

Presented by the Centre for Design History, University of Brighton

Symposium

Visuality, Nationhood and Power Relations: Representation of Korea in World's Fairs and Expositions

13 June 2024

9:30 AM–5:30 PM

M2, Grand Parade, University of Brighton
58-67 Grand Parade, Brighton and Hove, Brighton BN2 0JY

Introduction

This symposium entitled 'Visuality, Nationhood and Power Relation: Representation of Korea in World's Expositions' aims to survey and examine the multifaceted roles and meanings of the visuality of Korea represented in the world's expositions. Encompassing the early history of Korea's involvement with the world's expositions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the contemporary activities in representing the nation at international events, the symposium will serve as a rare opportunity to bring interdisciplinary approaches to measure the impacts of the world's expositions in framing, visualising and reproducing the images and narratives of Korea.

In this symposium, there will be a keynote, paper presentations and a roundtable by scholars of art and design history, material and visual culture, architecture history and anthropology who will discuss the past, present and future of Korea's visual representation in the world's expositions.

The symposium is hosted by the Centre for Design History (CDH) at the University of Brighton, with primary support from the Academy of Korean Studies and additional support from the University of Brighton and the Design History Society.

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**DESIGN
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Programme

09:30-9:45 AM Welcome and Registration

09:45-10:00 AM **Opening Remark**

Lara Perry, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science,
University of Brighton

10:00-11:00 AM **Keynote**

**'Representation of Korea in World's Fairs and Museums: Exploring
Assimilation, Imperial Projects, and National Identity'**

Youngna Kim, Professor Emerita, Seoul National University

11:00-11:20 AM Coffee Break

Session 1

Chaired by Lina Shinhwa Koo, PhD Candidate, University of Brighton

11:20-11:40 AM **'Korea at the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition: Image of Colonial Korea
in Japanese Empire's External Propaganda'**

Junia Roh, Assistant Professor, Department of Japanese Language and
Literature, Myongji University

11:40-12:00 PM **'Staging the Chosun in the Architectural Landscape: A Case Study of
the 1929 Chosun Exposition'**

Oknim Jo, PhD Candidate, History of Art and Design, University of
Brighton

12:00-12:20 PM **'Human display and the Landscape of Social Darwinism: Korean
Exhibitions at the Japanese Fair in the Early 20th Century'**

Hyukhui Kwon, Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural
Anthropology, Kangwon National University

12:20-12:40 PM Q&A

12:40-02:00 PM Lunch Break at G4 (on the ground floor)

Session 2

Chaired by Megha Rajguru, Co-Director for the Centre for Design History, University of
Brighton

02:00-02:20 PM **'The Korean Pavilion at World Expositions and the Evolving Way of
Representing Korea'**

Hyon-sob Kim, Professor, Department of Architecture, Korea University

02:20-02:40 PM **'Displaying "Korean" Science: National Identity and Science Expo in 1990s South Korea'**

Hajeong Kim, PhD Student, Department of Science Studies, Seoul National University

02:40-03:00 PM **'North Korean Exhibition Design as Propaganda'**

Heesun Choi, Visiting Professor, Industrial Design Department, College of Arts, Chung-Ang University

03:00-03:20 PM Q&A

03:20-03:40 PM Coffee Break

Session 3

Chaired by Eliza Tan, Lecturer, University of Brighton

03:40-04:00 PM **'Bridging Markets and Diplomacy: The Strategic Role of Korean Pavilions and Political Exchange & Cooperation in International Exhibitions'**

Changwon Park, Doctoral Researcher, Brunel Business School

04:00-04:20 PM **'Equity and Gender in Korea's Representation at the World Skills Competition'**

Kyunghee Pyun, Associate Professor, History of Art, State University of New York, Fashion Institute of Technology

04:20-04:40 PM Q&A

04:40-05:30 PM **Roundtable Discussion**

Led by Yunah Lee, Principal Lecturer University of Brighton

Closing Remark

Keynote

Youngna Kim

Professor Emerita, Seoul National University

Representation of Korea in World's Expositions and Museums: Exploring Assimilation, Imperial Projects, and National Identity

Abstract

Korea first participated in the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, followed by the Universal Exposition of 1900 in Paris. However, in 1910, Emperor Sunjong was forced to sign the annexation treaty, transferring all governing authority to the Emperor of Japan. Subsequently, Japan, having adopted Western strategies, pursued imperialistic policies. Japan hosted several fairs and expositions within Korea, operated museums, and ensured that the portrayal of history aligned with their perspective, thereby laying the groundwork for their colonial policies.

