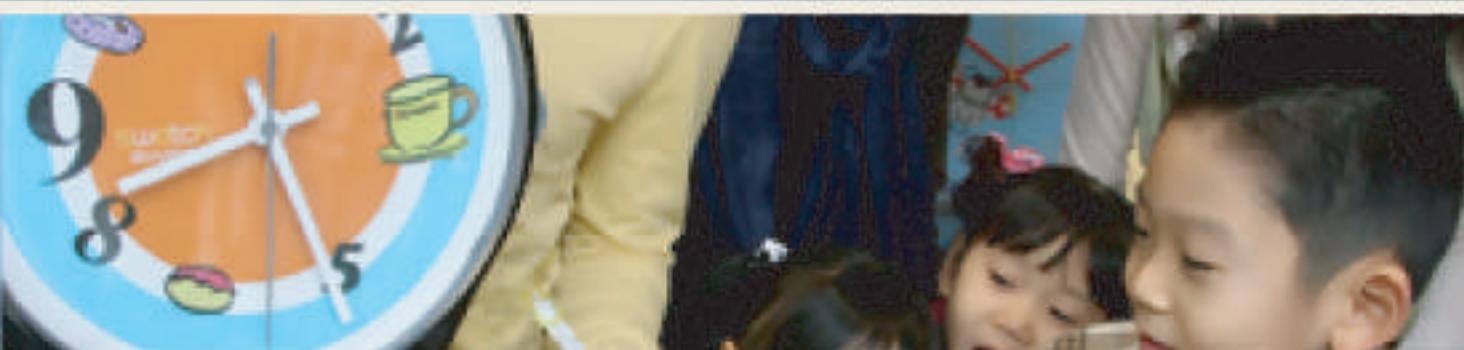




MY SASSY GIRL LANGUAGE calendar food festival focus PAINTINGS happenings wellness FILM



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It is interesting how a single note, a tiny brushstroke, one step in rhythm, one throw of the wheel, a turn of phrase, a morsel of food can become giant repositories of an entire culture. If culture is a composite set of attributes and aspirations, shared values, practices and beliefs that bind and define groups of people, then what happens when cultures travel? And what drives the spread of culture beyond national and territorial borders? Whether as ambassadors of peace and goodwill following periods of turmoil and misunderstanding or as brand-builders preceding or following a period of commerce-driven expansion, culture continues to play a vital role in a nation's image building exercise.

EDITORIAL

Across centuries, cultures have travelled by accident and by design. In more recent years, globalisation has ensured that the 'packaging' and 'marketing' of culture has become an industry in itself, one that generates employment and income and enhances the local and the national in the global arena. One such phenomenon is *Hallyu* or the Korean wave that is sweeping across most Asian countries. Propelled primarily by the spread of Korean films and music abroad, what was restricted to Korean popular culture has become a concerted promotion of uniquely national attributes – traditional clothes or *Hanbok*; the Korean script or *Hangul*; traditional paper or *Hanji* and Korean food or *Hansik*– all of which seek to promote the image of Dynamic Korea, where tradition and modernity, heritage and technology fluidly co-exist.

In this edition of **focus**, read about particular organizations that promote cultural transference and about our events this quarter that attempt to showcase the intangible yet incredible value of such exchange. Chul-lee Kim, Director of the Seoul Performing Arts Festival speaks of SPAF as a unique platform in Asia that commissions and promotes innovative artistic expression in contemporary dance and music, one such commission being Padmini Chettur's *Pushed* presented at SPAF 2006. Acclaimed art critic and writer Suneet Chopra critiques the interesting cultural interface in the work of Mun and Devendra Shukla, a Korean-Indian couple whose exhibition titled *Confluence* will be presented by InKo Centre in July in association with the Forum Art Gallery, the Park Hotel, Chennai and Kingfisher Airlines. The local and the global come together as traditional Korean cuisine is presented by chefs Do-seop Kim and Mi-kyung Lee at the Korean Food Festival in September hosted by InKo Centre in association with the Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, Seoul, the Taj Coromandel, Chennai and Kingfisher Airlines. Read about the uniqueness of KoreaHouse that preserves and promotes traditional culinary skills and about the distinctive nature of Korean cuisine where preparation and taste as well as presentation and etiquette combine to create a harmonious experience.

Following the extremely enthusiastic response, the weekly and monthly 'InKo happenings' – Language classes; Yoga, Calligraphy and Film screenings continue at the Centre.

