

# **The Significance of the Alternative Space As Seen through the Characteristics of Korean Alternative Spaces and the Challenges they face**

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## **1. Introduction:**

**As a Member of Asia's Alternative Space Pursuing Non-Western Values, What are the Characteristics of Korean Alternative Spaces and their Challenges?**

## 1. Introduction:

- Alternative spaces and biennales can be seen as a new cultural phenomenon in contemporary Asia since the 1990s.
- Alternative space in Asia promotes non-Western values along with efforts to re-map Asia into the world of contemporary art.
- Alternative space serves as a cognitive signifier as well as a spatial matrix of the works of artists who are struggling with identity problems.
- As a member of Asia's alternative space, what are the characteristics of Korean alternative spaces and their challenges?

## **2. The Spatiotemporal Context of the Emergence of Alternative Space in Korea:**

**Appeared at the time of IMF Crisis at the End of 1990s and from the backdrop of City of Seoul**

## **2. The Spatiotemporal Context of the Emergence of Alternative Space in Korea**

Alternative space emerged as a way to overcome the financial crisis (IMF)

- 1998 SSamzie Art project
- 1999 Loop, Sarubia, and Pool
- 2000 SSamzie Space
- 2000 Insa Art Space and Ilju Art Center



SSamzie Studio

1998 SSamzie Art project: Launched by SSamzie Inc., providing artists with studios and supporting their domestic and overseas exhibitions



1999 Loop, Sarubia, and Pool:  
Artists-formed, community-based alternative spaces



2000 SSamzie Space:  
Multi-cultural space incubating youth art, cutting-edge art,  
and post-genre art



SSamzie Space



Curatorial Office





Exhibition View of SSamzie Space



Insa Art Space, new building

2000  
Insa Art Space  
Ilju Art Center

Government-run and corporate  
Supported organizations

## 2. The Spatiotemporal Context of the Emergence of Alternative Space in Korea

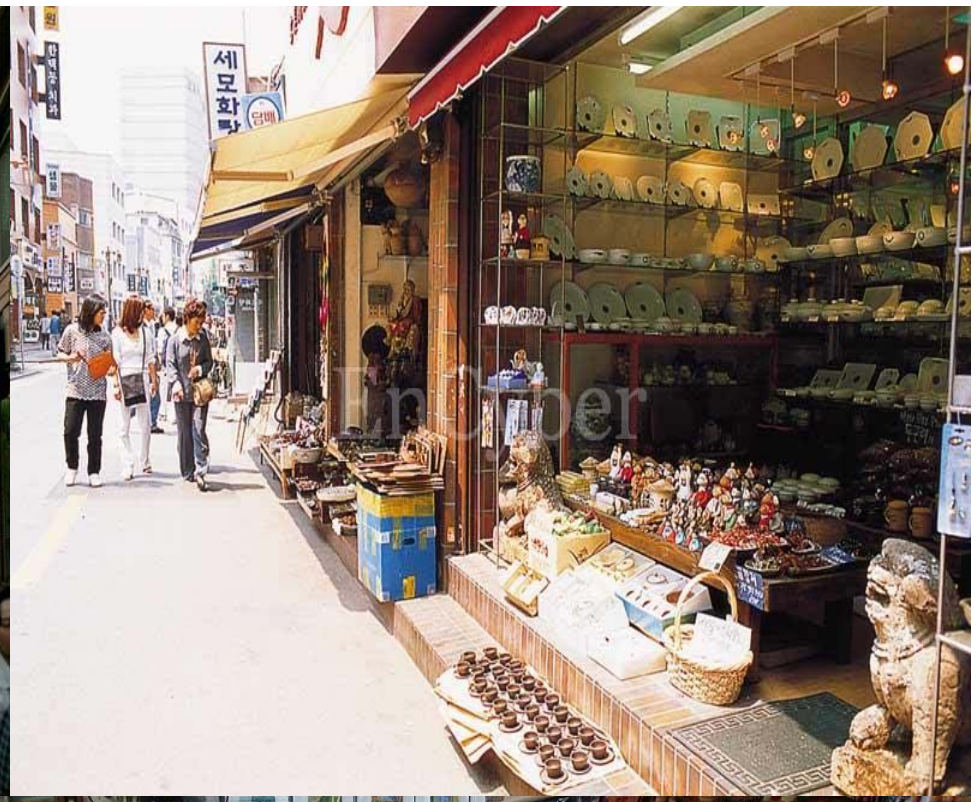
Metropolis and capital city of Seoul becomes the backdrop of birthplace and cradle for alternative spaces in Korea.



