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A young woman sits in the center of a room crammed with laboratory equipment (fig. 1). Behind her are glass flasks filled with unknown liquids and neatly arranged in rows. A large table juts from the painting's right edge. It groans under the accumulated weight of numerous implements all intended to measure, gauge, and subsequently coax into orderly submission the unruly world of the living. Next to the woman is a kymograph, used for measuring physiological response in animals. Battery powered, it records responses transmitted through electrodes attached to the subjects and is frequently used in pharmacological experiments monitoring the effects of drugs.[1] Two white rabbits housed in round wire-mesh cages below the table await their fate. Particularly conspicuous against the general pallor of the laboratory space is a black microscope placed on one corner of the table. It is positioned to the right of the young woman, who wears a laboratory coat of such dazzling whiteness that it seems to thrust her body toward the painting's surface.

Consider *Research*, an ink and color painting on paper by Yi Yu-t'ae. A Korean national living under Japanese colonial rule in Seoul, he created this work in 1944, a year before Japan's defeat in World War II and the consequent liberation of colonial Korea. Part of a diptych shown at the last edition of the Sŏnjŏn, colonial Korea's most important exhibition of visual art, *Research* joined the ideas of personhood and picturing at a time when both were acutely subject to transformative social and cultural pressures. The colonization of Korea by Japan from 1910 to 1945 fundamentally altered the lens through which artistic production was viewed. Newly defined as *misul* in Korean, or *bijutsu* in Japanese,

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Joan Kee is Associate Professor in the History of Art at the University of Michigan. The author of *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method* (2014), she has published on late Chosŏn landscape painting and colonial Korean portraiture. Her current projects include a study of modernity in Korean art as a deferred form of anticipation.

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Fig. 1. Yi Yu-t'ae, *Research*, 1944, ink and color on paper, 212 x 153 cm, Courtesy of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

art was classified according to medium and genre based on categorical divisions like Western versus Oriental, and oil versus ink. Such divisions mirrored and reinforced assumptions of national and cultural exceptionalism, which were made especially pronounced by the exigencies of wartime.

Modern art in particular emerged in lockstep with imperialist valorization of an attitude towards modernity founded upon beliefs in rationality, universality, and, above all, the persistent idealization of an unspecified future. Yet at the level of everyday life, the modern social order was more often defined by inequality, oppression, and the concentration of power in the hands of a select few. After the Second Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, ideological pressures compromised the links between personal subjectivity and tangible forms of material expression. Exploring what kinds of self-determination could be possible became a challenge for Korean cultural workers, particularly for those whose own political orientations were unresolved or explicitly ambiguous. This exploration may be what Ko Yu-sŏp, the first formally trained Korean art historian, was had in mind when he argued that modern art was more than a presentist symptom of newness or innovation. Modern art, he claimed, was more accurately described as *sidae ŭi yesul*, or "art of our time," a phrase he used to encapsulate the aspirations of those seeking to make artworks relevant to a specific time and place.[2]

Research was an experiment that gauged how and whether representation could still be viable when it otherwise seemed fated to collapse into the most literal interpretations of ideology. It produced a viewing experience that operated beyond the register of allegory by decoupling the act of picturing from a state-driven enterprise of image production that suppressed debate. Central to the operation of *Research* was the unclear position of the main character, the young woman in the laboratory coat. Her portrayal invites speculation as to whether she is a nostalgic icon of a partially realized modernity based on notions of speed and progress or an agent participating in the formation of a grimmer modernity rooted in perpetual doubt. The historian Miriam Silverberg alluded to this duality in her study of the "modern girl" phenomenon in Japan but its stakes were particularly high in colonial Korea, where it overlapped with the figure of the "new woman" so closely aligned with nationalist pro-Korean campaigns for political sovereignty.[3] Unlike the mass propaganda that tried to will into existence a state of national readiness and unity, *Research* embraced the uncertainty of representation in the face of a sociopolitical landscape overrun by slogans, proclamations, and commands.

The Cultural Politics of Genre and Medium

The materials and techniques used in *Research* identify the work as an example of *nihonga*. Literally "Japanese painting," nihonga emerged in late nineteenth-century Japan to challenge the popularity of Western-style painting (*yōga*), eventually spreading to other parts of East Asia with the expansion of the Japanese empire in the early twentieth century.[4] Intended to help recuperate Japanese cultural specificity, nihonga was a hybrid medium incorporating both traditional techniques of painting and more recent techniques of depiction used in photography and yōga. Nihonga artists mas-

tered a range of techniques from linear perspective to volumetric shading and their adroitness spurred yōga painters to undertake their own experiments with materials, including mixing oil painting with various binders to replicate the effects produced by ink and water.[5]

Numerous commentators have argued that nihonga was deeply entrenched in the efforts of the Japanese state to promote a sense of national belonging among its citizens.[6] These efforts buttressed the promotion of nihonga and nihonga-like works throughout Japan's expanding empire, specifically in Taiwan and Korea.[7] Artists like Yi Yu-t'ae were prominent among those tapped to show at the *Chosŏn misuljŏllamhoe*, the annual national art salon commonly abbreviated as the Sŏnjŏn and which became the single most important art exhibition venue in colonial Korea. Based on the Bunten (later reorganized as the Teiten), the annual Ministry of Education Art Exhibition in Japan, the Sŏnjŏn was established by the colonial Japanese government in 1922. It was juried almost exclusively by Japanese artists from Japan, some of whom favored works by Korean artists resembling their Japanese counterparts in Tokyo.[8] The Sŏnjŏn was thus part of a working infrastructure of culture that folded Koreans and Taiwanese into a shared vocabulary of visual idioms and tropes shaped by the agendas of imperial Japan.

But although the colonial government and several critics publicly endorsed nihonga as an emblem of Asianness and "Oriental painting" (*tongyanghwa*), its acceptance in Korea outside official channels was because of its novelty, according to Yi.[9] Nihonga was absorbed into a paradigmatic shift taking place from roughly the early 1920s to the early 1930s that not only included new forms of classification, such as the introduction of terms like visual art (*misul*), but also compounds like "modern arts" (*kŭndae yesul*, and by the 1930s, *hyŏndae misul*).[10] During the colonial era, nihonga works were criticized not on ideological grounds, but because they sacrificed conceptual singularity for rehearsals of skill.[11] The critic Yi T'ae-jun, for example, lamented how Korean practitioners of nihonga had merely followed its precepts; their works were "not so much paintings that were painted but manufactured and therefore were products rather than creations."[12]

When Yi Yu-t'ae painted *Research*, nihonga had been so thoroughly internalized by the colonial Korean art world that its practitioners seemed to think very little about questions of medium ("Hyŏnc'ho Yi Yu-t'ae," 346). For Yi, nihonga was less about fulfilling certain criteria and more about investigating its potential for resonating with other disciplines. Born in Seoul in 1916, six years after Japan formally annexed Korea, Yi learned nihonga techniques and principles at the Teikoku Art School (present-day Musashino Art University) in Tokyo from 1939 to 1940.[13] In *Research*, the amount of detail he lavished on depicting the equipment, material surfaces, and substances suggested how the medium of painting verged on science. Glass is depicted using a milky light-gray paint able to convey both hardness and coldness. The instruments on the laboratory table are more convincing as demonstrations of Yi's skill than as signposts of a narrative trajectory.

The rise of nihonga coincided with the rising prominence of *bijinga* in Japan. Used since at least 1905 to refer to a genre of painting depicting beautiful women, bijinga

has been described as the most timely, or rather, most time-conscious, of genres, often reflecting what was most up-to-date, trend-conscious, and fashion-forward.[14] Artistic representations of beautiful women were prevalent well before this time, but the new imperial ambitions of Japan in the mid-nineteenth century was a genre-evoking moment, with a particular body of work emerging in rhetorical response to various political and social imperatives. Created for public rather than private display, bijinga became more about socially recognized use than personal enjoyment.

