

# Yang Ah Ham

## Artist Statement and Biography

---

### Artist Statement

*Nonsense Factory* was triggered by the artist's contemplations of the various crises that seem to be inherent in contemporary life. The final result is a mirror that allows us to look at our society from a different angle. Using the surrealist atmosphere of the artist's novella as a sketch and framework, the installation exposes the absurdities of reality, recalling the works of Samuel Beckett or Franz Kafka. Notably, among the primary methods of contemporary art, Yang Ah Ham chose to create this grand metaphor of the contemporary through an installation and video. *Nonsense Factory* brilliantly illuminates elements of our lives that we thoughtlessly ingest like air or water, forcing us to carefully consider the absurdities and complexities hidden in plain sight in our day-to-day existence, and ultimately providing an experience of tremendous surprise and revelation.

The *Nonsense Factory* installation consists of six parts: "First Room: Central Image Box Control Room"; "Second Room: Welfare Policy Making room"; "Third Room: Coupon Room"; "Fourth room: Artists' Room"; "Fifth Room: Factory Basement"; and "Sixth Room: Blue Print Room for Future Factory."

These parts address the following themes of contemporary society respectively: the issues of the "iconomy"; happiness as ideology; capitalism and the monetary economy; the cultural snobbery of the art field; the precarious state of idealistic values; and the infinite competition inherent to the pursuit of constant growth and progress.

*Nonsense Factory* probes both the structure of our lives and their internal dynamic function visually in the exhibition space and the audience in reality, who wanders through these rooms of factory encountering the others and oneself in the image in the capitalistic society of the reification, the commoditization and the fantasization. At the same time, in the space of crossing and intertwining relation, the audience sees not only the absurdity of the represented reality, but also the possibility to re-produce/change the reality.

## Artist Biography

### Yang Ah Ham South Korea

Yang Ah Ham lives and works in Seoul and Amsterdam. She has lived in different cities and deals with society and individuals' lives using this experience.

After her MA study in Seoul (1991), Yang Ah Ham moved to New York where she received her MA in Media Art (1998). From 2006 till 2007, she participated in a residency at the Rijksakademie voor beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam.

Yang Ah Ham presented her multiannual projects, *Adjective Life in the Nonsense Factory* in ArtSonje Center (Seoul, 2010), previously *Transit Life* could be seen in Gumho Museum of Art, (Seoul, 2005) and *Dream ... in Life* in Insa ArtSpace (Seoul, 2004). Her work was exhibited as well amongst others in the group show *Art of Communication: Anri Sala, Yang Ah Ham, Philippe Parreno, Jorge Pardo* in the National Museum of Contemporary Art, (Seoul, 2011), Gwangju Biennale, (Gwangju, 2010), Shanghai Biennale, (Shanghai, 2008) and the Busan Biennale (Busan, 2006). She received the Arts Award of the Year, Arts council Korea (2005) and was nominated for the Hermes Art Prize, Hermes Foundation (2008). Ham was involved as co-organizer in the artist initiative project, *Be mobile in immobility*, DEPO, (Istanbul, 2011) and the Total Museum (Seoul, 2011). The group exhibition *Kunst Mit chokolade*, was held at Museum Ritter (Waldenbuch, 2012).

In 2013, Ham was nominated for *Artist of the year* by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul). The annual artist-of-the-year exhibition presents artwork that explores key social issues in Korean society. Yang Ah Ham presented "The Nonsense Factory". "The Nonsense Factory" is a mirror in which we can observe our society, the work parodies contemporary life like a theater of the absurd.

## Education

2006 – 2007	Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, NL
1995 – 1998	Media Art, New York University, New York, US
1991 – 1993	Art Theory, Seoul National University, Seoul, KR
1987 – 1991	Painting, Seoul National University, Seoul, KR

## Solo Exhibitions (Selected since 2000)

2010	<i>Adjective Life in the Nonsense Factory</i> , Artsonje Center, Seoul, KR
2005	<i>Transit Life</i> , Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul, KR

2004 Dream...in Life, Insa Art Space, Seoul, KR

2000 Mongyu Do Won Do, Artpace, San Antonio, Texas, US

**Group Exhibitions** (Selected since 2000)

2014 Projection, Art Rotterdam 2014, Rotterdam, NL  
Oh My God, Hilversum Museum, Hilversum, NL  
Utopian Days- Freedom, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR

2013 Unknown Forces, Tophane i Amire Culture and Arts Center, Istanbul, TR  
Real DMZ 2013:from the North, ArtSonje Center, Seoul,  
Real DMZ 2013:Borderline, DMZ Peace & Cultural Hall, Cheorwon, KR  
Artist of the year 2013, MMCA, The National Museum of Modern and  
Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR  
Move on Asia, ZKM, Karlsruhe, DE  
Videologue: Yang Ah Ham, ARKO Art Center