## **2. The Spatiotemporal Context of the Emergence of Alternative Space in Korea**

- Pool, Sarubia and Insa Art Space are located in Insa dong, the birthplace of traditional cultures.
- SSamzie Space and Loop are located in Hongik University area where youth culture originated.









Jazz Club Evans



Hongik University area



### **3. The Structural and Systemic Characteristics of Korean Alternative Space:**

**Dependent on Government Funds and  
Corporate Sponsorship Albeit  
Alternative and Independent**

### **3. The Structural and Systemic Characteristics of Korean Alternative Space**

- Loop, Sarubia, and Pool were established as community and friendship-based alternative spaces voluntarily organized by artists.
- SSamzie Space, Insa Art Space and Ilju Art Center were formed as affiliated organizations managed by government funds and corporate sponsorships.

### **3. The Structural and Systemic Characteristics of Korean Alternative Space**

- Improvements in government support and corporate sponsorships imply the changes of national art policy and business minds.
- National, public, and private art museums and commercial art galleries seek for transformation narrowing the gap with alternative spaces.
- Korean alternative space manifests ambivalent position, being confrontational and critical against the establishments, while aligning with them.

## **4. The Orientation and Aspirations of Korean Alternative Space:**

**Characterized by New Generation Artists  
and Leading the Task of Globalization**

## **4. The Orientation and Aspirations of Korean Alternative Space**

- The emergence of alternative space boosted new generation artists and transformed the landscape of the Korean art world.
- Alternative space and new generation artists are gaining force and becoming mainstream.
- New generations emerged from alternative space proclaim overground, starship, internationalization and globalization from the early stages of their career.
- Advancement into international stage becomes the biggest aspiration and final goal for the new generational artists.
- New generations pursue cosmopolitan Asia, new Asian identity with glocal vision, manifesting themselves as glocal hybrid models.

## **4. The Orientation and Aspirations of Korean Alternative Space**

- Choi Jung-hwa, Lee Su-kyung and Ham Kyung-ah utilize Korean traditions and Asian spirits as the main, modal and medium motifs, creating a new aesthetic identity.





