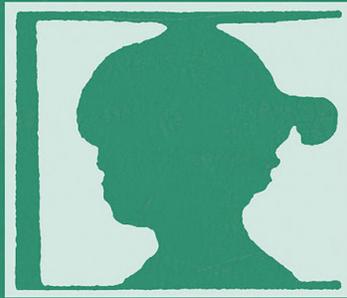


1989년2020



KIMURA BYOL  
CHO MIHEE 조미희  
NATHALIE LEMOINE

ARCHIVES / COLLECTION  
아카이브 모음

**Date de naissance officielle**

Official date of birth

**1965**

**Arrivée en Belgique**

Arrival in Belgium

**1969**

**1968**

**Date de naissance biologique**

Biological date of birth

**1988**

**Réalisation du court-métrage**  
*Adoption en Super 8*

Production of the short film  
*Adoption* on Super 8

**1989**

**Home-Coming Program :  
première incursion en  
terre natale**

Home-Coming Program: first  
visit to native land

**1990**

**Rencontres informelles de  
Coréen.ne.s adopté.e.s à  
Bruxelles (Belgique)**

Informal meetings of Korean  
adoptees in Brussels (Belgium)

**1991**

**Participation aux deuxièmes  
Olympiades de la diaspora  
coréenne à Séoul : second  
voyage en Corée du Sud**

Participation in the second  
Olympiads of the Korean  
diaspora in Seoul: second trip  
to South Korea

**1992**

**Fondation de l'association  
des coréen.ne.s adopté.e.s  
de Belgique : Euro-Korean  
League (EKL)**

**Publication du journal *Ko-Bel***

Founding of the Korean  
Adoptees Association of  
Belgium: Euro-Korean  
League (EKL)

Publication of the *Ko-Bel*  
newspaper

**1993**

**Départ en Corée du Sud,  
à priori pour un an**

Departure for South Korea,  
originally intended to last  
one year

## 1994

**Création de la branche Euro-Korean League (EKL) en Corée du Sud**

Creation of the Euro-Korean League (EKL) in South Korea

## 1996

**Création de l'association Korean Overseas Adoptees (KOA)**

**Changement de nom de l'association Euro-Korean League (EKL) pour Ko-Bel**

**Commissaire et artiste pour la première exposition d'artistes adopté.e.s intitulée *East to West***

**Création du groupe d'artistes Kameleonz**

Creation of the Korean Overseas Adoptees (KOA) Association

The Euro-Korean League (EKL) Association changes its name to Ko-Bel

Curator and artist for the first artist adoptees exhibition titled ***East to West***

Creation of the artist group Kameleonz

**Première exposition solo intitulée *Ugly Beauty***

**Création de l'organisation Han Diaspora**

First solo exhibition titled ***Ugly Beauty***

Creation of the organization Han Diaspora

## 1997

## 1998

**Organisation de la campagne de sensibilisation *Alien Awareness* pour le statut des adopté.e.s voulant revenir vivre en Corée du Sud (KimLeePark Production)**

Organization of the awareness campaign ***Alien Awareness*** for the status of adoptees wanting to return to South Korea (KimLeePark Production)

**Réception du visa F-4 destiné à la diaspora coréenne et qui désormais inclut les adopté.e.s**

Reception of the F-4 visa for the Korean diaspora, which now includes adoptees

## 1999

## 2000

**Publication du livre *55% Coréen.ne***

Publication of the book ***55% Korean***

**Création de la maison  
d'édition Star-Kim Project**

**Publication du guide  
d'artistes Overseas  
Korean Artist Yearbook en  
collaboration avec la maison  
d'édition One Gook**

Creation of the Star-Kim Project  
publishing house

Publication of the artist guide  
**Overseas Korean Artist  
Yearbook** in collaboration with  
the publishing house One Gook

**2001**

**Élaboration du concept  
백 = 100, blanc**

Development of the  
concept 백 = 100, white

**2003**

**Expositions à Copenhague  
(Danemark), Hong-Kong  
(Chine), La Louvière  
(Belgique) et Pocheon (Corée  
du Sud)**

Exhibitions in Copenhagen  
(Denmark), Hong Kong (China),  
La Louvière (Belgium) and  
Pocheon (South Korea)

**2005**

**Commissaire et artiste de  
la première exposition du  
groupe Orientity à la galerie  
La Centrale, Montréal**

Curator and artist of the first  
exhibition of the group Orientity  
at La Centrale gallery, Montreal

**2007**

**2002**

**Participation à la  
première exposition  
LGBT sous le nom de  
Kimpo Kim**

Participation in the first  
LGBT exhibition under the  
name Kimpo Kim

**2004**

**Création du groupe  
d'artistes Orientity**

Creation of the artists  
group Orientity

**2006**

**Départ de Séoul (Corée du  
Sud) pour Montréal (Canada)**

Leaving Seoul (South Korea) for  
Montreal (Canada)

**Demande de Certificat de  
sélection du Québec (CSQ)  
refusée**

Request for the Certificat  
de sélection du Québec  
(CSQ) refused

**2009**

**Réalisation des vidéos  
*Bang Bang et 9 octobre***

Production of the videos  
***Bang Bang*** and ***9 octobre***

**2011**

**Retour en Belgique**

**Obtention de la carte de  
résident permanent du  
Canada**

Return to Belgium

Canadian permanent resident  
card obtained

**2013**

**2008**

**Retour à la réalisation vidéo  
avec *Disadoption***

Return to video production with  
***Disadoption***

**2010**

**Réalisation de la vidéo  
*Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ?***

Production of the video  
***Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ?***

**2012**

**Déportation en Europe**

**Résidence d'artiste à Berlin  
(Allemagne)**

Deportation to Europe

Artist residency in Berlin  
(Germany)

**2014**

**Retour à Montréal**

Return to Montreal

**Réception d'une bourse  
d'accompagnement de  
l'organisme Montréal, arts  
interculturels (MAI) pour le  
projet #6261**

Reception of a grant from the  
organization Montréal, arts  
interculturels (MAI) for the  
project #6261

**2015**

**Réalisation du documentaire  
#6261 (partenariat ONF, CAM,  
Microclimat Films)**

Production of the documentary  
#6261 (partnership ONF, CAM,  
Microclimat Films)

**2017**

**Rédaction du livre 88 etc.**

Writing of the book 88 etc.

**2019**

**2016**

**Réalisation du projet #6261  
dans le cadre d'une résidence  
au Studio XX**

Production of the project  
#6261 as part of a residency  
at Studio XX

**2018**

**Exposition du projet *Kim  
Kim Project* réalisé en  
collaboration avec Kim  
Waldron (partenariat Arttexte  
et Art Souterrain)**

Exhibition of *Kim Kim Project*  
realised in collaboration with  
Kim Waldron (partnership  
Arttexte et Art Souterrain)

**2020**

**Première exposition  
recensant l'ensemble de  
la pratique à Dazibao**

First exhibition surveying the  
ensemble of the art practice  
at Dazibao



ADOPTION ART ACTIVISME

EN 1968, 949 ENFANTS CORÉEN.NE.S SONT ADOPTÉ.E.S À L'ÉTRANGER. LES PREMIÈRES VAGUES D'ENFANTS ADOPTÉ.E.S NE SONT CONSTITUÉES QUE DE FILLES. IN 1968, 949 KOREAN CHILDREN ARE ADOPTED ABROAD. THE FIRST WAVES OF ADOPTED CHILDREN WERE CONSTITUTED OF GIRLS ONLY.

1968  
949

# PARTOUT DANS LE MONDE DES ENFANTS ONT BESOIN DE VOUS



## TERRE DES HOMMES

'BELGIQUE' A.S.B.L.

Au secours immédiat et direct de l'enfance la plus malheureuse.

37D, AVENUE DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS BRUXELLES 14. CCP 409.40

명義인의 사진  
PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER



발급일: 1969년 8월 14일  
발급청: 대한민국 외무부

DATE ISSUED: August 14, 1969  
AUTHORITY ISSUED: THE MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- 6 -

효 력  
VALIDITY

본 여권은 다음의 각 경우에 그 효력을 상실한다.

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1. 명義인이 상당한 사유없이 여권발급일로부터 6개월 이내에 국하지 아니한 때, 또는

If the bearer to leave the Republic Korea within six months from the date of its issue without any due reason, or

2. 유효기간: 1972년 8월 14일 의래도.

On the EXPIRING DATE:

August 14, 1972

- 7 -

*Le Ligeur oct 1969 p.2. (Belgique)*

# DES MAMANS ET DES PAPAS DE CHEZ NOUS, ARRACHENT A LA FAMINE DES ENFANTS DU TIERS-MONDE

1969

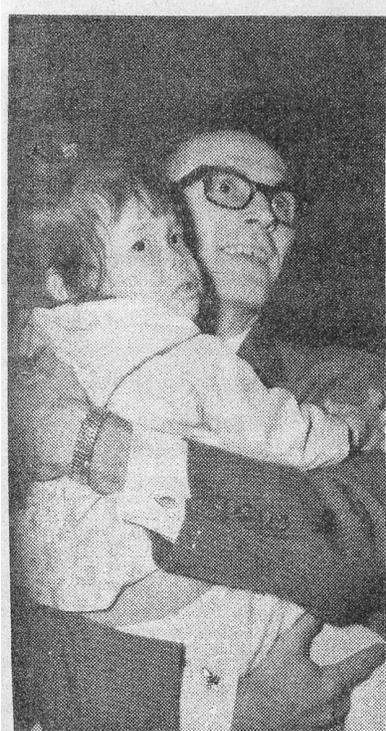
1190

**S**AMEDI, beaucoup de parents à l'aéroport. La plupart « famille nombreuse »... Certains, déjà pères et mères d'un petit Vietnamien ou de petites Indiennes, venus chercher un petit frère, une petite sœur de Corée. Un enfant dont ils ne savent rien sinon qu'il est orphelin — et affamé. Attendu et déjà aimé par sa nouvelle famille de Belgique.

LE LIGUEUR a pris ces quelques photos qui, mieux que des mots, rendent l'atmosphère profondément humaine — parce que riche d'amour paternel et maternel — de cette arrivée, parmi nous, d'enfants hier encore d'ailleurs.



*Une maman de famille nombreuse, dont le cœur est tout entier donné à ce petit abandonné du monde de la faim.*



*Depuis deux ans en Belgique; aujourd'hui, pleines de vie et de gaieté. Mais si faibles, lors de leur venue ici, qu'une troisième petite fille du même âge ne survécût pas au voyage...*



*Mi-Hé soupèse gravement du regard Papa et Maman. D'un bloc, elle leur donnera sa confiance, la minute d'après... L'adoption se fait de part et d'autre. Et l'enfant se donne à ses parents, comme ils se sont donnés à elle.*



Lesoir 1971 MAY 28  
(Belguin)

1971  
2725

28.5.71

ON NOUS ECRIT

## Pourquoi adopter de petits Asiatiques ?

*Les difficultés surgies à propos de l'attribution de visas pour des enfants asiatiques abandonnés pour lesquels des parents belges ont introduit une procédure en adoption a suscité des échanges de vues sur le fond du problème. Un couple de Cipro, qui a adopté un de ces enfants, nous envoie les considérations suivantes que nous versons, au dossier :*

Demandons-nous d'abord s'ils sont vraiment asiatiques ces enfants, pour plupart métissés et dont personne ne veut ou ne peut s'occuper dans le pays où ils sont nés ?

Ensuite, si, comme vous, nous sommes pleinement conscients que notre législation sur l'adoption et peut-être plus encore, celle relative à l'abandon dont elle dépend et qui l'entrave lorsqu'il s'agit de décider du sort d'un enfant belge, doit être libéralisée au bénéfice de l'enfant abandonné, nous pensons qu'il n'est pas exact de dire que l'adoption d'un enfant étranger est chose plus aisée: elle ne l'est certainement pas au point de vue de l'enfant : en effet, pour un enfant étranger léga-

lement adoptable, combien ne le seront jamais, soit que leur état physique les condamne, soit aussi que le pays où ils se trouvent s'oppose à cette forme d'aide extérieure ?

De toute manière et quoi qu'il en soit de cette prétendue facilité, nous tenons à affirmer qu'elle n'est pas l'élément qui a déterminé notre choix. Il nous a paru plutôt qu'il n'y aucune commune mesure entre la détresse physique de ces enfants perdus et celle de ceux qui sont abandonnés dans nos pays riches, et si la détresse morale d'un enfant sans parents est quelque chose que nous nous gardons bien de vouloir mesurer — que l'enfant soit belge ou asiatique, elle ne peut être qu'immense — nous constatons cependant que l'enfant de chez nous peut espérer la surmonter quelque peu et aborder quand même, avec un grave handicap certes, sa vie d'adulte, tandis qu'aucun avenir simplement humain ne se dessinait pour l'enfant que nous accueillons. Nous ne pouvons mieux faire que renvoyer vos lecteurs au livre de Bernard Clavel : « Le massacre des innocents » et aux témoignages qu'il rapporte, qui disent la situation tragique de ces enfants, d'une manière bien plus angoissante que nous ne pourrions le faire ici en quelques lignes.

Est-il besoin d'ajouter que ce n'est évidemment pas — mais nous l'avons déjà entendu dire — un ouï-d'exotisme, une sorte de mode, voire de snobisme qui nous pousse — un snobisme qui nous coûterait la vingtaine d'années et la somme d'efforts qui sont nécessaires pour faire d'un enfant, un homme ou une femme digne de ce nom.

Il ne s'agit pas non plus d'une option politique, sinon celle de la plus grande justice à l'échelle du monde qui, qu'on le veuille ou non, ne se limite plus à sa ville, à son pays.

J. L-D, à Cipro.

# Babies for Sale

South Koreans make them,  
Americans buy them

January 1988

BY MATTHEW ROTHSCHILD

**S**eoul, South Korea. Five pregnant women sleep on blankets on the tile floor of a small room. They keep their personal belongings in three wooden closets on one wall above their feet. This is home, at least until the babies come.

The dormitory is called Ae Ran Won, and it is one of a dozen homes for unmarried pregnant women in South Korea. Ae Ran Won can hold fifty pregnant women in its ten rooms, but when I was there in November, it had only thirty-five.

These women supply the raw material for a peculiar South Korean business: the export of babies to the United States.

U.S. families are adopting 6,000 Korean children a year, most of them infants, at a price of about \$5,000 a head. Korea is by far the largest supplier of foreign babies for the U.S. adoption market; 62 per cent of all babies adopted from abroad are South Korean. That amounts to 10 per cent of the total adoptions in the United States by families unrelated to the adoptees.

Many of the babies come from unwed mothers' homes, about 250 a year from Ae Ran Won alone. At first, the women do not want to give up their babies.

"According to the questionnaire that we distribute at the orientation interview, 90 per cent want to keep the babies," says Kim Yong Sook, the director of Ae Ran Won. But after counseling, "maybe 10 per cent will keep them."

*Matthew Rothschild is the managing editor of The Progressive. Research for this article was supported by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

"We suggest that it's not a good idea to keep the baby without the biological father," explains Kim Yong Sook, "and if the unwed mother and biological father are too young or too weak financially, we suggest that they give the baby up for adoption. We can't push, but we can suggest."

After delivery at a hospital, the baby is taken from the mother and given to one of four adoption agencies licensed by the South Korean government. The agencies then place the baby with a foster mother until an American or European family can be found to adopt it.

For some of the Korean mothers, the experience hurts. "Just after delivery, they are very upset," says Kim Yong Sook, who was a social worker and an unwed mothers' counselor for eleven years for Holt Children's Services, the largest adoption agency in Korea, before joining Ae Ran Won. "They have guilt feelings and avoidance feelings. 'I'd like to see my baby again,' they say. Sometimes they have bad dreams. They miss the baby and have a lot of pain."

Most of the mothers are poor women from low-paying factory or clerical jobs. They do not receive payment for their babies, though medical expenses—including delivery costs—are picked up by the adoption agency that takes the baby. Ae Ran Won provides free room and board for up to a year, free vocational training, and as much as \$100 to help the mother adjust when she leaves Ae Ran Won.

Like most of the homes for unwed expectant mothers, Ae Ran Won is supported by the Korean government, the

adoption agencies, and charitable donations.

On the other side of Seoul, at the end of a narrow open-air fruit and vegetable market in a poor section of town, a two-year-old boy pees in the street and a mangy white dog prowls about. Two houses down is Sung Ro Won Babies' Home, an orphanage for infants under three.

It, too, is a supplier for the U.S. market. The orphanage, which had 106 infants when I visited, turns over at least that number each year to Holt and other agencies for foreign adoption.

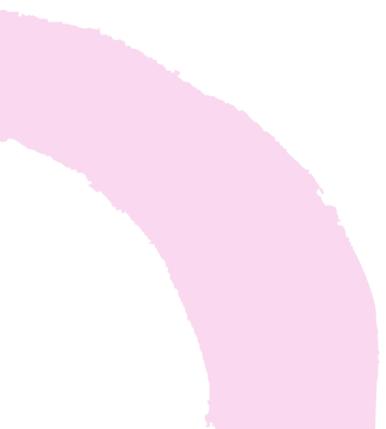
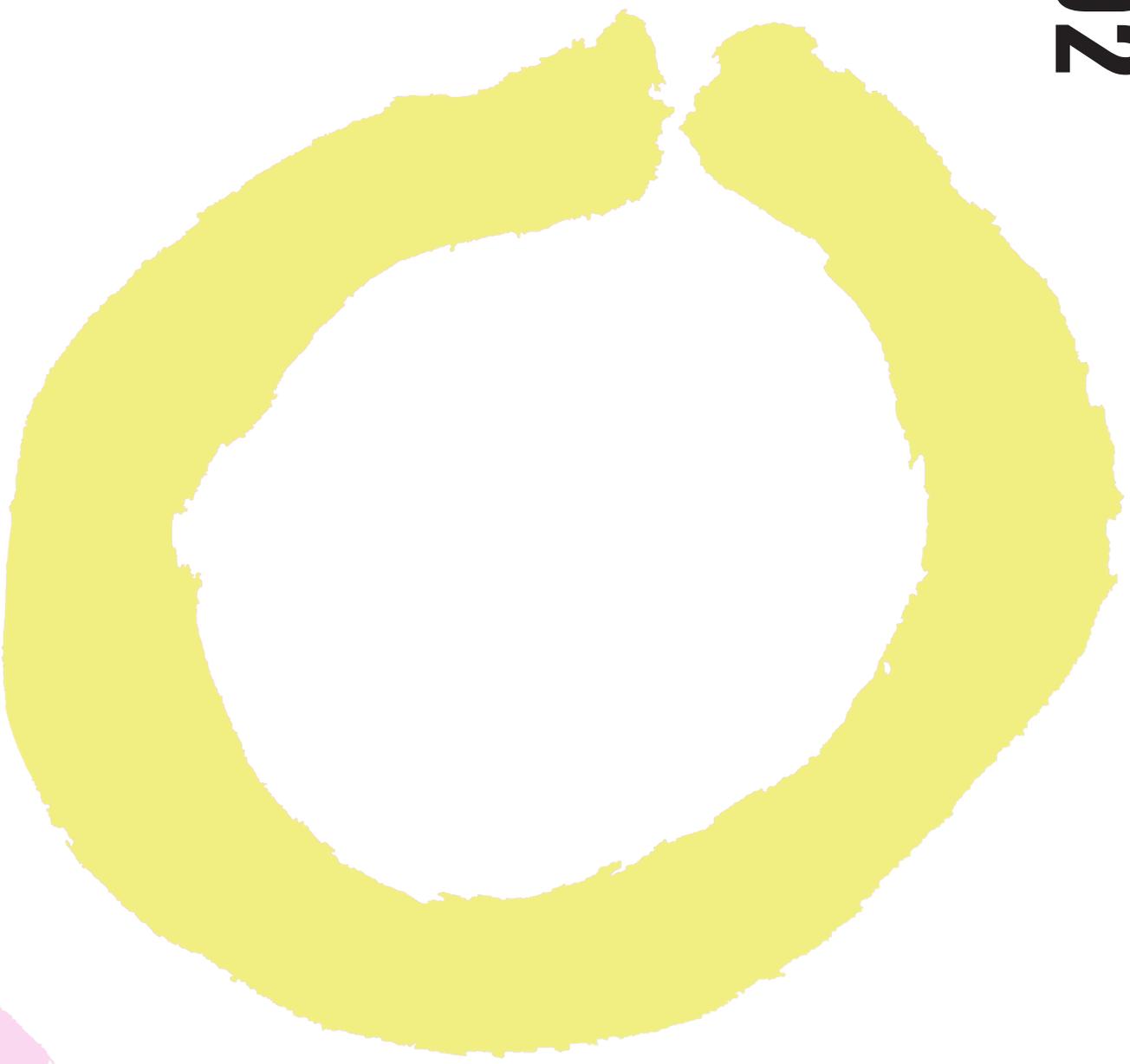
"Almost all are abandoned and brought here by the Seoul police," says Kim Chong Chan, the superintendent of the babies' home. "Some kids are waiting now, in jail or some other place."

Son Mi Gu was born on December 8, 1986, and was abandoned in a motel that same day. She has a pony tail standing straight up on the top of her head. Dressed in a pink frilled shirt and white thermal stockings, she sits up in one of the twenty-four white crated cribs that crowd the room. All are occupied. In one month, Son Mi Gu will go to her American family.

In a nearby room, eleven girls who are two-and-a-half sing "Kum Ba Ya, My Lord." Some clutch my blue blazer. Ten boys in the next room greet me in unison, then some call me "appa" or dad. They bring out brown envelopes with pictures of Americans. Kim Chong Chan goes over the photos with them, explaining about their new parents.

Kim Chong Chan takes me to his office. On his desk, under the glass top, is a long

**1989 - 1992**





**Home-Coming Program : une première incursion en terre natale.**

Home-Coming Program: first visit to native land.

내 이름은 조미혜,  
지금은 미헤 나탈리 르모완느 베르맹

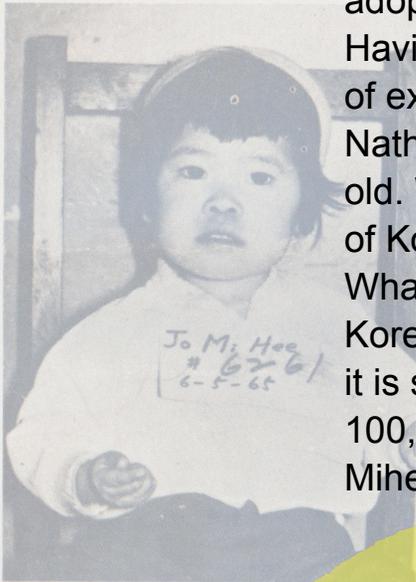
**Cela fait 20 ans depuis l'adoption de Mihee Nathalie par des parents belges. Ayant grandi dans un pays d'extrême racisme, Mihee Nathalie a maintenant 24 ans. Que pense-t-elle de la Corée, sa terre natale? Que pense-t-elle de ses parents coréens? À travers le monde, il y aurait 100 000 adopté.e.s comme Mihee Nathalie.**

« De retour en terre natale 20 ans plus tard,

“Landing in her homeland 20 years later,

# “20년만에 밟은 고국땅, 문득

It has been 20 years since Mihee Nathalie was adopted by Belgian parents. Having grown up in a land of extreme racism, Mihee Nathalie is now 24 years old. What does she think of Korea, her motherland? What does she think of her Korean parents? Worldwide, it is said that there are 100,000 adoptees like Mihee Nathalie.



입양 당시 양부모들에게 먼저 도착된 미헤 나탈리(한국명 조미혜)의 네살적 사진. 가슴의 '조미혜'라 쓰여진 한국 이름이 선명하다.

여동생을 갖게 해달라고 졸랐다(당시 엄마의 뱃속에는 동생이 생기고 있었지만 그런 사실을 이해할 리 없었던 나는 직접 슈퍼마켓에서 동생을 구입할 때를 썼다).

당황한 어머니께서, 입양에 대해 자세히 설명해 주셨고, 그때서야 나는 생김새가 다른 아이들과는 다르다는 사실을 알게 되었다.

그 이후에도 여동생을 무척 좋아하고 기다렸지만 부모님이 더 이상 여자 아이는 데려오는 일을 싫어한 탓으로 이를 수가 없었다.

일년이 지나며 한국에서 온 남동생 두 명이 생기게 되었다. 벨기에 부모와 아이인들로 구성된 우리 가족은 당시로서는 무척이나 이색적인 가족으로 화제가 되었다.

때문에 어머니는 이따금 거리에서 사람들에게서 사생아를 낳은 여자라고 오인받아 손가락질을 당한 적도 있다. 나와 남동생들은 나름대로 다른 생김새 때문에 벨기에 친구들로부터 놀림을 당해야

했다. 사람들 중에는 인간애를 보여준 두분에게 대해 존경의 시선을 보내는 사람들도 있었다. 나에게 세상에서 가장 매력적으로 생긴 아이라고 위로해주는 사람들도 있었다.

어머니는 현실적이었고 직설적이었다. 그녀가 나를 입양한 것은 인간적인 행위가 아니라 그녀 자신의 기쁨을 위해서라고 말했다. 결국 한국인 생모의 불행을 자신의 행복으로 만든다는 생각에는 별다른 의미가 없었다.

