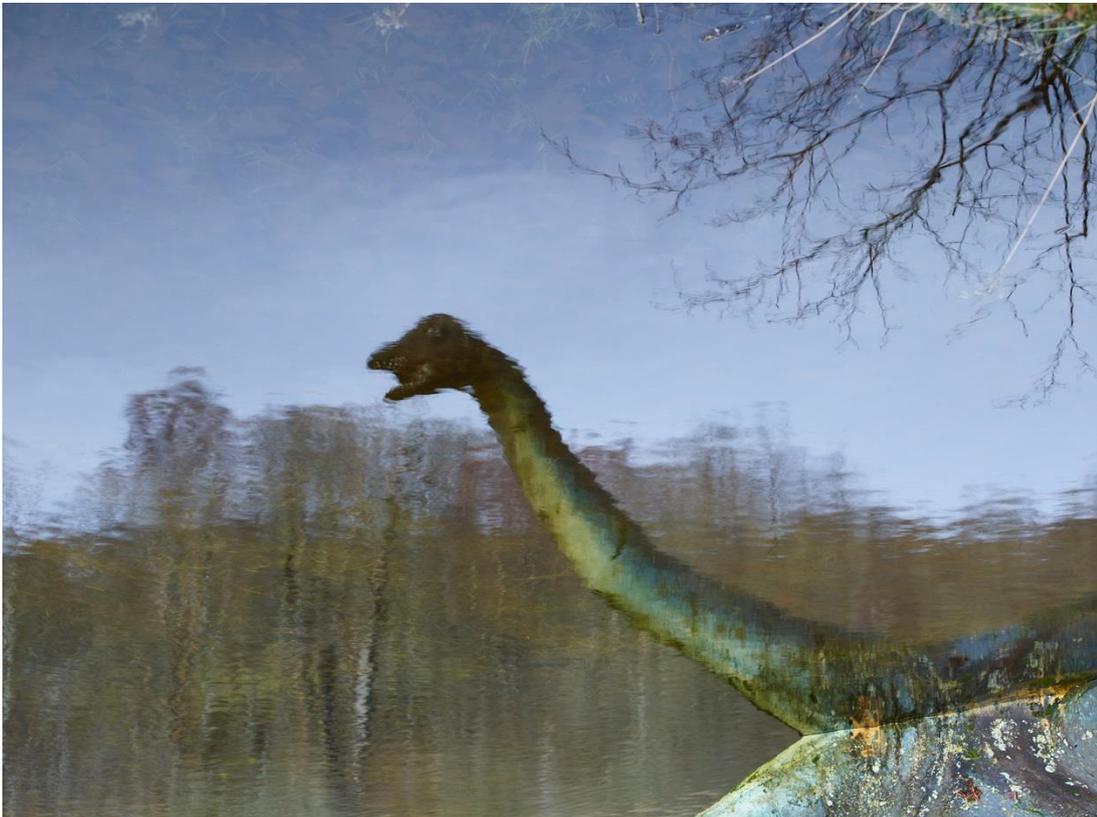


# **The Stranger and the Periphery**

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Professional Doctorate in Fine Art

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Prof. Doc. in Fine Art. UEL.

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**The Stranger and the Periphery**

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## Introduction

Within my work, I have been interested in exploring, through detailed observation of, and collecting artifacts from, my surroundings, the effect that place and memory have on humans and their environment. I explore the various invisible stories impacted by specific places and events, and those things that exist but do not show themselves directly. Recently, using 'placeness'—which gets its meaning from recognition and experience—as a foundation, my interest has moved towards people and places separated from their pasts due to migration and movement, disconnection and destruction, and thus that do not have this sense of 'placeness'.

I lived for a long while in the UK—the experience of being a stranger in a foreign land was what sparked my interest in marginalised places, as well as in individuals whose existence has long been ignored. One turning point for me came when I attended Alec Soth's solo exhibition at the Science Museum in London. At the time, I had spent a long period exploring specific locations for my project centred around airports, and I became fascinated by Soth's work, as he had also been interested in, and photographed, a specific area that had previously received less attention. Artists' early works such as Soth's *Niagara*, and *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, as well as British photographer Paul Graham's *A1* acted as great research materials for my own work. Their early projects focused on a particular place, and on people or things that had thus far received relatively little interest or attention, telling stories of the marginalised.

My fascination with strangers and marginalised placeness, alongside the basic question of the meaning of a 'stranger', naturally evolved into an interest in W G Sebald's novel *The Emigrants*, and in artists creating works from the perspective of those living outside the mainstream. Artists such as Kade Attia and An My Lê—either due to historical reasons, or because of where they were born—broke free from the mainstream of the societies they belonged to. These experiences allowed them to question everything they had come to take for granted, in the societies where they'd so long lived.

## Core Concerns

I focused for a long time on close examination and collection of the things around me, and through this I aimed to organise the world at large, and to find its invisible areas. In my work, I went beyond the visible, searching for what lies on the other side. Also fascinated by the problems and situations faced by modern society, I endeavoured via a microscopic approach, as well as through document collecting and interviews, to grasp the essence of that which does not readily show itself. Since I was very young, whenever I saw water, I would imagine the fish living within it (something not easy to see from the surface). This

imagining would soon develop into research and collection of actual living fish.

The things around us can be divided into the visible and invisible. We have a tendency to focus on what is real and what we can see, but in fact, behind this lies a vast world, where countless unseen things are in operation.

We have all been suffering at the hands of Coronavirus since its outbreak in China in November 2019. As a result of this great human disaster—caused by a virus we cannot see—our real and physical worlds and lives have collapsed. We live in a generation where we fear that which we cannot see more than that which we can.

I am interested in the margins and boundaries that exist between the seen and the unseen. The things we see tend to be either located somewhere important, or to present themselves readily if in the majority. I am drawn to those things considered less important—I create artwork to examine what exists on the opposite side of the majority perspective. Through my work, I hope that people think about the marginal, and the things considered less significant.

## **Methodology**

For the past twenty years, I have focused on photography, and have also produced several video projects. My work began in the late nineties with analogue black and white photography, moving on to analogue colour photography, digital photography, and then video projects and archival work.

While on my doctoral programme, I went beyond simply composing my work from photographs I had taken myself, to researching and collecting a variety of materials. This was my own way of reaching times and places unreachable to me. However, having worked with the medium of photography, I came to realise the limits and difficulties of working outside the current time and beyond places I could approach directly.

I read two different newspapers daily which one is right-wing and the other is left-wing, but I do not watch television. My personal interests usually come from the news stories covered, or from internet articles I come across by chance. Otherwise, if I happen upon a groundless story, which has not previously caught my interest, at work somewhere, I grow curious. I then look to understand how the story, or the thing that triggered my interest, encroaches on the here and now, as well as on money and time.

Once I develop an interest in a story, first I begin looking for texts and photographs. If there is a particular place related to my work, I go there to conduct a field survey. Using this first stage of research and field work, I decide whether or not to pursue the project. In this way, if I find a project I do want to pursue, I scour the whole world for additional materials, and carry out site visits, filming and interviews. At first glance, my work has similarities with the field work methodologies of cultural anthropology and ethnography, and so building a positive and trusting rapport with the

interviewee is important.

It is not easy to get in contact with interviewees, but when I am able to meet them, I make sure to explain clearly my intentions and to emphasise that I am trustworthy. After I have met with them several times, and made them sufficiently aware of my goals, they become part of my work. In this process the relationship with the interviewee is key.

## **Process**

I develop my projects with images I have taken and materials I have personally gathered. I carry out my work keeping in mind that the outcome of the project will later be displayed in an actual exhibition and publication.

With most of my projects, I spend at least a year visiting the same location across the seasons, travelling to various relevant locations, and meeting numbers of different people. These people are generally those who've been working on the projects I am interested in for a long time. I ask them their personal reasons for investing time and money in their interests.

I also continuously search for materials across the world. I also continuously search for materials across the world. Usually, I buy the original books and images related to my project from online antique bookstores. At the same time, I search out and read related books and theory. This work process takes between one and two years.

When my work is somewhat close to completion, I begin preparing for the exhibition and once the exhibition is over I present my work as a book publication. Exhibitions have a strong immersion factor, and are material, tied to a specific time and place. A publication, on the other hand, is lighter, flexible and has no expiry date—I felt a great appeal for these aspects, and for all my projects, I rounded them off with an exhibition and a publication.

The project, *In Search of Nessie*, which I carried out in the way mentioned above whilst working on my doctorate, was exhibited in Seoul, Milan and Toulouse, and the publication was displayed in Belgium, the UK, France, and Italy, amongst other places.

## **Products**

During the course, I completed my pre-existing projects, and also started a number of new ones. My pre-existing works consisted not only of 2D photographs, but included dual video as well as archiving. The results were incredibly successful, and I received multiple awards, as well as having the opportunity to exhibit my work internationally in Italy, Finland, and Latvia.

Further to this, in August 2020 I founded my own independent press, ARP (Artist-Run Publishing), publishing its first book in October of the same year. I am now producing the second book, with plans for publishing in May 2021. The business arose from my interest in the physical properties of art books, and the fact that they can be kept for many years to come. Art exhibitions are temporary, and bound to a particular location, whereas art books are relatively universal and democratic.

Working with various Korean companies, cities, and institutions, at the beginning of this year I embarked upon multiple new projects. The completed works are planned to be displayed in various exhibitions in Seoul and other locations in June and September. I am also working with a planner in Italy to produce a collaborative exhibition that will take place in Korea in a few years' time.

## **Biography**

### **EDUCATION**

2012-2014 MA Photography, Royal College of Art, UK

2008-2012 BA(Hons) Fine Art, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

2001-2006 Photographic Art, Kaywon University of Art, Korea (graduation with highest distinction)

### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2022 <In Search of Nessie>CE Contemporary, Milan, Italy

2021 <The Marginal Man>, Place MAK, Seoul, Korea

2021 <Loch Ness and its Monster>, Art Space BOAN, Seoul, Korea

2020 <In Search of Nessie> The 7th Amado Photography Award Exhibition, Amado Art Space/Lab, Seoul, Korea

2020 <The Night Watch> UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea

2020 <On the Periphery> BMW Photo Space, Busan, Korea

2019 <AIRPORT CITY> KAIST Art & Research Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2018 <Unnamed Land: Air Port City> SPACE 22, Seoul, Korea

2015 <SLEEPWALKER> Korean Cultural Centre UK, London, UK

2012 <Photographic Images of Fish and Shellfish in Korean Classical Painting> MOKSPACE, London, UK

### **GROUP and TWO person EXHIBITIONS**

2022 DMZ PEACE PHOTO SHOW, Yeonchoen art house, GyungGi-do, Korea

2022 GyeongGi Photo Festival, Ruygahun Seoul, Korea

2022 The Resonance of Trees, Photo Brussels Festival, Korean Cultural Centre, Brussels, Belgium

2021 DMZ Art & Peace Platform, Unimaru, Paju, GyeongGi-do /Jejin Station, Goseong-

gun,Gangwon-do  
 2021 On & Off, Life Logging,Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, Korea  
 2021 KT&G SKOPFNew Acquisitions PIC, KT&G Sangsang madang Hongdae+Busan,Seoul, Busan, Korea  
 2021 Selfish Art: Viewer:Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul, Korea  
 2021 Vitalità della ripetizion, Palazzo Tagliaferro Museum, Andora, Italy  
 2021 ARENA Named X: The Narrative of Hwaseong: A Poetically Dwelling Being, Royal X,Hwaseong,Korea  
 2021 Flora and Fauna: Cultural Ecology, Villa Hamiltonn, Seoul, Korea  
 2021 Mirror Neurons, Krasnoyarsk Museum Biennale, Krasnoyarsk Museum, Russia  
 2021 Другое измерение, Another Dimension, Novosibirsk State Art Museum, Novosibirsk, Russia  
 2020 Helsinki Photo Festival, The National Museum of Finland, Helsinki, Finland  
 2020 Riga Photomonth, Riga, Latvia  
 2019 OPEN YOUR STORAGE: History, Circulation and Discourse, Buk Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea  
 2019 Night Spotting + Goodbye Stranger (Two Person Exhibition), Seoi Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
 2019 Postmodern: short stories, Palazzo Tagliaferro Museum, Andorra, Italy  
 2019 Postmodern: short stories, The Mall, Milan, Italy  
 2018 10th SKOPF Photographer of the Year (3 person exhibition), GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, Korea  
 2018 ManifestO Rencontres Photographiques de Toulouse, Place Saint Pierre, France  
 2018 META PICS, UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea  
 2018 THE SCRAP, CULTURE STATION SEOUL 284, Seoul, Korea  
 2018 Young Portfolio Acquisitions 2017, Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Art, Kiyosato, Japan  
 2017 Family Reunion, Pi Gallery, London, UK  
 2015 Fluorescent, Soho Open House Arts, London, UK  
 2015 The Open West, The Wilson Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham, UK  
 2014 UNSEEN PHOTO, Westergasfabrie, Amsterdam, The Netherland  
 2014 SHOW RCA 2014, Royal College of Art, London, UK  
 2014 2014 New Hero, 'Public Art' Selected Artist Exhibition, NEMO, Seoul, Korea  
 2014 Young Art Taipei 2014, Taiwan  
 2014 UMIT PRESENTS 16MM FILM, BL-NK, London, UK  
 2014 RCA SECRET 2014, Royal College of Art Battersea, London, UK  
 2014 WEA, World Emerging Artist Exhibition (3 person exhibition), Selected by AAF Milan, Superstudio Piu, Milan, Italy  
 2013 Import/Export, Tornio/Harparanda, Northern Media Culture Association Magneetti, Finland/Sweden  
 2013 Splinter, Michael Hoppen Gallery, London, UK  
 2013 The Others, Hanmi Gallery, London, UK  
 2013 Night Break, (Two Person Exhibition), MOKSPACE, London, UK  
 2013 Contemporary Korea Photo Exhibition of Four Young Photographers, Guardian Garden, Tokyo, Japan

2013 RA Summer Exhibition 2013, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
 2013 NordArt 2013, Büdelsdorf, Germany  
 2013 7th International Arte Laguna Prize Finalists exhibition, Venice Arsenale , Venice, Italia  
 2013 OPEN PLAN: Nomadologies, 55 Gracechurch Street, London, UK  
 2013 WIP Show, Royal College of Art, London, UK  
 2013 14th Photography Criticism Awards winning Exhibition, Iyang Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
 2012 Take a view, National Theatre, London, UK  
 2012 The Recent Graduates Exhibition Curated by Jessica Hall, Battersea Evolution, London, UK  
 2012 クラウト [cloud/crowd] LE DECO gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
 2012 EWAAC Art Award exhibition, La Galleria Pall Mall, London, UK  
 2012 70 ARTISTS 7 DAYS, Regent Canal Mile End, London, UK  
 2012 NOW IS WHEN, Come To Revolution New Cross, London, UK  
 2012 4482, [Map the Korea] Barge house, London, UK  
 2006 ACROSS THE BORDER, Gallery 27, Kyunggi-do, Korea  
 2005 Group exhibition, Dongduk Gallery, Seoul, Korea

## **AWARDS, GRANTS**

2022 20th edition Laureates ManifestO Rencontres Photographiques de Toulouse, France  
 2022 Winner, ILWOO Photography Awards, ILWOO Foundation, Korea  
 2021 In Search of Nessie, Book selected for Global Distribution Support Program, Korea Art Management Service, Korea  
 2021 <RE:SEARCH>, Project Grant, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea  
 2021 Fund for Korean Art Abroad, Korea Art Management Service, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Korea  
 2021 Project Grant, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea  
 2021 MoPS Talent Portfolio ViewReView  
 2021, The Museum of Photography, Seoul, Korea  
 2020 Helsinki Photo Festival open call winner, Finland  
 2020 Selected Artist for Riga Photomonth, Latvia  
 2020 Project Grant, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea  
 2020 The 7th Amado Photography Award, Amado Art Space/Lab, Korea  
 2018 Laureates 2018 ManifestO Rencontres Photographiques de Toulouse, France  
 2017 ‘Photographer of the Year’, KT&G Sangsang madang, Korea  
 2015 Winner of KCCUK Open Call, Korean Cultural Centre UK, UK  
 2015 Finalist, The Open West, The Wilson Gallery and Museum, UK  
 2014 Royal College of Art ‘Overseas Student Bursary Award’, UK  
 2013 Finalist, “Import/Export”, Northern Media Culture Association Magneetti, Finland/Sweden  
 2013 Royal College of Art ‘Fine Art Award’, UK  
 2013 Winner of “British Institution Awards”, RA Summer Exhibition Prize, Royal Academy of Art, UK

2013 Finalist, NordArt 2013, Germany  
2013 Finalist, 7th International Arte Laguna Prize, Venice, Italia  
2013 Finalist, Portfolio Review Duesseldorf, Germany  
2013 Monthly Art Magazine 'Public Art' Selected Artist, Korea  
2012 14th Photography Criticism Awards, Photo space, Korea  
2012 EWAAC Art Award, UK  
2012 Warden's award, Goldsmiths college, UK  
2005 The 1st Place honours Award, Kaywon university of Art, Korea

### **Book, Selected Publication, Article and interview**

2021 06 IN SEARCH OF NESSIE, ARP, Korea, ISBN 9791197186417  
2021 01 Art in Culture, Korea  
2021 01 PHOTODOT, Korea  
2020 12 Monthly Art, Korea  
2020 10 THE NIGHT WATCH, ARP, Korea, ISBN 9791197186400  
2020 06 PHOTOWORLD Magazine interview, China  
2020 05 SAJINYESUL interview, Korea  
2020 02 Kukje Newspaper interview, Korea  
2020 02 Busan Ilbo (Newspaper) interview, Korea  
2019 07 Monthly Art, Korea  
2019 06 Interview 'Monthly Photography', Korea  
2019 05 SAJINYESUL, Korea  
2019 03 VOSTOK 14, Korea  
2019 01 SAJINYESUL, Korea  
2018 05 VOSTOK 9, Korea  
2017 08 PHOTO DOT, Korea  
2017 03 Kyunghyang Newspaper, Korea  
2016 11 L'Insense photo 14, France  
2015 08 Interview 'Monthly Photography'  
2015 08 VON Magazine Interview, Korea  
2015 07 SLEEPWALKER, KCCUK, UK  
2014 06 SCIENCE & FICTION, black dog publishing, UK  
2013 11 Night Break, Korea  
2013 09 Interview 'Monthly Art Magazine Public Art Invite New Artist', Sep, Korea  
2012 10 Landscape Photography of the Year: Collection 6, UK  
2012 09 ALLITERATI Magazine, UK, Issue 8, UK  
2006 06 Monthly Photography, the article of 'Freshwater fish of Korea', Korea  
2006 03 Art in Culture, Korea, Interview, Korea

