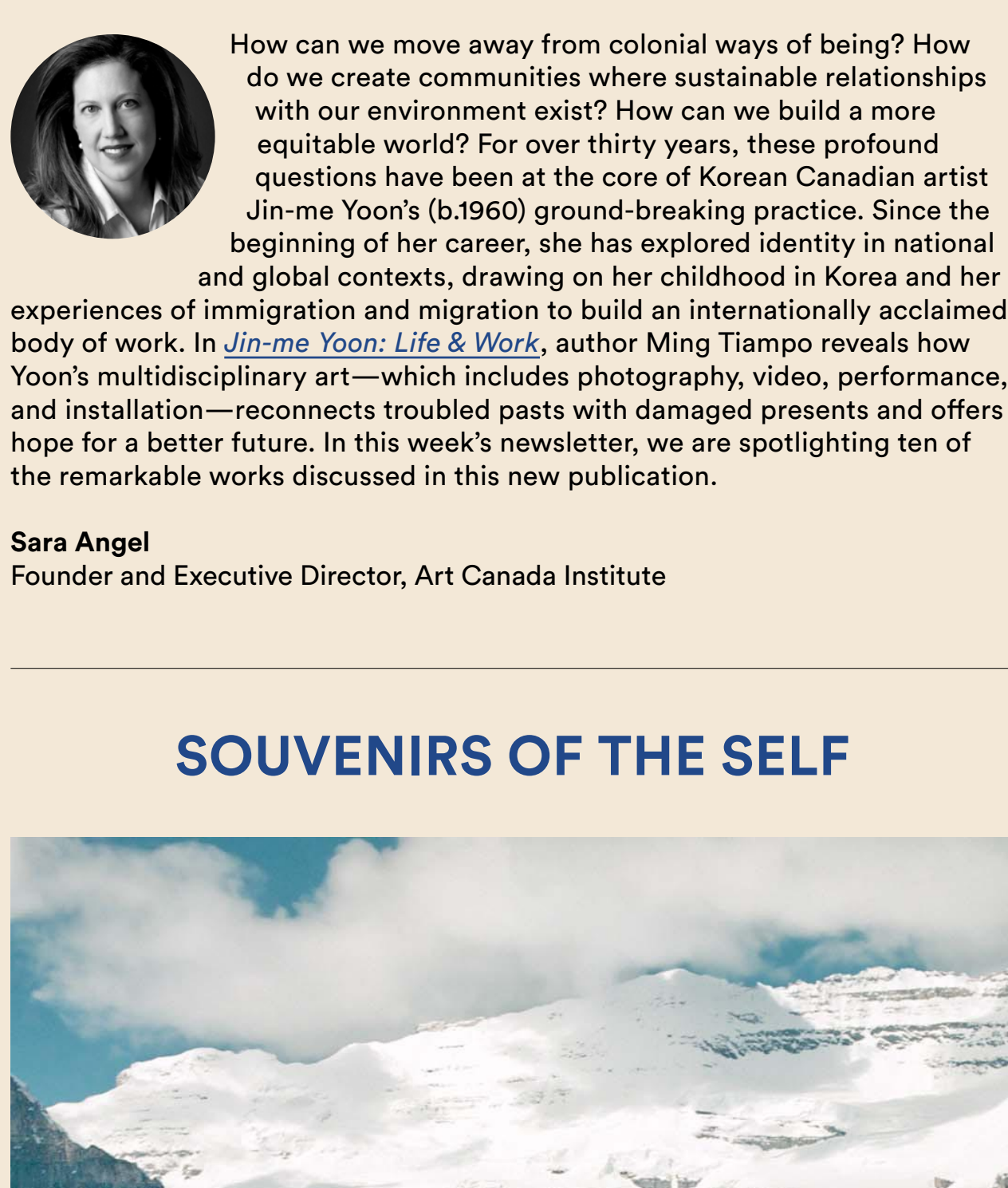


NOVEMBER 4, 2022

LOOKING AT JIN-ME YOON ACI'S NEWEST PUBLICATION BY AUTHOR MING TIAMPO

Today the Art Canada Institute proudly releases a book about Jin-me Yoon, the first critical biography to explore her singular oeuvre and highlight the artist's life and career. Yoon uses photography and video to make compelling artworks and installations—which were celebrated earlier this year when Yoon received the 2022 Scotiabank Photography Award and are featured in a new exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery.



