

Chaotic Harmony... An Array of Korean Sensibilities

By Kerry Methner / CASA

WITH ALMOST NON-STOP INNOVATION the work of a group of Korean artists has been gathered to offer a snapshot of some of the perspectives found in modern Korea. "Most of the 40 artists were born after 1965,"

noted exhibit co-organizer, Karen Sinsheimer, SBMA Curator of Photography. "Their work reflects the modern tensions that rule Korean life."

In no way a primer on life in Korea, the exhibit is more a primer on experimentation and self-reflection in the 2000's.

The exhibit opened last week with receptions, talks, and gatherings. On July 9th, Museum Director Larry Feinberg hosted a private reception for trustees and patrons that also included two of the artists and Korean dignitaries Geum-Young Song, Deputy Consul General and Jaeho Han, Director of The Korea Foundation.

These works are, "beautiful, lyrical, disturbing,

sometimes puzzling, often amusing, and overall engaging and innovative," Feinberg shared with the crowd before the curator's lecture and the gallery opening.

"The Republic of Korea, known in the West as South Korea, has produced very open, sophisticated, and a very robust culture that is open to many points of view, even self critical perspectives.... This is a ground-breaking exhibition," Feinberg shared.

The exhibit of 42 large scale images is divided between six areas of modern Korean life, according to Sinsheimer. Those divisions include: Nature (land and seas); Identity: Cultural and Personal; Family, Friends, and Memory; Urbanization and Globalization; and Anxiety. An ancient civilization, South Korea has recently transformed into one of the world's global economies.

In the 1960's 20 percent of the population lived in urban settings. Now that figure is around 80 percent. With the changing context comes cultural anxiety, new social settings, and new freedoms. Currently, one in ten Korean marriages are mixed according to stats.

Chaotic Harmony, co-organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is the first major exhibition in the United States of photographs made

by contemporary Korean artists presently living in Korea.

A catalogue of the exhibit, titled *Chaotic Harmony*, and distributed by Yale press, is available.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is located at 1130 State Street and is open Tu to Sun 11-5pm. For information visit www.sbma.net or call 963-4364.



War of Sisters, 2008, from the series *Tomorrow* (2008) by **WON, Seoung Won**. Inkjet photograph. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Lee Artworks & Projects.



Existing in Costume 1, 2006, from the series *Existing in Costume* (2006) by **BAE, Chan-Hyo**. Chromogenic photograph. Museum purchase with funds from the S.I. Morris Photography Endowment and gift from the artist.



Tour Bus, 2005, from the series *Magical Reality* (2005-6) by **KOO, Sungsoo**. Chromogenic photograph. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase with funds provided by the S.I. Morris Photography Endowment.



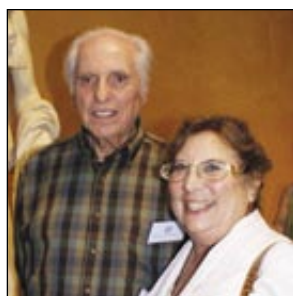
off-line_Burberry internet community, 2005 from the series *off-line* (2005) by **KIM, Sanggil**. Chromogenic photograph. SB Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by PhotoFutures



Song, Geum-Young, Acting Deputy Consul General and **Jaeho Han**, Director, The Korea Foundation



Larry Feinberg, SBMA Director and **Karen Sinsheimer**, SBMA Curator of Photography



Herman Schornstein and **Marie Morrisroe**



Neal Friedberg and artist **Bohnchang Koo**



PhotoFutures Members **Claire** and **Jerry Parent**, SBMA Trustee



PhotoFutures Members **Thomas Morrison** and **Cyndee Howard**, SBMA Trustee



Nancy Rogers and **Starr Seigele**



Margot Dement and **Lynda Fairly**



Neil Kennedy; **Michael Healy**, SBMA Trustee & PhotoFutures Member; and **Alex Smariga**



Clay Tedeschi (exhibition sponsor along with Lewis Bloom) with two Music Academy of the West Fellows: **Sung Cham Chang**, from Seoul, Korea, and **Matthew Park**



Refrigerator, 2008, from the *Everyday Life Project* (1998-2008) by **KIM, Kyung Duk**. Chromogenic photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Untitled, 1999 from the series *Bamboo* (1998-2008) by **KIM, DaeSoo**. Gelatin silver photograph, printed 2007. SB Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by Lorna Hedges & Mercedes Eichholz.