



2025 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

OCTOBER 12, 2025

11AM - 2PM

REDBIRD, DTLA



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11 AM - 12 PM	PASSED HORS D'OEURVES OPEN BAR
12:10 PM - 12:40 PM	LUNCH SERVED
12:30 PM - 12:45 PM	WELCOME Su Oh, Emcee Welcome Remarks OPENING REMARKS Gloria Lee, President, KAFA RECOGNITION OF FOUNDING DIRECTORS Hyon Chough Kyungja Oh
1:15 PM - 1:45 PM	KAFA AWARDS PROGRAM PRESENTATION Ellie Lee, Jury Committee Chair SPECIAL REMARKS Lee Haedon, Director, <i>KCCLA</i> PROGRAM WRAP UP Su Oh CLOSING REMARKS Gloria Lee



PATRON SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Hyon Chough
Higgin Kim
Robin Kim
Dr. Taewoong & Soonja Oh Kim
Dr. David Lee & Dr. Miki Nam

FUNDRAISER PLANNING COMMITTEE

Linda Chung, Cannon Design
Gloria Lee, Swift Lee Office
Su Oh, LA County Arboretum and Botanic Garden

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Hyon Chough
Lisa Hwang
Amanda Bomster Jabs
Roman Jester, Graphic Designer, Yay Brigade
Aekyung Lee
Robin Kim



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KAFA JURORS

Virginia Moon, Associate Curator Of Korean Art, *LACMA*

Jamillah James, Senior Curator, *MOCA Chicago*

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KAFA AWARD RECIPIENTS 1992 - 2024

HEEHYUN CHOI

2024

FILM & VIDEO



JUROR'S STATEMENT

The KAFA juror committee of 2024, comprised of Virginia Moon, Jamillah James, and Pablo José Ramírez, was presented with a strong and diverse pool of applicants. After a lively and critical exchange of compelling viewpoints, the committee agreed to nominate Heehyun Choi for this year's grant. Choi, a film and video artist, through her work delves into examining the inherently accepted social structures in the cinematic world both involving the film apparatuses themselves through performance, often placing herself as the protagonist. She draws upon a wide array of archival material and history to inform her choreography. What impressed us most about Choi's work was its sophisticated handling of ideas, seen and unseen, to expose a social critique of what it means to be a woman filmmaker in Korea. We have no doubt that the expression of her ideas through film and video will only become richer and make an undeniable mark in the burgeoning history of women filmmakers in Korea.

JURORS

Virginia Moon, Associate Curator of Korean Art, Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art

Jamillah James, Senior Curator, MCA Chicago

Pablo José Ramírez, Curator, Hammer Museum

MIRAE KH RHEE

2022

SOCIAL PRACTIA DN AUTO ETHNOGRAPHY



JUROR'S STATEMENT

The KAFA juror committee of 2022, comprised of Helen Molesworth, Virginia Moon, and Rebecca Lowery, was presented with a strong and diverse pool of applicants. After a lively and critical exchange of compelling viewpoints, the committee agreed to nominate Mirae kh RHEE for this year's grant. RHEE's trajectory as an artist has been propelled by a dedication to learning about and confronting the Korean culture from which she was separated as an adopted child; her clever, thoughtful mixture of mediums in this endeavor deftly traffics in complexity and humor. What impressed us most about RHEE's work was its sophisticated layering of motifs borrowed from historical Korean art with contemporary conceptual sensibilities: it is a rich and compelling admixture that we have no doubt will continue to expand in depth and breadth.

JURORS

Helen Molesworth, Writer and Curator

Virginia Moon, Associate Curator of Korean Art, Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art

Rebecca Lowery, Associate Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

YOUNG JOON KWAK

2020

PHOTOGRAPHY/ SCULPTURE/ VIDEO



JUROR'S STATEMENT

This year the KAFA committee, comprised of Rita Gonzalez, Helen Molesworth and Jan Tumlir, confronted a very impressive pool of applicants. Each member of the jury selected a top five, and then after a great deal of mutual deliberation, agreed to nominate Young Joon Kwak for the grant. This artist's strong community praxis, which revolves around members of the trans, gender non-conforming and POC communities, plays out in multiple forms and expressions, from material experimentation in sculpture and installation, photography and video, to the creation of performative collectives like the Mutant Salon. What impressed us most about Kwak's work is its mixture of political urgency and unfettered form, which seems destined for a bright future.

