

# **Nam June Paik's Vision of Korea and Metonymic Allegory: Fantasy and Hyperreality**

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## **1. Prologue**

It has been a year since Nam June Paik passed away. What kind of person was Paik? What kind of artist was he? How will his achievements in art history be evaluated? How should we understand the world of his art? So many questions regarding him and his art come to my mind and make me feel excited while I am writing this article in preparation for the exhibition on Nam June Paik.

The art of Nam June Paik is very complicated, complex, deconstructive, and hybrid. In artistic terms, it is postmodernism itself. As Fredric Jameson pointed out him already in 1986 as “emblematic of one feature of postmodernism,” in the sense that he developed “a new logic of difference” or “a new way of perceiving difference,”<sup>1</sup> Paik created a postmodern world of art in terms of style, form, content and subject-matter with video, a “representative medium of a postmodern era.” His life, more than anything else, was postmodern. Not only his life as a world-renowned cosmopolitan and diaspora artist who was born in Korea and spent most of his life in Europe and the United States, but also the man Nam June Paik himself, who was sometimes contradictory and impulsive, but very human, are considered typically postmodern.

The assertion of the postmodernity of Paik's art and life is based on his epistemological and existential duality of living on or transcending the borders, which is one of the symptoms of postmodernism. As if to repeat the dual identity as a Korean-American artist or complexity as a cosmopolitan artist, his art is defined as the post-genre intermedia that transcends the dichotomy of art/technology, high art/popular art, and art/entertainment, and furthermore, the distinction among genres. Especially, his video art is evaluated and recognized for its ambivalent aesthetics uniquely combining the Western cultural heritages, such as Dadaism, avant-gardism and technology, with the Eastern philosophy, such as Taoism, Zen philosophy, I Ching and shamanism.

The way in which Paik combines the Western culture and the Eastern philosophy is also postmodern. He paid attention to the Eastern philosophy such as indeterminacy, Taoist ‘randomness,’ and I Ching and tried to apply it to art to perform post-Western avant-gardism or deconstructive postmodernism which negates the traditional Western ideas such as determinism and rationalism. In addition to philosophy, he also combined the Western state-of-the-art technology with the Eastern classics to relativize Western values and acquire ambivalence between East and West. In this context, we can understand his paradox of humanizing technology through video art or his philosophy of “Participation-TV” to transform one-way communication of television to interactive two-way communication.

The important elements in Nam June Paik's art world are the introduction of, and themes based on the Eastern ideas and Korean sensibility which differ from, or relativize the Western value. Such themes are more saliently manifested in “Zen” series, including <Zen for TV>, <Zen for Film>, <Zen for Head>, and <TV Candle>; Buddha series represented by <TV Buddha>; philosophical works which depict the Eastern concept of time, such as <Moon is the Oldest TV>, and <TV Clock>; and other Korean motif-based works representing specific places, such as Deoksugung Palace and the South Gate, or historical figures, such as Tangun, the ancient founder of Korea, and King Sejong. Planned as one of the programs to celebrate the invitation of Korea as a guest of honor at ARCO 2007 and also designed to commemorate the first anniversary of Nam June Paik's death, the exhibition features some 70 selected pieces of his artworks representing Eastern and Korean motifs. It is hoped through this exhibition to show what Korea and Koreans meant to cosmopolitan Nam June Paik and how the artist reflected and translated them into his artworks.

## **2. Nam June Paik's Dual Vision of Korea and Metonymic Allegory**

As represented by the title “Nam June Paik’s Vision of Korea: Fantastic and Hyperreal,” the exhibition starts from the idea that Paik’s vision of Korea is fantastic and hyperreal. The two terms, fantastic and hyperreal, jointly imply the duality of the real and unreal, reality and illusion, and the psychological and cognitive confusion that occur at the boundary between them; and these are what define the dualistic pattern through which Paik interacted with the reality of Korea.