A renowned case in point is *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, a triptych Kuroda Seiki, the great champion of Western-style oil painting in Japan, submitted in 1897 to the second Hakubai exhibition and later to the International Exposition of 1900 in Paris (fig. 2). Three nude figures of a purportedly ideal Japanese woman are seen in various poses. Each figure is viewed isolation against an unmarked space not unlike how specimens of fauna and flora would be photographed and collected by colonial Japanese bureaucrats in subsequent decades. It was a far cry from *Morning Toilette*, Kuroda's foray into Gustave Courbet-like realism that unleashed onto a hostile Japanese audience a full-length portrait of unqualified vulgarity—an unkempt woman just out of bed, the feral aroma of sex still in her hair and on her skin.[15] In *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, the bodies are anatomical studies. They fit within the general parameters of the bijinga genre, which works best when the subject is in a state of perpetual inaction or suspension. The genre of bijinga is less a heuristic category than a symptom of an imperial mindset that staked its moral authority on providing to its subjects aspirational visions of a world free of sweat, dirt, and pain. The beautiful woman—here ensconced in Elysian Fields of gold—was a tangible expression of the promises made by a burgeoning empire newly flush from its military and economic success. The prominent display of such works in government-sponsored venues suggests a direct connection between idealized views of the female body and the construction of authority.[16]

Bijinga allegedly peaked as an artistic genre in 1915 when a special room was devoted to bijinga works at the Bunten.[17] Most examples of bijinga are notable for their singular rejection of personalization: women are ethereal, sylph-like beings that do not so much occupy space as float through or wander into it. Cultural historian Miya Lippit observes how the bijin in nihonga "was constructed as a form of nature only found within art" ("美人/Bijin/Beauty," 16). Yet as Katō Ruiko observes, bijinga in the early twentieth century was also characterized by its independence from the Edo mass culture symbolized by *ukiyo-e*, or woodblock prints and paintings depicting the city's pleasure quarters, with bijinga more closely aligned to portraiture.[18]

In Korea, bijinga discourse was grafted onto preexisting conceptions of *miindo*, an older Korean term used to refer to idealized depictions of women, mostly for private audiences of elite men.[19] By the early twentieth century, several works of miindo seemed interchangeable with their bijinga counterparts, a resemblance encouraged by the Japanese jurors of the Sŏnjŏn, many of whom were prominent bijinga artists. Such miindo showed young women in idealized situations, often wearing traditional Korean dress consisting of a short jacket and full skirt.[20] The most celebrated miindo artist in the colonial Korean art world was Kim Eun-ho. After attending classes at the

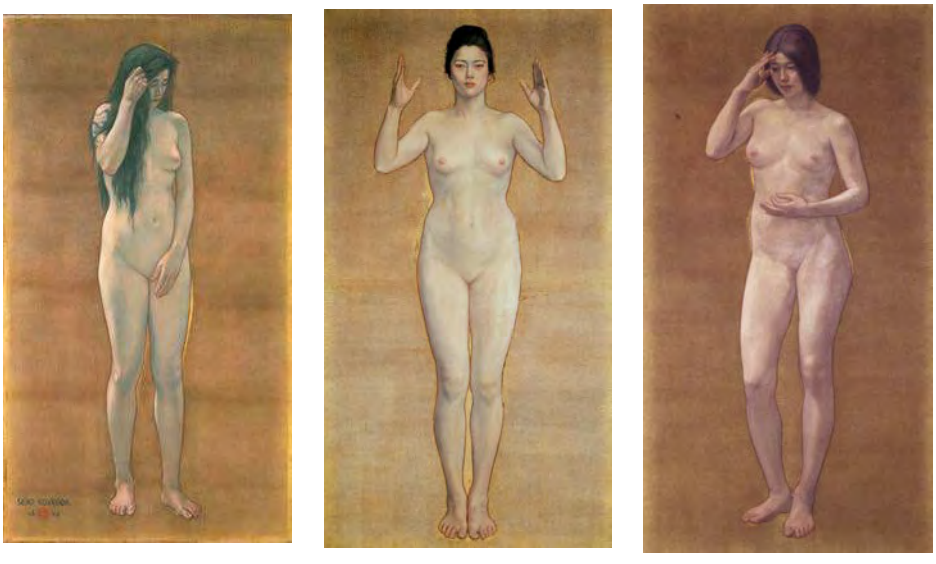

Fig. 2. Kuroda Seiki, *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, 1897, oil on canvas, each 180.6 x 99.8 cm, National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, Japan.

Tokyo School of Fine Arts from 1924 to 1927, Kim returned to Seoul where he became a favorite of the Sŏnjŏn juries, who applauded his elegant, if overtly sentimental, portrayals of young women. Yi Yu-t'ae, whom the critic Yi Kyungsung later described as "Kim's most faithful protégé," estimated that about a quarter of the works shown at the national salon would be "of the Kim style" ("Hyŏnc'ho Yi Yu-t'ae," 350).[21] Kim's stature was confirmed by his later appointment as a juror for the Sŏnjŏn, one of only three Koreans to be given this role. In *Miindo*, a work he completed in 1935, the figure is depicted almost entirely through meticulous, fine lines (fig. 3). Despite the attention paid to her facial features, the folds of her dress, and even the pattern on her rubber-soled shoes, she seems incorporeal. The pale brown and beige of her floral patterned jacket fades into the background, causing her to look as if she is blending into the blossoming tree directly behind her. She is compressed into the picture plane, a suggestion reinforced by the pattern on her green overskirt, which seems to flatten her body into the physical support.

The fact that bijinga helped construct a particular kind of social reality was borne out in Korea, where the genre was folded into a broad program of image production seemingly intended to build some form of cultural consensus at a time when colonial authorities were explicitly shifting from a period of coercive military rule (*budan seiji*) to policies advocating cultural assimilation in the name of cultural rule (*bunka seiji*). It was hardly surprising that the Sŏnjŏn teemed with recurring images of identifiably Korean women in a limited number of situations, generally in romanticized natural settings or otherwise decontextualized. Such images were not portraits, but the production of types that reinforced particular views of Korean women generally.

Almost a half-century later, Yi painted his own *Wisdom-Impression-Sentiment* in 1943 (Yi, "Yi Yu-t'ae ŭi saengt'ae wa yesul," n.p.) (fig. 4). Based on sketches of various

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Fig. 3. Kim Eun-ho, *Miindo*, 1935, ink and color on silk, 143 x 57.5 cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

family members the artist tended to use as his models, the triptych illustrates various stages of an unnamed woman's life, including marriage and motherhood (Yi, "Hyŏnc'ho Yi Yu-t'ae," 343).[22] Like the women in Kuroda's triptych, the woman in Kim's painting is specimen-like. But she is far less glorified in Kim's version, looking rather more like a stock character in a manual than a sacral or aspirational figure. It was unclear if the subject was a woman who happened to be still, or if it was an inert object that happened to resemble a woman. The lack of resolution mirrored how Japanese artists frequently depicted Koreans as souvenirs, or tokens of Koreana. The nondescript figure embodies a distinct attitude towards representation, where people and objects deliberately became more general and where portraits resembled still lives. Such a pointed lack of specificity or even what might be called counterspecificity converged with the aims of a political regime that could ill afford the potential risk of dissent that came with recognizing citizen subjectivities.

At the same time, changed attitudes towards portraiture put considerable pressure on the bijinga and miindo genres. One of Yi's Teikoku professors, the nihonga artist Kawasaki Shoko, wrote how "figure paintings," including bijinga, had become much more expansive with "its parameters increasingly crossing over into other areas."[23] Kawasaki may have been speaking of the increasingly blurred lines between bijinga and portraits of women. No longer exclusively intended for official or ritualized purposes, portraiture had become a means through which to rethink personal identity as a function of deliberate individual choice rather than inherited artistic conventions.

Recall one of the most important paintings by another of Yi's teachers, the legendary painter and essayist Kaburaki Kiyokata, a stalwart advocate of bijinga: a portrait of Higuchi Ichiyō, the first prominent professional female writer of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). Executed in 1940, while Yi was still a Teikoku student, it anticipates some the themes invoked in *Research*. Kiyokata's painting reflects popular conceptions of Higuchi as an exemplar of an "elegant" but "outdated" *gabun* style of writing that was "ornamental" and "feminine."[24] A wrapping cloth filled with fabric scraps is placed before the author, a sign of domestic chores to be done. Yet she sits idly, her fingers loosely clasped. Jutting into the immediate right-hand foreground is a pen and a blank sheet, the tools associated with her profession. Placing objects alluding to a subject's occupation or status was a well-known convention of portraiture. But to have them so far out of reach indicates that they are more than props. Hovering at the very edge of pictorial space, the blank sheet and pen may in fact be for the viewer's use, a veiled invitation extended to the audience, whose perceptions eventually define the telling of Higuchi's story.