My presentation aims to introduce these early efforts of the Joseon Dynasty to represent Korea at the Chicago and Paris World's Fairs. It also examines how Japan attempted to construct Korea's cultural identity at an institutional level, using early museums as examples. After the liberation in 1945, overseas museum exhibitions, much like expos, became an important way to reshape Korea's image.

Bio

Youngna Kim is a Professor Emerita of Art History at Seoul National University. She served as the Director of the National Museum of Korea from 2011 to 2016 and was a member of the Committee for Cultural Heritage Administration from 2007 to 2013. Youngna Kim earned her B.A. from Muhlenberg College and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Western art history from Ohio State University. She has authored numerous books and articles on twentieth-century art in Korean, Japanese, and English. Her most recent publication is *Korean Art since 1945: Challenges and Changes*, released by Brill in April of this year.

Junia Roh

Assistant Professor, Department of Japanese Language and Literature, Myongji University

Korea at the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition: Image of Colonial Korea in Japanese Empire's External Propaganda

Abstract

This study examines how the Japanese government presented colonial Korea in London through the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition. To date, arguments about images of colonial Korea as propaganda for the Japanese empire have focused only on domestic exhibitions and media in Korea and Japan. However, it is also important to understand the ways in which Japan presented other countries on the turbulent world stage of the time. The 1910 Japan-British Exhibition is a key to understanding this issue, because during the six months it was held in London, Korea was in the process of being annexed as a colony by Japan.

By comparing official guides and catalogues in English, official reports published in Britain and Japan, newspaper articles, photographs and museum collections, this study illustrates and reconstructs the display of the Palace of the Orient at the Japan-British Exhibition. It was the first exhibition in which Japan could present Korea as its colony to the world, and Japan took full advantage of the exhibition to justify its rule over Korea. The exhibition lasted no longer than six months, but the impact of Japan's propaganda strategies lasted much longer. The image of Korea as a Japanese colony was reproduced, reused and disseminated through souvenir albums and major museum collections to the present day.

Bio

Junia Roh is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Japanese Studies at Myongji University in Korea. She studied Art History at Seoul National University and Cultural Resource Studies at the University of Tokyo, where she received her PhD. Roh's main area of research is the visual and material culture of modern East Asia, particularly the history of craft and design. She values the work of excavating and interpreting historical sources, as design history as a discipline is still very young. She is also interested in how Korea and Japan as nations have historically presented themselves to the world, and by whom their histories have been written and changed.

Oknim Jo

PhD Candidate, History of Art and Design, University of Brighton

Staging the Chosun in the Architectural Landscape: A Case Study of the 1929 Chosun Exposition

Abstract

The Chosun Exposition was the second and largest exposition held by the Japanese Government General of Korea during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea. While previous studies have classified the pavilions of this exposition in terms of general architectural styles, in-depth reviews of the architectural features have been lacking. This research deepens the critical discussions of the previous analyses and takes the discussions further in terms of the historical implications of the architectural styles of the exposition pavilions in the context of Japanese colonial modernity. As background, the presentation begins with Japan's adoption of this specific event format, the 'exposition', from the West, and explains the relationship between Japanese imperialism and its architectural ideals, especially in terms of cityscapes.

The distinctive feature of the Chosun Exposition was the use of the 'Chosun style' in the design of the main pavilions, which were under the direct management of the Japanese Government General of Korea. The various architectural features of the Chosun Exposition will be identified and examined in relation to the imperialist aspirations of the Japanese colonial authorities.

Bio

Oknim Jo is a researcher, curator, and historian working across the fields of architecture, craft, and design and is the founding director of a design research collective, the Curating Society. Her research interests include transnational design historiography, mid-twentieth century interior design, and archival studies. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Brighton, working on a dissertation entitled "Transnational Studies of Interior Design Practice in South Korea from the 1960s to the 1980s." Her PhD project focuses on establishing historical accounts of the interior design profession and challenging existing design canons.

