

# A Utopian Stage: Festival of Arts, Shiraz-Persepolis (1969-77)

Asia Culture Center, Gwangju

13 May – 25 October 2020



Installation view, Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, South Korea 2020 © Asia Culture Center

*A Utopian Stage* is a multi-faceted and open-ended, evolving project that revisits the intersection of modernism, art and revolution through the radical aspirations of the hyper-modernist networks of artists and experimentalists which defined the 1960s and 1970s. This reconstruction of a complex space of international modernity is defined by the 'third worldist' sensibilities of the immediate post-colonial period. The project traces a Cultural Atlas through which knowledge was exchanged across alternative (often non-European)

plateaus. This process of global 'reorientation' takes us through a reconstruction of the gaze - subverting the single 'reading' of West to East into a more cyclical model, engaging in cultural, philosophical and political negotiations from East to East, East to West, South to East, South to South - constructing a panoramic exchange of global philosophical and artistic discourse. The project explores how in the aftermath of the collapse of European hegemonies and the rise of the Global South a fluid artistic exchange was possible across geographies, histories and forms in ways and on a scale that had never been possible before.

The ideals, as well as, the highs and lows of 20th century modernist universalisms are explored from the vantage point of the sensibilities and urgencies of the emerging Global South and their alliances with the international avant-garde.

As a multipartite project, *A Utopian Stage* takes the decade-long Festival of Arts, Shiraz-Persepolis (1967-1977) as its point of departure and as a case study. The festival, whose excavated archives have been banned in Iran since 1979, is considered as one of the most uniquely transformative inter-cultural experiences, perhaps the most radical multi-disciplinary crucible of any commissioning festival in history.

Curated by Vali Mahlouji / Archaeology of the Final Decade

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***A Utopian Stage: Festival of Arts, Shiraz-Persepolis* can be seen from  
13 May – 25 October 2020  
Open daily 10:00 – 18:00. Closed on Mondays.  
ACC Space 3 / 4**



### 2020 ACC CONTEXT < Solidarity Spores >

*A Utopian Stage: Festival of Arts, Shiraz-Persepolis (1967-77)* is curated as part of the *Solidarity Spores* exhibition, co-curated by Bojana Piškur; Vali Mahlouji / Archaeology of the Final Decade; Seonghee Kim; Sulki and Min / Tetsuya Goto; Dongjin Seo; and Sungwon Kim.

The Asia Culture Center (ACC) has been presenting a new vision for the future by examining Asia's histories and cultures through artistic practices within the global context. With growing interest in ASEAN countries and their expanding role in the global arena alongside Korea, China and Japan, new definitions of community and new hopes of solidarity are possible for Asia in the 21st century. In this context, the Asia Culture Center presents a special international exhibition *Solidarity Spores*, which explores dynamic traces left by artistic practices by touching on the themes of the "Non-Aligned Movement," "community" and "solidarity."

The exhibition sheds new light on the history of the Non-Aligned Movement and the accompanying cultural and artistic practices; in doing so, it asks how the spirit of solidarity can liberate us from division and conflict resulting from neoliberal globalization. Through visual manifestations of historical time and space that younger generations have not experienced before, artistic practices featured in the exhibition instil hopes and possibilities for a new world order, equality and communal history.

Installation photographs





Installation photographs (continued)

