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KIMSOOJA WINS SAMSUNG'S HO-AM PRIZE FOR THE ARTS

BY HANA KO



Kimsooja, who was honored with the 2015 Ho-Am Prize on June 1 in Seoul, in recognition of her contribution to arts and culture. Photo by Viktor Bentley. Courtesy Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Hong Kong.

On June 1, New York-based video artist Kimsooja was awarded the 2015 Ho-Am Prize in Seoul. The prize, established in 1990 by the Korean conglomerate Samsung and named after the pen-name of its late founder Lee Byung-chull, is awarded to “people of Korean heritage who have contributed to the enrichment of culture and arts for humankind.” As part of the Ho-Am Prize, Kimsooja was presented with a special diploma, a pure gold medal and a cash prize of KRW 300 million (USD 275,000).

Often referred to as the Korean Nobel Prize, the annual award is given to one recipient from each of the following five fields: science; engineering; medicine; the arts; and community service. The Ho-Am Prize for the Arts encompasses a broad range of genres, including literature, music, visual art, design, dance and theater. Kimsooja is only the third visual artist, and the first woman, to win the Ho-Am Prize for the Arts, with the other two being Lee Ufan in 2001 and Nam June Paik in 1995.

Born in Daegu, South Korea, in 1957, Kimsooja is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York, Paris and Seoul. After studying Western painting at Seoul's Hongik University in the mid-1980s, she moved to New York for an artist residency at MoMA PS1 in 1992. In the subsequent years, she began developing a body of sewn fabric works that incorporated concepts of nomadism, migration, interpersonal relationships and women's role in society. She has created sculptures inspired by cloth bundles and traditional bedcovers that are associated in Korean culture with travel and migration. The series, titled after the Korean word *bottari*, refers to the notion of wrapping and unfolding and intimates the idea of travel.

In her practice of over 30 years, she has explored similar themes in the form of videos performance works and site-specific installations. In 1999, Kimsooja created her most iconic video performance, *A Needle Woman*, in which she is dressed entirely in black, with her back to the camera, standing still amongst the bustling crowd of major metropolitan cities such as Tokyo, Shanghai, Delhi, New York, Mexico City and London. For the Korea Pavilion of the Venice Biennale, which she represented in 2013, she created *To Breathe: Bottari*, wrapping the building's interior with a translucent film that diffracted daylight and showered the space with spectrums of light.

Kimsooja has also participated in numerous other biennials and festivals throughout the world, such as the 3rd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2009), the 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012) and Busan Biennale 2014. She has had solo exhibitions at various international sites, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2008) in Washington, DC; MoMA PS1 (2001) in New York; Kunsthalle Bern (2001); Musee d'art moderne de Saint-Etienne (2012); and Guggenheim Bilbao (2015), among many others.

Most recently, Kimsooja is featured in "Thread Routes, Chapter III" (4/30–6/13), a solo exhibition of her works now showing at Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Antwerp.

Hanae Ko is reviews and web editor at ArtAsiaPacific.

URL: <http://artasiapacific.com/News/KimsoojaWinsSamsungSHoAmPrizeForTheArts#>