



Derek Kreckler's "Littoral"

Courtesy of MAAP

Bukchon meets video art

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If it wasn't for the dusty air of the last couple of days, we would have been a little more confident in saying it's finally warm enough for a stroll down Seoul's best galleries.

One such destination is Samcheong-dong, the upscale northern Seoul neighborhood that doubles as a cluster for posh restaurants and art galleries. Australian group Media Art Asia Pacific (MAAP) has chosen the area as the venue for its latest experiments in video and environmental art.

MAAP's "LANDSEASKY: revisiting spatiality in video art" exhibition is an ambitious project that covers six different Samcheong-dong galleries and aims to explore how media art and installments "interact" with its surroundings.

While the art works are displayed in one of the oldest areas of Seoul, they represent attempts at finding modern expressions for the land, sky and sea. MAAP explains that the concept was to recreate a "horizon" amidst an urban landscape.

Kim Machan, the curator of the project, said that the exhibition was divided into six different galleries, simply because no display space in the area was large enough to host what the artists were intending to do. While the decision was inevitable, the end result was convincing, and Kim now says she wouldn't rather have it any other way.

"Now visitors have to move around galleries to see all the video pieces, but the experience will enhance spatiality, which is exactly the theme of this exhibit," she said.

"It's just a horizon, but there's much more in it." Fifteen artists from Korea, China and Australia participated in the project and were each required to express regional characteristics in their works. The six galleries are scattered around the Bukchon section of Samcheong-dong and touring them requires a pleasant walk along one of Seoul's distinctively cultural neighborhoods.

"LANDSEASKY is about having commonality. This unusual group of artists were put together to reflect the whole international situation," Machan said.

Gallery IHN, located near the road going up to Cheong Wa Dae, features the works of three Asian artists — Paul Bai, Wang Gongxin and Heimo Zobernig.

Wang's "The Other Rule in Ping



Lauren Brincat's "This Time Tomorrow, Tempelhof"



Shilpa Gupta's "100 Hand Drawn Maps of India"



Jung Yeon-doo's "Handmade Memories — On the Dividing Line between Body & Soul"



Pong" is a video installation that could make viewers dizzy tracking the image of ping pong balls moving across the three screens.

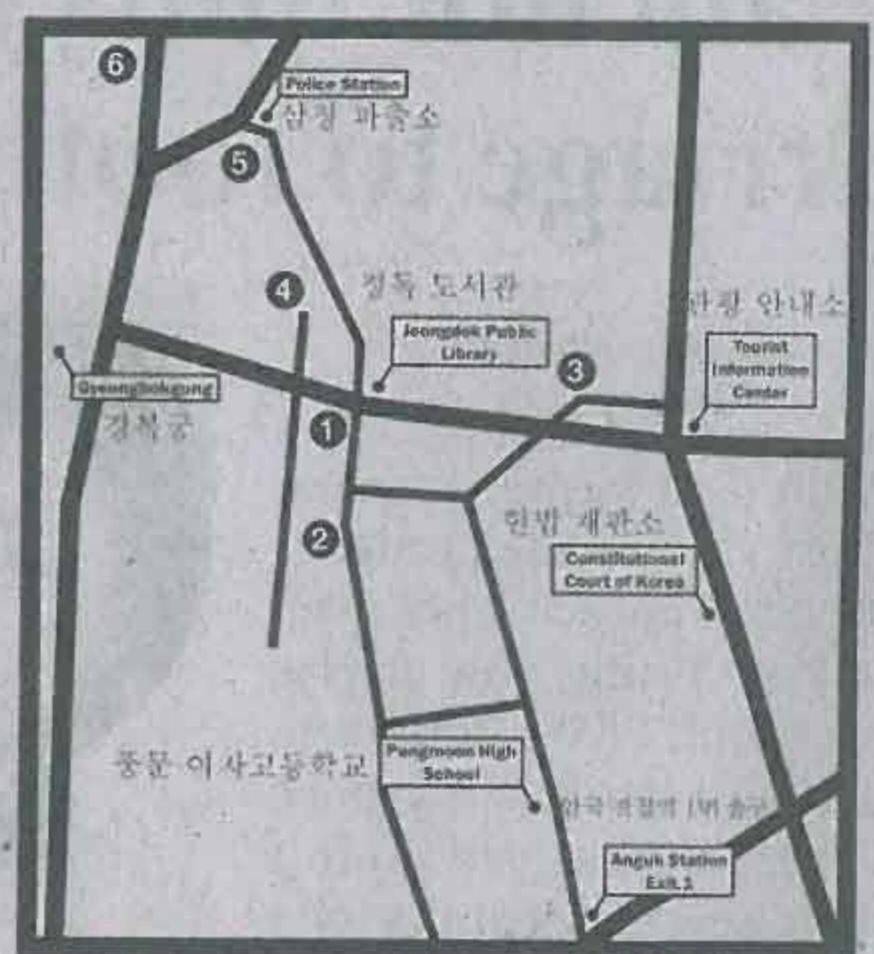
The exhibitions at Gallery Skape are highlighted by the works of Australian artist Lauren Brincat. Brincat's video shows a person walking through a landing strip of a deserted airport, her motion providing an eerie contrast with her surroundings that are absolutely still.

Opsis Art, a colonial era building located in the backstreet of Bukchon, is displaying "Another River, 3" by Korean artist Sim Cheol-woong, a video collage of the Han River and the array of cookie-cutter apartments and commercial buildings around it, a commentary on the country's ruthless process of industrialization. The gallery also displays the work of Craig Walsh, whose video summarizes the history of Australia and the suppression of its aboriginal culture.

One and J. Gallery, near Jeongdok Public Library, is displaying the most interactive works. Barbara Campbell's "close, close" responds to viewer's movement, allowing them to see different parts of the video as they move toward or backward from it. The video portrays a type of migratory bird which flies from Australia to Siberia, which is similar to the route of the LANDSEASKY exhibit.

Chinese artist Wang Peng's video

1. Artsonje Center 아트선재센터
2. Lee Hwaik Gallery 이화익 갤러리
3. One and J. Gallery 원앤제이갤러리
4. Opsis Art 옵시스 아트
5. Gallery Skape 갤러리 스페이프
6. Gallery IHN 갤러리 인



Map of Bukchon Area

"Feeling North Korea" combines footage of North Korea, taken by the artist himself, with a background of a black blank screen.

At Lee Hwaik Gallery, Korean artist Jung Yeon-doo comments on the subjectivity of remembering. In "Handmade Memories — On the Dividing Line between Body & Soul," he uses one screen to show an image of a rail track and the other screen shows people describing the track in different ways.

Indian artist Shilpa Gupta's "100 Hand-drawn Maps of India" shows 100 different maps of India, which shows how perception of a nation and border influences each other.

Artsonje Center has Kimsooja's "Bottari — Alfa Beach Nigeria."

Though looking peaceful, the piece captures a Nigerian beach notorious for slave trading and interprets horizon as a beginning of globalization. Dutch artist Jan Dibetts' "Horizon — Sea" series splits the screen with a vertical horizon in the rotated video, questioning the realistic nature of video art.

Admission is free. The Seoul exhibitions run through March 23 and LANDSEASKY will travel to OCT Contemporary Art Terminal in Shanghai from April to July and MAAP SPACE in Griffith University Art Gallery in Brisbane from September to November.

For more information, visit www.maap.org.au/projects/landseasky.