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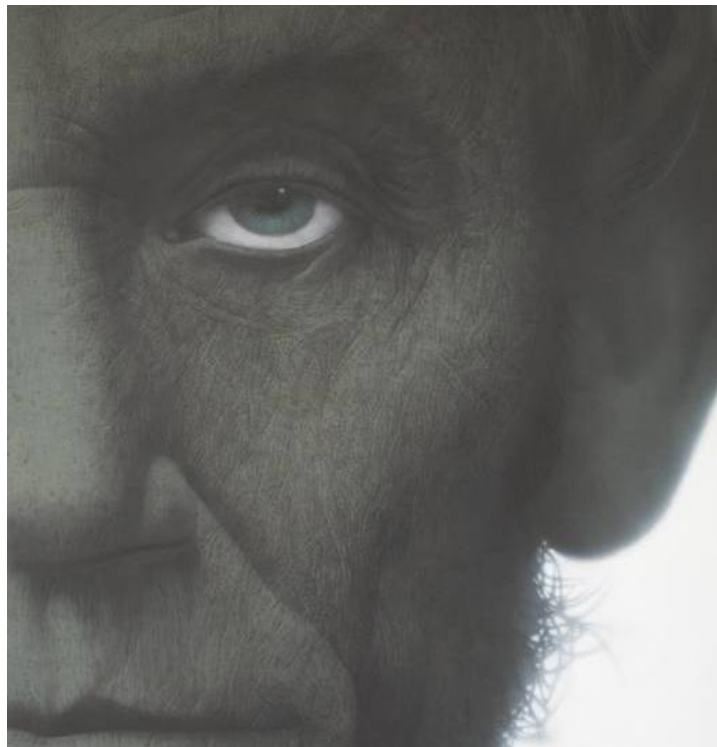
Since its establishment in 1949, Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute has been a major center for research, teaching, and publishing on modern and contemporary Asia. The Institute's mission is to train new generations of experts in the Asian humanities, social sciences, and the professions and to enhance understanding of East Asia in the wider community.

Seeing Eye-to-Eye with New Korean Art

By Nicole Ng, CC '11

Things haven't exactly been rosy for the art market in Korea in the past two years. Rattled by a series of forgery scandals and a devastating fire that devoured the country's beloved historical gate, the Korean art world is now reeling from an economic crisis.

But a silver lining remains for those with the capacity to expand abroad. Korean artists have generated quite a bit of excitement in cities like Beijing, New York and Miami—prompting several Korean
(GALLERY cont. on page 4)



Head down to the acclaimed Arario Gallery to see cutting edge Korean art. Above, part of *Lincoln* (2008) by Hyung Koo Kang.

Korean Power, Hard and Soft

By Joyce Ng, BC '11

How does a nation gain power and maintain influence? No doubt this is a question that preoccupies the minds of many a politician, but in the 40-minute lecture delivered by Professor Shin-wha Lee, the dual concepts of power and influence were effectively conveyed. Considering the relative brevity of the lecture, the audience sat through what was a lucid crash course in contemporary East Asian political power play.

Using a PowerPoint presentation derived from a paper that she is currently working on, Professor Lee gave a clear and crisp delivery on

soft power as a crucial political bargaining tool in the East Asian region. The definition of soft power and its difference from hard power was a theme that Professor Lee returned to again and again. Soft power is the

An agent of Korean soft power, *Hallyu*, otherwise known as the “Korean wave” in popular culture, has already extended its influence throughout the region.

ability to “attract and persuade without coercion and payment”, while hard power is the more concrete manifestation of a country's military prowess and economic prosperity. Both, she argues, are of vital importance to a

nation's state-building and simultaneous influence on a worldwide level.

With hard power, a nation cannot be ignored, but with enough soft power, a nation can be respected. Thus in order to achieve an elevated status amongst countries, a nation must adopt a two-pronged approach in gaining not only hard power, but soft power as well. In Professor Lee's words, “You need hard power to successfully project the soft power.” The idea of “soft power” is not difficult to grasp; rather, it is the multitude of things that come under this heading that surprises. An agent of Korean soft power, *Hallyu*, otherwise known as the “Korean wave” in popular culture, has already extended its influence in the form of
(LECTURE cont. on page 2)



Original illustration by Sonia Tycko, CC '09

(LECTURE contd. from page 1)

Korean television dramas, street fashion, pop stars, and teen idols.

