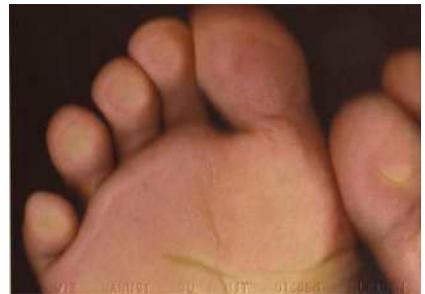


Portfolio - Yela An



PRESENTATION IN VIENNA ART WEEK 2019



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DESCRIPTION

My presentation in the Vienna Art Week 2019 is about founding an Asian artist collective that would focus on the Asian women living in Austria. The artist collective aims to make their existence visible by fostering recognition of their voices. The female and LGBTIQ Asian immigrants face racism and sexism in their daily life. However, the amount of study on them is quite insufficient. Therefore, their conditions, stories, and problems are not taken into granted.

In this respect, this year in February, we founded an artist collective and association called MAI LING. The name MAI LING refers to Gerhard Polt's video at the end of the 70s. In this video, an Asian woman represented a mixture of stereotypes about Asians, e.g., she is wearing kimono, but from Bangkok and cooks Chinese food. She is quiet and clean.

In 2019 April, we have started our first project, "who is MAI LING," which consists of personal stories that show mundane and often violent racism on a daily basis. This

work was presented at the Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz, and we continue to present on other occasions.

The body of work "Who is Mai Ling?" was extended by the performances at 36|PROJECTCELL and FriedensBim. During the first performance, phrases of prejudgments and stereotypes were written on index cards using a typewriter.

In the following performance in FriedensBim, these cards were corrected with red pens during a ride and then glued to the windows to confront the passengers with the existing prejudgements.

In 2019 October, at the Times Art Center Berlin in Germany, we present two of our new works on the same subject matter. One artwork is called 'Speak in Vain' which is an installation that consists of letters and overlapped with audio recordings. The letters transfer the stories and experiences of Asian female immigrants to their home countries, but at the same time, their family and friends cannot emphasize them. The immigrants cannot be understood in Europe and Asian either.

The other video work 'Beautiful alien girl' reveals constant cliches through the footage by Gerhard Polt at the end of the 70s. In this video, the female figures are objectified and fulfilled the white male fantasy. In doing so, this video satirizes the reality and stereotypes in Europe, and indicates that the Gerhard Polt's footage has still the relevance until today.

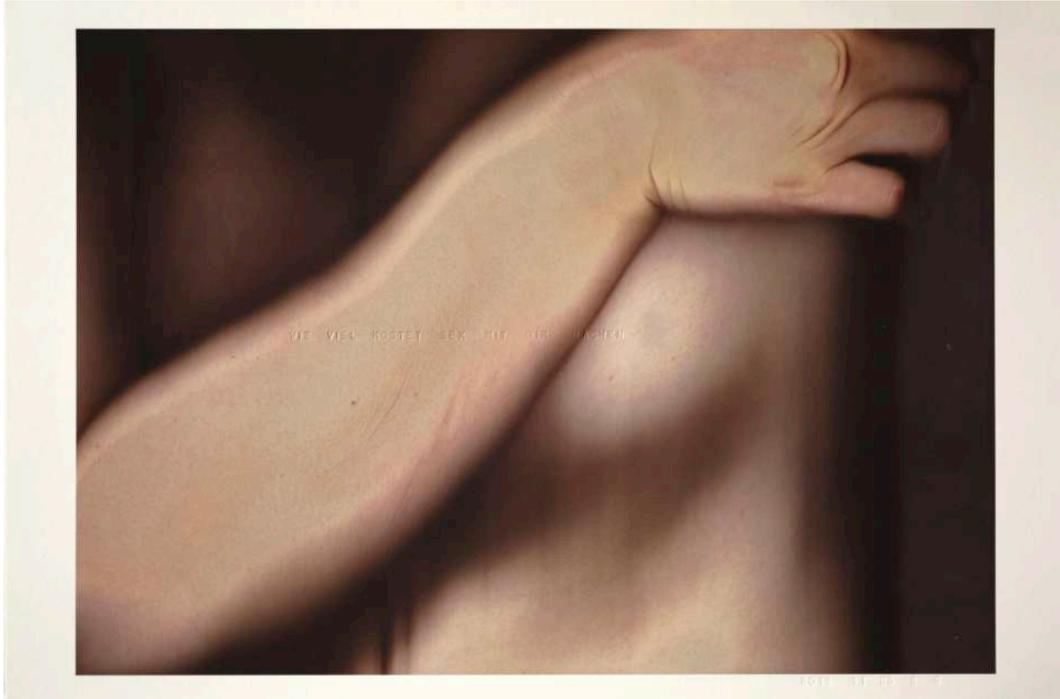
We decided to work not as an individual artist because MAI LING is a fabricated figure: we represent her role and give her voice from many MAI LINGs. Now nine members are working as MAI LING.

