

Park Chan-kyong:
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Park Chan-kyong is the second artist selected for the “MMCA Artist Studies” series. Since the late 1980s, Park has been a member of a community of critics writing art and organizing exhibitions through forums such as the Research Society for Art Criticism (*misul bipyeong yeonguhoe*), *Forum A*, *BOL*. Park took his first steps as an artist with the solo exhibition *Black Box: The Memory of Cold War Images*, held at the Kumho Museum in 1997, and has since continued to produce film and video works critically examining the Cold War, Korean modernity, and colonialism. Under the title *Red Asia Complex*, this book examines, from various perspectives, the nearly thirty-years trajectory of Park Chan-kyong’s art and writing. Perhaps because Park has so often written about his own work, other critics have rarely done so. For this reason, the book aims to document, criticize, and reinterpret his works from the perspective of surrounding researchers.

The material at hand for this task was quite voluminous. In addition to his lengthy notes, there were also articles that Park put together with plans to publish a collection of his criticism, video works uploaded to Vimeo, piles of exhibition catalogs, articles written for external publications, and a few manifestoes, among others. The first batch of materials provided by the artist was distributed to researchers who had been interested in Park’s work and used as the basis to support their individual essays, rather than being printed directly in the pages of this book. However, three of Park’s own writings, “Black Box: The Memory of Cold War Images” (1997), “On *Sindoan*: Some Scattered Views on Tradition and ‘The Sublime’” (2008), and “How to Sit Properly: Tradition and Art” (2016, co-authored with Lee Youngwook), were partially modified and included. This is because these texts act as

an essential body of reference for the majority of pieces contained herein, and thus serve to clarify and support the connections between them.

The participating authors in this book are Korean and Asian researchers who have either observed Park's work up close, collaborated with him, or are newly engaging with his work for this occasion. As a historian, Shin Chunghoon examines the issues of popular culture, history, and tradition that Park has explored through his art. Focusing on Park's text "Notes on 'Conceptually Oriented Realism': An Editor's Annotation" (2001), Choi Binna revisits if the concept of "Conceptual Realism," its validity, and its enduring role in Park's work. Park Sohyun deals with "colonialism" as a condition of Korean contemporary art in Park Chan-kyong's *Small Art History* (2014, 2017), and the artist's ceaseless attempts to problematize and work through it. Kim Hang asks, "What is the concept of the political for Park Chan-kyong?" In turn, Kim argues that Park's politics arise from the ethical indifference created by his image work. Here, ethical indifference refers to Park's endeavor to bring the fallen entity back to the foreground yet ultimately leave it aside without creating another victor's narrative. Hyun Seewon draws upon Park's theory of the artist's in examining the methodological relationship between his writing and his photography. Huang Chien-hung explores the connections in Park's work between Japanese occupation, the Korean War, the Cold War, and shamanism. The latter, he argues, can serve as a means of avoiding various forms of colonialism and paracolonialism that arise out of modernity, and thus effect a "dis-paracolonialism." In response to Park's critical reflection on tradition, Patrick D. Flores discusses how the issues of the tradition and the sublime relate to colonialism in the context of Philippines. As a video artist, Cha Jeamin brings the issues that Park has dealt with into contemporary perspective and re-evaluates their validity and meaning. As if to represent the young generation today, Cha Jeamin attempts to open to doubt the tradition and sublime

discussed in Park's writing and artwork.

But in fact, the original research plan focused on Park's artwork was found to be somewhat unsuccessful or hasty in the final stages of the book's preparation. And if there is a question to be asked here, it is the following: In examining an artist's trajectory, what happens to the scope of the work? What is the distinction between what can and cannot be designated as artwork? In particular, should Park's artwork be distinguished from his other activities? Having commissioned a text on Park's writing, it is clear that Park's activity as a critic is perceived to be as much a part of his art practice as the art itself, if not more so. For this reason, the Park Chan-kyong that appears in this book is referred to by a plurality of names: theorist, critic, curator, activist, as well as artist. Yet ultimately, such practice can only be discussed in close connection with his artwork.

The title of the book, *Red Asia Complex*, is a concept that has been rooted in Park's art and writing for a long time. If the "Red complex" is the driver of the mental geography that Park has explored in reference to Korea's Cold War division culture, then the "Asia complex" suggests the postcolonial perspective through which Park has ceaselessly critiqued the concrete institutions of tradition, modernity, and art in Korea. It is our hope that this book, created with much devotion and help from many people, will be joined by others in contributing to further research into the Park Chan-kyong archive, and at the same time that it will serve as a reference for the critical reflection and interpretation of Korean social history and art history.

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