

Burning Love 2014

Embroidered image on cotton, approx. 280x370cm

Young In Hong

Contextual Outline:

When the Korean government reversed a ban on the import of U.S beef, despite widespread fears of mad cow disease, thousands of Korean people, the great majority of whom were teenage girls who'd organised themselves online and via their mobile phones, took to the streets of central Seoul to protest. The demonstration took place on the 24th of May 2008, yet the event was not addressed in the major newspapers and the TV sites until the next day as the actions of teenage girls were deemed irrelevant. Now, the 2008 candle demonstration is discussed as one of the most important democratic protests in the history of modern South Korea.

Burning Love focuses on one important moment in history that has not been sufficiently explored. Through sewing Hong seeks to transfer the collectively formed emotion from the demonstration onto the surface of the embroidery work, attempting to immortalize the intensity of feeling behind the event. It does so by enlarging a digital image of the candlelit protest circulating the internet, to the point where the detail is unrecognised, and the transformation of the image begins to occur - conveying the explosive emotion that brought about democratic change amid the thousands of lit candles on the streets of Seoul.