STRATEGIC NON-ALIGNMENT AND NETWORKED AGENCY: NEW GENENATION ART AND INSTITUTIONAL VOID IN 1990S SOUTH KOREA

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Structural Gaps and the Fragmented Art Field

The early 1990s in South Korea began under the banner of political reform and cultural democratisation; yet the ground on which these promises unfolded had been prepared in the preceding decade.[1] By the 1980s, the art field was already cleaved by Cold War legacies and by the antagonism between state-aligned modernism and an oppositional Minjung formation.[2] Following the 1987 democratic transition, this bifurcated terrain incubated a proliferation of small collectives and ad hoc groups.[3] Operating within a broadly democratising policy climate, they worked with unusual intensity, testing formats and audiences that exceeded the prior decade's binary.[4] Over time, many were gradually drawn into institutional circuits, their repertoires reframed by emergent managerial and curatorial regimes.[5]

This article takes that sequence as a point of departure but resists treating the 1990s as either a mere afterimage of 1980s polarities or a clean break from them. I argue that the decade condensed two tendencies: the persistence of a dual hegemony–state-aligned modernism on one side and a recalibrating oppositional formation on the other–and the rise of new actors who learned to operate in the interstices that this duality left. The structural gaps opened by

[1] In this article, "the 1990s" does not refer strictly to the calendrical decade but rather to a historical period bounded by the June Democratic Uprising of 1987–which marked the collapse of authoritarian rule and the onset of political democratisation–and the 1997 foreign exchange crisis, widely regarded as the starting point of a neoliberal economic order. This periodisation is supported by recent scholarship, which identifies 1987 as the beginning of social liberalisation, mass consumer culture, and the emergence of new generational subjectivities, and 1997 as a turning point that restructured Korea's economic, institutional, and everyday life. See: Eunwoo Joo, "A Decade of Freedom and Consumption, and the Onset of Cynicism: The Republic of Korea, Its Conditions of Everyday Life in the 1990s," *Society and History* 88 (2010), 307–344 [in Korean]; Hae-Nam Park, "Internationalization, Globalization, and Popular Nationalism in the 1990s," *Journal of Koreanology* 77 (2020), 469–513 [in Korean]. In the cultural and artistic fields, this "long 1990s" marks the interval between the onset of institutional pluralism and relaxed censorship after democratisation and the consolidation of a neoliberal art market and governance logic after 1997.

[2] Hyejin Moon, *90nyeondae Hanguk Misulgwa Postmodernism: Dongsidae Misul-ui Giwon-eul Chajaseo* [90s Korean Art and Postmodernism: In Search of the Origins of Contemporary Art] (Seoul: Hyunsilmunhwa Research, 2015), 11 [in Korean].

[3] Ibid., 10–12.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Seo young Lee, "A Study on the Art Activities of the New Generation in Korea: Focusing on the Exhibition of 《Ssak》 (1995)," (master's thesis, Hongik University, 2021), 57 [in Korean]

democratisation and policy reorientation–and later widened by globalisation agendas–enabled a set of New Generation Groups to pursue what I term strategic non-alignment: a refusal to bind themselves to either dominant institutions or oppositional movements, and a decision to navigate between inside and outside positions to secure autonomy and leverage. These practices did not overturn field hierarchies in a single stroke; rather, they enlarged the range of what was possible within and against them and–despite later incorporation–quietly reset institutional norms of format, collaboration, and audience engagement.

The contribution Is threefold. First, historically, I reconstruct how a divided field–consolidated in the 1980s, opened by the 1987 transition, and increasingly steered by policy agendas in the early 1990s–generated ideological, institutional, and spatial gaps that neither dominant camp could fully occupy. Second, conceptually, I specify strategic non-alignment for the cultural field, distinguishing it from neutrality and framing it as a repertoire of tactics–format innovation, platform diversification, selective engagement with funding and transnational circuits, and oscillation between institutional and alternative venues–tuned to the constraints and opportunities of the moment. Third, analytically, I show how these tactics were later translated and partially absorbed by institutions and yet left durable shifts in curatorial formats and participation frameworks.