### **Residency**

2022 MMCA Residency Goyang, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea  
2021 Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea

### **Publications, Article and interview**

2022 Shinwook KIM, MoPS Talent Portfolio ViewReView, Ga-hyeon Foundation of Culture, Korea  
2021 In Search of Nessie, ARP, Korea  
2020 THE NIGHT WATCH, ARP, Korea  
2015 SLEEPWALKER, KCCUK, UK  
2014 SCIENCE & FICTION, black dog publishing, UK  
2012 Landscape Photography of the Year: Collection 6, UK

### **Projects**

2022 Eoudi Road-Highland, Scotland, Art Space Tiger 1, Seoul, Korea

### **Broadcast**

2022 MBC News interview  
2021 KBS News 7  
2021 MBC News  
2020 KNN News  
2015 YTN News

### **Lecture and Artist Talk**

2022 Assistant Professor, Department of Photography, Kyungil University, Korea  
2022 Chung-Ang University, Seoul, Korea  
2022 Chung-Ang University, An Seong Campus, Korea  
2021 Hongik University, Seoul, Korea  
2021 Kaywon university of Art, Korea  
2020 Kaywon university of Art, Korea  
2019 MIA PHOTO, Milan, Italy  
2018 Hongik University, Seoul, Korea  
2018 GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, Korea  
2017 Kaywon university of Art, Korea  
2013 Guardian Garden, Tokyo, Japan  
2013 Photographers Gallery, London, UK  
2013 Duesseldorf Photo Weekend, Duesseldorf, Germany

### **Public Collections**

Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts, Kiyosato, Japan  
GoEun Museum of Photography, S Korea  
Oriell College, University of Oxford, UK  
KT&G Sangsang madang, S Korea

Seoul City Hall, S Korea  
MOKSPACE, UK  
UARTSPACE, S Korea  
SPACE 22, S Korea  
Private Collections in the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and S.Korea

## **Chapter One**

### **Theory and creative practice**

#### **1.1 Early Creative Practice and Theory**

In Korea I studied fine art photography in art University. During that time, one of my earlier projects, the *Freshwater fish series* (2005), involved me catching, classifying and photographing every species of freshwater fish in Korea. I have built a vast archive of photos of Korean freshwater fish, about which I am fanatical. I have photographed about 30 species of indigenous Korean freshwater fish, twelve of which can only be found in Korea. Using photography, I have tried to show through the extremely precise recording ability of the camera the pure beauty that these small creatures possess. My question is not only of how things seem, but of how their appearance is interpreted, how we distinguish among them, and what the social and geographical implications of such judgments might be—all of these queries come into play in my practice. (Figure 1)



(Fig. 1) *Acheilognathus gracilis*, C-print, 100x150cm, 2005

*'Photographic Images of Fish and Shellfish in Korean Classical Painting' Eh Hae Doe, (2006-2007)*

After the graduation from art school in Korea, given my interest in fish inhabiting contained-area freshwater, it was only natural that I would be drawn to Eh Hae Doe. Eh Hae Doe is a type of Korean folk painting, with eh hae meaning 'fish and shellfish'. Fish paintings have many symbolic meanings. Fish jumping up towards a waterfall, for example, are interpreted as symbolising the abundance and worldly success that comes after overcoming difficulties. I reorganised fish and shellfish, which have been imbued with various meanings within Korean folk paintings and have long provided a feeling of safety and hope to Koreans. It was through this work that I first became interested in mythology. (Fig. 2)



(Fig. 2) Two Sturgeon, Size variable, 2006-2007, Photography Printed on Korean traditional paper.

## 1.2 BA Creative Practice and Theory

Since moving to London to study for my BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London, my ideas have developed significantly. Through the use of subject matters drawn from both urban and rural environments, my most important work was carried out within the border areas between nations and across regional boundaries. Through this work, I was able to negotiate the relationship between politics and a larger social perspective, as well as, more personally, my own memories of a border that signaled fear and desire. For me, physical borders represent danger, imagination and the desire to cross boundaries into forbidden territory. This may be to do with the unknown, or questions about rule breaking or transgression.

*The Night Watch* (2011-2017) (Fig. 3) came out of my experience of performing national service in Korea. When I was nineteen years old, I joined the military. I had to be the night watchman two hours each night at the border between South and North Korea.

During the night watch duty, as a young soldier, I was always exhausted. And sometimes I roamed from my night watch spot in a dreamlike state.

One day I was dozing off and walking around at the same time.

Suddenly I bumped into a man. Right away I realized that I had walked pretty far away from the night watch spot and the 'man' I bumped into was a huge tree trunk. I visually got an idea for this series from the moment I bumped into the tree trunk, the moment I first experienced an optical illusion.

The locations where I took pictures of a border never have an actual line. In Korea, a boundary meant frozen territory, a forbidden zone, a line between life and death involving an extreme tension, especially at night. Simultaneously, there was a picturesque landscape beyond the border.

In Europe, physical borders no longer exist, only transitional sites exist. By taking a picture of transitional areas at night such as New Forest and border between Belgium and Germany, I put in some of the emotional tension that I gained from my memories of the border. My mysterious, dreamlike memory overlays the specific transitional sites.



(Fig. 3) New Forest, 2012, Archival Inkjet print, 100x165cm



(Fig. 4) Grass messenger, 2013, Single Channel Moving image, 00:05:10

### 1.3 MA Creative Practice and Theory

*Grass Messenger* (2013) (Fig. 4)

I further continued my interest in borders through my MA work.

At first, I took a clump of lawn from my garden, and travelled with the grass divots to other countries, finally transplanting them into other places, such as the border areas between nations. It was about the movement of turf. The divots of turf I dug up represented the domestic, but I transplanted them abroad. I planted them in the borderland on either side of the Monschauer Strasse (Belgium) and Eupener Straße (Germany). Though this is a single road, each country has a different name for it.

By moving pieces of lawn from my own private space into the borderland, I became a messenger, moving something to an uncertain place between two countries. Through this site-specific act, I was attempting to transplant domestic objects from a particular place into a 'nonplace'. Such an act goes against what is deemed as acceptable.

## 1.4 Other Relevant practice after MA

### *Unnamed Land: Air Port City* (2015-2020)

Working as a tour guide since 2010 in London, I have travelled back and forth from Heathrow Airport more than 2,500 times. The many photographs I took during this experience formed the series *Unnamed Land: Air Port City*. (Fig. 5)

The boundaries between the airport and its surroundings seem clear, but in truth they can often be vague and obscure. The runway is cordoned off by a high fence, but is connected to a bypass slip road outside the airport, a huge long-stay car park, rental car companies, hotels and many other airport facilities. These are lined up like dominoes and make it difficult to traverse the airport boundary.

Airport surroundings form a strange scenery and attract diverse people. Given how they connect with distant places across the world (something that, ironically, cities are unable to do), airports are essential elements of big cities. Airports require a huge area of land, which existing cities do not possess. Moreover, the flight noise makes it impossible for airports to be located in city centres. Within a relatively short period of time, airports therefore generate their own surroundings on the outskirts of cities. Since its official opening 72 years ago, Heathrow Airport has continued its relentless expansion. Through focusing on the area—which I named ‘Air Port City’—and the people surrounding it, rather than investigating its interior and original intended purpose, paradoxically I was able to reveal its spatiality.



(Fig. 5) Terminal 5, 100x133cm, Pigment Inkjet Print, 2015

## Chapter Two

### ON THE PERIPHERY

#### 2.1 Prof Doc Years: The Stranger and the periphery

The original meaning of periphery from

*The centre-periphery (or core-periphery) model is a spatial metaphor that describes and attempts to explain the structural relationship between the advanced or metropolitan 'centre' and a less developed 'periphery', either within a particular country, or (more commonly) as applied to the relationship between capitalist and developing societies.*

In the Prof Doc Years, I studied artists whose work shapes my understanding of the periphery and sense of place.

Periphery means the concept of the margins in Sociology as defined above refers to the less-developed outskirts, in contrast to the developed city centre.

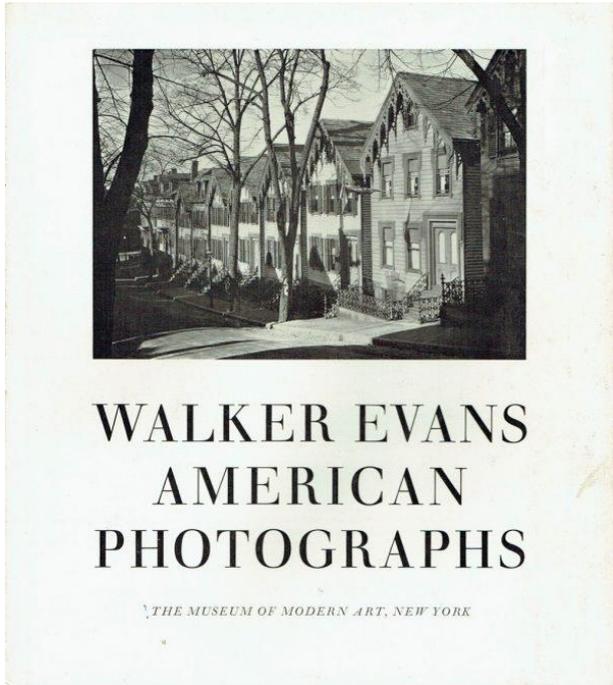
This is largely related to capitalism and the developing society.

The point I am focussing on, however, is a more flexible, vague meaning of the word.

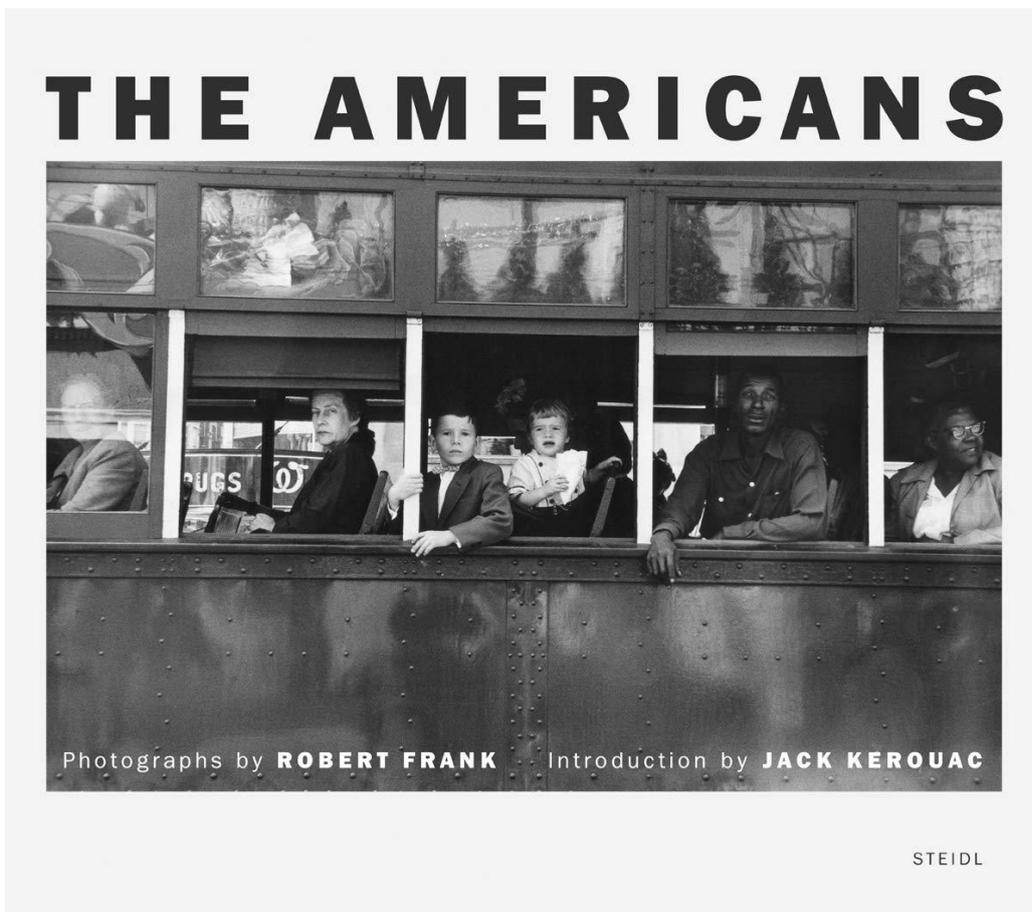
There was nothing particularly outstanding about my upbringing. I felt myself to be an ordinary man who kept himself to himself. It was when I came to England that I became intensely interested in peripheral existence. Though we are all the main characters in our own lives, to the people around us we exist on the periphery. I was a man from Korea, an unfamiliar East Asian country, and felt continuously alienated from the mainstream. I struggled for many years to learn to accept this situation and deal with the frustration it brings.

My interest in my surroundings unconsciously incorporated itself into my work. My photographic projects reflect my willingness to accept that my life was on the fringes, and I attempted to overcome my frustration through my work. I tried to make the familiar unfamiliar, and was drawn to surroundings which are simultaneously peripheral, temporary, and unstable.

After completing my master's degree, I was working on a project relating to airports. During this time, I was confronted with various obstacles, and experimented with new methods such as straight photography and a documentary approach. I started looking at the work of other artists. The prototype for modern subjective documentary photography began with Walker Evans' work first published under the title *American Photographs* by MOMA (Museum of Modern Art), New York in 1938 (fig. 6), and Robert Frank's series *The Americans*, published in 1958. (fig. 7)



(Fig. 6) *American Photographs* by MOMA (Museum of Modern Art), New York in 1938



(Fig. 7) Robert Frank's series *The Americans*, published in 1958

This continued with the New York MOMA exhibition, *New Documentary*, in the 1960s, exhibiting works by Gary Winogrand, Diane Arbus, and Lee Friedlander.

In the 1970s and 80s came the New Colour Photography by William Eggleston along with Stephen Shore, Joel Meyerowitz, Joel Sternfeld, writer Sally Uclere and others. Trends in typological photography, which began with the work of Bernd Becher and Hilla Becher at the Düsseldorf Academy started working collaboratively from the late 1950s to early 2000s, was followed by Thomas Ruff, Andreas Gursky and many others. Then came Alec Soth in the mid-2000s, who worked across the central regions of the United States, including Mississippi and Niagara. He began trying to express various abstract concepts, such as values and emotions, in addition to American and regional characteristics, as well as religions, by photographing visible objects. This new trend in the field of documentary, which started to reappear in the mid-2000s, has not yet been deemed worthy of a specific title or of deep consideration, regardless of its significance. Alec Soth's work has influenced a great number of students and artists studying photography since the late 2000s. His work moves beyond the common prejudices of typical documentary photography existing among Magnum photographers, who are faithful to recording reality. He recreates a new type of documentary photography by complementing typical documentary works of art with artistic emotions and archives.

The Mississippi is a historic river that has played an indispensable role in pioneering American history. As he follows its tributaries, Alec Soth poses questions about various cultures, values, gender and religion. (fig. 8)

Although no longer the driving force for the United States it once was, the Mississippi River, at one time, was a centre of prosperity for America due to the role it played in providing transportation between north and south. This historical prosperity has now passed, and is filled with peripheral elements. Furthermore, the surroundings and the people attracted by the overwhelming landscape of the Niagara Falls and its mythology seem rather crude and insecure. Niagara Falls is no longer the most amazing attraction in the world, but just one of among many tourist spots full of low-budget accommodation for newly-married couples. (fig. 9) Several questions arise when looking at Soth's work: What are the myths surrounding particular places? How have they functioned since settling into these spaces? And what does the periphery mean to Alec Soth?



(Fig.8) Alec Soth, *Sleeping by the Mississippi*, 2002

What I find interesting about his work is how he uses a combination of individual images to express invisible, intangible values and emotions that are neither immediate nor obvious.

Alec Soth says that it is not the capturing of individual images that is difficult, but the arranging and ordering of them. The same image can lead to different nuances and directions depending on the arrangement. Through his work, I came to think seriously about how to capture images, approach subjects, and how finally to arrange the images.

One of the most significant factors in documentary photography is the subject. Whether a person should be included in a photograph largely depends on the situation. In my project, however, it was difficult to portray my message without including people that are found in the spaces around airports, given that humans are so actively involved in these areas. In this regard, I received a great deal of inspiration from Alec's portraits. Soth has said that since dedicating himself to his work, he has slowly evolved from a painfully shy young man to become more outwardly interactive and sociable. He approached strangers and started conversations with them, and talked with them for as long as possible until their natural and

genuine features showed themselves. Such an approach was not easy, but gave me room to think about how to approach the subjects in my own work.



(Fig.9) Alec Soth, *Niagara*, 2007

In this way, I was considerably influenced by Alec Soth throughout the airport project (my first documentary work), as well as my current project looking at the spaces where myths are created and transmitted.

My initial work examining airport surroundings was influenced by the contemporary and subjective work of Alec Soth, who continued the tradition of documentary photography. In my point of view, his work, his work is not the kind of documentary photography that objectively records reality, but one that uses subjective emotion and personal experience in order to interpret a particular place.

In truth, my long-running project on airport surroundings was created within spaces unremarkable in any way.

By airport surroundings, I refer to a marginal space which flows in an ordinary way. There are

no special events or things that stand out. Based on this character of space, I began photographing the airport surroundings, and over several years secured the direction of my work, though I encountered a number of difficulties along the way.

At the time, I looked at Alec Soth's work and endeavoured to grasp the grammar and form of contemporary documentary photography, while also visiting the same places over and over and making great efforts to collect images.

Through Alec Soth's work, I imagined the point of view of an artist going to the same places repeatedly, and the ways of approaching unfamiliar places and people. This self-initiated image training became a kind of drill exercise or field training in my airport surroundings project.

At the time, I was inspired by the way Alec Soth chooses specific locations for his work, such as the Mississippi River and Niagara Falls, and felt a similarity with my own work.

The subject of Alec Soth's work was America's values as observed along the Mississippi River, and people's desires and love as seen in the Niagara Falls surroundings—things abstract and intangible. The difference found in my work examining airport surroundings, however, is that it concentrates on the concept of place and non-place, the people influenced by the airport, and the variety of place-based and culture-based effects such as new hobbies and leisure activities that have arisen as a result of the airport.

In other words, in contrast to the more ambiguous and abstract values that Alec Soth visualizes in his work, I believe my own work is more record-based and location-specific.

In addition to this, the archive materials presented in Alec Soth's work and exhibitions were fascinating.