진정으로 자선을 베풀고 싶었다면 신체장애자나 정신박약아를 입양했을 것이라고 했다. 그분이 하는 말이 틀리다고 생각하지 않는다.

그러한 양엄마의 솔직성 또한 나에게겐 행운이랄 수밖에 없다. 입양아들에게 솔직함을 보여준다면 훨씬 인간미를 느끼

며 입양생활을 하리라 생각된다.

벨기에에는 입양을 주선하는 ‘인간의 대지’라는 입양주선기관이 있다. 나와 내 동생들은 이 기관을 통해 입양되었다. 우리는 매년 일년에 한번씩, 페루나, 인디아, 한국 사엘지방과 같은 못사는 나라의 아이들을 위해 기금을 마련해야 한다. 볼펜이나 플라스틱 오렌지, 스티커 등을 판매한다. 입양된 자들만이 무슨 일을 해야만 한다 함은 슬픈 일이다. 왜 그런 일을 해야 하는지 통 이해할 수가 없다. 사실 동양질이나 다름이 없다. 못 살기로 말하자면 우리보다 훨씬 못한 친구들도 많다. 그 아이들은 제게서도 사

네살 때 입양된 후 20년 후 그녀의 모습. 한국어를 전혀 못한다. 지난해 한국방문 후 고국에 대한 이해의 폭이 조금은 넓어졌

**une mère qui pourrait apparaître de façon inattendue... »**

**a mother who might show up unexpectedly...”**

# 나타날 것만 같은 어머니여...”

**« En Belgique, il existe un organisme d'adoption appelé Terre des Hommes. Ma soeur, mes frères et moi avons été adoptés par l'intermédiaire de cet organisme. Une ou deux fois par année, on devait amasser des fonds en vendant des stylos ou des autocollants pour les enfants de pays pauvres**

**tels que le Pérou, l'Inde et la Corée. C'est triste de penser que seulement les adopté.e.s devaient faire ce travail. On ne savait pas pourquoi on devait le faire. En fait, c'était presque comme mendier. »**

"In Belgium, there is an adoption organization called Terre des Hommes. My

sister, brothers and myself were adopted through this organization. Once or twice a year, we had to raise funds by selling pens or stickers for children from poor countries like Peru, India and Korea. It is sad to think that only the adoptees had to do this work. We did not know why we had to do it. In fact, it was almost like begging."

하지만 서로 공감할 수 있는 부분이 있다. 마음이 편했기 때문에 자연스럽게 벨기에 친구들 보다는 그들과 더 가까워질 수밖에 없었다.

81년 여름, 방학동안 할머니와 삼촌과 함께 미국을 여행하게 되었다. 엄마의

# J'IRAI CRACHER SUR MA MÈRE

1990  
2962

Adoptée par des parents belges comme 5000 autres enfants coréens depuis 1968, Mi Hee a remporté le prix du festival « Etre jeune en Europe aujourd'hui » pour son film « Adoption ». Une cicatrice à jamais ouverte.

**S**on histoire commence par un film, *Adoption*, pour lequel elle remporte le prix du festival « Etre jeune en Europe aujourd'hui » à Bruxelles en juillet 1988. Son histoire commence dans un film, exactement vingt ans plus tôt : le Japonais d'*Hiroshima mon amour* est si beau que sa mère décide d'adopter un Asiatique. Ce sera une petite coréenne, « parce qu'il y en avait en stock ; c'est comme à la SPA : prenez plutôt un cocker, parce que pour les épagneuls c'est plus long et c'est plus cher. »

Voix hachée, regard en coin, Mi Hee Nathalie Lemoine Bertin n'a pas toujours fait de l'ironie. Quand elle atterrit de sa Corée du Sud natale sur le sol belge, après deux ans d'orphelinat, elle ne parle pas, ne marche pas. Le choc à l'aéroport : « J'ai eu très peur de ma mère : elle avait un long nez, des yeux bleus, et des cheveux bouclés, blonds. » Le choc est passé, reste une dyslexie légère à l'écrit, et une amertume certaine, à l'oral.

De sa première enfance, en Corée, seuls subsistent quelques flashes : une vague présence féminine, « ma mère biologique, je suppose », un marché aux poissons, où elle a probablement été abandonnée vers un an, les sœurs à l'orphelinat américain. Parce que Mi Hee ne parle pas encore assez bien l'anglais, elle ne peut pas vérifier son « enfance » sur le dossier d'adoption, rédigé par des Américains. Et refuse de le laisser lire par quelqu'un d'autre. Pourtant, le père était peut-être un GI.

Le médecin belge qui l'a examinée pour cause de rachitisme quand elle est arrivée, a déduit à la denture, « comme les chevaux », à la forme du visage, qu'elle a plus étroit que les autres Coréens, à sa taille (1,70 m aujourd'hui), que Mi Hee devait être eurasiennne. Date de naissance fluctuante, « biologiquement, je serais née en 1967 ; mais sur mes papiers, c'est 1965 ; les autorités coréennes s'accrochent très bien de ce genre de procédé. Si les parents adoptifs veulent un enfant de quatre ans, on leur en donne un... même si c'est évident physiquement qu'il ne les a pas. L'important, c'est qu'ils payent. »

Depuis 1968, 5000 enfants coréens ont été ainsi « vendus » à la Belgique, l'un des pays européens les plus adoptants avec la Suède. Mi Hee ne connaît pas le prix : « J'ai oublié ma valeur ; je sais seulement que les Indiens, par exemple,



se vendent plus cher que les Coréens. » Officiellement, on n'adopte plus de Coréens depuis 1980 ; ou alors il faut passer par des « filières privées ».

Mi Hee-Nathalie appartient à la première génération d'adoptés, ceux qui ont ouvert la brèche. Aujourd'hui, elle porte haut le bombers, vert, et le pantalon flottant, noir. Ce qui ne la distingue pas particulièrement des autres. Sauf qu'elle se fait traiter de « chintoque » : « J'ai toujours une impression de malaise, de ne pas être acceptée encore, même si la mode est à l'exotisme. » De ce plat pays qui est devenu le sien, Mi Hee a pourtant gardé la culture (Brel signe la musique de son film), la langue, et une grande reconnaissance pour la terre et la mère adoptives. Même si ses amis sont plutôt maghrébins, indiens, espagnols ou « vrais Coréens », ceux qui sont là pour étudier et ont toute leur famille là-bas.

« On se fréquente très peu entre Coréens adoptés. Moi, ça ne m'intéresse pas de les voir : ce serait comme de regarder dans un miroir, ils ne m'apportent rien culturellement. Et la plupart sont devenus complètement belges, ils ne veulent rien savoir de leurs racines ; c'est un moyen de défense comme un autre. » Elle partage donc son appartement, au sud

de Bruxelles, avec deux « vrais ». « Je me nourris de leur passé, qui pourrait être le mien, de leur culture, qui est la mienne. »

Au mur, une photo du dernier Jarmusch, des photos d'elle petite, la Déclaration des droits de l'homme en caractères chinois, James Dean. Et une affiche : « Korea : more than Seoul ». Grâce au prix remporté pour son premier film vidéo, réalisé avec très peu de moyens, et en deux jours, *Adoption*, elle part avec un groupe de Coréens belges rencontrer à Séoul les Coréens d'autres pays. Le tout organisé par le gouvernement de Corée, « pour se déculpabiliser » dit-elle.

Le 29 juin 1989, elle atterrit à Séoul. Aucune émotion, mais un espoir : « Celui de voir surgir dans la foule le visage de ma mère. Et on en était tous là. C'est peut-être le seul point commun entre tous ces Coréens de nulle part : retrouver leur mère. » Trois sur les vingt-quatre l'ont retrouvée ; ils sont restés en contact...

Avec ces Hollandais, ces Allemands, ces Suisses, ces Norvégiens, ces Suédois et ces Américaines — « c'est marrant, on les reconnaissait tout de suite, les Américaines » — les échanges vont bon train ; les fameuses Américaines, maquillées, à bouclettes sont parfaitement intégrées chez l'oncle Sam. Les autres, de prove-

nance diverses, mais européennes, sont « plutôt plus heureux au Nord ; les Suédois et les Danois se sentent chez eux ».

Mi Hee en profite pour tourner un deuxième film, sur la rencontre à Séoul, sur la Corée même, pendant que le premier passait sur une chaîne de la TV coréenne. « J'espère que ma mère l'a vu ; même si elle ne sait pas que c'est moi, au moins quelque chose est passé. » Mais qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : « J'espère qu'elle vit toujours, que je puisse me venger. Si elle est riche et remariée, je lui briserai son ménage ; si elle est pauvre et qu'elle me demande de l'aider, je lui crache sur la gueule... oui, je suis un peu rancunière. Je ne peux pas comprendre qu'on abandonne un môme. Il fallait y penser avant. De toutes façons, je ne suis pas un enfant de l'amour. Si mon père était GI, elle a dû me faire pour le retenir. »

Le film *Adoption* avait pour exergue « A mes géniteurs, à mes parents », la lettre leur disait « coréenne avec les Occidentaux, occidentale avec les Asiatiques » ou bien encore « mon asiatisme sent les frites et ma belgitude le imchi ». Nathalie Lemoine Bertin préfère qu'on l'appelle Mi Hee ; mais si elle reste en Belgique, elle se fera, sans doute, débrider les yeux. ● EMMANUELE PEYRET

EN 1991 SORTENT DEUX FILMS CORÉENS INTITULÉS *BERLIN REPORT* ET *SUSANNE BRINK* AYANT POUR SOUS-THÈME L'ADOPTION INTERNATIONALE.  
IN 1991, TWO KOREAN FILMS COME OUT TITLED *BERLIN REPORT* AND *SUSANNE BRINK*, BOTH ADDRESSING THE THEME OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION.

1991  
2 197



 제 2 회 세계한민족체전 1991년 9 월

**Participation aux deuxièmes Olympiades de la diaspora coréenne à Séoul : second voyage en Corée du Sud.**

Participation in the second Olympiads of the Korean diaspora in Seoul: second trip to South Korea.

1. Nom - Naam  
 Name - Surname LEMDINE

2. Prénoms - Voornamen  
 Vornamen - Given names M. H.

3. Nationalité - Nationaliteit  
 Staatsangehörigkeit - Nationality België

4. Date de naissance - Geboortedatum  
 Geburtsdatum - Date of birth 1/1/77

5. Sexe - Geslacht  
 Geschlecht - Sex

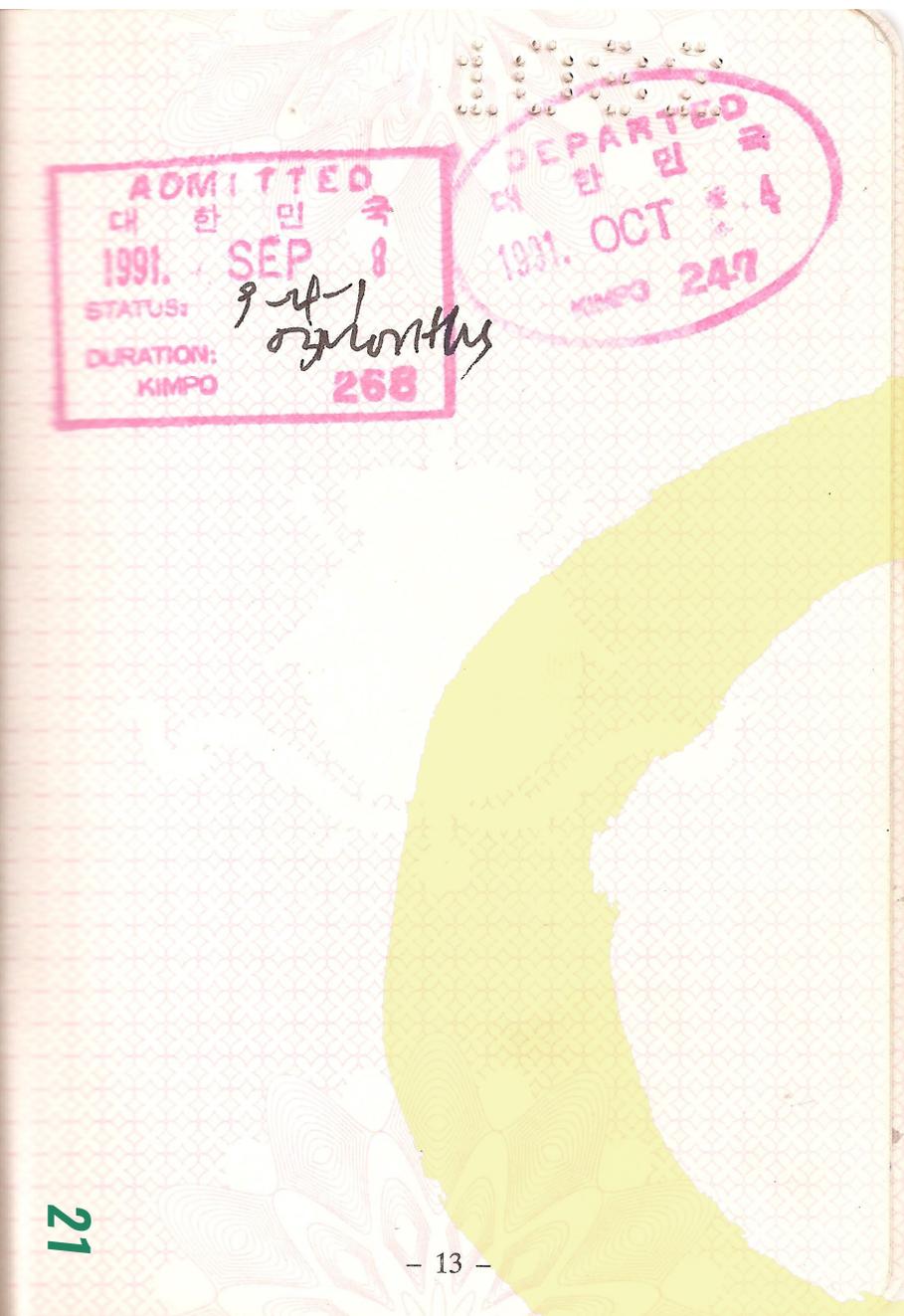
6. Lien de naissance - Geboorteplaats  
 Geboortort - Place of birth Pusan (Korée du Sud)

7. Date de délivrance - Datum van afgifte  
 Ausstellungdatum - Date of issue 10/6/91

8. Ce passeport expire le - De geldigheidsduur van dit paspoort eindigt op  
 Gültig bis - Date of expiry 9/6/93

9. Autorité - Instantie  
 Behörde - Authority Molenbeek-Saint-Jean

10. Signature du titulaire - Handtekening van de houder  
 Unterschrift des Passinhabers - Holder's signature 조배

Les deux femmes, qui séjournent actuellement à Ilwon-dong, Gangnam-gu, Séoul (Corée du Sud), sont en visite pour 9 jours.

« Je veux en apprendre beaucoup sur la Corée en très peu de temps. »

Le pays les a peut-être abandonnées mais elles ne laissent pas tomber.

*Deux adoptées retournent en Corée après 22 ans.*

*Two adoptees return to Korea after 22 years.*

제454호

스 포 츠 조 신

## 22년만에 벨기에서 온 두 '입양아가씨'

« Je veux trouver les parents qui m'ont (aban)donnée. »

"I want to find the parents who gave me (up)."

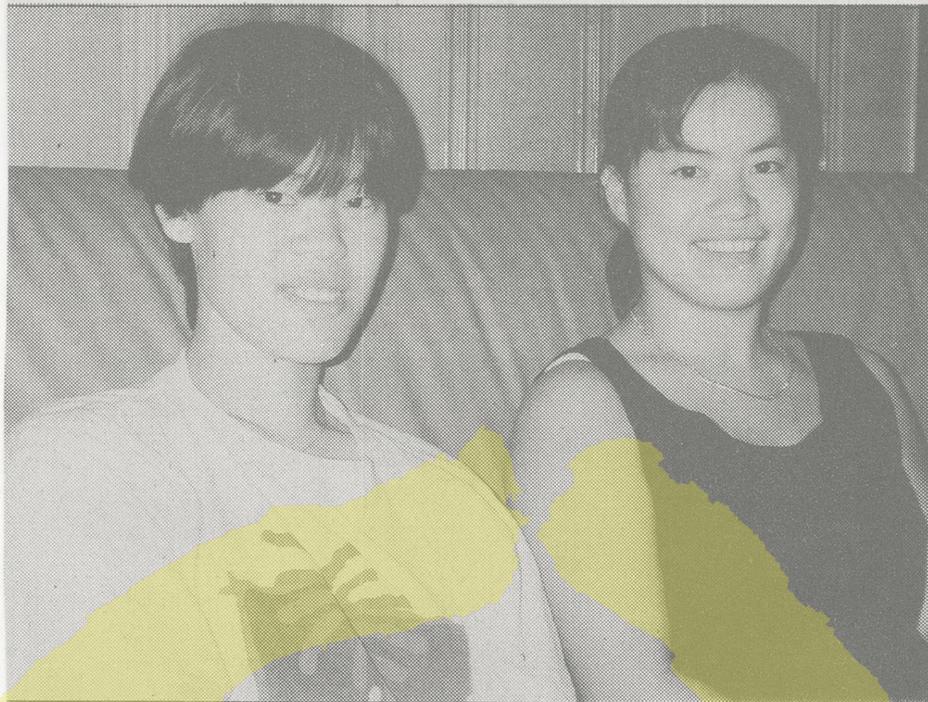
# “나를 낳은 아버지가 찾습니다”

The two women, who are currently staying in Ilwon-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul (South Korea) are on a 9-day trip.

"I want to learn a lot about Korea in a short amount of time." The country may have abandoned them but they will not turn away.

단시 동안이 "부산의 한 수산... 가꿈씩 꿈에 나타... 어렵פות한 기억을 끄... 뿐이다.  
벨기에 선교사의 주선으로 현재... 이원동 최명희씨(40... )집에 머물고 있는 두 아가씨는... 하면서 '맛죽은... 김치를 즐기... 연달했다.  
...지만 한국에 대해... 것을 배우고 싶어요."  
조국은 자기들을 버렸지만 자기... 들은 조국을 외면하지 않겠다고... 서.

SEOUL  
SEPT-91



◇지난 8일 낮12시 한민족체전에 참가하기 위해 다른 일행과 함께 고국의 땅을 밟은 조미희(왼쪽)와 서군자양.

The record about your childhood which I find today in Pusan Cityhall is as follows.

You were found on the 4th street, Dae Pyong Dong where you were only two months old. Young Do Police Station protected you for a while and then you were sent to Sohwa Orphanage.

you were adopted into a family in Belgium through Holt Adoption Agency.

(Your birth date is exact because your mother wrote it, but I am not sure of your real name.)

I tried to find the man who first found you and notify you to the police, but I couldn't because he moved. So I can't tell the situation in detail (~~exact~~ exactly).

The story you have interviewed with the reporter will be put on the newspaper tomorrow. So I think it is the best way (we can do) <sup>right now</sup> to expect some information or telephone calls <sup>about your birth and your mother</sup> from the persons who will read the newspaper.

24 September 1991



Danses traditionnelles coréennes ce samedi à Auderghem

## Retour aux sources de jeunes adoptés

Ceux qui veulent se souvenir, peuvent être aidés. Voilà pourquoi Mi Hee Lemoine, une jeune Coréenne adoptée par des parents belges vers 1970, a créé, en mars dernier, l'« Euro-Korean League ». Pour que les Coréens adoptés en quête de leur propre identité ne se sentent pas isolés. Pour les soutenir dans leurs recherches, fût-ce moralement.

Avant d'en arriver à mettre sur pied cette ASBL, le parcours de la jeune femme est celui de nombre de ses compatriotes, arrivés en Belgique tout bébés. Adolescente, elle a voulu retrouver ses parents biologiques. Ses racines. Mais les indices à sa disposition étaient minces. Ce rêve — cette nécessité ! —, elle n'a pu le réaliser qu'en 1991.

— *Tout avait été fait, semble-t-il, pour effacer les traces de mon passé. Pourtant, j'estime que pour mener une vie équilibrée, il faut combiner son intégration en Belgique et ses propres origines. Pour se sentir de quelque part...*

Si la rencontre avec sa mère ne fut pas aisée, c'est aussi parce qu'elles ne partagent ni la langue, ni l'écriture, ni les comportements sociaux. Aujourd'hui, à 24 ans, Mi Hee se dit qu'elle pourrait aider ses frères et sœurs de race en butte aux mêmes difficultés. Par exemple en diffusant la culture coréenne en Belgique. L'Euro-Korean League est donc née. Rien de trop formel, non, seulement un lieu de rencontre, d'échange d'expérience, l'occasion de parler. Permettre aux Coréens adoptés de communiquer entre eux, en Belgique d'abord, et puis, pourquoi pas, en Europe et au-delà.

Dernière initiative, en collaboration avec les « Holt Families in Belgium » : ce samedi, le groupe de danse « Esther », comprenant une vingtaine de Coréens de 12 à 15 ans, originaires de Seattle (États-Unis), se produit à Auderghem (1) pour une représentation unique en Belgique. Il s'agit d'un spectacle de danses traditionnelles qui, promet-on, sera « virevoltant et aux couleurs chatoyantes ».

Un autre projet tient Mi Hee Lemoine à cœur : une table ronde pour faire le bilan de l'adoption internationale en Belgique. Ce projet bénéficie d'ores et déjà du soutien des services de la protection de la jeunesse de la Communauté française.

Dans l'éditorial du premier numéro de « Ko-Bel News » (2), une revue qui reprend des messages de Coréens adoptés, des témoignages en français, en néerlandais, en anglais, en coréen... ces trois lignes, de la plume de Mi Hee. Trois lignes qui résument la vocation de l'ASBL, mais aussi qui traduisent ce sentiment intense que vivent les personnes adoptées, à un moment ou l'autre de leur vie :

*Belgique et Corée*

*Une mère retrouvée*

*Une envie d'être à partager.*

**FABIENNE NEUWELS**

(1) À 19 heures, au Centre culturel, 183-185 boulevard du Souverain. Prix : 300 francs (150 francs pour les enfants et les étudiants). Renseignements : 02-537.24.24 ou 427.04.62.

(2) 95 rue Antoine Bréart, 1060 Bruxelles; tél. : 02-537.24.24.



**1993 - 2006**



등록번호  
Registration No. - 293-000

소지인의 사진  
Photograph of Bearer

사진  
35mm x 45mm

소지인의 서명  
Signature of bearer: 

2

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8. 체류자격  
Status of Sojourn D-4 

9. 체류기간  
Period of Sojourn 1993. 9. 17.

10. 한국내주소  
Address in Korea 송파구 잠실 6동  
잠미 APT - 140

11. 근무처 및 직위  
Employment place & Position ~~시강의 우리대학 교직원~~  
이화여자 대학교 직원

12. 발급일자  
Date of Issue 1993. 5. 17. 

서울출입국관리사무소장 (인)  
Chief, Seoul Immigration Office

4

# THE KOREA TIMES

(1957年1月19日 第三種郵便物の承認可)

No. 13517 코리아 타임스

SEOUL, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 1994

CITY EDITION ★★★

SUB

## Globalization Symposium - (X)

### Orphans Adopted O'seas Return to Cool Welcome

By Kim Min-jeong

Judging from the enthusiastic response it's receiving from all sectors of society and the government's zeal in promoting it, internationalization is on its way to become an integral part of every Korean's life.

Thanks partially to this trend, Korea will probably be forced to become more cosmopolitan with more foreigners coming here for business, academic pursuit, tourism and so on. Most likely the already increasing number of homecoming "gyopos," those Koreans who had left motherland when it was an economic basketcase, will also multiply even further.

The question then is, will Koreans for all their internationalization and globalization be able to accept these people comfortably into the fold of their society?

It's no secret that it takes a lot more than just effort on the part of these foreigners and even "gyopos" to adjust to life in Korea with its closed society and chauvinistic attitude towards anything and anyone "un-Korean."

To complicate matters even further, Koreans would have to sort out their feelings for another group of people that they will be seeing more of in the coming years. As far as emotions go, this group comprising the tens of thousands of Korean orphans who had been sent abroad for adoption, will elicit the most confusion as Koreans will be unable to categorize them neatly in a group as they are so fond of doing.

Mention foreign adoption of Korean children and everyone agrees that it is morally wrong and shameful but, on the other hand, considering the situation of Korean society

deeply entrenched in confucianism that places such importance on blood ties, which makes domestic adoption near impossible, the same people say it's a blessing in disguise for the orphans. This ambivalence Koreans have about the issue is what adoptees who return to Korea find difficult to accept.

"Koreans don't know how to deal with us. They expect us to automatically become Koreans, speak Korean and be proud to be Koreans but when it comes to really accepting us into the society, they are unable to do so," said Elizabeth Eriksson.

Elizabeth Kyongmee Eriksson, 28, was one of the earlier cases of foreign adoption having been adopted by a Swedish family in 1971. Now, she is back in Korea and is planning to stick around for a while to "change things."

One of the things that Eriksson wants to see changed is the perception Koreans have towards transnational adoption and the adoptees themselves. This is where she hopes the Euro-Korean League (EKL) can help.

EKL, the result of informal gatherings of Korean adoptees in Belgium back in 1988, is an international non-profit organization that has been officially approved by the Belgian government.

Eriksson, who is president of EKL in Korea, and some of the other adoptees she met since coming here decided to open a branch in Seoul to help the adoptees who are returning to Korea in increasing numbers.

