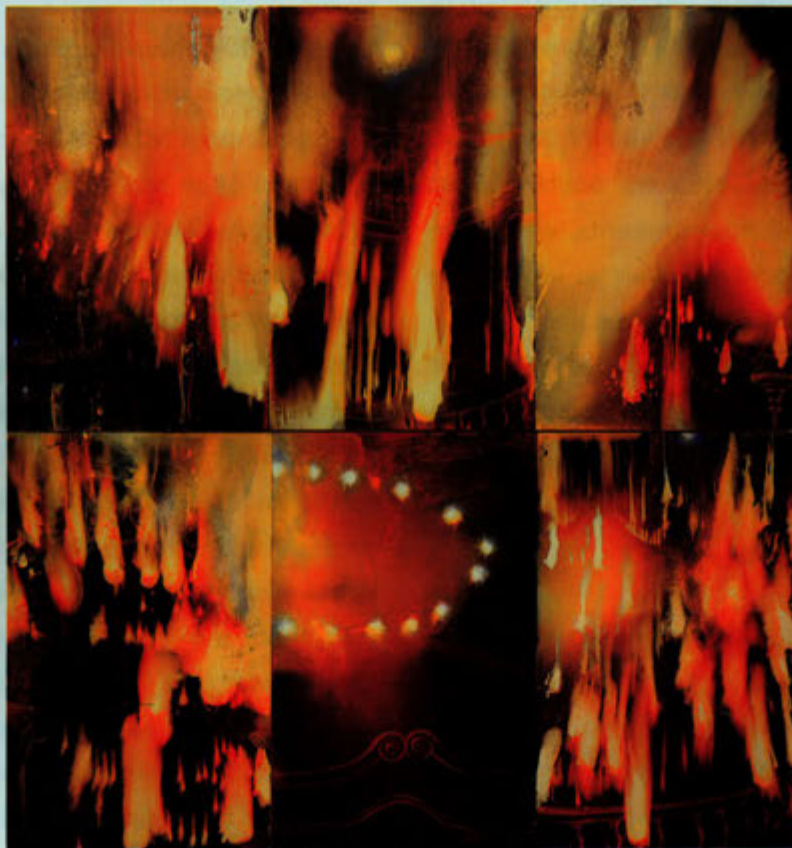


Younhee Paik

Ascending River



GOLDEN CLIMB - APPOLO Oil on aluminum 96x90" 2002

September 6 - October 22, 2005

University Art Gallery
Staller Center for the Arts
Stony Brook University

Younhee Paik : Ascending River

Younhee Paik moved to New York City in 1997 after living in San Francisco for nearly 30 years. The large body of work that Paik began in 1996 with *Invitation to Rest* was created in response to her mother's year-long hospitalization. Since it wasn't possible to hang paintings on the ceiling for her bed-bound mother to look at, Paik was inspired to create her ongoing series of contemplative, restful environments, which are intended as a tribute to her mother as well as an offering of rest and comfort to the viewer.

Paik's environments surround the viewer with sight and sound. Her multiple draped canvases, some as large as 16 feet long, cascade from ceilings and walls and, more recently, also cover the floors. Celestial and water imagery cover the multiple unstretched canvases that float overhead. Soothing music—or, in the case of her exhibition *Ascending River* at the University Art Gallery at Stony Brook University, the sound of ocean waves—helps transport the viewer to a peaceful place. Also new at Stony Brook is the projected water imagery that adds movement to the surface of the paintings. In some of the installations in this series, Paik offered a place to lie down, echoing her late mother's plight while offering a welcome break in the viewers' stress-filled lives.

