

## 2025 Korea Foundation – USC Korean Studies Forum

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Faculty Hall (DML 121), Doheny Memorial Library

University of Southern California

Hosted by the USC Korean Studies Institute and the Korean Heritage Library

Sponsored by the Korea Foundation

### Participants

**Monica W. Cho (USC)** is a Korea Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at the USC Korean Studies Institute. Her research areas include modern and contemporary Korean literature and culture, women's writings, feminist ecological criticism and environmental humanities, gender and sexuality studies. She is currently working on her book project tentatively titled, "Reclaiming Our Time: Six Decades of Madness in Korean Women's Writings," which examines how madness functions as a literary device and a method of feminist and ecological critiques of postwar South Korean modernity in Korean women writers between 1950s and 2010s. Cho received her PhD from the University of California, Irvine in East Asian Studies with emphases in Critical Theory and Feminist Studies.

**Youngmin Choe (USC)** is an Associate Professor of Korean Cinema and Visual Culture at the University of Southern California. Her publications include *Hanyo* (The Housemaid) (BFI, 2025), *Tourist Distractions: Traveling and Feeling in Transnational Hallyu Cinema* and the co-edited volume *The Korean Popular Culture Reader* (Duke University Press, 2016 and 2014 respectively). Her articles have appeared in film and media journals including *Cinema Journal* and the *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*. She earned her PhD in Asian Studies at UC Berkley.

**Yong Cho (UCR):** I am a specialist in the art and architecture of East and Central Asia from medieval and early modern periods. In my research, I focus on the question of how artistic creativity emerges when people, objects, and ideas move or become displaced from their place of origin. In my first book, *The Woven Image: The Making of Mongol Art in the Yuan Empire* (Yale University Press, forthcoming 2026), I explored the visual culture of fiber images in the Mongol court of East Asia. More recently, I have begun working on a new project, which investigates how the Mongol presence on the Korean peninsula during the last century of the Koryŏ led to the rise of new visual and material forms in Northeast Asia and beyond. Since 2020, I have worked as assistant professor in the History of Art department at the University of California, Riverside.

**Joon-Ho Choi (USC)** is the Associate Dean for Research & Creative Work and an Associate Professor of Building Science in the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. Choi's primary research interests are in the areas of advanced controls for high performance buildings, bio-sensing controls in the built environment, smart building enclosure, passive building strategies, human-centered building environmental control, building systems integration, environmental sustainability, and comprehensive post-occupancy evaluation, indoor environmental quality, and human

health, and work productivity. He is a technical committee member of American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, and a member of the International Society of Indoor Air Quality, American Society of Civil Engineering, and Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association. He earned his PhD degree in Building Performance and Diagnostics at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Susan Hwang (UCSB)** is an Assistant Professor of Korean Cultural Studies at UC Santa Barbara. She specializes in modern Korean literature, Korean cultural history, and translation studies. Her current research interests lie in cultural activism during social movements in modern Korea with an emphasis on the shifting relations between aesthetics and politics. She is currently working on her monograph titled "Uncaged Songs: Culture and Politics of Protest Music in South Korea." It is a cultural history of South Korea's song movement that charts how songs became a powerful component of the struggle for democracy in South Korea during two of the nation's darkest decades—the 1970s and the 1980s. She received her PhD from the University of Michigan.

**Seungyeon Gabrielle Jung (UCI)** is an Assistant Professor of Art History and Visual Studies at UC Irvine. She is a design historian and media scholar whose research interrogates the politics and aesthetics of design, with the postwar developing world as a critical site of inquiry. Her first book, *Utopia of Problems: Nation-Designing in Postwar South Korea*, examines the various roles that modern design assumed in the processes of South Korea's industrialization and political transformation. By analyzing failed state and corporate design projects—marginalized within dominant narratives that valorize clean, functional modernist forms as signifiers of progress and prosperity—the book challenges widely accepted definitions of design as a problem-solving method. Jung has collaborated with the Seoul Museum of Art and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea, and she has also written about feminism and design in Korea. She received her PhD from Brown University.