JURORS

Rita Gonzalez, Curator and Head of LACMA Contemporary Art Department

Helen Molesworth, Writer and Curator

Jan Tumlir, Writer, Teacher and Curator

ROBERT RHEE

2018

SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

During the selection process, Robert Rhee was the artist that we set aside and then later returned to for a second look. In the end, his work was chosen precisely because it appears at first glance to be so outwardly slight and subtle, but amply rewards more focused attention. Time appears to be a consistent underlying interest of Rhee's, and it takes time to unfold. His work seems to be concerned with "the ages of humankind," as reflected through the famous riddle of the Sphinx: "What walks on four legs in the morning, on two at midday, and three at night?" The presence of walking canes in a notable piece included in his portfolio summons such reflections. Yet it is also clear that Rhee wants to employ art to circumvent all strictly linear progressions. A series of small sculptural works featuring root vegetables growing around fixed metal armatures speaks to this, as does a series of photographs that represent the attempt to precisely replicate a gesture captured days, weeks, months, and perhaps years earlier. Art is thus presented as a means of fixing patterns for posterity, as well as an instrument of eternal return – a time machine. What ultimately won us over in Rhee's work is its combination of refined visual form with a somewhat idiosyncratic poetic sensibility. On the surface, this artist seems to be largely unconcerned with prevailing aesthetic-political trends, which bodes well for the future.

JURORS

Carol Eiel, Senior Curator, LACMA

Lanka Tattersall, Associate Curator, MOCA

Jan Tumlir, Writer, Critic, Educator

JENNIFER MOON

2016

INSTALLATION/ PERFORMANCE/ SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

Jennifer Moon is an artist who has made a pronounced and profound mark with the absolute commitment to her vision, sustained by immense energy and humor. Under the umbrella of an overarching project she calls “The Revolution,” her work has taken various forms, including room-sized multi-media installations, photographs, live performance, and even a mock TED Talk, but consistently embodies a lively imagination and great appeal, as reflected by the Public Recognition Mohn Award she won for her contribution to the 2014 Made in LA biennial at the Hammer Museum. Her spirit of collaboration and participation in the art community is evidenced by her work with KCHUNG and ongoing projects with fellow artists and cultural producers in and around Los Angeles.

Moon’s more recent exhibitions in Los Angeles and elsewhere see her continuing to develop her singular artistic practice. She is consistently working toward expanding her practice and ideas, and we feel it is important to support her creativity and production which often veers toward the temporal, ephemeral and conceptual. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for her and how she develops her work further with the support of the KAFA 2016 award.

JURORS

Anne Ellegood, Senior Curator, Hammer Museum
Christine Y. Kim, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
John Tain, Curator for Modern and Contemporary Collections,
Getty Research Institute

OLGA LAH

2014

INSTALLATION/ SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

Employing humble everyday materials like sponges and tape, Long Beach artist Olga Lah transforms architectural spaces into texturally complex environments. Her 2011 work *Array* consists of thousands of colored sponges that have been stacked into comically leaning rows and wobbly walls, while in *For the Land* (made the same year) she used only paper of varying shades of blue and gray to envelop a door and passageway, converting the space into baroque fantasy. The jury was particularly impressed with the 2013 installation, *Moving the Line*, in which Lah positioned colored vinyl tape to literally draw in space, describing an inverted pyramid along the side of a room through a series of off-kilter colored lines that together possess an imposing sculptural presence, despite being visibly immaterial.

