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SULLIVAN GALLERIES PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION IN US OF WORK BY MOON KYUNGWON AND JEON JOONHO

Catalyst for season of programs including lecture by Pritzker Prize-winner Toyo Ito

Chicago, IL—The first exhibition in the United States devoted to the work of the noted Korean artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho will take the form of an ambitious collaborative project at the Sullivan Galleries of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), opening September 20, 2013. News from Nowhere: Chicago Laboratory couples the work of the two artists with that of visionary architects, designers, scientists, philosophers, and other thinkers in a massive interdisciplinary investigation that examines the world as it is today by imagining a postapocalyptic future. Information about the artists, their collaborators, and public exhibition programs is available at saic.edu/newsfromnowhere.

Building upon a pilot presentation at last year’s Documenta (13) in Kassel, Germany, News from Nowhere: Chicago Laboratory will remain on view in SAIC’s Sullivan Galleries through December 21, 2013, during which period it will serve as an open platform for continued explorations. Visiting artists and designers and SAIC students and faculty members will participate in forums and projects designed to lead to new propositions for the future.

Moon and Jeon’s News from Nowhere describes a world in which the human race is nearly wiped out by manmade and natural catastrophes and must relearn the most basic skills and values. As inspiration, the artists looked to the eponymous 1890 novel by the 19th-century British designer William Morris, who envisioned an agrarian worker society in which divisions among art, life, and work were erased.

But here and now, when a dystopia seems possible, Moon and Jeon have sought perspectives from science, architecture, product design, engineering, philosophy, and religion, as well as the arts, for their newly expanded project. The collaborators include Toyo Ito, the 2013 Pritzker Prize-winner (Tokyo); takram design engineering (Tokyo); MVRDV design collaborative (Rotterdam); Kuho Jung and Kosuke Tsumura, fashion designers (Seoul and Tokyo, respectively); and mime Yu Jingyu (Seoul).

At the heart of Moon and Jeon’s presentation is a pair of two-channel high definition films: El Fin del Mundo (2012), which is the visitor’s first encounter in the Sullivan Galleries, and its new sequel, Avyakta (2013), which will be shown in a theater at the conclusion of the exhibition. Between these two moving-image bookends, the visitor encounters futuristic tools, prototypes of bioengineered

“When I encountered *News from Nowhere*, I was immediately engaged by Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joo-ho’s line of questioning: how do we reimagine and reaffirm the essential role and responsibility of the artist in today’s world,” says Mary Jane Jacob, the exhibition organizer and Executive Director of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies at SAIC. “It is a question we ask everyday as an art school and as a place where exhibitions are organized as a form of research. So, as we began to develop this show, we aimed to create a project that would assert the manner in which Moon and Jeon push against the boundaries that seem to perpetually separate art and life. This meant inventing an exhibition format beyond convention, one that itself is a hybrid and can evolve over time in unpredictable ways.”

**Walking through the Exhibition**

**US Premiere of Two Major Films by Moon and Jeon**

Displayed in a darkened room on two synchronized screens, the 13-minute *El Fin del Mundo* tells the story of two artists, one living in a world on the brink of catastrophic disasters, and the other in the postapocalyptic future where humankind is forced to create habitats in floating settlements as precaution against rising sea levels and a radioactive and hazardous waste-permeated environment. Presented in parallel, the portrayal of the two artists’ lives reinforces the necessity of art making in humankind, even as it struggles for survival in such extreme and harrowing contexts.

The next chapter in the story is encountered at the opposing end of the exhibition with the screening of the sequel, *Avyakta*, which portrays a world in which most of the planet is submerged under water. Here nations have collapsed and multinational corporations, backed by their capital and technology, have given birth to a new social system. The female artist met in the earlier film now carries out dangerous research missions in highly contaminated areas. She is transformed into a messenger, imparting new meanings that challenge others to change the course of history.

