

Plenum, a space completely filled with matter

/ Ka Hee Jeong, Curator

Try to imagine zero - total nothingness.

Perhaps, we are no longer – or never were - able to think of the actual state of vacuum. It is not possible to consider the notion of absent space and time. Our perception is binary and, hence, we fathom the world through contrasting opposites. For example, we can think of light and darkness, good and evil, being awake and asleep. However, we have trouble considering the notion of non-existence and we have even greater difficulties to grasp ideas that are beyond our empirical threshold of perception, such as nonspace and nontime. Indeed, we built our individual and anthropocentric models of the world based on the experiences we acquire through interactions of our body with matter in the limited period of a single lifetime. It begs the question: How could we ever fathom something that is so different from what we have learned?

The notion of nonspace, of pure vacuum has been a focus of exploration for many great philosophers. Democritus, for example, held the view that the world is full of indivisible atoms that interacted in empty space. On the other hand, René Descartes believed that the universe could not be empty. Descartes found it impossible to distinguish between matter and space and, therefore, absolute vacuum was impossibility. He coined the term 'Plenum', to describe our world, as a space that is always filled with matter. This same term 'Plenum' is also the title of Yunchul Kim's solo exhibition in gallery damdam, of the culture department of the embassy of the Republic Korea in Berlin, Germany.

Yunchul Kim is an electroacoustic music composer and artist based in Berlin and Seoul. He is also the founder of the LOCUS SOLUS studio in Seoul. Through his works Yunchul Kim attempts to minimize – and ideally - eliminate anthropocentrism from perceptual processes and re-introduce ways of pensive involvement to absolute ideals in a series of artistic operations he terms 're-configuration' and 're-entry'. In order to achieve this, Yunchul Kim focuses on the essence of matter, which he appreciates as the basis of everything. According to Kim world phenomena can only be understood through the direct interaction with materials and not with their symbolic meaning. It is only in the complete absence of visual or linguistic engrams that human understanding can gain access to the natural state of things.

Kim's artwork is a convolute of dynamic scientific explorations in metamaterials, energy frequencies and fluid structures. His exhibitions are meticulous and well crafted inductions to a sensorial phantasmagoria. Kim attempts to create spaces where preconceived notions of understanding of our material world lose their reflective surfaces and where visitors are introduced again in a new *world of materials*. It is in this new investigative topology where Kim invites us to explore what he suggests to be the original disposition of materials.

However deeply scientific Kim's endeavor is, there is also a profoundly romantic notion to his works. Is there truly a way to reverse cognitive evolution from its current state, where symbolic meaning has seized every corner of our minds? And if so, does a return to a primal interactive understanding of materials really reflect a way forward for human understanding and interpersonal interactions? A shift of our gaze towards this direction of enquiry could also lead to the following derivation: Kim's works are themselves a return to

solitude. Away from any social relationship based on the symbolic exchange of meanings, Kim is creating a path for ephemeral interactions in the old philosophical *way of truth*.

Kim's current exhibition 'Plenum' invites visitors to experience a carefully constructed material facticity and ultimately re-construct their own understanding of the world

About the artist

Yunchul Kim is an electroacoustic music composer and an artist based in Berlin and Seoul, and a founder of STUDIO LOCUS SOLUS in Seoul. His latest works are focusing on the artistic potential of fluid dynamics, metamaterials (photonic crystals) and especially on the context of magnetohydrodynamics. His works have been shown at Ars Electronica, Transmediale, ISEA, New York Digital Salon and VIDA in Madrid, among others. Kim has been awarded grants from various institutions and festivals such as the Collide International Award 2016, VIDA 15.0, Ernst Schering Foundation, Arts Council Korea, Edith-Russ Haus for Media Art, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Ars Electronica, Transmediale, Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, NRW and others. Kim has taught and gave workshops in diverse institutions, international festivals and academic centers. Now, he is a principal investigator of the Transdisciplinary Program in the Korea Institute for Advanced Study. He is also a member of the art and science project group FLUID SKIES and a researcher of the artistic research project LIQUID THINGS at art and science department at the University of Applied Arts Vienna in Austria.