

On Jung Hee Choi *Ahata Anahata Manifest Unmanifest IV*

La Monte Young Marian Zazeela

Jung Hee Choi is a rare phenomenon. Today, she is one of very few artists creating art of an extraordinary transcendent beauty and virtuosic organic technique that is one with the subject itself. We can see interrelationships from early Taoist paintings and calligraphy through Hokusai paintings of Mount Fuji, on through the works of Kazimir Malevich, Josef Albers, Georgia O'Keeffe, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Jasper Johns, Walter DeMaria, to Marian Zazeela and Jung Hee Choi.

As our senior disciple in music and art, Jung Hee is not only mastering, teaching and performing the line of the ancient Kirana tradition handed down by our guru Pandit Pran Nath in order to carry it on into the next generation, she is also expanding the tradition of sound, light and calligraphy of our own work with an original flowering that may emerge and eventually be recognized as the most imaginative statement of the next generation. It is remarkable that she has been able to absorb and articulate the techniques and formalities of the depth of La Monte's work in musical composition as well as Marian's work in the genres of graphite on black drawings, curvilinear form and colored light phenomena, and to be able to create completely original new works that demonstrate the highest levels of artistic achievement.

After hearing Jung Hee sing *Raga* with The Just Alap Raga Ensemble and upon experiencing her video, sound, drawing installation at the 2008 Asian Contemporary Art Fair New York, composer Terry Riley, the co-founder of musical minimalism and disciple of Pandit Pran Nath, conferred upon Jung Hee the title "Jewel of Kirana".

In India the word disciple applies to those who undertake the study of an infinite body of esoteric knowledge that may require lifetimes to master. Imagine Buddhist *saddhus* (spiritual seekers) who meditate for countless lifetimes to perfect their beings. Pandit Pran Nath always said Indian classical raga singing requires three lifetimes to master. One hundred years with the guru, one hundred years of practice, and then you can sing for one hundred years.

It is with this sense of commitment that Jung Hee Choi approaches her every endeavor. Here is an emerging polymath who achieves the combination of beauty and technique of a Michelangelo. As curators of Jung Hee's exhibition, we are extremely pleased to present the work of this master of many genres in our *Dream House* space: installations, raga singing, music composition, drawing, calligraphy, and the never before seen or imagined needle point drawings on black wrap illuminated with imperceptibly changing colored light from video projections that are perceived as filigreed arabesques reminiscent of elaborate silk brocade patterns suspended in illuminated darkness like stars from a distant galaxy. Our *Dream House* space, which at all other times houses the environment from which much of her work was inspired, now provides an atmosphere that will allow her work to develop to a new level of creative imagination and to the infinite evolution of dreams.

About the Light Point Drawings (previously titled Needlepoint Drawings)

With the application of her drawing techniques to a new, self-invented medium, that of inscribing with pinholes on black wrap, and with the utilization of video-projected colored light not *on* the drawing but, as it were, *through* the drawing, Jung Hee has created a profoundly engrossing body of work in these installations. Although these works can be described and even photographed, they must ultimately be experienced by the viewer in order to fully incorporate the element of time, which has now become an even more central and intrinsic aspect of these works. The varying colored light from pre-recorded videos projected through her needle point patterns continually delineates an ever-changing array, displaying facets of the curvilinear cosmos she has portrayed with endless imagination.

About *Tonecycle Base 65 Hz, 2:3:7*

In her essay, *Tonecycle Base 65 Hz, 2:3:7 Vocal Version* (2010), Jung Hee presents the concept that a pitch must be of a certain minimum duration to satisfy the condition that it can actually be defined to be a musical pitch. She states about her composition, *Tonecycle Base 65 Hz, 2:3:7*,

“In this linear superposition of 36 sine wave frequencies, there is no traditional musical pitch, where pitch is defined to be a specific fixed frequency of at least a minimum duration. Further, although there is no fixed drone in this composition, a tonic is implied because the frequencies based on the harmonics 2, 3 and 7 begin at fixed points, travel imperceptibly to other fixed points and return imperceptibly to the same fixed points of origin. However, this sense of tonic is very subtle because the sine waves never stand on the lowest points of origin or the highest points of ascent. A frequency with the starting value of 130 Hz ascends 0.0036 Hz per second and therefore is not in one place long enough to satisfy the definition of a musical pitch. Since all tones are ascending or descending together, some in fixed ratios to create parallel motion and some in similar motion, and since there is no reference tone (drone) or fixed tonic with which to compare, the sense of the pitch shift is practically imperceptible.”

But it is much more than what she states that:

“the sense of pitch shift is practically imperceptible.”

Even though all 36 sine waves are continuously moving, there is absolutely no sense of pitch shift at all but instead there is a powerful auditory illusion that the drone frequencies based on the harmonic relationships 2, 3 and 7 are absolutely stable to all listeners. Both the listeners in the audience and the performers hear the illusion of a very stable drone chord with only occasional acoustical beats in the form of long, very slow phase shifts. Jung Hee writes:

“For each of six sine wave frequency components there are five sine wave frequency components that have the same starting point (unison) as one of the original six. However, over time each of the sine waves having the same unison starting point gradually separates while moving in the same direction at slightly different rates of speed. These extremely close frequencies and their harmonics constantly produce beat cycles that traverse through a continuum of phase angles.”

Sophisticated listeners, such as composers who have worked with harmonically related sine waves and beat frequencies, may recognize these slow phase shifts as subtle change in the drone frequencies, however, most listeners will simply perceive these slow phase shifts as unspecified anomalies and the powerful auditory illusion that the drone is highly stable will continue to be reinforced.

As the performers, Jung Hee, Marian and La Monte, we actually sing the harmonically related frequencies by tuning our pitches as unisons to the existing sine waves as if the drone frequencies were absolutely stable. Through using this approach to perception, we are able to produce integral, harmonious music. But who would have imagined that each of the 36 sine waves is in a continuous state of flux and that there is absolutely no fixed drone frequency.

Through this example of auditory illusion Jung Hee has demonstrated that the *Maya* of illusion is continuously perpetuated as a result of the body's self-limiting and locked-in modes of perception, analysis and cerebral cognition, outside of which perhaps we can never escape.