In colonial Korea, unsettled attitudes towards portraiture—which the critic Park Yong-sook later described as an important characteristic of modern Korean art's "history of trial-and-error"—cast the subjects of miindo in a different light.[25] On the one hand, the proliferation of self-portraiture in the 1920s and 30s theoretically encouraged speculation on the personhood of subjects.[26] The figures in some paintings classified as miindo came across less as idealized types and more as actual individuals; Yi himself was best known in the colonial Korean art world as a figure painter (*inmul hwaga*)

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Fig. 4. Yi Yu-t'ae, *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment*, 1943, ink and color on paper, each 250 x 169 cm. Courtesy of Leeum, Seoul, South Korea.

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Fig. 5. Kaburaki Kiyokata, *Portrait of Higuchi Ichiyō*, 1940, ink and color on silk, 143 x 79.5 cm. Courtesy of Japan Artists Association and Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan. © Akio Nemoto 2018/JAA 1700069.

rather than as a painter of beauties.[27] On the other hand, the refusal of prospective subjects to be portrayed at all signaled an underlying skepticism towards the very act of representation. Jang Woo-sung, another prominent artist contemporary of Yi Yu-t'ae, recalled how difficult it was for him to convince acquaintances and even family members to pose for him.[28] The reluctance of his sitters reads as unexpressed fear of what representation might do to them, a fear that resonated with a context where individuals were quantified, classified, and processed into an expanding bureaucratic network.

Research adheres to the conventions of portraiture, with the subject surrounded by the accoutrements of her profession. Art historian Kim Youngna claims the woman in *Research* was the sister of a friend of the artist.[29] Yi claimed that he went to Keijō University Hospital to sketch faculty in the departments of physiology and pharmacology, but no record exists of any women actually employed in those departments as scientists, or in fact, of any female scientist having her own independent research facilities ("Hyŏnc'ho Yi Yu-t'ae," 343).[30] Indeed, the only professional woman Yi seems to have known personally was fellow artist Paek Nam-sun, the first professional Korean female artist to exhibit works internationally, including at the renowned Salon d'Automne in Paris, where some of the most important artistic movements of the twentieth century made their debut. It is almost certain that the subject, as was typical for the majority of miindo works, was imagined. Yi referred to the figure, in speculative terms, as "a woman who becomes a professor, who practices medicine, or a woman who works as a scientist" (343). He adhered to bijinga conventions by painting an imagined type, albeit in this case a type imagined in anticipation of having future real-world counterparts. But he may well have been alluding to how portraiture had become more like bijinga, existing less as a vehicle for private introspection and more as a reflection of shared collective perceptions of entire categories of people. Among the most important were those perceptions embodied in the ideas of the modern girl and the new woman.

The Very Models of a Model World?

Few terms were likely to provoke as much discussion as "modern girl," a contested and highly visible term used in colonial Korea from the late 1920s to describe a variety of new attitudes towards, and espoused by, the generation of women growing up entirely under colonial rule. An extension of the modern girl rhetoric popularized by largely male journalists in Japan amidst the tumultuous social and economic changes following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, the modern girl in Korea exemplified the complex blend of aspiration, hope, skepticism, and anxiety on which notions of modernization (*kŭndaehwa*) were based. Personified by figures like the novelist and painter Na Hye-sŏk, whose well-publicized affair and subsequent divorce became an exemplar of women gone wild, the modern girl referred to an imagined notion of a young woman liberated (or corrupted) by her behavior, dress, and penchant for being outside the home.

The modern girl was both congruent with and at odds with the broader discourse of the new woman (*sin yŏsŏng*) that was closely associated with the Enlightenment and

pro-Korean independence movements of the 1920s and 30s. New Woman discourse included advocacy for women's education as part of a more general campaign for nation-building. By the mid-1930s, for example, popular magazines aimed at a female readership, such as *Yŏsŏng*, devoted more attention to science, despite the almost total absence of working female scientists. Writing in 1927, the cultural critic and writer Pak Yŏng-hŭi insinuated that the difference between the modern girl and the new woman was the former's appetite for consumption and inability to be productive: "they stand out because of their careless, free pursuit of pleasure, extravagance, and decadence."[31] Then a member of the Marxist group KAPF, or the Korean Artists' Proletariat Federation, Pak lamented the modern girls who were "incapable of supporting themselves" as an exemplars of "problems coming from the private-ownership system ensconced in capitalism" (Ko, "Yusanja sahoe," 116).

Others regarded the new woman and modern girl as threats to the ideal of the "wise mother, good wife" (*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*) trope reinforced by the Japanese state during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), its first successful major campaign to expand its geographic borders. The resonance of the "wise mother, good wife" trope with Confucian approaches to gender may have lent it staying power: by the 1920s, it had been internalized in the popular imagination. Some paintings proposed an amalgamation of tropes. Painted by Kim Eun-ho in 1923, just before "modern girl" became common parlance, *Reverie* resembles other examples of bijinga (fig. 6). This time, however, the subject is the modern girl, recognizable by her heels and the shorter *hanbok* skirt. She turns towards the viewer, a pose that gives Kim free reign to expose a generous section of calf. Art historian Hong Sŏn-py'yo has speculated that the subject might in fact be a *kisaeng*, or a female entertainer: Kim's heroine has the "student coiffure" (*haksaeng-jang*) then popular among its ranks.[32] The modest nosegay and sheer wrap suggest a performance of modesty that might have been a source of titillation, particularly in contrast to the more brazen modern girls upbraided in the popular press for exhibiting their desires and wares so openly through bright lipstick, short skirts, and high heels. The *kisaeng* may have been the closest embodiment of both the modern girl and the new woman. Frequently mistranslated as "courtesan," the *kisaeng* was paid for her skills, and was required to share her compensation with a state bent on transforming the class system into a source of tax revenue. Her time was likewise commodified, especially when several painters began to hire *kisaeng* as models.[33]

Yet being able to convert capital into spaces of autonomy was a source of liberation, whether it meant earning money as a member of the workforce and buying property or gaining access to the resources of others. Consider a well-known caricature published in the daily newspaper *Chosŏn Ilbo* in 1930, "What if there comes a time when women can advertise who they are and what they desire?" (fig. 7). A row of faceless women wearing the shorter skirts popularly associated with the modern girl sit on a bench, their bare legs inscribed with various assessments of exchange value. On the far left, the text on one woman's left leg reads, "even if he is seventy years old, I will marry him if he can build me a culture house (*munhwa chut'aek*)." On her other leg, the text reads "as long as he buys me a piano." Coined in Japan in 1922, "culture house" was used to refer to

Fig. 6. Kim Eun-ho, *Reverie*, 1923, ink and color on silk, 130 x 40 cm, location unknown. Courtesy of Kim Sŏng-wŏn.

homes designed according to modern ideas of hygiene and management. As historian Jordan Sand has discussed, the "culture house" in early twentieth-century Japan was also defined by its contents. A piano was a particular status symbol, frequently commemorated in the large number of nihonga illustrations of domestic scenes produced in the mid-1920s.[34] Yet despite the pretenses of culture and civilized living suggested by the term "culture house," the unsigned caricature insinuated that it was part of a world where human relationships and intimacy were quantified, exchanged, and sold to the highest bidder. By inscribing the women's thoughts on their exposed legs—a sign of sexual availability—the anonymous caricaturist implied that this world was both erotically charged and irredeemably vulgar.

If the caricature undertook to reveal the underbelly of capitalist society, *Hwaun* depicts the seamlessness of its surface (fig. 8). Painted by Yi Yu-t'ae, it shows a woman who seemingly prevailed in the marriage stakes. She sits behind a lace-doily-topped round table in a well-appointed interior. An ostentatious arrangement of peonies takes up a good part of the painting, its mass emphasized by the delicate, almost spindly legs of a carved stand. Indeed, the items Yi lays out in the work reads like an inventory of must-haves for the aspirational bourgeois Korean home: a grand piano, a delicate lace tablecloth, and ornately carved wooden furniture whose design borrows freely from Western and Asian lexicons of style and suggests a deeply cosmopolitan household. But the objects so crowd the woman that it raises the question of possession. Who belongs to whom? The abundance of material goods appears to colonize rather than occupy space. We could easily imagine more goods piling up behind, eventually nudging both the woman and the table out of the picture. *Hwaun* implies how the accumulation of things might overtake the person, absorbing her into its world.

