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Doctorate Dissertation of Design

A Study on Layered Visual  
Experiences Exploring Cultural  
Concepts of Space in Korea

한국 공간의 문화적 콘셉트 탐색을 통한  
중첩된 시각 경험 연구

August 2018

School of Fine Arts  
Seoul National University  
Design Major

Christopher Jisu Ro, 노지수

# A Study on Layered Visual Experiences Exploring Cultural Concepts of Space in Korea

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## Abstract

본 논문은 3 차원과 2 차원 사이의 교차 영역에 존재하는, 정의를 내리기 어려운 공간의 교차지점을 파악한다. 디자인 매체와 방식이 계속해서 확장되고 발전함에 따라 경험과 깊이를 고려한 사고와 관련성이 높아지고 있다. 이것은 전통적으로 평면, 2 차원의 화면 및 인쇄물의 표면에 대한 이해를 발전시키려는 노력이 증가할 때 특히 그러하다. 이전에는 더 정적인 경험이었던 것이 이제는 커뮤니케이션의 가능성을 증가시킨 더 다양하고 흥미진진한 방향으로 발전하고 있다. 공간적이고 다층적인 사고와 전략은 우리를 지속적으로 디자이너이자 커뮤니케이터로서 자질을 갖춰 가도록 하는 경험을 제공한다.

이 논문은 한국에 존재하는 특정한 개념들을 강조한다. 한국은 다양하고 독특한 공간을 경험하고 이를 통해 사고할 수 있는 곳이다. 한국은 전통 건축 공간에서 오늘날 우리가 차지하고 일상적으로 사용하는 공간에 이르기까지, 그 공간의 구성과 활용에 독특한 매력과 경이로움을 지니고 있다. 지금까지 이러한 개념들은 주로 건축이나 인테리어 디자인을 통해 검토되거나 연구되지 않았다. 이것은 일상의 시민들이 계획 없이 간단하게 만들어지고 사용하는 일부 공간들이 특히 그러하다. 따라서 한국 과거의 더 전통적인 공간 묘사의 경우에도 마찬가지이며 이 맥락에서 연구가 시작되었다. 이러한 개념이 전통적인 그래픽 또는 커뮤니케이션 디자인과 2 차원 표면으로 어떻게 변환될 수 있는지에 대한 진정한 호기심이 생겼다.

본 논문은 이러한 공간적 개념들을 바탕으로 하거나 깊이 영향받은 잠재적 애플리케이션과 생각 및 시각적 사고행위를 발견한다. 그리고 이것을 발전시켜나가기 위해 과정과 형태에 대한 탐구를 중심으로 하는 실험을 진행했다. 이러한 현상 및 자료 분석과 탐구를 바탕으로 무빙 포스터와 같은 디자인 작업물에 적용시켜 그 과정을 온전히 반영한 형태에 대해 탐구하는 작업으로 발전시킬 것이다. 본 연구에서는 기, 풍수, 한국의 변화 공간, 서울의 각 지역 환경, 산업 공간, 전통 공간의 표현과 같은 문화적 개념을 조사했다. 더 깊게 이 연구는 복합적인 개념과 역투시 그리고 미디어에서 스크린 기반 매체를 통해 공간을 표현하는 것에 중점을 두었다. 또한 화면 속 공간의 개념을 이러한 관점에서 탐구하고 적용할 수 있는 것으로 증명하고, 이러한 반복이라는 탐구는 앞으로 나아갈 잠재적인 사고의 한 일면을 제공한다. 이 연구의 궁극적인 실현

중 하나는 이러한 한국적인 개념과 다양한 분위기의 경험 사이에 특별한 연관성이었다. 이것에서 쉽게 모방할 수 없는 한국적 분위기의 순간들을 발견할 수 있으며 맥락과 조화롭게 존재하는 공간의 거주자 또는 시청자를 위한 특별한 배려가 있다. 이것은 콘텐츠가 경험되는 방식에 긍정적인 영향을 미치는데 ‘중첩’의 경험이다. 이야기에 또 다른 차원을 추가하고, 질감과 촉각 방식으로 서술하며 이러한 계층화된 사고를 통해 독특하고 식별 가능한 특정 분위기 감각이 존재하는 것으로 지역적이면서 귀중한 것이다. 최근 몇년간, 한국의 그래픽 디자인은 탄력을 얻었고 한국에서 나온 작품은 국제적으로 인정 받고 있으며 고유한 목소리를 나타내기 시작했다. 이 연구가 지역적 맥락과 배경에서 공간적이고 감각적으로 구별되는 설계 개념과 프로세스를 통해 후속 연구 일부에 기여할 수 있기를 희망한다. 중첩된 디자인 경험을 통하여 생성되는 분위기를 탐구하는 방법으로 질감 있고 맥락적이며 희망적으로 새로운 경험을 창출 할 수 있을 것이다.

This thesis seeks to explore some of the elusive concepts that exist in the intersecting areas between three and two dimensions. As the mediums and channels used in design continue to expand and evolve, there is growing relevance in thinking around the concepts of experience and space. This is especially true in increasing efforts to evolve experiences in what was traditionally the flat, two-dimensional understanding of the screen and printed surface. What were formerly more static experiences now continue to expand in a number of exciting directions that have increased the potential for visual communication. These spatial and layered thinking strategies have great potential to add to the experiences that we continue to evolve and shape as designers and communicators.

This dissertation also placed emphasis on specific concepts existing in Korea. Korea is home to a great variety and range of unique, spatial experiences and thinking. There is a certain charm, fascination and wonder that can be found from both traditional Korean architectural spaces all the way up to some of the makeshift, everyday spaces used by regular citizens and residents. Up until now, these concepts have primarily been examined through architecture or interior design or not even researched at all. This is particularly true for some of the less thought of, or un-planned spaces created and used by everyday citizens. This is also the case for some of the

more traditional depictions of space from Korea's past. It is under these contexts that this thesis inquiry began. There was a genuine curiosity for if and how these concepts could be translated to more traditional graphic or communication design and the two-dimensional surface.

This dissertation employed practice-based processes and form exploration to develop and discover potential applications, thoughts and visual thinking inspired and based upon some of these spatial concepts. This study employed explorations through traditional film, moving collage, moving posters, interactive design and screen-based design. This study examined cultural concepts such as gi/feng shui, makeshift Korean spaces, local urban settings of Seoul, spaces created by industry and traditional representations of space. At a deeper level, this study eventually focused on the concept of multiple and reverse perspective and expressing space through screen-based media. The way space works within screen-based media proved to be a primary component in this study. The concept of depth within the screen proved to be engaging and applicable particularly with these explorations in perspective. These explorations of multiple perspectives, time and repetition provided glimpses of potential spatial thinking moving forward. One of the ultimate realizations of this study was the special connection between these Korean concepts and the varied experiences of atmosphere. There is a very special experience that can be found in these Korean atmospheric moments that cannot be easily replicated. There is a certain care for the viewer or the occupier of the space that exists in tandem with harmony and context. And this can influence in a positive way, the way the content is experienced. A fitting name for this might be a 'layered' experience. A way to present narrative in a textured and tactile manner that adds another dimension to the narrative. Through some of this layered thinking, there is a particular sense of atmosphere that can be achieved here that is unique and identifiable. Something that is both local and precious. In recent years, Korean graphic design has gained momentum and the work coming out of Korea has begun to identify a very unique voice of its own that is being recognized internationally. This study hopefully can contribute to some of this momentum through design concepts and processes that are more spatially and atmospherically aware. A way to explore the atmosphere that

layered design experiences can create that are textured, contextual and can hopefully create new experiences for narrative.

Keywords : 디자인, 공간, 공간 표현, 분위기, 공간 인식, 적응성, 적응 Design, Graphic Design, Space, Spatial Expression, Atmosphere, Space Perception, Flexibility, Adaptation, Layers.

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# 1. Introduction and Research Background

This dissertation started from several personal narratives that influenced the perspective and thinking of the researcher. The researcher is of Korean-American descent and one of the reasons the researcher is currently residing in Korea is a great interest and curiosity for the cultural identity, thoughts and concepts that exist here in both the past and present. The researcher also has backgrounds in architecture and graphic design. It was therefore thought to be very apropos to study a subject with an emphasis in Korea that also resided within the intersection of architecture and graphic design. The following dissertation is the result of those three concepts colliding.

For the longest time, I have had an extreme curiosity for all concepts Korea that I could not satisfy while residing in the United States. There were so many things I could never completely understand that literature, media and oral communication through and with my ancestors and relatives could never completely explain. I had always thought that before I pass away, I must experience this country and experience all of these mysteries in order to perhaps rest in peace. What initially was to be one year turned into now eight years and every single moment has been a learning moment. I have found these eight years to be priceless. I have found these eight years to answer so many questions. I have found these eight years to be in many ways just the start. And I am thankful for every opportunity and the knowledge that I continue to gain on a daily basis.

While living here, I have continuously been fascinated by Korean concepts of space. They were all at once charming, fascinating, comfortable, wonderful and curious. I had been used to western concepts of space for my entire life and to come here and see these different perspectives on space was both refreshing and enlightening. I was more startled by my quick acclimation to such spaces. Perhaps it can be traced to ethnic origins or roots? Perhaps it can exist in the clever planning or innovations that exist here? I cannot be certain of the origins of this. But I have found spaces here to be a very wonderful and creative ground for thoughts and living. I have

been very comfortable here. The way that I use space, the way that I think about spaces, the way that I reside in spaces have all felt very natural and comfortable to me in ways that I wished made sense. It was such curiosity that founded the beginnings of this research. I had found here to be a really palpable charm and wonder in the atmosphere and thinking of Korean spaces that I was convinced could be of use for design moving forward. Graphic design or visual communication design as we know it now has become infinitely more spatial in thinking. We are now more layered thinkers and it is no longer a static experience that drives how we define our medium. I think spatial thinking is something that will continue to gain traction moving forward. It is under such conditions that I was curious about the thoughts and thinking in Korean spaces. Could such moments be of use towards design and designed experiences? I believed and still believe these to be true. These were the formative seeds and starting point for this research inquiry. And even after such studies, I still continue to believe this to be true today.

I will begin this dissertation by explaining some of the concepts of Korean space that have influenced this thesis inquiry. I will then detail some connected and related cultural concepts and then proceed to explain how some of this research was conducted.

There have been numerous manifestations and concepts of Korean space that can be found as early as archives and records exist. For this research investigation, I will introduce several influential concepts in chronological order. But it should be clear that not all spatial concepts could be covered in this research. There are a great number that exist in Korea and it was not possible to cover them all. I will speak just to the concepts that influenced some of the thinking and context behind this research and more specifically, concepts that interested me from my arrival here.

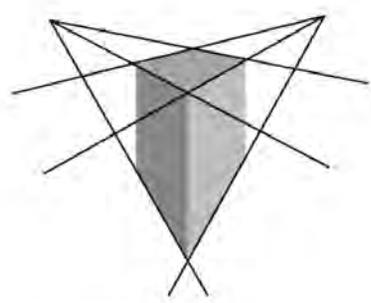
One of the most influential concepts in this dissertation was my first encounter with traditional Korean paintings. During the mid to late stages of the Joseon Dynasty, we begin to see a wide development in traditional Korean ‘Minhwa (민화 or folk paintings)’ and their portrayals and

representations of space. These paintings expressed a variety of spaces but particularly influential in this study were the Chaekgori or Chaekgado (책거리, 책가도), which are paintings depicting what have come to be known as ‘scholar’s accouterments’ or more casually, ‘books & things’. Moving forward we will refer to these as just Chaekgori, for simplification. Chaekgori were officially court paintings that were often painted and can be classified as the aforementioned Minhwa. These paintings were often placed in palaces and were conducted by court painters whose singular responsibility was to paint. The fascination with these paintings came from the distinctive use of perspective to express depth and space. In Chaekgori, we have one of the earlier instances of the representation of the concept of depth or space within Korean paintings and visual culture.

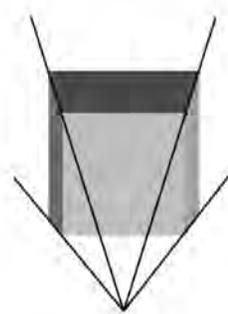
One of the most fascinating concepts of Chaekgori was the concept of reverse perspective. Reverse perspective deals with the eastern philosophy of paintings where the center lies not in the painting but in the viewer of the painting. Many Chaekgori use this perspective as a base. Western paintings, in an effort to depict accuracy, rely on the more realistic one or two-point perspective. However, in Chaekgori, you can see the focus of the perspective existing in the point of view of the viewer of the painting (see Figure 1 for comparison). This reverse emphasis and existence of multiple vanishing points creates what might be seen as awkward depictions of space where the viewing angle and rendered space appear slightly off. But conversely, this awkwardness also creates a very unique, distinctive and in many instances, very charming and fascinating rendering of space. Something not too commonly seen in traditional renderings of space and something that perhaps has some associations to Korea both culturally and philosophically. But does such a space have concrete connections to Korea? Are there some connections to such depictions with contemporary or traditional concepts of space in Korea today? These questions are the provocation for this research. What could be described as a Korean space and how do we express and interpret these spaces?



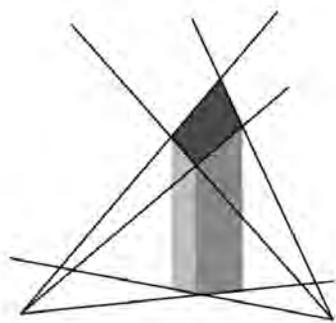
1 point perspective



2 point perspective



1 point reverse perspective



2 point reverse perspective

Figure 1. Perspective and Reverse Perspective

Also, during the Joseon Dynasty, particularly beginning in the late 18th century, an interest in western paintings in Korea began to increase. Concepts of western painting first arrived in Korea through China by missionaries in the 17th century. This was the first instance where Koreans were able to observe such paintings first hand and the concepts of realism

and perspective were surprising at this time. Because of these perspective renderings, many scholars stated that the paintings should be viewed with one eye as it would be a more accurate depiction of the reality they depicted. Many of these original western paintings to date had been destroyed because of Christian persecution during the Joseon Dynasty. There are some remaining works at Sungsil University but most date to the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

One of the main concepts to have some influence on painting at this time was the French concept of Trompe l'oeil. This is a technique of realistic depiction that implies the existence of space and three dimensions. Western paintings, captured real life accurately and reproduced faithfully the outward appearance of figures or objects. In contrast to this, Eastern paintings tended to capture or seek to capture universal truths or spiritual concepts. Western paintings during this time had elements of linear perspective and atmospheric perspective. This included the introduction of the cylinder and the cube, two objects that broke the two-dimensional plane. We also witnessed at a later time, movements like Cubism that explored abstract concepts in multiple perspectives and creating different understandings of animals or subjects through different lenses. But similar to the aforementioned differences in western and eastern thinking, the Cubist perspective was perhaps in an effort to show a process and possibility in breaking down certain subjects. Showing a new and different way to see such things. Whereas with eastern thinking, it seemed more so about a certain care for the viewer or consumer of how certain subjects were seen or

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<sup>1</sup> Yi, Song-mi,  
Searching for Modernity:  
*Western Influence and True-View Landscape in Korean Painting  
of the Late Choson Period*  
2015, The Academy of Korean Studies.  
Published with Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas.  
Pg. 4.

experienced. And not to say that was not the thinking of the works often found in Cubism. But there was a certain shock value in Cubism at the time that was not exactly the goal of some of the more harmonious tactics employed by these court painters.

During this period, architecturally, we are witness to concepts of Korean space that connect with ideology and religion. In traditional Korean housing (Hanok), often three generations were living all within one household simultaneously. The overlapping layers of family were the core of the household. And during this time, even beginning as early as the 1400s and 1500s, Confucianism and patriarchy were the large pillars that dictated the way a space was planned and created. The sexes were often separated into different living quarters. For example, the Sarang-chae was a place or room devoted to men and their development and often became the central area of a house. The spaces were also frequent to change during life cycles and periods as well. For example, the typical son would occupy a wide variety of spaces during his lifetime within the traditional Korean home.<sup>2</sup>

After the Joseon Dynasty came the period of the Japanese Occupation. During this time, Korean concepts of space began to take on more international influences. During the occupation, a large number of prominent civic and state buildings and organizations began the steps towards modernization. Among these buildings were the establishment of such places such as the campus of Keijō Imperial University, Seoul city hall, Seoul train station and the Mitsukoshi Department Store (now Shinsegae). For the most part, these buildings were all designed and planned by foreign architects of Japanese or German origin. They remain a controversial part of the history of South Korea as many deem these buildings to be symbolic of

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<sup>2</sup> Hong, Hung-Ock  
*Hannah: Traditional Korean Homes*  
1999, Hollym International Corp  
Seoul, South Korea. Pg. 44 – 49.

domination and imperialism. These spaces physically and conceptually were heavily influenced by western thought. But they still exist and remain part of the urban landscape of Seoul today.

During the Japanese occupation, we also have different expressions of space that are not just limited to architecture or physical constructions. Even in the text-based works of Yi Sang (a progressive Korean poet), we find a similar concept to the aforementioned paintings and philosophy where the orientation is towards the viewer, the person who is consuming the text. Travis Workman notes that, “the infinite lines bending around a singular point are not the extensive, straight lines of Cartesian geometry, but rather lines that curve in space-time (the notion of a square circle conveying this paradoxical space). As in most of Yi’s poems and fiction, the perspective at the center of this infinite recursivity is a ‘person’.”<sup>3</sup> Even before such concepts as ‘user experience’ existing in the everyday conversation, there has always been this underlying respect for the viewing person. Whether it be in painting or text, the one experiencing the content or message took great precedence in the process and output of expression.

After the Japanese occupation, with the engines of modernity at full speed we continue to see thoughts on space juxtaposed with the environment and structure of modernization. Both the rapid industrial development and

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<sup>3</sup> Workman, Travis  
Imperial Genus  
*Modernism without a Home: Cinematic Literature, Colonial  
Architecture, and Yi Sang’s Poetics*  
*The Formation and Limits of the Human in Modern Korea and  
Japan*  
2016, University of California Press  
USA. Pg. 213.

economic policy of the Park Chung Hee created a new series of thoughts in living and space. The 1964 Mapo Apartment Complex was Korea's very first foray into mass residency during industrialization. The complex was dubbed, 'a modern space where 450 families can find happiness and a new residential space built to add dimension to the city'.<sup>4</sup> Although heavily influenced by foreign concepts such as post-war construction in the United States, the core of the apartment concept to this day remains familial. The unit, the togetherness, the collectiveness of community are the core values of mass communities desiring to live all under the same conditions and same structures. This thinking and the aforementioned roots in patriarchy still heavily exist in this mindset. The apartment system still thrives in Korea and it has very much to do with family values. Togetherness and unity remain part of the core of living and moving together.

With the apartment also came several notions of mass production and industrialization. With the ease of construction and the concept of units, rapidly evolving Korea was also heavily influenced by production in large quantities. With plastic chairs, plastic surfaces, jangpan (linoleum flooring) and other materials, it seems many modern spaces in Korea contain hints and signs of mass production. One of the fascinating concepts of an idea that has its roots in Korea's past is the concept of pyeongsang. Pyeongsang are the square shaped platforms that often exist outside of convenience stores or in exterior spaces where Korean people like to gather. They are communal and shared spaces where people can come and use them particularly when exterior conditions are pleasant. Many of these pyeongsang are constructed by similarly mass-produced materials. The 'angle' which is a metal frame with numerous holes punched into it that can serve as a building block for bookshelves and tables is a core component of

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<sup>4</sup> Kim, Sang-ku, Park, Soo-hyung  
*Design That Resembles Us: Korea Design Heritage 2008*  
2009, Korea Design Foundation Publishers  
Seoul, South Korea. Pg. 36.

the pyeongsang. This often serves as the frame. The actual surface is typically a hard-wooden platform that is then covered by a jangpan, linoleum that is often printed in the visual appearance of wood. Here we see the juxtaposition of a traditional Korean concept of space with the materials of industrialization.

While not necessarily considered a space, we also have a juxtaposition of traditional Korean concepts with modern technology in the Ondol heating system. The Ondol system is a floor-based heating system where heat emanates from the floor to warm a household. The significance of the Ondol system in this particular research ties back to its roots in tradition as well as the concept of the unit or togetherness which identifies Korean spaces. The Ondol system often creates central or core spaces both in living and commercial spaces. The heat creates positions and spaces that control the disposition and composition of the household. Although in these times, the Ondol system is universal and equally distributed. In former times it was associated with particular spaces for gathering.

These historical examples formed the background and motivation for this research. Throughout history, there seem to be certain dispositions and patterns shared by those who reside in Korea. This viewer or user-oriented process to the planning and depiction of spaces were indications that there are some perceivable and palpable concepts in Korea that manifest themselves in space. The next section describes research towards identifying patterns, methods and concepts that exist in the creation of space in Korea.

## 2. Cultural Themes and Connecting Concepts

After reviewing several different historical and contextual understandings of space in Korea as well as contemporary observations of space in use today, there seem to exist several connecting themes that are immediately identifiable. The first theme or perhaps keyword is ‘flexibility’ or ‘adaption.’ Although it is not certain when such a theme became widespread here in Korea, this is a concept that seems to have long or deep historical roots in Korean culture. There is a certain ease and understanding of the natural ebb and flow of life that exists on multiple levels in Korea. Whereas some cultures are about domination or extreme control, Korea has long been about taking what exists and then working with it or around it. This not only exists in Korean spaces but also in many situations often found in daily life.

There is a word here that closely links to the word ‘flow’ in English known as ‘heurum’ (흐름). The word is often used when referring to a state of movement and perhaps it can be equated to the concept of inertia. This word is often used in daily situations to describe a defined situation and how one reacts to that. Similar to the concept of ‘going with the flow’, the concept here is not to resist. To take the existing situation and go with it. This is a key concept that has permeated Korean life in many ways across many boundaries, borders and time. It has even crossed the pacific and exists in many different capacities within the Korean diaspora as well. Whether immigrants to the United States or Germany, the concept is something that many Koreans can relate with and identify with in their daily lives.

The visual results of this are part of the inspiration for this thesis inquiry. Whenever traveling the streets of any given city in Korea, one can see the remnants of this concept in the environments and physical structures that exist. On any given street you may find some handmade constructions. Sometimes they are ‘no parking’ signs. Other times they are additions to existing structures that are constructed with tape and other semi-permanent

adhesives. In other instances, you may find makeshift transformers, constructions that are created from everyday household items. This research was fueled by this observation and the many manifestations of this one sees every day in Korea. Such constructions are also indicative of what we are researching as ‘Korean space’—places, spaces and concepts that can physically and conceptually be perceived as a space. In a study of traditional Korean spaces, Jung Sun Kyung references this concept through use of trees in traditional structures. Here he mentions the bent tree. In many cultures, this ‘bent tree’ structure might be deemed completely useless. But in many Korean structures there is an embrace of this bent tree for harmony, charm and uniqueness. There is a way that flexible thinking allows for an open-minded use of such materials.<sup>5</sup> It is a unique expression of aesthetics. This concept also has its base in several other interconnecting concepts that will be mentioned in the following paragraphs. These concepts often interconnect and form general patterns of behavior or action in Korea.

When examining some of the historical spaces in Korea, there is also a concept of the ‘open’ space. A space that has walls yet has no walls at the same time. There long existed a concept that the Korean dwelling was just as connected to the outside as it was the inside. This can be seen in some of the traditional Hanok structures and their concept of Maru, which is the large open space that often connected to the outside world. This also exists with the concept of a flexible panel system of windows and sliding walls. So again, despite the existence of walls, the concept in some ways is that the

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<sup>5</sup> Jung, Sun Kyung, pg. 195.  
*A Study on the Characteristics in Korean Traditional Living Space, from the Viewpoint of ‘Simplex’ and ‘Unique*  
The Graduate School of Lifestyle Design, Sookmyung Women’s University, Major of Living Style Design. 05, 2010.

wall is non-blocking. It is merely a channel that connects inside and outside. This flexibility also exists in the materials that often exist in these traditional structures. Yoo Jinhyung writes that the concept of 'flexibility' is one of the core characteristics of Korean spaces.<sup>6</sup> He writes about the opening and closing of the windows and their adaptability to create different sets of spatial experiences. It is also of note that the use of Hanji or traditional Korean paper allowed for walls to breathe with the seasons. The structure and the materials here allow for a non-static space to exist.

This idea of openness or opening up the building to larger forces and nature is a key grounding element in a lot of Korean aesthetics and thinking. Nature and adapting to the environment and embracing the existing often exist as a key principle that guides the planning and design around many things here in Korea. The notion of creating harmony by going with nature and optimizing certain 'rustic' qualities in both materials and spaces continues to influence structures both traditional and contemporary. Co-existence, asymmetry varying points of view and the desire to unite both man and nature are the principles behind many traditional Korean houses maintaining their own individual layout and structures.<sup>7</sup> In some ways it can be considered the opposite of human-centered thinking and orientation.

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<sup>6</sup> Yoo, Jinhyung, pg. 41  
*A Study on The Representation of The Korean Nature in Public Space Design*  
Hongik University, Space Design Department. 12, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Jung, Sun Kyung, pg. 197.

Another concept that was equally fascinating and similarly related was this concept of 'between', flux or transition. Transitional spaces. Yoo Jinhyung also refers to this as a key differentiation between western and Korean spaces.<sup>8</sup> With this concept of flexibility, Korean spaces often have a focus on this moment of transition which I think is also a very distinguishable characteristic that is instantly identifiable here. Many traditional houses were considered in flux with the environment. There have been studies of just the roof structures alone and how they were visually constructed to extend the environment.<sup>9</sup> So the physical structures, even the form factors were all created as transitions between the nature and the concept of human spaces.

A contrasting point between western culture and eastern culture also has some links to this concept of flexibility. In a lot of traditional western architecture and design there is a reverence for geometry and science. Many of the formal shapes, such as the triangle and square go are also signs of more humanistic thinking towards spaces. However, it is noted by several scholars that in Asia, there is a preference for such concepts as the circle and the mandala is representative of perhaps this flexible thinking. The circular form can adapt and fit comfortably. It does not seek to dominate visually or structurally. There is a certain sense of harmony that exists in circular shapes and structures. Along similar lines of thought is the idea of the 'void' and the power that can be found in emptiness and allowing things to happen as opposed to dictating how they happen.<sup>10</sup> A very common

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<sup>8</sup> Yoo, Jinhyung, pg. 19

<sup>9</sup> Jung, Sun Kyung, pg. 200.

<sup>10</sup> Choi, Eunjeong, pg. 87.

reference in western architecture of this idea of domination of nature exists in Frank Lloyd Wright's falling water. This is a well-known residential building that resides or exists over flowing water. In many eastern situations this would be a strange or unusual thought. It is deemed not healthy to live over flowing water here in Korea. I think the falling water estate is also an example of this in that it is not occupied now and was not exactly a pleasant space of residence.

This concept of flexibility continues to have manifestations that co-exist also with Korea's rapid economics. During the 1970s and 1980s, under the leadership of former president Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan, there existed what was known as the 'sae maueul' movement. This was a movement to increase industrialization and introduce new concepts of what a 'village' or life could be. It was under such movements that Korea began an extremely intense and rapid industrialization that took Korea from third world status to a global top twenty GDP. The effects of such rapid industrialization were not only recognizable in terms of finance and wealth, culturally many Koreans adopted such thinking. A very common phrase using Korean onomatopoeia which will be further discussed below, is quickly, quickly (빨리, 빨리). This phrase is almost part of the daily or hourly culture here in Korea. It basically means to do something very fast or as quickly as possible. It is not expressing just one speed but by using the word twice, it emphasizes perhaps 'double' speed. There are not many English equivalents or proper translations. ASAP (as soon as possible) also cannot express the nuances of this word. It is not official, it is not proper by any means and yet it permeates all aspects of society. It is widely embraced as a

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*A Study on the Expressional Technique and Design of Hybrid to apply the Koreaness in Contemporary Interior Space*  
Chungang University, Interior Architecture, Graduate School of Construction, 12, 2002.

method to go about things. If you do anything, you have to do it 'quickly, quickly'. In recent years, this breakneck pace has slowed a bit, but it still is a part of society. Any sort of service you pay for, delivery, dry cleaning, food, etc., one can expect lightning quick responses. Although increasing in recent years, the concept of waiting in line for anything is a rare phenomenon in Korea. Despite the quality of event, experience or product, many locals have little patience to wait. They demand things immediately. This kind of culture also has direct connections to the aforementioned 'flexibility' found in Korean culture. As rapid industrialization has taken precedent, it is not necessarily how something is done or to what quality, it is how fast it can be done. This rapid culture has influenced the way Koreans live and the current spaces that they prefer.

Another closely related, yet distinctly different culture comes from the word 'geechandah' (귀찮다). Simply put this word can explain the concept of 'bothersome' or 'annoying' and deals with a lack of desire to do something because of these reasons. This has its roots in the aforementioned movements of speed and flexibility. It becomes bothersome to do things a certain way or to wait for things too long. Things that go beyond speed and flexibility are often bothersome. The rise of the apartment and its almost universal preference here in Korea has much to do with this culture. For one thing, owning and maintaining a traditional house has gone out of style not so much because of prestige or social awareness, but more so because of the ease of use and flexibility in apartments. There is no yard to take care of. There is little maintenance or upkeep that one must do. No leaking roofs, no broken windows, etc. Everything is very functional, easy and efficient. The same can be said for the 'new town' (신도시). These types of residential cities sprung up in the 1990s and are continuing to boom. Here you have a series of apartments that straddle a market or building that contains all of the necessary functions of life. Restaurants, clothing, health products, any kind of services can typically be found in these buildings. These new towns are heavily car oriented. With pedestrian pathways existent but in order to reach these pathways, one needs to have access to some kind of automotive transportation. This shift and preference for the new has several possible historical ramifications. Upon conversations with local residents, a large

push for the new came about from the aforementioned rapid industrialization. There was a great desire to move on from the past. Especially a past mired in poverty. Rapid industrialization seemed to be the only path forward and one that a large majority of citizens were accepting of.

