

Park Chan-kyong and Lina Selander

Iniva London 14 January to 21 March

This pairing of two very different but tangentially related exhibitions emerges from the European curatorial research project Practice International, initiated by Utrecht's Casco, Iaspis in Stockholm and Iniva itself. Taking as its starting point the current model of postcolonial global hyper-mobility that tends to flatten out differences between art worlds in different countries and even on different continents, the curators and artists involved present alternative modes of operation which maintain something of a local character while simultaneously negotiating their relationships to a wider international network. Stepping outside established commercial channels of dealers and art fairs also seems to be important, and indeed Park Chan-kyong's extensive archive of catalogues, essays, poems and source material, on show alongside video works and paintings here, was an implicit challenge to any reductive commodification of his practice. Publications in Korean and English supply background context, and it is possible to read detailed criticism of particular works alongside copious information on other South Korean artists, festivals, exhibitions and traditions. In short, there is enough material on display to make you realise immediately how little you know.

The central piece is the documentary-style video *Sindoan*, 2007. Throughout the 20th century, religious groups of all persuasions from shamanism to Protestantism settled in a small area on the sacred Gyeryong Mountain in the middle of South Korea. Park brings together archive films, documentary photography and first-hand accounts of persecution at the hands of modernising authorities who broke up communities, destroyed icons and ultimately established a national park on the mountain in the 1970s. There is a wonderful collection

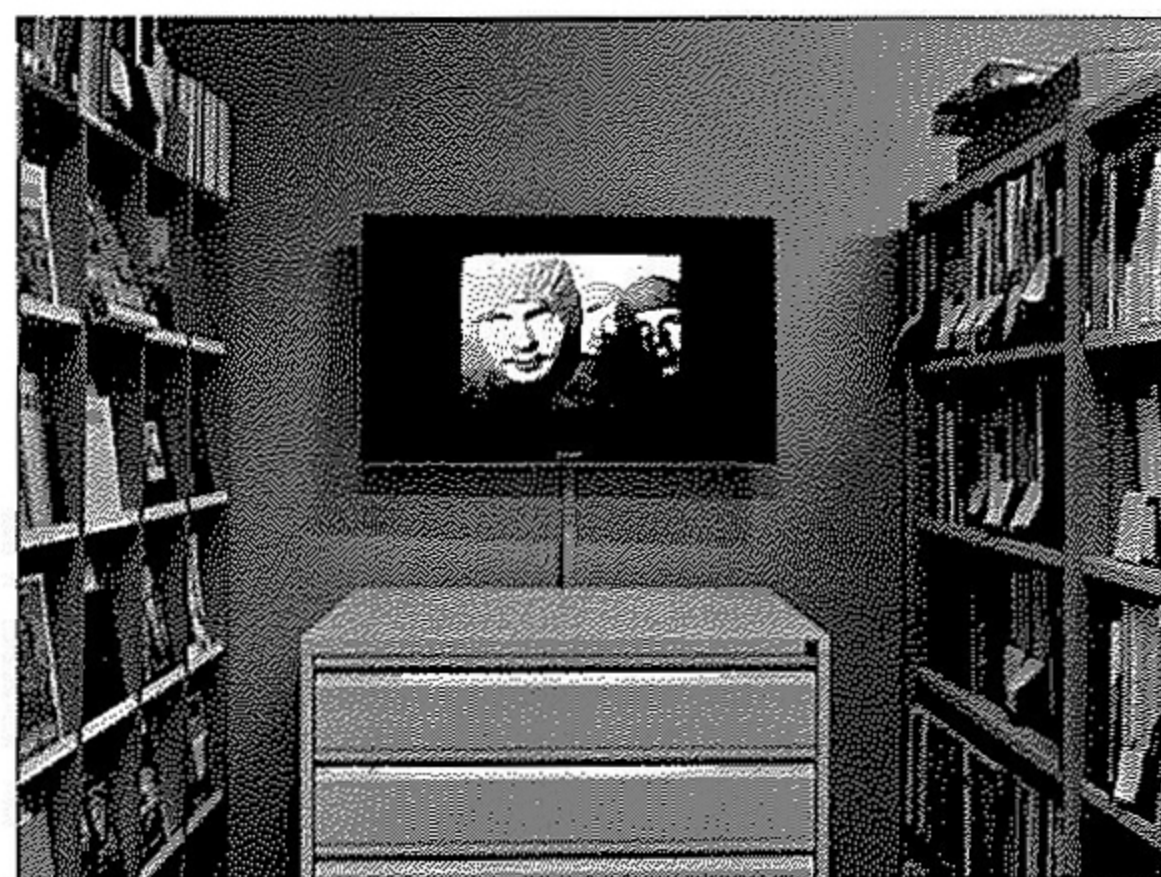
Rachel Reupke
Letter of Complaint
2015 video

of tattered black-and-white group photographs of the multifarious religious groups lined up in ceremonial outfits, each skirt, apron or headdress signifying allegiance to some particular sect, appearing alien to my contemporary European eyes. Straight documentary footage of traditional shamanist ceremonies to release spirits after a death bring home the idea that at least some of these practices continue into modern life.

In other works, Park concocts a more international stew of relationships, and these connections perhaps help us to imagine the modern South Korean context more realistically. The automated slideshow *Power Passage*, 2004, for instance, juxtaposes images and clips from science-fiction films of the 1960s and 1970s to suggest that fictitious events prefigured, or even perhaps laid the political groundwork for, real events to come. The 1969 film *Marooned* depicted a stranded US astronaut being rescued by a heroic Soviet spaceship, six years before the Apollo Soyuz Test Project saw a similar real-life docking. Computer drawings of hidden passages between North and South Korea are played off against astronauts gliding through hi-tech tunnels in space. Park builds similar confusions in *small art history 1*, 2015, a micro-exhibition of historic and more modern artworks shown in reproduction with handwritten annotations. We get examples of 19th- and 20th-century developments in Korean landscape painting, an icon painting of the mythical first shaman *Bari*, a Barnett Newman scanned from a catalogue and a terrifying photo of a prone man possibly about to be killed in 1950, his imploring eyes meeting the camera lens. Ed Ruscha's *LA County Museum on Fire*, 1965/68, is used to illustrate the burning down of Sungneymun Gate in 2008, and Ruscha's birth date is noted as the year 2481 in the Buddhist calendar.

Upstairs at Iniva the Swedish artist Lina Selander takes a similar set of elements but makes something of an altogether different tone. Her raw materials are found history and fragments from the archive, and she too edits together allusive semi-documentary films. But where Park Chan-kyong gives you an overload of stories and factual information, Selander works predominantly with a slow accumulation of enigmatic images. *Silphium*, 2014, starts with the story of a valuable contraceptive plant cultivated by the Romans, worth its weight in silver but consumed to extinction and surviving now only in the design on ancient coins. Images of tree trunks, eye-like knots, spectacles and an operating theatre give way to a laboratory housing instruments wrapped in protective foil and blankets. 'I am never sure if I invent or dream,' muses the voiceover, and after a while it starts to seem more like a hypnotherapy session than anything else. Selander says that she thinks of her work as 'a form about form, a vortex that generates content'. But, in this context at least, such formal concerns might translate as the standard lingua franca of a globalised art world, and any particular sense of why we should be interested is lost. ■

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Lina Selander
Anteroom of the Real
2011 video

Park Chan-kyong
Pa-Gyong (Last-Sutra-Recitation) 2015
installation view

