

Simon Morley

Korean Works 2010-15

2015.10.7.WED-11.15.SUN

Gallery JJ

한국에서 살기 시작한 이후, 나는 ‘사이 in-between’의 개념에 점차 관심을 가지게 되었다.
‘사이’는 가장 재미있는 일이 벌어지는 곳으로의 진입공간으로서, 나의 회화는 이 ‘사이’ 공간을 환기시킨다.

-사이먼 몰리-

갤러리JJ는 공간 이전 후 첫 기획전시로서 영국 작가 Simon Morley의 개인전을 마련하였다. 영국에서 순수미술과 근대사를 전공한 몰리는 2010년에 한국의 경기창작센터 레지던시에 온 시기를 기점으로 현재까지 단국대학교에서 학생들을 가르치는 한편 활발한 창작활동을 하고 있다.

몰리의 회화는 주로 단색적으로, 텍스트가 화면에 스며든 듯 이미지와 더불어 모호하고 불분명하며 흐릿한 화면을 구사한다. 그는 회화를 통하여 보기와 읽기 사이, 혹은 텍스트와 이미지, 동양과 서양, 과거와 현재의 사이, 그리고 음과 양 같은 분명하지 않은 경계의 어디쯤을 관객에게 상정한다.

‘KOREA’를 소재로 하는 이번 전시에서는 그의 주요 작업 중 하나인 ‘북페인팅’ 작품들을 포함하여 파빌리온 시리즈를 비롯한 신작들이 전시되며 스크를 설치, 영상이 포함된다.

종종 개념미술가로 환원되기도 하는 몰리의 회화는 볼수록 천천히 더 보이고 생각하게 만든다. 그의 회화의 가장 큰 특징은 역시 텍스트라고 봐도 좋을 듯하다. 몰리에 의하면 “Word is Image”다. 그는 텍스트가 의미뿐만 아니라 형태를 가지고 있음에 주목해왔다. 일견 단순하고 차분한 중간색조의 모노크롬이지만 다가갈수록 화면에서는 차츰 이미지 혹은 단어들이 표면 위로 떠오른다. 이들은 일치하지 않고 서로 상충하는 것들로서 이때 관객은 보기와 읽기가 교차되면서 혼란에 빠지게 되는데 이는 작가가 의도하는 바이다. 이렇게 작품 표면 위의 정형화된 코드와 정보를 인지하는 과정이 천천히 유도되는 사이에 작품은 보다 감각적으로 다가오며, 더욱이 그의 작품 전반에서 종종 보여지는 입체적으로 볼록하게 튀어나온 문자들은 그림자를 드리우면서 도드라져 촉각적 반응을 유도한다.

이렇게 그의 회화는 문자라는 이성적 코드의 개념적인 성향을 가지는 동시에 이미지라는 상상력의 세계가 혼합된다. 이때 책의 활자체를 바꾸지 않고 그대로 옮겨오는 등 팩트적 요소로서 작가의 주관성을 되도록 배제하는데, 그럼으로써 회화 자체가 주체가 되어 스스로 텍스트가 시사하는 상징성 혹은 통찰력 등을 넘어서 암시하게 만든다.

문화를 혼합하고 매체의 변환을 즐기는 성향은 그의 작업 전반에서 드러난다. 가령 그가 줄곧 진행해오는 ‘북페인팅’은 책이라는 매체를 회화로 변환한 것이며, 영상 작업이나 최근에는 사인판을 회화로 옮긴 신작을 선보이는 등 다양한 시도를 하고 있다.

이번 전시의 주제는 ‘한국’이다. 영국을 떠나 한국이라는 새로운 장소는 문화와 역사에 관심이 많은 그에게 다분히 신나고 흥미로운 소재를 제공하였다. 그것은 오래된 전통에서부터 현재의 상황에 이르기까지 다양한데, 먼저 ‘북페인팅’ 시리즈의 일환으로서(미술사가이기도 한 몰리에게 있어서 책은 땀 수가 없는 요소로 다수의 저서를 집필하였다) ‘코리안 화이트’ 시리즈를 창조하였다. 이미지는 한국 주재 영국대사였던 마틴 유든의 한국에 관한 고서컬렉션 가운데 선택한 책들의 표지를 캔버스 위에 회화의 형식으로 전사한 것이다. 19세기 후반과 20세기 초반에 서양인들이 한국에 대해 쓴 책들의 표지들은 우리 민족의 색으로 일컬어지는 백색의 다채로움에 힘입어 하얗게 백색의 회화로 전환되었다.

또한 그는 겸재 정선의 화폭에서 발견한 정자와 누각의 시적 아름다움에 시선이 꽂혔고 이는 신작인 ‘파빌리온’ 시리즈로 창조되었다. 그의 언어적 관심은 이번에도 어김없이 발휘되었는데, 정자의 이름인 독락정(獨樂亭)이나 응청각(凝淸閣), 팔영루(八詠樓) 등 표의성을 지닌 문자인 한자는 표음문자인 영어 알파벳으로 번역되어 다시 한 번 시각과 언어의 간극을 제시한다. 화면 속 기표들은 의미로는 그림 혹은 기억 속의 정자를 가리키지만 실제와의 사이에는 문화, 언어, 시간과 공간의 틈이 있으며 무수한 흔적들만이 존재하여 끊임없이 다른 의미화의 연쇄 속으로 미끄러진다. 원래에도 기호란 실제 대상과 일치할 수 없는, 즉 실존하는 사물들에 대한 본질적 규정은 아닌 것으로 현대철학자 데리다에 의해서도 사유되었다. 무수한 차이를 만들어내는 그 사이에서 시각과 언어로 잡아낼 수 없는 것들이 존재하며 이것들이 우리에게 신비감 내지 송고 같은 감성으로 다가온다. 더욱이 선택된 정자들은 현재는 없어진 것들이다. 한때 존재했지만 이제 사라진 것에 관한 기억은 재구성을 위해 존재할 뿐이다. 이들은 화면 속 다른 언어와 형태, 색면 속에서 나타나 친숙하지만 낯선 것이 되었다.

