

# EXPLORING NORTH KOREAN ARTS

International  
Symposium



universität  
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Vienna, MAK, September 3–4, 2010



## Introductory Remarks

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Little is known in Europe about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea. The picture produced by our media of that country at the Eastern end of the Eurasian continent is limited to news about famine, human rights violations and a highly militarized state that defies attempts by the USA and its allies to prevent it from possessing nuclear weapons. The Western perception of North Korea is supplemented by images of a monolithic political system that has had only two top leaders since its creation in 1948, by goose-stepping soldiers on Kim Il Sung square, faceless masses in gymnastics performances, and recently by the accusations over the sinking of a warship of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). North Korea is seen by many as an anachronism, as a state from a past era that stubbornly refuses to collapse.

Few people have any idea how North Korea looks inside. With a total land area between that of Bulgaria and that of Greece, it has about 24 million citizens, roughly three times the population of Austria: women, men, and children—individuals. What do they do each day? How do they spend their time? What concerns them, what brings them pleasure and happiness? Are they like us, or are they completely different? How much of the world do they know, and how do they perceive it? Obviously, such questions must be answered if we want to get any closer to resolving the many pressing issues surrounding Korea. In Europe, little is known about Korea's rich culture reaching back thousands of years, about its long and proud history or about the national tragedy of the 20th century. After having been colonized by Japan in 1910, Korea was divided into two halves in 1945. Soviet and American troops moved in to accept Japanese capitulation in Korea.

During the Cold War that ensued, they supported political forces that shared their respective ideals and interests. As a result, the part of Korea north of the 38th parallel became a socialist state. The Korean War (1950–1953) pitted brother against brother, leaving a high death toll, a destroyed country and a lot of pain and bitterness. Against this historical backdrop, it is no surprise that the goals of national unification and national independence were and remain at the top of the agenda in Korea. In order to pursue these goals, as well as to avoid being pulverized by the hefty ideological fight over supremacy going on between the two socialist giants China and the Soviet Union, North Korea developed its own version of socialism, called *chuch'e*. Unlike Marxism, which emphasized systemic forces as the shaping powers of a society, *chuch'e* puts the human being at the center and argues that with the right determination, anything can be achieved. Emphasizing the need to adjust all ideas imported from the outside to the specific conditions of North Korea, *chuch'e* is remarkably flexible. It allowed Pyongyang to successfully accomplish the balancing act between calling itself socialist and following a deeply nationalist and independent policy in the areas of ideology, foreign policy, economics and military affairs.

Unlike the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, North Korea did not experience a big-bang transformation into a post-socialist society around 1990, although many observers had expected this to happen. Unlike China and Vietnam, it also long avoided a redefinition of socialist orthodoxy that would have meant the monetization and marketization of large parts of the national economy.

Currently, North Korea has to struggle with a number of major challenges. It was singled out as part of the "Axis of Evil" by the administration of George W. Bush in the context of its "War on Terror." It faces a South Korea that is enormously successful economically and diplomatically, having developed into a full-fledged democracy and one of the largest economies in the world.

The Japanese neighbors have stopped their efforts towards diplomatic normalization, which would have included compensation for the suffering during the colonial period, and gone over to focusing on the issue of abducted Japanese citizens, which has given rise to a lot of emotion since 2002, in particular. China, the only remaining country that could be counted as an ally, is also a big neighbor and, as such, terrifying for a DPRK that perceives threats to its sovereignty as the most crucial of its problems. China's economic and social development is increasingly deviating from the ideal propagated in North Korea, thereby posing an ideological challenge of sorts.

Following initial successes, the North Korean economy experienced economic difficulties that culminated in famine during the mid-1990s. Despite hard work by its people, recovery has been slow. Natural disasters, political and management decisions, and a hostile external environment have all served to aggravate the situation. Being subject to massive sanctions and at the same time being highly xenophobic, North Korea is seen as one of the world's most isolated countries. Little gets in; little gets out. So what do we do about this country, how do we deal with it? Ignore it or hate it? Accept it or force it to change?

