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First Nam June Paik Exhibition at National Gallery of Art, Washington, Includes Most Ambitious Installation to Date of "One Candle, Candle Projection"

Third Exhibition of "In the Tower" Series, East Building, March 13–October 2, 2011



Nam June Paik, *Untitled (Red Hand)*, 1967

19th century paper scroll by Komatsu Akira, red ink, light bulb, and wood frame

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Hakuta Family

Washington, DC—A new exhibition featuring 20 works by groundbreaking contemporary artist Nam June Paik (1923–2006) will be on view March 13 through October 2, 2011, in the East Building of the National Gallery of Art. ***In the Tower: Nam June Paik*** is the third in a series of shows installed in the Tower Gallery that centers on developments in art since midcentury. The Paik exhibition is presented in two galleries and includes closed-circuit video works, a variety of previously unseen works on paper, and a short film about the artist. The centerpiece of the show, *One Candle, Candle Projection* (1988/2000), receives its most ambitious installation ever, taking full advantage of the vaulting, self-contained space of the I.M. Pei-

designed tower.

"Drawn from Paik's estate as well as on an important recent addition to the Gallery's own collection, this focus exhibition explores some of Paik's most dynamic yet meditative work. We are thrilled to be able to present our first exhibition on the artist and grateful to his estate for its generous loans," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

Organization and Support

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition is made possible by The Exhibition Circle of the National Gallery of Art.

Nam June Paik

Paik is a towering figure in contemporary art. Born in Korea, trained in Japan and Germany in aesthetics and music, Paik settled in New York in 1964 and quickly became a pioneer in the integration of art with technology and performance. He was the first artist to show abstract forms on a television, using a magnet to distort the image (in 1963), and among the first to use a portable video unit (in 1965). With these early works, Paik attacked the passivity that he felt television imposed on viewers. Through endless play with the medium, which Paik disassembled and recomposed (even making a literal "boob tube" for classical cellist Charlotte Moorman with *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, 1969), he reclaimed the televised image as an expressive, democratic tool.

Best known for his video sculptures, installations, and broadcasts, the prolific Paik also created paintings and works on paper, musical and other performances, laser projections, functioning robots, and numerous publications over the course of five decades.

The Exhibition

The exhibition is centered around Paik's video sculpture *One Candle, Candle Projection* (1988/2000). Each morning a candle is lit and a video camera follows its progress, casting its flickering, magnified, processed image onto the walls in myriad

projections. It is a central work in Paik's oeuvre for its simultaneous embrace of media overload and Zen simplicity, participation and contemplation. By turns steady as a rock and flickering in the air currents stirred by visitors, the flame is stillness in motion, a paradox magnified by its reproduction on the walls.

Two other "closed-circuit" works share the same dramatically darkened main gallery: *Standing Buddha with Outstretched Hand* (2005), and *Three Eggs* (1975–1982). In the former, a bronze Buddha "watches" its own image. In the latter, a video camera fixed on an egg sends the image to a portable TV while an identical TV (minus its picture tube) presents an identical but real egg: the result is both a Platonic reflection on levels of reality and a closed-circuit image of time passing, or standing still.

The second gallery features works on paper by Paik that explore TV as image, object, and medium. The selection includes works borrowed from the estate as well as gifts to the Gallery from Robert Rauschenberg and Dorothy and Herbert Vogel. A short film about Paik narrated by video scholar John Hanhardt offers an overview of the artist's career, while a brochure by Harry Cooper, curator of the exhibition, analyzes the works on display.

The exhibition also presents a new acquisition, *Untitled (Red Hand)* (1967), a gift of the Hakuta family (following the Gallery's recent purchase of Paik's last work, *Ommah* (2005), which is on view in the Concourse galleries). This important early work includes a light bulb that flashes through an antique Japanese scroll painting to illuminate a handprint made by the artist on the glass of the frame. It is a humorous meditation on authorship, scavenger hunting, technology, and tradition.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the

Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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