MUSEUM OF ONE

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When Documentation Becomes the Work

Photographs, Reperformance, and the Archival Lives of Korean Experimental Art

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Research note

A comparative study of how photographs acquire artistic authority through copying, repair, printing, exhibition and collection. This revision adds evidence about collection transfer, archival classification and the listing of reperformance video in an exhibition checklist, and engages Korean conservation scholarship. The scope of the unresolved material histories is stated within the article.

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Abstract

Photographs give Korean experimental art continuing public forms through copying, repair, printing, exhibition and collection. This article compares three documentary histories. Seoul Museum of Art describes Rim Dong Sik's interventions in photographic records. The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, holds a print made in 2000 of Kim Kulim's 1970 *From Phenomenon to Traces* and documents a reperformance in 2016, later represented by a video in an international exhibition checklist. Sung Neung Kyung's *Reading Newspaper* circulated photographically in 1976, while the present twelve-print object entered the museum's collection in 2017. In the Korean Senior Artist Digital Archive, the researchers' account of Sung distinguishes artworks from other performance records through exhibition, publication and artist selection. Read alongside Korean conservation scholarship, these records show how artistic recognition can be documented without establishing unchanged material survival. The comparison separates material continuity, exhibition history and institutional identification, and asks what evidence each relation requires. Collection transfer dates, classification rules and loan descriptions clarify the public histories of the objects. The dates of individual repairs, print manufacture and mounting remain bounded questions, rather than assumed links in an uninterrupted provenance.

Keywords Korean experimental art, Korean art history, performance documentation, photography, archives, reperformance, conservation

1. An Action and Its Afterlife

In April 1970 Kim Kulim burned grass on an embankment near Salgoji Bridge in Seoul. The black forms left on the slope were temporary. The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), now holds a photographic object associated with that action, a C-print made in 2000 and catalogued as *From Phenomenon to Traces*. Its date field retains both the historical year 1970 and the date of printing. That qualification distinguishes the event from a later material object while allowing both to circulate under one title (MMCA 2016; n.d.-b, object details and description).

The problem is not peculiar to Kim. A photograph of a person seated before a blade of grass, a panel showing an artist cutting and reading a newspaper, and an image of burned turf all invite viewers to treat what is visible as the work. Sometimes the artist's early exhibition practice supports that treatment. Sometimes it follows from a museum's acquisition of a later print. Sometimes the surviving photographic object has been repaired, so that its present surface belongs to more than one moment. These differences matter more than the general observation that a performance cannot be stored as an event.

This study compares Rim Dong Sik (임동식), Kim Kulim (김구림) and Sung Neung Kyung (성능경) because the cited institutional records permit three different histories of documentary activity. It asks through which acts a particular record acquired the standing of a public form through which a work could be encountered, collected or presented again. The comparison attends to the history of particular objects and occasions, allowing the artists' approaches to documentation to differ.

The title names that question rather than announcing one universal passage from document to artwork. A copied photograph can remain working material. A repaired print can retain its documentary use without becoming a separate work. A photographic panel can be exhibited as part of a performance's history, and a later print can enter a museum collection without becoming

materially identical to the event it represents. What changes must be specified before its significance can be assessed.

The comparison follows the acts through which documentary materials acquire an identifiable public status. It distinguishes the history of a photographic image from that of a particular print, and both from an institution's classification of an object as an artwork. Seoul Museum of Art's (SeMA) collection transfer record, MMCA's dating convention and exhibition records, and the Korean Senior Artist Digital Archive's (KADA) stated classification criteria make these distinctions historically specific. The claim concerns documented acts of recognition and presentation; it does not depend on a continuous material provenance for every surviving component. Prior circulation and overlap with the author's Relational Archival Investigation (RAI) publications are disclosed below.

2. Documentation and Its Scholarship

The distance between a live event and its record is a longstanding question in performance studies. Philip Auslander argues that documenting an action can frame and constitute it as performance for an audience (Auslander 2006, 5–7). Amelia Jones examines the specific knowledge made possible by encounters with documentary traces (Jones 1997, 11–12). Rebecca Schneider traces how performance persists through repetition and bodily transmission (Schneider 2011, 104–5). These arguments give documentation and renewed performance active roles in a work's reception. The history of an individual print, copy or panel still requires evidence particular to that object.