Going to the extremes of unconditional praise or absolute condemnation might appear to be politically correct in various contexts, but it is not very helpful for the purpose of achieving progress. We are concerned if people die of hunger. We are worried about the spread of nuclear weapons and about military clashes that cost lives and can easily develop into something disastrous. We know that our own happiness depends on the happiness of others. So looking the other way is not an option. Neither is megaphone diplomacy, especially since we know that reality is never the purest white or the darkest black. The basis of international relations is the acceptance of each other's sovereignty. The basis of dialog is the acceptance of each other as we are. This includes disagreement.

North Korea as a state is not like the states in which we live. Does it follow that the people of North Korea are not like us? The public image of North Korea seems to suggest this. Deserved or not: there are very few ways to escape these stereotypes. The number of inter-personal exchanges with North Korea is very small. Access to North Korea is possible, but not easy. Few North Koreans are allowed to travel. How can we improve our knowledge of that country, of its people, its guiding ideology and its political system? One way of doing so is through exploring what little is available in terms of self-description, a peculiar form of which is arts. To be sure, this approach has its limits and hence can hardly be seen as providing a comprehensive and objective picture. Yet, it allows us to peak into a world that is alien to most of us.

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The MAK Vienna has organized a rare exhibition of North Korean art entitled "Flowers for Kim Il Sung," which is on display from May 19 to September 5, 2010. The paintings on display were selected as the result of a long process involving the Korean Art Gallery in Pyongyang and the MAK Vienna. Hence, the selection reflects the Korean Art Gallery's ideas of how their country should be presented to the world. Naturally, this image is biased and incomplete. It provides a glimpse of a few but not all aspects of life in North Korea, and it emphasizes its positive sides. The exhibition is important. It is a mere beginning—nothing more, but also nothing less. It needs to be complemented by other exhibitions, by performances, by encounters, by discussions—open and controversial. Feelings will get hurt, emotions will run high. Yet, such a painful process is necessary if we want to escape the trap of propaganda, no matter where it may originate.

We would like to contribute to this process of deepening and broadening our knowledge with the international symposium entitled "Exploring North Korean Arts." It will take place at the MAK in Vienna from September 3 to 4, 2010 and is being organized by the Chair of East Asian Economy and Society at the University of Vienna. Twelve academic experts from eight Western countries will come together to discuss various aspects of the arts in North Korea. They will provide contextual knowledge as well as deep insights into specialized topics, as well as answer questions from the audience.

The symposium is organized around three core themes. The first is an introduction to North Korean art, including its function, its reception, and its connection to other spheres of society. We will next briefly discuss the question of exhibiting North Korean art, before moving to a few examples of North Korean art ranging from traditional brush painting to music, stamps, mosaics and illustrations in children's books. This is an academic event; we will focus on facts and their scientific analysis. Even so, there are no taboo topics. Neither those who expect unconstrained condemnation, nor those who hope for unlimited praise, will be pleased. We want to trigger new debates and to enrich existing ones. Many questions will be left open. Many answers will be regarded as unsatisfactory.

Our goal during the symposium is not to provide the one and only correct and coherent picture of North Korea. Diversity of opinion is a core and cherished characteristic of our society. Still, opinion requires information in order to develop and to become qualified. Building on what the MAK exhibition has started, we have invited experts with years of experience and deep knowledge. They will add hard facts to the otherwise very soft and blurred image of North Korea. One thing is clear, however: that this will be just the beginning of a long journey.



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## Program

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Kate Hext and Aidan Foster-Carter

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**North Korean arts and culture: function and reception**  
**Sept. 3, 2010, 2:10 p.m.**

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This paper will expand on some themes first voiced in “North Korea as Communist Chic,” our review of David Heather’s book *North Korean Posters* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2008) published in *Print Quarterly* Vol. XXVI No. 4, December 2009, pp. 429-31. Our topic is the various ways in which North Korean art and culture are projected, perceived, appropriated and responded to beyond the DPRK’s borders. We conceive of this as both an empirical stocktaking and an analytical exercise. The former is hard to demarcate, since the phenomena are scattered and diverse. But examples and case studies are likely to include:

- Collecting DPRK art: issues of originality and authenticity; communist chic
- Re/presenting DPRK art: political and other controversies
- Keepers of the flame: what is at stake in rival claims to ‘represent’ the DPRK in the West
- Militancy made concrete: DPRK-built statuary in Africa, especially the Dakar controversy
- Andreas Gursky’s photographic take on the Arirang mass games
- Recent indie films: The Red Chapel (Denmark), The Juche Idea (Jim Finn). Yodok Story
- The parodic riposte: Sun Mu, Jonathan Barnbrook.