For example, personal letters of the characters from the photographs, as well as books and documents, seemed to enrich the stories the artist was trying to tell.

Author Philip Brookman (2008, p.88) wrote on *Over the Rainbow: Alec Soth's NIAGARA*.

*Their letters, on the other hand, have the quality of found objects, representing personal points of view. Juxtaposed with the portraits, these letters become totally specific documents, in contrast to the prosaic parking lots and swimming pools that establish the tone of this work by simply reflecting the color and timbre of the sky.*

The subjects in Alec Soth's photographs reveal the ironic geopolitics and history of the central United States. This history of the United States starts from the east and moves west. In this process of exploration, the central region plays an instrumental role of an area to be passed through; it therefore becomes a space which eliminates purpose and a subject's significance. Paradoxically, a central geopolitical location becomes a marginalised space, as its significance is sacrificed, the focus moving instead to the beginning and end. Due to this fact, the central United States is full of ignored peripheral entities. In Alec Soth's work on the Mississippi River, the feeling of marginalisation and peripherality is well portrayed through images of the landscape and people.

As a stranger in the UK, I became interested in looking at ordinary and conventional subjects from an alternative angle. Myths are invisible, yet people believe in them, and although it is

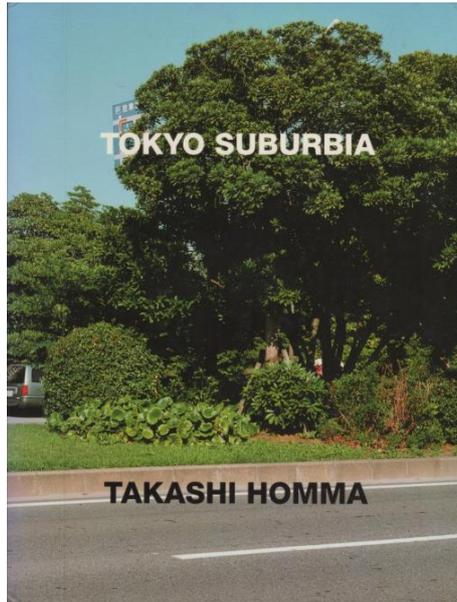
not clear exactly how myth operates beneath the surface, a variety of signs are present if one looks closely. For example, there is no proof that the Loch Ness monster exists, yet people spend their time and money visiting the lake. Some people even dedicate their whole lives to searching for Nessie. In my work, I have aimed to uncover how myths and superstitions impact real life beneath that which is seen on the surface.

## SUBURBIA

Takashi Homma's *Tokyo Suburbia* (Korinsha Press, 1998) (fig. 10) piqued my interest through its focus on suburbia, the forms of residences and people. Homma was born in Tanasi, Tokyo, in 1962. At the time, a large-scale new city had been built to the west of Tokyo. His parents were often too busy to look after him and his brother, instead giving him money to get dinner at cheap local restaurants.



(Fig. 10) Takashi Homma, *Tokyo Suburbia*, 1998



(fig. 10) Takashi Homma, *Tokyo Suburbia*, 1998

This photo was taken at New Town outside Tokyo. The cityscapes seen across his work are similar to those seen in much of East Asia, with a lot of familiar visual commonalities. Images of newly built Western-style houses, fast food restaurants such as McDonald's and KFC, and children loitering in video game arcades after school were jumbled together without any obvious connection. In this work, Takashi Homma reveals the dry appearance of New Town, whose history and identity are still uncertain, and the ordinary lives of the characters who live and wander around the area. Such features gave me a sense of unexplained tension as well as a feeling of tedium. Through images of kids playing games, teenagers in school uniform, and ordinary youths in their 20s, the photographer captures their natural appearance and behaviour to portray more dramatically the incomplete identity of New Town. The youths in his photographs represent the instability between childhood and adulthood. This is consistent with his theme—marginalisation, and not fitting into any category. His photographs do not force any idea of marginalisation onto his subjects. He always maintains an appropriate distance and neutrality. The characters do not express much emotion. His photographs do not seem to display any dramatic scenes or narratives. Homma's work poses questions about how the peripheral nature of New Town impacts residents and visitors to the area both emotionally and behaviourally.

My series titled *Paradise* (2013-2014) (fig.11) was a record of the disappearance due to redevelopment of the Doneuimun neighbourhood in Seoul from 2013 to 2014. Through my series *The Night Watch* (2011-2017), I wanted to create a new visual language for memory. To me, memory is a space which exists but is not recognised. *The Night Watch* series was a visual representation of memories that exist but cannot be discerned within darkness. The

*Paradise* series, however, shows how vivid memories and remains can suddenly disappear, even when they are not yet ready to be forgotten. It addresses the question of whether a demolished space can be erased from memory and history, and whether memory disappears alongside space. Just as time becomes fragmented, broken, scattered and eventually disappears, the remains pile up and new memories grow once again. *Paradise* also reveals the coexistence of abandoned areas with places that hold bright futures . Through this series, I wished to reflect on the lives and memories of modern people who wander around such places and nonplaces.



(Fig.11) Shinwook Kim, *Paradise*, 2013-2014

The absence of placeness and history in the *Paradise* series is similarly apparent in the work of Homma. He demonstrates that when there is insufficient placeness within a specific area, this gap prevents new memories from being formed. I believe that Takashi Homma aims to reveal the gap between the metropolis and its periphery, the adult and the child, completeness and incompleteness, reality and aspiration, realisation and unimplemented states. About the work of Takashi Homma from the 1960s, Charlotte Cotton, in her book *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, says the following:

*Japanese artist Takashi Homma (b. 1962) photographs newly built suburban housing in Japan and the landscaping around it, in which everything is strategically placed. He*

*gives the houses on the outer edges of suburban sprawl a sinister element, positioning his camera at a low vantage point, photographing only when the sites are devoid of human beings. The sense of the recently constructed, blueprinted way of life in readiness for habitation is all-pervasive. Homma develops ideas that first emerged in the 1970s when the dehumanizing impact and the politics of housing developments and the industrial use of land were coolly and categorically raised in photographic practice.*

### **Myrtle Avenue, 2013-2020**

Homma's work reminds me of the houses located on Myrtle Avenue (fig 12). Myrtle Avenue is a small road of 32 houses next to Heathrow Airport. It is located right under the main flight path, and is one of the closest residential areas to any airport in the UK. The road is directly opposite the international airport, lying under one of the country's greatest symbols of internationalisation and economic development, where some of its largest and most spectacular buildings are built. This small town is far from the glitz or the futuristic imagery of a mega international airport, where momentous, unending resources and personnel are constantly moving.

Myrtle Avenue is always crowded with people visiting to look at airplanes, but becomes quieter when the planes are landing in a different area of the airport. I witnessed the coexistence of the private and intimate elements of the residents' homes on Myrtle Avenue, with the public and deep significance of nonplaceness at the airport. Located at the border of place and nonplace, of the city and suburbs, the airport and its surrounding areas, the atmosphere in Myrtle Avenue is always bleak, filled with roaring engine sounds and wind blowing in from the runway.

Author and Curator Cullum, Fox and Hicks (2011) has looked at *Noplaceness*:

*Noplaceness – the title of an exhibition by Atlanta Art Now on “the feeling of not belonging anywhere, even when connected directly to a physical space.” The exhibition was “a manifesto for 21st century geographies” which are marked by the absence of distinct and historical place identity. “Geography has failed. The logic of globalization continues to throw into question an endless number of paradigms the 20th century taught us to love. Borders, stable identities and local languages all find themselves now under assault...All places threaten to become noplaceness in particular.”*

The exhibition title, 'NoPlaceness', mentioned above, felt as if it symbolised Myrtle Avenue, which I spent a long time observing. The airport's definitive 'non-place' is the old residential area located directly opposite it. Once a small farming village with its own sense of placeness and history, with the arrival of a giant airport, the village's unique identity and placeness began to grow diluted.

And so the original inhabitants of that old, small, simple residential space of Myrtle Avenue left, and in their place came outsiders who would put up with the loud noise for the sake of cheap house prices. Thus, the unique placeness and history of the area was diluted, and it became a marginalised space with the feeling that ‘though connected directly with a physical space, it belongs nowhere’, ultimately becoming a ‘noplacé’.

What is a place when you can see into it but cannot belong to it? A place where people are forced awake in the early morning by ear-piercing roar of airplanes. From many years of observing the area, I came to realise that people have their reasons for living there.

The people living in the area include those who work at the airport, people to whom it is more important to save rent than live in comfort, and airport minicab drivers who need to live close by. My project examines the boundaries and the things that take place within a small avenue about 300 metres in length. Over an extended period, I have quietly watched both ends of the avenue, which accommodates 32 houses. I saw people from various races, genders and ages. Where the airplanes roar over the roofs, there are also plum blossoms which blossom every year, and there are foxes that inhabit the area. In this life on the periphery, there is not only frustration, violence, anger, hatred, and unrequited love but ordinary day to day activities. It is a life that goes unseen by those who watch the planes taking off and landing, and those to whom the main space of the airport is a familiar sight. The trajectory of life has always been around us, and familiar to us, but has not been illuminated. There is evidence in my work that the lives of people in the margins have always been there.





(Fig.12) Shinwook Kim, *Myrtle Avenue*, 2013-2020

## THE STRANGER

Then where do the strangers and ‘others’ banished from us go?

In modern society, the kind of direct scapegoating that occurs in the story of Saint Columba and the lake monster is no longer current. Instead, strangers are now immigrants and ‘marginal’ people. These individuals are naturally excluded from the centre and made to gather on the outskirts of the city—a clamorous scapegoating ritual is not needed in capitalist economic systems. As part of one of my recently-completed projects, *Myrtle Avenue* (2013-2020), I visited and recorded the same small backstreet—the closest place to the walls surrounding Heathrow Airport, located on the outskirts of London—repeatedly for seven years. This project grew out of my interest in the minorities and ‘strangers’ that are from time to time covered within the history of photography.

Alec Soth’s *Broken Manual* (2006-2010) tells of lives separated from the basic societal framework in the remote mountainous and pastoral areas of America. In the film *Factory Complex*, which won Korean artist and director Im Heung-soon the Silver Lion Award at the 2015 Venice Biennale, women workers are shown as voiceless and marginalised within society. The film interviews numerous former ‘factory girls’ and women workers as they tell their stories. Southeast Asian women labourers reveal a certain anxiety as they speak about their lives. Seeing these women unable to tell even their own stories with ease, I began to think about the meaning of the ‘Subaltern’.

These individuals are placed in a situation where the opportunity to store their experiences in memory and transform these into ingredients for a story has been stolen from them. I think what they've been deprived of is not memory or experience per-se, but the power of a historical narrative that binds together memory and experience and re-enacts their pain to others. (fig.13)



(Fig. 13) Factory Complex, Im Heung-soon, Moving Image, 95mins, 2015

So what is a stranger? According to Alfred Schutz, 'For our present purposes the term "stranger" shall mean an adult individual of our times and civilization who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches.'

*The stranger does not know the intimate circumstances of the community, but he has the ability to reveal that the ideals and practices which the community members naturally accept are not universal at all. (Simmel, 1950 p. 402).*

Strangers are those who are not welcomed. Kant insisted that you must offer hospitality to others if you wish to receive hospitality yourself. Derrida and Levinas also discussed how to recognise and entertain others and strangers. According to the theories of Georg Simmel and Alfred Schutz, I am a stranger. Strangers are those who enter the realm of the actor and become subject to a new system. If they refuse, they will be exiled, punished, or driven out by the native people. When I first arrived at Heathrow Airport Terminal 3 in 2007, I was treated as a stranger who might bring a disease from the Third World. Even though I had not suffered from tuberculosis, they ordered me to get a chest X-ray. I was then forced to take my shirt off and step into a cold machine before I was allowed into arrivals.

This disinfecting of strangers who may carry diseases is an act of direct and compulsory screening of people from outlying areas that are deemed inferior. Ultimately, the principle of modern tolerance applies only if I comply with orders and promise to obey and conform to their rules. There are native people because there are strangers; similarly, some people are marginalised because others form the mainstream. People living in central areas are comfortable observing peripheral areas because these places are far away from where they live. They cannot understand how locals can endure such an environment. What is the concept of the stranger, and how do some people come to live in peripheral areas? I was never interested in this question until I came to the UK. But as I mentioned before, I was seen as inferior other from the moment I arrived. Being defined as inferior in terms of my language, nationality, and so on, I became curious about how other strangers came there and how they lived.

Do ethnic minorities and immigrants deserve exclusion due to the inevitable way that they disturb the native culture and take locals' jobs? This discourse relates to the current controversy surrounding Brexit. I am defined here as a different being. In the UK, when people refer to Asia, they are generally referring to the former British colonies as represented by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Since there are relatively few males from East Asia in the country, the majority of people assume that I am from China and that I am loud or wealthy. Asian people are also often regarded as physically inferior and poor in English ability, so people often unreasonably vent their anger towards such minority Asians. It makes no difference that I am from Korea and not China. This is because prejudice against the other begins with unfounded stereotypes. Furthermore, they know nothing about Korea, or automatically think of North Korea when thinking of Koreans. For 13 years, I lived in the UK as such a stereotyped stranger.

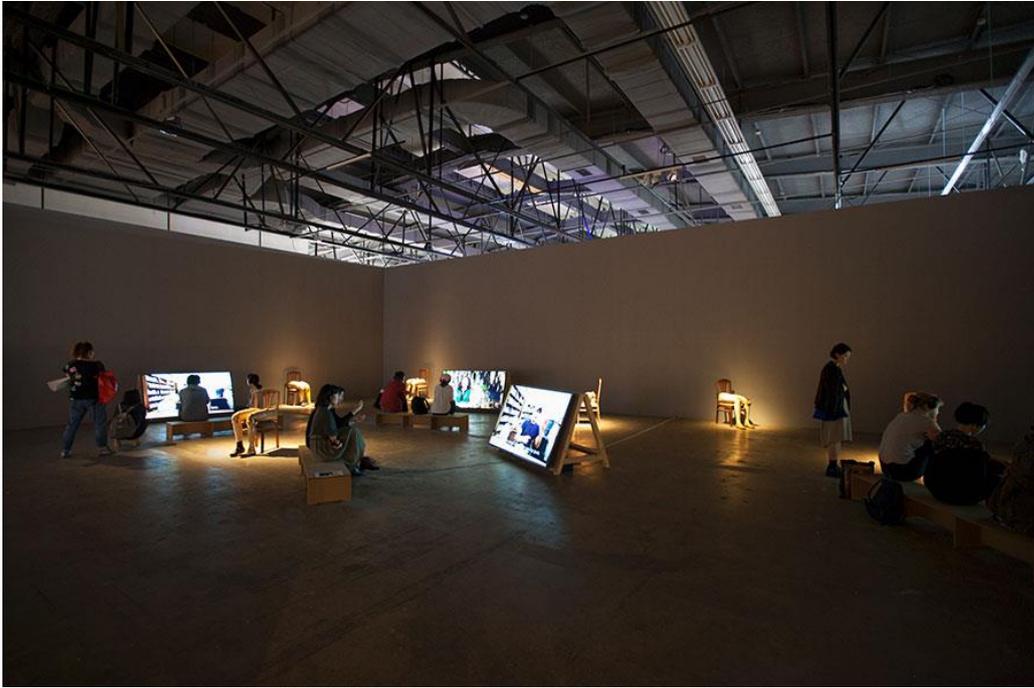
Strangers do not have a common memory shared with the native people of the existing group. The common memory of society is learned over time, and through experience and education among the mainstream members of society. Due to this lack of common memory, strangers are bound to think and act differently from mainstream natives. In this regard, I am a complete outsider and stranger. No matter how much I observe their behaviour and learn their language, there exists a limit for me in terms of understanding and being accepted.

In order for the inferior other to operate, there must be a central subject; however, what is a central subject? It simply means a person who was born and settled in an area. Living means that there is a house to live in. What kind of perceptions would second or later generation immigrant families who were born and grew up in the area have?

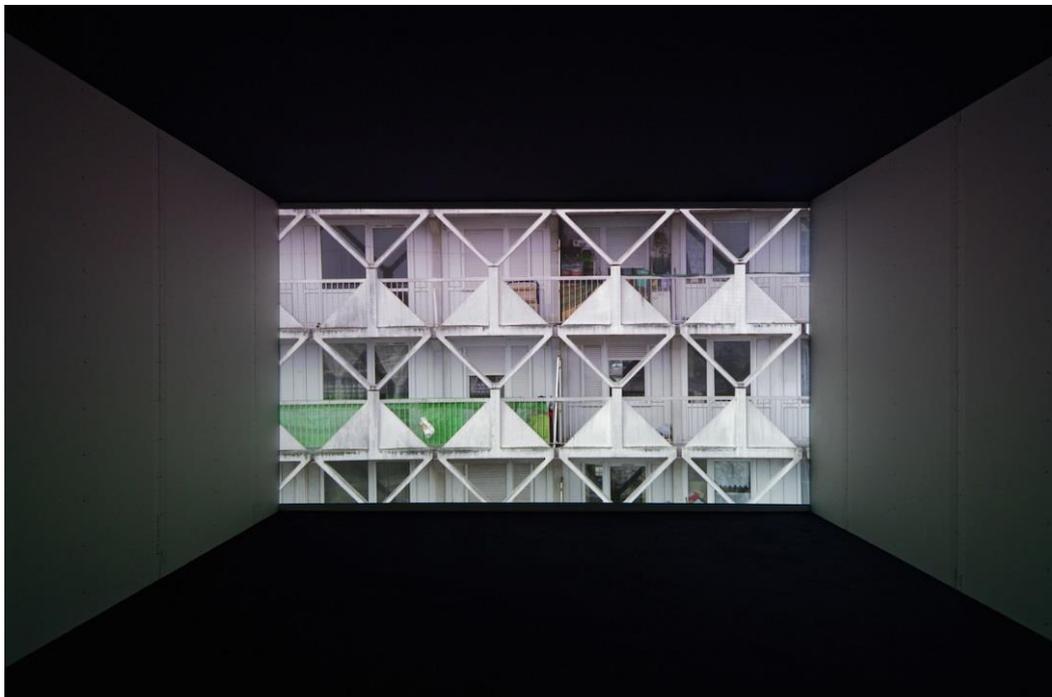
How do other artists talk about the experience of alienation which is invisible but ceaselessly operating?

Kader Attia (1970), a French Algerian artist, grew up enduring endless racism in a communal residential neighbourhood for lower classes and immigrants located in Saint-Denis on the outskirts of Paris. He says he was often exposed to nasty comments like 'go back to your

own country'. Such painful memories mean he still retains a great deal of both anger and passion while carrying out his artwork. Such an environment can lead some immigrants to resort to terrorism or other monstrous acts by making them think they have nothing to lose.