"Orphans who had been adopted in the '60s and '70s are now adults and more and more are coming back or

(Continued on Page 2)

### Orphans Adopted O'seas --

(Continued From Page 1)

thinking of it," Eriksson explained. "It's not an easy step for us to take since we will be finding a part of ourselves we had left behind as well as having to adjust to Korea and vice versa," she added.

Which is why the main purpose of the EKL is to "seek to improve social and cultural relationships between Korea and Europe that would be beneficial to the 50,000 Korean adoptees in Europe and to the Koreans in understanding them," according to its founder Cho Mihee Lemoine.

Lemoine, 26, who was adopted by a Belgian family in 1969, says the idea for the league grew out of social gatherings organized primarily for Korean adoptees in Belgium to get together and share their experiences. But they soon realized that they were in an unique position to promote cross-cultural understanding between Korea and Europe.

The EKL in Belgium has currently about 200 members including Korean adoptees from the Netherlands, Switzerland, France as well as "real" Koreans living in Europe.

From its humble origins, the league in Belgium has grown to become actively involved in a variety of activities such as the publication of the Ko-Bel News, a quarterly EKL newsletter in Hangul, English, Flemish and French, organizing social events to bring together adoptees and Koreans as with their Euro-Korean Concert and arranging seminars and conferences to introduce Korean culture to the adoptees.

The EKL branch in Korea is still in its starting stage but it hopes to provide practical assistance, in addition to it's other social and cultural activities, once it gets official recognition from the Korean government. "We would like to see more cultural and language programs being organized by the government for the adoptees and also a solution to the visa problems and perhaps a scholarship fund for those adoptees who wish to come here to study," said Eriksson.

If requested, they said that EKL would also provide help to those who want to find their birth parents and their families. However, the most important task would be to gather information and pass it on to anyone who needs it in coming back by letting them know the different options available and the difficulties they might encounter.

Due to a lack of post adoption services available for transnational adoptees, it is impossible to get any help in returning to Korea. "There is no place where one can go to get even the most basic information. This is where EKL would be most effective. Just being there to provide the information to those who ask for it would be a tremendous help and moral support to those adoptees that do come back," said Lemoine.

Adoptees have been coming back for pretty much the same reason, that is, to discover their heritage and to get back a part of them that had been taken away from them when they were sent away for adoption. But for many it's also a journey to put to rest the memories that have haunted them for most of their lives especially since there was no one to corroborate their stories.

rate their stories.

Jinhee Vandeputte, 27, a Belgian adoptee, said because some of the memories of her life before her adoption were so unusual, people told her it was just her imagination working overtime. Coming back, she said happily, has enabled her to prove that her memories were real after all and not just a figment of her imagination. Eriksson claims that the issue of foreign adoption had been focused too much on the negative aspects only. "EKL would create the environs for the debate to be channelled into a more positive direction to actually be of help to the adoptees," she said.

She also said ruefully that movies like Susan Brink's Arirang, based on a true story of a Korean adoptee and her abusive Swedish adoptive family, doesn't help because it tells only part of the story and not the whole, adding that she has had so many Koreans asking with morbid curiosity if all foreign adoptive parents abused their children.

Although, the adoptees admitted that there have been cases of adoption gone wrong, there have also been plenty of cases when it went right and they all agreed that it would be wrong and unfair to those who had wonderful adoptive families to link foreign adoption to child abuse.

Korean society seem to relish in the former cases in arguing against foreign adoption but when it comes to drawing up concrete policies to help the tens of thousands of children they have already sent abroad for adoption, neither the government nor society seem to be taking the initiative.

Karen Latriche, 25, an adoptee from France, likened the Koreans to ostriches who bury their heads in the sand to avoid coming face to face with reality. "Denial and ignoring won't make the issue disappear. People should be able to discuss it freely because when the subject is considered taboo, it becomes negative," she asserted.

"Adoptees don't come here to unleash their bitterness or to blame Korean society, we come simply in search of our background and our roots, so the least Koreans can do is be understanding about our situation," Eriksson took pains to point out.

Vandeputte put it more poignantly when she said, "It's the natural instinct in all of us that makes us want to come back to find that something we lost when we lost our family. Every adoptee has the right."

If Koreans want the adoptees to feel proud to be Koreans than they first must give them reason to be by not rejecting them the second time around.

It wouldn't be too far off the mark to accuse Korean society as well as the government of neglect and indifference towards their responsibility for these adoptees once they had been sent off abroad.

In the spirit of true internationalization and globalization and their various attempts to upgrade the international image of Korea in all aspects, it might be good strategy for Koreans to begin with what they see when they look in a mirror.

\* \* \*

The writer is a correspondent of The Korea Times.

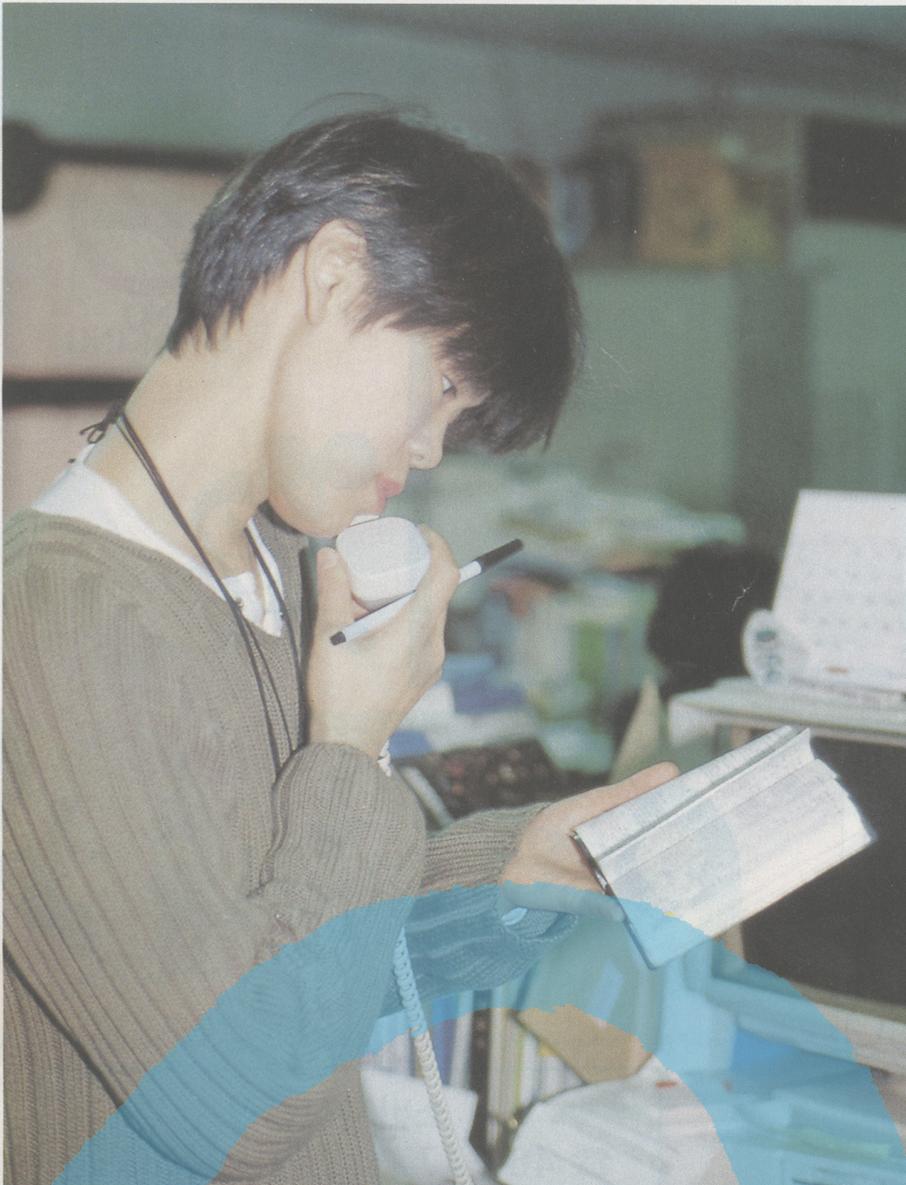
EN 1996, LA CORÉE DU SUD ROMPT SA PROMESSE, FAITE EN 1988, DE METTRE FIN À L'ADOPTION INTERNATIONALE DE SES ENFANTS.  
 IN 1996, SOUTH KOREA BREAKS THE PROMISE MADE IN 1988 TO STOP THE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION OF ITS CHILDREN.

« Il est temps de lever la stigmatisation entourant les exportateurs.trices d'orphelin.e.s et de les accepter. »

“It is time to remove the stigma surrounding orphan exporters and to embrace them.”

# 조미희

“고아 수출국 오명 벗고 그들을 동포애로 감싸안아 줄 때예요”



**지** 난해 10월, 조미희 씨는 취직을 했다. 서울 종로 5가에 본부가 있는 경제정의실천시민연합(경실련)에 출근을 하고 있다. 그녀의 직책은 해외 입양 담당이다. 주로 하는 일은 해외 입양아들의 가족을 찾아주는 일이다.

그녀에게 해외 입양아 출신들이 한국의 부모나 형제들을 찾고 싶다는 요청이 들어오면 한국의 입양 관계 기관을 찾아다니며 옛 서류들을 뒤적여 가족의 연락처를 찾는다.

반대로 해외 입양된 아이를 찾는 한국 부모들이 도움을 원할 때도 있다. 일종의 가교 역할을 하는 것이다. 그렇다고 단순히 그 역할만 하는 것은 아니다. 양쪽을 확인하고 상대방의 의견을 들은 뒤 만나게 해도 좋은지 결정한다. 말하자면 중재지역이다. 지금까지 30여 건을 심사시켰다.

이렇듯 해외 입양아들의 가족 찾기를 도와주는 사람은 경실련의 조미희 씨뿐이다. 정부 기관이 있긴 하지만 성과를 거두고 내 일처럼 뛰어주는 사람은 그녀 한 명이

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을 하면서 벨기에에 입양아들이 많다는 것을 알았다.

그 영화제에서 최우수상을 받아 양부모와 친척들이 자기 일처럼 축하를 해주었다. 상금 1천달러와 몬트리올 아마추어 국제영화제에 참가할 수 있는 특전을 받았다.

영화 '입양' 덕택에 그녀는 고국을 방문하는 행운을 가질 수 있게 되었다. 한국 대사관에 근무하

**Cho Mihee réside maintenant en Corée et se consacre à deux choses : retrouver les membres de sa famille biologique et préparer une exposition. « C'est un rêve de pouvoir montrer ces dessins imaginés comme un pont entre la terre natale et les adopté.e.s d'outre-mer », dit-elle.**

**Cho Mihee, now residing in Korea, is busy with two things: finding biological family members and preparing an exhibition. "It's a dream to be able to show these drawings imagined as a bridge between the homeland and the overseas adoptees," she says.**

하지만 주된 관심사는 해외 입양아와 관련된 일이다. 무엇보다도 올해 7월 네덜란드 헤이그에서 열릴 '해외 입양 청년 대회'의 성공적인 개최를 위해 나름대로 프로그램을 준비해야 한다.

이 일은 지난해 7월 독일 뒤셀도르프에서 처음 열렸는데 경실련



**“해외 입양에는 다 이유가 있게 마련이다. 그러나 이제는 국내 입양이 적극 이루어져야 할 때다. 입양아 출신들이 커가면서 느끼는 고통과 방향은 이루 말할 수 없이 크다.”**

**조미희 씨는 능력과 여건이 되는 데까지 해외 입양아 뿌리 찾아주기 활동을 하겠다고 한다.**



조미희 씨의 그림은 일정한 양식이 없다. 마음 가는 대로 붓 가는 대로 그린다. '둥근 것'이라는 제목의 작품이다.

해외 사업 중 중요한 행사이기도 하다.

개인적으로 조미희 씨는 3월 18일부터 25일까지 대전 삼성생명 갤러리에서 벨기에 입양 청년들의 전시회 준비로 바쁘다. 조미희 씨(회화) 외에 김미경(마스크)·허지선(판화)·성춘호(사진) 씨 등이 고국에서 첫 전시회를 연다. 조미희 씨는 이 전시회 행사를 위해 갤러리 선정부터 후원회 섭외 등을 했다. 물론 다른 멤버들과 함께 발로 뛰어 마련한 이 행사에 그녀는 가슴이 설렌다.

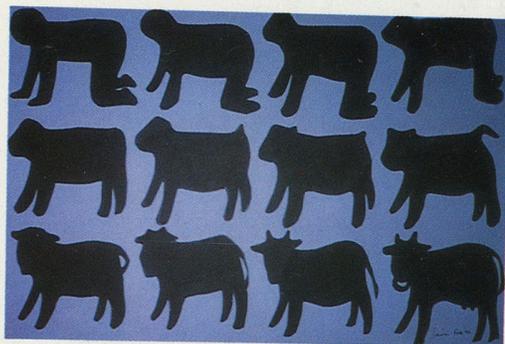
한국말이 그리 유창하진 못하지만 말은 통할 정도의 실력이다.

한국말이 너무 어렵다고 하소연한다. 프랑스어권인 벨기에에서 자랐지만 영어도 제법한다. 서울 목동에서 과리 유학생 출신 화가 여자친구와 함께 살고 있는데 한국 생활이 재미있긴 하지만 힘들다고 말했다.

앞으로 언제까지 입양아와 관련된 일을 하게 될지 또 한국에서 눌러살게 될지 확실한 계획은 없다. 하지만 언제나 현재에 최선을 다하겠다고 다부진 표정을 지었다. 그리고 앞으로 입양아 관련 영화를 만들겠다고 포부를 밝혔다. **IK**

□글/신광식 기자  
□사진/권혁재 기자





Ines CHO  
Hallugination-Holy caw



Bo WHANG  
One eyeball man  
oil on canvas (122.5×117.5)



Hyuna PARK  
In more relaxed moment  
acrylic on canvas (95×125)



CHO Mihee-Nathalie  
Yellow element  
mixed-media on paper (70×100)



Vincent SUNG  
Lesley. Paris 94  
photography

# Arts Of The Youth Of Kameleonz

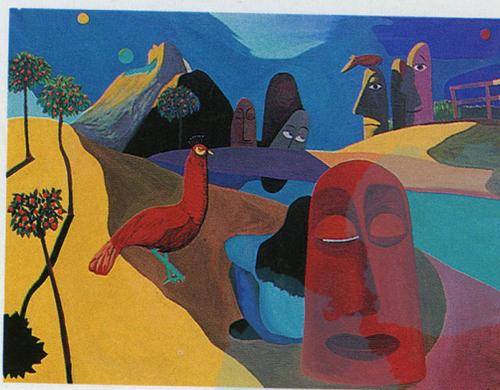
(TRANSLATION : Ross GREGORY)

Like the thousand faces of the chameleon which change colour according to its environment, the group kameleonz has been created by artists from all walks of life who have come together in search of a medium through which we may freely exhibit our art forms as an adaptable, amorphous being void from cultural, linguistic or geographical limitations. The beginning letter of the group's name, "K", stands for Korea. The final syllable has been modified to emulate a French phoneme. Through its name, the nature, origin and background of the group's members is thus encapsulated.

The ten members of Kameleonz have all spent many years scattered far away from their motherland, Korea. They have been exposed to many different cultures, attitudes and lifestyles. Our outlook on life is broad, our inclination international, our vigour intense, our various artistic endeavours passionate and distinctive. Although members all possess their own unique and original artistic ideas and modus operandi, we carry with us one common ambition,

that is to arouse the deep down highly perceptive and tender ephemeral senses of those around us who witness our work by unleashing the primal artistic urge that rages within us emitting an awakening shock wave, an offering of one mind, one ideology. Each of us has encountered an abundance of situations and through the acquisition of an ability to easily adapt to habitat we have come to respect the great fundamental humanistic moral nature of the universe. Our quest is to seek beauty and happiness by exploring the unknown world within and around us. We want to help Koreans stuck in a suffocating environment open the window to their hearts through art.

We Koreans, like other tribes, are industrious and talented. We are humane, we are pious. We are for



Ji Sun SJOGREN  
Where am I ?  
oil on canvas (149×200)

the greater part tender and full of warmth. Our nation's heritage is supported by an ever-enduring, unyielding will-power and spirit. We have endured ordeals from back into the deep recesses of time yet we have continued to work towards finding the right path and still we move onwards. Why are we now, however, in seeking globalisation and elevation to the status of an advanced nation searching for a "world culture"? The culture of the world is itself the very culture that we as Koreans can create and contribute to.

We ten young Korean-born artists wish to demonstrate to you through our various art forms the views on

life we have come to acquire as a result of our each having been dispersed around the world. Having undergone stigmatisation over extended periods of time after much struggle we have come to discover our true selves, our innate disposition. It is this that we want to show you. "Multimedia" is the medium that enables us to express ourselves in a definite and tangible way. We ten young Korean artists, having actively pursued our artistic endeavours in our respective homes away from home abroad are now coming to offer you our multi-media messages, together expressed freely through various languages, now that you, our Korean brothers, have paved the way for multiculturalism in your pursuit for global distinction and harmony.

Kameleonist CHOE Joo-Young

# Space for Shadows': quest for identity

KOREA HERALD

FRIDAY, DEC. 20, 1996.

Culture . p. 7.

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*Han Diaspora expresses life experiences through art performance*

By Cho Yoon-jung  
Staff reporter

While the word diaspora is usually used in reference to the Jewish people, there are many other races whose people are scattered all over the world and this is certainly the case for Koreans.

Through circumstances that may or may not have been of their own choosing and the path taken by the modern history of the nation, there exists a large population of young Koreans who grew up outside the country.

Whether adoptees to foreign countries or the children of immigrants, there are stories to be told about their experiences, stories which revolve around the quest for identity.

Forming a group called Han Diaspora this September, Korean American Sohn Hee-joo set about finding a way to tell these stories through art.

The result is a mixed media art performance titled "Space for Shadows." It will take place Dec. 22 at Kyongdong Church in Changchung-dong bringing together four young artists and performers.

Cho Mi-hee and Leah Sieck are overseas adoptees.

Cho was adopted to Belgium in 1969. Several years ago she returned to Korea in search of her birth mother. Now a painter and filmmaker who helps other adoptees search for their biological parents, her performance will consist of an SBS documentary about her life and presentation of six paintings.

All of Cho's art deals with adoption in some way. Back in 1991 Cho found her mother and painted "Floating Portrait," which shows a sense of rediscovery of self.



Leah Sieck dancing in the snow.

But in 1992, she painted "Et toi, d'ou est-tu?" (And you, where do you come from?) which expresses the confusion of identity that came when reminded by this question that she was not considered to belong to either Belgium or Korea, the places she had called home.

Sieck, whose original name is Kim Eun-sook, was sent to live with a family in the United States when she was only three months old. Recently returning to Korea, she now teaches English at Seoul National University's language center.

By telling about life with her adoptive family through poetry, dance and music and her short experience of living in Korea she indicates recognition of her "fluid identity." But in also communicating the unfairness of being criticized for not speaking Korean, she points to underlying problems here by questioning why she had to be adopted overseas.

The third performer Kim Myung-boon did not grow up outside Korea herself. She is an employee of Dooraeabang, a center for women who work in and around the military bases of Tongduchon.

In a slide and poetry presentation Kim shows how through her contact with children of mixed race she has realized that they do not have to be sent out of the country to be living outside it. She cries for the children as a witness to the outcaste lives they lead.

Wrapping up the show will be Eriko Ikehara who was adopted to the United States when she was 13. Her mother is Japanese and her father a black military serviceman based in Okinawa.

Ikehara defines herself as "bi-cultural, bi-racial, and bi-lingual first genera-

tion black Okinawan" and a "mixed media performance artist." She will be presenting an autobiographical piece employing dance, poetry, music and film called "Triogedy."

To put the separate performances in context, Prof. Shin Yoon-whan will present a general history of the dispersion of Koreans to other countries.

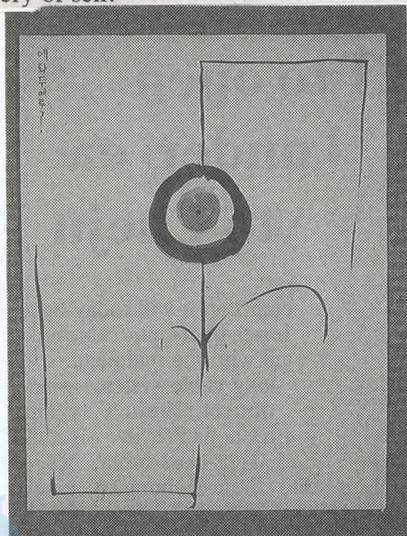
Sohn from Han Diaspora hopes the event will prod people to start thinking about the various issues presented in the performances. "It is not asking for sympathy, just a voice to tell a story," she said.

Pointing out that the one thing all Koreans scattered around the world have in common is the homeland, she explained that for herself and others like her, returning to the homeland is a way to understand the context of their identity.

Given that it is not easy to understand something that is not part of personal experience and art is not the simplest form of communication, a performance such as "Space for Shadows" is a fitting forum for the four performers involved. "Through art there is healing," Sohn said.

That healing is necessary is suggested in the title, "Space for Shadows." The four performers all word it differently — fluid identity, inbetweenness, outcaste, no man's land — but all seem to acknowledge a fate of living in a sphere of their own.

For information and tickets, call Sohn Hee-joo on 736-6818. Tickets are also available at the door. A preview performance will be held tonight at the Golden Helmet near Hongik University.



"Et toi — d'ou est-tu?" painted by Cho Mi-hee.

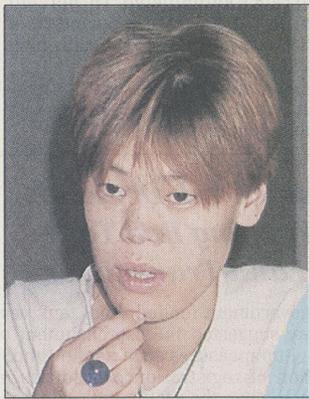
# Korean-Belgian Adoptee Explores Identity Thru Art

Staff Reporter

Beauty — the spare black Chinese ink strokes brazenly violate the delicate white rice paper, slashing out the calligraphy ideogram. Underneath, a tenuous row of mini-ideograms are linked together by their tendrils, like dancing figures holding hands. Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine's painting, "Mi-wo Series # 1" is an orientalized interpretation of Henri Matisse's masterpiece, "The Dance."

Like the other works in "Ugly Beauty," Lemoine's first solo exhibit, the black and white painting betrays the artist's particular predicament — she straddles the chasm between East and West, carving out a world from unknowns. A Korean-Belgian adoptee, Lemoine's experience with adoption is the inspiration of both her life and her art.

"In-between. That's how adoptees feel. We're always searching for a balance between two things. I use this tension to create my artwork," 29 year-old Lemoine explained in her lilting French-accented English. "But I'm not only an artist, I'm also an activist. There are so many of us and Koreans have to recognize and make a place for adoptees in this society."



Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine

Founder and director of Korean Overseas Adoptees (KOA), an organization that helps adoptees search for their birth mothers, Lemoine divides her time between her art and her activism; more often than not, the two overlap. "Ugly Beauty," her exhibit currently on display at the Munhwa Ilbo

Gallery, is an example of how the two different strains of Lemoine's life meld together and soar.

It's unmistakable — adoption and its emotional consequences are the recurring themes of Lemoine's paintings. Her most stirring works tackle basic identity issues that are all the more pressing for adoptees: Where do I come from? Who am I? What does my name mean? Who do I look like? Where do I belong?

Lemoine organized her 35 paintings to reflect her journey of personal discovery. "I arranged the exhibit so that it starts with the section 'Backgrounds,' the art I did when I was still in Belgium,"



'New World,' oil on canvas, by Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine

the artist said brushing her bleached orange bangs from her eyes, her pig tail bobbing. "The second section is 'Identity and Adoption,' which begins with works I did when I first came to Korea in 1988. Then there is the pre-natal life section, which explores the origins of life and the exhibit ends with the calligraphy section, the works influenced by my time in Korea."

The journey leaves its mark on the paintings' canvases — the artwork in each section look very different. "Flemish Landscape," one of Lemoine's first paintings completed in Brussels, is an abstract piece awash with muted whites and hints of blue and green.

"The New World," the painting which kicks off the second section, marks a change. It lays bare the confusion and anxiety Lemoine felt after her first trip back to Korea. "I wasn't very well when I did this," she said, laughing. "It expresses my confused state of mind then, I think."

The painting is also the first in which Lemoine plays stylistically with the clash between East and West — "My concept is that the acrylic symbolizes the West and the black Chinese ink is something I only started using after being in Korea so its the East. I used both of them in this painting to express the two sides of me." The effect is chaos and turmoil, the two media refusing to mix and clashing uneasily on one canvas.

The mood of the exhibit changes completely as it enters into the third and largest section, the pre-natal life paintings. Instead of the blackish shades and violent power that pervade the earlier paintings, these paintings of which "Fetus Trinity" is typical, are infused with pinks, purples and lighter blues, the gentle hues of infancy. Lemoine's preoccupation with the myth of origins is not surprising given her adoption but her approach is.

the artist said chucking at her own spontaneous reference to Milan Kundera's "deep" novel. "Birth is usually such a heavy subject and I wanted to show it in a lighter way, with humor." The colors, though they are softer, are no less striking — "I used a lot of purples in this section because it symbolizes femininity and most of these paintings are also framed by the color. Its like a womb."

