form has limitations in the specification of the memories that were experienced beyond the temporal boundaries. I thought that the introduction of spatial elements and composition to the narrative form relating to past memories might provide an alternative

direction to these limitations. Thus, I analysed examples of contemporary artwork that have been converted into spatial experiences, not as a way of separating the boundaries of time, but retaining the characteristics of temporal art, such as video and performance.

While collecting existing narratives about these sites and conducting critical research on the contents and structures of these narratives, I came to recognise the problem of how the stories are constructed. These narratives are time-oriented (for example, chronologically arranged), unilinear, and dramatised in the format of introduction, development, turn and conclusion. When it comes to narrativising stories of others, those forms allow audiences or visitors to withdraw themselves from considering their own ethical relationship to the stories or to feel ambivalent towards them. This is connected to the conventional narrative structure, which ultimately leads itself to a time-oriented narrative, and I began to ask what would be an alternative form that goes against the temporal and causal conventions of narrative. In search of such form, I wanted to build narratives about the particular sites mentioned above and while doing so, to experiment with the spatial structure in the stories.

In this dissertation, the methodological parts of the essays play three different roles. First, the essays present what I discovered and what I conducted during the work process. The texts function as a space to which I transferred all the 'things' that I collected and organised from the beginning to the end of the production as well as post-completion of the work. They include both tangible and intangible materials. The function of my texts can be compared to that of 'the cabinet of curiosity'. The texts are close studies and contemplation on the elements collected, and they also present these elements taken out of their original contexts and enter them into the realm of artmaking. Second, the texts reorganise the materials into meaningful experiences. They show how the ideas and questions that I had during my 'collecting' process can turn into a more concrete and relevant outcome. Third, the texts are instructions for my future artistic production as well as scores for my future performance. They would serve as a starting point for the questions or experimentations that would come after the completion of the artworks.

Using these methods, my dissertation also discusses the issue of simplification or unity in narratives dealing with the past, the impossibility of representing the past and historical

reality, audiences' position as strangers, and the cultural locating of narrative along the existing issues in contemporary documentary and video art that deal with the past. My writing is a critical review of these issues and perceives them as a point of departure for finding alternatives.

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WORK DETAILS

The works are presented on the website (<https://hyewonkwon.wordpress.com>) and on a separate online link in the thesis. These works are also included on the accompanying DVD.

Eight Men Lived in the Room - News

HD video, stereo sound, video projection, 5min 56sec, 2010

Eight Men Lived in the Room - Filmset

2CH HD video, stereo sound, 2min 52sec, 2011

The Life of a Comedian

HD video-audio installation, vertical video, transparent screen, 15min 18sec, 2012

Memory Museum - Guro

HD video, stereo sound, vertical display, 12min 33sec, 2016

INTRODUCTION

This research was born out of my own interest in sites that hold historical and cultural significance. These sites vary from a boarding house for workers (which now only exists in black and white news film footage) or a comedian's hometown in North Korea recalled in his memory (he was separated from his family during the Korean war) to a factory building, which now serves as an artist residency space.

The places chosen in my research are places which have now been forgotten and have disappeared from the archives, where individual memories and collective memories intersect, and current places associated with them are unrecorded. These places were the actual places that were chosen to experiment with as many forms of narrative as possible, and these places contained different narrative forms and current situations which exist somewhere between memory and oblivion.

My research began through conducting a literature search on each of these places. In addition to official documents, I conducted interviews with people who were related to the places to collect personal memories. What was most significant in this research process was not only the memories of these places themselves, but also the point at which these places were memorised or forgotten through a particular form of narrative. Thus, I considered a field investigation of the actual place and photographic documents as the most fundamental steps in conducting my research. The next step was to analyse the research materials. In this process, discussions on existing historiography and memory studies were used as a conceptual framework for critical analysis.

The views of Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann were of great assistance to me during the course of the work, particularly where they developed the notion of 'cultural memory' by focusing on the processes in which memories are stored and handed down by diverse cultural representations, and thereby acquiring social and cultural meanings. Although the concept of cultural memory implies the reconstructive features of memory, it further emphasises the fact that the meaning of the past is specified through the form of cultural

representation.¹ In addition to the places of memories themselves, which were my research subjects, I found a clue as to the analysis and reflection of the various forms – archive videos, photos, memorials, performances and so on – of the narratives regarding such places. Also, the concept of ‘lieu de mémoire’ (realms of memory), which was proposed by Pierre Nora, played an important role in the process of exploring alternative forms of narrative through a critical analysis of the locations of memories.² Pierre Nora presented ‘lieu de mémoire’ as a kind of concept which encompasses a specific object or place of a memory, a symbolic act or symbol, and a functional mechanism that builds and preserves memories. Through a combination of memories as well as history, he argued that existing historiography could move in a more productive direction. I tried to apply and specify this argument in constructing the place of actual memories in narrative form. The narrative form I intended to construct was not a complete method of representation but the ‘site of memory’ of symbolic meaning, where history and memory intersect, and its meaning continues to transform according to the age of its members, just as that proposed by Nora as ‘lieu de mémoire’. In short, I applied it to the construction of the narrative form and tried to specify it into the ‘space of remembering’, not the method of representation.

This research was to find alternatives to the problems in narration through analysing the places associated with past memories. The existing narratives based on the cultural forms – archive videos, photos, memorials, performances and so on – were still limited to incorporate contemporary temporality and diverse memories of the past. The linear narrative form has limitations in the specification of the memories that were experienced beyond the temporal boundaries. I thought that the introduction of spatial elements and composition to the narrative form relating to past memories might provide an alternative direction to these limitations. Thus, I analysed examples of contemporary artwork that have been converted into spatial experiences, not as a way of separating the boundaries of time, but retaining the characteristics of temporal art, such as video and performance.

While collecting existing narratives about these sites and conducting critical research on the contents and structures of these narratives, I came to recognise the problem of how

¹ Assmann, J (1995). *Collective Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and political Imagination*. Cambridge University Press

² Nora, P (1996), *Realms of Memory*. Columbia University Press

the stories are constructed. These narratives are time-oriented (for example, chronologically arranged), unilinear, and dramatised in the format of introduction, development, turn and conclusion. When it comes to narrativising stories of others, those forms allow audiences or visitors to withdraw themselves from considering their own ethical relationship to the stories or to feel ambivalent towards them. This is connected to the conventional narrative structure, which ultimately leads itself to a time-oriented narrative, and I began to ask what would be an alternative form that goes against the temporal and causal conventions of narrative. In search of such form, I wanted to build narratives about the particular sites mentioned above and while doing so, to experiment with the spatial structure in the stories.

Ethical responsibilities the audience may acknowledge for themselves in a viewing experience are very much related to the psychological and cognitive distance created between the audience and the subject matter of the narrative or the distance intentionally arranged (or designed) by the narrative structure of the work of art itself. The distance I referred to between the audience and the subject matter is temporal, spatial and also psychological. When this distance is set too close or too far, the audience either feels too involved and simplifies the experience or feels neglected and thus, cannot empathise with the subject matter. Therefore, my research strives for a narrative structure that does not hold down the temporal, spatial and psychological distance between the two (so that the audience does not feel either too close to or too far-removed from the story) but allows the distance to remain unstable and to keep on oscillating, encouraging the audience to figure out where to locate themselves around the subject matter and acknowledge the process.

My dissertation also discusses the issue of simplification or unity in narratives dealing with the past, the impossibility of representing the past and historical reality, audiences' position as strangers, and the cultural locating of narrative along the existing issues in contemporary documentary and video art that deal with the past. My writing is a critical review of these issues and perceives them as a point of departure for finding alternatives.

Mika Hannula points out that existing narratology including Ricoeur's is still very much captivated by the concept of narrative unity.³ 'But why unity' Hannula inquires and asks why 'the plurality, the messiness and the multiple satires to evolve and collide' are not allowed in narrative.⁴ My first project titled *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News* begins with news film footage from 1961 reporting the completion of the boarding house for workers on the outskirts of Seoul. The archive film itself was just material representing a fragment of the past. Later, I did more research and developed a chronology of the boarding house covering the timeline from its opening to its demolition in 1999. However, I still sought for a form that can tell the chronology but defies the narrative unity, because it was constructed from lots of fragments collected from the past. In order to break down the unity created during the work process, I came up with a structure where the voice narration and the image do not match. While the chronicle of the site, narrated by voice actors, is presented in a yearly time frame, keeping the narrative unified, there is a single video sequence (original news footage) repeatedly playing and it brings disruption to the consistency of the narrative.

As the title *Narrativisation of Site and Spatialisation of Narrative* suggests, my subject matter and my research methodology are inseparable from each other and are also in an inter-reflexive relationship. In order to find out how sites are narrativised, I experimented with spatial structures in narrative. To investigate how narratives can be constructed by spatial forms, I specifically selected a few sites as the subjects of my narrative. How do the spatial forms and elements of the particular sites function as the subject, formal elements or formal constitutive principles in narrative? This question has developed into an exploration of the spatial perspective of narrative structures and its possibilities.

In my work, I mean the term 'spatial form' of narrative both literally and metaphorically. An investigation of spatial form in narrative, in the literal sense, is a study on the ways in which spatial elements and architectural structures help arrange and compose narrative elements in an actual physical space. In the metaphorical sense, it shares the concept of 'spatial form of text' by the literary critic Joseph Frank, which focuses on the spatial form

³ Hannula, M. (2009) *Politics, Identity and Public Space – Critical Reflections In and Through the Practices of Contemporary Arts*, Expothesis, Utrecht Condortium, p.74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.75.

in narrative rather than narrative that revolves around time or the cause and effect relationships.⁵ Frank writes that the spatial form in narrative is composed through 'compositional devices' such as 'fragmentation, montage of disparate elements, and juxtaposition'. My exploration on spatial form in narrative in this dissertation includes both the narrative forms created by the physical structures of a real space, which are sensed and acknowledged by the audience's physical body, and the formal patterns in narrative perceived through their mind.

My dissertation consists of four video works and four text essays. Each essay talks about the process of creating one video. These essays also present my thoughts on the works when they were still in progress as well as when they were finished. In these writings, readers shall learn about my work process and features, which reflect my own research methodology, and what they culminate into. This kind of methodology is often considered to be part of the 'artistic research' category. However, the methods that I used to create each work represent my own itinerary and discoveries.

Collecting and Composition as Methodology

In this dissertation, my essays about the video works do the following. First, the essays present what I discovered and what I conducted during the work process. The texts function as a space to which I transferred all the 'things' that I collected and organised from the beginning to the end of the production as well as post-completion of the work. They include both tangible and intangible materials. The function of my texts can be compared to that of 'the cabinet of curiosity'. The texts are close studies and contemplation on the elements collected, and they also present these elements taken out of their original contexts and enter them into the realm of artmaking. Second, the texts reorganise the materials into meaningful experiences. They show how the ideas and questions that I had during my 'collecting' process can turn into a more concrete and relevant outcome. Third, the texts are instructions for my future artistic production as well as scores for my future performance. They would serve as a starting point for the questions or experimentations that would come after the completion of the artworks.

⁵ Frank, J. (1991[1945]). *The Idea of Spatial Form*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

Collecting is the method that I began my research with, and I used it for the longest time in this project. My collection includes materials such as documents, materials, and intangible elements, such as meetings, interviews, information and events. I use the collecting method in my overall research. I continue collecting while I produce and install my moving image works and even after the exhibition closes. For example, the first chapter of my essay, which is about the video work *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News*, features the following collection of things: information obtained from my visits to the National Archives of Korea; news footage from the 1960s; different thoughts on propaganda; the boarding house for workers; investigation of sites that are now gone; boundaries of archives; media photographs and newspaper articles; audio transcripts, recordings, discussions on the functions and roles of narration; repetitions; moving image editing; and the temporality of ‘pseudo-document’ archives. My dissertation uses collecting as a research method, and it shares the same discourse with Mieke Bal who studied the relationship between narrative and collecting. Bal writes, ‘... essential human features, that originates in the need to tell stories, but for which there are neither works nor other conventional models. Hence, collecting is story, and everyone needs to tell it’.⁶

Another important research method that I use in my dissertation is *composition*. In my work, composition refers to the process of arranging, organising the things that I collect and creating meanings from them. My dissertation itself functions as a conceptual space for my collection. The composition process involves making selections from the materials in the collection and also requires me to distance myself from the collection and make it defamiliarised. Mieke Bal refers to such a process as an experience of perceiving the materials in the collection as ‘absolute other’. More specifically, she calls it ‘paradoxical meaning production in collecting’.⁷ The process of defamiliarisation occurs while the collected elements are taken out of their original contexts, recomposed and entered into an artmaking context by the collector (i.e. the artist). Paul Ricoeur suggests the term ‘configuration’ to represent the idea of composition (the ways of arranging one’s collection) and writes that configuration is ‘this art of composition which mediates between

⁶ Bal, M. (1994) “Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting” in *The Culture of Collecting*, Reaktion Books. p.103.

⁷ *Ibid.*,p.105.

concordance and discordance'.⁸ Ricoeur writes that narrative operates 'in the line of connectedness', and this connection is 'the synthesis of heterogeneous'.⁹ In my own research, the concept 'discordance' of Ricoeur allowed me to unexpectedly discover relationships and make associations among different materials. An investigation that began with the building used as an artist residency led to a visit to a museum in the area. By combining elements of the two places, I turned the narratives of the sites (which is the subject of my project) into a moving image piece, which functions as a temporary museum.

As previously mentioned, while I worked on structuring my moving image work (i.e. making composition into a moving image), I especially considered how I would construct a spatial composition in the narrative. Spatial composition refers to applying elements of the space and the configuration of the site(s) as principles of formal composition to the work itself.

Post-production as Methodology

I worked on my dissertation while producing the artworks. I discuss the artmaking process itself as well as my reflections and studies on the finished piece. I wrote part of the text after the artworks were completed, and I continued working on the writing as I repeatedly revisited and reconsidered my work process and the final outcome over time. Whenever I went back to the writing and reworked on it after some time, I found myself reediting and reorganising my memory of the artmaking process and the finished work. As an interesting example of such post-production, I think of the American writer Lyn Hejinian, who continuously rewrote her autobiography, developing her text into a polyphonic structure.¹⁰ At age 37, Hejinian published *My Life* (1987), which consists of 37 text pieces (and each text piece consists of 37 sentences). Later this autobiography was republished when she was aged 47, 65, and 90, and each version had the number of texts corresponding to her age at the time of publication. This is a case demonstrating that post-production itself can be an artistic method for exploring possibilities of new kinds of narrative.

⁸ Ricoeur, P. (1994). *Oneself as Another*, The University of Chicago Press. P.141.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.141.

¹⁰ Hejinian, L. (2013). *My Life and My Life in the Nineties*. Wesleyan University Press.

About the Content and structure

Chapter 1 contains the process and results of the research into a boarding house for workers that has disappeared and exists only in the images in the archives. I analyse the reasons why the boarding house had been forgotten, and the conditions of the forgetting, based on the news film covering the completion of its construction in 1961. Moreover, I analyse not only the formal aspects of the government propaganda film from the 1960s, but also how the production of this film by the National Archives and the process of its preservation as archival material are related to its oblivion. The critical analysis of archival images and the exploration of the narrative form, including the forgotten current situation, was completed with the video work *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News* in the form of a ‘quasi-historical document’. I discuss the form of news composed of a collection of documents and ask about the meaning of the temporal composition in which the past place, recorded in a black and white archive video, is presented through the news format using the present tense.

Although Chapter 2 deals with the same place – the boarding house for workers – as in Chapter 1, it discusses the possibility and limitations of ‘autobiographical fiction’ as the narrative form in relation to the short story ‘fallen citizen’ written by Kwang Bok Lee.¹¹ The second work, *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*, explores the indeterminate possibilities of narrative form through the construction of the audiences’ complex temporal experiences – the temporal category of the past and the present that is not clearly determined. These discussions include the exploration of Jamie Baron’s analysis of the narrative possibility of San Soleil’s autobiographical narration by Chris Marker,¹² and the exploration of autobiographical narration as an open form where memory, fiction and present perception intersect in the performance, *Anomalous Fantasy*, by Eun Yeong Jeong.¹³

¹¹ autobiographical novel written by Lee Kwang Bok, based on his own experiences of living in a boarding house for workers. Lee, K. B. (1975) *Fallen citizens*. Shindonga, January, 278–309.

¹² Baron, J. (2014) *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, p. 30.

¹³ <http://sirenjung.com/index.php/yeosung-gukgeuk-project/anomalous-fantasy-2016/>

In addition, this chapter also discusses the writings of others related to *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*. Critic Pahng Haejin finds a narrative form suggesting the impossibility of representation in the filmset through the construction of empty spaces which emphasise the absence of the past, the movement of the camera and singing coming from voices which lack bodies. On the other hand, sociologist Dong Jun Seo identifies with the melancholy that an artist faces who encounters the impossibility of writing history in the form of narrative within the filmset. Through such discussions, the predicament of the narrative that the filmset intended to construct was developed into a more specific question. In work which deals directly with the past, how does critical perception come to be empathised, and how do the ethical positions of audiences relate to narrative form and create meaning?

Chapter 3 deals with the collaborative project entitled *The Life of a Comedian* featuring South Korean comedian Bo Won Nam, who has made stand-up comedy-style performances based on Korean contemporary history and collective memory. By applying Roland Barthes' concept of 'text' in the process of the collaboration with Nam, I analysed various elements and plurality of his performances and observed the process of collaboration as mentioned by Barthes, 'a reader as an active collaborator'.¹⁴ In this process, I explored the possibilities of theatrical re-enactment and space in terms of a 'site of remembering' to playback individual memories. In the performance onstage, where an autobiographical memory is being played out, it presents the possibility as a form of narrative that embodies memories through the flow of unstable consciousness that falls between memory and acting. Through the process of making *The Life of a Comedian*, I extend the concept of 'network' as a symbolic analogy to Barthes' 'text' and focus on the unstable flow of dynamics and meanings between elements of narrative form that deal with memory in order to discuss it through my own term 'traffic'. In addition, the situation in which *The Life of a Comedian* deals with collective memories of a certain generation of the past which are no longer shared with current audiences, is reflected in the form of its installation. *The Life of a Comedian* is not an actual performance but an audio-video installation that seems like a real performance. The performance, which is repeatedly

¹⁴ Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York : Fontana Press, p. 163.

replayed in the exhibition space, reveals the ways in which memory is narrated through the act of remembering.

