

Jump into the Unknown

Organization
Nine Dragon Heads

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Gordana Andjelic Galic
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Jusuf Hadžifejzović
Kazunori Kitazawa
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Phil Dadson
Seo Bak Ei
Sim Jea Bun
Song Dae Seop
Suh Yoon Hee
Susanne Muller
Yoo Joung Hye
Shin Yoo La

Aleksandra Janik & Magdalena Hlawacz
Anna-Lea Kopperi & Heini Nieminen
Harold de Bree & Mike Watson
Yoko Kajjo & Jason Hawkes

Quartair Group (Geeske Harting, Jessy Theo Rahman, Paul Donker Duyvis, Pietertje van Splunter, Thom Vink)

Nine Dragon Heads, initiated in South Korea in response to the destruction of an important historical site in 1995, evolved into a traveling interdisciplinary platform where artists from all five continents work in locations with transitional characteristics that may be environmentally, economically, or politically troubled, on important cultural, historical, and geopolitical routes.

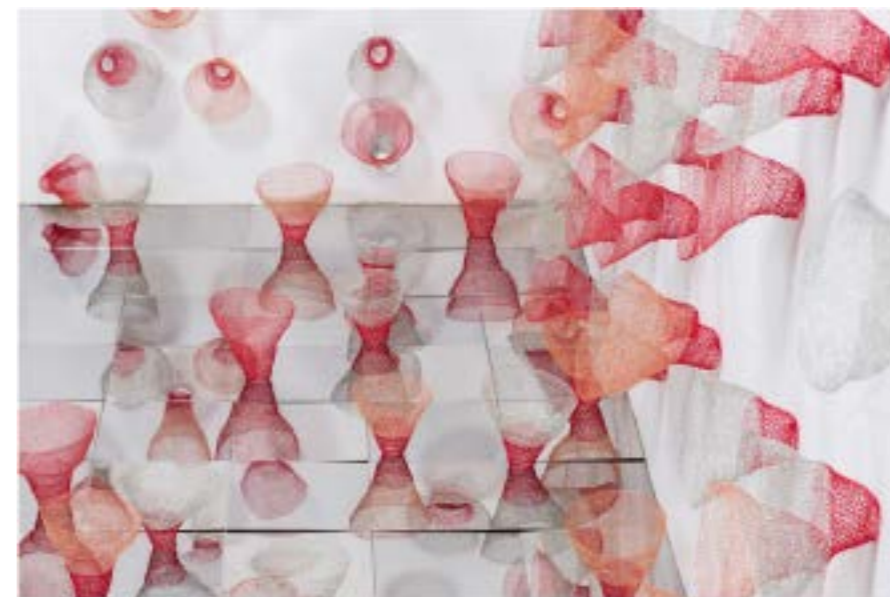
At various times Nine Dragon Heads has worked on locations on the South Korean peninsula and its islands, including the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and Joint Security Area (JSA) between the North and South of Korea. Other areas recently engaged include Bosnia/Herzegovina, Georgia, and the central Asian locations of Uzbekistan, Turkey, China, Tibet, and Mongolia. Past projects have also taken place in Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand. *Jump into the Unknown* in Venice reiterates a recurring structural specificity of Nine Dragon Heads—a form of open-air practice that engages three islands in the Venetian lagoon (Murano, Lido, Pellestrina), accompanied by exhibition of working traces, artifacts, and performances in the Palazzo Loredan.

Conceptually, the exhibition *Jump into the Unknown* is elaborated in on-going research-based laboratory mode, where individual works bear poststudio, experimental, or situational and performative character. Participating artists don't aim to place full stops or answer all the questions but look for the creation of a space where experimental open-air and public art practice results in an ethical artistic message.

In the context of the foundational underlying premise of engaging with *Jump into the Unknown* as a destination/nondestination of the Nine Dragon Heads project in Venice, the deed of a famous Korean Buddhist monk, Jajang (founder of the Tongdosa Temple in 646 CE) is a significant example. In an act of desocialization, Jajang removed the normally ubiquitous statue of Buddha as an object of worship from the Temple and replaced it with a panoramic window open onto the backdrop of the surrounding mountainside. The “mad monk,” as legend names him, dropped the sacral visual formula in his search for a new methodology for engaging with the unknown in the form of the ineffable. This example sits in a specific cultural spiritual context but may also be understood as a *modus vivendi* within an artistic methodology, a way of approaching understanding through a flexible preexisting frame that also mindfully considers the specifics of a constantly changing situation.

Within Nine Dragon Heads art was never conceived only as an embodiment of professional skills, but as a reflection on the manifested environment through a certain worldview. Thus the applying of experimental artistic practice to human activity, including the destructive interventions on nature, is a quite legitimate journey into the unknown.

Magda Guruli



10. Aleksandra Janik, Magdalena Hlawacz, *Place. The Quest for the Quest*, 2014. Photograph, lightbox, mixed media, 100 x 130 cm. Photo Aleksandra Janik, Magdalena Hlawacz. Courtesy the Artists

1. Enrique Muñoz García, *La Tombola*, 2014. Digital photograph, Canon EOS 5, Mark III, 24 mm objective, 30 x 20 cm. Photo Enrique Muñoz García. Courtesy the Artist

5. Iliko Zautashvili, *Public Opinion*, 2015. Installation, clothing iron with metal inscription, ironing board, digital sublimation print on satin, 119 x 118 x 250 cm. Photo Iliko Zautashvili. Courtesy the Artist

3. Yoo Joung Hye, *The Garden of Coexistence*, 2013–2015. Installation, crochet, copper wire, 170 x 15 cm, 118 pieces. Photo Yongin Myoung. Courtesy the Artist