Questions of possession and ownership were significant issues that in a few years' time would be pushed to its violent and devastating extreme with the onset of the Korean War. Debates about capitalism were rampant in the late colonial Korean art world; Son Ŭng-sŏng recounted, for example, how his contemporary, the artist Pak Tŭk-sun, a right-wing anti-Communist, got into a heated quarrel with his wife, the socialist poet O Chang-hwan at their wedding.[35] But private ownership could also be personally validating, a point implicitly raised in the abundance of portraits showing women occupying physical space through intellectual activity, as exemplified by Yi's *Research*.

Modern Girls in Wartime Korea

Categories like new woman and modern girl anticipated the formation of a particular kind of emerging audience, the former aligned with political liberalism and the latter with capitalist forms of ownership and consumption. In wartime, both categories were reabsorbed into the national body writ large. The Second Sino-Japanese War, which later expanded into a major front of World War II, put new pressure on competing ideas of womanhood. In 1940, the writer Kim Kwang-sŏp wrote how notions of progress (*paljŏn*) now meant emphasizing female strength rather than beauty.[36] Supporting his observations were covers for *Ilbon Puin* (*The Japanese Wife*), a magazine published

Fig. 7. Caricature published in the January 12, 1930 issue of the *Chosŏn Ilbo*. © Digital Chosun, Inc.

Fig. 8. Yi Yu-t'ae, *Hwaun*, 1944, ink and color on paper, 212 x 153 cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

by the Maeil newspaper company, the mouthpiece of the colonial government.[37] First published in 1944 as one of the very few publications targeting a female readership during the wartime years, *Ilbon Puin* featured stories about the war, as well as poetry and novel excerpts from leading Korean writers. Cover images featured women hard at work, usually factory labor of a kind (fig. 9). More literal still was *Sin Yŏsŏng* (*New Woman*), published by private Japanese citizens belonging to a pro-imperial organization, the Hŭng-a Cultural Publishing Corporation. It differed from its predecessor of the same name not only in its content, but also in its definition of the new woman. The cover of the September-October 1944 issue portrays her as a sturdy pillar of the military-industrial complex, impervious to any physical hardship, even the dark and dangerous labyrinths of a coal mine (fig. 10).[38]

Historian Theodore Yoo has shown how wartime conscription through volunteer groups included both women and men, with the former channeled into poorly compensated factory and administrative work or into uncompensated sex slavery (*Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea*, 204). Neither the lack of consent nor the horrendous working conditions quite made it onto the covers of *Sin Yŏsŏng*. Rosy-cheeked, with perfectly coiffed hair and wearing a suspiciously clean blouse, the heroine is unsullied and uncomplaining. The image is just as unreal as the racy modern girls might have been two decades earlier, but the pristine face and body belongs to the culture of bijinga and miindo. As historian Elyssa Faison points out, long-standing ideals of womanhood effectively limited the ways the Japanese state could mobilize female labor, despite acute shortages of human resources caused by the forced conscription of Korean men in 1943.[39]

Magazines targeting a female demographic trotted out the safe "wise mother, goodwife" trope by running numerous stories of virtuous women tending the proverbial hearth.[40] Yet contrary to the alabaster vision of perfect health that made Kuroda's *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment* a fitting addition to Meiji Japan's efforts to claim a place among the order of Western nations, Yi's variation on the theme seems to work towards an opposite outcome. *Wisdom* shows a woman sitting with one hand exposed. The hand is conspicuously devoid of function—it neither gestures nor grasps. Her other hand is concealed. *Impression* shows a new bride flanked by relatives on her wedding day. She is a vessel of unsullied purity and represents a stark contrast to what at that time was the mass impression of thousands of Korean women into sexual slavery. *Sentiment* illustrates the aftermath: a woman holds her child. Against the backdrop of World War II casualties, the composition appears strangely, and perhaps intentionally, tone-deaf. What, the painting seems to suggest, is the point of bearing and rearing children only for them to die in the name of a distant emperor? *Hwaun* is far less grim in tone. But the placidity of his protagonist reads less as tranquility and more as a memorial to a time now decidedly past, one when the possibility of leisure was replaced by ceaseless labor.

Yet even as political mandates changed, the modern girl lingered. Perhaps the most prolific chronicler of the type was Ku Pon-ung, who produced several portraits of contemporary Korean women in the 1930s and 40s. Among his most incisive works is a picture of a woman clutching a white fur wrap over a purple overcoat (fig. 11).

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Fig. 9. Cover of April 1944 issue of *Ilbon Puin* (*The Japanese Wife*). Reproduced by permission of Adan Mungo.

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Fig. 10. Cover of September-October 1944 issue of *Sin Yŏsŏng* (*New Woman*). Reproduced by permission of Adan Mungo.

Her eyes are just barely visible, her other features disappearing into the bright apricot mass of color that passes for flesh. The sensation of dissolution resonates with the unrestrained energy associated with modern girl, but the application of paint is less suggestive of a frenetic blur than of effacement, indicative, perhaps, of the modern girl's disappearance into the colorless void of collective mobilization pictured on the covers of women's magazines.

More common were modern girls who were far more subdued than their predecessors, a poignant example of which was *Woman in a Skisuit* by SonUng-sŏng (fig. 12). Painted in 1940 just after Son graduated from Taiheiyō Art School, which specialized in teaching Western-style oil painting, the work reflects general popular interest in women playing sports or otherwise engaged in exercise, a subject often raised in connection to the outdoors-minded modern girl.[41] But where the modern girl played at sports for no other reason than personal pleasure (derived from both exertion and attention from others), the new woman of 1940 was more likely to do so out of a sense of national, and even moral, duty.

Sporting a permanent wave and a jaunty knitted salmon-apricot hat, the woman has the modern girl look.[42] She sits on a wooden stool, her jacket partially unzipped. A glove has been removed, but the other remains, as if she is reluctant to expose her flesh to the air. The ski suit suggests the world of affluent leisure that was the Modern Girl's milieu. In her new surroundings she resembles a common laborer, an image congruent with what family magazines prescribed in their pages: "women should not

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Fig. 11. Ku Pon-ung, *Woman*, 1940, oil on canvas, 43 x 32 cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

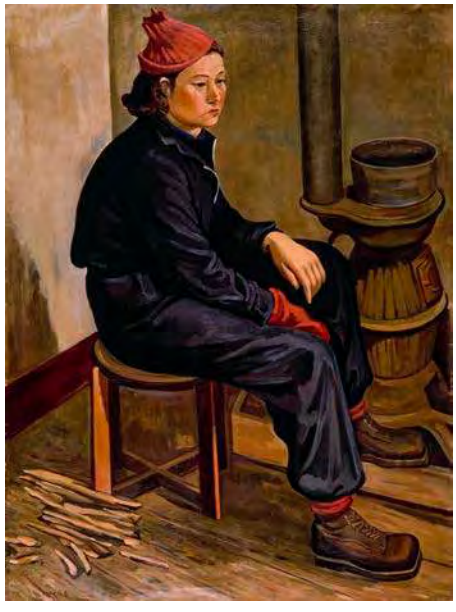

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Fig. 12. Son Ŭng-sŏng, *Woman in a Skisuit*, 1940, oil on canvas, 129 x 93 cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

be embarrassed to wear work clothes."[43] The unknown woman wears pants resembling *momppe*, the loose-fitting work pantaloons that the colonial government would legally require women to wear from 1944.[44] The modern girl now looks as if she might be the one responsible for chopping enough wood for the stove.

Dejection settles over the scene like a layer of dust. The face of the woman is wan, her back arched as if succumbing to gravity's downward pull. Her flushed cheeks read differently from those of the working heroines featured so triumphantly on magazine covers. Here they are merely evidence of a recent confrontation with the elements. Despite the allusions to hard work, the woman and the space she occupies are curiously, even ominously still. The stove pressed against the right edge of pictorial space looks unused. A pile of kindling sits untouched in the lower left-hand corner. Then there is the woman herself, whose hand looks soldered to her thigh as if she were slowly turning into stone. Indeed, there is decidedly something statue-like about the figure. Yun Hŭi-sun, arguably the most prolific art critic in Korea at the time, may have sensed this when he dismissed the work as "a depiction that illustrates only apparent external appearance."[45] The painting functions most convincingly as a commemorative portrait, one that anticipates the final, imminent passing of the modern girl as she was previously known.