Hyukhui Kwon

Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Kangwon National University

Human display and the Landscape of Social Darwinism: Korean Exhibitions at the Japanese Fair in the Early 20th Century

Abstract

This presentation explores the terrain of discourse contained in Korean exhibitions at Japanese expositions in the early 20th century. It examines the process by which Koreans were displayed in the two exhibitions, the historical situation that occurred at the time, and the resulting reactions of Koreans. Through this, this presentation analyses various aspects of the intellectual system called Social Darwinism theory along with the hegemonic order of Northeast Asia at the time. It will also be able to consider how the human exhibition was used at the fair as a public practice of racial discrimination and colonisation. In particular, through these two exhibitions, the paper aims to criticise the representation of Koreans by the Japanese and at the same time raise questions about the contradiction in which Koreans otherise other race through their dichotomous view of civilisation and barbarism.

Bio

Hyukhui Kwon is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Kangwon National University. He specialises in Korean culture in general, including North Korea, and his areas of interest include museums and cultural heritage studies. He is currently conducting research on North Korean propaganda culture.

Hyon-sob Kim

Professor, Department of Architecture, Korea University

The Korean Pavilion at World Expositions and the Evolving Way of Representing Korea

Abstract

The Korean pavilion at world expositions is one of the most typical channels through which Korea and Korean architecture have been represented on the international stage. As Umberto Eco suggested, the main function of a national pavilion at an exposition is to symbolise the country: the 'primary function' and 'secondary function' of a building are reversed. This presentation will outline the history of the Korean pavilion at world expositions and discuss how the way of representing Korea and Korean architecture has evolved through various phases, among which three are most distinctive.

First, the earliest Korean pavilions in 1893 (Chicago) and 1900 (Paris), no more than inferior replicas of traditional Korean architecture, raise an issue of correct reproduction of a supposedly 'authentic' Korean building. This issue came to be resolved ironically at the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London, where Japan justified its colonisation of Korea. Second, two Korean pavilions from 1960s expos (New York, 1964/1965; Montreal, 1967), designed by Korean architects for the first time, embodied a national identity by modernising motifs from traditional architecture. Chung-Up Kim's pavilion in New York included a restaurant building named the 'Korea House' – the counterpart to its main exhibition building – of which overall motif was traditional though not without modern abstraction (e.g., the sloped and curved roof). Swoo-Geun Kim's pavilion in Montreal modernised the multi-layered composition of the traditional timber structure (e.g. gongpo, seokare, buyeon) supporting the roof. Although the two architects' translations of tradition were different, it is arguable that both were obsessed with the form of tradition alike. This point could be related to the well-known 'debate on tradition' and 'Japanese-style scandal' (1966–1967) heated within Korea in the similar period. However, international ideas were changing so rapidly that such issues of tradition could seem out of date, and the Montreal expo was an outlet for fresh architectural innovations: Buckminster Fuller's Geodesic Dome, Frei Otto's membrane structure, Moshe Safdie's prefabricated collective housing, etc. Encountering the contemporary trends in Montreal, Swoo-Geun Kim turned to a high-tech style for the next Korean pavilion in 1970 (Osaka). Third, recent Korean pavilions in the new millennium, with more progressive and creative designs for the future by the next generation of architects (e.g. Minsuk Cho in Shanghai, 2010; Seok-Cheol Kim in Milan, 2015; Hoon Moon in Dubai, 2020), reflect Korea's elevated status in the world, particularly indebted to the country's ever-growing importance in the economy and the 'Korean Wave' in culture.

As already obvious, the two pavilions for the 1960s expositions are considered critical in this presentation owing to the accompanied issue of modern reinterpretation of tradition, which penetrates the overall history of modern architecture in Korea. On the other hand, this issue was also critical to the Korean government because 'tradition' was believed to support the cultural legitimacy of the military regime as well as its project of building a modern nation – which needed to be exhibited in the international arena. The Korean

Pavilion at World Expositions reveals the underlying dynamics of Korea's domestic and international politics surrounding the events.

Bio

Hyon-Sob Kim is Professor of Architectural History at Korea University. Based on doctoral and postdoctoral research on European modernism and East-West exchange in architecture at the University of Sheffield, his research interests have expanded to include the historiography of modern architecture in Korea and the representation of Korean architecture in the modern West. His publications on the latter include '*The appearance of Korean architecture in the modern West*' and '*Representing Korean architecture in the modern West: two Korean Pavilions from 1960s international expositions*'. He was a recipient of the Korean Government Overseas Scholarship, an AHRC research grant (UK), the Harvard-Yenching Institute Visiting Scholarship (US), etc.

