Jaha Koo / CAMPO

Haribo Kimchi



PERTH FESTIVAL

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Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise values, language, beliefs and knowledge on kwobidak boodjar.

Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect the caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

We also acknowledge all First Nations people, whose contributions make our Festival culturally and artistically richer.

Our hearts are happy that you are here, on the traditional lands of Whadjuk, part of the Bibbulmun nation and its people.

Perth Festival Noongar Cultural Authority Council
Roma Yibiyung Winmar, Vivienne Binyarn Hansen, Richard Walley, Barry McGuire & Mitchella Waljin Hutchins

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Welcome

I was drawn to *Haribo Kimchi* because it shows how personal stories can travel. Through small, thoughtful gestures, Jaha Koo opens up space for empathy and recognition, reminding us that culture doesn't need to shout to cross borders and that some of the most powerful connections are built through the everyday things we share.

Haribo Kimchi is a quietly extraordinary work – funny, precise and deeply affecting. It's an honour to present Jaha Koo in Western Australia for the first time, and to share a work that is intimate, intelligent and unforgettable.

Anna Reece
Artistic Director



Jaha Koo / CAMPO

Haribo Kimchi

SOUTH KOREA / BELGIUM

18 – 22 Feb

Studio Underground, State Theatre Centre of WA
Yandilup / Perth

Duration 70mins

Wed – Fri 7pm
Sat 1 & 7pm
Sun 6pm
Latecomers will not be admitted.
This event is a complete lock out.

↗ Audio described performance Sat 21 Feb 7pm

Performed in English and Korean with English surtitles

This performance contains live cooking on stage. There are intense smells of food being prepared. The following foods are used in the performance: cucumber, carrots, chilli peppers, onion, garlic, seaweed, curly parsley, mint leaves, peanut oil, egg, fish sauce and kimchi.

Synopsis

In *Haribo Kimchi* we find ourselves in a pojangmacha, one of the typical late-night snack bars found on the streets of South Korea. There, we meet three characters – a snail, a gummy bear and an eel – who take us on a culinary journey, exploring food as shelter for those dislocated from their culture. In a series of intimate, absurdist anecdotes, they recount the evolution of kimchi culture, the bitter pain of unadulterated racism, the shame of trying to blend in and the deep umami taste of home.

In a hybrid style that combines music, cutting-edge video and robotic performers, the artist Jaha Koo reflects on cultural assimilation with all its conflicts and paradoxes. In an exceptional performance that plays with all the senses, he serves up personal stories marinated in sweet-and-sour melancholy.



A Note from the Creator

Haribo Kimchi began with the idea of placing two very different kinds of food next to each other to think about identity, cultural collision and hybridity.

Kimchi has been with me since the moment I was born. It carries time within it through fermentation, along with layers of memory and history. Haribo, on the other hand, represents a taste and habit I formed later in life after moving abroad.

The line between fermentation and decay is very thin. It is in this fragile space that culture can either be preserved or transformed. When something we acquire later in life meets cultural inheritances that existed before we were born, something new can emerge from that friction.

For me, food is a kind of language. It is not only a way to survive, but also a way to express memory, emotion and identity. As I moved from a rural town to Seoul, and later from Korea to Europe, I experienced some of the deepest cultural differences at the dining table. And in those moments, I kept returning to the same question: Who am I?

In this work, I think about this through the idea of what I call 'jelliness'. Jelly is soft and flexible. When pressure is applied, it changes shape, but it does not break. It bends and then slowly returns. It is neither solid nor liquid, but something in between.

Haribo Kimchi is a metaphor for an identity that is constantly fermenting and changing. Identity is not something fixed. It is alive, always in process.

Jaha Koo



Credits

Concept, Text, Direction, Music, Sound & Video
Jaha Koo
Performed by
Gona, Haribo, Eel, Jaha Koo, two guests
Dramaturg
Dries Douibi
Scenography, Research Collaborator & Media Operator
Eunkyung Jeong
Artistic Advisor
Pol Heyvaert
Technical Coordinator
Korneel Coessens
Technique
Bart Huybrechts, Tom Daniels, Jasse Vergauwe
Production Coordinator
Wim Clapdorp
English proofreading
Jason Wrubell
Snail animation
Vincent Lyne

Images
Bea Borgers

About Jaha Koo

Jaha Koo (he/him) is a South Korean theatre and performance maker, music composer and video artist who lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. His artistic practice oscillates between multimedia and performance, bringing together his own music, video, text and robotic performers or objects on stage.

He is known for the Hamartia Trilogy – *Lolling and Rolling* (2015), *Cuckoo* (2017) and *The History of Korean Western Theatre* (2020) – a long-term exploration of the political landscape, colonial history and cultural identity of East Asia. The trilogy addresses structural issues in Korean society and examines how an inescapable past continues to shape the present.

His most recent work, *Haribo Kimchi*, premiered in June 2024 at Tangente St. Pölten in Austria and is currently touring internationally. He is now developing a new creation, Born to be K to be POP, scheduled to premiere in early summer 2027.

Koo studied Theatre Studies at Korea National University of Arts (BFA, 2011) and completed his MA at DAS Theatre 2016. He is an associate artist of LOD muziektheater, Theater Utrecht, CAMPO and Seoul Performing Arts Festival.

About CAMPO

CAMPO is a Ghent and internationally-oriented arts centre that develops, produces and presents innovative and daring forms of contemporary (stage) art. It is at once an antenna, catalyst and instigator of innovative artistic quality that is locally embedded, nationally relevant and globally resonant.

CAMPO is an incubator for artists and arts organisations. Through talent and trajectory development, dialogue, flow and participation, we are a connecting hub in an ecologically conceived artistic network.

CAMPO crosses generations. A focus on new voices and space for established names reinforce each other. CAMPO aims to surprise, move, reflect and engage (inter)national audiences by bringing together innovation and experience in theatre, dance, performance and crossover. It develops and opens up oeuvres.

CAMPO is a driver of cooperation. It forges alliances inside and outside the arts sector. From an artistic heart, it generates social connection, urban embedding and (inter) national dialogue.

CAMPO aims to be a reflection of a multi-voiced society both on stage and in terms of its audience. It breaks and opens frames of thinking and listens to makers, society and audiences, with both feet in reality.

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perthfestival.com.au