Titles, Dates, and Reconstructed Works

Four Documentary Histories of Korean Experimental Art

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Abstract

A work can retain its title and historical date even when its materials, arrangement, or means of presentation have changed. This working paper examines four Korean archival and museum cases: Kim Yong-Ik's *Plane Object* photographs and the history of "plain" and "place"; the differing production years assigned to Park Suk-won's *Jeok–Eungnyeok*; the 1975 historical reference and 2016 materials of Lee Kang-so's *Untitled 75031*; and Kim Kulim's *Mediator*, used by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, to exemplify compound dating. MMCA's acquisition narrative and publication guidance acknowledge remaking as part of collecting an experimental past. The paper reads that institutional practice alongside scholarship on the relations among images, material traces, and artwork identity. Aga Wielocha's discussion of Danh Vo's chandeliers provides a particularly revealing comparison: a title can date an object's removal and transformation into art rather than its fabrication, just as a museum's leading year can identify an earlier work rather than the age of its present components. These different histories require the event dated by each title or caption to remain explicit. Neither artist authorisation nor institutional recognition settles every claim about an earlier condition. The paper credits the overlapping demonstrations in the author's Relational Archival Investigation papers and develops their implications for collecting, editorial preference, and historical inference. Its contribution is a comparative account of how names and dates sustain continuity without making the evidence for that continuity interchangeable.

Keywords: Korean experimental art; artwork identity; reconstruction; museum catalogues; Kim Yong-Ik; Park Suk-won; Lee Kang-so; Kim Kulim; Post-Interpretive Criticism.

Related publications and the scope of this revision

This working paper develops research also presented in Relational Archival Investigation: Identity, Chronology, and Historical Judgment in Korean Experimental Art and its companions, Documentary Evidence and Source Comparisons and Extended Case Studies and Methodological Demonstrations (Vale 2026a–c). The overlap is substantive: the Kim Yong-Ik title comparison, the Park Suk-won date discrepancy, and the separation of Lee Kang-so's historical action from later materials and documentary accounts already appear there. They are not presented as new discoveries or independent confirmations. Earlier versions of the present essay contributed to that research's development. The references identify the November 2026 editions deposited publicly on OSF on 9 November 2026, file version 1, with links to those exact versions. The present paper extends the demonstrations through a comparison of collecting, editorial conventions, and the historical authority of objects and documents. Appendix B specifies the shared findings and the additional argument.

The historical work and the object before us

A museum date can be accurate without describing the age of everything a visitor sees. Kim Kulim's *Mediator* is catalogued as a work of 1971 with partial remaking in 2001. Lee Kang-so's *Untitled 75031* carries 1975 as its leading year while identifying photographic printing and the remaking of objects in 2016. In each case, the later date is not an alternative answer to the earlier one. The two dates make different assertions about the work: one locates its historical identity, while the other qualifies the material form through which it can now be encountered (MMCA n.d.b–c, production-year entries).

The distinction matters because a catalogue line does several jobs at once. It allows a museum to identify what it owns, places the work in an artist's career, and helps a reader imagine its position among other works. These functions are related, but not equivalent. Recognition of a reconstructed work as belonging to an earlier practice does not make its present components surviving objects from that earlier moment. Conversely, the recent manufacture of those components does not necessarily make the museum's historical identification false. A history of experimental art must be able to retain both propositions.

Names raise a comparable problem. A repeated title may identify a series rather than a single object. An apparent error may have been temporarily accepted by an artist and become part of the work's circulation. An English title may make a familiar Korean term more accessible while directing attention toward only one aspect of its meaning. The question is not whether naming and dating involve judgment; they plainly do. It is which judgment a particular title or date records, and how far that judgment can reasonably be carried into an interpretation.

The four cases considered here do not constitute a general history of Korean art. They are closely delimited documentary histories selected because their surviving descriptions allow different relations between a work, its records, and its later materials to be distinguished. They concern multilingual naming, divergent production-year assignments, stable historical dates with recent components, and an explicit institutional convention. Their value lies in comparison, not in the suggestion that four examples establish the prevalence of a national pattern.

The central argument is that continuity of artwork identity and continuity of historical evidence must be considered separately. A reconstruction can be authorised as the work while remaining evidence of a later act of making. A photograph can participate in a work's identity without documenting the place where the work was subsequently exhibited. A preferred title can remain useful while other names retain historical significance. These distinctions allow criticism to explain how experimental works continue without requiring the history of their continuation to disappear.

Collecting an experimental past

MMCA's 2016 Annual Report names the works around which its acquisition narrative is

organised. Section 2-2, "2016년도 신소장품의 특징" (Characteristics of the 2016 Acquisitions), lists Lee Kang-so's *Painting–78–1*, Park Suk-won's *Jeok–Eungnyeok*, Sung Neung Kyung's *Eight Pages of Newspaper*, and two works by Kim Youngjin in connection with the Busan

Biennale. The paragraph begins on printed page 34 and continues on page 35. It includes both "당

시의 원작을 그대로 한 경우” (cases retaining the original works as they were) and “부분적으로 재현한 작품” (partly recreated works), and then stresses artist remaking and the importance of historical meaning and context (MMCA 2016, §2-2, 34–35).