Much of soft power deals with branding the national image, both domestically and internationally. The self-esteem that a nation owns has a direct correlation to how the nation is perceived overseas, in that a nation with more national pride will convey a sense of unity that other countries may either see as appealing or intimidating. As for the latter sentiment, Professor Lee made sure to add a word of caution, "Stronger nationalism in a globalized world can have negative connotations." Yet the irony remains: strong national pride must exist for the effective projection of soft power.

The question-and-answer session that immediately followed Professor Lee's presentation quickly branched off to the oft-debated topic of

North Korean isolationism. Professor Lee made a few references to North Korea—the main focus of her talk was on South Korea—so some of the questions seemed out of context. Moreover, instead of posing a question to the speaker, one member of the audience made several attempts to promote Korean nationalism and his personal conviction that Korea will definitely achieve reunification. Though he was only speaking on behalf of himself, there were several other members in the audience who either murmured, or nodded their head in agreement.

About Soundings:

Published monthly by the Weatherhead Undergraduate Council, *Soundings* is edited by Preeti Bhattacharji. If you have any questions or comments, or would like to contribute, you can contact her at pb2205@columbia.edu.

The Korea (High) Society

By Hannah Kim, GS '10

Since 1995, The Korea Society has chosen to honor one or more "distinguished Koreans or Americans in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the promotion of U.S.-Korea relations" through The General James A. Van Fleet award. Arguably one of the most prestigious awards in the field of U.S.-Korea relations, it is presented at the annual dinner hosted by The Korea Society. The award was named in honor of General Van Fleet, the first president of The Korea Society, for his leadership as commander of the U.S. Eighth Army during the Korean War in 1951.

Previous notable recipients include the Peace Corps Korea Volunteers (2008) for their democratic activism in Korea

during 1966-1981, The Freeman Foundation (2007) for their continued financial support of The Korea Society, and former President George H.W. Bush (2005) who facilitated China's formal recognition of South Korea in 1992.

The Korea Society's annual dinner is also a major source of fundraising for this non-profit organization through corporate sponsorships and ticket sales, but primarily through the contribution of distinguished keynote speakers, such as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (2007) and the former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (2006). This year's keynote speaker is Special Representative for North Korean Policy, Stephen W. Bosworth, who was appointed in February 2009. Mr. Bosworth served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea from 1997

to 2001 and was an adjunct professor of International Relations at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

This year's honorees are Chung Mong-koo, chairman of the Hyundai-Kia Automotive Group, and Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State. Chairman Chung is recognized for his management skills, which have pushed Hyundai-Kia to become the world's sixth-largest automaker. He was also noted in 2004 by *BusinessWeek* magazine as one of the year's best managers. Former Secretary of State Kissinger's notable accomplishments include his involvement in the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory (1984-1990), Defense Policy Board (2001-2008), the Nobel Peace Prize (1973), and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977) which is the nation's highest civilian award.

The Korea Society's 2009

Annual Dinner will be hosted at The Waldorf Astoria on East 49th between Park and Lexington Avenue on Tuesday, June 9, 2009. The reception will be hosted at 6:30PM in the Jade Room, and dinner will be served at 7:30PM in the Grand Ballroom.

Tickets can be purchased on the website and include options for individual tickets at \$400 as an Associate or table purchases at \$50,000 as Benefactor. Although tickets are available to both members and non-members of The Korea Society, the pricing does lend a bit of exclusivity to this black-tie event.

The Korea Society's 2009 Annual Dinner
The Waldorf Astoria
301 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Tuesday, June 9, 2009
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Unwind Over Lunch at HanGawi

By Christine E. Kwon, CC '10

Twenty minutes late to my noon reservation, I run onto 32nd Street, frantically making my way east across “Korea Way.” With its large Korean signs, redolent odors of *kalbi*, and trendy girls clutching tiny cups of frozen yogurt, 32nd Street does have enough activity to be reminiscent of Seoul. But embedded within the myriad shops stands HanGawi, whose aged wooden doors suggest a wholly different Korea.

The foyer opens slightly to a long wooden corridor, lined with simple rectangular tables that lie just a foot off of the ground. One is to dine, in traditional fashion, upon square seat cushions on the floor. Calmness exudes from the walls. The doors close behind me, and immediately, my frazzled panic from having arrived 25 minutes late and alone begins to lift. Shoes are removed, and a waiter dressed in the simple, gray

pajama-like outfit of a Buddhist temple attendant leads me to my table, padding across the pine floor in soft, sock-like slippers. HanGawi is not another iteration of the familiar Korean restaurants ubiquitous to the American suburbia.