But it can be inferred that some of these concepts existed within Korean culture for even longer periods of time. The concepts from rapid industrialization are actually not foreign concepts but concepts that were readily adaptable into both historic and contemporary Korean culture. One of these connected concepts, is the concept of Korean Onomatopoeia (의성어). It is a system where Koreans describe or verbalize concepts through sounds that often come in pairs. It is a very common part of the Korean language and is heavily in use in almost any situation. It is particularly effective as a descriptor, something to assist in the clarification of a concept verbally. This concept, although used to describe spaces, is not something that has a direct link to Korean spaces or particularly for this research. But the reason why this concept is relevant is that it has very much to do with the aforementioned concept of flexibility. The use of these onomatopoeic descriptors is something that also comes from natural processes. Something existed and to describe that concept, a simple set of sounds that felt appropriate was created to match both concept and description. This can be construed as a very intuitive process, one that can only be grasped through empirical practice and experience. In any manner where, one was to read about these descriptors, one can often only fully grasp them by experiencing them and hearing them in person.

This reliance and trust in intuition is also, I feel, something very Korean. In other cultures, the propensity for truth to exist in scientific or mathematic terms is quite strong. And not to say it does not exist here, but the willingness of this culture to accept intuitive decision making and understandings is something very special and unique. I would say in recent times, logic and proponents for logic have won a long-waged battle here. But I find with great joy, the occasional existence of methods for intuitive thinking that are exciting, charming and fascinating all at once. The

aforementioned Korean Onomatopoeia is one endearing example. There also exists a great wealth of accumulated knowledge that has roots in oral history. For example, the nutritional benefits of certain foods or ingredients. In every household, one will always hear about the certain effects of a certain kind of ingredient or food whether there is any scientific base to these facts or not. This is also something quite beautiful and charming at the same time.

Connected to this idea of ‘flexibility’ but perhaps in a more abstract way but also with some strong cultural relevance to spaces and spatial thinking is what I would like to call ‘floor’ culture. The floors of Korea can be considered intermediate spaces connecting conceptually both the inside and outside.<sup>11</sup> It is said by scholars that with the floor, both exposure and concealment exist simultaneously and when put all together, the results are what can be considered a cohesive space. There is a strong connection and attachment to the floor that exists in Korean culture that I find to similarly be very endearing and something special and unique. At any given point, in any household, the floor is a special place where people spend a large amount of activity at any given point. From household to household you will find often times a very immaculately cleaned floor where all sorts of activities can take place. As opposed to western culture where shoes are permitted indoors and there exists a general separation from objects and items on the floor, there is a resonance with life and living close to the floor in Korea that is immediately resonant. During the winters, the ondol heating system, as mentioned above, provides warmth and extra incentive to remain closer to the floor. During the summers, the relative coolness of the floor provides a moderate surface to reduce one’s body temperature. In some households, traditional concepts of furniture such as seating and bedding are situated much closer to the floor for the aforementioned reasons. For all of these reasons and more, the floor and the culture surrounding the floor are

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<sup>11</sup> Choi, Eunjeong, pg. 92.

very poignant and powerful parts of spatial thinking here in Korea. And such culture was worth further investigation in this research inquiry.

In my brief time in Korea, many of these concepts have become formative in my education here. Part of my journey to Korea took place in a curiosity for the roots that defined my ethnicity. There was a general curiosity towards this 'motherland' that I had known for many years but only through informal and limited connections. But many of these roots and these connections have further manifested themselves through this research. I was aware of some of these concepts but to be able to experience them and study them through the lens of graphic design has been very fascinating and rewarding.

Many of these concepts have a strange resonance with me and perhaps my DNA. The aforementioned floor culture holds a strange place dear to my heart. I can remember even while growing up in the United States, there was this strange solace I found with activities that took place on the floor. Although we had a carpeted household, there was a certain joy in the activities that would take place on this cushioned surface that I cannot forget and in some strange way, were integral to my upbringing. I think the same can be said for this larger concept of 'flexibility'. I had seen it, experienced it, wholly participated in it in many capacities. I have seen it mentioned, acted upon through my parents and grandparents and now too, as an adult or child, I too am the product of such 'flexible' thinking. There is a certain relationship that I have with nature and the way things are that I think are inherent to who I am and this upbringing. The next following sections will now document some of the ways I went about exploring these concepts of space and culture. In the next following sections, I may touch upon some of my cultural roots and some of the new findings I had when exploring these spaces. Overall, the research was both joyful, enlightening and filling of many gaps that I had had in my history, my thinking and my understanding of my culture and heritage.

### 3. Research Methods

This research was conducted through a combination of methods in order to gain a greater understanding of perceptions and concepts of space in Korea. As space is a very subjective and interpretive experience, the first phase of research was conducted using qualitative research methods. Through a series of open-ended interviews, the first phase intended to group or identify concepts that local Koreans conceived to be spaces. These interviews were conducted amongst a wide range of individuals, from everyday citizens to designers, artists and educators.

After this phase of research, a specific list of spaces that Korean people often identify with was completed. This list of spaces became the source for the second phase of research. The second phase of research utilized the research method of card sorting. Creating a card for each representative space that included text and a series of images to show that space, the cards were then interpreted by a wide number of participants. This portion of research was more quantifiable in order to gain a more concrete understanding of spatial interpretation through numbers.

The third phase of research, similar to the first phase was very subjective in nature. In this phase, the visual output of artists, designers and architects in Korea were visually observed and analyzed in order to see how people working in expressive mediums were perceiving or working with the concept of Korean spaces. As people who express themselves visually, how they were formally dealing or working with space in their work and projects was another point of interest in this research. The objective of this process was to gain insight into the spatial concepts of those who sought to show or express work in their daily practice. This phase of research was largely intuitive and took place with simple to complex observations of existing work.

The largest phase of research was the fourth phase of research. This can probably best be described as practice-based research where many of the

explorations actually used form and the processes of design to create definitions and visual expressions of these concepts in Korean space. Here, using certain design processes and methods for exploration in form, I began to work on visually examining just what a Korean space could be and how this could be defined within the traditional two-dimensional plane. This phase, similar to phase one and phase three, was also very qualitative and intuitive. This phase went about exploring these concepts utilizing many of the mediums and platforms used in design practice.

### 3.1 Research Phase One: Structured and Un-structured Interviews

In this first phase of research, seven participants from a variety of backgrounds took part in an interview. The interviews lasted around 20 to 40 minutes. The goal of this phase of research was to uncover some general perceptions and associations Koreans had with space under very loose or unrestricted dialogue conditions. The questions consisted of several pointed questions such as what types of spaces one might think of when they thought of space in Korea. After several of these structured questions, the conversation moved into more un-structured formats where the subject matter sometimes became more focused on a general theme or interest of the interviewed individual. The interview subjects were one industrial design professor, one professor in visual communication design, one visual artist, one craftswoman, two graduate students in visual communication design, one undergraduate student in visual communication design. The age range of those interviewed was from 25 to 51. All of the participants were of Korean descent and currently make residence in South Korea. The gender of the participants was mixed with four being male and three being female.

## 3.2 Interview Results

The goal of this interview series was to uncover some basic understanding of spaces and how they are expressed or thought of in Korea. Some of the responses were predictable in that they were immediate associations. Reactions and responses came out that were often intuitive and with little pre-meditated thought or planning. The conceptual spaces that were spoken of were ones that often are thought of in terms of Korea and space. Some of the responses were more surprising than others. One participant mentioned the ad-hocism that exists in Korea where many citizens take it upon themselves to fix or create their own spaces. Using existing technology or leftover structure such as furniture or other items from appliance stores, Koreans often construct their own spaces and needs within spaces. A popular example of this is the aforementioned Jucha Geumji (a hand-made sign that typically states, 'No Parking') which is often constructed from leftover materials. However, which method that these are constructed, they are always a clear designation of space and ownership.

Another fascinating concept was how technology has also influenced Korean concepts of space. One response was mentioning the existence of the kimchi refrigerator (often an entirely separate refrigerator used only for storing kimchi). The existence of these refrigerators often creates a two-refrigerator household. This in turn has created further need for storage or exterior rooms to hold this extra refrigerator. Often times, they are placed in an extra room or on the veranda (perhaps what people in North America might call a balcony). Other responses spoke of technology and the placement of items of daily use and how they affected Korean spaces. The television and the computer and their placement often created what might be defined as a 'center' of the household. The placement of the computer or television would then create that household's 'Maru' which in modern times, can be thought of as a central connecting space within Korean households. The same could be said of the air conditioning unit. Many households in Korea have one main air conditioning unit and this also dictates the orientation of space.

Another space related concept that was refreshing and unexpected was the association of Hanbok (traditional Korean attire) to thoughts on space. The participant explained that compared to western suits, the process for thinking and designing a Hanbok was three dimensional. Western suits exist with more two-dimensional thinking and patterns as a base. But the lines, the formation of the structure and how the Hanbok sits and is created is thought with the body and three dimensions in mind.

After all of this interview data was compiled, one of the first steps in filtering this information was to do a keyword search and create a relevant and lengthy list of concepts that could be associated with Korea or Korean spaces. After the first round of questions, a lengthy list of associated spaces was created. The list was long and spanned a wide variety of concepts and interests. The list was then narrowed down to six archetypal spaces. These spaces were considered archetypal for being distinctly Korean and for the most part, not something that could be found internationally. These six archetypal spaces became the main research component for the next research phase which was card sorting.

### 3.3 Research Phase Two: Card Sorting

The method of card sorting was used to gain an understanding and insight into the thinking of Korean residents. How they see or perceive Korean spaces. Based upon the interview results, we created six categories of potentially archetypal or representative Korean spaces. Card one showed images of ‘Pyeong sang (평상 / 실외 만남의 장)’ which are the previously mentioned exterior square shaped platforms that one typically finds in many neighborhoods or parks in Seoul. Card two showed images of a ‘Maueul Hwaegwan (마을회관)’ which is a large communal space often existing in smaller communities but also is representative of a larger central, multi-use space. Card three showed several instances of ‘Bang (‘방’ – 노래방, PC 방, 만화방, 짬짬방)’ which is a Korean word for the concept of room, or personal space. This word is often attached to activities such as Karaoke

singing, playing PC games or studying. Card four showed an apartment interior with the large space in the middle known as the ‘Maru or Guhshil(아파트 / 마루)’ which are common residential spaces. Card five showed images of ‘Pojangmacha (포장마차 / 임시 공간)’ which are temporary structures that exist on streets where people drink or eat food outside. Card six showed images of ‘Goshiwon, One Rooms, or Officetels (고시원 / 원룸 / 오피스텔)’ which are typically one room based residencies for students and younger people (see Figure 2 for images of cards).



Figure 2. The six representative cards used in card sorting.

The participants of this card sorting process come from a variety of backgrounds. There were 55 total participants. The age range went from age 21 to 64. The majority of responses came from the ages of 23 to 28. The participants predominantly came from the city of Seoul at 30.9%. Incheon

and Yongin were the next most represented cities. The gender of the participants skewed more female than male with 63% being female participants. 13% preferred not to say and 24.1% were male participants. The card sorting took place two times with two different questions. Additionally, several follow up questions were asked that were similarly related to the theme of the cards.

### 3.4 Card Sorting Results

The card sorting took place twice with two questions. The first question was, ‘Which of the following spaces would you consider to be a traditionally Korean space?’ The second question was, ‘Of the following spaces, which one would you consider to be the most Korean regardless of time, history or context?’

The first question which asked about traditional Korean associations was dominantly answered by card number one, ‘Pyeongsang (평상 / 실외 만남의 장소)’ with a selection percentage of 64.2%. The second most responses went to ‘Pojangmacha (포장마차 / 임시 공간)’ at 34%. The third most responses went to ‘Maul Hwaegwan (마을회관)’ at 28.3%. The Pyeongsang visually and spatially does have some connection to traditional Korean structures. This response is not entirely surprising as further analysis also will show that the structure of the Pyeongsang is simplistic and the concept has survived many generations of buildings and architecture. The secondary choice of Pojangmacha is also an interesting selection. Many of the individual responses also noted alcohol and places connected to alcohol consumption or atmospheres where alcohol consumption was easier. There was an obvious historical and cultural connection here. The third choice of Maul Hwaegwan also signified a concept of shared space or community space. In several of the open responses, the traditional concept of Korean space was much more interconnected and shared, even with strangers (see Figure 3 for more results and data).

1~6번 사진 중 전통적인 한국의 공간성이라고 생각되는 사진을 고르세요. (Which of the following spaces would you consider to be a traditionally Korean space?)  
(53 responses)

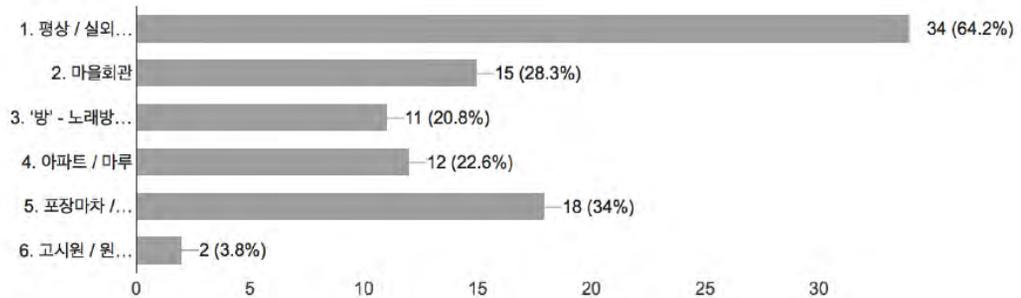


Figure 3. Card Sorting Chart 1

The second question was focused on Korean associations that had no links to tradition, context, or time. We showed the same cards and were curious to see what space might feel the most ‘Korean’ despite context. In this response, the answers were overwhelmingly for ‘Bang (‘방’ – 노래방, PC 방, 만화방, 짬질방)’ at 45.3%. Coming in second standing was the ‘Goshiwon, One Rooms, or Officetels (고시원 / 원룸 / 오피스텔)’ at 24.5%. Ranking third was the contemporary apartment or ‘Maru or Guhshil (아파트 / 마루)’ at 20.8%. Part of the reasons for such a response was that the concept of ‘bang’ is the most action-oriented space out of the selected spaces in the cards. And the space that is most frequently used by Korean young adults who were also the largest participant group in this survey. But in some of the free commentary it was also noted that the concept of ‘bang’ had its roots similarly in traditional Korean architecture in the form of the Hanok (traditional Korean housing structure and design). It was also noted in the free commentary that perhaps the need for the ‘bang’ had come as a reaction to familial society and the need for an independent space outside of one’s home or residence (see Figure 4 for more results and data).

1~6번 사진 중 시간, 역사, 맥락과 관계없이 가장 한국적인 공간이라고 생각되는 공간은 무엇인가요? (Of the following spaces, which one would you consider to be the most Korean regardless of time, history or context?)

(53 responses)

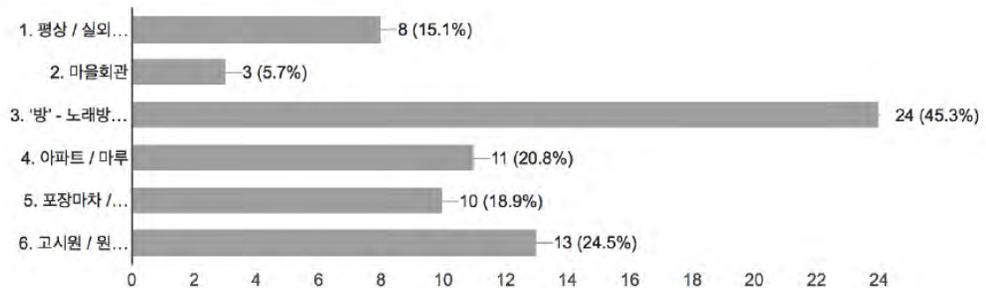


Figure 4. Card Sorting Chart 2

After the card sorting portion of this research, there were several related questions that were also asked to each of the participants. The first question was curious about associations with Hanok, the aforementioned Korean traditional housing design and structure. Obviously, when one thinks of Korean space, the associations with Hanok are the first to come to mind. The Hanok was intentionally left off the card sorting process because the responses would overwhelmingly lean towards Hanok related responses. The question that was asked here was if there were any connections between the Hanok and contemporary Korean spaces. The answers were far and varied. A common response to this question was that contemporary Korean spaces were largely influenced by foreign architecture. Several other responses connected Hanok structure to the aforementioned ‘bang’ or room culture. Where the structure and style of living were dictated by a series of rooms. Several responses also made connections between ‘Ondol (traditional Korean floor heating system)’ and the affection towards wood-textures that are often found within the main spaces of apartments. Another observation was that the concept of rooms and privacy has now moved completely outside of the house and is taken care of in cafes and other public yet private pay spaces.

The next question asked about other spaces that could be associated with Korea. The responses here that were most often referenced were the Golmok (small residential alley) and the Shijang (street market typically set on a long horizontal or vertical axis). Many responses had particularly fond memories of Golmok experiences. The Golmok seemed to be an intersecting space that many experienced in their youth. The reason for keeping Golmok and Shijang out of the original card sorting process was that both alley and market were very international concepts with almost every culture having some variation or form of them. Although the Korean version of these is quite distinct, the focus was placed on spaces that were a bit more unique to Korea and perhaps Korean planning.

The final question sought to connect what made Korean spaces particularly special or enjoyable experiences. Many responses had a direct reaction to the connection between the outside world. The Pyeongsang from the original card sorting process as well as Jeongja, another form of Pyeongsang were mentioned again several times. The pure joy of connecting to outdoor spaces and the 'refreshing' sensations found in such spaces were often cited. The aforementioned alcohol and alcohol culture and spaces was mentioned as well. Perhaps it was less due to the actual space constructions but the experiences associated with alcohol. Similarly, the Golmok and Shijang were mentioned several times here as well. One response very poignantly observed that when foreigners come to Korea, they perhaps come and go without experiencing any type of authentically Korean spaces and that this was an area of study that should not go under looked. Another frequently mentioned concept that perhaps does not have to do with any specific space was 'ground' or 'floor' culture. Korean furniture, restaurants, spaces often have a very tactile and palpable presence or relationship with the ground. This relationship with the ground manifests itself in a wide variety of ways and can be seen in almost all instances of Korean culture. Although not directly related to a particular space as it can take place in many circumstances, the concept actually fits well within many Korean spaces and contexts that exist today.

### 3.5 Research Phase Three: Visual Analysis

This next research process was perhaps the most subjective and involved visual interpretation of what can be described as already very subjective works. The intention of this part of the research was to see how people who were working in mediums of visual expression such as fine art, architecture or design, were expressing their own impressions, perception and concepts of space. On December 12, 2014, the Arko Art Center hosted an exhibition called, *Home, Where the Heart is* which was an exhibition bringing together visual artists and designers to explore three concepts of home—homes of memory and childhood, homes that we reside in now and homes we dream of in the future.<sup>12</sup> The content and curation of this exhibit served also as background to the goals of this research process. The intentions of this were to see how visual expression could also be a form of indicating or expressing spatial experiences and history. It can also be said that visual expressions of space are very authentic portrayals of thoughts and experiences. Also, such methods for expression can also express perhaps what words or other means of communication could not. The research method used here, visual analysis, borrows from the same tactics as research in art history. Research began with a formal study of the project and then further investigation into the meaning and intentions behind such form took place. This research took place across several different disciplines and media.

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<sup>12</sup> Glint(curator)  
*Home, Where the Heart is*  
Arko Art Center,  
<http://art.arko.or.kr/nr4/?c=2/12&cat=old&uid=452>

### 3.6 Visual Analysis: Fine Art

The field of fine art was a rich resource for artists and visual practitioners who were working with concepts of space and specifically reference Korea and Korean culture. During this research the works of Do Ho Suh, Hyun-seok Choi, Yang Jungah Lee, Seahyun Lee, Yeondoo Jung and Suh Seung-won were investigated for their ties to both Korea and space.

The works of Yeondoo Jung were particularly appropriate for this visual analysis in terms of space. In the previously aforementioned Mapo Apartment Complex we see Confucius ideals manifest themselves through the mass residence and the concept of togetherness. Yeondoo Jung explores this concept in depth through his project, *Evergreen Tower* which is a photographic project where he shoots and documents all 32 of the residences of an apartment complex named Evergreen Tower. In each photo, he shoots families in their main living space, the 'maru' of the apartment and each one is similar yet different (see Figure 5). They are similar in that true to the apartment ethos, every unit is almost identical and they are different because of the idiosyncrasies found within each family. Here, Yeondoo Jung is also depicting or representing in his photographs a chance to participate in the otherwise private lives of these families in Evergreen Tower.



Figure 5. A scene from *Evergreen Tower* from Yeondoo Jung.

While reviewing the field of fine art, another concept dealing with Korean concepts of space was the notion of empty space. This was referenced while studying the Korean monochromatic paintings known as Dansaekhwa. This concept also had several concepts and understandings within the field of architecture which will be discussed later in this paper. Dansaekhwa has recently received a revival of appreciation in the international art world. Critics and collectors from abroad have gained great interest in these distinctly Korean expressions of singular color and restraint. The concept of white, or empty space in Korean monochrome paintings during the 1970s was a common theme that spanned a wide range of artists and practices. The art critic Lee Il once said, 'Our ancestors who painted landscapes in ink did it not, of course, because they could only see in black and white or because they could only draw it that way. Rather, they did it because they believed the essence of nature could be better expressed that way... We

become one with nature in a spiritual space. In a word, white on its own embodies all possible creation.”<sup>13</sup> This thinking is particularly relevant with the work of Suh Seung-won who often experimented with creating spatial graphic constructions. He would take a series of lightly colored elements and position them to imply depth and space (see Figure 6). But his paintings were also significant for their use of white space or negative space. The white space, although representing a background canvas also becomes the main figure in that through this white space, a greater level of depth and perception is implied in his graphic works. The negative space creates the painting as much as the actual used space.

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<sup>13</sup> Kim, Youngna  
*Tradition, Modernity, and Identity*  
*Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea*  
2005, The Korea Foundation, Hollym  
Seoul, South Korea. Pg. 50.



Figure 6. Dansaekhwa, Suh Seung-won.



Figure 7. Isopink materials and space. Chen Dai Goang

Another depiction of space that had less to do with the actual composition of the space but more so the materiality was found in works down by Chen Dai Goang. These works ‘investigate ways in which building materials can interfere with certain given places’. His use of materials also refers back to post-industrialization materials of mass production (see Figure 7). Pink styrofoam (isopink), fomax, acrylic glass are all materials that can be found internationally. But as they exist in great frequency and use here in Korea, there are cultural and social connections with such materials as well. Particularly with such materials as the isopink, insulation styrofoam. It is in such frequent use here in Korea, similar to objects such as green duct tape, the object has become Korean in spirit through its massive use. Chen uses

such materials in conjunction with light and then space to create spaces that are at once familiar and unfamiliar at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.7 Visual Analysis: Architecture

Architecture, for obvious reasons, is the embodiment of space in form and context. Space is how many working architects think and express their concepts. But space is also elusive and specifically defining what connections conceptual spaces might have to Korea have not been easy to research. In this portion of the research the work of architects Kai Chun Kim and Sohn Joo Min were analyzed and interpreted.

The architectural work of Kai Chun Kim was particularly interesting for its immediacy and direct objectives to work and express Korean concepts in space. Kai Chun Kim expresses in his work what he calls, 'the space of bright silence'. This silence is not the same as concepts originating from Japan or China. It can be observed that the Japanese interpret what might be known as a kind of quiet or still silence. However, in Korea, referencing the poetry of Chusa, 'sunlight fills up the garden all day long but there is no one passing' and here this references a persistence of light or the sun. In his work, Kim calls for a comfortable, natural or felt silence. One that creates comfort in people. This thinking can be seen in many of Kim's current body of work. It can be the same thinking as the aforementioned spaces of Suh Seong-won where white or negative space is looked upon positively.

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<sup>14</sup> Ciclistica, Serenella  
*Korean Eye*  
2012, Parallel Contemporary Arts Limited  
Milano, Italy. Pg. 68.

Some people describe Kim's house as 'a cosmos where there is no separation between substance, space, time, people, and nature.' This concept was also prevalent in the thinking behind the spaces of the Hanok structure (see Figure 8). According to Kim, the Korean space can also be described as an 'establishment of relationships' and something that 'equals nature' and not mimics or dominates it, a concept we discuss later in this dissertation. One of Kai Chun Kim's projects, the Muryangsujeon Temple, has an interesting concept of endlessly changing spaces instead of a defined, fixed space that also express this thinking of space equaling nature.<sup>15</sup> The concept of 'bang' that was discussed in the survey portion of this research is also actively explored in the work of several Korean architects. The architect Sohn Joo Min explores the concept of 'bang' culture in many of her built projects. Her main work focuses on what is known as a 'han-bang' concept which translates to one-room multifamily housing.<sup>16</sup> This separation of space, function and utility as well as pro-active mindset of designing for urban density are now very common aspects of Korean spaces and the work of Sohn exemplifies this.

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<sup>15</sup> Lee, Yeunsook  
*Korean Spirit in Creativity & Design*  
2004, Yonsei Press  
Seoul, South Korea. Pg. 79

<sup>16</sup> Lee, Yeunsook  
*Korean Spirit in Creativity & Design*  
2004, Yonsei Press  
Seoul, South Korea. Pg. 79



Figure 8. Layered and open temple space design by Kai Chun Kim.

### 3.8 Visual Analysis: Graphic Design

Graphic design or visual communication design was a particularly interesting field of expression to study. The medium of graphic design is inherently flat. From posters to videos to books, most of the works are flat by nature. But there remain many designers who continue to challenge this through their work. Despite designing or creating a poster, the contents of that poster can be extremely spatial. In this portion of research, the graphic designers Everyday Practice and Min Byeong-gul were analyzed for their spatially conscious work.

Everyday Practice is a design studio that currently works across a variety of media. Their work makes fascinating use of photography and three-dimensional structures. Although not specifically engaging with or

attempting to express space, two projects in particular were thought relevant for this research. The project *Why Do I Resent Things?* is a physical type installation. The project is interesting placed in the center Mahdang (center space) of a Hanok structure(see Figure 9). The project is a typographic construction that is also utilizing very everyday materials of industrialization not too dissimilar to the work of Chen Dai Goang. The second project, *I Have to Live*, is a similarly constructed typographic installation that exists on the top of a rooftop in Seoul. This similarly is using everyday materials and is placed on a very common rooftop environment (see Figure 10). The ties to Korea are very transparent in these two projects through the use of Hangul in these projects, the everyday materials and the placement in very prototypical Korean environments. Although not consciously attempting to re-create a Korean space, these physical installations represent some of the same philosophical thinking as Chen Dai Goang in creating spaces through the juxtaposition of material and environment.



Figure 9. Typographic installation by Everyday Practice.

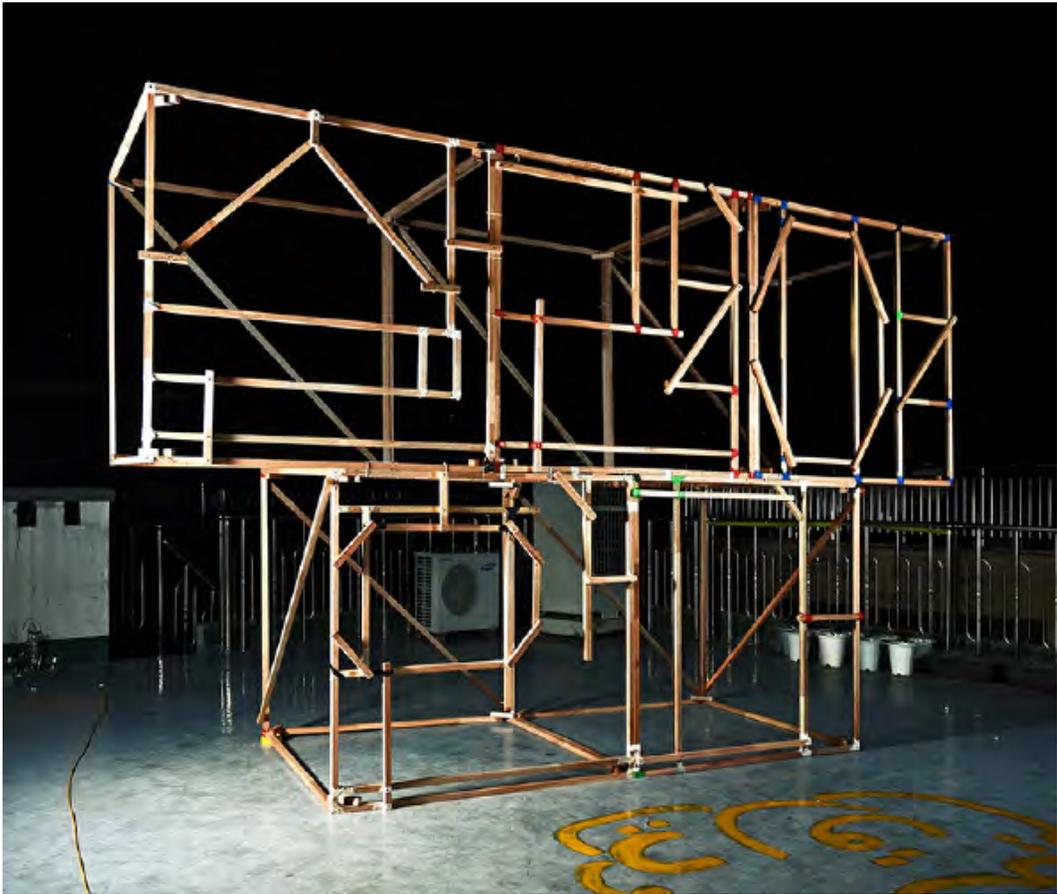


Figure 10. Typographic installation by Everyday Practice.