The wording is significant without being a complete account of any one acquisition. Its movement from retained originals and partial re-creations to a general emphasis on artist remaking should not be harmonised into the proposition that every component of every listed work was newly made. What it establishes is narrower: the museum openly discussed different material relationships to the experimental past when explaining these acquisitions. Remaking was not an inference supplied by a later critic to expose a concealed problem; it formed part of the institution’s published rationale.

The passage is also work-specific in a way that matters to the present comparison. The Lee work named there is *Painting–78–1*, not *Untitled 75031*. It cannot certify the authorisation or material history of the latter merely because both are by Lee. Those details must come from its own record. The acquisitions narrative supplies context for the museum’s collecting, while the individual catalogue descriptions supply different claims about particular holdings. Neither level replaces the other.

Read in those terms, the acquisitions narrative helps explain why the cases belong together. A museum can seek a historically significant work through retained material, a photographic ensemble, or a later realisation. Its record then has to connect the collected object with the earlier practice without assigning every component to the same occasion. The RAI demonstrations already separated work identity from material continuity. The present inquiry extends that result by asking how a stated collecting rationale and an editorial convention give the separation a public form.

Scholarship, identity, and the authority of a record

Aga Wielocha’s account of distributed artwork identity is useful here because it develops a particular history of objects, not simply a general definition. Her discussion of Danh Vo follows three chandeliers from the former Hôtel Majestic in Paris into an artistic project. The history of the ballroom, the artist’s narratives, the circumstances of acquisition, and changing presentations all contribute to the works’ identities. Crucially, their titles record the times and dates at which the chandeliers were removed, rather than the dates of their manufacture. The objects subsequently appeared in different arrangements, including disassembled and suspended presentations. An enduring physical object is therefore only one part of the work that a collection seeks to maintain (Wielocha 2021, 107–8, 111; n. 11 on 112).

Placed beside the Korean cases, this example makes two different temporal relations visible. An old object can acquire an artistic identity through a later act of removal, naming, and presentation. Conversely, recently made components can sustain an artwork identified with an earlier event. This is a comparison of the functions of dates, not a claim that Vo and the Korean artists share one artistic intention. The age of the material cannot, by itself, decide the age or identity of the work. Nor can the date chosen for a title answer every question about the object’s previous uses.

Wielocha shows why objects and documentary accounts can jointly constitute an artwork. The Korean cases ask which historical propositions each constituent can establish, and how

institutional captions distinguish—or abbreviate—those propositions. This is not a correction of an alleged claim by Wielocha that all documents are equally reliable; she makes no such claim. It is an extension from the question of what a museum collects to the question of what a historian may infer from the collected work and its description. A date can be constitutive of artistic identity while dating an act other than fabrication.

Amy Brost's discussion of authenticity and reenactment similarly considers how replacement and renewed presentation can preserve a work without preserving every original material. Her account brings models of performance, iteration, and evolving conditions of display into conservation thinking (Brost 2022, 183–87). The relevant question is no longer whether change has occurred, but which changes the work can accommodate and how their legitimacy is established. This does not make every later version authentic. It makes the grounds of continuity a subject of inquiry.

That extension requires a worked comparison. MMCA can recognise *Mediator* under a 1971 historical identity while specifying partial remaking in 2001. Its publication guide explains how the two dates should be ordered. The guide is consequently evidence for a convention of description, whereas the collection entry is evidence for the museum's account of this particular work. Neither document, merely by agreeing with the other, independently establishes what materials or arrangement were present in 1971. The questions of legitimate continuation, the convention used to name it, and evidence of an earlier state remain connected but distinct (MMCA 2020, §3.74, 134–35; n.d.c).

The Park Suk-won comparison tests the same distinction from the other side. Separating the 2016 wooden elements from the historical work does not dissolve the difference between the leading assignments of 1972 and 1974. A general theory of variable works cannot choose one year, and the museum's later publication rule cannot supply an unrecorded reason for either assignment. The comparison therefore does more than recommend fuller documentation: it identifies which question is answered by each kind of record and which question survives after the dates have been differentiated.

The distinction between artwork continuity and evidence of original materials was already explicit in the RAI main paper (Vale 2026a, §2, 2–3). The contribution here is not ownership of that distinction. It is the comparison between a work named through a later removal, works catalogued through an earlier historical identity, and an institution's stated means of expressing later production. This comparison shows why the interpretation of a date must begin with the act it names rather than an assumption that one kind of beginning always takes precedence.

Korean scholarship gives this distinction a particular historical setting. In the published abstract of her study of Kim Yong-Ik, Jung Eun Young locates the artist's conceptual practice in the relation between material form, reflective criticism, and the coexistence of concealment and disclosure. She emphasises that these concerns were already being explored through the cloth works of the mid-1970s (Jung 2024, published abstract). The naming questions discussed below should be understood within this established account of medium and institutional conditions, not offered as a discovery that the work was more complex than painting on cloth.