If *Woman in a Skisuit* reads convincingly as a statement, *Research* comes across as an experiment, one with an uncertain outcome. Its subject was not the modern girl, whose exploits and habits were discussed so excessively as to reduce the very idea to flat caricature. Nor was she a profoundly invisible cog in Japan's imperial wheel of

devastating exploitation. Through *Research*, Yi broaches the question of how to imagine womanhood outside the most commonly iterated tropes, an issue of pressing concern given laws like the Student Labor Act of 1944, which empowered colonial authorities to effectively cut off higher education opportunities for women. Missionary-established schools were targeted for closure, including Ewha Womans University where Yi would teach after 1947.

Pairing *Research* with *Hwaun* feeds into a larger discursive framework based on antipodes. Both works enable viewers to make normative claims about the organization of political power in colonial Korea and to explore more deeply the political work that representations of femininity and otherness are doing. That we know Yi paired *Hwaun* with *Research* leads us to wonder if he meant for it to generate a contrast between types, between the "wise mother, good wife" at home and the publicly visible modern girl. As much is suggested by the title *Hwaun*: *"hwaun"* is a literary device referring to a poem written in response to rhymes of a different poem. The deliberate presentation of the works as a diptych made palpable what the poet and essayist Mo Yun-suk described as the price of being a "modern woman": "we have to carry out the duties of the housewife as well as work as professionals in the public realm."[46] The juxtaposition of *Research* alongside *Hwaun* emphasizes the precarity of women's lives, regardless of their affluence or education. She could be a scientist one day and a lady of leisure the next, but this multiplicity was not only a function of choice, but also of obligation. Did a woman have to *visibly* fulfill multiple roles in order to be legitimated as proper or worthy?

But the world depicted in *Research* is also self-contained, its energy stemming from the unresolved position of its subject. Compare her with the main character of a work by Ota Chou (fig. 13). Ota's painting stands out in the history of nihonga as a rare depiction of a woman engaged in action not ordinarily characterized as women's work. Swaddled in a loose white robe that looks almost like hospital gauze, she firmly supports her patient's arm while guiding the scalpel. Her patient too is singular, a prototypical beauty who, despite her elaborate attire, is revealed to have actual rather than metaphorical flesh. Ota largely repeats what, since at least the Great Kanto Earthquake, was a general promotion in Japan of hygiene and good health, a campaign that ran parallel to colonial authorities' efforts to typify Korean bodies as unhealthy and therefore in need of constant surveillance and treatment. But Yi conspicuously shows his protagonist in the full flush of health. Securely wrapped in a laboratory coat that doubles as a shield from prying eyes seeking to gain access to her body, the right hand of Yi's female scientist grabs her left wrist in a gesture of self-restraint. Her hair is pulled tight behind her in a simple bun, her legs crossed at the knees in a seemingly defensive position.

Yi's female researcher has something in common with the women depicted in *Telescope*, a painting executed in 1940 by Yurimoto Keiko, one of the few active professional female painters in early Shōwa Japan (fig. 14).[47] Although the brightly patterned kimonos of the women make them the central object of viewer interest, Yurimoto stresses the act of looking. Seated on a tubular chair similar to that designed in 1928 by

Marcel Breuer and celebrated as one of the high points of modern European design, a woman prepares to look through the telescope. Her companion in the kimono with burnt orange trim holds a spyglass to her face. The woman standing next to her looks at the same unidentified scene without any mechanical assistance at all. Shown with bobbed hair, a veritable trademark of modern girlhood, the women stand firmly on an imagined ground. Though clad in traditional socks and sandals, their feet are far more convincing as load-bearing supports than the diaphanous sylphs populating other bijinga.

Although the abrupt cropping of pictorial space of *Research* takes some cues from nihonga, the body Yi produces is far less pliable. Hers is also the only one in the painting that seems alive. Depicted in colors considerably more varied than those used for the background, the woman is pale but not corpse-like. She even wears rouge on her cheeks and lips, faintly suggesting a veiled coquetry markedly different from her surroundings. The microscope commands our attention perhaps more quickly than any other image save for the woman's face. It is black and heavy; compositionally, it is the picture's visual anchor. But while it and the other instruments on the table frame the upper half of her body, the woman is not subject to them in the way that Yurimoto's women are bound to their implements of seeing.

The physicality of female action figures prominently in *Makeup*, a diptych executed in the nihonga style by Park Rae-hyun, among the most important professional female artists in Korea (fig. 15). Painted in 1943 and shown at that year's Sŏnjŏn, it shows the daughter of Park's Japanese landlord braiding her hair in front of a mirror attached to a low red chest typically used to store cosmetics, jewelry, and other accessories. One half shows a lateral view of the chest and the other depicts the young woman. Intimate domestic scenes like these had long been a mainstay of the bijinga genre, but here the act of self-beautification feels downright laborious. The woman's body is slightly rotated so as to better display the pattern on her kimono and, thus, Park's technique.

But the contortion of the torso conveys an awkwardness made pronounced by the woman's unusually prominent feet. Her toes are bent, ostensibly to support her weight as she kneels on an imagined floor. Her fingers adroitly braid hair as if they were coils of rope, suggesting that even basic personal upkeep was itself work. In wartime Japan, where the semblance of normalcy was increasingly more difficult to maintain, even the act of braiding one's hair may have been a genuine accomplishment. The division of the scene into two separate paintings insinuates that Park may have wanted viewers to consider the imagined scene as contiguous with their own world.

The Viability of Painting

On May 23, 1943, the colonial government newspaper *Maeil Sinbo* published an image of *Impression*. The work aptly conformed to the kind of regional specificity endorsed, and sometimes demanded, by the mostly Japanese jurors of the Sŏnjŏn.[48] Often referred to as "local color," this specificity included portrayals of traditional Korean culture and landscapes. Such performances of cultural specificity affirmed Japan and its representatives as embodying the mainstream while Korea symbolized the margins.

Fig. 13. Ota Chou, *Vaccination*, 1934, ink and color on paper, 199.5 x 119 cm. Courtesy of Kyoto Municipal Art Museum, Japan.

Fig. 14. Yurimoto Keiko, *Telescope*, 1939, pigment on silk, 228 x 176 cm. Courtesy of Izuru Yamamoto and Kyoto Municipal Art Museum, Japan.

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Fig. 15. Park Rae-hyun, *Makeup*, 1943, ink and pigment on paper, 130.8 x 154.5 cm, location unknown. Courtesy of Unu Museum, Seoul, South Korea.

But *Impression* was more than a transparent bid for juror favor. Compared to most reproductions, the image was conspicuously large. The subject of marriage was also unusual given how images of warplanes, war heroes, and mobilization were far more commonly reproduced, particularly in newspapers.[49] The decision of the *Maeil Sinbo* to magnify its reproduction of *Impression* may have been intended to inject a note of normalcy in a profoundly abnormal time. Curator and writer Yi Kyu-il claimed that such normalcy was successfully used to defend the merits of at least one artwork; for the 1944 Sŏnjŏn, Kim Eun-ho submitted a painting depicting a mother happily watching her children sing and play music, a work that was criticized for not reflecting wartime concerns. A Japanese sculptor, Miki Hiroshi, defended Kim's painting, stating how its portrayal of domestic joys might comfort soldiers coming home from the front.[50]

If Yi's painting seemed unduly sentimental, it may have very well been a preemptive measure, aimed at deflecting possible criticism in a time when state scrutiny was especially pronounced. Both the 1943 and 1944 editions of the Sŏnjŏn saw authorities removing certain works from view. *Woman in a Red Hat* by Kim Man-hyŏng, for example, was condemned for portraying the hard life of Cheju Island women that might potentially stir political "unrest."[51] Yi's own political position was not entirely clear. Like

many other established Korean artists, including his mentor Kim Eun-ho, he worked on pro-war propaganda paintings, thus suggesting at least some investment in the values of the imperial state (Yi, "1940 nyŏndae c'hoban ch'inil misul," 322–24).[52] He also visited military hospitals in the company of Japanese artists, ostensibly to boost soldier morale.[53] Yet Yi was among the first to celebrate a free Korea after its liberation from Japan in 1945.[54] Framing cultural workers as either resistance fighters or collaborators did not necessarily work for someone whose entire life had been defined by colonial Japanese rule. Listen to Ku Pon-ung's confession, made just after Japan's defeat: "I spent my artistic career in a net of Japanese influence . . . I even had to ask what [Korean] 'independence' meant . . . I did not recognize the word."[55] On a purely practical level, executing war paintings may have been one of the few avenues artists had to escape forced conscription into active combat duty, the fear nearly every able-bodied Korean male in their twenties shared during wartime Korea.[56]

