

**Press
 Release**

Title	Nam June Paik Art Center – MAO (Museo d’Arte Orientale, Turin) presents <i>Rabbit Inhabits the Moon: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Mirror of Time</i>
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Rabbit Inhabits the Moon: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Mirror of Time



- For the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Italy, Nam June Paik Art Center and the MAO Museo d’Arte Orientale, Turin is presenting the exhibition *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon*.
- Exhibiting major works by Nam June Paik alongside those of contemporary Korean artists, the exhibition highlights sound and performance as common elements, offering a reinterpretation and renewed perspective on tradition.

● Overview

- Title: *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Mirror of Time*
- Period: Oct 19, 2024 – March 23, 2025
- Venue: MAO (Museo d’Arte Orientale), Turin, Italy
- Curator: Davide Quadrio (Director, MAO), Joanne Kim (independent curator)
- Artist: Kyuchul Ahn, bela, Gloria Campaner, Jesse Chun, Giorgia Fincato, Gooseung, Shiu Jin, Young-chul Kim, Dae-sup Kwon, Francesca “Heart” Mariano, Nam June Paik, Chan-Ho Park, Jiha Park, Sunmin Park, Diana Lola Posani, Hyunhye (Angela) Seo, eobchae x Ryu Sungsil, Sun Hee You
- Hosted and Organized by the MAO Museo d’Arte Orientale, Turin
- In partnership with Nam June Paik Art Center and Fondazione Bonotto
- The exhibition has been made possible with support from the Korea Foundation

● Introduction

Rabbit Inhabits the Moon: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Mirror of Time

Nam June Paik Art Center (Director Park Namhee) and the MAO Museo d’Arte Orientale presents *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon: The Art of Nam June Paik in the Mirror of Time* at the MAO, Turin, Italy from October 19, 2024 to March 23, 2025.

Celebrating the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Italy, this exhibition aims to stimulate dynamic dialogue reflecting the development of the cultural and artistic landscape of the two countries, particularly reinterpreting the legacy of Nam June Paik and his influence on contemporary artists. Nam June Paik Art Center fosters the expansion of Nam June Paik’s art and philosophy through ongoing collaboration with institutions both domestically and internationally.

The exhibition *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon* revolves around the figure of Nam June Paik (Seoul, 1932 – Miami, 2006), one of the most important artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and a pioneer of video art. Trained as a pianist and musicologist, Paik explored technological progress in his works, using a mixed language that combined mass media and the customs of western capitalistic and commercial society with the rituals of the Korean poetry and music and the country’s cultural and shamanic traditions.

The exhibition successfully opened on October 18, drawing over 400 attendees to the opening ceremony. A thrilling opening performance by the Korean traditional drumming group Gooseung and Italian pianist Gloria Campaner captivated the audience. Major local media outlets, including Italy’s national broadcaster Rai (Radio Audizione Italia), extensively covered the event, and the exhibition welcomed more than 1,000 visitors during its opening weekend, demonstrating strong interest in Korea and the exhibition itself.

The exhibition is curated by Davide Quadrio, director of the museum, and Joanne Kim, Korean critic and curator, with Anna Musini and Francesca Filisetti. Curatorial and scholarly consulting was provided by Manuela Moscatiello (Chargée d'étude, Maison de Victor Hugo, Paris), Kyoo Lee (curator for the shamanism room, Professor of Philosophy, City University of New York) and Patrizio Peterlini (director of Fondazione Bonotto).

As inferred by the title, the literary topos of the rabbit in the moon, common to many cultures in the Far East – China, Japan, Korea – as well as Central Asia, Iran and Turkey, is the starting point from which the exhibition's other themes naturally branch off. Inspired by the eponymous installation by Paik from 1996, in which the rabbit in the legend becomes a wooden sculpture that looks at an image of the moon on a television screen, in this exhibition reality and imagination, tradition and technology meet, repeat and mirror each other, in a synthesis of content that emerges as the exhibition unfolds, through a complex game of references and reinterpretations.

The painstaking, immersive exhibition design also highlights the coexistence of symbols, techniques, materials and objects from different times and places, creating an itinerary free of fixed chronological coordinates in which themes move in parallel, intersect, and cyclically re-emerge, like in a piece of woven fabric.

Also central to the exhibition is the musical and performative sound component, which appears in the most diverse forms in the works by Paik, especially in connection with his participation in the Fluxus movement and his long-term collaboration with the cellist Charlotte Moorman, as well as in the reformulations offered by contemporary artists. In the installation *Nocturne No. 20 / Counterpoint* (2013(2020)), Kyuchul Ahn reinterprets a piece by Chopin, removing one of the eighty-nine hammers of the piano after each performance, causing the gradual disappearance of the sound. The performance will be presented with the collaboration of the pianists Gloria Campaner and Sun Hee You and is made possible thanks to the sponsorship of Piatino pianoforti.