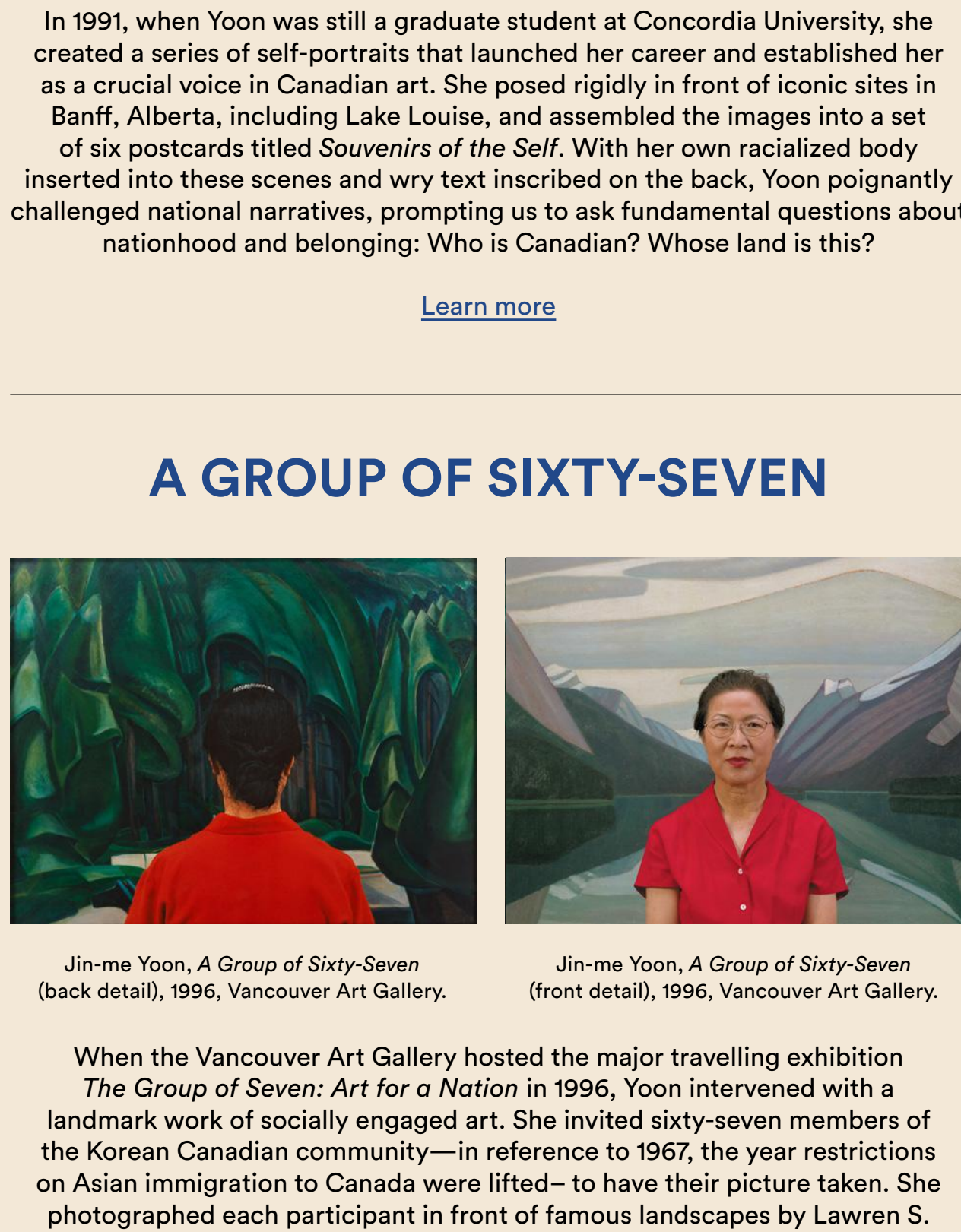
Jin-me Yoon, Long View, #1, 2017, Collection of the artist.



Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

SOUVENIRS OF THE SELF



Jin-me Yoon, Souvenirs of the Self (Lake Louise) (detail), 1991/2019, Collection of the artist.