I look forward to greeting you at our events and courses, to receiving your feedback online or over the telephone and to deepening this dialogue with your support and participation.

Rathi Jafer

Director, InKo Centre

InKo 'screenings'

From the deeply cathartic and intensely personal to the hilarious and unabashedly romantic, InKo screenings over the next quarter focus on the range and diversity of contemporary Korean cinema

A PETAL

Directed by Jang Sun-woo, 1996

27 July 2007

The most traumatic event in Korean history after the end of the Korean War was perhaps the Kwanju Massacre in May 1980, when large crowds of students and citizens demonstrating for democracy were targeted by special forces sent in by the government. The resultant carnage sent shock waves through Korea. Director Jang Sun-woo, who was arrested for distributing leaflets exposing the massacre, made *A Petal* a full fifteen years after the bloodshed of Kwanju. Jang Sun-woo powerfully personalizes this difficult chapter in South Korea's political history, creating the necessary catharsis for his countrymen even while composing an achingly beautiful lament for a lost child. *A Petal* is a fierce and uncompromising look at the Kwanju uprising and its political and personal aftermath.

A Petal's female lead was played by Lee Young-Lan, who won a Best Supporting Actress Award in 1996 at the Asia-Pacific Film Festival for her stirring performance. With flashbacks, haunting music, disjointed editing and animated sequences, the film creates a highly disturbing and initially confusing collection of scenes and impressions.



However, the varied elements of the film are soon meshed together to lead the viewer forcefully to what must rank as one of the most intense and heartbreakingly endings in Korean film history.



THE UNFORGIVEN

Directed by Yoon Jong-Bin, 2005

24 August 2007

Winner of multiple awards at the Pusan International Film Festival in 2005 and selected for the UnCertain Regard section of the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, *The Unforgiven* directed by Yoon Jong-bin, casts an unswerving eye on what really goes on in the military and its effect on



those who are conscripted. The reduction of all human relationships into a rigid hierarchy during the two year compulsory military service is presented through a clever flashback structure and an intimate character study of the two principle characters, Sergeant Tae-jeong and the young rookie Seung-young. To their delight, the two recognize each other as junior high classmates and Tae-jeong promptly takes Seung-young under his wing, hoping to teach him about the 'ways of the military'. Seung-young however is unable to conform to the strict hierarchy of the military and is soon pegged as a troublemaker. His inability to articulate his inner turmoil explores the long shadow that mandatory military service casts on the lives of Korean men.

Yoon Jong-bin's forthright look at brutality and brotherhood in the military is at once an absorbing character study and a gripping tale. Cutting back and forth between the two soldiers' time in the service, it gradually reveals how their shared secret changes their lives forever.



To register for
Korean Language classes,
English Language classes,
Calligraphy and Yoga
please call **044 2436 1224**

MY SASSY GIRL

Directed by Kwak Jae-yong, 2001

28 September 2007

With its easy yet unpredictable blend of laugh-out-loud comedy, metaphysical romance, and fun characters, *My Sassy Girl* can easily be included among the best that Korean cinema has to offer.

The film is based on an on-line serial written by Kim Ho-sik that detailed his relationship with his off-the-wall college girlfriend. This was eventually compiled into a best-selling book and caught the attention of director Kwak Jae-yong, who wrote the script for the film. The story kicks off with college student Kyun-woo meeting a drunken girl, late at night, in a subway. Just before she passes out, the girl looks at Kyun-woo and calls him 'honey'. The other passengers, assuming him to be the hapless girl's boyfriend, demand that Kyun-woo look after her. After carrying her on his back for what seems to be miles, Kyun-woo drops the girl off at a motel. But instead of leaving her and getting on his way, Kyun-woo finds himself intrigued by the nameless girl and vows to do whatever he can to heal her sorrow. Thus begins Kyun-woo's see-saw relationship with this totally unpredictable young woman who completely steals his heart.

From her unforgettable first appearance as a wasted commuter to her rambunctious bullying of Kyun-woo, to the heartbreak she wears on her sleeve, Jun displays an unparalleled level of enthusiasm and dramatic range in portraying a young woman whose domineering exterior is but a smokescreen for her own vulnerability.

"*My Sassy Girl*" is a genre-bending exercise that throws in elements of teen comedy, traditional melodramatic romance and even some genre parody and blends them into a unique cinematic experience that defies categorization.