But the most memorable paintings comprise the grand finale of "Ugly Beauty," the calligraphy section. The myth of origins, the mystery of language, the meeting of East and West and the meaning of beauty are all intelligently explored in these deceptively simple paintings.

The Mi-wo Series which gave its name to the exhibit as a whole is a part of this section. For Lemoine, notions of beauty are attached to her unknowable Korean heritage — "I started to think about beauty when at an early age, I understood about the meaning of my adoptive-Korean name. The Chinese character of Mi is Beauty. The second part is girl.

The global meaning is Beautiful girl."

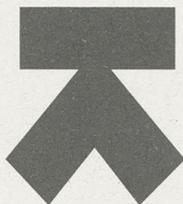
Names are another motif that runs through Lemoine's life and art. The artist has many names — Mihee Cho, Nathalie Lemoine, Kim Byul — for the many identities she possesses. "My favorite painting is 'Kim Byul,'" Lemoine explained. "Kim Byul is the name my birth mother gave to me and the painting is a mirrored image of the name written in Korean. The fact that it is reversed shows the warping of my Korean identity."

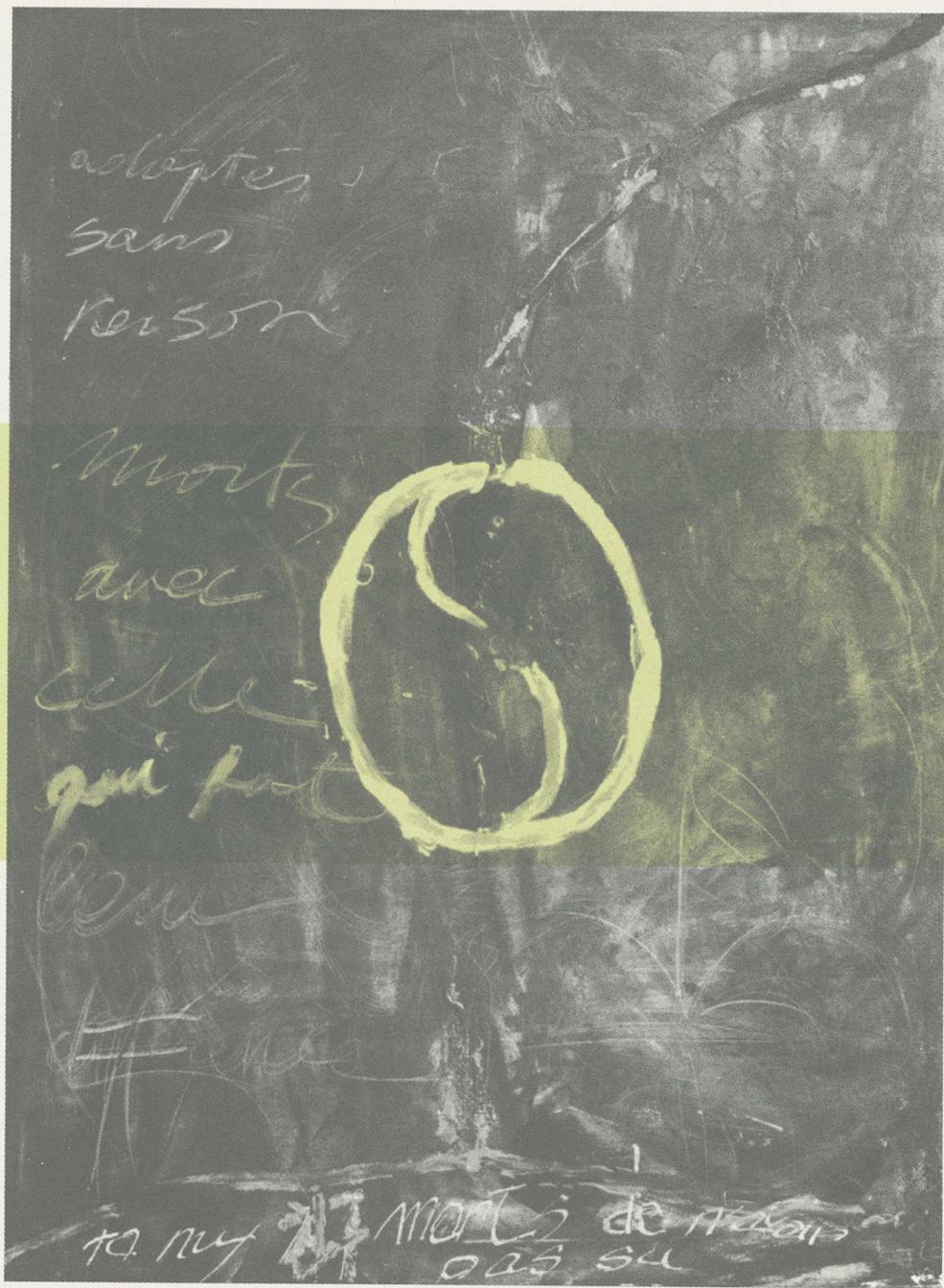
"Ugly Beauty" features another young woman artist with many names. Two short videos by Me K. Ahn, a twentysomething Korean adoptee from Minneapolis, are being shown in the exhibition hall alongside Lemoine's paintings. "Its a made up name," Ahn said in her melodic voice. "Me K. is my Korean name from the orphanage made more English and Ahn is the Korean translation of my Japanese adopted mother's last name, Ando."

"Living in half tones" and "Undertow" explore similar themes of adoption and quest for identity. The first is a pseudo-documentary that Ahn made soon after her trip to Korea — "it conveys the emotional experience of returning to the orphanage I lived in." The second is more experimental and explores "how the loss of family and culture can affect one's body consciousness and sexuality."

Lemoine uses an egg-shaped tao symbol as her personal motif. Its meaning also aptly explains the significance of her exhibit, "Ugly Beauty" — "Though we have received Western educations, in the middle of our hearts lies a truly Eastern mentality. Through art, we find a harmonious blend of the two."

"Ugly Beauty" will continue until July 20. For more information, call the Munhwa Ilbo Gallery at 3701-5760-1.





무제 untitled : : 1993

금:::안에.	검은.	점과.	처음부터.달걀.모양으로.그렸다..	
하얀.	점을.	찍을.때.		
처음부터.	달걀.	모양으로.		
그렸는지.	아니면.	동그란.		
모양을.	그렸는지..			
안:::실례가.	안되면.	그.	지금은.너무.추워서.안되고.녹화해.둔.송지나.취재.	화일.방송에서나.볼.수.
모양을.	어깨에.	문신했다고.	있다..	
하던데.	지금.	보여줄.		
수.	있는가..			
문:::언제.	문신을.	새겼나..	1988년도.내.생일에.새겼다.. 색깔은.검다..	
안:::생명에.	관심을.	많다고.	생명은.모든.것의.시작이고.기본이다.생명이.모든.사람에게.	주어지
들었는데.	어떤.	관점에서.	는.것도.아니고.그.사람들에게.생명을.다시.	잉태
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			처지.여러.상황들도.생각했다..아이가.생겼을.때.남자는.	도망
			가도.되지만.여자는.그.생명을.	결정해야.
			하고.책임져야.한다..	
안:::육체적으로.도망간다고.도망가지는가..			여자에게만.책임이.주어진다..	불공평
			하다..	
안:::유희를.	믿는가..		내가.술.마실.때.얼굴이.빨개지는.것을.보면.아버지가.	인디언이었
			을.거라는.생각도.해봤다..	
			17살.때.아프리카를.간.적이.있는데.별.	불편
			함을.느끼지.못했다..레게.음악도.	좋아한다..
			유희를.믿지만.인생이.힘들기.때문에.나에게.	그런.
			일이.없기를.바란다..	
안:::인생에서.	무엇이.	힘겨운가..	모든.사람들이.힘들겠지만.나는.태어날.때부터.어려운.조건에서.	태어
			났고.재미있게.살려고.노력하지만.행복을.느끼지.못한다..	
안:::지금.	하고.	있는.	좋은.영화를.볼.때..최근에.본.비밀과.거짓말이라는.영화가.좋았다..	진
일.중에.	무슨.	일을.	실이.있고.나와.공통점이.많았다..	
할.때.	가장.	행복한가..		
안:::친어머니를.	만났을.	때.	어머니를.처음.만났을.때.	이야기
어떤.	감정이었는가..		를.안.했지만.직감적으로.	내.
			어머니를.알아봤다..한시간.후.	내.어머니라고.이야기
			해줬다..나는.알고.	있었
			다고.말했다..그.때는.꿈.같았다..	
금:::아주.	어렸을.때.	기억나는.	제일.먼저.기억나는.것은.꿈인데.악몽이었다..	내
것이.	있는가..		가.아기였을.때.흰.옷을.입은.사람이.	나를.안고.
			있었다..처음에는.간호원이라고.생각했는데.	나중에는.
			수녀라고도.생각했다..사람들이.막.	뛰어
			다녔는데.나를.	안은.사람이.

**Quand êtes-vous venue en Corée pour la première fois?**

**« En 1988. Je suis une Coréenne adoptée et je voulais connaître la Corée. Je m'intéresse à l'art coréen et je voulais l'étudier en profondeur. »**

**When did you first come to Korea?**

**"In 1988. I am a Korean adoptee and I wanted to know Korea. I am interested in Korean art and I wanted to delve deeply into it."**

안:::언제.	간.	것인가.
안:::우리나라.	대중.	음악을
어떻게.	생각하는가..	

한국.대중.가요는.이탈리아.대중.가요와.비슷하다..아직.한국.음악.	듣는.
것이.어렵다..상승이.더.좋다..벨기에의.가라오케에서.	부
업을.했는데.일본.사람들이.조용필.노래를.많이.불렀다..	내
가.태어난.곳이.부산인데.배경.화면도.부산이었다..	아버
지가.판소리.판을.구해.들어야.	한다고.
했는데.강요해서.	싫어했다..
한국.사람이라는.자부심이.생겨.지금은.좋아한다..	

문: ::오늘은, 무엇을, 했는가.. 다른, 입양아들을, 위해, 사회복지회관도, 찾아가고, 친구도, 만나  
고, 여기도, 왔다..  
정: ::처음, 한국에, 온, 1989년에, 왔다.. 한국, 입양아이고, 한국이, 알고, 싶어서, 찾아왔다.. 한국, 미  
것이, 언제인가.., 술에, 관심이, 많았는데, 깊게, 들어가, 보지, 못해, 여기에서, 공부하고, 싶었다..  
정: ::가수, 이상은을, 어떻게, 이: ::대학로의, 카페, 태양과, 물고기sun.and.fish에서, 처  
만났는가.., 음, 만났다.. 작품집을, 들고, 찾아와, 그림을, 보여주었다.. 그래서,  
안: ::카멜레옹즈는, 주로, 무엇을, 카멜레옹즈는, 외국에서, 살던, 한국, 사람들의, 친선,  
하는가.., 모임이다.. 전시회는, 2번했고, 서로, 자기, 일이, 바빠, 자  
이: ::10월, 9일, 홍익대학교, 거리, 미  
술전에, 카페를, 빌려, 전시하기로, 했다..

안: ::거기, 모인, 사람들은, 이: ::화가, 사진가, 행위, 예술가도, 있다..  
다, 화가인가..  
문: ::카멜레옹즈에서, 웅즈는, 불어로, 이: ::사람들이, 나가고, 새로, 들어오고, 그러나, 11명을, 유지하  
11을, 뜻하는데, 항상, 려고, 한다..  
안: ::한국미술을, 어떻게, 생각하는가.. 분홍과, 빨강을, 같이, 쓰는, 것을, 보고, 충격을, 받았다.. 유럽에서는, 규칙이,  
안: ::어떤, 것에, 분홍과, 광고물이나, 한복에서, 봤다.. 사람들, 옷, 색깔도,  
빨강을, 같이, 쓰는가.. 화려하고, 다른, 세계에, 온, 느낌이었다.. 싫다는, 느낌  
보다는, 불편했다.. 한국, 글자꼴에, 관심이, 많다.. 단순하  
면서도, 예쁘고, 귀엽다..

안: ::한국에, 오기, 전, 18살, 때, 영화를, 만들었다.. 그때, 한국, 대사관에서, 처음, 타자기로, 글  
우리나라, 글자를, 본, 자, 찍는, 것을, 보았다.. 벨기에, 한국, 식당에서, 부업  
적이, 있는가.. 을, 했는데, 주인이, 한국인, 3세였다.. 그, 사람이, 나에  
게, 왜, 한국말을, 못하냐고, 물었다.. 그때, 처음, 한국말을, 깊이, 생각하  
게, 되었다..

금: ::한국에, 오기, 전, 미국, 캐나다, 모로코를, 가, 보았다.. 모로코  
유럽말고, 다른, 나라를, 의, 아라베스크, 문양과, 글씨, 균형이, 좋았다.. 11살, 때, 가보았다.. 사하라 137

**Parmi les artistes belges, en aimez-vous certains?**  
« Oui, René Magritte, Paul Delvaux et aussi l'Autrichien Egon Schiele. J'aime les œuvres inachevées. Quand je dessine, j'utilise de l'encre et des couleurs coréennes. La forme de l'œuf est une perception de moi-même. La coquille jaune me rappelle ma propre peau jaune. Le blanc symbolise l'éducation occidentale et tout ce que personne ne peut toucher, comme l'esprit, qui fait de moi une Coréenne. Cette forme est une réponse à mon identité. »

안: ::무의식, 속에, 아직도, 여기에서, 30년을, 살아도, 그림, 것들이, 자연  
좋아할, 수, 있는, 스텝까, 만, 자꾸, 왜, 해야하는가, 라는, 의무가, 생긴다.  
그런, 것들을, 느끼지, 가는, 다, .. 한국과, 일본을, 많이, 비교, 해, 봤다..  
못하는가..  
금: ::반대로, 베네룩스benelux에는, 계통이, 웃을, 색을, 좋아하지, 않는다..  
어두운, 남색, 계통이, 웃을, 색을, 좋아하지, 않는다..  
많이, 눈에, 띈다.. 색을, 좋아하지, 않는다..  
그런, 색들은, 편안하게,  
받아들여지는가..

금: ::북한, 중국은, 빨간색이다, 중국은, 원래, 그런, 것으로, 알고, 있었지만,  
형아무, 관장에, 걸려있는, 한국은, 다른, 것이라, 어경다, 일본과, 비슷할, 것이라, 여경  
사랑을, 했을, 때, 다.. 한국과, 일본을, 많이, 비교, 해, 봤다..  
Among Belgian artists, is there somebody that you like?  
모가, 그림이나, 디자인, 아버지, 그림을, 잘, 리지, 못, 그려, 인지, 모르, 어머니는, 여성로  
계통에, 관련, 있는가.. 제, 사회, 문제를, 공부하는, 동안, 이, 나를, 입양을, 했을, 것이라, 양부  
나도, 한국과, 일본을, 많이, 비교, 해, 봤다..  
여경다, 어렸을, 때, 한국과, 일본을, 많이, 비교, 해, 봤다..  
정: ::언제부터, 미술에, 관심을, 어렸을, 때, 한국과, 일본을, 많이, 비교, 해, 봤다..  
38는가.. 에, 관심이, 아한다, 제일, 좋았던, 영화, 제목이, 지금, 기억, 나지, 않지만, 1950~60년대, 흑백영  
화이다.. 한, 가정에, 관한, 이야기이다. 대사도, 없고, 움직임도, 없고, 잔  
잔하다.. 어머니라는, 단어만, 나온다..

## Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine, une artiste sociale

Qui suis-je ? Cette question que chacun se pose au moins une fois dans sa vie est quasiment un leitmotiv pour Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine. Coréenne de naissance, adoptée à l'âge de deux ans par une famille belge, elle a aimé pendant son adolescence se prendre pour une Japonaise, a imaginé tous les scénarios de son abandon, est partie à la recherche d'un père américain fictif... et elle a peint. Un style expressionniste que ses professeurs trouvaient oriental, «*parce qu'ils me voyaient, moi*». Mais sa peinture se rapprochait alors plus des physiques torturés d'Egon Schiele que des cerisiers en fleurs.

En 1988, la Corée occupe le devant de la scène médiatique et Mihee-Nathalie décide d'accepter enfin ses racines. Elle a 20 ans et tourne un court-métrage qui obtiendra le prix du festival *Etre jeune en Europe aujourd'hui*. C'est alors que le gouvernement coréen invite la jeune artiste à découvrir son magnifique pays. L'expérience la bouleverse. Elle mettra deux ans à se remettre de cette découverte qui l'a peut-être encore plus désorientée. Jusqu'à être de nouveau conviée à visiter sa patrie originelle avec un groupe de jeunes adoptés de l'étranger. Ses racines la poursuivent, elle se lance à la recherche de ses parents naturels et les retrouve. Ce besoin légitime de savoir va la conduire vers les autres adoptés d'origine coréenne, et elle montera une association en Belgique qui rassemble maintenant plus de 400 membres. Depuis, son art et sa mission sociale ont tous deux pris de l'ampleur. Quand elle a décidé de revenir à Séoul, elle pensait n'y rester qu'une année. Et puis le rythme effréné, le succès de son association d'aide aux adoptés montée sur place, l'enchaînement des expositions toujours soutenues



Entre deux



C'est à qui ?

par l'ambassade de Belgique, la folie créatrice de jeunes artistes coréens venus de l'étranger et réunis pendant deux ans au sein du Kameleonz group, l'ont empêchée de partir.

Aujourd'hui, elle expose au Centre culturel français de Séoul une série de tableaux à la fois inspirés de la culture coréenne et de toutes ces influences complémentaires et

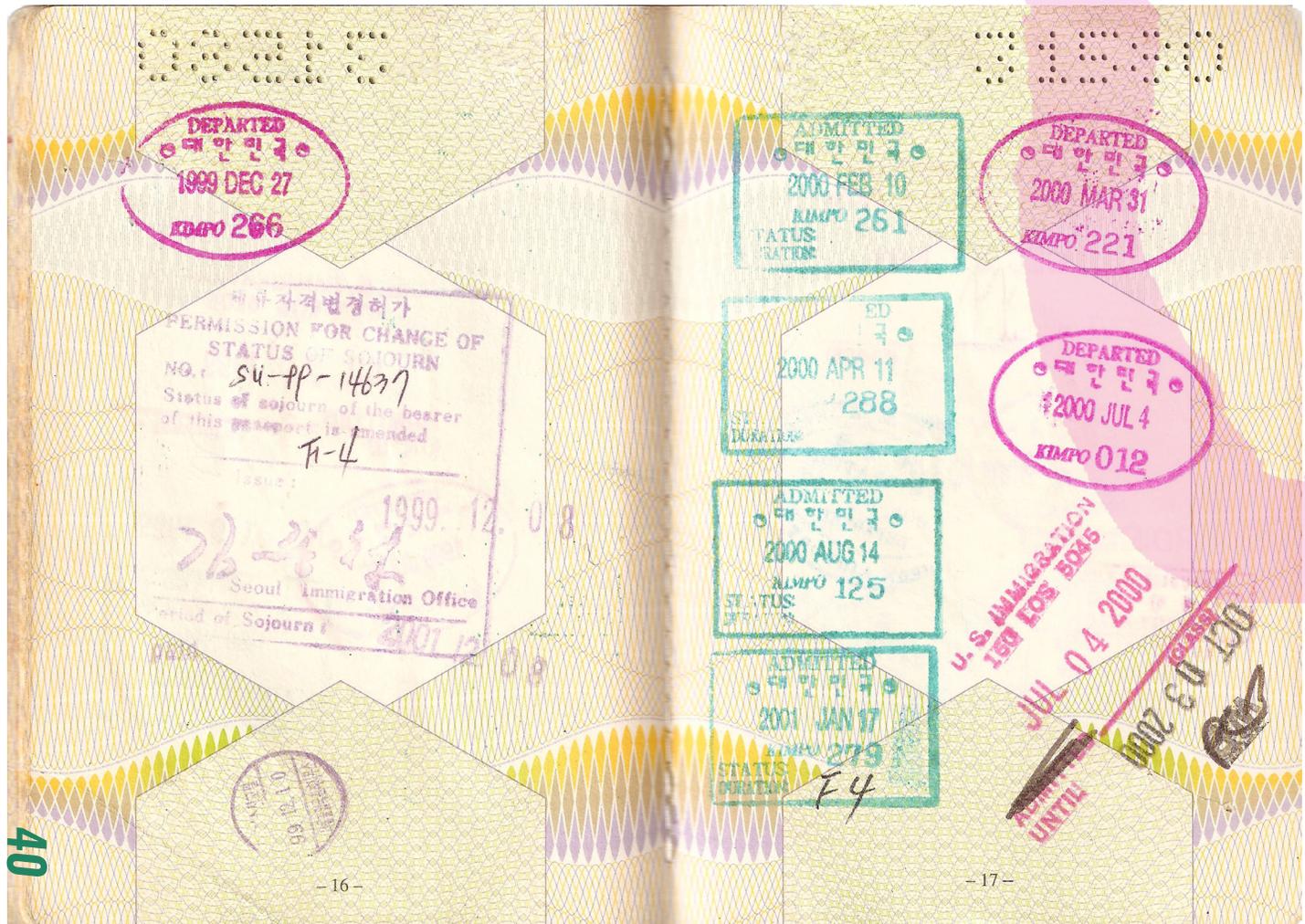
contradictoires qui lui viennent de sa francophonie et de ses incontournables valeurs anglo-saxonnes. Sur un épais papier de riz blanc éclatant les couleurs criardes d'un pop art inattendu. Grâce à la surface accidentée du support, l'application devient un travail graphique mais aussi une réflexion sur la matière, sur l'opposition a priori d'un papier brut et naturel face à une peinture sophistiquée. Elle manipule les contrastes, l'humour et la provocation. Quand elle se lance dans la calligraphie, ce sont des fœtus ou un cordon ombilical qui apparaissent. Quand elle parle de beauté, elle l'associe à la «laideur». Elle joue avec les mots, dans sa peinture comme dans ses titres, emmène le visiteur dans un grand rébus où se croisent le français, le coréen, l'anglais et le chinois. Le mélange des caractères et des symboles asiatiques avec la technique occidentale est-il le signe d'une réconciliation, le reflet d'un équilibre atteint ? Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine ne peut s'exprimer qu'à travers un art interculturel, évidemment, dont la période coréenne sera une des multiples facettes.

Son besoin d'espace et d'expériences pourrait l'emmener au Canada, terre idéale s'il en est, ou tout au moins pays «neutre» pour une artiste déracinée. Mais auparavant, elle doit réaliser deux grands projets qui lui tiennent à cœur. D'abord elle souhaite assurer le lancement d'une ONG dont elle vient d'être nommée présidente, la «Han Diaspora» dont le but est d'aider juridiquement et socialement les Coréens adoptés à vivre en Corée. Et enfin tourner ce documentaire sur lequel elle travaille depuis sept ans, traitant des 200 000 Coréens adoptés en Europe et en Amérique du Nord depuis 45 ans.

— Corinne Leclercq

EN 1999, LE VISA F-4 EST ACCORDÉ AUX ADOPTÉ.E.S CORÉEN.NE.S SOUHAITANT RÉSIDER EN CORÉE. JUSQUE-LÀ, LES ADOPTÉ.E.S CORÉEN.NE.S N'ÉTAIENT PAS CONSIDÉRÉ.E.S D'ASCENDANCE CORÉENNE. IN 1999, THE F-4 VISA IS GRANTED TO KOREAN ADOPTEES WHO WISH TO RESIDE IN KOREA. UNTIL THIS POINT, KOREAN ADOPTEES WERE NOT CONSIDERED TO BE OF KOREAN DESCENT.

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**Alien Awareness**

**5월 5일 어린이 날  
'마로니에 공연'에 모여라!!!**

5월 5일 어린이 날, KIN과 김이박 프로덕션이 공동으로 입양인 비자 캠페인, 길놀이 공연 '재생' 행사를 개최한다. 입양인 비자 캠페인은 현재 한국비자법 개정 운동을 펼칠 계획을 갖고 입양인들과 함께 그들의 입장을 알리려 한다.

'비자법 개정 운동'은 스스로의 의지와는 전혀 상관없이 외국인으로서 살아가야 하는 입양인이 자신들의 권리를 찾고자 하는 운동이다.

아래는 행사 주최자들의 성명서 내용을 요약한 것이다.

**우**리는 한국인으로 불리며 다른 나라에서 살아왔다. 스스로의 의지와는 전혀 상관없이, 외국인으로서.. 하지만 우리가 한국으로 돌아오려 했을 때 우리는 외국인 (이방인)으로, 법적으로 받아들여질 수 없다고 규정 당했다. 이 법으로 인해 우리는 또 한번 모국에서도 외국인(이방인)이 된 것이다.