**Angela Kiloren (Lumenova)** is Principal at Lumenova AI and advises international media and entertainment organizations on growth strategies. She was a former CEO of CJ ENM America and Head of Global Business for CJ ENM. She led the U.S. strategy and operations for Korea's leading film, television, and music powerhouse, including the acquisition of U.S. studio Fifth Season, development of English language remakes and originals from Studio Dragon and CJ ENM's IP library, and the creation and growth of the KCON convention — the world's largest celebration of K-Pop and Hallyu since 2012. She served numerous leadership roles over almost 15 years, including COO and SVP Marketing, and Chief Marketing Officer for CJ America across its food, logistics, agri-bio, and entertainment divisions. Killoren served as the Chair of the Board for the Network of Korean American Leaders and led its merger with the Council of Korean Americans.

**Minjeong Kim (SDSU)** is a Professor of Sociology at the San Diego State University. Her research areas include gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, family and international migration, and popular culture. Kim has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on these topics. Kim is the author of *Elusive Belonging: Marriage Immigrants and "Multiculturalism" in Rural South Korea* (2018, University of Hawai'i Press) and co-editor of *Global Gender Research: Transnational*

*Perspectives* (2009, Routledge) and *Redefining Multicultural Families in South Korea: Reflections and Future Directions* (2022, Rutgers University Press). Kim is currently working on a book manuscript based on her research about Korean immigrant communities on the US-Mexico border. Kim holds an MA in Women's Studies and a PhD in Sociology from the University at Albany, State University of New York.

**Soy Kim (Youtube)** is Head of North America, Music and Podcast Content Strategy at YouTube. Her work blends global youth culture, content strategy, GenAI x video, product development, and marketing strategy. Previously, she worked across algorithmic discovery, product Go-To-Market strategies and industry education at Spotify. Her experiences span marketing, content strategy, music, film and TV distribution and global business strategy in both the U.S. and Korea. As a marketing executive, Kim developed record-breaking, multi-platinum campaigns for artists including BTS, Chloe x Halle, Baby Keem, and John Legend. She serves as a mentor for national non-profit Asian American Collective, the Recording Academy GRAMMYU program, and YouTube's Music & Premium product and engineering org. She has received academic grants to conduct ethnographic research on Korean society. She holds an MBA from Yale University and a BA from Harvard University.

**Hye-Jin Lee (USC)** is a Clinical Associate Professor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Lee is also the founder and former editor of *Books Aren't Dead*, a podcast series for Fembot that reviews and discusses recent publications by feminist scholars in the fields of media, communication, science and technology. Lee's primary research focuses on the cultural meanings of popular culture and the power struggles (as well as collaborations) between the industry and the fans. Lee's current research includes the K-pop industry and global fandom, transformation of cultural meaning, status and content of popular culture when it crosses borders, convergence of social media and television, and the gendering of technology. Previously, she was the managing editor of *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, a peer-reviewed academic journal that focuses on interdisciplinary scholarship in communication and cultural studies. Lee holds a PhD from University of Iowa

**Jeong-In Lee (USC)** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Southern California Society of Fellows in the Humanities. Drawing on ethnomusicology and performance studies, her research attends to the relational, affective, and sensory dimensions of sonic experience in militarized and socially contested spaces. Her current book project investigates the acoustic and affective environments of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), theorizing listening as a mode of witnessing, refusal, and attunement to histories of violence. Engaging feminist theory, trauma studies, and sound studies, she traces how sonic practices – from military loudspeakers to resonant silences – mediate collective memory, contested borders, and the lingering afterlives of the Korean War. She received a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin and MA from Texas A&M University.

**Jin-kyung Lee (UCSD)** is Associate Professor in Literature at UC San Diego. She authored *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex Work and Migrant Labor in South Korea* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and co-edited *Rat Fire: Korean Stories from the Japanese Empire* (Cornell East Asia Series, 2013) and an anthology of Korean

literature, *Island Ablaze and Other Stories: The US Empire in North and South Korean Literatures* (Cornell University Press, 2025). She is currently working on a monograph on the colonial literary representations of capitalism and liberal ideas and their afterlives in contemporary South Korean popular culture. Lee received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from UCLA.