JURORS

Alma Ruiz, Senior Curator, MOCA

Carol Eiel, Curator of Modern Art, LACMA

Dan Cameron, Chief Curator, Orange County Museum of Art

JEAN SHIN

2012

INSTALLATION/ SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

Jean Shin brings extraordinary sensitivity and empathy to her materials—often unappreciated and discarded—and transforms them into impressive, even magical constructions with a meticulous hand. For Shin, the process of procuring these not-so-raw ingredients often entails a degree of community engagement and can be as important as the finished product. Her art helps viewers understand that objects are important not only for their inherent qualities but for the stories, histories, and meanings invested in them by the people who possessed and used, or forgot and abandoned them. Shin's body of work is already impressive, and the power of her work is evidenced by her long history of projects and exhibitions at many respected institutions. We the jurors are delighted to give this year's KAFA Award to such an accomplished artist.

JURORS

Carol Eliel, Curator of Modern Art, LACMA

Leah Ollman, Writer, Los Angeles Times and Art in America

Doryun Chong, Associate Curator of painting and sculpture, Museum of Modern Art in New York

KAKYOUNG LEE

2010

SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

Kakyoung Lee's animations (or "moving images," as the artist calls them) are based on her own experiences and are often focused on the repetitive nature of her own life and surroundings. We appreciated the quiet, meditative aspect of these videos and the combination of hand-drawn animations with local sound. The tender, human quality of these visions of everyday life is arresting and evident across a coherent body of work. It is particularly interesting to see how an artist who considers herself to have two home countries—South Korea and the United States—perceives her environment. We look forward to watching the continuing evolution of Lee's art.

JURORS

Carol Eliel, Curator of Modern Art, LACMA

Leah Ollman, Writer, Los Angeles Times and Art in America

Bennett Simpson, Associate Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles

JAYE RHEE

2008

PERFORMANCE/ PHOTOGRAPHY/ VIDEO



JUROR'S STATEMENT

We all felt that Jaye Rhee's videos merit the award because of their subtle sophistication. Although they look simple, the way the artist has made every decision of framing, pace, length and sound ? reveals a restrained outlook that is generous, humble, and refined. The work seems original and timely, not rehashing established precedents but drawing on an exceptionally developed understanding of the past in a format that is accessible and unpretentious.

Howard Fox was drawn to the enchanting quality of the videos. Peter Frank admired the visual and intellectual surprises they delivered. We all agreed that Rhee is an artist pursuing an original vision that very much deserves recognition by KAFA.

JURORS

Howard N. Fox, Curator Emeritus of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Peter Frank, Editor, THE Magazine, Los Angeles, Senior Curator, Riverside Art Museum

David Pagel, Art Critic, Los Angeles Times, Associate Prof. & Chair of Art Dept., Claremont Graduate School, CA, Curator, Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, TX

WON JU LIM

2006

INSTALLATION/ SCULPTURE



BIOGRAPHY

Born in Gwangju, South Korea, Won Ju Lim received an MFA from the Art Center College of Design (Pasadena) and a BA from Woodbury University (Burbank). Selected exhibitions include Emily Tsingou Gallery (London), Honolulu Academy of Arts (Hawaii), Kunsthalle Göppingen (Göppingen), and the National Gallery (Prague). Lim's work consistently explores the body's relationship to space, time and memory through the terms of architecture, sculpture, and atmosphere. She is represented by Galerie Max Hetzler (Berlin) and Patrick Painter (Los Angeles). Won lives and works in Los Angeles.

JURORS

Howard Fox : curator LACMA

Eunjie Joo : curator REDCAT

David Pagel : critic, curator

JENA H. KIM

2004

DRAWING/ PAINTING/ INSTALLATION



JUROR'S STATEMENT

This year's jury selected New York-based artist Jena H. Kim for the 2004 KAFA Award. Kim's abstract compositions feature geometric shapes and lines in invented spaces, the artist's attempt to capture multiple perspectives of a three-dimensional space. Through paintings and interventions in existing architecture, Kim explores the interaction of landscape and the constructed environment. Trained as a painter, Kim's works often feature adhesive materials such as contact paper, tape, and vinyl, as well as marker applied directly on walls. Her playfully diagrammatic markings rendered in a readymade, flat palette explore space and surface, abstraction and gesture.