As this far-from-exhaustive list suggests, both genres and issues are wide-ranging. We posit shifting milieus of diverse actors, within and beyond the DPRK, each trading in meanings in a bid to achieve a range of goals: aesthetic, political, intellectual, commercial et al. We ask: How do these varied projects intersect? What price truth or beauty? What falls through the cracks? Above all, to quote Franklin (1985)’s always-fundamental question: “who’s zoomin’ who?”

De Ceuster, Koen

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**The genius of the North Korean artist in theory and practice**  
**Sept. 3, 2010, 2:30 p.m.**

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Misunderstandings are rife when it comes to appreciate North Korean art production, which is often subsumed under the misnomer of totalitarian art. This is in no small measure a consequence of limited access to North Korea and its art circles. An additional reason for the misrepresentation of the North Korean art world is the application of Western concepts that are not necessarily appropriate in describing North Korea’s reality. This can best be described by looking at how, from Kim Jong Il down, the genius of the artist is highlighted in art-theoretical writings, and how this is reflected in the way artists—in this specific case Chosŏnhwa painters—are trained and function.

Brian Myers

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**The “Strong and Prosperous Country” campaign in North Korean propaganda**  
**Sept. 3, 2010, 2:50 p.m.**

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Launched in 1998, the campaign urging North Koreans to join in building a „Strong and Prosperous Country“ has grown in urgency of late. The official media would have the masses believe that this ambitious goal will be fulfilled by the year 2012, in time for the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung’s birth. Through an analysis of the relevant propaganda as it is expressed through journalism, literature and the visual arts, Myers argues that the campaign reflects neither a re-orientation towards Stalinist materialism nor a movement towards Chinese or Vietnamese style reforms. Rather, the envisioned „Strong and Prosperous Country“ is in keeping with the ruling „military-first“ policy, according to which economic growth is needed primarily to strengthen the state’s defences. Myers’s greater point is that North Korea’s official culture (including the various artefacts on display in Vienna) is an underutilized source of insight into the regime’s worldview and behaviour.

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James E. Hoare

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**The people's art galleries? Posters and monuments in the DPRK**

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**Sept. 3, 2010, 5:00 p.m.**

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I am not an art historian nor a student of the arts except in the most amateur of ways—I am not even sure that I can engage in that great let-out “I know what I like.” My tastes are eclectic and catholic. I have written one book and a few articles that were concerned with the architecture of embassies, and a paper on the building of the Anglican Cathedral in Seoul. But being in the DPRK made me think about many things that might not previously have struck me, and the use/misuse/lack of art was one of them. I first visited the DPRK for a week in May 1998, as part of an EU humanitarian visit. Apart from Pyongyang, I made various day trips along the west coast, and spent four days visiting Hamhŭng, Wŏnsan and the Kŭmgang mountains. We were carefully minded, but there was no attempt to stop us from taking photographs. While digitizing those photographs recently, I was struck by the general absence of anything beyond the grand monuments of Pyongyang.

Away from the capital, the architecture is dreary and so was almost everything else. A few grand tributes to Kim Il Sung, the occasional statue—were we taken by different routes?—and the equally occasional hand-painted exhortation to work harder. Not much else. Returned to the DPRK as the first British representative in 2001–02, I was freer. We could travel much more widely than I had expected, either in our own right or with humanitarian organizations. We contributed to these, so the authorities let us visit.

If you were to draw a line from Sinŭiju to Kŭmho, where the light water reactors were being constructed by KEDO, I visited all the major cities below that line, many villages, a number of factories and collective farms, schools, and more orphanages and hospitals than I care to remember. I went to party offices, local government offices and factories, such as they were. And of art, I saw precious little. Occasionally, at a historic site or a temple, somebody would appear and lay out pictures or carvings for sale. We bought a few, more as souvenirs than for their artistic endeavor, but it was all pretty meager. The vibrant poster art that one encountered in Pyongyang was rarely in evidence. Even in Kaesŏng, where scores of children carefully painted the Koryŏ remains, there were few posters. Offices had the two Kims, but little more. The sad truth seems to be that art, in any real sense, exists only in Pyongyang. The rest of the country is bereft of it.