A unique annual festival, the Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF) is Korea's biggest performing arts festival which actively mediates and connects individual genres, local artistic infrastructure, local festivals and international festivals. SPAF 2007 which opens in September will showcase 38 works from 15 countries and a host of satellite events. Mr Chul-lee Kim, who took up the post of Director in 2006 discusses what

he sees as SPAF's emerging role in promoting innovation and interactivity within the arts in Asia and in particular of becoming a hub for Northeast Asian performance arts, culture and industry.

In 2005

Padmini Chettur from Chennai, India was commissioned to create an original piece of work that meshed Korean traditional music with her unique language of dance. The result was significant for her and the Korean audience who saw her production when it premiered at SPAF 2006 and toured thereafter. This kind of co-production or collaboration does not just provide opportunities for the artists to expand their artistic realm but also opens up possibilities for different cultures to meet and discuss their differences as well as their affinities.

The Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF) started in 2001 to establish an international festival, combining two existing festivals - The Seoul Theatre Festival and the Seoul Dance Festival - with an aim to be the cultural counterpoint to the World Cup, one of the largest international sports events held in Korea in 2002. Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Arts Council Korea and the City of Seoul, SPAF is an international performing arts festival, held every autumn in Seoul. It is Korea's biggest performing arts festival encompassing world class theatre, dance, mime, music, theatre and interdisciplinary genres.

The festival aims to provide topics and issues and to play a leading role in setting the trend in performing arts in Asia. As such, SPAF recognizes the uniqueness of each individual performing arts genre even while actively supporting innovative trends and values and experimentation manifested through a powerful interactivity of different genres within the broader field of the performing arts.

In order to support and organize SPAF's production systems, a separate SPAF multi-level network has been established to mediate and connect individual genres, local artistic infrastructure, local festivals and international festivals.

At the core of SPAF's multi-level network, is its aim to secure its artistic and market value by expanding non-standardized, indefinite imaginations and centralizing them as practical interaction and collaborations. One such collaboration was with India's Padmini Chettur.



In 2007, the 7th edition of SPAF will be presented from 20 September to 14 October 2007 throughout central Seoul with cutting edge acts from abroad as well as from Korea. This year's theme is 'Challenge!' and 'Dare to Dream of Provocation!' SPAF 2007 intentionally throws uncomfortable questions at its audiences with tenacity. We believe that the performing arts in our times should not rest at simply copying pieces of our daily lives. It should dream of challenging life itself. The audience at SPAF 2007 cannot enjoy the works presented from the comforts of their seats - they will be asked repeatedly to involve with the works themselves. We hope that with this participatory approach and with thought-provoking content, we will persuade the audience to dispense with the customary distance between the spectator and the actor; part with a certain pre-determined way of viewing artistic practice and look at the stage and the world beyond with a refreshed and more informed point of view.

Alvis Hermanis's 'Long Life' (Latvia, presented at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2006), Inbal Pinto's 'Shaker' (Israel) and Silviu Pucaret's 'Waiting for Godot' (Romania) are just some of the few outstanding performances that are waiting to wow audiences this autumn. SPAF will also start the first 'Seoul Dance Collection' this year to provide a platform for young dancers to meet artists from all over the world and expand their artistic vocabulary through this rich experience. SPAF will be held in conjunction with the Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) and this will give audiences an opportunity to appreciate the latest Korean performing arts through showcases as well as with full-length programmes during the Festival.

Chul-lee Kim, Seoul

HOME AND THE WORLD

Korean Traditional Food in the World

What makes Korean food special, different, distinctive and what has globalization meant to the cooking and presentation of traditional Korean cuisine. Mi-kyung Lee, Head of the Department of Cultural Products, KoreaHouse, discusses the unique characteristics of traditional Korean food as integral to the culture from which it emanates

Korean traditional cuisine can be categorized into several types, such as royal, noble and folk cuisine, based on the class of people for whom such food was prepared and banquet, wedding, holiday and ritual cuisine based on the purpose of preparing such food. Diverse characteristics, based on the type of food, determine the unique nature of Korean traditional cuisine. There are however certain distinctive common factors and characteristics that typify Korean food.



Korean cuisine must harmonise hot and cold, pungent and mild, rough and soft, solid and liquid and a balance of colours. It is often served on hand-forged bronze ware or bangjaa.

The food is served in a specific arrangement of small dishes alternating to highlight the shape and colour of the ingredients.

