

'Axis of Horizon' exhibit previews on Instagram Live

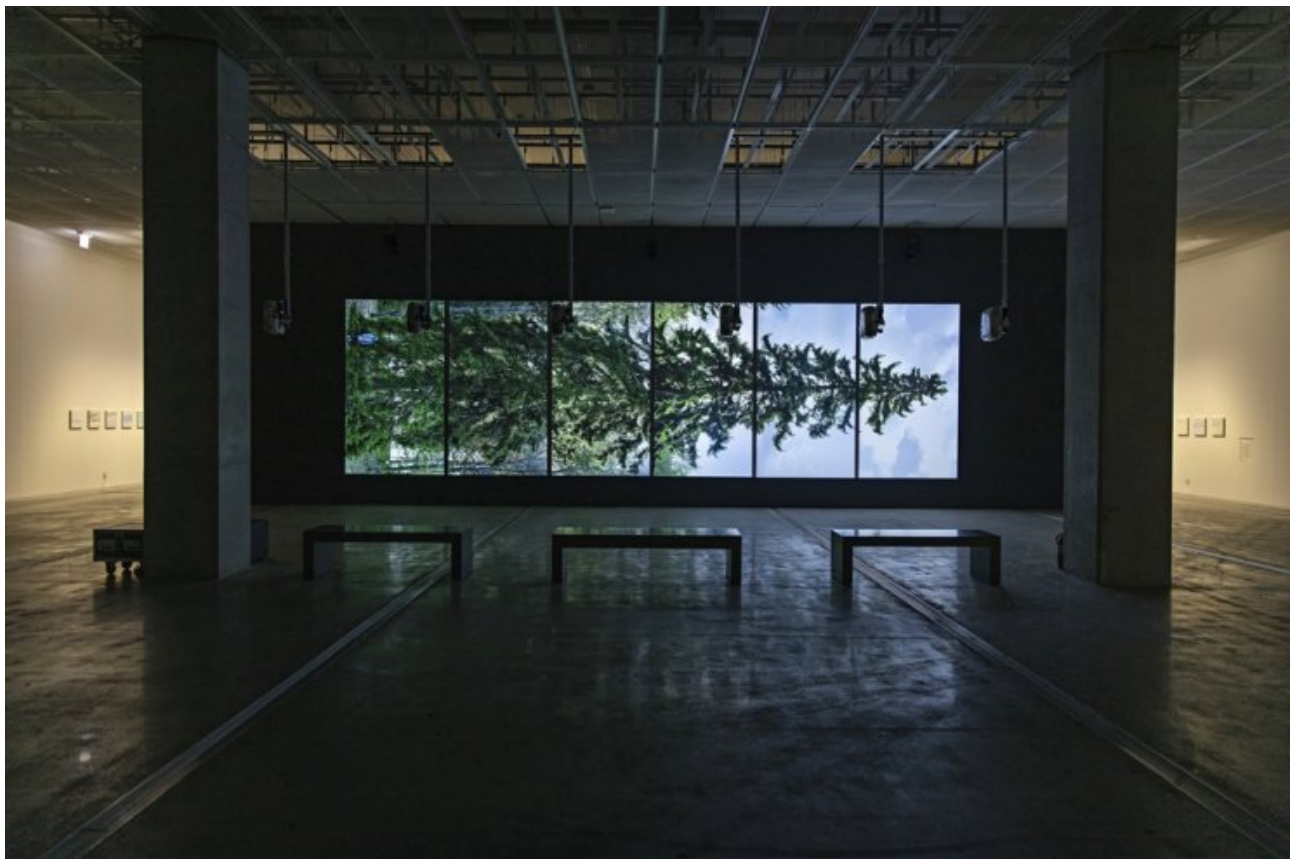
koreatimes.co.kr/www/culture/2020/04/145_287950.html

April 15,
2020

Arts

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Updated : 2020-04-15 18:41



Eija-Liisa Ahtila's "Horizontal — Vaakasuora" (2011) is on display at "Axis of Horizon" at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul. Courtesy of MMCA

By Kwon Mee-yoo

The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) will unveil newly acquired pieces that fall under the theme of nature, initially through an online preview amid the museum's closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Titled "Axis of Horizon," the exhibition examines the relationship between nature and people in different social and historical contexts.

MMCA director Youn Bum-mo said, "Axis of Horizon introduces notable art pieces by 17 international artists who propose new

perspectives on nature. With COVID-19 taking a toll in Korea and other parts of the world, I hope the art in this exhibition offers consolation, a sense of healing and new artistic discourse for audiences to find hope."

The exhibition, which was originally slated to open April 6, will be shown to art fans through an online viewing first. The MMCA will livestream this exhibition on Instagram at [instagram.com/mmca_korea](https://www.instagram.com/mmca_korea) on Thursday at 4 p.m. Curator Yang Ok-kum will give a tour and comment on the pieces on show for 30 minutes.

The title of the exhibition comes from the understanding of nature as a series of axes on the horizontal plane of the Earth. Nature has long been a subject matter of art, seen in traditional landscape paintings. "Axis of Horizon" focuses on contemporary reinterpretations of nature.

The exhibition consists of three sections — "The Whole of Parts," "The Volume of Phenomena" and "The Other Side of Places."

The art in "The Whole of Parts" section aims to offer insight into humanity by exploring the symbiosis of humans and nature.

Some of the pieces, such as Finish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila's "Horizontal — Vaakasuora" (2011) and Teresita Fernandez' "Dark Earth (Comos)," are being exhibited for the first time since the museum acquired them.

"Horizontal — Vaakasuora," a six-minute six-screen video, was purchased by the museum last year with funding from the MMCA Director's Council supporting the museum's new media collection. The video shows a spruce tree horizontally and the artist hired six monitors to present the exact size of the real tree.

"The Volume of Phenomena" visualizes the phenomena of nature, stimulating unconventional perceptions of nature.

Jesus Rafael Soto's "Penetrable" (1988), which came out of the museum's storage after about two decades, makes viewers pass through vinyl hoses hanging from the ceiling.

"The Other Side of Places" reexamines the definition of landscape.

Laurent Grasso's "The Silent Movie" shows a sunlit coastal landscape, which in fact has camouflaged military installations. MAP Office's "Ghost Island" is a series of art pieces related to fishing activities from social, economic and historical perspectives, recycling fishery trash.




Jennifer Steinkamp's video installation "Still-life" (2019) / Courtesy of MMCA

As the state-run museum has been indefinitely closed since Feb. 24 to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, the MMCA is experimenting with various platforms to reach audiences online.

This is the second online preview of the national museum, following the "The Modern and Contemporary Korean Writing," a special calligraphy exhibition at the MMCA Deoksugung. The calligraphy exhibition was shown through a prerecorded video on the museum's YouTube channel, recording 47,000 views as of Wednesday.

The museum is also introducing 12 major art pieces from its collection, showing one every Wednesday through Facebook Live, starting with Park Saeng-kwang's vibrant painting "Jeon Bong-jun" on April 8. MMCA director Youn sat in front of the camera and explained how skillfully Park used primary colors including "obangsaek," or the Korean traditional five-color scheme of red, blue, yellow, white and black.

The series will continue to feature the museum's renowned art pieces selected through an online survey, including Kim Whan-ki's "Rondo" and Nam June Paik's "The More the Better." One or two art pieces will be introduced each month and after the Facebook Live broadcast, an English-subtitled version will be uploaded to the museum's YouTube channel at youtube.com/mmcakorea.

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