Nam June Paik’s dualistic attitude towards Korea was based on his sense of deprivation from exile and the confusion and contradiction of double identity as an expatriate artist. For Paik, who was positioned as a racial and national “other” at a place where he belonged but could never truly belong, and who sensed the impossibility of returning to his mother country, Korea was a signifier of loss and a space of absence. However, Korea existed as a reality. Merely, it existed remotely as a past. Similarly with other diaspora artists, he could not get rid of nostalgia and fantasy for homeland, and never ceased to incorporate the country in his works. Thus, Korea became a place of return and a signifier of desire. The duality of loss and desire, and absence and return explains the double vision that Paik had about Korea. According to this double vision, Korea and Koreans that he represented were expressed as hyperreal and fantastic entities that reside on the boundary between reality and illusion, place and non-place, and actuality and artificiality.

It is also noteworthy that fantasy and hyperreality provide a perspective on Paik's artistic world as well as his vision of Korea. The nature of a video medium, which makes repetition and fragmentation of images possible and freely crosses between the past and the present, is hyperreal. His artistic world, in which all the dichotomic boundaries collapse through such a medium, guarantees postmodern fantasy and hyperreality.

I would like to emphasize at this point that such fantasy and hyperreality of his art can be interpreted as metonymic aesthetics and strategy of a diaspora artist living in a postcolonial era. He left Korea at the age of 17, wandered about Hong Kong, Japan and Germany, and finally immigrated to the United States at 32. Metonymic allegory to Paik, who experienced the feeling of loss caused by exile, and confusion and contradiction by dual identity, served as a strategy to grasp the difference between foreign culture and national culture, and imperialism and colonialism.

Metonymy is a form of allegorical rhetoric in which the original in reality is expelled, transformed into and substituted by other things. Such allegory is made through fragmentation and breakdown of forms, representation, history and the subject. Especially in colonial discourse, it has a transgressive meaning in the context that it is granted with political impetus as an ambivalent power challenging colonial stereotypes. As Homi K. Bhabha, who prefers metonymic reading of texts to metaphoric one, claims, the colonized project the ‘othered’ fantasy with ambivalence of mimicking and at the same time mocking the colonizer. Such duality of desiring to get similar and rejecting it at the same time, that is, the threatening ambivalence towards the colonizer is the characteristic of colonial mimicry.<sup>2</sup> Mimicry here is not of mimesis to represent, but of simulation to repeat the reality. It lets the unreal fantasy enter the empty space of reality which gets dismantled and dissolved through repetition. As such repetitive mimicry, which transcends reality and blurs the distinction between the real and the unreal, functions as a force of metonymic allegory, the authority of colonial discourse is challenged. The functional relationship of metonymy, the postcolonial rhetoric, to fantasy or hyperreality as disguised reality can be understood from this aspect.

Metonymy is a mechanism to expose postcolonial symptoms and express its inherent power structure. It also serves as an effective aesthetic tool to overcome self-collapsing narcissism by placing autobiographical elements or a private narrative into social, cultural and historical context. The conceptual premise of this exhibition that Nam June Paik's vision of Korea is fantastic and hyperreal consequently leads to a conclusion that he engaged himself in the postcolonial statements directly and indirectly through fantastic and hyperreal metonymic allegory, which is the point of argument of this

article.

### 3. Fantasy and Hyperreality

Etymologically, fantasy refers to imaginative power to make invisible illusion or phantom visible ('fan' and 'phan' in fantasy and phantasy have a meaning of making something invisible visible). The power is considered subversive as it has the ability to create an alternative, secondary world free from reality and human conditions and satisfy the desire for perfect and unified reality. As Georges Bataille said that fantasy enjoys autonomy, not in possessing an object, but in desiring it,<sup>3</sup> fantasy speaks of frustration, lack, absence, and loss caused by cultural frustration in terms of desire and compensate them with desire. When desire poses itself as an obstacle to social and cultural order and continuity, however, it goes through a process of purification by being suppressed, eliminated or expelled through vicarious experience of a creator or a viewer.