Chapter 4 deals with a specific building, which is now used as an artist residency space, and the area 'Guro' where the building is located. While it had initially been built as a factory in the 1970s, the ownership and the building's functions have changed numerous times over the years. Researching this building and its surrounding area, I discovered the bureaucratic memorial 'Labourer House', which was established to commemorate the history of this area and raised questions regarding the way in which official memorials including this one have constructed a historical narrative of the local community and its identities. This memorial demonstrates a way to exclude the subject of memory and strengthen existing bureaucratic historical perspectives. Through *Memory Museum – Guro*, I studied the possibilities of alternative narrative forms while resisting the existing forms of the existing memorials. Based on cases of artists in the 1980s, who suggested the new concept of memorials and memorial halls, such as Jochen and Ester Gerz from Harburg, Germany – Monument against Fascism, War, and Violence and for Peace and Human Rights – I analysed existing concepts and forms where they intended to overthrow and examine the possibilities of the newly proposed 'memorial' narrative forms. Particularly in these cases, I focus on the ways in which space reminds us of memories of the past, all while refusing to represent the past, and participating as a 'co-producer' and a 'witness' in the process of remembering and commemorating the past. *Memory Museum – Guro* constitutes a space in which memories are recalled from different times and which intersect with each other and are repeatedly replaced by various memories in order to create a coexistent space. Such spatial arrangement not only includes memories, but also the process of oblivion, not to represent past memories, but to create spaces of generative narratives in which memories of the past were recalled, collected, overlapped and transformed. Therefore, in this chapter, through the video works of Malik Ohanian, I analyse the problems of temporality which are recognised as the limit of the Memory Museum. From the basis of the discussion on Ohanian's work that poses the question of 'simultaneity' through the spatial installation of video works and 'the sync does not fit' images and sound, the dynamics and the unstable flow of meaning – what was discussed earlier by using the term 'traffic' – between the elements of the narrative form which deals with memory can be extended not only to narrative form but also to the dimension where

the audiences experience the temporality of the place and share the meaning, and to find alternative possibilities for narrative form.

CHAPTER 1. The Forgotten Site – *Eight Men Lived in the Room* – News



Fig.1 *Eight Men Lived in the Room*, 2010, HD video, stereo sound, 5m 56s, video stills

The black-and-white film *Eight Men Lived in the Room-News*¹⁵ starts with the number '1961' on a black screen, and the following images contain news about the establishment of a boarding house for workers in Mulla-dong, Seoul, in 1961 in the typical form of the Korean Government's publicity film of that time. (The media scholar Jung Mee Mha defines the form of *Daehan News* (*Korean News*), publicized in theatres every week by the Korean Government from 1953 to 1994, as a kind of film.¹⁶) It is in a form in which narration and background music are added on top of footage, indicating that it was filmed under limited technical conditions. This news, lasting for 45 seconds, announces the completion of the building of a boarding house for workers in a vibrant and hopeful atmosphere, while the narration reports that the 3-story building can accommodate 200 people and the screen shows several images of it. In one of the images, a room containing 4 bunk beds can be seen. The news finishes after delivering the hope for the building that many workers can

¹⁵ my work, SD video, stereo sound, video projection, 5 minutes 56 seconds, 2010 (URL link: <https://vimeo.com/33214944>).

¹⁶ Mha, J. M. (2014) A historical consideration of the propaganda and the government PR. *Journal of Practical Research in Advertising and Public Relations*, 7 (4), 100.

find a place to stay there. That is all there is to the black-and-white film, stored as No. 397 in the National Archives of Korea. It seems irrelevant to today, like a short fragment of the forgotten past, so the original data themselves do not arouse a specific interest or an emotional response. However, the following context of the film makes an attempt to change this indifference or oblivion.

The film, followed by numbers for each year, such as 1962, 1963 and so on, was completed in 1999 after passing through the period between 1971 and 1976. All the narration in this period reports incidents of workers in the boarding house. The main characters in the incidents are a worker who died instantly from a falling piece of cement while working at a construction site, people who died from cholera after sharing a soup of clotted animals' blood near a construction site, a child murderer arrested in the boarding house, a film producer found dead from malnutrition in the boarding house and so on. After those stories about the residents of the boarding house, the film *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News* finishes by relating the story of workers being driven away to nearby dosshouses due to the demolition of the building in 1999.

Researching as the Performative Process

Except for the first sequence, telling of the completion of construction, among the eight chronological sequences of *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News*, the narrations of the remaining seven sequences were adapted from the contents of real references found during the research. The important criteria for the research were to include disparate elements as far as possible and to document the reference materials found during the research and my experiences during the process. This was because the purpose of the research was not to form a coherent viewpoint on the subject of the research or to make a specific representation relating to the subject of the research. The aim was different from that of the research of traditional documentary filmmakers or academic historians. My research intentionally took a circuitous route and even jumped to strange points that did not appear to be related to transcend logical correlation. This process aimed to find a newer context rather than studying the coherent grounds relating to the subject of the research. In fact, the important matter in this process was not actually the subject itself

but the process of making the map of the context embodying the journey starting from that subject.

The other purposes of this process were to form a relationship between the author and the subject of the research by examining it and studying how this examination of the process changes the relationship. The facts that the experience of the journey starting from the subject was important rather than the subject itself and the focuses were on how the subject of the research made a relationship with me and how it changed explain the performative character of the process. The following extracts are from my research diary, connoting my thoughts that occurred during the research.

Research Diary – Start of the Research

I found a studio with friends in Mullae-dong, Seoul, in 2008. It was not a familiar town to me, but the rusty iron plates and the smell of iron at the ironworks in the town were interesting. While looking at the old ironworks, I was curious about the old days of the town and consulted the related documents in the National Archives of Korea. However, contrary to my expectation, the documents concerning Mullae-dong were few. What captured my interest among them was the film about the completion of the boarding house for workers in 1961.



Fig. 2. Black-and-white news film, sound, 45 seconds, 31 December 1961. The National Archives of Korea, video stills

In the black-and-white news film, the completion ceremony was held in the snow. Men in military uniforms, a band, people who gathered to see it, a 3-story brick building, a signboard, the interior of that building, a long corridor with the doors of 24 rooms, the scenery of a room with a public bath and bunk beds and the scenery that lay outside a window of that room passed by.

Seen after people crowded into the new building, the inside of the building was empty and contrasted the scene of the completion ceremony, for which many people had gathered. The building was empty because the residents did not yet live there. However, strangely, this emptiness seemed to predict the future of the building. To me, this archive alluded to the future. It was an image of the past that revealed a certain sign of the future. (Fig.2)

Research Diary – Field Investigation of the Actual Place

My experiences, entangled in the archival film of 1961, made me continue to research the boarding house for workers. I found an address, which seemed to be related to the boarding house for workers in Mullae-dong, in an article from an old newspaper. However, the address system in South Korea has changed twice since then, so it was difficult for me to work out the exact location. With the help of an officer from the borough office, I found out roughly which part of the town it was within a distance of 4 km. I looked around that area in search of the boarding house for workers, but the exact place and the previous look of the place were still not certain, because the method of dividing the roads had changed and new apartments, a park and a senior welfare centre had been built. The more I looked for the building, which appeared to be solid and concrete in the black-and-white film, the more cloudy and uncertain it was in the present.

From the religious organization that ran the boarding house for workers at the end, its closure could be confirmed. The building was demolished in 1999.



Fig. 3. Colour photographs, 1971. The National Archives of Korea

I continued the research to find stories existing between two points, 1961 and 1999. The news of the completion ceremony in 1961 from the National Archives of Korea was the first and last significant document. The boarding house for workers appeared as the background in the other references.

The photograph from 1971 (Fig. 3) captured the First Lady when she visited the boarding house for workers. Slim and old men sat around the First Lady, who was wearing a fur coat, as if they were the background. I saw the faces of the actual residents of the boarding house for the first time in this photograph. They had sunk into the archives for a long time and coincidentally called out.

The other photographs contained not images of the building or administrative documents but the faces of the residents who lived in the boarding house for workers. However, they did not occupy a position as the main character in the frame of the photographs but existed as the background of the First Lady or extras. This confrontation with the faces of the residents, whose names only appeared as victims or criminals in newspapers, produced a big change in

my research. I came to empathize with the subjects of my research, and, at the same time, I was concerned about my feelings, because I did not want them to be rash sympathy or pity.

The faces of the nameless workers in the photographs were captured in the frame of a camera about 40 years ago and coincidentally called from the abyss of the archives after 40 years. I thought about how this 'contingency' can bring possibilities into the research and result in a work of art.

Selection, Deletion and Omission in the Archives

The research about the boarding house for workers continued to find more related articles from newspapers and magazines. From those articles I could speculate about the reasons for the disappearance of the boarding house for workers in the National Archives of Korea. The boarding house for workers appeared in the articles of newspapers and magazines as a house for workers who were injured on a construction site or a place where a murderer hid a body for a while. The boarding house for workers did not receive attention from the National Archives of Korea after its completion, because the military government at that time only kept records that publicized its policy or inspired patriotism. Therefore, all the workers who used to live there – mostly from the countryside – no longer exist in the official documents of the National Archives of Korea. The faces of the workers, coincidentally captured in the frame of the photograph (Fig. 3) taken when the First Lady visited the boarding house for workers at the end of the year, represent numerous faces that have been deleted or omitted.

Ernst van Alphen explains why archives have to be defined not only from the 'inside' but also from the 'outside' by referring to Michel Foucault regarding 'excluded' existences.

Especially Michel Foucault's notion of the archive seems to be responsible for this figurative use of 'archive'. He used the term archive for 'the law of what can be said', or a set of discursive rules. Such a set of discursive rules consists of specific conceptual distinctions that determine what can be said and what cannot be said. In that sense, discursive rules imply always at the same time exclusions. Those exclusions concern memories, documents, practices of knowledge production that

are overlooked, not taken seriously, considered as unimportant or without any value. Exclusions from the archive are inherent to any archival organization. This explains why memories and knowledge 'outside the archive' are also part of the archive, in the sense of being produced by archival rules of exclusion. As a consequence an archival organization has by definition an inside as well as an outside.¹⁷

Daehan News and Military Government

I undertook research about the form of media and the background of the time of the start of this project, the government's propaganda film called *Daehan News*.

Chungbum Han describes this period as the period of political transition and social chaos in the contemporary history of Korea.¹⁸

At the dawn of 16 May 1961, a small number of soldiers under the deputy director of the Second Artillery Corps, Chung-hee Park, were successful to dominate the Headquarter of the Army in Yongsan by mobilizing about 36,000 troops during the unstable situation of the politics, economics and society in the Second Republic. The key figure of the actual power under the parliamentary government, Prime Minister Chang, and his wife fled to the foreigner exclusive Carmel Monastery in Hyehwa-dong and the president Boseon Yun also hid his family in the house of relatives and waited the time shiftlessly at the Blue House, the Korean presidential residence. The Army Chief of Staff, Doyoung Jang, was watching his side between the government and the revolutionary army.¹⁹

After the military coup called the May 16 Coup, the Park regime began on 15 October 1963 and continued until 26 October 1979. Chung-Beom Ham integrates the changes of the film policy and institutional dimension during this period of political upheaval with incidents of 'the first merging of film companies from the announcement of the Ministry of

¹⁷ Van Alphen, E. (2015) The politics of exclusion, or, reanimating the archive. *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, 49/50, 118.

¹⁸ Ham, C.-B. (2014) A study on the newsreel and cultural films in the early 1960s. *Journal of East Asian Cultures*, 57.

¹⁹ Lee, Y. (2011) The History of the Junghee Park Regime. *Philmac*. (Requoted in Ham, C.-B. (2014) A study on the newsreel and cultural films in the early 1960s, *Journal of East Asian Cultures*, 57, 187–188).

Education on 30 September 1961 and the earlier enactment and proclamation of the National Film Production Center Act on 22 June'. He especially pays attention to the establishment of the National Film Production Center, working as the central organization of news and cultural films of the Park regime, and attributes special meaning to its aspect 'the Park regime's earliest Policy Act on the field of film production after the May 16 coup'.²⁰ Many scholars agree that *Daehan News* was a medium to secure the legitimacy of the military regime's power and promote the nation's policy.

Many scholars, including Sunghee Park, agree that *Daehan News* was 'the means of securing the justification of power and publicizing the policy' in the military government of the Park Chung-Hee Regime.²¹

This can be seen from how the growth of the film market had a direct connection with the frequency of the exposure of *Daehan News*, released at the same time. Korean citizens in the 1960s who just entered into the mass society were educated with the mission of the time called modernization through the messages, created by the nation, and the desires to achieve that mission were indoctrinated. From the facts that this indoctrination was one-way and the contents were exhaustively under the control of the producer, *Daehan News* can be seen as the means of the nation's propaganda in the form of a news report. ... The president Park Chung-Hee who seized power through the military coup d'état in the early 1960's under the banner of the national consensus and the aim of standing up from the economic aid system to the economic independence system adapted *Daehan News* as one of the most impactful means of the nation's propaganda in order to gain the attention of the public as one power.²²

It was the winter of 1961 when the ceremony for the completion of the boarding house for workers was held and produced in *Daehan News*. Only a few months had passed after the military coup d'état. Not only the establishment of the boarding house for workers but

²⁰ Ham, C.-B. (2014) A study on the newsreel and cultural films in the early 1960s. *Journal of East Asian Cultures*, 57.

²¹ Park, S. (2009) Grammar of propaganda: A pentadic analysis of the *Daehan News* 1960 ~1969. *Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies*, 53 (1), 324-347.

²² Park, S. (2009) Grammar of propaganda: A pentadic analysis of the *Daehan News* 1960 ~1969. *Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies*, 53 (1), 326.

also the ways in which the cameramen of the National Film Production Center shot the ceremony for the completion, the way in which it was produced in *Daehan News* and the way in which it was released at the theatres were related to the media policy of the Park Chung-Hee regime.

Moreover, the media policy of the military government is related to today's oblivion. The boarding house for workers, appearing in the black-and-white propaganda news in the 1960s, was intentionally and selectively recorded by the official archives called the National Archives of Korea, and it has sunk into oblivion since then. Filming the completion ceremony, screening it and keeping it as an archival document progressed under the media policy, but, at the same time, today's oblivion due to the disappearance from the archive could also be the result of the military government.

Temporality of the Archival Images

The empty images of the boarding house behind the crowded visitors in the original news film (the news about the completion ceremony of the boarding house for workers) were revealed more clearly as the continuity of the editing was broken. The method of editing would be chosen for the practical purpose of showing the images of the place more clearly. However, this editing of discontinuous images – of the crowded visitors and the empty space – created effects that the National Archives of Korea had not intended. Fifty years after the release of this film, the gap in time makes the images in the film appear to capture the future. There were empty rooms in the images because the residents had not moved in yet, but they seem to foreshadow the future of the building; it was empty once again before its demolition. It was a sign of the future, coincidentally captured in the images of the past.

An archive is read not only as an evidence of a specific time but also as a subject transcending the limit of time from the time lapse. When an archive is examined at different times, ambiguous and mysterious facts that are not apparent at the time of creation are revealed.

This attempt to read the archive as an image beyond the limit of the specific time creates more ironic situations from the unique ‘future projection’ style of narration in *Daehan News*. Sunghye Park describes the ‘future projection’ style of *Daehan News* in the following:

The key of news is usually delivering facts of the past but *Daehan News* is filmed in the ‘future-projection’ style so that incidents of the future are the main stories of the news. The ‘future-projection’ style focuses on delivering blueprints of the future rather than the present and emphasizing the appropriateness of the economic development.²³

When the last scene of *Daehan News*, used in *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News* (written as *News* hereafter), is viewed again, the paradoxical encounter of the ‘future projection’ style of narration (‘This boarding house for workers will be home for many workers in the future’) for the propaganda and the empty space, predicting the tragic future of the building, comes to the forefront more clearly.

The Imitation of the Form of Historical Documents

The film of the Korean Government called *Daehan News* had the characteristic of propaganda that aims to deliver information and educate people while appearing in the form of news. The purpose was to dominate and control the public’s awareness of the present. The National Film Production Center where *Daehan News* was produced had the right to make a decision regarding whether to include or exclude news at that time. This especially had a powerful influence over the countryside, where the spread of media was relatively poor. The purpose of the Government, controlling the public’s ways of recognizing and understanding the present, was seen not only in the contexts but also symbolically in the form itself.

The narration provided when the news about the completion of the boarding house for workers was delivered in *Daehan News* was the following:

²³ Park, S. (2009) Grammar of propaganda: A pentadic analysis of the *Daehan News* 1960 ~1969. *Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies*, 53 (1), 327.

The Seoul Metropolitan Council provides the cozy boardinghouse for workers in Mullae-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, for the workers who have no house. This well-built three-story building with 24 rooms that can accommodate 200 people with bedrooms, a restaurant, barbershop, bathhouses, kitchens and etc. will be home for many workers in the future.

The narration expresses information and opinions about the boarding house for workers in the form of news with the present and future tenses. The voice is of a middle-aged man, but he does not appear in the images. This is because it was not possible to relay from the spot at that time due to the technological limitations, so the narration was recorded in the studio after filming the scene and edited into the film. However, this 'disembodied voice' implies something more than the result of the technological limitations. Unlike announcers who delivered news on the other broadcasting stations at that time, *Daehan News* delivered news only with this 'disembodied voice' from the beginning to the end. By doing so, the military government that ordered the production of this news gained a more specific and omniscient position rather than being a specific agent from the abstract medium called a voice.

The following article from a newspaper (Fig.4) is about a worker who lived in the boarding house.

There was an accident when a lump of cement hit one of the workers working at the new construction site of the Electrical Testing Laboratory of KEPCO and instantly killed him at the site.

A lump of cement (thickness of 70 centimetres and length of 2 metres) fell off above the head of Sunbok Choi (25, living at the boarding house in Dongdaemun), who was digging the ground at the new construction site of the Electrical Testing Laboratory of KEPCO at 176-5 Sindang-dong at around 9 in the morning on 18th, and instantly killed him at the site.

This new construction site has been run by the construction company (owned by Youngbin Sunwoo) since 1 September.²⁴



Fig. 4. Article published on 18 September 1962. *Kyunghyang Daily News*

These documents, collected from newspapers, were adapted to the scripts of narration, as in the following, while working on *News*.

Today one of the workers working at the new construction site of Electrical Testing Laboratory of KEPCO died instantly after being hit by a falling lump of cement.

A lump of cement with a thickness of 70 centimetres and length of 2 metres dropped onto the head of Sunbok Choi, who was digging the ground at the construction site in Sindang-dong, Seongdong-gu, at around 9 a.m. and instantly killed him at the site. He was identified as a worker living in the boarding house in Dongdaemun.

As seen above, the new narration imitating the form of *Daehan News* has almost the same contents as the original document from the newspaper. What have been modified here are

²⁴ Article on 18 September 1962. *Kyunghyang Daily News*.

actually not the contents but the form of the documents. The documents in the form of a newspaper are modified into the form of *Daehan News*, which plays black-and-white moving images accompanied by a 'bodiless voice'.

