

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeong-ok Jeon 703-507-0864 [jeongok.jeon@projectandini.org](mailto:jeongok.jeon@projectandini.org) / Jammie Chang 301-755-4428 [jammiechang@gmail.com](mailto:jammiechang@gmail.com)

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## Desirable Fairy Tales: Between Fantasy and Reality

Mina Cheon, Hye Rim Lee, Gilbert Trent, Satomi Shirai

Hosted by KORUS House, Embassy of Republic of Korea ([www.Dynamic-Korea.com](http://www.Dynamic-Korea.com))

Organized by Project Andini ([www.projectandini.org](http://www.projectandini.org))



**On View:** March 10 (Wednesday) – March 25 (Thursday), 2010

**Gallery Hours at KORUS House:** Mon-Fri (9 am -12 pm & 2 pm-5 pm)

**Opening Events:** Wednesday, March 10, 6 pm-8 pm

- **Reception and Gallery Tour with Artists**
- **Opening Performance:** “Shreddy Bear” & “T42” by *banished? Production*
- **Outdoor Video Projection:** “Lash” by Hye Rim Lee
- **Book Exhibit:** “Shamanism + Cyberspace” (Atropos Press, 2009) by Mina Cheon

Please **DOWNLOAD High Resolution Images** and **Curatorial Essay** at

<http://www.projectandini.org/wp/2010/01/desirable-fairy-tale-between-fantasy-and-reality/>

**Washington, DC (Jan. 18, 2010) - KORUS House** of the Embassy of Republic of Korea and **Project Andini** are pleased to announce ***Desirable Fairy Tales: Between Fantasy and Reality***, a group exhibition featuring four artists with different cultural and aesthetic backgrounds, **Mina Cheon, Hye Rim Lee, Gilbert Trent** and **Satomi Shirai**. In celebrating the first art exhibition program organized by Project Andini, an art collective founded in March 2009, this exhibition includes various eye-catching opening events: a gallery tour held by the curator and the artists, an experiential performance installation by *banished? productions*, an outdoor video projection “Lash” by Hye Rim Lee and a book exhibit of “Shamanism + Cyberspace” by Mina Cheon.

***Desirable Fairy Tales: Between Fantasy and Reality*** attempts to disclose the absurdity of socially-accepted behaviors and the fabricated universality in our lives, which are profoundly rooted in the children play as ‘ideal’. Based on their personal experience and memory of childhood play, the exhibiting artists Mina Cheon, Hye Rim Lee, Gilbert Trent and Satomi Shirai, create works which are collectively themed around girly toys such as paper dolls, doll houses and the ageless Barbie doll, and yet each deals with different issues within geopolitical, virtual, autobiographical and cross-cultural circumstances. While some of them attempt to refute postulations of societal norms that are taken for granted, the other artists encourage audiences to question these stereotypical formulas, ideals and concepts and see them from a different perspective. The use of various contemporary art mediums such as painting, installation, digital print, photograph and 3D animation adds to an exciting dynamic to the exhibition.

Korean American artist **Mina Cheon** explores how South Korean paper dolls of the 1970s reveal the way in which her country was Westernized, especially in the way little Korean girls came to idealize the American life style. Cheon’s large scale digital prints of original paper doll dresses depict various Caucasian and Victorian styles of women’s attires for different functions which has produced a Western fantasy as the standard beauty. Part of the series of “*Dresses for Different Events*” and “*Party Dresses & Home Dresses*” are presented in the exhibition along with three installations from “*99 Miss Kim(s)*.”

**Hye Rim Lee**, a Korean multi-media artist based in New York and Auckland of New Zealand, is focusing on the aspects of popular culture, in particular cyber culture and video game in relation to notions of femininity. Lee’s work visually and critically evolves from TOKI, a female cyborg which is the main character of her 3D animation. Apparently appealing a universal sexual desire and fantasy of men: girlish face with womanish body, TOKI, in a deeper sense, raises a question of ‘subject-object framework’ in which a woman figure in art has long been an object, which was created and consumed by men. Presented in the exhibition are her two 3D animations: “*Lash*” and “*Crystal City Spun*.”

Deeply inspired by Buddhist philosophy of human existences, **Gilbert Trent**, an African American, gay artist, explores issues of race, sex and gender through representational images of paper dolls. Trent often revisits his memories and captures the unsettling feelings he had as a child because of his attraction and desire to play with “girly” things. His paintings “*White Girl Black Paper Dolls*”, depict a white girl dissatisfaction of having to play with paper dolls alongside, “*Ken?*” a transgendered Ken from the Barbie collection, are representative of his ethnic background and sexual identity. He will also introduce his experimentation of an installation as an extended media, which reflects the perplexity between a boy’s girly desire and the reality.

Japanese-American artist **Satomi Shirai** is primarily interested in the “assimilation and transformation of culture in migration and passage of time” and her photographs cull from her own experience of relocation and separation between two distinctive cultures: Tokyo and New York. Capturing the interiors of domiciles that are staged with miniature plastic toys from a doll house kit, her photographs represent Western architectural structure and Japanese domestic life style. The enlarged images of the originally small doll house kit blur the concept between reality and fantasy, yet manifest the delusion of “ideal life style.”