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Jane Portal

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**On the challenges of forming a museum collection of North Korean art**

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**Sept. 3, 2010, 5:20 p.m.**

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Of those museums which collect Asian art, including that of the Korean peninsula, few have ventured into the world of North Korean art. As the nation's informal title suggests (the name should really be the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), this is art which was produced around the time of the Korean War, as well as since that war's conclusion in 1953. The regime which has run the country since then has been a totalitarian state, and as such has kept close control over the production of art. Much of what has been produced has a heavy propaganda element, and it can be compared most closely with art production from the Soviet Union, as well as with that from China prior to the relaxation of controls. North Korea is of the opinion that its art output exists to benefit the state, and must be instantly understandable by the populace.

It is partly because of the status of the art output of North Korea that museums have been reluctant to collect it: it is regarded not so much as fine art as state propaganda. Most museums which deal with Asian material consider themselves to be art museums, not history museums. Another reason for North Korean art's absence from most museums is the sheer difficulty in collecting it, and problems of making judgments even when it is available. There is yet another problem to be overcome: the United States has placed an embargo on trade with North Korea, and though it might be possible to overcome this impediment, the attitude of museum benefactors, who are so important to the financial well-being of American museums, cannot be ignored.

The British Museum sent staff to North Korea to start the formation of a collection in 2001 and 2002, following the exchange of diplomatic personnel between the two countries in 2000. It was difficult to plan these visits in advance as conditions concerning the purchase of art were entirely unknown. However, North Korean authorities were told in advance that collecting was an ambition of the British Museum (and British Library); it was clear that for the visits to bear fruit, bundles of dollars would need to be taken to close deals. On arrival in Pyongyang, the BM and BL staff were told that arrangements had been made to view fine and decorative art objects, both by means of small exhibitions of objects being made available for inspection, and for visits to be paid to “shops,” or arts and crafts centers.

It was not long before it became clear that the art being offered was of two fundamental types: traditional Korean art such as celadon and ink paintings, and “revolutionary” art such as pots decorated with industrial scenes and propaganda paintings and posters, some with heavily belligerent anti-capitalist—and especially anti-American—messages. A range of these objects was secured. It was difficult to know how “original” some of this work was: the names of the artists were mostly unknown, and it was uncertain whether some of the paintings were in fact the products of their signatories.

Having formed a collection and returning to the West with it (with some difficulty, as it all had to be hand-carried) there was the issue of its display: should it be shown in the same gallery as traditional South Korean art, or displayed separately? The space in the British Museum allocated to Korea fortunately had a separate lobby, which solved this problem. However, one outcome had not been predicted. This was the hostile attitude by South Koreans to the display of material from the North. Their public complaint was that it simply didn't count as “art.”

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Frank Hoffmann

**Props and pops: delineating North Korean brush painting**  
**Sept. 4, 2010, 2:00 p.m.**

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Where does brush painting in North Korea come from, how did it develop, and what is it today? The discussion of such basic questions involves, perhaps surprising to some, historical as well as highly political issues—and this is not just limited to brush painting in the North. During the colonial period (1910–1945) the term *tongyanghwa* was introduced, meaning as much as Eastern-style painting, which late-colonial Europe usually called Oriental painting. While Japan took the liberty of calling its own modernized version of brush painting Japanese-style painting, namely Nihonga painting (as this is what *nihonga* means), its colonies Taiwan and Korea were deprived of terms which referred to their national identities.

Towards the end of the colonial period, Korea's *tongyanghwa* did closely resemble Japanese Nihonga in all technical aspects. This is especially true for the first half of the 1940s, the period of the Pacific War, when the arts on the peninsula were instrumentalized as war propaganda tools by the Japanese authorities.