By modifying not the contents but the form, the original way of recognizing the contents can be revealed, and interesting examples of the attempt to raise questions about it can be found in the long-term project of Walid Raad in the Atlas Group Archive. In his project the documents of 'Notebook Volume 38: Already Been in a Lake of Fire' were donated by a fictional historian of Lebanon, Dr Fadl Fakhouri, and they contain 145 pictures of cars. The cars in those pictures have the same brand name, model name and colours as the cars that were used for bomb attacks in the Lebanon War from 1975 to 1991. There are setting texts, called Dr Frakhouri's notes, next to the pictures of the cars. Those notes are the records of the number of casualties, the location and time of the explosion and information about the explosion. What are written there are the actual facts. The fiction is the form that created a fictional character, Dr Fakhouri, by collecting various facts and information with a laptop. Ernst van Alphen defines Walid Raad's process as follows:

The documents and images presented by the Atlas Group are not inherently fake or fictional. The texts and photographs were not manipulated. But it is their montage and assembling into a narrative or specific historical situation that propels them into fiction.²⁵

Moreover, van Alphen's quote from Raad addresses the questions of why the artist formed a certain narration by crossing the boundaries of fact and fiction and what the artist wanted to say through that narration.

I like to think that I always work from facts. But I always proceed from the understanding that there are different kinds of facts; some facts are historical, some are sociological, some are emotional, some are economic, and some are aesthetic. And some of these facts can sometimes only be experienced in a place

²⁵ Van Alphen, E. (2015) The politics of exclusion, or, reanimating the archive. *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, 49/50, 127.

we call fiction. I tend to think in terms of different kinds of facts and the places that permit their emergence.²⁶

However, although *News* is in the fictional form of 'alike-document', it is not a complete imitation but rather intends to be an incomplete imitation and amplify it. *News* attempts to criticize the original document, intervene in the way in which the documents in the archives are read and change or subvert this way through the method of 'incomplete imitation'.

The narration of the second sequence after the original archive (the 45-second news film) in *News* reports the accidental death of the worker from the boarding house by adapting the articles of the newspaper in 1962, but the moving images shown with this narration are still in the first sequence of the news. From this point the method of 'incomplete imitation' is used, and a gap between the moving images and the narration is created. The images containing the completion ceremony accompany the narration about the accidental death of one of the workers. They only have an indirect correlation. Then, until the last sequence depicting the demolition in 1999, the original film of the completion ceremony repeats in every sequence while the narration makes a bigger gap, as its content becomes more tragic after the hopeful stories of the completion ceremony.

As the content of the narration changes, the repeated moving images show that the 'bodiless voice', like an omniscient narrator in the original reference, is the form intentionally chosen and created. The gap between the narration and the moving images in *News* is produced by the discordance in contexts and the difference in time and amplified as the sequences develop. Furthermore, this gap shows how the subject of the boarding house for workers reveals the boundaries of the archive.

Furthermore, *News* attempts to experiment with possibilities whereby audiences can find new elements and interpretations in the edited moving images beyond the original purpose of this archive by using the repeated moving images of 1961 and the narration continuing to 1999. As I found a sign of the future in the images of the empty spaces of the

²⁶ Knape, G. (2011) Afterword. In: Walid Raad: I Might Die before I Get a Rifle. Göttingen: Steidl, p. 99.

boarding house, when the narration suggesting an image and meaning to this place loses its power and effect, there are more possibilities of making a new discovery in these black-and-white moving images. For example, an audience studying architecture can see it as a place of incarceration – like a prison – or a novelist can imagine the scenery viewed from the window of the room by the person who will live there – maybe because of the unnecessary direction in the scene in which the interior is examined objectively.

The place called the ‘boarding house for workers’ was seen through the specific form called *Daehan News*, and the meaning was presented in this form. In this respect *News* attempted to discover a new meaning of the place by disbanding the existing form called *Daehan News*, deleting the assigned meaning of the place and rearranging the omitted and deleted stories.

Temporality of the News Existing as Documents

What *News* considered as significant issues, apart from the existing form of historical documents, is the relationship between ‘documents’ and ‘a documentary’ and the way in which the form of news in the present extends beyond the given setting of time and transforms into a different experience.

Jamie Baron used what Philip Rosen mentioned about the difference between a newscast and a documentary while suggesting ‘the construction of temporal sequence’ for the most important variable in the process that ‘documents’ become ‘a documentary’.²⁷

Film theorist Philip Rosen argues that the difference between a newscast and a documentary about the same event concerns the production of a break between past and present and the act of putting events into a sequence. Moreover, he suggests that, when a series of documents is placed in a chronological sequence in which cause and effect are at play, their meanings are thereby restricted and, as a result, the texts into which they are appropriated begin to read as ‘documentaries’ and therefore as ‘history’. Discussing the difference between NBC anchor Bill

²⁷ Baron, J.(2014) *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*, Routledge, p. 35.

Ryan's newscast on the day of John F. Kennedy's assassination and a later documentary called *JFK: A Time Remembered* (Obenhaus, 1988), Rosen writes:

No one would argue, I think, that *JFK: A time Remembered* is not a documentary. In our standard expectations and mode of apprehension, it is recognizable as such both in its use of footage from the actuality of the events being depicted, and also because they are arranged in careful sequence and thus presented in a form that places and make sense of the actuality. Such a 'well-formed' sequence is justified precisely as History; sense can be made because the event is over. From this perspective, Bill Ryan's commentary is only a halting start to the ongoing project of converting a relatively unbridled visual indexicality into sense.²⁸

In fact, Baron's explanation that the 'construction of temporal sequence' is necessary when 'documents' become 'a documentary' is relevant to most historical documentaries. However, the interesting point relating to *News* is that Rosen gave the example of the news that reported the assassination of John F. Kennedy for the 'document'. Rosen actually produces this example to explain that a film is recognized as a documentary when this kind of news is arranged in a sequence, but I came up with other possibilities while pondering this relationship within *News*. To be specific, *News* also uses the 45-second news from 1961 as a 'document', and this document is arranged in a chronological sequence from 1961 to 1999. *News* is not just a document but becomes a documentary from the narration, corresponding to Rosen's idea. However, the unique point in *News* is that all the sequences are made of the documents. The narrative characteristic of *News* is the way in which the sequences are composed of the collections of the documents. There is no other narration that explains the overall sequence or another viewpoint that explains the documents. Literally, the collection of the documents themselves composes the sequence. The reason for this choice is that what I used as documents is in the form of news, and most of the texts of the narration in news are in the present. Because of the specific form of news, most of the contents of news are about events taking place on that day or a few days ago, so of course the tense that they use is the present or the present progressive form. The documents used in *News* are from the past, but audiences listen to

²⁸ Rosen, P. (2001) *Change Mummified: Cinema Historicity, Theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, p. 232.

the stories of the past in the present tense while watching it. I found this point to be a very interesting matter. Although the contents and technical facts of the news and the years passing by as subtitles state that it is from 40 to 50 years ago, as it is reported in the form of 'news', which usually talks about the present, the past is experienced from 'the perspective of the present'. Even though *News*, composed of the documents only, talks about the past in the moving images, it uses the present tense in the narration, and audiences come to experience two different times at the same time. This setting of unfixed time can produce very dramatic effects on the experiences of audiences. As far as the present tense works in the form of *News*, audiences do not consider the narrative relating to the boarding house as being something completely in the past so that they have nothing in common with it. Even if it does not, at least, the form was chosen not to be like that. I believe that the problems of the narrative form that make audiences experience differences in the present and the future or in here and there cause the audiences to evade ethical responsibility or awareness of unity regarding the problems of the past. Especially for me, attempting to talk about the past in its relationship with the present, the narrative form causing the distinct separation of time and spaces is a sensitive subject. As I am not fully satisfied with my attempt concerning this narrative in *News*, the matters that I have missed and my thoughts about the experiences of time and spaces relating to the experiences of audiences will be discussed further in relation to the next work, called *Filmset*, in the second chapter.

CHAPTER 2. The Represented Site – *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*

Autobiographical Fiction



Fig. 5. *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*, 2011. Installation view

*Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*²⁹ is a work created from the series of *Eight Men Lived in the Room – News*. This work has been extended into a series because it deals with the subject of the ‘boarding house for workers’ covered by *News* and because it shares most of the archival research conducted in *News*. Nonetheless, *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset* was conducted as a separate work from *News*, because an interesting form of ‘autobiographical fiction’ was found that has a notably different context from the previous materials.

²⁹ My work, 2 ch HD video, stereo sound, 2 minutes 52 seconds, 2011 (URL: <https://vimeo.com/33213683>).



Fig. 6. Bok, L. K. (1975) Fallen citizens. *Shindonga*, January, 278–309

The novel 'Fallen citizens' was published in the magazine *Shindonga* in January 1975, and it was the work that won the prize from the competition in the non-fiction genre.(Fig.6) It is the same length as a short story, with the title 'Fallen citizens', and it was written by Lee Kwang Bok, based on his own experiences of living in a boarding house for workers. When I read this novel, I thought that it was very realistic and that it sounded as if Lee was describing real stories. At the same time, I could not distinguish the exact boundary between such a realistic depiction and dramatization. Although this 'autobiographical novel' cannot be considered to contain only objective information, it does contain specific details that cannot be found in other archival materials. Additionally, unlike the materials that I have investigated over the years, the work is interesting because Lee actually entered and described the experience of the insiders living directly in the boarding house. The following scene, which comes directly from the novel, is the scene in which the eight men, who used to live in the same room, spent the New Year together getting intoxicated while sharing the sorrow of living away from home.

On January 1, 1973, in room no. 1, we decided to have a so-called company dinner, for which we paid 30 won each. With the money, we were able to buy two bottles of four-hop soju and threw a party that lasted throughout the evening. The shoebox under the bed was pulled out to make a drinking table, around which eight of us sat. We used the soup bowls as glasses and exchanged them amongst each other to take drinks. The exchange of glasses did not last long – it soon come to an end.

However, as Song and Yoon were light drinkers compared with the rest, they were already drunk. The sight of them made the others disappointed at the fact that the party was already ending – they wanted to drink more. Surprisingly, Yoon went out and returned with another bottle of soju. With this initiation, another person went out to buy another bottle of two-hop soju. After all, we were all drunk and sang together. On nights like this, it is normal to have such a sentimental atmosphere; likewise, on this night, everyone dwelt on their own misfortune in life and sang to comfort themselves. However, singing was not allowed in the boarding house. At first we sang quietly so that it could not be heard from the office, but when we got too emotional we forgot as we sang loudly in chorus. Mournful and old popular Korean songs, such as ‘Ta-hyang-sa-ri’ (Live away from home) by Ko Bok Soo, ‘Nageune seol-um’ (The sorrow had greed prepared) by Na Hoon Ah or ‘Banglangsi-in Kim Sat Gat’ (The wandering poet – Kim Sat Gat) by Kim Yong Im, echoed throughout the room on that night. At this point, people from other rooms also began joining the chorus. It was like moths gathering to the light.

The song that shook the room was stopped by the office staff. We kept singing, stubbornly confronting the office staff with the fact that it was a holiday, but as soon as the staff appeared in the room, we all knew that the atmosphere had been broken.³⁰

Unlike other materials related to the boarding house, in this scene it was as if I was in the specific scenery of the story. I felt like I was sitting right next to these people and watching them. This work of fiction managed to reproduce scenery from the long ago past. At the

³⁰ Lee, B. K. (1975) *Fallen citizens*. Shindonga, January, 278–309.

same time, I was constantly reminded that the vivid, realistic images of this work of fiction are no longer present and almost forgotten in today's society. While deliberately reminding us of this history, the scenes that I perceived as realistic depictions started to feel like the stories of forgotten ghosts. I experienced a sense of dual consciousness through the realization that, although these scenes from fiction are a vivid representation of the past, they do not exist now and are only memories in the present.

Lee Kwang Bok's depiction of such a place is interesting, because Lee grew up in an era when boarding houses for workers actually still existed. These were the spaces where people used to sing, eat and talk. However, 50 years later, I learnt about these spaces only from archival documents. This way of life could not be reproduced as vividly as in the work of Lee Kwang Bok. Accordingly, I intended to represent these spaces from the past by reflecting the current situation that I personally experienced and perceived.

Whereas *News* intended to imitate and dissolve the form of the governmental propaganda film *Daehan News*, which defined and presented the boarding house for workers, *Filmset* intended to imitate the physical appearance of the boarding house, as captured in the black-and-white news film *Daehan News*. At the very least, I tried to imitate a room with four bunk beds where eight men used to live, as depicted in Lee Kwang Bok's autobiographical novel, 'Fallen citizens'. While the imitated room may in fact be a similar size to the actual room from the past, it is nevertheless just a staged space. The space itself is not affected by the temporal passage of the past, as described in *News*, nor does it include the vivid elements of representation as revealed in Lee Kwang Bok's novel.

The replicated space escapes from all the underlying contexts implied in the novel and becomes a dull empty space. Although I chose to stage a room with an accurate size following the actual dimensions of the boarding house appearing in the black-and-white news film and Lee Kwang Bok's novel, my intention was to isolate elements from the past depicted in this representation and to rearrange them in the present – or within the past that I had recreated – instead of just representing or replicating the space from the past.

When considering the process of my work in *News* and *Filmset*, it can be seen that I tried to imitate the form or the space of the past itself. However, such an attempt refuses to

present the space as a realistic and vivid representation (as in Lee Gwang Bok's autobiographical novel) or to give the viewers specific and clear temporal experiences (as in the black-and-white news that reported the closing ceremony of the boarding house). These works indicate the subject of the past rather than representing it. The resulting effect is able to reveal the existing 'form' itself that uses representation or presentation of the past.

As previously mentioned, efforts to remove the vivid nature of the representation were made due to the intention to reflect the present situation of the boarding house – now dismantled and disappeared and almost forgotten in today's society. The removal or control of this 'vivid representation' was to determine the 'degree of reality' in *Filmset*. In the end it was the cinematic representation of the film industry that I decided to use as a standard for deciding the degree of reality in my visual representation.

In historical films and dramas that reproduce the past, the maximum degree of reality is targeted. The space created by the set and the actors who play in it aim to convey to the audience that the representation of the past is true. However, the degree of the reality in *Filmset* aims to reach the stage of recognizing the form of such cinematic representation itself.

Reference in Fiction

Although Lee Gwang Bok's 'Falling citizens' was the main point of reference for *Filmset*, the stories and events of various characters who appeared in the novel were not specifically reflected in my work. This was because the reproduction of stories and events would prove to be too specific and realistic and did not seem to be helpful in maintaining the tension and the awareness of the discrepancies between the past and the present. In the novel 'Falling citizens', which combined fact and fiction, the naturally mentioned socio-cultural references were more interesting parts. The titles of some old Korean popular songs were quoted in the novel.

Mournful and old Korean popular songs, such as 'Ta-hyang-sa-ri' (Live away from home) by Ko Bok Soo, 'Nageune seol-um' (The sorrow had greed prepared) by Na Hoon Ah or

'Banglansi-in Kim Sat Gat' (The wandering poet – Kim Sat Gat) by Kim Yong Im, echoed in the room on that night.

Although the writer only made a brief reference to these songs in the novel, they seemed to be very important to me. These songs were the actual songs that everyone from the generation of Lee Gwang Bok once knew. Perhaps the experiences and memories associated with these songs would all be different depending on each person. However, I thought at least that these songs could be a platform for sharing memories and stories of different generations from the past and the present.

The songs are all relevant to the social situations of that time, and they are considered as the theme songs of migrant workers – workers who have left their families and homes in search of jobs. During the 1970s, which became the background of the novel, the concentration of the population in the metropolitan area was deepening, and therefore a lack of housing and urban poverty were emerging as major social problems. In response to this, popular songs such as 'Ta-hyang-sa-ri' (Live away from home) by Ko Bok Soo contained collective memories that shared the situation of that time beyond the experience and memory of an individual. It was thought to be a narrative that could still be readable in the present time while still managing to contain a specific narrative related to the workers who migrated to the city. In the end 'Ta-hyang-sa-ri' (Live away from home) became the main narration of *Filmset*.

I count the years

I have been away from home

Ten years

*The lost years of my youth*³¹

The Presentation of the Impossibility of Representation

The interior space of the boarding house was constructed with reference to the original document of *News* and the camera moves slowly inside the film set. The setting in which

³¹ Written by Kim Neung In and composed by Sohn Mok In in 1934. This song was well-known for being sung by the compatriots living in China during the Japanese Colonial Period.

the camera captures this space can be described as 'a camera that arrived too late'. After all the work had been completed and the people who lived and worked within the space had been forgotten, we are left to wonder what the camera can capture. In reality it is only able to capture an empty space.

In reference to this, critic Pahng Haejin states that *Filmset* proves the 'inability of a camera'.

In the case of *Eight Men Lived in the Room - Filmset*, the inability of a camera to capture the tragedy is proved where the camera slowly sweeps across this empty artificial stage – a sophisticated set of scenes with disappeared characters and their stories. The songs, which seem to have been sung by characters from the past, are represented only by sound itself, causing the inability of the site and the absence of characters to be more noticeable. In this way, the impossibility of representing the past is being emphasized.³²

The impossibility of representation in *Filmset* is specified through several factors. One factor is a camera capturing an empty space. The camera takes a slow shot of an empty film set. This film set is a space that resembles the boarding house for workers. Although this set refers to the past space – the boarding house for workers – neither the set nor the frame that captures this space actually represents the past itself. Another element that reinforces the impossibility of representation is the viewer's ability to hear the sound of the people singing from this empty space. This song, which seems to describe the hearts of the people who had once lived in the boarding house, echoes throughout the room, without actual people singing it. Those people who sang this song, or those who might have sung this song, are portrayed without their presence.

We are left to question 'the impossibility of representation', which is presented by a camera that captures an empty space, referring to *Filmset*. While it is a space with a likeness in appearance to the past, the room is actually empty and the resonating voices do not have bodies. This refers to the present perceptions of the way in which spaces are able to speak for the past and confronts us with situations of oblivion that cannot be resisted.

³² Haejin, P. (2016) The Act of Looking Around, or (Re/De-) Narrating a Site/Space. Nanji Studio 10 residency artist catalogue.

Seo Dong Jin, a sociologist, says that *Filmset* is tilted toward the nihilism of disguised history. He also expresses the following opinions about the perception of impossibility and the melancholy evoked through conveying this perception in *Filmset*.

We are left to wonder whether it is impossible to define history from the perspective of these workers, workers who were the victims of industrialization and the capitalist modernization. Could it perhaps be impossible for a representative image of a historical figure to accurately reproduce the historical realities of these workers in their positions in society, if the representation excludes the comments made by them? Should not history be an arbitrary landscape in which we are invited to exchange various stories, all the while making us aware of the fact that these situations exploited and dominated us? Claims that the history should be totalized in terms of its history of proletariats may seem a ridiculous argument in today's society. However, it is disappointing to consider that it is impossible for people to be able to discuss these things in current times, where we pride ourselves on the freedom to speak about things to all ends. Totalization avoids imagination and rejects any sense of melancholy. In this regard, Hyewon Kwon's work seems to be referring to the artist's sense of melancholy as a reaction to the world around her, a portrayal that is impossible to capture through historical writing. The melancholy which is portrayed through the work might not be referring to history itself, but rather to the melancholy experienced by the subject. Therefore, it is not the melancholy of history, but Kwon's approach to convey to the world that history has disappeared, through inferring the sense of melancholy experienced by the artist.³³

Such criticism by Seo inspired me to revisit the processes of work that were involved in the production of *Filmset*. Obviously, during the course of the last research, I tried to identify what I could capture and represent. However, at the end of the research process, I ended up feeling helplessness as a result of my inability to define the subject that I wanted to capture and represent. Thus, I cannot help but agree with Seo's point that underlying emotions of melancholy have a strong presence in *Filmset* as a theme of helplessness.