(Fig. 14) Kader Attia, *Shifting Border*, 2018



(Fig. 15) Kader Attia, *La Tour Robespierre* ('The Robespierre Tower'), colour, sound, 2:14

minutes, 2018

*La Tour Robespierre* ('The Robespierre Tower') (fig.15) is an installation and visualisation of the poor communal residence in Saint-Denis, Paris, using single channel HD video projection (colour, sound, 2:14 minutes, 2018). *Shifting Border* (2018) is a visualisation of how to accept and overcome communal trauma in society. These two projects seem to be similar but there is a difference between them. *La Tour Robespierre* reveals the standardised and inhuman structure of a huge concrete tenement on the outskirts of Paris. It displays the characteristics of *Mise-en-abyme*, evoking dizziness with its endlessly repeating scenes of the urban landscape. The huge complexes on the outskirts of this kind of city are still inhabited by immigrants from former colonies and their descendants. According to Attia's explanation regarding his work *Open Sky Jails*, apartments like the open sky jails have the function of collecting, monitoring and controlling the people who live in them. Another work of his, *Shifting Border* (2018), consists of three video installations, as well as uncanny sculptural elements with segmented body parts sitting on a chair. In this way, Attia has explored the trauma of individuals and groups arising from events such as the Vietnam War, Gwangju Uprising, and other legacies of violence and genocide in East and Southeast Asia. He notices how various forms of healing appear in non-Western cultures through interviews with Vietnamese shamans, Korean psychiatrists and other scholars.

One aspect of Attia's video work is of particular personal interest to me—this being the notion that the experience of national trauma through external intrusion or colonization can paradoxically be a connective link which strengthens the collective consciousness of the suppressed majority. The collective memory of trauma brings members of society together and makes them members of the mainstream. This has the effect of ostracising strangers who have no memory of such events, or were not involved. In the end, the members of the majority society that were attacked and invaded by the other then exclude strangers, or those who did not experience and share the trauma.

In the exhibition *Mediations* (Jeu de Paume, Paris, 6 Feb- 30 May 2018) by Susan Meiselas (b 1948, USA) there was a work entitled *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1991-ongoing). This is an archival and documentary work examining how Kurdistan, an ethnic community with no physical country, exists in reality and can be defined. Meiselas' work looks at the cultural identity of the ethnic community and the various political issues that confront them

The Kurdish people live across Turkey, Iraq and Syria and do not have a country of their own, yet they maintain their roots and hold onto their identity. Meiselas began recording the evacuation of families, and the search for the remains of relatives of Kurdish survivors in northern Iraq where a massive genocide of the Kurds was committed in 1987 and 1988 by Saddam Hussein. Since then, she has been searching for Kurdish migrant communities and collecting and recording various materials. Through a variety of documents, family photographs, maps, and individual stories, she tries to reveal the collective memory and identity of the Kurdish people. (fig.16)

The Kurds have been historically defined as outsiders wherever they lived, and are not recognised or incorporated into the mainstream societies to which they belong. In the interviews for her work, she asked a Kurd who lived in Turkey when he came from, and he replied that he was from Turkey. This is because Kurdish people know if they answer that they are Kurdish, too many questions will follow. Ordinary people do not really understand the concept of an ethnic group without a nation. They also wonder why a minority would want to keep their ethnicity without being assimilated into the resident country, as assimilating with the majority culture seems like the better option. But Meiselas insists throughout her long-standing work that this is not such a simple matter.



(Fig. 16) Susan Meiselas, *Kurdistan*, 1997



(Fig. 17) Susan Meiselas, *Kurdistan: Archive project*, 1991-2008

I think resistance against minorities is a logical instinctive human defence mechanism that distances and rejects the new. However, my experience living as a rejected outsider means that I can work while looking at society through a variety of perspectives seen only by the stranger.

Through my new ongoing work, *The Marginal Man*, I am exploring what defines race, cultural nationality, outsiders, members of a nation and their shared identity and citizenry through a series of processes and images over time. I hope to find answers to my questions regarding how an independent individual, defined as 'The Stranger' by Alfred Schutz, enters a foreign country and adapts to life there through trial and error, and whether over time the stranger can be assimilated into the mainstream society or culture. Unfortunately, the answer is already set for both the artist and the audience of the work.

## 2.2 Use of Archival Material

*"I like these strange monoliths that sit in this no place," Dean writes of the sound mirrors, aware that "no place" is the literal meaning of "utopia." They exist in a "no time" for her too-though here "no place" and "no time" also mean a multiplicity of both: "The land around Dungeness always feels old to me: a feeling impossible to explain, other than it is just 'unmodern' ... To me it feels 1970s and Dickensian, prehis-toric and Elizabethan, Second World War and futuristic. It just doesn't function in the now."*

I was able to find a few intriguing ideas within Hal Foster's piece, *Archival Impulse* (2004, p.15). Tacita Dean referred to a useless concrete sound receiver in Dengie, located near Kent's Dungeness, as a giant 'sound mirror', equating a nonplace with utopia.

The building is a military facility constructed in response to warnings of incoming air strikes from Europe, but Tacita Dean made it into a useless thing that transcends time and space.

Tacita Dean argues that useless objects and architecture, almost like archival materials, function as an entrance connecting an incomplete history to the future.

I was fascinated by her interpretation, and the reason behind this also connects with my original question.

Living as someone in the present, I began to question the meaning of my continual interest in and investigation of times gone and events that had taken place before I was born. In particular, for an artist like me who photographs and films directly himself, I end up dealing only with the present, and given I can only be in one place at any given time, I encounter limitations. As a person existing only in one place, archives act as a connecting link to the past and present to which I do not have access.

In Arlette Farge's book, *The Allure of the Archives*, there is a line that reads: '*the archive plays with truth as with reality*'. This line likely has many interpretations, but I took this to mean that, paradoxically, the most important aspect of archival records may not be the 'integrity of the record'. I was extremely fascinated by the reference to the archive as a material that plays with truth.

These interests of mine later led on to *In Search of Nessie*, in which I investigated fabricated materials and records that impact on real lives and places.

*The archives do not necessarily tell the truth, but, as Michel Foucault would say, they tell of 'the truth. Namely, the unique way in which they expose the mode of speech of an individual,*(Farge, 2013, p.29)

## Chapter Three

### The Marginal Man

#### 3.1 The Marginal Man

Everett Verner Stonequist (1901-1979) was an American sociologist, perhaps best known for his 1937 book, *The Marginal Man*.

*'The marginal person is poised in the psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds...within which membership is implicitly if not explicitly based upon birth or ancestry...and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations.'*



(Fig.18) Shinwook Kim, New Malden, 2017



(Fig.18) Shinwook Kim, New Malden, 2017

American sociologist Everett Verner Stonequist earlier defined the term ‘marginal man’ in the same way. For me, the marginal man, is someone who, having left their home for somewhere new, is suspended across two places and excluded from both.

The fact that one person hangs across two separate places, but does not fit perfectly into either, brings about a great deal of problems and confusion for the individual. During my long period living abroad, I was never able to completely assimilate, I became very interested in the concept of the marginal man.

I naturally developed an interest in New Malden, the area on London’s outskirts in which the defector community is based. New Malden is known for having a high population of Koreans, but to me it felt like an area of translocality.

I first came across the concept of the ‘translocal’ while reading the book, *Trans-locality and the Reinterpretation of Border*, in which the concept of border is reinterpreted outside the level of nation, and redefines it within an understanding of the dynamic phenomena of border-crossing and migration.

The defectors now settled in the UK have engaged in the action of border-crossing in search of freedom and a new life. They have been estranged from their home and are trying to adjust to life in a new place. Though New Malden (where they have settled) is clearly in the UK, it is possible to go about daily life to a certain extent only using Korean. For these people, unused to conversing in English, it is a hybrid place, where the culture and language they are

accustomed too is also mixed in.

It is somewhere you can always see Korean people, and the one place in the UK the Korean language can be heard spoken almost everywhere.

Based on these kinds of place-based characteristics, I focused my attention on New Malden as a settlement for marginal people, and I believed the space to be translocal. I decided to search out defectors living there, unable to fully assimilate into British society.

The defectors are simultaneously marginal people and foreigners in the UK, apostates of the dictatorial regime of North Korea in which they were born and raised, unable to return; they are thus 'perfect others'.

The 'other' I am focussing on here is Spivak's other. The defector named 'Mr Choi' residing in the UK, is a foreigner and the archetype minority within western metropolitan society. One might think he represents the world of North Korea, but in fact Mr Choi does not represent everyone from his hometown.

Yet within British society, the defector will always appear as the archetypal ethnic minority. This shows us how, the symbols of 'North Korea' and 'defector' are formed in the west.

The subaltern Spivak refers to largely focussed on women from the third world and the disadvantaged. Much like the subaltern, this group of defectors living in the UK, a major western country, are voiceless, and are ignored and not listened to.

I referred to Spivak's concept of the 'other', and set my interest on how this foreigner defector, 'Mr Choi', operates and forms within the space that exists between the various unclear and discontinuous political economies, languages, ideologies, labour, and so on.

And what if the subaltern is on the fringes of the fringes—through what methods can they share their own thoughts and opinions?

I became interested in Spivak's concept of the subaltern after observing defector Mr Choi's active efforts to lift up his own voice as someone excluded from all three societies he spans—the UK, South Korea and North Korea.

Through my work on boundaries, I hoped to discover what it was these marginal people were trying to say, and through observing them just as they were, I wanted to look at the complex situations they found themselves in, as well as the construction of the mounting oppression and contradictions they suffered.

Ultimately, the difference of the 'other' that Spivak refers to reveals their otherness, and seeks to find a method of viewing these individuals not as a target existing on the antipode of the central western perspective; a method of accepting and facing them just as they are.

*Firstly, translocality can serve as a fruitful starting point from which to challenge dichotomous geographical conceptions (Agnew 2005), such as space and place, rural and*

*urban, core and periphery.* (Clemens and Patrick, 2013, p.18).

Translocality is defined as “**being identified with more than one location**” (Oakes and Schein 2006, p.13). As such, the concept is used to simultaneously address localities and mobilities within a context.

New Malden as a place of the translocal and transnational. (fig.18)

Despite the indifference towards North Korean defectors (resulting from their ‘strange’ and ‘marginal’ status), a sizeable community has settled in New Malden, London.

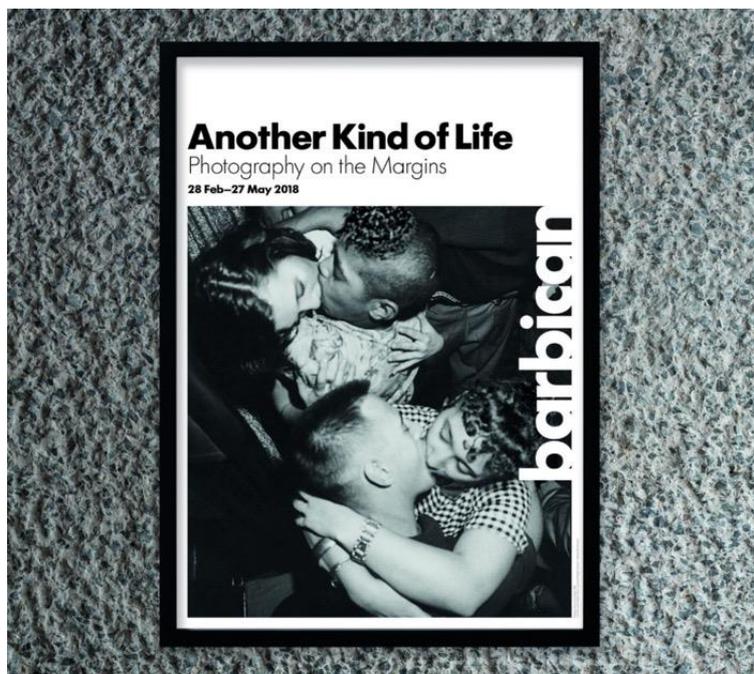
Despite all the experiences I have built up as an artist, throughout the time I have endured living in the UK as a stranger in an unfamiliar place, I have always felt as if I didn’t exist. Regardless of the time I have spent in the UK, due to my ethnicity and lack of language skills, each moment I am here, I am a stranger to each and every person I encounter. I have spent 13 years as a non-existent person in this societal system. I recognise a lot of differences between the UK and my home country of Korea. In the West, I am just seen as a Chinese man, and this has a negative impact on me in a number of ways. From the perspective of the West, it is of no importance whether I am Chinese or not, and they do not see Korean as a separate category. (Similarly, when they come across a Southwest Asian, they immediately think of India first). On the other hand, within my own country, I have become a Korean artist based overseas. Due to my active work as an artist abroad, within Korea I have received interest both in me as an artist and in my work. I have long felt like the stranger and the marginal man. I can clearly sense the alienation and exclusion from society, as well as the sense of distance in these two disparate places. As well as the above-mentioned interests, I am also intrigued by strangers, minorities, and peripheral areas, as I explained at the November 2019 seminar. These interests naturally brought my attention to North Korean defectors living in the New Malden area just outside London.

Both my grandparents and my father were born in North Korea, and fled to South Korea around the time of the Korean War. I have grown up listening to a lot of stories about North Korea. I have always had a basic interest in North Korea and the influence of its culture, and was naturally very interested in the fact that there are so many North Korean defectors living in New Malden. From 2017, therefore, I often visited the New Malden area. About 10 miles from the centre of London, it is a quiet residential area located in Zone 4 of the south western district, about 30 minutes by train from central London or 1 hour by car.

New Malden has the only Korean Town in Europe, and for reasons that are not clear has become a densely populated area of Korean people since the 1990s. Approximately 20,000 Koreans now live in the area. There are basic service industries such as Korean restaurants, grocery stores, travel agencies, beauty salons, and churches, mainly operating for Koreans residing in the UK. It is also known as the most populated area of North Korean defectors in the world outside of South Korea. Currently about 600 to 800 North Korean defectors have settled in the UK, the majority of them living in New Malden.

One day in early 2017, through an acquaintance I was able to meet a North Korean defector living in New Malden. After going for a meal together, I went back to his house to hear more of his stories. The man was in his 50s or 60s, and said he had been a naval officer in North Korea. He had a long military career and prepared for a long time in order to escape. It took him several years to reassure his colleagues and make sure that he would avoid any suspicion in trying to defect. They would often drink secretly together, and through this became closer. Then, one night when his fellow soldiers had fallen asleep drunk, he escaped on a small boat. I listened intently to his story for hours. He was working as a painter-decorator with other Korean Chinese people and North Korean defectors in London. It had been quite a while since he arrived in the UK, but he still wasn't able to communicate in English, meaning that he couldn't even get his bike fixed by himself. After I explained the project and my intention to photograph him, I arranged to meet up with him again. At that time, I was planning to photograph North Korean defectors in New Malden for my project. He readily agreed, and we set a date for our next meeting.

I contacted him to confirm ahead of the shooting, but he suddenly informed me that he would no longer be able to take part. His family in London had persuaded him not to get involved, in case the rest of their family still in North Korea were harmed. He said that he was constantly surveilled. Although it has been quite a while since he defected and settled in England, the spectre of North Korea still controls him. I was unable to persuade him. Through acquaintances, I got in contact with other North Korean defectors who might be willing to be photographed, but no one responded. I felt they were still afraid of the North Korean regime and feared that the rest of their families would be harmed if they were captured in photographs, rather than in texts or drawings. I saw that continuing my involvement would be difficult, and had no choice but to take photos wandering around New Malden.



(Fig.19) *Another Kind of Life: Photography on the Margins* (28 February – 27 May 2018)  
Barbican Art Gallery



(Fig.20) Alec Soth's 'Broken Manual', *Another Kind of Life: Photography on the Margins* (28 February – 27 May 2018) Barbican Art Gallery

The *Another Kind of Life* exhibition (fig.19) held at the Barbican Centre in London in early 2018 was particularly memorable for me. In today's world, it is hard to define what is normal, but the concept of the exhibition was to examine different lives, the lives of minorities, and the people who lie on the outskirts of society. The exhibition also included Alec Soth's *Broken Manual*, a work that captures the space and character of hermits, and a life outside the common standards set by the world. Alec Soth's work (fig.20) includes several types of research materials such as books and interviews, on topics such as how to avoid the world, how to survive in the wild, or how to build a house in the trees. In addition, it was an exhibition revealing in various ways the lives of minorities. One thing that was regrettable was that, though black people as well as sexual minorities were illuminated, there were no works examining Asians, refugees, etc. Even the definition of a 'minority' depends a lot on who the central subject is. There are minorities whose existences are recognised by many people, while some are excluded from society and cannot be seen or revealed to anyone. As a man of East Asia (I think the issues faced by Southwest Asians have received a lot of attention—for example, the East that Edward Said refers to in *Orientalism* refers to the Middle East or Southwest Asia), not an Asian as typically understood by Western society, I am well aware of the extent to which East Asian men are a minority and an invisible existence. But at the same time, I was there by choice, and had the freedom to

leave whenever I wanted.

I have experienced thirteen years of racial discrimination, prejudice and social alienation as a foreigner and an East Asian man, but nevertheless had the freedom to choose whether I stayed or left. The experience of discrimination and humiliation that I faced in this unfamiliar place is pain that followed me simply because I arbitrarily chose to live in the UK.

I think that the North Korean defector living in the UK is one of the most extreme examples of the existence of the marginal man and stranger. For a variety of reasons, including oppression, they risked their lives to escape the place where they were born and raised. North Korea borders China and Russia. If defectors cross the border, it is into China. They defect to China rather than Russia as they are less noticeable there (due to their ethnicity) and because of the relatively short borders between North Korea and Russia. China, however, where defectors risk their lives to enter across the river, is one of the world's most brutal dictatorships. China does not embrace defectors. They capture defectors and send them back to North Korea, traffic them or exploit them for labour. As such, defectors are forced to survive in the worst place in the world. North Korean defectors who manage to survive in China usually end up in Southeast Asia or go directly to South Korea to escape the hell of North Korea and China. Most of them come to South Korea, where they can speak the language and where many North Korean defectors also live. To date, about 33,000 North Koreans have settled in South Korea, and about 600 to 800 North Koreans are known to live in the UK as of 2020.