2012 Kunst Mit Schokolade, Museum Ritter, Waldenbuch, DE

2011 Art of Communication: Anri Sala, Yang Ah Ham, Philippe Parreno, Jorge Pardo,  
Deoksugung Museum, The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR  
be mobile in immobility, creative politics, DEPO, Istanbul, TR, co-organizer  
be mobile in immobility, the materialized memory, Total Museum of  
Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR, Co-organizer  
21 Rooms, Nam June Paik Art Center, Yongin, KR  
Terra Incognita, Incheon Women Artists' Biennale, Incheon Culture & Arts  
Center, Incheon, KR

2010 10000 Lives, 8th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju Biennale Hall, Gwangju, KR

2009 Yang Ah Ham & Fahrettin Orenli, Amsterdam Grafisch Atelier (AGA)  
Amsterdam, NL

2008 Translocalmotion, 7th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai, CN  
Hermes Art Prize, produced by Hermes Foundation, Atelier Hermes, Seoul, KR  
Frieze Art Fair, Project with PiSTI/Istanbul, Regent's Park, London, UK  
Platform Seoul 2008: I have nothing to say, and I'm saying it, Seoul Train  
Station (old), Seoul, KR

2007 Open Ateliers, Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, NL  
Asian Contemporary art: My Lovely Day, Rodin Gallery, Seoul, KR  
Contemporary Korean Art: Wonderland, National Art Museum of China,  
Beijing, CN  
Videonale 11 -/AS Media Screening, Bonn Museum, Bonn, GR

- 2006 A Tale of Two Cities, 11th Susan Biennale, Susan Museum of Art, Susan, KR  
El mar que te dos noms: videoart de Corea, Cas a Asia, Barcelona, ES  
2005 Arts Award of the Year, Arko Art Center, Seoul, KR  
e-flux video rental, Insa Art Space, Seoul, KR  
Against Translation, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, KR  
DMZ\_ 2005, Demilitarised Zone Korea, Heyri Art Valley, Paju Book City, KR  
Illusions of Memory, Chinese European Art Center, Xiamen City, CN  
Publicly Speaking, SSamzie Space & AIT exchange program, Tokyo Wonder Site, Tokyo, JP, SSamzie Space, Seoul, KR
- 2004 Packed / Unpacked, Heyri Art Valley, Paju, KR  
Media Art- Now & Future, Shin Museum of Art, Chungju, KR  
Body Around, Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California, US
- 2003 Crossing 2003: Korea I Hawaii, Koa Art Gallery, Honolulu, Hawaii, US  
Korea Media Art Today: 'Relative Reality', Walsh Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, US  
Korea Contemporary Art 2003: Facing Korea, De Appel, Amsterdam, NL  
ISCP Open Studio, ISCP-New York, New York, US  
Energy, Project Space Zip, Seoul, KR  
SSamzie Open Studio, SSamzie Space, Seoul, KR
- 2002 Project 1\_Paused, Gwanju Biennale, Gwangju Biennale Hall, Gwangju, KR  
Real\_interface-swimming across your eyes, Space imA, Seoul, KR  
MAPP, Seoul Media Center, Seoul, KR  
30,000+30days, ChungRangli Station, Seoul, KR
- 2001 Paper, Signature & Self Portrait, im n il Gallery, New York, US  
Song poems, Cohan Leslie & Brown Gallery, New York, US  
Suitcase Study, 1A Space, Kowloon, HK  
EMAP- Ewha Media Art Project, Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, KR
- 2000 Apt.3F, Asian American Art Center (AAA), New York, US

## Residencies

- 2010 Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul, TR
- 2009 Amsterdam Grafisch Atelier (AGA), Amsterdam, NL
- 2005 Arts Initiative Tokyo (AIT), Tokyo, JP  
Chinese European Art Center (CEAC), Xiamen, CN
- 2003 International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), New York, US
- 2002 SSamzie Space, Seoul, KR

2000 ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas, US

### **Fellowships**

2012/13 Mondriaan Foundation, (Project subsidy), Amsterdam, NL

2010 Mondriaan Foundation, (Solo Show at ArtSonje Center), Amsterdam, NL  
Seoul Foundation Arts and Culture, Seoul, KR

2009 Fonds BKVB, Basisstipendium, Amsterdam, NL

2006/7 Arts Council Korea (ARKO), KR

2003 Arts Council Korea (ARKO), Young Artist Grant, KR

### **Awards**

2013 MMCA, The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, nominated for 'Artist of the year' Art Prize, Seoul, KR

2008 Hermes Foundation, Atelier Hermes, nominated for 'Hermes Art Prize', Seoul, KR

2005 Arts Council Korea, 'Arts Award of the Year', 1'1 Prize, Seoul, KR

2004 Park Geunhi Culture Foundation, 'Daum.net Media art prize', Seoul, KR