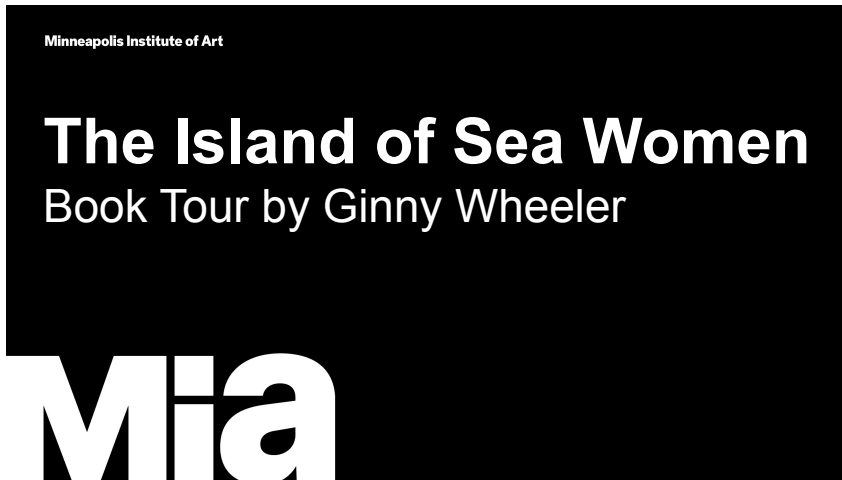


Island of Sea Women Tour September 2020

By Ginny Wheeler



Theme: Building relationships through storytelling. Storytelling becomes a powerful healer in this story. When Young-sook's great-granddaughter Clara persists on establishing a relationship with her, it is seeing the story of her life with Mi-ja in the rubbings, reading her letters to hear Mi-ja's story, listening to the story of grief at the memorial that finally allows Young-sook to heal her frozen heart. In turn, she will tell her own story to her estranged family and perhaps they will be able to forgive her. The power to heal is in the story.

Objects: All are on display in Sept. 2020

1. Delita Martin, *The Soaring Hour (Self Portrait)*, 2018, American, Relief printing, charcoal, acrylic, colored pencil, decorative paper, and hand-stitching on paper, 2019.35.1 Gallery 374
2. Sande mask, second quarter of 20th Century, Mende, Wood, raffia, 72.69.1 Gallery 254
3. Mami Wata figure, 1950s, Igbo, Wood and pigment, 2011.2 Gallery 250
4. Hagiwara Hideo, *Dawn over Lake Kawaguchi*, 1981-1986, Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 2019.138.5 Gallery 227
5. Ethel Stein, *Spring, Rain, Wind, Sun*, 2011, Cotton fibers, Japanese paper, 2015.28 Gallery 275
6. Maebyeong with Chrysanthemums, 11th-12th century, Korean, 2015.79.482a,b Gallery 206
7. Covered Box with Chrysanthemums, 13th century, Korean, 2015.79.489a,b Gallery 206
8. Tomb Guardian Figures, 16th-18th century, Korean, Granite, 2015.79.533.1 Gallery 206

Slide 2:

Zoom controls

Please mute your audio at the start. To unmute, click on the microphone icon or simply press down and hold the spacebar to temporarily unmute.

If you wish to share via the Chat feature, just click on the Chat icon to open and type your comment or question.

To minimize the speaker window when the presentation begins, click on the line or middle square.

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Slide 3:

Building Relationships

At the heart of the story is the friendship and estrangement between Mi-ja and Young-sook, a story that begins in 1938 on the Korean island of Jeju.

Storytelling becomes the key to bridging these relationships. Two stories unfold: Mi-ja's and Young-sook's.

The book opens in 2008 and then flashes back to 1938 when Mi-ja's and Young-sook's lives become entangled forever.

The power to understand and to forgive lies in storytelling.

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3

And so we will begin with a story — a creation story. The origin story of Jeju Island.

During a healing ceremony for Yuri, the girl who was strangled by an octopus, Shaman Kim tells the haenyeo the creation story. Jeju is dominated by Mount Halla or as she is known: Grandmother Seolmundae. (SOLE mon day)

Here's the story:

Slide 4:

Building Relationships: A Creation Story



“As a goddess, [Grandmother Seolmundae] flew over the seas, looking for a new home. She carried dirt in the folds of her skirt. She found this spot where the Yellow Sea meets the East China Sea and began to build herself a home. Finding it too flat, she used more of the dirt in her gown, building the mountain until it was high enough to reach the Milky Way. ...

wordpress.com

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4

Slide 5:

“Soon her skirt became worn and tiny holes formed in the cloth. Soil leaked from it, building small hills, which is why we have so many oreum. In each one of these volcanic cones, another female deity lives. They are our sisters in spirit, and you can always go to them for help.”