In early November 2019, I picked up visiting government officials from the Ministry of Unification at Heathrow airport. While driving, I overheard that they had come to the UK to meet a North Korean defector. I asked if I could attend their meeting, but was rejected. Instead, after I dropped them off at the restaurant where they were to meet their guest, I waited for the defector nearby the restaurant. Before the North Korean defector went inside, I was able to find him first, briefly introduced myself, and managed to get his contact information. Afterward, I contacted the defector several times to explain the project, and then visited him three times a week to talk to him and ask whether he would be willing to take part in the work. In this way, since January 2020, I have been asking questions about what borders, strangers, refugees, minorities and hometowns are, via a North Korean defector living in New Malden, England.

With these questions, I hope to make use of the sociological theory of 'the marginal man' to examine the individual existence of a North Korean defector, and the concept of 'translocality' in reference to New Malden, where he lives. (fig.21-22)

Through several interviews, I found out how many times he had escaped from the brink of death before he came to stand before me. Feeling restricted within the place they were born and raised, defectors risk their lives to come out into the wider world. However, other boundaries and limitations await them. They are defined as North Korean defectors, refugees and people existing outside of the mainstream. Because of the miserable reality they experienced in the place they were born and raised, they crossed a number of

boundaries in order to live, confronting the line between life and death.



(Fig.21) Mr Choi at work, 2020

Mr Choi manages logistics in a Korean-run company in New Malden. According to him, due to his lack of language skills, he had no choice but to work under Koreans who had already settled there. He has, however, big goals and dreams. These will be portrayed through my work. His three children were born after he left North Korea, and as a result are growing disconnected from their customs, culture, and language. The disconnection and separation of the first and second generations of the 'marginal man' are underway. According to sociologist Robert Park, the 'first generation of the marginal man' possesses the following three characteristics:

1. Physiological characteristics - unexpected behaviours, behaviours going against customs and manners

2. Psychological characteristics - sensitivity to one's position, excessive self-consciousness, unstable feeling and attitude, chronic nervousness, a sense of inferiority, various compensation mechanisms, boredom, nervous breakdown, mental fatigue, depression

3. Social/psychosocial characteristics - grouping with the same migrants, efforts to

improve their status (fight, martyrdom, or heroic behaviour)



(Fig.22) Mr Choi at home, 2020

Through this work, I hope to ask what we mean by 'hometown'. I also want to investigate what it means to 'marginal men' when they are unable to assimilate into their new settlements and are not accepted by the existing members of this new society, as well as questioning whether there are any things that can be discovered only by leaving one's hometown. In addition, I would like to define New Malden as a 'translocal' place that has recently emerged beyond 'non-placeness', and also to explore 'periphery and boundary', also long-standing concerns of my work.

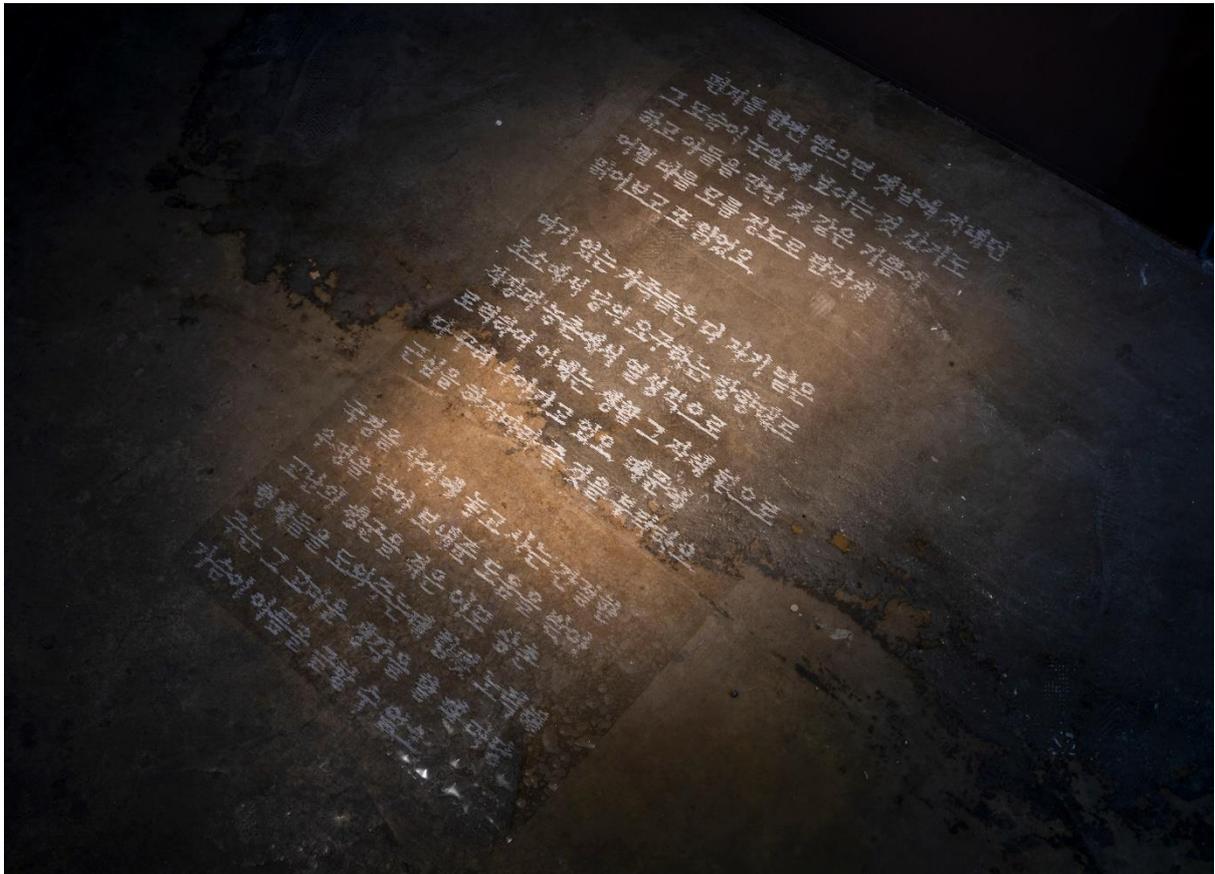
My solo exhibition, *The Marginal Man*, held in Seoul in November 2021, was a visualization of what I understood of physical borders, and the hybrid location of New Malden on the peripheries of the city.

In that exhibition, marginal man Mr Choi took part himself as the narrator, and the exhibit was formed around photographs I had taken as well as extracts from his personal documents. A foreigner who has left his home; a marginal man never able to assimilate, though it has been twenty years since settling in this new place; an Asian man living in the UK; a Korean from the

other side unable to fit in completely with the South Korean crowd; an outsider that belongs nowhere, tired of the opportunism and snobbery of other defectors in the same situation. Through this exhibition, I hoped to question the meaning of hometown, the place in which one is raised-to ask what the marginal man is, as someone trying hard but failing to assimilate; as well as the marginality of this Korea Town known as New Malden.



(Fig.23-25) The Marginal Man, Shinwook Kim Solo Exhibition, Place MAK, Seoul, Korea, 2021



In addition to the local surroundings and cultural hybridity repeatedly revealed in the works of Alec Soth and Kader Attia, I am also interested in the topics of disputes and the lives of refugees dealt with by Irish photographer Richard Mosse through his book, *The Castle*, and exhibitions. I am also fascinated by the sense of societal alienation and intimacy between, and heterogeneity across, family members revealed within Masahisa Fukase's works, such as *Memories of Father and Family*.

*'The more powerful or dominant group does not expect to adjust itself to the others; it is the subordinate group which is expected to do the adjusting, conforming, and assimilating-or remain apart'* (Park, 1928, p.881)

### 3.2 New Malden as a Translocal

If Utopia is a fantasy world that does not exist in reality, then Heterotopia is a society that does exist in the real world. Heterotopia refers to a heterogeneous world, however, something different from the everyday world that we live in. It describes a space that provides an entirely different experience, and an entirely different awareness. New Malden for example, where many Koreans are based, is a Heterotopia despite being located in the suburbs of London—it is a mixture of the UK, North Korea and South Korea. It cannot be defined within a singular spatial concept. It is a space with an uncategorisable system of rules where one can witness scenes of a heterogeneous life. To put it into one phrase, it is a space that makes 'singularity' its own special trait. Or, to think of it another way, it is a 'completely different space that is divided in every way from other spaces in society'—the space is pluralistic, multiplistic, dispersive and heterogeneous. Here, Heterotopia (whatever its real contents are, and on whatever basis it is divided) refers to a space lying outside the limits of what a single society sets as 'day-to-day' or 'normal'. Heterotopias are spaces that fundamentally cannot exist within an actual place—they are varied, heterogeneous and numerous. They can also reflect and juxtapose boundaries—this principle of juxtaposition can be found lying in the outskirts of London, in New Malden. It is the UK, and is not confined to either North or South Korea. It exists as the archetypal Korea (it has even been referred to as the 'already-unified Korea', nicknamed 'New Mal-dong', with 'dong' meaning district). In other words, New Malden has been positioned as a place that maintains 'the nucleus of the Korean race'. In this way, New Malden is both a 'different place' and a 'place of others'. It is a Heterotopia integrated in a form that cannot be altered to fit inside the UK, South Korea, North Korea, or any other image.

Since the beginning of 2020, the rapid spread of Coronavirus has made it difficult to move actively across borders. For the effective prevention of spread, countries have closed their borders and strengthened their boundaries. Travelling to another country—something that

had been so easy a mere few months ago—has become an arduous process requiring testing and two weeks of self-isolation. This might become a decisive turning point in cementing opposition to the tide of globalisation.

From the 1980s onwards, with easing Cold War-tensions and the fall of Communism, international desire for trade and cooperation led to rapid and continued globalisation. We can see events such as the election of Donald Trump and Brexit in 2016 as opposition to ongoing globalisation and flow of movement. These oppositions may be further strengthened by the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, and we can expect to live in a world with limited mutual movement for a while longer.

With the current restriction of physical borders, what will happen to the interest in translocality that promotes border crossing and migration? We will come to see in the near future the physical limits of national borders as even more fixed and immovable. If borders of the pre-Coronavirus generation were open and fluid, with boundaries that we could cross, and where all sorts of possibilities converged, the opposite is soon to become true. This is likely to accelerate the desire for exchange within the ‘marginal people’ and ‘strangers’ who feel more readily the barriers of physical borders, and stir in them questions and anxieties regarding identity.

The subtitle to W. G. Sebald’s 1992 novel *The Emigrants (Die Ausgewanderten)* reads ‘Four Long Stories’ (*Vier lange Erzählungen*). The tales of four emigrants are recorded within four short stories. All the characters, for a variety of reasons emigrated abroad when they were young. The majority are Jewish, and due to situations at the time were forced to move to new places, living their whole lives unable to recover from the pain of losing their homelands.

After leaving their hometowns and starting again somewhere new, the author tells how these individuals’ lives unfold, eventually to death, in a stripped-back writing style. With one emigrant at the centre of the story, the book tells of four individuals living as strangers in foreign lands. The book’s characters, who live for many years as strangers, eventually choose suicide, or otherwise a life little different from death. Though each narrative is different, the dark and distorted lives of the characters are held together by the common title of ‘emigrant’. The descriptions, placed side-by-side with actual archival material, are so detailed and arouse such subtle emotion that it almost doesn’t feel like a novel, blurring the line between fact and fiction. Whilst reading, I wondered about the things that cause emigrants pain, and where the wounds and hurt that emigrants and ‘marginal people’ carry for their whole lives originate from. I, too, lived for thirteen years as a perfect stranger, outside of the mainstream in London.

During the time spent as a ‘stranger’, you go unrecognised and are unable to build up of a meaningful history. I have memories from the latter half of my time in London of not being full no matter how much I ate, and only being able to carry on with the help of hard liquor.

As time went on, the wounds from the unkind treatment and disregard I would receive on a day-to-day basis did not heal, becoming deeper and festering. I couldn't stand the idea that things might continue on as they were, and as my time as a stranger grew longer, my dependence on alcohol grew more severe, and with it my blood pressure rose.

To a certain extent I was able to understand the sense of loss experienced by the characters in Sebald's novel, and what was causing them pain. One thing I did wonder and question was, given that the characters were of the same skin colour (white) as the people of the countries they emigrated to, wouldn't they be able to live a relatively harmonious existence, as long as their language (English) was fluent enough? As an East Asian man in the UK, I had to put up with being treated like an 'idiot Chinese tourist' every moment.

The characters in these four stories have no choice but to leave their homes at a young age. They spend almost their whole lives in foreign countries, never to return home. The stories in the novel hold a deep connection with the project I am currently working on, *The Marginal Man*. The project, which I described in the previous chapter, tells the stories of North Korean defectors who have left their homes and now live in the UK. Like the characters in Sebald's novel, for a variety of reasons they lost their hometowns. In addition to the man I previously mentioned, I intend to tell an additional two stories of North Korean defectors living in London.

The concepts of translocality, along with that of the transnational, are geographical concepts commonly used within social sciences. The transnational refers to border-crossing on a macroscopic level from country to country, whereas the translocal refers to something that occurs within the state, traversing across boundaries from one locality to another. One other important feature that differentiates translocality from transnationalism is that the former is based on a concrete place—usually an area or place within the unit of the state. This concept of translocality is helpful for understanding the dynamic alternative socio-political topographic movements that are born within the more microscopic level of the 'local' to resist the centralised, top-down, oppressive impact of the state. Mr Junghwa Choe, whom I mentioned previously, represents the translocal life of the 'marginal' as he comes and goes between Yeonbyeon, Seoul, and New Malden. Using the stories of two more men, one born in 1928 in Chongju, Pyongan Province, and another born in Hongwon County, South Hamgyong Province in 1950, I intend to establish what happens to the lives of those forced to separate from their birthplace through additional work and research.

## Chapter Four

### ~~4. Current Projects~~

#### 4.1 In Search of Nessie

##### *In Search of Nessie* (2018-2020)

Alongside the projects I stubbornly pursued surrounding airports—*Unnamed Land: Air Port City* (2015-2020), *Night Spotting* (2015-2016) and *Myrtle Avenue* (2013-2020)—at the beginning of 2018, I embarked on a new project entitled *In Search of Nessie*. It began with my 2005 freshwater fish project, and was based on my long-standing research interest in water, underwater organisms and the environment. I started this work at the point I had grown exhausted by my work loitering around the airport. With my personal fascination with fresh water and the life within it as the foundation, I became intrigued by ecology, ethnic anthropology, and a variety of cultural perspectives.

The legend of the Loch Ness Monster first appeared in Catholic history as Saint Columba's encounter with a creature in Loch Ness.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 565 A.D. in Lake Ness, which flows into Loch Ness, Saint Columba supposedly cried out upon seeing someone carried off by a monster into the water.

Since then, there were intermittent stories passed on by word of mouth about a monster in the lake, and it was the 1930s in which the legend with which we are so familiar today took the form of a physical photograph, and eyewitness testimonies began to proliferate alongside.

In 1993, the A82 road was opened in Scotland, running from Glasgow to Inverness via Fort William. Given this road runs alongside Loch Ness, people could reach the lake by car—it was then that eyewitness accounts noticeably increased.

Producing work is one way of telling a story. What stories do we find interesting? There are stories that continue to haunt us long after we have heard them. Some stories travel back and forth between time and space, yet remain active. These stories, which have enough vitality to reach beyond generation and region, are preserved by naming them as myth or superstition. The project began with the question of where and how such stories begin, and how they might affect real life and culture.

Loch Ness, an enormous lake in Scotland's northern Highland region, dating back to the Ice Age, is a place of myth that sets the stage for ancient legends through its unobservable

depth, unpredictable weather, old medieval castles, 'water horse', and so on. The idea that there could be a dinosaur-like creature named Nessie existing in its waters is widely known around the world. A photograph of a mysterious creature, taken as a prank in 1934 by surgeon Robert Wilson, triggered a long-standing myth embedded in Mother Nature, which would go on to become the target of consumption and distribution. In those days, when we were unable to measure nature's depth and extent, the old myth, which referenced unknown locations, was rekindled through visually manipulated photographic images, arousing a wide number of questions. Are fiction and manipulation among the elements that form and maintain myths? Ideas around the Loch Ness Monster, which exists between truth and fabrication, as well as the hide-and-seek between humans and nature that surrounds it, have spread via visual and cognitive errors, through manipulation of images and through myth regarding a target of an unknown substance. Is mythology a fiction overwritten by elements in the past we were unable to comprehend, or is it the yearning and curiosity for the unquestionable unknown? How are stories associated with particular places created, and how do they become myth, maintaining their vitality across time and place?

The Guinness World Records notes an individual who investigated Nessie for 46 years, and another self-proclaimed 'Nessie Hunter' who has been searching for the mysterious creature for over 30 years. I did not intend to prove Nessie's (non-)existence, but instead desired to uncover how invisible myths permeate a real place and create a variety of devices designed to imagine the monster through the surrounding landscape, characters and various archives. Through this work, I intended to find the elements of a myth that are created, spread, propagated and maintained within a particular place.

*The man (Steve Feltham), dreaming of seeing the monster with his own eyes, has spent the past thirty years observing Loch Ness. He made the monster figurines himself out of clay to sell to tourists. On his website he reveals how he first got sucked into the search for Nessie. Reading his story, I came across a vivid example of how the physical components of cinematic apparatus capture the imagination of children.*

*'This subject has fascinated me since a family holiday in 1970, when I was seven. It was then that we visited the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau, a team of volunteers who each summer set up a makeshift camp on the Lochness near Urquhart Castle, from where they mounted round-the-clock surveillance in the hope of filming Nessie. What really caught my imagination was the platform they had built, on which they had mounted a cine camera and tripod; the lens alone must have been a metre long. Grown men looking for monsters? Fantastic!'*

Text by Un-Seong Yoo from the catalogue of The 7th Amado Photography Award Shinwook Kim Solo Exhibition 《In Search of Nessie》, 19th November - 20th December, 2020

Rene Girard argues that in modern society, strangers are scapegoated. Claude Lévi-Strauss

saw the myth of monsters as ‘a device for controlling time’. His fundamental idea was that the monster is a hybrid creation operating within the structural axis of opposition between nature (based in earth and chaos) and culture. Stories of monsters allow us to symbolically analyse the riddles (of our origins, of time, birth, death, etc) that cannot be solved within the ordinary level of historical experience. I hoped to reveal fragmented images and to disrupt how they operate, intending to find out how and through what processes they give meaning to a particular place.

What makes a story (a myth) and how is it maintained and operated?



(Fig. 26) Knockie Lodge, from the series of *In Search of Nessie*, 2019

#### 4.2 Going to Loch Ness

To answer the questions that arose during my investigation, I went to Scotland. I wondered, even if there was only one person who still believed in it, why that was the case, and through what means a groundless tale creates real life and value. And so, as mentioned above, I met numbers of different people, and made ten trips to shoot and conduct field surveys.