A fuller Korean-language comparison comes from Ryu Ji-yeon's study of Lee Kang-so's 1976 Untitled paintings. Ryu examines the interval between his experimental actions and later painting rather than assuming that one simply replaced the other. Her analysis of photographs transferred

to cloth and subsequently worked with paint concerns the tension between represented things and material intervention. She also traces critical accounts that recognise elements of process and performance within the paintings (Ryu 2012, 14–20). These are the Untitled paintings, not the individual action identified as Untitled 75031; their common generic title cannot make them the same work.

Ryu's analysis gives the present argument a historically specific counterpart. The overlap of an image, a physical trace, and an act of making was already an artistic problem before a museum acquired a later realisation. A scholarly account of that overlap need not be corrected merely because the work later receives a compound date. The further question is what belongs to which occurrence. A trace interpreted as the result of artistic action and a newly made component recognised as belonging to the work require different grounds when either is used to describe an earlier installation. Ryu's account of artistic continuity and this paper's account of later collecting can therefore inform one another without being treated as rival histories.

Kaeun Park, meanwhile, reads Lee Kang-so's performative works as challenging confidence in perception and anthropocentric authorship. Her close discussion of photographic evidence and *Untitled-75031* makes clear that the work's uncertainty is not simply a consequence of incomplete documentation (Park 2025, 361–66). This article does not rediscover that uncertainty. It asks how a catalogue's historical year and the dates of its present components interact with the different encounters that scholarship describes.

These comparisons locate the contribution more precisely. The paper does not discover that Korean experimental art complicates the relations among image, object, and action, or that contemporary artworks can persist through material change. It examines the institutional expression of those relations: the selection of a preferred name, the placement of one year before another, and the use of a present inventory to describe a historical work. The four cases show where those expressions sustain a warranted continuity and where an additional inference needs its own source.

Kim Yong-Ik: a name accepted after an error

Kim Yong-Ik's *평면 오브제* circulates in English as *Plane Object* and *Flat Object*, while surviving photographic descriptions also preserve "plain objet," "place objet," and "Place object." The variants should not be silently regularised. Nor should every occurrence be treated as a formal renaming of one physical object. SeMA's portfolios bring together works from a series, photographs made on different occasions, and later accounts of their names.

The most useful record is the portfolio registered MA-05-00049360, online item 89408. SeMA identifies images 17–18 with a 1977 work and reports Kim's recollection that he intended "plain objet," that "place objet" arose through an error, and that he temporarily accepted the form because its meaning seemed compatible before returning to the intended wording. Image 18 is described as the reverse of image 17 and transcribed with the title "平面 objet (Place object)," dimensions of 100 × 300 cm, and the year 1977 (SeMA n.d.b, descriptions of images 17–18).

The account contains two kinds of evidence. The reported inscription establishes a title attached to a particular photographic record. The recollection supplies an explanation for the relation between intended and adopted wording. Their agreement is meaningful, but they are not

interchangeable witnesses. The date of the work written on a photographic verso does not necessarily date the inscription itself, and a later explanation of an error does not establish the date of its first printed occurrence.

The RAI publications already drew the important distinction between origin and adoption: a name can begin accidentally and subsequently be accepted (Vale 2026a, 9; 2026b, §D.1, 6; 2026c, §1, 1–3). The additional question here concerns editorial treatment. Correcting all historical occurrences to “plain” would remove evidence of the temporary acceptance reported by the artist. Preserving “place” everywhere as the artist’s original intention would disregard the same account. A responsible edition can prefer a title for present identification while retaining the other form as part of the history of use.

There is no need to derive an entire interpretation from this lexical difference. “Place” may direct an English reader toward location; “plain” can carry meanings that are not identical to the geometric “plane”; “Flat Object” makes a further interpretive choice explicit. These possibilities do not establish what any historical reader actually understood. Jung’s account of the work’s material and conceptual concerns is a reminder that the artistic problem exceeds an English noun. A history of reception would need to identify a critic who relied on a particular variant and show what that wording allowed the critic to argue.

The portfolio also establishes a precise connection with the 1978 Gallery Te exhibition in Tokyo. Its description of image 13 identifies a photograph made against a studio rooftop wall near Hongik University for reproduction in the exhibition leaflet. Image 14 is another rooftop photograph. The exhibition file separately lists the leaflet, invitation, and guest book: MA-06-00002340, MA-06-00049344, and MA-05-00049343. The exhibition opened on 16 October 1978 (SeMA n.d.a; n.d.b, images 13–14).

This relation is more informative than a general statement that a photograph belongs to an exhibition archive. It distinguishes the site at which the image was made from the occasion for which it was reproduced. The photograph’s appearance in a Tokyo leaflet would not, by itself, make it a photograph of the Tokyo installation. Equally, the rooftop setting does not disqualify it from the exhibition’s documentary history. Its role was connected with preparing a public presentation elsewhere. Naming the relation accurately preserves both places rather than allowing the exhibition title to absorb the photographic occasion.