**Namhee Lee (UCLA)** is a Professor of Modern Korean History and the Director of the Center for Korean Studies at UCLA. Her publications include *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Cornell University Press, 2007), *The South Korean Democratization Movement: A Sourcebook* (co-edited with Kim Won, Academy of Korean Studies, 2016), and *Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea* (Duke University Press, 2022). She is currently co-editing the Cambridge Modern History of Korea. She holds a PhD, MA and BA in Modern Korean History from the University of Chicago.

**Albert L. Park (Claremont McKenna College)** is Bank of America Associate Professor of Pacific Basin Studies and Associate Dean of Faculty for Research at Claremont McKenna College. His book project *Entangled Life: Mutuality and the Birth of Environmental Movements in Modern Korea* focuses on the roots of environmentalism in modern Korean history and its relationship to authority and vernacular ecology. He is the author of *Building a Heaven on Earth: Religion, Activism and Protest in Japanese Occupied Korea* and is the co-editor of *Forces of Nature: New Perspectives on Korean Environments*. Park co-founded EnviroLab the book series *Environments of East Asia* (Cornell University Press), a multidisciplinary, open-access book series that covers environmental issues. His work has been supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Fulbright Program, the Social Science Research Council, Japan Foundation and the Korea Foundation. Park received a PhD from the University of Chicago and a MA from Columbia University.

**Seo Young Park (Scripps College)** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Scripps College. Her research interests include urban space, gender and labor, market and value, time and temporalities, and East Asia, especially South Korea. Her current research projects explore individual, commercial, and institutional practices responding to the urban atmospheric crises in South Korea, analyzing how these practices contribute to the emerging forms of knowledge and care that shape the relationship that people have with the environment. She authored *Stitching the 24-Hour City: Life, Labor and the Problem of Speed in Seoul* (Cornell University, 2021) She received her Ph.D. in Anthology from University of California, Irvine.

**Sunyoung Park (USC)** is associate professor in the departments of East Asian Languages and Cultures and of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Southern California, where she also serves as the Director of the Korean Studies Institute. She is the author of *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015) and the editor of *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea* (University of Michigan Press, 2019). Her contributions to the English translation of Korean fiction include *On the Eve of the Uprising and Other Stories from Colonial Korea*

(Cornell East Asian Series, 2010), *Readymade Bodhisattva: The Kaya Anthology of Science Fiction from South Korea*, and *On the Origin of Species and Other Stories* by Bo-Young Kim (Kaya Press, 2019 and 2021 respectively). She is currently writing a monograph on science fiction and the politics of modernization in South Korea. She received her Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University.

**Sixiang Wang (UCLA)** is Associate Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Korean Language Program Coordinator at UCLA. He is a historian of Chosŏn Korea and early modern East Asia. He teaches courses in Korea's premodern history as well as the history of cultural and intellectual interactions in early modern East Asia. As a historian of Chosŏn Korea and early modern East Asia, his research interests also include comparative perspectives on early modern empire, the history of science and knowledge, and issues of language and writing in Korea's cultural and political history. He is currently writing a book on the cultural strategies of Korean diplomacy with Ming empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It underscores how Korean ritual and literary practices produced diplomatic norms, political concepts, and ideals of sovereignty in the construction of a regional imperial order. He holds a PhD from Columbia University.

**Fiona Yuanjing Xu (USC)** is a Ph.D. student in East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Southern California. Her research interests include modern Korean literature, Buddhist studies, science fiction, and gender and sexuality studies. Her recent projects have focused on modern and contemporary cultural representations of Buddhism in South Korea, particularly the way female monastics, lay communities, and popular cultural imaginations engage with Buddhist thought to rearticulate gender norms and seek liberation. She is also developing a research focus on Buddhist speculative fiction, examining how speculative narratives reimagine Buddhist thought in relation to embodiment and marginalized identities. She holds an MA from USC and BA from Barnard College.