서울역사박물관에서 마주친 1945년 휴전 당시 남북의 경계를 가르는 사인판은 흐릿하게 깊이감을 주어 시공의 보이드(void)를 탄생시켰고 금강산 그림에는 지금은 없는 남북간 열차의 이미지가 오버랩되었다. 작가는 현재 DMZ에 가까운 문산에 살고 있다. 한반도 분단상황에 대한 관심은 이성적 현실이자 자신이 몸담고 있는 세계를 향한 또렷한 역사의식의 발로에서다.

그의 작업실 한편에 놓여진 책상 앞에는 로스코 포스터와 정선의 금강전도가 나란히 붙어있었다. 추사 김정희와 정선을 존경하고, 한국의 전통화에 나타나는 일필휘지, 자유롭지만 형식에 구애받지 않은 가운데 완결성을 추구함에 매료되었다는 몰리. 이제 그의 ‘사이’는 서구의 이성적 세계관과 동양의 ‘여백’의 관념적 세계의 어디쯤에 있는 듯하다.

Since living in Seoul, I have developed my interest in the concept of the ‘in-between’. It is the entry space where the most fascinating things happen, and I hope my work recalls this ‘in-between’ space.

-Simon Morley-

Gallery JJ has prepared, at its new location in Gangnam, the first special exhibition of a British artist, Simon Morley. He studied fine art and modern history in the UK, and since his residency at GCC (Gyeong-gi Creation Center) in 2010, he has been teaching at Dankook University while developing his own creative activities. His paintings are mostly monochromatic, as if text has smeared into the surface, which contains an ambiguous, uncertain and blurred imagery. He introduces, through this work, the blurred boundaries between looking and reading, text and image, Eastern and Western, past and present, and yin and yang. With the topic of ‘Korea’ this exhibition will include examples of his main body of work, ‘book painting’, along with new works of the pavilion series and a video installation.

Often considered a conceptual artist, the more you look at Morley’s painting, the more you discover and contemplate. The keynote of his work is text. Word is Image, says Morley. He focuses on the fact that text not only has a meaning but also a form. Though a simple and calm tone of monochrome, images or texts are gradually revealed as you approach. Their relationship is not parallel but of oxymoronic where the looking and the reading of viewers are cross-referenced causing confusion. This is the intention of the artist. His monochrome work becomes more sensible while the process of recognition of standardized code and information on the surface of his work is induced. Moreover, his text painted in relief casts a shadow where a tactile response is also induced.

His painting thus blends the conceptual character in the rational realm of text with the fantastical realm of the image. He remains objective and factual by retaining the original type face and layout when using sources. Thus painting itself becomes the principal agent to infer how text implies representation and comprehension.

Morley’s interest in blending cultures and converting media can be seen in most of his work. For instance, his “book painting” is a conversion of the medium “book” into painting, and recently he has tried various media, such as video, and converting a signboard into a painting.

The theme of this exhibition is “Korea”. This new land Morley found after leaving the UK gave inspiration to someone who is very interested in culture and history. His themes range from old tradition to the present, but

initially, he created the series “Korean White” as part of his book painting series. (Books are inseparable to an art historian, which Morley also is - he has authored several books.) For sources, he selected book covers from the book collection of Martin Uden, former British ambassador to Korea, and painted them on canvas. Covers of books written by westerners in the late 19c and early 20c were converted into paintings, coupled with various white colors, the color associated with Korea.

Furthermore, he fell in love with the poetic beauty of the pavilions and palaces he found from reading a book about the Joseon dynasty artist Kyumje Cheong Seon, which inspired him to create a “Pavilion”. His interest in language showed itself again. Names of pavilions - Dok Rak Jung(獨樂亭), Eng Chung Gak, (凝清閣) and Pal Young Roo (八詠樓) – that are Chinese characters with semantic elements were translated into the English Alphabet, once again suggesting a gap between visuality and language. Symbols, by meaning, indicate paintings or the pavilion in memory, but it is an in between reality of cultural, linguistic, time and space gaps. Only myriad traces remain in order to continuously become other meanings. A symbol by its nature cannot be identical to what it actually represents, or in other words, it is not a fundamental representation of the existential object, a truth especially emphasized by the postmodern philosopher, Jacques Derrida.