In 1991, when Yoon was still a graduate student at Concordia University, she created a series of self-portraits that launched her career and established her as a crucial voice in Canadian art. She posed rigidly in front of iconic sites in Banff, Alberta, including Lake Louise, and assembled the images into a set of six postcards titled *Souvenirs of the Self*. With her own racialized body inserted into these scenes and wry text inscribed on the back, Yoon poignantly challenged national narratives, prompting us to ask fundamental questions about nationhood and belonging: Who is Canadian? Whose land is this?

[Learn more](#)

A GROUP OF SIXTY-SEVEN



Jin-me Yoon, A Group of Sixty-Seven (back detail), 1996, Vancouver Art Gallery.

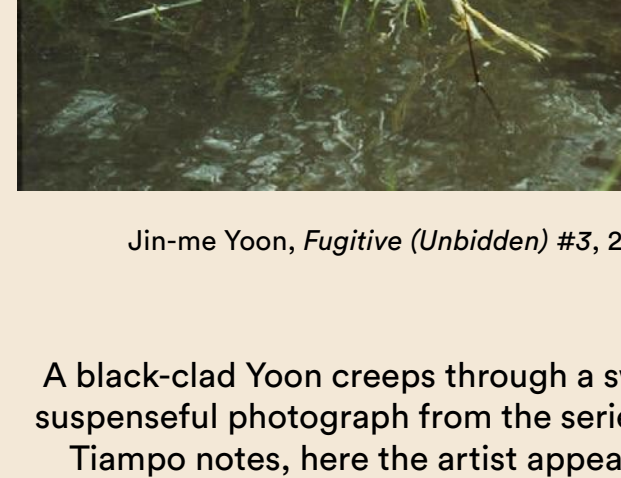


Jin-me Yoon, A Group of Sixty-Seven (front detail), 1996, Vancouver Art Gallery.

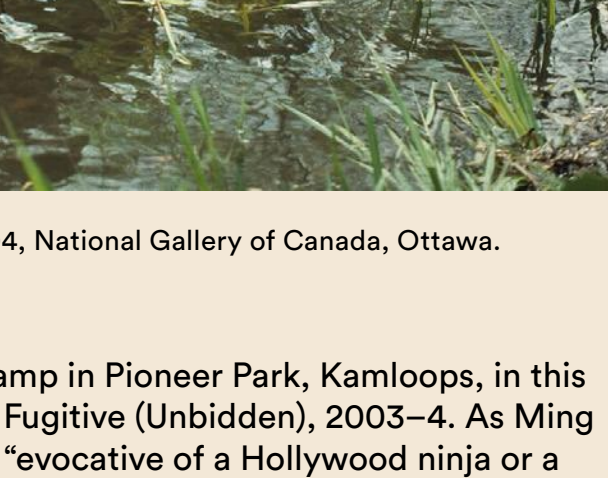
When the Vancouver Art Gallery hosted the major travelling exhibition *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation* in 1996, Yoon intervened with a landmark work of socially engaged art. She invited sixty-seven members of the Korean Canadian community—in reference to 1967, the year restrictions on Asian immigration to Canada were lifted—to have their picture taken. She photographed each participant in front of famous landscapes by Lawren S. Harris (1885–1970) and Emily Carr (1871–1945), creating a foundational collective portrait that confronts art history's colonial perspectives and foregrounds diasporic presence in Canada.

[Learn more](#)

TOURING HOME FROM AWAY



Jin-me Yoon, Touring Home From Away (one of nine diptychs, front panel), 1998, Collection of the artist.