Chinese and Korean painters have traditionally strived to imbue their paintings with *chi-yun*, or "spirit resonance," so that the paintings, whether portraiture or landscape, would contain the life force and essence of the subject. Paik has absorbed this basic principle and offers her paintings as destinations—replicas of the heavens. These sheltered, peaceful environments represent her expression of a spiritual and psychological

journey to the unknown. Surrounded by clouds or starry night skies, hung like waves cascading across the ceiling—or, as in the *Night Flight* paintings (2003-4) and the *Ascending River* installation (2005) at Stony Brook, with plexiglass-covered floor paintings that reflect the ceiling paintings as well—the viewer becomes a willing inhabitant of an other-worldly space that invites deep relaxation and intense meditation. Paik's work evokes a sense of buoyancy, a feeling akin to her experience of the ocean as a child growing up in a Korean fishing village. Paik's recurring imagery of fish, ships, and staircases add visual symbols for the intended voyage, just as a painter of landscapes might depict a path on which the viewer could wander. Some of Paik's most recent work, painted after a trip to Prague in 2003, superimposes architectural floorplans of European cathedrals onto her night skies, suggesting another man-made vessel for the spiritual journey. These cosmic landscapes offer safe environments in which viewers can pursue their own internal exploration.

Paik's use of water imagery, though a constant in her work, was affected by her trip to India in the mid-1990s. Unlike the water that surrounded her familiar Korean island, the dark and undulating waters of the Ganges seemed to her to be imbued with spiritual significance. The footprint that recurs in Paik's work as a symbol of mankind's spiritual quest was inspired by an actual footprint she observed in the Ganges.

Paik's imagery, suspended in coherent, visually soothing spaces that evoke the sky, the heavens, and the ocean, is poetically ambiguous. These images make a connection between the world of experience and the

world of the unknown, allowing viewers to use them in whatever way befits their own level of spiritual attainment. Complex in color and texture, the paintings are all-encompassing in their radiance. By challenging conventional notions of space and time, these billowing canvases allow the viewer to experience, however briefly, an alternative view of reality.

In stark contrast to these enormous, enveloping environments is Paik's series of paintings on aluminum lithographic plates, inspired by her perceptions of life in New York City. Although smaller in scale, these paintings are filled with similar recurring images – boats, fish, crosses, geometric shapes and lines – while taking a new approach to the subjects of water and light. While the large canvases are painted with liquefied acrylic using rollers and brooms and plenty of water to allow for the spontaneous and accidental, the metal paintings are produced by rolling on oil colors that naturally by chance create a surface reminiscent of rippling water. The gleaming metal itself contributes to the effect of reflected light, much like the representation of light in the long, horizontal canvas *City Awakens* (2001), which was painted in response to the September 11th tragedy. By grouping a series of small aluminum paintings into a large grid – as in *White Night* (1999) – Paik builds a separate but complementary visual universe in which the plates of the grid work separately and in concert with each other. Elegant lines echo throughout the series, adding to the visual and psychological connections between the abstract spirituality and the drawn recurring symbols that characterize Paik's work.

Yunhee Paik's fully-realized microcosms offer the viewer/participant an intensely rich experience. Whether immersed in one of Paik's encompassing environments or reflecting on one of her metal plate paintings, viewers are empowered not only to experience the spiritual quest of the artist but, perhaps, to take a step forward on their own spiritual journeys as well.