In this paper I will take a closer look at how post-liberation arts in northern Korea dealt with that heritage, with side notes on how the South reacted to developments in the North, and of course, on how the role of Western oil painting vs. brush painting (in the North now named *chosŏnhwa*, Korean-style painting) changed over time. We will look at the entire period from right after liberation to the present.

On the theoretical front, the complex relationship of such developments to modernity and international modernism within the context of nationalism, politics, and cultural preservation will be discussed. We will question the conventional wisdom of viewing modern Korean art, both in the North and in the South, as subaltern modernism, a remake of Western art movements (be it Soviet socialist realism or the latest trends from New York), or as an unfinished modernization project. Essential pieces of the Korean modernity puzzle do not quite fit Western constructs and are therefore simply abandoned in mainstream art-historical writing from and about Korea. The causes for such a dilemma seem to lead us to the Western concept of modernity itself, which is constructed against the concept of tradition and idealized as such as a social construct. It implies that modernity (as a social concept) came as a dual revolution, political and industrial-technical, with the arts being part of both.

Even the equation “modernism equals democracy” is at hand, since it was at least propagated after World War II as part of the campaign to establish abstract art as an expression of political freedom (vs. socialist realism in Eastern Europe). It thereby obscures the history of modernism in Korea and elsewhere in Asia and challenges realities in both Korean nations. The treatment of main periods of DPRK art production and the application of terms such as socialist realism in mainstream literature are perfect examples for this possible theoretical, almost-but-not-quite, is-it-modern-or-what dilemma. We will check our toolbox, see what can be done to make a little more sense of *chosŏnhwa*, and show how it all connects.

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Keith Howard

**Redefining Koreanness: North Korea, musical ideology, and “improved” Korean instruments**  
**Sept. 4, 2010, 2:20 p.m.**

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Chuch'e, the North Korean state ideology of “self reliance,” demands a blend of the international and the local. Hence, since the 1960s, a musical instrument collective has revised and developed traditional instruments, creating hybrids known as Kaeryang Akki (“improved” instruments). While some instruments were considered too closely allied to the aristocracy and were abandoned, others have incorporated much of their Western instrumental counterparts; keywork on flutes and oboes allows an increase from pentatonic to chromatic sound-worlds, silk strings have been replaced with nylon on zithers, and the Haeg'um two-stringed fiddle has gained two strings and multiplied into four types to match the string section of a Western orchestra. These “improved” instruments are considered to retain old sound timbres, and are most commonly found in music based on folk traditions or in scenes portraying life in old Korea in revolutionary operas and people's operas. This paper explores the ideological rhetoric, and the construction, repertoire and playing techniques of “improved” instruments. It is based on two fieldwork excursions to North Korea, as well as on interviews with scholars attached to the musical instrument collective and with performers at the Pyongyang Music and Dance University.

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Ross King

**“Monuments writ small: the politics of North Korean philatelic imagery”**  
**Sept. 4, 2010, 2:40 p.m.**

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In this paper, I examine the sixty years of North Korean postage stamp issuing policy between 1946 and 2006. North Korean philatelic imagery and policy are examined in order to determine what light philatelic policy and output sheds on issues like a) North Korea's incorporation of postage stamps into its propaganda machine, particularly with respect to the origins and nature of the Kim Il Sung cult and its imagery, b) visual representations of North Korea's construction of a new, North Korean historical meta-narrative, c) North Korea's attempts to project certain foreign policy initiatives and national(ist) images abroad, and d) North Korea's cooptation of philatelic marketing to earn foreign currency. The paper tries to demonstrate and document how, over time, North Korea has succeeded in adapting “monumental” art to the miniaturized confines of postal paper, all in the service of state propaganda and hard currency earnings.

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Marsha Haufler

**Mosaic murals of North Korea**

**Sept. 4, 2010, 4:50 p.m.**

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With over four decades of history, the mosaic murals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are amenable to many but not all types of art-historical analysis. Access is the issue. Lack of access to commission records, production sites and the primary audience limits what can be said about the creation and reception of these works of art. This paper therefore falls back on one of the most traditional approaches to art history: visual analysis informed by social history. The subjects, styles, and techniques used in the mosaic murals shed light on their relationships to the mosaics of the Soviet Union and the art of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as well as on their distinctive course of development in North Korea. DPRK publications document the intended impact of the mosaics on both domestic and foreign audiences, and the recent acquisition of a North Korean mosaic by the Queensland Art Gallery affords a glimpse of the export potential of this art.