IN WIEN

SERIES: IN WIEN (2018)

DIGITAL PRINTS ON LAID PAPER, LETTER EMBOSSING

29.7 X 42.0CM



Wie viel kostet Sex mit dir machen?

DESCRIPTION

Racism toward Asians is often not an issue because there is less physical harassment. That does not mean that racist comments, assaults or exclusion can be ignored. Unprovoked hatred and anger are imprinted on the victim.



This work consists of the following sentences, which the artist has experienced in Vienna since 2011:

How much is having a sex with you? (Wie viel kostet Sex mit dir machen?)

We sell this girl as well. (Wir verkaufen dieses Mädchen auch.)

At least I am a domestic asshole. (Zumindest bin ich ein inländisches Arschloch.)

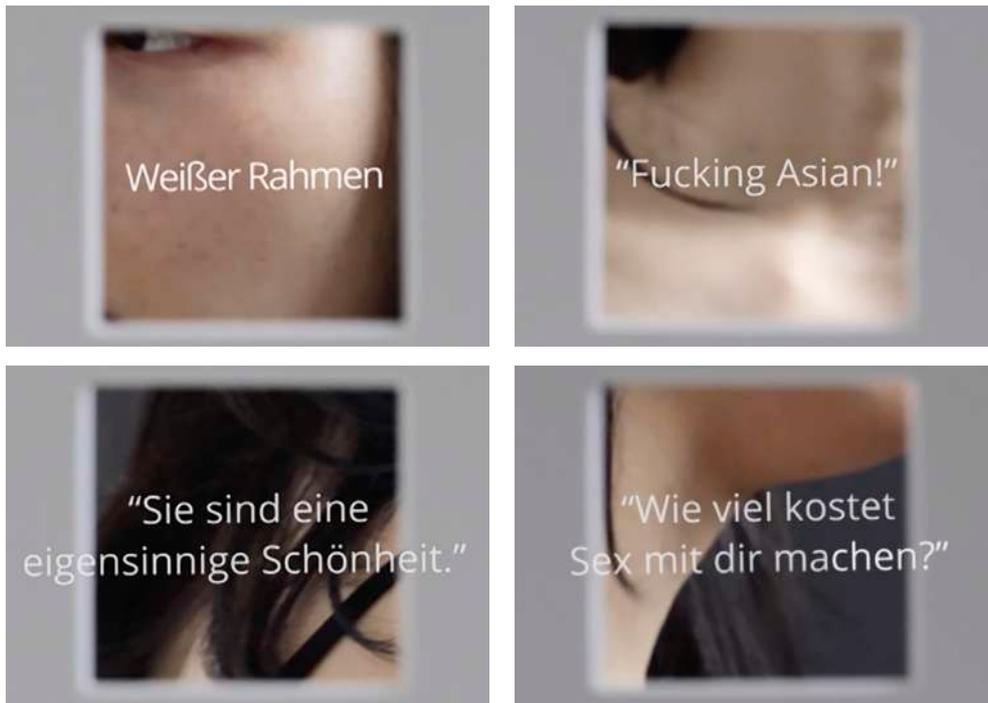
How can you breathe with your small nose? (Wie kannst du mit dieser kleinen Nase atmen?)

