

× Sept. 13 – Nov. 5, 2011:  
**YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY  
INDUSTRIES**  
THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS  
IN ART

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**Audain Gallery**

SFU WOODWARD'S

**YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES**  
**THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART**

Since the late 1990s, the Seoul, Korea-based duo Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (YHCHI) have been producing work that draws on and refigures the potentials and limitations of net art, digital literature, conceptual writing, as well as television and cinema. In their web-based works and in their gallery projections, YHCHI utilize Flash to animate rapid narrative events, linguistic landscapes, and critical reflections on the role of art and the artist. Accompanied by jazz-based soundtracks (often made by the artists) that often refer to the legendary bebop drummers Kenny Clark and Max Roach, YHCHI's works are visual-linguistic events, mediated by software, that unfold rapidly in conjunction or in counter-point to the soundtrack, pushing the relationship of viewing and reading. As Mark Tribe, author of *New Media Art*, describes: "By accelerating the pace at which the text appears to a rate just within the threshold of human cognition, the artists coax us into a state of rapt concentration."<sup>1</sup>

Although they are often located in the framework of net art, unlike many earlier net artists, their work resists the idea of interactivity. Instead, their work builds up a narrative strategy or an artistic address that is, as poet and electronic literature critic, Brian Kim Stefans states, is "primarily characterized by the computer's power to create a state of desire in the user and then to deny the user satisfaction of that desire suddenly and absolutely."<sup>2</sup>

Through their use of sound, image, new media, and installation, the framework of net art, and its specific history, is not broad enough to define YHCHI's practice. Instead, it could be argued that visual art is the only field open enough to incorporate poetry, cinema, new media, and music. In their recent work, this openness of visual art and its cultural value of art is both engagingly used and criticized, as the work for the Audain Gallery, *THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART*, demonstrates.

As the Audain Visual Artists in Residence, Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries' practice is ideally suited to the SFU Visual Arts program, with its emphasis on artistic interdisciplinarity, and to Vancouver's rich history of the relationship between poetry and visual art.

1. <https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/MarkTribe/Young-Hae+Chang+Heavy+Industries>
2. <http://blog.sfmoma.org/2011/07/third-hand-plays-the-comedy-of-subjection/>

Talk: Sept. 16, 6pm

Opening: Sept. 16, 7-9pm

**Opening at Centre A:**  
**Sept. 16, 8pm**

**Salons with YHCHI**

Sept. 21  
IS IGNORANCE THE FOUNDATION OF ART? If so, why study art? If not, is art all about smarts?

Sept. 22  
IS UNTRUTH ESSENTIAL IN ART? If so, what's with the saying "truth is beauty and beauty is truth?" If not, what's so great about truthful art?

Sept. 29  
IF ART CAN BE EVERYTHING, IS EVERYTHING ART? If so, what does it mean to be an artist? If not, ditto?

Oct. 5, 8pm Centre A  
HI, WE'RE YOUNG-HAE AND MARC, AND WE WERE IN TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS DOING SOMETHING OR OTHER, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

The Audain Gallery serves as a vital aspect of the Visual Arts program at Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts. Its mission is to advance the aesthetic and discursive production and presentation of contemporary visual art through a responsive program of exhibitions in support of engaged pedagogy.

The Audain Gallery encourages conceptual and experimental projects that explore the dialogue between the social and the cultural in contemporary artistic practices.

The *Audain Visual Artists in Residence Program* and student exhibitions are central to the gallery's programming. The Audain Gallery is curated by Sabine Bitter, working with Gallery Assistant Brady Cranfield.

This exhibition is realized in cooperation with Centre A, Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

For more information, please contact [info@audaingallery.ca](mailto:info@audaingallery.ca)



DESPAIR IS  
JUST AROUND  
THE CORNER

*THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART* is a commissioned work for the Audain Gallery by the Seoul, Korea based art collective Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (YHCHI). A fast-moving, text-based artwork synchronized to a jazz score, the work renounces the interactivity typically associated with web-based media. Stripping away the paraphernalia of graphics, design, photos, banners, colors, and fonts, YHCHI present provocative and humorous narratives that reduce net art to information.

The literary voice of Internet writing is one characterized by “distance, homelessness, anonymity, and insignificance.”<sup>1</sup> By having their work travel into the gallery, even as it is available on their website, YHCHI play with the desire to deny the power of the art institution. While their previous work has typically used the Monaco typeface over a blank background to counter the seductive appeal of the cinematic image that their narratives evoke, *THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART*—in a departure for the artists—uses a moving image as a background. Even so, the banality of the image creates a similar effect of detachment from the cinematic aspect of their work. Superimposed onto footage of passengers on a Tokyo commuter train, *THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART* contrasts the conflict and struggle of

daily existence with the seemingly unproblematic and easy life of an artist. Proposing that life’s dynamic is characterized by the struggle to overcome conflict, the artists respond to the question of whether anything in life can exist without struggle. They conclude that art—and the life of an artist—is the solution to a conflicted life. Characteristically, these issues are examined from a perspective that provokes an empathetic criticism from within, which simultaneously assumes the roles of corroboration and critique.

The assertiveness of YHCHI’s claims about the status of artistic production in *THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART* provokes two contradictory responses in the viewer. On one hand, the work prompts the passive consumption of an immersive stream of flashing text, while on the other it incites an appraisal and balancing of the work’s polemic content with the viewer’s own knowledge of art. In doing so, the work antagonizes both non-art and art audiences alike by advancing an image of artistic labour based on a performance of leisure on the part of the artists. This approach disavows the traditionally valued and closely held conception of the political function of art and the political work done by artist. If in the current art historical moment everything in art has been done, then

under a limited definition, art is easy. One of the clichés about contemporary art is that anything can and will be accepted as art, which leads to the logical conclusion that one could earn a living as an artist essentially twiddling one’s rhetorical thumbs. This reading is supported by the observation that contemporary art has become increasingly distanced from classical ideas of work and labour.

*THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN ART* provides multiple forms of address and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries seem to revel in the confusion their antagonistic strategies provoke. In particular, they challenge assumptions about what it means to be an artist and the place of active political content in the art world. Yet, against the reduction of the agency of artists to lifestyle choice, it is the position of art production as entangled in the multiple contradictions of capitalism that makes art politically effective. For it is through such an implication that art has the ability to function as a place for labour, conflict, and fun that does not negate the value of the work performed by the majority of citizens.

– Vikram Uchida-Khanna

*YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES* is [yhchang.com](http://yhchang.com). Its principals, Young-hae Chang (Korea) and Marc Voge (U.S.A.), are based in Seoul. YHCHI has made work in 17 languages and presented much of it at some of the major art institutions in the world. It has done commissioned works for Tate (London), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), and the New Museum (New York).

1. [http://iowareview.uiowa.edu/TIRW/TIRW\\_Archive/tirweb/feature/younghae/interview.html](http://iowareview.uiowa.edu/TIRW/TIRW_Archive/tirweb/feature/younghae/interview.html)

SFU

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
THINKING OF THE WORLD

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Goldcorp Centre for the Arts  
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