“Grandmother Seolmundae watches over us all,” we chanted.” p. 29



Wikipedia.org

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5

Point out the oreum. Each of these hills is a volcanic cone called an oreum and each is a goddess, like the goddess of love.

The haenyeo were able to keep the ancient religion of Shamanism alive even after it had been outlawed. Their devotion served to strengthen the bonds among the women.

Transition: We will now look at a contemporary black female artist who explores the art of storytelling and at the same time her own dual existence between the physical and spiritual worlds. Her name is Delita Martin. You can find this work in the Mapping Black Identities exhibition on third floor.

Slide 6:



Delita Martin, *The Soaring Hour (Self Portrait)*, 2018, American, Relief printing, charcoal, acrylic, colored pencil, decorative paper, and hand-stitching on paper, 2019.35.1

Martin: "The duality of women in this...work projects the spirit and its connection to the physical world, which reinforces the bond among women."


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6

Take a moment to reflect on this quote as it pertains to her self-portrait. What comes to mind?

Follow-up questions:
How does Martin connect the physical world with the spirit world in this piece?
How does she connect the figures? How does the direct gaze make you feel?

Slide 7:



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GalerieMyrtis.net

7

Slide 8:



Sande mask, second quarter of 20th Century, Mende, Wood, raffia, 72.69.1

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8

NOTES:

Delita Martin, *The Soaring Hour (Self Portrait)*, 2018

- Relief printing, charcoal, acrylic, colored pencil, decorative paper, and hand-stitching on paper
- **Mende Mask:** Inspired by the Sande society of West Africa's Mende people, an exclusive community of women that prepares Mende girls for their transition into womanhood. (Sierra Leone today)
- **African American women** are the icons of strength in their communities.
- **Storytelling:** Inspiration in oral traditions and family photographs, explores the art of storytelling. .
- **Her gaze:** Reflective - her hidden self. The direct gaze falls on us intentionally. It communicates with us much like the Mende mask would communicate with the young Sande girls.
- **Spirit Figure to the left.** Her niece Erin is the spirit figure and Delita the actual figure. The mask is the transition. Martin was the "cool aunt" —she hung out with her niece and taught her about being a woman.
- **Spirit realm:** The organic shapes represent the undefined, organic spirit realm where the women are birthed into. **"This explores womanhood through the spiritual realm of existence, inspired by the Mende belief "Wherever two or three women are gathered together, there is the spirit and authority of Sande."**
- **Quilting:** Her grandmother was a quilter. Tacking was the only stitch she taught her. Grandma would tell stories to Delita while they quilted together. Delita began associating people, places, and objects from her stories and developed the symbolism of her visual language. Grandmother was "sewing together her family history." Delita wanted to be able to hold together the stories likewise with the **hoop stitch** (which is the stitch used in her work).
- **The moon** became the symbol of grandmother and female.
- **Layering** of printing, quilting, drawing and painting reflects the real and the fantastic.
- **Hoop earrings:** The message is "part of the group." All her female subjects have pierced ears. Wearing hoops ever since she was 6 months old — a rite of passage.
- **Blue:** Calming, soothing. Represents that spiritual (in between space) for her. She's drawn to blue. Looking at family photos when her dad died, she noticed everyone wore blue. His funeral was totally blue. Became conscious of it in her work.
- **Quote: When she's in the sea, she's in the womb of the world.** p. 79
- **NOTE: Shamanism:** The Japanese had outlawed. Religion of Korea is **Shamanism**, original; buddhism from India; **Confucianism** from China
- **Quote: [Shaman Kim] was our conduit between the human world and the spirit world.** p. 29



Sande (SAHN day) Mask worn by the Mende people

In Sierra Leone, the African women are united in a secret society: Sande

- Worn by a woman dancer during a girl's initiation ritual.
- Mask represents the ideal of womanhood and feminine beauty among the Mende women. Here are two of note:
 - **Burnished surface glimmers:** alludes to water where the Sande spirits live. The Sande often oil their own skin when dancing in front of the community and prospective husbands.
 - **Black:** symbol of femininity
 - **Bird:** Just like a hen watches over her chicks, the Sande leader watches over her initiates
- The bird on the crown is a hen and refers to maternity and the responsibility of motherhood.
- The chicken is the supreme bird: busy, domestic, sleeps at home, and entertaining.
- Sande believe that chickens can see into peoples' hearts - meaning **they can see the truth.**

The Dance Ceremony: The dancer is completely covered by the mask and raffia dress and stands perfectly still and silent as the spirit enters the mask. She speaks only through her movements and gestures.