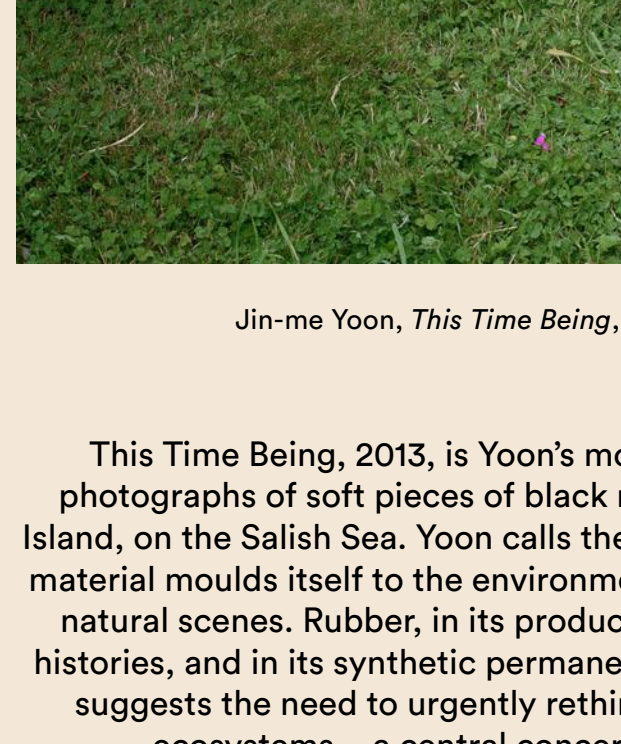


Jin-me Yoon, Touring Home From Away (one of nine diptychs, back panel), 1998, Collection of the artist.

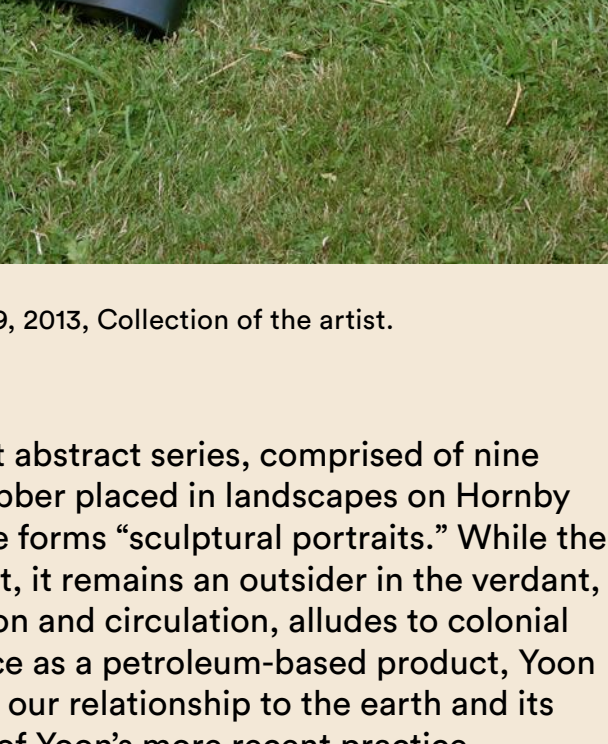
In this pair of photographs, Yoon stands alongside John Joe Sark, Keptin of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council. On the left, they look out over Indigenous ancestral burial grounds on Prince Edward Island. On the right, the landscape expands to reveal that the site has been turned into a golf course. Whenever Yoon investigates the way a place is pictured for tourists, she encounters histories that have been buried over. *Touring Home From Away*, 1998, is presented as nine double-sided lightboxes that borrow from the visual language of advertisements but call into question our relationship with the lands to which we travel and where we live.

[Learn more](#)

INTERSECTION



Jin-me Yoon, Intersection 5 (left panel detail), 2001, Collection of the artist.