The same discipline applies to individual-work identity. A series title and the year 1977 do not establish that the 100 × 300 cm object described on the verso is the accessioned work of that name in either museum. SeMA’s accession 2000-0160 is described as a two-part work, 130 × 280 cm; MMCA’s online record 7573 describes a three-part configuration of different dimensions. Those differences must remain visible until photographs, configurations, and provenance establish a more exact relation (SeMA n.d.c; MMCA n.d.d). The comparison concerns records of the series, not an already reconstructed genealogy of every surviving cloth.

A 1978 work remade for Kim’s 1997 Kumho Museum exhibition makes the issue still clearer. SeMA’s record MA-03-00002265 describes an earlier four-sheet arrangement and a later five-sheet arrangement, including an extended sheet reaching the floor (SeMA n.d.d). This history does not mean every use of the series title denotes that remake. It shows why a stable name can continue across changes that matter to the object before us. The title preserves a relation; it does not provide the entire material history of that relation.

The case therefore yields a double obligation. The historian must not eliminate title variants simply to obtain a clean vocabulary, and must not multiply artworks solely because vocabulary differs. A preferred title is a means of reference, not proof that all earlier names were meaningless or that all similarly named objects are identical. This account extends the RAI naming demonstration into the relation among multilingual circulation, exhibition preparation, and the identification of individual works.

Park Suk-won: two published production years

Park Suk-won's *적-응력*, rendered here as *Jeok–Eungnyeok* and elsewhere as *Accumulation–Stress*, supplies a different problem. MMCA's *2016 Annual Report*, printed page 40, entry 76,

assigns 1974 in the column headed 제작연도, or production year. The online collection entry, record 7925 and management number 07912, assigns 1972 and separately states that the wood was remade in 2016. Its description associates the work with the First Seoul Biennale of 1974 (MMCA 2016, 40, entry 76; MMCA n.d.a).

The identity of the described work is supported by more than the similarity of title and artist. Both accounts identify oil on cloth with four wooden elements. The cloth measures 332 × 358 cm. The first three wooden measurements agree; the last is 63.5 × 25 × 25.1 cm in the report and 63.5 × 25 × 25 cm in the online record. The small difference is retained rather than corrected silently. Together, the distinctive arrangement and measurements provide substantial grounds for comparing the descriptions, while the stated remaking prevents this identification from being mistaken for a claim that every component has remained unchanged (Vale 2026b, §B.5, 3–4).

The result is a discrepancy between two published production-year assignments. It is not a demonstrated database revision. The annual report and the webpage are different documents; the webpage's present wording does not disclose whether an earlier version carried 1974, when its year was entered, or whether its compilers followed the report. Without an earlier dated capture or an amendment record, there is no documented administrative sequence from one year to the other. The earlier version of this essay overstated the evidence when it called the comparison a demonstrated date revision. That formulation is withdrawn here.

Nor does the 2016 remake resolve the contrast. The later year explains the wooden components' manufacture, while 1972 and 1974 occupy the leading historical position. The narrative's reference to a 1974 exhibition makes a production–exhibition distinction plausible, but the report explicitly labels its column as production year. A general possibility cannot therefore be substituted for an explanation of this entry. Curatorial correction, different source information, or an editorial practice of using exhibition dates remain possibilities, not established causes (Vale 2026a, §6, 8; 2026b, §C, 5–6).

The work itself helps clarify why the issue is not merely clerical. MMCA describes painted shadows on cloth associated with four wooden elements: their orientations appear to produce a logically impossible lighting arrangement. This account locates the work in an inquiry into what an arrangement makes perceptually convincing, rather than treating it simply as a dated object made of wood (MMCA n.d.a, descriptive paragraph). The chronology matters because an earlier production date and a first-exhibition date place that inquiry differently within the artist's practice. The formal account, however, does not choose between the two years.

Two consequences must consequently remain separate. Production in 1972 followed by exhibition in 1974 is not the same chronology as production in 1974, the year of the reported exhibition. Neither assignment by itself establishes that the work was made for that exhibition. The present study has not identified a published interpretation whose conclusion demonstrably changed because one of these dates was used. The historical stakes are conditional; a documented effect on scholarship remains unestablished.

The RAI inquiry also located a separately numbered *Jeok–Eungnyeok 2* dated 1973 in the Arts Council Korea record. Its title, materials, and dimensions do not identify it as MMCA's cloth-and-four-wood arrangement. It therefore supplies context for a related practice, not a third date for the same object (Vale 2026b, §C.3, 5–6). Excluding that unsupported match is part of the finding. A history becomes less accurate, not richer, when adjacent works are merged to fill a chronological gap.