What a culture consumes is often directly linked with what it is capable of producing or procuring, whether off the land or from the sea. With four clearly distinctive seasons and a well-developed agricultural system, rice and many other grains are produced in Korea and a variety of cooking methods using those grains have been evolved over centuries. Rice and other grains continue to take centre stage as main dishes. Influenced by the traditional culture of an agrarian society, there are also many cooking methods for poultry, meat and vegetables. Being a peninsula, bordered on three sides with the ocean, the Korean diet is enriched with sea food, found and farmed in abundance along its coasts.

Korean cuisine is based largely on rice, noodles, vegetables, meat, fish and tofu. Traditional Korean meals are notable for the number of side dishes or banchan that accompany the ubiquitous steam-cooked short-grain rice, soup and kimchi which is a fermented, spicy vegetable banchan, most commonly cabbage, radish or cucumber. Every meal is accompanied by numerous banchan. Korean food is usually seasoned with sesame oil, fermented soybean paste or doenjang, soy sauce, salt, garlic, ginger and red chilli paste or gochujang. Korea is the largest consumer of garlic, ahead of the rest of Asia, particularly China and Thailand and countries of the Northern Mediterranean, such as Spain, Italy and Greece.

Korean cuisine varies seasonally, and during winter, traditionally relies on kimchi and other pickled vegetables preserved in big ceramic containers stored underground in the outdoor courtyard. Korean royal cuisine, once only enjoyed by the royal court of the Joseon period, takes hours and days to prepare.



Researchers say that the greatest health benefits come from the color green, including yellow-green and white-green, both of which take pride of place on a Korean dinner table.

The traditional Korean diet contains an abundance of greens and roots, many of which are little known outside the country. Numerous studies show that diets in the healthiest of societies include a very high proportion of plants, in a wide variety. But what is it about plants that make them so beneficial? Besides providing vitamins and minerals, plants also contain phytonutrients. Since phytonutrients are often organic pigments, a plant's colour can be a sign of its health benefits. For example, red plants (tomatoes and tomato products) have been shown to prevent prostate cancer. Red-purples (grapes, blackberries and blueberries) are known for their anti-cancer benefits and prevents heart disease. Orange plants (carrots, mangoes and pumpkin) protect cells from oxidation, which is linked to many types of diseases. A traditional Korean dinner table, is a feast of many colours.

Research also shows very clearly a relation between the green pigment of plants and the red pigment found in blood. This establishes a fundamental link between all plant and animal life. Since then, numerous studies have noted longer life spans in societies that consume a large proportion of greens. Chlorophyll, found in all plants, can prevent damage to the DNA in cells, which if damaged, can transform normal cells into cancerous cells. Other studies suggest that chlorophyll increases the absorption of other nutrients, thus maximizing the transport of vitamins and minerals in the blood. As researchers discover new facts about chlorophyll and other phytonutrients, Koreans can find comfort in the fact that their traditional diet fits the description of healthy eating.



For a complete and fulfilling gastronomical experience, nutrition, colour, temperature of the food served and the containers used to present the food are regarded as equally important as is taste.

One of the most unique characteristics of Korean cuisine is the fermentation of foods such as bean and pepper pastes, various kinds of kimchi and salted fish. The process of fermentation, an important method to store food for a long time, especially through the bitterly cold winters, has long been a crucial element of Korean cuisine. Another characteristic is the emphasis on the harmonious blend of materials. Proportion is of paramount importance to Korean cooking. Interestingly, a 'sincere manner' is also considered essential for cooking. Since it is accepted that Korean food requires a combination of devotion and effort, the right mental attitude and proper manners during cooking are emphasized as vital for a good cook.

While soju, a vodka-like liquor with high potency, originally made from grain, and more recently from potatoes is the best known liquor; Majuang wine, a blended wine of Korean grapes with French or American wines is the most popular. There are well over 100 different wines and liquors available in Korea and these are generally divided into fruit wines, and herbal wines. Acacia, maesil plum, Chinese quince, cherry, pine fruits, and pomegranate are the most popular fruit wines while ginseng-based medicinal wines, called insamju are promoted as energy-boosters.



A systematic and scientific approach adopted by organizations such as the Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation has played a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting Korean traditional cuisine as Korea's intangible cultural heritage and in globalizing Korean foods as cultural goods.