From NAM to the Art Field: Defining Strategic Non-Alignment

I use non-alignment as a heuristic, adapting strategic logics associated with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to illuminate how New Generation groups in early 1990s Korea secured room for manoeuvre within a divided art field. Forged amid mid-century decolonisation and the Bandung conferences and institutionalised in the early 1960s, NAM sought to preserve decision space between Cold War blocs by calibrating engagements, building coalitions, and advancing claims about sovereignty and anti-imperialism–neither withdrawal nor passive neutrality, but an active politics of positioning under constraint.[6]

Three ideas travel usefully from this history when translated with care. First, strategic autonomy designates the effort to preserve decision space under hierarchical pressure–keeping

[6] See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 1–15.

options open and avoiding lock-in with any single bloc.[7] Second, soft balancing and hedging describe complementary ways to engage dominant actors without capitulation: modulating rules and agendas through coalitions and institutional instruments while cultivating alternative channels to diversify risk and resources.[8] Third, norm entrepreneurship captures how actors lacking structural preponderance can shift expectations by diffusing standards of appropriate practice and thereby reframing legitimacy.[9] These concepts are not imported wholesale; they guide an analysis of tactics in a cultural field organised by policy regimes, markets, and curatorial infrastructures.

Translated to the art context, strategic non-alignment names a repertoire through which cultural actors avoid binding affiliation with either a dominant institutional bloc or a consolidated oppositional movement, and instead navigate interstitial zones to secure autonomy, visibility, and resources. This concept draws on Homi K. Bhabha's notion of the "in-between"–where cultural meaning is produced through hybridity, ambivalence, and the negotiation of identity in postcolonial contexts. For Bhabha, interstices are not empty spaces but dynamic sites of cultural invention and negotiation, where new forms of expression emerge through difference and displacement. Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu's framework helps us understand how artists and cultural practitioners position themselves in relation to power: their strategies involve a calculated balancing act between an autonomous artistic field–driven by creative and intellectual values–and a heteronomous field shaped by external forces such as policy directives and market demands.[10] In practice, three recurring signatures mark this repertoire. One is the diversification of platforms and supports–moving between self-organised initiatives and selective institutional interfaces, often mixing public grants, institutional exhibitions, and self-funding–which hedges policy and market volatility and preserves decision space. A second is patterned oscillation across the inside/outside boundary–entering museums or biennials under negotiated conditions while sustaining independent projects–which soft-balances institutional power by modulating agendas and timelines without renouncing access. A third is innovation in format and discourse–temporary or site-specific occupations, hybrid media, collaborative authorship, process-based

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[7] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 103–105.
[8] T. V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 46–71; Cheng-Chwee Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's Response to a Rising China," Contemporary Southeast Asia 30, no. 2 (2008), 159–185; Evelyn Goh, *Meeting the China Challenge: The U.S. in Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies*, Policy Studies 16 (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2005).
[9] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998), 887–917.
[10] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85–91; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 11–18.

work, and the use of zines or ephemera–which acts as a norm-entrepreneurial lever, shifting legitimacy criteria toward participation, hybridity, and process rather than fixed camp identities.[11] These signatures surface most clearly where ideological, institutional, or spatial gaps are under- or ungoverned by a dual hegemony, creating openings for tactical invention.

Cultural fields, however, absorb novelty quickly. As non-aligned tactics gain traction, they are often translated into institutional formats through curatorial reframing, branding, metricisation, and project-based funding grammars–producing partial incorporation alongside the diffusion of selected norms. Co-optation does not erase earlier interventions; it resets parameters of legitimate practice by normalising temporary and site-specific formats, collaborative modes, and participatory grammars within schedules and evaluation criteria. The heuristic thus clarifies both the tactical life of non-alignment and its longer afterlife within cultural governance.

Scope and limits deserve emphasis. The framework presumes a bifurcated field with imperfectly overlapping control; transitional governance that generates policy and institutional gaps; and actors with sufficient organisational capacity to diversify platforms and funding. Where fields are fully monopolised (closing gaps) or fully liberalised (diluting camp dynamics), explanatory power diminishes. To discipline cross-domain borrowing and avoid category errors, NAM-derived logics are paired with cultural theory on interstitiality and field dynamics, which attends to how minor actors manoeuvre under constraint and how institutional grammars evolve.