This case changes what may responsibly be said about the institution. MMCA has published two different leading years for substantially corresponding descriptions. It has also openly recorded a later remaking. The discrepancy warrants a focused question about the grounds of the historical date; it does not establish deceit, general unreliability, or an invisible act of revision. The stronger account is the one that retains the unresolved difference while specifying exactly which history remains unknown.

Lee Kang-so: a stable date does not mean one occasion

Lee Kang-so's *Untitled 75031* is a necessary comparison because it does not supply the same kind of discrepancy. Both the annual report, printed page 39, entry 73, and MMCA's online record 7922 retain 1975 as the leading year. The online record specifies 2016 photographic printing and 2016 remaking of objects, identifies management number 07909, and lists ten photographic elements measuring 40 × 60 cm. This is agreement about a historical reference combined with differentiation of later materials, not evidence of a changed leading date (MMCA 2016, 39, entry 73; MMCA n.d.b; Vale 2026b, §B.2, 2).

The longer account nevertheless shows why a stable year does not establish a single historical occasion. MMCA attributes the photographs to Park Seo-bo and locates their making at Deoksugung in Korea before the Paris Biennale. The photographs could therefore participate in the Paris presentation without being photographs of that presentation. A date shared by the action, the exhibition, and an image would not eliminate the difference between their locations or make the resulting traces interchangeable.

Kaeun Park's discussion of *Untitled-75031* already recognises the Korean origin of the photographs and uses the uncertainty of their relation to the installed traces to question habitual claims about photographic evidence and authorship. Her account describes eight photographs in the historical installation, whereas the museum's present description lists ten in its collected realization (Park 2025, 364–66). The comparison does not show that two photographs were added to an otherwise unchanged ensemble. The sets and occasions would first need to be identified image by image.

This is an important limit on claims of novelty. The article does not correct Park by informing her that the photographs were taken in Korea; she states that herself. Nor does it present nonhuman agency as an implication unnoticed by Korean art history. Its concern is the documentary relation

between an earlier account of an installation and a later inventory of materials. Their common title does not settle whether every component refers to the same presentation.

The RAI publications examined the further question of when the rooster was present in Paris and how later sources describe its removal. That discussion is not repeated here as an independent discovery (Vale 2026a, §8, 10–11; 2026b, §E, 7–8). The point relevant to the present article is that a museum's recognition of the work under a stable 1975 date cannot decide the sequence of every encounter within that year. Preparation, exposure, opening, and continued display may require separate evidence even when the work's historical identity is secure.

This distinction develops the conservation problem in a specifically historical direction. A museum may be justified in presenting a 2016 realization as Lee's work. The photograph of that realization can then be excellent evidence of its 2016 appearance. It does not follow that the image establishes the number of photographs, the presence of a live animal, or the viewing conditions experienced by a particular audience in 1975. These are not objections to reconstruction. They are differences in the historical questions that a reconstruction can answer.

A compound date can therefore be an instrument of clarity. It allows the present ensemble to remain connected with the earlier practice while marking the later acts required to make it available. What matters is that the parenthetical qualification continues into the historian's prose. Removing it does not necessarily falsify the work's name, but it can make a historically faithful attribution appear to be a statement about the age of the materials.

The case also supplies a useful limit on a purely suspicious reading of catalogue authority. In this instance, the museum gives the reader information needed to resist the very conflation being examined. Critical responsibility includes noticing that disclosure, rather than treating every museum description as an obstacle to be overcome.

Kim Kulim: what the parenthesis means

Kim Kulim's *Mediator* provides the most explicit institutional account of how different dates are meant to coexist. The current collection description gives 1971 with partial remaking in 2001, management number 04643, and materials of cloth, water, and stone. It describes relations among water held in a container, cloth shaped by the weight of stones, and shadows (MMCA n.d.c, production-year and materials entries; descriptive paragraph). A work concerned with the behaviour of materials need not have a simple relationship to the survival of one original set of materials.

MMCA's *Guide to Publication* addresses that problem directly. Section 3.74 instructs that, where the original year differs from years of remaking, casting, restoration, printing, or edition production, the initial year is followed by the other year in parentheses. *Mediator* is one of its examples. The same section permits the earliest confirmed public-presentation year to be used when the production year is uncertain. In the 2020 version, these provisions appear on printed pages 134–35; the August 2019 version places the corresponding guidance on pages 132–33 (MMCA 2020, §3.74, 134–35; 2019, §3.74, 132–33).

The rule makes clear why a single date cannot be interpreted without its convention. The first year may identify a historically privileged beginning, while the qualification marks a different kind of production. The permission to use a first-presentation date introduces another possibility: a heading understood as production may sometimes carry an exhibition-related year because the

former is unknown. This does not explain Park Suk-won's particular assignment. It explains why the distinction is possible and why an object-specific account remains necessary.

The publication guide is evidence of an articulated convention, not evidence that every earlier catalogue was produced under that convention. Its 2020 wording must not be used to claim that a particular compiler applied it in 2016. Nor does the rule establish which source supports 1971 in *Mediator*. It governs how different dates may be expressed after a historical judgment has been made. The evidence for that judgment belongs to the work's own documentary history.