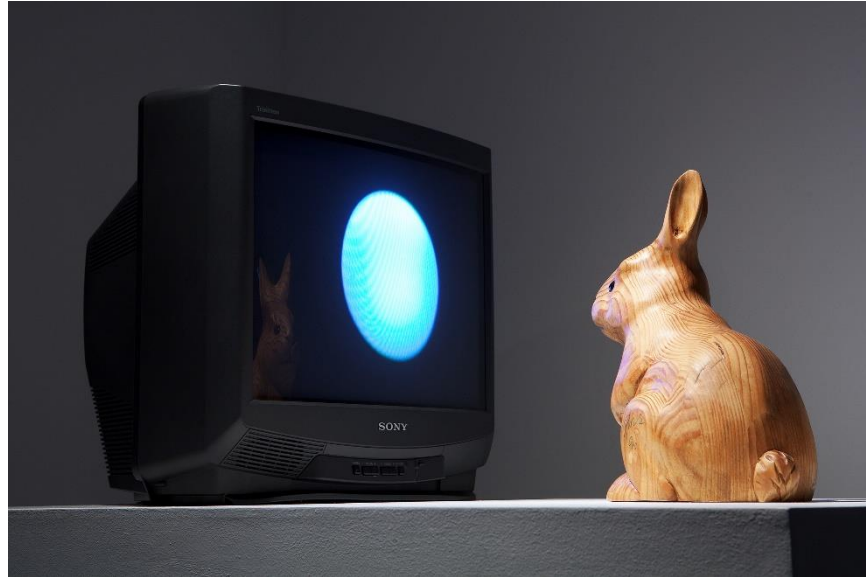
The exhibition will run for six months until March 23, 2025, accompanied by a variety of educational programs each month.

■ Museo d'Arte Orientale (MAO)

Inaugurated in 2008 in the historic Palazzo Mazzonis, the MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale houses one of the most important collections of Asian art in Italy and Europe. The MAO is not only the place where the collections are presented to the public. It is an experimental space for the activation of the collections themselves through exhibition and performance projects; it is an opportunity for the creation and expansion of content and research; is an actor in a global network that explores the possibilities of cultural valorization of groups of Asian art works in a European and international context; it is a social space and a meeting place; it is an experimental centre that works in triangulation between conservation, production and evolution of the activities that are carried out in a framework of environmental respect and system ecology.

■ Works

1. Nam June Paik, *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon* (1996)



Nam June Paik, *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon* (1996)
1 wooden rabbit statue, 1 CRT TV set, 1-channel video, color, silent, DVD, variable dimensions
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection © Nam June Paik Estate

Among Paik's works that regard television and the moon together as information media is *Rabbit Inhabits the Moon*. It consists of a TV set and a wooden statue of rabbit watching the television. Often called a "jade rabbit," the rabbit in the moon pounding with a mortar under a laurel tree, is a mythical figure in the Buddhist tale and in the Far Eastern folklore. The Korean children's song, *Bandal*, meaning a half moon, also contains lyrics "On the Milky Way in the blue sky / Glides a little white boat / With a laurel tree and a rabbit." In Paik's work, the rabbit is looking at the TV monitor showing the moon where it is supposed to live. The moon shape on the screen is made by computer graphics. Mankind was able to watch the real moon when the historic moon landing was broadcast live on July 20, 1969, which was an epoch-making event of television history. Paik substituted a TV viewer for a rabbit to highlight the role of television bringing realities and imaginations together.

2. Nam June Paik, *Zen for Head* (n.d.)



Nam June Paik, *Zen for Head* (n.d.)
Ink on paper, 200x71cm
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection © Nam June Paik Estate

Nam June Paik presented *Zen for Head* on October 26th, 1961, at the *Originale*, organized by Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mary Bauermeister. Using his head, hands, and necktie dipped in ink as a brush, Paik slowly crawled along a piece of paper laid on the floor, recording the smallest gestures of his body. *Zen for Head* was Paik's interpretation of La Monte Young's *Composition 1960 #10 to Bob Morris* (1960). La Monte Young's original score consists of the quote, "Draw a straight line and follow it." Paik revisits this performance on September 8th of the following year at the *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik* held at Städtisches Museum, Wiesbaden. For this performance Paik dipped his head in a mixture of ink and tomato juice and slowly crawled on a 4-meter (13-feet) long piece of paper. In surviving video footage, Paik appears to concentrate on his performance, his gestures deliberate and decisive, while the audience is laughing at the incredible spectacle. Paik saved the paper from the performance as a separate piece under the same title.

