

# The exuberance, chaos of youth

*Kukje Gallery highlights younger, bolder voices in Korean art scene*

By Kwon Mee-yoo  
 meeyoo@ktimes.co.kr

Cha Jae-min's "Fog and Smoke" starts with a fisherman dragging his net through a street clustered with skyscrapers. The location is Songdo, the rapidly- and ruthlessly-developing business district of Incheon.

In the stark contrast between the ultra-modern new town and the squalor of the badly-aging districts left behind, Cha sees a suspension between the past and present. Her expression is straightforward, filming smoke created from the incineration of waste from the new buildings and juxtaposing it with images of the older parts of the city.

The 20-minute video is the highlight of "The Song of Slant Rhymes" exhibition, currently showing at the Kukje Gallery K2 in central Seoul. The works of Cha and six other young artists are on display, representing attempts at applying meaning to the chaos of 21st century life. Their paintings, media art and installations are experimental, poignant and exuberant.

The exhibition was organized by independent curator and art critic Kim Hyun-jin, co-curator of the 2008 Gwangju Biennale.

"I didn't set any boundaries or criteria in selecting the works, but focused more on the rhyme and rhythm I sensed from each art work," Kim said.

Kim redesigned the traditional white cube installation that symbolizes the Kukje Gallery K2 by setting it up against a temporary, angled wall in the middle of the exhibition hall. Hanging with it are some 80 recent drawings by Lee Mi-yeon, who reconstituted photographs of accidents at sea. Thin carbon papers swaying on the askew wall remind visitors of the exhibition's title.

At first, Hong Young-in's works look like ordinary paintings, but when examined closely, one sees that they are made of mechanic embroidery based on acrylic paint. Hong's works seem to be defined by the clash and connection between disparate visual images.

She also oversaw the performance of a musical piece, "Gwanghwamun Quartet," during the exhibition's opening, creating a wall of sound that provided a contrast between the gallery's plaza and the exhibition space.

Yoon Hyang-ro's media works raise the issues of violence and sexual pleasure in modern society. She expresses this through a collection of video clips from the Internet that reveal hidden sexual desire in the media and by deleting human characters from American comic books.

Other artists participating in the exhibition



Clockwise from above: Cha Jae-min's "Fog and Smoke," Hong Young-in's "Heterogeneous Walking," Sterling Ruby's "Debt Basin 2," and Ruby's "SP223." Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

include Moon Young-min, Jung Eun-yung and Nam Hwa-yeon. Kukje Gallery said it would like to make this project annual to discover more young talent. The exhibit runs through June 16.

Meanwhile, the gallery saw an unexpected surge of visitors to its last Jean-Michel Basquiat exhibit in March and its current exhibit "Sterling Ruby" presents another side of American art.

Based in Los Angeles, Calif., Sterling Ruby's works reflect the irrationality of people as well as people at the margins of society. For the major works of the exhibit, the artist scattered layers of spray paint to create a soft, illusionary color field and added drips of paint. Sterling Ruby said the works took inspiration from graffiti.

The Sterling Ruby exhibit runs through May 10. For more information, visit [www.kukje-gallery.com](http://www.kukje-gallery.com) or call (02) 735-8449.

