

Press Release

October 30, 2020

Dust Clay Stone

Pia Arke, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Bouchra Khalili, Alexander Ugay

October 30 – December 20, 2020

Art Sonje Center, 3F

Curated by	Haeju Kim (Deputy Director, Art Sonje Center)
Production Management by	Heehyun Cho (Curator, Art Sonje Center)
Organized by	Art Sonje Center
Supported by	Arts Council Korea, Danish Arts Foundation, Institut français de Corée du Sud



Pia Arke, *Untitled (Toying with national costume)*. C. 1993 (reproduction 2010), 120 x 130 cm, Contact sheet and b/w inkjet print in the collection of Søren Arke Petersen. Photo: Kuratorisk Aktion.

Art Sonje Center is pleased to present a thematic exhibition, *Dust Clay Stone*, curated by Haeju Kim (Deputy Director, Art Sonje Center) with Pia Arke, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Bouchra Khalili and Alexander Ugay. *Dust Clay Stone* focuses on works that represent the complex issues of identity faced by individuals experiencing situations of migration, as well as the perceptions that are formed or lost in the course of such experiences. The four participating artists, Pia Arke, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Bouchra Khalili and Alexander Ugay reveal their interests in the complex identity, the individual and

collective memories, post-colonialism and allyship, the works are inter-connected in their methods of creating works such as their deep exploration of the structure of languages, the representation of images, and approaches to the archival references. The exhibition focuses on the languages as an indicator of perception generated from the situation of migration and looks into the way in which words and texts are operated within the works.

Born in Greenland and lived in Copenhagen, Pia Arke (1958–2007) is considered one of the most important Nordic artists who have focused on post-colonial issues. Arke produced numerous works of video, photography, and writing as she re-examined the colonial history and the traces left by colonial researchers. This exhibition features her video works, along with various photographs of her hometown landscape taken with a pinhole camera she made.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951–1982) was born in Busan and migrated to the US at the age of 12. She studied literature and art in her undergraduate and graduate studies, leaving behind beautiful works of writing, videos, performances, and drawings over the course of her short life. Cha's work deals with issues of identity and migration, exile and alienation; in particular, she establishes a "third language" as she combines the merged experience between her mother tongue and the language of her adopted home with her text and images. Her best-known work, the 1982 book *DICTEE*, blends together the lives of women through combinations of past and present, history and fiction, images and language and is considered a key text in both migrant and feminist literature. This exhibition features her major video works that portray the structure of oblivion and loss.

A third-generation Goryeoin (Korean diaspora who were forced to move to the former Soviet Republics in Central Asia) born in the former Soviet Union, currently Kazakhstan, Alexander Ugay (b. 1978) makes photography and video that combine the use of digital equipment with 8mm and 16mm cameras made during the Soviet era. His work reveals memories and nostalgia as it explores interactions among history, the present situation, and future prospects. For this exhibition, he uses the disappearing medium of VHS to capture the words from the disappearing language of "Goryeomal". Currently based in Korea, the artist also presents a new work commissioned that documents the physical movements of Goryeoin and the former Soviet Union migrant workers in Korea. Ingrained through daily labor, their repeated movements show a complex mixture of emotions, including monotony, meditateness, and community anxieties.

Born in Casablanca, Bouchra Khalili (b. 1975) currently lives and works between Berlin and Oslo. She is renowned for works of photography and video that address the realities and historical circumstances of political minorities, and the issue of geographical migration in particular. Her work presents concerns of language and subjectivity through storytelling situated at the intersections of the history and personal narrative. For this exhibition, she presents two video works, *Twenty-Two*

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Hours (2018) and *The Typographer* (2019), and text focusing on the French writer and poet, Jean Genet. They respectively concern Genet's 1970 visit to the US at the invitation of the Black Panther Party and his solidarity with its members, as well as the last book and sentence written by the writer.

■ WORKS

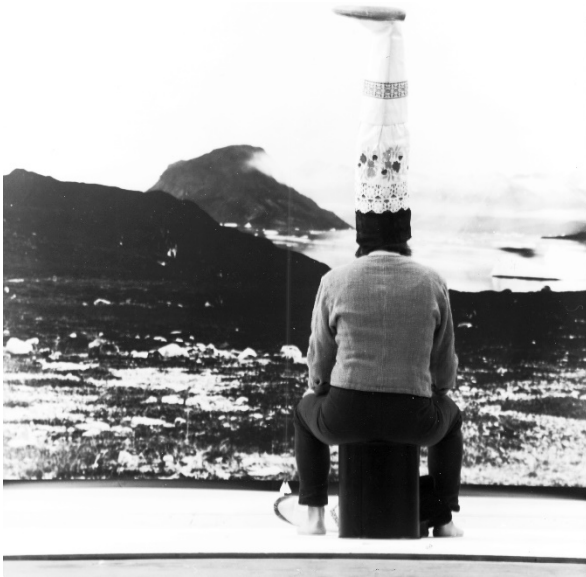
1.

