

Choe U-Ram

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

Once upon a time, there were two worlds. They were connected to each other through a number of small holes, as if the worlds were breathing through these holes. However, the holes had a tendency to close up, so there were guardians next to each one to keep them open. The guardians were called “Custos Cavum”. They took the form of seals and had large front teeth, which they used to gnaw the holes to prevent them from closing up. Whenever a Custos Cavum felt the generation of a new hole somewhere, it fell into a deep sleep. From the body of the quietly sleeping Custos Cavum grew winged spores called “Unicuses.” These spores took flight and flew to a new hole, where it gave rise to a new Custos Cavum.

As time went on, the people of each world gradually forgot about the other. The guardians lost their power and died, one after another. When the last Custos Cavum died, the last hole closed, separating the two worlds completely. The existence of the other world was entirely erased from people’s memories.

Last night, I saw a Unicuses start to grow from the last bone of a Custos Cavum in my small garden. According to an old story, Unicuses will grow whenever the holes to the other world are open again.

Artist Biography

Choe U-Ram **South Korea**

b. 1970, Seoul
Lives and works in Seoul

Choe U-Ram (b. 1970, Seoul) currently lives and works in Seoul.

According to Choe, everything with life has movement. By adopting the movement as a vital component of his work, Choe began to work on his series of Anima-Machines. Through a fictional narrative or mythology based on archaeological imagination and movement intricately manipulated by mechanical devices, the artist visualizes the sub/consciousness, i.e. the coexistence of machine and life, which are casted as an aspect of the time and space we dwell in the present (or future). The power of his narrative renders life into these otherwise animated solid masses, which now coexist with humans in a new time and space.

In 2004, Choe established himself as a representative artist in the Korean contemporary art scene with his participation in the inauguration exhibition of Samsung Museum of Art, Leeum. In 2006, he began to garner the attention from the international audience with his solo exhibit City Energy-MAM Project004 at Mori Art Museum and his participation in the 61th Shanghai Biennale. *Urbanus* (2006), first introduced at the Mori Art Museum, still remains one of his representative works. Choe's notable large-scale installation works from the following years include *Una Lumina* at SCAI The Bath House (2008) and *Opertus Lunula Umbra* at Liverpool Biennial (2008). The artist continues to actively work both in and out of Korea.

Education

- 2000 Chungang University, Seoul, B.F.A
- 1999 Chungang University, Seoul, M.F.A

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 'Lamp Shop project', Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea
'Anima', Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2012 'Choe U-Ram', Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea
'U-Ram Choe Show', John Curtin Gallery, Perth, Australia
- 2011 'In Focus', Asia Society Museum, New York. USA
- 2010 'New Urban Species', Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, USA
'Kalpa', Bitforms Gallery, New York, USA

- 2008 'Anima Machines', SCAI The Bath House, Tokyo, Japan
- 2007 'U-Ram Choe', The Crow Collection of Asian Art, Dallas, USA
- 2006 'New Active Sculpture', Bitforms Gallery, New York, USA
'City Energy- MAM Project004', Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2002 'Ultima Mudfox', Do Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2001 '170 Box Robot', Hello Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1998 'Civilization Host', Gallery Boda, Seoul, Korea

Selected Recent Group Exhibitions

- 2013 'Post-humanist Desire: Sexuality and Digitality in Contemporary Art', MOCA, Taipei, Taiwan
'Site Specific Art Project: Choe-U-Ram', National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea
'Who is Alice?', Spazio Lightbox, Venice, Italy
'Flow, Just Flow', University of Richmond Museums, Richmond, USA
'DNA (Design and Art)', Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, Korea
- 2012 'Korean Eye 2012', Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
'Google Zeitgeist 2012', The Grove, London, UK
'Dream Walking in the Magical Reality', the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea
- 2011 'The Creators Project; New York 2011', DUMBO, New York, USA
- 2010 'Made in Popland', the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea
'Printemps Parfume'; Centre des Arts d' Enghien les Bains, Enghien les Bains, France
- 2009 'Beginning of New Era', the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea
'The imaginary line'. Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea
'No longer empty- Transformation', New York, USA
- 2008 'Made Up; Liverpool Biennial', FACT, Liverpool, UK
'1 51 Asian Art Triennial', Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK
'Open Space', NTT Intercommunication Center [ICC], Tokyo, Japan
- 2007 'Sprit of Place; Genius Loci, 3th Biwako Biennale, Omi Hachiman City, Japan
- 2006 '61th Shanghai Biennale-Hyper Design', Shanghai, China
'Seoul Forest Open Air Sculpture Symposium', Seoul Forest Park, Seoul, Korea

2005 'Hardcore Machine', Art Space Hue, Seoul, Korea

2004 'Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art Opening Exhibition', Leeum, Seoul, Korea
'Susan Biennale', Susan Metropolitan Art Museum, Susan, Korea
'Offisina Asia', Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italia
'The Armory Show', Pier 90 & 92, New York, USA

Awards

2009 'Kim se choong Sculpture Award', Young sculptor part, Kim se choong memorial work organization, Korea;

2006 'Young Artist Today Award', Fine arts part, Korean government, Korea

2006 'POSCO Steel Art Award', grand prize, POSCO T J Park foundation, Korea