Dafna Zur

**Art and war: the Korean War in children's picture books of the DPRK**

**Sept. 4, 2010, 5:10 p.m.**

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My presentation examines North Korean children's books published from the postwar period to the early 1990s. I show how text and illustrations work together to participate in the nation-building narrative. The reinforcement of nationalist rhetoric is achieved through the invocation of Kim Il Sung's central role in the liberation struggle, the celebration of North Korean soldiers' (and children's) sacrifices for the nation, the promotion of hatred toward the perpetrators of the conflict (the United States) and scorn for their South Korean puppet army, and the bitter recollection of the Japanese colonial period—all these themes are used to emphasize the significance of the Korean War as an anti-colonial struggle. The illustrations that accompany the children books' texts are central to the understanding of how the narrative works to inculcate nationalist ideology. I contextualize the visual illustrations through a comparative perspective using fascist and totalitarian art from the Soviet Union and China, and decode the visual images in order to expose some of the foreign influences. Following Alan Tansman's argument for the existence of a fascist aesthetic that exists as a cultural ideology which is not necessarily framed by political fascism, I consider the depictions of aestheticized violence, stoic beauty and the sacrifices of North Korean soldiers and children in order to try and understand what role such images play in instilling the child reader/viewer with a bonding experience that leads to empowerment and contributes to the rebirth and regeneration of the North Korean nation.

## Biographies

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**Koen De Ceuster** lectures in modern and contemporary Korean history at Leiden University, the Netherlands. In his current research he deals with issues of history, memory and the politics of remembrance. A chance encounter in 2004 sparked an interest in North Korean art theory and praxis. He co-authored *North Korean Posters: the David Heather Collection* (Prestel, 2007).

**Aidan Foster-Carter** is honorary senior research fellow in sociology and modern Korea at Leeds University, UK. He has followed North Korea for over 40 years, starting in 1968 as a juvenile fan of Kim Il-sung. Since 1997 he has been a full-time freelance consultant, writer and broadcaster on Korean affairs, serving academic, business and policy circles alike. His thousands of articles include writing regularly for the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Jane's, Oxford Analytica, NewNations and (in a more populist vein) *Asia Times Online*.

**Rüdiger Frank** is Professor of East Asian Economy and Society at the University of Vienna and Deputy Head of the Department of East Asian Studies. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Korea University and the University of North Korean Studies. He holds an MA in Korean Studies, Economics and International Relations and a PhD in Economics. Visiting professorships have included Columbia University in New York and Korea University in Seoul. He is a Council member of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe, Vice Director of the Vienna School of Governance, and Deputy Editor of the European Journal of East Asian Studies. In 2008, he created a new interdisciplinary graduate program on "East Asian Economy and Society" at the University of Vienna which he directs. He is co-editor of the annual book publication *Korea: Politics, Economy and Society* (Brill). His major research fields are socialist transformation in East Asia and Europe (with a focus on North Korea), state-business relations in East Asia, and regional integration in

East Asia. His latest work is the edited book (with S. Burghart) *Driving Forces of Socialist Transformation: North Korea and the Experience of Europe and East Asia* (Vienna: Praesens).

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**Sonja Häußler** is Korea Foundation Visiting Professor at the Free University of Berlin. She holds an MA in Oriental Philology with a focus on Korean Philology and a PhD in Korean Philology. Visiting professorships have also included Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and Humboldt University in Berlin. Her major research fields are literature and spiritual culture of the Chosŏn dynasty, modern Korean literature, regional culture in Korea, and cultural policy of North and South Korea. Her latest work is the edited book (with Csoma Mózes) *Proceedings of the International Conference Dedicated to the Twentieth Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Hungary and the Republic of Korea (1989–2009)* (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest).

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**Marsha Haufler**, who publishes as Marsha Weidner, is a Professor of Art History and Associate Dean for International Studies at the University of Kansas. She holds MA and PhD degrees in art history from the University of California, Berkeley, and teaches and directs graduate research on Chinese and Korean art. Her own research has focused on Chinese women artists, Buddhism in the aesthetic life of later imperial China, Tibeto-Chinese art, and, most recently, contemporary art in North Korea.