The work of Min Byeong-gul was perceived relevant for this research through its similar use of dimension and material. Similarly using Hangul as a base, Min Byeong-gul often creates typographic constructions that span furniture design, object design and product design. The project that was most relevant to this research is a series called *3x3 Wood Type*. This project is a series of Hangul characters that wrap around singular platforms (see Figure 11). The type can be read in multiple directions and it is a fascinating fusion of type and object. The letterforms themselves often have two directions which often create areas of space within. Other than Hangul and the use of materials, the connections that tie back to Korea are somewhat

abstract in these projects. Hangul is definitely the strongest link but the forms themselves and the way they sit in their individual spaces can be observed to be rather international. Although these objects perhaps have less to do with physical space, the atmosphere captured here can be observed to be very spatial.

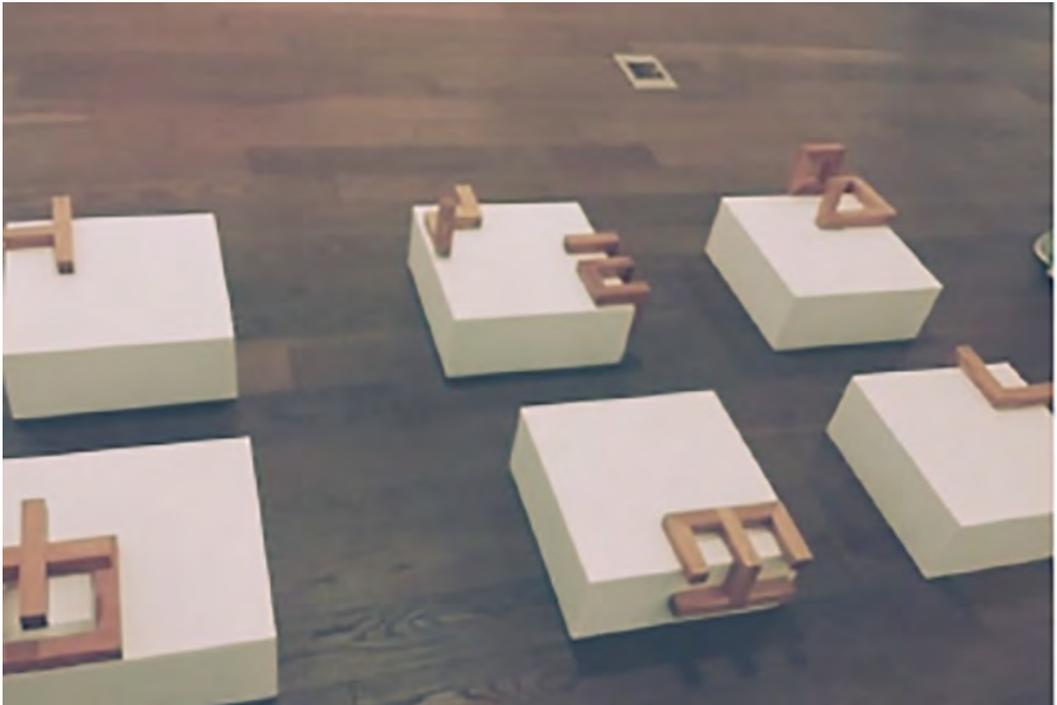


Figure 11. Three dimensional typographic objects in Hangul by Min Byeong-Gul.

## 4. Visual Exploration

The following section will describe some of the form making and visual exploration of Korean concepts in space. This section is divided into several projects that fall under the umbrella of Korean space and visual interpretations of Korean space. Each project began with its own objective and motivation all seeking to explore a certain concept within Korean space. Although some projects were more successful than others, each project sought to explore visually articulating some of these concepts through the eyes, hands and feeling of a graphic designer.

The ultimate guiding principle in this section is process. Each of these projects were conducted without any initial clarity as to what the end results would be. There was an early hypothesis or hunch and thereafter, the process became the guiding force. Although some of the initial research was quantitative and data based, this section of research required exploration through making. A chance to test things visually and see what results could happen through an intuitive, form-based process.

The results are very mixed here. Some were obviously more successful than others. But all in all, the process of exploring these themes visually was both exciting and exhilarating. Something that was all parts fascinating, perplexing and rewarding at the same time.

### 4.1 Project One: Plastic Wood

A phenomenon that is very fascinating is the limitless amount of wood patterns in use in Korea. The patterns almost signify a sense of space or home. It is almost a psychological experience where the pure visual appearance of wood signifies home or space. A place to rest, occupy and be comfortable. The difference is that instead of using real wood, it is the pattern or visual appearance of wood that manifests itself in many places in

Korea. This can take place at restaurants, tables, interior spaces, produces, materials, etc. In any given place the texture of wood could be in use in a number of very creative and innovative ways to create spaces for use (See Figure 12, 13, 14).



Figure 12. In the streets of Seoul, a very common sight is the Pyeongsang, an outward sitting area that consists of a lowered table and is often covered in a wood textured 'jangpan', which is like a linoleum covering.



Figure 13. Another example of a pyeongsang positioned in front of a local convenience store.



Figure 14. More examples of pyeongsang and ad-hoc resting places constructed from jangpan materials.

The use of this wood texture has many different roots. Part of its existence was due to rapid industrialization and price. Due to the rapid industrialization that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, much of the Korean landscape is visually representative of the aesthetic output from factories and commerce. There is heavy use of plastic and rubber that dot any given landscape at any given time. The cost of using actual wood too is a contributing factor. Although readily available, the price of use can be burdensome and to bring such wood into a city like Seoul, store it, install it and maintain it is something that formerly could not be accommodated during the rapid industrialization. And although the Korean economy today is a much healthier machine and ranked with the world's leading GDP

economies, price is still an influential factor in what is used and maintained. For many homes here, there is the concept of unit. Apartments and smaller ‘villas’ are divided into several units and here the main goal is ease of use, cost and efficiency. Here it is much more cost effective to install either plastic wood panels or covering existing flooring with wood textured linoleum. It has become an integrated part of the interior environment here in Korea and its visual appearance is extremely common. Particularly the linoleum wood texture surface. This seems to exist in all facets of life. A very common sight in Seoul is the existence of the aforementioned pyeongsang that are sometimes wrapped or covered with this linoleum wood texture surface. This surface is called ‘jangpan’ and can be found at any commercial retailer that sells both wall paper and other home furnishings (See Figure 15). It is inexpensive and extremely functional. Moving forward in this thesis, I will refer to this covering as jangpan.



Figure 15. An example of a jangpan in conjunction with wood textured tape to hide wiring at a restaurant. A common site at many restaurants in Korea.

The appearance of the jangpan serves a very crucial role. The aforementioned psychological effect of the materials is quite amazing. Without this material, the pyeongsang would have an entirely different atmosphere and feel. But the presence of wood or the visual appearance of wood creates an atmosphere where one is comfortable to sit and occupy. It is as if one is bringing the comforts of home outside of the home. Much of Korea is a floor-based culture as we discussed earlier in cultural concepts. Koreans often engage in their daily lives close to the floor. This has roots in the floor heating system known as ondol. This also has roots in traditional Korean architecture as well. Low set tables and interiors where shoes are not allowed further this culture in many ways.

This first set of visual explorations is a series of experiments considering the visual, emotional, spatial and psychological effects of the artificial wood texture and the jangpan material itself. Each of these constructions takes a different aspect of the jangpan and highlights its character and attempts to interpret some of this character visually. These exercises can be considered visual interpretations of the jangpan space. A space that is defined by the existence of jangpan. The aforementioned pyeongsang is a representative example in that the wooden structure that exists beneath the jangpan is similar to a table. Often made of laminated lumber or sawdust, these wooden structures often exist and until they are covered with the jangpan laminate, are not immediately used. It is the jangpan that actually creates the occupiable space. This is an altogether strange phenomenon in and of itself. I've seen many street corners with pyeongsang that are unoccupied and out of use. And the pure reason for these is that they are only constructed of wood. The real wood is often weathered, unclean and with splinters. The artificiality of the jangpan and the rubber surface often prove to be more weather resistant and thus more susceptible for cleaning and maintenance. Therefore, some of these jangpan surfaces have an immediate functional capacity that Korean people enjoy. The psychological effect of the wood

surface is also fascinating. With the laminate wood, the wood appearance is sometimes non-descript. Even though it is real wood, the appearance is less like the idealized or symbolic wood we see in our minds. In some strange ways, I believe this also to have an effect on occupiers of this space. The symbolic nature of wood creates a space worthy of occupation. It is an intriguing phenomenon and one that functions as the backbone for some of these visual explorations.

In many of these explorations, I was intrigued by this fact. The actual visual appearance was almost symbolic and representative of wood and it did not matter so much that the material was not wood itself. This actually leads to many strange sights in Korea. Systems where the jangpan is being used in ways that normal wood could never be. As the surface and material are linoleum or rubber, the wood can be bent, shaped, melted, wrapped, dislodged in ways that normal wood could never in a million years do. The results are fantastic visual expressions of wood in and of itself. I find these expressions to be very beautiful. They are symbolic in some ways of the mass industrialization that took place here. They are also symbolic of the flexibility in Korean culture that we mentioned above. There is a certain beauty to the impossibility of the visual expression of these structures and spaces that defies logic.

So, in this first series of projects, I was curious to explore this phenomenon. How a space can be defined through this visual and psychological phenomenon. How plastic wood and the actual physical appearance of wood could alter some of our concepts of space. For me, this exists on so many levels here in Korea and yet I think it has not been fully explored. But here with the existence of jangpan, literally everything can become an occupiable space.

My first foray into this project was through just exploring the material of jangpan in and of itself. I began exploring the tension, the ability to warp, stretch, extend it and also how it begins to fill a space and change the dimensions of a space. I remember one of my first poignant experiences with this material was when I had hired somebody to install it in my new

residence. After conversing with the installation expert, he kept trying to persuade me to curve the material upward. This did not make sense to me because visually, wood could not curve in such a manner. But he was adamant about it because of the cleanliness of it he proclaimed. He said by curving it up at the very edges, it actually did not allow dust to go into the cracks or underneath the floor. I thought this was very thoughtful and interesting. Although the visual did not work logically, as wood never curves like that, the actual function of the curve made so much sense. I allowed him to proceed as he said he wished to and to this day, I understand his thinking and why he was doing what he did. This was one of my first poignant experiences with this idea of 'flexibility' and not letting the rules or perceived notions of wood, block one from using it in creative ways.

I think this is some of the greatest charm of Korean aesthetics and spaces. This ability to adapt and to not let certain logical definitions block methods or new processes to develop. This served as the backdrop for some of these initial visual explorations. I was curious to see how I could explore the material of jangpan in ways that the installation expert might explore even further. The first series just explored taking some of that gesture, where the wall meets floor and expanding upon this wonderful curve (See Figure 16, 17). The illogicality of the curve was a charming element that I wanted to maintain and further explore through these explorations. The results of these were both entertaining and in some ways thought provoking. Although not necessary by any means, the kind of gross exaggerations of some of these explorations lead me to think about their actual application in space. How could such thinking further their use in amplifying that moment when wall meets floor? I thought such amplification could also be an interesting Korean aesthetic that has not been explored yet. Whereas we seem to do just enough, there has not yet been an overall sensation of going over the top. At least not in some of the spaces and environments I have seen so far. This first series of explorations also got me to think about the psychological impact of this jangpan and how it does truly create a space within the mind. Without the jangpan, the floor seemed unoccupiable. And yet by adding the jangpan and then connecting floor to wall, the room suddenly felt like it had a place to occupy. A place for me to sit and reside.

By adding numerous layers, it started to confuse things. Different types of wood grain texture were all set in one place. But this too, afforded a strange comfortability that is difficult to explain. Even the layering of the wood, as impossible as it seemed, created a certain level of comfort. As if real layers of wood were cut extremely thin and stacked upon each other. The visual sensation and spatial sensation of these was something to be marveled at. Something that definitely triggered new impulses and thoughts in the mind. I think this series still has lots of exploration left. If I had some more carpentry skills, I would definitely like to play with this idea of wall meets floor more. I think it is an interesting concept that has many cultural implications as well. In every society, we have this similar situation where floor meets wall and it seems there are uniform methods for doing this. It was here in Korea that I first saw the curve and I thought this was fascinating. Something with great potential even. And I think moving forward, this has lots of potential for further study as well. Something that could lead to different thinking in spatial design. This idea of keeping such immaculately clean floors creates certain unnecessary mental burdens for Korean people I feel. There is a constant pressure to keep the floor clean. I wonder if the spaces we reside in, could make use of more curvature in order to maximize cleanliness. This could revolutionize the way we think of things in terms of space and space maintenance.



Figure 16. This is an exploration of Jangpan flooring and the wooden textures that exist with such industrial materials. In Korea, many households have this material covering their floor systems. It is completely artificial yet has a similar psychological affect in that it creates certain sensations of space.



Figure 17. An exploration of the system where the wall and jangpan meet. In this scenario, the actual amount of dust that can accumulate is rendered to almost nothing here.

The next series of explorations is based upon this idea of curvature and where floor meets wall. Or the intersecting point thereof. In this series, I thought it would be interesting to just explore this dynamic. Explore encapsulating that curve, that moment of transition in one moment. As mentioned above, many Korean spaces are about this idea of transition. Not just staying in one space. Or not defining one space to the next. And I thought this was quite poetic and apropos. The idea of creating a transitioning space. An area where there is no floor and there is no wall. An area that was doing both. This next series was playfully called ‘pyeong’ which is the Korean unit of space used in determining housing layouts and pricing for residences. It was a playful naming upon a perhaps more serious concept. Each of these small graphic monuments is an icon capturing that

transitional moment, frozen in time (See Figure 18, 19). The goal of this project was to isolate that moment and let viewers examine it in greater detail and from multiple directions and perspectives. In this series, I experimented with multiple different sizes as well as different materials for the jangpan. The results I feel are still in transition themselves. I do enjoy the moment of isolation. Capturing this kind of transitional moment in a more iconic form has some potential I feel. I also think that, as I mentioned above, this idea of wall to floor has great meaning culturally that could still be expounded upon in this project. I think also in hindsight; this project can also begin to take a more spatial direction. If these moments were more occupiable. If some of the pyeong represented here could be more part of spaces that house or create opportunities for occupation. I think these would be the logical next steps for this project. The current scale magnifies this experience but it does not expand upon the spatial definitions and meanings this project could contain. I also think that the human engagement level with this project could go up. Not just from a spatial perspective but from an acknowledgement of the importance or the uniqueness of this wall to floor transitional moment. It would be interesting if moving forward, this could have some impact on the way spaces are designed or thought of in the public and private realm.



Figure 18. This series explores the impossible things that plastic wood can do. Unlike real wood, plastic wood can take almost any configuration based upon the space that it occupies.



Figure 19. This concept is distinctly Korean and alludes back to the original concept of 'flexibility' found in Korean culture. This series is trying to capture that impossible moment where the plastic wood bends perfectly, something real wood could never do unless dramatically manipulated.

This next series I began exploring with printed wood textures on adhesive vinyl surfaces. The motivations for this study were similar to previous motivations. I was curious about the psychological and spatial qualities of the wood print textures. The joy of these adhesive textures was that they could be cut and pasted upon any kind of surface and any kind of system. The end results were a series of constructions that almost could never take place in real life. The sheer maneuverability of the plastic wood prints was something that created a great sense of illusion and also began to blend reality with fantasy (See Figure 20, 21, 22).

In each of these studies, I was curious about how far I could push what could be conceived as reality. I was also curious about the sense of space

that could be created just from the use of the wood texture. As I mentioned above, there is a certain recognition of a houseable or occupiable space when seeing some of these wood patterns. They have the ability to turn an existing platform into an occupiable space.

So, in each of these series I was curious about where and when space began and also how people would perceive these strange combinations of wood. Combinations that could normally not be constructed very easily in person. From a dimensional standpoint, the sheer thinness of the surfaces rendered a certain quality of fantasy as well. As most of the materials are constructed from prints and simple vinyl adhesives, the materiality was very manufactured and industrially based. In hindsight, I think that these materials could be pushed even further in their applicability. Thinking more forward into the future of design, the simple application of wood textures has the ability to change our concept and definition of what that product, surface or space might be. I was curious about how to challenge some of these definitions and depart from them as well. I think somehow, a more interesting possibility is to develop new methods of application processes. Right now, we are limited to the two-dimensional surface. But, if we were to add a new layer upon this and create multiple surface applications, I think the possibilities are really exciting and unpredictable. You can see some of these in the last studies of this series of explorations. One thing I have noticed in hindsight about this process is also a similar issue of scale. I think these could have been larger and more encompassing of an idea of scale or space. I also think it is difficult to make this material look meaningful. The sheer delicacy, lightness and industrialness make for very poor or mass-produced sensations. Although these are the sensations we are accustomed to with such materials, I think it is not necessarily the results or output that I am seeking or was interested in exploring. But nevertheless, there are many possibilities here and this process was admittedly fun and engaging. It was absolutely perplexing, even while making these, to be exploring the visual sensation of wood in such a manner. This is something that I think very unique to this process and the visual experiences that these hold.



Figure 20. This is an exploration of vinyl sheets printing like wood. The actual visual appearance of wood dramatically distorts the perception of the viewer. What is actually, plain, plastic and artificial can suddenly retain aspects of life, comfort and space.



Figure 21. Here is a series of explorations furthering the concept of impossible wood forms and compositions. Situations that could not exist so easily with regular wood.



Figure 22. Another in the series of unlikely wood combinations.

The final series of explorations in this series explored a set of pre-composed or pre-fabricated series of plastic wood surfaces. This series of surfaces were found while exploring different materials in the euljiro/chungmuro area of Seoul, an area known for its industrial materials and production processes. This was what one might call a truly accidental discovery. While exploring a series of plastic or acrylic surfaces, I accidentally discovered a series of plastics that actually had a wood texture printed within. The existence of such plastic was both exciting and fascinating at the same time. It felt like the

next step, an advancement or evolution of the jangpan. A series of acrylic surfaces that could be used in more industrial capacity. Or perhaps less industrial capacity because of the delicacy of the materials. This set of materials actually used plexiglass or acrylic panels and somehow encased the wood printing within, similar to fossils, or some other type of process of coating or transparent sealing.

This series of explorations sought to similarly express the transitional moment between wall and floor. The strange thing with this series of materials was that because of its already encapsulated nature, to create this moment of arch or curve, it was a matter of figuring out how to bend the materials in the manner that I was hoping for. After several weeks of research, I had discovered a method by which to warp or bend the materials in a manner that was more apropos to what my intentions were. Using a heat gun or heat generator, I was able to apply a temperature shift to these panels in order to change their pliability. The end results were that I was able to adjust their position and bend them as I wished. The result was similar to the first two explorations in that I was able to create a strange visual conundrum where the wood is actually bending in a very aesthetic and visual manner (See Figure 23, 24). This bending was also frozen in time and I was able to capture this moment. This along with the sheer or sheen of the acrylic surfaces provided the same sort of visual contradiction I was attempting to achieve in the first several explorations. Similar to the previous explorations, one of the limits of this study was the size and scale of the actual pliable plastic. Although I could obtain larger sizes, the ability to work with sizes provided sometimes a certain limitation to the ability to render and create new spaces. It seems I was more limited to the isolated moment that I was fascinated with and I think this moment could have been expanded in a meaningful way. The visual sensation of working in this manner was similar to the sheet printed plastic wood in that it was both a very unusual sensation as well as a moment that was undefinable and unspecifiable. The sheer lightness and the sensitivity of the materials was the antithesis of all the years of knowledge I had accumulated about wood and working with wood. The concept of wood was out the door and now, it had become a symbol. An icon of what it used to be. The patterns were

taken from some real piece of wood during some non-descript time and in its place, the memory or a visual representation of how it would be or should be used had formed.

I think such thinking is also very Korean in some place. The fact that it is no longer wood matters not. The fact that it was at one-point wood seems more relevant. The fact that it represents wood is more relevant than the fact that it is not wood. Such playful contradictions and flexibility in terms of defining what wood is feel distinctly Korean to me. The fact that the resemblance of wood works just as real wood could work but better due to the industrial surface quality of the material seems to be a take on efficiency that could only happen here in Korea.

In the United States there is some kind of precious fancy for history. I think this exists in the fact that the States does have a limited history. A finite number of years that always occupies the thoughts and perhaps complexes of those who live there. There is a constant comparison to countries in Europe and the great history that exists in the buildings and spaces there. Americans are pre-occupied with such thinking and embrace the old. Whether it is really old or not. In Korea, there is a large history here as well. But I think the difference lies in the context and the immediacy of the recent history. The immediacy of the Korean War and its economic aftermath. There is a certain direct connection to poverty and struggle that many who are living still grapple with on a daily basis. And I think this creates such conflict. It is not such much about history but more so showing that Korean can embrace the future. That the country is up to date and that the country can move forward. It is also about removing some of the pain perhaps in the recent history. From 1910 to 1945, during the Japanese occupation, there were many events that many locals seek not to remember anymore. And this too perhaps has been the spark towards the shift adoption here of industrialization here.

These series of explorations were curious about space. But I think the aftermath and the results also have just as much to say about economics and history as they do with just the concept of Korean spaces themselves.

Although the starting point was space, I think the results also speak to some of the issues that are constantly under debate and discussion here in Korea. Issues of a country that modernized at a lightning rate. A rate that could render the definition of wood in a completely different manner for how it is consumed, used and considered within space.



Figure 23. This final series of explorations made use of a curious set of existing materials found in the Euljiro/Chungmuro district of Seoul that are actual prints of wood textures on or within plexiglass/acrylic panels. Similar to the above studies, this series was an homage or study on capturing that transitional moment where wall meets floor.



Figure 24. Some more explorations in the same series exploring the moment where wall meets surface.

## 4.2 Project Two: Chaekgori: An Analysis of Reverse Perspective

This next project was a study on space, perspective, dimension and meaning within chaekgori (책거리) and chaekgado (책가도). One of the more fascinating concepts is the idea of reverse perspective found in many Korean visual works dating back several hundred years. The concept is not a novel one and exists in different incarnations around the world and yet from an early time, the Korean interpretation of this concept has a lot of fascinating meaning and interpretations of space that were worthy for further investigation. In this particular study, the ‘chaekgori’ or sometimes known as the ‘chaekgado’ was studied for its unique expression and interpretation of space. The ‘chaekgori’ are a particular classification of ‘minhwa’ or traditional folk paintings from Korea. These were particularly used in most frequency as court paintings often by royalty or upper-class residents who sought to enhance their interiors visually. They often existed as screens or fold out screens with visuals painted upon them. They were sometimes referred to as the ‘scholars accoutrements’, or a series of objects that depict scholarship. Many of these objects included books, pens, flowers and other items that could distinguish the presence of an academic. They were a chance for the culturally or economically elite to show great prowess or advancement. They often were part of the décor or environment within residencies or places of study in order to show status.

More often than not these were painted by ‘court painters,’ artisans whose main purpose was to create visual objects and ephemera for consumption in the household. These painters were often very skilled and adept at expressing but not necessarily present in expressing themselves or any personal agenda. Perhaps similar to a design profession, they were tasked with certain executions and executed as necessary.

These court painters often employed spatial techniques for representation. When examining this chaekgori, you can see the implications of space. There is a certain level of depth and perspective found in many of these. It

was this concept of depth and perspective that created intrigue as a subject matter for this dissertation research. Their execution and expression of space was both fascinating and charming all at once. The beauty of these paintings was very unique and unusual. Something that felt at once Korean and at once representative of some of the visual concepts this dissertation seeks to explore. As mentioned in section one of this dissertation, the fascinating concept of perspective was introduced in early times. But the unique twist on these is the reverse perspective as well as the variable perspectives found within chaekgori.

This series of studies sought to explore the structural nature of the reverse or variable perspective found within these paintings. Therefore, the results are not so much a finished project per se, but more so a series of studies. A series of visual studies in order to grasp a particular concept.

Here I had taken a series of historically representative chaekgori and began to dissect them visually. By dissection, I mean not any sort of destruction or altering of the original work by any means but more so, I sought a process by which to greater understand how they were constructed and what perspective principles were utilized in such work.

This project also has a second half which begins towards the end of this dissertation. This second half took some of the knowledge uncovered in this first half and utilized them in a more practice-based method of research. Here I began taking some of these principles and exploring them visually to see what sorts of spaces or concepts I could create through such processes.

In this first series of explorations, I was curious about the concept of vanishing points and horizon lines. These are the basic fundamental concepts of depicting space within a two-dimensional plane. I was interested in establishing these lines and back tracking to discover where, how and what connects. Typically, in the establishment of space visually, there are a series of guide lines or rough and lightly drawn lines that set up the dimensions and the structure for which the space is depicted. By using

this same series of lines, one can also determine the structural elements in reverse. This series of explorations was just that, a reverse diagrammatic study of the spatial components of these paintings(See Figure 25).

One of the principle differences between western concepts of perspective and the chaekgori displayed here was this concept of one, two and multiple point perspective. One-point perspective is the concept that there is the concept that to the human eye, there is but one singular vanishing point and everything disappears into this point. This has long been established as one of the methods to accurately depict reality. But when examining chaekgori, the most fascinating concept is that there is never one single vanishing point but many. And in my opinion, this is what creates a great amount of charm, fascination and beauty in these paintings. Upon further research this is also something that depicts certain aspects of eastern thinking. One-point perspective did exist in Asia at this time as mentioned above in the introduction. But the use of multiple vanishing points was not for a lack of awareness of such concepts, but more so for the intentions of portraying each object individually and as beautifully as possible.<sup>17</sup> I think this kind of thinking happens in a large amount of frequency here and not just in regards to aesthetics or visual principles. There is a genuine interest in understanding and identifying multiple perspectives and trying to understand the other side, whether through language or through intuition. In the introduction to the second phase of this project, I will discuss some more of these principles such as stereopsis and the concept of moving or sliding perspectives.

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<sup>17</sup> Choi, Hye yeon

*Images Enjoyed with the Heart, Chaekgado*

Hankuk News, Seoul, South Korea, May 5, 2010.

[http://www.newshankuk.com/news/news\\_preview.html?news\\_idx=2010050612055709171](http://www.newshankuk.com/news/news_preview.html?news_idx=2010050612055709171)

In the illustrations below, I've taken some existing paintings and began to explore or discover where and how the vanishing lines work. As one can see, the vanishing lines themselves rarely end in a singular point. They are in many instances, singular, independent and parallel. I think this makes for some very interesting visual systems. Here, when examining the content of each shelf, they are all residing in their own world and it has an inner logic that works if you consider the painting a structure on its own. I find this to be very fascinating and a concept that in and of itself, could be worth a large amount of research and investigation.

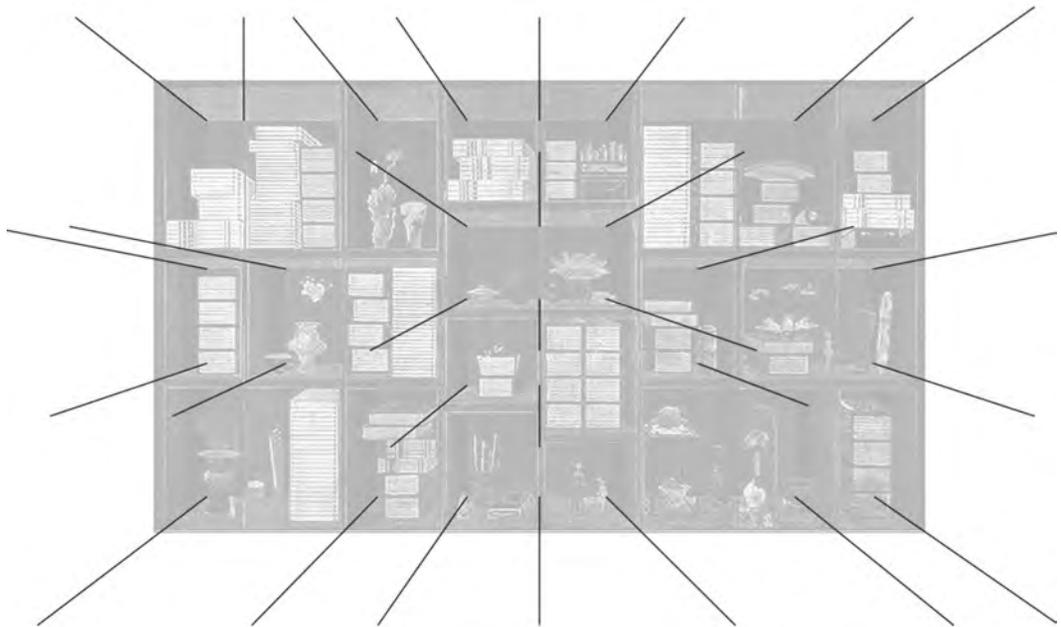


Figure 25. This is the first of several studies exploring the vanishing point, horizon lines and perspective lines of several chaekgori paintings. As one can see in this example, many of the perspective lines are near parallel and this reflects in the depiction of the books and objects of the shelves.

In several of these angle studies, I also began to focus on the content individually of each of the shelves to see if they were following a similar pattern or system. The following illustrations show that the system for the entire painting also works at a micro scale (See Figure 26, 27). One of the interesting things to note was that although the vanishing lines were almost parallel, there was a clear distinction of direction. Some point up while the others point down following the traditional rules of perspective of say, a one-point vanishing perspective. The clear difference here or deviation from the rules of perspective is the proximity between the difference between up and down. As can be seen in the illustration below, the decision to represent a downward facing or upward facing vanishing line is decided within a single frame and shelf. I think this extreme contrast is what makes these paintings so interesting. There is a slight moment where you are not sure of the direction for these reasons. I think this ties into some of the earlier concepts mentioned of flexibility and transition. There is a certain ease of which these spaces and objects are presented that is sometimes not so easily represented in other cultures.

