

# Kunst Raum Mitte

## DISSOLUTIONS

Mooni Perry

23.5.–4.10.26

The second sequence of the program DISSOLUTIONS is a solo exhibition by artist and filmmaker Mooni Perry. At its core is the video installation *EL* (2025), which will be presented in Europe for the first time. Influenced by feminist and speculative readings of East Asian cosmologies, the exhibition takes the form of a hotel lingering between memory and oblivion. Perry takes as her starting point the historical and cultural interconnections of East Asia in the context of Japanese colonial rule in Korea and Manchukuo, a puppet state in northeastern China controlled by Japan from 1932 to 1945. The region was promoted as a space of new possibilities, driven by migration and promises of a better future. This vision, however, was based on coercion, displacement, and human trafficking, as evidenced by the history of the so-called “comfort women,” who were subjected to wartime sexual slavery by the Japanese military.

At Kunst Raum Mitte, the focus on site-specific historiographies shifts to the institutional framework itself: the historic building—originally constructed as part of a school complex during the German Empire, used as an after-school care center in the GDR, and taken over by municipal cultural programs after reunification—can be read as a layered site that embodies diverse historical and political contexts. Here, Perry’s work creates a fictional in-between world in which questions of tradition and Korean identity are explored through video, music, and collective research. In dialogue with Perry’s atmospheric storytelling practice, a curated selection of archival materials from the *galerie weisser elefant* is on view. Seemingly incidental objects appear in new constellations, bringing into focus moments of staging, hosting, and traveling.

Exhibition curator: Agnieszka Roguski

### 1 *EL*, 2025

Video installation (single-channel video, loop, 35 min., curtain)

The video installation *EL* (2025) forms the narrative anchor of the exhibition. At its center is the former Yamato Hotel in Shenyang, northeastern China. There, the Korean poet Sansaee meets the Chinese opera singer Fei: Sansaee takes a job at the hotel to start a new life beyond Korea, while Fei has known only a life of constant travel. A vague attraction develops between them, triggering a chain of dreamlike sequences and reflections. As Fei realizes that, despite her touring, she has never truly “traveled,” Sansaee begins to have recurring dreams in which she wanders through ruinous,

abandoned spaces filled with local stories and traumas. In parallel, Sansaee writes texts about love and its indeterminacy. She ultimately decides to leave once more, entering a recurring state of liminality—embodied in *EL* as “Eternal Love / Eternal Liminality.” Drawing on the history of Manchukuo and the vision of a utopian-exotic “new world,” *EL* opens up a space that can never be fully explored. Instead of a fixed narrative, a web of fragmentary memories emerges. As an imagined setting, the film’s world expands into the exhibition space where it is atmospherically charged—and where one’s own sense of belonging becomes palpably fragile in the uncanny presence and absence of local history.

# Kunst Raum Mitte

## 2 *Listening Room of Choson Akguk Troupe (Choson Musical Troupe), 2026*

Sound and research installation (MP3 player, printed materials)

The sound and research installation *Listening Room* builds on *EL*, exploring musical archives and performative practices from the 1930s and 1940s in East Asia. The focus is on the Okeh Record Company and the associated Choson Opera Troupe (Choson Akgukdan). Named after the historical term for Korea, the troupe toured throughout Korea, Japan, and Manchukuo. Most of the former performance venues have since disappeared or are now inaccessible, making a clear reconstruction of the histories impossible—and thus opening up possibilities for the imagination.

Perry's focus is on the female performers and their multifaceted roles, which oscillate between art, entertainment, and exploitation. Their performances draw parallels to the *kisaeng*—professional artists and entertainers in historical Korea—as well as to early forms of popular music culture. The installation brings this music to life: historical recordings are played via an MP3 player that visitors can operate manually. Booklets and track lists of the musical pieces hang on the walls, functioning as the indexical references of an archive.