Fantasy art, of which activity of interpreting itself is fantastic like myth, enters a realm of fantasy from an orderly and explicit world to depict and represent desire. Fantasy artists pursue something fantastic such as phantom-like narcissism between mirror image and real image, revolt of the marginal, carnival returning to the unconscious, unknown realm between the preconscious and the unconscious, mythical archetypal images, sexual desire, physical violence, the grotesque, the uncanny, and abjection. They attempt to trace and visualize those that have been regarded as something concealed, silenced and absent on the boundary between the real and unreal, reality and dream, consciousness and unconsciousness, order and disorder, and history and myth. It is the subversive power of fantasy art to discern and disclose the limit and contradiction of reality and dominant order through such unfeasible attempts.

When the subject or consciousness loses the ability to distinguish reality from fantasy and engages fantasy in reality without knowing the action of fantasy, it shifts into the so-called hyperreal world. Hyperreality, a postmodern cultural symptom and an issue of semiotics, is defined as reality that exists as image, representation, symbol, advertisement and spectacle irrelevant of the real (Guy Debord), "the simulation of something which never really existed" (Jean Baudrillard), reality "projected in an absolute space which is also that of simulation" (Jean Baudrillard), and "the authentic fake" (Umberto Eco). In a word, it is "reality by proxy." It means that the world we live in is substituted by a hyperreal world which pursues the stimulation of copying and simulacrum. Artificial spices which create non-existent taste, plastic flowers which look more real than the real ones, a photo of a model modified with digital technology, those who morphed into a beauty after plastic surgery, and distorted documentaries are hyperreality as an upgraded or alternative version of reality.

Especially in consumer society, it becomes difficult to distinguish the real from the unreal, and the distinction itself becomes meaningless as reality is replaced by brand or sign exchange value. As the sign exchange value further increases, gets complicated and preferential, reality loses its importance and interaction with reality finds itself in an empty shell without any substance or meaningless transience. When the reality is replaced by representational image and hyperreal spectacle, or, when the real shifts into the hyperreal, a transient fantasy world, such as Disneyland and Las Vegas, of copy, fake, imitation and simulacrum, enters the scene.

The important mechanism that creates hyperreality of Las Vegas and quasi-Las Vegas is artificial light and decorative lighting. Psychedelic artificial lighting, which imbues people with the fantasy of standstill time and transcendental space and makes them lose their sense of reality, is what brings about the hyperreal spectacle. Here, an analogy can be easily drawn between the visual pleasure generated by the spectacle of Las Vegas and the visual characteristics of video art dependent on electronic lights, especially Nam June Paik's video art which uses collage methodology and clip aesthetics to create splendid images and multiple monitors to maximize electronic radiation. In short, Nam June Paik's video art and the lighting effect of Las Vegas repeat each other in the context of fantasy and hyperreality.

Nam June Paik created a hyperreal, fantastic world of art based on the fundamental property of an

electronic medium. Video, indeed, is a hyperreal medium; not to mention its artificial electronic beams, but concerning the facts that it transcends the realistic concepts of time and space while maintaining the aesthetic duality through its mechanisms of reproduction and fragmentation of images, and that it creates a world of fantasy similar to movie, television, and drama, on whose fantasy the audience relies on.

Paik, who created a unique fantasy aesthetics with the hyperreal medium, activated the hyperreality and fantasy ascertained by the medium through the allegory of metonymy, especially in his works on the themes of Korea and Koreans, and thus expressed his dual vision on the native land.

#### **4. Invitation to the Exhibition "Nam June Paik's Vision of Korea: Fantastic and Hyperreal "**

The exhibition "Nam June Paik's Vision of Korea" intends to shed light on Nam June Paik as a fantasy artist by showing how his fantastic and hyperreal vision is expressed in individual works and how his methodology of media and aesthetics works in the representation of such vision, while weaving the exhibit itself into a fantastic narrative.