**Investigations by Collaborators**

In the cavernous central section of the show, between the films, the visitor enters into a world invented by Moon and Jeon’s key collaborators, linked together in a web of generative play and sense of urgency. Takram design engineering, for instance, offers prototypes of a range of artificial organs that recycle water within the human body during extreme conditions. The concept for these arose when Moon and Jeon first approached the takram team to design a container for filtered water for the future envisioned in *El Fin del Mundo*. But in contemplating a world where water would be scarce, takram chose to design a heat-irradiant neck collar and artificial human organs that would help human beings conserve water more efficiently.
The section devoted to the contributions of MVRDV also illustrates alternative scenarios for the future, including biodegradable “bubbles” in which people live and new kinds of foodstuffs for a world of shortage. Futuristic garments on display include a prototype body suit by Kosuke Tsumura and a hexagon-patterned uniform by Kuho Jung, also seen in El Fin del Mundo. In the video, Lucis, Yu Jingyu employs his skills as a mime to conjure the body language of a future time.

Meanwhile the contributions of Toyo Ito—a series of architectural drawings and photographs documenting the master architect’s designs for a “lost” village—are real products created after the 2011 tsunami in Japan. With respect to the project, Ito avowed the need to “forget everything he knew” and listen to the villagers—a process that led him to assert the primacy of public gathering spaces in community building.

Occupying a vast space designed by Louis Sullivan at the turn of the last century, the exhibition—designed by the artists in collaboration with Kaz Yoneda of takram design engineering—synthesizes very different kinds of work into a holistic experience. "Moon and Jeon’s experts from various fields speak through images, objects, and words, each in their own way taking up a diagnosis of today and a reflection on tomorrow," notes Jacob.

Chicago Laboratory
As the exhibition title suggests, News from Nowhere is also a “Chicago Laboratory.” New works and ideas will spin out from the turning point of Sullivan’s architecture, which marks both the cartographic 0/0 point of Chicago and the center of the exhibition. These encounters, as platforms for the future are, chronologically:

• Extreme Ordinary: Redesigning and Redefining Vital Commodities, September 30–October 1—Kotaro Watanabe and Kaz Yoneda of takram, with Tim Parsons, SAIC Professor of Designed Objects, will lead a workshop in which students will design a product to be used by humans in a hundred years’ time, when survivors drift from one piece of land to another on a ship similar to Noah’s ark in search of natural resources that could sustain their lives. Each student team will be assigned a specific product (watch, pen, ID card, book, bath, etc.), defining the meaning and purpose of each object, while reframing the values it might offer in the future.

• Toyo Ito: Architecture After 3.11, Tuesday, October 15, 6:00 p.m. at the Rubloff Auditorium, The Art Institute of Chicago, 230 South Columbus Drive—The 2013 Pritzker Prize winner Toyo Ito will present the Butler-VanderLinden Lecture on Architecture. This lecture is jointly supported by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Visiting Artists Program; Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies; William H. Bronson and Grayce Slovet Mitchell Lectureship in Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; the Butler-VanderLinden Lecture on Architecture endowment of the Architecture & Design Society at the Art Institute of Chicago; and AIA Chicago. The Architecture & Design Society
gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of Park Hyatt Chicago. Additional support is provided by the National Building Museum.

• A Conversation on Beauty, public forum, Tuesday, October 15, 9:30 a.m. at Fullerton Hall, The Art Institute of Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue—Today, with the problems facing us as a society where the very survival of humanity is threatened, we need to marshal imagination to catapult positive change. Bringing together major international artists and architects, this forum will address the place of aesthetics in creating a positive, new future, illuminating how these practitioners understand beauty as a tool for designing the new world—featuring 2013 Pritzker Prize–winning architect Toyo Ito, Yusaku Imamura, director of Tokyo Wonder Site, SAIC alumnus and artist Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle (MFA 1989), and artists Moon Kyungwon, and Jeon Joonho.

• Kuho Jung: Between KUHO and hexa, Monday, October 28, 6:00 p.m., SAIC Columbus Auditorium, 280 South Columbus Drive—Korean designer Kuho Jung will discuss his design process and recent work. In a related workshop, Kuho will collaborate with SAIC’s acclaimed Fashion Design Department to embark upon various projects to envision survival and comfort in the places we might occupy in decades to come. A selection of garments from Kuho’s recent collection will also be on view in the SAIC Fashion Department display cases October 14–31.

Credits
Exhibition spatial concept and design by takram design engineering, Kaz Yoneda, Architect, with artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho. Generous support for the artists has been provided by Hyundai Motor Company, LB Investment, and Nefs Co. Ltd., along with Asiana Airlines in cooperation with GALLERY HYUNDAI, Seoul. We would also like to thank the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, for their support of the exhibition.

