

# BODIES OF PYONGYANG

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Project Information: <http://bodiesofpyongyang.com/>

Artist Information: <http://yunhyepark.com/>

NEW YORK, NY (April 9, 2009) – *Art in Odd Places* will present *Bodies of Pyongyang*, live art performances by artist Yoonhye Park at multiple public venues in Manhattan.

At key pedestrian traffic sites *Bodies of Pyongyang* will seek to stimulate dialogue and discussion with the public, inciting awareness about the prevailing and ongoing issues of women's rights in North Korea to the international and multicultural communities of Manhattan.

Most people know who Kim Jong-il is, the dictator of North Korea; however, women in North Korea are hidden and veiled in contemporary context. *Bodies of Pyongyang* is a public visual art performance installation--twenty girls wear North Korean schoolgirl uniforms situated inside a (70"x70"x70") clear cube box installation, located at multiple outdoor venues across Manhattan. These tightly packed schoolgirls will try to move within the confined area expressing their emotional pain and struggle. Red strings symbolizing their dual inner states of suppression and resistance entangle the girls, further restricting their freedom to move inside this already constricting and hermetic space.

These performances reference social and political themes explored by performance artists such as Marina Abramović, Shirin Neshat and Vanessa Beecroft, who have also choreographed groups of performers to make powerful artistic statements. With *Bodies of Pyongyang*, a public intervention by the artist Yoonhye Park, the plight of women in North Korea, is forced into people's daily lives. The *Art in Odd Places* program provides accessible pedestrian venues that will enable *Bodies of Pyongyang* to have maximum exposure to everyday onlookers. This is paramount to the artist's interest in acknowledging and giving human presence to anonymous North Koreans who are not able to represent themselves outside of their own country. Yoonhye Park dresses the girls in high school uniforms to symbolize that youthful moment of rebellion and fearlessness that can alter with the onset of responsibility. With recent reports of young women protesters putting themselves at extreme risk, there exists an illustration of the steps people are willing to take in order to resist oppression. Through action *Bodies of Pyongyang* underscores these stories of a totalitarian regime, ending each performance with a dramatic gesture representing the illusion of freedom and hope that in present circumstances, is unlikely to become a reality.

**About the Artist:**

Yoonhye Park is based in New York and her work is informed by her own experiences as a migrant from South Korea. Through her artistic practice she seeks to capture the emotional, political and psychological responses inspired by the interrelationship of hope and failure. She explores cultural surroundings using her own body as a medium in order to create performative visual languages. Yoonhye is an interdisciplinary artist who uses performance, video, photography, drawing, and installation to manifest ideas concerning the personal and political.

## **DATES: HOURS: LOCATION**

SUNDAY April 19, Abe Lebewohl Park / St. Mark's Church

SATURDAY April 25, Foley Square

SATURDAY May 2, Washington Square Park

SATURDAY May 9, Tompkins Square Park

Performance Hours: 2:30-5pm – FREE and Open to the Public

To get there by subway:

Abe Lebewohl Park / St. Mark's Church, take the 6 to Astor Place or the L to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

Foley Square, take the 4, 5, 6, J, M, Z to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall / Chambers Street.

Washington Square Park, take the A, B, C, D, E, F, V to W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. or the N, R to 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Tompkins Square Park, take the 6 to Astor Place, the L to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, or the F to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

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Art in Odd Places (AiOP) aims to stretch the boundaries of communication in the public realm by presenting artworks of all disciplines. AiOP reminds us that public spaces function as the epicenter for diverse social interactions and the uncontrolled exchange of ideas. [artinoddplaces.org](http://artinoddplaces.org)



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