Telefonica, the exhibition venue and formerly a telephone company, is an antique building with a highly valued cultural property. Its antique interior makes it an effective ambience to create a fantastic exhibition narrative. Entering the central exhibition hall on the ground floor, one meets the work entitled <Communication/Transportation> (1995) symbolizing the evolution of communication technology. The work which reflects the artist's keen interest in telecommunication and two-way communication is placed at the introductory locale to emphasize the symbolic meaning of the site that it was a former telephone office. The work comically imitates a means of transport in the old days in contrast with the pedantic and conceptual theme of communication and transportation. An old Korean carriage carrying a female dummy in *hanbok* – traditional Korean costume – and a funny-looking horse made of electronic parts demonstrate the theme of the exhibition, fantastic and hyperreal vision of Korea, in a metonymic way. In this way it becomes a most suitable introductory piece. The viewer now rides the remote carriage and starts a psychological journey into Paik's fantastic world of art.

In front of the two walls opposite the entrance stand multiple-monitor installations, <Dolmen> (1995) and <The Hundred-and-Eight Torments of Mankind> (1998). Both are large-scale works, with the former consisting 79 small and large monitors and the latter made with 102 monitors. These multiple-monitor installations, representing his style of the 1980s and the 1990s, fascinate the viewer with the spectacle of splendid moving images and electronic beams in contrast with his earlier meditative and mysterious works of the 1960s and the 1970s. The fantastic moving images repeating themselves kaleidoscopically with radiating electronic light enhance the visual effect inside the grandiose, splendid interior of the old architecture, thus re-create hyperreality of Las Vegas as mentioned above,

Displayed across the multiple-monitor installations are a group of robots. On one side stand <Tangun, as a Scythian King>(1993), <King Moonyung>(1992), <Kim Yoo Shin>(1993), <Yul Gok>(2001), and <Hippocrates Robot>(1997). (Hippocrates, although a Greek medical doctor, is identified with Buddha because he cured and enlightened people. For this reason, the artist placed a small Buddha statue inside the body of the work and attached screens showing its images.) On the other side, there is a robot family including <Grandfather>(1986), <Grandmother>(1986), <Technoboy>(2000) and <Baby Robot>(1991), creating an imaginary story of robots. As if to highlight his declaration to humanize technology and personify machines, Paik produced a number of works in the robot series since his first robot piece <Robot K456> in 1974. The artist created Spielberg-style new modern myth through the robot series, which is a postmodern parody of today's human beings and an artistic ode to cybernetics.

Telefonica exhibition hall has two small galleries, the narrow but long wings of the central hall. Displayed in the left gallery are meditative classical works based on the theme of Zen philosophy: <TV Buddha>(1969), a metonymic self-portrait which alludes dual identity of the artist himself through the Buddha statue who faces himself projected on the monitor and experiences narcissistic split-self; <Zen for TV>(1963), a pioneer work of video art produced by manipulating the interior circuit of a television set to create a single scanning line; <Zen for Film>(1964) which runs an imageless film and makes the

viewer gaze at the emptiness; <Zen for Head>(1962), a performance piece emulating ink calligraphy using his hair as a brush; and <Radio Candle>(1984) showing a lit candle placed inside an empty vintage radio. These works create a quiet and cozy fantastic atmosphere in contrast with the spectacle on the multiple monitors in the central hall. Opposite to this small gallery provided as "Zen for Room," is a projection room. Here is played a video showing Paik's shaman ritual performance executed to lament the death of his close artist friend Joseph Beuys. Paik carried out an exorcism to console the soul of Beuys, and now it is his turn to be consoled as a deceased. Watching Paik in white *hanbok* stage performance of being possessed by a spirit, the viewer experiences the apex of hyperreality that crisscrosses the present life and afterlife, and art and reality.

