

Trip Report

Projects for Malaysian Contemporary Art:
Developing Contemporary Art Education and Reaching
Young Contemporary Artists

July 17 - 23 SEOUL, KOREA

- On Thursday July 17 at 11:00am, I arrived in Seoul, Korea. I surprisingly met four deaf Korean students at the Seoul International airport. They were requested by the President of Korea Nazarene University to pick me up from the airport. It was a very nice welcome. It took us three hours to drive from Seoul to Cheonan, Korea.
- **Dr. Abraham Seung-an Im**, President of Korea Nazarene University and **Ms. Betty Hye-Ryung Kim**, Public Relations. Korea Nazarene University (KNU) is located in Cheonan, Korea. Dr. Abraham is interested to have my coming workshop for KNU universal design students in the near future. Dr. Abraham was pleased to be part of the sponsors for my art exhibition at Seoul's Total Museum of Contemporary Art. The university gave me four high-quality projectors. After that, I was introduced to **Ms Mi Ja Wi**, Manager of International Relations of Korea Nazarene University.
- I spent one day to travel around Cheonan city.
- On July 18, I left Cheonan for Seoul. When I arrived in the museum, I met with **Mr. Byeong-Sam Jeon**, Chief curator of the museum for first time since we have talked each other on emails for six months. We discussed about how to buy supplies, where to set up my installation and what to contribute.

- On July 19, Byeong introduced me to **Ms. Mijoo Kim**, President of Women With Disabilities Arts & Culture Network because Mijoo wanted to have a meeting with me for an interview. She has seen many deaf Koreans are hopeless to live in Korea. She has agreed with the story I told to The Korean Times. Mijoo is the one who worked hard to get a Korean interpreter who knows American Sign Language and Korean-spoke language for me.
- I managed to go to the museum myself although I can't read Korean signs. I have to go back and forth to the museum from a friend's house from July 20 to July 24. Every one-way trip took 1 ½ hours.
- On July 20, I have received an email from Dr Abraham Seung-an Im that his good friend, **Ms. Lee Joung Sun**, President of Family, Children & Disability of National Assembly, Republic of Korea, Seoul, Korea would like to meet with me if I am available on July 23. This should be good news that I meet one of the ministries from Korean government. I decided to accept her request. It would be hard for me to leave the museum on that day because the opening reception would be launched at evening on July 23.
- On July 23, Dr. Abraham sent two interpreters from the University for my meeting with Ms. Lee Joung Sun. One is deaf interpreter who knows American-Korean Sign Language. The other is hearing interpreter who knows Korean Sign-Spoken Language. Dr. Abraham's enormous thought and generous support on my need was very inspiring.
- At 12:00pm, I met with Ms. Lee Joung Sun and **Mr. Soo Young Kim**, Legislative Assistant of National Assembly, Republic of Korea at her government office. We discussed about how to make better education and effective facilities for deaf people such as I have a good life, good education and good role model I made in the United States where I have been living in for 9 years. As a committee of Family, Children & Disability of National Assembly, Ms. Lee asked for my advice and opinion about deaf Koreans' lives in Korea because Ms. Lee didn't see anyone from Korean deaf communities who want to become a leading role such as artist, doctor, lawyer, engineer, or politician. I explained her that Korea not only created the lack of opportunities, but also Malaysia does. That is the main reason why I left Malaysia at the age of 20 for USA for getting better education and motivation with Nippion's scholarship. Ms. Lee definitely agreed with my answer. I shared my academic experience with Ms. Lee and Mr. Soo. Ms. Lee would like me to visit Korea again so Ms. Lee could organize a 'deaf education' workshop for me. I appreciated her offer and I will do a collaborative project with her in the near future. The meeting finished at 2:00pm.
- I have to rush to the museum by cab before next meeting starts with the selected artists at 4:00pm.

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- I met **Ms. Ji Hye Seo**, Strategic Service Division & Project Manager, ICGIST for increasing promotions and advertisings to deaf schools around Seoul, Korea.
- When the opening reception started, there were more than 100 invited guests coming to the exhibition. I met **Ms. Cathy Rose A. Garcia**, Reporter / Culture Desk of The Korean Times Newspaper who has interviewed with me before I come to Korea. Cathy has other interview with me for next article. The article was very helpful and informative that made Ms. Lee Joung Sun an opportunity to meet up with me.
- **Ms. Ji Hee Eun**, News Editor and Producer of The Hankyoreh Newspaper, interviewed with me for a TV channel.
- After the reception, Byeong brought the selected artists and contributors to Seoul's top restaurant for a celebration.
- I departed for Tokyo, Japan.