JURORS

Howard N. Fox, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Eungie Joo, Director & Curator, Gallery at REDCAT (Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater)

David Pagel, Art Critic, Los Angeles Times, writer and curator

MARIA PARK

2002

DRAWING/ PAINTING



JUROR'S STATEMENT

We selected Maria Y. Park as the winner of the 2002 KAFA Award because we feel that her work combines a high level of ambition and accomplishment in a manner that is original and promising. Using a variety of media and techniques, including acrylic on canvas, collage on paper, and multi-colored tape applied directly to the wall, the young San Francisco-based artist (who was born in Germany) creates fantastic landscapes that are equally indebted to comic books, computer graphics, and contemporary painting. Simultaneous playful and cool, Park's crisply rendered images of futuristic spacemen, ancient Chinese warriors, and pack of penguins (among many otherwise unrelated elements) are suffused with a slyly ominous streak that bespeaks a deep suspicion about the giddy pleasures provided by the Internet, often at whiplash speeds. As a group, her diverse, multi-scaled works give energetically animated form to the polyglot, sometimes chaotic feel of modern life, in which a seemingly endless glut of images competes for our attention. With a savvy, light-handed touch, Park brings Surrealism up to date, where its strange, psychological twists are dispersed across un-private territory of cyberspace.

JURORS

Howard N. Fox, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Henry Hopkins, Professor of Art, University of California, Los Angeles

David Pagel, Art Critic, Los Angeles Times, writer and curator

JYUNG MEE PARK

2000

SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

The Korean Arts Foundation of America has announced the winners of its eighth awards. Artist Jyung Mee Park was selected by a panel of three jurors and will receive a prize of \$10,000 as well as an exhibition of her work.

Park's large-scale, abstract sculptures made from thousands of sheets of folded rice paper have been exhibited in solo shows at 55 Mercer Gallery, New York, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and most recently, in the Special Projects Program at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York.

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp says, "Park brings together the aesthetics of the East and West by combining monumental scale with the fragility of paper. Inspired by the shapes of Buddhist Korean lanterns and the blossoming of flowers and plants, she folds and layers paper into giant cones, vessels, and towers." Park, who is 35, came to this country at the age of 18. Initially trained as a painter, she started doing this work while bed-ridden for a year with an illness. She began folding the paper as a form of medication, saying, "Busy hands-free up your mind."

JURORS

Jay Belloli, Director, Armory Center for the Arts

Julie Lazar, formerly Director of Experimental Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art

Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, independent art writer for the L.A. Times and Artnews

DO HO SUH

1998

DRAWING/ PAINTING/ INSTALLATION/ SCULPTURE



BIOGRAPHY

The three artists recognized by this year's Kafa jury display very different sensibilities, but they share one very important characteristic (besides their Korean heritage and American milieu): all three are committed to, and unusually skilled at creating, a powerful, almost magical sense of transformation. In equally surprising and beautiful ways, Do-Ho Suh, Byoung Li and Young Kim challenge our perceptions of reality by altering the space we traverse. San Francisco's Young Kim does this with an inward-turning restraint, documenting herself with a formidable single-mindedness, one photo at a time, over a several-year period – and, then, turning a similarly multi-part tableful of water-bearing bowls into so many miniature oceans. Byoung Li of Los Angeles turns the sterile rooms of a public gallery into a garden of vivid, almost hallucinatory color and rhythmic, playful, even unpredictable geometric shapes – all created as much with light projection as with sculptural manipulation.

The jurors awarded New York-based Do-Ho Suh the grand prize because his work evinces the stylistic breadth seen in Young Kim's art with the sensitivity to material and to abstract, optical effect in Byoung Li's. Suh's extra-sculptural inventions, whether fabric, rubber, wood, paper, clothing or photography, speak to our nature both as sentient beings and as sensate beings. They appeal alternately to our touch and our sight, our physical experience, and our cultural memory, our passage through architectural space and the limitations of our minds and bodies.