Recent East Asian scholarship places these questions within more specific histories. Douglas Gabriel and Nancy P. Lin discuss Kim Kulim's grass-burning action through the ecological duration of the scorched ground and its regrowth. They situate mediation and documentation within performance practice in the region (Gabriel and Lin 2025, 320–21). Their account establishes a precedent for treating the action's afterlife as part of its history. Eunjoo Lee places the grass-burning action in the history of Korean photographic practice and identifies it as a work now classified as photography. Her conference paper also discusses documentation's recognition as artistic production (Lee 2025, 16–17). The present study follows the particular later print dated by MMCA to 2000, its collection status and the museum's subsequent reperformance.

Sooran Choi examines both Kim's grass-burning action and Sung's newspaper installation through contemporary press and archival photographs, situating them within the political conditions of the 1970s (Choi 2020, 85–87, 93–95). Joan Kee's discussion of Korean experimental art gives performance photography a political and representational role within the conditions of the 1960s and 1970s (Kee 2023, 54). This context helps explain why photographs demand attention as historical forms. The comparison pursued here asks how the status of named objects can be specified through their manufacture, treatment and exhibition histories.

Korean and Korea-focused scholarship has already made a more specific argument about the creative use of records. In her 2019 MA thesis, Hanna Yoonwoo Lee distinguishes making a record from assembling, organizing and establishing relations among records. Her discussion of Korean experimental performance treats photographic documentation as material support and as an activity capable of reshaping recorded information or developing it into further work (Lee 2019, 40–42). The proposition that documentation could be creative therefore cannot serve as this article's claim to novelty.

Kim Han Deul's published abstract identifies Rim's 1985 *Thoughts Facing a Blade of Grass* as one of two performances whose records and paintings the article analyzes as connected forms of

practice (Kim 2021, abstract). This is a direct precedent for the Rim section. The particular question pursued here is what SeMA's descriptions of named copies and a repaired photograph allow us to distinguish within that continuation: the represented action, the making of a record, the deterioration of an object and the artist's later intervention.

Seo Yeon Chung's conference paper examines how the camera helps shape the form and content of Sung's early photographic works, especially *Photo Album* and *Here* (Chung 2024, 2–3). The subsequent article by Seo Yeon Chung and Yeon Shim Chung challenges a merely documentary reading of Sung's photography from 1975–1976. Its published abstract identifies works including *Mirror*, *Photo Album*, *Here*, *Ruler*, *Apple*, *Index Finger*, *Smoking* and *Hand* (Chung and Chung 2024, abstract). These arguments provide context for the present study of *Reading Newspaper*. The conference text and the journal abstract provide different levels of access to the scholarship, and the abstract supplies no case-specific account of the *Reading Newspaper* panel.

This scholarship also guards against replacing one generalization with another. An action arranged for a camera does not necessarily have the same history as a public performance later represented by a photographic panel. Nor does an argument about *Here* determine the manufacture date or mounting history of the photographs now associated with *Reading Newspaper*. The value of the comparison lies in keeping these different occasions in view, not in making every photographic practice illustrate the same theory.

The evidence used below includes SeMA's object descriptions and collection guide, MMCA's collection entries, acquisition lists and reperformance report, the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) Korean Senior Artist Digital Archive (KADA), and institutional documents for the 2023–2024 exhibition *Only the Young*. The method compares the functions of these records. An acquisition list can date collection without dating manufacture. An exhibition checklist can identify a loan without establishing the genealogy of its components. KADA's methodological account can explain a classification without proving the conservation history of the classified object. Where two institutional accounts appear to agree, their agreement is reported without assuming that they are independent witnesses.

3. Rim Dong Sik and the Reworked Photograph

Rim's outdoor actions depended on passing conditions. A body entered a relation with grass, reeds or a landscape, and that relation could not remain in place indefinitely. In SeMA's collection essay, curator Kim Ho-jeong describes the surviving materials both as a unique archive of the original site and as the work itself. This formulation expresses an institutional interpretation of their artistic standing. The status and material history of each item require further specification (Kim n.d., §3).