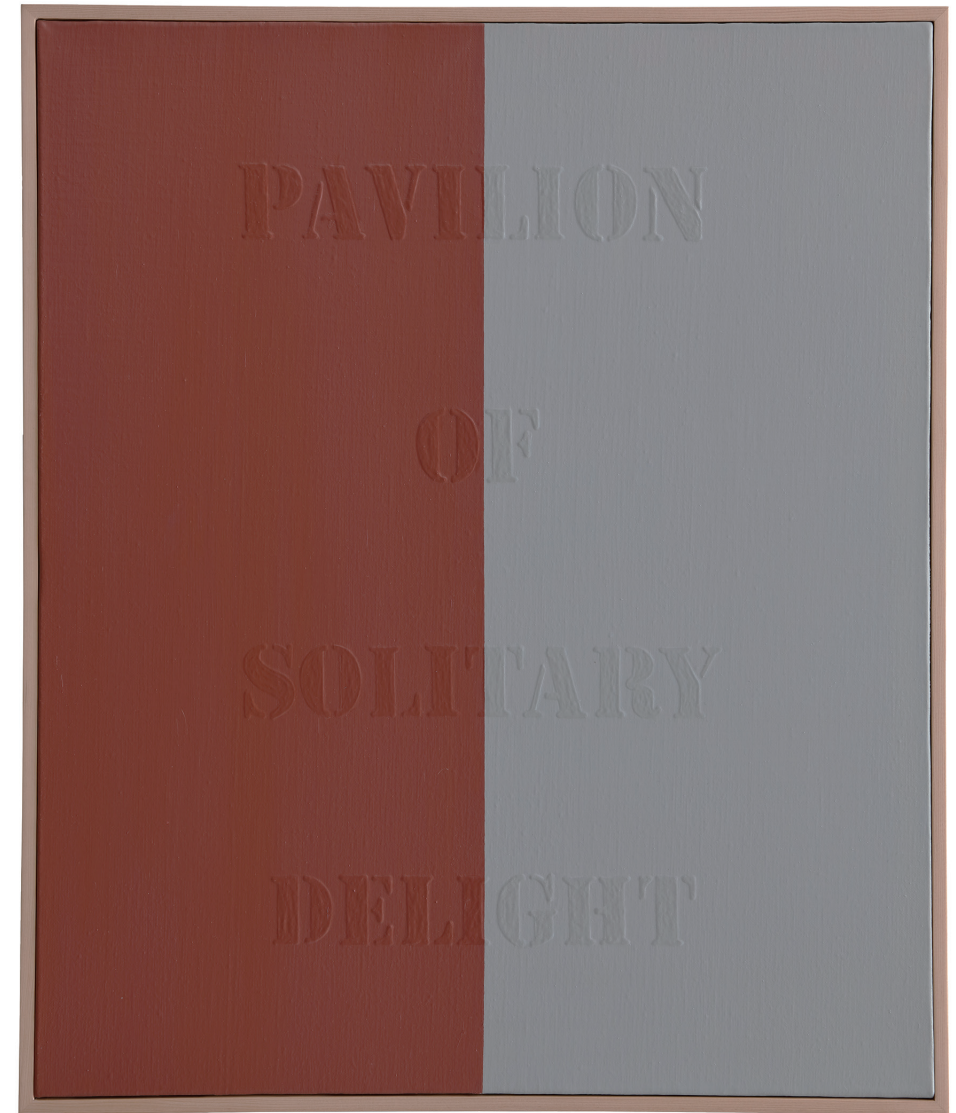
There exist things uncatchable by visuality and language which lie in between where countless differences are created, and these things touch us in mysterious and noble forms. The pavilions Morley chose do not exist in the present day. Memories for the once-existed-but-gone are here only to be reconstructed. Their presence in a different language, form and color made them familiar but now they are strange.

A signboard in the Seoul History Museum dividing South and North Korea’s border during the 1945 armistice, is painted with blurred depth, giving birth to a void between time and space, and the painting of Mt. Geumgang depicts the ghostly image of a train that crossed Korea - something that is impossible today. The artist currently lives in Munsan, close to the DMZ. His interest in the division on the Korean peninsula clearly represents his clear awareness of the historical facts behind the world he lives in.

In front of the desk sitting in a corner of his studio, Cheong Seon’s painting of the Geumgang Mountains and a poster of Rothko hang side by side. With admiration for Cheong Seon and Kim jung-hee, pen-name, chusa, Morley is fascinated by the one stroke painting technique used in Korea’s traditional paintings and the pursuit of completeness while being spontaneous. Now Morley’s “in-between” seems to lie somewhere between the West’s rational world and the East’s spiritual world of “emptiness”.



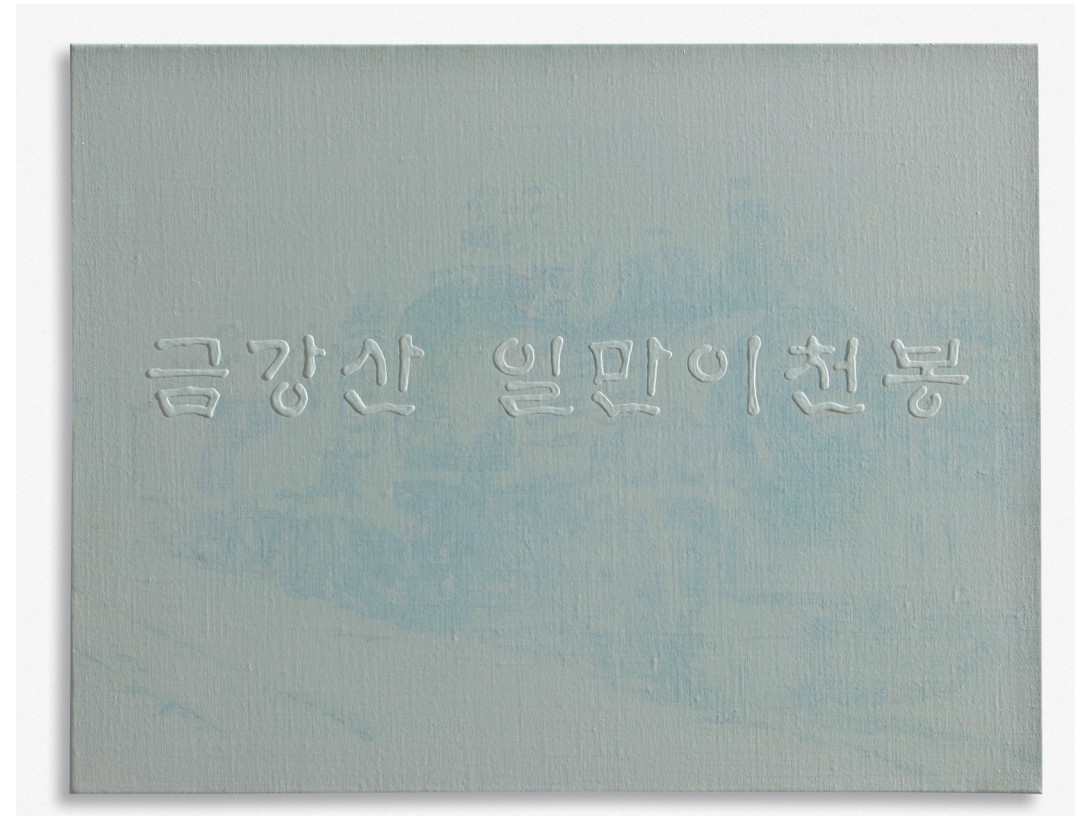
Pavilion of Eight Songs : 팔영루
75x63cm
Acrylic on canvas
2015



