



Clockwise : • Sun Tag Noh's "the strAnge ball" is a photographic essay on a US radar installation in Korea. • Shilpa GUPTA's "Singing Cloud" is a 1,000 microphone sound installation. • WEERASETHAKUL – From Apichatpong Weerasethakul's "Primitive" • Ulrike-2 In "Ulrike and Eamon Compliant", by Blast Theory, you begin your journey through espionage and paranoia with a cell-phone in a box."

Looking for a chance to get a super-hip, cutting edge multimedia art fix? Then pack your reflective shades, grab a fistful of clove cigarettes, slam down a few espressos, sharpen your post-hipster irony till it gleams and head to downtown Seoul for one of the best art exhibitions of the year. Media City Seoul is presenting the 6th edition of its international biennial exhibition, with this year's theme of "Trust."

As the title suggests, this exhibition is about the ambiguous notion of "trust." We invest a certain amount of trust in any relationship we have with the world, whether personal or impersonal, academic or economic. Consider getting into a taxi in Seoul and speeding downtown among thousands of other drivers, each piloting their own 2,000-pound-plus potential weapon of mass destruction. This is a demonstration of trust at the highest level as we put our lives into the hands of complete strangers. According to Media City Seoul, "As individuals we not only have relations to our fellow citizens, but also increasingly with modes of connection. With proliferating forms of media, information comes to us in many guises and the message is more and more opaque; marketing poses as friendship, solitude as community, and populism as democracy."

"Trust" is an exhibition on a vast scale that continues for more than two months and presents the works of 46 international artists, including twelve entirely new commissions,

In Art We Trust Media City Seoul

This unconventional exhibition gives visitors a chance to pause and reflect on the ever-changing media forms that define our everyday lives.

WORDS BY CHARLES MONTGOMERY

three outdoor projects, one performance and a substantial number of works that have never before been seen in South Korea. All of this is spread across four venues in the City Hall district of Seoul: the Seoul Museum of Art, the Seoul Museum of Art's Gyeonghuigung Annex, the Simpson Memorial Hall and the Seoul Museum of History, all located within 15 minutes walking distance of each other.

The focus of Media City Seoul has always been on technology and media art, and "Trust" brings together a stellar constellation of media artists, a priceless opportunity to see the work of internationally established artists whose pieces are not often seen in Seoul.

One of the featured artists is Thai filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul, who has an international reputation for feature-length films and video installations. Weerasethakul will be showing his recent project *Primitive*, about the sleepy village of Nabua, which was the target of fierce oppression, fighting and violence from the 60s through the 80s. The village is now devoid of men, as many villagers were either killed or had fled to the forest. This reality of Nabua, known as "widow town," is echoed in a local legend about a widow ghost who abducts men who enter her domain. The multi-platform work consists of video projections, photographs, sculpture and synchronized sound that conjure a dreamscape in the jungle, following the imagined male descendants of the Communist farmers as teenagers who lead a

journey into fabricated memories.

The collaborative film *End of Endless*, by internationally acclaimed multimedia artists Lucas Bambozzi, Cao Guimarães and Beto Magalhães will also be featured, a piece that examines the disappearance of certain occupations rendered obsolete as consequence of modern innovations. It composes an immersive picture about the creative geniality and resistance against new cultural forms and technological trends.

In addition to familiar faces in the art world, this is also an opportunity to see the work of emerging artists. Among these up-and-comers is Korean artist Sung-hwan Kim (now living in Amsterdam). Kim's new work, *Washing the Brain and Corpse* is a single-channel video. Its inspiration comes from the poem "Leichen-Wasche" (Corpse Washing) by Rainer Maria Rilke. The poem's treatment of corpses, which the artist interprets as objects which can invent new stories even after death, presents a link to a legend with which his generation is intimately familiar: the story of a South Korean boy whose mouth was said to have been ripped open by North Korean spies for saying "Nan kong sandangi sireoyo" ("I don't like Communists"). Here, the artist focuses on the ironic circumstances under which such a story is disseminated; after one person's mouth is damaged, the story about that damaged mouth is then conveyed by several other mouths, initiating a ripple effect of the story's influence which spreads, transforms or becomes extinct alongside changes in time and space.

"Trust" also includes several outdoor projects that require audience participation, two of which are sponsored by the British Council. The first of these is Blast Theory's "Ulrike and Eamon Compliant" (originally presented at the Venice Biennial in 2009) a work based on the lives of Ulrike Meinhof (Red Army Faction) and Eamon Collins (Irish Republican Army). This interactive work invites the audience to assume the character of either Ulrike or Eamon as they take a journey through the city receiving

and making phone calls as the character they have chosen. The second outdoor project is Duncan Speakman's "As If I Were the Last Time," an interactive flashmob featuring website downloads combined to create a collaborative outdoor orchestral experience.

It is easy to see from these varied examples that "Trust" promises to be interesting on multiple levels, with unconventional artists using cutting edge media to explore how communication and trust interact. This exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in modern media or concept art, or anyone interested in the point at which technological and artistic practice come together to build modern artistic narratives.

EVENT: Media City Seoul

THEME: Trust

DATES: Through November 17th

LOCATION: Various venues near Seoul City Hall (lines 1 and 2)

TIMES: Tues – Sun 10 am – 9 pm; weekends & holidays 10 am - 7 pm (Sep - Oct), 10 am - 6 pm (Nov); closed on Mon.

ADMISSION: Free

ONLINE: Follow the progress of the exhibition through the show's website (mediacityseoul.org), blog (trustseoul.wordpress.com), twitter account (twitter.com/mediacityseoulE), and flickr site ([flickr.com/photos/mediacityseoul/sets](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mediacityseoul/sets)).

*There are English guidebooks and audio guides available free of charge.

For those who want to take this exhibition on the road, Media City Seoul is offering a catalogue (again, under the title "Trust") which contains texts by fiction writer Young-ha Kim and writer, film theorist and video artist Jalal Toufic; curatorial essays by Clara Kim, Nicolaus Schafhausen, and Fumihiko Simitomo; and a foreword by artistic director Sunjung Kim.