Slide 9

Carol Poulson: Friends Book Discussion
Leader presents Lisa See



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Slide 10

Lisa See goes to Jeju Island.



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Slide 11

Themes: A Novel about Forgiveness

We will break from the presentation at this point to discuss the book so that we can see each other. I encourage you to click on the grid view. Unmute yourself when you wish to make a contribution. You may also type a response in the chat.

1. What other themes come to mind?
2. Lisa See vividly describes emotion-packed moments in the book. Which moment stands out for you?

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Slide 12:

Building Relationships: Tall Tales from the Sea

"I listen for the **sumbitori** of all women in our collective. Together our sumbitori create a song of the air and wind on Jeju. Our sumbitori is the innermost sound of the world. It connects us to the future and the past. Our sumbitori allows us first to serve our parents and then our children." p. 12

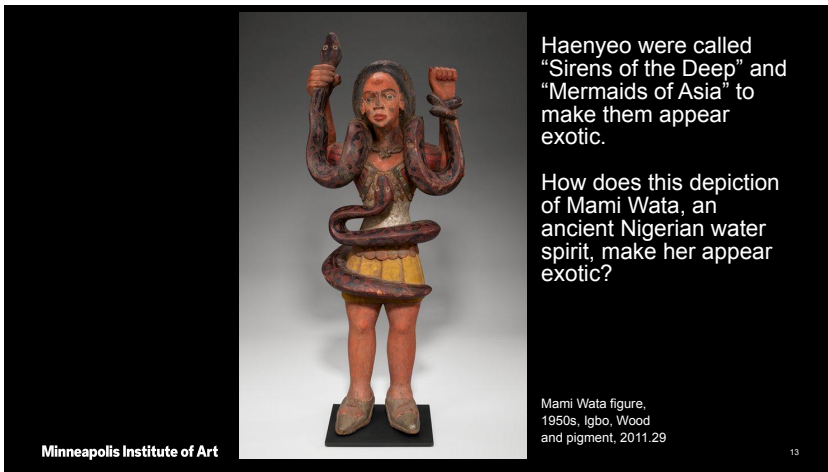
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Mermaid tales have been traced to early sightings of the haenyeo. Sailors, who first caught site of the scantily-clad haenyeo, saw them as mermaids who could breath underwater, survive in frigid temperatures, and create other-worldly songs when they surfaced. Of course, they weren't the only ones who saw them as super-human; even Dr. Park came to study them in 2008. Here is how Young-sook described the sumbitori:

You may recall that on American soldiers' postcards, haenyeo were depicted as exotic mermaids in provocative poses. And you may also recall that after Mi-ja's first encounter with her future husband, she knew only too well how men viewed the haenyeo.

Transition: Here, at Mia, we have our very own water spirit...and she, too, has been made to look exotic - or at least exotic by 1950's standards.

Slide 13



Haenyeo were called “Sirens of the Deep” and “Mermaids of Asia” to make them appear more exotic.

How does this depiction of Mami Wata, an ancient Nigerian water spirit, make her appear exotic?

Transition: Even today the haenyeo on Jeju are curiosities for tourists. Next, we will travel to Japan to explore Sacred Stories.

NOTES:

Mami Wata Figure, 1950s, Igbo

- Nigeria
- Her name means Mother of Water
- Venerated in Africa and African diaspora in Americas
- She has great spiritual power and associated with wealth, love, and good fortune.
- **Snake is a water spirit and symbolizes the divinity**
- Often a mermaid who kidnaps travelers swimming or boating but also depicted as a woman who wanders the markets
- Once a traveler returns, he or she is more attractive, wealthier, and more easy going.
- Dual natures of good and evil reflect the fact that water is an important means of providing communication, food, drink, trade, and transportation, but it can drown people, flood fields or villages, and provide passage to intruders.
- **Sea as metaphor for WOMB or motherhood**

Slide 14

“Wherever you are on Jeju, you can see Grandmother Seolmundae.” p. 40 Let’s try to imagine this volcano.