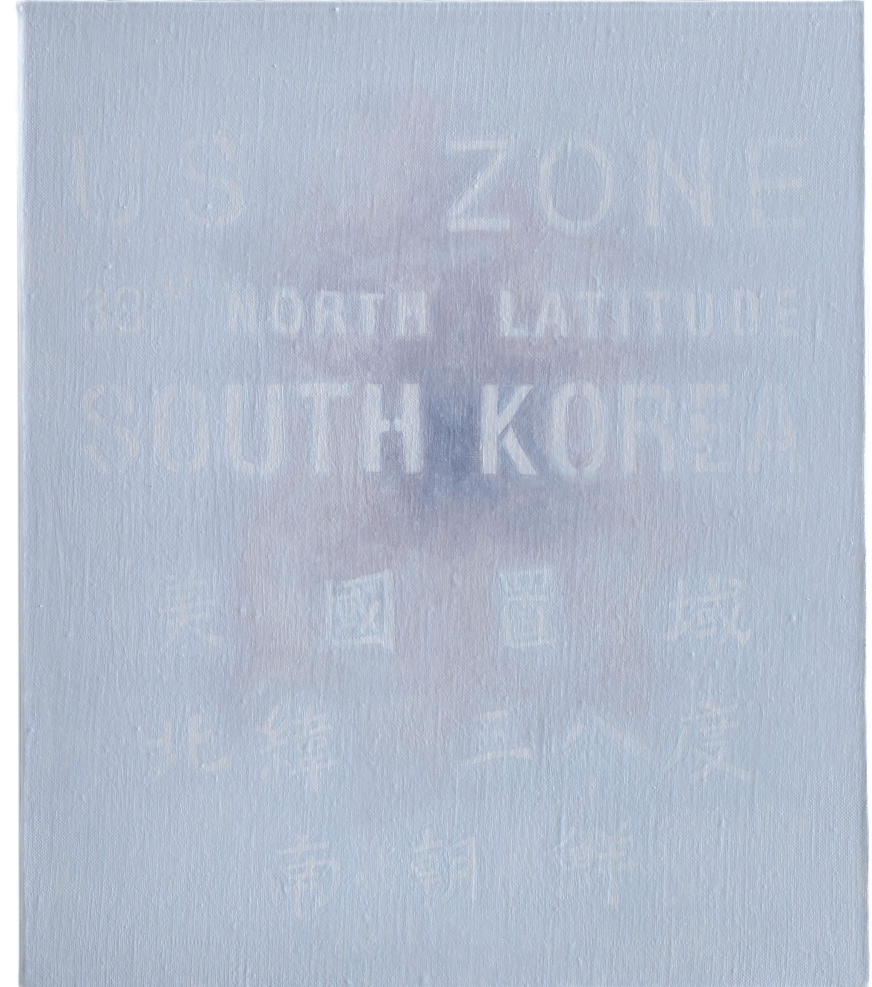
Pavilion of Solitary Delight : 독락정
75x63cm
Acrylic on canvas
2015