The guide's abbreviated example lists cloth and water, while the fuller collection description also names stone. Its wording refers to remaking, while the collection entry specifies partial remaking. These differences should not be turned into a new history in which stone was added later or the whole work was replaced. They demonstrate that an illustrative caption and an object record do not necessarily carry the same descriptive detail. The example teaches a convention; the collection entry describes a particular holding. Neither should be made to answer the other's entire question.

This gives the parenthesis a more consequential role than that of a minor editorial supplement. It connects two temporal claims without pretending they are one. The earlier year places the work within a history of practice; the later year indicates that the object or arrangement through which that history is encountered has undergone another act of making. To omit the parenthesis is to remove information about that relationship. To treat the parenthesis as a confession that the work is inauthentic would be to misunderstand the convention that makes the relationship explicit.

Brost's discussion of authenticity is helpful at this point because it allows renewed material presentation to be considered without defining all change as loss. The additional historical question is what an accepted presentation can establish about a previous one. An authorised continuation may belong to the history of a work without becoming contemporaneous evidence of the work's first form. The legitimacy of making it again and the accuracy of a claim about its earlier condition remain distinct judgments.

What names and dates carry forward

The comparison does not produce four failures of museum description. It produces four different relations. Kim Yong-Ik's case concerns naming and adoption within a series whose individual objects must still be distinguished. Park Suk-won's concerns a difference between published historical-year assignments. Lee Kang-so's concerns agreement in the leading year alongside different material and exhibition occasions. Kim Kulim's concerns an explicit convention for keeping an earlier identity and a later material act together.

These differences clarify the limits of the catalogue line without making it dispensable. A preferred title and a leading date are necessary if works are to be identified and discussed. The problem begins when that necessary economy is taken as a complete historical account. A title can establish a useful continuity of reference while leaving material continuity unresolved. A leading year can locate a work's place in an artistic practice without dating every component before the viewer. Neither field is defective simply because more than one historical act lies behind it.

The established principles of art documentation already accommodate much of this complexity. Getty's *Categories for the Description of Works of Art* separates title wording, type, language,

preference, and dates of use, and allows the creation date to distinguish the activities to which different years refer (Getty Research Institute n.d.a, §§3.1–3.7; n.d.b, §§4.2–4.2.3). The argument here is not that museums need to discover that titles have histories. It is that an art-historical explanation must preserve the distinctions available in those histories rather than collapse them when the work enters a narrative.

The proposed distinction can be stated simply: belonging to the same work is not the same as providing evidence for the same historical proposition. A new print and an old exposure may belong together, but they establish different dates. An accepted title and a mistaken original wording may both belong to the naming history, but they do not establish the same intention. A museum’s compound date and its rule for expressing that date may agree, but the rule is not independent evidence that the year itself is historically correct.

This is where the article contributes beyond the general language of distributed identity. The components of a work’s identity may be dispersed, but their historical authority remains particular. Equal importance to the work does not mean equal authority to date an event, establish a place, identify an object, or attribute a decision. The practical consequence is not to rank sources globally as reliable or unreliable. It is to specify the claim for which each source is being used.

The historical consequences that can be claimed

The strongest consequences in this four-case comparison concern how Korean experimental practice becomes available for later history. The museum collection does not simply inherit a set of untouched objects from the 1970s. Some works arrive through recent material production, some through photographic ensembles, and some through documentary explanations that maintain a relation among different occasions. MMCA’s acquisition narrative acknowledges this condition. Its publication guidance gives that condition a visible form in the caption.

A later museum can therefore make a historical practice available without recreating an earlier audience’s experience in full. This is particularly significant for works whose procedures, traces, or arrangements were tied to temporary circumstances. What has been preserved may be a means of presenting the work again, not the exact conditions of its first encounter. The distinction does not reduce historical works to recent inventions. It requires the later act of presentation to receive its own place in the history.

The title history has a parallel consequence. A cleaned-up name can improve access while concealing the circumstances through which a work previously circulated. Conversely, preserving every variant without explaining its status can make accidental wording look like competing authorial intentions. The useful historical account explains the relation: intended wording, reported error, temporary acceptance, later preference, and the individual object to which any occurrence can be tied. It does not merely choose a winner among spellings.

The Park discrepancy remains different. Its importance is not exhausted by the proposition that all works have multiple dates, because the two compared sources both place different years in the leading production-year position. A genuine unresolved difference survives the separation of the 2016 material date. That is a defensible finding even without the administrative history required to explain it. It is not necessary to call the museum mistaken in order to identify a question its published accounts do not yet answer.

These findings have consequences for interpretation, but the extent of those consequences must be stated accurately. A two-year difference can affect a possible account of precedence. A title variant can direct a possible reading. A later photograph can support a particular reconstruction of an exhibition. None of those possibilities proves that a named historian actually made the corresponding inference. The present article establishes conditions under which historical claims would need qualification; it does not claim to have measured how frequently later scholarship adopted an error.