The Artists
Last year the Seoul-based team of Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho participated in Documenta (13) in Kassel, Germany and the Gwangju Biennale in Gwangju, South Korea, and received 2012 Noon Award Grand Prize of Gwangju Biennale, 2012 Korea Artist Prize, co-organized by the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea and the SBS Foundation, and 2013 Multitude Art Prize by Multitude Foundation.

Some of Moon’s selected solo exhibitions include GreenHouse at Gallery Hyundai, Seoul (2010) and Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka (2004). She has also participated in several group exhibitions including Poiesis of Collective Intelligence at Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media, Yamaguchi (2013); 60 Seconds of Solitude in Year Zero at Stalker Festival, Tallin (2011); A Different Similarity at Bochum Museum, Bochum (2010); Central Istanbul, Istanbul (2009); Now Jump at Nam June Paik Art Center, Yongin (2008); Nanjing Triennale at RCM Museum of Modern Art, Nanjing (2008). In addition, Moon collaborated with
Tadao Ando for a public art project at Genius Loci in Seopjikoji, Cheju Island, Korea (2007); Media Canvas at Seoul Square, Seoul (2010).

Jeon has had several solo exhibitions at SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo (2009); Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris (2008); and at Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York (2007). Jeon has also participated in several group exhibitions including Lifelike at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2012); Yokohama Triennale, Yokohama (2011); Your Bright Future at LACMA, LA (2009) and The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, Texas (2008); Metamorphosis at L' Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris (2008) and All About Laughter at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2007) among other venues. He has received awards at the 2004 Gwangu Biennale and is the 2007 recipient of the Grand Prix of the 27th Biennale of Graphic Art in Ljubljana.

Moon holds a MFA from the California Institute of Arts, Valencia and a PhD in Visual Communication from Yonsei University, South Korea. Moon is a professor of the College of Art & Design, Ewha Womans University. Jeon holds an MA from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, and a BFA from Dongeui University, South Korea. Both artists live and work in Korea.

The Curator
Mary Jane Jacob, the organizer of News from Nowhere: Chicago Laboratory, is Professor and Executive Director of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. A curator who has organized hundreds of exhibitions, site-specific and community-based projects, and public programs, Jacob actively works with artists to expand the practice and public discourse of art as a shared process. Study into the nature of the art experience with artists and others has lead to anthologies Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art (University of California Press, 2004) Learning Mind: Experience into Art (University of California Press, 2009).

At the Sullivan Galleries, Jacob is currently spearheading a major research project on Chicago social practice. This follows on two citywide exhibition programs: “Studio Chicago” (2010–11) that led to the publication The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists (University of Chicago Press, 2010), and a new look at modernism with the Mies van der Rohe Society at IIT (2008–10) retraced in Chicago Makes Modern: How Creative Minds Changed Society (University of Chicago Press, 2012). She has also brought international artists to do special projects for Sullivan—Omer Fast, Kimsooja, Wolfgang Laib, J. Morgan Puett and others—while invigorating the curatorial training offered to SAIC students. In 2010, she was awarded the Women’s Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award and the Award for Achievement in the Field of Public Art from Public Art Dialogue, and in 2012 Jacob received a Warhol Foundation Curatorial Research Fellowship.

About the Sullivan Galleries
The Sullivan Galleries of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago are located in Louis Sullivan’s historic masterpiece, the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. building. Exhibitions and public programs feature the work of both acclaimed artists and those new on the scene who work collaboratively with the SAIC community to explore how art functions within society today. As the public arm of SAIC’s
Department of Exhibitions and Exhibition Studies, Sullivan Galleries seek to
generate new research around issues, ideas, and professional practices in art
and design, while stimulating dialogue among the wider Chicago arts
community.

Public hours for the Sullivan Galleries are Tuesday–Saturday 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Free admission. For more information, the public may visit saic.edu/exhibitions.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of
the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate
and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to more than 3,200
students from around the globe. SAIC also provides adults, high school students,
and children with the opportunity to flourish in a variety of courses,
workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies
program. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy
built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students
unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while
working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in
their fields. SAIC’s resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new
Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide
students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For
more information, please visit saic.edu.

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