"One of the tasks that falls to art is how to reconcile modern collective life with the arts," wrote the poet Kim Chong-han in 1939. Kim was writing about poetry, but he might as well have been addressing visual art, particularly that identified as modern.[57] "Modern art" became an increasingly generic term used to refer to recent artistic production generally, yet it also came to stand for a set of values markedly different than those ascribed to the term a decade earlier. Foremost among these was the reification of timelessness via the endorsement of concepts like tradition and history in a wartime context in which the preservation of an unbroken lineage was as much at stake as territorial borders and political authority. Concurrent too was the recognition that there may in fact not be any time left, particularly as the defeats outnumbered the victories and the casualties accumulated. As Janet Poole has argued in her study of Korean writers in the late 1930s, an unremitting sense of a disappearing future was prevalent.[58]

Yi may have channeled the past in order to confront the realities of a present too raw and complex to be addressed literally. Tasked with producing war propaganda paintings on behalf of an imperial state that sought to instrumentalize its subjects, he would have been all too familiar with the pressures brought to bear on representation. In such a context, perhaps the only viable option was to trace one's steps, to go back to familiar tropes and treat them not as foregone conclusions, but as hypotheses. Painting in order to establish picturing as an experiment—this may explain why so many of his wartime paintings ended up looking so conspicuously out of place, and perhaps even out of time. Writing in the Korean-language newspaper *Tonga Ilbo*, Kim Chong-han observed how "modern art" could not be exclusively rational in nature: "even if rational functionalism is evident . . . art must accommodate the nonsensical."[59]

Although Kim was involved in the production of pro-war propaganda, his observations were directly at odds with mainstream calls to "do more than work for art's sake" and instead "contribute to the cause of the nation."[60] Against the relentless parade of photographs and paintings highlighting military glory, *Sentiment* alludes to what Kim meant by "nonsensical." As the *Maeil Sinbo* reproduction inadvertently showed, the work looks profoundly out of sync with the proliferation of war propaganda imagery. The morose, subdued atmosphere of what should ordinarily be a joyous, or at least an

emotional, occasion is especially striking. It is as if Yi was suggesting that the artwork could produce its own sense of time, one stubbornly incongruent with the falsely cheerful teleology vainly promoted by the state in a last-ditch attempt to reverse or decelerate what the state and its citizens already knew was the inevitability of defeat.

In *Research* and *Hwaun*, Yi constructed worlds tethered to specific kinds of time. The attention he lavished on the furnishings in *Hwaun* had more than a hint of wistfulness. He was in fact painting the life that had once been promised in exchange for undivided allegiance to the imperial project of development. The world of *Research* revolves around the visibility, rather than the legibility, of things. What the viewer sees is containment, as suggested by the curved edges of the rabbit cages that hem the creatures into the space of the picture. Similarly, the reflection of windows painted on the glass surfaces indicates to viewers their own enclosure within interior space.

Both paintings are large enough to invite looking from multiple vantage points, including from the sides as well as from the front. Jang Woo-sung notes how paintings increased in size after the establishment of the Sŏnjŏn, the result, he claimed, of Korean artists being forced into competition with Japanese artists for audience attention (Jang, "Wŏljŏn Jang U-sŏng," 424). The dimensions of *Research* and *Hwaun* closely mirror those of propaganda war paintings, suggesting some contiguity between the art world and the world outside the spaces of exhibition. Yet the largeness of the works—*Research* in particular—emphasizes how claims of objectivity might function as a tactic of deflection. The laboratory and its attendant connotations of scientific rigor and quantitative analysis call attention to how colonial authorities used science as both rationalization and alibi for its empire-building agenda. That it was hardly innocent or benign is suggested by Yi's singular command of opacity. Not only is the gaze of his protagonist inscrutable, the viewer's gaze ricochets off the opaque light blue-gray surfaces of the laboratory flasks. Absent is any definitive indication of the light: we have no way of knowing if the illumination is natural or from an incandescent bulb.

In *Research*, the presence of the female researcher is emphasized by the unstable position assigned to the viewer. We are too far away from her to presume any real intimacy with the somewhat forbidding young woman before us. As in *Hwaun*, the placement of objects such as the table and the caged rabbits precludes intimacy between audience and subject. There is no opportunity to acquire real personal knowledge of the woman. Particularly enigmatic is the facial expression of the protagonist in *Research*. Her gaze is steadily frontal without being direct. She looks as if she is turning her head slightly to look back at the viewer, yet her pupils seem to rest on an object next to, or perhaps behind, us. Her gaze contrasts with the large number of contemporaneous works depicting women as bodies unable to reciprocate the looks they attract. It could be that her eyes are deliberately unfixed to avoid seeing horrors that, once glimpsed, could not be unseen: by the early 1940s, scientific research had taken a dark turn, used to conduct various chemical experiments in the name of the imperial war effort. Looking had consequences.

Even though the work is divided between foreground and background, the flasks in the latter are just as conspicuous as the caged rabbits in the former. In *Research*,

Yi makes viewers reckon with the shallowness of pictorial space, which in light of the painting's large size seems almost ludicrously theatrical (Kim, "Haebang ihu ŭi tongyang hwadan," 10).[61] It is as if he suggests that the modernity of his heroine depends on the viewer acknowledging how she both seeks to belong to a given place yet also remains squarely outside it. The beady red eyes of the rabbits otherwise destined for an untimely fate at the woman's hand are also the eyes that function like surveillance monitors in embryo. She is being watched and, by extension, she is being fixed in her place. The whiteness of the coat reads as both a reflection of light and as a void. Yet much like the rabbit cages, the coat also contains a body. Her controlled facial expression and the sheathing of her body in the white laboratory coat loops back to the overarching conscription of the body into the imperial war machine.

But she is not there for the taking: imagine trying to lift either of the women portrayed in Yi's diptych. In *Hwaun*, the woman is slotted in between the table and stiff upright chair, pinioned against a grand piano that reads more convincingly as a screen or a wall than an actual freestanding object. Her doppelgänger in *Research* also sits behind a table, but she is more mobile. Her legs point away from the table edges, while her unusually prominent feet imply how she might walk away from her position at any given moment. In *Hwaun*, only the billowing folds of the woman's skirt—a contrast to the tablecloth whose ends hang limply—suggest any intention on her part to change position.

Where does the picture begin and end? Do we start, for instance, with the round cages of rabbits? They are slightly truncated at their bottoms so as to insinuate how we share physical space with the woman. Oddly the woman in *Research* wears slippers, a choice of footwear indicating a marked level of comfort with the space as opposed to the formal dress of her counterpart in *Hwaun*. The slippers allude to the ease with which modern girls supposedly navigated the world outside the home. Crossed legs raise the modest hemline of her otherwise sober blue-gray skirt, showing an unexpected and generous flash of leg that boldly reads as a provocation and as a declaration of allegiance to modern girls everywhere: women of the world, raise your hemlines in solidarity! The exposed ankle is startlingly provocative, especially in the context of the still, mausoleum-like laboratory. Against the cool greys and opaque, diluted blues is a flash of pale orange-pink skin, a jarring contrast that reads like a declaration of sensuality that Yun Hŭi-sun euphemistically described as Yi's "robust" sense of color.[62] Pictorially, it contrasts with the flesh of bijin in nihonga, which is often both pasty and flat. The dark peach of her exposed flesh hints at the body underneath the clothes and perhaps, by extension, the person that the most progressive conceptions of the modern girl or new woman helped audiences to envision.

The delineation of interior absorption in both works made a case for slow, and above all, careful looking, analogous to the reflexive scrutiny that would have posed one of the greatest threats to an imperial regime that demanded total attention from its subjects. That *Research* seemed to portray a new woman with hints of the modern girl establishes the point further: both tropes had long been reduced in the popular media to ready clichés.[63] Its multiple false starts and open ends run counter to the fic-

tion reinforced by popular depictions of the modern girl, namely that a stranger can be known simply on the basis of exterior appearance. The instability of representation opens up to another fault line separating what we see from what we know.