³³ Seo Dong Jin, the way that Baek Gon reads the historical image of Hyewon Kwon – Gon, B. (2015) Meta-criticism on 'Memories sailing in the mythical world, history of Kwon Hye Won'. Public Art, November, pp. 122–123.

However, when I ask myself whether the role of art should stop delivering feelings of helplessness, I am driven to declare that I see the portrayal of helplessness being taken even further.

Craigie Horsfield's four-channel video work *Broadway* (2001/2006) offers another possible direction regarding this discussion. This work contains images of the crowd looking in the same direction. They are waiting for or witnessing a special moment, as they are all fixated on the same place. While their faces express emotions of surprise, despair and wonder, what they are actually looking at is never revealed. The sound of this four-channel video only contains a humming sound. Likewise, the exact sound cannot be revealed. Horsfield does not make the objects in this work visible and does not make their visualization clear. He chooses not to represent but rather suggests the impossibility of representation. Accordingly, this may not be a form of presenting the impossibility but a choice of possible methods. In the case of Horsfield, the limitations of this visualization are portrayed through a method called 'framing'. Although framing puts the object out of the screen, it strongly encourages the awareness of those objects that exist outside the screen through their active and intentional description. In this way viewers are able to experience the presence and feelings of such objects with which they might not even be familiar. Moreover, the title of the work *Broadway* refers to the ruins of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States that destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Center in 2001. However, imagery of this historical place or event is not revealed in the work. Both of these inferences exist outside the screen, in the direction that the people depicted on the screen are constantly looking. Viewers experience this work with emotions associated with these historical events or by associating the images on the screen with the historical references presented in the title. Likewise, the issue of presenting a specific historical reference becomes more complex when there is a restraint not to represent the imagery visually in a direct way. Horsfield presents the depiction of these events in a minimal way. He chooses not to convey his emotions in reference to specific historical events but concentrates on what existed outside the screen, which is not specifically represented on the screen. This makes viewers feel the presence of that historical event and think about what it means to them today without being caught up in the existing images of 9/11. *Broadway* does not suggest that the images of the past cannot be seen or represented but

reminds us that it is possible to experience a certain passage of time in the present in relation to the historical subjects of the past.

Experience of Temporality

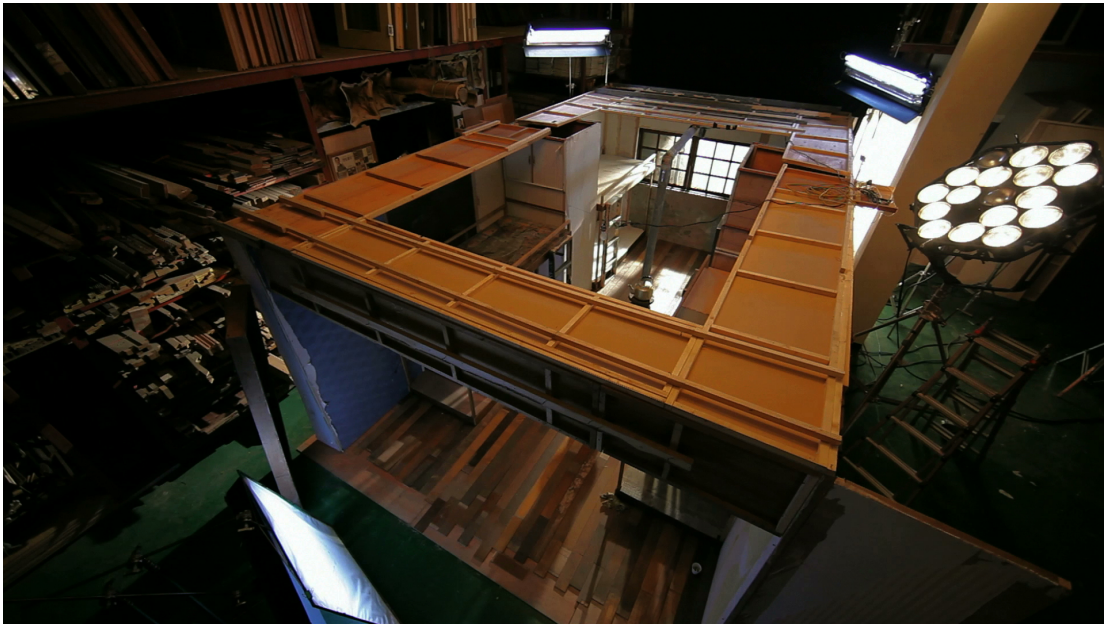


Fig. 7. *Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset*, 2011. Production still

Although it is true that *Filmset* includes melancholic sentiments about the impossibility of representation, it still struggles with the helplessness of not being able to be presented completely in its representation of the past and shows efforts to resist and overcome these limitations. This relates to the experience of time experienced by the perspective of the viewer.

There are three different kinds of temporal passing in *Filmset*. The first factor is the song, which is represented through the shapeless voice. This popular song, which conveys the narrative of time and collective urban migration, is sung by the voices of eight men. This self-indulgent chorus confronts viewers with significant verses that were sung, heard and enjoyed by the people within the boarding house at some point in the past. While listening to this song, memories of the past are summoned: memories of when eight men whom we know lived together in this space. The second kind of temporal flow is made through the location of the lighting apparatus installed in the boarding house. This lighting equipment

produces external light that can be made in studio filming with precise cinematic language, as seen in the foreground image (Fig. 7) of the shooting space of the work – the light of dawn, the light of morning, the light of day and the light of night. The lights are made up of different colours and orientations, which enable viewers to watch the flow of the day, creating a unique temporal passing that is separate from the sound and played within this space. These lights represent the temporality that flows constantly from dawn to morning and back to evening, unlike the sounds of the past, which remain at a certain time. In *Filmset* the temporal passing through illuminated light reproduces another kind of temporality, which is much faster and more compact than what we can usually experience. Contrary to this, the temporal flow through the movement of cameras is presented irrespective of the change in time. While a song from a specific point in the past is being played, the camera slowly floats around the space as the light of the day passes by quickly. The songs from the past, changing lights and slow movements of the camera all inflict different temporal flows. Within this time and space, audiences are separated to some extent as bystanders. Even though they may seem to belong to a certain degree, they are placed in a state in which they are not completely separated or completely included. This state poses questions regarding whether subjects of the past can be recognized within different time coordinates from the ones that exist now or, when an object is meant to be recognized, whether it is perhaps meant to be recognized specifically from a psychological distance. In *Filmset* the time experienced by the audience, the time presented to the audience and the time presented through sounds or images are slightly overlapped and constitute a complex experience of temporality. This is an attempt to construct a more aesthetic, contemporary and free temporal experience beyond the recognition of fixed time – a time that defines the object or the existing concept of time. In the following passage, Christine Ross analyses the aesthetic experiments that deal with temporality in contemporary art, stating:

As it injects contemporary forms of temporal passing in the artwork, art endeavors to present the modern regime of historicity. Not in the sense of making history present or of constructing an absolute 'present' (beyond objects and events). Rather, in the sense of freeing the three categories of time (past, present, and future); of complicating their connection; of activating the past in the present and allowing it to condition the future in that very process. ... What is at stake here is

the realignment – the temporal reordering that is specific to every epoch – of past, present, and future in relation to each other.³⁴

Moreover, in Giorgio Agamben's writings, the experience of time reveals the possibilities of associating the attempts to materialize subjects of the past with historicity.

... every conception of history is invariably accompanied by a certain experience of time which is implicit in it, conditions it, and thereby has to be elucidated. Similarly, every culture is first and foremost a particular experience of time, and no new culture is possible without an alteration in this experience. The original task of a genuine revolution, therefore, is never merely to 'change the world', but also – and above all – to 'change time'.³⁵

In retrospect, in *Filmset* I tried to build a multi-temporal experience for the audience as a reaction to past materials, which I included in *News* – mainly news films, photographs, newspapers and administrative materials from official archives. This is because I found Lee Gwang Bok's autobiographical short story to be a very heterogeneous point of reference. While Lee's work depicts the same subject of the boarding house, it felt as if the specific perspective conveyed through the voice of the speaker and the temporality are different. In this novel the boarding house for workers is viewed from the perspective of an autobiographical speaker described only through inferences of 'I'. He is currently sharing a room with seven other men at the boarding house. The perspective of this novel is derived from an insider of the boarding house, who is not a manager but a resident. Moreover, the present moment at which the speaker is speaking is during the 1970s, when the building was full of workers – at the time when the building was neither completed nor demolished. The viewpoint of this autobiographical narrator, 'I', makes the reader stay with the insider, which is a feature unlike the document previously recorded by a random outsider. Additionally, it extends beyond the distinction of 'there', 'here', 'then' and 'now' and forces the reader into the context of the past.

³⁴ Ross, C. (2012) *The Past is the Present; It's the Future Too*. London: A Bloomsbury Company, p. 6.

³⁵ Agamben, G. (2007) *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*. London and New York: Verso, p. 99 (quoted in Ross, C. (2012) *The Past is the Present; It's the Future Too*. London: A Bloomsbury Company, p. 8).

Chris Marker's 1983 film *Sans Soleil* tells a story about a man through the voice of a woman. This man travels all over the world, including Japan and Africa. The woman sometimes reads the letters written by the man and or tells stories about the man. One of these stories talks about a film that the man will make in the future.

In relation to Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*, Jamie Baron sees the indeterminacy of the autobiographical narration of this work as a possibility, analysing how this relates to the experience of the audience.

In my view, the indeterminable status of this image (as well as others) in *Sans Soleil* illustrates the complexity of our relationship to the appropriated document. Marker, by complicating the archival status of certain images, makes it clear how much our reading of an image is based in our ability to locate the temporality of it, as well as implicated intentions 'behind' it. This reading determines whether or not the archive effect occurs, which, if it does, gives rise to a particular experience of the historical past. When temporal and intentional disparities become uncertain, the audience is faced with a constant struggle around how much authority to give the indexical recording. This struggle is crucial to our understanding of history, where it both depends upon and determines which status we label a piece of history – and, thus, historical – evidence. It is this attribution that forms the basis for our mediated confrontation with the past.³⁶

Eun Young Jeong's *Anomalous Fantasy*, a performance held on the stage of the Namsan Art Center in Seoul during October 2016, shows us how the nature of autobiographical narration constitutes a more multi-layered and complex narrative through theatrical space and actors.³⁷ *Anomalous Fantasy* is an integrated result of Jeong Eun Young's project called *Female National Theatre*, which has been taking place for about eight years in the field of visual arts. In the meantime Jeong has produced works mainly based on research about the performances of women, which have traditionally been declining, and communities of performing arts, including *Female National Theatre*. At a relatively early stage in this project, the work was conducted based on the male characters played by

³⁶ Baron, J. (2014) *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, p. 30.

³⁷ <http://sirenjung.com/index.php/yeosung-gukgeuk-project/anomalous-fantasy-2016/>

female actresses. This was a popular activity during the 1940s and the 1950s, when the Korean War was in operation. In relatively recent works, however, actress Nam Eunjin – who is the last successor of *Female National Theatre* – became the main character through playing herself. Even in *Anomalous Fantasy*, Nam Eunjin, who is in her 30s, appears as a main character. On this stage she plays herself, the last successor of *Female National Theatre*. However, the setting becomes complicated when she plays both the role of herself and the role of the character that captured her when she first started acting. She also plays the role that recalls such memories. In addition, she falls for reasons that she cannot explain clearly and plays the male role of her own imaginative *Female National Theatre*. In other words, in *Anomalous Fantasy* Nam crosses the boundaries between reality and fiction; past and future; and recollection and re-enactment. The autobiographical setting of *Anomalous Fantasy* creates such powerful inspiration because it refuses to fix its setting in one particular meaning and constantly changes in a fluid manner by acting as an autobiographical and fantasy entity.

The autobiographical narration that appears in the non-fiction novel 'Fallen citizens', which was an important reference for *Filmset*, also explores the perspective of this indeterminate possibility, and *Filmset* attempts to include various temporal experiences. Furthermore, these attempts led to the contemplation of keeping a distance from the audience and the ethical perceptions involved.

Keeping a Distance and Ethical Responsibility



Fig. 8. *Eight Men Lived in the Room* – Filmset, 2011. Video stills

Rather than attempting to represent Lee Gwang Bok's novel strictly, *Filmset* explores different ways to portray different times and points of view that deal with past subjects, such as the boarding house. The intention of this inquiry was to keep audiences from crossing the division between temporal and spatial contexts in relation to subjects of the past but at the same time not experiencing separate emotions or perceptions from this past. The clear distinction between 'them, then, there' and 'us, now, here' is associated with ethical responsibility, and *Filmset* tried to overcome the experience of recognizing the past as 'the other' through a complex temporal experience that cannot be confirmed definitively.

Jamie Baron explains Linda Hutcheon's concept of irony whereby she explores how archive documents are used in appropriation films and leads us to question how the distance between work and audience is related to the ethical position of the audience.

The difference between these two structures of irony – antiphrastic and inclusive – have important implications on how we think about our ethical responsibility towards the people and events depicted in the archival documents within

appropriation films. If we experience 'their' context as wholly different from 'ours', and our position as detached and superior, we may feel we have no moral or ethical obligation to the 'others' we see on the screen. By contrast, when a more inclusive form of irony is at play in an appropriation film, we may experience a much more complex and ambivalent relationship between the context of 'our' and the 'other' from which the archival documents derive. Indeed, inclusive irony, which confounds judgement or refuses to resolve into a final, singular meaning or value, places the audience in a more complex epistemological and moral position. As a result, the function of irony in the appropriation film constitutes as ethics of the archive effect.³⁸

Filmset intended to test the possibility of multi-layered and diverse interpretations through the construction of complex temporality. Moreover, the intentions of these experiments become more evident when they are seen with *News*, which is linked in a series. In the environment in which *Filmset* and *News* are seen together, from the perspective of outsiders and insiders on migrant workers during the period of urbanization, the temporality of the past and the present and remembered and forgotten things coexist together. When the series was shown altogether, many audiences found the scenery of the room from the black-and-white news to be similar to the reproduced room. Moreover, they found it interesting that, even though the setting was the same place as in the past, it was experienced in a different way. The room in the black-and-white image from *News* seems like a real place, but it is experienced as a space from the past, and the room that is reproduced in *Filmset* seems like a fake and imitated space but nevertheless is experienced in the present as an actual and realistic space. What is experienced here is never fully understood. There are moments in which various voices and temporal passing overlap with each other, enabling contradictory meanings to coexist simultaneously.

In producing *News* and *Filmset*, I struggled with my intention to create a narrative in an environment in which the audience could recognize the tensions and mobility and in which the meaning and interpretations overlap or conflict with each other. Additionally, various meanings or interpretations do not scatter away from each other in a manner that

³⁸ Baron, J. *The Archive Effect*, p. 37.

is vague, and viewers are left to discover the possibility of various interpretations in both films. However, in dealing with objects of the past, concepts such as 'distance from the audience', 'ethical solidarity' and 'coexistence of various interpretations' are very complex and contradictory. In other words, if the distance from the audience becomes too close to the past while maintaining ethical solidarity through similarity or continuity with the present – if the similarity to or continuity with the present is strengthened too much – there is a risk of simplifying the past subjects and fixing them to specific interpretations. On the other hand, if the distance from the audience is too great while aiming for a moment in which insights and various contradictory meanings might coexist through the distance from the audience – if the indeterminacy of meaning and interpretation becomes too strong – the ethical sense of solidarity risks being lost and the risk of facing the subject of the past as 'the other' may occur. Since *News* and *Filmset*, the quest to coordinate a certain narrative within the complex associations of the audience and to determine how this can be embodied through an aesthetic method has become ongoing and important to me.

CHAPTER 3. The Site in Memory – The Life of a Comedian³⁹

One day I came across the television performance of Bo Won Nam, a famous South Korean comedian. He was re-enacting past historical events as solo performances on stage. I watched as he recreated actual historical events or characters through sound and acting, noting that his performance style on stage covered sites that came from memories. The sites that appeared in Nam's performances were places from his own personal memories or places from the collective memories of all of those who have experienced modern and contemporary history in Korea, as known and remembered through media. As a different form and factor from my previous work, *Eight Men Lived in the Room*, which used archival images and filmic representation, I thought that I could explore how a site can be narrated through the use of actors, stage and theatrical devices and the way in which the narrative transforms or converts the sites in memories.

Collaborative Post-scripting

Since the debut of Nam, a South Korean comedian, in 1963, he has been establishing his own type of performance through the use of objects, animals, vocal mimicry and music, including gukak (Korean traditional music), pop songs and others. Nam calls his performance a 'one-man show'. I conducted research on the subjects of his performances making reference to historical events or characters. During his several decades of performances, he dealt with subjects of various historical events, mainly related to the modern and contemporary history of Korea, including the liberation, the surrender of the Emperor of Japan in the Second World War and the Korean War. The following is a description of his performance on 25 June 1950, when the Korean War broke out.⁴⁰

25 June 1950

Chungsung area in Gangwon province. Foggy morning at 4 a.m.

(Making the sound of a second hand while looking at the watch on his wrist)

The sound of a frog coming from somewhere

³⁹ My work, video–audio installation, vertical video, transparent screen, 15 minutes 18 seconds, 2012 (URL: <https://vimeo.com/50191543>).

⁴⁰ This part is inserted into my work *The Life of a Comedian*, and it can be seen from the link (<https://vimeo.com/50122936>)

(Imitates a frog croaking)

(Mimics the sound of a bomb flying and falling)

(Mimics the sound of a tank)

It is a war.

Every time Nam performed, he composed the contents of the performance in a slightly different way. The composition of the performance changed, depending on which subject the audience was mainly interested in or where and when he performed. However, the parts related to historical events or situations that often appeared in his performances were performed in almost the same way each time. I transferred the contents of his performances into a script while watching video recordings of his works. There were several reasons for choosing such a method. The first was to analyse closely the structure and contents of the narrative that Nam composed, and the second was to identify the part or point of the performance that was not translated into written text. In addition, the process of creating a script from the performance was in fact a completely opposite process by which Nam created his own performance. In an interview with Nam, he states that he does not write scripts in advance in the production stage of performances; he repeatedly practices and changes his ideas until they have become a complete performance.⁴¹ Moreover, although the part about completed performances varies slightly depending on the composition, he says that it is repeatedly used for performances while maintaining its structure – as it is in making most independent pieces.

I regarded the process of creating a written script from the recorded footage of his finished performances as the beginning of a collaboration with him. The process served as a way of looking backwards and intervening in Nam's performance-making process – the process of observing how audiences perceive and remember the two scenarios in which a performance with pre-written scripts and a performance that is organically created through practice without a script – and exploring the different effects of the process of revival involving different stages and actors.