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**Kate Hext** completed her PhD on Walter Pater in 2009 at Exeter University, where she is organizing a conference entitled *Reweaving the Rainbow: Literature & Philosophy, 1850–1910*, to take place in September 2010. She is UK book reviews editor for the new journal *Victoriographies*, and has lectured widely in the field of aestheticism, most recently in Hong Kong. Her interests also extend to Henry James, T S Eliot, modernism, the Hollywood musical and running.

**James E. Hoare** has a PhD in Japanese history from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, and joined the Research Analysts of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1969. He worked mainly on China and Korea, and was posted to the British Embassy Seoul (1981–95) and Beijing (1988–91). Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in December 2000, he became the first British representative in Pyongyang from May 2001 to October 2002. Since his retirement in January 2003, he has regularly written and broadcast about North Korea, and is currently teaching a course on the subject at SOAS. Among his books are *Uninvited Guests in Japan* (1994) and *Embassies in the East* (1999), and several books on Korea with his wife, Susan Pares. He is also one of the coeditors of the *Korea Yearbook*, published by Brill.  
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**Frank Hoffmann** studied Korean Studies and Art History at the University of Tübingen. He continued his research on modern Korean art and intellectual history at Harvard University and has also taught at other institutions including the University of Maryland and the Intercultural Institute of California in San Francisco. His publications have appeared in specialized journals such as *Korea Journal* and *Korean*

*Studies*, as well as in renowned popular magazines including *Art in America*. At present, he is also the CEO of an Internet corporation applying nanotechnology strategies to satellite and data center networks.  
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**Keith Howard** is Professor and Associate Dean, Research, at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney and Professor of Music at SOAS, University of London. He has written or edited 16 books, including *Singing the Kyrgyz Manas* (with Saparbek Kasmambetov, forthcoming), *Korean Kayagum Sanjo: A Traditional Instrumental Genre* (with Chaesuk Lee and Nicholas Casswell; 2008), *Zimbabwean Mbira Music on an International Stage* (with Chartwell Dutiro; 2007), *Creating Korean Music: Composition and the Discourse of National Identity* (2006), *Preserving Korean Music: Intangible Cultural Properties as Icons of Identity* (2006), and *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave* (2006). In addition to giving lectures, workshops and concerts at universities in Britain, throughout Europe, and in America, Asia and Australia, he is a regular broadcaster on Korean affairs for BBC, ITV, Sky, NBC and others. He is a member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts and sits on several editorial and advisory boards. He founded and managed the SOASIS CD and DVD series as well as OpenAir Radio.

**Ross King** earned his BA in Linguistics and Political Science (International Relations) from Yale in 1983, followed by an MA and a PhD in Linguistics from Harvard (1986, 1991). Currently he serves as Professor of Korean and Head of Department at the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada. His research interests include 1) Korean historical linguistics, 2) Korean dialectology, 3) history of Korean linguistics, including the history of

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Korean linguistic thought in Korea, Korean language and nationalism, and Korean language ideologies, 4) Korean language pedagogy, and 5) history of language, writing and literary culture in the "Sinographic cosmopolis," with a specific focus on medieval Korea and the interplay of cosmopolitan and vernacular in other regions of the Sinographic cultural sphere. His contribution to this conference is offered in compensation for all the time and money he wasted collecting stamps in his youth.

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**Brian R. Myers** was born in the US, educated in South Africa and Germany, and is now living in South Korea. He specializes in the research of North Korea's official culture, a subject on which he has written for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and other newspapers. Myers's books include *Han Sorya and North Korean Literature* (Cornell East Asia Series, 1994) and *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Melville House, 2010). Myers is also a contributing editor of the American magazine *The Atlantic*, for which he writes literary criticism.