The document 1985년 〈풀잎과 마주한 생각〉 문서, registered MA-02-00007550, offers a particular example. SeMA describes a black-and-white copy of a photograph reproduced in two parts across two sheets. The photograph records *Thoughts Facing a Blade of Grass*, an action performed outside Hamburg in 1985 in which Rim faced a blade of grass with his beard linked to it. The museum places the document within a wider practice of colour and black-and-white printing, copying, recopying, layering and editing photographic records (SeMA n.d.-a, description). This account establishes an attributed history of handling. The production sequence of the two sheets remains open.

A second item, MA-02-00006517, is separately catalogued as a copied photograph of the same 1985 action. Together the entries establish that the archive contains distinct documentary units associated with the action. Their relation to particular exposures and their order of production

remain unspecified (SeMA n.d.-a; n.d.-b). A fleeting encounter thus survives through records with their own forms of handling and circulation.

That history extends beyond the copies. SeMA relates the action to later work involving reeds and beard and to a 2005 painting with the title *Thoughts Facing a Blade of Grass* (SeMA n.d.-a, description). An action could generate further gestures and images without all of them becoming interchangeable manifestations of one physical object. A recurring title could hold the sequence together while its materials and occasions changed. The familiar statement that an action ‘survives in photographs’ is therefore insufficient to describe the artist’s continuing work with its visible forms.

The photograph registered MA-03-00006485 makes the distinction especially consequential. SeMA identifies its subject as *Tying Reeds and Beard* on Wonsando in 1988. The record describes damage and peeling caused by prolonged moisture and reports that Rim used marker and oil paint to redraw background features, including grass and rocks, to recover lost image content. The entry also records donation by the artist in 2019 (SeMA n.d.-c, object details and description).

The year 1988 identifies the historical action associated with the image, and 2019 identifies its donation. SeMA supplies an account of the artist’s repair, while the exact repair date and its relation to acquisition remain unspecified. Locating individual additions on the surface would require close examination and a conservation map. The present interpretation follows the attributed history of intervention.

A photograph that has been damaged and worked upon cannot be treated, without qualification, as an unchanged view of the original background. Yet later intervention does not make every historical use of the photograph invalid. Questions about the contour of a rock at the moment of exposure would benefit from comparison with an earlier print or negative. Questions about Rim’s subsequent care for his records can draw directly on SeMA’s account of the intervention. The image’s evidentiary value changes with the question put to it.

SeMA explains the intervention as an effort to recover damaged content. The artist’s authorship gives the repair a place within the continuing treatment of the record. Historical contemporaneity is a separate question. A later authorized addition belongs to the object’s material history even when it restores an image of an earlier action.

SeMA’s collection history adds another act of mediation. Kim Ho-jeong describes Rim’s participation in arranging material and supplying explanations before transfer. Original records, later recollection and institutional description meet in the present collection. A current caption may preserve an earlier inscription, an explanation supplied later by Rim, or a curatorial formulation. The date and authorship of a caption require their own evidence (Kim n.d., §2 and note 1).

SeMA’s 2025 collection guide records four collection occasions between 30 November 2018 and 8 January 2019 (SeMA 2025, 23). This collection-level chronology supplements the repaired photograph’s item-level record of a 2019 gift. It does not identify that photograph’s particular transfer date or establish when its surface was repaired. A collection’s transfer history and an individual object’s treatment history therefore remain distinct even within the same institutional archive.

The 2020 exhibition *Rise Up Rim Dong Sik* presented archival activity as part of the artist’s practice (SeMA 2020). That interpretation is consistent with the reported copying and repair. Their different dates and purposes make the continuing practice historically intelligible. As the RAI

demonstration already argued, a photograph can bear evidence of several acts, with the relevant evidentiary use depending on the question put to it (Vale 2026b, 3–4).

4. Kim Kulim and the Date on the Print

MMCA's entry for Kim Kulim's *From Phenomenon to Traces* offers a different route into the problem. The museum identifies the original grass-burning action with 11 April 1970, when black triangular traces were produced near Salgoji Bridge in Seoul. Its collection object is a C-print on paper, 99 × 148 cm, listed as photography and acquired by purchase. The date field reads 1970 with a qualification identifying printing in 2000. The collection management number is 04616; the online record number is 4616 (MMCA 2016; n.d.-b, object details and description).