Choi Jung-wha



Choi Jung-wha



Lee Su-kyung



Lee Su-kyung





Ham Kyung-ah

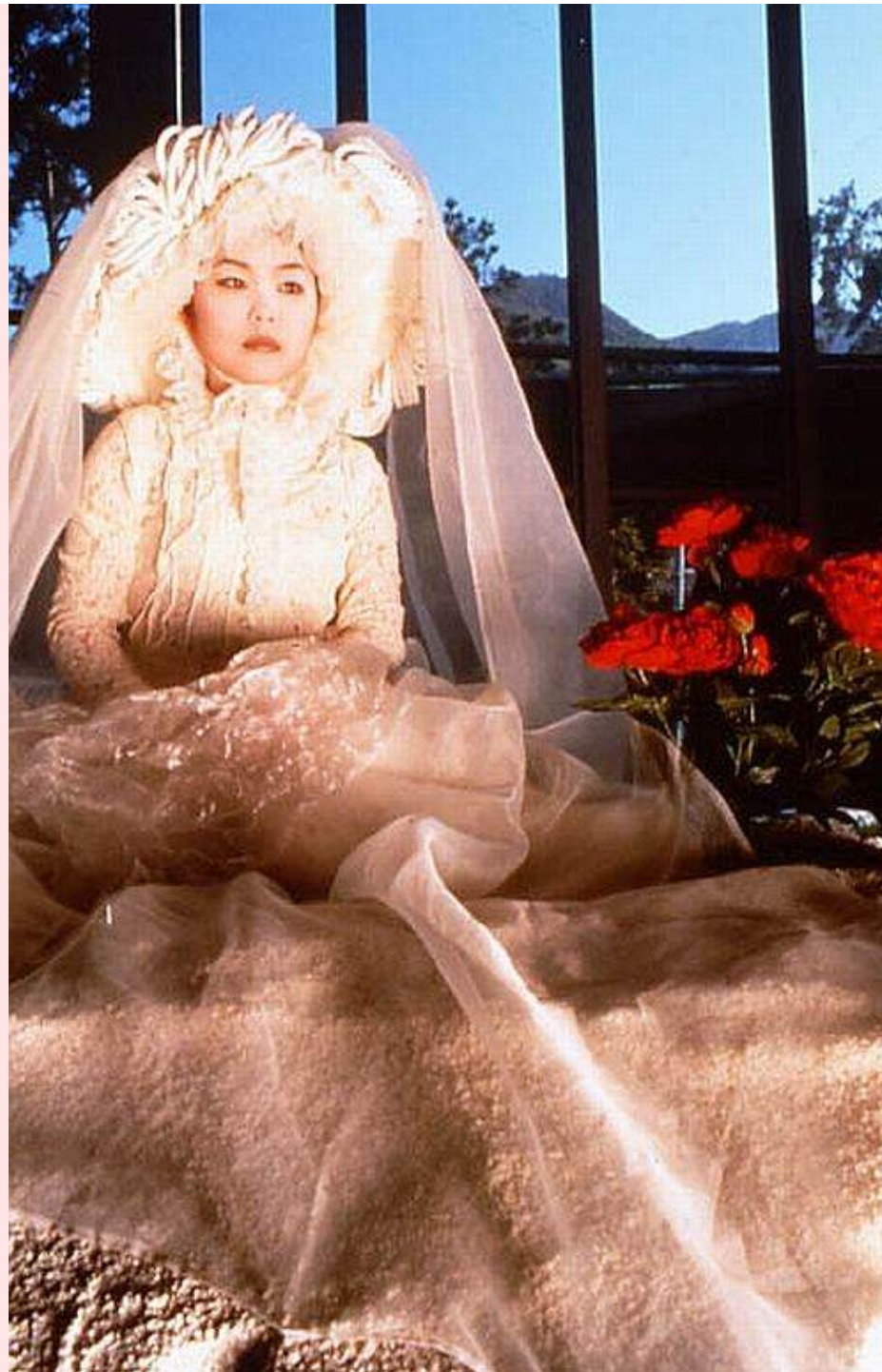


Ham Kyung-ah



## **4. The Orientation and Aspirations of Korean Alternative Space**

Kim Hong-suk, Jung Yeon-doo, and Yang Hye-kyu come up with a mixture of ideas transcending regional characteristics of Korea and Asia, and establish their own cosmopolitan world of art



