

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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Tue–Sat 11:00am–7:00pm



NAM JUNE PAIK: *The Late Style*

Thursday, 17 September–Saturday, 7 November 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, 17th September, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

I am a communication artist.

—Nam June Paik

Gagosian Hong Kong is pleased to present the first exhibition of Nam June Paik's work in Hong Kong, following the announcement of the gallery's worldwide representation of his estate.

Born in Korea and living and working internationally, Paik brought television into the realm of art for the first time and treated it as a tactile and multisensory medium. Trained as a classical pianist, his early interests in composition and performance combined with his radical aesthetic tendencies brought him into contact with protagonists of the counter-culture and avant-garde movements of the 1960s, including Fluxus. Such engagement profoundly shaped his outlook at a time when electronic images were becoming increasingly present in everyday life. He embraced new technologies as material parts of his repertoire, which later included satellite transmissions, robots, and lasers. In 1974 Paik coined the term “electronic superhighway” to describe the exponential growth of new forms of communication. His installations, performances, and writings contributed to the creation of a media-based culture that expanded the very definition and aesthetic possibilities of making art.

Video sculptures, paintings, and drawings produced during the last decade of Paik's life, many of which have never been exhibited, will be presented together with key works from the 1960s through the 1980s. The exhibition testifies to his lifelong exploration of the role of technology in culture, including the dissemination of infinite images via television. In *TV Chair* (1968), he harnessed the closed-circuit capacities of video to engage the viewer. The autobiographical installation *359 Canal Street* (1991) comprises wall-mounted television parts and a desk containing personal letters from Paik's friends including Ray Johnson, Yoko Ono, and Fluxus founder George Maciunas; and newspaper clippings on Paik's activities as an emerging artist in Europe.

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After suffering a stroke in 1996 at the age of sixty-four, Paik traveled less and spent more time at his New York studio, where he revisited persistent themes while tenaciously pursuing new ones. He continued to use the television as his muse and canvas, marking monitors with fleeting brushstrokes; painting and drawing abstractions that evoke transmissions gone awry; and engineering technologically ambitious installations for major exhibitions at the Guggenheim museums in New York (2000), Bilbao (2001), and Berlin (2004). In *Candle TV* (1991–2003), a single lit candle stands in for electronic light inside the shell of a television; while in *Golden Buddha* (2005), a carved Buddha figure faces a screen displaying images of itself. In a series of brightly colored canvases from 2005, Paik humanized schematic TVs with facial features, using conventional painting materials to represent his signature subject and medium. In these final years, he fused disparate elements from art, music, nature, and technology into avant-garde bricolage.

An accompanying, fully illustrated publication includes an essay by independent curator and scholar John G. Hanhardt; numerous color plates; and extensive documentation on Paik's life and work (English and Chinese).

Nam June Paik was born in Seoul in 1932, and died in Miami in 2006. His work is included in museum collections worldwide. Selected solo exhibitions include "Projects: Nam June Paik," Museum of Modern Art, New York (1977); "Nam June Paik Rétrospective," Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (1978–79); "Nam June Paik," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1982, traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago); "Nam June Paik/Vidéo tricolore," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1982–83); "Nam June Paik—Mostly Video," Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (1984); "Nam June Paik: Three Video Installations," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1989); "Video Time," Kunsthalle Basel (1991); "Video Space," Kunsthhaus Zurich (1991); "Nam June Paik Retrospective," National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (1992); "The Worlds of Nam June Paik," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2000, traveled to Ho-Am Gallery and Rodin Gallery, Seoul; and Guggenheim Bilbao); "Global Groove 2004," Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2004); "Nam June Paik," Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf (2010, traveled to Tate Liverpool); "In the Tower: Nam June Paik," National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2011); "Nam June Paik: Global Visionary," Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. (2012–13); and "Nam June Paik: Becoming Robot," Asia Society New York (2014–15). Representing Germany, Paik and Hans Haacke were awarded a Golden Lion at the 45th Venice Biennale (1993).

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Image: *Bakelite Robot*, 2002, single-channel video (color, silent) with LCD monitors and vintage Bakelite radios, 48 x 50 x 7 3/4 inches (121.9 x 127 x 19.7 cm) © Nam June Paik Estate

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.

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