Modeling Narratives:
Architecture of Desire in Contemporary Seoul*

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Abstract

In the article "Modeling Narratives" we suggest a number of unconventional architectural interventions in the fast-shifting urban environment of contemporary Seoul. We focus on marginal phenomena of the city's life and attempt to create for them appropriate architectural manifestations. We began with a socio-political reading of these phenomena, but have proceeded in modeling narratives that express their main characteristics and predominant parameters. These phenomena are the high rate of suicidal attempts in Seoul's Han-river, the recent proliferation of illegal prostitution and abnormal sexuality, and the anarchical reactions against the authoritative government and conventional social norms in the heart of the city.

Trying to study these phenomena, which usually pass unnoticed by the official historiography, we build plausible narratives that describe the involved people's repressed desires and their intentions for the future. These narratives become the main tool for the architectural proposals we then suggest and design, for they define the program, placement, form and materiality of the interventions themselves. In that way the narratives mediate between architecture and its socio-political context, reconciling the personal imagination of the architect with an understanding of local places and cultures along with pressing political and ethical concerns. By doing this, these narrative-based projects are intended ultimately to contribute to the reconfiguration of the ever-changing Seoulian society.

Introduction

In the "*Modeling* narratives" we suggest a number of unconventional architectural interventions in the fast-shifting urban environment of contemporary Seoul. We focus on marginal phenomena of the city's life and attempt to create for them appropriate architectural spaces. Based on a sociopolitical reading of these phenomena we proceed in modeling narratives that express their characteristics and parameters. The narratives become the main tool for designing architecture, for they define the program, placement, form and materiality of the final architectural interventions.

> The home of Wonhyoro Street in Seoul
> where I left childhood behind
> is a clinic for plastic surgery now.
> The Mapo home where I spent my teen years
> listening to the government's propaganda
> Is filled with municipal offices,
> and gorgeous Balm Island is now gone.
> *Near the Blue House, Jimnyung Girls' High School,*
> *my alma mater, is a government building, too.*
> *The home where I spent my college years*
> *in Sangdo-dong has become a cheap hotel.*
> *Frogs once croaked near my newlywed home in Kui-dong.*
> *Now, a convenience store stands there.*
> *Today, I'm driven from the white villa*
> *near Yoongdong Bridge,*
> *and looking for a place to rent.*[1]

Contemporary Korean poet Chung-hee Moon, captures in the lyrics of "Where Is My Home?," what could be probably a most poignant picture of the drastic transformation of South Korea's capital. Over the last 60 years, Seoul has changed from a traditional city to a world metropolis, undergoing, as the poetic language discloses, dramatic changes on its path to modernization (Figure 1). Its urban characteristics and its architectural elements manifest clearly the nature of this change. The city has significantly expanded in size, and statistically has the highest population density among the world's major cities, followed by Tokyo and Beijing.[2] Almost half of South Korea's population nowadays resides in Seoul and its metropolitan area. Undergoing tremendous physical changes over a short time, Seoul's current architectural conditions are characterized by a significantly temporal character. The city's buildings have a very short life span, with the average building likely to remain standing for only 19.9 years.[3] Moreover, since 1990 the city has witnessed the proliferation of a short-lived new type of space called "bang," which in Korean means room. "Bangs" occupy temporarily small left-over spaces in existing buildings and accommodate

programs varying from entertainment and leisure, to commerce or any kind of services. At the same time, amid these fast developing transient environments, strong religious beliefs prevail among the population, with churches having been integrated into countless commercial buildings (Figure 2) (Figure 3).

More than 10,000 churches accommodate Seoul's growing Christian population nowadays.[4] The city is unquestionably a mosaic of contradictions, oscillating between tradition and modernization, with its dwellers trying to adjust – not always without difficulties – to the changing conditions. Modern Korean fiction, with renowned representatives like Yean-hee Chung and Chung-joon Yee, has in particular captured a sense of both the joy and the pain experienced by ordinary city people in these conditions, persons who have became "misfits" by their failure to adjust to the ceaselessly – and rapidly - shifting urban lifestyle and who have been pushed to the perimeter of the city, literally and metaphorically.[5]

This project focuses its attention particularly on these kinds of people, looking closely into a number of socially marginal activities that take place daily in contemporary Seoul, understanding them as instances of repressed human desire. We identify three main categories of these repressed desires and strive to unearth them, giving them public expression through a corresponding architecture. The basic premise is that their existence in the city's daily routine is suggestive of how people adapt to fast-changing urban conditions. Accordingly, architects should take them seriously as a concern or preoccupation. The first category of repressed desire can be found in the wish to escape this world, as manifested in suicide attempts. The second is related to sexual desires and the quest to fulfill them. The last one refers to cases of anarchy manifested in incidents of protest against existing laws and regulations.

