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IM Heung-soon Solo Exhibition 《The Observatory》 at Frieze No'9 Cork Street, London

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11 – 27 May, 2023

Venue: Frieze No'9 Cork Street, London

Opening: THU 11 May, 2023, 6–8pm

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The Page Gallery presents ‘The Observatory’, a solo exhibition of Korean artist and film director IM Heung-soon at Frieze No. 9 Cork Street, Frieze's permanent London exhibition space. Featuring new film and video installations, this presentation is informed by the artist's focus on the Korean Peninsula's current situation after the division between North and South.

Early in the artist's career, IM Heung-soon worked with the ‘Seongnam Project’ (1998–1999), an artist group dealing with the problem of unequal distribution of capital in Seongnam City in Korea. He was also part of the ‘Mixrice’ (2002–2004), a group exploring the concept of migration in contemporary society in various ways, including collaboration with migrant workers. In a similar vein, and with an acute awareness of the problems surrounding the Korean division, the artist speaks about issues located on the margins of social, political, and capitalist ideology. As such, his work foregrounds minority groups such as North Korean defectors, victims of a massacre by the state, and female workers.

The exhibition will be a rare chance to experience IM Heung-soon's distinctive language of moving images in which he finds the possibility of confronting unresolved pain through history, and the lives of those who cannot even be mourned, through interview scenes and images sketching nature.



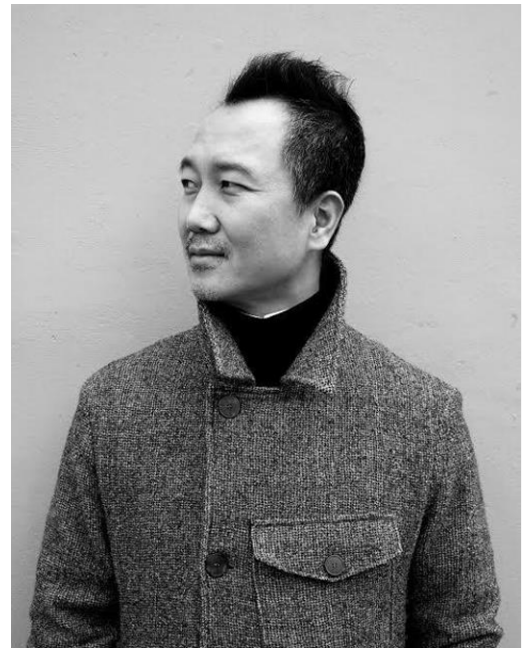
IM HEUNG-SOON  
THE OBSERVATORY  
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The Page Gallery  
Galleria Forest G205, 32-34 Seonilbeop 2-gil, Seongdong-gu, Seoul, Korea  
T 82 2 3447 0049 | www.thepage-gallery.com

**About IM Heung-soon**

IM Heung-soon was born in Seoul in 1969. Currently, IM is working between Seoul and Jeju as a visual artist and filmmaker. His works deconstruct and expand the genres of visual art and film. IM has been organizing and producing works in diverse forms, crossing the areas of documentary film as contemporary art and public art, individual and collaborative works, exhibition space and theater, and sites of everyday life.

IM started a career as an artist in 1998 and held a total of fifteen solo exhibitions. His major solo exhibitions include *Reincarnation* (MoMA PS1, 2015), *Things that Do Us Part* (MMCA Hyundai Motor Series, MMCA, 2017), *Ghost Guide* (The Page Gallery, 2019), and *Title Match: IM Heung-soon vs. Omer Fast «Cut!»* (Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, 2022).



IM has also been invited to a number of international exhibitions and film festivals, including the Gwangju Biennale in 2002 and 2010, the Sharjah Biennale and Venice Biennale in 2015, the Taipei Biennale in 2016, and Carnegie International in 2018. As a filmmaker, IM released eight feature films, starting with *Jeju Prayer* (2012).

He received the Silver Lion Award at the 2015 Venice Biennale for *Factory Complex* (2014) and the Audience Winner at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival for *Ryeohaeng* (2016). His works are in the collection of major Korean and international art museums such as the MMCA (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art), Seoul, Centre Pompidou in Paris, LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), Stavanger Art Museum (Stavanger, Norway), in the Sharjah Art Foundation in the United Arab Emirates.

## About The Page Gallery

Founded in Seoul, Korea in 2011, The Page Gallery has established itself as an important hub that mediates Korean and international modern and contemporary art. The Page Gallery is located in Seoul Forest, which makes it a convenient venue for open-air installation art that communes with nature and communicates with the public. In the interior of the gallery, diverse types of exhibitions are held free from space constraints by utilizing its height and large space. The Page Gallery has been continuously hosting exhibitions of foreign artists through a novel and experimental organization of exhibitions while continuously introducing major Korean artists. The gallery communicates with the public as a cultural and artistic venue that contributes to the diversity of Korean art.