3. Ahn Kyuchul, *Nocturne No.20/Counterpoint* (2013(2020))



Ahn Kyuchul, *Nocturne No.20/Counterpoint* (2013(2020))
piano, pencil on printed paper (111 pieces), variable dimensions
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection

Ahn Kyuchul's *Nocturne No. 20/Counterpoint* is a duet created by a pianist who plays the same piece at a specific time and a tuner who randomly removes one of the 88 hammers of the piano after each performance. The performance consists of each independent action performed by the pianist and the tuner. Each time the note on the piano keyboard decreases one by one, the performance disintegrates gradually and finally approaches the silence. The time of the performance annihilates 'sound' and creates random noise. The independent performers and the constantly changing piano and performance are different every moment they act and move in every exhibition. *Nocturne No. 20/Counterpoint* is accidental and indeterminate, like Fluxus art.

The 111 score drawings filling the wall are individual 50 notes from the lowest to the highest that make up Frédéric Chopin's *Nocturne No. 20*. The artist conceived this piece from the story of people playing an old piano in an empty lot in a back alley in Havana and a swarm of white ants relentlessly gnawing at the piano keys. The artist says, "I oppose art that settles for typical and predictable responses and solutions," and tries to create a small crack in the implicit order of art museums through the work.

4. Sunmin Park, *Architecture of Mushroom* (2019)



Sunmin Park, *Architecture of Mushroom* (2019)
1-channel video(4K), color, sound, 15min 18sec
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection

Sunmin Park captures scenes that are not generally sensed with a binocular vision encompassing a microscopic view and a telescopic view. In this way, she expresses the fragments in the cracks of everyday life. *Architecture of Mushroom* is a work that combines narrations about architecture by 13 domestic and foreign architects with a video observing mushrooms in Gotjawal, Jeju, with a downward gaze and slow movement for one year in 2017. Mushrooms, fungi that consume nutrients by decomposing organic matter, play an essential role in the ecological cycle in which forests are created and destroyed. On the one hand, mushrooms are life forms with architectural structures of pillars and roofs. *Architecture of Mushroom* makes us reimagine the relationship between nature and humans by overlapping or contrasting the extinction and creation of mushrooms with various topics in architecture in an era in which materials that have not disappeared due to mass production pose a threat to humankind and nature.

Sunmin Park intends to “measure the whole by examining the parts.” In the forest, she “measures a large forest and imagines a large world with lower and slower movements” than mushrooms. Observing the mushrooms on the ground of the forest through her eyes, we can think of the structure built by nature and the architecture built by humankind and ponder their collapse and extinction. In this way, *Architecture of Mushroom* shows the poetic insight and sense necessary to penetrate the Anthropocene.

5. eobchae × Ryu Sungsil , *CHERRY-GO-ROUND* (2019)



eobchae × Ryu Sungsil , *CHERRY-GO-ROUND* (2019)
1-channel video, color, sound, 27 min 9 sec
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection

CHERRY-GO-ROUND is a work produced through Nam June Paik Art Center's project to discover rising artists. eobchae, the commissioned artist, created the work in collaboration with another artist Ryu Sungsil, who appears in the work as her fictional character, 'Cherry Jang.' In *CHERRY-GO-ROUND*, which consists of narratives from three fictional viewpoints of the past, present, and future, the Vlogs of the characters 'Cherry Jang' and 'Balhaelite1' are intersected with the story from the second person point of view. The first part begins with an online broadcast telling the secret to whitening the earth according to the 'brightening theory' devised by Cherry Jang in a virtual city of 'Shenzhen' in 2019. The second part shows how Cherry, who gained cult popularity through her broadcast, was created and consumed as a brand image and gained great power. The third part contains the adventure of Balhaelite1 taking place in the city of Shenzhen1, where the surveillance system of e-government is thorough in 2049 AD.

The work deals with a virtual society intertwined with social issues such as climate and environmental issues, digital control and surveillance, authoritarian politics, polarized economy, and labor while explicitly revealing the shallow and self-conspicuous aspects of contemporary media consumed there.

6. Shiu Jin, *Directions for Performer* (2014)



Shiu Jin, *Directions for Performer* (2014)
color digital C-print, 37×50cm
Nam June Paik Art Center Collection

Directions for Performer is a photograph of directions for a performer written on Shiu Jin's forearm by himself. The directions are as follows.

1. Make sure to wear black no matter what it's clothes or accessories.
2. Always stay among the audience.
3. Move on secretly never to be caught being a performance.
4. Keep a secret pretending like you don't know until the end, even if you are discovered to be a performer.
5. Move, as convenient for you. But be sure the steps back and forth, side to side.

The performer is supposed to wear black clothes, blend in with the audience and move as directed, and it should be done secretly so that it is not known that the performance is taking place. However, the direction given to the performer is to wear something black and move among the audience, and this ordinary movement is what everyone does at the exhibition. Through this, Shiu Jin raises questions about 'the nature of the artist' while creating an element that entertains himself, that is, a situation in which "the audience itself becomes a performer, and another audience watching it." This relationship can be seen as complex because it is not clearly revealed. However, the artist's intention is to pursue diversity and room for another interpretation of the relationship between the work and the audience. The audience also observes each other and participates in the work while giving infinite interpretations to themselves through the gap between the work and the audience.