## 3 *AFSAR Comfort Women Study Club, 2026*

Research installation (tables, chairs, various research materials, printed matter, shelves)

The research installation *AFSAR Comfort Women Study Club* is conceived as an open space for thinking and working together. It serves as a meeting place for members of the Asian Feminist Studio for Art and Research (AFSAR), co-founded by Mooni Perry, a platform for collective research and artistic practice. Books, films, and texts become part of an evolving archive, supplemented by joint screenings and discussions. Through collective research, reading, and discussion, the setting continuously changes and expands—thereby sharpening the focus on histories that have been obscured or distorted, particularly those of the “comfort women.” The difficulty of reconstructing these stories in the first place is transformed into a resource. Many of the inaccessible or fragmentary historical traces lead through detours, via secondary sources, oral histories, and isolated artifacts. The space responds to this fragmentary nature by making research visible as a tentative, collaborative process that bridges the gap between documentation and fiction.

Mooni Perry's works have been exhibited at venues including CHAT, Hong Kong; the Bangkok Art Hall; the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; the Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster; and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

26.–28.6.2026

Screening: Montika Kham-on, Hanwen Zhang

26.6.2026

5 PM Reading group: Haunted Potentials

7 PM Screening: Montika Kham-on, Hanwen Zhang

8 PM Talk: Montika Kham-on, AFSAR / Mooni Perry, Hanwen Zhang

2.7.2026

7 PM Performance: Luzie Meyer

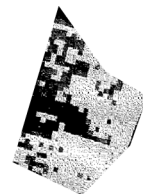
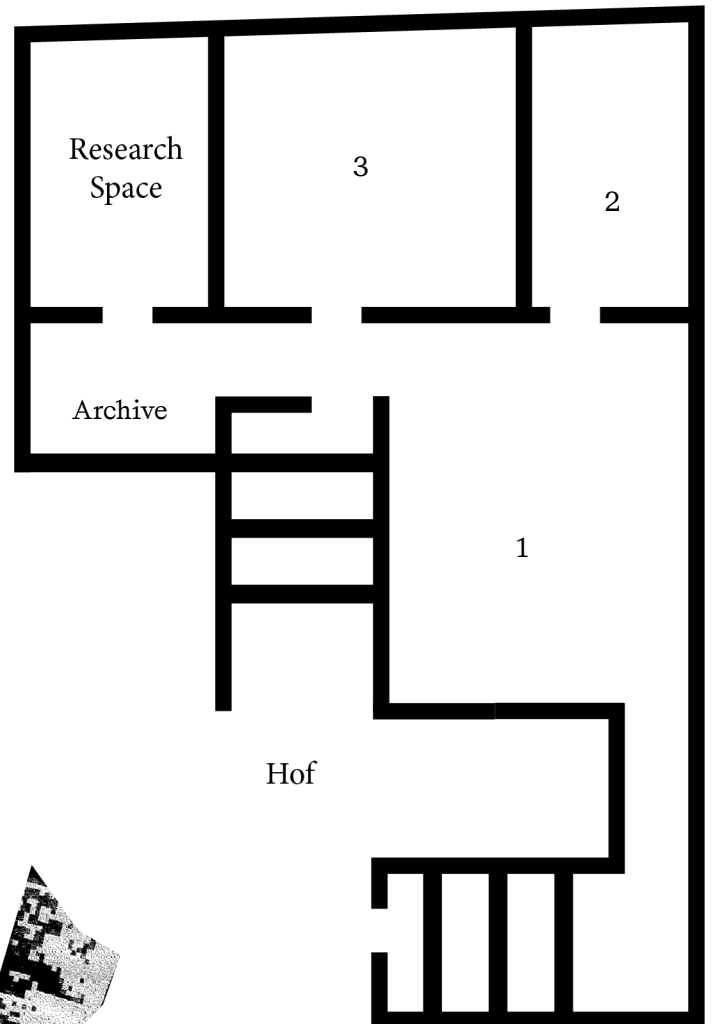
17.7.2026

5 PM Reading group: Haunted Potentials

24.7.2026

6 PM Guided tour with Mooni Perry & Agnieszka Roguski

Program curators: Natalie Keppler & Agnieszka Roguski



Kunst Raum Mitte ist eine kommunale Galerie des Fachbereichs Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte im Bezirksamt Mitte.



**Kommunale Galerien Berlin**