Installation view of Im Heung-soon's solo exhibition 'Ghost Guide' The Page Gallery, Seoul, 5 December, 2019 - 29 February, 2020

**Bukhansan**

2015, Single channel FHD video, color, sound, 26 minutes

Supported by Kim Geun Tae Foundation

<http://imheungsoon.com/bukhansan/>

At break of dawn, a woman climbs Bukhansan— “North Korean Mountain”. Born in North Korea, she escaped to South Korea through China. She is working as a singer and actress in South Korea while attending college. She begins her story with the memories of her hometown and friends. The stories of cheesy yet beautiful everyday lives with her parents and fairytales her father had told her follow. She tells her stories like monologues, as if she is trying to remember or as if she is simply acting. Even though the rugged mountain path continues to leave her out of breath, her voice resounds only stronger. She keeps telling her thoughts on her life in South Korea, her family back in North and the unification of Korea. Upon arriving at a mountaintop that could be somewhere between North and South, she begins to sing. Her song feels as though it is a desperate wish from someone anxiously swaying between parting and reunion, expectation and despair, or existence and loss. And her wish awakens certain sentiment we did not realize we have forgotten.

Artist Note



**Brother's Peak**

2018, 2-channel FHD video, color/B&W, 12-channel sound, 16 minutes

Supported by Gaeseong Industrial District Foundation, Culture Station Seoul 284, Arts Council Korea

<http://imheungsoon.com/brothers-peak/>

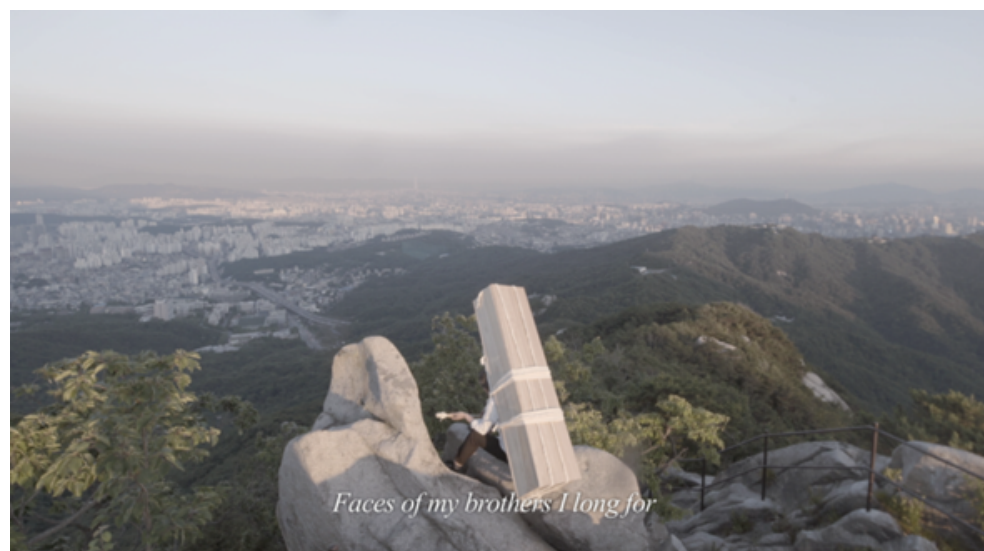
Brothers Peak is a mountaintop at the foot of Bukhansan. The artist frequently climbs it and while hiking he could not but think about the past and present of both Koreas and the suddenly changing international situation with the inter-Korean and US-North summit.

The Gaeseong Industrial Zone had become a space where trust in each other and peace was built. The sudden closure of the zone and the withdrawal of companies had not only been a low point in inter-Korean relations but also a great disappointment for entrepreneurs and workers on both sides and the people in the North. Especially the entrepreneurs in the South saw all their efforts and sacrifices collapse. Although some of them could survive through production abroad, the majority is desperately hoping for the reopening of the GIZ.

On November 23, 2016, nine months after the closure of the GIZ entrepreneurs staged a funeral ceremony in front of the National Assembly. This performance expressed their hopes that the operations of the GIZ will be normalized again and inter-Korean economic cooperation resumes. This work shows how the coffin and other objects used in this funeral ceremony are carried up to Brothers Peak. Although time, space and the setting are different, repeating this funeral ceremony in reality also revives it as a form of art. Now it expresses support for the fate of those entrepreneurs that suffered through the closure of the GIZ and the workers that had been deployed to the zone asking the audience to join.

This work of art was made together with the gay choir G\_Voice and Lee Hyang, an accordion player from North Korea.