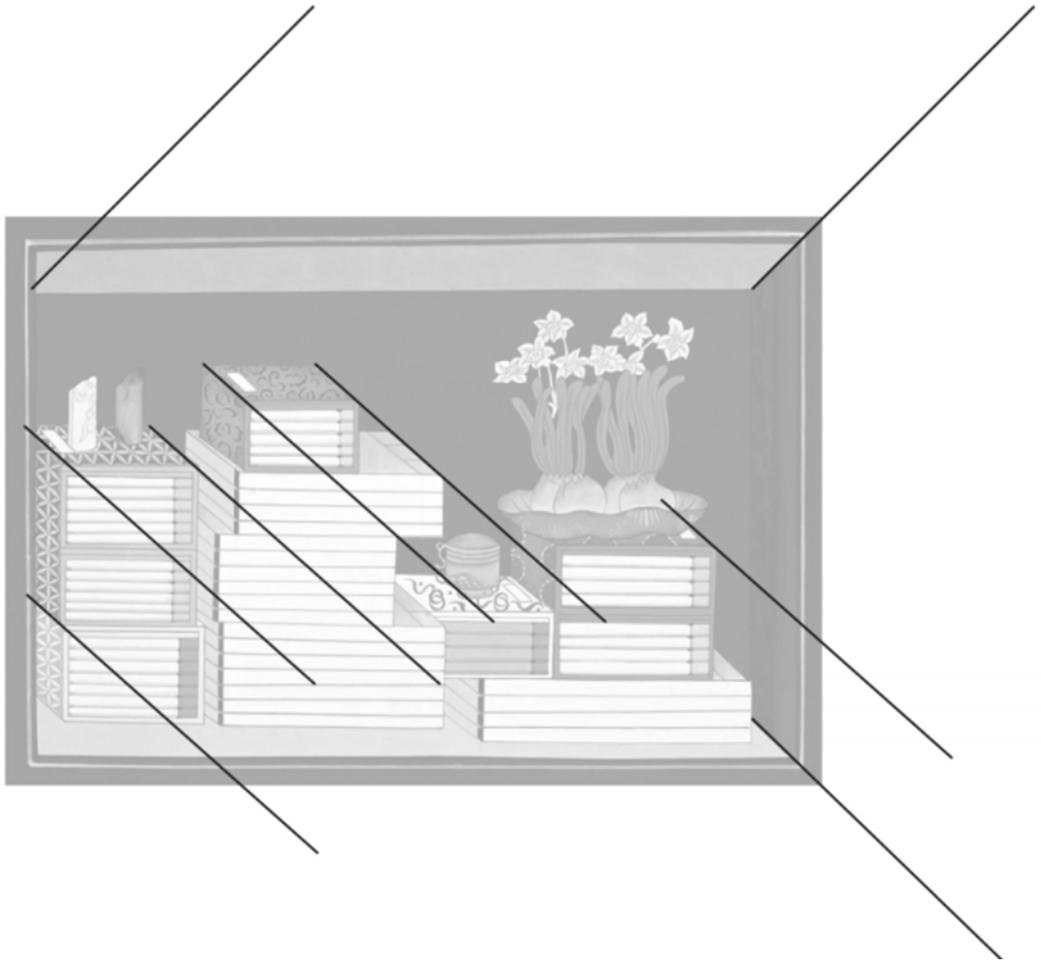


Figure 26. This is an example of more of the existing almost parallel lines. Here one can see that there are two directions for the parallel lines, either pointing up or down and into the background.

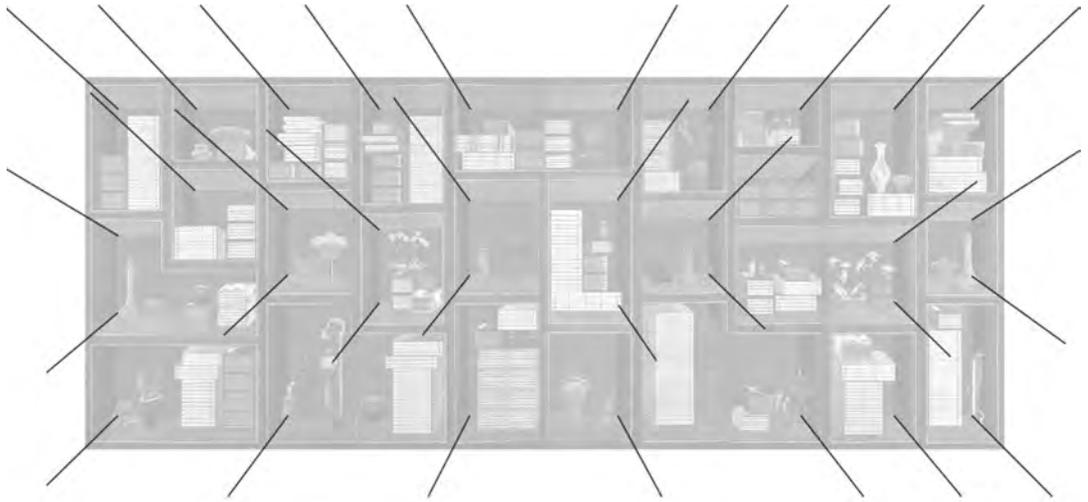


Figure 27. This diagram illustrates the same principles but in more quantity. A similar system of near parallel lines are either facing up or down and the contents of each shelf reflect such orientation.

The illustration below also represents an attempt at determining if and how a vanishing point could exist in such paintings. From the results below, one can see that there exist three, maybe four different vanishing points that are approximate and not exact (See Figure 28). There is a supposed point but as mentioned above, it seems the focus was more on how each of the objects were represented in their particular location. We will discuss this more at length later but there was a common notion that these paintings were depicted for viewers from multiple angles. Or even more so, viewers who would view this painting from left to right. The following results show that the approximation of the vanishing point exists somewhere near or towards the middle of the painting. I think when examining the lines and the methods by which they overlap also seem to be an intuitive aesthetic. They are lines not created by a hard-lined logic or systematic thinking. They are more improvisational. And I find this to be similarly endearing and charming all at once.

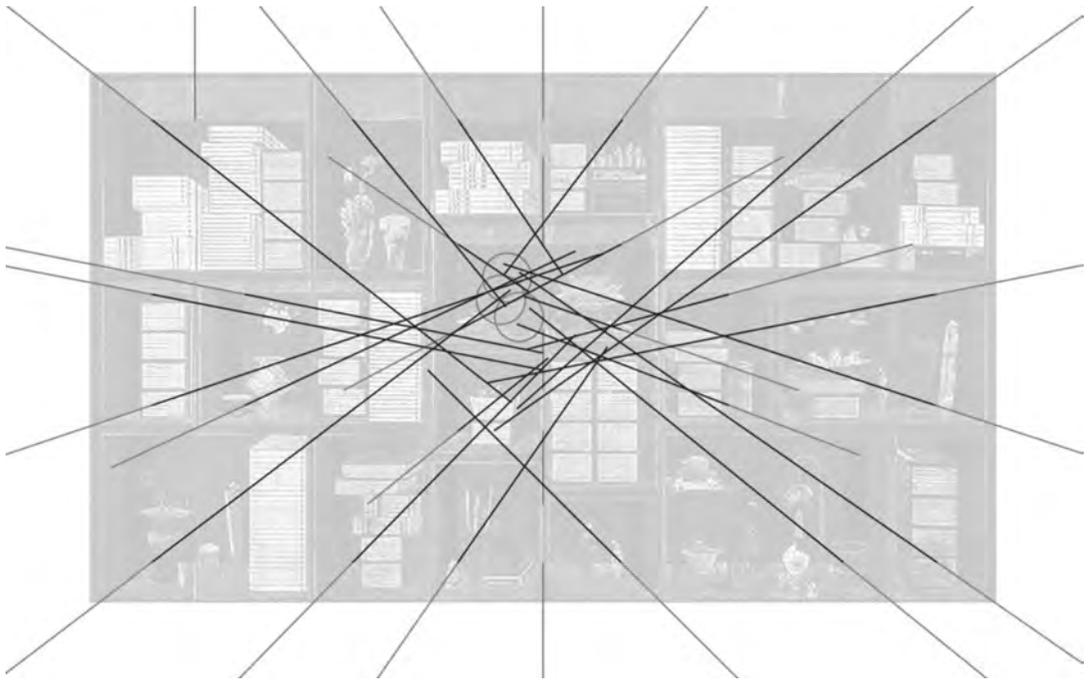


Figure 28. In this study, the vanishing lines are actually drawn all the way until they finish to see at what points these lines connect or intersect. From this diagram it can be seen that there is almost a shared vanishing point in three instances. And they all roughly center around the middle of the painting.

Chackgori also exist in a variety that do not depict any physical or known structure. Sometimes the objects, books and items sit independently in an often non-descript space or landscape. I think the bookshelves themselves have an extreme effect on how these spaces are depicted. In some instances, my attraction to these paintings could almost exist purely from examining the bookshelves by themselves. I think the stronger or more identifiable lines are captivating. They give a quick and palpable sense of space. I think that these independent or structureless paintings also have a very captivating element and it is less so on the structure but the structure that the objects themselves show. For example, the elements that create the distinguishable spatial lines are actually the books themselves. I find in these paintings that the books themselves become a hero or special item that establishes the entire painting. Without these books, these paintings would have less impact

and less sense of space. I tend to wonder if that is why these paintings have so much of their naming and their meaning coming from the word book, the word 'chaek'. Without such objects, all orientation would be lost.

In this series of sketches, it appears due to the absence of any defining structure, the objects, books and items all have an orientation independent of each other. And this creates a bit more chaos in terms of how the lines are oriented (See Figure 29). But I think it is interesting that the way the books are depicted is in a straightforward, linear or rectilinear fashion. And I think, as mentioned above, this has to do with maintaining an orientation. A structure in the absence of structure. The books are key elements here for establishing the entire painting and the entire space.

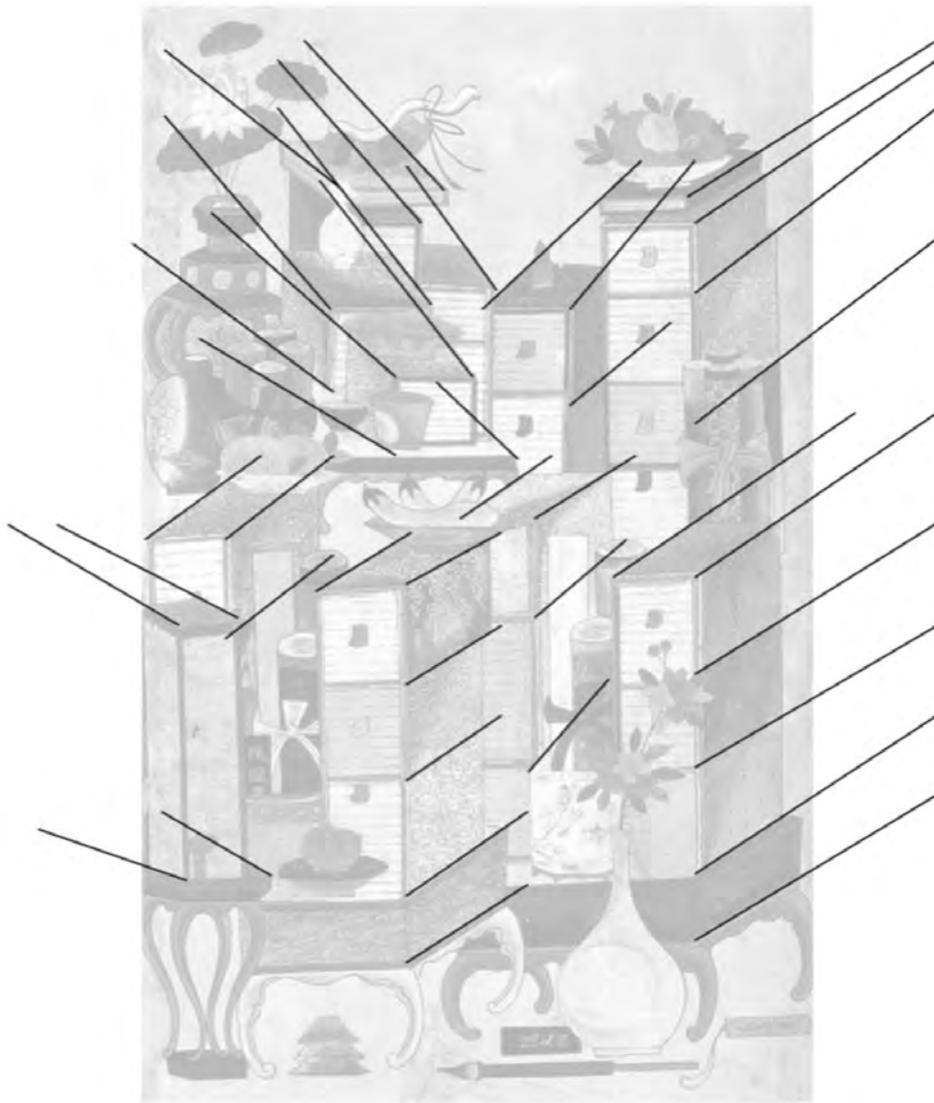


Figure 29. This is a study without the actual bookshelves. Many of the chaekgori were grounded and consisted of objects and items set within a space. I find these types of paintings to be equally interesting in terms of space in that the objects themselves do enough to portray and depict depth and dimension.

This series of studies was one of my first forays into what I think could best be described as traditional Korean aesthetics. A sense of visual identity based

in the past. A sense of visual identity created with influence from the outside world but also an interior logic and thinking that is endearingly Korean. I think what I found while doing these studies is again, this sense of charm and wonder that can only be created through such concepts of flexibility and adaptation. There is a sense of ease that exist in these paintings that I cannot readily find in other visual examples of form or culture.

I was immediately drawn to these from my very first viewing. And as a foreigner, who also has some roots or connections back to Korea, it was an entirely refreshing and wonderful experience to see these. I was captivated by the beauty and the beautiful representations of space. It was a pleasure to study such concepts and examine them in more detail.

I would say with these studies, upon further reflection, it would be interesting to try to produce these in physical space. In the second phase of this project, I began to explore taking physical examples of space and depicting them through such techniques. If a third phase of this research existed, it could be interesting to take these concepts of semi-parallel structures and see how they could be constructed or re-constructed in real, physical spaces.

### 4.3 Project Three: Seoul Collages

The next part of this thesis exploration involved observation of urban landscapes in Seoul. One of the keywords in this thesis is this continued concept of flexibility. How urban environments adapt, shift and react to their local residents. This is especially true in Seoul and a constant thread in Korean culture. It is not a culture of resistance but a culture that collectively moves together. The following project examines these concepts of space. How the urban space is defined collectively and how different aspects of the space can be re-positioned and re-assembled in a manner similar to Korean space construction. This project is called Relocation (See Figure 30, 31).

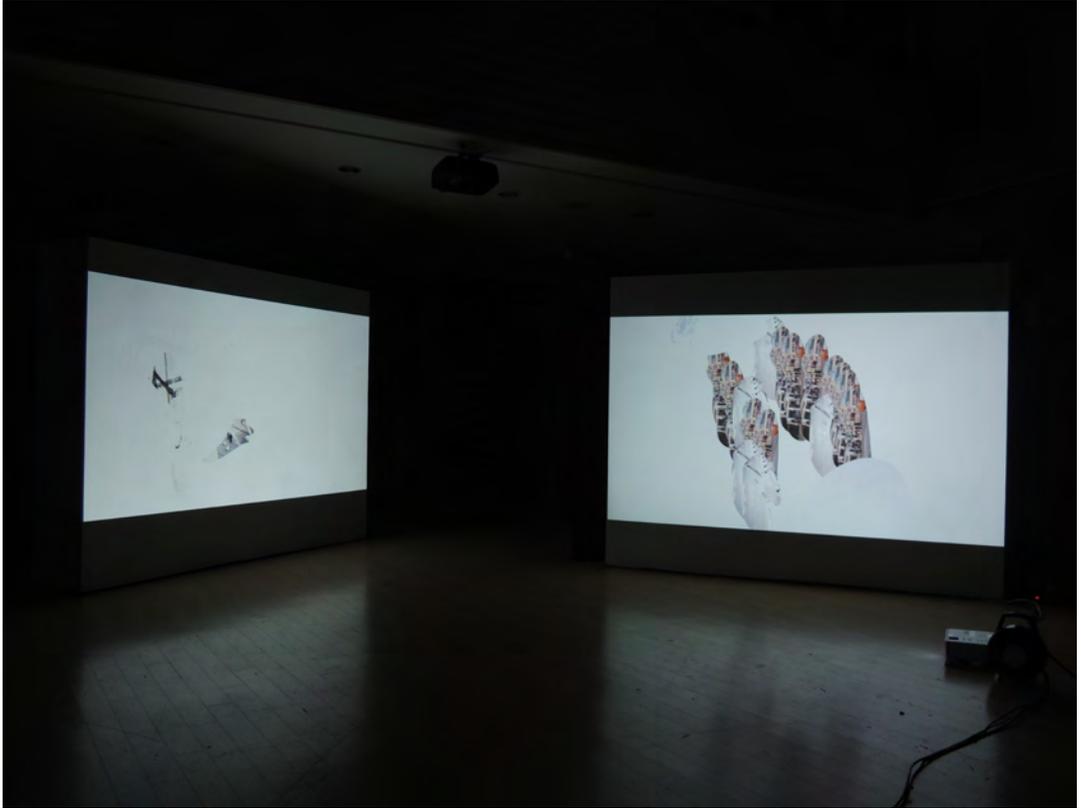


Figure 30. Relocation. Film, 1280x1024. Time: varied. A series of stills from the 81TY exhibit at Seoul National University.

Relocation often refers to the process of moving or transitioning from one space to another. In typical dialogues, relocation carries a certain authoritative weight. Often in association with immigration or settlement, the term implies a larger scale movement. In this project individual movements are isolated and then re-constructed together, thus implying a collective movement. A relocation. The collective process and re-juxtaposition in this project was inspired by the traditional analogue means of collage. This project sought to explore collage through motion. A moving collage exploring the concept of relocation.

Moving collage is the method I've been dubbing this and I felt it apropos for how I have approached this thesis and this particular project. A large part of the background of this thesis comes from the intersection of two and three dimensions. My background in architecture and my future and present in graphic design. I think part of my draw and interest in motion comes from this background in architecture. Motion can extend the flat surface. It can extend the space and the directions of the two-dimensional screen. I enjoy just as much what we do not see as what we do see. I enjoy what is coming next, what is coming after and what is coming before. I think this particular series was particularly exciting for me because I was playing more with how traditional framing devices work. And how things work when breaking out of the traditional box or rectangle as a means to represent a particular sequence or narrative.

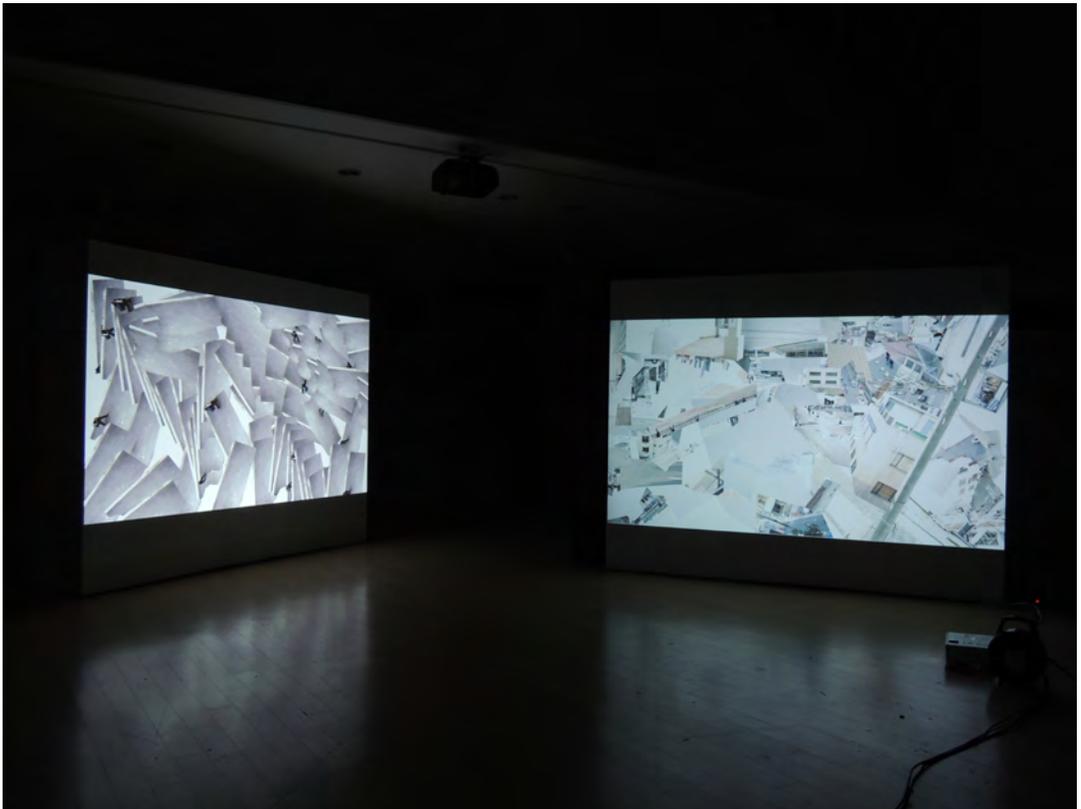


Figure 31. Relocation. Film, 1280x1024. Time: varied. A series of stills from the 81TY exhibit at Seoul National University.

The exploration of the bounding box was one of the first points of exploration in this study. I began to take the natural urban environments, the natural areas of distinction and separation and used them as moments to cut, piece together and re-edit glimpses and moments of space. It was a very physical way to look at the motion and the space of the city (See Figure 32). Some of the studies were much more complicated and involved lots of cutting and pasting. While others remained simpler. I think during this process, I found the element of illusion and loss of orientation to be the most fascinating part of this process. The orientation of the viewer, similar to chaekgori is dependent on the position and place of the viewer and the viewer's eyes. Although this was not the immediate intention when setting out on this project, the results were such.

This project also influenced the second half of the chaekgori series. It was here that I learned some of the founding principles for creating these multiple perspectives and working with them to create more extreme senses of depth and atmosphere.



Figure 32. Screen cut from the moving collage series. The following slide is an amalgamation of the city of Seoul from multiple perspectives.

It was found that isolation became a keyword. When some of the studies took on a simpler nature, when the actual elements or footage were isolated to a few moments, the effects and orientation of space were more powerful. More engaging. The viewer could concentrate and be absorbed in the activity at hand.

Another engaging element was not only isolation but the concept of negative space and how it could create more intense moments of focus as well. By stripping out elements of the bustling urban environment, the moments of the city somehow also become poetic. Moments for pause and reflection.



Figure 33. Another screen cut from this series. Here is a juxtaposition of emptiness with the chaotic nature of the city.

This project also began to experiment with elements of repetition. Taking certain elements and exploring with different time cycles in order to create a different take or perspective on the same environment or scene (See Figure 34, 35, 36, 37, 38). This process is explored in more detail in Section 4.6.



Figure 34. Another screen cut showing a repetitive sequence in the relocation project.



Figure 35. More juxtapositions of emptiness and chaos. Heavy use of negative space to allow for concentration and moments of pause.



Figure 36. More juxtapositions of emptiness and chaos.



Figure 37. More juxtapositions of emptiness and chaos. Here are some further explorations of repetition of a certain scene or element and allowing for a different experience of one environment.



Figure 38. Here is a detail of the same scene.

This project involved a lot of heavy observation of urban locations in Seoul. Intersections, places of work, places of industry, academic institutions, areas of commerce. The goal was to capture certain natural moments of movement and play with the idea of juxtaposition. Re-positioning them together and creating new ideas of movement or space. In each of these

movies and scenarios, the space itself is static. It consists of a few defined parameters for space. Streets, walls, buildings, structures. The movement itself comes from those that occupy the space. These are moments from the city that define the city. The spaces are not those defined by the actual walls or limits of architecture but those defined by the occupants. The passengers within the spaces.

#### 4.4 Project Four: Visual Ondol

As mentioned in the beginning of this dissertation, Ondol is a technology that heats the floors of most residential spaces in Korea. It is distinctly Korean and it is one of the original designs that many Koreans cherish both for its history and for its efficiency. It is also a special part of design history in Korea. One of the fascinating components of this design and technology is that it does not have much of a visual component. It is for the most part, a concept that remains more felt than scene. The actual technology and visual components remain hidden under the flooring of housing and units here in Korea. When asking many local residents, it is not surprising to find that many locals have an unclear visual understanding of how ondol works. For this reason, this particular research series felt very apropos for this visual exploration of Korean spatial concepts. What could some kind of visualization of Ondol or the concept of Ondol look like?

Ondol is readily identifiable for its spatial components. In the winter time, people identify with the culture that exists above and around the floor. Housing is sometimes centered on where and how the ondol heating works strongest or most efficiently. Such concepts have a long history here in Korea and have influenced both interior design and interior architecture. This floor culture and the concept of closeness to the floor is also distinctly Korean and one that has a direct relationship to this technology. Many Korean household's social activity and existence are centered on this relationship with the warmth centered on and within the floor.

For this particular project, the thinking was what if the concept of ondol or heat could be visualized. Creating a sort of visual identification of heat or energy. And something that could actively exist on the floor or to extend this floor culture. For this project, similar to the concept of Pyeongsang, the aforementioned space existing outside for locals and visitors, I sought to create a kind of visual platform that could represent heat and the concept of heat. Using a series of LED bands and a semi-transparent surface that could reflect these lights, I created a platform that visually looked warm. The actual LED bands themselves do not produce an entirely large amount of heat. But there is some level of heat that could be associated with these platforms. But I was not so curious about the actual reproduction of heat. I was more interested in this idea of a place, on the floor that people would gravitate towards for similar reasons. The concept of heat, whether visual or not, and the idea of a space on the floor. This project consisted of two incarnations. The first incarnation was a smaller board, smaller than the typical pyeongsang. This board was installed in an actual exhibit space where visitors could sit on this space and occupy this space(See Figure 39, 40, 41). The space was the Doosung paper gallery and was part of the Illust Festa series of exhibitions for designers and illustrators.

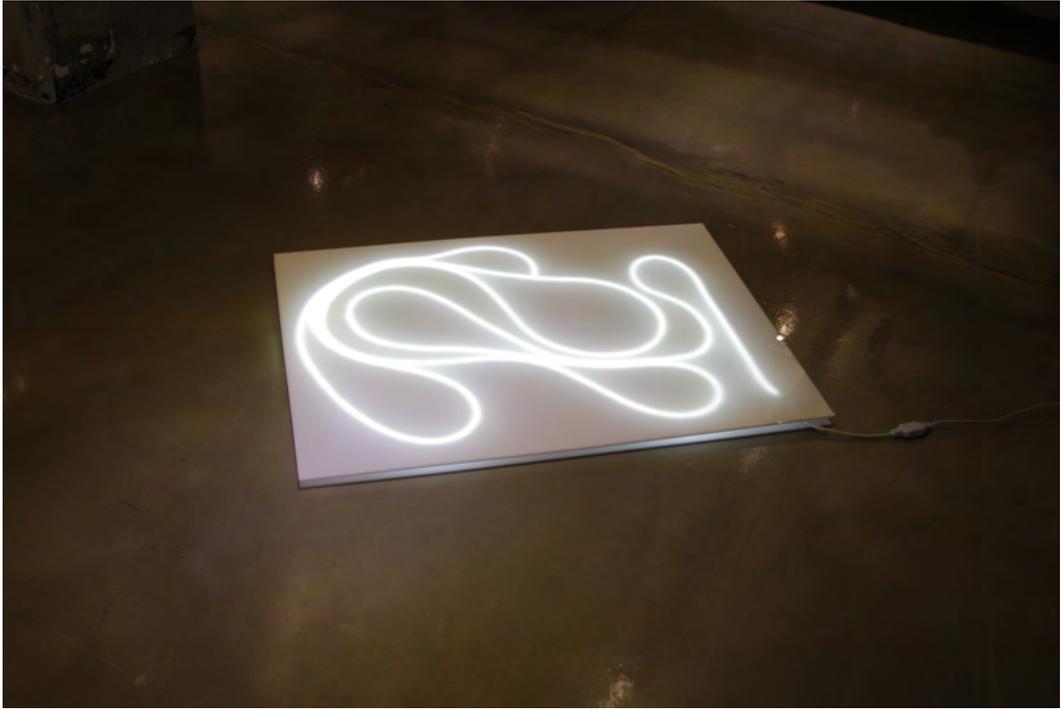


Figure 39. Visual ondol, experiment one. This is a plate that can exist in some capacity as furniture. It is a visualization of ondol conceptually.

Although installed within the exhibition space, there was a certain hesitancy from visitors to interact with and occupy the space. Perhaps it was the atmosphere of an exhibition where artworks are typically off limits or inaccessible. Or the fear of damaging certain artworks. But those that did occupy the object did not have a certain sense of comfort with this space. Although small and not necessarily comfortable in terms of the jangpan or pyeongsang type of space, this visual space did hold certain elements of comfort for those who were occupying it. Those who sat in this space remarked of the certain familiarities that existed when occupying a space like this. The visual component just added something slightly different as it was explained. Something that was not familiar and something that perhaps did not add so much to the visual experience. After doing this initial study, I

was curious to create a larger space. More in lines of the size and use of the pyeongsang. I was curious to see if this could change some of the dynamic of this space.