Bridging Relationships: Sacred Stories

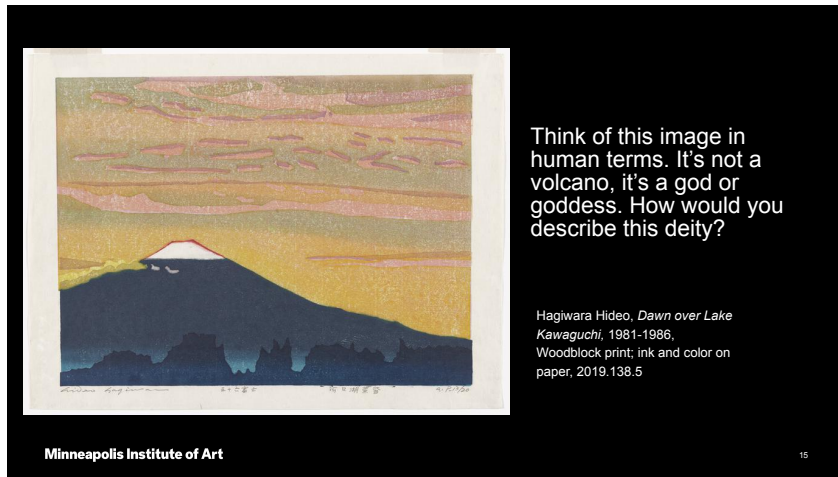
“‘We sleep on [Grandmother Seolmundae] every night,’ we recited. ‘We wake on her every morning.’

‘When you go into the sea, you dive among the underwater ripples of her skirt. She is the great volcano at the center of our island. Some people call it Mount Halla,...to us, she *is* our island. Anywhere we go, we can call to her and weep out our woes, and she will listen.’ p. 31

This is such a wonderful way to think of a grandmother: she’s always there, a protector, the provider, the comforter. From the very earliest of times, people created sacred stories to explain natural phenomena like volcanoes.

So let’s visit Japan where a Hanga artist Hagiwara Hideo (HADJ ee WAH rah Hih DAY oh) created woodcuts in the 1980s of a different volcano: Mt. Fuji. They are hung outside of the Pillsbury hall. This is one.

Slide 15



Think of this image in human terms—It's not a volcano, it's a god or goddess. How would you describe this deity?

Activity: Go to the Japanese galleries just outside the Pillsbury Auditorium to see all of the Hideo woodcuts of Mt. Fuji. Choose the one that you think best represents Grandmother Seolmundae.

Transition: In 2008, Young-sook recalls the changes to her island.

NOTES:

Description of Mount Halla: “Mother Seolmundae went aflame not with another village being burned but with the fiery colors of the season. This was a reminder to us that whatever was happening between men would pass, and nature would endure with her cycles and beauty.” p. 242

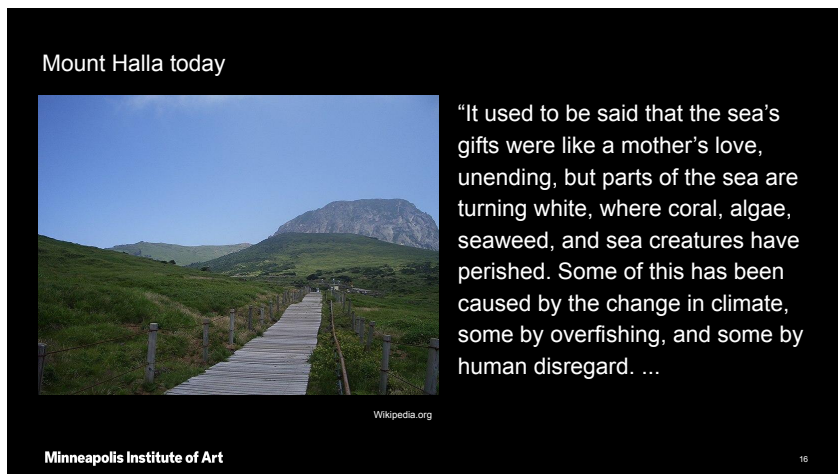
Conservation:

- “It is our duty to be keepers and managers of the sea. If we protect our wet fields, they will continue to provide for us.” p. 17
- **“We enter the netherworld to earn our living and return to this one to save our children.”**
- Haenyeo are served by the abundance of wind, rocks, and women.
- The three-step farming system (pigs’ poop for fertilizer/eat pigs/humans poop and it is eaten by the pigs)

Hagiwara Hideo: a post-WWII Sosaku Hanga artist

- Sosaku-hanga is an art movement where the artist is the sole creator: designer, carver, and printer.
- Inspired by Katsushika Hokusai’s iconic 36-views of Mt Fuji created in the 1800s, Hagiwara wanted to create a more modern view of the mountain. It was easier in the 1900s to have access to the mountain so he could find new view points.
- Mt. Fuji defies all challenges. That is why people approach it with cameras and drawing pens. Whether it looks noble or vulgar depends on our mind’s eye.

Slide 16




This description of the sea, a metaphor for motherhood, could very well be a description of what has happened to Young-sook.