In order to grasp the sociopolitical implications and character of these phenomena we turn our attention to newspapers and journal articles, which have a bearing on the issues under examination, offering a general knowledge and understanding. On the other hand, though, in an attempt to engage in a more personal and imaginative understanding of these phenomena and thus envision an appropriate architecture for them, we take leave of this knowledge and start constructing our own fictional narratives. We construct three narratives based on the above-mentioned categories of desire, in order first to grasp what kind of mentalities have triggered them, next to imagine what spatial characteristics are related to them, and then to envision or sketch out appropriate relevant architectural interventions for them. The narratives are not merely descriptions of programs or spaces, as usually narratives are used in designing architecture.[6] Given that, unlike many other representational forms, narrative is a linguistic means of expression *par excellence*, we believe, partaking from the discourse of phenomenology and hermeneutics on the topic,[7] that narrative language can facilitate the generation of authentic architectural images and *models* that can meaningfully reflect their socio-cultural and political context. Thus the narratives we create for the three different categories of desires function as ways of capturing our imagination and means of working towards the final architectural solution. They depict aspects or even just fragments of proposed urban interventions, and describe atmospheres and possible rituals to be associated with the architecture. Finally, they portray the imagined lived experience of the future architecture, along with the potential emotional engagement of people with it.

Seoul Episode 1

"When I cross the iron bridge over the Han River
the ripples catch my eye. (…)
In this city where many lives toss and flow
I fell and struggled. I built
and tore down too many days on ripples
that never returned to their original spot."
Heeduk Ra, "That Part of the Wave" [8]

Seoul is bisected by the 1km-wide Han River into the Gangbuk district in the north and the Gangnam district in the south, with 26 bridges ensuring fluid transportation between the two regions. Han-gang Bridge is one of the twenty-six bridges that cross Han-river, and one of the first to be built across the river. It is an important mid-town crossing, accommodating a significant amount of car traffic on a daily basis. Yet it is perhaps better known for its infamous reputation of attracting the highest number of suicides in Han river.

"South Korea is the republic of suicide," [9] as sociologist Jong-Joo Ahn notes in his recent work, emphasizing the increasing socially-marginal dangers in Korean society. Suicide is indeed one of the leading causes of death in South Korea and a very serious problem for the younger generation. [10] The ceaselessly increasing suicide rate in South Korea is directly related to the enduring economic recession that started in the late 1990s. [11] Given the high population density in and around Seoul's metropolitan area, suicides are commonly featured in Seoul's newspapers. [12] With deliberate reticence though, perhaps aimed at discouraging others, these suicides are usually reported in the papers as simply a number. Seoulians generally choose to ignore this tragedy.

Questioning this attitude, we start exploring alternative understandings of this reality, wishing to make it critically present in the daily life of the citizens. We set off by working on a narrative that can weave in a dense poetic writing the dreary reality of the suicides, revealing place-specific and socially-embedded truths, but also imagining possibilities of a future architectural program, its possible use and the emotional engagement of the people with it:

> There is a group of people who continuously plunge their bodies into the river. The water of the river seems like the last refuge in the city. Most of them believe in the possibility of erasing their personal histories, gaining chances to live again. The water seems as if it could wash away all the past. But their falls lead only to death and bring pain to the ones left behind.
>
> The city government has invested lots of money trying to save the drowned ones, but none of the applied policies have worked. In the end, the city government makes another proposal, which actually satisfies both sides: the government and the potential suicides. It gives people a chance to live in another persona and

at the same time, generates revenue for the city. People who accept this proposal work as performers for a "show" that stage their suicidal act. People who can survive the real show will receive a new identity.

For this show, the city government builds a stage-like structure which looks like a series of springboards for diving. Before starting, people have to fill out two forms, a death announcement and a birth announcement. This is the moment of turning their desires into reality. In this ritual of filling in the necessary papers and falling into the water afterwards, they drift from reality to pure desire. The fall is a moment of pure freedom for them. If they can survive, they will get a new life.