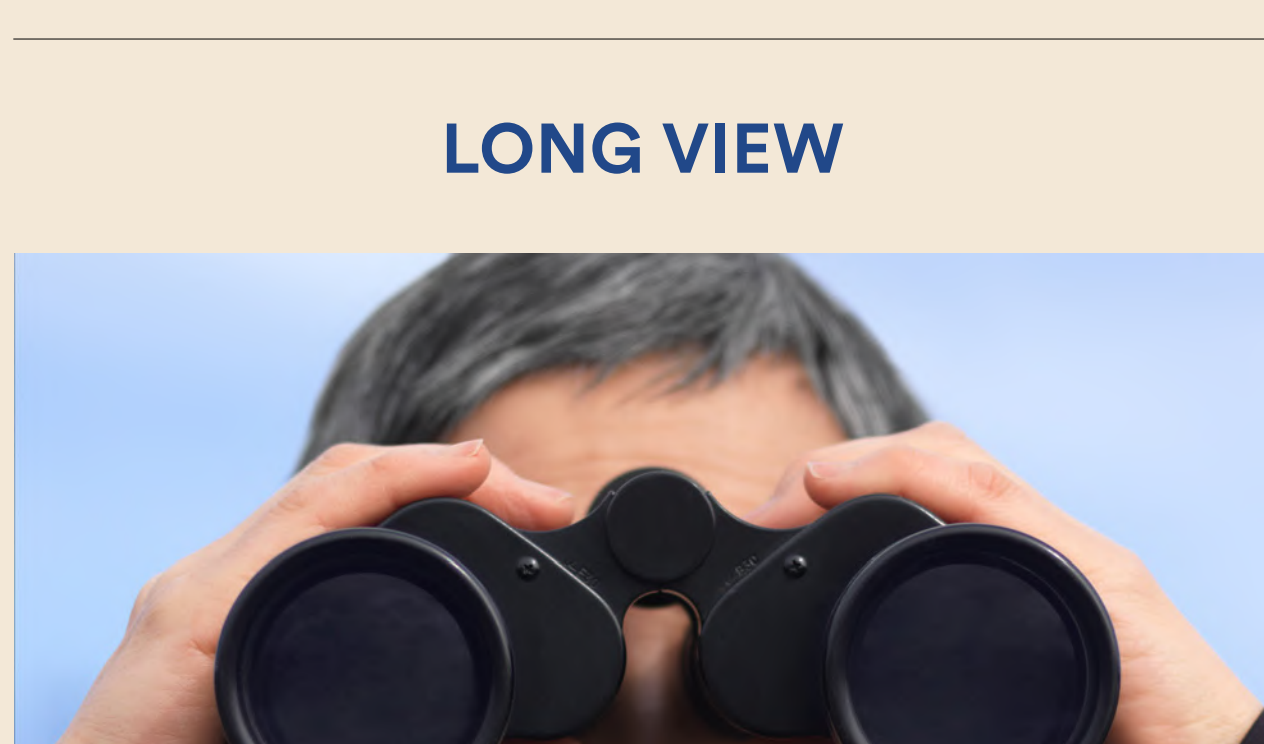


Jin-me Yoon, Intersection 5 (right panel detail), 2001, Collection of the artist.

"Can an artist be both culturally productive and biologically reproductive?" Responding to this question, the diptych *Intersection 5*, 2001, comically suggests not, as a six-legged mother lies stunned or dead, sucked dry, perhaps from the two kids on the right, who are splashing around in spilled milk. However, the graphic and theatrical images in the *Intersection* series—which offer a brilliant critique of the male-dominated art world—prove that Yoon's creativity flourished while she balanced the challenges of motherhood and her rising career.

[Learn more](#)

FUGITIVE (UNBIDDEN)



Jin-me Yoon, Fugitive (Unbidden) #3, 2004, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

A black-clad Yoon creeps through a swamp in Pioneer Park, Kamloops, in this suspenseful photograph from the series *Fugitive (Unbidden)*, 2003–4. As Ming Tiampo notes, here the figure is "a provocative of a Hollywood ninja or a Viet Cong resistance fighter." It is one of two personas she conjures up in the series, which includes video and photographic elements. Elsewhere, she floats down a river like Ophelia in *Hanbok*, wearing a *hanbok*, the traditional Korean dress. These opposing roles of enemy of war and feminized victim reference stereotypes cast on Asian bodies. Yoon unsettles them while also addressing the intergenerational experiences of immigrants from war-torn countries.

[Learn more](#)