**Jane Portal** studied Chinese at Cambridge University and went on to spend a year at Beijing University as one of the first foreign students to be allowed to attend courses in Chinese archaeology there in 1979–80. She was subsequently employed as a curator at the British Museum for 21 years, during which time she took a second degree in Korean at SOAS London, studying for a year in Seoul, Korea. She curated the permanent Korea Foundation Gallery at the British Museum, which opened in 2000, and subsequently visited North Korea twice in 2001 and 2002. She was then given overall responsibility

for the Chinese and Korean collections. In 2002, when Neil McGregor became Director, she accompanied him to China several times, developing the China Strategy. She coordinated the signing of MOU's with three major Chinese museums and the sending of several British Museum exhibitions to China. She organized a large loan exhibition from China in 2007—*The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army*; with over 850,000 visitors in 6 months, this was the most successful exhibition at the British Museum since *Tutankhamun*. A smaller version of it toured four venues in the USA in 2008–10. It won the Exhibition of the Year award in the UK in 2007. In 2008, Jane was appointed Chair of the Department of Asia, Oceania and Africa at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Publications on Korea include: *Korea: Art and Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 2000); *North Korean Culture and Society*. British Museum Research Publication 151 (Ed., with Beth McKillop) (London: The British Museum, 2004); *Art Under Control in North Korea* (London: Reaktion Books in association with British Museum Press, 2005; American edition: University of Chicago Press, 2005; Korean edition: Keelsan Books, Seoul, 2005).

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**Dafna Zur** is a graduate student at the University of British Columbia, where she is completing her dissertation on the participation of children's literature in developing the nation-building discourses in Korea from 1920 until 1950. Her interests lie broadly with the children's literature of North and South Korea. Her work on the depictions of the Korean War in North and South Korean children's literature has been published by *International Research in Children's Literature* (December 2009) and the *Korea Yearbook 2010* [forthcoming].

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# Panels – MAK Lecture Hall Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna

September 3, 2010

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## Panel 1: Introducing North Korean Art

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- 2:00–2:10 p.m.** **Rüdiger Frank**, Introduction
- 2:10–2:30 p.m.** **Aidan Foster-Carter and Kate Hext**, DPRK arts and culture: function and reception
- 2:30–2:50 p.m.** **Koen De Ceuster**, The genius of the North Korean artist in theory and practice
- 2:50–3:10 p.m.** **Brian Myers**, The Strong and Prosperous Country Campaign in narrative and visual propaganda
- 3:10–3:40 p.m.** Coffee break
- 3:40–3:50 p.m.** Discussant: **Frank Hoffmann**
- 3:50–4:30 p.m.** Q&A
- 4:30–5:00 p.m.** Coffee break

## Panel 2: Exhibiting North Korean Art

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- 5:00–5:20 p.m.** **James Hoare**, The People's Art Galleries: posters and monuments in the DPRK
- 5:20–5:40 p.m.** **Jane Portal**, On the challenges of forming a museum collection of North Korean art
- 5:40–6:00 p.m.** Coffee break
- 6:00–6:10 p.m.** Discussant: **Marsha Haufler**
- 6:10–6:40 p.m.** Q&A

September 4, 2010

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## Panel 3: Examples of North Korean Art (1)

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- 2:00–2:20 p.m.** **Frank Hoffmann**, Props and pops: delineating North Korean brush painting
- 2:20–2:40 p.m.** **Keith Howard**, Redefining Koreanness: North Korean musicology and "improved" Korean instruments
- 2:40–3:00 p.m.** **Ross King**, "Monuments writ small": the politics of North Korean philatelic imagery
- 3:00–3:30 p.m.** Coffee break
- 3:30–3:40 p.m.** Discussant: **Sonja Häußler**
- 3:40–4:20 p.m.** Q&A
- 4:20–4:50 p.m.** Coffee break

## Panel 4: Examples of North Korean Art (2)

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- 4:50–5:10 p.m.** **Marsha Haufler**, Mosaics in North Korea
- 5:10–5:30 p.m.** **Dafna Zur**, Art and war: the Korean War in children's picture books of the DPRK
- 5:30–5:50 p.m.** Coffee break
- 5:50–6:00 p.m.** Discussant: **Brian Myers**
- 6:00–6:30 p.m.** Q&A

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**MAK** Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna, Austria, Tel. (+431) 711 36-248, Hotline (+431) 712 80 00, E-Mail: office@MAK.at **Opening hours** Tue MAK NITE©, 10 a.m.–midnight, Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.  
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