Racism is also your fault, because you are too kind to the people. (Rassismus ist auch deine Schuld, weil du zu nett zu den Leuten bist.)

WEISSER RAHMEN

WEISSER RAHMEN (2018)

4 MIN, FULL HD VIDEO



DESCRIPTION

The central topic of this video project is the analysis of Asian female body through two schools of thought: sexism and racism. In Europe, Asian women are represented as figures for fulfilling male visual desires.

This video consists of political subjectivity: the subjective experiences of an Asian woman in occidentally constructed system. Racism and sexism of Asian women are ousted from other ethnic issues. Therefore, Asian women face to collective apathy in the people of color group. This video shows the narrative stereotypes and cliché about Asian women in German-speaking room in Europe. This video project is a reconstitution based on the artist's experience.



This video consists of the following sentences, which the artist have experienced in Vienna since 2011:

"Nihao!"

"Why aren't you Chinese?"

"Fucking Asian!"

"How much does sex with you cost?"

"You're a stubborn beauty."

"They are a living sculpture!"

"There are so many foreigners in Austria. In 20 years, Austria will no longer be Austria."

"I gave you my mobile number, why don't you call me?"

"We sell this girl too."

"Did you understand everything, why are you smiling?"

"Asians are very hardworking."

"Koreans eat dogs."

"Ching Chang Chung!"

"How can you breathe with that little nose?"

"Racism is your fault too, because you're too nice to people."

"The Austrians are interested in you, but they have no idea, that's why people call you 'Ni Hao'."

"At least I'm a domestic asshole."

"So what? Nevertheless, you can go for a drink with me."

"They are very exotic. Can I take a picture of you?"

"How can I believe you?"

"Maybe you're too old to learn German."

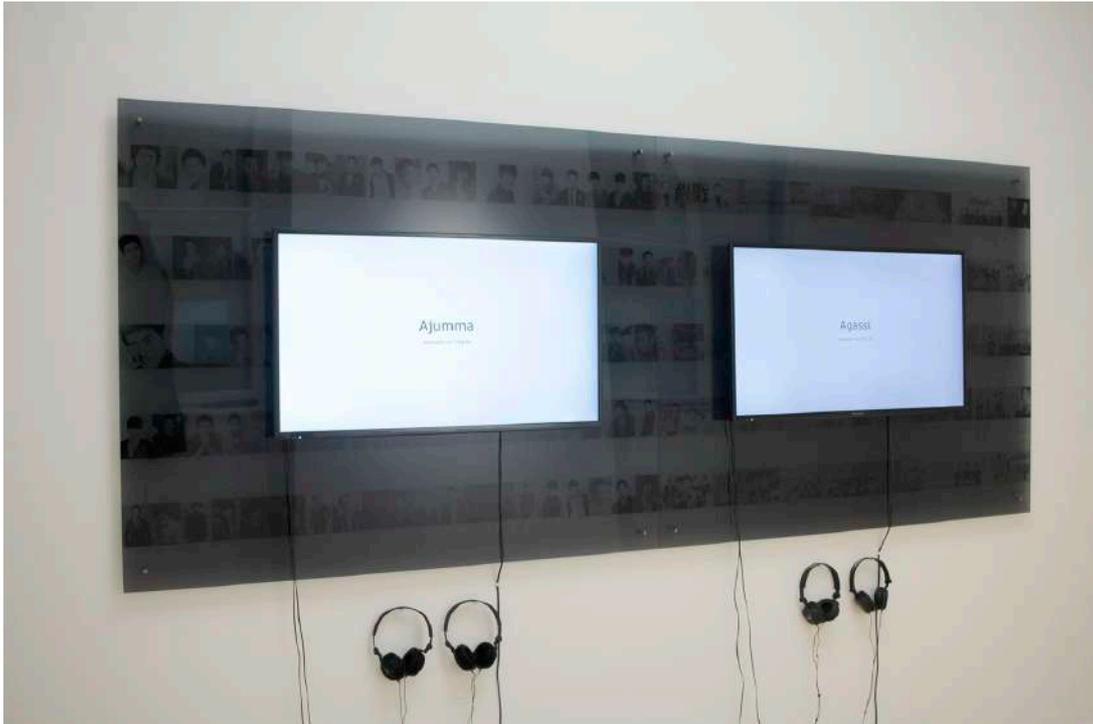
"Namaste!"