I had doubts as to whether I could approach the deep-set, long-standing story of this myth through only two years of shooting and interviews, and through looking at data and photographs.

From my research into the Loch Ness Monster, I discovered the story had a far longer history than I had expected, and does not finish with the simple statement 'there is a monster in Loch Ness'.

The simple sentence, 'there is a monster', forms a far more intricate plot than one would expect. There are various historical backgrounds, as well as multiple individuals for whom the monster needs to exist. For children, it offers a fantasy, and for adults, a practical profit. Within the modern consumer system, this mythological fetish has morphed into a means of making money.

It was after I had begun to feel a thirst similar to the above that I started collecting and purchasing archive photographs.

Even if I were to spend years staking-out by the lake, build a house beside it, and live there my whole life, I would never be able to retrace the time and history of the lake and the tales that have saturated it. I worked hard to physically collect the stability of this story and myth, naturally perpetuated by those before us, and evidence it visually.

As it was something I could not do directly, I hoped to trace back the story chronologically through faithful gathering and recording. I thought that through this I might be able to draw a little closer to the intricate plot masked within the story.

I continued to gather documents that'd been scattered across the world, and give shape to my intentions in a far more visual, physical, and concrete manner through the exhibition.

Within the exhibition space, I wanted to stimulate the audience's fascination not only through the photographs I had taken, but also using the various original documents I had legitimately purchased.

The fundamental strength that gave this story life came from how it drew people's interest.

My exhibition was no different to a research laboratory visually embodying this fundamental intention of the myth. A variety of objects and archive materials drew viewers' interest, becoming bait for their fascination. Through this, regardless of whether they believe or not, if nothing else they would become aware of the story's existence and have their interests sparked.

The various materials I had gathered made the fictional world into something elaborate and visual, disturbing people's viewpoints and awareness. The archive materials and objects I collected as part of my work and exhibition represented Nessie and moved between reality and imagination, fiction and truth.

The space in Seoul, in which my solo-exhibition *In Search of Nessie* was held from November to December 2020, best embodied the intentions for my work.



(Fig. 27-29) *In Search of Nessie*, AMADO Art Space, Seoul, Korea, 2020

The exhibition was arranged across eleven rooms, and largely divided into four topics:

1. Nature 2. Economy 3. Religion 4. Science.

I aimed to classify our awareness and responses surrounding the lake across these four broad frameworks.

The section on nature, arranged on the ground floor of the exhibition space, showed the sublime aspect of the lake and the enormity of nature through photographs I had taken.

Within the first-floor space, the economy section brought into focus the present tourism business related to the lake.

The separate greenhouse space was where I arranged the section on religion, which was where the myth of the monster first came about. Here, I displayed a huge book project and set up something like a small sanctum.

When opened up, the 40x50cm book project reached 90cm wide, and thus was large and physical. The work was formed as a collage of images I had taken myself as well as from the archive books I had found. I read all of the text from a 1954 book I had discovered, which told

the story of the lake, and included images connected with its contents or that might be disturbing.

My idea behind the installation was to spread the book on top of an altar that appeared almost holy, and the size and weight of the book was intended to make people feel as if they were looking at something serious and precious, even though the work had actually been based on fabrication and imagination.

I made the book directly by hand, and the production process itself took seven working days. I printed it myself and sewed it three times using a sturdy thread.

The science section, on the basement floor of the exhibition space, was organised as past archives of those who had tried, through various methods, to track down the Loch Ness Monster, as well as installation works and photographs I had taken of scientists, and interviews I had done with individual researchers. The space displaying the installation piece was inspired by Adrian Shine's research laboratory, and I tried to recreate the impression I had had when I visited his workspace on the first floor of the building in Drumnadrochit next to Loch Ness.

To me, it felt like a film set; as if the objects in his laboratory, rather than being for actual research, were simply to give the *impression* that he was someone researching the Loch Ness Monster.

That space operates as an element to substantialise a story whose substance is vague. Through this, audiences witness visually a substance-less myth become realised physically.





(Fig. 27-29) *In Search of Nessie*, AMADO Art Space, Seoul, Korea, 2020

Within my work, archive documents disperse place and non-place, and help reform myth. A tale unseeable and ungraspable is made into something physical and visual, and the story's historical origins and development over time are displayed.

In the October 2004 article, 'An Archival Impulse', Hal Foster(2004, p.3,22) wrote the following:

*In the first instance archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present. To this end they elaborate on the found image, object, and text, and favor the installation format as they do so. (Frequently they use its nonhierarchical spatiality to advantage-which is rather rare in contemporary art.)*

*Finally, the work in question is archival since it not only draws on informal archives but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private.*

*Perhaps all archives develop in this way, through mutations of connection and disconnection, a process that this art also serves to disclose. "Laboratory, storage, studio space, yes," Hirschhorn remarks, "I want to use these forms in my work to make spaces for the movement and endlessness of thinking...."10 Such is artistic practice in an archival field.*

As Hal Foster said, it was the historical nature of the legend of Loch Ness, and the

contradictions that exist within this history, which made me interested in archival material. I collected the seemingly less important records, as well as materials related to the various research into the lake, and set up the exhibition in order to physically display the assorted examples of what allowed this story to exist as something tangible.

The arrangement and installation of the archival materials mingles the evidence-based properties of the archive with its time-based properties. This type of archive installation symbolises the non-linear nature of the Loch Ness Monster narrative.

Just like Hal Foster said, I hoped that audiences of *In Search of Nessie*, unclear of what is true and what is not, would think on and on about Loch Ness' various tales.

Mark Dion is an artist who creates works by gathering objects, sorting them, and then confusing the contexts. I had long since been interested in his methods of gathering and arranging objects, and ended up going to see his solo exhibition in Seoul. In 2021, I went to see Mark Dion's solo exhibition held in the Barakat Contemporary in Seoul, in which fabrication and reality appeared jumbled in together.

Since the mid-1980s, American artist Mark Dion has travelled the world as an amateur ecologist, nature researcher, collector, archaeologist, and ornithologist, to name a few.

By classifying and arranging the variety of objects and collections he has gathered from a designated place, and then setting them within the exhibition space, Mark Dion creates a new context.

In *The Sea Life of South Korea and Other Curious Tales*—whose subject was the health of Korea's sea and the diversity of its living creatures—Dion presented two large-scale works showing the process of analysis-collection/classification-exhibition, alongside the key sculptures and drawings that represent the past thirty years of his work.

The exhibition began with Dion's 'Cabinet of Marine Debris', consisting of the ocean plastic he'd collected from Korea's southern and eastern seas, continuing with immersive diorama, 'Sea Life of South Korea', a recreation of an anonymous marine biologist's laboratory.

In addition to this, he introduced for the first time commemorative sculptures and new drawings that encourage critical introspection regarding the relationship between nature and human culture, a focus of his work for the past thirty years.

Through the exhibition display, which felt like something straight out of an ocean research institute or a natural history museum, Dion imitated the museum's roles of digging up and reclassifying relics, and presenting a reorganised history.

Dion's cabinet work began with the 1996 project in which he displayed in a cabinet the objects he had collected while travelling across Germany's Baltic and North Seas. His series of cabinet projects—for the 1997 Venice Biennale, a 1999 Tate Modern exhibition, and later a 2000 New York Museum of Modern Art exhibition—became a key topic within Dion's art world, and an art practice he repeated over and over across a long period of time.

The works presented in this exhibition, in which nature and artifact, reality and performance, past and present all interact, go beyond the question of time and whether or not something is real, making many people aware of the severity of the environmental problems resulting from rubbish in the ocean, and carrying the message of hope that they might work together to preserve the ocean environment.

Dion's work is significant in how it combines and exhibits things that do and do not exist, distorting the real and imaginary, and creating new meaning.

And *In Search of Nessie* was not asking simply whether or not the monster exists, but questioning the true substance of this old story surrounding nature and humanity. The 11 minute 8 second dual channel moving image work shows my intention well.

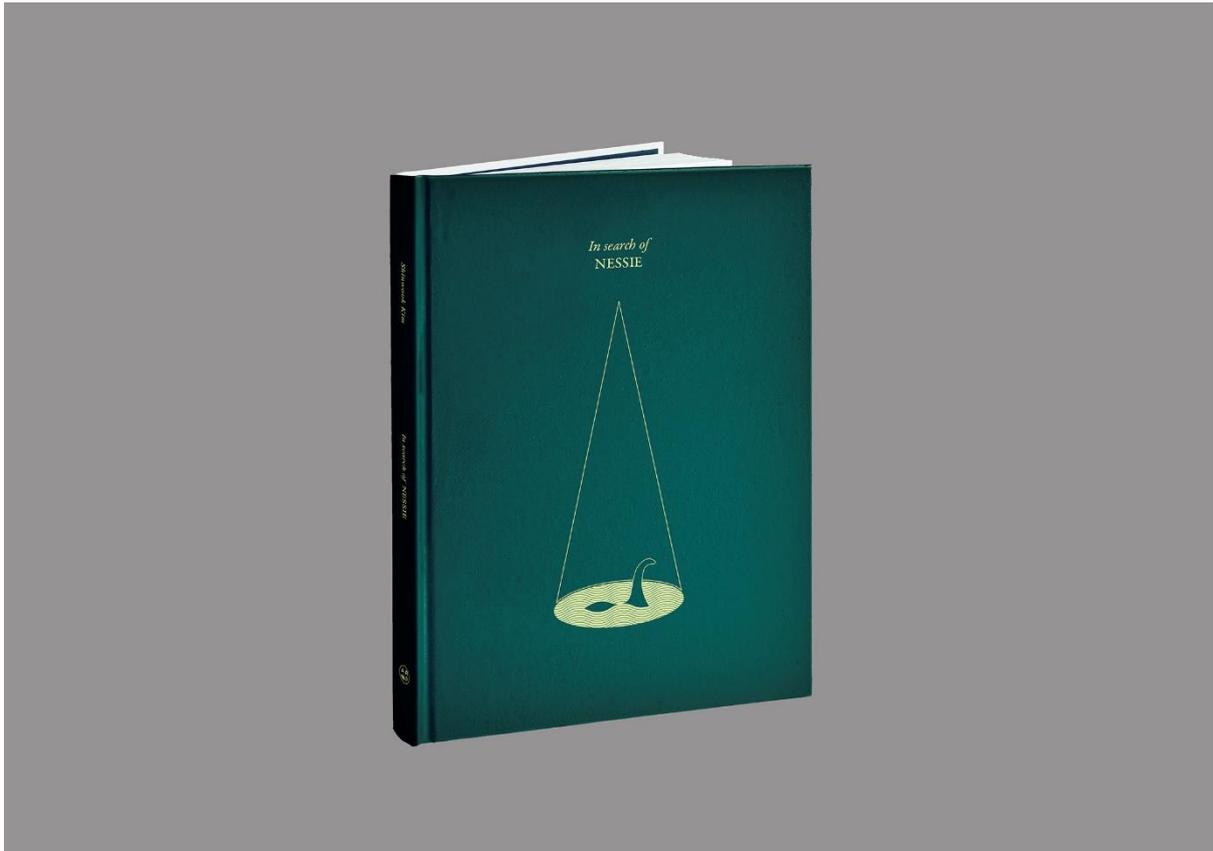
Loch Ness' tranquil surroundings are shown on the left side, and at the same time on the right are shown the variety of incidents related to the lake, interviews I had filmed, and archive film materials I had collected. With this work I aimed to caricature how people have squabbled for so long, while nature remains there as it always has been.

These archives and objects represent our collective imagination surrounding the myth. With this background, it was a given to me that the current series would ultimately remain on as a book, easy to hold in one's hand and easy to transport.

To put it simply, an exhibition is tied to a moment and instant in time, but a book has a relatively long life. From when I was first planning this series, I'd decided that I needed to make a book.

As my work began to take more shape, I debated a great deal about how I would make the book. I thought about the book's format, organisation, as well as the appropriate arrangement of the photographs I had taken and the archive materials I had purchased.

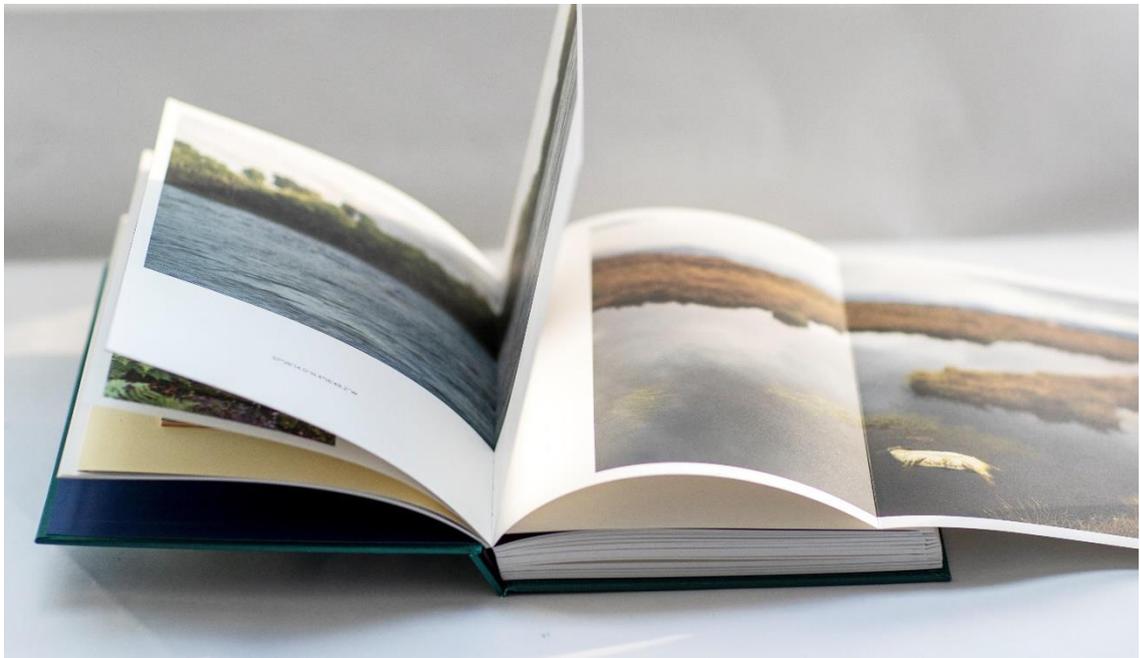
To begin with, I decided that for the format, the book should not be too large. I wanted it to feel like a handy introductory travel guide to searching for the Loch Ness monster that you could hold in your palm.



(Fig. 30-32) *In Search of Nessie*, ARP, 2021

I decided on the colour the Loch Ness monster brings to mind—green, the colour of dinosaurs. For the cover design, I used a gold illustration that intuitively symbolises the search for the Loch Ness Monster.

I chose a square-shaped design, which expressed the caricature of the Loch Ness Monster and the act of searching for it.



(Fig. 30-32) *In Search of Nessie*, ARP, 2021

The key chapters of the book naturally connected with the four sections of the exhibition mentioned above:

1. The natural environment of the lake,
2. The people searching for Nessie,
3. Tourists.

The three topics are the most important and straight-forward elements of the lake, and when these three elements operate organically, they function as the myth of the place.

At first, those reading the book come into contact with real information contained through a pamphlet displayed alongside photographs of the lake's scenery, and can see images of the lake's various environments and vegetation.

In the second chapter, readers see those across all time periods and spaces who have searched for the Loch Ness Monster, as well as documents I had gathered. The beginning of the third chapter, using a pamphlet aimed at providing information to tourists as the basis, shows how the lake's surroundings have been intricately formed with the purpose of drawing in visitors.

This book is different from holding my aforementioned exhibition in one's hands.

I'd originally put together the exhibition before producing the book, and so I got all the real-life objects out, arranged them on a wall, and put them together again within a flat-surfaced object.

I intended for the exhibition I earlier explained to be effectively contained within a book. I emphasised the accessibility of a material that anyone can approach with ease, but open the book and it is filled with endless historical traces and stories.

Inside the book are images folded into three parts which you can open out, making best use of the book's properties. As well as being enjoyable for readers, tied in is the myth's attribute of searching for a hidden story.

There are eleven of these folding-out pages, and most of them contain images I wanted to focus on, or archive materials which feel like opening up a book with in a book or a postcard.

300 copies of the complete text in English were produced and distributed, as well as 150 copies of the Korean translation, which include a Korean booklet.

In 2021, the work was selected as a grant recipient for international distribution of an art book by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and is kept in the Tate Modern and The Museum of Modern Art in New York, amongst others.

### **The Loch Ness Monster as a Scapegoat**

For the purpose of granting power to their religion, people needed a monster—not one that lived in their own villages or towns, but within a 'placeless place'. It was for religious

reasons that word was first spoken of a mythical being living in an enormous lake.

*In 563 A.D., Saint Columba of Ireland went with a group of his colleagues and followers to Iona Island, found off the coast of Scotland. Here they built a monastery, which went on to become the largest monastery across the whole of the Irish Church. Saint Columba dedicated himself to sharing the gospels with the Picts of Scotland. He converted the King, and in the end successfully evangelised across the whole of the Picts' land. Behind this great success lay a single miracle. Living in the River Ness was a huge monster, which Saint Columba is said to have banished with prayer and the sign of the cross. From then on, his virtuosity became widely known, and the eminence of this miracle brought a sudden increase in the number of visitors to the monastery.*

*Saint Columba, known as the Apostle of the Picts, had a huge impact on the Western Church. Monks from the monastery he set up in Iona went out across the whole of Europe, and until the Rule of Saint Benedict took root, the Rule he established was employed across the whole continent. He became recognised for how he lived embracing the joy of the Holy Spirit. Alongside Saint Patrick and Saint Brigid of Kildare, Saint Columba is honoured as one of the three patron saints of Ireland.*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 565 A.D., with his holy assertion Saint Columba defeated the monster that had been terrorising a man in the River Ness. As he travelled further north in Scotland the anecdote was disseminated by the population. This kind of holy ability allowed Catholicism to spread all the more easily across Scotland. This sparks curiosity as to why Saint Columba chose to use a monster in a lake, and whether or not such a monster actually existed. If religion represents good, then we inevitably require an 'other' to call evil. If there were no such things as demons, and no fear of evil, then how would people come to rely on religion? In this case, one might assume that Saint Columba—who'd committed sin in Ireland and travelled to the remote areas of Scotland as a missionary—through desperation or a repentant heart, might have needed this achievement. The ever-changing weather and the vast expanse of nature, the true scope of which is difficult to comprehend, offer a perfect backdrop to the monster narrative. The basis and true substance of incidents that occur within such a place are impossible to precisely comprehend. By performing the miracle of turning polluted water from a well into holy water as he passed by the River and Loch Ness with his companions, and then banishing a deadly monster, Columba's eminence was raised, giving him reason to propagate his holy teachings. The monster that had been killing people in River Ness was an enormous and belligerent being. It is described as a being with overwhelming power—one that ordinary people are helpless against.