That boundary is also a protection against overstating the relation between archival inquiry and institutional power. Selection and description necessarily shape what can be known, but not every shorthand is concealment and not every unresolved difference is evidence of disregard. The four cases include information that institutions have deliberately retained. A criticism attentive to historical responsibility should make use of those distinctions before attributing an institutional failure.

What this article adds beyond the RAI demonstrations

The contribution is an extended comparative interpretation, not a second announcement of the same findings. RAI established the Park pairing, the separation of Kim’s reported naming error from subsequent adoption, and the need to distinguish Lee’s documentary occasions. It also distinguished recognition of a work from evidence of its original materials. This paper retains and cites those results. Its contribution cannot consist solely in giving them more space or changing their terminology.

The additional argument connects three practices that the shorter demonstrations did not analyse together: the acquisition of an experimental past, the editorial ordering of its dates, and the differing historical functions of names. The annual report expressly includes retained and partly recreated works within its collecting account. The publication guide makes later material production visible without relinquishing an earlier historical identification. Wielocha’s chandelier case supplies the converse relation, in which a later act of removal is constitutive of the title given to an older object. Together, these comparisons show that no single material age or chronological priority determines what an artwork date means.

The Korean scholarly comparison is equally important. Ryu’s account of Lee’s 1976 paintings connects image, material intervention, and process; Kaeun Park’s interpretation of *Untitled-75031* addresses perception and photographic authority. Their questions are not replaced by the present source comparison. They clarify why the distinction among an exposure, an action, a material trace, and a later collected ensemble has interpretive force. The working paper’s added task is to follow those distinctions into the catalogue and back into the historical claims made through it, without attributing an oversight to scholarship that already recognises the problem.

For Post-Interpretive Criticism, the consequence is that interpretation should remain answerable not only to an artwork but to the historical relation through which that artwork is encountered. A title, date, or reconstructed display can be a legitimate guide while supporting only some of the propositions that are subsequently attached to it. The critic’s task is neither to strip those guides away nor to accept them as complete. It is to make their scope explicit enough that a further document can change the relevant claim without forcing the entire account to be discarded.

Limits of the evidence

The source base consists of the annual report, publication guidance, public collection descriptions, archival transcriptions and descriptions, and the scholarship identified below. It does not include an inspection of the physical works, original photographic versos, complete 1978 printing proofs, or object-specific acquisition and conservation dossiers. Where the argument depends on SeMA's identification of an image or its transcription of an inscription, that institutional mediation is stated. The source register distinguishes a photograph's described verso from a verso directly examined for this revision.

No independently dated sequence of MMCA database versions has been established for Park Suk-won's work. The consultation of a present description cannot supply the date of its entry or amendment. The annual report's 2016 coverage is likewise not proof of its exact publication day. The comparison establishes two documentary assignments, not the correct production year or the administrative process connecting them.

The scholarly comparison is bounded but no longer restricted to abstract-level engagement with Korean research. Ryu Ji-yeon's Korean-language article was read in the museum publication, with particular attention to its analysis of the 1976 paintings and its discussion of earlier criticism. Jung Eun Young's article remains cited through its published Korean and English abstracts; no fuller reading is implied. Kaeun Park is discussed from the published text. The conservation comparison draws on Wielocha's chandelier case and Brost's account of authenticity. Ryu's quotations from earlier critics are considered through her discussion, not counted as separately examined publications.

For this revision, the acquisitions passage was checked against the facsimile of printed pages 34–35 in MMCA's institutional PDF. The list of works ends on page 34 and continues at the top of page 35 before the discussion of retained originals and partial re-creations. Appendix A identifies that transition and the decisive wording. This comparison verifies the published passage; it does not replace examination of the physical acquisition or authorisation records.

Finally, four deliberately selected cases cannot establish rates of discrepancy, museum behaviour across Korea, or a general law of reception. Their differences are retained because they test the argument as much as their similarities do. A stable date, an acknowledged remake, and an editorial abbreviation are not failed attempts to find an error. They are evidence that the history of description contains more than correction and neglect.

Conclusion

The early year beside a reconstructed work does not have to be an illusion. It can identify the practice to which the work belongs while a later date records the material act through which it continues. MMCA's compound dating makes that distinction explicit. The difficulty begins when an abbreviated account is asked to establish more than it says: the age of every component, the place of a photograph's exposure, the intention behind a title, or the circumstances of an earlier audience's encounter.

Kim Yong-Ik's naming history demonstrates why an error and its subsequent adoption are separate events. Park Suk-won's published dates demonstrate why a discrepancy is not yet a history of amendment. Lee Kang-so's work shows that continuity of title and year can hold together materials and occasions that must remain historically distinct. Kim Kulim's *Mediator*

makes visible a convention by which the museum acknowledges such differences instead of eliminating them.

