



PRESS RELEASE

BOHNCHANG KOO open-end

opening **Saturday, November 8th 2014**
from **3.00** pm to **8.00** pm

on show from Sunday, **November 8th 2014** to Sunday, **January 11th, 2015**
everyday, 10.30 am – 7.30
Wednesday and Thursday, 10.30 am – 9.00 pm

in collaboration with Studio Akka

Galleria Carla Sozzani
Corso Como 10 – 20154 Milano, Italia
tel. +39 02.653531 fax +39 02.29004080
press@galleriacarlasozzani.org
www.galleriacarlasozzani.org

BOHNCHANG KOO

open-end

Galleria Carla Sozzani presents the first Italian exhibition of photographs by the Korean Bohnchang Koo, featuring images selected from his series: “Vessels”, “White”, “Portraits of Time”, “Riverrun” and “Everyday Treasures”. His explorations are focused on impermanence, the passage of time, and the disappearance of cultural heritage.

For the series “Vessels”, Koo photographs rare porcelains of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910). Visiting museums around the world, Koo brings back to life the memory of this exquisite white tableware, which he shoots on a white background with soft light. “*I tried to capture the point of view in which the vessel is more than just a precious antique, but a vessel carrying a soul with infinite capacity to accommodate the heart of the observer and of the potter.*” – says the artist. It is the rescue of Korean cultural heritage and, at the same time, the possibility of transcendence into the object.

In Koo’s “White” series, the subject is nature, or rather those fragile signs that nature leaves now when the brightness is over: slender branches of ivy still clinging to the wall and dotted forms of creepers, pine needles on the snow, creating a new, unsuspected “calligraphy” that compel us to observe the beauty and the ephemeral enclosed in the simplicity of small everyday events, something we spend little time observing.

It is not dissimilar to the survey “*Portraits of the Time*”: The main “actor” is a wall, pure white, since almost all the work of Koo is based on the two most basic colors: white and black. The wall bears the traces of time. Roughness and folds, crevices, the authentic “*skin*” of life.

And even “*Riverrun*” is slightly ruffled, or smooth and soft as silk velvet, metaphor of another age of man. In the most recent works, “*Everyday Treasures*” Bohnchang Koo radicalizes his research even further. “*Everyday Treasures*” collects images of soaps. Treasures that we use every day without the slightest awareness. The soap is consumed like our lives, day by day.

The images are so simple and may even seem easy, but once again the author emphasizes the fragility, the transience of our world.

Koo’s elegant aesthetics, in a limited range of subdued tones and lacking all aggression, well represent the Korean sensitivity, and the ability to observe the more subtle expressions of the real.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1953, Koo was educated in the cultural tradition of Buddhism.

He graduated in Business Administration from Yonsei University in the same city. After working several years in a multinational company, in 1980, he decided to follow his interest in art and moved to Germany to study photography at the Fach Hochschule in Hamburg. In 1985 he returned to Korea to teach at the then opened Kaywon School of Art and Design. He currently teaches at Kyungil University in Gyeongsan.

His works have been exhibited in numerous solo shows, and are part of several museum and private collections in the United States and Asia, including: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Kahitsukan Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Leeum; Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul.

In 2008 he was artistic director of Deagu Photo Biennale in South Korea, and in 2013 was one of the curators of Photoquai, Paris. He is president of the foundation Parkgeonhi in Korea. Among his publications are: *Deep Breath in Silence*, *Revealed Personas*, *Vessels for the Heart* in Korea and *Hysterical Nine*, *Vessel*, *Everyday Treasures* in Japan.

Bohnchang Koo is considered one of the pivotal photographers of South Korea, not only for his photographic research, but also for his work as a teacher and curator that has greatly helped to form and promote contemporary Korean photography.