The historical title itself requires discrimination. Kim Donghyoun's published abstract identifies three 1970 works under *From Phenomenon to Traces*, involving grass-burning, ice and the wrapping of the museum. The present account concerns the grass-burning action and the specified MMCA photographic object, not every work that has circulated under the shared title (Kim 2014, abstract). An inquiry into the title's wider use would be a different comparison.

The 1970/2000 distinction is not incidental. The original action involved a changing site, a sequence of burning and a trace whose appearance would not remain fixed. The collection entry identifies a later printed image associated with that history. The museum does not hold the scorched embankment. It holds a photographic object produced thirty years after the named action. The 2000 date belongs to printing, not necessarily to the exposure of the negative, the artist's selection of the image or the museum's purchase. None of those additional dates is supplied by the public entry.

When the print enters the collection under the earlier title, it becomes an institutionally recognized material form through which the historical work can be encountered. That standing does not make its paper contemporary with the 1970 event. It also leaves the printing authorization, source negative and edition history unspecified. A photographer attribution would supply another part of this account, while the relation between a particular exposure and the collected print would still require evidence.

KAMS's researcher's note reports that the photograph is understood to have been taken by fellow artist Jung Chanseung, citing the Asia Culture Center's 2016 volume *Happenings and Events*, p. 95 (KAMS n.d.-a, researcher's note). The cited page was not inspected. Although the KAMS entry gives dimensions matching MMCA's print, it supplies no accession link or complete negative-to-print history. Its separate 2019 date for the Gwacheon anniversary reperformance conflicts with MMCA's dated 2016 records. The attribution is therefore retained as a qualified account of photographic authorship, with the museum's contemporary records governing the event chronology.

MMCA's account characterizes the object through both its photographic form and the process-oriented practice it records (MMCA n.d.-b, description). A photograph can be documentary and a collected artwork. The museum's publication guide places a later printing date in parentheses after the initial year when the two differ (MMCA 2020, §3.74, 134–35). Kim's collection entry follows that form, preserving the distinction between the historical action and the later print. The guide supplies a published convention for reading the field; it does not establish when the entry was compiled or what prompted the printing.

MMCA's 2016 programme introduced another form of public presentation. The programme announcement scheduled a reperformance for 18 March at the Gwacheon outdoor sculpture park,

within the programme marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Gwacheon site (MMCA 2016). The museum's annual report confirms that the event took place and that MMCA recorded it in digital video and photographs, which it archived for future exhibitions and research (MMCA 2017a, 104–5). The renewed action therefore generated a further body of documentary material.

The reperformance also acquired a subsequent exhibition identity. The Guggenheim's 2023 checklist lists *Re-enactment of From Phenomenon to Traces: An Event through Fire and Grass*, dated 1970/2016, as a silent, single-channel video lasting four minutes and fifty-nine seconds, with MMCA as lender (Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2018.341). This locates a video identified with the reperformance in a later exhibition record. The checklist does not establish which recording or edit supplied the loan, or whether the 2000 print informed the renewed action.

The work identified with a transient landscape action became available as a later photographic print and through a museum-organized reperformance. The print presents a bounded image associated with the historical action. Reperformance established another occasion of action, with its own site, participants and audience. Its new photographs and video carry a further date and viewpoint. The historical title connects these forms while their material occasions remain distinct.

The sources leave the specific 2000 print's role in planning the 2016 event unresolved. Establishing that role would require production correspondence, instructions and a comparison of the historical and renewed actions. Photographs, the artist's memory and other documents may have informed the programme. The evidence presently establishes the museum's collection of a later print and its realization and recording of a reperformance under the acknowledged work identity.

Kim's case supplies a history of later printing, collection, reperformance and further documentation. Rim's records supply a history of copying and reported intervention in photographic surfaces. In both cases, an object's present standing draws together several acts whose dates and purposes need to remain visible. MMCA's purchase of the print establishes one institutional act within Kim's history. The motivation for the original action requires separate evidence.