Ideologies into Institutions: Cultural Governance and the 1987-95 Art Field

The June Uprising of 1987 catalysed a nationwide democratic movement in South Korea, demanding direct presidential elections and the end of authoritarian rule. Although it precipitated political change, institutional democracy remained emergent. During the subsequent transition under the Roh Tae-woo regime (1988-1993), South Korea adopted neoliberal reforms framed as "economic democratisation."[12] Privatisation, deregulation, and market liberalisation became

[11] George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 87–92; Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005), 120–135.
[12] Kie-Duck Park, "Theory of Socio-economic Reform in New Democracies and Its Application to the Case of the Roh Tae-woo Government," *Korean Political Science Review* 28, no. 1 (1994), 123–140 [in Korean].

integral to economic policy, shaping the trajectories of both democracy and cultural development.[13]

This neoliberal turn reshaped cultural policy under the broader banner of democratisation.[14] The government established the Ministry of Culture in 1990, launched the Ten-Year Master Plan for Cultural Development in 1993, and expanded cultural infrastructure.[15] Yet these initiatives reflected neoliberal priorities: privileging cultural consumption and promoting the arts as an economic sector, rather than addressing core issues such as freedom of expression or the autonomy of artistic practice.[16]

Complicating cultural democratisation further, the Kim Young-sam administration (1993-1998) advanced a segyehwa (globalisation) programme aimed at positioning South Korea as a competitive global cultural player.[17] This top-down initiative emphasised national branding, international exhibitions, and support for cultural industries, subordinating democratic ideals to economic growth.[18]

However, these changes did not expand artistic autonomy; they reinforced existing institutional structures, with modernist groupings retaining dominance. In the early 1990s, government censorship persisted–even amid attempts at rapprochement between Minjung and modernist art, as in the exhibition *Young Perspectives: Proposals for Tomorrow* (1990).[19]

Between 1987 and 1995, the South Korean art world was marked by a striking paradox: official rhetoric promoted pluralism, civic participation, and autonomy, yet cultural decision-making remained centralised, consolidating state control.[20] In this context, both Dansaekhwa modernism and Minjung art left significant gaps in the cultural landscape. These

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[13] Sohyun Park, "The Delayed Democratization of Cultural Policy: Focusing on the Politics Surrounding the Independence of the Ministry of Culture and the Abolition of Censorship," *Journal of Cultural Contents* 29 (2023), 114 [in Korean].

[14] Hye-Kyung Lee, *Cultural Policy in South Korea: Making a New Patron State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 87–89.

[15] Korean Culture and Arts Foundation, *The Arts Promotion 20-Year History* (Seoul: Korean Culture and Arts Foundation, 1993), 101 [in Korean].

[16] Lee, *Cultural Policy in South Korea: Making a New Patron State*, 89–96; Park, "The Delayed Democratization of Cultural Policy: Focusing on the Politics Surrounding the Independence of the Ministry of Culture and the Abolition of Censorship,": 139–150.

[17] Lee, *Cultural Policy in South Korea: Making a New Patron State*, 123–125.

[18] Ibid.

[19] At the 1990 exhibition *A Young Perspective–Proposal for Tomorrow* (Seoul Arts Center), the inclusion of Minjung art provoked strong institutional discomfort: the art center was temporarily closed, publicity was suppressed, and curators were pressured to remove provocative works–ultimately resulting in at least one resignation. When the exhibition aired on national television, it sparked public and parliamentary controversy, which led to further investigation and censorship. Other cases from this period include the destruction or banning of politically sensitive artworks, confiscation of exhibition catalogs, and the surveillance or arrest of artists. See: Heesun Kim, "Misulmuhwa-ui Minjuhwa, Geu Jeontong-ui Hyeonjang: Jeolmeun Sigak–Naeil-eui Je-an Jeon" [Democratization of Art Culture, a Site of Tradition: Young Perspectives–Proposal for Tomorrow], *Monthly Art*, February 1991, 122–123 [in Korean].

[20] Park, "The Delayed Democratization of Cultural Policy," 107–8.

"gaps" and interstitial spaces were not incidental; they emerged from the disjunction between policy ideals and governance realities, shaped by neoliberalism, globalisation, and national branding.

