

"The Republic of Korea today, however, represents a country far different from what most Swedes might know or imagine", cultural attaché Jin Hong RIM writes ahead of a unique art show.



BAE Joon Sung, The Costume of Painter - Phantom of Museum GM, W. House - stoppym, 2009, Oil and lenticular on canvas

- ['I hope Sweden will support Korea's endeavors'](#)
- [Korea's President: 'Thank you, people of Sweden'](#)

The Kingdom of Sweden has been a good friend of the Republic of Korea since 1950, when a significant number of Swedish medical staff participated in the Korean War for humanitarian reasons. Since then, the two countries have come a long way and celebrated the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2009. Yet, despite the bilateral diplomatic ties stretching more than 5 decades and Korea's growing economic status and cultural dynamism, the prevailing image in Sweden of the country in the Far East seems to have revolved mainly around the following three motifs so far; the Korean War and ever-present tensions across the borders in the Korean peninsula, the time-honored martial art of Taekwondo and a large community of adoptees from Korea.

The Republic of Korea today, however, represents a country far different from what most Swedes might know or imagine. Korea has gone through unprecedented political, economic and social transformations over the past few decades and has emerged from a very poor agrarian society to a modern and industrialized nation. On the other hand, its geo-political situation with regard to its belligerent neighbor to the North remains perplexing and seemingly precarious, as amply demonstrated by the recent shelling of a South Korean island by North Korean forces.

The underlying unifying theme of the upcoming group exhibition titled, "38°N Snow South: Korean Contemporary Art" intends to illustrate the rapid changeover of Korea throughout its modern history and its consequences, as reflected on the various optical prisms of modern artists in Korea. The exhibition, taking place at Gallerie Charlotte Lund on Kungstensgatan 23 in Stockholm between February 3 and March 19, will feature six established and up & coming Korean contemporary artists and will serve as a once in a blue moon opportunity for art connoisseurs in the Venice of the North to survey a wide array of the Korean contemporary art works in a single visit.

Korean contemporary art exhibition in Sweden

Written by Jin Hong RIM

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The exhibition has been organized by the curator, Miyoung von Platen, and the title of the display is based on the fact that a lot of Westerners visiting Korea during winter for the first time are surprised by its unexpectedly chilly and snowy weather in the country. The 38th parallel north has another important symbolic meaning in Korea. The 38th parallel north roughly divides the Korean peninsula in the middle and in 1945 the dividing line became the boundary between North and South Korea before the outbreak of the Korean War.



Those visitors to the exhibition might find themselves pleasantly surprised by the works of art on display by BAE Bien-U, BAE Joon Sung, JUNG Yeon Doo, KIM Dong Yoo, LEE Dong Wook and SHIN Meekyoung and will be reminded of the harsh geo-political reality facing Korea today.

Jin Hong RIM

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