Research and its subsequent pairing with *Hwaun* suggest an epistemic approach to painting, one intended to create space for artworks to exist outside the discursive structures anchored by categories like nihonga and bijinga. *Research* is painting as impediment, provoking doubt rather than certainty. The result was twofold. First, the paintings refused the endgame mentality of 1944 in which the Japanese state had already signaled its own anticipation of defeat by visibly endorsing a culture of destructive self-sacrifice. Second, it reintroduced the importance of critical judgment. According to the critic Park Yong-sook, modern art in Korea was only possible after the formation of a civil society (Park, "Han'guk hyŏndae misul," 11). But the problem of judgment—so openly broached in *Research* and *Hwaun*—raises new possibilities for how visual artworks might help shape civil society outside dominant scripts of domination and subordination. If wartime exigencies threatened the envisioning of rich, internal worlds, artistic production depended even more on producing experiences of the uncertainty. The viability of painting turned on whether it could provoke viewers to reflect further upon their own participation in a world whose fragility made it more subject to change, yet also more open to possibility, than ever before.

Notes

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1. I thank Abi Klopper, Ana Lisica, and Jean Mary Zarate for their assistance in identifying laboratory equipment.

2. Ko Yu-sŏp, "Hyŏndae segyemisulgye ŭi kwihu," *Sindonga* 25 (1933): 40–42.

3. Miriam Silverberg, "After the Grand Tour: The Modern Girl, the New Woman, and the Colonial Maiden," in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, ed. Alys Eve Weinbaum et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 354–61, 357.

4. It is unclear when *nihonga* was introduced to Korea, although Kang Mingi suggests that it predates Japan's official annexation of Korea through a number of channels: Korean officials traveling to Japan and China, Japanese artists who began to visit and settle in Korea in greater numbers after the Russo-Japanese War, and Korean artists traveling to Japan between 1890 and 1910. See Kang Mingi, "Kŭndae chŏnhwangi han'guk hwadane ŭi ilbonhwa yuip kwa han'guk hwagadŭl ŭi ilbon ch'ehŏm," *Misulsahak yŏn'gu* 253 (2007): 215–51.

5. One of the most popular exhibitions in the Korean art world circa 1942 was a group show of ink paintings made by oil painters like Ku Pon-ung. The show took place at the Hwasin Department Store in Seoul.

6. Ellen P. Conant, Steven D. Owyoung, and J. Thomas Rimer, *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968* (Saint Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995), 34.

7. Chuan-ying Yen, "The Demise of Oriental-style Painting in Taiwan," in *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*, ed. Yuko Kikuchi (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 83–108, 87.

8. Kawabata Shoko, one of Yi's teachers and a frequent Sŏnjŏn juror, was pleased to find so many Korean paintings resemble those shown in Tokyo. See Jang Jeng Lan, "Yi Yu-t'ae wa Pu P'o-sŏk ŭi miindo pigyo yŏn'gu," *Tongak misulsahak* 4 (2003): 153–70, 158.

9. Yi Yu-t'ae, "Hyŏnc'ho Yi Yu-t'ae," interview by Kim Ch'ŏl-hyo, *Han'guk misul kirok bojonso charyojip* 6 (2009): 342–77, 350.

10. The first published record of *misul* was in 1911 in connection with the founding of the Sŏhwamisulwŏn (Academy of Painters and Calligraphers) in Seoul. The critic Oh Kwangsu, however, claims that *misul* may have been informally used earlier. See Oh Kwangsu, *Han'guk hyŏndae misulsa* (Seoul: Youlhwadang, 2000), 37.

11. This contrasts sharply to later historical interpretation situating artists like Yi Yu-t'ae and Kim Eun-ho as guilty of "worsening the *nihonga*-ification of the colonial Korean art world" ("Ilbon misul ŭi iip kwajŏng," *Kyegan misul* 25 [1983]: 102–3, 102). The above article was taken from responses given by nine critics and art historians (Kim Yun-su, Moon Myung-dae, Pak Yong-sook, Yi Kyungsung, Yi Ku-yŏl, Ahn Hwi-joon, Chŏng Yang-mo, Yim Chong-guk, Choi Su-nu).

12. Yi T'ae-jun, "Sŏhwa hyŏpjŏnŭl pogo," *Tonga Ilbo*, October 26, 1930.

13. Founded in 1929, the Teikoku Art School was especially popular among Korean artist as its admission policies were somewhat less stringent than those of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. See Kang Mingi, "1930–1940 nyŏndae han'guk tongyanghwaga ŭi ilbon hwap'ung: ilbon hwap'ung ŭi chŏngae wa suyong," *Misulsa nondan* 29 (2009): 223–48, 234.

14. The first to use the term *bijinga* was Oguri Fuyō in a publication circa 1905–6. See Nozomi Naoi, "The Modern Beauty in Taishō Media," in *The Women of Shin Hanga: The Judith and Joseph Barker Collection of Japanese Prints*, ed. Allen Hockley (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2013), 23–42, 38.

15. Alice Y. Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's *Morning Toilette* on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," *Art Bulletin* 90, no. 3 (2008): 431–40.

16. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject is Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute Publications, 2011).

17. Miya Elise Mizuta Lippit, "美人/Bijin/Beauty," *Working Words: New Approaches to Japanese Studies* (April 20, 2012): 15, escholarship.org/uc/item/9491q422#page-1/.

18. Katō Ruiko, "Bijin-ga," trans. Reiko Tomii, in *Nihonga: Transcending the Past*, 108–9.

19. In nineteenth-century Korea, a minority of images depicted women renowned for their intellectual talents rather than their erotic appeal or entertainment skills. Known as *yŏsa*, and painted by literati artists for an exclusive audience, such women were often portrayed reading. For a discussion of these paintings, all of which featured legendary Chinese women of the arts rather than Korean subjects, see Ko Yŏn-hŭi, "19 segi namsŏng munin ŭi miindo kamsang–Chaedŏgŭl kyŏmbihan miinsang ch'ugurŭl chungsimŭro," *Hanguk kŭnhyŏndae misulsahak* 26 (2013): 41–64.

20. For descriptions of works featuring Korean women selected for the Sŏnjŏn, see Hyeshin Kim, "Images of Women in National Art Exhibitions during the Korean Colonial Period," in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 141–53.

21. Yi Kyungsung, "Yi Yu-t'ae ŭi saengt'ae wa yesul," in *Hyŏnch'o Yi Yu-t'ae* (Seoul: Korea Arts and Culture Foundation, 1987), n.p.

22. Unlike many of his colleagues, Yi did not use paid models.

23. Kawasaki Shoko, "Jinbutsu-ga nyūmon," *Atorie* 6, no. 4 (1929): 24.

24. Tayama Katai, "Shōrai no joshi no bunshō ni tsukite," *Bunshō sekai* 1, no. 2 (1906), quoted in Tomi Suzuki, "Gender and Formation of the Modern Literary Field in Japan: Women and the Position of the Novel, 1880s–1930s," in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880–1940*, ed. Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, and Johsua S. Mostow (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 143–77, 168; "Genbun-itchi ni tsukite," *Bunshō sekai* 1, no. 3 (1906), quoted in Suzuki, "Gender and Formation of the Modern Literary Field," 168.

25. Park Yong-sook, "Han'guk hyŏndae misul ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng," *Han'guk ŭi kŭndae misul* 3 (1976): 11.

26. Joan Kee, "Contemporary Art in Early Colonial Korea: The Self Portraits of Ko Hui-dong," *Art History* 36, no. 2 (2013): 392–417.

27. Choi Sunu, "Hyŏnch'o sansu," in *Hyŏnch'o Yi Yu-t'ae hwajŏn* (Seoul: Hyundai Gallery, 1972), n.p, exhibition catalog.

28. Jang Woo-sung, quoted in "Wŏljŏn Jang U-sŏng," *Han'guk misul kirok bojonso charyojip* 6 (2009): 420–77, 424.

29. Kim Youngna, *20th Century Korean Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), 77. Kim cites Yi, but does not give any bibliographic information or further support for this claim.

30. Kim Sam-sun, the first Korean female scientist to direct her own laboratory, had just received her doctorate from Hokkaido in 1943.

