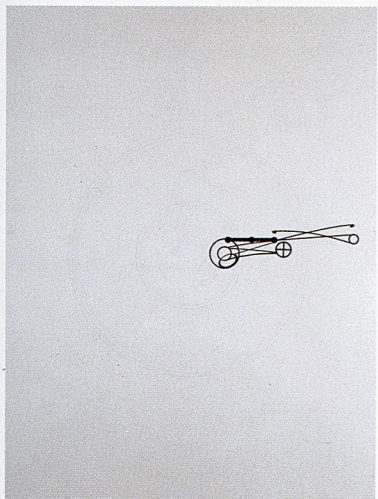


Seoung-Won Kang *In the Holy Garden* 1995 364×454cm
Acrylic, oil, spray on canvas



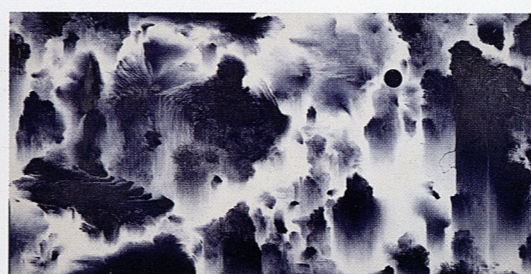
Jae-Ha Lyu *20012 Space 1* 2001 200×300cm
Acrylic on canvas



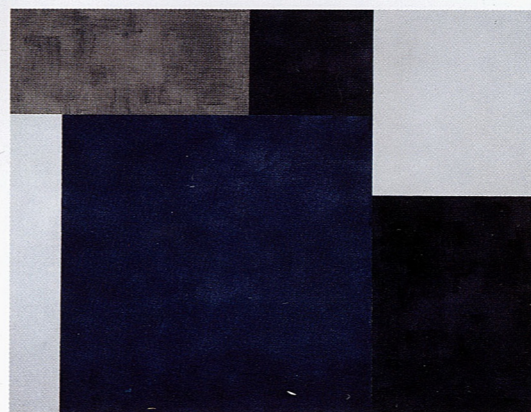
Sang-Nam Lee *P/R(W+L7)* 1997 231×172cm Acrylic on canvas



Jee-Eun Lee *Untitled* 1996 227×182cm Mixed
media on cotton



Beom Moon *Slow, Same, #10205* 2000 151×305×12cm
Oil stick, varnish on linen



Sun-Ho Choi *Winter III* 2001
175.5×228cm Acrylic on canvas

relate to Young-Sun Suh, Won-Bae Oh, and Bocsu Jung (Chuyoung Lee, Assistant Curator) in their common use of everyday images and human stories, which in turn leads to Chang-Hong Ahn, Ok-Sang Lim, and Sung-Dam Hong (Soojung Kang, Assistant Curator), who also incorporate human stories into their work.

The relationship between reality and transformation is investigated by Taek-Sang Kim, Chul-Joo Suk, and Myung-Hi Cha (Jienne Liu, Assistant Curator) and Seoung-Won Kang, Jang-Jig Jung and Un-Sung Han (Eun-Ju Choi, Senior Curator). Their realities flow seamlessly into the fantasy of Young-Hoon Ko, Jae-Ha Lyu, and Suk-Ju Lee (Mihwa Park, Assistant Curator), which in turn give way to the inner world, developing in different directions. The uniquely symbolic worlds of Ji-Won Kim, Sang-Nam Lee, and In-Sun Choi (Seung-Wan Kang, Curator) predict the symbols and forms of Kwan-Wook Park, Jeong-Soon Oum, and Jee-Eun Lee (Soo-Jin Park, Assistant Curator), who are highly conscious of the intrinsic constraint placed on painting by the planar nature of the canvas. This consciousness is taken to an even deeper level by the final two groups in the exhibition, Beom Moon, In-Hyeon Lee, and Seung-Hye Hong (Young-Ran Park, Assistant Curator) and Tchun-Mo Nam, Seung-Taik Jang, and Sun-Ho Choi (Junmo Chung, Chief Curator).

Designed to reflect where painting stands today and to redefine the inherent rights painters have lost, *The Reinstatement of Painting* will be a source of clarity as Korean painters search for an identity and a direction.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, KOREA

Korean Art 2001 The Reinstatement of Painting



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, KOREA Gallery I, II March 15~May 6, 2001



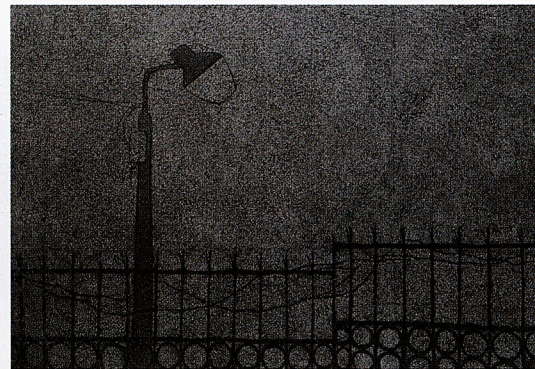
Korean Art 2001 ; The Reinstatement of Painting

When photography was first introduced, many people thought that painting would soon cease to exist. From the perspective of the time-honored concept of painting as an imitation of nature, painting would have to relinquish the status it had enjoyed for so long, and photography would assume the mantle of best imitator of nature: Painting was simply no match for photography in capturing a subject exactly.