The gyro-drop, the swimming pool and the memorial

Through the fictitious narrative, the fall is imagined as an opportunity for someone to dive into all their desires, a moment of freedom, an action that can even cause immense happiness. It is also seen as a path towards a new life, as if the character is being baptized in the water again and given a new name, a new identity, a new future. Narrative language captures a different understanding of the falls, and even traces in them elements of joy or redemption. Revealing this alternative perspective it leads us to the conception of a new architectural program.

As the narrative already portrays, a stage for diving is envisioned as one of the architectural interventions. Based on this idea, we work towards the design of a tall gyro-drop in Han River that can incorporate the boards and a swimming pool at its bottom, and host the imagined ritual of rebirth captured in the narrative. (Figure 4)

Since the narrative also sketches the emotional frustration of the people who are left behind, it subsequently triggers the development of an additional program, a memorial that will constantly remind the citizens of the already drowned city-dwellers but also offer them a place in the city for mourning. The combination of these new architectural programs will intervene with the city's everyday reality as following:

Having been drawn to the looming figure of the gyro-drop, people can climb the arches of the bridge to access the diving boards over the swimming pool (Figure 5). They can choose to climb up the gyro-drop and experience a free-fall into the river. They can also get on the diving boards and jump off (Figure 6). Whenever people jump from the boards, screams emitted from the gyro-drop dramatize the jumping moments; the sound of suicide attempts can be heard from afar. The pool they find themselves in is transparent and has eight swimming lanes, each of which symbolizes a specific past year. Each lane's length varies in relation to the number of suicides committed during that specific year. At the end of the swimming pool, people find an artificial island made up of funeral urns with countless death-days and times inscribed on them. The inscriptions correspond to the moments of death of all the people that have drowned. The area can also be used as a resting area for the swimmers, but mainly it serves as a memorial where people mourn for their dead (Figure 7).

The screaming sounds echo in the distance. People can always visit the memorial from an underground passage beneath the swimming pool. The tower of the gyro-drop sinks into the water and gives access to this path, which arrangement also allows for clear unobstructed views of the people plunging their bodies into the pool, the swimmers, the memorial at the end of the pool, the tower of the gyro-drop perceived as even more imposing from below, as well as parts of the city. Submerged into the water of the river - the very environment that is the last one experienced by the suicides – the gyro-drop, the swimming pool and the memorial reconcile the tragedy of the unspeakable deaths with the reality of everyday urban life. The suicides may still continue, but the citizens now acknowledge their existence and their consequences for the city.

Seoul Episode 2

(…) The streets are full of sexual desire like a broil before it festers a wealthy muscle
a tower crane hauls a steel beam 100 meters into the sky
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah I watch the audacity, the diligence and insanity
the sincerity and blindness (…)

Ji-woo Hwang "Looking for a Way to Live" [13]

A 2004 special law reinforced penalties for prostitution in Seoul.[14] This has as a result that prostitution is carried on illegally and secretly, a fact contrary to the initial intention of the city government. As many journalists have actually criticized the Korean government has on the one hand prohibited prostitution by law, while on the other hand, it has played the role of a "pimp."[15] According to a recent report on South Korea's prostitution, South Korean adult men indulge in prostitution regardless of their marital status, and 4 out of 10 (39.2%) had an experience of buying sex in 2010.[16] The report also notes that almost half of South Korean men (49%) buy sex at least once in their life-time, a high percentage compared to those of other countries such as U.S. (15%), Netherlands (16%), and the U.K. (7%).[17] Moreover, other kinds of sexual activities, like virtual sex, also proliferate.

On the other hand, pornography is a significantly new reality in Seoul, with South Korea having the highest pornography revenue per capita.[18] In the area of Daehangno in downtown Seoul, for example, pornographic live shows entice people,[19] and erotic film festivals take place every year. Some years ago, even a group of middle-school students produced an item of home-made pornography and circulated it on the web, which aroused a huge social criticism.[20]

Our project's second narrative partakes of this new urban reality, envisioning an architectural condition that can incorporate it into Seoul's life:

> There is a group of people who start filming themselves, making their own pornographies. By broadcasting them to the internet world, they believe in the existence of an ideal sphere where they can live through the imagination of others.