"Sayonara!"



AJUMMA & AGASSI

AJUMMA & AGASSI (2017) :
IMAGES OF WOMEN IN THE SOUTH KOREAN MASS MEDIA
VIDEO INSTALLATION AT THE XHIBIT



DESCRIPTION

My interest is in the field of gender in South Korean mass media. In Korean mass media, field representations of women are still subordinated to male point of view. Korean mass media is an accurate description of Korean society. The mass media's outdated images of women reflect the current state of gender (in)equality in South Korea.

For my diploma exhibition at the Xhibit, I presented two video works: Ajumma (2015) and Agassi (2017). My two videos show women who have lost their right to individuality and who have been balancing on a tightrope of immature, male demands. My two videos aim to examine gender in popular Korean culture in a new light through the use of Korean mass media images the original images. To show collected found footage of similar images has a ripple effect and makes it uncanny and

at the same time. To compile such mass media images has a ripple effect. The videos first highlight the lack of TV roles available to women and then draw attention to the confining stereotypes Korean women must face when they are given TV roles.

The series of videos about 1. 'Korean Middle-Aged Women' / Ajumma (2015) and 2. 'Korean Girls' / Agassi (2017) consist of found footage from the Korean public media. All of the found footages for my videos are taken from Youtube.



Information on the video installation:

All photos on the wall are from Korean show programs led only by men. In fact in South Korea, there are few show programs with women as hosts. Many show programs only include women as assistants or helpers which are traditional female roles within Korean society. These women are mostly coy, kind, wise, meek, and mild.

The photos of men are under the black acrylic glass. Using the black acrylic glass men exist in the video installation, at the same time they can not be dominant like always. The Videos of women have to seize the spotlight. This video installation create a synergy effect to watch the video works.

AJUMMA

AJUMMA (2015)

10 MIN, VIDEO CLIPS FROM SOUTH KOREAN SOAP OPERAS



DESCRIPTION

The video Ajumma (2015) is about middle-aged women in Korea. When a woman is old or married, she is called "Ajumma". They are treated almost as a third sex, no longer as women.

These days sexual discrimination is still highly prevalent. Comparing modern sexism to the time of women's suffrage in the 19th century complicates the idea of discrimination. Discrimination now is not so apparent and therefore to stand against it requires new strategies. In the past, women were denied some basic legal rights that were given to men, and so the structure of discrimination was obvious. Now stronger sexism works in confidential and complicated webs of discrimination. There is, for example, a 'glass ceiling'. It may appear that all systems are equal, meaning women and minorities have the ability to rise to the highest rungs, but this is not the case. Too

many barriers still block women. To struggle against sexism requires an elaborate and complex plan.¹

This situation of hidden sexism is well produced and sustained by Korean mass media; the media creates an image of women as obedient, commodifiable objects.

The Korean word "Ajumma" is the informal expression of the word "Ajummeni", which means 'aunt'. These days Ajumma refers to any middle-aged or elderly woman.²

Even though its original meaning does not degrade women, it is almost forbidden to call someone by this word in public. In February 2014 an experiment was carried out by Korean journalists about women being called Ajumma on the street. 8 % of the women did not respond to being called in this way, and 21% of the women responded to the journalist in an offensive way.³

Women who were involved in the experiment reported feeling that their sex and their social status were both denied when they were called Ajumma. Moreover they thought that being called Ajumma undervalued all housewives.