⁴¹ In addition to conducting research on his previous performance, I held an interview with him about the process of making a performance and his personal past.

Furthermore, even on the completion of the video installation entitled *The Life of a Comedian*, which was completed in collaboration with Nam, I made use of this method – the method of analysing and comparing a text script that has been created after the performance – once again in the process of writing my thesis.⁴²

Performance as a Text

Nam's performances include all aspects of dialogue – including first-person narration, third-person narration and words borrowed from others – as well as simulating the sounds of objects or animals associated with the dialogue. These compose the contents of his performance while mixing and intertwining without boundaries. In the composition of Nam's performance, 'sound' serves as a very important factor. In particular, attempts to utilize different sounds have become a strategy to construct his narrative form. The following is part of the script that has been extracted from the first performance of my work *The Life of a Comedian*.

Bo Won Nam appears on the stage
(While lifting his thumb)
Hello, this is Bo won Nam. Hahaha.

I was born into a wealthy family in a small village called Geumsan-ri in Eunsan-myeon, Suncheon-gun, South Pyongang province. When spring comes, beautiful flowers bloom everywhere and beautiful birds can be found in and from the mountains.

(Mimics the sound of a bird)

A calf cries (imitates a calf mooing)

A chicken cries (imitates a chicken crowing)

⁴² The performance text script of *The Life of a Comedian* is attached to this thesis as a separate reference; see Appendix A.

A puppy cries and a dog cries (imitates a dog barking)

I grew up in a very small village where animals used to cry day and night.

There was a mill in the house, a bicycle and a phonograph.

My father was a landlord. Thus, every day I heard the sound of the phonograph whilst standing in front of it.

There were various kinds of sounds kept inside it.

All of Korea's folk songs were in there.

(In a folk song style)

The smoke of coal and white charcoal burning ...

Let's enjoy. Enjoy this in your youth. Because you won't be able to when you're old and weak ...

Whenever I make sounds whilst sitting on a rock,

a grandpa walking past, stops and says

'How old are you, little boy? Enjoy during the youth'

(Pretending to give a clout) He gives me a clout with his knuckles.

'Hey, you little boy. You should become a clown. A clown'.

Attempts to include as many different types of sounds as possible are also shown in the above. In addition to Nam's first-person narration, the sounds of animals, of folksongs from the phonograph and of the chit-chat of local elderly people reveal the common features of trying to quote and mimic the sounds as much as possible without making any alterations. Nam inserts into his performances various sounds and dialogues from different moments as close to the original form of their sounds as possible. By incorporating these various kinds of sounds and dialogues into a solo performance form, in which one provides all the sounds and voices alone, the performance creates its own narrative form in which various sounds and voices coexist.

For this reason I attempted to approach Nam's existing performances from a form of text that intervenes and rewrites rather than from the perspective of a completed 'work'. This view of 'work' and 'text' has been borrowed from the concept of Roland Barthes's claim. In Barthes's 1971 essay *From Work to Text*, he emphasizes the transition from the 'work' of the old literary concept to the 'text' of the new dynamic experience. In this essay he presents 'text' and 'work' from two different perspectives.

The difference is this: the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field ... the work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration ... only exists in the movement of a discourse...⁴³

According to Barthes, 'text' is an 'experience only in an activity of production'. To him, 'work' signifies different attitudes rather than something that is different from 'text'. He suggests the concept of 'text' as opposing the previous attitude, which regards writing as a kind of complete and self-sufficient act.

In particular, among the concepts related to Barthes's 'text', 'plurality' provided me with a conceptual framework for analysing Nam's existing performance and seeking directions for the collaborative process. To Barthes, the pluralism of text indicates that the text has numerous meanings – not that the meaning of the text is ambiguous or inaccurate but that it is 'irreducible'.⁴⁴

From this perspective I believe that Nam's performances, which contain 'plurality', present enough possibilities to be explored as 'text'. This is because the contents of his performance are collected from various sources. Nam's performances are collected, memorized and simulated from various paths, including his personal memories, the voices of others, the words of others, the sound of phonographs and the sound of nature. On the other hand, these heterogeneous elements are woven into his solo performances, which, as Barthes expresses, have a 'stereographic' character, written from various directions.

⁴³ Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Fontana Press, p. 157.

⁴⁴ Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Fontana Press, p. 159.

A Reader as a Collaborator Plays the Performance

What I found interesting while analysing Nam's performances is not only the fact that the sources of the contents that he simulates came from various places but also the fact that he intends to simulate the original format of the contents, which he borrows, as well as the features of the sound that these contents have. For example, along with the end of the Second World War, in relation to the historical moment of announcing the end of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, Nam replicates the Japanese Emperor's declaration of surrender that he heard on the radio. Not only does he simulate the contents but he also imitates the voice of the Japanese Emperor on the radio.

A small radio. On the radio called 'National Matsuda', the surrendering voice of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan came out.

My age was ten by then.

(Imitating the Emperor's voice in Japanese) Sekai daisei mada. Wareni niaraiz sikanomi nai. Dekkiwa haraddani jangakkunano. Dakkudang oh hiresidae.

The generations of the world will not be beneficial to us.

The enemy threw the brutal bomb and everything was over.

We had the pleasure of liberation.

In this part, citing the Japanese Emperor's declaration of surrender, Nam quotes not only the content but also the way in which the content was conveyed, that is, the voice of the Emperor that was broadcast on the radio. Looking at this process, we can see how past records have become the form of re-enactment on the stage. Nam was only ten when he heard this broadcast on the radio, and it is true that he creates the content of this performance from this experience. However, he is able to simulate the concrete voice of the Emperor and dialogues thanks to the actual broadcast sound that he had heard in the recording room of the radio station.

In fact, when we listen to this disc of voice recordings, released by NHK on 1 August 2015, we can see that Nam is copying the voice of the original.⁴⁵ Although the comedian Nam created such a way to emphasize further his talent of copying sound, the fact that he recreates the contents as well as the way in which they were recorded, the way in which they were delivered, the format of the medium and the characteristics of the recording as an actor on stage in citing the past records seems like a new possibility. Nam's 'reproduction of the record' is related not only to the record of the past but also to the situation – the time and space of when the Japanese Emperor's declaration of surrender was broadcast through the Japanese radio station *National Matsuda*, in the room of a wealthy family in North Korea – in which this past record was stored as a memory. This historical moment of the past is narrated in the space of personal memory, including the situations in which he experienced the historic moments through the medium of radio. Such is both 'reproduction of memory' and 'reproduction of the record'. They show 'what we remember' and 'how we remember it'.

In the course of such an analysis, the following questions were raised regarding my research questions: When historical moments are narrated through places in personal memory, what transitions and transformations take place in the historical moments that are accepted as factual information? When a form of record is translated into a form of performance, how does the perception of citation or 'borrowing' reappear?

I tried to make new performances with Nam, not performances that are repetitively re-performed in his existing works, such as the 'declaration of surrender by the Japanese Emperor' analysed above. In addition to translating his existing performances into written texts and analysing them, I continued with the process of making his personal memories into performances on stage through an ongoing interview with him. In a word, this was a process of more active 'reading' about his performances and his personal past memories and the assumption of a 'reader' as a collaborator to talk and perform together. Barthes also applies the musical concept of 'playing' to the concept of 'text', and he does not read a

⁴⁵ The Japanese Imperial Household Agency disclosed the Japanese Emperor Hirohito's voice, which was recorded on 14 August 1945 and broadcast at noon the following day. A recording engineer of NHK sneaked into the palace wearing an army uniform and recorded the Japanese Emperor Hirohito. After the first recording, Emperor Hirohito made a second recording, since he thought that his voice sounded a little low – ultimately, the second one was broadcast.

text as an object of consumption like a reader of the present time but rather suggests the reader's concept of 'listening' and 'playing' at the same time – just like the musical concept of 'playing'. Barthes is proposing a reader as an active collaborator.

We know that today post-serial music has radically altered the role of the 'interpreter', who is called on to be in some sort the co-author of the score, completing it rather than giving it 'expression'. The text is very much a score of this new kind: it asks of the reader a practical collaboration.⁴⁶

Among the various stories that I summarized in the interview with Nam, I decided to pursue his memory of his older sister, who was torn away from him by the Korean War, for our collaboration project. The Korean historical tragedy of the separated family – referring to a family of which the members have long been separated from each other due to the division of South and North Korea after the Korean War – was already known through the records of the past, but to me, who grew up in the later generations of Nam, it was only known through the records of the past media. Additionally, 'the separated family' part is like a collective memorandum shared by all Koreans but also a memory of different generations. Therefore, I intended to explore how existing forms of narratives related to 'the separated family' could be converted or transformed while the personal memory of Nam, which is related to the historical fact, is being reproduced in his performance form. Moreover, it was also an attempt to explore how the form of performance on stage can be interpreted as a multi-layered space in which various pieces of information, memories and records are crossed and conflicting. Thus, the result differed substantially from Nam's previous performances, which were already completed long ago and repeatedly re-performed. The part of 'the separated family' in *The Life of a Comedian* contains memories of his older sister, who broke away during the evacuation to South Korea after the Korean War. Nam describes his visit to Pyongyang – as a member of the performance team – 50 years after he was separated from his sister. In this process he cites a well-known song in Korea called 'Five hundred years'.⁴⁷ Similar to Nam's previous performances, he borrows

⁴⁶ Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York : Fontana Press, p. 163.

⁴⁷ The song 'Five hundred years' was influenced by the chorus of the traditional folk songs of Gangwon-Do, and it is said to have been created during the Japanese colonial period. Since then many different singers have sung and recorded the song. It is a popular song that is widely known even today, especially after it was sung by a popular singer, Yong Pil Cho.

this folk song as an important element of the narrative for the part of 'the separated family'. The next part describes the situation of separation from his sister using the original lyrics of 'Five hundred years'.

(In a folk song style) My sister in this world full of sorrow.
I cry leaving my feelings behind. Of course we should meet.
We should meet again.

Let's live around five hundred years. So we can meet again.
It has been ten years and fifteen years after we have been separated.

Autobiography Haunted by Oneself

When comparing the 'the separated family' part with Nam's previous performances, there are similarities to but at the same time differences from previous performances. For example, we can see clear and definite narratives and performances in the parts that were previously produced and performed repeatedly, but, in 'the separated family' part, features such as incorrectly unfinished sentences or repetitive dialogues are found. These are not because of a lack of practice but because the performance is based entirely on the personal memory of Nam. As for the process of making and practising this part, he states that he constantly intervenes and influences himself and that his actual memory from the past is acting. Thus, it can be assumed why his performance is not made clear – unfinished or repeated sentences. While observing this process, I thought that I could discover more possibilities in this form in which everything is not clearly organized. At this point Nam reminds himself of the time and place of the past and at the same time is also aware of himself acting on the stage. That is to say, he is unstable between himself in the memory that he plays and himself currently on the stage, without any clear separation or arrangement. This is because it is a situation in which he is acting his own memory. I considered this unstable consciousness or sense of flow to be very interesting. There is a phenomenon here in which the past and the present influence each other through the form of performance, and the facts and memories and their reappearance are combined to create the narrative flow. This can be related to the following claim of Barthes, who emphasizes the dynamics between different meanings:

The text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination.⁴⁸

The part of 'the separated family' in *The Life of a Comedian* creates an unstable and fluid flow between the past and the present and between reality, memory and re-enactment. In addition, because of this point, I think that the space and the form of performance are examples that present the possibility of a form of narrative of the past in memory.

Of course, I found the dynamics of the 'text' in the process of filming and analysing the performance of 'the separated family' part and again in writing it as a script. Above all, however, it was in the scene in which this part was photographed that I felt strong dynamism. Nam has tears in his eyes as he re-enacts the scene in which he is reunited with his sister in Pyongyang after being separated for 50 years.

I watched the situation quietly and experienced the illusion of seeing Nam acting himself from the past on stage and at the same time seeing Nam looking at his sister in Pyongyang in the past. At that moment it seemed as if Nam existed both in the past and in the present. His tears may have been part of acting, but they were rather from his immersion in the past situation. I had talked to him several times about the situation with his sister during a prior interview, but he had never shown tears. After filming he said that it was very rare for him actually to shed tears on the stage of his show. Even for Nam, who has spent several decades on stage, this performance of materializing the past through the present body was a special experience.

Marvin Carlson suggests such an 'overlap' in his book entitled *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* using the term 'ghosting' and demonstrates that this is an intrinsic characteristic of the theatre.

⁴⁸ Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York : Fontana Press, p. 159.

This process of using the memory of previous encounters to understand and interpret encounters with new and somewhat different but apparently similar phenomena is fundamental to human cognition in general, and it plays a major role in the theatre, as it does in all the arts.⁴⁹

Carlson says that this phenomenon of 'ghosting' is an important trait found both in the process of theatrical production and in the process by which it is performed and accepted by the audience. Although the past memory – whether it is personal or collective – that Carlson mainly mentions refers to the memory of the audience, such a trait can also be found in 'the separated family' based on the memory of Nam. Nam, who plays this part, recognizes both himself in the memory and himself acting on the stage in the present time and moves back and forth between them. In addition, the viewer who sees Nam can recognize his unstable condition – between being an actor in his memory of the past and being an actor who plays it on the current stage.

In *The Life of a Comedian*, other than the part of 'the separated family', the form of a multi-role constitutes most of the performance. The performances that became famous involved Nam translating folk songs, poems and songs that were familiar in general at that time into dialect versions of different regions in Korea. However, from Nam's autobiographical viewpoint, this form reflects the emotions of various migrants leaving North Korea. The audiences of his prime would have been able to laugh and enjoy listening to the dialect of his hometown. It seems that this gave the audiences excitement and pleasure when he changed the songs and literature that people only read and heard in Seoul dialect – standard language – into a local dialect. The phenomenon of 'ghosting' proposed by Carlson occurs on several levels in *The Life of a Comedian*. It is also found when presenting cultural memories – songs, literature and so on changed into an unfamiliar context, a local dialect – that were familiar to the audience at the time. On a more psychological level, it can be found on the current stage, where the audience members project their old memories and memories of their hometown back to the current stage and the actor and the person in the memory remind each other and move unsteadily.

⁴⁹ Carlson, M. (2001) *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. US: The University of Michigan Press, p. 6.

Although the discussion about the theatrical forms of the current re-enactment and the past recollection is interesting, the dynamics of the 'text' created by 'the separated family' of *The Life of a Comedian* is based on the autobiographical memories of Nam. It is not made from collective memories or memories of others, like his previous performances, but is an 'autobiographical' performance made from the memories and experiences of himself. In my previous work *Eight Men Lived in the Room*, I explored how autobiographical fiction functions as an element of narrative, but in *The Life of a Comedian*, this autobiographical factor is very directly related and is reflected in the form itself. Although the discussion of Barthes' 'text' is generally related to *The Life of a Comedian*, in particular the subversive interpretation of the author's 'biography' provides a clue to consider the form of the 'autobiographical performance'. Barthes discusses the concept of an 'author' in relation to text and presents 'the network' as another metaphor for text, in which text is broken, interrupted, delayed, read without a clear central point and explored from the perspectives of many different combinations.

... his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work; there is a reversion of the work on to the life (and no longer the contrary); it is the work of Proust, of Genet which allows their lives to be read as a text.⁵⁰

Barthes argues that the author's biography is part of the network that forms another flow in the text and furthermore that the artist's lifetime can be understood as a form of networked text. In this sense someone's lifetime is a networked text made up of various forms of writing about life. Nam is a performer and a writer in *The Life of a Comedian*. In this work Nam is a writer who writes his own story through his performance. I intended to approach *The Life of a Comedian* with 'networked text'. I wanted to generate 'traffic' between unconnected elements that did not generate 'traffic' before – I developed this term 'traffic' from Barthes's concept of metaphorical text as a 'network', like a transportation system or an information system, and I found that, in the construction of the various elements of the text, there are dynamic and unstable flows of meanings. I used this term to emphasize the occasion – between critical elements, rather than merely combining elements from various references. In addition to 'the separated family' part to

⁵⁰ Barthes, R. *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Fontana Press, p. 161.

which Nam's autobiographical elements were directly related, I tried to compose *The Life of a Comedian* together with the parts related to the life of Nam in the existing performance. Thus, his childhood story in North Korea, in which he first recognized his talent as an actor, the end of the Second World War and the Korean War and the stories of reuniting with his older sister who was torn away from him by the war and becoming a successful comedian were all included. I intended to create as many different kinds of 'traffic' as possible in the work of *The Life of a Comedian*, so that his life itself would be interpreted as text filled with 'traffic'. In *The Life of a Comedian*, Nam borrows his previous performances and his memories; however, the entire work is not simply a collection of such pieces but a collision and intersection between the collection and the intention to explore the possibility of a stage as a new narrative space.

Another issue that arose in the process of collaborating with Nam was the part related to the audience's reception process. From the 1960s to the 1990s, when Nam was the most popular performer on stage, he performed mostly for actual audiences. That is, the subjects that Nam dealt with were the facts, figures, songs and literature that the audiences of that time also knew. In other words, it was a performance that utilized the cultural memories shared by the audience of that time. However, the year 2012, the year when I collaborated with Nam, was different from the preceding ones. At this time Nam was a comedian of the past who had already been forgotten by the public. He continued to perform but mainly for older people who could share memories of the past. This is because he was dealing with memories of the past that were difficult to share among the younger generations due to their unfamiliarity with the past. In this situation *The Life of a Comedian* was not only a memory of the past but also a performance that included Nam's own autobiographical memory.

I wondered what circumstances I would encounter with the current audience. In the process *The Life of a Comedian* was completed in a form reproduced with video images of performances, not the real performance itself. This includes the intent to eliminate the 'liveness' of the actual performance while revealing the form of the performance. Moreover, it includes situations in which the performances of Nam are no longer being performed by sharing the cultural memories of the current audience. The performances of Nam in *The Life of a Comedian* do not cause collective laughter from the audience, as in the

peak days in the past, but they contain past moments that are constantly being reproduced in the present time. Therefore, *The Life of a Comedian* was completed in the form of a performance that was replayed repeatedly in the exhibition space without an actual audience. Cuts of the shots were not applied much in the filming process, and I wanted to put the body of the original actor – played by Nam – in the frame as it was and edit as if the original performance had not been cut in the middle and as if the actor had disappeared from view like the blackout on stage. The actual exhibition space was made into a dark and black space without any other lighting, and the image of the body of a man that plays through the transparent screen hanging in the air was installed close to the actual size. (Fig.9) Therefore, it can be suggested that the audience entering the first exhibition space is confused, as if Nam stood in the space, and, at the same time, it is not a play performed in the present moment but a past that is repeatedly being played in the present moment.