5. Sung Neung Kyung and Early Photographic Exhibition

MMCA's collection description identifies a performance of Sung Neung Kyung's *Reading Newspaper* on 4 April 1976 at Four-Person Event in Seoul and another on 3 July at Event Logical. It also identifies the photographic panel exhibited at the Fourth Independents Exhibition in 1976 with the panel now in its collection. The present entry lists twelve gelatin silver prints on paper, each 26.3 × 26.3 cm, under management number 08033 and online record 8194 (MMCA n.d.-c, object details and first historical paragraph).

The Fourth Independents Exhibition ran from 3 to 9 July 1976. Its opening therefore coincided with the date assigned to the second live performance (MMCA n.d.-a). The record leaves the order of events within 3 July unresolved. MMCA's identification supports the early photographic exhibition history and connects it with the collected object. It provides an institutional account of that relationship, while the history of each photographic paper, mount and arrangement remains a further question.

MMCA's annual report lists the twelve photographs among its 2017 acquisitions (MMCA 2018, 69, no. 63). The Guggenheim's 2023 checklist describes the MMCA loan as twelve gelatin silver prints on wood panel with masking tape (Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2021.556). These records establish an acquisition year and a later description of the object's presentation. Establishing the history of its individual components from the 1976 exhibition onward would

require the acquisition file, early installation photographs, inscriptions, mounting records or a conservation account.

The KADA artist dossier, researched under Cho Soojin, describes Sung's photographic presentation within an account of the interaction between newspapers, photography and action (KAMS n.d.-d, section on the convergence of newspaper, photography and performance). Its methodological note also makes the classification process explicit. Performance photographs and videos are treated as artworks when they were exhibited, published in print or selected by the artist as works; other records are classified as related documentation (KAMS n.d.-d, recording principles, §2(1)③). The dossier records a retrospective research rule, rather than a universal definition or a rule shown to govern the 1976 exhibition.

This distinction gives an institutional form to the question posed by the article's title. A photograph's relation to an action does not alone determine its classification. Publication, exhibition and artist selection can supply the reasons recorded for treating it as a work. The dossier also describes digitizing artist-held film for its database images (KAMS n.d.-d, research scope, §1(3)①). A database image, a brochure reproduction and an acquired photographic sheet must consequently be identified at their respective levels before their histories can be joined.

KAMS's researcher's note connects twelve photographs taken in 1976 and used in the *Event Logical* brochure with images held by MMCA (KAMS n.d.-c, researcher's note). MMCA Research Lab describes the event photographs in the brochure as made beforehand (MMCA Research Lab n.d., final sentence). Together these accounts support a provisional reading of the images as preceding the 3 July live event. The inference depends on the accounts referring to the same image sequence, and their independence has not been established. Because the brochure's interior and linked artist note were not inspected, no exposure-by-exposure identification is proposed. The accounts document an attributed history of circulation, while manufacture and mounting remain separate questions.

The 2017 *Reenacting History* brochure reproduces the twelve images with the credit 'Photo by LEE Wanho' and the line 'Courtesy of the artist' (MMCA 2017b, 12). The caption records a photographic credit without specifying whether it refers to the original exposures or reproduction of the work. It supplies no manufacture date for the sheets or account of their mounting.

Ryu Hanseung lists the newspaper action at the April and July 1976 performances. His transcription of the April event poster specifies a repeated procedure: Sung was to read passages aloud and cut them out until only unprinted paper remained (Ryu 2015, 112–13, 115). MMCA places the reading and removal of printed passages within the controlled circulation of public information under the Yushin regime (MMCA n.d.-c, description). A photographic arrangement presents that procedure through selected views and relations among images. The arrangement leaves the spectators' responses and the full duration of either performance to other forms of evidence.

Chung's conference paper makes the camera's constitutive role central to its reading of Sung's early photographic practice (Chung 2024, 2–3). That argument helps frame the present inquiry into the kind of presentation that the *Reading Newspaper* photographs became and when they entered public view. The panel's individual components require a more particular provenance than that general account of photographic practice can supply.