Loch Ness, represented as the 'absolute periphery', forms the background to God defeating the Devil. The monster, that lives there by necessity, represents evil and the absolute 'other'. In place of God, Saint Columba defeats the monster with a holy cry, thus earning authority and power comparable to that of God, eventually becoming recorded in history as one of the great saints. What I see here is a monster whose existence is unclear, summoned and used for religious reasons, rejected and then banished. As soon as the monster

appeared wearing the mask of evil and 'other', it needed to be banished—it is thus a scapegoat, stranger, and an enemy. A being that is needed to strengthen internal solidarity, to take on the sins of others, and then disappear to that faraway place. That is what a scapegoat is. According to René Girard's *The Scapegoat*.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Professional Practices**

#### **5.1 Professional Practices During Prof Doc Years 09. 2018 - 06. 2021**

##### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2021 8th Solo Exhibition, Art Space BOAN, Seoul, Korea
- 2020 <In Search of Nessie> The 7th Amado Photography Award Exhibition, Amado Art Space/Lab, Seoul, Korea
- 2020 <The Night Watch> UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea
- 2020 <On the Periphery> BMW Photo Space, Busan, Korea
- 2019 <AIRPORT CITY> KAIST Art & Research Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2018 <Unnamed Land: Air Port City> SPACE 22, Seoul, Korea

##### **GROUP and TWO person EXHIBITIONS**

- 2020 Helsinki Photo Festival, The National Museum of Finland, Helsinki, Finland
- 2020 Riga Photomonth, Riga, Latvia
- 2019 OPEN YOUR STORAGE: History, Circulation and Discourse, Buk Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
- 2019 Night Spotting + Goodbye Stranger (Two Person Exhibition), Seoi Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2019 Postmodern: short stories, Palazzo Tagliaferro Museum, Andora, Italy
- 2019 Postmodern: short stories, The Mall, Milan, Italy
- 2018 10th SKOPF Photographer of the Year (3 person exhibition), GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, Korea
- 2018 ManifestO Rencontres Photographiques de Toulouse, Place Saint Pierre, France
- 2018 META PICS, UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea

##### **AWARDS**

- 2020 Helsinki Photo Festival open call winner, Finland
- 2020 Selected Artist for Riga Photomonth, Latvia
- 2020 Project Grant, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea
- 2020 The 7th Amado Photography Award, Amado Art Space/Lab, Korea
- 2018 Laureates 2018 ManifestO Rencontres Photographiques de Toulouse, France

##### **Residency**

- 2021 Seoul Art Space Geumcheon, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Korea

### **Publications, Article and interview**

2021 06 IN SEARCH OF NESSIE, ARP, Korea, ISBN 979-11-971864-1-7  
2021 01 Art in Culture, Korea  
2021 01 PHOTODOT, Korea  
2020 12 Monthly Art, Korea  
2020 10 THE NIGHT WATCH, ARP, Korea, ISBN 9791197186400  
2020 06 PHOTOWORLD Magazine interview, China  
2020 05 SAJINYESUL interview, Korea  
2020 02 Kukje Newspaper interview, Korea  
2020 02 Busan Ilbo (Newspaper) interview, Korea  
2019 07 Monthly Art, Korea  
2019 06 Interview 'Monthly Photography', Korea  
2019 05 SAJINYESUL, Korea  
2019 03 VOSTOK 14, Korea  
2019 01 SAJINYESUL, Korea

### **My Art Practice Before Covid-19 In the UK, Italy and Korea**

From 27<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018, I held a solo exhibition in Seoul. (fig.36-38) I also took part in an exhibition with two other artists from 1<sup>st</sup> December in Busan's Goeun Museum of Photography. (fig.39-41)

In addition to this, in March 2019 I participated in the MIA Photo Fair in Milan, Italy. (fig.42-43) In July of the same year, I also took part in a group exhibition in Andorra, Italy.(fig.44-46)

During my second year I intended to develop and complete the works I had been creating, and to successfully run my various planned exhibitions. In September 2019, at the beginning of this second year, I held a joint-exhibition at Seoi gallery in Seoul, and from 1<sup>st</sup> October took part in an exhibition organized by the Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), one of the most prestigious art museums in South Korea. At a seminar in November, I presented a summary of everything I'd been working on that year, including the recently completed *In Search of Nessie*, as well as my plans for upcoming projects. In January 2020, I was awarded the prestigious 7<sup>th</sup> Amado Photography Award in Korea, and as part of this presented a solo exhibition in November. The work was also selected for the 'solo exhibition project grant' sponsored by the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (SFAC). This was announced in February 2020, and a solo exhibition is planned for June 2021. In March, I became the 2020 Selected Artist for Riga Photomonth Latvia and my works were presented there during May 2020.

In February 2020, my 5<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition was held at BMW Photo Space in Busan. This was the first time my two series of works on airports were exhibited together. Showing both *Night Spotting* and *Unnamed Land: Air Port City* as part of the same exhibition, I was able to see that my views and perspectives on the airport surrounding areas had expanded through

the process of my work.

However, due to the global pandemic, my visiting lecture at the Royal College of Art (RCA) scheduled for March 2020 was delayed, and my 6<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition scheduled to take place in Milan from April to September 2020, along with the Milano Photo Festival, where I was to participate as a representative artist of the CE Contemporary Gallery, were postponed. My 7<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition, originally scheduled to take place in Seoul in May 2020, has also been delayed to 2021. On top of this, I have had to put a hold on all my planned projects, including shooting in Newcastle and in the border area of the Tumen River, China.



(Fig.33-35) 2018 <Unnamed Land: Air Port City> SPACE 22, Seoul, Korea



(Fig.36-38) 2018 <Unnamed Land: Air Port City> SPACE 22, Seoul, Korea



(Fig.36-38) 2018 <Unnamed Land: Air Port City> SPACE 22, Seoul, Korea



(fig.34-36) 2018 10th SKOPF Photographer of the Year (3 person exhibition), GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, Korea



(fig.34-36) 2018 10th SKOPF Photographer of the Year (3 person exhibition), GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, Korea



(Fig.37) 2019 Postmodern: short stories, The Mall, Milan, Italy





(Fig. 38-40) 2019 Postmodern: short stories, Palazzo Tagliaferro Museum, Andora, Italy



(Fig. 38-40) 2019 Postmodern: short stories, Palazzo Tagliaferro Museum, Andora, Italy

## **Work in Progress Seminar November 2019**

My first Work in Progress Seminar of 2019 took place in November. At this seminar, I presented photos from the various exhibits I took part in as well as the ongoing *In Search of Nessie* (2018-2020) project. I mentioned during the seminar that *In Search of Nessie* was almost complete, with several additional shootings having taken place. I was able to contact the DNA research team in New Zealand to learn about their investigation process and the conferences they conducted in Drumnadrochit, Scotland, as well as to see how old myths were regaining life with the help of new science. I experienced vivid scenes where myth continued to build new layers, instead of simply remaining in the past. The team's research and publications were spreading a long-standing myth in real time through the BBC, CNN and even Japanese news channels. As someone who has always been curious about the relationship between myth and science, as well as how myths maintain their 'nowness', it was a highly memorable collaborative process for me. By observing first-hand the various interviews and media conferences related to the DNA studies, I started to think about the reproduction of myth. I was also able to confirm that the story was still spreading with vitality as well as spawning new myths. At the seminar, I also talked about my preparations for a solo exhibition scheduled to take place in Milan in April 2020, and a solo exhibition of the 'airport series' to take place in Busan in February 2020. I talked about the 'stranger' and 'marginal man and his surroundings'. I also explained how the UK is home to the largest number of North Korean defectors outside of South Korea, and how I believe that the term 'defector' conforms to concepts of the stranger and 'marginal man'. Through my own life and experiences, I have worked to reveal the concept of 'stranger' and the matters surrounding it, and this effort is represented by my long-term project about the airport. In my future projects, I will continue to pursue my interest in the lives of individuals who have had to sacrifice their homes, within the context of the vast discourse surrounding migrants, politics, ideology, loss of hometown, and so on. The defector is perhaps the most extreme example of a stranger.

## **Work in Progress Seminar March 2020**

This seminar was initially postponed due to strikes, and eventually cancelled entirely as a result of COVID-19. I have been personally seriously affected by the pandemic. As of April 2020, the number of flights in operation had dropped to 5% of its usual level and almost all international travel has been put on hold. I had been working self-employed as an artist, airport driver and tour guide in London for ten years. All my forms of income have been cut off, and I have no idea when things will return to normal. As of April 2020, I was no longer able to afford my monthly rent or living expenses. I had to delay all my plans for the first half of the year, including the ongoing project in the UK with North Korean defectors, the planned visit to the Tumen River via North Korean border in China, and the shooting in Newcastle. My scheduled lecture at the Royal College of Art, solo exhibition in Milan in early April, and solo exhibition in Seoul in May were all postponed.

## 5.2 A written reflection on professional practice

I held a solo exhibition at BMW Photo Space in Busan, from 3<sup>rd</sup> February to 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2020. (fig.47-51) BMW Photo Space is a specialist photography exhibit space operated by automobile company BMW, where I held a fully-supported solo exhibition as their selected artist. It was my 5<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition and the 3<sup>rd</sup> solo exhibition of my works about the airport. Although I'd exhibited the works in a total of seven group exhibitions in museums and galleries across various countries, this was the first time that two of the series were exhibited together. As the exhibition space was not small, a free-standing wall was set up inside the exhibition hall to divide it into two sections—one for *Unnamed Land: Air Port City* (2015-2020) and one for *Night Spotting* (2015-2016). The exhibition was set up so that visitors could see *Unnamed Land: Air Port City* first before entering the exhibition hall to view *Night Spotting* in a space divided by free-standing walls.

BMW Foto Futures  
신진작가 지원 프로젝트



# On the Periphery

주변에서

2020.02.03(Mon) - 04.11(Sat)

김신욱  
Shinwook Kim

BMW Photo Space 부산시 해운대구 해운대해변로 299 BMW MN빌딩 2F T. 051-752-1630 OPEN 월-금 09:00-18:00 / 토 09:00-15:00 [www.bmwphotospace.kr](http://www.bmwphotospace.kr)





(Fig.41-45) Exhibition view '*On the Periphery*' BMW Photo Space, Busan, Korea, 2020

*Night Spotting* was shot around Incheon and Gimpo Airports in Korea, as well as London Heathrow Airport. Spending nearly seven years going back and forth around various major international airports at all times of day and night, I felt these spaces to be in some ways similar and in some ways different. I could see more differences during the day, and more similarities at night.

Rather than dividing by place, through exhibiting photographs from various different airports together, I intended to reveal the similarities that exist across disparate locations.

It has been seven years since I started shooting around airports in 2013. During that time, I travelled to London Heathrow Airport nearly 3,000 times, and visited Incheon Airport and Gimpo Airport on numerous occasions across all seasons and all times of day. I have also visited the surrounding areas of Gimhae Airport, Yangyang Airport, Wonju Airport (all in Korea), Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, Milan Malpensa Airport, and Dusseldorf Airport for research. As an artist, it was a great pain to go back and forth to the same space (London Heathrow Airport) two or three times a day in order to make a living. It was difficult to accept being treated as an anonymous driver, and to endure a repetitive itinerary, spending time on something that was not developing my career. In the end, however, the time was not wasted, but instead became a stage for frustration and challenge. I think these works and exhibitions provided a good opportunity for me to learn and grow as an artist.

My other exhibitions include one held at the (SeMA) Seoul Museum of Art in 2019, where seventeen airport works were presented. My work was selected as the central piece for the exhibition, displayed on a 7.5 metre-high wall—the tallest wall the SeMA. (fig.52-53)

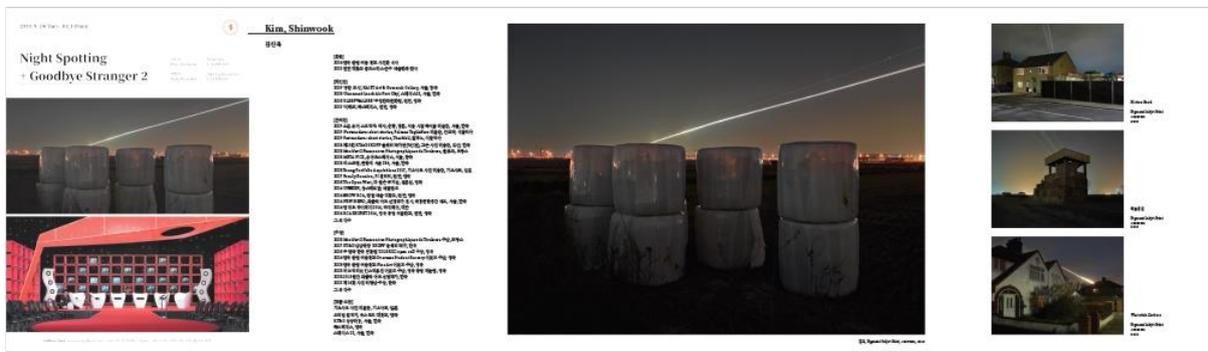


(Fig.46-47) OPEN YOUR STORAGE: History, Circulation and Discourse, Buk Seoul

Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea, Exhibition View, 2019

Since it was my first time to display two-dimensional works on such a high wall, and wouldn't be likely to have that same opportunity often in the future, I wanted to take a risk and experiment with the composition. The wall has two viewing points accessible to visitors on the first and second floors, so I placed the works a little higher. In addition, we made various attempts, based on several preliminary sketches, wanting the pictures to appear randomly arranged on the wall. Through the exhibition display, I aimed to reveal the characteristics of creation and expansion that occur around the airport, slowly eating away at its surrounding area, as well as the group of individuals who have a multi-layered and multi-faceted relationship with the airport. The various aspects of the exhibition installation process, including rendering, measurement, and modifying placements, took a total of 12 hours. It was the longest time I'd ever spent installing a work on a wall, despite planning it in advance. When concentrating on a single image within this kind of dizzily arranged display, you can see the hidden story underneath, and as the images connect to one another, they eventually come together within a larger frame. Like the world of Wikipedia, where pages can be cross-referenced to one another, through my exhibition I wanted to reveal an open and expanding world made up of photographs.

As well as this, in September 2019, I took part in two-person exhibition and 'Artist talk' for the work *Night Spotting* in a gallery in Seoul. (fig.54-56)



(Fig.48-49) Catalogue, *Night Spotting + Goodbye Stranger* (Two Person Exhibition), Seo Gallery, Seoul, Korea, 2019

2019. 9. 24(Tue) - 10. 13(Sun)



# Night Spotting

## + Goodbye Stranger 2

김신욱  
Kim, Shinwook

Artist Talk  
9. 24 PM 4:30

박연두  
Park, Hyundoo

Opening Reception  
9. 24 PM 6:30



Gallery Seoil [www.seoigallery.com](http://www.seoigallery.com) / Tel: 02-762-4900 / Open: AM 11:00 - PM 7:00 (매주 월요일 휴관)



(Fig.50-51) Night Spotting + Goodbye Stranger (Two Person Exhibition), Seoi Gallery, Seoul, Korea, 2019

My new work, *In Search of Nessie* (2018-2020) was announced as the winner of the 7<sup>th</sup> Amado Photography Award in January 2020, with the solo exhibition taking place in Seoul in November that year. This is a highly prestigious photography award in Korea, and is very competitive given that the host supports an individual exhibition and publication of an art brochure, as well as awarding prize money.

I was also selected for a 2020 solo exhibition project grant by the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (SFAC). My solo exhibition was scheduled to be held in Seoul in May 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was chosen as the 2020 Latvia Riga Photomonth Selected Artist, which was scheduled to begin from 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.

A solo exhibition of *In Search of Nessie* in Milan, scheduled from April to September 2020, and the April-June Milan Photo Festival, where I was to participate as a representative artist of the CE Contemporary Gallery, were all postponed due to the pandemic. (fig.57)



(Fig.52) 18 February - 11 May, 2022, *In Search of Nessie* exhibition brochure, Milan, Italy

In March, I was invited as a lecturer to conduct a ‘one-on-one tutorial for students’ and ‘Artist talk’ at the Royal College of Art, but it was postponed due to the pandemic.