Koreans traditionally ate (and many still do eat) seated on cushions at low tables with their legs crossed in a modified lotus position. Some traditional restaurants provide floorchairs with backs. Meals are eaten with a set of silver or stainless steel chopsticks called jeotgarok and a long-handled shallow spoon called sutgarok (similar to the Western spoon but unlike the Chinese soup spoon). The chopsticks and the spoon are together known as sujeo (a contraction of sutgarok and jeotgarok). Unlike other 'chopstick cultures', Koreans have used spoons since the 5th century. Unlike Chinese and the Japanese, Koreans generally do not pick up their rice or soup bowls, but leave both on the table and eat from them with spoons.

From complex Korean royal cuisine and regional specialties to modern fusion cuisine, many Korean dishes are becoming internationally popular. The globalization of Korean food has perhaps been influenced by the rising interests in Korean culture worldwide. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, which refers to the recent surge of South Korean popular culture in other countries and especially amongst its Asian neighbors, was mainly led by the successful export of Korean drama, movies and more recently, K-pop or Korean popular music, Hangul or the Korean language, Hanbok or the traditional Korean dress and Hansik or Korean cuisine. It is however also the inherent quality of Korean food itself with its emphasis on the natural freshness of materials, the variety of presentation styles and the propagation of healthy eating that ensures that its popularity will be sustained. With standardised recipes for Korean foods published in foreign languages foreigners can now learn how to cook Korean foods easily and there is an increasing awareness of Korean cuisine worldwide.

THE KOREAN CULTURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation (previously, the Foundation for the Preservation of Cultural Properties, Korea) was established on the basis of the Cultural Properties Protection Act. It is a special Foundation that specialises in safeguarding and promoting both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Korea.

The major activities of the Foundation include presenting traditional art performances; traditional crafts exhibitions; providing an experience of traditional culture; cultural heritage workshops; the revival of traditional ceremonies; the excavation and research of cultural heritage and publications; cultural heritage education; the development of cultural products; the presentation of traditional cuisine and traditional wedding ceremonies.

Mi-kyung Lee, Seoul

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN TRADITIONAL FOOD



- Various cuisines such as royal, noble and folk cuisines have been developed according to the region and the class of people
- A variety of dishes have been developed according to different table settings
- Special chopping and mincing methods are often used
- Seasoning and spices are used delicately, but their usage is similar for various dishes
- Recipes are complicated and most dishes take many hours to prepare as it involves a specific way of cutting and chopping
- Grains play an important part in Korean cuisine and there are various recipes to cook grains
- Main dishes and side dishes are clearly distinguished
- There are many kinds of food and diverse recipes
- The belief that food can be a medicine is prevalent
- Both the appearance and taste of food are considered important
- Table setting and manners are primarily influenced by Confucianism
- There are special foods for specific holidays or seasons.
- The five colours representing five directions are often used for cooking.
East : Blue, West : White, South : Red, North : Black, Middle : Yellow

TABLE ETIQUETTE DUBS THE FOLLOWING AS 'BAD MANNERS'



- Picking up chopsticks or a spoon before the oldest person at the table does so
- Sticking the chopsticks or spoon straight up in the bowl as it is reminiscent of incense burned during a funeral
- Stabbing food with chopsticks and picking up food from a shared *banchan* dish at the table making unnecessarily noisy sounds when chewing foods or clanking a bowl with a spoon or chopsticks
- Stirring rice, soup with a spoon or chopsticks,
- Stirring shared side dishes to select what you want to eat,
- Removing certain spices or ingredients from shared side dishes,
- Finishing eating much faster or slower than the others at the same table thereby forcing others to hurry or wait
- Drinking while looking straight at an elder. This is considered very rude. To avoid this, you turn away a little to your side and tilt your head
- Accepting a drink from an elder or superior with both hands on the cup. Instead, the left hand is usually placed on the heart as the right hand holds the cup into which the liquor is poured.

KOREAN FOOD FESTIVAL

Tradition and modernity combine in the Korean Food Festival presented by InKo Centre in association with the Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, Seoul, the Taj Coromandel, Chennai and Kingfisher Airlines.



Come September, chefs Do-seop Kim and Mi-kyung Lee will present a ten-day Korean Food Festival at Taj Coromandel, Chennai. With a variety of delectable dishes and a special vegetarian section, the Festival promises to be a veritable treat for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food connoisseurs.



Do-seop Kim is currently Deputy Head, Department of Cuisine, KoreaHouse. With a degree in food processing from Seoil University Mr Kim has extensive work experience in the hotel industry in Korea - the Yukkakjeong restaurant; the Food Service Department, Chaewon Co.; Hotel Capital; Hotel Amiga; Samsung Everland and Hotel Castle, to name a few. In 2002 he joined the Cuisine Team at KoreaHouse, Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation.