Figure 40. Here the function of this system can be seen with an occupant sitting on the actual surface.



Figure 41. The visual component in tandem with the technological component can form a concept of space.

The next series of studies went a bit further and explored different sizes and capacity as an outdoor or external visual experience. The following images show some of the larger visual ondol system in space and in action (See Figure 42, 43). The reason for this series of tests was to explore the structure and the physical characteristics of a slightly larger space. A space more physically in line with that of the pyeongsang.



Figure 42. Here exists a larger unit. Using a more traditional color scheme, the larger shape was explored in its closeness to other Korean outdoor spaces such as the Pyeonsang.



Figure 43. The pyeongsang is an outdoor space that has not been explored with heat in this capacity.

Although larger in size, the perceived and actual effects of such a physical change were somewhat limited. But one observation was that the space was considerably more occupiable. This second, larger visual ondol space was installed at an exhibition center in Namsan. With lots of foot traffic, the interest and curiosity for this space was increased as well as the occupation and use of it.

One of the interesting things to note was the pure fascination with the lighting and optical component. Compared to other static works and other objects within the space, the use of lights added an instant curiosity that was definitely palpable. The platforms became a space for many pictures and curious double takes by visitors. Perhaps this is similar to the scientific reaction of insects and light sources, but there is definitely a natural reaction

and inclination of human beings towards light. This leads me to wonder what could happen if this increased in a larger capacity and in residential spaces? Could this change the concept of coming home? Imagine a lighting system where instead of overhead lights, floor lighting was the preferred system to go in tandem with ondol technology? It is an interesting thought and one that I think has potential for the residential designs that we currently live in every day.

#### 4.5 Project Five: The Force

This project was interested in visualizing some of the unseen or invisible 'forces' found in Korean spaces. Often known as 'gi' or '기운' this subject is a somewhat controversial subject in Korea. Partly because there is limited scientific evidence to prove of its existence, the actual conduction of this project proved challenging in many ways because of this. But it is a fascinating subject and well worth exploration spatially. The concept is fascinating because in an objective manner, it can almost be said that people can feel its existence. And I mean objective because many people have had different incarnations of this experience. So, although this has not been proven and is very difficult to prove, many people can account for this in one form or another from their local experiences. The basis for some of this thinking exists in traditional Chinese concepts of 'feng shui' and other models for circulation with more widespread acceptance and understanding. But there are other subtler forms of gi as well. Sometimes within spaces, even within and amongst people, there is a certain sense of gi that people here in Korea believe in and adhere to. Some people may remark that a certain person has a certain sense of gi. This would imply that this person, has a certain energy or force that can be easily felt. Others might comment that even within a certain meeting or common gathering, there is a certain gi that exists in this space. This can make or break the space. Sometimes the gi provides for a good energy and that carries over into, say, a good meeting.

But all of these are intuitive processes. They are felt, or the gi is felt and it is not so much seen. It is something that is commonly understood to exist but there has been no way to prove its existence.

The reason for conducting the following project was to see if it could be possible to visual a normally visual-less form. The gi is something that people can sometimes feel but has never been seen visually. Although such explorations could be criticized heavily for their inability to be proven, as this is visual practice-based research, the thought was to try something that others might be less inclined to try. Therefore, for four weeks, a series of experiments took place seeing if this concept of gi could be captured visually and how it relates to both physical and conceptual space in Korea.

For this project, we were allowed to use a traditional Hanok in Seongbukdong called Marodayan. It was a traditional city Hanok and one that had undergone some renovation but was basically still in its original shape and form.

The Marodayan Hanok is a traditional 'L' or 'ㄱ' shaped Hanok. In this space we did spatial testing on both the inside and the outside of the Hanok. This space was selected for its openness and for its 'regularity', meaning it was a very common type of Hanok with no particular extensions or architectural additions. The goal was to find a very representative space of Korea or Seoul. This research took place during the summer time, a hot and temperate time to do testing of this kind. This proved difficult in that at times it was difficult to ascertain the existence of any circulation due to the lack of wind or breeze existing here. But other than this, it seemed that the conditions and environment were admirable to test this concept of gi. The residing manager of Marodayan was a monk who operated and controlled most of the maintenance of the hanok. She gave us many bits of wisdom and advice during our studies. One thing she mentioned over and over again was that this hanok had very good gi energy. People slept well here and were very comfortable here. This lead us to believe that we could find some results from further exploring this space.

Another interesting aspect of this space was its asymmetry. As it was an L shaped hanok, the dimensions were never symmetrical and this kind of imbalance felt proper as well. Scholars often researched some of the benefits and experiences found within asymmetry. It was often thought that asymmetrical visualizations could eliminate certain concepts of boredom and monotony. This was particularly true with feng shui and some of the ideological aspects of spaces.<sup>18</sup> In this particular space, this asymmetry was seen as an added bonus for such studies.

Another common conception of Hanok was this connection between the inside and outside world.<sup>19</sup> The walls functioned more so as transitional spaces that allowed a dialogue between the inside and outside. In this L shaped Hanok, this was also extremely palpable. Despite the temperate conditions, the resident Monk kept many of the screens open exposing and allowing a connection to the maru space. This was also a good sign of gi with the space.

The last concept that had influence on this study was this concept of the void. We mentioned the void above in several different studies and concepts and it holds true within the concept and space of the hanok as well. It is often said that the void is the most important aspect of gi. Without void, gi cannot exist.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that in this asymmetrical space with a larger than normal maru, the void was a large part of how the occupants of

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<sup>18</sup> Choi, Eunjeong, pg. 91

<sup>19</sup> Choi, Eunjeong, pg. 91

<sup>20</sup> Yoo, Jinhyung, pg. 19.

this hanok operated with the space. It was due to these elements that the space did indeed feel comfortable and the circulation felt healthy.

It has been written before that the maru can be thought of as a spontaneous space.<sup>21</sup> It is a space without any planning and that allows for divergence. There is a term called liver or living that can describe a space that is meant to grow from the inside to the outside. This space can be thought of as such. It is a space where both a psychological sense of openness as well as security can co-exist.

For this project I got to meet professor Park Si Ik who was formerly a professor at Hanyang University in the Department of Architecture. He was kind enough to talk to our team about some of the basic concepts of gi or feng shui and give us a sense of how to determine the existence of it in spaces. He talked much about the actual role of architecture on gi and how the hanok is a particularly plentiful structure for such concepts. He also talked about the flow of water underneath the earth and how lots of this tend to lead to unhealthy circulation. At first he was quite adamant about us researching a hanok in another section of town. Marodayan was in Seongbukdong and he was of the opinion that hanok in this area of town had poorer circulation than others. He also noted that the water flow beneath this particular hanok was of high quantities. This also should attribute to poor circulation he said. But this point seemed debatable with the resident monk who was convinced that this hanok had good circulation. It was a point of contention that, similar to this study, could have no real conclusions due to the un-scientific nature of these concepts. Professor Park did note that there were many positives to this particular hanok and that it would still be an acceptable space to further study. Just intuitively, I could also feel something positive about this space.

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<sup>21</sup> Yoo, Jinhyung, pg. 20

For all of the above reasons I was curious to see what kind of gi could be found in this hanok and more so, as with the other projects in this dissertation, how could we visualize this gi. We were convinced there were ample amounts of gi in this space but how would we capture this visually? This presented some great challenges as we were essentially tasked with visualizing the invisible. And it is not like the wind which is tangible and has a direction that can be felt. For the most part, we would be going on feeling something that was extremely subtle and not so swift to identify.

After several rounds of thought as well as some consultation with Professor Park, I determined that the best instrument for determining the existence and/or flow of gi was the human body itself. The only way to determine this concept was to use our intuition and use the five senses to measure and gauge its existence. The subjective nature of this lead me to believe that it would not be believable to use just one body/person. It would have to be a number of people to see if there was some truth or direction to this gi. For this study, I was fortunate to work with a team of nine researchers who would function as some kind of measurement system for gi. In order to visualize this, I thought it would be necessary to have something to indicate direction or flow. If gi existed, where was it going and was it really going all in one direction. I created a series of arrows that could be used in tandem with the five senses to see if there could be some kind of flow or direction. So, each of the researchers was given an arrow and, in each session,, they closed their eyes and attempted to feel the direction of the gi (See Figure 44, 45). We conducted several tests in this manner. Unfortunately, it was difficult to ascertain a single direction. I'm not sure exactly what I was expecting from this study but I had the strange hope that we would be able to find something or something would appear to us through consensus. This was unfortunately not the case.



Figure 44. In this experiment, the researchers are carrying visual indicators of space. Arrows that can be adjusted so that each participant can show which direction they can feel both the circulation and the 'force' existing in the space.



Figure 45. As can be seen in these two slides, the assumption that one singular direction would appear was slightly flawed. Although there was a general direction for the circulation, it was not an obvious one that could be immediately determined based upon the position of the arrows.

This initial series of tests with the arrows took place in the maru or outside area of the hanok. I was curious to see if there would be any kind of difference between the inside and the outside. This thinking was based upon the aforementioned notion of transitional spaces and openness.

After this first series of tests, we took the arrows and the researchers inside to attempt a similar series of tests while inside the hanok? The inside of the hanok did make for a more comfortable atmosphere. There was more places to comfortably reside as well as feel the general direction or flow of the gi within the space (See Figure 46, 47). Here we conducted a similar series of studies. Unfortunately, similar to the first series of studies, there were

multiple directions depicted by the arrows and no general consensus. Perhaps unfortunate is a poor word choice as this was in many ways, somewhat to be expected. We conducted inside, several rounds of experiments trying to collectively gather a consensus gi. For the most part, a maximum of three arrows were collectively pointing in one direction. Although the results were mixed, the participants noted that it was interesting to utilize these senses to try to gather a certain direction or impulse for the gi. This was a positive attribute to this series of studies and perhaps something that had made it worthwhile for even myself to begin to utilize some of these senses and detection mechanisms.



Figure 46. The following stills show tests from within the space. The interior of the space also proved difficult to determine a singular direction of circulation.



Figure 47. Here another angle of the arrows and the researchers attempting to find any kind of consensus direction for the circulation or force of the space.

After doing several group studies using a team of researchers, the next series employed the use of one researcher alone. For this particular research I thought it would be interesting to work with an artist or designer who was used to using their body as both expression, vessel and perhaps system for measurement. For this particular series, the researcher was a contemporary dancer named Hong Kyung Woo. She began a series of explorations using just the arrow as a device that she then began exploring the space with (See Figure 48, 49). Similar to the previous set of experiments, this series of studies began first on the outside and then later moved inside.

This series, similar to the first series was a bit ambitious and simultaneously ambiguous in its results. With a singular researcher, we ran into the issues we mentioned previously about impartiality or objectivity. It was difficult to determine the scope of her interpretation of the space and her channeling of a particular direction for the gi. But it can be said that this series was fascinating from a performance point of view. There was something very

fascinating and engrossing about her interpretation of the space purely from a movement point of view. She seemed to be reacting to the space in a manner that was in strong accord with any kind of circulation or gi that might be in this space.



Figure 48. A series of interpretative dance performances dealing with this concept of 'force' by the contemporary dancer Hong Kyung Woo. Here she was reacting to both the interior and exterior of the Hanok and allowing the 'force' to inform her movements. The following two performances were captured on film and exist as both film and stills. The arrow that she is carrying is a signifier of direction.



Figure 49. This series was explored in the courtyard or open space of the Hanok.

This series also had an interior component. In many ways, the outdoor component was similar to the indoor component. It was a bit ambiguous in terms of results but it was fascinating from a movement perspective. The inner space, with its restrictions and size limitations also proved to be an interesting space for expression and detection of gi. I think one of the most interesting parts of this particular study was the effect of shoes. Strangely enough, in the absence of shoes, there is a certain flow and understanding of the space that is neglected when with shoes. Although it sounds a bit ironic and implausible, this is a certain connection that also reminds me of being distinctly Korean. Many Korean households insist on the absence of shoes and I think this creates for a different understanding an awareness of space. For Hong Kyung Woo, it seemed to bring something different to her interpretation of the space. At least from a visual point of view.



Figure 50. This series was explored in the interior shared space of the Hanok. This space was particularly sensitive to circulation. The owner of the space had proclaimed that residents and people who stayed in this space for long periods of time could feel the effects of the circulation here.



Figure 51. Another angle in the same series within the Hanok space.

The next two series of studies employed the use of lights. One of the fascinating points of light as mentioned above, is the stimulation and reaction from the human eye. There is a certain level of palpability that is increased or enhanced with the use of lights or light elements. It was through such thinking that I thought light to be an appropriate channel to try to gauge the circulation or movement of gi. I was inspired particularly from some of the work of Harold Edgerton and his capturing of sequences. Sequences that are typically difficult to see with the regular, un-aided human eye. I was also particularly fascinated with long exposure light

photography for similar reasons. I thought that through such long exposure, certain spaces and concepts became clearer and more visible to the human eye.

For this particular study, I brought some light systems into the Hanok space. Using a similar system to the previous studies using arrows, I began to explore the possibility of capturing the gi or circulation of the space through light. In this particular group of studies, I asked the researchers to hold a light system and adjust it based upon how they were feeling the circulation to move. Similar to the directional studies using the arrows, I thought that there might be some kind of significant direction or movement with the gi. When examining the photographs of this series, it can be seen that the configuration of the light source was moving in certain directions but, similar to the arrow studies, it left much to be desired in terms of accuracy or even democracy(See Figure 52, 53, 54, 55, 56). There was a certain randomness to these series of studies that I wish was reduced or dampened. The interesting concept in this series was as the researchers held the light and adjusted the light in the dark hanok space, the space actually took on different qualities. Although not exactly my intentions when starting out with this series of studies, I found these results to be pleasantly fascinating. As they adjusted the light per their reaction to the gi, it felt that the ambience and energy of the room was changing as well. And this was probably the closest I became to finding some sort of gi or force within this space. In hindsight, I think different ways of working with the lights could also yield better results. For example, perhaps I could have created more individualized strands of light so that each researcher could have more sensitive levels of detection. Perhaps a system of small micro lights or LED lights that were more reactive and able to track some of the conditions of the body while detecting the circulation could have been more accurate or more expressive of such detections.



Figure 52. Here our team of researchers is exploring visually, the 'force' of the space with the use of a visual indicator. The visual indicator here is an LED line that each of the researchers held and adjusted based upon their intuitive sense of the position and circulation of the 'force'.



Figure 53. Here is another still of the researchers exploring circulation. This series was also documented in film format and it can be seen how the researchers are reacting to the space and how their intuition is informing the positioning of the visual indicator.

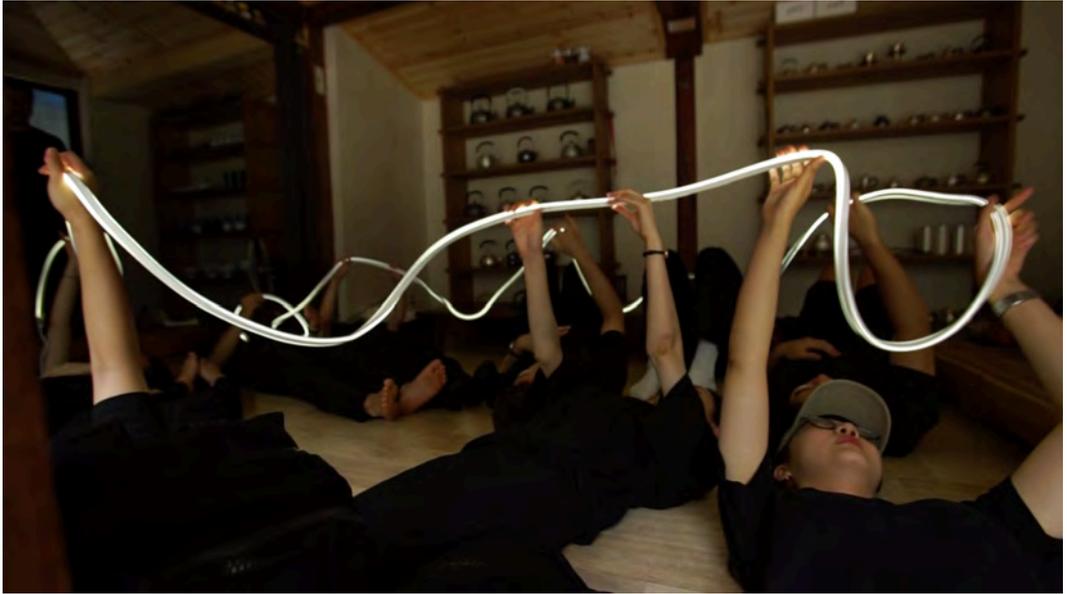


Figure 54. A zoom in of the LED study.

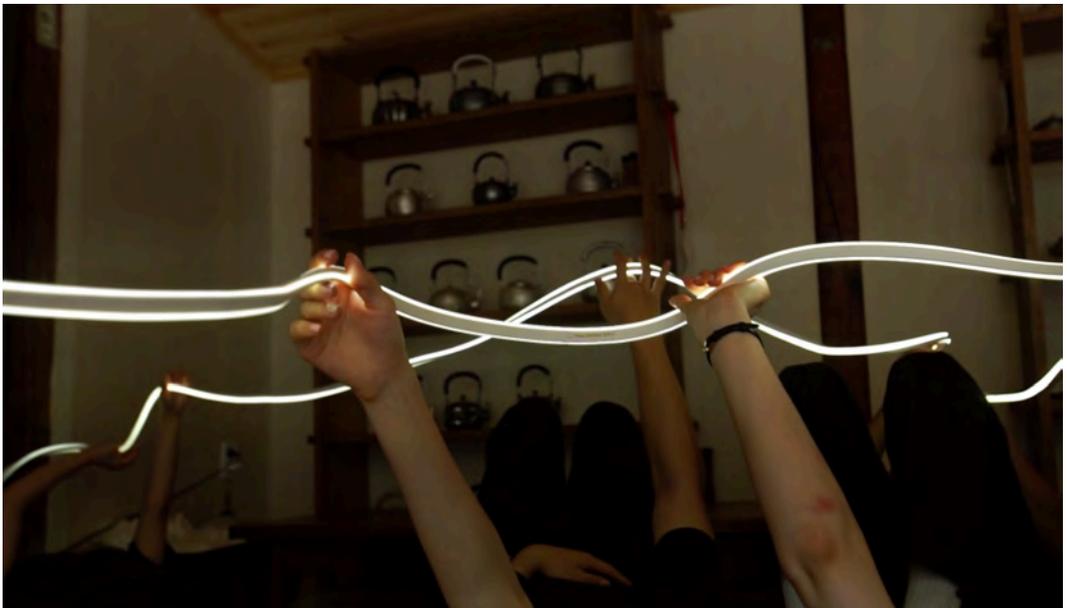


Figure 55. A further close up of the LED line in action.



Figure 56. The visual indicator was an LED line that could capture the intuitive positioning of the researchers based upon their sense of space and circulation.

The final series of experiments in this series was focused less on the space itself but attempts to capture both movement, force, circulation and gi. This next series I was curious about long exposure techniques and their ability to capture movement. As mentioned above, some of this series was inspired by the projects of Harold Edgerton. I was curious about visually recognizing or capturing some sense of circulation within a space. Although not exactly accurate to the levels of circulation, one can see some of the dynamic of energy in movement through these studies (See Figure 57, 58, 59). There is a certain beauty by which motion is captured and being able to see some of the details of motion was a fascinating part of this group of studies.

This series of studies took place not within the confines of a hanok space but in some general spaces. The reason for this was because of the length of

time and the amount of space required for accurate studies for capturing movement. It was not possible to achieve this in the marodayan space.

The overall results from this series were perhaps less indicative of any kind of circulation or direction but more so an interesting study I would say on gi. The visual aspect of these studies and the level of detail captured within each series was probably the greatest merit to this group of experiments. I think similarly in hindsight, an additional layer of lights or light capturing ability could be interesting for the progression of this study. Perhaps a closer link to the body and how the body accurately is captured could aid this study further. I also think that a more space-oriented perspective for this work could yield more interesting results. For this recent study, the space almost is not as important as the lights. And I felt that I had lost my track or position slightly while doing these studies. But the results were, as mentioned above, visually fascinating and I think there is still much potential here for further study.



Figure 57. This is another series of explorations on the 'force' and using another form of visual indication. A traditional technique in photography is the use of extended exposure to capture movement or the sense of movement. Here the extended exposure technique is used with a visual indicator of light to see if a certain sense of circulation could be captured.



Figure 58. More in the same series but taking place within a different space.



Figure 59. More in the same series but taking place within a different space.

## 4.6 Variable Perspective / Depth & Reverse Perspective

Returning back to the chaekgori as a source of inspiration and structure, this next series of explorations focuses on the concept of variable perspective. Variable perspective is a situation where you have more than one perspective in one frame or environment. Similar to reverse perspective, the concept mentioned above, the technique of variable perspective has several advantages and possibilities that are unique to some of the visual properties of chaekgori. In variable perspective, you obviously get instances of reverse perspective. But the sheer quantity of perspectives also gives you several other visual sensations that are unique and distinguishable (See Figure 60). The most prominent sensation is the sense of depth.



Figure 60. In this diagram, one can see the variable perspectives that exist in chaekgori. Here, the eyes represent the different placement of all figures as they walk along and consume this painting either in space or in motion.

Stereoscopics is a system where doubling an image or the process of stereopsis provides sensations of more depth. Similar to binoculars, when

the image is doubled, with both eyes working, one gets a greater sense of variation in shade, perception and depth of field (See Figure 61).



Figure 61. An old stereoscopic image showing the sense of depth.

This portion explored the concept of stereopsis with additional elements of reverse perspective. Creating moments of impossibility and performance. In some of the traditional Korean chaekgori, there were always moments of irony or impossibility. The dimensions, the way certain objects were brought together. Such moments also enhance the viewing experience in very unique and idiosyncratic ways.

The following pages explore both elements of variable perspective in addition to elements of reverse perspective. The first series of images are initial sketches for exploring the display of several perspectives in one scenario or environment. Taking inspiration from chaekgori, each of these studies involves a panel like system in order to display or house various

content. In this situation, the content is a various mix of graphics, found footage or created footage. Many of these examples are using footage of the street. The reason I used footage from the street was that it created another layer of depth to the perception of depth. By taking existing perspective and adding an additional layer of perspective on top of it, this sensation of variable perspective was that much more enhanced.

For this particular research series, I also did explorations in the absence of color. The reason for this was because I wanted the focus to be more so on the actual perspective and the sensations related to perspective.

The first series of investigations involved some simple representations of space(See Figure 62, 63). One of the fascinating elements of chaekgori is this portrayal of depth and space within the two-dimensional plane. Here the charm comes from the overlapping of perspective—creating two or more perspectives in one plane. In typical western thinking and spatial representation, this goes counter to logic. It does not make any sense in some capacity and this creates for what I believe is a beautiful moment of contradiction. Where reality and hyper-reality blend together. One of the great moments of chaekgori is found in a concept called ‘formative humor’<sup>22</sup> which is another way to explain this blending of contrasting concepts. Formative humor is the ability to capture four dimensions within a single plane and the ability to express something freely that could not exist. This is just the personal opinion of the researcher but I do feel this is a very integral part of Korean aesthetics. The ability to blend reality. Layered experiences. So, the first series of visual explorations sought to discover different aspects of formative humor.

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<sup>22</sup> Shim Kyu Sub

*Chaekgori*

Tongil News, Seoul, South Korea, January 25, 2013.

<http://m.tongilnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=101239>

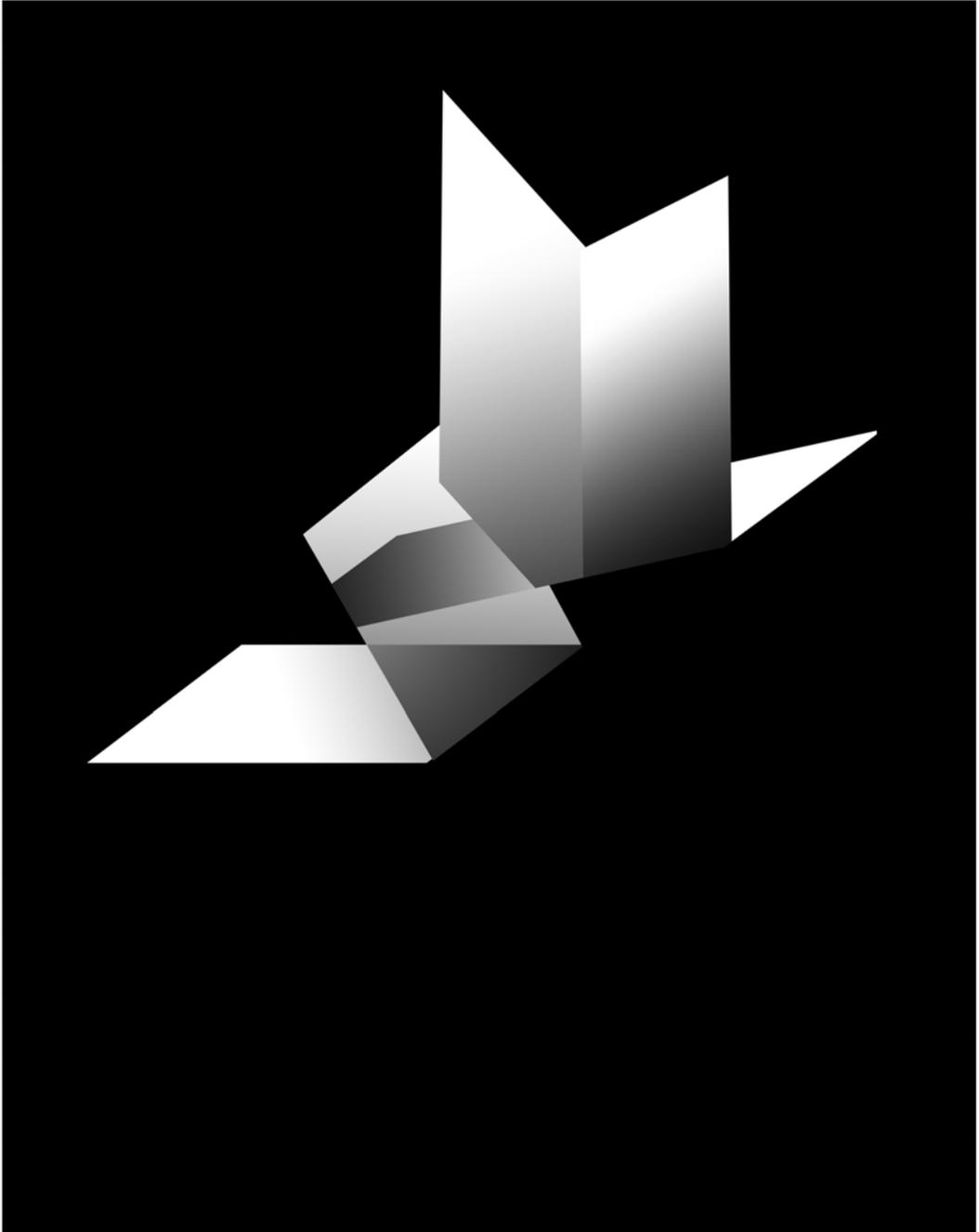


Figure 62. Initial sketches showing potential variable perspective environments.

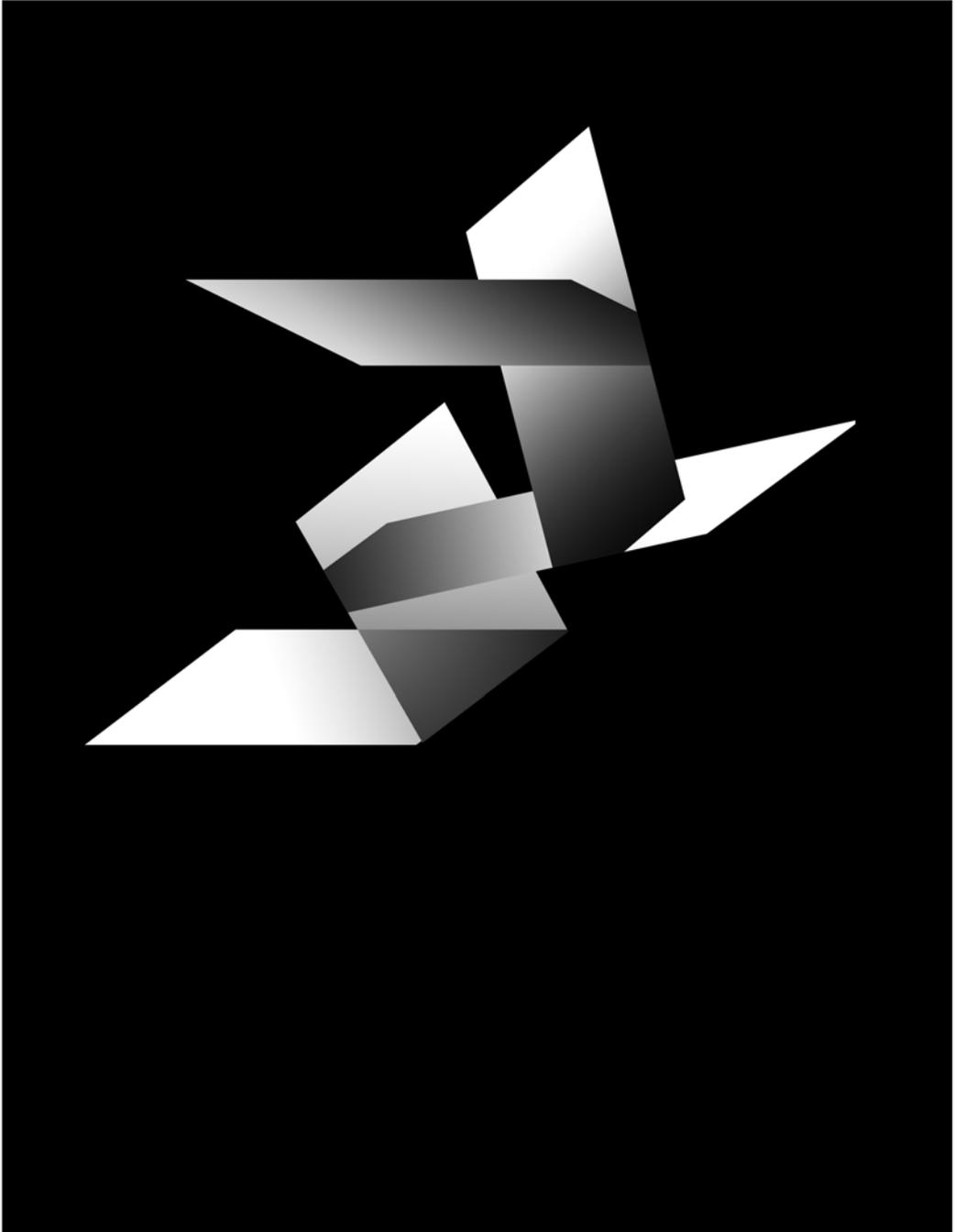


Figure 63. Initial sketches showing potential variable perspective environments.