Pia Arke

Untitled (Put your kamik on your head, so everyone can see where you come from), 1993

B&W contact sheet, inkjet print, reproduction, 2020

30 x 30 cm, Collection of Søren Arke Petersen



Arke sitting in front of her own landscape photograph, wearing a traditional Greenlandic shoe on her head. This image was published in 1994 with a contribution written by Arke for the Greenland newspaper *Sermisiaq*. In it, the artist criticized the curation methods used to plan and stage exhibitions on Greenlandic contemporary art. In particular, she stressed the importance of linking the work of Greenland's contemporary artist to ethnography rather than the visual arts tradition, of being wary of Western perspectives regarding the West as "superior," and of Greenlandic artists themselves becoming aware of these issues.

2.

Pia Arke

Nuugaarsuk alias Pinhole Camera Photograph alias The Point, 1990

B&W, 4 x inkjet prints, reproduction, 2020, 59.5 x 49.5cm each

Collection of Brandts Museum of Photographic Art, Courtesy of Søren Arke Petersen



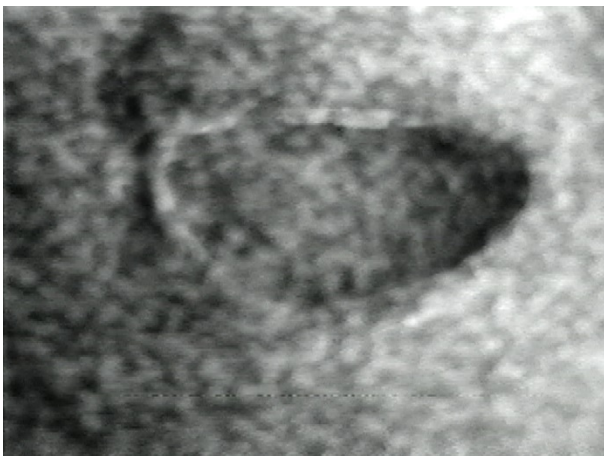
For this photograph, Nuugaarsuk Point in the southern Greenland town of Narsaq has been photographed with a pinhole camera made by the artist to match her own body size. This was one of many places in Greenland that the artist visited in her formative years with her father, a radio operator who observed and relayed climate patterns. Arke positioned a pinhole camera at the location where her childhood home once stood to capture an image of the landscape she observed outside of her window as a child. Within the camera, she watched the image forming for over 15 minutes on low-sensitivity film, with her own body included in the image to produce the final version. The resulting image combines the actual setting with the artist's memories and physical person.

3.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

Mouth to Mouth, 1975

Digitized 16mm film, B&W, sound, 8 min



In this work, one of her early films, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha isolates and repeats a simple, physical act. After English and Korean words appear on the screen, a mouth forms the eight Korean vowel graphemes. While the ordinary and primal actions of finding the roots of language are closed-up, the

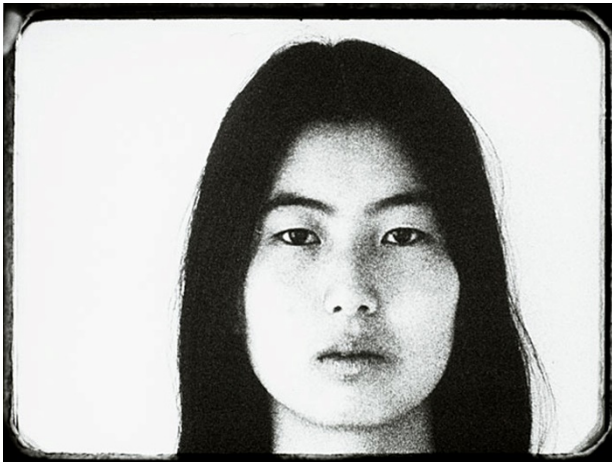
phonetic sound of vowels which expected to occur from the visually presented mouth shape is disrupted by the white noise of television static and the sound of running water. The scenes where the specific images gradually fade to black and reappear interpreted as representing the nature of spoken language that evanesces after a speech, at the same time, it is also read as a symbol of the mother tongue that repeats loss and reappearance, speaking several languages according to the experience of migration.

4.

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha

Permutations, 1976

Digitized 16mm film, B&W, silent, 10 min



Collection of the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation. Copyright: Regents of the University of California. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York.

This film features six shots of the face of the artist's younger sister and quickly cuts from image to image which intensifies the flickering effect of film. The flicker technique used in this work can be found in other videos of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, which shows every frame, the minimal unit of film, as a slide show style. The artist met the film as she saw wide range and various film including European Avant-Garde studying at college with working three years at Pacific Film Archive, and later, she studied film techniques and theories deeply and wrote "A Theory of Film Set-up." The flicker technique depicts the character as an unstable being flickering in and out of the viewer's visibility, and the artist draws a racial issue of stereotype that Asian faces are difficult to tell apart by juxtaposing her face at the end of the sequence.