Rhonda Cooper



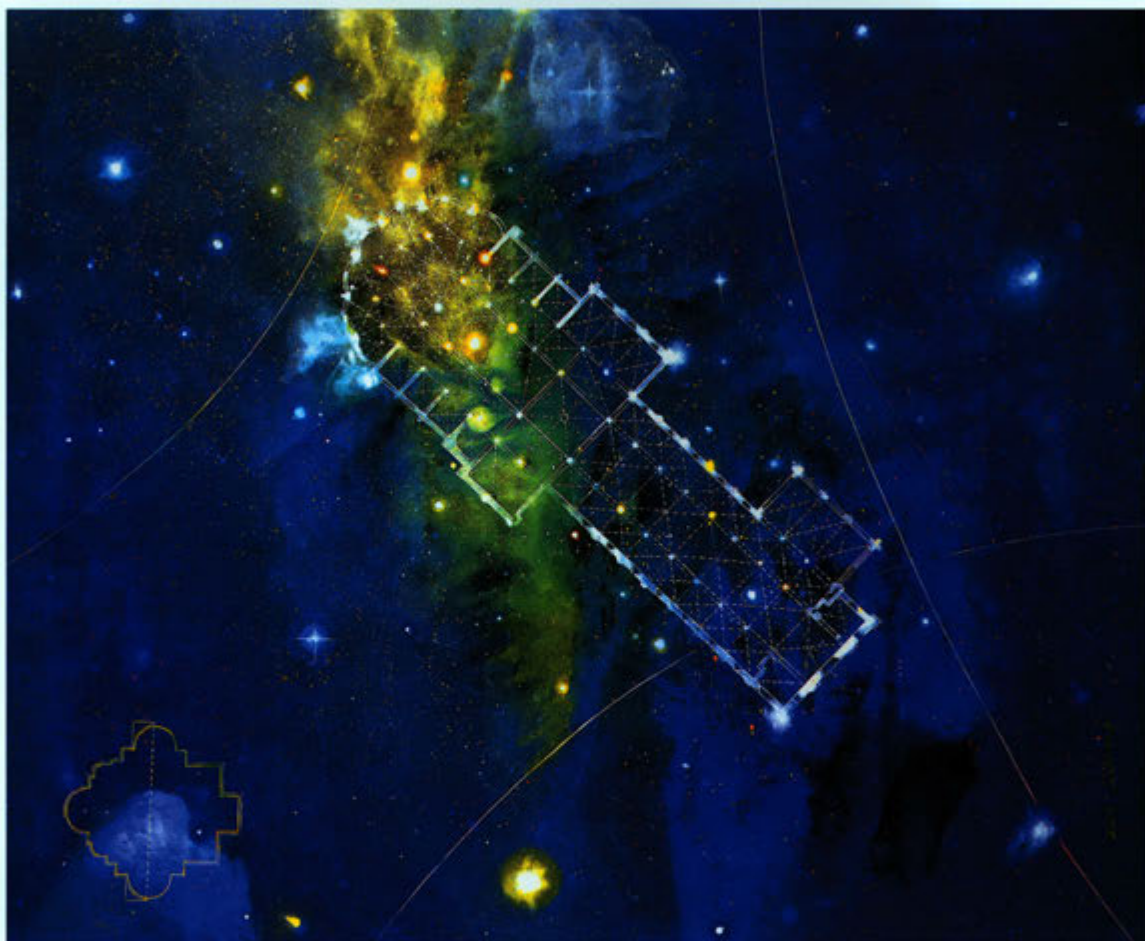
Invitation to Rest Ceiling Installation
at TOTAL Museum, Seoul 1999