> Virtual sex doesn't presuppose the physical contact of people, so it is beyond the clutches of the law. However, it inspires people's imagination, giving the virtual experience a fascinating power, like that of novels. It is a dream from which they don't want to wake up, solely made up of desire and imagination, without rooting itself to the ground. Moreover, it has the power inherent to anonymity.

> Even though people are in search of a dream world, they still live in the actual one. In this sense their pursuit is a fantasy, one which becomes more intriguing if placed alongside reality. People want to enter into this ideal world, but the closer they approach it, the farther it moves away, as reality still holds their ankle.

The blooming flower

Emerging from the writing is first of all the new image of a condition that *cannot be rooted to the ground*, metaphorically but also spatially; an element related to the character of the imagined architecture. The ideal world is somewhere in the spaceless *space* of the internet, somewhere in the "clouds" since it is understood as a dream that cannot be lived. Only through the juxtaposition of this dream-like condition with reality can people's repressed erotic desires be fulfilled. The people take the roles of either "actors" or "spectators," always keeping their real identity hidden. The "actors" voluntarily share moments of their private lives with a broader public of strangers. They seem to enjoy living in their own showcases as they remain behind computer-screens and strive to find ways to indulge in the pleasures of sexual encounter without physical contact. The "spectators" are the ones who peep into others' private moments, they also keeping their anonymity.

The above-mentioned images captured in the narrative language lead gradually to the conception of the new architectural intervention: the blooming flower structure. The blooming flower is designed as a privacy-challenging rental-housing complex, a space *not rooted to the ground*, to be realized in one of the city's most crowded areas. The architectural intervention has to be *out of reach* for the majority of people, respecting the narrative's preoccupations. Thus it is designed as a parasitic structure on the top floors of one of the city's landmark buildings, near the large open square of Seoul's City Hall. The entire district, in which both the chosen building and the public square are situated, is constantly busy and crowded by

potential spectators, as big screens for watching events and spectacles are installed everywhere (Figure 8). The blooming flower structure creates a dream world in the city as following:

It consists of a limited number of small individual transparent units, each of which includes only a large bathtub and a waterbed. These small cells are situated next to each other horizontally and vertically, occupying five floors of the open hole found in the landmark building. The ritual requires that the people who inhabit the units wear beautiful masks to hide their faces while either taking a bath or indulging in sexual intercourse. They can see both the inhabitants of the adjunct units, and also enjoy the city view (Figure 9).

The structure becomes an urban theatre, exposing its inner skin to the city. Resembling a blossoming flower, it protrudes from the building and hangs on Seoul's cityscape, moving sensuously. Every night a large number of Seoulians gathers around the building to see it blossom, enjoying the city's famous flower-viewing festival. The distance between the street level and the rental units affords them blurred glimpses of the cells' inhabitants (Figure 10).

Seoul Episode 3

> (…) The fragrance is in full bloom. I dig a grave inside it. The grave is not visible.
> In this invisible grave I go and sit down. I lie out. (…) I forget and am at it again digging a grave there.
> The grave is not visible. Toward the invisible grave I go forgetting for a moment about the flower.

> Sang Yi, "Precipice"[21]

Reactions against authority and existing social norms are part of Seoul's reality, with those who wish to resist conformity and control of social conduct leading marginal lives of petty anarchy. This also has been manifested through student activism in the city. From the late 90s on, "anti-culture" and "anti-government" movements have emerged in Seoul's universities, especially through university festivals. Students have questioned the pre-existing social and cultural norms (including the social prejudice regarding homosexuality) and protested against the government's despotic control over the Korean educational system.[22]

The project's last narrative is woven around these repressed desires, envisioning an alternative way of dwelling in the city:

> There are people believing in the possibility of living in society without laws and rules. They feel an aversion to conventional culture functioning under an authoritarian social structure. Therefore they have started to search for a place where they can experiment with something new. In this place there won't be any notion

of social and cultural pre-existing norms. For this reason they move underground. This condition negates all the systems and relationships that the society has generated throughout its history.

Some of the people start isolating themselves not only by cutting off all their relations with others but also by placing a series of walls around them. They are confining themselves voluntarily. They intentionally make the whole structure complicated, not only to make it impossible to get out but also to minimize contact with people.

Some others, although abandoning the city, still wish to send back a new spirit to it. They gather in big empty rooms under the main street and dance frenetically to the rhythm of passing cars, horns and city sounds. Their gatherings are perceived through their emitted shoutings on the city level.