Fig. 9 *The Life of a Comedian*, 2012. Installation view

In *Tenant* by Grace Schwindt in 2012, the theatrical situation and the result of filming were used as theatrical forms, but, at the same time, we can find cases in which the sense of realism or 'liveness' of the theatricality is not experienced. Schwindt uses a variety of theatrical elements, such as sets, actors, costumes and props, in this work, but these create a situation in which they hit, interfere with and slip rather than composing a linear narrative. *Tenant* is based on a dialogue between the artist's grandfather and the artist, which deals with the story of Mrs Schumacher, who lived in Berlin as a tenant of the grandfather during the Second World War. In the story Mrs Schumacher was a Communist, and, since Vladimir Lenin's February Revolution in 1917, she had helped Lenin travel from Switzerland to Russia. It is a script based on the actual content of conversations, but as the script gradually finds a shape, the reality of the script is either disjointed or transformed into something else. The dialogue, which sounds like conversation, is transmitted through several actors, sometimes in the voice of the child, sometimes in the voice of the elderly man and sometimes in multiple voices. This dialogue is spoken in a dull, emotionless tone. Although the set that Schwindt has embodied reminiscently resembles home in Berlin, like its attitude toward the dialogue, it does not form any concrete space. Simple walls and floors, and some furniture, staircases, railings and so on, are all reminiscent of the house. The actors who deliver the dialogue also reproduce ordinary movements that are irrelevant to the contents of the dialogue at a non-daily pace. Additionally, these routine movements are connected or intersected without any specific connection, and sudden unfamiliar movements intervene between them.

Schwindt's work inspired me to think about the relationship between the 'dynamics of texts' and the 'reality of the past', which I explored through *The Life of a Comedian*. Both tasks created a theatrical situation based on actual memory, but the process of making a narrative and the effects of the results point elsewhere. In *The Life of a Comedian*, the real memory of Nam is revealed sometimes through acting, sometimes through stylized imitation and sometimes between reality and acting, stylization, but the powerful reality of his body is not greatly undermined. Although it is the body reproduced by the filmed images, Nam and his body, which convey the autobiographical memory of the generation to which they belong, reveal a definite reality by themselves. On the other hand, in *Tenant* there is a strategy of dismantling all of the elements of reality that were originally based on this work – the dialogue of the author's grandfather, the memory of her grandfather

and the house in Berlin – and transforming them into something else. The reality preserved in part, such as the body image of Nam in *The Life of a Comedian*, is not found. All the real factors are dismantled and presented as strange pieces in unfamiliar relationships. I think that Schwindt is taking a more negative and radical attitude toward the reality of the past, and this is reflected in the narrative structure of *Tenant*. Conversely, in *The Life of a Comedian*, I do not completely dismantle or deny the reality of the past but adopt a strategy that reveals the various levels of such reality. In particular, Schwindt shows a different view from me in dealing with the actor's body especially as a theatrical element. I use the actual body as a very important factor in realizing the actor's autobiographical memory in *The Life of a Comedian* and as a mediator between reality, re-enactment and fiction, whereas Schwindt, like other theatrical elements, uses the actor's body in a way that dismantles the realities of the past.

While trying to represent a system, I deconstruct it by using the same mechanisms that I apply to build it: bodies, movements, speech, furniture, architecture, and costumes. For example, the film *Tenant* describes the routines that take place in a family home, such as eating together, doing homework, or bathing. These routines are embedded into a wider historical and social context and get repeatedly interrupted—such as a performer falling down stairs at the very moment she reaches the top. The body in my work is turned into a fragile prop in constant danger.⁵¹

Although the video–audio installation form of *The Life of a Comedian* reflects the current state of Nam's performance, which repetitively plays one particular moment of the past, his performance still includes situations that current audiences can also share. Ironically, although this was created from the memories of the past, it is still related to the current situation of Korea that the present audiences experience in the future tense.

The last part of *The Life of a Comedian* shows a performance that Nam actually gave in Pyongyang. He imitates the sounds of cars, trains and boats while imagining that these will be used as the means of transportation between North and South Korea when the country

⁵¹ <http://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/recipients/grace-schwindt>

achieves reunification. He imagines a train and adds another imagination, an impossible one, that he would like to ride the steam locomotive that he used on the way back home in North Korea. This imagination, which he reproduced on the stage long ago, is still a futuristic one even today, and it is also the future that current audiences can imagine together. The last part includes a futuristic imagination that is still a performance of the past, and this made me question the possibility of temporality and time tenses as the forms of narrative when the memory of the past is transmitted to the present audience. Such a question was explored in more detail after a few years in 2016 at *Memory Museum* – Guro.

CHAPTER 4. Re-narrated Site – *Memory Museum-Guro*⁵²

Memory Museum – Guro – hereinafter referred to as *Memory Museum* – was completed in 2016 but first began back in 2014. For one year, from June 2014 to June 2015, I was a resident artist at Seoul Art Space GEUMCHEON, located in the outskirts of Seoul. I worked with *Memory Museum* on the basis of experiencing the artist-in-residence programme and the research on the space and residency building itself.

Memory Museum shares the same questions that arose during the process of making *The Life of a Comedian*. They are questions pertaining to how places can be narrated through the forms of actors, a stage and theatrical devices and how the places in memory are converted or transformed through narratives. However, *Memory Museum* proceeds to explore these questions, focusing on the specific locations and elements of narrative forms, memories and current perceptions. While concentrating on the relationship between the specific place and the narrative form, the questions that are explored in *Memory Museum* are specified as follows: How are questions about a particular place handled in the structure and form of narrative? How does the structure and form of narrative reveal or transform the memories of the place and of the current perception? In *Memory Museum* the theatrical element of stages is still explored as a multi-layered narrative space where various pieces of information, memories and records cross and conflict, but it explores such questions in a manner that differs from *The Life of a Comedian*. The stage space in *Memory Museum* is not a fictional space that has been theatrically ‘made up’ but rather is based on a specific space that actually exists. Physical and historical research on the actual space was conducted, and questions concerning how this space can become a place to gather and organize memories of the past were explored.

The Geumcheon Art Factory building is a three-story factory building that was built in the 1970s. The building was originally used as an electric cable factory and then a printing factory before it was purchased by the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture in 2008 and turned into a residency space for artists. Geumcheon Art Factory is located in a large industrial complex called Guro Industrial Complex. From 1964 to 1974, a period of 10

⁵² My work, HD video, stereo sound, vertical display, 12 minutes 33 seconds, 2016 (URL: <https://vimeo.com/195617874>)

years, it was established as an export industrial complex, and it is estimated that about 110,000 people were engaged in this industry in the late 1970s. Thereafter, since the 1980s it has been transformed into a heavy industrial complex led by a chaebol (a large, usually family-owned, business conglomerate in South Korea), but it was also the place where violent labour movements occurred due to the poor working conditions of that time. The numbers of workers have now fallen dramatically due to the changes in the industrial structure, and the major industries of the Guro Industrial Complex have changed from manufacturing to broadcasting, communication and information services. However, a large number of workers – including foreign workers – are still working in this space and being exposed to a harsh environment and working conditions.

Research Diary – Beginning of the Research (November 2014)

While I was researching the Geumcheon Art Factory building and the area surrounding it, I came to identify the influences of the buildings' oldest past. The story is from a long time ago, before this factory was built. The land of the Guro Industrial Complex where this building is located was originally worked by farmers for many generations. In 1961 the Park Jung Hee regime detained the land from the farmers to build the Guro Industrial Complex, and during the process these farmers filed a lawsuit against the country. However, the military regime forced the farmers to withdraw the lawsuit by kidnapping, torturing and threatening them. Fifty years later, some of these farmers and their descendants filed a lawsuit demanding national compensation for the violence that their ancestors had endured. Although the Seoul High Court adjudicated in February 2014 that it would compensate the families with the amount of 113.7 billion won – the largest amount of compensation in history for a single case – the case is still currently pending in the Supreme Court.

I checked the old register copy of the factory building at the registry office and confirmed that the land was a barley field and was expropriated as national land before the factory was built in 1975. Starting with this information, I began to investigate documents related to this building and its surroundings and conducted interviews with the people concerned. The first company involved was an electric cable factory company known as Palgum Industry. At that time it was a mid-sized company supplying domestic telephone lines and special transmission and reception cables for military units. I was able to meet some of the former workers of

Palgum Industry. Even after retirement they maintained their fellowship by meeting each other regularly. I was able to hear about the scenery of the factory during those days. They said that the electric cable factory at that time used the method of coating a coil with rubber powder, and, by the time the workers had finished a day's work, all of their faces had turned black due to the smoke from burning rubber.

As I read through the records of various labour movements in the Guro Industrial Complex, I knew that this factory was not an exception to the poor working conditions. While listening to former workers speak about the factory, I came to hear about a particular individual who was known as 'Director Kang'. Kang was a big character who joined the company as a bookkeeper and went on to become a finance director. At that time it was nearly impossible for a high-school graduate to become a finance director. I asked all around how I might be able to meet this person and finally made contact with her nephew. According to her nephew, she had retired a long time ago and is now residing in a nursing home following the discovery about 10 years ago that she had Alzheimer's disease. Although I initially wanted to meet her in person, I discovered that it was not possible, but, thanks to her nephew, I was able to read the diary that she had written over a long period of time.

This diary was incredible, particularly because the contents and photographs in it revealed some very different views of the factory than those told to me by other workers. Kang, in the photographs that were attached to many pages of the diary, looked different from other female factory workers of that time. There were scraps of foreign Vogue pages and fashion articles from newspapers scattered throughout the pages of the diary, and the photographs of Kang in her youth, which seemed to have been taken in a studio, looked as though she was a movie star from old times. Her nephew said that Kang had been very interested in fashion since her youth. I asked if he had heard anything from Kang about her life in the days of the electric cable factory, and he said that it seemed to him that life in the company was not particularly difficult for her. In addition, as Kang had been promoted to the senior position of a finance director, she led a life of leisure in her old age, even after retiring from the company. Although Kang is currently suffering from Alzheimer's disease and thus has lost all her memories of the past and can barely talk, her nephew insists that Kang was always very proud of her working years at Palgum Industry. I was surprised and found it rather

interesting that Kang's memories about the company were so different from the other workers who were employed by the same company as her.

I met once again with the workers of the Palgum Industry and asked them if they remembered anything particular about Kang. I learned that Kang's day-to-day environment was rather different from that of the other workers, as she worked in the office space that was beside the president's office. Moreover, it is alleged that she was a secret mistress of their boss for long period of time. In fact, it was supposedly something that most of the factory workers who had been employed for the company for a significant amount of time had known about, and apparently there was an incident when the wife of the boss came to the factory and had a big fight with Kang.

In learning of these rumours, I came to understand a little more why the memories of the same factory/company might differ greatly between Kang and the rest of the workers. Kang left behind only the memories that she wanted her nephew to know about in her diary. In this sense the fact that Kang is now suffering from Alzheimer's disease and has lost all her memories seems very ironic.

Counter-Memorial



Fig. 10. The Laborer House, location still

In addition to conducting such research, I discovered an interesting space while exploring the surrounding area. It was called Laborers House and was established under the name of Guro-gu District Office. It was opened in May 2014 with the purpose of providing visitors with an opportunity to experience the tiny and shabby rooms where female factory workers of the Guro Industrial Complex once lived, from the late 1960s to the 1980s. Like a movie set, the place had reproductions of the tiny rooms and a display of archive photographs accompanied by brief histories of the female workers of the Guro Industrial Complex.(Fig.10-11)



Fig. 11. The Laborer House, location still

This was, in other words, the ‘official memorial hall’, which had been established by the institution to honour the history of this area. *Memory Museum* started with the observation and reflection of this official memorial hall. By reproducing a fake space like a movie set, this Laborers House acts as a replacement of the past of Guro Industrial Complex, which was the original purpose of the museum, with a fake space. Moreover, the audience was not the subject who remembered and commemorated the past of Guro Industrial Complex but rather acted more like tourists who were passively experiencing this fake space that had been modelled like a movie set. This memorial hall was ultimately a failure in attempting to recall the past or to commemorate the identity of the area. It was my hope that the *Memory Museum* project would resist the concept of this institution-led memorial hall in every way. Through *Memory Museum* I intended to honour the past of the building (and the surrounding area), which is now used as Geumcheon Art Factory, to create a space that effectively commemorates the residents who once lived here. At the same time, however, I tried not to imitate and represent the object of memory and refused to fix the memories of the past through means of representation. Moreover, I wanted to create a space that does not limit the experiences of the audience through the

representation. All of these were located at the opposite point of the concept and form of the Laborers House, which deals with objects of the same past.

Since the 1980s a new concept of monuments or memorials has begun to emerge from artists with a critical awareness about past monuments or memorials. One example of this is the *Monument against Fascism, War, and Violence – and for Peace and Human Rights*, a monument erected in 1986 in the heart of Hamburg's commercial district of Harburg. This monument was built by artists Jochen and Ester Gerz, who define it as a 'counter-monument'. It was located in the outskirts of Hamburg, where working-class people of German and Turkish identity resided, and it was built in the shape of a long square pillar, 12 metres high, with a floor area of 1 square metre. To be more specific, it was in the shape of a hollow aluminium pillar, and the surface was made of soft lead. In addition, written instructions were included under the monument in seven languages: German, French, English, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic and Turkish. The content of the instructions are as follows:

We invite the citizens of Harburg and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so, we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-meter-tall lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day, it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Harburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the end, it is only we ourselves who can rise up against injustice.⁵³

The artists attached a steel pen to this monument with cable, and people left their names, messages and scribbles here. When these messages filled the monument up to the brim, it was lowered into the ground, and people could leave more messages higher up the monument. Every time this monument was lowered, local people and the press gathered to record and celebrate the monument. The monument was lowered six times, and in 1991 it completely disappeared into the ground. Today, there is only a stone plate left to commemorate the act of this erasure. Malkin highly appreciates the active and subjective

⁵³ Malkin, J. R. (1999) *Memory-Theater and Postmodern Drama*. University of Michigan, p. 12.

role of the subjects – local residents and visitors – of memory in memorizing and commemorating the project.

The viewer thus became both a witness and a co-producer, determining the behavior as well as the appearance of this marker of memory.⁵⁴

Malkin also compares the process of disappearing objects that commemorates the act of memory with ‘disappearances’ on stage in the memories of the audience.

These repeated performances, each time with an altered memorial object, underlined the mutability of memory, its unfixing and yet repetitive nature; while the immersion itself signified the disappearance of memory’s ‘exterior scaffolding and outward signs’ – similar to the ‘disappearance’ of theatrical performance, which leaves its trace only in the memory of the participating viewer.⁵⁵

In fact, the form of the Laborers House, which had been designed to commemorate the past and memories of the Guro Industrial Complex, is the method that many national memorials have chosen. These memorial halls are composed of a space where visitors can experience the space of the time, such as a movie set, and a space for exhibiting typical narratives by displaying archive photographs and texts.

The Laborers House did not consider the issue of ‘who’ remembers the past – even though its purpose is to encourage ‘remembrance’ through various forms of exhibition and spatial representation. I believe this to be one of the most fundamental problems of such bureaucratic memorials. The question of who ‘remembers’ differs from the question of who’s memory belongs to it. This memorial hall also deals with past workers, their lives and their memories, but the subject who is actively performing the act of ‘remembrance’ is a ‘public institution’ that is composed of all these materials and representations as if it were objective and omniscient. The question of ‘who is doing the remembering’ is ultimately related to the way and form in which the memory is presented. The organizer of this memorial hall is neither the workers nor the local people who experienced these

⁵⁴ Malkin, J. R. (1999) *Memory-Theater and Postmodern Drama*. University of Michigan, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Malkin, J. R. (1999) *Memory-Theater and Postmodern Drama*. University of Michigan, p. 12.

memories in the past, nor is it the audience members who came to 'see' the past again. In addition, the memories formed by this memorial hall have no room for interpretation for the people concerned in the past and the audience members who newly come to recognize these memories – there is no room for interpretation. What is assigned to them is just passive. The public institution, which is the subject of the 'remembrance' of this memorial hall, constitutes the past of the concerned region not only through such an arbitrary, one-way form and structure but also through the form and structure of smooth and clear narratives to hide the fact that the people concerned and the inmates of the memories are excluded from the process of 'remembrance'.

While recalling my discussion of Malkin's 'disappearance', I wanted to develop the *Memory Museum* project into a kind of 'counter-memorial hall' that overturns the existing memorials, based on a space that can effectively be represented or an archival space that chronologically constructs a typical narrative. This is not a method of replacing the objects of memory or stopping the act of remembrance by representing the object of the memory but rather an attempt to create a 'commemorative space' that enables us constantly to recall the object of memory while at the same time realizing that the objects of these memories have disappeared and do not exist. Additionally, I thought that it was important to reveal who is performing the 'remembering', that is, the subject who is making the form and structure in the memory of the past reflected in the actions and results of this 'remembrance'.

Repeated Replacement

I decided to use Geumcheon Art Factory itself, which is currently being used as an artists' residency space, as the main spatial element of *Memory Museum* to materialize my vision. The current Geumcheon Art Factory was first remodelled in 2008 to be used as a residency space. Following this process the traces of the past scarcely remain, leaving only the basic framework, including the structure of the building, which consisted of extremely functional elements, such as a workshop, a hallway, a kitchen and an office space. I thought that the present state of the past having been removed could provide a suitable stage or set that might both remind us of the past and reveal a situation that does not presently exist. The most frequently used space in *Memory Museum* is the typical corridor, which

appears as a spatial background for different characters and different times, as seen in the image below. This corridor becomes a barley field where the farmers once worked, and it also becomes the electric cable factory where the bookkeeper used to work. (Fig.12)

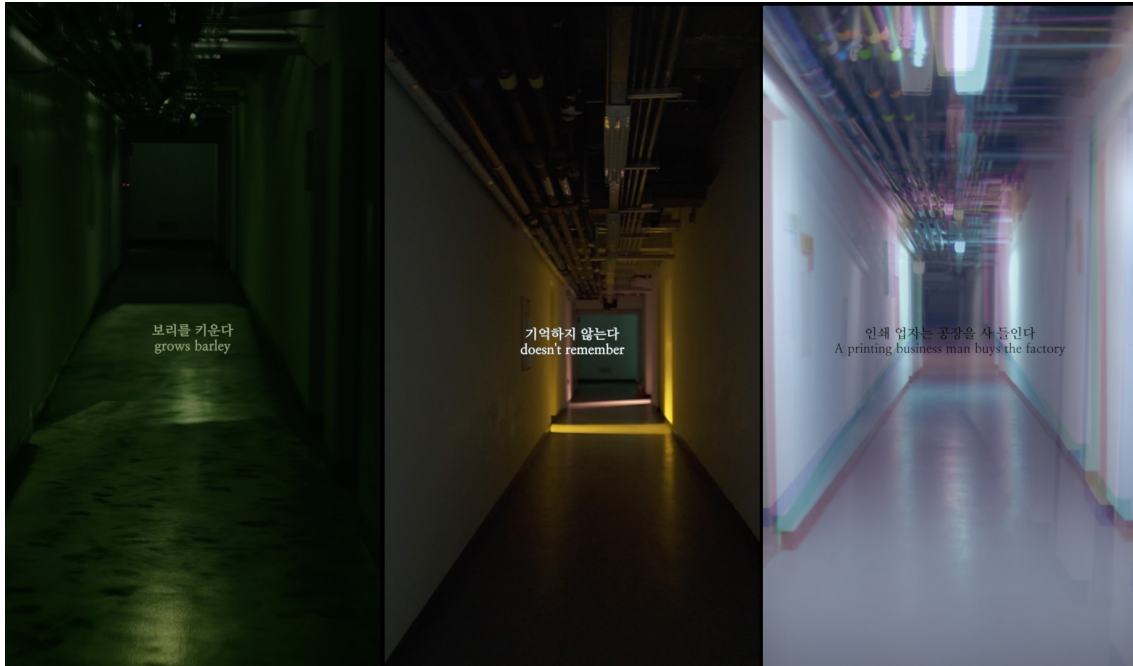


Fig. 12. *The Memory Museum-Guro*, 2016. Video stills

In other words, although the same corridor appears seven times in all, it appears under different lighting conditions and with different frames and different narratives each time. The structure of this repetition reflects the fact that the memories of the people associated with this factory building are all remembered differently, depending on the time and person. As I continued to investigate this place, I learned that the memories of the people involved were different and that they all stayed during different periods of time. Certainly there were personal interviews with individuals and objective facts from newspapers and administrative documents, but the most important thing was that the content that I was researching related to the memories of this place as opposed to complete and objective research on the place itself. My research shows how the memories of this place have changed over time. I considered the perspective of 'place of memory' to be more interesting than a comprehensive and objective view of what the place was like, because the former reflects time and the people who stayed in this place. Additionally, the differences in memory about this place were reflected in the form of narratives through

the repetitive use of the same space – the corridor – and the variation in the repetition. Such a method was intended to reveal simultaneously that the present place still serves as a ‘memorial hall’ to collect and remind us of memories of the past while at the same time the memories and meaning of this place have been and will continue to change.