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THIS TIME BEING

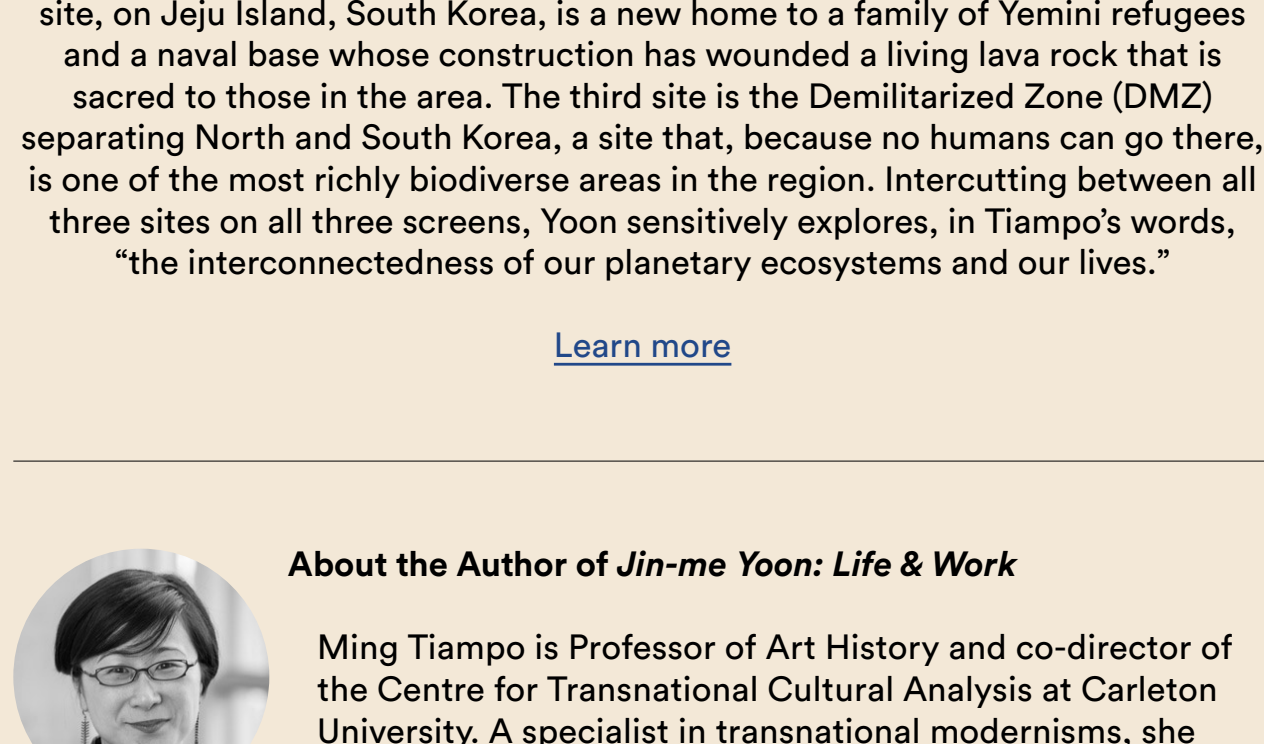


Jin-me Yoon, This Time Being, #9, 2013, Collection of the artist.

This Time Being, 2013, is Yoon's most abstract series, comprised of nine photographs of soft pieces of black rubber placed in landscapes in Hornby Island, on the Salish Sea. Yoon calls these forms "sculptural portraits." While the material moulds itself to the environment, it remains an outsider in the verdant, natural scenes. Rubber, in its production and circulation, alludes to colonial histories, and in its synthetic permanence as a petroleum-based product, Yoon suggests the need to urgently rethink our relationship to the earth and its ecosystems—a central concern of Yoon's more recent practice.

[Learn more](#)

OTHER HAUNTINGS (DANCE)