In February 2020, I was interviewed by two Korean newspapers, and in March, news of my solo exhibition was aired on Korean television. In April, I was interviewed by Korean and Chinese art and photography magazines, both of which were published in May. (fig.58-59)



01 | 巴斯路 611-613 号, 100×133 厘米, 色索喷墨印刷, 2018 © KIM Shinwook  
02 | 鸟的袭击, 80×100 厘米, 喷墨印刷, 2017 © KIM Shinwook

列作品中, 一条嵌入式视频被投放到山洞壁上。视频中, 一只小船穿梭于比利时和荷兰之间, 它所依托的河流暗指希腊神话中运输灵魂的斯提克斯河 (River Styx)。就像公路一样, 大片的水域为两个地方提供了彼此之间的联系。但是水域本身作为位置却具有不确定性。尽管在政治上和地形上都有定义, 但是它们处于不断地流动和变化之中。当这一切被影像呈现出来时, 一个场景便可以栩栩如生, 并无限地从其所处的 (文化) 语境中脱颖而出。

我在同一时段还创作了另一组作品——《家庭肖像 (2014-15)》, 由 6 张图像组成, 将批判性的镜头对准了一个家庭的习俗和家中的成员们。这



影像 / 故事 / Image & Story 摄影艺术收藏与交易 / Photography Collection and Trading

### Change of Sense: Korean Photography Today

## 从三位摄影师作品看韩国当代摄影观念的转变

图 / 金申旭 (Kim Shinwook), 安成模 (Ahn Sungsheok), 金文多 (Kim Moondok)  
文 / 塔蒂亚娜·罗森斯坦 (Tatiana Rosenstein) 编译 / 张丹雨

2019年举办的第十届首尔摄影节探索了1950年代的韩国摄影史, 研究了摄影的当代实践, 并对当代摄影的最新争议进行了探讨。摄影节的最后一部分展出了年轻摄影师的作品, 这一部分看起来生动而鲜活。尤其是在以下两个问题的呈现上: 摄影对现代社会的影响; 摄影对当代媒介形式和实践的影响。本期我们采访了三位来自韩国的年轻摄影师, 他们均有作品在此次摄影节中展出。

这三位摄影师可以说截然不同, 然而他们在以下几个方面却又都观点一致: 韩国摄影仅仅处于起步阶段; 本土的市场还不够成熟并需要理解摄影的价值; 收藏家们对年轻摄影师的作品应当更有信心一些, 不要害怕风险。



金申旭 (Kim Shinwook)

Madang in South Korea)、牛津大学奥里尔学院。在我们的对话中, 他跟我分享了他是如何与摄影结缘的, 以及他坚信没有一个好的想法专业摄影就无法生存的原因:

我的父亲就是一个热爱摄影的人。我人生的第一台相机是我十岁那年父亲送给我的。是一台获得 Asahi Pentax KM。从此, 我开始了摄影之路。我刚开始学习摄影是在韩国凯原大学 (Kaywon University), 但是我想对艺术有更深层次的理解, 从而将其与摄影相结合。所以我选择了去伦敦大学金史密斯学院继续学习。

在摄影创作中, 金申旭更容易被脑海中无形的想法所吸引。他在现实与想象之间游走, 探索这两者间无形的边界和“非场所” (non-places), 如机场或车站。1982年在首尔出生的他毕业于伦敦大学金史密斯学院美术系, 并获得了学士学位。两年后, 他又在英国皇家艺术学院摄影专业取得了他的硕士学位。

我的灵感和想法来源于各种资源, 比如我的记忆, 人生经历或者我身边的场所。这些都取决于我在进行的项目, 因为我的脑海中经常有各种各样的想法从未散去, 直到它们中的某一个开始萦绕在我心间, 不停地强迫着我分秒去想它, 然后促使我赶紧去将它实现。

当我在英国皇家艺术学院学习的时候, 我开始创作《探渡者》系列作品, 这是一个移动影像项目。系

(Fig.53-54) Photoworld Magazine, May 2020, China

김신욱 | On the Periphery  
코끼리 더듬기 - 비행기를 둘러싼 세 가지 시선



1. Helsinki Photo Art Magazine, May 2020, Korea



2. Helsinki Photo Art Magazine, May 2020, Korea



3. Helsinki Photo Art Magazine, May 2020, Korea



4. Helsinki Photo Art Magazine, May 2020, Korea

(Fig.55-57) Photo Art Magazine, May 2020, Korea

Helsinki Photo Festival Open Call Winner, National Museum of Finland, June – September 2020. (fig.60-61)



Shinwook Kim (KR)

## In Search Of Nessie

Producing photographic work is one way of telling a story. What stories do we find interesting? There are stories that are still haunting people even after a long time. Some stories travel back and forth between time and space yet remain active. These stories, with enough vitality to reach beyond generation and region, are preserved by the means of naming them myths or superstitions.

The project *In Search of Nessie* began with the question of where and how such stories began and how they might affect real life and culture. Loch Ness, a huge lake dating back to the Ice Age in Scotland's northern Highlands region, is also a mythical place that is widely known around the world, for the reason that it might be hosting a dinosaur-like creature – the Loch Ness monster, informally named "Nessie". In 1934 a photograph of a mysterious creature began to circulate – this was however a prank by a surgeon named Robert Wilson. The photograph triggered this long-standing mythological phenomenon of Mother Nature to become target of consumption and distribution. There are even records in the Guinness-Records Book of a self-proclaimed "Nessie Hunter", who has been searching for Nessie for thirty years. Another man, Adrian Shine, has researched the Loch Ness and its mysterious creature for over about 45 years. Throughout 2018-2019, there has been another scientific investigation into Loch Ness monster DNA by geneticists from New Zealand and other countries.

The photographer Shinwook Kim does not intend to look for Nessie's real existence, instead he desires to uncover how invisible myths permeate an actual place and create a variety of devices, designed to imagine the myth through the surrounding landscape, characters and various archives. Through this work, he intends to find the elements of a myth that are created, spread, propagated, and maintained in a particular place. Shinwook hopes to reveal fragmented images and disrupt the way they operate in order to find out how they give meaning to a particular place and through what kind of a process this is achieved. What makes a story (a myth) and how is it maintained and operated?

Various artworks of the artist were exhibited at the National Museum of Finland, Pyhän Birgitan puisto, and JCDecaux Finland.

### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Shinwook Kim is an artist and photographer based in London, Milan and Seoul. He holds a bachelor's degree in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London and master's degree in Fine Art Photography from Royal College of Art, London. The artist has been working on structuring a huge world through close observation and collection of his surroundings while seeking to find the nature of it. Shinwook has been exhibited internationally in for example the UK, France, Italy, Netherlands, Finland/Sweden, Japan as well as in his motherland South Korea. His works are held in permanent collection at the Kiyosato Photo Art Museum in Japan, KT&G (SangSang Madang, SPACE22) in South Korea and Oriol College, University of Oxford in the UK and many more. He is also represented by CE contemporary in Milan, Italy.



(Fig.59) Helsinki Photo Festival 2020

In 2020, From 14<sup>th</sup> October until 05 Dec, 6<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition of mine was held at UARTSPACE in Seoul. *The Night Watch* (2011-2017) was exhibited for the first time in Korea. Two of the series are permanently stored at Oriol College, Oxford University in the UK. (fig.62-66)

# THE NIGHT WATCH

UARTSPACE



21 Oct —  
5 Dec 2020

김신욱

서울특별시 강남구 영구동로 71길 10  
유미드스페이스 2층



(Fig.60-62) 2020 <The Night Watch> UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea



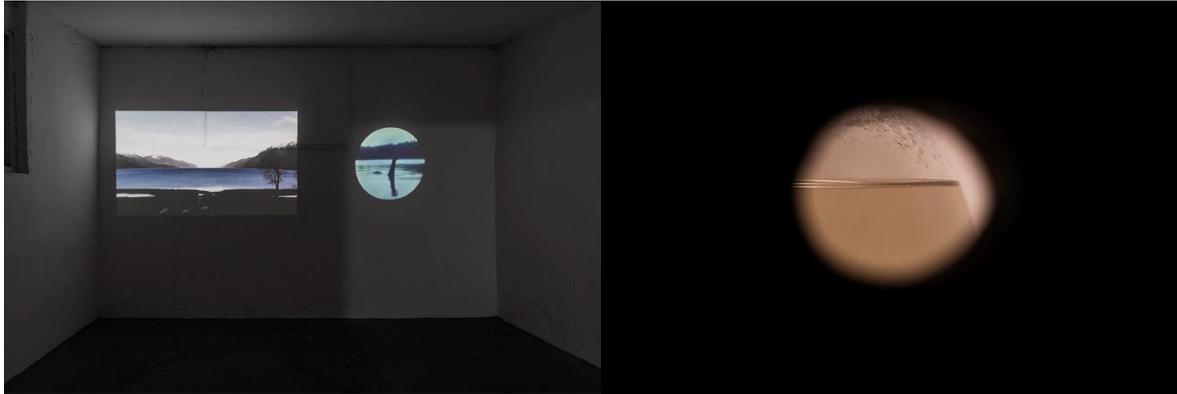
(Fig.60-62) 2020 <The Night Watch> UARTSPACE, Seoul, Korea



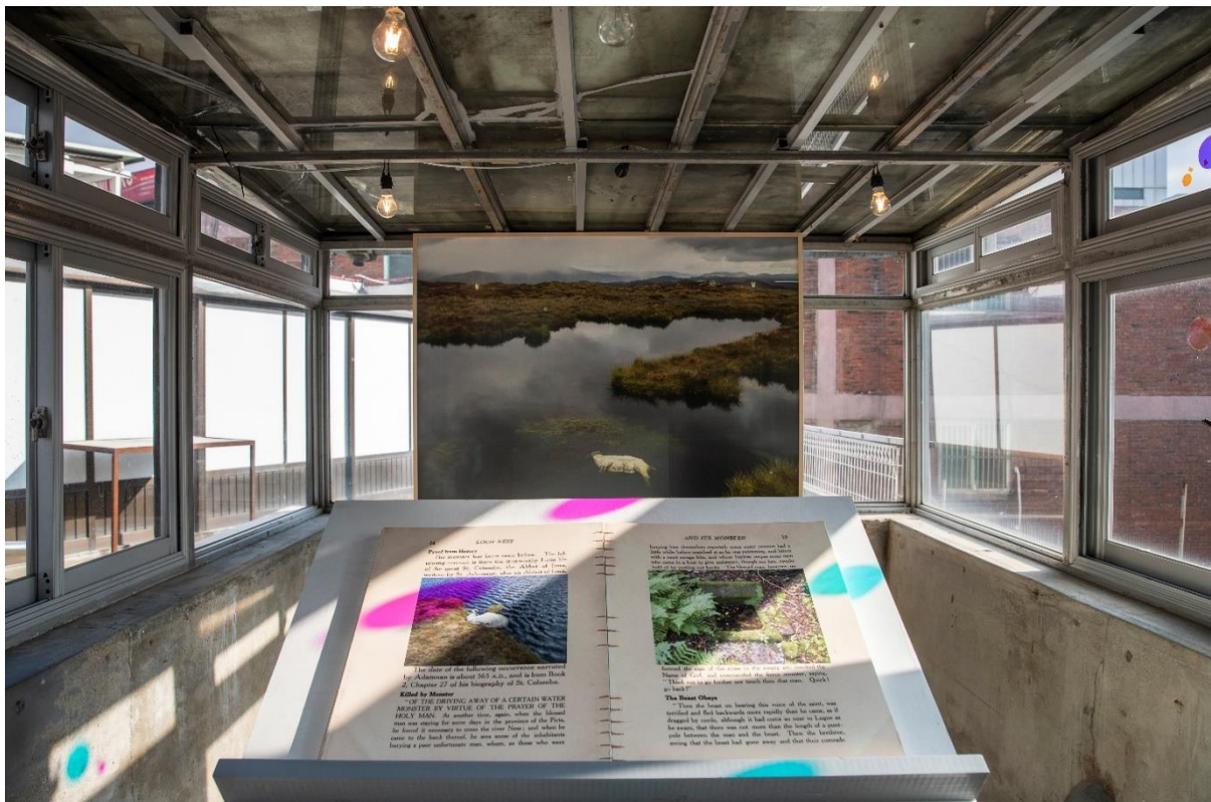
(Fig.63-64) *The Night Watch*, ARP, ISBN 9791197186400

From 19<sup>th</sup> November until 20 December, my 7<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition *In Search of Nessie* was exhibited in Amado Art Space in Seoul. This included not only photography but also video, archives and stereoscopic work. (fig.65-70)

The 8<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition in Seoul, scheduled for May of 2020, was rescheduled to 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021. With this exhibition, the *In Search of Nessie* book will also be published. Its dummy book has been produced and is now being prepared for publication.



(Fig. 65-67) 2020 <In Search of Nessie> The 7th Amado Photography Award Exhibition, Amado Art Space/Lab, Seoul, Korea





2020 <In Search of Nessie> The 7th Amado Photography Award Exhibition, Amado Art Space/Lab, Seoul, Korea



(Fig. 68-70) 2020 <In Search of Nessie> The 7th Amado Photography Award Exhibition, Amado Art Space/Lab, Seoul, Korea

On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, I was invited by the Hongik University Visual Communication Design department to give a postgraduate lecture entitled 'The Paradoxical Value of Mistakes'. During this three-hour lecture I talked about how I use my mistakes as a basis for moving in a more positive direction, seeing my consistent and tenacious attempts as an artist as day-to-day and ordinary. The lecture took place in a Hongik University lecture hall, and was simultaneously broadcast online.

The *In Search of Nessie* book is in its production stages, and will be published by ARP in the middle of May.

Alongside the Republic of Korea Ministry of Unification, and private enterprises in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi-do, I am working on two art projects, planned for exhibition in June and September respectively.

I am also working as a project-coordinator for the 1<sup>st</sup> Korea-Italy Exchange Exhibition, which will take place in Italy in two years' time.

## Conclusion

As an artist, in order to organise the world at large and find its invisible things but which affect our society, I have continued to closely examine and collect the idea around me.

I believe that my work is one way of telling a story, and is also a process of training myself to communicate with and learn about the world. I am interested in the concerns of contemporary society, as well as the connections I hold with the world, continually questioning what meaning my work has in the present, and what meaning it will come to hold as time passes. I work hard to create something that reflects not only the current times, but goes beyond that, so that even after time passes, it will hold its own meaning beyond a particular time or place. In order to do this, I am gathering and reading a large number of books and documents, and in terms of expression, I am moving beyond two-dimensional images to more actively include a variety of mediums, such as video and three-dimensional objects. For my previous project examining airport surrounding areas, I spent a long while endeavouring not to become consumed with making a living, but to find my own identity as an artist. Through my current work, I tried to take my understanding of my own interests, as well as the contemporary generation, beyond myself as an individual.

In order to find the real substance of events and stories, using a microscopic approach, document collection, interviews, and so on, I intend to examine the unseen macroscopic

context of the issues and situations modern society faces.

I am currently working on a new project in Korea, related to its place and social background. As a 'stranger' myself, separated from my place of birth, having lived across the UK, Russia, China, I also working on a project related to my interest in the various societal meanings this concept holds for the individual, and in the history of individuals and places that have been scapegoated and separated from politics and the larger discourse.

My past work on airports researched into the vicinities that are both influenced by and compared to the 'centre'.

It was expanded within this project, and then continued in *The Marginal Man*, which told the stories of people living on the margins, in a particular region of the outskirts of a huge city. I further developed the concept through *In Search of Nessie*, in which I researched a specific location as a place where mythology and stories live on.

Through *In Search of Nessie*, I learnt the meaning not only of the images I took, but also of the archival materials and collected objects, and discovered how these things operate within my work. With the publication, I was able to try exhibiting one series of works through a book.

As an artist who usually works with the photography medium, the archive images I collected provided an opportunity to think more deeply about the meaning of images and the medium's properties.

If it was not for this process, I would not have been able to think so deeply about all sorts of theories and experiences.

My longstanding concern, as an artist who uses the camera for his work, was whether I would be able to convey a story through something I could neither carry out nor arrive at myself.

However, as I went through my doctorate course, I could see more clearly why I was interested in the documents and images I had gathered.

It is difficult to say that the documents I gathered for my work are important for the here and now.

They are far removed from the real world, and generally would be seen of no use.

These things are usually hidden, and do not reveal themselves easily. My long-term interest has been in marginality and things that do not receive attention.

Based on this research and interest of mine, from 2021 I was able to conduct a new project entitled *Edgeland*, with the title referring not to a simple border area, but to a transitional space existing between the city centre and the suburbs.

With my longstanding interest in peripheries as the foundation, as part of a series, I began working within the surroundings of Korea's large cities at the beginning of 2021.

Through this concept of *Edgeland*, the border areas between cities and suburbs are dynamic spaces where disconnection and connection, preservation and development, overlap of time, disappeared spaces and approaching places, past and future, place and non-place are all

jumbled together.



(Fig. 71) 'Edgeland' Exhibition view, Korea, 2022

In this way, for me 'margins' do not represent simply the boundary between a centre and its surroundings, but exist as a stage and place for repeated expansion, where new things can be found.

Foreigner, marginal place, non-place, boundary, the marginalised—words such as these all refer to a societal condition, to peoples and places removed from the centre.

With my long experience as a foreigner and this concept as the basis, I plan to express my interest in one place or person through visual arts imbued with societal meaning.

I arrived in the UK as a stranger in my twenties, and spent the whole of my thirties there. Living as a stranger for thirteen years, I was fiercely determined not to become consumed by making a living and to survive as an artist—I thus have no regrets, and also developed a great deal during that period.

Although the longer I spent in the UK, the more accustomed I grew to the lifestyle and environment, at the same time I was always anxious. Was it the uneasiness of being a perfect stranger, excluded from society? I forever wanted to break free from the minority, disadvantaged position of the stranger—it was only after thirteen years that I was released

from this life that I had unknowingly chosen.

I am a Korean born and raised in Korea, but in the UK and the rest of Europe I was generally regarded simply as East Asian or Chinese, and in my daily life experienced numerous discomforts because of this. Given that in Korea people generally do not have a good image of Chinese people, I suffered a great deal as a result of this twofold situation.

These feelings, and ten years working as a taxi driver gave me an extreme sense of isolation, exhaustion, and stress, and I eventually ended up turning to drink. Within these circumstances, through the doctorate course I was able to examine my feelings from a more detached perspective, and this proved a good opportunity to connect this experience to my work.

Through seminars and tutorials, I learnt of many theories I was previously unaware of, and received a lot of feedback. I was able to understand how my thoughts and my work were received by other people. I also discovered that, even though they were each examining different topics, there were commonalities across my previous works.

Through the course, I learnt that my current interests lie in the topic of the stranger and the issues surrounding it, and using the personal situations I found myself in as a foundation, could experiment with how I might fuse this with theory and practice in order to create a work of visual art. With the variety of feedback I received, I was able to edit and supplement my work. Thanks to the doctorate, I gained the fundamental strength required to continue to embark upon new projects.

Within this process, the present report provided me the opportunity to theorise around the fundamental 'anxiety' I felt as a stranger living in a foreign country and to examine my experience from an objective point of view. I searched out information on theories surrounding all types of societal outsiders and marginal men, as well as boundary areas; I was able to reflect on their definitions, and understand that the anxiety I felt was not peculiar to me.

The emotional anxiety of the foreigner, and the personal thoughts I could not express, and to which nobody would listen, went beyond a language-based problem to the structural level. The sociological theories and humanities-based definitions I researched for my Doctoral report gave me a more comprehensive understanding of these emotions.

And as an artist, I felt the limitations of collecting images myself—to escape from this I made various attempts at collecting and arranging archive materials, but through reading the likes of Hal Foster's short essay, I could explore a range of perspectives on archival collection. Through this, I clearly understood why I had become interested in collected documents and images.

The writing of this report overlapped with the end of my thirteen years living as a foreigner.

Through looking into and understanding both my previous work and the fundamental anxiety I had felt as an outsider, I grew to appreciate the various meanings of the foreigner and of marginal spaces, and was able to proceed to the next stage.

Through researching theories and the meaning of words, and looking in detail at the roots of my interest, I understood what connected my work to theory.

Embarking on the final stage of my doctoral programme, as well as the new project soon to be exhibited, over time once connected marginal places and remnants, for various reasons, became disconnected, and memories grew fragmented; I am looking into how these things influences us in the present.

My new work examines the concept of 'mentalities', and looks into how historical events affect us in the present, and how they form the collective consciousness. It is a work of visual art based on the modern history of mentalities derived from margins and borders, past and memory.

The research methods and training I practised and was taught through the doctorate programmed proved a great aid to my new work.

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