The four histories therefore lead to a conclusion more precise than the claim that museum descriptions construct art history. A catalogue establishes relations through which works remain identifiable, but the historical authority of each relation must still be specified. A work may survive through change. The account of that survival becomes stronger when it preserves who made the later materials, what earlier occasion the work invokes, and which parts of that occasion the surviving evidence can actually establish.

Appendix A. Pinpoint source register

Collecting rationale. MMCA, 2016 Annual Report, §2-2, “2016년도 신소장품의 특징,” printed pp. 34–35 (PDF pages 34–35). The list beginning “부산 비엔날레 출품작으로는” continues on p. 35 with Kim Youngjin’s 1978–2, followed by the passage distinguishing retained originals and partial re-creations. The named Lee work is Painting–78–1. The wording and page transition were checked against the facsimiles for this revision. The passage supplies a general collecting rationale, not an individual authorisation history for Untitled 75031.

Kim Yong-Ik. Gallery Te exhibition file: SeMA, classification record 930; leaflet MA-06-00002340, invitation MA-06-00049344, guest book MA-05-00049343. Portfolio MA-05-00049360, online item 89408: image 13, rooftop photograph identified as made for the 1978 leaflet; image 14, another rooftop view; images 17–18, named 1977 work and its verso; image 18, title and dimensions transcribed by SeMA. These numbers identify images described in the catalogue, not page numbers in the physical portfolio. SeMA’s header counts 25 items while the description extends to image 26; the cited positions are retained without treating that difference as evidence of missing material. Museum-work comparisons: SeMA accession 2000-0160, online work WORK_0000000647; MMCA online record 7573. Remake description: MA-03-00002265, online item 19167, four-sheet and five-sheet configurations.

Park Suk-won. MMCA, *2016 Annual Report*, printed p. 40, entry 76, under 제작연도. Public catalogue: management number 07912, online record 7925; production-year field, materials, dimensions, and first descriptive paragraph. The printed report and the catalogue are separate witnesses; no dated amendment sequence is established. RAI’s detailed comparison is Vale 2026b, §B.5, pp. 3–4, and §C, pp. 5–6.

Lee Kang-so. MMCA, *2016 Annual Report*, printed p. 39, entry 73. Public catalogue: management number 07909, online record 7922; production-year field, ten-element photographic inventory, and final descriptive paragraph. Kaeun Park 2025, pp. 364–66 and n. 38 on p. 370, supplies the scholarly comparison. The eight-image account and the present ten-element inventory are not treated as an identified before-and-after sequence.

Kim Kulim and the dating convention. MMCA, *Guide to Publication*, 2020 version, §3.74, printed pp. 134–35, including the *Mediator* example; corresponding passage in the August 2019 version, §3.74, pp. 132–33. Public catalogue: management number 04643, online record 4643; production-year and materials fields. The guide’s example does not independently establish the original year, the extent of replacement, or the catalogue’s amendment history.

Scholarly comparisons. Wielocha 2021, pp. 107–8, on the chandelier project, removal dates, and different presentations; p. 111, on the work and its documents; n. 11 on p. 112, on the three named holdings. Ryu 2012, pp. 14–17, on photographic images and material intervention in the 1976 Untitled paintings, and pp. 18–20, on process and their critical reception. These paintings are not identified as Untitled 75031. Brost 2022, pp. 183–87, supplies the conservation discussion; the comparison with Kaeun Park retains the pinpoints above.

Appendix B. Disclosure of reused evidence

RAI main paper (Vale 2026a). Sections 6–8, printed pp. 8–11, contain the Park Suk-won chronology, Kim Yong-Ik naming history, and Lee Kang-so documentary comparisons. The present article reuses their principal evidential distinctions rather than treating them as new findings.

RAI Documentary Supplement (Vale 2026b). Sections B.2, B.5, C, D.1, and E supply the detailed pairing grounds, alternative explanations, title transcription, and Lee source relationships. The seven-entry acquisition comparison developed there is not reproduced here as a new sample or used to claim prevalence across Korean collections.

RAI Extended Case Studies (Vale 2026c). Section 1, printed pp. 1–3, develops the Kim Yong-Ik distinction between the origin of a title and its adoption. The present article extends that discussion toward editorial preference, the rooftop photograph's relation to exhibition preparation, and the limits of identifying individual works through a series title.

Additional contribution. The comparison connects Wielocha's chandelier history and Ryu's analysis of Lee's paintings with MMCA's collecting rationale and compound-date convention. Work continuity and evidence of earlier materials remain distinguished, with the underlying principle credited to RAI. A museum statement does not become independent corroboration by recurring in several Museum of One publications.

Edition and access statement. The three RAI publications were deposited publicly on OSF on 9 November 2026. Each reference links to file version 1, a repository designation rather than a numbered manuscript edition. Titles and opening texts were checked against the deposited PDFs. Printed pagination excludes the cover: fifteen pages in the main paper, ten in Supplement 1, and eight in Supplement 2. Public deposit does not imply peer review.

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Note on sources, names, and publication history

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