Slide 17:

The top of Mount Halla today

...Therefore, the haenyeo will dive for a harvest of styrofoam, cigarette filters, candy wrappers, and bits of plastic. The man from the cooperative ends his orders with 'Young-sook and the Kang sisters will gather litter on the shore today.'" p. 174



Wikipedia.org

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The haenyeo were early conservationists careful to make sure their harvest on land and in the sea would be there for future generations.

Transition: Another story is the one that bound Mi-ja and Young-sook together forever. Just as Clara said to great-grandmother: "Deep roots remain tangled underground," ... "[Mi-ja] says that about the two of you, and I guess she's right." p. 322

Slide 18:

This is the baby divers first day diving:

Building Relationships: The Rubbings

"[Mi-ja] ripped a page from the book and held it over the written character name for the boat. Even tied up, it bobbed in the waves, making it nearly impossible for Mi-ja to keep the paper steady and for me to rub it with charcoal. Once I was done, we took a moment to examine the result: a shadowy image of a character we couldn't read but knew meant 'Sunrise.' We'd been commemorating our favorite moments and places this way for years. It wasn't our best rubbing, but with it we'd remember today forever." p. 21

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So here we have another story, but this one is told through images on handmade Japanese paper. This isn't much different than paging through a photo album of moments in our lives.

Let's meet an artist who, like the Mi-ja and Youngsook, uses homemade Japanese paper in a unique way.

Slide 19:

Let's meet the creator of Lamb Chops



NewYorkTimes.com

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Here is Lamb Chops with the entertainer Shari Lewis. This is what she is most famous for.

Slide 20:



Ethel Stein in her New York studio. She died in 2018 at 100.

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NewYorkTimes.com

20

Here she is.

Ethel Stein is a weaver who creates complex, geometric designs. In this picture we see her working at a loom where she weaves two weavings into one. The weaving in the back becomes a shadow of what we see in the front weaving. In the one in our gallery, she has also incorporated homemade Japanese paper between the two weavings. She dies her own cotton thread.

Slide 21



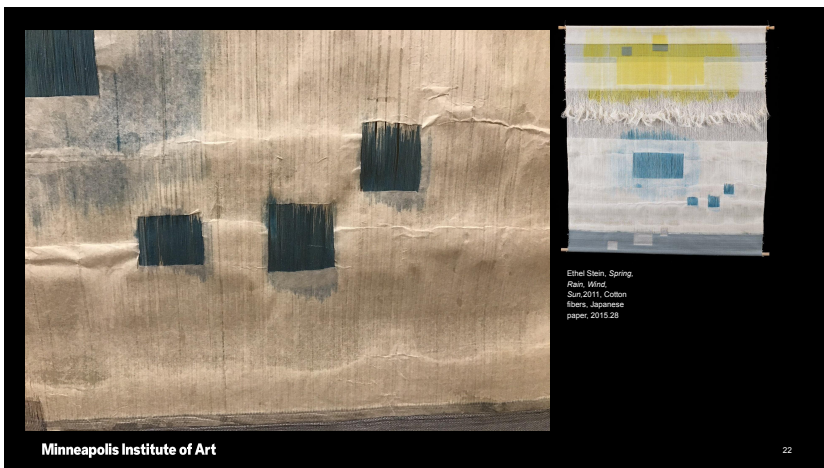
How does Ethel Stein capture the idea of each of the elements in her title: *Spring, Rain, Wind, Sun?*

Ethel Stein, *Spring, Rain, Wind, Sun*, 2011, Cotton fibers, Japanese paper, 2015, 28

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21

Slide 22



Ethel Stein, *Spring, Rain, Wind, Sun*, 2011, Cotton fibers, Japanese paper, 2015, 28

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22

•You can see the wrinkles of the paper.

Transition: Another story in the book that took 50 years to tell, is the story of the 4.3 Incident. A story of grief. Telling stories at funerals, in grief sessions, on Caring Bridge helps people who have suffered a loss to heal. But on Jeju Island, the Koreans were forbidden to talk about the 4.3 Incident or be arrested and killed.

NOTES:



Ethel Stein
Spring, Rain, Wind, Sun

- Her designs were based on geometry and shading. The complexity of weaving against the simplicity of design is very expressive as seen in this piece.
- Uses complex mathematical calculations to achieve her patterns.
- **Hand-dyes** her thread
- Notice: You can see the weaving in the back as shadows.
- Resurrected historical weaving techniques and merged them with the 20th Century Bauhaus school designs.
- Known mostly for her sock puppet, Lamb Chop with entertainer Shari Lewis
- **Deep roots remain tangled underground. p. 322** Relationships like that of Mi-ja and Young-sook may not be visible to others; but their relationship endures inside their hearts. We saw this with Young-sook's daily care of Mi-ja's home and Mi-ja's letters to Young-sook. Their relationship endured even after the estrangement. It was the rubbings that brought this home to Young-sook.
- **Quote:** Jeju is her home, an island known for **Three Abundances**: wind, stones, and women. Today the most capricious of these—the wind—is but a gentle breeze. Not a single cloud smudges the sky. p. 3
- **Quote:**... her hands, though gnarled from work and deeply creased from years of exposure to the sun, are agile. The sound of the sea . . . The caress of warm air . . . The knowledge that she is protected by the **thousands of goddesses** who live on this island . . . Even Gu-sun's colorful epithets can't sour her mood. p. 5