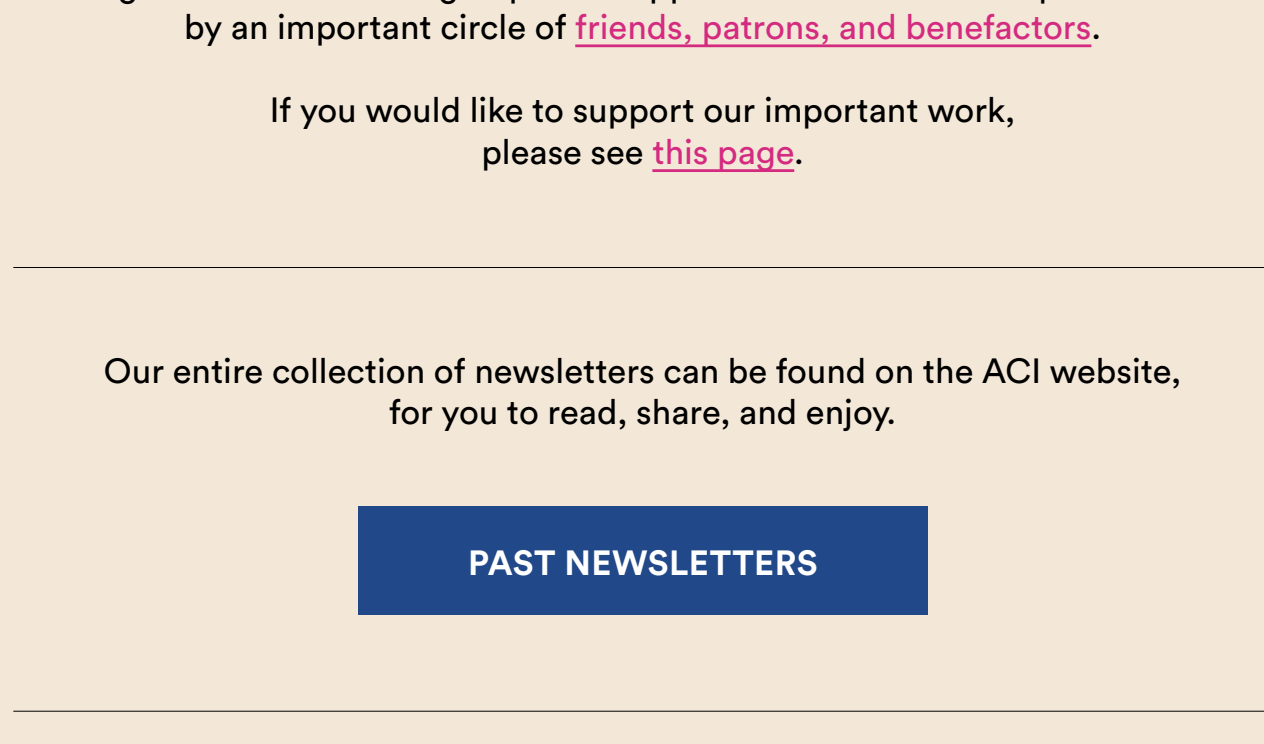


Jin-me Yoon, Other Hauntings (Dance) (video still), 2016, Collection of the artist.

The evocative video *Other Hauntings (Dance)*, 2016, tells the story of the Gureombi rocks on Jeju Island, South Korea, an expanse of sacred stones upon which a naval base was built in 2012. Gureombi is a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site and a Human and Biosphere reserve. The military base hosts Canadian and American warships, Korean forces, and cruise liners. Yoon's work features an activist and dancer who maps out the geography of this beloved site into a figure, as if her body and the site are one and the same. While she fades into a body in fatigues with seaweed hair, she never loses her voice, symbolizing the continued struggle over this site.

[Learn more](#)