Hajeong Kim

PhD Student, Department of Science Studies, Seoul National University

Displaying “Korean” Science: National Identity and Science Expo in 1990s South Korea

Abstract

In this presentation, I introduce the case of the 1993 Daejeon Expo, focusing on the display of “Korean” science. I argue that displaying Korean science should not be understood as demonstrating a direct link between Korean traditional and modern science, but rather a showcase of the socio-technical imaginary of 1990s South Korea. In 1988 President Roh Tae-woo initiated a new mega-event. The Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, which had experience in organizing trade shows, formed a committee. To gain international recognition and public interest, Oh Myung, the committee leader shaped the Science Expo, aligning with government plans to develop the Daedok Research Cluster in Daejeon.

Choosing the Expo’s theme was challenging. Traditionally, such expos showcased cutting-edge scientific achievements, but in the circumstances of South Korea, which was a developing nation in the early 1990s, scholars were concerned about imitating developed countries. Fearing comparisons to Japan’s 1985 Tsukuba Science Expo, some committee members, like Lee O-ryung, advocated for a theme highlighting traditional Korean science. Lee believed revisiting Eastern science could counter Western dominance and inspire Korean pride. The theme, “The Challenge of Change: Recycling and Creation for New Horizon,” was set and historian Park Sungrae noted the “recycling” concept was not just literal waste management, but also reflected South Korea’s recent economic growth. The initial theme faced criticism during Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) approval. The BIE inspectors found it too vague and unrepresentative of South Korea as a developing country. Marcel Galopin, the head inspector, suggested a theme emphasizing participation by developing countries. He proposed the theme “A Challenge for a Better Use and the Recycling of Man’s Resources: Folk and Modern Technologies for the Benefit of the Developing World.” This theme explicitly emphasised the benefits of the developing countries and lacked the critique of Western science nor emphasis on Eastern science that had originally been proposed by the committee. Through revisions, the final theme became “The Challenge of a New Road to Development,” incorporating both traditional science and recycling as sub-themes. Notably, the view of Korean science shifted from being separate from Western science to complementary. Recycling, initially symbolic of economic growth, transformed into a focus on actual waste management.

The Expo’s exhibits reflected a nationalistic and optimistic view of science. Merging tradition and modernity, visitors could see a solar-powered traditional turtle ship and a robot playing *Samulnori*, a traditional Korean music. The government pavilion showcased the harmonious relationship between the two. By walking through the exhibit hall, people could understand Korea certainly had its scientific achievements with evidence made by their ancestors. The “Running Korean” video emphasized a direct link from past to present, portraying shipbuilding as a “reinvention of the turtle ship,” and the Mugunghwa satellite as fulfilling an “ancient dream of observing the sky from Cheomseongdae,” an ancient observatory of Korea. However, this juxtaposition was not a direct link between

the two sciences, but rather a reflection of 1990s South Korea's socio-technical imaginary, a society's collective hopes and ideas about science and technology.

Bio

Hajeong Kim studied the history of science at Seoul National University. Her master dissertation, entitled "Daejeon Expo '93 and Science Culture in Early 1990s Korea," was published as a research article in 2020 and a book chapter edited by Daejeon City in 2023. Currently specialising in energy policy, her PhD dissertation research will focus on the evolving role of state-owned energy corporations in South Korea, particularly in the context of sustainable energy transition from natural gas to hydrogen.

Heesun Choi

Visiting Professor, Industrial Design Department, College of Arts, Chung-Ang University

North Korean Exhibition Design as Propaganda

Abstract

What does an exposition mean to the secretive state of North Korea, and how does North Korea want to show its national identity through the exhibition space? North Korea, which joined the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) late in 2007, has been interested in international expositions since their establishment. In the 1960s, North Korea knocked on the door of international fairs and trade shows, and in 1985 it participated for the first time in the Plovdiv Special Expo in Bulgaria. Officially, North Korea participated in Expo 2010 Shanghai and Expo 2019 Beijing (International Horticultural Exhibition) in China.