**출입국 비자 관련법 개정운동**

**우**리는 한국에 돌아왔고 현재 서울에 살고 있다. 그러나 우리가 한국에 더 오래 머무를 수 있는 권리, 다른 외국인들처럼 대우 받을

수 있는 권리를 얻는 데는 많은 어려움이 있다. 다른 많은 입양인들 또한 같은 상황에 놓여 있다. 우리는 경제적인 문제를 위해 이런 행사를 갖는 것이 아니다. 다만 인간으로서의 기본적인 권리를 찾고 싶을 뿐이다. 거리 공연과, 비자법개정 캠페인은 7월에 시행예정인 정부법안(재외동포의 출입국과 법적지위에 관한 법률안)이 입양인들과 동포들의 특수한 위치를 진지하게 고려해 줄 것을, 사회 각계와 외무부, 보건복지부 (입양문제담당)에 요청하기 위한 것이다." 라고 말하고 있다. 현재도 이루어지고 있는 해외입양의 문제와 입양1세대들이 나서서 하는 비자법 개정 문제가 하루 빨리 국회 법안에 통과되어 이들이 모국으로서 갖는 애정을 정부가 포용하는 마음으로 수용하길 바란다.



**On** May 5, 1999, Children's Day, KIMLEE-PARK Production in collaboration with KIN is having a street performance titled "Rebirth" at Marronnier Park, Daehakro (Haehwa Dong) to increase awareness of overseas adoptees and began campaigning for the reform of their entry visa status.

Currently, overseas adoptees who were sent abroad without a choice are treated as foreigners when they return to South Korea in search for their root and biological parents. While the South Korean government and the society highlight these overseas adoptees returning to South Korea because "their blood is thicker than water," they have no interest in the hardships the overseas adoptees face in South Korea. One prime difficulty is their visa status. It takes more than a year to find a biological parent, sometimes never due to improper docu-

mentation. But since their period of sojourn in South Korea is 90 days, they have no choice but to leave the country and re-enter again. Usually, they would fly over to the near by countries like Japan but having to do so every 3 months is a high toll.

The following is an excerpt from their statement.

Korean has a particular diasporic or displaced community. Following Korea's colonial period, its involvement in the Pacific War, the civil war, and the subsequent partition of the country to this day. Korea claims to be the most homogenous people in the world. According to 1995 statistics compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, some 5.3 million Koreans were living abroad in 142 countries. Many left the Motherland either by force for political reasons (Japanese occupation), by choice to find better living situations or without a choice (adoption). Since 1954, more than 200,000 Koreans have been adopted overseas. Adoption began in post-war Korea for socio-economic reasons, but even in times of prosperity Korea still continues to send approximately 6 babies every day to be adopted. ... Korea's economic situation is critical, however, it has not dissuaded many Koreans from living in their motherland in order to learn about their roots and participate, share and contribute to this "hermit" society. ... Korea Takes pride in the closeness of their culture and spirit of "jung" (affection, feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood). What stronger evidence is there of this spirit than the repatriation of overseas Koreans when financial reasons are clearly beside the point? Yet the South Korean Government denies (dual) citizenship to these ethnic Koreans. And instead declares them "Aliens". What makes Korean abroad come back? And why is South Korea afraid to accept its "Dongpo" (Korean abroad) into its society?

## VISA CAMPAIGN

We, Dongpos & overseas adoptees are of known Korean ethnicity. We live abroad as foreigners. And return as foreigners to our motherland alienated unaccepted and estranged. Upon returning to Seoul, we have faced difficulties in obtaining the right to stay longer. In addition, as overseas adoptees, we resent being treated life any other ALIEN. It is our intent to 1) Educate the public about the welfare system towards overseas adoptees, 2) Ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Law and the Ministry of Social Welfare to grant a SPECIAL visa status in view of the July 1, 1999, bill regarding Dongpo situation in South Korea. With the collaboration of Korean International Network.

## 해외 입양인들의 활동

조미희



조미희 (김별)  
Nathalie Lemoine  
국적: 벨기에  
Belgium

한국의 국제입양은 한국전쟁이 끝난 직후인 1953년에 시작되었다. 한국 정부는 전쟁 후, 피해 된 나라를 재건하고, 복지사회를 이룩하려는 일념의 하나로 해외입양제도를 실시하였다. 홀트아동복지회에서는 4개의 입양기관과 함께 국제입양을 알선하였다. 이때 보내진 해외입양아는 약 170,000여 명(또 다른 자료엔 20만 명으로 기재)으로 거의 모든 아이들이 서부 또는 백인의 나라에 보내졌다.

올림픽 직후인 1980년대 후반과 현재까지, 해외입양아들은 성장하여 그들의 모국인 한국을 방문하길 원했지만, 한국 방문은 이루어지지 않았을 뿐만 아니라 왔다 해도 사는 비용이 만만찮았다. 1980년초, 입양1세는 스웨덴에 그들의 단체를 만들었고, 1996년 미국 미네소타에서도 그들은 그들만의 단체를 만들었다. 이러한 움직임으로 1994년 한국에 유럽한국인 연맹이 만들어졌다. 그 후 Global Korean League, 한국해외입양(부모찾기와 입양인 권리찾기) 그리고 세계해외입양단체가 형성되었다. 1998년 KEEP에서 KOA와 토론회를 가졌을 때 서로의 일에 흥미를 갖고 추진을 하기로 했다. 1999년 KIN은 GOAL과 한국에 돌아온 성장한 해외입양인의 문제와 다른 나라 입양제도와 다른 것에 대해 얘기를 나누었다.

개인적으로, 나는 전혀 다른 단체에 남지 않았고, 개인적인 수준에서 일을 하였다. 나는 KIN과 입양관련비자문제와 입양에 관해 다른 계획인 입양비자법을 김이박 프로덕션과 함께 캠페인을 열 예정이다.

이번 5월 5일 입양비자법 개정 운동은 나와 같은 문제를 갖고 있는 입양인들의 문제를 제기하는 시발점이 될 것이다. '재생'이란 주제로 하는 길놀이 공연과 퍼포먼스는 자신의 의지와 상관없이 해외에 입양된 우리들의 몸짓과 외침을 표현하는 자리가 될 것이다.

(8 페이지에 계속, continues in 8)

WOMEN'S VOICES

BY MARTHA VICKERY AND KARI RUTH

Creating a voice and space for adopted Koreans

Mihee-Nathalie LeMoine — a portrait of an artist activist

**M**ihee-Nathalie LeMoine (Mihee Cho) is a study in contrasts. She is a Belgian born in Korea, adopted at age 3. Her native language is French, but she has lived and worked in Seoul, a place where she can rarely communicate in her native language, for five and a half years.

She calls herself a dreamer, and is an artist by profession. Over the last five years, she has worked and exhibited her adoption-related abstract and mixed media art and films in Seoul. She has also founded several organizations for adoptees and has taken on the time-consuming detail-oriented task of helping adoptees, including many Minnesotans, look for birthparents in Korea. In all her work, she has been prolific and she has been noticed.

She is idealistic, yet practical. She has the sensitivity of an artist, and her art eloquently expresses the pain and in-betweenness felt universally by international adoptees. Yet she has shown amazing perseverance and toughness in taking on the Korean international adoption bureaucracy. She seems introverted and sometimes leads the solitary artist's life. Yet she has been outspoken about public policy affecting adoptees.

On top of all that, Korean TV showed her unabashedly eating a mixture of mayonnaise and kimchee. And it wasn't just for the camera.

In part because of her efforts, real progress has made on overall policies of opening adoption records to adult adopted Koreans. Adopted Koreans and their families owe her a debt of gratitude for her singlehanded, sometimes dogged efforts to help people make needed connections in their birth family searches. She has also been involved in other wider areas of advocacy. Recently, with some other activists, she has tackled the issue of granting a longer-stay visa (as opposed to the conventional three-month tourist visa) for adopted Koreans and



Mihee-Nathalie LeMoine

others born in Korea who want to work or study in their motherland. Several bills with versions of this idea are being introduced to the legislature in Korea right now.

This fall, LeMoine wrote an e-mail letter to her contacts in Korean adoptee organizations announcing that she is resigning from the advocacy and search support organization she founded in 1994, the Euro-Korean League-Korean Overseas Adoptees (EKL-KOA). She wrote that she wishes to spend her next decade (she is now 30) in pursuing her art.

LeMoine's work has affected many lives, whether through her art, her advocacy, or both. *Korean Quarterly's* Seoul correspondent Kari Ruth interviewed LeMoine in Seoul about her productive artist-advocate career in Korea, and the following are excerpts from that interview.

LeMoine said that as far as she knew, her parents were the first adoptive parents in Belgium. She was adopted first and a sister and two brothers were adopted later, all from Korea. She grew up in a wealthy suburb of Brussels. She and her siblings were the only Asian kids she knew of. There was an age mix-up on her records, and although she was treated as the

eldest, she really was a middle child in her family. "Officially I was born in '65. My sister born in '66, and my other brother in '66. And then I learned I was really born in '68. I always knew I was younger than them, but officially, I was the eldest."

Before moving to Korea, she had a career in advertising in Belgium. She also founded the Euro-Korean League while living in Belgium, an organization which

held monthly meetings and published a quarterly newsletter on international adoption related topics. She started her filmmaking and painting career while still in Belgium.

She first came to Korea in '89 with a tour group. She returned again in '91, then again in '93 to live there. She came back in '93 because she had found her Korean mother. "I decided I wanted to understand her society better. She was an unwed mother. I felt that our relationship would be different if I understood the society."

"But I didn't intend to stay for so long," she continued. "I had no expectation about Korea. I just wanted to live here and feel more comfortable ...and understand better the function of the society. ...I thought that the first year was very difficult. I wanted to stay and experience something better than that. ...After the second year, I had spent so much time in Korea, I thought, OK, I can stay another year!"

LeMoine said she was lucky in her own search for her birthmother. She found records at Holt International (a large,

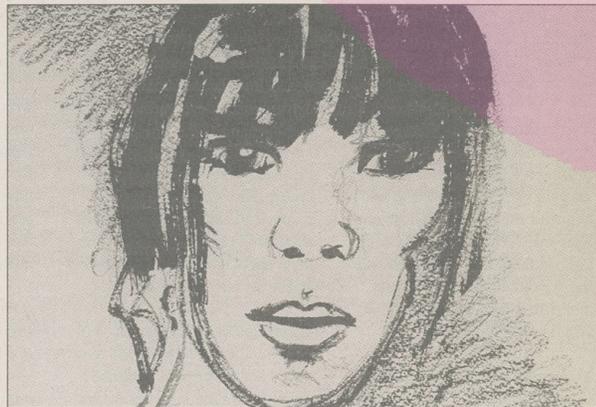
established adoption agency), that referenced an orphanage, then she was allowed access to records at the orphanage in Pusan where she had been placed. Her record even included a letter from her birth mother. After that, she went on TV with her story, and a day later, her birth mother called the station. She soon met her birthmother and found out she had a biological brother and sister as well.

After that, people began to ask her to help with their searches. Her first client was a birth mother whose child was also adopted to Belgium, who had called the TV station at the same time as LeMoine's birth mother. She asked LeMoine to help her with a search in Belgium. "Holt didn't want to give them the papers (containing the name and the case number of the child)." The family had asked repeatedly for this information and had been turned down, she said. "Because I had been to Holt for myself, I called Holt to ask them for help." Two hours before she left (for Belgium), someone had a change of heart. They called and gave her the name of the adoptee.

Korean adoptees prompted her to establish the search support arm of the Euro-Korean League in 1994.

The Euro-Korean League was recognized officially by the Belgian government in December 1991. There was some media attention given to LeMoine's films and in 1994, there was some media coverage of her work with adoptees, including an article in the popular fashion magazine *Marie-Claire*. Requests for search support began to pour in from all over as a result of this and other coverage.

"When I came back (to Seoul) '93, I had maybe 55 (requests for search support). And I started to build a system to find people." There were quite a number of barriers to overcome in starting up a search support organization, she related. "A lot of animosity from Holt - I don't think it was so much Holt now, as just one person at Holt who was very ...moody. And it was very hard not to work with her because I needed basic information from her for the adoptee." She began to develop a system of the kinds of things she



Self portrait, Seoul 1994

"So then I had a name, but didn't feel too confident looking for him because, well, there are 5,000 adoptees in Belgium and where should I find him, you know?" LeMoine did manage to find the adoptee. That one successful search on behalf of another, and the recognition of other issues of interest to

could do on behalf of a searching adoptee or birth family. "I didn't want to do all the research. Just give a link and be there to follow up. A lot of times people (who were searching) had to go back (to their own country) and then people tend to forget about them. So I would be there to make the phone call, maybe, or call the

## WOMEN'S VOICES

newspaper, see if anyone had replied (to an advertisement about a person's search)."

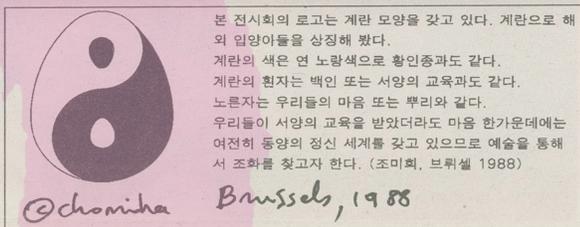
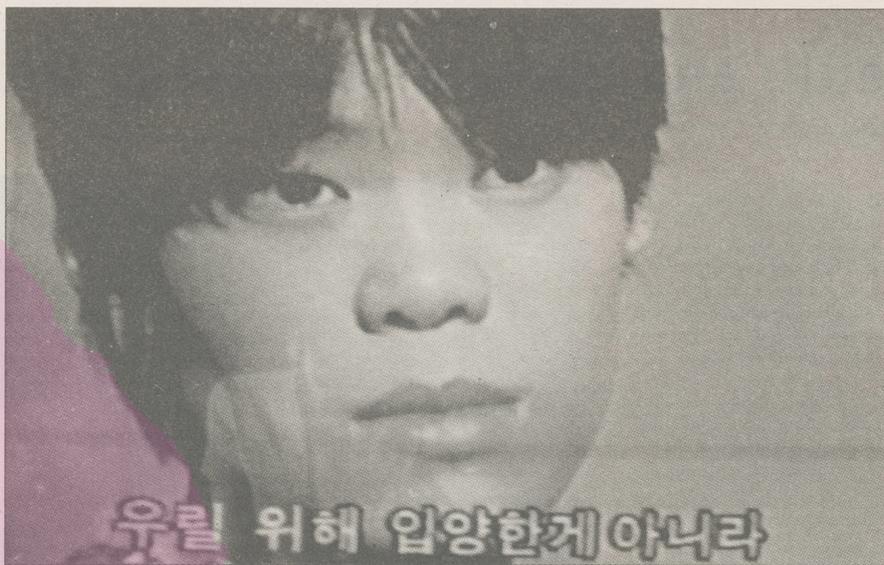
LeMoine said she made it her business to know the system enough to work with the people within the bureaucracy. "I volunteered at Holt, for about three months, just to understand how the Korean adoption system functions. ...After that I knew better how to do it. I could call a friend of a friend of a friend to find things."

In all, LeMoine has had perhaps 500 requests for search support from adoptees, and another 200 from biological family members of adoptees. She knows of about 100 cases where the sought-after person was found as a result of her efforts.

She feels justified in taking a break from her search support now, particularly since, in the last couple of years there are more overseas adoptees living in Seoul, and more organizations set up to do the work. She also feels like she needs respite from the work. "Adoptee searches are very emotional and very demanding," she said. "I'm 30 years old now and I feel like I can do other things for awhile."

A big part of her feeling of confidence that her role can be replaced is due to the newly-formed Global Overseas Adoptees Link (GOAL) which was formed in March 1998 through the efforts of Lemoine and Twin Citian Ami Nafzger. GOAL will be a homebase organization for adoptees living in Korea and will act as an advocate for the returning adoptees with the Korean government. GOAL participated in a First Symposium on Adoptees' Needs, held in May 1998 with the Ministries of Health and Welfare, and Law and Foreign Affairs, adoption agencies and press. GOAL also publishes a monthly newsletter and has a quarterly meeting in Seoul. GOAL is planning an adoptees' conference for August 1999. LeMoine has agreed to stay on as president for one year. After that, she predicts, she may still want to volunteer, but will step down from the leadership role.

Concerning the gains she has seen in search support and post-adoption services over the last five years, LeMoine said she sees appreciable changes in the



본 전시회의 로고는 계란 모양을 갖고 있다. 계란으로 해외 입양아들을 상징해 왔다. 계란의 색은 연 노랑색으로 황인종과도 같다. 계란의 흰자는 백인 또는 서양의 교육과도 같다. 노른자는 우리들의 마음 또는 뿌리와 같다. 우리들이 서양의 교육을 받았더라도 마음 한가운데에는 여전히 동양의 정신 세계를 갖고 있으므로 예술을 통해서 조화를 찾고자 한다. (조미희, 브뤼셀 1988)

Above: "Cho Mihee 45% Korean?" from SDS Korea TV broadcast, May 1996. Left: Cho Mihee's logo and a poem.

ways adoption agencies are handling requests for searches, particularly at Holt, which has made post-adoption services a priority project in recent years. Reflecting on the public's view of returning international adoptees, LeMoine said "It's not perfect, but at least now there is more understanding that we come here to find a piece of ourselves. Some people need to find a specific person, some only need to come here and live and work here, and learn the language or whatever. They say about 90 percent of adoptees think about doing a search, and perhaps 50 percent of those really are acting on that."

The attitude of the media, and the type of coverage given to adoption has also changed for the better, she believes. "In the past, she said, adoptees were treated "like a disabled or a handicapped person, like people who cannot help Korea or cannot even belong to Korea. But after people see that adoptees have good jobs here or have something to say or contribute, and especially after we were organized, they seemed to take us a bit more seriously."

The way the media portrays

adoptees is slowly improving, LeMoine said, but there's much more room for improvement. "I see a lot more chances for adoptees to say what they want to say. Of course they (the reporters) will always take the problematic, the things they don't like. They take advantage of anything like scandal - "I hate my motherland," or "I love my motherland!" There's just a lot of black and white."

LeMoine said she is often annoyed by the Korean media's tacking on pet issues, and giving that issue excessive coverage at the expense of other important stories. "Now they don't want to talk about us," she said, referring to the returning adoptees. "Now it's the "IMF adoptees." That's what they are being called, the children being adopted now." It's a trend, she hypothesized. "Like '95 was the North Korean issue, '94 was the "comfort women." In '96, it was the adoptees, in '97 they talked about homosexuals, and in '98 the IMF. And next year, what is it going to be?" she asked, laughing. "You know, I think that's why I got the prize (first prize for her film *45% Korean* at the Seoul International Documentary Film

Festival). If it was the year of comfort women, I would not have been able to get a prize! I think I am very lucky sometimes!"

LeMoine said her art has been and will continue to be an important source of her own self-expression, and a way to give voice to issues of internationally adopted Korean people. A very unique opportunity to do that occurred in March '96 when she exhibited as part of a three-person show called "West to East." All were adopted Korean-Belgians, and are part of an eleven-artist association called KameleonZ. "We had the media come and it was really cool. ...And we had support of YMCA and Belgian Embassy. Big Belgian companies in Korea were helping, and it was really something where we could say we were being a bridge between two societies. It gave a really positive image of adoptees. That we are not just demanding or asking. That we can share something," she said.

The role of women is also a developing theme of LeMoine's work. She seems to look at it from a global perspective. In Korea, she feels, she is still and outsider and excused from participating in the role struggle. "I am conscious and understand the differences of roles in Korea (compared with the West), but it doesn't mean that I have to play

the game. ...just compromising between what I want and what they want from me when we have to deal with each other! I feel I am between a foreigner and a Korean, and also between a man and a woman in (terms of) social expectation."

Another artists' group Han Diaspora, was co-founded by LeMoine and a significant exhibition entitled "A Space for Shadows," the first multimedia art exhibition by adopted Koreans, was held by members of the group in 1997.

Concerning where she wants her art to take her, LeMoine reflected "Before, I was Mihee- Nathalie LeMoine, the Korean adoptee. Then after awhile it was the Korean adoptee artist. And now, it's just the artist, which for me is a good change. Although I am an adoptee and I am not ashamed of it, but it is not everything in my life. Of course, I am an activist also, and I try to be a strong voice. But I cannot be the only voice, and I think there are many adoptees who can make a difference there."

In making sense of her adoption and identity through both reaching out and reaching in, LeMoine has decided she is not either Korean or Belgian, hence her development of the duality or "45 percent Korean" theme in her art and filmmaking. "I don't feel I'm Korean. There are moments when I can be Korean. But like in the videotape *45% Korean*, what I mean is that I cannot forget my education and experience as a Belgian person. Like when I see a Smurf, when I see a Tintin (both Belgian cartoon characters) I'm so happy, you know?" she joked. "And when I see kimchee, I'm not happy. It's like, oh no, now I have to eat the kimchee! I'm happy with my mayonnaise, and with my Smurf! This is the world I have. It's like you have all these things in your world but you know the basic one is just there. It's there for you. It's what your adoptive parents gave you and your adopted country gave you."

NOTE: To contact GOAL, write to: Global Overseas Adoptees Link/ K.P.O. Box 1964/ Seoul 110-619 Korea, or email at [akgoal@yahoo.com](mailto:akgoal@yahoo.com). GOAL's website is <http://bleu.net.co.kr/goal/> ●

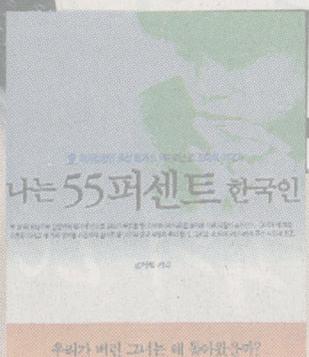
LES DIRIGEANTS RESPECTIFS DE LA CORÉE DU SUD ET DU NORD SE RENCONTRENT POUR LA PREMIÈRE FOIS EN 2000.  
THE RESPECTIVE GOVERNING PARTIES OF SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2000.

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2000년 7월 1일 토요일

조선일보

Books



Writer

**Autrice renommée de 55% coréenne, Cho Mihee (32), aussi prénommée Kim Star, a vécu pendant 20 ans sous l'étrange nom belge de Nathalie Lemoine.**

**Résidant en Corée depuis 1993, Cho Mihee a créé un mouvement social connectant plus de 150 adopté.e.s coréen.ne.s avec leurs parents biologiques. Après 7 ans en Corée, elle comprend mieux les valeurs coréennes et ses 20% de « coréenne-icité » s'élèvent maintenant à 55%.**

“엄마의 고통, 이제는 이해 해요”

Renowned author of *55% Korean*, Cho Mihee (32), also called Kim Star, lived under the strange Belgian name of Nathalie Lemoine for 20 years.

Living in Korea since 1993, Cho Mihee has created a social movement, connecting over 150 Korean adoptees with their birth parents. After seven years in Korea, she better understands Korean values and her 20% 'Korean-ness' has now reached 55%.

45

“그래서 93년 한국 땅을 밟았다. 화

가로 활동하는 틈틈히 입양아를 위한 사회운동을 벌이며 150명이 넘는 입양아를 부양하고 있다. 한국에서 7년을 보내고 있다. 한국에서 7년을 보내고 있다. 한국에서 7년을 보내고 있다.

입양아의 거울에 비쳐진 우리의 모습이 있다. 그리고 그 모습은 세수 안한 얼굴로 거울을 볼 때와 같은 부끄러움이다.   
/글=김태훈기자 scoop87@chosun.com  
/사진=이기원기자 kiwiyi @chosun.com

## Coming out in Korea?

Here we are with a hot issue. Not a new one though. Being homosexual is one thing, but being out of the closet is another. The step of coming out and the feeling you have before making that that big step should be full of wonders because giving up lying and being accepted for who you are is the best feeling. But the world doesn't function that way.

Homosexuality in Korea is kind of like being a Korean in Japan. In the documentary film "Annyong Kimchi" (1999) by Matsue Tesuaki, the main character told his Japanese friends that he was a Korean, which was a big revelation since he had been hiding it.

Another correlation: When I first came to Korea and realized that being a Korean adoptee was not the coolest thing to be, I started to lie about my origins. I told my Korean friends that I was a "kyopo." I was afraid because maybe I was not Korean enough.

One strong Korean belief is that Koreans don't have sex before marriage. Still many Koreans want to, or really, believe that. Since marriage doesn't exist between people

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

of the same gender in Korea, it's logical for Koreans to believe that there is no homosexuality in their own country.

In the documentary "Pyongyang Dairies," Norwegian-born Australian filmmaker, Solrun Hoaas asked a North Korean about homosexuality in Korea, who firmly answered that there are no gays in North Korea. If you asked the same question a decade ago in South Korea, citizens would have answered exactly the same. I can still hear Margaret Cho (Korean-American comedian) imitating in her one-woman show, her mother's words "Oh, no gay in Korea."

In 1995, the first big article about gay society in Korea was published in the Korea Times. In 1996, the "Song Jina's Files" about homosexuality aired on S.B.S, and the Women Film Festival showed many lesbian movies, but a few months later the first Queer Film Festival in Seoul was banned for immorality. In the summer of 1997, at Pagoda Park in Chongno, the

first public awareness action campaign was organized by Kiri Kiri and Chingu Sai.

What is coming out? Ask Hong Sok-chon and Ellen Degeneres. They are both TV celebrities who lost their credibility on television after coming out. For most gays and lesbians, "coming out" is a big deal and often hard to do. It takes courage to come out due to the risk of losing everything.

What is a closet? A closet can be a piece of furniture. It is also, in the gay lexicon, a mental space where an individual feels safe or protected but also often repressed, and wanting to share his or her true self.