LONG VIEW

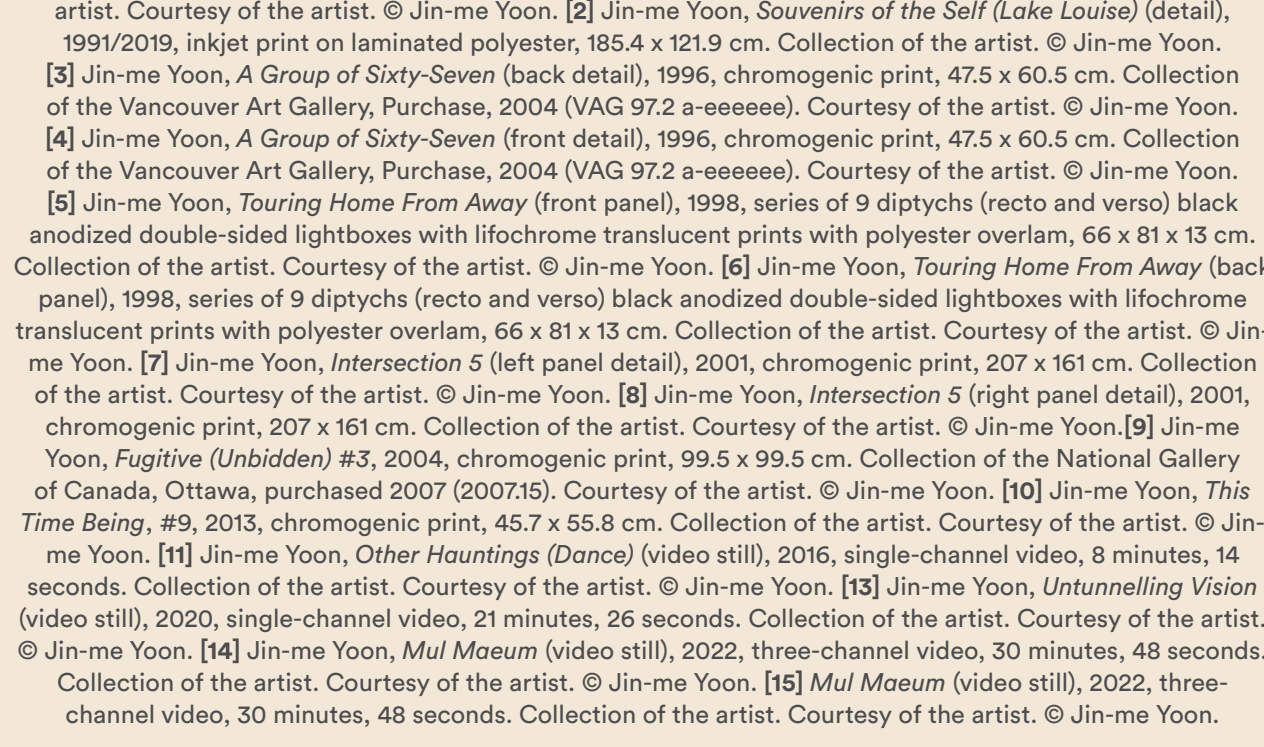


Jin-me Yoon, Long View, #1, 2017, Collection of the artist.

In this striking photograph, Yoon looks through a pair of binoculars. Reminiscent of Alex Colville's *To Prince Edward Island*, 1965, the work also echoes media images of North and South Korean soldiers surveying each other. Her gaze is in fact directed toward Korea from Long Beach in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, on the territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations on Vancouver Island. *Long View*, 2017, which includes photographic and video components, was commissioned for a program marking *Canada's sesquicentennial*. Situated in an area that is an iconic tourist site of the West Coast, the ancestral lands of the Il̓a-o-qui-ah and the Yuułu'ŋi'ŋath First Nations, and a former military site, the series connects distant yet entangled geographies, histories, and memories through Yoon's singular vision.

[Learn more](#)

UNTUNNELLING VISION



Jin-me Yoon, Untunnelling Vision (video still), 2020.

Yoon continues to explore the interconnections between militarism, tourism, and colonialism in this multifaceted work that included conversations with Tsuut'ina and Mohkinstsis (Calgary)-based artists and knowledge keepers. These gatherings and discussions inspired Yoon's expansive multimedia installation *Untunnelling Vision*, 2020. Throughout the series, Yoon connects three places: Heritage Park; a tunnel constructed on Calgary's Ring Road; and a site that was once leased by the Canadian Armed forces, then cleared of mines and used as the set for the Canadian war film *Paschendaele* (2008)—and today still holds the detritus of those activities. Excavating histories, Yoon's work, as Ming Tiampo describes, crucially proposes "new possibilities" for this land.

[Learn more](#)

MUL MAEUM

Top: Jin-me Yoon, Mul Maeum (video still), 2022. Bottom: Jin-me Yoon, Mul Maeum (video still), 2022.

Mul Maeum, 2022, meaning "water-heart-mind," is a cinematic and poetic meditation on extraction economies and the military industry. The three-channel video and photographic series weaves together three Korean sites through the flow of water. The first site is a fishing village near Saemangeum, home to the longest seawall in the world, where the damming of water has cost fishermen their livelihoods and destroyed a natural habitat for migratory birds. The second site, on Jeju Island, South Korea, is a new home to a family of Yemini refugees and a naval base whose construction has wounded a living lava rock that is sacred to those in the area. The third site is the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea, a site that, because no humans can go there, is one of the most richly biodiverse areas in the region. Interconnecting between all three sites on all three screens, Yoon sensitively explores, in Tiampo's words, "the interconnectedness of our planetary ecosystems and our lives."

[Learn more](#)

About the Author of Jin-me Yoon: Life & Work

Ming Tiampo is Professor of Art History and co-director of the Center for Transnational Cultural Analysis at Carleton University, a specialist in transnational modernisms, she is interested in the histories of our globally entangled present. She has published on Japanese Modernism, global Modernisms, and diaspora in Canada, France, and the U.K., as well as the connections between Inuit and Japanese prints. Tiampo's major publications and curatorial projects include *Guta: Decentering Modernism* (University of Chicago Press, 2011) and *Guta: Splendid Playground*, co-curated at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (2013). She is an associate member at ici Berlin; a member of the Hyundai Tate Research Centre; Transnational Advisory Board; a member of Asia Forum; and a founding member of TrACE, the Transnational and Transcultural Arts and Culture Exchange network, as well as co-lead on its *Worlding Public Cultures* project.

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