The underground

Expressing the intense aversion felt by a portion of Seoul's citizens towards authority, an element portraying the existing social conditions in the city, the narrative captures the architectural possibility of building an underground structure. The underground structure is further understood through the narrative as serving two different ways of living; either offering people the possibility of complete seclusion, or enabling them to establish another means of communicating with the citizens above, instilling a new spirit into the city's life.

We thought the most appropriate place for the imagined architectural intervention to be beneath the very heart of the old town of Seoul, the Gangbuk district. Our intervention expands in particular under one of the city's most central circulation arteries, the Sejong Road. Sejong Road is an area of dense symbolism for Koreans for a variety of reasons. First of all, a number of important public buildings are situated along its sides (including Seoul's Central Government Complex, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism – now the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History - the US embassy, and the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts), and their co-existence represents different degrees of socio-cultural and political control, unsettling notions of identity in people's consciousness. Moreover, the road is a constant reminder of Korea's past. On the one side, it faces Seoul's main palace where kings of the Joseon Dynasty lived for 600 years; on the other side it faces the statue of General Yi, who fought against the Japanese invasions in the late 16th century. Recently a new square was added in the middle of the Sejong Road where a gigantic statue of King Sejong (who created *Hangul*, the Korean alphabet, in the mid 15th century) was erected. The square looks like an island surrounded by traffic lanes (Sejong road has a length of 600 meters, a width of 100 meters, and ten car lanes in each direction) and can only be accessed though few underground passages (Figure 11).

It is beneath this highly symbolic area that an underground city is imagined and designed, envisioned to work in a twofold way: A never-ending network of mazes offers people the possibility of abandoning the urban reality forever. It is to be found in the lower level of the underground city. The mazes make their way around the foundations of the above-ground landmark-buildings and the existing underpasses. Countless new underground passages are thus created. An underground necropolis is one component of the mazes. People who fought against authority and lost their lives are buried in urns situated along the passages.

In a level above the mazes, a space hosting a new nighttime program is created for those citizens who still want to keep some contact with the city's life. The space is used as a dance hall: a flickering of traffic lights seeps into it from the traffic lines of the city level above, which have been turned into glass openings. People gather to drink and participate in a ritualistic dance festival (Figure 12). They dance as the passing cars shout rhythms of engine noise and car horns into the space. They cry out, their voices drowned out by the cacophony of traffic. People in the city above faintly perceive the existence of this underground space through these very screams; the attenuated voices haunt the city's nocturnal landscape and become one of Seoul's urban myths (Figure 13).

Conclusion

The project is an examination of the socio-political context of Seoul and how architecture can respond to it through the lens of narrative. Our narratives are hardly precise and clear descriptions of final design projects, but rather the modus operandi of a socio-political architectural study, which based on the innovative power of linguistic imagination, is not some "decorative excess of effusion or subjectivity, but the capacity of language to open up new worlds."[23]

The narratives indeed uncover something new in Seoul's specific urban environment, revealing existing place-specific characteristics and social phenomena evolving from people's aspirations and desires. They disclose that the place of the Han River may be understood by some of the city's inhabitants as a passage to another realm; the City Hall square and its vicinities might contain elements of urban voyeurism of a collective nature; and the Sejong Road, much more than simply a crowded circulation artery, is a progressive representation of Seoul's long and troubled history submersed in a frenetic atmosphere. Providing an alternative and more personal mode of a site-analysis, they open up the possibility of *sketching* new architectural possibilities and programs, envisioning their appropriation by the inhabitants. The narratives are a way of capturing emerging thoughts and ideas in terms of program, use, and users' appropriation of the space, along with atmospheres and elements of the places in which these architectural ideas would appropriately be materialized.

By doing that, this narrative-based project contributes ultimately to the reconfiguration of Seoulian society. It is not just a commentary on it, but rather an addition to its reality, revealing the power of fiction in shaping the world around us. Accordingly, narratives do not need to be used only as descriptions of the conditions that architecture encounters (social, political, environmental, etc.) or of the architecture after its completion, but can genuinely mediate between architecture and[24] its socio-political context, offering better alternatives to reconcile the personal imagination of the architect with an understanding of local places, cultures, and pressing political and ethical concerns.