The advent of photography sent such shock waves through the world of painting that it was not unreasonable to worry about the continued existence of painting as an art form. However, the worries proved unfounded, and painting has not become extinct. On the contrary, painting took the threat as an opportunity to search out a new direction. Moving from impressionism into postimpressionism, painting was finally able to acclaim its independence from the task of simply imitating nature. This recognition that paintings are paintings opened a road that is still being trod, and painting of the 20th century has produced some of the most splendid and richest accomplishments in the history of the arts.



Dae-Won Kim *Long Time Ago I* 2001
260×170cm Indian ink, mixed media on rice paper



Mi-Sun Kang *Landscape of Mind-Narrow Street* 2001
134×194cm Indian ink rice paper



Byung-Jong Kim *Song of Life-Forest* 2001
185×245cm Indian ink, color on paper



Ho-Deuk Kim *Sky, Stone, Wind* 1996 115×223cm Indian ink, color on cotton



Bocsu Jung *The Carved Image of Body* 1998
175×226.5cm Black pencil on corrugated paper

In the 1980s, however, painting encountered another crisis, with media arts in their various forms posing yet another threat to the continued existence of painting as a medium. A video artist went so far as to declare that in the 21st century paintings would disappear and only images produced by the media arts would remain. At the time this did not sound like an empty threat, and in fact, from the 1980s on, the arts world has been dominated by installations, images, and other media art forms, all increasingly crowding out painting. International exhibitions are often predominantly installations and images, and many exhibitions organized by leading museums and art galleries have, in order to be competitive, shown only media arts. Young painters who have begun making a name for themselves, and even established painters, as a matter of course take it upon themselves to present some installations and image works in addition to the paintings that form the core of their work.

The emergence of the media arts, coupled with the disintegration of barriers that once separated genres, has spurred a kind of restructuring in the arts. The "post-painting" and "post-sculpture" movements, pushing to escape what were felt as the constraints of painting and sculpture, were rooted in the 1970s, but they gained momentum in the 1980s. Genres penetrated deep into each other, and the boundaries that had traditionally separated art and life dissolved. Being at the same time both art and life meant that it made no difference which it was, a development that has stripped off the aura of mystery that surrounded the arts for so long.

In response to this, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, in an effort to define the meaning of today's painting, has gathered together a selection of those artists who have continued to work on canvas despite the recent trends among both young and established artists to pursue the media arts. The quest to discover meaning in painting is not an attempt at returning painting to its past, but is a call for another examination by painting into its own essence. It is about restoring painting to its proper place after years of aimless wandering. It is about regaining the inherent rights painters have lost.

By casting off the chains of naturalism, painters have nurtured their art and sustained themselves through many movements. Our age must pursue an approach to, and an interpretation of, painting that differs from other historic periods. This is the key to avoiding a simplistic reactionary approach that will lead to failure, and to assuring a freshness that will guarantee the continued renewal of painting. This is where the quest for the Reinstatement of Painting should begin.



Julie Hwang *Botany* 1998-2001 227×181cm
Acrylic on canvas

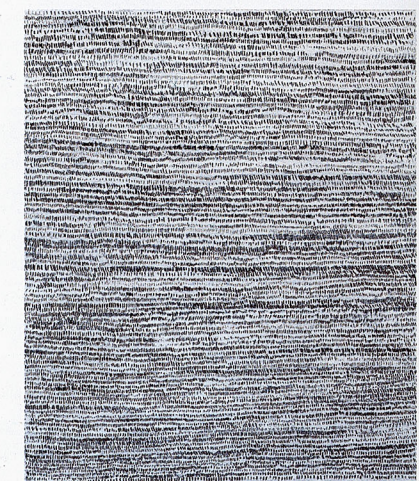
Rather than focusing on either older well-established artists or younger artists who have just begun capturing the attention of the art world, this exhibition presents the work of mid-career artists in their 40s and 50s, artists in their prime, working with maturity and developing impressive bodies of work. They deserve to be the focus of attention, for they not only form the backbone of the Korean art world, they are also a rich source for potential change.

Another distinction of this exhibition is its new way of selecting artists, which places all curators of the museum, including the Director, on an equal footing. Under the theme of the "The Reinstatement of Painting," curators each chose a sub-theme, giving diversity in unity as sub-themes converge into the main theme, which itself diverges into the sub-themes.

The 42 participating artists present their work in 14 groups of three, with each group having its own space and with the sub-themes of adjacent groups relating to each other, giving an order that proceeds logically through the exhibition halls, all the while reflecting the main theme. The first exhibition hall is dedicated to figurative painting and



Sung-Dam Hong *Mukbang* 2001 216×110cm
Oil on canvas



Myung-Hi Cha *Untitled* 2000 170×140cm
Acrylic, charcoal on canvas