There is an additional exhibition space at the rear of the central hall. Displayed on the walls of a corridor leading to the space are a series of 20 prints showing the scenes from Paik's first solo exhibition, "Exposition of Music: Electronic Television," held in Wuppertal in 1963. The blood-dripping bull's head for ritual and "Prepared TV" series created by manipulating the interior circuits of television gives the viewer a glimpse on the historic scene of the birth of early video art decades ago. The corridor leads to the long space in which three dark rooms are set up to screen a total of 16 single-channel videos. Played in the first room are classical video works including <Suite 212>(1975) and <Global Groove>(1973). In the second room the satellite trilogy beginning with <Good Morning, Mr. Orwell>(1984) are played, and in the third room video works on Asian themes such as <Buddha Mix>(1989) and documentaries on Nam June Paik are introduced. A number of sketch drawings are hung on the walls of an open space beside the dark rooms, and in the front space a large sculptural work made of 79 monitors, <Turtle>(1993), is installed. The psychological journey into the fantastic world of Nam June Paik comes to an end when the viewer arrives to see the turtle, a symbol of longevity, which speaks for the immortal artistic world of Nam June Paik.

## **5. Metonymic Strategy of Nam June Paik**

The exhibition "Nam June Paik's Vision of Korea" starts from the concept that Paik's vision of Korea is fantastic and hyperreal. As mentioned earlier, however, the ultimate message the exhibition intends to deliver is that Paik, as a Korean-American diaspora artist, employs fantasy and hyperreality – the characteristics of his aesthetics – as a postcolonial metonymic strategy. That said, what is the essence of Paik's metonymic strategy? With what methodology does he achieve the fantastic and hyperreal metonymic allegory?

First is the aesthetic duplication and identification based on repetition, overlapping, and dissolution of images. The nature of fantasy and hyperreality itself implies duality, but to Nam June Paik, duality was the ontological and epistemological backbone of his art. He ensured the dual tense through the play of time by juxtaposing the past and the present, or perpetuating the present, and also acquired visual duality with his unique collage technique of repeating, dissecting and overlapping images. The whole process, as pointed out by Jean-Paul Fargier, is characterized by "dedoublement" and "redoublement."<sup>4</sup> As minimalist artists who create a sequential continuum through the repetition of the same units or parallel arrangement of the parts generate metonymic allegory when they decode the whole thing with partial examples, Paik practiced metonymy to separate signifier from the signified through collage images which form a composite through fragmentation, duplication and repetition.

Paik's video works, <Allan 'n' Allen's Complaint>(1982) and <Merce by Merce By Paik>(1979), typify the aspects of dedoublement and redoublement. In these works, the images of all the main characters get visually duplicated through dissolution and multiplication, while Allen Ginsberg and Allan Kaprow, and Merce Cunningham and Nam June Paik acquire dual identity as they become doubled and identified at the same time. Identification is the other side of duplication and has metonymic function. Paik identifies himself not only with Buddha, turtle and shaman, but also such avant-garde colleagues as Joseph Beuys, John Cage and Merce Cunningham. The sameness, above all, is a key characteristic of his robot series. His robots made of worn-out radios, TV sets, cameras or electronic parts obtain family

resemblance as they were created in almost same manners in terms of style and method. The portraits of his colleagues such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, George Maciunas, and Charlotte Moorman are similar to those of historical figures in different times and spaces such as Galileo, Robespierre, Empress Ekaterina, and Madame Curie, and again these great figures of the West look similar to such Korean heroes as Tangun, King Moonyung, King Sejong, Yi Seong-gye, Jeong Yak-yong, and Hyecho. This is most evident in <Hippocrates Robot> which identifies Hippocrates with Buddha. As such Paik generalized the difference in race, gender and age only with a minimum clue, and individualized each robot only through the act of naming. Realistic representation was out of his interest. The idea of robots itself is not only fantastic and hyperreal, but also secures metonymic dimension through substitute body which simulates.

