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**Site-Specific Art as Necrophilia;  
Platform in Kimusa Exhibition in  
Seoul 2009****Introduction**

In site-specific art, irrelevant to any kind of contention, the instinctual characters, Thanatos and Eros are obliged to be rendered. Eros, as a compulsion to repeat, inhibits onto the locus. Thanatos, as a compulsion "that aims at a state of things which has never yet been attained" (Freud 1973; 38), destructs the site. And this ambivalence has the biased inclination by the dominance of one side. What decides this inclination is not a static force which is owned by each side but the transformation of the "neutral energy." (Freud 1961; 44) And the character of site-specific art totally depends on this imbalanced duality.

**Kimusa and Exhibition**

Kimusa is the Korean acronym of Defense Security Command, which was founded as "Army Counter-intelligence Corps" during the Korean War. Due to the ideological antagonism in Korean peninsula and the long-lasting military dictatorship from 60s to 80s, Kimusa influenced the decisive political moments in an anti-democratic way by the execution of public power. (Savada 1997; 316-317) In 1974, as Kimusa moved to Sogyeok-dong, the central area of Seoul, Kimusa could be confirmed itself as the synonym for the confidential and brutal state power through the military dictatorship until late 1980's. Until they moved to the suburban area, Gwachon city in 2008, Kimusa was forbidden to the public. After 2008 it finally became public by the government plan which will convert it into the National Museum of Contemporary Art



Fig. 1: Kimusa in 2010

by 2012. However, the controversy is still in advance whether the museum should be under the management of the government or the place where the independent curators can organize the exhibitions without any external interference. And without any affirmed future for Kimusa, as the 4th of the series of five international contemporary art festivals in Seoul, Platform 2009 exhibited various artworks in Kimusa.

### The Dead Place

Kimusa is a disembowelled shell and not a place where Eros and Thanatos are able to find their object. First, there is nothing to be retained by Eros. The compulsion for self-preservation and self-repetition is unable to find the pleasantness to be continued. Also there is nothing to be destructed by Thanatos. Without the old occupants, Kimusa is just an empty shell that is never able to give the pleasant of mastery as the demolition of Kimusa cannot be equal to the destruction of the old occupants' dominance or to the death sentence for the anti-democratic power. These frustrating situations make Kimusa the dead place for the dual compulsions.

### The Necrophilia

As a specific site for artistic practices, Kimusa results the slippery interweaving of Eros and Thanatos, the necrophilia. Empty Kimusa, the fossilized shell of decayed military dictatorship have reminded the people of the cruel history of the civil movement for democracy. Additionally, the broadened gap between the ideal state power and the dissatisfaction of the contemporary political situation is deeply related to the gaze of Kimusa after its temporal declination. And this gap brings the imbalance of the dual compulsion by

transferring the displaceable neutral energy onto one side. In the case of the dead Kimusa, what overwhelms is Thanatos.

Eros chooses the site. It is undeniable to say that the site-specific art will cite the history of the selected place. This citation is the evidence of how the artistic will or the curatorial intention were interested in the site. Moreover, the historic memoir of Kimusa amplifies this interest into love and hate. Though the hatred is originated from the painful past, it is unavoidable that the choice of Kimusa reflects the Eros of the residents whirring around there and of the site where the residents keep living. At this point, we see the overlapping of the corrupt state power that produced the Kimusa and the hope for the ideal state power which is yet to come.

On the contrary, Thanatos affirms the future of the chosen site. The desire for the ideal state power in a democratic society always premises the denial of the present. Though the people's critical mind affirms the future for a better nation, to produce the progressive critique, the people want to judge the present in the name of Thanatos, the death sentence for the anti-democracy. For South Korean, Kimusa is the place where they recall the negations of the past. But as far as they adopted it as their own, the negatable part of Kimusa is not its past or present but its worst future, the repetition of the past.

However, the union of Eros and Thanatos is always elusive and disproportionate, like necrophilia never enables the pregnancy. What is visible inside the empty Kimusa are the traces of victims frustrated by the corrupt state power. The invisible what South Korean want to render by the site-specific art in Kimusa is the ideal state power. However, the real state power conceals itself by allowing an individual to project the illusion of the ideal state power on the empty Kimusa. Instead the state power hides itself behind the illusion of the ideal state power by disemboweling Kimusa.

Eventually, what Thanatos and Eros see from each other is just an illusion. That is why they are fascinated by each other and also they are slippery. Thus, the necrophilia only renders the mirrored image of each other that is fabricated by the invisible power.

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