5.

Alexander Ugay

More than a hundred thousand times, 2020

Video installation, 3 channel HD video, 35 min 48 sec

Commissioned and produced by Art Sonje Center



Koryoin labor migrants show the movements of their working process in South Korea. Monotony and "infinity" of the activity are immersed a mind in a meditative state where alienated time turning into inner time and wandering memory fills existential voids. The principle of repetition in unalienated form brings out the difference as in the case of craftsmanship or time regained. In an alienated form, automatism, boredom, anxiety arises. The conventionality and ritualism of the performance connects the external and mental sides of industrial labor in a mirror image of the social surface. This video may be an attempt to capture an image of collective anxiety in the imagination and memory of the Koryoin community which is in the process of reinventing the land at a time of global deterritorialization.

6.

Bouchra Khalili

Twenty-Two Hours, 2018

Digital film, 4K, Color, sound, 45 min, Edition of 5 + 2AP

Commissioned for Ruhr Triennale, produced with the support of Oslo National Art Academy, Harvard film Study Center, Secession, Vienna. Courtesy of the artist and mor charpentier, Paris



Twenty-Two Hours investigates Jean Genet's visit to the United States between March and May 1970. Invited by the Black Panther Party, the French poet stood in solidarity with the revolutionary movement and its leadership, which was at that time arbitrarily detained. During the two months he spent in the US, he toured the country, tirelessly calling for solidarity. Nearly 50 years after, Quiana and Vanessa, two young African-American women examine Genet's commitment to the Party in the very same area where the poet delivered his first public speech: Cambridge, Massachusetts. As much storytellers as film editors, the young women combine fragments of images, sounds, stories, and film footage, to tell the story of Genet's commitment to the BPP, suggesting a reflection on the civic poet as a witness to history. Simultaneously, Doug Miranda, a former prominent member of the Black Panther Party who organized Genet's tour on the East Coast narrates his meetings with Genet and his own commitment to the Party.

■ About the Artist

Pia Arke (1958-2007)

Pia Arke lived and worked in Copenhagen. Arke is recognized as one of the Nordic region's most important postcolonial thinkers. Through different artistic media as photography, collage, video, performance, installation and writing, Arke examined the places where she lived as a child and the historical colonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland. While she participated in a number of exhibitions during her lifetime, the first major survey of her work took place in 2010 with *Tupilakosaurus* at Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art and The National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen. Arke's work has recently been shown and collected by museums including Louisiana, Copenhagen; Brandts – Museum of Art and Visual Culture, Odense; and Moderna Museet Stockholm and Malmö. Most recently, works by Arke has been shown in *Pia Arke: Wonderland* at Kunsthall Trondheim, Trondheim, Norway (2019) and as part of the exhibition *Migration: Traces in an Art Collection* at Tensta konsthall (2019).

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982)

From the mid-1970s until her death at age 31 in 1982, Korean-born artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha created a rich body of conceptual art that explored displacement and loss. Her works included artists' books, mail art, performance, audio, video, film, and installation. Although grounded in French psychoanalytic film theory, her art is also informed by far-ranging cultural and symbolic references, from shamanism to Confucianism and Catholicism. Her collage-like book *Dictée*, which was published posthumously in 1982, is recognized as an influential investigation of identity in the context of history, ethnicity and gender.

Her work has been shown at the Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; Artists Space, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Bronx Museum of Art, New York, among other venues. A major retrospective exhibition of her work, entitled *The Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982)* was organized by University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in 2001, and traveled to five cities, including Seoul, Korea.

Bouchra Khalili (b. 1975)

Bouchra Khalili lives and works in Berlin. She later graduated in Film & Media Studies at Sorbonne Nouvelle and Visual Arts at the Ecole Nationale d'Arts de Paris-Cergy. Encompassing film, video, installation, photography, printmaking, and publishing, Khalili's practice explores imperial and colonial continuums as epitomized by contemporary forced illegal migrations and the politics of memory of anti-colonial struggles and international solidarity. Deeply informed by the legacy of postindependence avant-gardes and the vernacular traditions of her native Morocco, Khalili's approach develops strategies of storytelling at the intersection of history and micro-narratives. Combining documentary and conceptual practices, she investigates questions of self-representation, autonomous agency, and forms of resistance of communities rendered invisible by the nation-state model.

Khalili's work has been subject to many international solo exhibitions, including at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2019), Museum Folkwang, Essen (2018), Jeu de Paume, Paris (2018), Secession, Vienna (2018), Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2017), MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2016), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2015), MACBA, Barcelona (2015), PAMM, Miami (2014 - 2013). She was a nominee of the Guggenheim's Hugo Boss Prize (2018) and the Artes Mundi Prize (2018).