Sung's *Newspapers: After the 1st of June 1974* adds a related history of physical remnants. The work involved cutting printed text from successive issues of Dong-a Ilbo and presenting the altered

sheets and removed material. KAMS's work record dates the Third ST Exhibition to 21–27 June 1974 and describes cutting repeated daily during its run (KAMS n.d.-b, description; Choi 2020, 93–95). The papers and cuttings carry physical consequences of the procedure. Their use as historical evidence depends on identifying the occasion that produced the materials in a particular installation.

The KAMS dossier identifies the installation held by ARKO Art Center as the result of Sung's 2001 reperformance at his exhibition *Art Is the Shadow of Delirium*. The Guggenheim checklist identifies ARKO as the lender of the installation exhibited under the historical date 1974 (KAMS n.d.-d, collection history, §2(1)⑨; Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2018.370). The archive's account places the collected installation within a later realization of the work. A component-level account of its papers, boxes and any subsequent replacements would require the lender's records.

Sung's case therefore brings early photographic exhibition into relation with a later installation produced through reperformance. A photograph of cutting, a sheet with text removed and a box containing cuttings have different relations to an action. One represents selected views, another bears the consequences of cutting, and another gathers material separated by it. Specifying their production and presentation allows these forms to be compared within Sung's continuing practice without collapsing the two works' identities.

6. Three Routes to Documentary Authority

The comparison distinguishes three routes through which records acquired continuing artistic authority. In Rim's case, SeMA describes copying and intervention in photographic materials, and records the later transfer of the archive. In Kim's case, MMCA identifies a print made decades after the action and documents a reperformance later identified with a video in an international exhibition checklist. In Sung's case, photographic presentation belonged to the work's 1976 exhibition history, while later acquisition and loan records identify the collected object. KADA's classification criteria make exhibition, publication and artist selection explicit grounds for distinguishing artworks from other performance records. These routes locate different acts of recognition; they do not prescribe one necessary sequence from event to document to artwork.

Three relations organize this comparison. Material continuity concerns the survival and treatment of particular papers, pigments, supports or residues. Exhibition history concerns the forms through which a work has been publicly presented. Institutional identification concerns the authorized account connecting a collected object with an earlier work. The evidence for these relations can reinforce one another. A stable institutional title may also accompany changed materials, and an early exhibition may be established while the conservation history remains incomplete. A repaired photograph can retain a relation to its subject while carrying evidence of later treatment.

Conservation scholarship places an artwork's continuing identity within relations that exceed a single material object. Aga Wielocha treats objects and their contextual records as interrelated components of an artwork's distributed identity (Wielocha 2021, 110–11). Amy Brost discusses how a later realization can maintain a connection to a work while introducing physical differences (Brost 2022, 184–87). These accounts help explain how a later print or renewed display can participate in a work's history while retaining a distinct date and material condition.

Kim Eunjin's Korean-language study brings this problem into MMCA's conservation discourse. She treats documentation and record preservation as means of sustaining temporary works, while warning that repeat printing from a negative or digital file does not diminish the obligation to care

for surviving originals (Kim 2016, 90–91). She also makes conservation decisions a matter of deliberation among artists, custodians and specialists; the artist's view is important without being an absolute criterion (Kim 2016, 92). Her account supports attention to both continuity of meaning and material history (Kim 2016, 94). Applied to the present comparison, it makes the evidentiary question more exact. An artist's intervention or an institution's identification can establish a relation to the work without making a later addition contemporary with the first action. Kim's article supplies a conservation argument, not a treatment report for these particular objects.

The word 'original' accordingly has several possible references. An action can be original as a first occurrence. A panel can belong to an original exhibition history. A later print can be recognized as an artwork without being a vintage print. A repaired photograph can be original evidence of the artist's later intervention. The argument gains nothing by making one of these senses cancel all the others.

The international circulation of *Only the Young: Experimental Art in Korea, 1960s–1970s*, presented by MMCA, the Guggenheim and the Hammer Museum in 2023–2024, made these problems available to further audiences. Historical actions were encountered through photographs, objects, records and renewed presentations (MMCA 2023; Guggenheim Museum 2023; Hammer Museum 2024). The portable form of a work need not reproduce the circumstances in which it first occurred. Its selection and presentation are later historical acts, not necessarily falsifications of the earlier one.