JURORS

Peter Frank, Art Critic, L.A. Weekly, ArtNews

Henry Hopkins, Former Chairman, Art Dept. University of California, Los Angeles

Julie Lazar, Director of Experimental Program, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

YUNHEE MIN

1996

SCULPTURE



BIOGRAPHY

Yunhee Min explores the possibilities of abstraction through painting and large-scale, site-specific installations that engage color, light, and spatial perception. Rooted in the legacies of modernism and postwar abstraction, her work reinterprets these histories through a contemporary lens, transforming non-representational forms into vibrant, immersive environments.

Guided by both intuition and process, Min's practice balances structural systems with fluid gestures to create compositions that feel at once material and atmospheric. Through subtle shifts in luminescence and the physical act of painting, she evokes the sensory experience of light in space—blurring the boundary between surface and environment.

Born in Korea in 1964, Min lives and works in Los Angeles. She holds a BFA from Art Center College of Design and an MA from Harvard University, and is Associate Professor of Art at UC Riverside. Her installations have been presented at the Hammer Museum, LACMA, and Night Gallery, among others, and her work is included in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and the Hammer Museum.

JURORS

Howard Fox : curator LACMA

Ann Goldstein : curator MOCA

Peter Frank : chief editor The Magazine, senior curator Riverside Museum

ALICE PARK-SPURR

1995

DRAWING/ PAINTING



ARTIST STATEMENT

“My paintings are visual poetry marked with color and images. They are expressions of memories, experiences, dreams, nature, and the inner self — an inner self that is charged with fear and doubt. I paint what is natural to me both consciously and unconsciously. Sketching and planning only restricts my freedom. However, what comes naturally does not arrive easily. My painting process is an endless struggle. Only after much endeavor I am able to voice my emotions and reveal my inner self: each layer of painting comes as a consequence of increased awareness. I work on a surface as if I were excavating something, like an archeologist. In the end, each layer documents part of my introspective experience and becomes a tangible record of my painting process. Having spent many years living in the Yukon wilderness and seeing on a daily basis such pristine beauty, it has been natural for me to explore these visual images. The colors, the long and short hours of sunlight, the serene winter scene, the unexpected encounters with wild animals, and the ever-changing weather conditions are etched into my mind.”

JURORS

Josine Ianco Starrels : director LA municipal Art Gallery, chief curator
Long Beach Art Museum

Howard Fox : curator LACMA

Stephen Nowlin : director Williamson Gallery Pasadena Art Center

BYRON KIM

1994

DRAWING/ PAINTING/ SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

With the naming of Byron Kim as the recipient of the Korea Arts Foundation of America's third annual Award for the Visual Arts, the Foundation has built upon its fine record of previous years.

The program, national in scope and international in meaning, is intended to award excellence in the visual arts by recognizing and supporting the work of artists of Korean ancestry who are residents or citizens of the United States.

The award reflects the Foundation's efforts to foster cross-cultural understanding through the arts in the global world of the 1990s. This year's awardee, Byron Kim, stood out in the field of exceptional artists we considered. He emerged as the awardee for the consistently clear resolution of his art, its thoughtfulness and integrity, its sure visual impact, its deft technical execution, and its provocative intellectual content.

Kim's monochromatic abstract paintings and three-dimensional objects surely participate in the modern Western tradition of abstraction and its aesthetics. Yet his work also involves many layers of meaning including perceptual, social, political, and bodily aspects of contemporary life. Because the colors Kim uses often are derived from the many colors of human skin, his art carries vast implications about race and identity and the commonality of all peoples. His work prompts serious reflection about such issues by all who view it.