I hope that Korea can come out of its closet. It must be even harder to come out in a country completely in the closet. I want to congratulate Mr. Hong for his brave attitude and for standing up for his rights. I just want to sing the original English version of "Na kwaenchanha! — I will survive!" — a classic song in the gay clubs of the world, including Seoul's.

Cho Mi-hee  
Seoul

KH - Dec 21, 2000 p. 7

# Expatriate artists explore womanhood, subconscious in creative shows

By Kim Mi-hui  
Staff reporter

KHerald - p.10 - Friday 13-29, 2001

The two most noticeable trends on the culture scene right now are the vitality of the movie industry and the "death" of fine arts. Art, in particular, has been a drab business sparked only with occasional big international shows, and solo exhibitions by local artists, for the most part, have been dull and familiar.

Two small art shows by foreign residents in Korea, however, are about to add a bit of spice to the scene. Different from imported exhibitions in that the artists are familiar with the culture here and that their works reflect the fact in one way or another, these exhibits also offer fresh interpretations of Korea since they are explorations of Korea that the artists have seen or experienced living in this foreign country.

The two exhibitions are multimedia artist Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine's sixth solo show "Variation on Womyn" at Samak Cafe Gallery near Insa-dong (through April 23) and an exhibit of paintings by Toomas Altnurme at Noksepyong subway station on line no. 6 (through April 30).

Lemoine, Korean name Cho Mi-hee, is a Korean adoptee to France who came here eight years ago to learn about her native country. She has made quite a name for herself already participating in social activities such as helping Korean adoptees to France find their biological families and helping to ease visa processes for all Korean-born adoptees.

Not surprisingly, her artworks reflect her deep interest in Korea, particularly its culture. She has previously dealt with hyperrealism, identity themes and calligraphy art.

Her latest show is an experimental combination of calligraphy and questioning of language and communication. She offers 15 works that investigate the role of women by varying the typical symbols for women in the Asian society: Chinese character (女) and colors purple and gold, which represent woman and Asia, respectively.

"I basically put the Chinese character for 'woman' in different situations by controlling colors and sizes, and try to make a statement about the various woman issues," Lemoine, 32, said in an interview with *The Korea Herald*.

"For example, the bold black Chinese character against light background represents a strong woman, two characters suggest lesbianism, the decorated character questions 'what is a beautiful woman?' and the framed character shows a woman confined to a role or a place, like house," Lemoine explained.

The artist thought of the idea for the series while helping to organize the third Women's Film Festival (April 15-22).

"I worked with the organizers for two months doing the subtitles for French films and such, and because many of the movies were feminist, they got me thinking about women and how they are represented in Asia. I thought it'd be an interesting experiment to put to question language and communication by playing around with the Chinese character and symbols usually associated with the gender," she said.

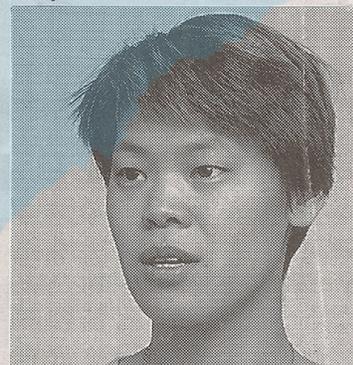


"We don't know much about the art industry, but we do know that most of the galleries we've seen aren't designed for people like us," said Kim Kon-a, 26, co-owner of the gallery. "We like art but prefer casual environments to the black-tie system prevalent today, so we just decided to start our own."

"We needed a place to get together with our friends anyway," added Kim Young-in, 28, the second owner of the venue.

The two Kims' intention is already more than realized. Most of the visitors to the gallery/cafe are people in their 20s and 30s and active in popular cultures like movies, music and postmodern art, thanks to the fact that the gallery owners are also active members of such communities. Kon-a is a Hongik University graduate who once led an underground punk rock band called "Drug" (1194-1997) and Young-in is an ex-student of filmmaking at Seoul Institute of the Arts.

The gallery's first show is a solo exhibition by French-Korean multimedia artist Cho Mi-hee, who explores feminist themes with post-modern calligraphy works. The relatively well-known artist was chosen as their first guest as a publicity stunt or a sort, Kon-a said.



Lemoine's "Variation on Womyn" runs through April 23. For more information, call 02-735-5705. The artist has her own homepage, [www.chomihee.com](http://www.chomihee.com).

## Soleil-Levant et Matin-Calmé

PAR PHILIPPE PONTS

La quête d'identité  
d'une « Coréenne de nulle part »

**M**ihee Cho ou Nathalie Lemoine ? Il a fallu dix ans à cette Coréenne de naissance, adoptée par une famille belge, pour résoudre le rébus de ses identités. Dix ans de « descente à la limite de mon être », dit-elle, pour calmer une rage au cœur qui étouffait ses émotions, pour découvrir la tolérance et une certaine paix avec soi-même, pour accepter le déracinement. Un cheminement solitaire, douloureux, qui aujourd'hui s'épanouit dans la création. Artiste peintre exposant régulièrement en Corée, Mihee-Nathalie joue des symboles coréens comme des techniques occidentale et asiatique, avec une désinvolture où la sensibilité se masque d'humour.

Le sourire reste nostalgique, mais l'amertume provocatrice d'autrefois (« *Ma coréanité sent la frite et ma belgitude le kimchi* [chou fermenté] ») s'est estompée. Mihee pense tourner un film sur l'adoption : « *Il ne s'agit pas d'une histoire personnelle, mais de peindre ce par quoi nous passons, nous, les adoptés.* » Pour Mihee, ce sera boucler la boucle, car tout pour elle a commencé avec un autre film, *Adoption*, pour lequel

elle remporta le prix du Festival du court métrage vidéo de Bruxelles en 1988 et qui a été sélectionné cette année par la Biennale de Kwangju. Elle avait 20 ans.

Date de naissance fluctuante, souvenirs obsédants d'un marché au poisson – où peut-être elle

Mihee Cho fait partie  
de la première  
génération  
d'orphelins coréens  
adoptés à l'étranger  
dans les années  
1960-1970

avait été abandonnée – et le choc pour l'enfant de 2 ans qu'elle était de voir ces yeux bleus et ces boucles blondes à l'arrivée à Paéropport de Bruxelles. Un an après avoir obtenu le prix, elle se rend à Séoul avec un groupe d'adoptés américains et européens invités par le gouvernement coréen. « *Apraravant, lorsque je cherchais*

*à me documenter, le Centre culturel coréen me fermait la porte au nez : "Vous n'avez rien à faire ici puisque vous n'êtes pas Coréenne."*

*Cette fois, j'étais un peu reconnue, alors on m'invitait...* », raconte-t-elle. Ce contact la bouleversa et, à son retour au plat pays, elle organisa la première association belge d'adoptés. Elle reviendra à Séoul deux ans plus tard. Pour un an. Elle y est toujours.

La Corée n'est pas qu'un pays exportateur de biens : elle « exporte » aussi ses orphelins. Sur les 5,3 millions de Coréens vivant à l'étranger, 200 000 sont des enfants adoptés au cours des cinq dernières décennies. Après avoir légèrement baissé, le flux avait repris à la suite de la crise financière de 1997-1998 (le nombre des enfants partis à l'étranger a augmenté de 9,3 % pour atteindre 2 250 sur 9 292 enfants abandonnés en 1998). Aujourd'hui, il s'est à nouveau ralenti.

Mihee fait partie de la première génération d'adoptés – celle de la décennie 1960-1970 – qui, tout en éprouvant une reconnaissance mitigée pour les familles d'accueil, ont souffert de ne pas connaître la terre de leur naissance. « *Avant de venir ici, j'étais une*

*Coréenne de nulle part* », explique Mihee. Mais, une fois sur place, tout n'a pas été facile : « *On veut être comme tout le monde. De prime abord, on passe inaperçu, mais, dès qu'on ouvre la bouche, on ne l'est plus parce que l'on parle mal la langue. On découvre le racisme asiatique. Pour les Coréens, on reste des enfants, et ce n'est pas facile de se faire accepter comme adulte.* »

L'adoption d'enfants coréens par des parents étrangers a commencé après la guerre, dans les années 1950, en raison du grand nombre d'orphelins nés de soldats américains. Dans un pays marqué par l'éthique confucéenne où la lignée par le sang est primordiale, les Eurasiens sont mal vus et l'adoption à l'étranger était un moyen pour les mères d'éviter l'opprobre. Lors des Jeux olympiques de Séoul, en 1988, le gouvernement prit des mesures pour enrayer un exode qui ternissait l'image du pays : il imposa des quotas et facilita l'adoption locale, qui a augmenté mais reste inférieure à l'adoption à l'étranger.

Comme beaucoup d'adoptés, Mihee s'est mise à la recherche de sa mère biologique, qu'elle a d'ailleurs retrouvée : « *Nous*

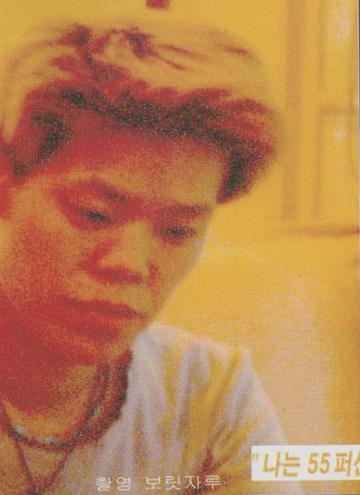


« *Cœur brisé caché* » (encre de Chine sur papier de riz) de Mihee Cho. Son œuvre exprime avec humour ou gravité le drame du déracinement.

*n'avions pas grand-chose à nous dire, mais au moins je savais.* » Vivant d'expédients avant d'être reconnue en tant qu'artiste, Mihee organisa une association, Korean Overseas Adoptee (KOA), pour venir en aide aux adoptés qui débarquent en Corée en quête de racines et découvrent qu'ils ne sont pas les bienvenus. Grâce à la pression de son association, ils peuvent désormais obtenir un visa de deux ans. Conjuguant art et action sociale en faveur des adoptés, Mihee et Kate Hers ont constitué un réseau d'artistes de la diaspora coréenne, publié un

annuaire illustré de leurs œuvres, *Overseas Korean Artists Yearbook*, et mis en place un site Web ([www.chomihee.com](http://www.chomihee.com)).

Pour Mihee, les questions acides s'estompent devant la reconnaissance d'un travail d'artiste aux multiples facettes. L'humour l'emporte désormais sur l'ironie acerbe : au *Et toi, d'où es-tu ?*, une de ses peintures de 1992, répond sa récente exposition au centre culturel français de Séoul : *L'habit ne fait pas le moine*, images manipulées à partir d'un habit de moine décomposé qui jouent sur son nom de famille belge.



# Kim po Kim

"나는 55퍼센트의 한국인" 펴낸

촬영 보릿자루

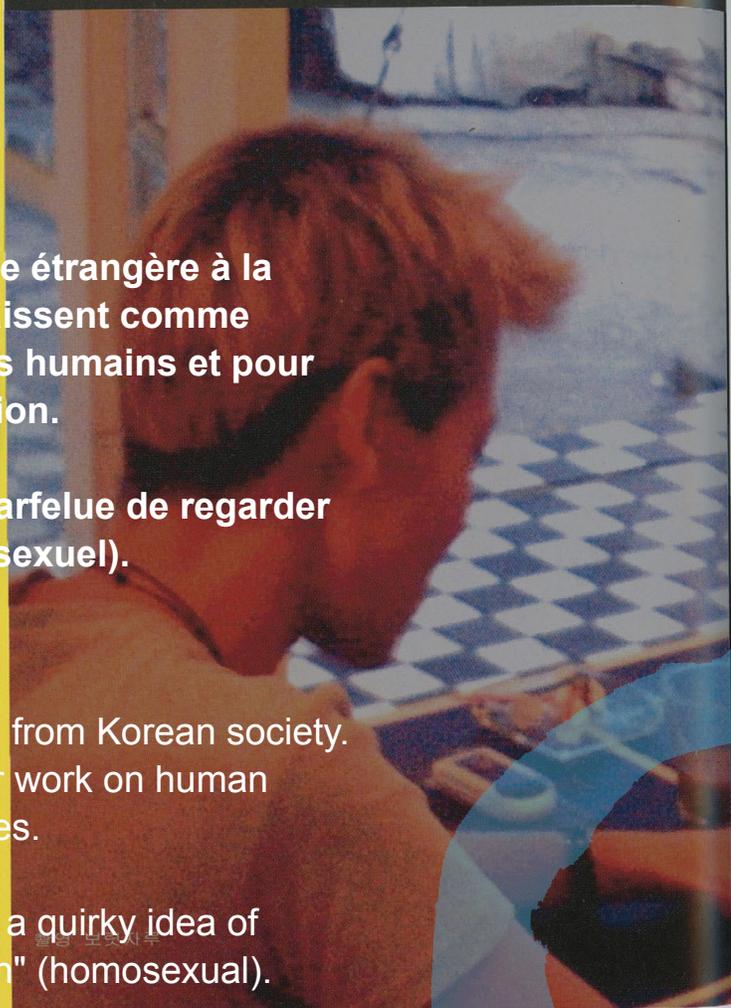
## 레인보우 코리아전 열었다

Kimpo Kim est aujourd'hui une artiste étrangère à la société coréenne. Plusieurs la connaissent comme autrice, pour son travail sur les droits humains et pour ses multiples apparitions à la télévision.

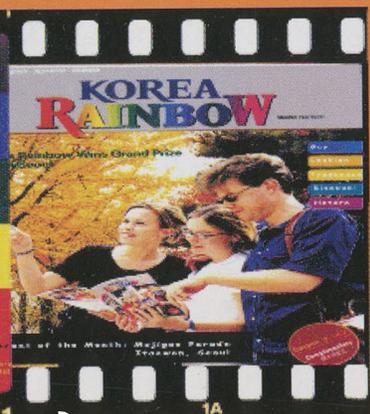
Cette exposition est née d'une idée farfelue de regarder du point de vue de l'« Iban » (l'homosexuel).

Today, Kimpo Kim is an artist estranged from Korean society. Many know her as a writer and from her work on human rights along with several TV appearances.

This particular exhibition was born from a quirky idea of looking from the perspective of the "Iban" (homosexual).



촬영 보릿자루



이번 무지개 2002 행사에서 김포김씨의 작품전은 타이틀이 [레인보우 코리아]였다. 코리아레인보우, 데일리 퀴어 등 한국사람들에게는 다소 생소할지 모를 그녀만의 표현 방법으로 인해 그녀의 작품이 약간의 오해를 불러 오기도 했지만, 퀴어 작품 전시회인 만큼 많은 퀴어인들에게는 공감을 불러 오기에 충분했다.

2002  
이 광고들  
그 이면에  
2365  
있다는 것  
그리고 한

이 광고들이 말하려는  
그 이면에 또다른 메시지가  
있다는 것을 나는 안다  
그리고 한국 이반인 당신도..

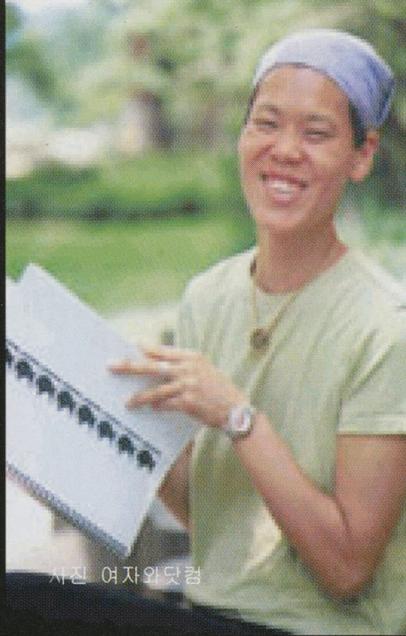


사진 여자닷컴

Il y a beaucoup de publicités qui nous entourent et, selon les homosexuels, nous avons la possibilité d'extraire un code *queer* de ces images.

Même si l'expression « Rainbow Queer » est méconnue des Coréen.ne.s, comme d'autres expressions utilisées dans l'exposition, « Korea Rainbow » et « Daily Queer », c'était suffisant pour susciter la sympathie du public. Moi, je sais qu'il y a d'autres messages cachés derrière ces publicités.

There is a lot of advertising around us and according to homosexuals it is possible to extract a queer code from these images.

Even if "Rainbow Queer" is somewhat misunderstood by Koreans, as well as other expressions used in the exhibition such as "Korea Rainbow" and "Daily Queer", it was enough to incite the public's sympathy. I, myself, know that there are other messages hidden behind those ads.

게이와 레즈비언 들은  
이렇게 생각하는 하지...

이와 더불어 우리는 주위에 많은 광고 매체를 접하게 되고 의도가 무엇이건 간에 공교롭게 드러난 이미지로 부터 쿼어코드를 뽑아내는 노력을 우리는 지니고 있다.

두 남자가 깊은 시선으로 마주보는 포스터에서 아무래도 "짹한 친구의 우정"이라고 우겨대도 우리는 거기에서 게이코드를 읽으며, 두 여자의 얼굴을 맞댄 화장품 광고에서 또한 우리는 레즈비언 코드를 읽는다.

공감할 수 있는 과정은 조금은 배타하게 그리고 다르게 바라 보는 쿼어인들의 광고를 보는 시각을 표현하는 것이 어떤 작품에서의 재미이자 예술활동의 자극이며 또한 삶이었다.

(작가의 변)



(c) 2001 kimpo kim



(c) 2001 kimpo kim

国家・人種・文化——三つの壁と闘う  
ミヒコナタリー・ルモワンヌ  
菊池恵介 訳

コリアン・ディアスポラ・  
アーティストは語る



Diaspora coréenne - Paroles de l'artiste  
Korean diaspora - The artist speaks

特集  
文化と抵抗



“ミ・ウォ”シリーズ# 1  
 ライス・ペーパー、ソウル、1995年  
 作品中の「美」という漢字は朝鮮語で「ミ」  
 と発音する。しかしその下に書かれたハン  
 グル「ウォ・ヨ」によって、音上では「ミ・ウォ  
 ヨ」となり「醜い」という意味になる。「美」は  
 「醜」に読みかえられることで宙吊りにされ  
 ている。

« Je ne peux pas changer le fait que je sois née d'une mère coréenne et d'un père non-identifié. Je dois l'accepter. Il est facile de s'apitoyer sur soi-même lorsque tu es abandonnée par tes parents, vendue à l'étranger comme enfant adoptée et traitée en tant qu'immigrante lorsque tu retournes au pays. Sur papier, je suis née en 1965, mais je suis réellement née en 1968. J'ai vécu trois ans en avance sur mon âge. »

"I can't change the fact that I was born of a Korean mother and an unidentified father. I have to accept this. It is easy to pity yourself when you are abandoned by your parents, sold abroad as an adopted child and treated as an immigrant once you return home. On paper, I was born in 1965 but really I was born in 1968. I lived three years ahead of my actual age."

こうして九六年に、三人の国際養子のアーティ  
 ストで共同展を開催し、人々に韓国の養子政策の功罪  
 について考えてもらおうとしました。この共同展は  
 予想外にメディアの注目を集めたので、私もそれを  
 利用させてもらって韓国養子の権利要求を打ちだし  
 ました。とりわけ、韓国養子のための特別な在留資  
 格をつくること、そして実親探しのための便宜をは  
 かることです。後者に関しては、国際養子の斡旋機  
 関にポスト・アドプション・ケアという部署が設け

路を持ってないということでした。そこで思いついたのが、アー  
 トという手段です。私は昔から美術が好きで、家出をした一三

際養子の問題性を訴えました。これは「国際養子の停止」の政  
 府発表がなされた九六年と重なりました。このような処置に政

« J'ai été adoptée par une famille blanche qui voulait adopter des enfants orientaux. À l'origine, ils voulaient un.e enfant japonais.e mais il n'y avait pas d'enfants japonais.es à adopter. Ils avaient d'énormes préjugés envers les chinois.e.s qu'ils considéraient « grossier.ière.s et issu.e.s de clans mafieux ». Les Japonais.es eux.elles donnaient l'impression d'être calmes et intelligent.e.s. Les enfants belges étaient rares et difficiles à adopter. La compétition était trop élevée. Mes parents adoptifs détestaient les enfants indien.ne.s parce que leur peau était trop foncée. Les enfants coréen.ne.s étaient moins chers.chères et il était possible de les accueillir six mois après avoir fait la demande d'adoption. »

"I was adopted by a white family who wanted to adopt oriental children. Originally, they wanted a Japanese child but there were no Japanese children available for adoption. They had terrible prejudice against the Chinese as being "crude and from mafia clans". In contrast, the Japanese gave the impression of being quiet and intelligent. Belgian children were rare and difficult to adopt. The competition was too high. My adoptive parents hated Indian children because their skin was too dark. Korean children were cheaper and it was possible to receive them within six months after making the adoption request."

« J'ai appris le coréen et j'ai travaillé en tant que bénévole à l'Agence d'Adoption Internationale de Corée en 1993 et 1994. En 1995, j'ai organisé une exposition sur le problème de l'adoption internationale dans une université en Corée. Cela a coïncidé avec l'année où le gouvernement a annoncé la suspension de l'adoption internationale. La Corée était devenue notoire pour le trafic d'enfants depuis les Jeux Olympiques de Séoul en 1988. »

に立ち会うことができました。とくに離散家族の再会に際しては、あたかも別れたカップルが再会をはたしたかのような強烈な印象を受けました。南北の分断状況がいったいどのようなものかを垣間見た気がします。

● 「親の位置」について考えさせられました。ミヒさんのベルギーのご両親はひどいオリエンタリストだったと伺いました。ミヒさんの創作活動などを通じて、それが徹底的に否定されていたときに、彼らは認識をどのように変えていったのでしょうか。「親と子の相互関係」について少しお聞かせください。

とか。もしそれに対する正しい認識と心の準備があれば、成功する家庭も増えるのではないかと思います。

なおミヒさんは、この一月二七、二八両日にわたって東京経済大学で開催される国際シンポジウム「ディアスポラ・アートの現在」に招請され、ふたび来日する予定である。同シンポジウムについての問い合わせは東京経済大学広報課まで。電話042-3328-7724 URL <http://www.tku.ac.jp>

"I learned Korean and worked as a volunteer at the International Adoption Agency of Korea in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, I held an exhibition at a university in Korea addressing the problem of international adoption. This coincided with the year that the government announced the suspension of international adoption. Korea had become notorious for child trafficking since the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988."

**« En 1996, une exposition collective s'est tenue à l'International Adoption Artist of Three People pour essayer d'amener les gens à réfléchir sur les avantages et les inconvénients des politiques d'adoption coréennes. Contre toute attente, cette exposition a reçu une attention médiatique. Je m'en suis servie pour exiger la création d'un statut spécial de résidence pour les enfants coréens adoptés et une aide pour retrouver les familles biologiques. À cet égard, un département de services postadoption a été établi à l'Agence d'Adoption Internationale. Le statut de résidence s'avère très difficile à obtenir. Nous devons encore nous battre. »**

"In 1996, a collective exhibition was held at the International Adoption Artist of Three People to try to get people to think about the merits and demerits of Korean adoption policies. This exhibition unexpectedly attracted the attention of the media. I used it to request the creation of a special residence status for Korean adopted children and for help with finding birth parents. Regarding the latter, a post-adoption care department has been established at the International Adoption Agency. The residence status is proving extremely difficult to obtain. We are still fighting."

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## US Immigration Plan

Bush's Proposals Could Draw Latin Voters to GOP

— Page 7



## Ministry Mergers

Government Structure Should Be Redrawn, DPM Kim Says

— Page 10



## Exploring Identity

Artists Overseas Look at What It Means to Be Korean

— Page 14

# Arts & Living

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2004

14 | THE KOREA TIMES

## In Focus

# Artists around the world look at what it means to be Korean

By Lisa Hanson  
Contributing Writer

**K**yoopo — A Korean resident abroad  
Zainichi — Korean-Japanese  
Ibyang — Adoptee  
Iljomo — Born in Korea, emigrated as a child

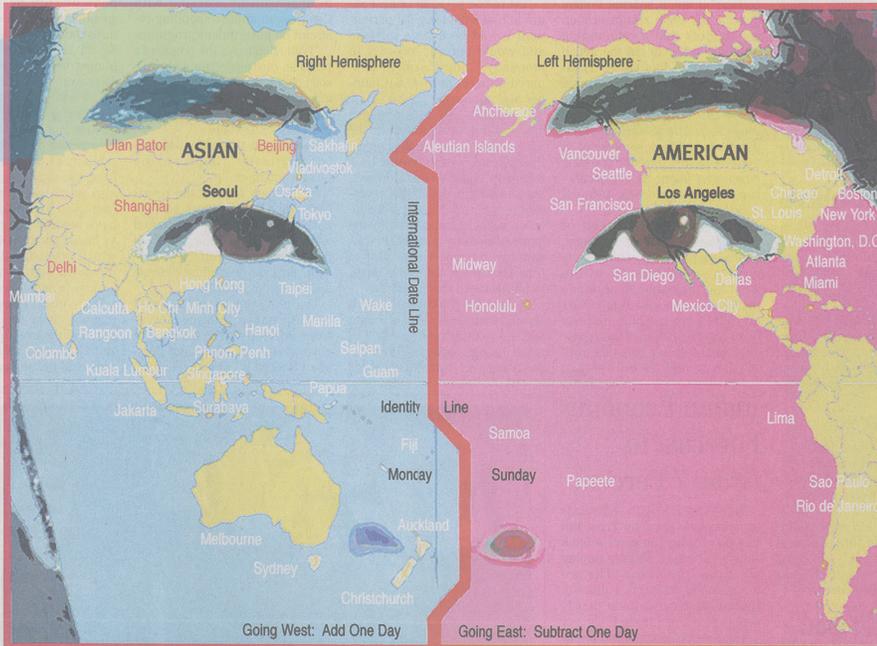
Korean overseas artists grapple with what each of these categories mean. Some expose their interpretations, while others ignore them.