Joining Mr Kim will be Mi-kyung Lee from the Department of Cultural Products, KoreaHouse. With a degree from the Department of Food and Nutrition, Seoul Health College and a Masters' from Sungshin's Womens University, Ms Lee won the Gold medal in the Traditional Food section at the Seoul International Food Exhibition in 2004. Ms Lee was the Cooking Instructor at the Bundang Joongtop Social Welfare Centre; the Chief Instructor at the Gyunggi Cooking Academy; an Instructor at the Youth Vocational Training Centre supported by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development as well as an Instructor at the Middle School and High School level. In 2004, she joined the Korean Traditional Food Research Institute as a researcher. Ms Lee currently heads the Department of Cultural Products, KoreaHouse.

Mr Do-seop Kim and Ms Mi-kyung Lee will bring both experience and flair to the culinary festival in Chennai.





THE KOREAHOUSE is a complex cultural space in the heart of Seoul. Founded in 1981, it is one of the finest examples of Korean traditional architecture. KoreaHouse not only showcases the exquisite beauty of traditional Korean architecture but also presents traditional Korean food, music, dance, craftwork, and weddings to visitors. The complex building was designed and built by Shin Ung-su, a designated important intangible cultural property for large-scale carpentry. Shin referred to Jagyeongjeon of Gyeongbokgung, the royal palace of the Joseon dynasty, for his design. The complex, sizing up to a total of 8,265 square metres was built exactly in the traditional Korean style consisting of tall gates, a detached house, a main building, servants' quarters, and a back yard. Zelkovas, maples, pine trees, yews, Chinese quincees, royal azaleas grow in the beautiful grove with a narrow path paved with stones.

The heritage of court cuisine goes all the way back to the Three Kingdoms period and was handed down to the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. The KoreaHouse serves its court cuisine based on the records found in ancient historical documents which contain records of the table manners and customs, cooking utensils, table setting, and names and ingredients of dishes.

Set up in consultation with culinary experts, The KoreaHouse has developed high quality menus in addition to documenting, preserving and extending the culinary practices related to traditional methods of cooking and serving food.

Tradition and modernity combine in the Korean Food Festival presented by InKo Centre in association with the Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, Seoul, the Taj Coromandel, Chennai and Kingfisher Airlines. From 8 to 17 September, Chefs Kim and Lee will present a delectable array of Korean food at Hotel Taj Coromandel, Chennai. With a varied menu and specific information about the uniqueness of the dishes presented during the festival, the Korean Food Festival promises a culinary journey into the very heart of dynamic Korea.



From 8 to 17 September, Chefs Do-seop Kim and Mi-kyung Lee will present a delectable array of Korean food at Hotel Taj Coromandel, Chennai. With a varied menu and specific information about the uniqueness of the dishes presented, the Korean Food Festival promises a culinary journey into the very heart of dynamic Korea





BUSAN OPENS OUTDOOR ART MUSEUM

A spectacular outdoor art museum spreading over the entire length of Busan's Gwananni Beach was opened to the public recently. The museum displayed the reproduced works of six great artists -- including Korea's late video artist Paik Nam-june and America's LED conceptual artist Jenny Holzer -- by using light and video imaging.

Paik's work "Digitation" has been installed in front of the Homers Hotel located at the centre of the beach, while Shim Mun-seop's "Road to an Island" is on display next to Paik's work.

With the museum complete, the Gwangalli area is all set to become a spectacular, rare outdoor art museum, enhancing Busan's landscape and attracting more tourists to the city.

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Thirty-eight items of documentary heritage of exceptional value have just been added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, bringing the total number of inscriptions since 1997 to 158.

UNESCO's Memory of the World programme was established to preserve and raise awareness of documentary heritage, the memory of the world, which reflects the diversity of languages, peoples and cultures. The programme was born of the realization that this memory is fragile and that important documentary material is lost every day.

Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, has accepted the recommendation of the International Advisory Committee, which met this year in Pretoria, South Africa from 11 to 15 June, to inscribe the following documents from India and Korea in the Memory of the World Register:

India - Rigveda :

The 30 manuscripts of the Rigveda dating from 1800 to 1500 B.C., kept in the Bhandarkar Institute in Pune, are the oldest Vedic texts. It is believed that the Vedas existed since the beginning of the world and are the source of revealed truth.