Birth & Death of Stars Ceiling Installation at TOTAL Museum, Seoul 1999



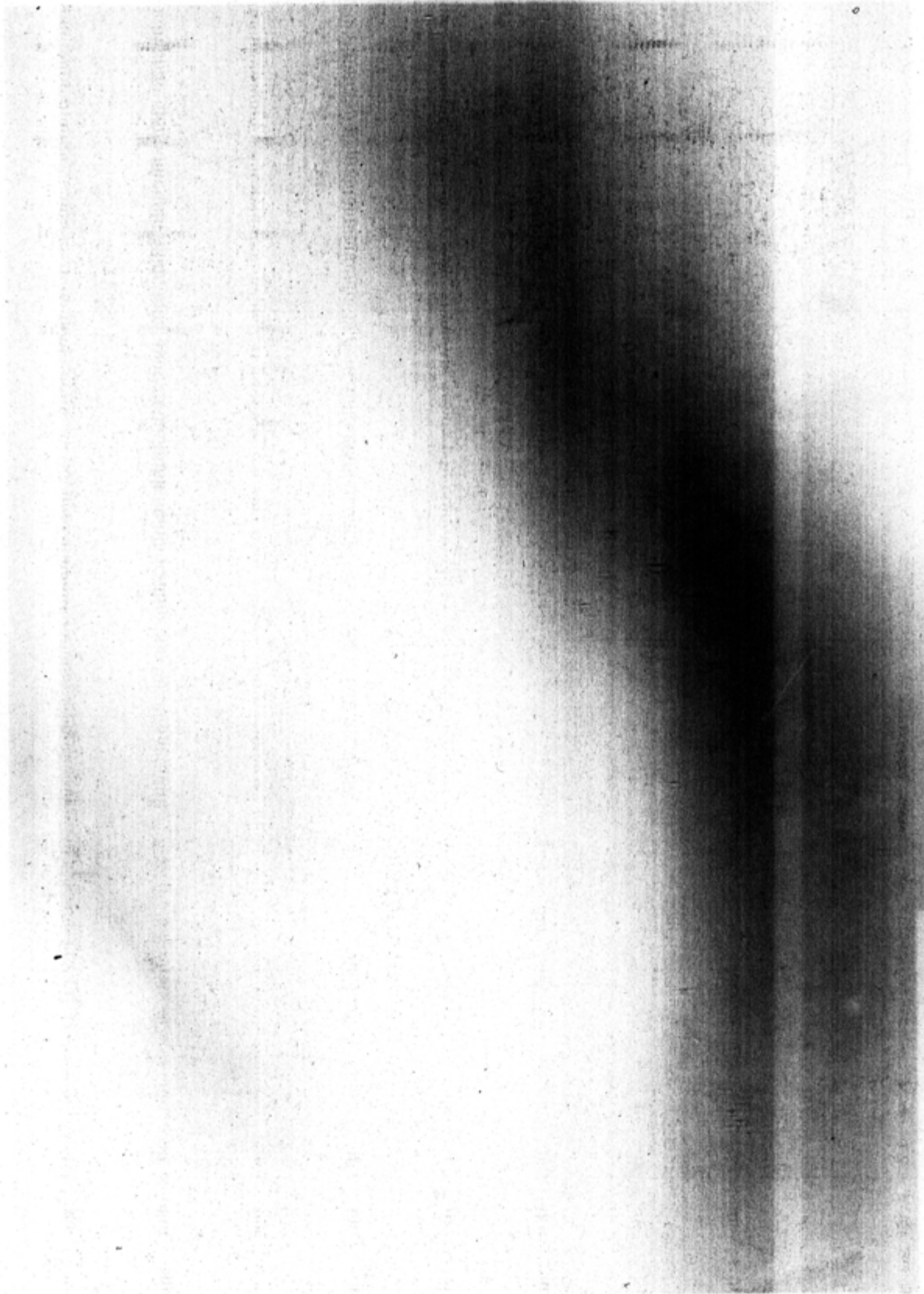
Odyssey Ceiling Installation at Gallery HYUNDAI, Seoul 2001