The third volume of "O.K.A.Y., the Overseas Korean Artists Yearbook," was released last December. In the pocket-sized book, art, photos and writings are interspersed with personal notes from overseas Korean artists. Some artworks have a political message; others are personal or emotional, but each one has the same underlying theme: Whoever you are or whatever you are, it is OK. In traditional Korean society, where group identity is stressed and individuality can sometimes mean alienation, the book's emphasis on diversity resonates with a bit of cultural defiance.

Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, a 35-year-old Korean adoptee from Belgium and a coordinator for all three volumes, wanted to create an artistic space specifically for overseas Korean artists. In the spring of 2000, her friend and co-coordinator for the first volume, Kate Hers, was restricted from participating in Art Sonje Center's "KoreamericaKorea" exhibition. The curator of the show told Hers, an adoptee from the United States, she could not participate because she was not a Korean immigrant.

In an article published in the July 2000 issue of Art Monthly Magazine, Hers criticized the curator. "The curators purposely ignored a generation of approximately 120,000 of the 2,000,000 overseas Korean-Americans that live in the U.S.," she wrote. "And whose voices are excluded? We are the overseas, adopted Koreans (OAKS), who are sent to the U.S. to live with American families, usually as children, losing our culture, our language and our Korean families." Hers said she eventually had to return to the U.S. to pursue her art career. But, Lemoine stayed and continued with O.K.A.Y.

"It is true we have a different experiences, but that doesn't mean we're not immigrants," Lemoine said. Korean adoptees are not immigrants, because their official parents are not Korean, a fact which nudged Hers out of qualification. Hers and Lemoine exemplify many Koreans who grew up abroad and do not fit tidy classes of identification; while they embody



"Crossing My Own Pacific Ocean," by Raymond Hahn. In O.K.A.Y. volume one, Hahn writes "my work involves examining some of the relationships that exist between geography and culture in an Asian American context. I attempt to analyze the extent of identification a person may have with their ethnic background and the circumstances that promote or preclude this."

# Exploring Kyopo Identity

two cultures, they are not thoroughly a part of either one. Lemoine and Hers started O.K.A.Y., to counteract traditional ethnic categories and the rigidity that kept Hers from taking part in the "KoreamericaKorea" exhibition.

"I didn't want to distinguish between Korean adoptees, kyopos, and 1.5 iljomo," Lemoine said.

While Lemoine has tried to equally embrace these distinctions, others are just starting to get used to them.

Cho Woong-hee, a 23-year-old, Korean-European artist whose work will be featured in the fourth volume, returned to Korea to fulfill his two-year mandatory military duty. Cho was born in Switzerland and spent most of his life in France and came back to his native country. He has found his identity difficult for some to accept. "If you are European, but physically look Korean, it is tough. I think when you look like a foreigner, Koreans are very patient, but when you are Korean-looking and cannot speak Korean fluently or are unaware of Korean customs, I feel like Koreans almost despise you."

Overseas Koreans who at once feel tied to their home and connected with the country in which they grew up are faced with what it means to be Korean. The nearly 70 overseas Korean artists whose art and literary works are displayed in the three volumes of O.K.A.Y., chal-

lenge stiff rudiments of what it means to be Korean.

"The book is about Koreanness and how artists want to define it," Lemoine said. "Some people reject while others embrace it, and just because artists do one or the other doesn't mean they will show it in their artwork."



Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine is an adoptee from Belgium. She has lived in South Korea for 10 years.

Korea Times Photo by Kim Hyun-tae

Koreans are scattered throughout the world. More than 5.3 million Koreans live abroad in 14 different countries and 200,000 of these are adoptees, according to statistics cited in O.K.A.Y. volumes. Each volume of O.K.A.Y. is a smattering of artwork from Koreans residing in separate diasporas. The U.S., Japan and Europe were centripetal locations for the first three volumes. The fourth volume, which will be distributed next year, centers on Koreans living in China and South America. Each yearbook jostles with layers of identity. Some artists choose universal topics that appeal to broad audiences, while others play with personal subjects exclusive to adoptee or Korean experiences.

Kyryn Lee Young, a kyopo who left Korea at two years old, returned five years ago. She is a writer and teaches at Ewha Womans University. "I like to write instinctively and not to focus on Koreanness, but it's something I find myself inevitably writing about," Lee said.

Vincent Sung, an adoptee artist and commercial photographer from the first volume, oscillates between personal and public personas, delving in both ostentatious and raw and intimate portrayals. One fashion photo draws attention to the color and media used in his artwork, exuding a commercial sensibility, while another picture, titled "Naked Eyes, Naked Soul," offers a more private glimpse into Sung's

artwork. His subject is a man smiling with his head tilted to one side. "In my work, I want to see people raw. I try to capture what clothing tries to hide from me," Sung said.

Sung's balance between the commercial and the personal stresses staggered dimensions embedded in any personality that are subtle for some but awkwardly pronounced for others, namely adoptees.

Adoptee artist Tammy Tolle deals directly with Koreanness, unraveling dimensions particular to adoptees. She filmed a documentary, "Searching for Gohyang," which unfolds her search for her birth family, the life she was forced to leave at eight years old and the identity she lost during the 14 years she had lived in the U.S. "The film is about finding my family and my own perspective on being between Korean and American," Tolle said.

"Gohyang," which translates to hometown in Korean, has literal and metaphorical meaning in Tolle's work. It is her hometown in South Korea, and it is a sentimental, abstract place where she said she seeks nonphysical, but no less permanent, things like meaning and belonging. Like many adoptees who return to Korea to reconnect with their native culture, this place has remained elusive, slipping between the folds of her Korean past and her kyopo present. "I realized (Korea) really isn't home. There were memories that came to me, but I didn't feel any connection to them. In the United States, I always felt like I didn't belong there. And, then I came here, and I didn't quite fit in here, either," Tolle said.

Finding one's gohyang is a symbolic search for Tolle. "It is not just adoptees that go through this, it's a universal search in diasporas all over the world," Tolle said. "Some of the feelings we have as adoptees, of not fully belonging to one place, is common among new generations of African Americans and Latin and South Americans."

In one way, an adoptee is an outward manifestation of an inner search that many people, despite race or background, take. Adoptees who return to Korea to meet their birth parents and discover their origins are ultimately seeking what every generation seeks in their nascent adult years: a sense of purpose. A universal search also surfaces in Eun-Mi Postma, an adoptee from Holland whose radio documentary, "Omma and Mama" is published in the third volume. Postma's subject matter is motherhood, but her work is not concerned with the Oedipal and Freudian variety. She examines the definition of motherhood.

"The reason I made this documentary is that I grew up with two families," Postma said. Postma was adopted at seven years old and can recall two different bonds with her mothers. In her work, she attempts to deconstruct these bonds and to understand the meaning behind them.

"What is the bond with my mother? From a practical side, my Dutch mother is my mother. From my blood, my mother is from Korea," Postma said.

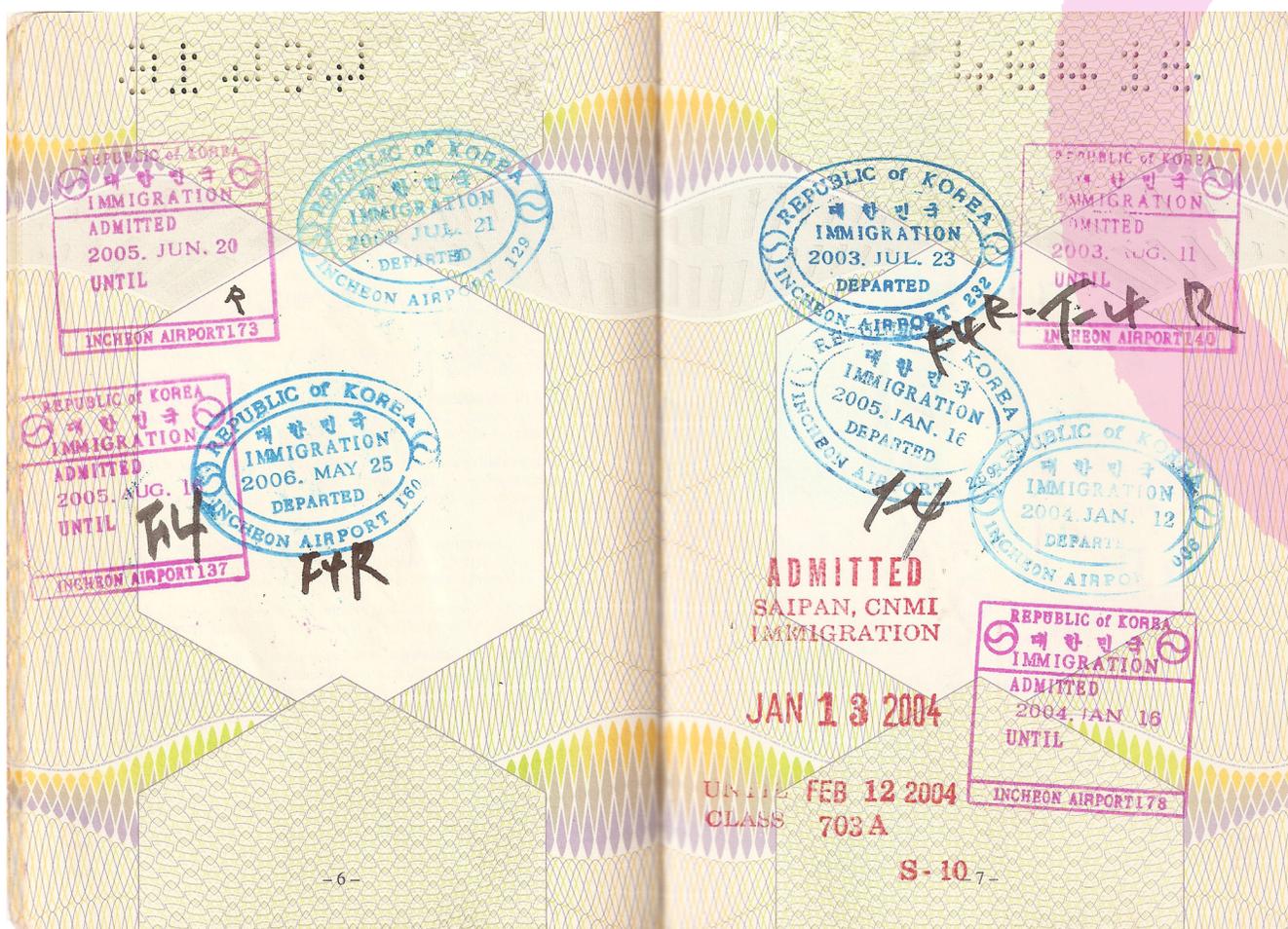
Her topic, like the lives of many adoptees, has an appeal that resonates in a globalized world where national borders are readily traversed, definitions are reevaluated and conventions run over. Motherhood, gohyang and identity are artistic themes and routes to uncover one's origins.

Lemoine is working on a fourth volume that will be distributed next year. The focus is on Koreans living in China, Australia, Kazakhstan and South America. To get a copy of any of the O.K.A.Y. volumes or to submit work for the next volume, e-mail overseaskoreanartists@yahoo.com or write to PO Box 1964, Seoul, 110-619. The books are 15,000 won.

lhanson@koreatimes.co.kr

En 2005, LES FEMMES CORÉENNES OBTIENNENT LE DROIT À UN REGISTRE FAMILIAL PERSONNEL, AINSI QUE LE DROIT D'Y INSCRIRE LEURS ENFANTS NÉS HORS MARIAGE. In 2005, Korean women obtain the right to a personal family registry as well as the right to record their children born outside of marriage.

2005  
2001



## 6 THE REVIEW | ARTS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2005

SUN

## Cross-cultural Seoul searching

A group of South Koreans raised abroad are using art to question our perception of identity and belonging in a powerful new exhibition, writes **Clarence Tsui**

"Korea is known as the hermit kingdom," says Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine. "Koreans are very nationalistic. If you don't fit in with what they have in mind of being Korean, they often treat you even worse than a foreigner."

For some people, such words probably amount to Orientalist bigotry. But Lemoine is no cheerleader for small-minded right-wingers. Born Cho Mi-hee, she is a Korean-born, Belgium-bred and now Seoul-based multimedia artist and activist for the rights of her fellow Overseas Adopted Koreans. These "Oaks", as they call themselves, were sent to foster parents in Europe and the US in the 1960s and 70s, and are now back in Korea looking for their biological relations.

What fuels Lemoine's ire was the ill-treatment she endured on her return to her birthplace – something she never experienced in Belgium. "There was no support to help adult adoptees to search [for their biological parents]," she says. "The attitudes of adoption agencies and social workers were and are very rude,

discouraging and disrespecting. It's emotional abuse. And it's the reason she established an adoptees' rights group in Korea. "It was for a year," she says. "And I'm still here. Adoptees are immigrants without roots and connection.

"Over the past decade I spent in Korea, I can see that, after the International Monetary Fund crisis, Korea welcomed adoptees more than before – hoping somehow [we could use] our western knowledge to overcome the country's economic [problems]. But it's for immigrant children who could speak Korean and English and have a sense of Korean etiquettes – and not adoptees who are useless foreigners with Asian faces."

Lemoine's art challenges perceptions of national identity, too. Defined by a Korean heritage and a Belgian upbringing, she confronts fantasies about Asians in the west and also Korean constraints – the "oriental" and the nationalist idea of "identity". Combining the two terms, Lemoine came up with the term

Orientity – the name for a group exhibition at the Hong Kong Fringe Club that aims to subvert the meaning of "Korean-ness" through the work of seven European, American and Japanese artists with Korean ancestry.

Ethnic roots are the only tie unifying this disparate group of installation artists, fabric designers, photographers and filmmakers. Among them are emigres, adoptees and second-generation Korean-Americans. Diverse cultural influences define their works, but there's none of the clichéd, kitschy mix of western aesthetics and eastern spirituality that many still expect of mixed cultural artists. Instead, their

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# ing to find a place to call home

work questions the notion of identity – and whether certain characteristics are biological.

The most vociferous of the artists involved, Lemoine – who initiated the first run of *Orientity* in Kyoto in September with Korean-Japanese fabric designer Oh Haji – also presents the most provocative work in the exhibition. *Today I Feel* is an installation of 30 wall posters, each containing a square of reflective material pasted in the middle, with the words “Today I Feel” on top and an emotion or a social identity at the bottom.

Walking through the mirror-like array, viewers will see their reflections framed by proclamations about feeling “creative”, “Asian-American” or “straight”. The humorous suggestion that you can position yourself as something different every day – whether it’s in sentiment, race or sexuality – is a statement about the volatility of one’s being.

“It’s fluid and multiple,” says Lemoine. “People tend to reduce and accept just what they want to see in a situation. It will be interesting to see the reaction of the visitors.”

If confrontation marks Lemoine’s work, then subtle reflection predominates that of others. Oh’s fabric-based work transforms the traditional Korean dress, the *hanbok*, into



Korean-Japanese artist Oh Haji and her hanbok work (above), and Hawaiian-Korean Naomi Long’s *Sisters* 1951 (left)

a statement about the Korean diaspora in Japan. “For Korean-Japanese, the purpose of wearing folk costumes in Japan isn’t only to emphasise their racial consciousness – it shows ‘I am a minority in Japan,’” says Oh.

Unlike Lemoine, she says she believes in the existence of a Korean identity, which “I’m consciously presenting in my work”.

Rediscovery of heritage shaped the work of Naomi Long, who emigrated to Hawaii when she was four, and provides a literary interpretation of the emotions that might lie within family photographs, in *Sisters* 1951 and *Family Portrait* 1965. “My mother had told me stories about my grandmother and her difficult

life in Korea, and so I wrote the texts with them in mind,” says the photographer and writer. “Through photographs, we maintain a connection to a place, a time, a relationship. In these works, I wanted to reveal the invisible ties of blood and spirit that exist between mother and child, brothers and sisters, self and world – ties that bind regardless of geography and the passage of time.”

Her melancholic take on identity belies the torment she felt when she left the comparatively multicultural Hawaii for life elsewhere in the US. “[In Hawaii] I was never self-conscious about my ethnic identity,” says Long. “It was an accepted part of my being

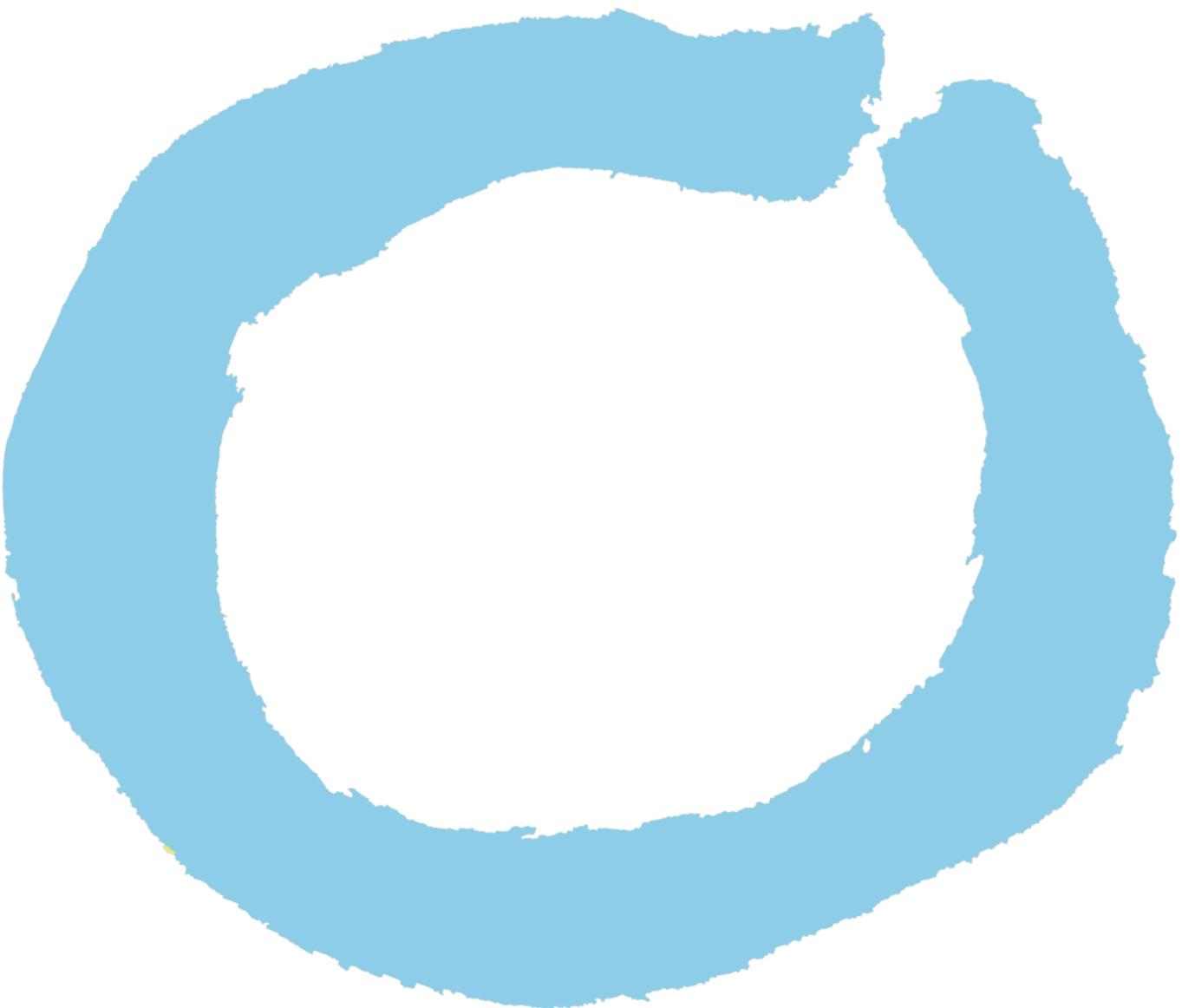
and not something I had to hide or defend. It was only when I left Hawaii that I became more consciously aware of my Korean heritage. There were gaps in my knowledge, so I read books about Korea, dug up old family albums and interviewed members of my family, asking them what they remembered.”

Long’s pursuit of her roots is far from a patriotic endeavour. It was instead a way to “fill the gaps” of her personal history. “All of us are wanderers between somewhere and nowhere. In this in-between place, the challenge is to acknowledge and embrace interconnectivity and change because it’s a mistake to perceive any particular culture as ‘pure’.”

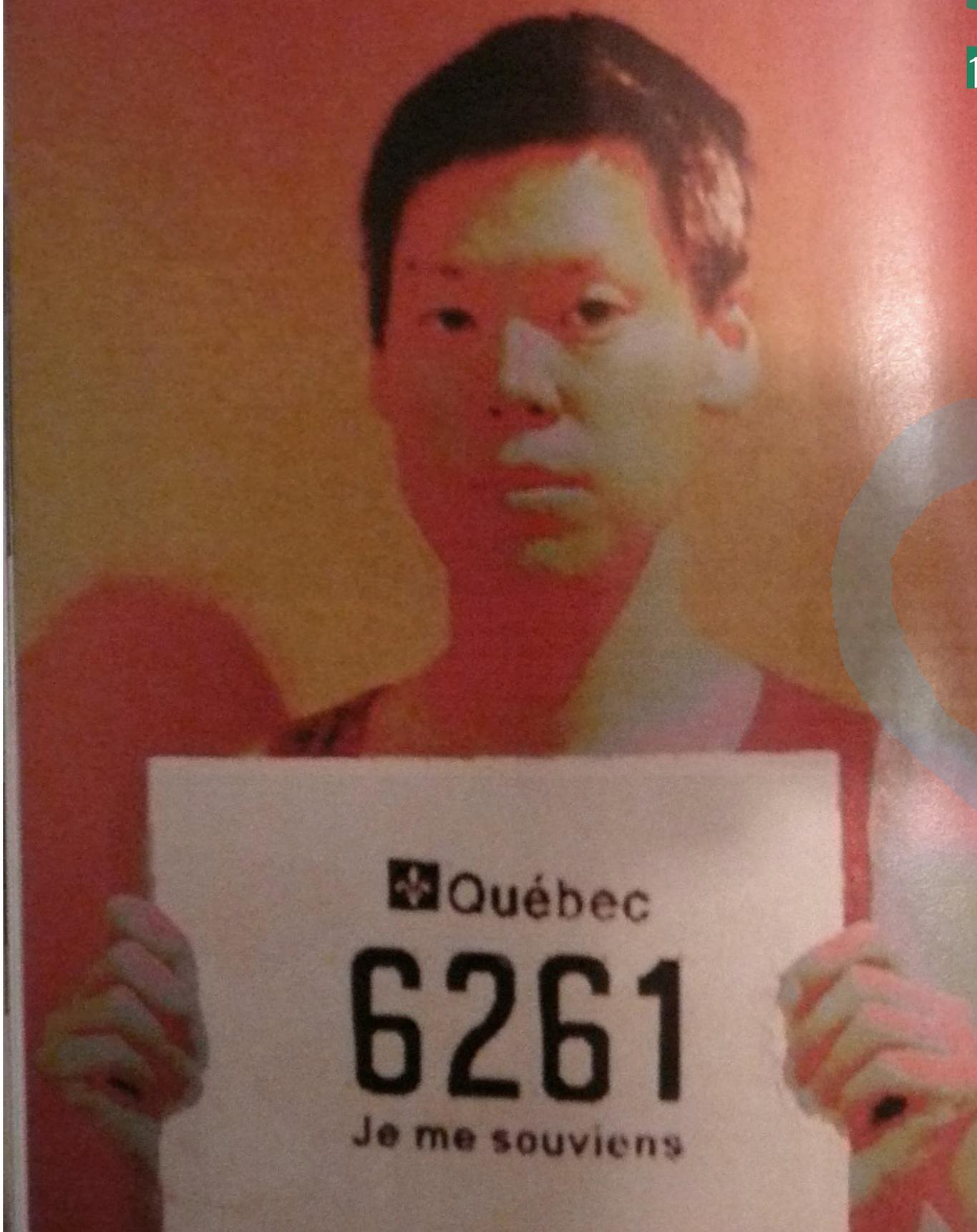
Hong Kong seems obsessed with superficial facets of Korean culture, which accounts for yesterday’s two seminars about the allure of Korean soap operas and film stars at the City Fringe Festival. *Orientity*, also part of the festival, offers a more thoughtful take on the country. “The artist draws from his or her entire life experience,” says Long. “And that includes being Korean, being overseas and wondering who we really are.”

*Orientity*, Mon-Sat, noon-10pm, the Economist and Fringe Gallery, Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd, Central. Inquiries: 2521 7251. Ends Sat

**2006 -2020**



Cover Story



## The pros and cons of international adoption

# Roots of discontent

On top of the usual angst about growing up, adopted Asians living in the West must also confront racism and a sense of displacement. **Wency Leung** reports

As a child, Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine was skeptical when her adoptive Belgian parents explained that she and her siblings were from South Korea.