Slide 23:

This is Young-sook recalling the moment she couldn't forgive:

Bridging Relationships: A Story of Grief

Breath is life-giving, but on the day of the 4.3 Incident, Young-sook held her breath:

"I stopped breathing, holding in air longer than could be possible, as if I were in the deepest part of the sea. When I couldn't hold it any longer, I sucked in not the quick death of seawater but instead unforgiving, unrelenting, life-giving air.

"And then the shooting began." p. 231

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23

Breath is a symbol of life in this story. But on the day of the 4.3 Incident when Young-sook watched in horror as the soldiers killed her husband, son, and Yuri, she held her breath. She chose a death to her friendship with Mi-ja, whom she blamed for their deaths.

This ban lasted for 50 years. Now it is 60 years later and Young-sook goes to the memorial service and has a white chrysanthemum pinned onto her lapel in honor of the dead.

Today the white chrysanthemum is given at memorials and funerals. This was an "aha" moment for me. When I walked through the Korean gallery at Mia, I was struck by all the chrysanthemums on the stoneware and wondered why a chrysanthemum. Now I know!

Slide 24:

As I tell you how each is made....

Look at the the way the chrysanthemum is depicted. Why do you think the Koreans may have chosen it to honor the dead?



Maebyeong with Chrysanthemums, 11th-12th century, Korean, 2015.79.482a,b

Covered Box with Chrysanthemums, 13th century, Korean, 2015.79.489a,b

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24

Activity: When you go to find your Grandmother Seolmondæ among the Mt. Fuji woodcuts, visit Korea and see how many stoneware objects you can find with a chrysanthemum depicted.
The History of Chrysanthemums

Transition: At the end of the book, Young-sook chooses to tell her own story. She chooses to heal the family. She chooses life.

NOTES:

The *Maebyeong* (mah BY ee ong) with *Chrysanthemums*:

- Maebyeong, a Korean transliteration of the Chinese term meiping (plum bottle), refers to a shape like this vessel's, with rounded shoulders and curved contours as well as a distinctive lip.
- Painterly style
- Scrolling designs were not adopted from Norwegian Rosemaling! They were adobe by imported Chinese ceramics. The designs can be traced as far away as Egypt and Greece.
- Goryeo celadons with scrolling patterns in iron oxide like this one were prized.
- NOTE: the seed pod on the pot

The *Covered Box with Chrysanthemums*

- a black and white inlaid design under a celadon glaze.
- A pattern is engraved on celadon with a knife and covered with purple and white soil. When the soil dries, the overflowing mud is wiped off, remaining only in the carved areas; thus, a white or purple pattern will appear. When it is baked after painted with glaze, the white soil appears as white and the purple as black, and this pattern is seen through the glaze.

HISTORY OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

- First cultivated in China. Pottery dating back to the 15th century BC depicts the flower as we know it today.
- In the 8th C Japan's emperor adopted a single chrysanthemum as his crest and official seal.
- National Chrysanthemum Day, celebrated in Japan since 910 AD, is one of the five sacred festivals of Japan.
- 17th century the flower was introduced to the Western world where its symbolism took a more foreboding turn. Chrysanthemums were often placed on gravestones and became associated with death.

Slide 26:

Bridging Relationships: Choosing Life

“For a tree that has many branches, even a small breeze will shake some loose.” p. 282

For Young-sook the tree is a mother, the branches the children.

She explains the aphorism this way:

•“The meaning had always been clear to me. With children, there will be many conflicts, griefs, and problems. It was my job as Min-lee’s mother to prevent any of those things from happening.” p. 282

25

After the 4.3 Incident, however, she explains the aphorism like this:

- “For me, the pride of my life, my youngest daughter, was the branch who’d broken off in a way I never expected. By joining Mi-ja’s family, she had shattered my heart.” p. 347

Transition: The island of Jeju has a protector against the winds that storm across Jeju. Let’s meet him.