Images

Figure 1. Photograph showing a drastic urban re-development in Seoul's Dongdaemun area.
(Photo by Y. Jung)

Figure 2. Photograph showing a typical Christian church in Seoul in a commercial setting surrounded by apartment buildings. (Photo by Y. Jung)

Figure 3. Photograph showing Seoul's cityscape of Christian churches. (Photo by Y. Jung)

Figure 4. Image showing the intervention of the gyro-drop, the swimming pool and the memorial in the Han-river.

Figure 5. Image showing people approaching the gyro-drop through the sidewalk of the bridge.

Figure 6. Image showing the moment of the drop. Whenever people jump from the boards, screams emitted from the gyro-drop direct the moment.

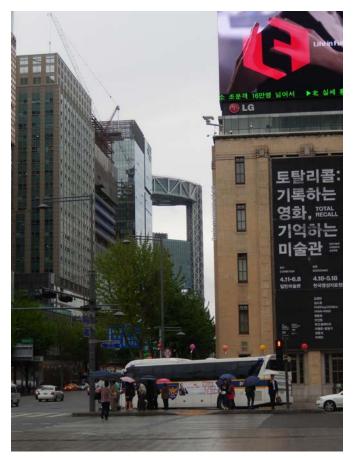Figure 7. Image showing the osmotic relationship between the two programs: the swimming pool and the memorial.

Figure 8. Photograph showing the site of the second intervention (The blooming flower) in downtown Seoul. (Photo by Y. Jung)
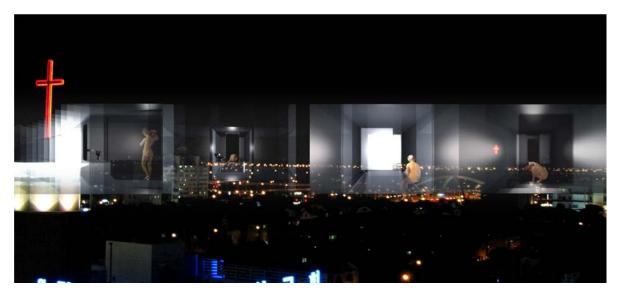

Figure 9. Image from the inside of the blooming flower. People can see the image of the city overlapping the structure.
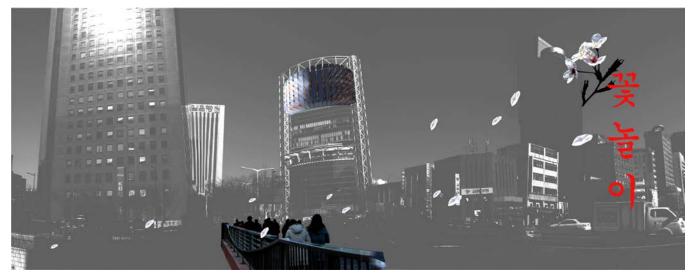
Figure 10. Image showing people gathering around the area to see the structure blossom.
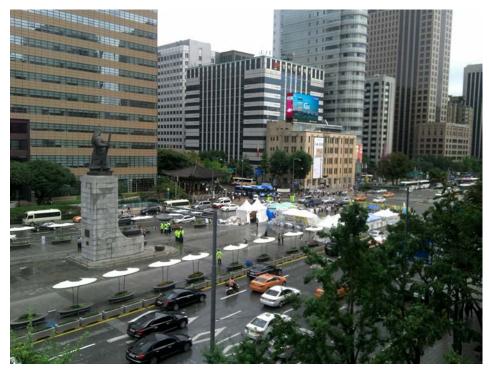

Figure 11. Photograph showing the site of the third intervention (The underground) in downtown Seoul. (Photo by Y. Jung)

Figure 12. Image showing how at night light from the jammed traffic above permeates into the space. People make wishes with the rhythm.
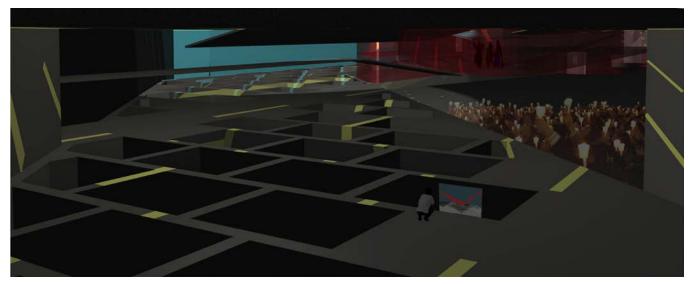

Figure 13. Image showing the multi-layered underground intervention.