What would the world be like if there was a single standard in beauty and a homogeneous manner of life? What if all girls chase for pink and boys for blue? What if every girl holds a velvet fantasy, but then the fantasy approaches to the reality as she becomes a woman? This exhibition certainly encourages audiences to pay attention to the tension between fantasy and reality in the childhood world, to challenge the socially-invented ‘formula’ or ‘concept’, and to seek balance between fantasy and reality through different perspectives.

### **About Curator**

**Jeong-ok Jeon** is a founder and director of **Project Andini**, an art collective based in Washington, DC since early 2009. Jeon has been curating, organizing and consulting various art exhibitions and cultural related events. Her past positions include the guest curator of the US ASEAN Film & Photography Festival held in the National Geographic Society in Washington, DC (2006), the second curator at SSamzie Space in Seoul, Korea (2002-04), and the curatorial assistant for the Korean Pavilion Exhibition at the 50th Venice Biennale in Italy (2003). This year, Jeon begins her MA in Philosophy at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. She also holds MFA in Fibers from Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, GA (2001) and BFA in Fiber Arts from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea (1997).

### **About Artists**

**Mina Cheon** (Korean-American), PhD, MFA, is a new media artist, writer, and educator who divides her time between Baltimore, New York, and Seoul. She is currently a full-time professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore, teaching studio and liberal arts. As an artist, she has shown internationally, with solo exhibitions at spaces including the Lance Fung Gallery in New York (2002); Insa Art Space, Arts Council, Seoul (2005); and C. Grimaldis Gallery in Baltimore (2008). From installation and performance to video and interactive media, her artwork deals with issues of media, space, borders, and conflicts between nations, especially the triangular relationship between South Korea, North Korea, and the United States.

[www.minacheon.com](http://www.minacheon.com)

Based in Seoul, New York, and Auckland of New Zealand, **Hye Rim Lee** (Korean-American) has extensively shown her digital animation and performance works in solo and group exhibitions, art fairs and film screenings. Most recent exhibitions include "Dress You Up in My Love," a crossover fashion show in New York (2010) and "Glasstress" of the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). In 2008, "Crystal City" a solo show was viewed in three locations: Gacma in Malaga, Spain, Diehl Projects in Berlin, and Max Lang Gallery in New York. Lee also participated in several artist-in-residency programs such as ISCP in New York (2007), SSamzie Space, Seoul (2006). She holds BFA in Intermedia from The University of Auckland, New Zealand and BM in Voice from Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea. [www.hyerimlee.com](http://www.hyerimlee.com)

**Gilbert Trent** (American) received his BS in Fine Arts Education at Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA (1979) and MA in Studio Art at New York University's Venice Program that was held in both Venice and New York (2003). His various exhibitions include "Six in the Mix" at the Hillyer Art Space, curated by Renee Stout, Washington, DC (2009), "Art, Actually" at Leslie-Lohmann Gallery in New York (2008), "East of the River Group Show" at Honfluer Gallery in Washington, DC (2007) and "Self-Portraits: Clara and the Americans" in Brescia, Italy (2003). Trent is currently teaching studio and digital art in the private sector and participating in a studio program at Arlington Art Center in Arlington, VA. [www.gilberttrent.com](http://www.gilberttrent.com)

**Satomi Shirai** (Japanese-American) has exhibited her photographs in numerous shows including "Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2009 Exhibition" at Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in DC (2009), "Public/Private" at Arlington Art Center in Arlington, VA (2009), "Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2008" at National Portrait Gallery in London (2008), "Spectral Analysis" at Motus Fort in Japan (2008), etc. She has participated in Akiyoshidai International Art Village in Yamaguchi (1998) and one of her work is

collected by Kiyosato Museum of Photography Art in Yamanashi. She is currently a MFA candidate at City University of New York Hunter College. [www.satomishirai.com](http://www.satomishirai.com)

### **About *banished?* productions**

*banished? productions* is an avant-pop performance company that generates immersive interdisciplinary art experiences for all, to re-create wonder and re-awaken the senses. It is committed to producing quality work that cull from multiple artistic expressions, particularly in performative experiments that play with text and form. *banished?* strives to inspire and collaborate with other artists in order to fuel its own artistic process: re-discovering and re-inventing the art of narration. <http://www.banishedproductions.org>

### **KORUS House**

**Location:** KORUS House (2370 Massachusetts Ave. NW Washington, DC 20008). The Korean Embassy consists of three (3) buildings; The KORUS House is located between the main office building and the consulate on Sheridan Circle. For a map, visit [www.dynamic-korea.com/korus\\_house/kh\\_location.php](http://www.dynamic-korea.com/korus_house/kh_location.php) The KORUS House is at location B.

**Metro:** The KORUS House is about a 15 minute walk from the Dupont Circle metro station, heading northwest on Massachusetts Ave. Metrobus lines N2, N3, N4, and N6 stop nearby at Embassy Row.

**Parking:** Guests are welcome to park in the small lot adjacent to our building during the event, but space is very limited and first-come-first-serve. There is also some limited street parking in the local area.

KORUS House, Embassy of the Republic of Korea  
2370 Massachusetts Ave. NW Washington, DC 20008  
Tel: 202-939-5688