These cases establish differences in how surviving materials are made publicly legible. They do not measure whether documentation determined selection for international exhibitions. That broader proposition would require comparison with actions whose records were lost, remained private or were not selected for display.

7. Titles and the Work of Historical Precision

Titles help sustain connections among these forms. Kim's historically dated work and later print share an identification even though their material occasions differ. Sung's 1974 newspaper installation circulates in English through formulations using 'after' and 'from … on' (Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2018.370; KAMS n.d.-b). These phrases direct attention toward a continuing procedure. Institutional records then supply the particulars of its presentation. Claims about the effects of translation require an identifiable use in a caption, exhibition or argument.

Reading institutional dates with their qualifications preserves distinctions already present in the evidence. Omitting the 2000 print date obscures MMCA's own material chronology. Treating the institutional identification of Sung's panel as a component-by-component conservation history exceeds what the public entry states. Assigning every visible detail of Rim's repaired photograph to 1988 ignores the later intervention described by SeMA. In each case, the institution's account remains valuable when its evidentiary scope is specified.

Photographic authorship requires the same care. The credit to Lee Wanho in MMCA's 2017 brochure and KAMS's attributed account of Jung Chanseung identify documentary leads with different evidential scopes. Neither resolves the entire history of a collected print. The performer, photographer, printer, artist as editor or restorer, and institution as custodian may contribute to different stages. A work's familiar artist name cannot by itself assign all those roles to one person.

The uncertainty is specific. A qualified photographer attribution can be reported while the negative-to-print relation remains unresolved. An unknown repair date does not erase a museum's explicit account that repair occurred. In each instance the obligation is to state which relation is supported

and which further claim would require another source. Historical precision gives interpretation a particular object and occasion to discuss.

8. Limits of the Evidence

This study compares published accounts and public records rather than reporting physical examination of the objects. For Rim, SeMA describes copying, deterioration and repair and supplies a collection-level transfer chronology. It does not date the repaired photograph's intervention or identify which transfer included it. The original negatives, versos, a treatment map and item-level transfer documentation would permit a more detailed material history.

For Kim, MMCA gives the action and print dates, medium and acquisition by purchase. The purchase year, source negative, edition, print authorization and complete chain between exposure and the collected print remain unresolved. KAMS's photographer attribution remains mediated through an ACC page that was not inspected. MMCA's report confirms the 2016 reperformance and new recording, and the 2023 checklist identifies a video associated with that event. Neither establishes a causal role for the 2000 print in planning the reperformance or the file lineage of the later video loan.

For Sung, MMCA identifies the twelve-print object with the panel exhibited in 1976 and records acquisition in 2017. KADA's criteria explain how its researchers distinguished artworks from related records. They do not supply the manufacture or mounting history of MMCA's sheets. The pre-event brochure account remains an inference from institutional descriptions, pending examination of the brochure interior and comparison of individual frames. The order of the exhibition opening and performance within 3 July is unspecified. For the separate 1974-titled installation, KADA identifies the ARKO object with a 2001 reperformance, while the history of its components requires the lender's records. None of these omissions is evidence that components were replaced.

The scholarship is cited at the level of access obtained. Kim Eunjin's 2016 conservation article was consulted in full, alongside the previously consulted thesis, conference papers, journal articles and catalogue chapter cited above. The complete final texts of Kim Han Deul's 2021 article, Kim Donghyoun's 2014 article and Chung and Chung's 2024 article were not obtained through the lawful free sources checked. Their published abstracts establish relevant precedents but cannot support a detailed comparison of their arguments, examples or footnotes. Chung's freely available conference paper is a separate text. The historiographic assessment therefore remains bounded by this access limit, and no exhaustive claim of priority over the three articles is made.

9. Conclusion

The records considered here locate artistic continuity in acts with different evidentiary requirements. SeMA attributes copying and repair to Rim and documents the archive's later transfer. MMCA distinguishes Kim's historical action from the printing of its collection object, records a reperformance and is identified as lender of a video associated with that event. Sung's photographic exhibition history is joined to later acquisition and loan records, while KADA explains the criteria through which its research distinguished works from related documentation. The separate ARKO installation further locates one historically titled work in a later realization.

