

KUKJE GALLERY

Koo Bohnchang



JM-GD 22

2007

Archival pigment print

97 x 76 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”

March 24 – April 30, 2011

○ **Exhibition Information**

Artist: Koo Bohnchang (Korean, 1953-)

Title: Koo Bohnchang

Duration: March 24 – April 30, 2011

Place: Kukje Gallery_Space 2 (Tel 733-8449)

Opening hours: Monday-Saturday: 10am-6pm, Sunday: 10am-5pm

KUKJE GALLERY

○ Exhibition Introduction

Koo Bohnchang's solo exhibition at Kukje Gallery is a unique survey seen through both his photographs and the lesser known personal collection of eclectic objects amassed by the artist.

The role of collecting has been a seminal part of Koo's practice, his lifelong interest having started when he was only six years old. Beginning as a young boy Koo was drawn to the power of everyday objects – recognizing them as having some special quality. This sensitivity to the individual object and its relationship to a larger collection (as a kind of portrait of a life) mirrors the historic Renaissance practice of a *cabinet de curiosité*. Indeed, Koo's studio resembles this kind of collection as he has an extensive inventory of exotic objects, although the artist is not drawn to rare and expensive totems, but rather everyday and ordinary things he comes across in his daily life. In this way Koo's collection serves a kind of refuge for ephemera that might otherwise have disappeared – confined to the dustbin of history.

As an artist Koo Bohnchang is deeply engaged by the constant deluge of objects and his photography is an extension of this sensitive and highly specialized perspective. Since his emergence in the 1980s, Koo has always focused more on investigating a more personal vocabulary and inner exploration and avoided the more factual concrete documentary style of his peers. In this way his early interest in collecting has served as a window into his later mature art practice and indeed his journey as an artist can be seen in the highly specific and cultivated objects he chooses to save.

At the entrance of the 1st floor in Space II there is a small installation of objects from the artist's childhood, encased in a clear plastic box. A celadon vase from a corner of his home, a white ikebana pot found buried in his yard, an electric fan, a Sears catalog he enjoyed reading, the 1966 Tokyo Olympic guide book his father brought back from the event, and a cassette recording of the movie *The Graduate* — all are special memories of the artist from the time before he became an artist. The foreign magazines and the stack of calendars piled up on the ground reflect his interests and aesthetic in his teenage years. In addition the artist's inexplicable longing for travel can be seen as having taken root in the original copy of *Kim Chan-sam's Penniless Journey Around the World*. All of these things serve as a guide into the private life of the artist.

Lined up on a large table are a grouping of diverse objects that reflect and provide a link between Koo Bohnchang's lifestyle and his art practice. The objects placed on the tabletop are just a few of the many objects that have been selected from his vast collection, chosen for their direct or indirect relation to his work. Categorized into three subjects: *frames*, *boxes* and *models* these objects also introduce important organizing concepts that frame his art. In the adjacent gallery are projections of snap-shots taken by the artist while studying abroad in the 80s and his documentation of Korea when he returned from his studies before and after the 1988 Seoul Olympics. These seemingly casual photos viscerally capture the diverse everyday human life and landscape more vividly and intensely than any fine art photographs could. It is the catalog of these places and things, happened upon during his travels, which serve as the artist's constant companions.

On the wall of the staircase leading up to the second floor are another specialized grouping — selected objects from Koo's collection that have appeared in his previous work. A pocket watch featured in the *Breath* series, insect specimens from his work *Goodbye Paradise* and the *Gasan Okwangdae* mask that appeared in his *Masks* series. These photographs serve to connect the display of his personal collection on the 1st floor with his photographic work displayed on the 2nd floor.

Press Release

On the 2nd floor are all photographs of other peoples' private collections. They include Itami Jun's private collection of Moon Jars; Korean vessels from The Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka; Korean masks from the Musee Guimet, Paris; Korean Gobdols collected by Yanagi Soetsu, and a private collection of stationary and burial accessories. By displaying both Koo's own private collection and those of acquaintances, the artist illustrates the complex and profound relationship between his personal and previously unknown "hidden eye" and the "eye of the camera" that we were already familiar with. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to experience the refined harmony and deeply personal, highly cultivated narrative of the artist and his oeuvre.

Curated by Kim Sung Won

KUKJE GALLERY

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Press Release

○ Exhibition Images & Captions

Use of images must clearly credit the artist and Kukje Gallery



MGM 03
2009

Archival pigment print
80 x 62 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”



MGM 07
2009

Archival pigment print
80 x 62 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”

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JM-GD 10-2 PL

2007

Archival pigment print

76 x 97 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”



JM-GD 22

2007

Archival pigment print

97 x 76 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”

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○ Exhibition Images & Captions

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JM-GD 34

2007

Archival pigment print

76 x 97 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”



JUN 03

2010

C-print

154 x 123 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”

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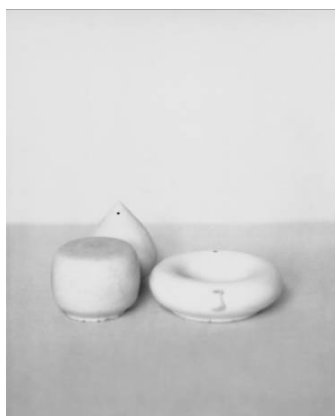
JUN 20

2010

C-print

63 x 50 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”



OSK 10 BW PL

2005

Archival pigment print

106 x 85 cm

“Courtesy of Bohnchang Koo and Kukje Gallery”

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OSK 15 BW

2005

Archival pigment print

106 x 85 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”



OSK 14 BW PL

2005

Archival pigment print

106 x 85 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”

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○ **Exhibition Images & Captions**

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UB 13
2008

Archival pigment print
25 x 50 cm

“Courtesy of Koo Bohnchang and Kukje Gallery”