The next phase of explorations continued aspects of formative humor but replaced some of the static planes with planes that were in motion. The idea was to add a new spatial layer upon this thinking. The incorporation of movement does several things. It creates different sensations of depth that static images do not. One of the joys of motion graphics is its ability to create spaces that exist off screen. Traditional cinematography and film thinking employs the elements of what is off screen just as much as what is on screen. This technique allows for more visceral perceptions of depth and space. This was particularly relevant for explorations in perspective and the desire to create moments of the aforementioned formative humor.

This next series of studies employed moving planes but also intentionally discarded what could be construed as content(See Figure 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69). The actual motion and depictions of motion were intentionally blurred to explore the effect of a moving surface and how such a moving surface could increase or enhance this notion of perspective and space. This was later abandoned in further studies as the effect was rather ambiguous. But in these initial studies, as opposed to a static plane, the thinking was a moving plane would provide enhanced levels of depth.

The next goal in these studies was to employ the actual systematic frameworks within chaekgori. How the planes sit on the same environment, yet they utilize totally different concepts of perspective. In each of the following studies, I intentionally sought to create these moments of extreme contrast. Again, formative humor relies on the ability to break conventions and the actual logics of reality. Here, the moving planes exist in one reality yet maintain their own individual rules of thinking.

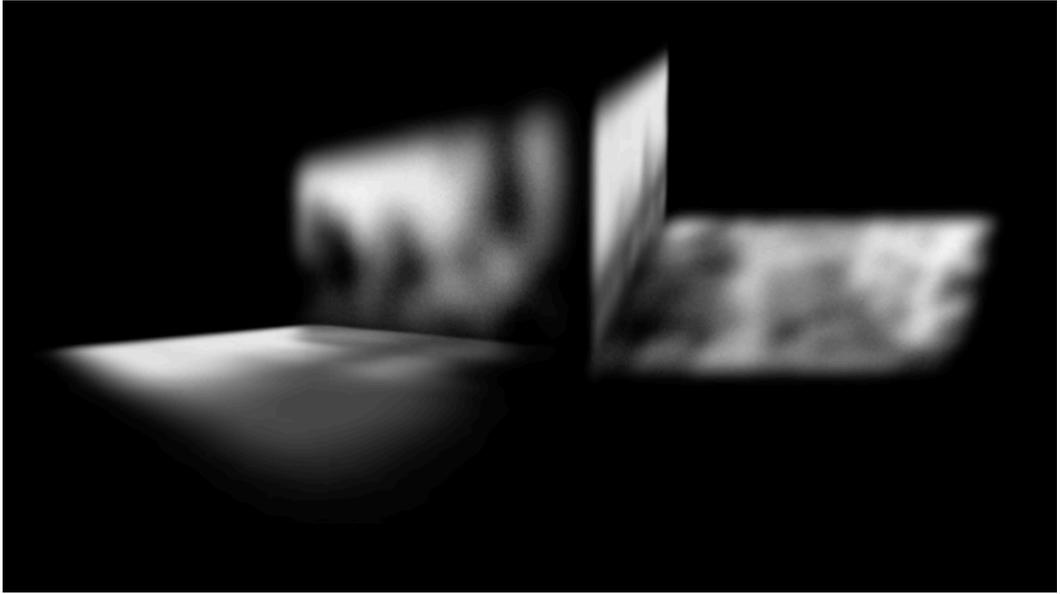


Figure 64. Motion sketches enabling the variable perspectives. Here two different sets of perspective exist at once, thus creating the sensation of reverse perspective.

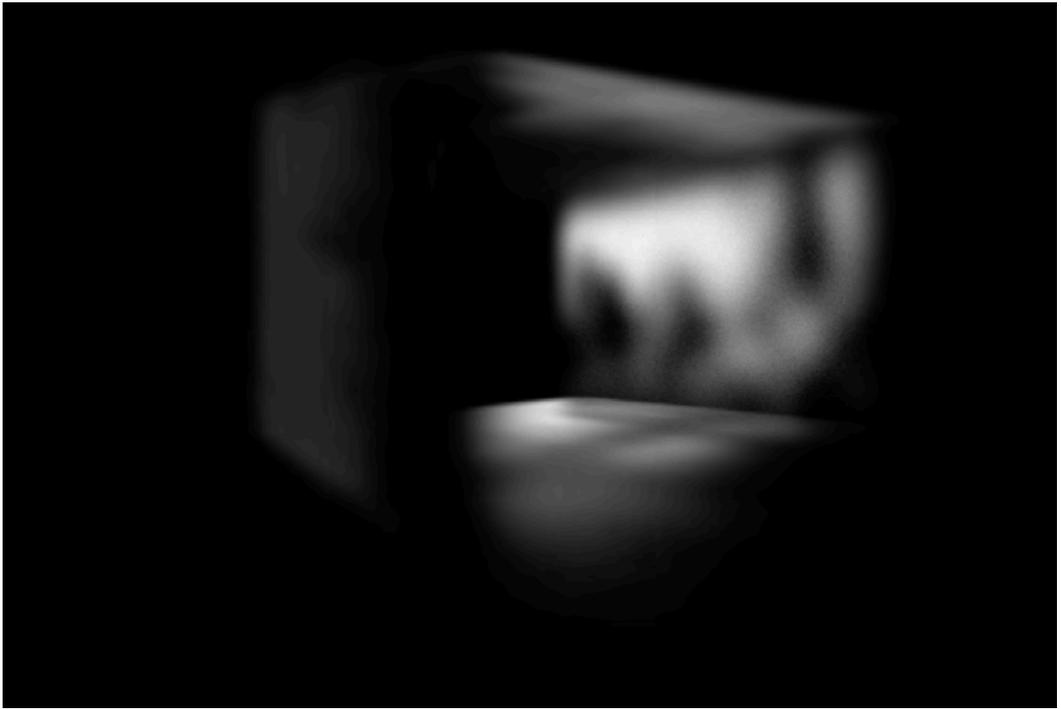


Figure 65. A motion sketch making use of the existing framework often found in chaekgori.

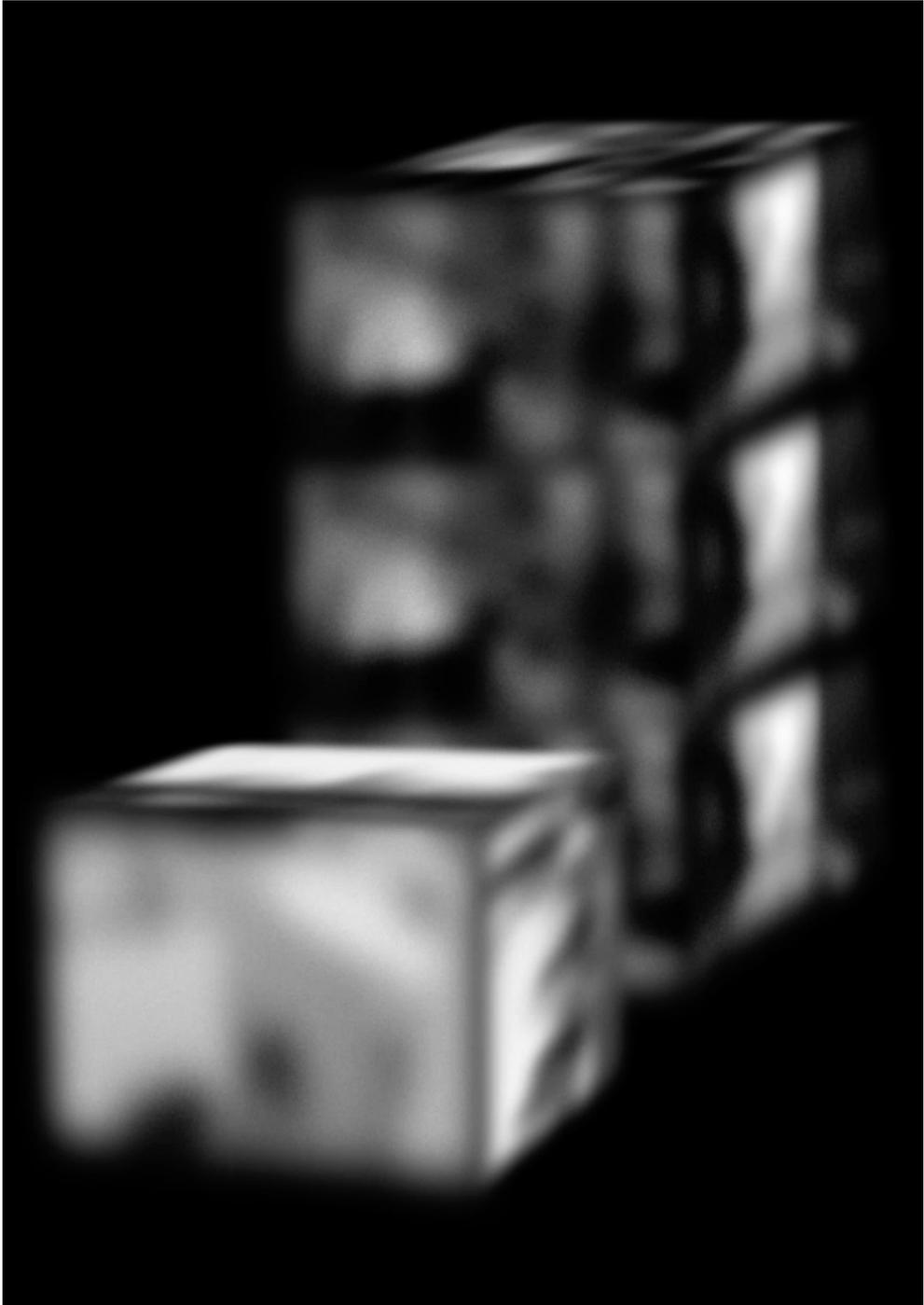


Figure 66. A series of motion sketches further utilizing the existing framework of chaekgori.

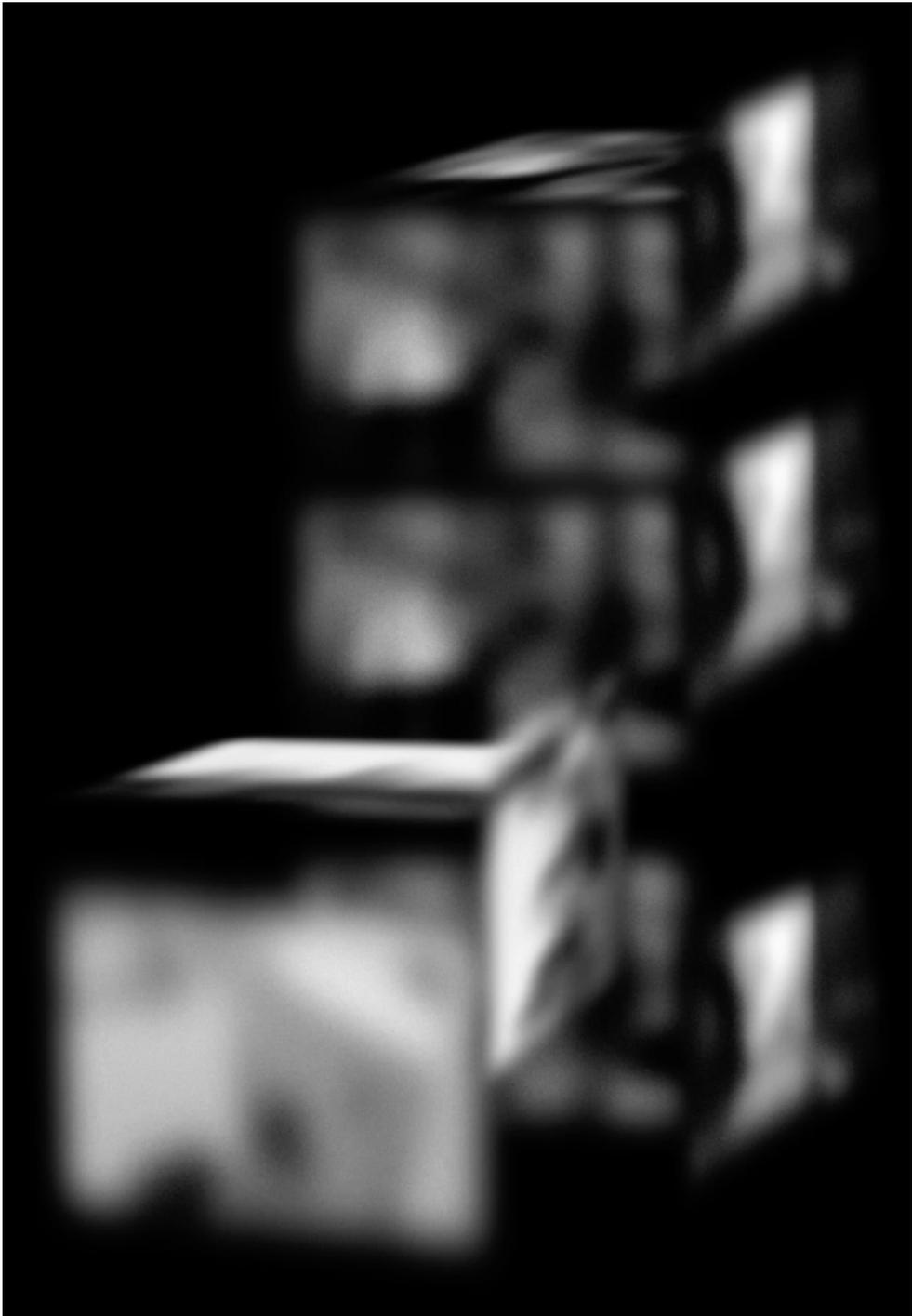


Figure 67. A series of motion sketches further utilizing the existing framework of chaekgori. This one is showing the expansion of frames.

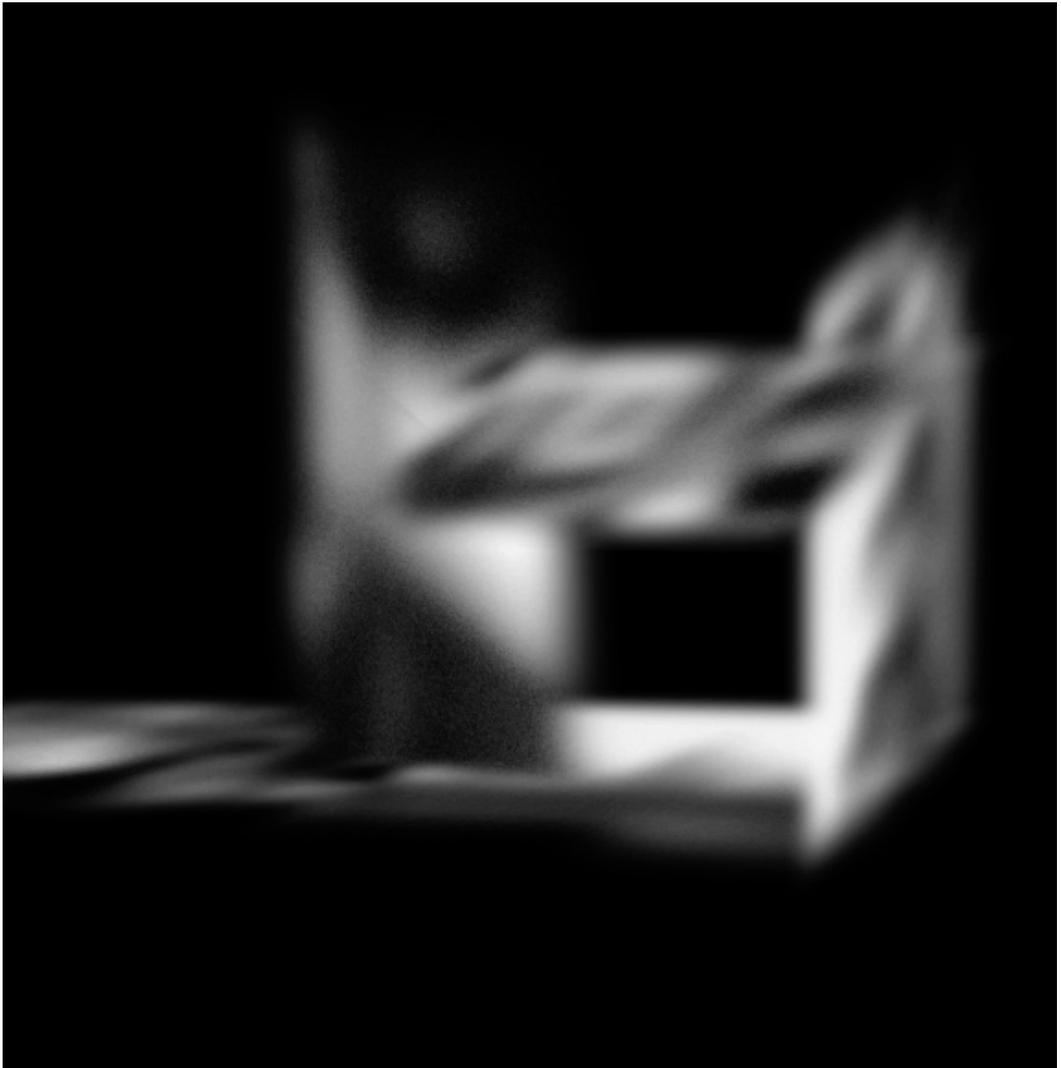


Figure 68. A still cut from the same series.



Figure 69. Here are some experiments substituting the angle and perspective of the street with an alternative source. This time the human face. The intention of this was to see how perspective could be rendered without some of the facades and vanishing points from the street. This series was not as successful.

After these initial studies using blurred and abstract moving surfaces and planes, I decided to return back to identifiable surfaces and planes. Part of the reason was due to feedback from peers and observers. The abstraction, although somewhat aesthetically interesting, was far more distracting than helpful. There existed a certain level of confusion and curiosity that was not one of the immediate goals of this study. Therefore, the abstract moving surfaces were abandoned and I began utilizing some of the familiar images of spaces in Seoul.

The reason I used existing spaces in Seoul was for some of the same logics and thinking. I wanted to have planes that captured movement. I wanted to have planes or surfaces that showed something in action. A surface that was alive and existing with depth and space. Utilizing again some of the thinking behind film and the spaces off screen and on screen in order to create depth.

As this exploration was about Korean spaces, it felt appropriate to use Korean spaces in action. Or active Korean spaces. The first series of studies of studies employed the use of the actual physical structure and elements found in chaekgori. Stacked boxes, stacked piles and angles creating perspectives in multiple directions (See Figure 70). After doing these types of studies it felt a bit contrived though. Almost too easy at some points. Perhaps unnecessary. Creating a direct link to the chaekgori, logically made sense but this series of studies did not feel necessarily new or explorative.

Because of this, the studies continued to go deeper and expand upon this direction. But looking back, perhaps there is some merit to maintaining the original system of the chaekgori. There is certainly a visual charm and fascination as well as a direct or indirect link to Korea. Also, in re-visiting some of these studies and reflecting upon this previous work, I can see now some direct connection to spaces that is a bit more visceral than some of the later studies conducted here.



Figure 70. An exploration taking existing street perspectives from Seoul and applying them in a manner very reminiscent of chaekgori.

The next series of studies began to take this idea of bringing an existing perspective into a new perspective. As can be found in chaekgori, many of the objects and structures had their own independent orientation and perspective. This was again, part of the visual beauty of these elements and the concept that I found so fascinating was this idea of a perspective within a perspective. Or even more fascinating yet, a number of perspectives within one environment and all functioning with their own laws and rules.

This next series of studies attempts to bring some of this thinking into action here. With this series of studies, I began exploring taking one perspective and adding additional perspective on top of this through similar processes of the chaekgori. By skewing the angles and the plane/surface I began adding different levels of depth to an existing space (See figure 71, 72). Most of these initial efforts were not so successful. They visually were interesting but besides from visual interest, the overall effect did not create the same level of space or depth that I was hoping they would. In this series, one successful

element was that the layers of repetition and the extension of time added more to the aforementioned experience of 'formative humor'. Here, we have elements of variable perspective and in addition to this, we have the element of time and space that is extended in this environment. This creates a similar sensation to the fascinating effect that is found in chaekgori.



Figure 71. A series of studies expanding upon the idea of variable perspective. Here exist 10 perspectives simultaneously. The angles of the frames are also adjusted to add another layer of depth and perspective.

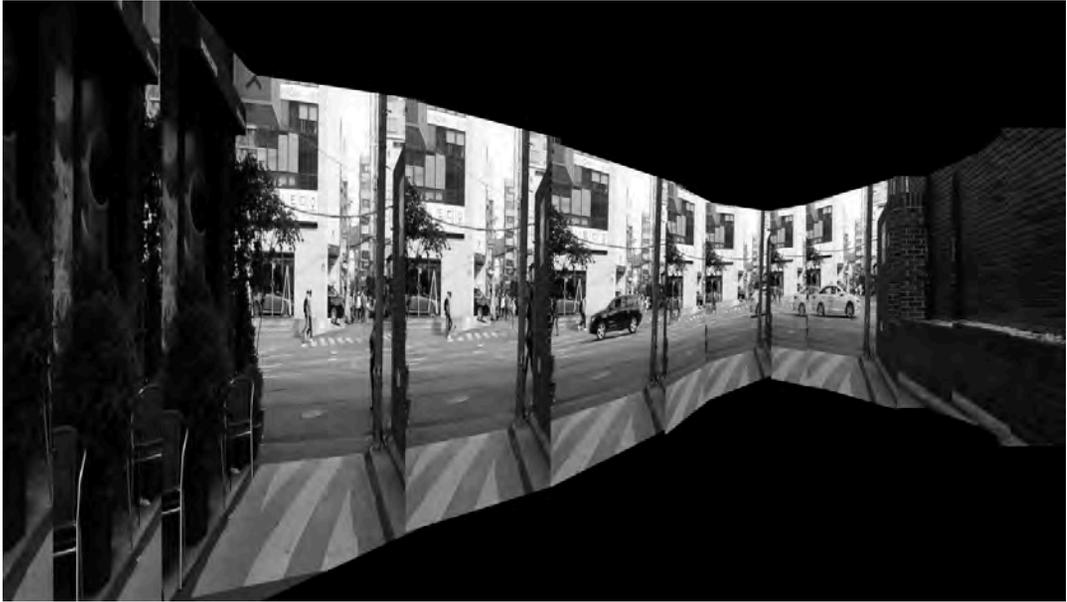


Figure 72. Another in this series, this time showing another ten frames.

One of the exciting concepts found in chaekgori is the idea of the viewer. The person viewing and experiencing these objects in space. In eastern thinking, there is a reverence for the viewer that defies objectivity, logic and accuracy. The viewer is more important than the realities that exist otherwise. In western thinking, to capture perspective accurately, depictions of space often consider heavily one or two-point perspective that is based heavily on accuracy and a realistic representation. But in many of the chaekgori, the beauty and charm comes from this inaccurate portrayal of space. Many chaekgori were found to be based upon numerous perspectives as if the viewer was moving in a space. This is the truly fascinating concept that makes these images so distinct. We mentioned earlier how each of the objects and structures functioned independently and used their own orientation. This was to make sure that every viewer at every perspective and angle had the possibility to consume this in their own way. It was as if each painting had numerous sets of eyes that moved with the content.

Advancing these studies took this concept into action. For the next series of studies, I explored having not only multiple perspectives in space but also attempted to move the content with the viewer. So, each of the perspectives is changing and adjusting to both content and a viewer who might be walking through this space. Or perhaps to multiple viewers who are situated in different points or places while viewing this work.

In these studies, the content either moves from left to right and simultaneously the perspectives are following along this path as well (See Figure 73, 74). The results of this are equally mixed. I think at moments; the moving planes do capture the sensation that exists in chaekgori. But it is not exactly a fascinating or engaging sensation. The sensation of simultaneity is fascinating though as well as the concept of variable perspective, the perspectives within the perspective.



Figure 73. This series is amplifying the idea of variable perspectives. This is a sequence of 20 different perspectives in one environment.



Figure 74. Here is an alternative 20 perspective sequences. This time we are utilizing motion within the holding frames to amplify and project another layer of perspective on top of this existing one.

Extending further this concept, another series of studies was performed following some of the principles of perspective employed often in chaekgori. Here a rectangular frame establishes an object or place and every subsequent angle thereafter is based upon the positioning of that rectangular frame. The result does seem to capture space in a more active and depth-based view. This series extends the idea of space through the extension of the planes/surfaces in relation to the established point. This series also follows some of the intentions of the previous series where the actual frames and content follow each other. There is also a certain attention to a potential viewer from either multiple perspectives or one who is traveling alongside the content together. I think what I learned from this series of studies is that the establishment of a base or center has a strong effect on grounding the spatial understanding of the viewer. I can see why it works so well in traditional chaekgori and I can see how its further employment can have lots of potential for future representations of space.

I think during these studies I also learned that the concept of scale and vanishing lines can have a greater impact when employed correctly. Here, the vanishing lines function more in terms of the traditional understanding of perspective that we know (See Figure 75, 76). As opposed to the previous studies where I placed more emphasis on the idea of perspective within perspective, here this concept is in place but also with the more traditional structure of spatial understanding that we used today. By vanishing lines, I mean the lines that recede into space. These would be the lines that typically culminate into what would be known as a vanishing point.



Figure 75. This slide and the following slide show a series of perspective studies using the actual structure of the chaekgori where one frame sequence is square and the others provide the supporting depth and perspective.



Figure 76. This series was also experimented with in motion where the perspective is skewed with the collapsing and folding panels.

The next series of studies actually took place outside of the computer and dealt more with the physical spaces in Seoul that were being captured on film. Here in this series of studies, I began actually moving the camera and creating perspectives within perspectives by arrangement and positioning of the camera. For this next study, I began by adjusting the position of the camera across a lateral/horizontal line. So here, I shot film of the same location and same environment but from eight different perspectives. I am not sure what I was expecting I would find here but I wanted to test and see what kind of things could happen by placing perspective within perspective but not with the use of the computer or composing device alone.

I think the results of this series have some potential as well. When exiting the confines of the computer, the tactility of the space was that much more real and visceral. It felt less constructed and less manufactured and more

comprehensive of space than the previous studies. To date, these studies seemed to be the most in line with some of the successes and triumphs within the aesthetics of the chaekgori.

In each of these studies, the vanishing points and lines play a large role and have great effect on the overall impact of these studies. The physical walls provide a great implication of space that creates an active environment that is both palpable and recognizable through our visual senses. This series also makes great use of this concept of 'formative humor' and the contrast in time and space is more convincing than in previous studies (See Figure 77, 78).

Although not exactly dealing with space, I thought that the actual composition and end juxtaposition of the spaces had some great potential as well. The way this series creates natural contrast through the physical walls, surfaces and vanishing lines and how they also connect with one another in space has great potential as well. I think while doing this series, I see great potential for this study to lead to other studies of greater depth and spatial perception. I think moving forward it would be relevant and valuable to increase the amount of perspectives here. Perhaps doubling, tripling theme and then juxtaposing these together can also create new spatial sensations that have not been experienced before. At least this is the thinking for now.

It seems the limits here have more to do with the actual technology than the actual space or concept itself. Perhaps if the camera was not defined by the square that it has, the perceptions of space could truly be endless. I also feel that the content itself here could change the understanding of this series. I wonder if the content was different and perhaps more visceral, what sort of effect that could have on the understanding and experience of such spaces.

I think while doing this, I also began to learn more about this age-old concept of surface and void. Here, the void is the active space. It is where all the action takes place. Yet without the surface, the planes that construct the space, this space would have less meaning in some ways. As I mentioned

above, the vanishing lines, although confining in some ways, prove to be great indicators and grounders. They position the viewer and give the viewer something to hold on to. A physical orientation that allows for better consumption and experience of the void. For me this is a potentially interesting concept that could also benefit from more development as well. Surface and void.



Figure 77. Here as opposed to creating the perspective through the distortion of planes, the actual camera is moving here. Here are eight different perspectives fused into one.



Figure 78. Here is the same sequence but showing the passing of time.

For the next series of studies, I drew inspiration from some of the older studies I did with the Seoul moving collage series. Here I was interested in some of the less structured approaches to space that could take place within a singular environment. Unlike the previous sets of studies, all order was completely thrown out the door and the cataclysm of perspectives proved to be a very engaging and thought-provoking realization of some of these concepts.