Pavilion of Frozen Clarity : 응청각
75x63cm
Acrylic on canvas
2015



Diamond Mountain No.1
41x35cm
Acrylic on canvas
2012

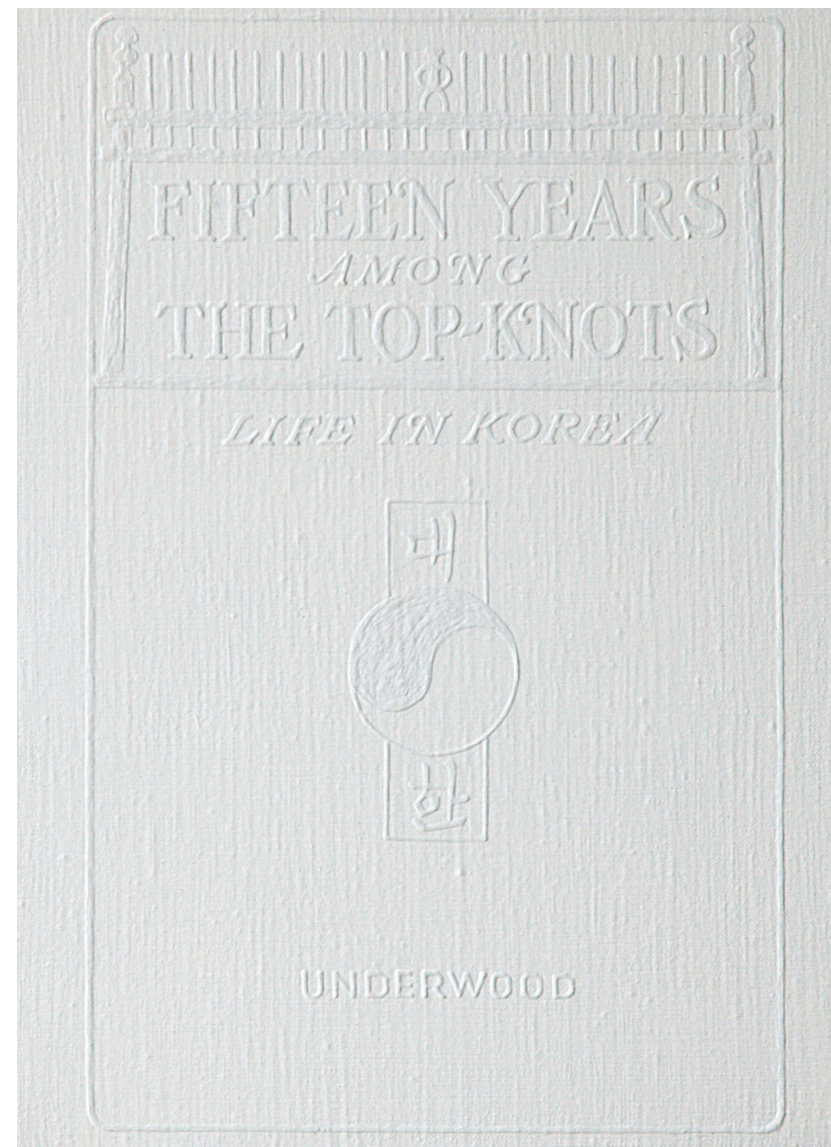


Border, 1945
diptych 53x45cm each
Acrylic on canvas
2015



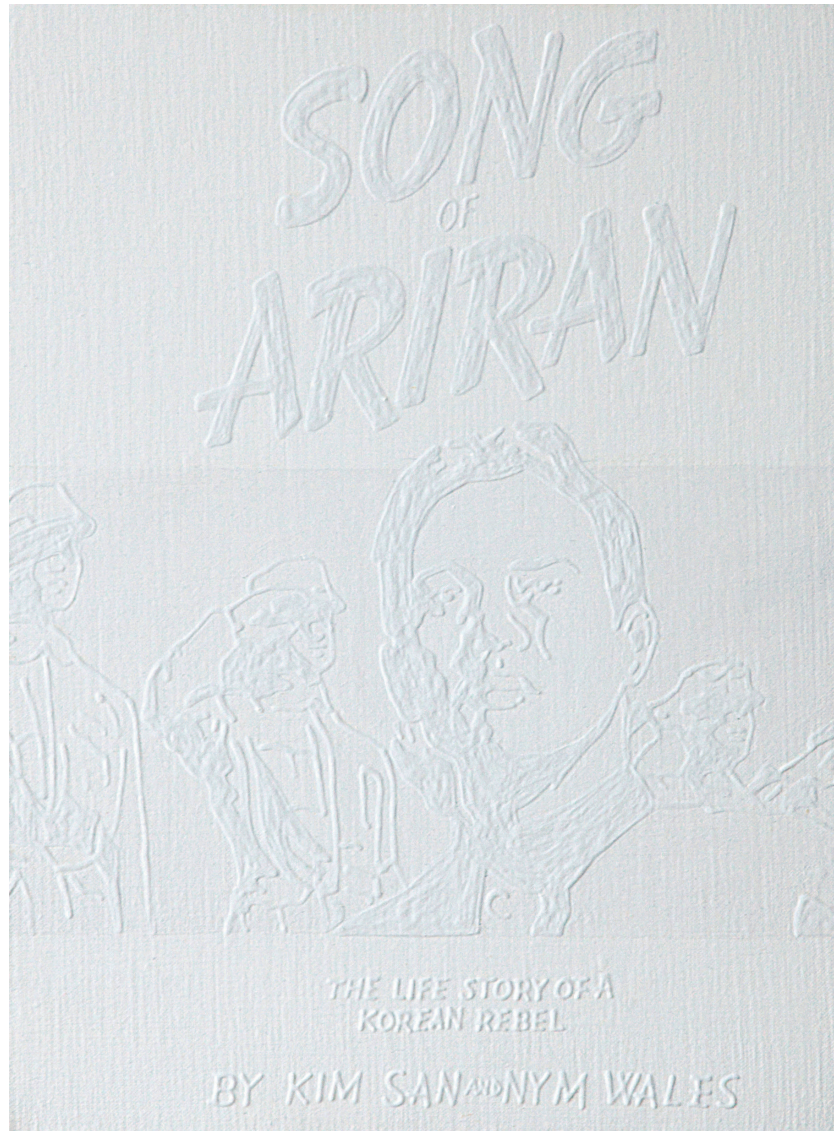
'Corea or Chosen Land of the Morning Calm' by Henry A Savage-Lander (1895)

