In Her Dream

Young In Hong

*fig-2* 6/50, ICA Theatre, London, 7pm, 9th and 12th February 2015.

Performance Outline:

Commissioned by *fig-2* and performed at the ICA theatre, **In Her Dream** was developed in collaboration with two musicians, two choreographers and three dancers. The performance drew influence from the opposites of Western musical traditions and Korean shamanism, combining dance, music, installation, elaborate set and costume, and intentionally embodying a spirit of Baroque, where movement and gesture is heightened to hyperbolic, operatic effect.

**In Her Dream** was Young In Hong's response to women's protests against gender inequality and domestic violence globally but with a particular focus on post war South Korea. The plot of the performance originated from the true story of Kim Bu Nam, who was raped when she was 9 years old, and taunted throughout her adult life by her attacker. As the law would neither penalise him nor protect her, 21 years later in 1991, the woman murdered her abuser, and the ensuing controversy provoked vociferous protests among women, which led to reforms in domestic violence law in South Korea.

Inspired by this narrative, **In Her Dream** was set between two stages in the middle of the theatre representing Jin’s dual existence, Part l, Jin’s mundane life and Part ll, her psychological life. Using a non chronological time frame, the performance played out within a confluence of both western and eastern musical traditions, where classical cello contrasted with the guttural vocals and ritualistic sounds of the Korean shamanic drummer. On the 1st stage, Ann, Una, Elvire & Jin, all young low paid workers, have dinner together. As the guests' behaviour becomes more drunken and unruly they taunt the protagonist Jin, and, as both music and movement reach a crescendo, Jin flees to the 2nd stage. Isolated and tormented, Jin talks to herself and her secret trauma unfolds.

In creating the work, Hong collaborated with two choreographers Eleanor Sikorski and Sarah Louise Kristiansen to compose gestures and improvise movements drawn from archival images of female demonstrators in the 1960s and 1990s, who were found on the front line of protests, against repressive, patriarchal societies and demanding legal reform. The performance focused on non-linguistic, emotional expressions drawn out of the intensity of the musical and dance elements.

An extract from a diary found following a fire at a brothel in Gunsan, South Korea, in 2002 also helped to inspire its choreography, and was spoken by Eleanor Sikorski as part of the performance.The diary belonged to one of the 19 prostitutes who had perished in the fire, unable to escape, being locked into the building.

With the choreographed arrangement and design of **In Her Dream** Young In Hong aimed to explore the female experience of confinement and community, and more particularly to highlight the plight and victimisation of the abused woman and the perils of groupthink within repressive societies.