"We thought they were lying... because we didn't know it was a real country until they showed it to us on a map," Lemoine said, adding that even then, the idea of originating from Korea was too abstract for them to comprehend. "It was only when we were adults that we really believed we were from there."

Lemoine, 39, was about 18 months old when she was put on a plane from Korea to Belgium in 1969. There, she was raised by Caucasian parents who also adopted three other, unrelated Korean children.

Lemoine, who is now an artist living in Montreal, Canada, said it took her a long time to become comfortable with her ethnicity.

"For me, I was not very proud of being an Asian," she says.

But, having spent several years in South Korea and having met her birth family, she has since come to terms with her heritage.

A generation of children who were adopted from Asia into Western families following the Korean and Vietnam wars has entered adulthood. And many are returning to their birth countries to discover their roots and to establish cultural connections.

Some adoptees have set up organizations to share their experiences and help each

**JUST A NUMBER:** A self-portrait by Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine shows her holding up her adoption number. Lemoine was just 18 months old when she was flown from Korea to Belgium to join her adoptive family. Now an artist living in Montreal, Canada, she grew up with three other adopted unrelated Korean children.



**FINDING ANSWERS:** Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine stands outside the South Korean embassy holding her adoption number. Lemoine traveled to South Korea in 1991 to reunite with her birth mother and discovered that she was given away because her mother, who was then only 16 years old, was unwed at the time she was pregnant.

children. There's also only a handful of studies comparing domestic and international adoptions.

But, he adds, research has shown that even when internationally adopted individuals are raised with all the privileges of being part of an affluent, Caucasian household, they are nonetheless vulnerable to the harmful effects of racism and discrimination in their adopted country.

## Modern challenges

Adoption agencies and adoptive families rarely considered this in the past, but are now taking note, Lee says. Some agencies offer seminars to help adoptees and Western families tackle some of the challenges associated with international adoptions.

In Canada, Children's Bridge, an agency based in Ontario, holds mandatory sessions for new adoptive parents, during which adult adoptees from South Korea and Vietnam speak about their experiences regarding race and identity. Today, China is the largest source of children for international adoptions in Canada.

"To pretend that race is not going to matter is not something that we feel is helpful to the child," says Cathy Murphy, director of adoption services at Children's Bridge. "It's very important to recognize that racism, unfortunately, is alive and well in Canada, and that our children will experience racism. It's not a matter of if—it's a matter of when."

other find their birth families. Meanwhile, some groups are challenging the practice of international, transracial adoptions.

Unlike in domestic, same-race adoptions, international adoptions involve additional issues of displacement, separating children not only from their birth families, but also from their ethnic communities, says Richard Lee, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota who studies the development of Korean adoptees.

"In the case of internationally adopted individuals, who are typically adopted as infants, there's always going to be the question at some point of not only, 'Why was I adopted?' but also 'Why was I adopted to another country?'" he says.

Lee says there's little research to determine whether these issues have a positive or negative impact on adopted

## Hi Bridée

je, tu il, elle  
nous vous ils elles

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de l'autre bout

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à la ronde

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quiconque

adulte  
silence insultes  
rageur  
d'ailleurs

le tout d'une moitié  
du bout à envier

moi, toi, eux  
oui ça va mieux

©2007,  
Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine,  
Montréal

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# Ori Orie

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# Orientité

## *Oriental + identité*

Même si l'adoption des coréens diminue, des milliers de «petites» chinoises arrivent en adoption sur le sol québécois. En Corée, le mois de mai est dédié à la famille (5 mai : journée des enfants, 11 mai : journée de l'adoption). À Montréal, on y célèbre l'héritage culturel asiatique. Le paradoxe se trouvant dans l'exposition Orientité, c'est que les artistes européennes (Adel Guillon, Jane Jin Kaisen, Nathalie Lemoine) sont (d'apparence) asiatiques, même si elles n'ont pas grandi dans leur « dite » culture. C'est par l'art qu'elles tentent, en tant qu'adultes, de se réapproprier et de recomposer une identité qui est effacée, blanchie. C'est par leur héritage culturel inexistant, mais tout de même lié au physique, que leur créativité personnelle devient de plus en plus importante dans la définition du bagage – en progression – de cette nouvelle culture. Un travail collaboratif entre les trois artistes ; des photos adultes de chacune dans lesquelles nous retrouvons leur numéro d'adoption, des ambassades et leur agence adoptive respective. La diaspora asiatique est connue pour être silencieuse et sectaire, malgré ceci, en ayant perdu leur héritage culturel d'origine, les asiatiques adoptés dans des familles occidentales ont gagné en échange une certaine liberté d'opinion. Orientité a vu le jour à Kyoto, puis a voyagé à Hong Kong et à Grenoble. ■

[www.myspace.com/orientity](http://www.myspace.com/orientity)

AUGUST 18, 2012

## BERLIN: HOME BASE PROJECT

FIND US ON



SEARCH

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### ART BERLIN

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### ART COLOGNE

artblog cologne  
cologne galleries

Those of you who studied art will remember the first term at University: lots of parties, living in your studio, getting drunk, dissolving in countless ideas and plans. This is the feeling that the Berlin-based and soon to be Jerusalem-based 'Homebase Project' evokes. In a three days festival twelve international artists, who just finished a three months residency, exhibit their outcomes in their temporary studios: art dealing with notions of 'home'.

The results are extremely different. The British performance artist **Georgina Porteus**, for instance, shows "over-egg the pudding", where she splashes pink pudding dough in circular movements all over the studio space. The German conceptual artist **Julius Weiland** is doing pretty much the opposite, by exhibiting a minimalist carved non-frame: A site-specific work that is very much about the absence of painting. Belgian artist **Nathalie Lemoine** translates the discussion on home into a topic of identity and thus on how much our home, or what we consider to be home, makes us who we are.

Throughout the evening I was told the history of the building, which is quite unique: From being one of Germany's leading beer-breweries in the 20s, it was occupied by the Nazi regime, later by the communist FDJ party and remained a forgotten space after the German reunion in 89. Homebase Project has taken the advantage of the space's history and opened a discussion on questions of homeliness, location, occupation - and last, but not least: about being a young artist, exploring the world outside home.

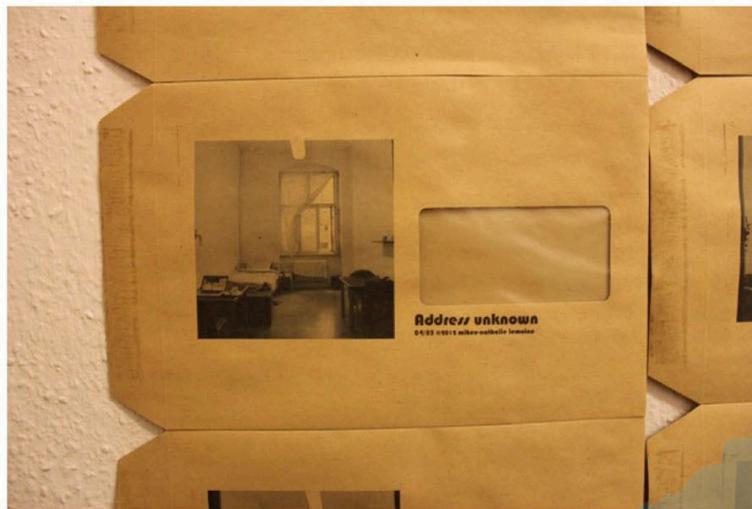
#### Homebase Festival

17-19 August 2012

#### Homebase Project

Thulestrasse 54 (backyard!)  
13189 Berlin

Within the time of their festival, there are also several performances and parties to go to. You can check the whole program on their website: [homebaseproject.org](http://homebaseproject.org)



TRANS-VUES\_BYOL KIMURA ALIAS MIHEE-NATHALIE LEMOINE

# Pleinement queer



**QUÊTES IDENTITAIRES ET EXPRESSIONS ARTISTIQUES**

**Aller à la rencontre de soi-même, afin de créer, est le propre de maints artistes. Si peu y parviennent, byol kimura alias mihee-nathalie lemoine, transpose par l'art son parcours identitaire fascinant. Rencontre avec une artiste queer, son art et ses identités.**

Née en Corée du Sud, byol kimura y vit 1 an et 9 mois, avant de partir pour la Belgique avec sa famille adoptive. Si elle grandit en Belgique et y crée plus tard la première association de Coréens adoptés (1991), elle vivra 13 ans en Corée, participera à la première *Gay Pride* et en 2002 à l'exposition *Rainbow*, avant d'immigrer à Montréal. Elle a fait sienne ces identités multiples et y conjugue l'art comme moyen d'expression, exutoire et véhicule de ses messages.

**Sur le nom, l'âge et l'adoption**

D'entrée de jeu, byol kimura alias mihee-nathalie lemoine, m'explique son parcours, afin de mieux comprendre la provenance de son nom et de ses origines, qui tissent inextricablement son parcours identitaire : «Beaucoup de gens m'appellent Kimura, mais c'est mon nom de famille. Mes amies proches m'appellent byol, qui veut dire étoile en coréen, car en Asie on met le nom de famille d'abord et le prénom après. J'ai voulu garder cela, c'est un *statement*.»

D'ailleurs, parlant de «*statement*», le tatouage gravé 6261 que porte byol au poignet est son numéro d'adoption. Elle présente ce tatou dans le court-métrage Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? question inhérente au dit

tatouage, présentant ses divers questionnements identitaires. D'ailleurs, lorsqu'on demande à byol son âge, la réponse est complexe : «Réellement j'ai 46 ans, mais officiellement 49. On m'a vieillie de 3 ans au moment de l'adoption. En général, on rajeunit, mais là c'était une erreur... Lorsque j'ai retrouvé ma mère biologique, elle m'a confirmé que j'étais plus jeune.»

Dans le film *disadoption*, byol raconte sur une chanson qui a bercé de nombreuses enfances, comment son père a demandé jadis de la «désadopter» : «J'aime intégrer une référence populaire — souvent des chansons puisque c'est une base culturelle que les gens vont comprendre — et les conjuguer à mes expériences personnelles». Pour ceux qui veulent adopter, byol souligne l'importance de ne pas minimiser l'effet de l'ethnie, car les parents adoptifs, de par leur culture, n'ont pas toujours tous les outils.

**Identité queer et transpossibilités**

À la question «est-ce que tu te considères coréenne, belge ou canadienne?», byol répond par l'ensemble : «Pour moi, c'est un tout et ça fait partie de moi. C'est comme dire «est-ce que votre identité est féministe ou gaie?» Les deux! Pour moi, il n'y a pas de choix à faire, je suis féministe, queer, intersexe, qui a choisi d'être une fille, car c'est plus facile biologiquement parlant...», explique celle qui aime les femmes «mais pas toutes les femmes, celles plus masculines» précise byol. Elle préfère l'appellation *queer*, car elle n'évoque pas l'idée de l'hétérocentrisme, «soit une lesbienne qui essaie de reproduire un schéma hétérocentré (maison, enfants, chien, etc.) Je ne me définis pas de cette façon».

D'ailleurs, parlant de définition, byol continue sur l'idée des trans : «Pour moi avant, trans voulait dire transadopté, mais les transsexuels/transgenres se sont réapproprié le mot, alors que ce mot «trans», parle de transition, c'est une transpossibilité. Et il y a plein de transpossibilités... D'ailleurs, si on se réfère aux transgenres, une fois la transition terminée, il ne sont plus trans, puisque cette transition est terminée».

Ainsi, en s'appropriant ses diverses identités, Byol effectue constamment des transitions vers celles-ci afin de se les réapproprier par le biais de l'art : «L'adoption (transidentité) et l'idée de vouloir s'adapter dans un nouveau corps (transgenre), mais aussi à la nouvelle culture (éducation par des personnes occidentales qui présentent une dualité visible avec notre corps d'oriental) présentent des corrélations», appuie byol.

**Identité artistique militante**

byol s'initie très tôt à la peinture, alors que sa grand-mère lui donne des pinceaux. Elle poursuivra sa passion dans une école d'art, où elle y découvre entre autres, le surréalisme et le non figuratif : «Au début, j'étais très imprégnée de l'environnement belge dans lequel j'étais, ce n'était pas du tout des trucs coréens».

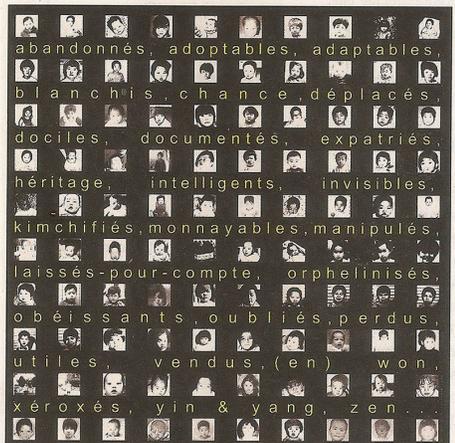
Bien sûr, à la base, l'art est pour byol un exutoire, une thérapie, mais «plus je me connais, plus j'essaie de faire passer un message, de développer mon style», explique celle qui avoue s'intéresser au Pop Art. D'ailleurs, son travail sur les nouilles coréennes implique non seulement l'idée que «l'identité d'une personne passe nécessairement par la nourriture», mais implique aussi un questionnement sur la consommation et une esthétique (soupe Campbell/Andy Warhol), propre au Pop Art.

«En gros, mon travail est conceptuel», explique celle qui fut tout au long de sa carrière artistique influencée par des artistes aux origines diverses, dont Félicien Rops, Lee Ufan, Egon Schiele, Adrian Piper, Kim Ki Chang, Lee Bul, Tracey Moffatt, Sophie Calle ainsi que Nam June Paik, au niveau de la vidéo conceptuelle : «Avant, mon art était plus impulsif et maintenant, avec l'âge, c'est plus réfléchi. J'aime intégrer un mélange des 3 cultures qui sont en moi».

En 1988, byol s'intéresse au médium de la vidéo avec son premier court-métrage *adoption*, qu'elle réalise pour un concours sur le thème d'être jeune en 1988 (au même moment que les Jeux olympiques de Séoul); elle explorera son parcours identitaire, avec une lettre ouverte à sa mère biologique qu'elle ne connaissait pas. D'ailleurs, ce court-métrage sera le début du parcours audiovisuel de byol et beaucoup de ses vidéos sont conceptuelles avec l'idée du chiffre 100 (en durée, 100 secondes, mais aussi sur la blancheur, car 100 en coréen veut aussi dire blanc). Elle exprime notamment ces préoccupations identitaires dans *Rire jaune*, *Ô Canada*, ou encore *Hairy* (100 grammes de cheveux en 100 secondes).

D'ailleurs, le dernier travail de la vidéaste fut présenté à la maison de la culture de Montréal le 15 octobre dernier et portait sur les 100 ans de sa grand-mère, filmée en 100 secondes, mais d'une durée totale de 14 minutes. À la fois, conceptuel, le travail de byol est militant et propose un message, d'où le fait qu'une de ses œuvres (100 photos de Coréens blancs) se retrouve au Musée de la citoyenneté à Incheon en Corée du sud. Si vous avez la chance de visionner le très beau film, *Couleur de peau miel* co-réalisé par Laurent Boileau et Jung Junsik, byol est dans le film puisque Jung était son collègue de classe, en Belgique. ✂ JULIE VAILLANCOURT

Pour en connaître davantage sur l'artiste et visionner ses œuvres, visitez son site web : <http://starkimproject.com> ainsi que sur la page du collectif <http://www.gouleur.ca> dont elle fait partie.



# LAURA

2015  
535

Klunder's newest tattoo runs down the inside of her left forearm and reads "K85-160," a number that dates to her infancy. Klunder was 9 months old when her South Korean mother left her at a police station in Seoul. The police brought her to Holt Children's Services, a local adoption agency, where a worker assigned Klunder the case number K85-160. It was only two weeks into 1985, but she was already the 160th child to come to the agency that month, and she would go on to be one of 8,800 children sent overseas from South Korea that year. Klunder became part of the largest adoption exodus from one country in history: Over the past six decades, at least 200,000 Korean children — roughly the population of Des Moines — have been adopted into families in more than 15 countries, with a vast majority living in the United States.

Klunder, who is 30, has a warm goofiness and a tendency toward self-deprecation. ("I was the chubby kid with glasses wearing Lisa Frank T-shirts," she said, shaking her head at the memory of her middle-school self.) But she also resonates intensity. She chose the tattoo of her case number as a critique of adoption, she told me. "I was a transaction. I was a number in the same way that people who are criminalized and institutionalized are given numbers."

Klunder, who was raised in Wisconsin, moved back to South Korea in 2011, which is where I met her one night last February along with three other friends, all adoptees from the United States. We were at a restaurant in the Hongdae section of Seoul, known for its galleries, bars and cheap restaurants. Outside, the streets teemed with university students, musicians, artists and clubbers. The neighborhood is also a popular spot for the approximately 300 to 500 adoptees who have moved to South Korea — primarily from the United States but also from France, Denmark and other nations. Most lack fluency in the language and possess no memories of the country they left when they were young. But they are back, hoping for a sense of connection — to South Korea, to their birth families, to other adoptees.

That night, Klunder and her friends passed plates of *bibimbap* (rice topped with meat and vegetables), *soondubu jjigae* (tofu stew) and *pa jun* (scallion pancake) around the table and ordered bottles of beer and *soju*. Everyone there was a member of Adoptee Solidarity Korea, or ASK. It was started as a reading group in 2004 by a handful of politically progressive Korean female adoptees (and one man) in their 30s, who began to discuss why Korean single mothers felt pressure to give away their children — 90 percent of those who place their children for adoption are not married. They talked about a culture in which single mothers are often ostracized, one in which employers typically ask women about their marital status in job interviews; parents sometimes reject daughters who raise their children alone; and the children of single mothers are often bullied in school. They also questioned why the government offered little aid to mothers to help keep their families intact. At an adoption conference organized a year after the group was created, members handed out fliers that read, in part, "ASK stands in opposition to international adoption." They sold T-shirts, designed by Kimura Byol-Nathalie Lemoine, an early adoptee activist, that depicted a wailing baby with a large stamp on its rear end: "Made in Korea."

Over time, ASK backed away from its message of ending adoption, as it was too polarizing, adoptees said, and "hard for people to hear a we said after the word 'stop,'" Jenny Na, one of the group's fo

wrote in a history of ASK. But in recent years, members — along with other Korean adoptee activists — have built an improbable political campaign, lobbying for legislation that has helped reduce the flow of Korean children overseas. In the process, they have emerged as leaders in a movement to question the very concept of international adoption, one that has galvanized other adoptees around the world.

Some of those leaders, including Klunder and her friend Kim Stoker, who was also at dinner that night, want to stanch the flow of Korean children entirely. "I get parents' desperation to have children," said Stoker, who at 41 was the oldest of the group at the table. "Accepting diverse families is great," she said. But, she added, "I don't think it's normal adopting a child from another country, of another race and paying a lot of money. I don't think it's normal to put a child on a plane away from all its kin and different smells. It's a very modern phenomenon."

Neither Klunder nor Stoker believes international adoption will stop in South Korea any time soon. But ending it is what they want. As Klunder put it, "Our goal is to make ourselves extinct."

In 1954, a couple from Oregon, Bertha and Harry Holt, went to a local auditorium to watch a presentation by World Vision, the Christian relief organization, on Korean War orphans. At the time, South Korea was hobbling to recover from its brutal war with North Korea. "We had never seen such emaciated arms and legs," wrote Bertha, a nurse and fundamentalist Christian who wore round wire glasses, "such wistful little faces looking for someone to care." Federal law prohibited families from adopting more than two children from abroad. But in 1955, the two senators from Oregon sponsored the Bill for Relief of Certain Korean War Orphans, which Congress passed specifically to allow the Holts to adopt four boys and four girls. Reports of Harry Holt, a farmer and lumberjack, coming home with eight children appeared in newspapers around the country, and soon prospective parents flooded the Holts with letters, saying that they, too, wanted to adopt war orphans. Within a year, the couple had established the Holt Adoption Program in the United States (followed later by a Holt agency in South Korea), the first and still one of the biggest international-adoption agencies.

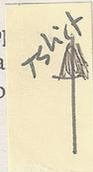
During the '50s, most children available for adoption were of mixed race — "the dust of the streets," as they were called — whose fathers were American and U.N. soldiers. Some of them had turned up at orphanages, lost or abandoned; in the postwar chaos, it was unclear if their parents were still alive. But in other cases, mothers relinquished their mixed-race babies because they feared that their families would be treated as outcasts.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the country had industrialized and urbanized rapidly; divorce and teenage-pregnancy rates climbed. Poor and working-class single women with babies struggled with little, or no, support from the government. Most of the children placed for adoption at the time were fully Korean. In the meantime, the number of babies available for adoption in the United States in the 1970s dropped, as birth-control was more readily available, abortion was legalized and single motherhood became more socially acceptable.

South Korea, by this point, had passed the Special Adoption Law, which created a legal framework for adoptions and approved four agencies to process those adoptions. From the beginning, though, there were problems. Adoption paperwork was sometimes fraudulent — a grandmother or an aunt might give up a baby without the mother's consent (while she was working or looking for work), because they thought the mother and the child would be better off. Agency workers often didn't verify information — about a child's

Previous page:  
Laura Klunder in Seoul.  
She had her adoption  
case number tattooed  
on her arm.

Right:  
Jane Jeong Trenka and  
Luke McQueen, who  
were raised by adoptive  
parents in the United  
States, now live  
with their daughter in  
Chungbuk Province.



The New York Times Magazine



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culture

## Metallica au Québec

Metallica sera à Montréal le 19 juillet au parc Jean-Drapeau dans le cadre de sa tournée *WorldWired*. Le groupe sera également à Québec le 14 juillet.



Des Montréalais recevront de la visite

# Son projet : cogner aux portes #6261

**L'artiste multidisciplinaire Kimura Byol a envoyé plus de 100 lettres à des Montréalais habitant au numéro civique 6261, pour son documentaire *Projet Montréal #6261*. Coréenne d'origine, Belge d'adoption et Montréalaise de cœur, Kimura Byol souhaite jeter un regard cosmopolite sur la réalité de la métropole.**

— Ariane Labrèche, 24h

Après avoir passé près de 10 ans à Montréal, Kimura Byol vient d'obtenir sa résidence permanente.

«C'est le plus beau cadeau de ma vie. Je sens que c'est donc à mon tour de faire un effort pour raconter la réalité de Montréal», explique-t-elle.

L'artiste multidisciplinaire s'intéresse depuis toujours à des thèmes qui abordent les questions d'identité, d'ethnicité ou d'immigration. *Le Projet Montréal #6261*, conçu au départ comme une œuvre vidéo photographique et photographique, s'est muté en docu-

mentaire grâce à la bourse Regard sur Montréal du Conseil des Arts de Montréal.

Au départ, Kimura Byol a envoyé près de 100 lettres. «Trois personnes ont fini par me contacter et j'en ai rencontré une par hasard», énumère-t-elle.

Autant de réalités qui se déclinent dans les quartiers d'Anjou, de Verdun, de Notre-Dame-de-Grâce et de Rosemont. «Les gens me parlent de leur vie personnelle, de pourquoi ils habitent là. Certains sont immigrants, d'autres, non; d'autres sont arri-

vés des régions. Ça permet de tracer un portrait de la ville qui n'est pas comme une publicité, ni centré seulement sur les mauvais côtés», souligne-t-elle.

### Un numéro bien spécial

#6261, c'est le numéro d'adoption qui a été apposé à Kimura Byol au début de sa vie, alors qu'elle était une orpheline disponible pour l'adoption en Corée du Sud. À moitié japonaise et coréenne, elle est au confluent de deux peuples aux antipodes.

Enfant, elle a été adoptée par un couple belge. «Longtemps, j'ai pensé que j'étais blanche, ce qui n'est pas la réalité. En plus, on m'a donné un nom belge, Nathalie Lemoyne, raconte-t-elle. Le fait d'être Asiatique avec un nom belge porte à réflexion et a vite provoqué une ambi-

**L'artiste Kimura Byol souhaite rencontrer des Montréalais habitant à l'adresse civique 6261.** — PHOTO ARIANE LABRÈCHE/24H



guïté avec les autres.»

L'artiste souhaiterait rencontrer six Montréalais de six quartiers différents. «Si vous habitez au #6261 et que vous voulez partager quoi que ce soit avec moi, des anecdotes ou des histoires, écrivez-

moi!» propose-t-elle. L'invitation est lancée.

Si vous aimeriez participer à cette mosaïque cinématographique, vous pouvez contacter l'artiste à #6261@microclimat films.com.

## Année record pour le FIFEM

**CINÉMA** Pour sa 20<sup>e</sup> édition qui se tiendra du 4 au 12 mars prochain, le Festival international du film pour enfants de Montréal (FIFEM) proposera sa plus importante offre de films en compétition officielle. En effet, 20 œuvres, dont 10 courts-métrages, se disputeront les grands honneurs au cours de l'événement.

Des longs-métrages de l'Allemagne, la Norvège, la France, la Pologne, la Suisse et la Corée du Sud, entre autres, obtiendront donc de la visibilité au Cinéma Beaubien. Des courts-métrages seront aussi présentés. Au total, une trentaine de pays seront représentés le mois prochain. Pour le programme complet: [fifem.com](http://fifem.com). — Agence QMI



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