Kim Hong-suk



Kim Hong-suk



Jung Yeon-doo





Jung Yeon-doo



Yang Hye-kyu



## **4. The Orientation and Aspirations of Korean Alternative Space**

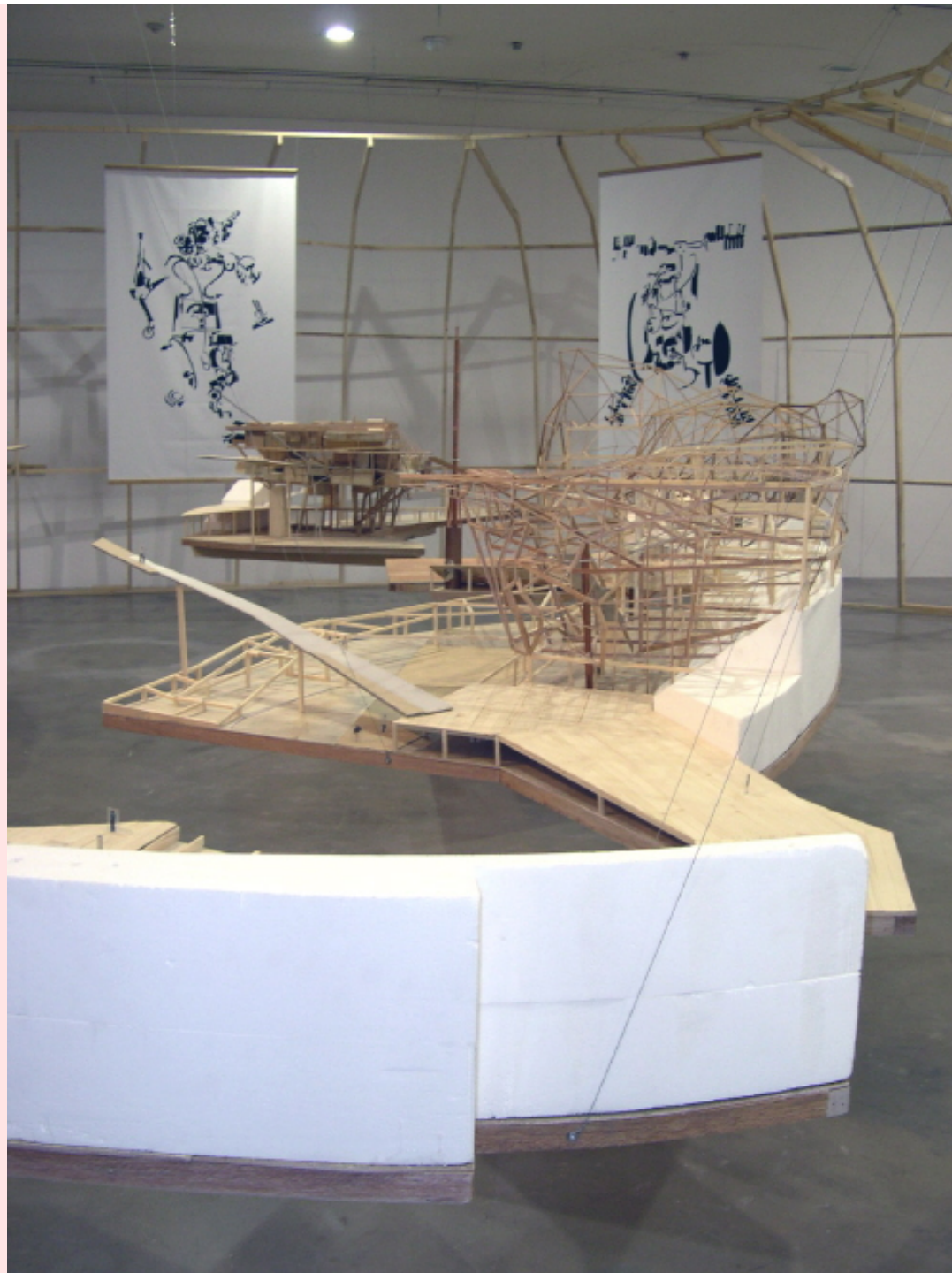
Park Chan-kyung, FlyingCity, Mix Rice and others criticize and reflect on socio-political realities concerning the inter-Korean conflicts, urban development, diaspora and migration labor, changing and expand the Min-jung art spirits of the 80s into a new paradigm.



Park Chan-kyung



Park Chan-kyung



FlyingCity









## **5. Conclusion:**

**Alternative Spaces in Korea to Serve as  
a Conduit for Spreading *hallyu*, or a  
Korean Wave of Visual Art Through  
International Networking**



## 5. Conclusion

- Globalization is not a confrontation with what is local, but a significant encounter between regions and the world, which leads to returning to roots.
- Alternative space in Korea promotes opportunities for direct exchanges among Asian neighbor countries via Asian networking.
- *Hallyu*, or Korean Wave, can be seen as a new quality of contemporary Asia, the subtle mixture of cultural hybridity.
- We may carefully propose the possibility of continuity of *hallyu* of pop culture and the *hallyu* of visual art.
- Alternative spaces or biennales could serve as a conduit for spreading *hallyu*, achieving the tasks of searching for non-Western values.



Lee Young-ae, Bae Yong-june  
the most popular *hallyu* stars