These changes in *Memory Museum* continue to evolve as the time and images of an individual renew the present space. The farmer’s space is replaced and renewed by the space of the bookkeeper of the electric cable factory, which is repeated by the space of the boy who died of mercury poisoning in the thermometer factory. Although *Memory Museum* commemorates and recalls a specific place – Seoul Guro Industrial Complex – at the same time, by continuously replacing the current space with ‘repeated replacement’, the property of the space is not fixed but ever-changing and eventually becomes a state in which the space cannot be identified specifically. Psychologist Cathy Caruth states that, in terms of experiencing history as expressed through trauma, ‘trauma’ is always ‘displaced’ or ‘placeless’, because it always follows an incident.

... a history that literally has no place – neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present – in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood.⁵⁶

Such a discussion validates a fact proven in *Memory Museum*, in which the quest for the memories of a place eventually presents itself in a state in which it cannot be determined. The past of this old factory building, which is the subject of *Memory Museum*, does not, and cannot, exist in the present. The past of this factory building should be in ‘another place’, not in the now. Paradoxically, however, *Memory Museum* attempts to create ‘another place’ through this space in the present. That is to say, this is an attempt to make the present space as ‘another place’. ‘Another place’ in *Memory Museum* does not completely replace the present space, but rather it overlaps with the present space, or is created temporarily and disappears within time. In the work, this place is not the space of the past nor the present, but it is experienced as a space where the past and the present exist simultaneously.

⁵⁶ Caruth, C. (1995) Introduction to part 1. In: Caruth, C. (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 153.

In addition, the component of 'repeated replacement' keeps previous memories forgotten due to new emerging memories. In *Memory Museum* 'remembering' occurs alongside 'forgetting', reflecting the perceived phenomenon of the actual research process regarding this place. Although many historians mention the close and paradoxical relationship between 'remembering' and 'forgetting', in particular Pierre Nora's claim that 'remembering' is a realm that occurs simultaneously with 'forgetting' in relation to a 'site of memory' had a great influence on the research process and analysis of *Memory Museum*. In the 1980s the French historian Pierre Nora, along with other historians and intellectuals, conducted a research project entitled 'Les Lieux de Mémoire' on French historical sites. Nora argues that the most fundamental function of 'Les Lieux de Mémoire' was 'to stop time, to block the work of forgetting' and added that 'Les Lieux de Mémoire' only exists because of 'their aptitude to metamorphosis, in the incessant reversal of their meanings and the unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications'.⁵⁷ Nora's dual discussion of the memory and oblivion of site made me aware of the fact that the form of memory, which is repeatedly replaced in *Memory Museum* in dealing with the place of memory, also includes the process of forgetting regarding this place.

I was able to find this paradoxical principle in the performance of a young Japanese theatre director in February 2017 at one theatre in Seoul. The performance, called 'A line connecting a point and a point. The hexahedron made of this. Several different worlds that are full, in it. And about that light', such a long and mysterious title for a play, was by Mum and Gypsy and directed by Takahiro Fujita. This play deals with the earthquake, tsunami and radioactive spills surrounding the nuclear power plants in Fukushima, Japan, during March 2011. However, these disasters are not directly mentioned or represented but are only partially mentioned in fragmented forms through the memories of the characters. The traumas caused by such catastrophes are revealed in this play by the characters, who, as Caruth says, 'are possessed by an image or event'. In Fujita's performance the past events in which the characters are captured do not directly indicate the disaster of this reality. The memories that define these characters are of a friend known as Ayara who attended the same junior high school as them ten years ago and who ran away from her

⁵⁷ Nora, P. (1997) *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*. Columbia University Press, p. 25.

home and stayed in a tent alone in the woods during those teenage years. In this performance 'captivated memory' is presented through the method of 'repeated replacement'. However, Fujita's performance constitutes space and time in a seemingly more complex space than in *Memory Museum* through this composition method. The memory of ten years ago is repeatedly replayed by various characters through various viewpoints and times. However, the times are presented in such a way as to be inconsistent in many directions so that these past memories, which are repeated many times during the performance, are never presented at the same time. The memories that reoccur in the performance form the structure of the whole play, which occurs by characters in the time and space of the memory like a three-dimensional spiral structure, but it happens at different times and from different perspectives each time. Moreover, the memories occur at different times and do not become complete but rather, in a broader sense, incorporate the time and characters of the memory, creating a vaguer and more segmented perspective. From this standpoint the memories of the real incident of the earthquake and tsunami are intertwined. In Fujita's performance clear and complete stories or characters are never experienced. What we experience as an audience is roaming the unknown and time and space caught within past moments. This experience, like many other disasters and traumas, is a form of non-verbal, incomplete memory that the present artistic form can suggest. The place where combinations and compositions occur is not the stage or the middle of the play but the mind of the audience watching this performance. Joo Young Koh, who translated the script of this performance and first introduced Fujita's performances to Korea, states that the method of narrative used by Fujita requires the audience to 'construct' but at the same time presents a memory of the past in the state of 'confusion'.

In order to accurately understand scenes in chronological order, the audience should work with the 'composition' of the profession. The audience should look at the various characters in order to determine the ambiguity and identify the changed flow of the story which has been swiftly added to the scenes. It is like the previous works of the artist, where the method of narrative is confused between the current progressive reality and the memories of the past. It is a question on the

'memory' itself. What is 'memory', and how does memory depend on the subject according to the flow of time?⁵⁸

The memories of the past, which are visited through different characters at different times in Takahiro Fujita's performance, are like the corridor space of *Memory Museum*. This corridor space is presented through different characters, different times and different memories. Although in Takahiro's performance, the memories of the past that are reproduced repeatedly are related to one identical moment – the forest where their friend used to live 10 years ago -, in *Memory Museum*, different memories are collected in the space of a corridor. These memories of the past in *Memory Museum* have no overlapping points in time but they share the space in the corridor. The place where the memories gather, change and disappear in Takahiro's performance is not the stage, but in the memories of the past that characters in the play share. On the other hand, in *Memory Museum*, this hollow space (the corridor) in the present moment becomes the 'place of memory'. In the space of this corridor, past memories temporarily gather, change, and disappear.

Another aspect that was considered important in exploring the nature of memories of this place and how the present situation of the place is related to the narrative form was about 'temporality'. In *Memory Museum*, the temporality that was meant to be explored through the narrative form was, in fact, a temporal form in which both the past and the present coexisted and neither of which was superior.

I wanted the audience to experience the past and the present simultaneously - rather than replacing the present moment with the reproduced past or presenting the present moment without its past. Several elements of *Memory Museum* were used to make this narrative form, the first of which was the tense used in the narration. The narration of this work was based on interviews and newspaper articles of characters who stayed there at different times. In the narration, all sentences are in the present tense. The following is a

⁵⁸ Koh, J. Y. (2016) The questions on the ontological way of memory. In: Collection of Contemporary Japanese Plays. Worin Publishing, pp. 556–557.

story about a farmer made from the oldest memory in *Memory Museum*, and a part of the narration about the artist, made from the most recent memory.⁵⁹

Whose land is it?
A farmer's father's father
grows barley
The Japanese war office's land
The Shinhan Corporation's land
The Farmer's father
grows barley

The Printer leaves
An artist arrives
A ship continuously sinks
The cries of mothers
Never stop

All of the things that happened in the past and in recent times have used the same present tense. The reason was not to prevent forming a flow of time from the past to the present, but to create a form in which all memories from different times stay together in the same space. The use of the present tense, combined with the image of space, creates the 'present space' consisting of the 'present moment' of each person. This is an attempt to dismantle the chronological flow from the past to the present, and to create 'heterogeneous present moments'. However, despite these attempts, when looking back on the finished result, there still exists a temporal flow from the past in *Memory Museum*.

Individual scenes are clearly presented in the present tense, but when edited and viewed in the form of a single-channel video, it still contains a chronological flow from past to present. This limitation is due to the format of single-channel videos, selected by *Memory Museum*. Although each scene or image is presented in the present tense, when it consists of a single-channel video with a single stream, it still forms a single stream of time.

⁵⁹ The narration of *Memory Museum* is attached to this thesis as a separate document – Appendix B

Artist Malik Ohanian dismantles the linearity of narrative through the spatial installation of video, creating an simultaneous experience of the coexistence of heterogeneous times. *Seven Minutes Before (2004)* is a video installation by Ohanian which consists of seven screens connected together. In *Seven Minutes Before*, the images that initially seem to capture different places and different times are revealed in the explosive scene of the camper van that, in fact, they are seven scenes which happened at the same time. More specifically, these seven scenes were not filmed separately but were filmed at the same time with seven different cameras installed on seven screens at the same time. Although these scenes were filmed in the Vercors Massif, France at the same time, they show different images – a Japanese musician playing the koto, an African musician playing kamantcha, a wolf trapped in a cage, birds, mountains, roads and so on - except for the explosion scene. Through *Seven Minutes Before*, Ohanian creates a simultaneous experience that cannot be unified into a single time in which different times coexist.

In addition, a row of seven consecutive screens were set out of the audience's field of view. Christine Ross discusses Jean-Luc Nancy to state that Ohanian's method of installation (not allowing the entire work to be seen at one time), as follows: "It operates a failure of the global defined as a "totality grasped as a whole" to sustain a "world-forming" philosophy which exceeds representation." Ross analyzes that the method of installation used in *Seven Minutes Before* presents the world of 'relative simultaneities' that cannot grasp the whole from one perspective or view, against the globalization of the world as a single object.⁶⁰ In Ohanian's *Seven Minutes Before*, heterogeneous times are experienced as 'multiple times that do not integrate into one narrative', through multiple screens and a method of panoramic installation of these screens.

On the other hand, *Memory Museum*, which retains the flow from the past to the present, does not completely organize diverse memories and voices from various times in the past – without a criteria of priorities - together with the present space, which I believe is due to the formal limitations of single-channel videos. However, rather than regarding this as the limitations of the single-channel videos, I felt the need to further explore the form of

⁶⁰ Ross, C.(2012). *The Past is the Present ; It's the Future Too*. A Bloomsbury Company, p.233

narratives and compositional methods that deal with such multiple disparate times within a single channel.

Ohanian's approach to 'simultaneity' has been presented as a more complex and historical experience of time through his video and sound composition from 2007 entitled *September_11, 1973_Santiago, Chile 2007*. Unlike *Seven Minutes Before*, this work is a single screen format video work. The first thing that is perceived in this work is that the video and sound are not in sync with each other. The sound comes from the documentary *The Coup d'Etat* by Patricio Guzman, produced during 1975-1979. This documentary covers the period of the socialist government of Salvador Allende, known as the first president elected through open elections in 1970 in Chile. The government ended by the military coup on September 11, 1973, when Allende died after bombs were dropped on La Moneda, Allende's residence.

Later, Chile was under military dictatorship for 17 years; civilian government was in place in 1990. In 2000, the Socialist government came to power again after 30 years. In Chile, the era of the Allende government is problematic: reinstatement and concealment continued at the same time as contradictions, oppression, denial and affirmation. Guzman's documentary deals with this period, and the footage of it consists of the news footage and the footage filmed by Guzman himself. However, Ohanian's work *September_11, 1973_*, extracting only the sound from Guzman's documentary, shows films taken by Ohanian himself instead of Guzman.

Ohanian filmed his work in 2007 at Santiago, the same place where Guzman had also filmed his work in 1973. It is an image of the same place after 34 years. However, the sound of the image has been removed. The sound that comes along with the current image at the time of production in 2007 was from Guzman's documentary in 1973. Sounds of the past are heard along with the current images of La Moneda, where ordinary cityscapes and traces of bombing cannot be found any longer. Thus we hear the sounds of the military coup: helicopters, tanks and gunshots; the voices of people talking; and the voice of Allende making his last speech on the radio before his death.

Although the 'past' and the 'present' in *September_11,1973_* are presented to the audiences at the same time, they cannot 'synchronize' the video and sound, and therefore, cannot experience the past and the present as a single integrated narrative. Through 'not being able to synchronize', audiences constantly perceive the gap between video and sound, experienced as a gap between the past and the present.

Nevertheless, in this work, audiences struggle to combine the sound of the past with the image of the present. Eventually, the audience is confronted with the temporality of the past and the present that is difficult to combine together rather than the gap of the past and the present itself.

Although both the past and the present are concurrent, it can be said that it is a form that includes the temporal nature of the gap that cannot be integrated. Like *Seven Minutes Before*, the simultaneity presented in *September_11, 1973_* is considered as 'relative simultaneity'; it cannot be integrated into one. However, if the former uses the spatial installation of the multi-screen as its constituent method, the latter implements the concurrency through the concept of 'not being able to synchronize' between the single-screen video and the sound.

In *September_11, 1973_*, Ross described the concurrent experience of sounds and images that are not in sync with each other as 'sound-image oscillation'. Such does not only recognize the gap between the sound from the past and the image of the present, but also tells audiences that they are constantly going through this gap by making them experience it as a 'binding problem between the past and the present'.⁶¹

It can be related to the term 'traffic', which was used in Chapter 3 to access *The life of a comedian* as 'networked text'. I have used such a term to expand the textual concept of Roland Barthes to specify that active, dynamic and unstable motions and flows occur between the various combinations of textual elements.

⁶¹ Ross, C.(2012). *The Past is the Present ; It's the Future Too*. A Bloomsbury Company, p.244

The discussion related to Ohanian's *September_11, 1973_* made me realize that the concept of 'traffic' is a concept that can be created during the process of interpreting the work and within the experience of audiences. This shares many similarities with the point that Ross has discussed through the elements of audience/work and process/result:

if narrative representations are understood more as a process than a result, historical narratives do come about- not in the work per se but in the spectator's response to the work. This requires that we think of representation not only as a unified integration (as the scientists investigating the binding problem tend to do), but also as an integrating process.⁶²

A representation, a historical narrative considered as a process and as a problem, may well take the form of a non-fully reconciled récit. In *September 11, 1973_*, this occurrence has both a pragmatic and a historiographical *raison d'être*.⁶³

In the course of my work, the concept of 'traffic' - derived from the narrative process of the place - is not only created within the work itself, but also includes the element of audiences watching the work - its concept has been extended to the extent that audience experiences and shares the time of the place.

In the end, this research explores how one might find the most effective type of narrative form that contains diverse memories and voices that existed in the past and bring them into the present. In other words, it involves capturing memories of the past as well as the oblivion- not only from a critical perspective, but also with emotional sympathy. Moreover, I intended to find the way in which audiences can experience such a form of narrative as a process without constantly or fixedly going through these opposing elements. It was an attempt to change the perception and experience of these places through the awareness of the discontinuous temporality and indeterminate narrative. However, the form of narrative related to temporality can be advanced on various levels and layers in an artwork, and each of these forms create different experiences of temporality. Therefore, research of how the relationship between temporality and narrative form can reconfigure

⁶² Ross, C.(2012). *The Past is the Present ; It's the Future Too*. A Bloomsbury Company, p.249

⁶³ Ross, C.(2012). *The Past is the Present ; It's the Future Too*. A Bloomsbury Company, p.250

the memories and experiences of a place should be continued through more diverse practices in the future.

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Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset, 2011. Production still

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Fig. 10

The Laborer House, location still

Fig. 11

The Laborer House, location still

Fig. 12

The Memory Museum-Guro, 2016. Video stills

Appendix A : Script for *the Life of A Comedian*

Bo Won Nam appears on the stage
(While lifting his thumb)
Hello, this is Bo won Nam. Hahaha.

I was born into a wealthy family in a small village called Geumsan-ri in Eunsan-myeon, Suncheon-gun, South Pyongan province. When spring comes, beautiful flowers bloom everywhere and beautiful birds can be found in and from the mountains.

(Mimics the sound of a bird)

A calf cries, (mimics a calf mooing)

A chicken cries (mimics a chicken crowing)

A puppy cries and a dog cries (mimics a dog barking)

I grew up in a very small village where animals used to cry day and night.

There was a mill in the house, a bicycle, and a phonograph.

My father was a landlord. Thus, every day I heard the sound of phonograph whilst standing in front of it.

There were various kinds of sounds kept inside it.

All of Korea's folk songs were in there.

(In a folk song style)

The smoke of coal and white charcoal burning...

Let's enjoy. Enjoy this in your youth. Because you won't be able to when you're old and weak...

Whenever I make sounds whilst sitting on a rock,
a grandpa walking past stops and says
“How old are you, little boy? Enjoy during the youth”
(Pretending to give a clout) He gives me a clout with his knuckles.
“Hey, you little boy. You should become a clown. A clown.”

A small radio. On the radio called ‘National Matsuda’, the surrendering voice of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan came out.
My age was ten by then.

(Imitating the Emperor’s voice in Japanese) Sekai daisei mada. Wareni niaraiz sikanomi nai. Dekkiwa haraddani jangakkunano. Dakkudang oh hiresidae.
The generations of the world will not be beneficial to us.
The enemy threw the brutal bomb and everything was over.

We had the pleasure of liberation.

That’s right. Five years after that. When I was fifteen years old.

At that time, I was in the second grade of junior high school.

June 25 1950

Chungsung in Gangwon province. Foggy morning at 4am.

(Making the sound of a second hand while looking at the watch on the wrist)

The sound of a frog from somewhere

(Mimics a frog croaking)

(Mimics the sound of a bomb flying and falling)

(Mimics the sound of a tank)

It is a war.