The comparison shows why the continuing artistic standing of a documentary form and the survival of its original components should be investigated together without being equated. A repair can preserve an image's use while changing its surface. A later print can give an action a collected

form. Publication and exhibition can give photographs a public role before a museum acquires them. Korean conservation scholarship provides a basis for taking those continuities seriously while preserving the historical significance of particular materials.

The article's contribution is this sustained comparison of institutional practices of recognition and their evidentiary limits. The collection guide, classification criteria and video checklist make those practices more specific than a general claim that documentation is creative. A responsible history identifies the act each record establishes and leaves the remaining relations open to further evidence.

Prior Circulation and Related Publications

An earlier version of this article was published as a Museum of One working paper, version 1.0, on 9 November 2026 (Vale 2026d). The author's RAI working paper and two technical supplements, also released as version 1.0 on that date, drew on an earlier draft for their accounts of Rim's photographic repair and Sung's early photographic exhibition. They share the SeMA and MMCA sources and the distinctions between depicted action, later treatment, early display and material continuity (Vale 2026a, 6–7; 2026b, 3–5; 2026c, 9–10). The present revision adds the SeMA transfer chronology, KADA's classification and digitization account, the Guggenheim video checklist and engagement with Kim Eunjin's conservation study. Its distinct contribution is the extended comparison with Kim Kulim's print and reperformance history, rather than a new claim to have discovered documentation's creative role. These publications belong to the same research programme.

Note on Sources and Translations

Institutional management numbers are distinguished from online record numbers and exhibition loan identifiers. Web records are cited by object fields, named sections or checklist entries. Page numbers refer to printed pagination, except where a PDF page is explicitly stated. English renderings of Korean titles are explanatory unless an institutional or published English form is available; Korean titles are retained in the bibliography. Names follow published English forms where available. The conference and journal versions of Chung's study are separate references. Abstract-only use is stated in the citations and references. Attributions transmitted through KAMS or Ryu refer to those consulted accounts; the ACC page, 1976 brochure interior and April poster were not independently inspected.

Selected Archival Objects and Dates

Rim Dong Sik, *Thoughts Facing a Blade of Grass*. The action is associated with 1985. SeMA MA-02-00007550 is a photograph copied in two parts across two sheets. MA-02-00006517 is a separate copied photograph. The two documentary units leave the number and sequence of source exposures open (SeMA n.d.-a; n.d.-b).

Rim Dong Sik, *Tying Reeds and Beard*. The action is associated with Wonsando in 1988. SeMA MA-03-00006485 carries reported marker and oil-paint intervention and an item-level 2019 donation date. The collection guide records transfers during 2018–2019 without assigning this object to a particular transfer. The repair date remains unspecified (SeMA n.d.-c; 2025, 23).

Kim Kulim, *From Phenomenon to Traces*. MMCA dates the grass-burning action to 11 April 1970. Collection object 04616 is a C-print made in 2000 and acquired by purchase. The reperformance on 18 March 2016 produced photographs and digital video archived by MMCA. A video identified with the reperformance is listed in the Guggenheim's 2023 checklist as X.2018.341; that code is

not an MMCA accession date (MMCA n.d.-b; 2017a, 104–5; Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2018.341).

Sung Neung Kyung, *Reading Newspaper*. MMCA dates live performances to 4 April and 3 July 1976 and the Fourth Independents Exhibition to 3–9 July. KAMS links twelve photographs to the Event Logical brochure; MMCA Research Lab describes its event photographs as made beforehand. MMCA identifies collection object 08033 with the exhibited panel and records acquisition in 2017. The dates and treatment of its individual components remain open (MMCA n.d.-a; n.d.-c; 2018, 69, no. 63; KAMS n.d.-c; MMCA Research Lab n.d.).

Sung Neung Kyung, *Newspapers: After the 1st of June 1974*. KAMS describes daily cutting during the Third ST Exhibition of 21–27 June 1974 and identifies the ARKO-held installation with a 2001 reperformance. The Guggenheim's 2023 checklist identifies ARKO as the lender under the historical date 1974 (KAMS n.d.-b; n.d.-d, collection history; Guggenheim Museum 2023, checklist entry X.2018.370).

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