St. Etienne Acrylic on canvas 120x150" 2004



St. John Divine-Far Acrylic on canvas 144x96" 2004





Floating City-Trojan Forum Acrylic on canvas 140 x 96" 2005





near Moon

Wherever, whenever

Invitation to Rest Ceiling Installation at TOTAL Museum, Seoul 1999



St. John Divine #2 Oil and mixed media on canvas 72 x 84" 2004



St. John Divine #1 Oil and mixed media on canvas 72x86" 2004





City Awakens Oil on canvas 72x192" 2001

Acknowledgements

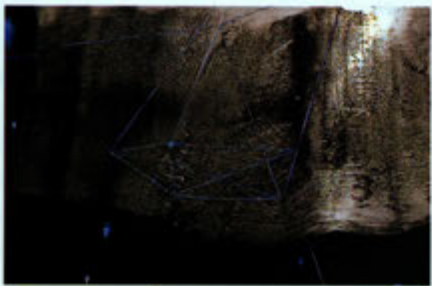
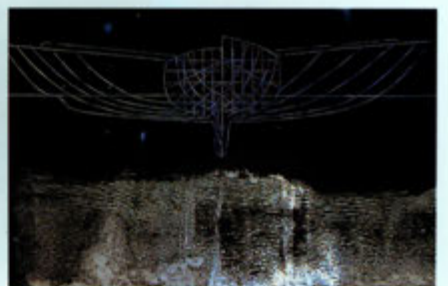
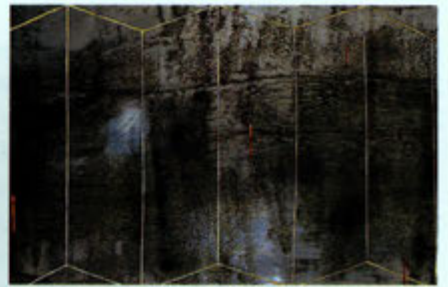
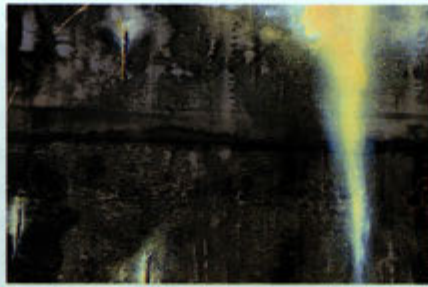
The 2005-2006 University Art Gallery exhibition schedule is made possible by a generous donation from the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation. Additional funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Friends of Staller Center. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping us present this wonderful exhibition to our students and faculty as well as to the local and regional community.

I also want to express my appreciation to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Dan Kitchen, Pat Moran, Pete Pantaleo, and Michelle Wacker for exhibition assistance; Amy Bagshaw and Max Libroiron, Gallery Assistants; our Gallery Interns; Liz Silver, Technical Director, Michael Leslie, ATD, and the Staller Center Technical Crew for exhibition lighting; Amanda Meyers, Staller Center Director of Advancement, for gallery fundraising; and Hilary Whiteley, Assistant to the Gallery Director.

Most of all, I wish to thank Younhee Paik for sharing her work with the Stony Brook community.

Rhonda Cooper
Gallery Director
University Art Gallery
Staller Center for the Arts
Stony Brook University

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White Night - April Oil on aluminum 76x111" 2004

Biography

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 2006 | TRITON Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA | 2003 | Andrew Shire Gallery, Los Angeles, CA |
| 2005 | Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook, NY | 2002 | Walter Wickiser Gallery, New York, NY |
| 2004 | Heidi Cho Gallery, New York, NY | 2002 | Silicon Valley Museum, San Jose State University, CA |
| 2003 | San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,
Artist Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 2001 | Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery, University of California
at Santa Cruz, CA |
| 2002 | Sugar Hill Art Center, Harlem, NY | 2000 | Woodward Gallery, New York, NY |
| 2001 | Gallery HYUNDAI, Seoul, Korea | 2000 | Gallery Korea, New York, NY |
| 2000 | Saint Peter's Church, New York, NY | 1999 | Euphrat Museum of Art, De Anza College, Cupertino, CA |
| 2000 | Brenda Taylor Gallery, New York, NY | 1998 | Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA |
| 1999 | Kennedy Art Center, Holy Names College, Oakland, CA | 1998 | Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC |
| 1999 | TOTAL Museum, Seoul, Korea | 1997 | Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, TX |
| 1997 | Gallerie BHAK, Seoul, Korea | 1997 | Western Gallery, Western Washington University,
Bellingham, WA |
| 1997 | San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Rental Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 1997 | Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester,
Rochester, NY |
| 1996 | LASCA Gallery, Los Angeles, CA | 1997 | The Painter's Craft, Humboldt State University
Art Gallery, Arcata, CA |
| 1996 | D.P.Fong Gallery, San Jose, CA | 1996 | Tiger's Tail, National Museum of
Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea |
| 1994 | Gallery HYUNDAI, Seoul, Korea | 1996 | Rapture, San Francisco State University Art Gallery,
San Francisco, CA |
| 1993 | D.P. Fong Gallery, San Jose, CA | 1996 | Who is Afraid of Freedom, Newport Harbor Art
Museum, Newport Beach, CA |
| 1991 | TRITON Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA | 1996 | Rediscovering the American Landscape,
Gerald Peter Gallery, Santa Fe, NM |
| 1991 | Gallery HYUNDAI, Seoul, Korea | 1996 | Korean Art, New Sensation, Gallery Korea, New York, NY |
| 1990 | The Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 1996 | Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ |
| 1989 | Kennedy Art Center, Holy Names College, Oakland, CA | 1995 | Tiger's Tail, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy |
| 1989 | Jennifer Pauls Gallery, Sacramento, CA | 1995 | Crocker Museum, Sacramento, CA |
| 1988 | National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea | 1995 | Transamerica Gallery, San Francisco, CA |
| 1988 | The Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 1995 | John N. Joe Gallery, Los Angeles, CA |
| 1988 | Duson Gallery, Seoul, Korea | 1995 | SOMAR Gallery, San Francisco, CA |
| 1987 | Los Angeles Artcore, Los Angeles, CA | 1995 | San Jose Museum, San Jose, CA |
| 1986 | San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA | 1995 | Whan Ki Museum, Seoul, Korea |
| 1985 | San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Rental Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 1995 | Gallery HYUNDAI, Seoul, Korea |
| 1985 | Han Kuk Gallery, Seoul, Korea | 1994 | Mentors, San Francisco Art Commission Gallery,
San Francisco, CA |
| 1983 | Korean Cultural Gallery, New York, NY | 1994 | Landscape, Korean Cultural Gallery, Los Angeles, CA |
| 1982 | Bridge Gallery, San Francisco, CA | 1993 | Haenah-Kent Gallery, New York, NY |
| 1979 | Community Art Center, San Pedro, CA | 1993 | Seoul, California 7, Art Beam Gallery, Chosun |
| 1976 | Sinsegue Gallery, Seoul, Korea | | |
| 1975 | 29th San Francisco Arts Festival, San Francisco, CA | | |