In this series, there is no orientation furthering this concept of 'formative humor'. Here there is no up, down, left or right. In some ways, this is almost the opposite of previous studies where there was set order and positioning. There was a logic to how the perspectives were rendered and their relationship to each other (See Figure 79, 80). Here the relationships are less based on rules or logic. It is a more intuitive process where each set of planes, surfaces and voids connects through a more fragmentary process.

In this series of studies, I was curious to continue this discussion of surface and void. Here the void places a very strong element. I think its existence makes these studies that much more interesting. Here the void creates what I would like to call a double experience. Here the void acts as it does in the previous studies by setting the action. Next the void also acts by creating emphasis on the planes and surfaces that create the space. It seems to be a symbiotic relationship that works to great effect. Here each of these three elements supports each other in the creation of an environment. I think the lack of direction here also creates for an interesting sensation. Here it is known we are viewing and experiencing a space but the lack of orientation takes us away from this for a moment in time. It allows us a moment of curiosity as we try to orient ourselves. I think some of these effects also exist in the chaekgori and are wonderful sensations for any type of visual or design-based experience. As Marian Bantjes describes, it is perhaps a state of 'wonder' where we as the viewer can become engrossed in something more engaging than reality.



Figure 79. Here is an older motion poster where I had inadvertently first created this variable perspective effect. The poster was originally for the AGI I Love Seoul exhibition and showed different parts of Seoul stitched together in one.



Figure 80. Here is a test using similar strategies. Combining multiple perspectives and with no orientation or configuration based on the viewer perspective.

The next series of studies I would call hybrid studies. Taking bits and pieces from all of the previous studies. Some to greater effect and some to lesser effect. Here I am focusing more on the element of time and the aspects of time that can be seen through formative humor and the idea of multiple perspectives at once. In this series in particular, I am more curious about creating those moments of suspended reality and orientation. Where one is not quite certain which direction is which and which time is which time.

In these particular studies I was also interested in stressing more of the emphasis on void. Creating larger gaps in space and letting less of the surfaces come through. This had some interesting visual and spatial effects. For one thing, the depth was more visceral here. The element of mystery

begin to take a larger role and this provided for larger sensations of depth and spatial awareness. I did this through focusing on areas of shadow within the urban Seoul environment. So instead of focusing on lighted streets or pathways, I focused more on areas where the depth and darkness of the city could come through.

Looking back now, I think this had several interesting effects and perhaps several unexpected results. One of the main results that was unexpected was the gloom and darkness of this series. Several observers noted a certain negative or pessimistic perspective that was being conveyed through such imagery. Although it was unintentional, I can agree that some of this imagery may be perceived in such a manner.

I think this series overall had several insights that could be interesting moving forward. In the absence of planes and surfaces, the void can become an interesting element for atmosphere. The void has a certain tension, weight and texture that can be immediately felt and perceived from any perspective. Here the absence of anything can create more than less. If that makes sense. This series could probably best be described as fragmentary. Taking elements but not exactly reproducing or showing the entire picture or concept.

Part of this fragmentary notion also exists with the layers that can be found in repetition. I think this idea of repetition here is also a very strong force to be recognized here. Through repetition and this use of void, we get a strong sense of tension between reality and what starts to blend reality. In several of these scenes it is difficult to ascertain at what point is real and what points are blending together. I think this has some potential to be further explored in different kinds of studies as well.

If this series had any drawbacks, I would say perhaps that the atmosphere of gloom and doom was something that I had not really intended from the beginning. Upon showing this to classmates and fellow researchers as well as my advising professor, the overall feeling was that of a dark or harsh

environment. Although using Seoul as the background and moving imagery, parts of Seoul were not able to be recognized easily. With this kind of response, I think moving forward, it would be wise to tackle different strategies for content.

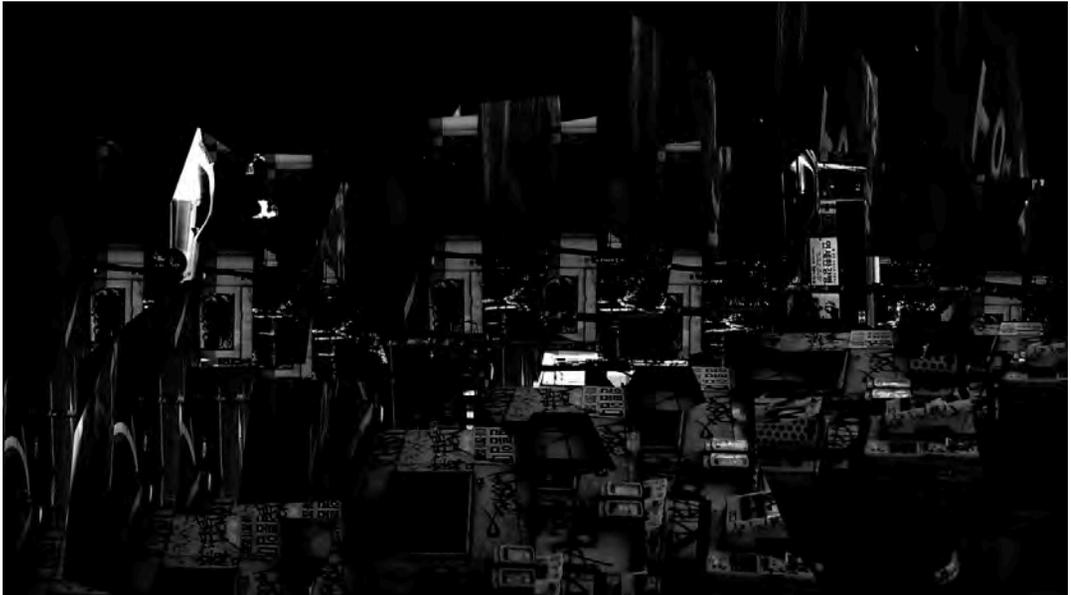


Figure 81. These next studies are an amalgamation of the previous studies. Combining elements of repetition, staggered time cycles and multiple perspectives, this series also explored the extent of the void. How the void can also become a key figure in the creation of such atmosphere.



Figure 82. A similar composition but less quantity.

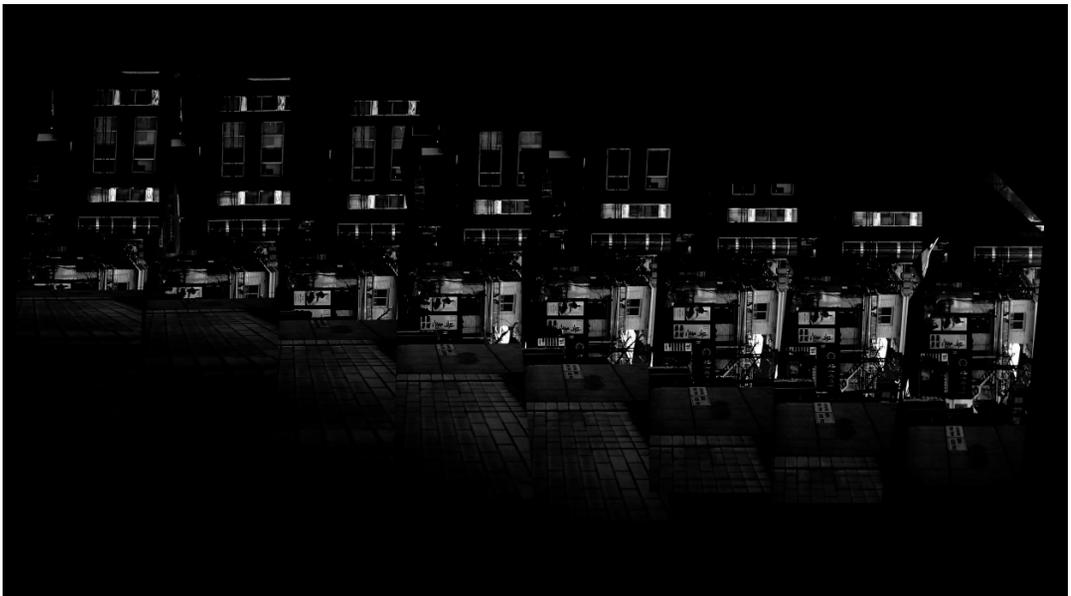


Figure 83. Here is study similarly using multiple perspectives physically constructed within one environment.

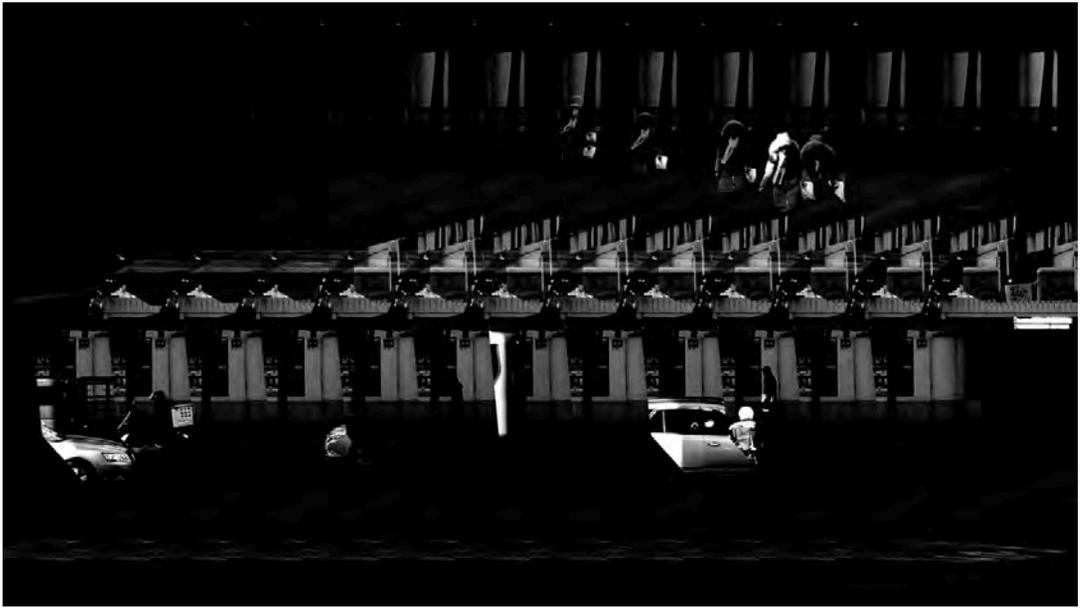


Figure 84. Another sequence using staggered time and repetition.



Figure 85. And one more sequence using staggered time and repetition.

The next series of studies focused more on staggered time cycles and extending the experience of one perspective and one sequence. Here I was curious what would happen if we imitated the chaekgori principles by purely staggering the time units and cycles. So here, one film is placed and then set apart using varying time cycles across one environment (See Figure 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91). The results are quite interesting too in that they show one concept but they are now showing multiple perspectives of that time sequence. The results I feel do show a certain level of depth that can only be obtained through such processes.

An aspect of these studies that I think is fascinating deals with more traditional notions of Korean space as well. One of the key relations of Korean space in the past was this connection to the landscape and the topography. In these studies, we are taking what could be defined as non-descript locations of Seoul and examining the content of these locations. But what I think is interesting is the relevance of the man-made topography here. Here the topography is not predicated by existing conditions. It is a by-product of man-made environments and structures. For the longest time I was wondering what happened to such connections between the landscape and Korean spaces. This was especially prevalent through the thinking behind Hanok structures<sup>23</sup>. And yet in this day and age, we now see a series of urban landscapes with no such thinking at all. Massive constructions, apartments, mega-complexes. But somehow in these studies, and I'm not sure if it is through the intervention of time, but somehow, a sense of topography has re-appeared. This leads me to think that further studies through such lenses could be interesting. It seems there is still an understanding, appreciation and awareness for the topography in contemporary landscapes, but this is a far more constructed awareness.

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<sup>23</sup> Jung, Sun Kyung, pg. 198.



Figure 86. Here is a series of studies purely focused on staggered time cycles. Here we see a view from Sangsu, overlooking Yeouido.



Figure 87. Another frame in the sequence.



Figure 88. The scene and environment remain the same yet using some of the principles of chaekgori, we can see through different positions on the screen, different content from the same space.



Figure 89. Here is a series of studies purely focused on staggered time cycles. These are studies from a different location, a busy street in the Hongdae area.

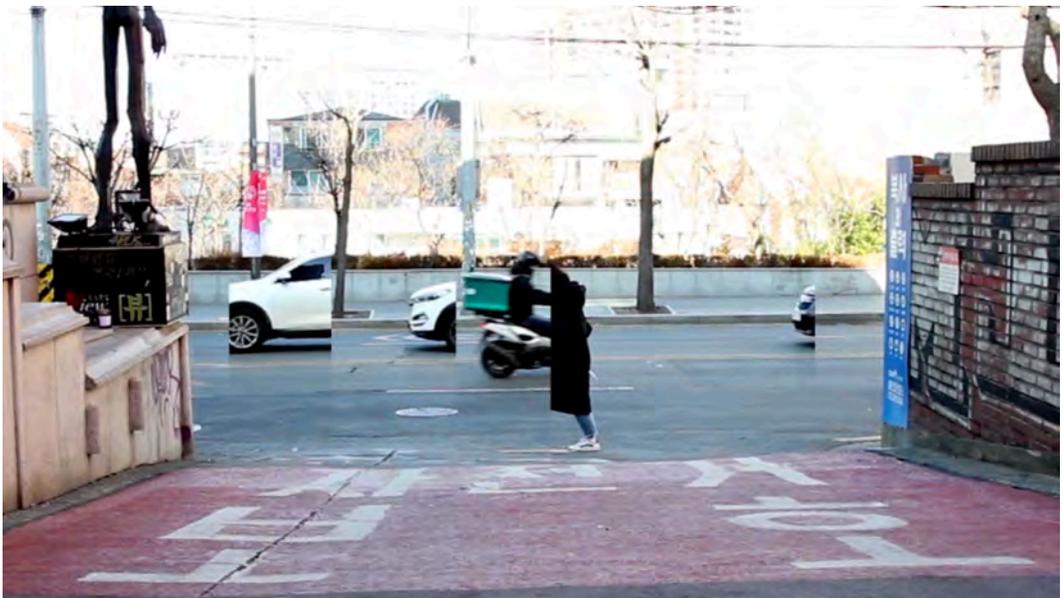


Figure 90. Another frame in the sequence.



Figure 91. Another frame in the sequence.

## 4.7 Layered Experiences

Another concept that informed this research is the concept of layered spaces and layered experiences. Such experiences often exist here in Korea and they are not constructed through a rigorous system of planning but more so, an adaption to the times and spaces. There is a very natural process that over time constructs and forms a space. Where one decision leads to another decision in a very organic manner. I thought another informative part of this investigation could be to explore such phenomenon. For this series of explorations, I started to break out and explore what interaction might do to these spatial concepts. Tactility was something that could definitely be felt during the viewing of these tests. But what could happen if the actual interaction began to incorporate more action and interactions with the human hand.

Using some very basic html and scroll effects with a browser, I attempted to create a kind of moving environment. Where depending on the mouse movement, one could alter the way you were receiving the different perspectives. Some of the perspectives would obviously come in large groups or cycles. Others would come yet again in more fragmented experiences with more emphasis placed on the void (See Figure 91, 92).

These studies overall showed that even with very simple interactions, the depth was much more palpable on a number of levels. The future of this thinking has many possibilities as well and it would be interesting to further these studies under the concept of either increasing the void or increasing the number of perspectives displayed at any given point in time.

So far I am calling this concept 'layered experiences' meaning they are not just one dimensional or linear experiences. But they are more so experiences that overlap and create both texture and palpability. The interactive space was thought to be a perfect place for such explorations to take place and the following screenshots show some tests exploring how layered movement, repetition and space could be represented and interacted with. For a long period of time, experience design as a term has been limited to the lines and plans of a UX or UI designer. But I feel that moving forward, experience design can be and should be more comprehensive. To show more of what can be done and captured through the mediums we use as designers.

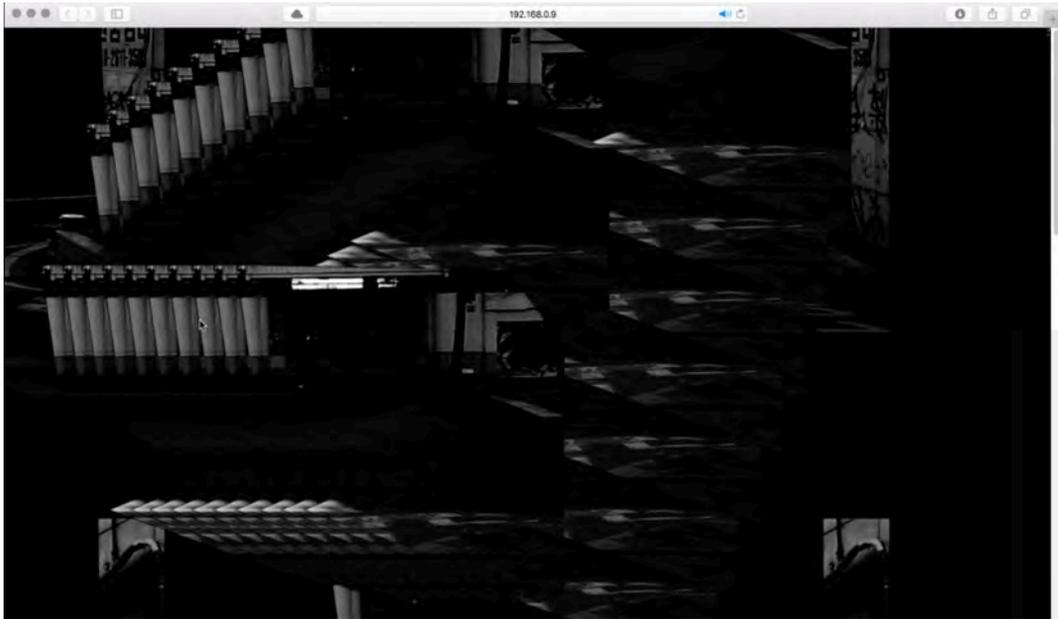


Figure 91. Here is a screenshot of a browser window. This study was curious about the extent that depth could be perceived with interaction allowing the repetition and the perspectives to take on new meanings and new experiences.



Figure 92. Here is another screenshot of a browser window where the cursor position and space have adjusted.

After this series of studies, the concept of ‘layered experiences’ became a starting point for some of the final design-oriented explorations in this dissertation. The concept of two-dimensional concepts and spaces that overlap and layer was an idea that unified all of these studies. The concept also was apropos for this dissertation’s position at the intersection of architecture, space and two-dimensional design.

## 5. Design Application and Thinking

The ethos or spirit of this dissertation comes from the seeds of design. An interest in space and architecture as well as translating these concepts using the processes of graphic design are all grounded in various forms of design and the thinking that takes place during design. The results can sometimes be understood as being on the peripheral areas of design, but the processes are definitely grounded in more traditional design methods and methodologies. The results being peripheral in design come mostly from the free-form nature of these explorations. There were a lot less restrictions than typically found in design processes and I think this was crucial for this research.

There were certainly some liberties that were taken during these studies that typically do not exist in the field of design but I think this crucial for several reasons. The first reason is that I feel without such activities, without such thinking design cannot progress. During a practical work week with official, business-based projects, there is very little time nor budget for experimentation. Any sorts of experimentation can exist only in increments and after hours. When all of the official needs of clients are finished. These often take place in small increments. Small adjustments to a more streamlined design budget that can change or enhance the outcome of a project. This is not necessarily always the case as there are some design practices that have definitely defined another model for this. Some smaller studios have crafted a very impeccable model for experimentation. Their relationships with their clients has also gone more from a client services model to more of a commissioner and artist system. Thus, allowing a certain flexibility in design work that goes beyond the normal spectrum found in more industrial or commercial projects. That said, even for myself and my own practice, I continue to work on a wide spectrum of projects that take points from every process. There are some projects with more of the commissioner/artist model where there is a bit more freedom. But for the most part, there is still a careful consideration for the needs of the client that I do not disregard. And this is one of the areas that can be frustrating for the

growth and development of a designer. Finding the time to truly explore and advance concepts. Finding a direct connection or applicability for such exploration always remains a slightly abstract proposition.

Therefore, in my own side and spare time, I continue to try to define new models of working and new models of thinking without any real or realistic application. The reason for this is this time allows me to evolve. To try some new things that normally I could not try. And for the most part, a lot of this thinking and the discoveries in this space come back into my client work somehow. Whether it is immediate application or more thinking that becomes part of the process, these extracurricular/peripheral activities are always crucial to how I think and continue to develop as a designer. And almost always I find a way to bring back some of the extra-curricular thinking into my everyday practice. This is the effort that I strive for as much as possible. To what success this happens is debatable but it is something I am stubbornly continuing to explore every day. There is a relationship that informs each other. Where each of the components and concepts inform each other. For every impossible, impractical exploration that I do, it always seems to come back and inform something that I am experimenting with in real life. Something that I enjoy very much and something that I feel can come back and enhance a client project.

I think the same can be said for these experiments during my doctoral studies and this dissertation. There was a definite freedom here to explore that I could normally not explore and for this, I am extremely grateful and excited about the work I was able to attempt and explore during these studies. I also think that many of these projects and explorations did influence my commercial work at this time. I think without this time for exploration and experimentation, design would lose a lot of meaning for me. It is the opportunity to evolve and try new things that thrills me and makes design that much more worthwhile. There is a balance between these two processes that I think is crucial for the health of a designer.

So, when thinking about design and the design applicability of this dissertation, the answers are quite wide and varied. On the one hand, these

processes may seem abstract to the everyday viewer or even people of design backgrounds. The connecting points with design can be abstract. But I think this abstraction is what allows for new things to develop and this abstraction should be embraced somehow. There is never anything completely right from the beginning. For every strange result and misfire, there are a million more ideas that can actually aid or assist the greatness of a project moving forward. I think this is the beauty of both design and exploration. It is the process and the point where discovery meets application. If clear and common goals are set from the beginning, the results are often canned. They are predictable and less interesting. Something always borders on familiarity when working in such a manner. Edward DeBono often commented on such processes through his book *Lateral Thinking* and discovering methods for thinking outside of the box. I believe such thinking is also very pertinent to how I work and strive for evolution in my work.

For this series of studies, as I mentioned before, I feel there is still a lot left to be explored. But I feel the potential is very much there for a number of possibilities. As mentioned several times above, I feel one of the great possibilities for these studies exist in screen-based media. How we consider a screen to be a space. How we consider the depth of a screen and the relationship with what is on the screen to what is off the screen and soon to be coming onto the screen. I think this notion of space still has great potential and will continue to find itself as a key figure and concept moving forward within design and how we apply design to RGB based media. Therefore, these studies in perspective and space I think have great potential moving forward. Especially the way perspective is thought of as well as the representations of space that I have explored from Korea. There is a certain charm, dynamic and fascination with these methods that I think has potential moving forward within design. I think moving forward the 'fourth' dimension in screen-based media is still in development. There are currently many different incarnations for this and many thoughts on what this could be. But I feel that this also exists in some of this spatial and time-based thinking. Such thinking will also inform the experiences that we create and shape on screen. I think we have seen this recently through the rise of

moving media and the resurgence of animation as a property that enhances visual communication.

A very palpable example of this is the increase of motion applied to traditional posters. In the past five years, we've seen a dramatic rise in the amount of identities and posters that have what we could call 'moving' or 'animated' properties. Traditionally flat identities or graphics that are now brought to life through movement. This exists now with the re-emergence of the animated gif file as a medium. Through social networking services and social media, we now have a platform for quick dissemination of data and information that exist in encapsulated graphics. The gif or movie file has found a new home in five to ten second looping graphics that increase or enhance attention. As noted before above, when lights move or when backgrounds move, there is an increased curiosity. A natural curiosity by the viewer is increased and enhanced that cannot be necessarily seen when the media is more static and traditional. It is a different effect and reaction and one that cannot be denied or ignored.

On one recent social media-based project I remember working on, the identity for that event when brought to movement, had a completely different effect than when static. The moving poster had a very palpable reaction that created more awareness and intrigue for that event. It is thus paramount that we continue to acknowledge the notion of dimension in our work and how we think about design. Formerly static, printed posters are now showing scale, depth and space that can be experienced at a more tactile level. Social media has created an outlet where motion and space create more connections and interactions with content. We have also recently seen the rise of augmented reality and its usage as a true means to blend physical spaces with graphics and communication. The augmented reality plus motion graphics experience has created a very curious dimension by which we look at and expand upon what we see in reality and what we experience on a daily basis. I think that these two channels have great potential moving forward. Utilizing some of the visual and spatial sensations explored in several of these studies, dimensional thinking could provide new platforms for expression. We already live in an era of multi-channel

communication platforms. But I think even within the channels that we now employ; spatial thinking has great potential moving forward.

The following stills are from a series of motion posters exploring kinetic typography and some of the principles discovered while exploring perspective within the chaekgado. These studies took place simultaneously to the explorations of this dissertation and reflect the back and forth relationship between more tangible application and more free-form exploration. This series is currently titled 'very' and is a series exploring very complex and perhaps maximalist typography in motion(See Figure 93, 94, 95). Each series incorporates the word 'very' in a composition showing a complex process of layering, overlapping and time exploration. This particular series took inspiration from some of the complex and more deep visual experiences captured within the chaekgado and perspective studies. It was fascinating to see how much depth could be portrayed through repetition, staggered time cycles and density. In this series, I was not actually exploring a certain visual sensation of accurate depth, but more so depth through atmosphere and ambience. The still frames here do not capture the motion in their entirety, but each series was directly influenced by the processes found while studying the multiple perspectives in the final series of project explorations.

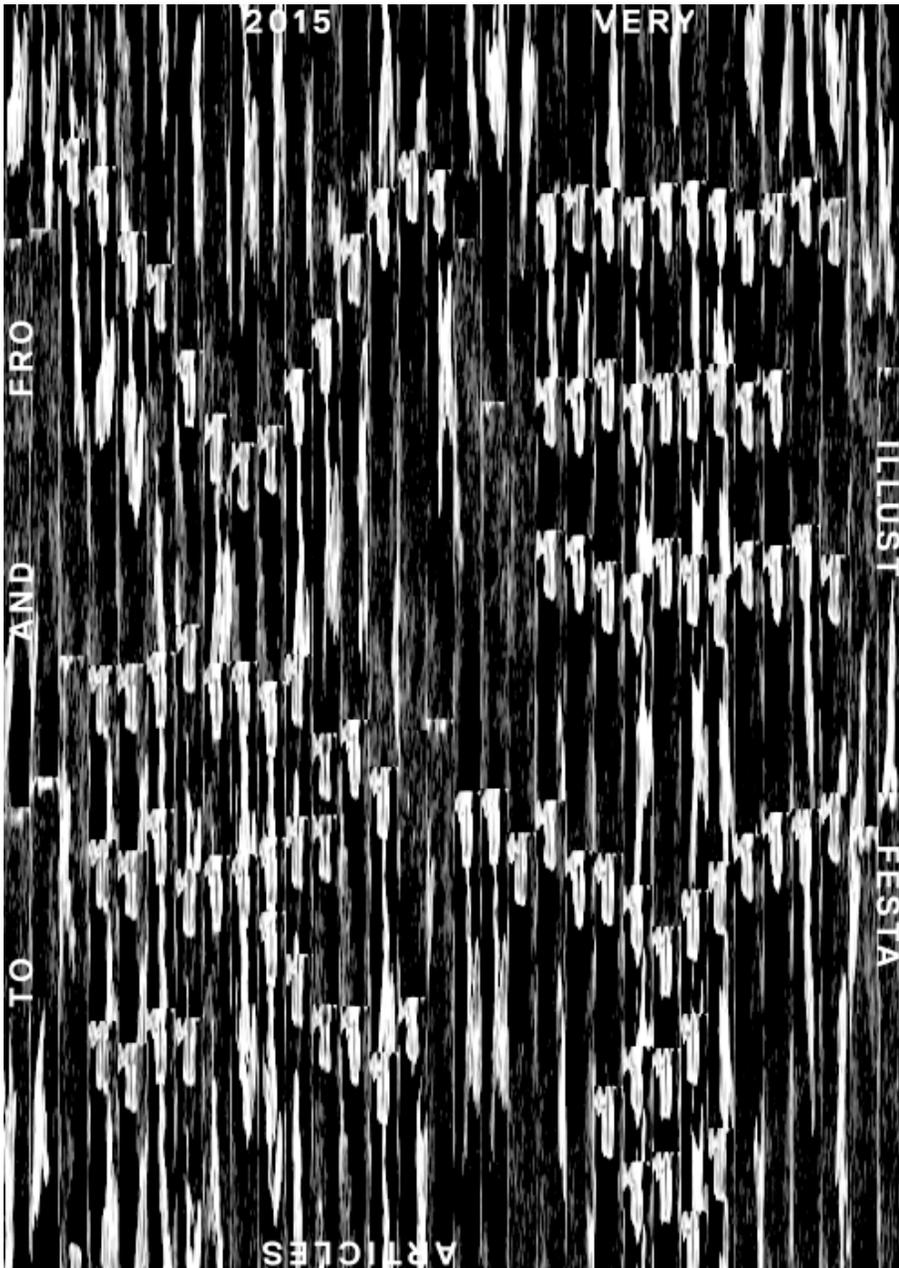


Figure 93. A frame from the VERY series. A series of moving posters that utilizes some of the elements of repetition and staggered time cycles to create certain levels of depth and space within the screen.

On several of these studies, I was exploring the use of a finite number of clips and employing ways to create differentiation between them either

through staggered time cycles, placement, position and also shape/form composition. The results of this show a certain level of depth that can only be achieved through such methods. One of the great inspirations that I took from the earlier studies was this concept of each unit having a place and way to be interpreted on its own. For example, stereopsis and the way that the human eye could move from place to place and still have a strong and accurate effect. The concept of taking care of the user or viewer and understanding his/her perspectives. This was one of the key concepts in this series. The concept of unit and the idea that a unit can make up a whole was also very relevant in this series of studies. Each of these explorations involves the use of a set amount of units and it is their configuration that creates the actual typography and spelling of the word very.