Republic of Korea - Printing woodblocks of the Tripitaka Koreana and miscellaneous Buddhist scriptures :

This is the most complete collection of texts of the Buddhist canon, carved on 81,258 wooden blocks between 1237 and 1248. They are kept in the Haeinsa temple on Mount Kaya which was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1995.



ALL IT TAKES IS A MOBILE PHONE...

Travelling in a country where you do not know the language can be difficult. But if you visit Seoul after November 2007, chances are that you will not face that kind of problem any longer.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government has announced a master plan for a ubiquitous tour system. The system, which will be introduced primarily to attract more tourists, enables visitors to access any information about Seoul via a mobile phone. The service, which will eventually cover the entire city, is the first of its kind in the world.

The U-Tour system will be installed in 300 locations across Seoul, and it includes a portal system that provides information on recommended restaurants and hot spots in the city.

While locals will be able to access the service by using their mobile phones, foreign tourists will need to rent or borrow phones that have a roaming service capability. City officials say that since the system will be available in four languages—Korean English, Chinese and Japanese, travellers



will no longer need tour guides to show them around the city.

Here is as an example of the system's capabilities: An Indian traveller planning to visit Seoul checks out Seoul's tourist attractions using his web cam. When he arrives in Seoul, he borrows a mobile phone and looks for the relevant information on it. The traveller locates the shortest path to his desired destination within a couple of seconds. He can also pay for public transportation using his mobile phone.

The U-tour project is part of Seoul's plans to draw 12 million tourists to the city by the year 2010.

SWATCH PICKS KOREAN DESIGN TO SYMBOLIZE MODERN LIFE

Korean university student Kim Sang-hun proudly holds a larger-than-life model of a new watch at a downtown-Seoul department store. Kim designed the piece for well-known watchmaker Swatch.

The Swiss-based firm is all set to release Kim Sang-hun's "Kaffe Pause" worldwide. Kim's coffee-and-donut design symbolizes the widely recognized need for breaks in the midst of the frenetic pace of modern life.

Kim majors in industrial design and won Swatch's international design contest.



CONFLUENCE

An exhibition of paintings by Mun & Devendra Shukla

InKo Centre in association with The Forum Art Gallery, The Park, Chennai and Kingfisher Airlines presents *Confluence* : an exhibition of paintings by Mun and Devendra Shukla from 21-31 July 2007 in Chennai. Art critic and writer Suneet Chopra reflects on the individual perspectives and the synthesis of icons, lines, colour and texture in the paintings of this Indo-Korean couple

THE NATURAL LINKS IN CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

The exhibition of a young couple, Mun J H Shukla and Devendra Shukla, the former born in Seoul, Republic of Korea and the latter in New Delhi, India may surprise one as to how close their perceptions are but one has to explore the many common elements that have gone into the making of this synthesis.

They were both born five years apart in countries that had emerged from struggles against occupying powers at roughly the same time – India from the British and Korea from the Japanese. Both countries were partitioned and both have external forces in one part of their territory. And it is interesting that the external forces in both the Indian subcontinent and in the Korean peninsula are an "unwelcome presence". So the tendency to break away and strike an independent expression is that much stronger. For both Mun and Devendra, this independent space, close to their homeland yet distinctly different was the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China. It was here that they met and married.

While anyone familiar with the historical development of these two cultures would find this the most natural course of action, the fracture of the colonial past has distorted that vision in contemporary art to one of western metropolitan centres and their satellite states. Yet, one wonders whether an Indian or Korean artist looking at the works of a Van Gogh is not attracted more to the Japanese aesthetics that he had evolved rather than the painting as representative of an imperial France that the artist had rejected. The same can be said of the influence of Persian miniatures on Matisse and our finding that resonance closer to us than the aesthetic past that Matisse had broken away from.

For me the greatest quality of *Confluence*, the exhibition of paintings by Mun and Devendra Shukla, is the manner in which both artists disregard the artificial division between the figurative and the abstract created by Occidental art. On the contrary, they use the figurative and non-figurative as complementary as was the case in both pre-colonial and post-colonial Asian art and this allows them to break clear of the modernist or post-modernist debate to explore contemporaneity through a series of individual blends of icons, lines, colour and texture. Devendra has a remarkably consistent realist strand running through his work while Mun tends to veer towards the non-figurative.