The same goes to multiple-monitor installations. <Dolmen> and <Hundred-and-Eight Torments of Mankind> on the theme of Asian concept are hardly distinguishable from such general multiple-monitor installations as <V-ramid>, <Fin de Siecle>, <Video Flag>, <Megatron/Matrix>, and <Electronic Superhighway>. In some cases particular motifs are expressed through images and decorative details, but in most cases, multiple-monitor installation works show similar style and methods utilizing multivision technology. To Paik, who extends the conditions of diaspora to a cosmopolitan vision, Korea, Asia and the world were one entity. Zen philosophy, shamanism, moon, and turtle that he portrayed were presented as an Asian alternative with no distinction among Korea, Japan, China, and Mongolia, or one that transcended Asia. The substitute body such as robots and alternative ideas such as Zen and shamanism are transcendental motifs which generate fantasy and hyperreality, and at the same time metonymic props which connote subversiveness in the disguised mimicry. In conclusion, Nam June Paik deployed metonymy to differ and defer the meaning in terms of duplication and identification, and with the mechanism of mimicry and repetition. In this process he codified and abstractized personal stories and historical facts, and finally decontextualized and deconstructed autobiography and history.

Second is the appropriation of the past and tradition and its application to the present. Nam June Paik took creative inspiration from the mental roots of Asia such as Zen philosophy, Buddha statue and shamanism, and used legendary and traditional subject matters of Korea such as the moon, rabbit, tiger, turtle, and traditional Korean drum (*janggu*), costume (*hanbok*), hat (*gat*) and pipe (*gombangdae*). He represented such historical figures as Tangun, King Moonyung and Kim Yoo Shin, and depicted such cultural sites of the past as dolmen and Deoksugung Palace. The borrowing of the past is commonly found in diaspora artists, but Paik secured the dimension of metonymy by making it present and perpetual. He reproduced, transformed, and recycled legends, archetypes, and fragments of the memory from his firsthand experience in a modern way, and gave them a contemporary meaning. <TV Buddha>, <Moon is the Oldest TV>, and <TV Clock> that perpetuate time based on Asian philosophy, legends and Asian concept of time, and <Dolmen> and <Deoksugung>, the modernized figurations of the cultural heritage and historical sites, are metonymic installations through which history and past tradition are brought to today just like photography and documentary video which perpetuate instantaneity and monumentalize the transience of the ruins.

The use of traditional motifs often found among diaspora artists including Nam June Paik is also a self-representational gesture to signify oneself and one's motherland faced with the loss of language and identity crisis. Such politics of identity can be easily reduced to a stereotype or left to the danger of self-marginalization of the colonized. It may be interpreted as sentimentalist orientalism as the body of an artist becomes identified with a particular racial stereotype. Nam June Paik used autobiographical and retrospective motifs but overcame self-marginalization or self-reflective narcissism, and it was the politics of metonymy that enabled him to do so. That is, he used traditional images as an aesthetical support on which to reconstruct the present rather than the past-oriented nostalgia, and built a fantastic and hyperreal metonymic world of art.

Third is the metonymy achieved by intermedia and post-genre practice such as installation, performance and video. Performance/installation/media artists like Nam June Paik insert in their work such realistic parts and daily fragments as action, readymade, 'found objet,' 'found space,' and 'live objet'

to narrow the gap with the viewer, reality and society. The fragments of reality borrowed here exist as hyperreality rather than as reality. In other words, imperfect, temporary and accidental elements of life are granted with a metonymic meaning as they become perpetual and a fetish in artistic context. Performance, installation and video – representative postmodern, post-genre art – maintain new relationship with the viewer as a model of communication due to their metonymic function, which provides epistemological meaning to routine and non-artistic aspects of post-genre.

Particularly, video is a typical metonymic medium which presents disguised resemblance. Video, as "index art" which exists as a trace of an object rather than as representation of it, has metonymic power of simulation like photography. Installation and performance, which are art in situ, achieve metonymy in the context of relocation. Installation obtains a metonymic meaning by spatially substituting non-place experienced through loss, lack and shift of place, while performance does the same through physical movements and practices which define the relationship between place and space. Most of diaspora artists who incorporate post-colonial themes of displacement of language and space into their work are more interested in post-genre media art rather than in traditional painting or sculpture because of the metonymic function of the media. Multiple-media, post-genre experiments of Nam June Paik and many other diaspora artists are after all media metonymy of linguistic and spatial displacement.