Based on the understanding of the purpose of its participation in the world events through the articles written in North Korea, this research analyses its design characteristic of the exhibition space. By tracing different types of international expos, it is found that North Korea tries to show its national identity to the world by illustrating the Juche idea by using colours, symbols and flowers with specific meanings and by establishing a clear visual spatial hierarchy as a propaganda poster image.

Bio

Hee Sun Choi is a visiting professor in the Department of Design at Chung-Ang University in South Korea. Since receiving her Doctor of Design (DDes) from Seoul National University in 2015, she has been conducting specialised research on North Korean design. Her recent publications include the two volumes of design history books *North Korean Industrial Art as Design: 1945-1999* and *2000-2018*, published in 2020.

Changwon Park

Doctoral Researcher, Brunel Business School

Bridging Markets and Diplomacy: The Strategic Role of Korean Pavilions and Political Exchange & Cooperation in International Exhibitions

Abstract

The presentation explores the concept and role of exhibitions as vital marketplaces, tracing their historical roots and modern significance. Emphasising the importance of booth and pavilion design for SMEs entering international markets, it highlights Korea's strategic use of exhibitions to promote its national image. The study examines major exhibition centres like those in Germany, noting their influence on global trade. Drawing on the role of the Leipzig Trade Fair in East-West German cooperation, this presentation explores its implications for inter-Korean exchange. It demonstrates how exhibitions can foster human and material exchanges, offering a foundation for future diplomatic and economic cooperation between North and South Korea.

Bio

Dr Changwon Park is currently pursuing a Doctoral Research programme in Information Systems Management at Brunel Business School. His research focuses on the impact of people's movements on the spatial value and performance of the exhibition (trade show) industry. Before entering academia, Dr Park spent over a decade in management roles for government-related organisations in Korea, where he organised and hosted trade shows. This professional experience sparked his academic interest in the hospitality industry, particularly in exhibitions. During this period, he received his first PhD with the dissertation entitled "A Study on the Inter-Korean Exchange and Cooperation Process in Exhibitions and Conventions—Application of Grounded Theory." Following his PhD, Dr Park served as a lecturer and research professor at KyungHee University. Leveraging his extensive industry background, his research continues to focus on business-related aspects of the exhibition industry.

Kyunghee Pyun

Associate Professor, History of Art, State University of New York, Fashion Institute of Technology

Equity and Gender in Korea's Representation at the World Skills Competition

Abstract

Like any other world organisations after WWII, the World Skills Competition was founded in 1946. The contest for the skilled young technicians and artisans quickly disseminated in the late 1950s. It was in 1970 that the World Skills Competition was hosted in Tokyo, Japan. By the end of the 1980s, Atlanta in the USA, Sydney in Australia, Seoul in Korea, and Chinese Taipei had all welcomed what was becoming the world's greatest international vocational skills event. The Bienal de São Paulo was created in 1951, following the model of the Biennale di Venezia, which was founded in 1895. These international competitions presented an opportunity for Korean artists, designers, and various professions in "skills." Most participants at the World Skills Competition were high school students enrolled in vocational schools while professional artists went to biennials. Few women were invited for the nation-sponsored competitions like these. The paper discusses the equity and inclusion in rapid industrialization in South Korea in the twentieth century. The legacy of the World Fairs and Expositions begun in the nineteenth century is critically examined in accessibility to elite education in the late twentieth century. Gendered labour of the early twentieth century persisted throughout the post-war industrial development. Emphasis on proficiency or mastery of certain skills among working-class young men should be critiqued in the context of neglected female workforce during the government-initiated economic development plans called "compressed modernity." Loss of heritage crafts and neglect of women's contribution to fine arts and industrial skills should be included in the larger context of the world expositions and skills competitions for their lack of equity and inclusion.

Bio

Kyunghee Pyun is Associate Professor of Art History at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York. Her scholarship focuses on the history of collecting, the reception of Asian art, and the intersectionality of art and technology and industrial history. She wrote *Fashion, Identity, Power in Modern Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); *Interpreting Modernism in Korean Art: Fluidity and Fragmentation* (Routledge, 2022); and *Dress History of Korea: Critical Perspectives of Primary Sources* (Bloomsbury, 2023). As an art critic, activist, and curator of contemporary art, she published *American Art from Asia: Artistic Praxis and Theoretical Divergence* (Routledge 2022) with Michelle Lim; and *Expanding the Parameters of Feminist Activism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022) with Gillian Hannum.

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