As the dominant art movements grappled with a shifting landscape, both confronted the need to transition into a system more attuned to a changing society. Modernist artists sought to absorb emergent trends–postmodern vocabularies concerned with materiality, interiority, and deconstruction–while maintaining their hegemony.[21] Minjung artists, in turn, reinterpreted realism in light of new forms, responding to the democratic shift.[22] This mutual process of assimilation and reinterpretation enabled both camps to navigate the evolving political-cultural climate and secure continuity within a changing art world.

Drawing on Bhabha's concept of the third space, these interstitial gaps are not empty or passive, but dynamic sites where conflicting cultural, political, and historical forces meet and negotiate new meanings. The third space is the in-between–not a neutral zone, but a site of hybridity, ambiguity, and transformation. It emerges when identities, institutions, or traditions collide, producing new forms of expression that are neither fully original nor simply borrowed, but shaped through difference and negotiation. As Bhabha argues, culture is not fixed; it lives in this liminal space, where the past is carried forward but reinterpreted.[23] In post-democratisation South Korea, such spaces became arenas where alternative cultural practices emerged–not in opposition to the state or market, but through strategic positioning between them, enabling innovation, resistance, and new forms of public life.

Non-Aligned Interventions: Navigating Gaps in the 1990s Art Field

The dual structure consolidated during the 1980s–between the modernist bloc and Minjung art–persisted well into the 1990s, shaping the institutional, policy, and discursive order of the Korean art world and reinforcing a polarised landscape.[24] A small number of groups and institutional actors controlled the bulk of funding, infrastructure, and official opportunities.[25] It was in this

[21] Ibid.
[22] Moon, *90s Korean Art and Postmodernism: In Search of the Origins of Contemporary Art,* 57.
[23] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 85
[24] Junhee Lee, "Hanguk hyeondae misul-e natanan 'sinsedae misul' yeongu–1985-1995nyeon-e yeollin sogeurup jeonsireul jungsimeuro" [New Generation Art in Korean Contemporary Art: Focused on Small Group Exhibitions from 1985 to 1995] (master's thesis, Graduate School of Fine Arts, Hongik University, 2005), 33–34 [in Korean].
[25] Ji-hyun Shin, "1980nyeondae ihu Hanguk misul-eseo-ui sinsedae misul 'Myujieom' geurup yeongu" [A Study of the 'MUSEUM' Group of New Generation Art in Korean Art since the 1980s] (master's thesis, Hongik University, 2020), 43–46 [in Korean].

paradoxical environment–pluralism as slogan, concentration in practice–that New Generation Groups emerged. The following analysis examines how they secured artistic agency by strategically occupying the openings left by this polarised system.

New Generation Groups coalesced from 1987 onward, largely comprising early-career artists who had met in art schools and circulated through overlapping social worlds. Leading examples include MUSEUM (1987), Golden Apple (1990), and SUB CLUB (1990).[26]

MUSEUM was formed in 1987 by Hongik University alumni including Choi Jeong-hwa, Lee Bul, Noh Kyung-ae, Myung Hye-kyung, Ko Nak-bum, Hong Seong-min, and Jung Seung. The group became known for one-off projects, an unabashed embrace of popular culture, a playful, pleasure-oriented sensibility, and a deliberate disregard for traditional aesthetic hierarchies–traits that would later define New Generation art.[27] Golden Apple, founded in 1990 by Hongik graduates Lee Yong-baek, Lee Sang-yoon, and Baek Kwang-hyun, foregrounded individual expression untethered to group ideology. After organising three exhibitions in its founding year, the group disbanded, with members continuing to develop and discuss their work outside conventional institutional structures.[28] SUB CLUB functioned less as a fixed collective than as a sequence of experimental, thematic projects under the banner of "creating new artistic forms for a new era." Without stable membership, artists were invited based on each project's topic. The resulting shows were eclectic and fluid, blending visual art, music, publishing, and performance, often accompanied by self-published zines.[29]

At the core of these groups lay a strategic choice of non-alignment. Unlike prior generations who relied on museums, juried exhibitions, or academic hierarchies, these artists refused full absorption into any single institution, critical discourse, or political orientation.[30] Attuned to the sensibilities of a media-saturated generation, they drew freely on kitsch aesthetics, popular culture, and new media technologies, experimenting at the intersections of diverse forms. Responsive to social change, they privileged personal taste, originality, and emergent channels of communication over standardised norms and rigid ideological commitments. In a rapidly shifting visual and consumer environment, they explored independent modes of working, chose venues freely, and foregrounded improvisation and presence in their practice.[31] For instance, Choi Jeong-hwa's pop-inflected material bricolage, Ko Nak-bum's playful experiments