Notes

1   Chung-hee Moon, "Where Is My Home" in *Woman on the Terrace*; *poems by Moon Chung-hee*, trans. Seong-kon Kim and Alec Gordon (Buffalo; New York: White Pine Press, 2007): 77.

2   In 1945, the population of Seoul was only one million and it exceeded 10 million around 1988, remaining mainly stable ever since.

3   Sang-nim Yi et al., *Seoul Scenarios* (Seoul: Space, 2004): 287.

4   Jun-Gon Kim, "Hanhyereul bonaemyo saenggakhanda," *Kukminilbo*, 27 December 2005.

5   Yean-hee Chung's literary work deals primarily with people who are affected by a modern society that has evolved too rapidly for them. Chung-joon Yee describes the sharp contrast between a traditional and a modern way of living. Hyun-Jae Yee Sallee, ed., *The Snowy Road – and Other Stories – An Anthology of Korean Fiction*, trans. Hyun-Jae Yee Sallee and Dr. Teresa Margadonna Hyun (New York: White Pine Press, 1993): 14.

6   The notion of a connection between architecture and narrative is not new to architectural discourse. Today, even in popular design thinking resources, narrative is acknowledged as important. According to the guide to architectural terms *Archispeak* for example, architecture can be formed around narrative or narrative can be spun around an architecture. The definition points out that various architects have described the sequential experience of their buildings as an unfolding narrative (a plot), and it also explains how even conventional architectural proposals often need to be presented in a *narrative* form, in order to tell the story of the design process, even in the absence of the architects themselves.

7   In his renowned essay "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality," Paul Ricoeur argues that the productive imagination - before taking shape in any of a thousand possible images - has primarily linguistic origins, and that only the emergence of new meanings in the sphere of language can generate images that may be both new and culturally significant. Paul Ricoeur, "The function of fiction in shaping reality," *Man and World* 12, no. 2 (1979): 127.

8   Heeduk Ra, "That Part of the Wave," in *Scale & Stairs; Selected Poems of Heeduk Ra*, trans. by Won-Chung Kim and Christopher Merrill (Buffalo; New York: White Pine Press, 2009): 54.

9   Jong-Joo Ahn, *Wiheom jeungpog sahoe* (Seoul: Gungli, 2012): 176.

10   South Korea has the highest suicide rate in the OECD. "Exit Strategies: A national debate about the alarming high suicide rate," *The Economist*, 8 July 2010, http://www.economist.com/node/16542639 (accessed 15 July 2015).

11   Ahn, *Wiheom*, 179.

12   For more on this issue see: Young-Joo Kim, *Jeongchaegjalyojib-Daehanmingug jasal hyeonhwang mich yebang daechaeg* (Seoul: Seonjintongildang, 2012): 15.

13   Ji-woo Hwang, "Looking a way to live," in *Even Birds Leave the World; Selected poems of Ji-woo Hwang*, trans. Won-Chung Kim and Christopher Merrill (Buffalo; New York: White Pine Press, 2005): 28-29.

14   The first law banning prostitution was promulgated in 1947 and was modified in 1961, but in 2004 the government made a special law to reinforce the punishment.

15   For more on this issue see "Daehanmingugjeongbuga pojuyeossda," *Hankyoreh 21*, 28 November 2011, 56-57.

16   See Uh-young Ha, "Hangug namseongui seong," *Hankyoreh 21*, 5 December 2011, 40-41.

17   Ibid., 40.

18   Hyo-sik Lee, "Korea, No.1 in turnover of porn industry," *THE KOREA TIMES*, 7 February 2011.

19   On the proliferation of pornographic live shows in Korea, see "Oeseolmudae daemyeongsa majimag sido pyemag," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 18 September 1996, 35.

20   Woo-young Lee, "Poleunogeulapiui sahoejeog uimi," *Hyeonsanggwainsig*, no. 75 (1998): 26.

21   Sang Yi, "Precipice," in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry*, ed. David R. McCann, trans. Edward Mack (New York; Chichester [England]: Columbia University Press, 2004): 69-70.

22   For more on this issue see "Jeolmeumui banlan 'munhwa chegye jeonbog'," *Sisa Journal*, 30 May 1996, 50-57.

23   Richard Kearney, "Paul Ricoeur and the hermeneutic imagination," in *The Narrative Path: the Later Work of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. T. Peter Kemp and David Rasmussen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989): 5.

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