In South Korea, women say that they lose their own name when they get old, and all of them instead receive the same name tag of Ajumma.

This new meaning to the word Ajumma was given during the time when Korea had to overcome the economic crisis following the Korean War. The reason for this change in meaning was that society did not need the image of the traditional woman anymore. Instead society needed strong mothers and housewives who did not mind rough work in order to provide a better life for their family.⁴

There is also a Korean word for a middle-aged man, "Ajessi". However, Ajessi has more varied images as men have established themselves in the economic mainstream. All women obviously become Ajumma but paradoxically no woman wants to be an Ajumma. The mass media has degraded the meaning of Ajumma, and people now consider this degradation as normal social circumstance.

¹ Prof. Nam-Soon Kang, SisalN Magazin, <http://m.sisain.co.kr>, Open on 17.01.2016

² The National Institute of the Korean Language, <http://stdweb2.korean.go.kr>, Opened on 17.01.2016

³ Jin-Suk Lee, Dong-A ILBO, <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20140211/60734193/1>, Opened on 17.01.2016

⁴ Hankook ILBO, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=110&oid=038&aid=0000311777>, Opend on 16.01.2016

In Korean society, women are treated harshly and categorized based on the fact of being a woman. Women are even conditioned to live in frames of stereotypical, female behavior. Moreover they try to control themselves in order to avoid behaving like an Ajumma. If women do not stop hindering their performance to conform with the provided stereotypes, such categorization of women will keep continuing. There is no Ajumma; there is only people who want to call women Ajumma.⁵

⁵ Ma-lu Lee, Magazine Allure, <http://www.allurekorea.com/2014/09/04>, Opend on 16.01.2016

AGASSI

AGASSI (2017)
10 MIN, VIDEO CLIPS FROM SOUTH KOREAN TV BROADCASTS
AND MUSIC VIDEOS



DESCRIPTION

The Korean word “Agassi” refers to a young woman of childbearing age.¹ The video Agassi (2017) deals with Korean misogyny, especially in regards to how the K-Pop music market, known as an abbreviation for Korean pop music, has used images of young women. K-Pop entertainment is a huge business in Asia. The biggest entertainment companies are all run by men. Furthermore in most shows produced, men seize the spotlight, and women are left secondary roles which only support the male lead. Not only in TV shows but also in film, it is difficult to find a woman as the

¹ The National Institute of the Korean Language, <http://stdweb2.korean.go.kr>, Opened on 17.10.2016

main character. The fact that people in Korea do not question K-Pop illustrates the patriarchy and male chauvinism within the country.

The K-Pop business demands that teenage girls dress scantily and dance provocatively. Young girls are consumed as sexual objects, but people do not consider this within the Child, Young Boys and Girls' Sex Protection Law. Their bodies are rated like meat, ranging between good and unacceptable. Most of male culture likens sex (and thus sexual assault) to eating a woman or scoring her deliciousness. These kinds of ideas expose a patriarchal system in which assault on women is viewed as a consumption of sexual objects.²

The girls in K-Pop are required to be ambivalent, being sexy and at the same time, being innocent and pure. If they cannot keep a balance between those demands, they cannot work in this business anymore. They are fired even if they want to keep the job. They are nicknamed by men. Actually, such voyeurism includes jealousy of objects and anxiety about pleasure of enjoyment. Jealousy changes often to aggression, and anxiety is accompanied by oppression. Men who enjoy following idol girls can become aggressive when they feel their sexual fantasy has been broken. This is immature action. Like a sort of separation and abuse, a man wants to abuse a woman, if he cannot have her.³