Alexander Ugay (b. 1978)

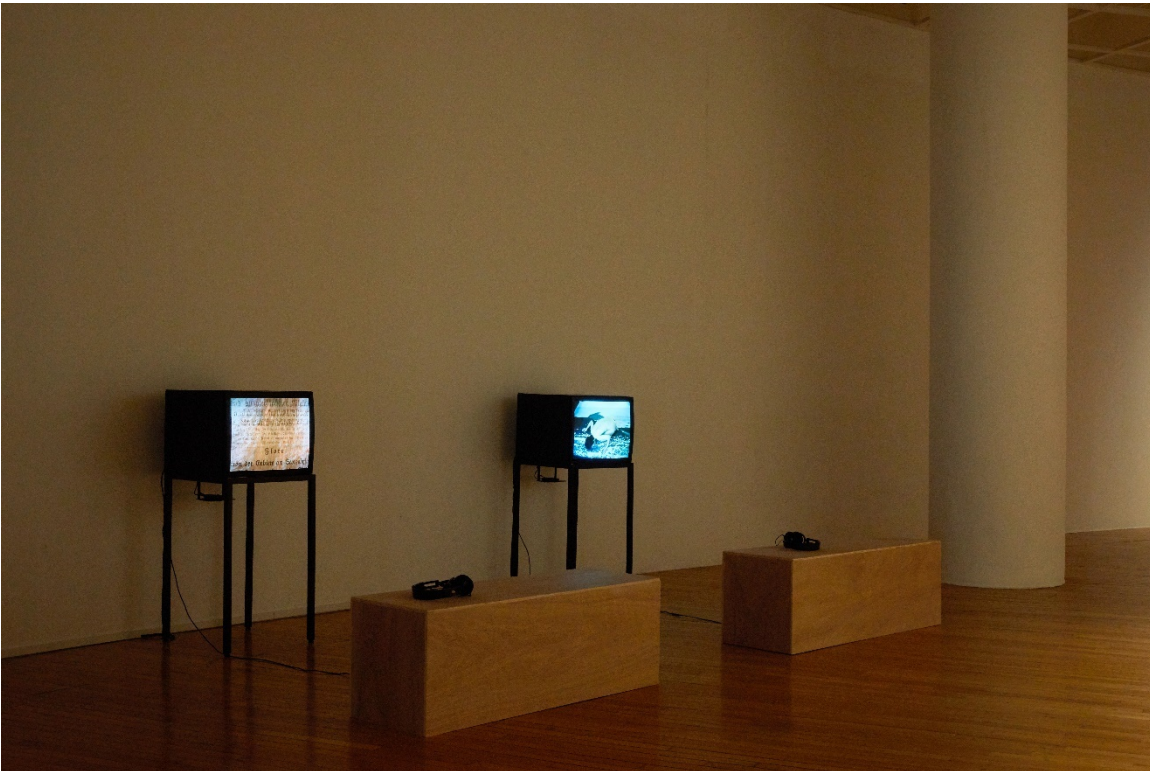
Photo and video artist, Alexander Ugay, lives and works in Almaty and Seoul. He reveals the issues of memory and nostalgia in his works, exploring the interaction of history with the current reality and the future. This partly explains the artist's simultaneous use of 8-16 mm film cameras manufactured in the Soviet era and modern digital recording devices. Many of Ugay's photo and video projects are aimed at studying the relationships between collective and personal memory, collective and personal space, focusing on the concept of time and its flow. In recent years, the artist has been actively working with the medium of installation.

Notable recent exhibitions include *Eurasian Utopia: Post Scriptum* at the Suwon l'Park Museum of Art in Suwon (2018), *Phantom Stories: Leitmotifs of Post-Soviet Asia* at the Lunds konsthall in Lund (2018), *More than an Image, Less than an Object* at Galeria Labirynt in Lublin (2017), *Festivities Are Cancelled!* at the Kyiv Biennale (2017), 6th Moscow Biennale (2015), Busan Biennale (2014), *Promises of the Past* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (2010), *Younger Than Jesus* at the New Museum in New York (2009) and 9th Istanbul Biennale (2005).

■ Images



Dust Clay Stone (2020), installation view. Art Sonje Center. Photo: Yeonje Kim.



Dust Clay Stone (2020), installation view. Art Sonje Center. Photo: Yeonje Kim.



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■ **Outlines, *Dust Clay Stone***

Artist Pia Arke, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Bouchra Khalili, Alexander Ugay

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Venues Art Sonje Center, 3F

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Hours Tuesday–Sunday 12–7pm

Admissions General 5,000 KRW
Students 3,000 KRW

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