The Han River bridge blew up at 2:00 am on 28th

(Mimics the sound of explosion of the Han River)

(In a folk song style) The Han River bridge is destroyed. Where is the place for a Seoul nobleman?

Oh my Bowon. Have you seen my Bowon? Where did you go Bowon? Where did my Bowon go?

(Pretending to start to play the haegeum (a traditional Korean string instrument), and mimicking the sound of it)

The refugee life starts to the south - to the south.

At that time, I, Nam Bowon, was pulled naked by my mother by the wrist from North Korea to cross the Taedong River.

My mother and I walked from Pyongyang to the South, a total of 550li.

I arrived, and had to meet my sister across the Taedong River...

I had to meet her without any appointment.

My sister falls onto the road of Hwanghae with my brother-in-law, as well as the others,

But we continue towards Gyeonggi province.

From there, we become a completely separated family.

It has been fifty years since I became a separated family.

I was lucky to go to Pyongyang to meet my sister.

Seven days and eight nights. For seven days and eight nights, in search of my sister...

I finally met her there.

My sister was too old and all skin and bone after 50 years.

"Dear sister, what have you been doing? and how have you been?"

"I live well because of our leader."

"Yea? That's right."

"Sister, you should take care of your health. You need to be healthy in order to live well. You should be healthy."

“How have you been?”

“I am a comedian actor in the South. I also received a medal to put it your way. So basically I have become a talented actor - a people’s actor.” Then she says,

“Yes. You used to be pretty impeccable.”

‘Being impeccable’ means a mischievous boy with talents.

We only have 30 minutes or less.

How can we talk in peace when we are at the airport,
when the plane is waiting for take-off?

I have to go. Please give us more time. I have to go.

Then she gave me this much of rice. In a bundle. This much of rice.

She tells me that it is what she had cultivated and that I am to share this with our mother and father.

I thought that only the South delivered rice to the North,
the rice cultivated from the North, I take it with me...

(Nam is about to cry)

It is what she had cultivated herself, I put it in my arms.

I return to the South with it and once again become a separated family...

I bought my sister a meal for the first time in 50 years, but she couldn’t even finish it.

I came back to the South, to the South.

Don’t look back. Don’t look back, dear sister.

If you do, I can’t go.

Finally, she comes back in front of my car

when she was entering back into the hotel. My Dukyong. (Nam’s real name)

Please live well, live well...

My sister...

I have no other chances to meet my sister again.

She keeps looking back even when she enters the hotel...

(In a folk song style) Dear sister in this world filled with sorrow.

I cry, leaving my emotions behind. Of course we have to meet again. We have to meet again.

Let's live for five hundred more years. So we can meet again.

But it has already been over 10 years since we were separated. 15 years have passed.

Separation from my sister whom I cannot meet again.

I have no idea whether or not she is still alive.

If she sees this program,

"Dear sister, please be healthy. If you are, then we can meet again." I would like to tell her this again.

Finally, in 1963, there was recruitment of actors in the theater. Recruitment of actors.

At that time, the theme of the test was to try to express the theme (Korean poem) with a dialect from each province – like the traditional three-verse Korean poems of Sa Eon Yang. That is, "The mountain is high, but it is a mountain under the sky. If you climb up there will be no more to climb up, but they keep say that it is high.'

So if I go up and say

"Where are you from?"

"I am from Hamgyeong province." "You are from Hamgyeong province. I will sing 'Even if the mountain is high'.

"How high would the mountain be? If you keep climbing up there will be no place farther to reach for. A person would keep complaining that the mountain is too high, rather than use the cord to climb up."

"Okay. Where are you from?"

"I am from Pyongan province." "Ah, please say something in Pyongan style."

"How high would the mountain be? Where would these stubborn little people be, not climbing up the mountain. People say that the mountain is high without actually climbing up. If you do climb up, you will be successful. Indeed."

"Who is next?"

"How high would it be? Right? There is no one who cannot climb up if they try. People don't even think about going up, rather they just complain that it is too high. Go up. What are you looking at? Is it done? Yea?"

"Yes, it's all good. Next, where are you from?"

“There was a mountain. How high would it have been? It’s exciting to even think about it. Where would the rude bastards be if they tried to climb up. People tend to just look at it and say that it is too high to climb up, without any intention of going up. If you do go up, you will become a member of the National Assembly and a President. How does it sound? It sounds good doesn't it? Go up! Okay?”

Likewise, I came first in the field of comedy. What did I do at the Civil Hall on my debut? I had my first part in presiding while playing a double role.

“Where are you from?”

“I am from Pyongan Province”

“What will you sing for us?”

“I will sing A little calf”

“Sorry?”

“In Pyongan Province, we say it differently.”

“Ah, really? Anyway, let’s listen to it.”

“(Singing in Pyongan dialect) A little calf. A little calf. A brindled little calf. He looks like his mother and his father.”

People would clap their hands.

“Who is next? Where are you from?”

“I am from Ulsan.”

“Ah...Ulsan. Which song?”

“I will do Ting-a-ling.”

“Sorry?”

“I said Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling.”

“You mean Ring ring? Okay. Go for it.”

“(Singing in Ulsan dialect) Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling. Please get away. My bicycle is on the way. Ting-a-ling-a-ling. The old man walking should move away. If you walk slowly you will get hurt.”

“Okay, Gyeongsang-do dialect is also included. Where are you from?”

“Why do you ask? Can you not see it from outside?”

“No. Where?”

“I am from Mokpo.”

“Okay. Which song?”

“A wild rabbit.”

“Sorry?”

“I said I will sing A wild rabbit. You can’t even understand Korean...Damn it...”

“Okay. Okay.”

(Singing in Mokpo dialect) A wild rabbit, ra-bbit. Where are you off to? While jumping hippity-hoppity, where are you going? Oops. I was doing good though... Thanks everyone.”

I started doing shows like these.

I went to the Soviet Union (Russia).

“Dasvidanya”

I went to France, and said “Bon jour. Madam Moselle.”

I went to Japan, and said “Sirai goinara...”

Then, until where do I go?

In 1985, I get to go to Pyongyang in North Korea as a group of exchange artists.

What would I do in Pyongyang?

Let’s say that I do what I like in North Korea,

“This South Korean is preparing for the war even with his mouth.”

Just in case this happens, I don't do it.

Then what did I do?

“Hey. If we reunite, the cars will commute between the North and the South.”

(Mimicking the sound of a car starting and moving)

They were not clapping. Not only this but also the train will move around.

(Mimicking the sound of a train)

More than this train, we find the one with the ‘choo choo’ sound more romantic.

The one we used to take to go home.

(Mimicking the sound of a steam locomotive train)

Crossing the bridge.

(Mimicking the sound of a steam locomotive train)

Passing the tunnels.

(Mimicking the sound of a steam locomotive train)

Is that all? Three sides are sea side. There will be ships available from Busan to Wonsan. From Wonsan to Busan. From Busan to Wonsan. From Mokpo to Nampo. From Nampo to Mokpo. That’s right.

(Mimics the sound of a boat)

Appendix B : Script for *The Memory Museum- Guro*

Whose land is it?

A farmer's father's father

Grows barley

The Japanese war office's land

The Shinhan Corporation's land

The farmer's father

Grows barley

Whose land is it?

Only farmers can have ownership of land

The farmer

Grows barley

The president commands

The farmers are taken

Their eardrums ruptured

Their knees are broken

Whose land is it?

"It is the state's land"

The barley field

Has a new name

Guro Export Industrial Complex

The farmers' homeland disappears

A wire factory is built

A bookkeeper

Gets a job in the new factory

15 years later, the bookkeeper

Becomes the financial director

48 years later, the bookkeeper

Gets Alzheimer's disease

The bookkeeper

Reads a Vogue magazine

The same factory
A different world
The bookkeeper
Doesn't remember
With the scent of gentle spring,
Pink woollen flannel (woollen flare skirt)
The smell of burning rubber
She doesn't remember
As grey as the winter is
'Ceroree' green coat (Celery green, light green coat)
The black faces in the factory
She doesn't remember
In autumn, the season of fading
A beautiful orange skirt
The bookkeeper
A secret mistress of the factory owner
In a midday of summer
blue pantaloons
With a black military cable
She is strangled
The bookkeeper
Doesn't remember
The same factory
A different world
15 years later, the bookkeeper
Becomes the funds director
48 years later, the bookkeeper
Gets Alzheimer's disease
Next to the wire factory
There is a thermometer factory
Boys
Make thermometers
On the floor

Drops of mercury roll around
Into the mouth and the skin
Drops of mercury soak
Unable to get to sleep
Eyes are stopped
Tongues are stiffened
A fifteen year old boy dies
Boys die
The Seoul Olympics takes place
In the wire factory, a boy
Loses his way
In her father's factory, a girl
Plays organ
28 years later,
The girl becomes a pianist
28 years later
A boy still wonders around the wire factory
The factory goes bankrupt
A printing business man buys the factory
The company has a name
Meaning 'rice cake soup'
A Japanese friend's company name
From the National Tax Service
From factory complexes,
All the information is given
The printer
Produces tax bills
Expensive printing presses
Governmental organisations
The Japanese company, rice cake soup
Everybody receives bills
No one knows
Expensive printing presses

Governmental organisations
A Japanese friend
The printer leaves
An artist arrives
A ship continuously sinks
The cries of mothers
Never stop
The artist's brother dies
The artist
Comes back after forty five days
And never works
Never works
Every night, women
Come to chat
With them, the artist
Makes moonlit nights
An epidemic strikes
The last exhibition is cancelled
The artist
Prepares a dinner
Invites all
Waits for them all

Appendix C : Summary of work-process and informations

< Eight Men Lived in the Room - News >

HD video, stereo sound, video projection, 5min 56sec, 2010

- Found a studio in Mullae-dong, Seoul
- Search documents about Mullae-dong in the National Archives of Korea
- Found a 45-second news film from 1961 (No.397)
- Copied the film from the National Archives of Korea (transfer to SD video)
- Search about the site in the film and attempted to visit – failed to find it
- Visited the areas relating to the old address of the boardinghouse for workers – recorded in photography and marked on a map
- Started to search about the documents concerning the boardinghouse for workers – newspapers, magazine, administrative documents, dialogues with nearby residents



research material (article published on 17 December 1962. *The Dong-A Ilbo*)



research material (B&W photographs, 1971. The National Archives of Korea)



research material (B&W photographs, 1970. The National Archives of Korea)

- The dialogues with nearby residents confirmed that the building was demolished long ago
- Checked the administrative documents of the building's demolition in the Yeongdeungpo Borough Office

- Analyzed the form of the propaganda news films in the 1960's
- Wrote a script in the form of news based on the collected documents –composed 7 additional sequences
- Selected background music for each sequence
- Cast the voice actors for the script
- Recorded the narration of the voice actors in a recording studio
- Edited a video and sound
- Worked on English subtitles
- Completed the video work



Eight Men Lived in the Room – News, installation view

< *Eight Men Lived in the Room - Filmset* >

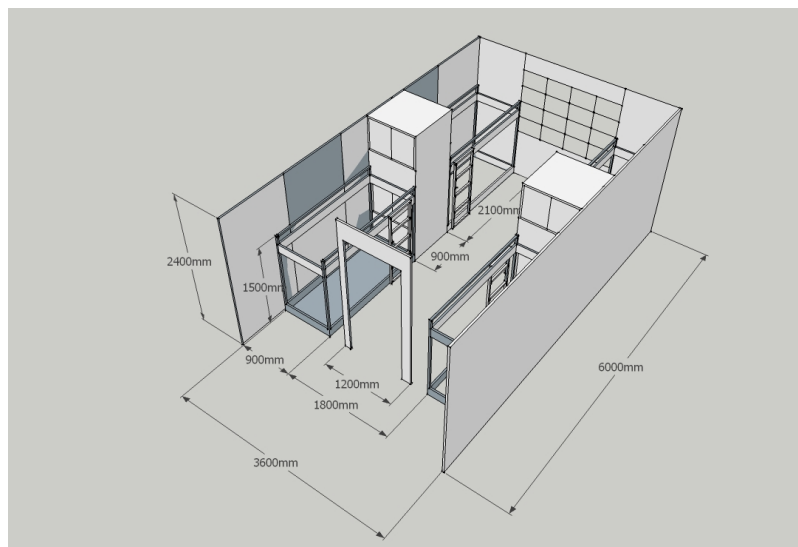
2CH HD video, stereo sound, 2min 52sec, 2011

- Found a nonfiction short story, 'The Fallen Citizen', by Gwangbok Lee while searching the documents for '*Eight Men Lived in the Room - News*'



Lee, G.B.'s short story *Fallen Citizen*, 1975

- Analyzed the scenes in the short story (visual and sound part)
- Attempted to construct the main place of the short story, the room of the boardinghouse for workers
- Discussed possibilities with a set designer (based on the scenes in the story and the images of the room in the news film)
- Sketched for the construction of a set (2D and 3D)

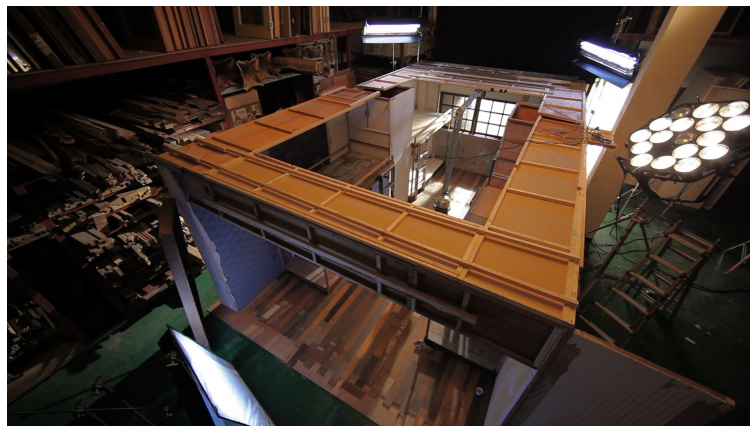


2D design for filmset



3D modelling for filmset

- Discussed the material for the construction of a set – recycled and collage woods used for other films
- Constructed a set
- Completed a set



Eight Men Lived in the Room- Filmset, production still

- Discussed with Camera and Lighting director on the site of the set
- Draw a storyboard
- Had rehearsal for Lighting
- Started shooting
- Cast 8 voice actors – who have voices of middle aged men
- Practiced singing and had a rehearsal – a chorus of 8 drunken men
- Recorded the chorus at a recording studio
- Edited a video and sound – 2 channels

- Worked on English subtitles
- Completed the video



Eight Men Lived in the Room – Filmset, installation view

< The Life of a Comedian >

HD video-audio installation, vertical video, transparent screen, 15min 18sec, 2012

- Clipped newspaper articles about the performance of the comedian Bowon Nam at a funeral
- Planned an autobiographical performance of the comedian Bowon Nam
- Searched the comedian Bowon Nam's documents - photos, videos, and texts



research material (B&W photographs, 1970. The National Archives of Korea)

- Completed the first autobiographical script reflecting his life
- Had the first meeting with Bowon Nam



interview still

- Completed the second script
- Practiced and held a rehearsal for shooting
- Searched for a theater location for shooting
- Prepared costumes and make-up for shooting
- Shot a performance – with shooting, lighting, and sound recording staff
- Edited the video and sound
- Worked on English subtitles
- Completed the video
- Made screen for video installation 1 – the plexiglass vertical screen for ratio (9:16)
- Made screen for the video installation 2 – attached a screen film on the plexiglass for rear projection
- Tested an installation of the completed screen with a video
- Installed the device for the video and sound (projector and speaker)
- Exhibited the video work



The Life of a Comedian, installation view

< Memory Museum - Guro >

HD video, stereo sound, vertical display, 12min 33sec, 2016

- Researched Seoul Art Space Geumcheon – past photographs, documents, and conducted interviews with related people



photograph from the former staff of the building, 2012 (before the remodeling)

- Interview with related people 1 – workers at the cable factory
- Interview with related people 2 – a nephew of a book keeper at the cable factory
- Interview with related people 3 – visited the factory making mercury thermometers
- Interview with related people 4 – a former staff member of the printing house
- Interview with related people 5 – present residents of Seoul Art Space Geumcheon (artists)
- Wrote a script
- Researched the site – a tour with a facility manager
- Draw a storyboard on the site – the outside, basement, corridors, closed spaces, rooftop, collecting well, machine room, etc. of the building

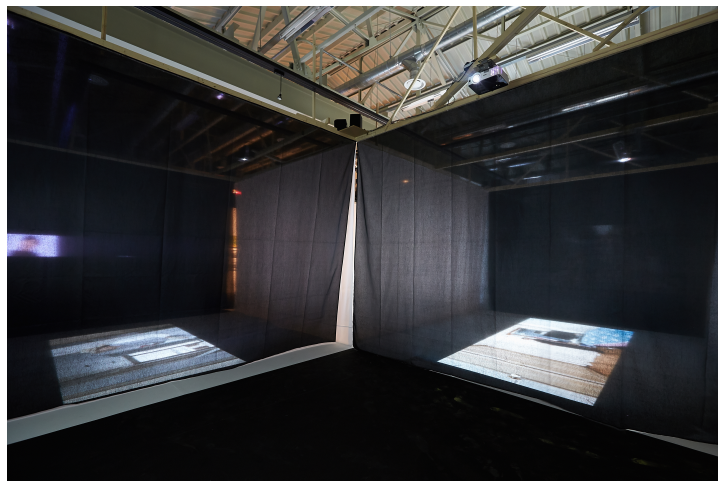


experiment for storyboard



experiment for storyboard

- Conducted a meeting with the shooting and lighting team on the site
- Edited a storyboard
- Outdoor shooting – on the site of a barley field
- Prepared props for shooting 1 – prepared a video for a projection in the corridor (videos of the barley field and wire factory)
- Prepared props for shooting 2 – the account book of a book keeper (by imitating the original)
- Prepared props for shooting 3 – placed color films on a window (green, orange, and blue)
- Prepared props for shooting 4 – used black beads (for the effect of the black rubber powder falling on the screen)
- Prepared props for shooting 5 – thermometer and hot water
- Prepared props for shooting 6 – created a silver duct
- Prepared props for shooting 7 – used iron powder falling in the dark (collected from an ironworks)
- Prepared props for shooting 8 – used silver liquid falling on an organ (by mixing silver powder and transparent glue)
- Prepared props for shooting 9 – used a black mirror and moon (the surface of the moon is represented on a circular transparent acrylic panel)
- Prepared props for shooting 10 – composed screens with fabrics by imitating the design of the cancelled exhibition (projected the image of the MERSC virus)



installation image of the cancelled exhibition

- Prepared props for shooting 11 – used props on a table

- Shooting – with the camera, lighting, and art staff
- Recorded sound – collected from the collecting well and on the site



recording sound at the collecting well, production still

- Edited the video and sound
- Worked on English subtitles
- Completed the video



Memory Museum – Guro, video still