

HP GARCIA GALLERY

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MINA CHEON

Reading and book signing from her newly published book
"Shamanism + Cyberspace" (Atropos Press)
Wednesday, 19 May 2010, 6:30 PM

HP Garcia Gallery is pleased to present a special evening featuring Mina Cheon reading and signing her newly published book *Shamanism + Cyberspace* (Atropos Press). This event will take place on Wednesday, 19 May 2010 at 6:30 PM. *Shamanism + Cyberspace* combines postcolonial, deconstructionist, and performance theory, offering exciting interpretations of new media and shamanism itself, specifically in South Korea.

The book engages shamanism and cyberspace cultures, while critiquing the separation of magic and science in the postmodern era. Deploying an array of interpretive methods, Cheon unfolds the myriad myths in media culture that surround the figure of the shaman. She shows that cyberspace, a scientific discourse and a reproductive technology, invokes the shaman as part of its claim to be a utopian space of new relationships and that cyberspace is an extension of Western-centric imperialism. Cheon looks at the highly contested spaces of shamanism gone tourism today, as well as rituals performed by the Korean female shaman Kum-hwa Kim, a superstar within anthropological and theater circles. She then connects the shaman with the death of media guru (the founder of video art), Korean national hero, and international art star Nam June Paik, while formulating a new theory of "media mourning" that accounts for the complexity of media events surrounding the media man and his death, especially shaman Kim's possession as Paik during a Korean shamanic memorial ritual.

At the click of a mouse, today's imperialistic values are dispersed through tourist sites, Web sites, holy religious sites (existing everywhere and nowhere at once), and everyday cyber-social interactions. In response, the book critiques how cyberspace cultures are formed through power and knowledge systems that are still predominantly Western. Here, the liminal moment is highlighted as shamanism collides with contemporary media art worlds, collapsing time and space, upending gender and racial categories, and confounding the boundaries between East and West.

Mina Cheon (PhD, MFA) is a Korean-American new media artist and scholar who divides her time between Baltimore, NY and Seoul, Korea. Cheon received her PhD in Philosophy of Media and Communications from the European Graduate School, European University for Interdisciplinary Studies, Switzerland, under the guidance of critical theorist Avital Ronell. As an artist, Cheon has exhibited internationally with "Political Pop Art" works that include installation, performance, video, and interactive media while addressing the relationship between media and political conflicts within Asia and in relation to the Western world. Cheon is a full-time Professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art where she teaches studio art, new media, and liberal arts.

Shamanism + Cyberspace is published by Atropos Press: Publisher of Thinking (Editor: Wolfgang Schirmacher, NY and Dresden). Atropos Press, an independent publishing house in association with the European Graduate School, is dedicated to opening new debates in the fields of philosophy and media studies by producing interdisciplinary academic works at the forefront of contemporary thought and culture. The aim of the press is to advance scholarship and contribute to the arts and sciences, and society as a whole.

The reading will take place within the setting of the exhibition "Nature of the Beast," curated by Richard Humann, with artworks by China Blue, Lars Chelberg, Solange Fabião, Heide Hatry, Brian Knep, David Opdyke, Roxy Paine, and Osmo Rauhala. As a thematic tie-in, the reading is staged by the artworks that recall the shamanic transformation between man, machine, nature, and beast.

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