## 6. Epilogue

Examining the three metonymic strategies mentioned above, one can find those strategies themselves are dualistic: the opposing terms of repetition and dissolution, duplication and identification, and past and present are dualistic, and so are the attributes of intermedia. Such duality not only represents fantasy and hyperreality of Nam June Paik's art, but also reflects his dual vision of Korea – fantastic and hyperreal. After all, his dual attitudes toward his motherland, expressed as fantastic and hyperreal metonymic allegory, constructed his unique art world which is both Korean and international. In this sense, he can be considered postmodernist or cosmopolitan. And based on this reason, it can be said that he gives an answer to Asian, Korean and diaspora artists who ponder on what is "Koreanness" or "Asianness" posed between globalism and localism, and tradition and new identity.

"Koreanness" has two sides: cosmopolitan Korean in a global age and local Korean based on mental and cultural roots. Facing this dual identity of modern Korea, contemporary Korean artists understand the debate on globalism and localism as a conceptual means for post-ideology, multi-valueness, and hybridity, rather than an identity crisis, and are constructing a new identity of Korean art. Identity of art, especially for Asian countries like Korea that create and develop their own art under the influence of foreign powers and acceptance of Western art, is presented as a model for an opposing or alternative difference to differentiate themselves from the West, the first world, and imperialism. Therefore, it alters depending on foreign influence or the change in time, and is always challenged by a new identity.

Local identity, indeed, can be defined only when global/local dichotomy is destroyed. And, true globalism can be approached through local tradition and historicity. As indicated by Paik's works, contemporary Asian and Korean artists can re-contextualize their cultural tradition not by breaking up with tradition but by the strategy of duality to ensure that the past runs parallel with the present. Especially, Northeast Asian artists who share cultural heritage such as Chinese characters, traditional Asian painting, Zen philosophy, Confucianism and naturalism are required to have open-minded attitudes toward open regionalism and cultural coexistence to prevent such commonness from causing them to lean toward past-oriented, Asian-centrism.

It is hoped that this exhibition of Nam June Paik will provide contemporary Korean and Asian artists living in a global age with an opportunity to investigate into the meaning of postcolonialism, postmodernism, cosmopolitanism and orientalism. It is also expected that the exhibition will make a "curating difference" in terms of planning, and in terms of communication it would help overseas art scenes and viewers enhance their understanding about Nam June Paik, an artist both international and Korean.

The exhibition is also significant in many other ways. First of all, it has the meaning as an exhibition in memory of Paik, taking place around the first anniversary of his death on January 29, 2006. More significantly, the exhibition being held to honor Paik and his artistic accomplishments is co-organized by the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation which has been preparing for the establishment of the "Nam June Paik Museum." While he was alive, Paik expressed his expectations about the first museum under his name by calling it "a house where Nam June Paik will live for a long time." It is noteworthy that the exhibition will serve as an important preliminary project to make the "house where Nam June Paik will live for a long time" known worldwide. The museum is scheduled to be completed by the autumn of 2007 and open in the spring of 2008.

It is also meaningful that it was possible to organize the exhibition with loaned artworks only. It must be emphasized that the joint participation of Koreans who own Paik's works suitable for the theme of the exhibition adds importance to the purport and significance of the exhibition. I extend my deep appreciation to the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Busan Museum of Modern Art, Leeum Samsung Museum, Sungkok Art Museum, Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation, Kaywon School of Art and Design, Gyeongju World Culture Expo, Gwangju Biennale and private collectors that lent their treasured collections. Finally, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all those concerned and the co-organizers, Organizing Committee of Korea at ARCO 2007, Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation, Telefonica Foundation, and Casa Asia Foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Anders Stephanson, "Interview with Fredric Jameson," *Flash Art* no. 131 (Dec. 1986-Jan. 1987), p.70,72.

<sup>2</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p.86-90

<sup>3</sup> Georges Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, (Requoted from Rosie Jackson, *Fantasy – The Literature of Subversion*, translated by Sogang Women's Literature Study Group, Munhakdongne Publishing, 2001, p.30)

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Fargier, "Last Analogy Before Digital Analysis," *Video By Artists*, Toronto: Art Metropole, 1986, p.67