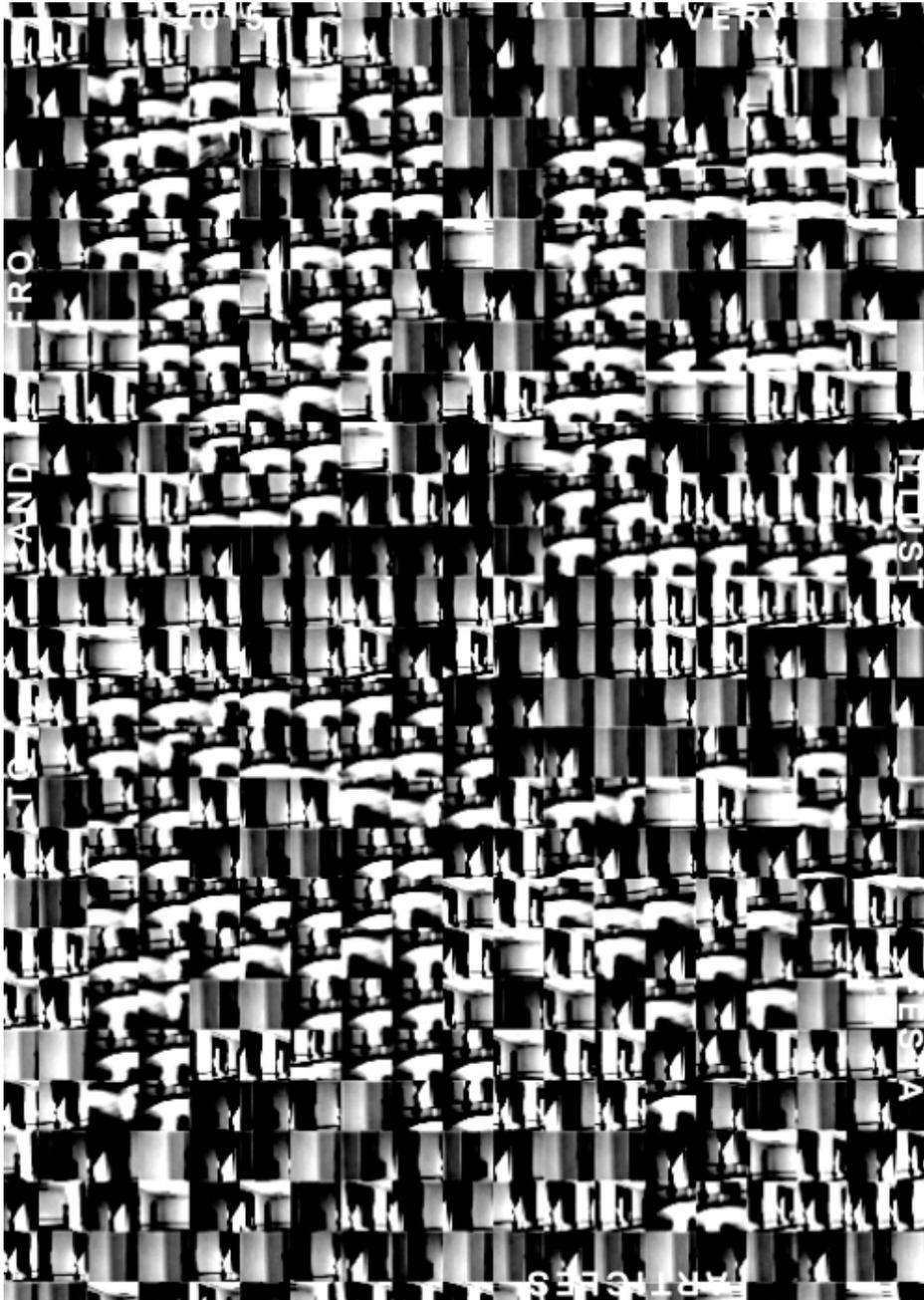


Figure 94. This poster as well as the next one are more closely aligned to some of the discoveries of the multiple perspectives series. Here I am using living footage to form the typography and it is through staggered time cycles and repetition that I am able to create certain sensations of depth and density.

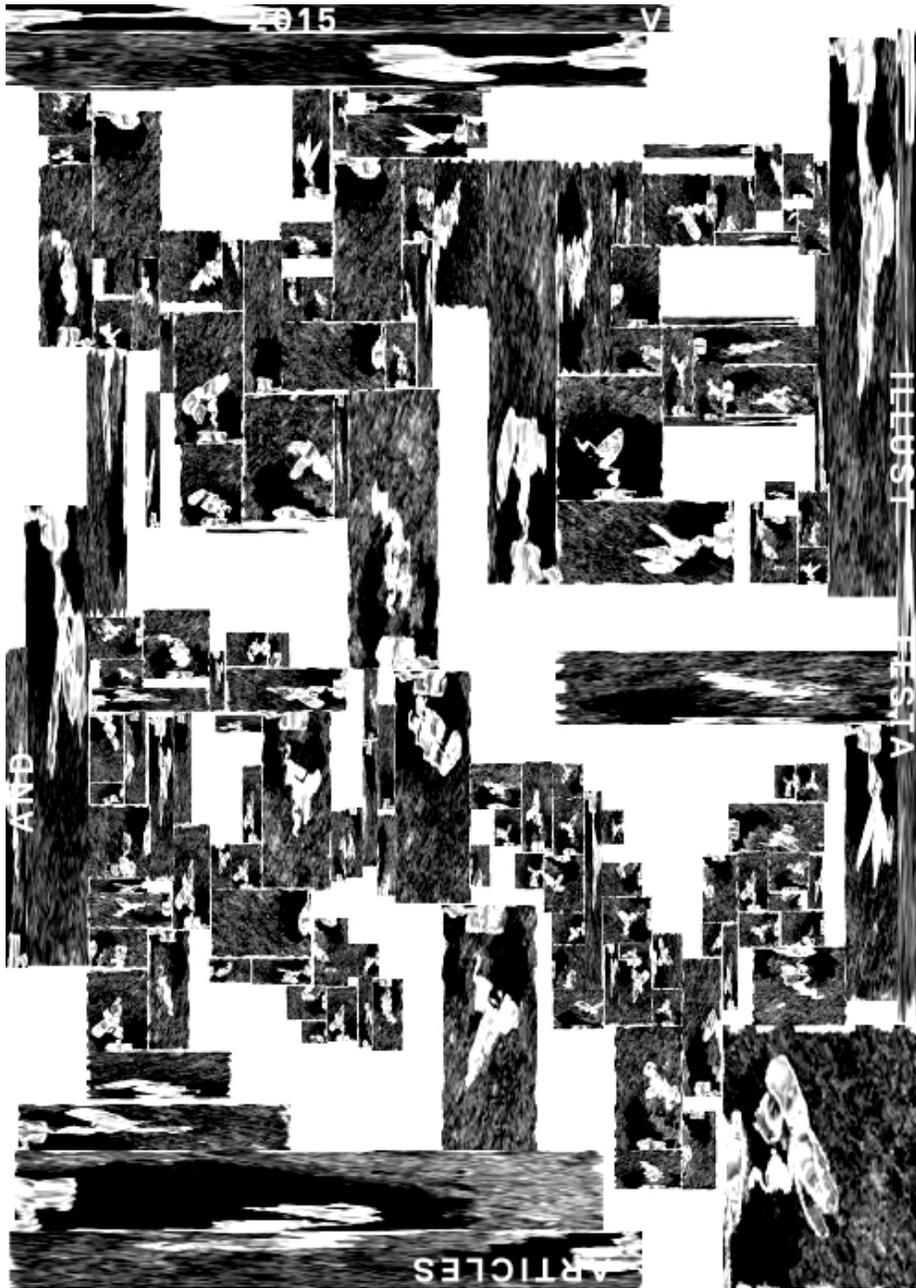


Figure 95. This series is of similar thinking to the previous poster. But this time, each of the planes are moving in and of themselves.

For the final series of explorations, I employed this method of motion posters and applied some of the different levels of thinking that went into this dissertation research so far from a more specific design perspective. Through these posters, I also was attempting to capture this concept of 'layered experiences.' The aim of these final studies was to summarize some of my earlier findings and perhaps create greater clarity as to their use and application within the field of design.

This first series aimed to utilize some of the thoughts from the aforementioned concept of variable moving perspective. Here the position of the viewer is moving alongside the space to create a sensation of the perspective traveling in tandem with the viewer's eyes. The sense of respect for the viewer was the main objective of such explorations and here we are exploring this in the form of the moving poster where such movement can exist(See Figure 96, 97).



Figure 96. These posters explored the previously mentioned concept of variable moving perspective. Here the camera is in continuous physical movement from one perspective to the next. The frame sequence is from left to right.



Figure 97. Similar to the posters above, a series of physical explorations of perspective that moves with the viewer. The frame sequence is from left to right.

The next series of moving posters found interest in the concept of reality mixing with fantasy. As a key point to the power of some of the earlier Minhwa paintings, the mixing of time, space and what we comprehend logically as human beings was a point of great power and merit. This next series of posters was interested in exploring such thinking. Here you can see some of the previous studies in multiple and variable orientations even more dramatized for this moving surface. The objective here was to distort the sensation of time and place. To create moments where the viewers must observe and find context for their understanding of the spaces viewed and experienced(See Figure 98).



Figure 98. A series of moving posters exploring the traditional concept of reality mixing and matching with fantasy.

Another fascinating discovery during the chaekgori observations was the concept that the texture and surface quality were often independent of the perspective and the dimension being represented. This was particularly fascinating as it seemed to be yet another moment of respect or care for the viewing person or observer. A method for the viewer to orient themselves with the painting and also travel from left to right with some semblance of stability. For this next series of moving posters, this concept of independent texture and surface was explored. Here in these posters, one can see the similar reverse perspective methods of chaekgori utilized and with the content of each box containing different and independent moving spaces (See Figure 99).

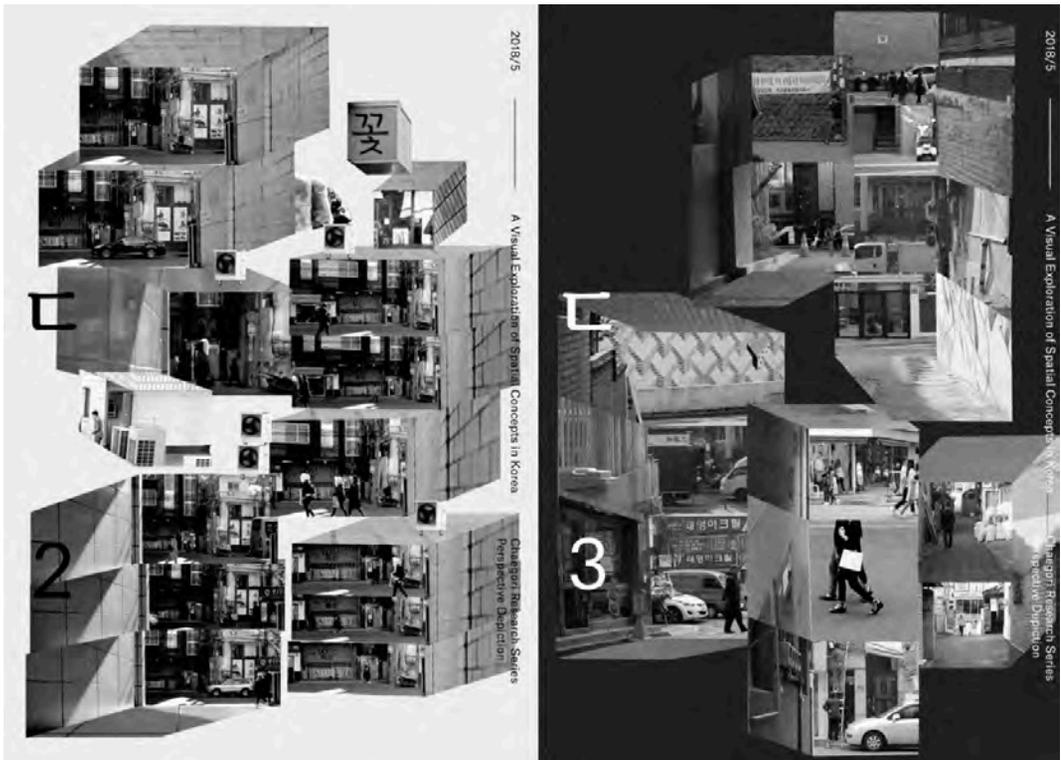


Figure 99. A series of moving posters exploring the concept of independent texture, surface and pattern.

Similar to the concept of independent surfaces, the concept of independent time was a relevant part of this research as well. Exploring some of the impossible connections of time was a powerful element in the experience of some of the earlier chaekgori and this series of posters explores this concept. In this series, multiple instances of time are portrayed or displayed in one cohesive instance. In the chaekgori, as mentioned before, the element of time was often distorted. Sometimes at one moment, both spring and fall, or winter and summer were represented. Or similarly elements of both the night and the day. In this series, this concept is explored with more layers of repetition(See Figure 100, 101, 102).



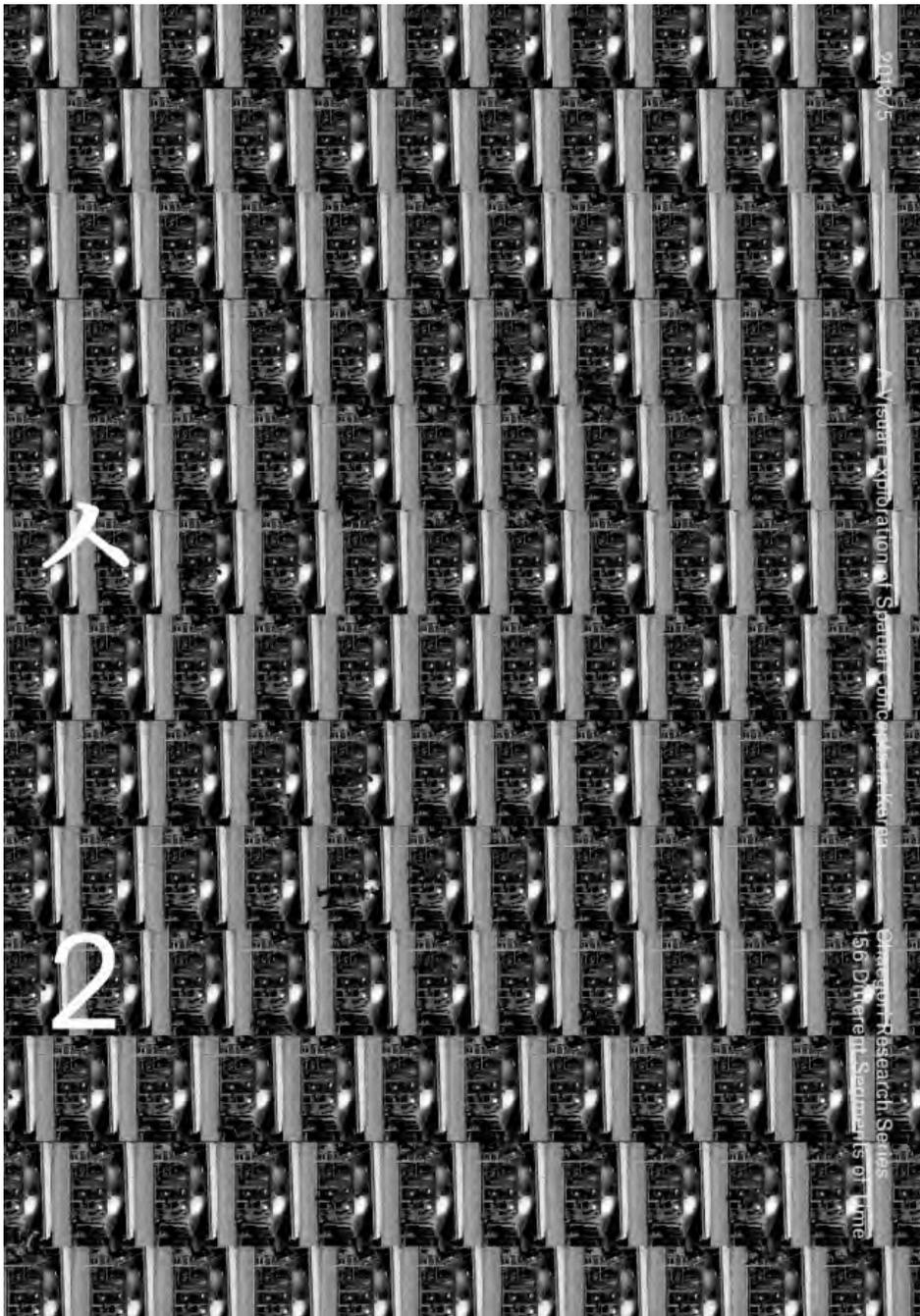


Figure 101. This series of posters all explore the concept of time amalgamation. This poster is showing 156 different time segments all as one.



Figure 102. This series of posters all explore the concept of time amalgamation. This poster is showing 14 different time segments all as one. The frame sequence is from left to right.

In the following series of studies, I began further exploring again this concept of reverse perspective. In this series of studies, I am using the traditional containers and conveyors of perspective from chaekgori which was most often through the use of a cubic box, book or object. In this series of studies, I explored what might happen when this reverse perspective moves. When the objects themselves alter and the element in the back becomes larger than the element in the front. The concept was often used in chaekgori and here they are brought even more to life through motion graphics.

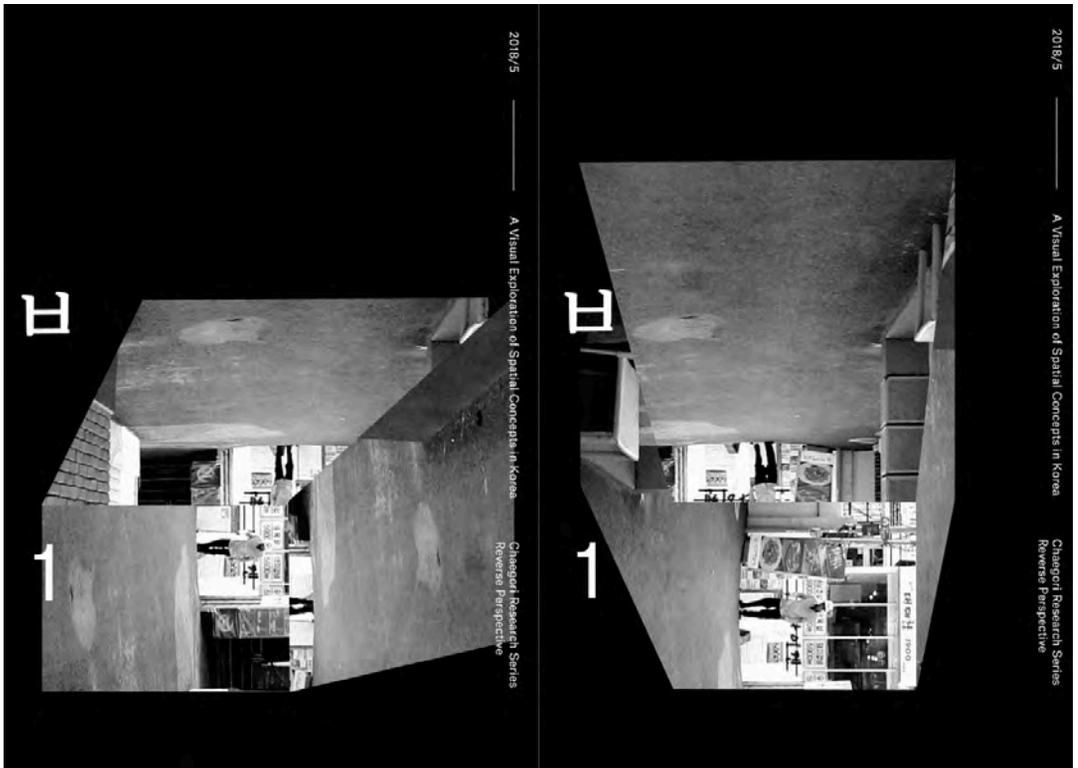


Figure 103. Here the concept of reverse perspective is being explored using the traditional containers and conveyors of perspective from chaekgori. Here, from left to right is a frame sequence showing the expansion of the reverse perspective from front to back. The frame sequence is from left to right.

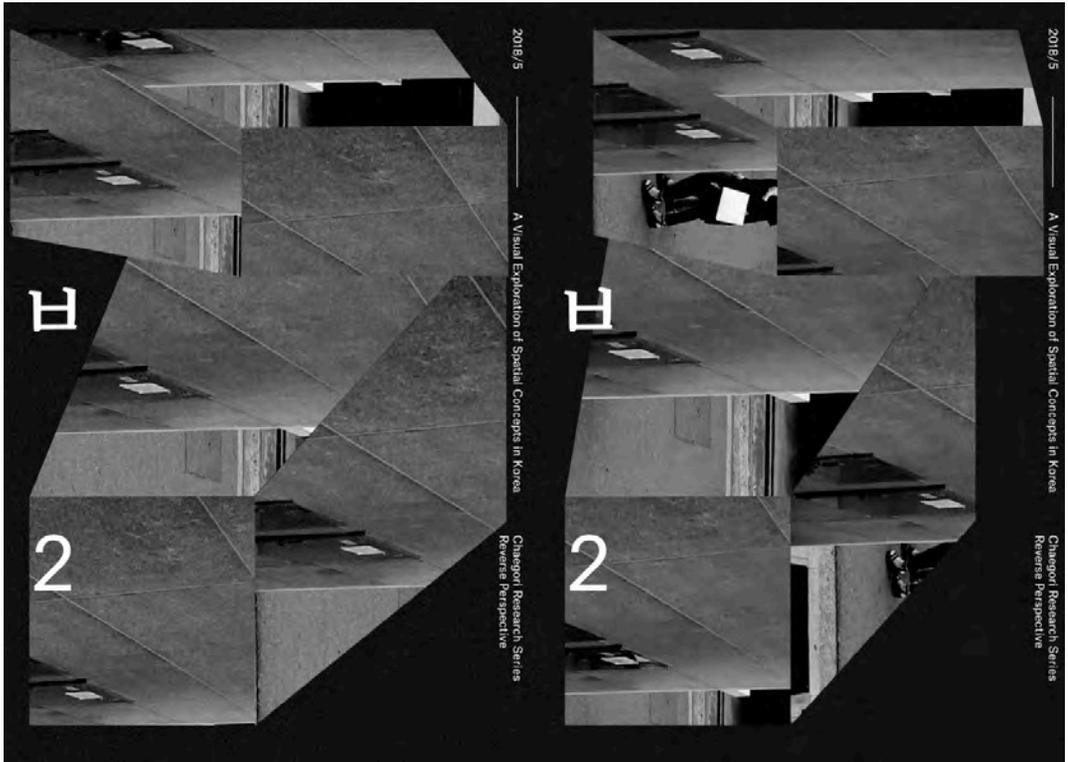


Figure 104. The same concept is in action here, this time utilizing two objects for perspective display. The frame sequence is from left to right.



Figure 105. The same concept is in action here, this time utilizing three objects for perspective display. The frame sequence is from left to right.

I think the next steps for this dissertation would be to continue to develop some of these layered explorations and perhaps revisit some of these traditional concepts at an even deeper level. I think there is still so many things that are possible. It is both exciting and daunting at the same time. I think this is an interesting first pass at encountering narrative and dealing with ways to tell stories that are less linear and less chronological, or even logical. But I feel that these can still take on another dimension that has not been discovered yet. And I hope I can continue to develop this moving forward. I am also still trying to find and discover at what point does this draw inspiration from Korea or does something about this process become Korean? In the larger scheme of things, I think this does not matter so much. Korea was the inspiration and the concepts do not need to be so

relegated to their beginning points. Nor does it matter to have such political or geographical distinctions to the inspiration behind this work. But in a country still seeking ways to define its identity, I think there is some thought here with great potential as well. But I wonder could such things make a difference and do they ultimately matter? I think for example, if I continue to create things that are intentionally signifying Korea or concepts of Korea, I wonder if they then become cliché or too simple to be even used in design later? This worries me in some ways and is something that needs to be considered for this research moving forward.

## 6. Conclusions

At the conclusion of these explorations, a definite grasp of some of the conceptual thinking and context of spaces in Korea has been formed. Both a historical and contextual understanding of these spaces and their relationships to everyday life and culture have been assessed and interpreted through a number of visual methods. Such studies have proved to be both meaningful and daunting at the same time. At the core of these explorations was the original objective to explore how these concepts of Korean space, which previously remained as just that, concepts, could be visualized and explored through the mechanisms we operate with in design. Previously and historically, these concepts had very little visual components and in certain capacities, existed for a long time purely as ideas. Such spaces could be felt but not necessarily seen. Therefore, there was a keen interest in exploring these previously non-visual concepts especially under the context and lens of two-dimensional thinking and form making.

The architect Peter Zumthor continuously presents arguments in his practice for the importance of atmosphere. How atmosphere is something that is so crucial to any building. And despite the program, use or location, at the end of the day what truly makes a building is this notion of atmosphere. The experience of the space and the details that define it. In the field of graphic design, atmosphere is an often-overlooked concept. It is a principle that is sometimes commented on and regarded but not entirely an integral part of the graphic design process. But it is often in the overlooked details that can make or break certain projects. Although there is a certain ability to directly communicate messaging, it is often the indirect manner that the message is communicated that makes all the difference. Moving forward, the role of atmosphere will also occupy a more critical place within the education and execution of design. In the future, how does one capture atmosphere? Control it? Shape it? Craft it? Replicate it?

In this dissertation, the hope was to gain a more astute awareness of atmosphere as seen by both graphic designers and architects. This was with

a particular and specific focus on Korean concepts and notions of atmosphere and space. In the founding efforts of this research it was observed that everyday residents in Korea have through both calculated and natural means, crafted a very unique and dynamic culture of space and spatial thinking. But as of yet, such thinking has not been observed or explored in detail. There is at times here a certain aversion to concepts that are deemed common or quotidian. Concepts created by regular people for use in everyday circumstances are sometimes deemed unworthy of further research or study. This series of explorations found a certain recreation in pursuing visually, concepts that had not been pursued before. This was even more so apparent from this less common intersecting area between graphic design and architecture. A concluding thought at this intersecting area is that a certain awareness of multi-dimensional thinking and process was necessary to convey such spaces and atmosphere. Layered experiences are a concept that was explored at a number of different levels during this dissertation research. The concept of a non-singular experience that can unravel, show and capture space and depth as well as craft certain senses of atmosphere saw many connecting points to this concept of layering. Layering itself was found to be something very common to Korean culture and spatial thinking. As opposed to a singular direction or expression, certain methods of expression with spatial thinking can occupy a time based, multi-dimensional component that cannot be achieved in static two-dimensions. They can only occur through these processes of combination and layering.

Although the results of this study still reside in what might best be described as peripheral regions, the over-arching conclusion is that there has been some traction gained towards an applicable understanding of these concepts of Korean space and atmosphere. Such thinking has even found its way into the commercial practice of the researcher. The hope is that with continued development, such thinking can gain a more concrete system of application and perhaps a clearer and identifiable method for use. Such application and methods for use could have impact towards a stronger sense of place and identity. In this continuously evolving environment, where many cultural and historical concepts are sometimes lost through rapid industrial

development, what is deemed precious or sacred and what is not remain as pertinent questions. In the quest for advancement, there still remain questions about locality, place and culture. This dissertation is hopefully a means to continue such discussions but with a positive position on local concepts. The layered experiences that can be created using some of the spatial concepts here are unique, memorable and precious. The hope is these can continue to influence new and perhaps unusual methods to both see and experience design.

## 7. Limitations and Further Studies

This study has had several limitations and there are a multifarious number of explorations left to be done. There remains a diverse number of potential studies and the researcher remains very motivated to conduct them. One of the greatest limitations in this project was the subjectivity of this research material. For many of these endeavors, ultimately coming to a significant and clear conclusion still remains undetermined. Even though there are definite signs of a particular direction, they remain at just that, signs. There were many results that were qualitative to the point that it was difficult to actualize or accurately document the impact of some of these studies and concretely affirm their applicability.

Another area of research that would benefit further studies would be the incorporation of experts in motion graphics and/or programmers/developers. This level of expertise could change some of the thoughts and processes on layered experiences and the translation of spatial concepts. An area that still remains unexplored in its entirety was the area of interactive spaces. There still remains much potential in this area and a collaborative series of explorations in tandem with programming and motion could lead to very fruitful results. The screen still has a great amount of potential especially in terms of creating and catering to certain kinds of atmosphere.

Another area of further development could be continued exploration in completely static experiences. Those kinds of experiences that can be found in traditional media. Perhaps in more traditional formats such as print or editorial design, the same concepts of layering and space could take on new dimensions. For example, layered narratives, or narratives that overlap has a great level of potential. Especially explorations in narrative that break from the traditional concepts of linear structure.

Physical spaces and experiments with planes and projections was also an area that was thought of yet not completely explored in its entirety. This

area has some very interesting potential application moving forward especially in this convergent area between space and graphic design. The same could be said for further studies on gi/force and their impact or effect on physical spaces. How can such concepts change the dynamic of a physical space? These concepts were fascinating because of their local component and can still be considered a very rich area of potential. Especially for fusing concepts that are typically isolated to local contexts but used collaboratively in more future thinking and application.

This research will continue on past this dissertation in a number of ways. The subjects researched here could occupy a lifetime of exploration. The research will continue to take place within the context and concepts of Korea and the continued hope is for expanded application outside of the physical boundaries of this country. The goal remains for such local thinking and concepts to positively influence design practice and process at an international scale.

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