

**MMCA Korean Contemporary Artist Series**  
**《Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style》**



◇ **Cho Sung-mook, a sculptor making continuous self-innovation**

- An artist with adventurous creative spirit, undergoing continuous transformation instead of settling in a safe sculptural world
- Presents the harmony of the world of style through the imposing large-scale sculptures and the world of flavor through savory ingredients

◇ **A large-scale solo exhibition that sheds light on artist Cho Sung-mook's representative works and recent work**

- Exhibits some 90 representative works including <Messenger> and <The Progress of Bread> series
- Holds the exhibition at MMCA Gwacheon from December 1, 2015 to June 06, 2016

**The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA; Acting Director: Kim Jeong-bae)** is holding the exhibition **<Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style>** from December 1, 2015 to June 6, 2016 at **Circular Gallery 1 of MMCA Gwacheon**.

As the 13<sup>th</sup> exhibition of the **MMCA Contemporary Artist Series**, 《Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style》 sheds light on veteran artists who have left distinct footsteps in the history of Korean contemporary art; it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> exhibition in the sculpture category. Veteran sculptor Cho Sung-mook (1940- ) is considered a major artist who has made his mark in the history of Korean contemporary sculpture by constructing his own unique formative world while keeping his distance from popular trends. Despite his old age, he still comes up with adventurous and experimental works through continuous self-innovation as an active artist.

He was born in Daejeon, Chungcheongnam-do in 1940, studying in the Department of Sculpture at Hongik University. During his college years, he was specially selected at the 9<sup>th</sup> National Art Exhibition in 1960 and won fame in the art arena. He was an active member of Wonhyung Club, an avant-garde sculpture group that appeared for the first time in the Korean contemporary art arena; he also participated in AG, which was a representative avant-garde art group, leading the trend of Korean contemporary sculpture. During the 1960s-70s, he produced in various modes abstract sculptures that were at the frontline of contemporary sculptures at that time. By introducing ready-made products as his materials, he played a pioneering role in utilizing daily objects in the field of contemporary art.

As such, after the period of pioneering explorations during the 1970s, the artist dealt with issues of awareness that went beyond the property of materials by continuously presenting the <Message> series from the 1980s. He concentrated on the production and presentation of the <Messenger> series, including the sculpture of chairs, from the late 1980s to 1990s. The <Messenger> series has become a representative image that comes to mind when we think of artist Cho Sung-mook's artworks.

Through the <Messenger> series, Cho Sung-mook has established his unique formative style. Instead of sticking to such style, however, he continued undergoing transformation and challenging himself. In the latter part of the 1990s, he explored the <Communication> series by using a unique material like noodles. In recent years, he has been presenting a new art world by using synthetic resin as his material to make it look like bread.

The 《Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style》 exhibition introduces Cho Sung-mook's representative art world by striking a balance between the world of imposing style -- which shows sculptures of heavy chairs -- and the world of flavor, which

---

expresses the fun elements of sensuous materials. Additionally, this exhibition will provide an excellent opportunity for visitors to see other aspects of the artist by showcasing his early drawings and the changing style of his recent works.

For details, please visit the homepage of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (<http://www.mmca.go.kr>).

- Exhibition Planning: Curator Kim Gyeong-un (Curatorial Department 1/Tel.: 2188-6329)
- General Inquiries: Tel. 02-2188-6000 (MMCA Gwacheon)
- ※ For details on the exhibition, please call MMCA Gwacheon's Curatorial Department 1 (02-2188-6329)

---

## Exhibition introduction

With the goal of formulating a solid history of Korean contemporary art, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon has organized the *Korean Contemporary Artists* series, which collects and reviews the works and legacies of exemplary Korean artists. As the latest installment in this series, the museum proudly introduces *Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style*. Keeping his distance from contemporaneous trends, Cho Sung-mook (b. 1940) constructed his own aesthetic world, successfully establishing himself as one of the key figures in contemporary Korean sculpture and installation. He remains active to this day, continually renewing his style and challenging the audience with experimental and visionary works.

Born in Daejeon, South Chungcheong Province, Cho Sung-mook studied at the Department of Sculpture, College of Fine Arts at Hongik University. While in college, he made a remarkable debut, being specially selected at the 9<sup>th</sup> *National Art Exhibition* in 1960. From the beginning of his career, Cho was one of the leaders of Korean avant-garde art and sculpture, participating in two of the most important groups in the history of Korean contemporary art: the Wonhyung Club, Korea's first avant-garde sculptural group, and the AG group, the most renowned avant-garde art group in Korean history. In the 1960s and 70s, when abstract sculpture was still at the very forefront of avant-garde Korean sculpture, Cho was already pushing the boundaries of the medium with his unorthodox works. In particular, by incorporating industrial goods and materials into his sculptural works, he became one of the first Korean artists to actively utilize everyday objects in an artistic context.

After his pioneering experimentations with various materials, Cho Sung-mook began dealing with deeper issues of cognition with his *Message* series, which he continually produced from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Then from the late 1980s through the 1990s, he produced his representative *Messenger* series, featuring works inspired by the form of a chair.

With the *Messenger* series, Cho Sung-mook successfully created his own distinct and unique aesthetics, but that did not stop him from continuing his artistic growth and exploration with new experiments. For instance, in the late 1990s, he initiated his new series *Communication*, featuring works made with a very unconventional sculptural material: noodles. In more recent installation works, he has used synthetic resins to produce unusual works that seem to be crafted from bread.

*Cho Sung-mook in Taste of Style* is a major solo exhibition highlighting the exceptional vision embodied by Cho Sung-mook's art. The exhibition focuses on Cho's *Messenger* series, representing

the innovative qualities of his work since the 1980s, and also features various works demonstrating his continuous experiments with highly original materials. As one of the leading figures of Korean sculpture for several decades, Cho's work is imbued with a stately ambience, complemented by his playful experiments with sensational materials. Nowhere is this more evident than in the chair-like sculptures of the *Messenger* series, which epitomize his singular style while simultaneously demonstrating the ongoing changes that have marked his work. Furthermore, the exhibition also presents many of Cho's early drawings, which have never been exhibited in large numbers, granting visitors exclusive access to Cho's hidden artistic process. Notably, some of these drawings were created with a lit cigarette, such that they are literally permeated with the artist's "aura," which means "breath of air" in Ancient Greek and Latin.

From his early career as a leading contributor to Korean contemporary sculpture, to his current experiments in search of self-renewal, Cho Sung-mook's art has always been characterized by a keen sense of the mundane, trivial elements of everyday life. Cho himself has said that everything in existence has its own pure form of expression, and his works represent the freedom of studying that expression and maximizing its visual impact. Through such liberation and freedom from restriction, he conveys his own audacious spirit, which keeps him right in step with current times. Moreover, he displays his incredible creativity in discovering the artistic potential of seemingly ordinary items borrowed from daily life. In this way, Cho's creative mind continues to serve as a powerful source of inspiration and joy for countless viewers.



**Cho Sung-mook,  
<Messenger &  
Communication>, 1995**



**Cho Sung-mook  
, <Messenger &  
Communication>, 1998**



**Cho Sung-mook,  
<Messenger 9314>, 1993**



**Cho Sung-mook, <The Progress of Bread>, 2008**



**Cho Sung-mook, <The Progress of Bread>, 2008**



**Cho Sung-mook, <The Progress of Bread>, 2009**



**Cho Sung-mook,  
<The Progress of Bread>, 2009**