Slide 25: Dol Hareubang: (DOHL haRah bong)

Dol Hareubang, sculpted from the island’s volcanic rock, is a grandfather figure, a protector. He is seen here protecting Jeju Island.



mysalaam.com

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26

These shamanistic statues are believed to be offering protection and warding off demons. These grandfather figures have come to symbolize Jeju Island. There is even a park commemorating them. They are all over the place. They guardian figures at the gates and entrances to buildings, gardens and homes not much different than Mia’s two lions at the 24th Street entrance. You can also find them on the shores as if they are shielding the island from the wind. Small ones are also sold to tourists.

Transition: New on display from the Mary Griggs Burke collection are two Tomb Guardian Figures from the 16th-18th Century Korea. They are show stoppers! I first saw them on display when Mia re-opened.

Slide 28:

These protectors are tomb guardians, made of granite, standing 4 1/2 feet tall. What do you think?

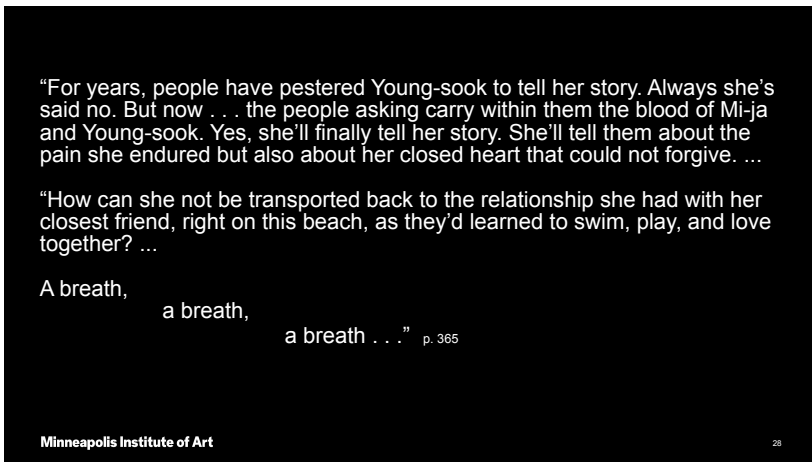


Young-sook sought solace by turning her back on Mi-ja and then her own daughter. But instead, she was as restless as the spirit of Do-saeng's husband who died at Hiroshima and was never buried properly. The memorial ceremony for the victims of the 4.3 Incident nudged Young-sook to listen to Mi-ja's story. **"To understand everything is to forgive."**
p. 314

Transiton: In the end, Young-sook realizes that her estrangement from her youngest daughter's family isn't really protecting her heart at all. So she decides to tell her story.

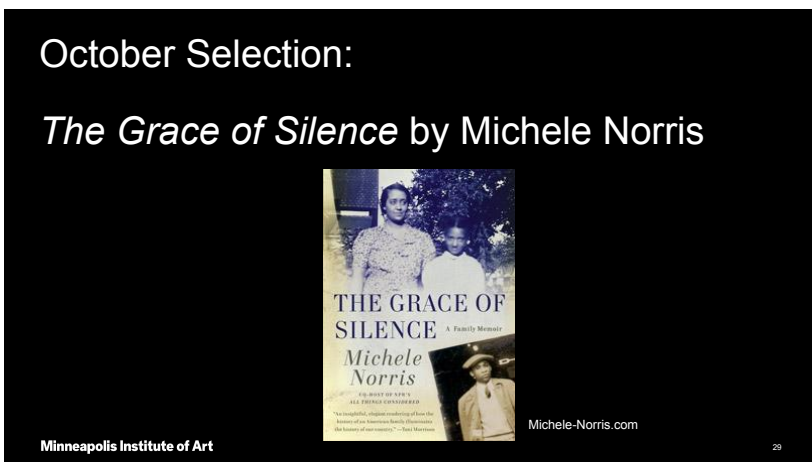
Slide 29:

The last page of the book:



Do you have any last thoughts that you'd like to share with each other before I turn it back to Carol?

Slide 30:



Quotes that may help with discussion:

The Promise: ““You are another daughter to me, Mother replied. “Today, Halmang Samseung’s job is done. As the goddess who oversees pregnancy, childbirth, and raising a child to the age of fifteen, she is now fully released for her duties. Many girls have friends, but the two of you are closer than friends You are like sisters, and I expect you to take care of each other today and every day as those tied by blood would do.’ It was as much a blessing a **warning**.” p. 13

Understanding a friend’s heart: How different it is with friendship No one picks a friend for us; we come together by choice. We are not tied together through ceremony or the responsibility to create a son; we tie ourselves together through moments The spark the we first meet. Laughter and tears shared. Secrets packed away to be treasured, hoarded, and protect. The wonder that someone can be so different from you and yet still understand your heart in a way no one else ever will. p. 36 (note: Mi-ja understood the hardening or Young-sook’s heart; whereas, Young-Took remained in the dark.)