40x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2011

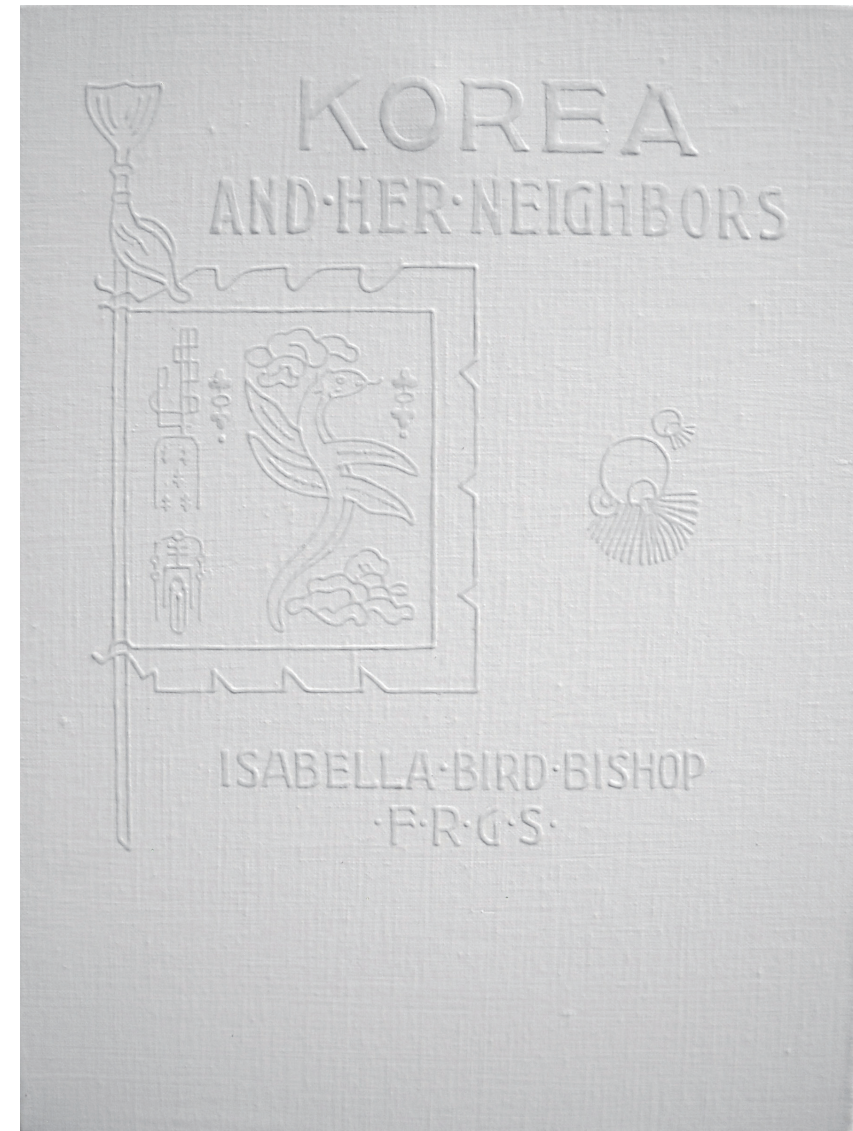


'Fifteen years among the Top-knots or Life in Korea' by L.H. Underwood (1904)

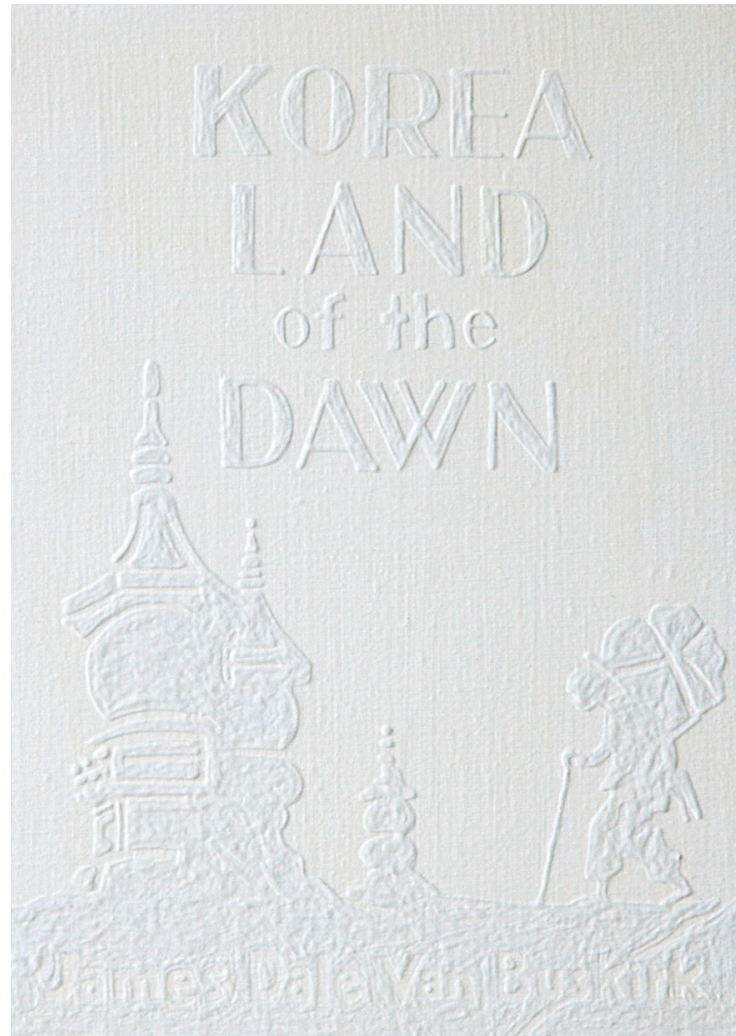
40x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2011



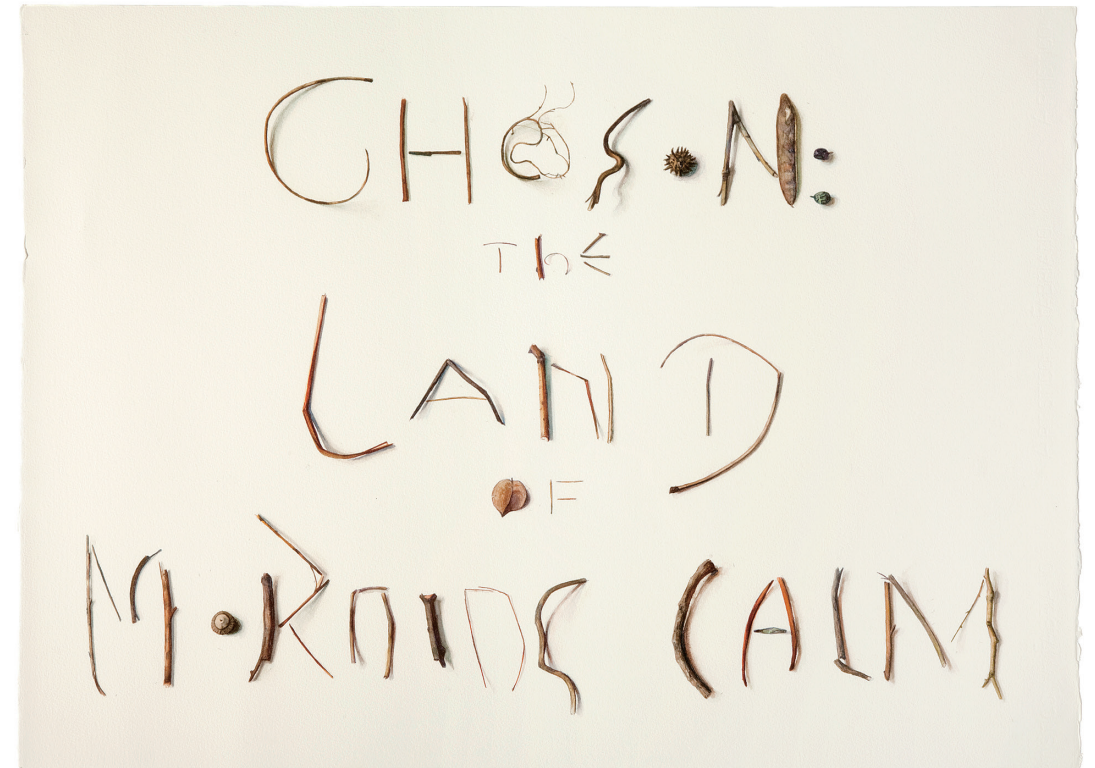
'Song of Ariran' by Kim San and Nym Wales (1941)
40x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2011