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2003 National Contemporary Museum, Seoul, Korea

- Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1993 What Heaven Looks Like, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, San Jose, CA
- 1991 National Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1990 Angel's Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro, CA
- 1989 Gloria Laguna Museum, Austin, TX
- 1989 Jeremy Stone Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1989 Jose Droids Biada Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1988 Countervisions: Pioneers in Bay Area Art, SFSU, San Francisco, CA
- 1986 Jennifer Pauls Gallery, Sacramento, CA
- 1985 San Bernadino County Museum, San Bernadino, CA
- 1984 Wingluk Memorial Museum, Seattle, WA
- 1984 World Print Council Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1983 Korean Culture Gallery, Paris, France
- 1982 Dugsoo National Modern Art Museum, Seoul, Korea

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CATALOG ESSAYS

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- Brown, Betty. March 1988.
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- Hopkins, Henry T. "The Evolution of Younhee Paik" Symbols and Work, February 1991.
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- Linhares, Philip E. "The Art of Younhee Paik," September 1997.
- Song, Mi-Suk. "Journey to the Unknown World," September 1997.
- Nixon, Bruce. "Atmospheric Conditions: Recent Work by Younhee Paik," April 1999.
- Heartney, Eleanor. "Nocturnal Journeys," April 1999.
- Goodman, Jonathan. "The Fifth Season," August 2001.
- Goodman, Jonathan. "Searching for the Sublime," January 2005.
- Morgan, Robert. "Attending Universe," January 2005.
- Van Proyen, Mark. "Redemptive Rememberings," February, 2005.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

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- Bank of America, Sacramento, CA
- Byuck San Corporation, Seoul, Korea
- Kangwon Inc., Seoul, Korea
- Sam Yang Corporation, Seoul, Korea
- San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
- Inje University, Pusan, Korea
- TRITON Museum, Santa Clara, CA
- Pacific Bell Co., San Francisco, CA
- Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul, Korea
- ILSHIN, Inc., Seoul, Korea
- Posco Center, Seoul, Korea
- Hyo-Sung Co., Ltd., Seoul, Korea
- Korean United Methodist Church, San Francisco, CA
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Invitation to Rest Ceiling Installation at D.P.Fong Gallery, California 1997

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