It is the themes then that these artists pick that draw them together. The irony in one of Devendra's painting of a world tormented by war and destruction while a figure stands above saying 'let it be' is matched by the equally ironical "Warrior" by Mun which reflects the pride of those about to die – perhaps, in a mercenary war. The same sort of ambivalence characterises Mun's "Movement" with a lithe leopard form swathed across the canvas, the other side of which is picked up by Devendra in his work titled "Victim of Circumstance". It is obvious that the two artists share a common journey in our times but each certainly has his or her own perspective.

Artists may seek realities but they are no judges. Their concern is often to awaken us to the realities they seek or find. As audiences see their work, there are bound to be judgements. The more original a path they show us, the more perceptive the judgements will be. Mun and Devendra have chosen a path less travelled but that is where the fruit is sweetest and the sights more full of wonder. And we thank them for it.

Suneet Chopra, New Delhi

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Confluence will be on show from 21-31 July at the Forum Gallery, Chennai. The gallery, founded by Shalini Biswajit in 1997, is a contemporary space which stocks a comprehensive range of paintings and sculpture promoting more than a hundred established and emerging artists. Apart from bringing to Chennai several prestigious shows, the gallery is associated with charitable organisations and hospitals and imparts art education to the underprivileged and the mentally challenged. This exhibition is supported by The Park, Chennai, the city's first luxury boutique hotel and Kingfisher Airlines, one of the most dynamic of brands in the Indian aviation industry.

An exhibition showcasing Mun and Devendra's work alongside offers an interesting opportunity to juxtapose contemporary Korean and Indian styles in painting even while portraying the subtle influences that the cultures have had on these individual artists whose work represent the interface between these two cultures.



Mun J H Shukla was born in Korea and is currently a resident of India. She is an accomplished painter with many solo and group exhibitions to her credit. With a BFA in Oriental painting from Hong-ik University, Seoul, a research degree in Mural painting from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, Mun has also specialised in lacquer painting during her MFA at the Si Chuan Art Institute, China. Mun has exhibited in solo and group shows in Helsinki, Seoul and New Delhi. Her works exude a rare gusto and her brush-strokes are both powerful and yet full of abandon. As a Korean living in India, Mun has absorbed certain vital cultural idioms and this makes her work both intensely personal and yet open to intercultural dialogue.

Mun's husband, **Devendra Kumar Shukla**, is a painter inspired by the surrealistic approach and endeavours to create images that symbolise unconscious thought processes. With a BFA and MFA from the College of Art in New Delhi, Devendra has a diploma in Commercial Art from the Sharda Utkil School of Art, New Delhi; in Art Appreciation from the National Museum of India and a research degree in Painting and New Media from the Academy of Fine Art, Finland. He completed a research project at the Central Institute of Fine Arts, China under the bilateral cultural exchange programme initiated by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Devendra has won many national and international awards and scholarships, has curated international art exhibitions in India, China and Finland, has edited art books and catalogues and has lectured and taught on the nuances of art and spirituality in several countries in Asia and Europe. Devendra has exhibited in solo and group shows in Finland, Beijing, Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata. With a keen sense of composition, his paintings are an imaginative mesh of different motifs, figures and other elements that are intrinsically held together.

CALENDAR

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2007

JULY - 2007												INKO CENTRE - CHENNAI																		
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THE FORUM ART GALLERY - CHENNAI																														

AUGUST - 2007												INKO CENTRE - CHENNAI																		
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FILM																														
CEX																														
TAJ COROMANDEL - CHENNAI																														

ELC	English Language Classes	FILM	The Petal (July), The Unforgiven (August) and My Sassy Girl (September)
KLC	Korean Language Classes	CEX	Confluence - An exhibition of paintings
Y	Yoga	FEST	Korean Food Festival
C	Calligraphy		

VISA SERVICES : Travellers from Tamilnadu, Pondicherry and Kerala can obtain a visa to travel to the Republic of South Korea from the Visa Services section at InKo Centre. For further details contact : 51, 6th Main Road, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai - 600 028, T : 044 2436 1224, F : 044 2436 1226

TRADE ENQUIRIES : Contact KOTRA (Korea Trade Agency)
463, LR Swamy Parvatham Block, 2nd Floor, Teynampet, Chennai - 600 018
T : 044 2433 7280, F : 044 2433 7281

Contact **The Korean Association** in Chennai :
51, 6th Main Road, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai - 600 028, T : 044 2432 3747, F : 044 2436 1226

For a comprehensive overview of the Republic of Korea, visit www.korea.net

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