'Korea and Her Neighbors' by Isabella Bird Bishop (1898)
40x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2011



'Korea Land of the Dawn' by James Dale van Buskirk (1931)
40x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2011

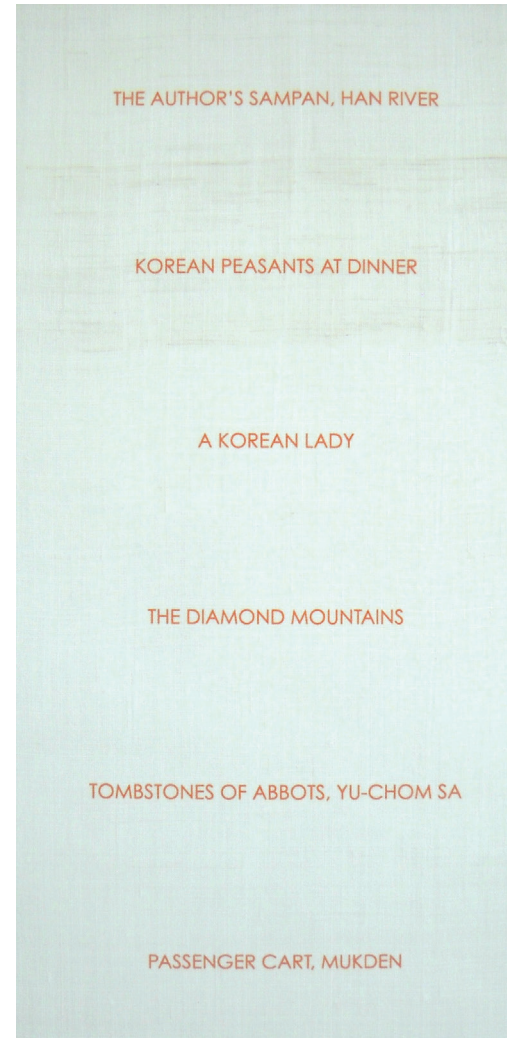


'Chosön_Land of the Morning calm' by Percival Lowell (1885)
76x57cm
Watercolor on paper
2011



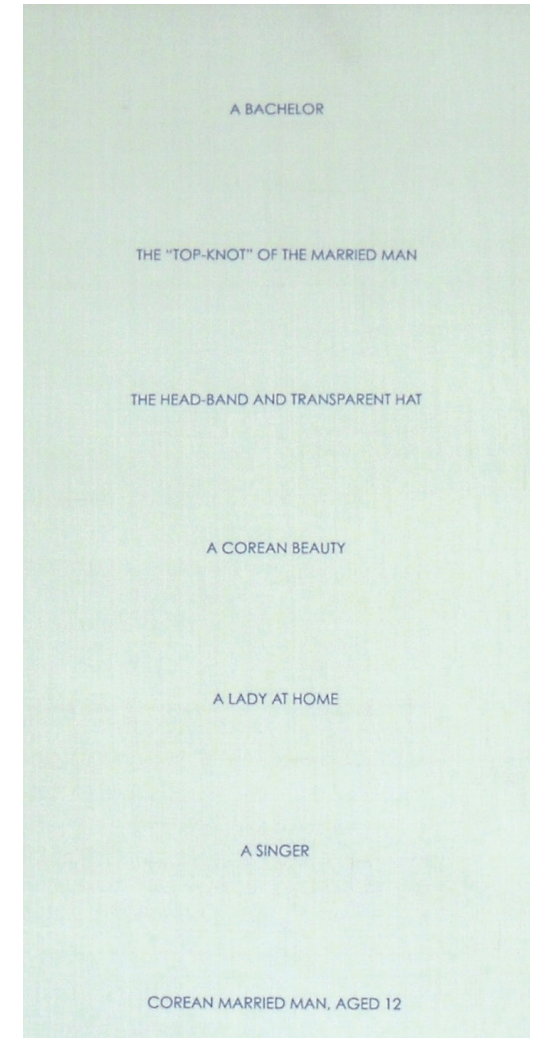
Horizon

44 seconds video
Installation
2015



Illustration

Full scrolls 336x33cm each
print on linen mounted on paper and silk, wood, four scroll each
2011



Simon Morley

Born 1958, in Eastbourne, UK.
Live and works in South Korea and France.

BA Modern History, Mansfield College, Oxford University
MA Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London
PhD, University of Southampton

One-Person Exhibitions (since 2000)

2015

'Korean Works,' Gallery JJ, Seoul
'Kiss Me Deadly', Gallery Baton, Seoul

2014

'Albert Camus: Oeuvres', Galerie Scrawitch, Paris
'Book-Painting,' Lounge Project, Artsonje, Seoul
'Lost Horizon', Art First, London

2012

'Monograph', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo, Japan

2011

'Korea Land of the Dawn, and Other Paintings', Art Link Gallery, Seoul
'A Short History of the Twentieth Century', Art First Gallery, London
'Guest from the Future' (two-person show with Maria Chevaska), Galerie8, London

2010

'Six Halls', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo
'Moon is Homeland Bright': An Installation, Kyunghee University Museum of Art, Seoul
'Messagerie', Musée des Beaux Arts, Dijon, France

2009

'Hitchcock's Blondes', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo
'The Rose Annual, 1924', Art First Project Space, London
'Cine Italia', Metis_NL, Amsterdam

