

Geumhyung Jeong // REHAB TRAINING (Seoul)

Puppen, Staubsauger, Sexspielzeuge, Fitnessgeräte, Haarbürsten... Das sind nur einige der Alltagsobjekte, die die südkoreanische Choreografin und Performancekünstlerin Geumhyung Jeong in den letzten Jahren gesammelt und zu ihren Spielpartnern gemacht hat. In ihren Performances erforscht sie immer wieder die merkwürdigen Beziehungen zwischen ihrem Körper und diesen Objekten der Moderne. REHAB TRAINING ist ein Duett mit einer lebensgroßen, männlichen Puppe, hergestellt als künstlicher Patient zur Ausbildung von Pflegepersonal. Diesen Dummy lässt Geumhyung Jeong in akribischer Kleinstarbeit eine Art Reha-Training durchlaufen, das aus konkreten Aufgabenstellungen besteht: Unter ihrer Kontrolle lernt er, sich zu bewegen, zu laufen und sie anzufassen. Mit beinahe irritierender Ruhe und Besonnenheit widmet sich Geumhyung Jeong dem Versuch, ihren Partner interaktionsfähig zu machen und eine Beziehung zu ihm herzustellen. Die Zuschauer*innen werden zu Voyeur*innen der wachsenden Intimität innerhalb dieses absurden Pas de deux.

Die 1980 geborene **Geumhyung Jeong** ist eine südkoreanische Choreografin und Performancekünstlerin. Sie studierte Schauspiel an der Hoseo University in Asan (Südkorea), Tanz und Performance an der Korean National University of Arts sowie Animationsfilm an der Korean Academy of Film Arts in Seoul. Jeongs Arbeiten untersuchen die Möglichkeiten des Körpers, seiner Sinnlichkeit und der Fähigkeit seine Umgebung zu verändern. Ihre Arbeiten verbinden Tanz und Puppenspiel und lenken Aufmerksamkeit auf die technischen Aspekte des Theaters. Sie stellte Arbeiten aus und zeigte Performances unter anderem in der Tate Modern, beim Liveworks Festival, dem PuSh Festival, im Atelier Hermes (Seoul), der New Museum Triennial, dem Zürcher Theater Spektakel, in der AI-Hall, beim SPIELART Festival und ImpulsTanz Festival. Sie wurde mit dem 16. Hermes Foundation Missulsang Art Award ausgezeichnet.

Geumhyung Jeong war bei SPIELART bereits 2015 mit CPR PRACTICE zu sehen.

1. – 3.11. jeweils 19 – 21.40 Uhr
Muffatwerk

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REHAB TRAINING

Geumhyung Jeong

SEOUL'S SOULS

A few thoughts on Geumhyung Jeong's work in relation to the city it is made in.

by Max-Philip Aschenbrenner

Geumhyung Jeong entered the sphere of the international performing arts circuit around ten years ago with her lecture-performance *Oil Pressure Vibrator*, in which she told a most unlikely story about love at first sight and about the sometimes rocky road worth walking to reach one's true emotions. And it all started one sunny day in Seoul when she had a crush on an excavator.

Seoul, South Korea's capital, is where Geumhyung Jeong works. This megalopolis is characterized by urban sprawl, by construction and consumerism. It is an international contemporary hub, one of the wealthiest and most densely populated places on Earth. It is also a place where excavators on streets are usually operated by men – a role Geumhyung Jeong was not willing to accept. She took on the challenge, followed her desire, obtained an excavator license and spent a romantic day with her very own excavator on a sandy beach, where they dug into each other's emotions and bodies and witnessed a movie-like sunset together. In her next show, *CPR Practice*, she took place in the middle of an arena-like setting and performed first-aid actions on an ordinary training dummy, the upper part of a torso bearing the features of a middle-aged Caucasian male. Geumhyung Jeong always falls in love with the objects she handles and in this case she threw herself into the action to bring her plastic partner to life.

Her approach follows the logic of invocation and incantation, and draws from both the puppeteer's knowledge and technique and from the method actor's alike. 그분 (Gbun) is the instance that takes a decision. It is neither personal nor common, neither subjective nor social. It comes, performs and disappears. It uses the body it finds, speaks through the mouth that opens for it, looks through the eyes that blink for it. 'He', as the concept is translated rather poorly, is what everybody shares without owning it; that which everyone agrees with, without following its suggestions; it's what counts in the end, without knowing when and where it began.

In Korea, which joined the game of the capitalistic nation states rather late and imported its rational and mechanistic view of the world only two generations ago, ghosts, spirits and revenants are still pretty much alive. The country is deeply embedded in a tightly knit system of rigid relationships and strict hierarchies, in traditions and values, and it is ruled by families led by powerful father figures. Adultery was punishable as a crime until 2015, the general abortion ban was lifted only recently, and 80 per cent of the still growing GDP, that allowed Korea to introduce free healthcare and one of the best pension systems in the world, is in the hands of a strict, patriarchally organized family-run company, Samsung. Because Korea also stands with its head high up in the clouds of a hyper-fetishized world of goods and services, its 빨리 빨리 (pali-pali) culture, which praises speed as the most

efficient strategy to achieve success, is globally unique and led the country through a period of tremendous economic growth over the last 60 years.

But with it came the typical problems of a late capitalistic society, and they came much faster than in many Western ones: saturation of the domestic consumer's market, an aging population because of low birth rates, no jobs or temporary work for the younger generation due to outsourcing, skyrocketing real-estate prices and ever-exploding rents.

Geumhyung Jeong looks closely at this society, its often contradictory convictions and morals, its dreams and hidden desires. She slows down the speed of her being and her perception, and turns this prolonged temporality into tenderness. The theatrical situations she establishes are vortexes, in which the living and the non-living meet, in which the ordinary, the outcasts and those overlooked in a consumer society take centre stage. She sometimes also exhibits her Private Collection: Unperformed Objects. It consists of masks, mannequins, dildos and vacuum cleaners, which she displays in the space very meticulously, nearly clinically.

Clips of the performed objects usually complete these shows and open up a space of possibility for interactions and relationships that lurk in each thing, that exist beyond the artist's own. In her recent creation, Rehab Training, she takes a step forward and invites the audience to witness her programme of physical training for a Seoul's Souls humanoid doll that is now life-size. She uses a variety of hospital tools to perform with her partner, teaches him how to walk, how to handle things and finally how to hug and fuck her. A dance duet evolves from common gestures, gazes and manipulations.

She quotes archetypical images and clichés oscillating between man and woman, between a service professional's distance and a personal touch, between human flesh and the objective presence of plastic and metal, between herself and the technically mediated world around her. And yet, paradoxically, the situations she engineers often involve her playing a victim or a person in need.

Moving along this fine line between executor and executed, between performer and performed, she transcends the obvious dichotomies by undermining given patterns and places the contemporary human being and its fragility on a next level, always intertwined with everything, always both the human and the post-human, the master and the slave.

Seoul on the surface appears to be similar to its sisters Tokyo and Beijing. An old Korean saying goes: when the two whales fight, the shrimp in the middle gets crushed. It's this fine balance, this harmony between the two Pacific superpowers China and the US that the middle child has to stabilize. And it might be a similar spirit that fuels the position Geumhyung Jeong adopts between the audience and her objects. Without a doubt, the city's marketing claim – 'I Seoul you' – can be used to describe perfectly the works of Geumhyung Jeong, her ongoing investigation into what this thing is that makes us feel, that makes us able to engage, that allows us to be, this thing that makes us human.

<https://www.kfda.be/en/program/rehab-training>