JURORS

Howard N. Fox, Curator of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Noel Korton Curator, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

Roland Reiss, Chairman, Graduate Program, Claremont Graduate School Art Department Claremont, California

SOOK JIN JO

1993

DRAWING/ PAINTING/ INSTALLATION/PHOTOGRAPHY/ SCULPTURE



BIOGRAPHY

The three artists recognized by this year's Kafa jury display very different sensibilities, but they share one very important characteristic (besides their Korean heritage and American milieu): all three are committed to, and unusually skilled at creating, a powerful, almost magical sense of transformation. In equally surprising and beautiful ways, Do-Ho Suh, Byoung Li and Young Kim challenge our perceptions of reality by altering the space we traverse. San Francisco's Young Kim does this with an inward-turning restraint, documenting herself with a formidable single-mindedness, one photo at a time, over a several-year period – and, then, turning a similarly multi-part tableful of water-bearing bowls into so many miniature oceans. Byoung Li of Los Angeles turns the sterile rooms of a public gallery into a garden of vivid, almost hallucinatory color and rhythmic, playful, even unpredictable geometric shapes – all created as much with light projection as with sculptural manipulation. The jurors awarded New York-based Do-Ho Suh the grand prize because his work evinces the stylistic breadth seen in Young Kim's art with the sensitivity to material and to abstract, optical effect in Byoung Li's. Suh's extra-sculptural inventions, whether fabric, rubber, wood, paper, clothing or photography, speak to our nature both as sentient beings and as sensate beings. They appeal alternately to our touch and our sight, our physical experience, and our cultural memory, our passage through architectural space and the limitations of our minds and bodies.

JURORS

Peter Frank, Art Critic, L.A. Weekly, ArtNews

Henry Hopkins, Former Chairman, Art Dept. University of California, Los Angeles

Julie Lazar, Director of Experimental Program, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

YUN-DONG NAM

1992

SCULPTURE



JUROR'S STATEMENT

As a jury of three we worked diligently to select one clear winner from the seventy-nine excellent candidates for the first Korean-American Art Award. We were pleased to see that entries came from all over the United States including the east, mid-west, south, southwest as well as from California. Our first challenge was to narrow the field, and after several reviews, we came to agreement on four finalists who were CHONG-KEUN CHU, EUNJU KANG, YUN-DONG NAM and HYE SOOK PARK. From these we selected YUN-DONG NAM for his very interesting work in clay. As jurors, exposed to his work for the first time, we were drawn to his individualized use of the clay medium and his capacity to communicate in the form. Series of small objects hung in clusters create a larger work reminiscent of seed pods, masks, organic forms and even tools which seem to speak of mysticism, growth, birth and renewal. The small scale of each object asks for intimate examination while the grouping of a whole has formal impact from a distance. Some works are humane and accepting and some less friendly creating a life-like interaction between opposing points of view. The overriding consideration lies in the clay material itself which Yun-Dong sees as "an organic material able to capture one's ideas and transform them into reality. Emotion and energy are inherent properties in clay. In clay the earth holds, grows, wears down and is renewed." We offer our congratulations to Yun-Dong Nam and the other three finalists as well as all of those who entered this first competition.

JURORS

Howard Fox : curator LACMA

Ann Goldstein : curator MOCA

Peter Frank : chief editor The Magazine, senior curator Riverside Museum



KAFA (Korea Arts Foundation of America) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation whose core mission is to present a biennial award recognizing and supporting one emerging Korean American artist, since 1989.

Founded in 1989 by a group of art supporters in the Los Angeles area, Korea Arts Foundation of America (KAFA) is the city's oldest Korean-American arts non-profit. For more than three decades, we've championed creativity, nurtured artistic talent, and celebrated the achievements of Korean-American artists across the United States. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and collaborative projects, KAFA fosters cultural exchange and brings diverse voices together to shape a vibrant artistic community.

Every two years, KAFA awards one artist a \$20,000 prize along with a \$5,000 exhibition stipend. The award supports creative endeavors, celebrates artistic achievements, and recognizes the contributions of outstanding Korean-American artists. Each recipient has the opportunity to present a solo exhibition within a year of receiving the award, co-hosted by KAFA and the Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles (KCCLA).

PLEASE DONATE!