2008

'Moon Palace', Paik Hae Young Gallery, Seoul
'Cine Italia', Zonca & Zonca, Milan

2007

'A Short History of Dutch Painting, Part II', Metis_NL, Amsterdam
'Classic Japanese Movies', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo
'The English Series', Art First, London

2005

'Bookpainting', Fiera del Libro d'Arte, Palazzo del Re, Bologna

'VIRUS', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo

'A Short History of Dutch Art', Metis_NL, Amsterdam

'Rossa', Galleria Spazia, Bologna

'Reading Room' (with Maria Chevaska), MOCA Peckham and Peckham Library, London

2004

'A Short History of Modern Japanese Fiction (in Translation)', Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo
Solo Presentation, MiArt, Milan (Percy Miller Gallery)

2003

'Post Card', Percy Miller Gallery, London
'The Life of Things', 3 Degrees West Gallery, Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere
(Artist- in-Residence exhibition)

'The Unfortunate Tourist of Helvellyn and his Faithful Dog', 3 Degrees West Gallery, Wordsworth Trust

2002

'Italian Holiday', Zero arte contemporanea, Piacenza, Italy
2000/1
'The Collected Works of George Orwell, and Other Paintings', Percy Miller Gallery, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

2015

'Visible Air,' Kyunghee University Museum of Art, Seoul

2014

'Le Mont Analogue', Galerie Julien Bezille
'Moon', Art First Gallery, London

'Universal Studios, Seoul', Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul
'Memoire de guerre,' Musée Romain Rolland, Clamecy, France

2013

'Crossing Spaces', Kunsthalle Faust, Hannover, Germany
'Natural History,' Art First, London

'Monocromi. Dalla Materia alla Superficie. La Poetica dell'oggetto. Morley e Pinelli,'

(two-person show) Galleria Spazia, Bologna
Chang Eung-Bok's Boutique Hotel, 'Peach Blossom Dream', SeMA Living Arts Museum, Seoul
Gwangju Design Biennial (collaboration with Chang Eung-Bok), Gwangju, South Korea.

2012

Poznan Mediations Biennial, 'The Unknown', Poznan, Poland
REAL DMZ, Cheorwon Province, South Korea, curated by Samuso

2010

'Gyeonggi Creation Center Residency Program Exhibition', Incheon Art Platform, South Korea

2009

'Self-Taught', Uri and Rami Museum, Ashdot Yaacov, Israel

2008

Michael Petry's 'Golden Rain', On the Edge exhibition, Saverger, Norway, European Capital of Culture Exhibition 2006

'Les Mots pour le faire', with Yves Chaudouet and Maria Chevaska,
Musée Romain Rolland, Clamecy, France

2005

'A Picture of Britain', Tate Britain, London
'Ex Roma', Abbey Award Winners Exhibition, APT Gallery, London

'Lost and Found in Translation', Newlyn Art Gallery, Newlyn, Cornwall

'Art is a Word', Benefit exhibition for the Museums of Israel, Christie's, London

2004

'Melt', British School in Rome
Gallery Artists, Taguchi Fine Art, Tokyo

'Compass', Sala 1, Rome

'Ancoats Hospital: After L.S. Lowry', Nunnery Gallery, London

The Book Show', The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, Cumbria

2003

'The Book Show', (curator/exhibitor), Nunnery Gallery, London

'A...parole', Cortili di Casa Sanna-Meloni, Berchidda, Sardinia, as part of 'Del Segno, Del Suona e della Parola, PAV

'The Unfortunate Tourist of Helvellyn and his Faithful Dog', (exhibition conception, design, and contribution) The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, Cumbria

'The Cover Theory', Ex-Centrale Electrica, Piacenza, Italy (curated by Mario Sinaldi)

2002

'Sumptuous', Ex Macelli Pubblici, Prato, Italy (curated by Palazzo delle Papesse Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, Siena)

'L'Ultima Cena', Castello del'Ovo, Napoli, Italy (curated by Massimo Sgroi)

'Fluent: Painting and Words', Camberwell Art School Gallery, London

'Red Spy', Fortezza della Brunella, Aulla, Italy

'La Forma delle Forme', Villa Braghieri-Castel, Modena, Italy

'New Religious Art', Henry Peacock Gallery, London

The Open, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool
'Bibliomania' (edited by Simon Morris), Printed Matter, New York

'Fabric' Abbott Hall, Kendal
'Private Views', London Print Studio, Herbert Read Gallery, KIAD, Canterbury

'showhouse', PM House and Gallery, London
'East Wing No. 5', Courtauld Institute, London

2001

'Artmart', 291 Gallery, London
EAST International, Norwich (selected by Mary Kelly and Peter Wollen)

'Wax', Auction in aid of Cancer Research
'Closer Still', (Southern Arts Touring Show)

Winchester School of Art Artsway, Sway

2000

'9,8m/s2', Zero arte contemporanea, Piacenza, Italy
'Art Futures', Contemporary Art Society, Barbican, London

Occupation Studios Fund Raiser, Platform Gallery, London
'The Wreck of Hope', The Nunnery Gallery, London, (artist/co-curator)

'Chora', Abbot Hall, Kendal
South Hill Park, Bracknell
Hotbath Gallery, Bath

1999

'Chora', 30 Underwood Street Gallery, London (artist/co-curator)

'Six Young British Artists', Galerie Axel Thieme, Darmstadt, Germany

'The Discerning Eye' (invited by Charlotte Mullins), Mall Gallery, London

'Hub', (curated by Above/Below), Bishopsgate, London
'Ninenineninety-nine', Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London

'Wunderkammer', 13 Laburnum Lodge, London
'After Jackson Pollock', Sali Gia Gallery, London (artist/curator)

'Networking'. P-House, Tokyo, Japan

1998

'A State of Affairs', Arthur R. Rose, London

'Cluster Bomb', Morrison-Judd Gallery, London

'The Bible of Networking', Sali Gia Gallery, London
'Souvenirs', (curated by Above/Below), Museum Street, London

'Absolut Secret', Royal College of Art, London