31. Pak Yŏng-hŭi, "Yusanja sahoe ŭi sowi 'kŭndaenyŏ' 'kŭndanam' ŭi t' ŭkjing–modŏn kkŏl, modŏn ppoi nonjaeng," *Pyŏlgŏngon* 2, no. 10 (1927): 114–16, 116.

32. Hong Sŏn-py'yo, *Han'guk ŭi chŏnt'ong hoehwa* (Seoul: Ewha Womens University Press, 2009), 149.

33. Jang Woosung allegedly started using *kisaeng* as models in 1937 in preparation for the sixteenth Sŏnjŏn taking place that year. The most famous of these was Min San-hong, the model for his celebrated work *Blue Uniform*, depicting Min in the loose sleeveless blue overcoat (*chŏnbok*) and broad brimmed hat (*pŏnggŏji*) traditionally worn by male military officers in Chosŏn Korea. Min seems to have regarded her sitting as a form of collaboration with Jang; she was reportedly even happier than him when she heard that *Blue Uniform* won an award at the twentieth Sŏnjŏn in 1941. See Yi Kyu-il, "Wŏljŏn Chang U-sŏng, hwabaek ŭi 'p'urŭn chŏnbok,'" *Chungang ilbo*, March 29, 1986.

34. Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 320.

35. Son recounts that many of the guests with left-wing sympathies soon repatriated to North Korea not long after the incident (Son Ŭng-sŏng, "Myŏngsa kyoyudo," *Chugan simin* 574 [1977]: 10).

36. Kim Kwang-sŏp, "Yŏsŏng kwa sach'i," *Yŏsŏng* 5, no. 9 (1940): 30–32, 32.

37. O Yŏng-sik, "Yŏsŏng chapji yŏinginbon haeje," in *Adan mungo migongae charyo ch'ongsŏ* (Seoul: Somyŏng, 2014), 24.

38. According to Theodore Yoo, 94,000 Koreans were employed in mining by 1941 (*The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008], 204).

39. Elyssa Faison, "Gender and Korean Labour in Wartime Japan," in *Gender and Labour in Korea and Japan: Sexing Class*, ed. Ruth Barraclough and Elyssa Faison (London: Routledge, 2009), 27–43, 40.

40. For examples, see Kim Yisoon, "Female Images in 1930s Korea: Virtuous Women and Good Mothers," in *Visualizing Beauty and Ideology in Modern East Asia*, ed. Aida Yuen Wong (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2012), 91–100, 96.

41. Kim Chin-song, *Hyŏndaesŏng ŭi hyŏngsŏng–Sŏul e ttansŭhorŭl hŏhara* (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏngu, 1999), 155–59.

42. The colonial government would ban permanent waves in 1943.

43. Quoted in Michael Kim, "The Aesthetics of Total Mobilisation in the Visual Culture of Late Colonial Korea," *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 8, no. 3–4 (2007): 483–502, 494.

44. Those not wearing the trousers were barred from entering public buildings or riding public transportation. See Hyung-Gu Lynn, "Fashioning Modernity: Changing Meanings of Clothing in Colonial Korea," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 11, no. 3 (2004): 75–93, 82.

45. Yun Hŭi-sun, quoted in "19 hoe sŏnjŏn kaep'yŏng," *Maeil sinbo*, June 12, 1940.

46. Mo Yun-suk, "Yŏryu chakka chwadamhoe," *Samch'ŏlli* 8, no. 86 (1935): 214–35. In 1933, Mo herself dispensed with her own housewifely duties after divorcing her husband, the philosopher An Ho-sang.

47. For a discussion of female artists who produced bijinga at this time, see Michiyo Morioka, "Changing Images of Women: Taishō-Period Paintings by Uemura Shoen (1875–1949), Ito Shota (1877–1968) and Kajiwara Hisako (1896–1988)," (Ph.D diss., University of Washington, 1990).

48. An anonymous writer calling himself "Pi Ga-so" in an explicit reference to Picasso scathingly wrote how many of the works in the 1944 Sŏnjŏn looked as if they were merely trying to curry favor with the jurors (Pi Ga-so, "Sŏnjŏn," *Chogwang* 10, no. 7 [1944]: 66).

49. For examples produced by some of colonial Korea's best-known artists, including Chŏng Hyŏn-ung and Kim In-sŭng, see Yi T'ae-ho, "1940 nyŏndae c'hoban ch'inil misul ŭi kungukjuŭi kyŏnghyangsŏng," in *Kŭndae han'guk misul nonch'ong*, ed. Pak Hyŏn-ki and Hong Hyŏn-suk (Seoul: Hakkojae, 1992), 320–60.

50. These remarks and claims are unsubstantiated. See Yi Kyu-il, *Twijibŏ pon han'guk misul* (Seoul: Sigongsa, 1993), 182.

51. Choi Youl, "1940 nyŏndae ŭi misul: yuhwa punyarŭl chungsimŭro," in *Kŭndaerŭl ponŭn nun* (Seoul: Life and Dream, 1997), 229.

52. Yi T'ae-ho identified fifty artists as having collaborated with the Japanese regime, including some of Korea's best-known artists like Kim Eun-ho, Ku Pon-ung, Lee Ungno, and Pak Rae-hyŏn. Yi divided collaborators into three categories: those who participated in artist groups openly supportive of the colonial regime, such as the Tanganghoe (to which Son Ŭng-sŏng belonged); those who painted works having explicit pro-war themes; and, finally those who sold their works and donated the proceeds to benefit the Japanese imperial war machine, particularly after 1939. Although Yi Yu-t'ae and Son Ŭng-sŏng participated in producing documentary paintings for the war effort, neither was included in Yi's list of collaborators.

53. Choi Youl, *Han'guk hyŏndae misul ŭi yŏksa 1800–1945* (Seoul: Youlhwadang, 2006), 523.

54. Immediately after the liberation of Korea, Yi joined the Tangumisulwŏn, a group of artists founded by the painter Kim Yŏng-gi in 1945 to purge Japanese, and specifically nihonga, influence from Korean ink painting. The name was an abbreviation of Tangun's Hill (*Tangun ŭi ŏndŏk*), named after Tangun, the apocryphal founder of the Korean race. Group membership was partly based on ideological affiliation. The renowned ink painter Kim Ki-ch'ang, for example, was barred from joining due to suspicion of pro-Japanese activity. See Kim Yŏng-gi, "Haebang ihu ŭi tongyang hwadan," *Han'guk ŭi kŭndaemisul* 4 (1977): 9–12, 10. The group's inaugural show in 1946 was intended to commemorate the March 1 Independence Movement of 1919, the first major public demonstration against Japanese colonial rule. See "Tangumisulwŏn 3.1. kinyŏmjŏn," *Chayu sinmun*, February 8, 1946.

55. Ku Pon-ung, "Haebang kwa uri ŭi misul kŏnsŏl," *Han'guk ŭi kŭndae misul* 1 (1975): 9. This essay, originally written in 1946, was only later published in the above journal.

56. The fear of forced conscription is vividly described by Yi Yu-t'ae's contemporary, the artist Yi Chong-mu, in "Damrim Yi Chong-mu," *Han'guk misul kirok bojonso charyojip* 6 (2009): 391.

57. Kim Chong-han, "Siron siron siron–hyŏndaesi wa monyument'allijŭm," *Tonga Ilbo*, November 14, 1939.

58. See Janet Poole, *When the Future Disappears: The Modernist Imagination in Late Colonial Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

59. Kim Chong-han, "Yesule isŏsŏ ŭi pihamnisŏng (sang)," *Tonga Ilbo*, February 22, 1940.

60. Sim Hyŏng-gu, "Siguk kwa misul," *Sinsidae* 1, no. 10 (1941): 130–32, 131.

61. Size was an important element in Yi's later works. For the inaugural exhibition of the Tangumisulwŏn, he submitted a large painting of Sohn Byung-hee, a prominent leader of the March 1 Independence Movement. Although no image of the work survives, the proportions of the work—which were apparently so large as to result in the work's rejection—invoke speculation as to whether Yi intended his painting to replace or compete with war paintings commissioned by the Japanese colonial government. Incidentally, Yi refused to attend the opening of the first Tangumisulwŏn show, allegedly to protest the removal of his work.

62. Yun Hŭi-sun, "Sŏnjŏnp'yŏng," *Maeil sinbo*, June 23, 1944.

63. Jiyoung Suh, "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity in Colonial Korea," *Korean Studies* 37 (2013): 11–43.