

## Basel Snapshots: Park Chan-kyong

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In Art Basel's Unlimited section, a ghostly procession reflects on Korea's past traumas  
By Nirmala Devi



Park Chan-kyong, *Citizen's Forest*, 2016, 3 channel video (b&w), ambisonic 3D sound, 26 min 6 sec. Courtesy of Art Sonje Center and Kukje...

One of the standout works in last year's Taipei Biennial (which, incidentally, was a slow-burn affair: slightly baffling when you were in it, but better and better the more you thought about it from a safe distance) was Park Chan-kyong's just-over-25-minute-long, three-channel black-and-white video, *Citizen's Forest* (2016). Better-known as an art critic during the 1990s, Park began to show art at the end of that decade and has slipped between a variety of media, genre and disciplines ever since.

His work is sometimes described as referencing an 'Asian Gothic' aesthetic (in 2011, he codirected the Golden Bear-winning horror short *Night Fishing*, shot entirely using an Apple iPhone 4, with his brother Park Chan-wook), and *Citizen's Forest* takes the form of an eerie, ghostly procession of skull-faced people through a tranquil forest setting. As well as being on show as part of Art Basel's Unlimited, the work forms the centrepiece of *安寧 Farewell*, Park's current solo exhibition at Kukje Gallery in Seoul, and tackles themes of tradition and modernity, ritual and remembrance, historical memory and art history (*Citizen's Forest*, which nods to traditional scroll-mounted shan-shui paintings, was partly inspired by Oh Yoon's *The Lemures* (1984), a panoramic sketch of a procession of victims of the Donghak Peasant Revolution, the Korean War and the Gwangju Uprising). And, of course, it addresses the enduring opposition of nature and culture. It's a work that's worth taking time to watch.