Moving on after a tragedy:

- “Fall down eight times, stand up nine.”
- Do-Saeng after 4.3 incident: “for me, this saying is less about the dead paving the way for future generations that it is for the women of Jeju. We suffer and suffer and suffer, but we also keep getting up.. p. 238
- “When the string breaks while working, there is still the rope. When the oars wear out, there is still the tree.” Dosaeng helping Young-sook go on after Jun-bu and her son are killed.

Anger: Shaman Kim to Young-sook: “You are not being punished *for* your anger. You’re being punished *by* your anger.” p. 350

Seeing Death: “I’d watched my mother die in the sea. I’d seen Yu-ri go into the sea one person and come out another. I understood the sea to be dangerous, but what was happening on dry land confused and scared me. In the last few months, I’d witnessed several people get shot in front of me. I’d seen people on both sides beaten. Those who’d been killed or injured were all Korean—whether from the mainland of Jeju—and the perpetrators had all been our countrymen. This was unfathomable to me, and I couldn’t stop shaking from fear, not even when my husband held me tight and told me he would keep us safe.” p. 197

Remembering but not forgiving: “At the 4.3 Incident memorial program: If she keeps her eyes open, that’s what she sees: beauty. But she’s afraid to close her eyes for all the dark images that are coming back to her. “Who can name a death that was not tragic?” The speaker asks. “Is there a way for us to find meaning in the losses we’ve suffered? Who can say the one soul has a heavier grievance than another? We were all victims. We need to forgive each other.” Remember? yes. Forgive? no.” p. 260

APHORISMS:

"Every woman who enters the sea carries a coffin on her back,"

- [Young-sook's mother] warned the gathering. "In this world, in the undersea world, we tow the burdens of a hard life. We are crossing between life and death every day." p. 17
- Young-sook also says this on her first day as the diving chief.

"A greedy diver equals a dead diver," Do'saeng lamented.

- "When we go to the sea, we share the work and the danger," Mother added. "We harvest together, sort together and sell together, because the sea itself is communal." p. 18

If there is happiness at age three, it will last until you read eighty. p. 35

You aren't aware your clothes are getting wet in the rain. p. 46

- Positive: friendships grow into love; negative: a thief starts with small things.
- The rubbings were physical proof that Mi-ja and Young-Took were growing closer together.

If you plant red beans, then you will harvest red beans. p. 39

- Man plants a baby (Joon-lee was truly her father's daughter. She was smart, diligent, and studious. p. 26)
- Grandmother planted seeds of racism against Japanese collaborators
- Mi-ja pleads with the Japanese to leave the potato eyes for future potatoes
- Haenyeo are taught not to be greedy...take only what you need.

When a woman gets married, she has the best food for three days. That must last her a lifetime. p. 111

A good woman is a good mother. P. 149

The granny who weaves on a loom her work has five rolls of cloth in her old age, but the granny who dives all her life doesn't even have proper underwear.

- Young-Sook thinks that the aphorism is wrong as she put her kids through school and still has lots of underwear.

I'm afraid of bears as well as tigers.

- This saying had recently sprung up, and it meant that the police and the constabulary were to be feared as much as the rebels and insurgents. p. 213

Fall down eight times, stand up nine.

- Do-Saeng after 4.3 incident: "for me, this saying is less about the dead paving the way for future generations that it is for the women of Jeju. We suffer and suffer and suffer, but we also keep getting up.. p. 238

When the string breaks while working, there is still the rope. When the oars wear out, there is still the tree.

- Dosaeng helping Young-sook go on after Jun-bu and her son are killed.
- I was faced with the most basic truth, the one that I'd learned when my mother died: when the end come, it's over. Plain and simple. There's no turning back the clock, no way to make amends, no way, even, to say goodbye. But I also remembered how my grandmother had said, "Parents exist in children." Jun-bu existed in our unborn baby, in all our children. I now had to follow my mother-in-law's advice and draw strength from the things I'd learned, if only to protect this tiny bit of my husband I carried in my belly. I would live because I could not die. p. 239

When a girl is born, there is a party.

For a tree that has many branches, even a small breeze will shake some loose.

- The meaning had always been clear to me. With children, there will be many conflicts, griefs, and problems. It was my job as Min-lee's mother to prevent any of those things from happening. p. 282

- For me, the pride of my life, my youngest daughter, was the branch who'd broken off in a way I never expected. By joining Mi-ja's family, she had shattered my heart. p. 347

"Deep roots remain tangled underground," [Clara} recited. "Yo-chan's mother says that about the two of you, and I guess she's right." p. 322