In Korean SNS (Social Network System) and the Internet, there are many demeaning words to refer to women while less similar versions exist for men. Some of these words for example are 'Kimchi Girl' (a belittling nickname for a Korean woman), 'Soy Bean Girl' (a high maintenance woman), 'Plastic Surgery Girl', and 'Mrs. Kim' (a middle-aged women, especially one who cannot drive a car well). The object being (nick)named is always part of a disadvantaged group. The categorization of people comes from the ruling, hegemonic view. This is called a classification system. If the established group has many classifications, the group has been formed by the so called second-class citizens.⁴

² Jung Hee-Jin, *The Challenge of Feminism*, p.99-100

³ Kim Heung-Kyung, *Jungang Newspaper*, <http://mnews.joins.com/article/20024280#home> Opened on 14.05.2016

⁴ Prof. Na-Young Lee (Jungang University), EBS Focus 'Loathing', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdZZKLaBX9M>, Broadcasted by EBS on 03.10.2014

In 2015 there was research into Korean men's life by the Korean Women's Development Institute which included interviews from Korean women. Since 'Kimchi Girl' and 'Soy Bean Girl' began to emerge in Korean society, women have tried to prove that they do not belong to these categorizations.⁵ This categorizing restricts women's behavior and activities. Women are forced to constantly control themselves to avoid being nicknamed by men. This is called stereotype threat effect: "If negative stereotypes are present regarding a specific group, group members are likely to become anxious about their performance, which may hinder their ability to perform at their maximum level." Stereotype threat effect is a part of rape culture.

'A Toronto policeman giving a safety talk at a university told female students not to dress like sluts. Soon after, Slutwalks became an international phenomenon, of mostly young, often sexily dressed women taking back public space (rather like the Take Back the Night walks of the 1980s, but with more lipstick and less clothing). Young feminists are a thrilling phenomenon: smart, bold, funny defenders of rights and claimers of space - and changers of the conversation. That Policeman's "slut" comment was part of the emphasis colleges have put on telling female students how to box themselves in safely - don't go here, don't do that - rather than telling male students not to rape: this is part of rape culture.'⁶

Limiting women to inferior roles in TV shows becomes an extension of the overall societal restrictions put on women. Young girls are invited to TV shows as guests where they have no authority and are demanded to satisfy men's needs. At these shows, most of the men are not the same age as the girls. They are older and have more broadcasting experience. Moreover, the host which leads the show is always a man.

⁵ A Basic Study on the Men Lives(II), Sang-Su Ahn, In-Sun Kim, Jeong-Hyun Lee and Bo-La Yun, Published by Korean Women's Development Institute, 2015

⁶ Rebecca Solnit, Men Explain Things to Me: And Other Essays, p.224

SKIN

SKIN (2014)
LINEN, 50X150 CM



DESCRIPTION

Jean-Luc Nancy has also noticed that when people want to touch their own body, it is only possible through their skin.

This work developed according to a pattern that depicts the different orientation of the skin. Due to the extent of the muscles, the surface must expand in specific directions. In these results, running paths on the skin transferred accordingly to the linen material.

TONGUE

TONGUE (2012)

3 MIN, DV-PAL HDTV, 16:9 FORMAT



DESCRIPTION

This video shows the movement of the tongue. This work developed by the memory of the artist's childhood: the movement and tactile stimuli of the tongue was strange. It was wet, red, and alien.

PASSPORT

SERIES: PASSPORT (2012-)

EAR PRINTS ON THE PASSPORT PAPER

21.0 X 29.7 CM



DESCRIPTION

This work shows the control bodies by the government not only the issue of fingerprints but also whole bodies soon. The represents typical Western ignorance and apathy about third-country nationals (it is also called 'non-EU foreign national'). At the same time, the migrant is forced to integrate into Europe, otherwise forcibly expelled from the EU to the virtual home country. Even the definition of integration is to join a social group or people by equal participation. In other words, integration indicates the combination with the equitable treatment of two or more cultures, not a commitment of absorption into one of the culture.



Besides, the integration implies to accept the white man's style, his values, or his religion. While migrants undertake to acquire Occidental knowledge, the European citizens stand in an exceptional position; namely, the discrimination of other cultures and the racism against the migrant have connived.