[26] Pil Ho Kim et al., *Korean Art in the Nineties* (Seoul: Hyunsil Munhwa, 2016), 65–80.
[27] Moon, *90s Korean Art and Postmodernism: In Search of the Origins of Contemporary Art,* 255–256.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Shin, "A Study of the 'MUSEUM' Group of New Generation Art in Korean Art since the 1980s," 33–35.
[31] Kim et al., *Korean Art in the Nineties*, 18–21.

with constructed environments, and Lee Bul's early performative and sculptural interventions exemplify this sensibility.[32]

Their non-alignment entailed navigating between Institutional and extra-Institutional zones rather than renouncing one or the other. They are remembered for a lack of bureaucratic structure, one-off exhibitions, improvisational collaborations, and fluid, open-ended networks. Leadership rotated across projects, and participants entered and exited as events unfolded. Connecting this practice to a NAM-inspired logic, their exhibition-making leveraged interstices as sites of soft balancing and norm entrepreneurship: instead of conforming to a centered art system, they transformed everyday and commercial urban spaces–cafés, clubs, residential alleys–into temporary venues and event platforms.[33]

A key example was OZONE, founded In 1989 In Seoul's Jongno district by MUSEUM member Choi Jeong-hwa. OZONE hosted a continuous stream of event-based exhibitions and performances, alongside surprisingly in-depth seminars themed around kitsch. Unlike conventional museums or galleries, it served as a pioneering experimental space for New Generation Groups, marked by a raw, hybrid atmosphere assembled from materials salvaged from streets, markets, and construction sites–fake wood, plastics, exposed concrete, highway rails.[34] Rather than simply installing paintings or sculptures, the venue pulsed with performances, parties, and unpredictable happenings. In the 1991 exhibition Bio Installation, for example, artists staged live performances directly before audiences–O Jae-won's "marriage" to a mannequin and Kim Sa-ha's staged intimacy with a television monitor–both notable for their chaotic, unscripted energy.[35] Likewise, in 1992's Show Show Show, different artists each day presented installations, performances, film screenings, and even direct sales, expanding the horizons of what an exhibition could be. Club spaces such as Ollo Ollo, Power Plant (Balsonso), and Fungus (Gompang-i) also emerged in the early 1990s.[36] These venues nurtured unofficial networks through installations, late-night performances, and discussion events. Artists curated, installed, and promoted the shows themselves, eroding conventional genre boundaries. Such spaces functioned as hybrid sites where art, play, and sociality overlapped.

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[32] For reproductions of the works: for Choi Jeong-hwa, see Jung-Ah Woo, "On the Museum's Ruins: The Contemporaneity of Korean Art and the Discursive Construction of 'New Generation Art' in the 1990s," *Art History and Visual Culture* 20 (2017): 124, figs. 5, 6, and 9; for Ko Nak-bum and Lee Bul, see Pil-ho Kim et al., *Korean Art in the Nineties* (Seoul: Hyunsil Munhwa, 2016), 177–83.
[33] Shin, "A Study of the 'MUSEUM' Group of New Generation Art in Korean Art since the 1980s," 80–84.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Hyeon-do Kim, "Neukkihan kkeopjil gwa chalna-ui neukkim– 'Bio Installation,' sinsedae migam-ui hyeonjang-eseo" [Greasy Shell and Momentary Sensation– 'Bio Installation' at the Site of New Generation Aesthetics], *Space*, February 1992, 54–57. [In Korean]
[36] Kim et al., *Korean Art in the Nineties*, 103–111.

Collaborations were improvised according to shifting conditions and available resources. Members of MUSEUM and Golden Apple, for instance, participated flexibly as group composition changed from one exhibition to the next.[37] I interpret these temporary and irregular exhibitions not as mere playfulness but as strategic responses to structural exclusion and to the concentration of capital and public support in the art world. When official market and academic channels offered limited access, these artists identified and occupied spaces they could shape–cultivating new publics, inventing new artistic languages, and modelling innovative forms of collaboration.