Artist Note





**Old Night**

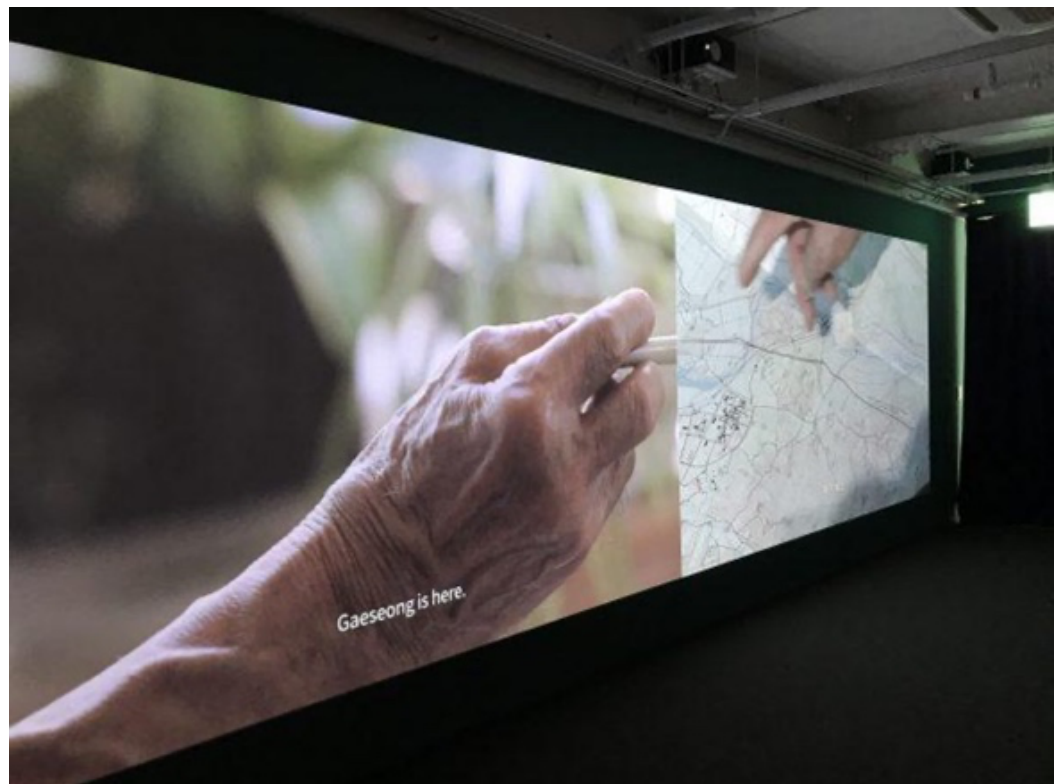
2021, 2-channel FHD video, color, 5.1-channel sound, 40 minutes 58 seconds

Commissioned by The Inter-Korean Transit Office

<http://imheungsoon.com/2021-old-night/>

This work was carried out based on the stories of the people who lived in the Jangdan area (Unification Village, Haemaru Village) in Paju, which is the border village between the South and the North of Korea. I tried to reconstruct the history of division by using various images such as the daily lives of Jangdan residents, natural landscapes and stuffed animals. On the other hand, I focused on the ecological value and meaning, one of the important assets of the DMZ, and tried to find the possibility of life after the pandemic in the border village of Jangdan. This is because it has great potential as a space of hope for not only the future of the two Koreas, but also humans, nature, and the generations to come. The works on display include <Old Night>, a two-channel video work, <Jangdan Residents Archive> that shows the 'dreams' and 'daily lives' of the residents of Tongilchon and Haemaru Village who participated in the interview, and <Native Plants Wall> using endangered native plants. The title of the two-channel video work was taken from the poem 'Goya' by the poet Baek Seok.

Exhibition text, DMZ Art & Peace Platform, 2021



**A Hundred Years Inn**

2023, 2-channel FHD video, color, 5.1-channel sound, 47 minutes 22 seconds  
Commissioned by Jeonnam Museum of Art

This artwork was inspired by the novel of the same title by novelist Lim Chulwoo, who is from Wando, Jeollanam-do. Lim is a writer who has consistently talked about tragic events in modern Korean history, including the Gwangju Uprising in 1980. A Hundred Years Inn features the families of the victims of the Jeju April 3rd Uprising, Gwangju Uprising 1980, and Bodo League massacre in 1950 as the main characters, who gather together on the fictional island of Yeongdo.

IM Heung-soon focuses on the sense of guilt and responsibility of a writer that underlies Lim Chulwoo's novels. While Lim's sense of guilt and responsibility is pointed toward the "activists" involved in the incidents he met while working on his art, IM Heung-soon invited four activists - Lee Jin-hee, CEO of Women with Disabilities Empathy; Kwon Hyunwoo, Secretary General of the Korea-Vietnam Peace Foundation; Choi Hye-young, Director of Gangjeong Friends, and Lee Jong-geol, Secretary General of Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group Chingusai-to enjoy tea along with a time of rest and healing.

Exhibition Text, Jeonnam Museum of Art



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S&B image from Bohemian, 2013, Courtesy of the Artist and The Page Gallery

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