Importantly, these groups did not confine themselves to the margins. They also engaged selectively with public exhibitions, commercial galleries, and corporate-sponsored projects. MUSEUM, Golden Apple, and SUB CLUB mounted shows in established venues such as Kwanhoon Gallery, Sonamu Gallery, and Kumkang Renoir Art Hall, regularly traversing boundaries between official and independent spaces.[38] Their stance thus was not institutional avoidance but tactical non-alignment: a strategic repositioning that blurred dichotomies of institution versus anti-institution, public versus private, and art versus commerce by using selective entry to modulate agendas while retaining autonomy.

With the advent of large-scale, curator-driven exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial (1993), the Gwangju Biennale (1995), and the opening of the Korean Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (1995), New Generation Groups were rapidly absorbed into the institutional mainstream. Many members subsequently became widely recognised artists, and "New Generation" persisted chiefly as a descriptive label.[39]

Yet their practices did not vanish. The self-organisation, new networks, and temporary spatial experiments developed from 1987 onward provided templates for later alternative spaces, project-based networks, adaptive responses to evolving market and policy conditions, and hybrid genre experimentation in Korean contemporary art. In this sense, New Generation art crystallised a tactical, non-aligned aesthetics that re-specified how practice could be situated amid structural gaps, laying groundwork for the complexity and dynamism that followed.

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[37] "Sogeurup undong-euro boneun Hanguk hyeondae misulsa" [Korean Contemporary Art Viewed through Small-Group Movements], *Monthly Art*, February 2005. [In Korean]

[38] For examples MUSEUM, "MUSEUM," Kwanhoon Gallery, 1982; MUSEUM, "U.A.O," Kumkang Renoir Art Hall, 1988; SUB CLUB, "Underground," Sonamu Gallery, 1990; SUB CLUB, "Made in Korea," Sonamu Gallery, 1991.

[39] Kim et al., *Korean Art in the Nineties,* 76.

From Tactic to Institution–Absorption and the Afterlife of Non-Alignment

New Generation Groups constituted an experimental site for a NAM-inflected aesthetics, operating outside the established ideological and formal coordinates of Modernist and Minjung art as well as Western postmodern canons. Rather than responding to the systemic pressures of Korean society–authoritarian residues, factionalism, and hierarchical cultural orders–solely through opposition or backlash, these artists mobilised impermanence, flexible networks, and hybrid aesthetics as creative tactics. By intervening in gaps generated by social change, policy design, and market structures, they actively carved a third artistic space that traversed conventional boundaries of the art world. While the playfulness, surface orientation, improvisation, and individualism of New Generation groups are often noted, it is crucial to recognise that these qualities were both products of–and responses to–the confluence of democratisation, the expansion of consumer capitalism, shifts in cultural policy, and globalisation across the 1990s. Together, these forces enabled new forms of artistic subjectivity and supplied a platform for practices that proved durable even as they were subsequently reframed by institutions.

Ultimately, the non-aligned strategies adopted by New Generation artists unsettle presumed binaries in post-democratisation Korean art. Their approach not only reshaped the 1990s landscape but continues to inform contemporary debates by probing what forms of agency and experimentation can still be forged in today's unevenly governed cultural spaces. In a late-capitalist global art world, their NAM-oriented practice, hybridity, and non-aligned networking resonate with questions of artistic peripherality, layered subjectivities, and strategic negotiation at the intersections of policy and market logics. The experience of New Generation Groups in Korea thus should be read not merely as a local episode but as a framework for thinking about networked experimentation, comparative peripheries, and diversified NAM aesthetics in East Asia and beyond.

Future research can extend this account along several concrete lines: mapping the micro-infrastructures of venues and funding streams that enabled temporary projects; tracing how curatorial grammars translated non-aligned tactics into institutional routines; developing comparative studies with contemporaneous formations in Japan, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia; and assembling oral histories that capture how artists navigated policy, markets, and criticism in practice. Such inquiries would refine our understanding of how networked subjectivity, temporal and spatial flexibility, and dynamic negotiation continue to shape the language, patterns, and possibilities of contemporary Korean art discourse.