Saliently, it is vegetarian. Barbecue short-rib beef, a staple of most Korean restaurants, is replaced by offerings of delicate rolls and noodles, thick, warm porridges and stews, and fragrant mountain roots and vegetables. Truth be told, I am at first a bit skeptical. HanGawi refers to itself as “a vegetarian shrine in another place and time,” and this motto strikes me as suspiciously New Age-y, a ploy to appeal to Western sensibilities of health and well-being and emphasize the exoticism attributed to elements of East Asian culture and spiritualism.

In some ways, perhaps, HanGawi is guilty of employing some of these Orientalist tactics: the servers’ cotton ballet slipper-like socks adorned in a delicate flower pattern,

waiters who kneel tableside as if in prayer while writing down your order, dishes with titles like “grilled tofu delight”—it can be a bit much. At the same time, however, this is all part of the carefully-crafted HanGawi experience: an escape that consumes not only all of your sense but also your sense of time and space.

My friend finally arrives, and we both order the mini prix-fixe lunch, a complete meal with a porridge, appetizer, entrée, and dessert for \$20, an unbeatable bargain for a restaurant the *New York Times* categorizes as “very expensive.” Our pumpkin and spinach porridges arrive in small metal bowls like pots of paint in beautiful, opaque shades of butter-orange and spring leaves. Grainy and viscous, so thick each dip coats the spoon, my pumpkin porridge contains a hint of sweetness with a substance that is all subtlety and warmth.

I have next ordered *japchae* (translated under the cringe-worthy title “vermicelli delight”), soft, transparent noodles with lightly sautéed vegetables and chilies wrapped and steamed in a brown paper packet, which the waiter opens at the table to release the fragrant steam of sesame and chilies. The noodles are delicate and spicy, enough to pique the taste buds without overwhelming them. Our temple attendant pads in and out quietly, replacing our bowls and plates between courses.

My entrée, vegetarian stone bowl rice, arrives with a faint sizzle—the sound of

rice browning against the sides of the scorching stone bowl. It is topped with colorful shredded vegetables, shoots, and roots, and served with *kochujang*, Korean chili paste. The ingredients are of great quality, and their simple and unadorned presentation allows their individual flavors to develop and deepen unimpeded with each bite. My friend’s dish, the tofu clay pot, is a thick, bubbling stew with thick chunks of vegetables and tofu, surprisingly clean-tasting, he says, but hearty enough that there is no meat to be missed. It’s not “obviously” vegetarian, he comments; our meals are balanced and complete in and of themselves.

Small dark bowls with a clear, refreshing liquid, a few pieces of apple, and a sprinkling of pine nuts conclude our meals, and it has come time for us to leave HanGawi. We retrieve our shoes and gingerly step back out onto 32nd Street. “Oh,” my friend says. “They tricked me. It’s still bright outside.” It is not yet 2 p.m. but it is as if I have been thrust back into the chaos of Seoul/New York after a long sojourn behind the wooden doors of HanGawi. It is indeed a shrine of sorts, a complete experience of mind, body, and, of course, appetite.

Mini Prix Fixe Lunch \$20
Appetizers \$8-\$13
Main Dishes \$15-\$22

Reservations recommended.

HanGawi
12 E 32nd St
(212) 213-0077



HanGawi helps you escape the stressful city, whether in Seoul or New York.

(GALLERY contd. from page 1)

auction houses to set up offshore branches. Arario Gallery New York is the fourth expansion of the original Arario house based in Cheosun and Seoul. Designed by the acclaimed architect David Adjaye, the 20,000 square feet gallery is among the largest contemporary galleries in the Chelsea district and aims to bridge the proverbial East-West cultural divide "through the works of Asia's greatest contemporary artists."

I decided to check out Arario's sneak preview installation of an upcoming exhibit by Hyung Koo Kang, one of the most important portraitists working in Korea today. Kang's portrait of *Gogh* (2006) sold for more than \$350,000 at a 2007 debut auction, even as the market was already feeling the pinch of an economic decline.

Kang began his methodical investigation of the human face 20 years ago, fuelled by the varying interpretations that a single, fleeting facial expression can yield. A scholar of visual illusion, Kang is as invested in the viewer as he is in the subject of his painting. His subjects, quite often artists or celebrities, tend to fix an inverse gaze upon the viewer, provoking a visual showdown of sorts.

So there I was, completely bowled over in an intimately lit studio, standing literally eye-to-eye with a blown-up version of a wrinkled, mop-haired Andy Warhol that exuded a certain George Clooney smirk-charm. In *Warhol* (2008), iconic halved images of the deceased artist are produced across four large canvases coated in different monochrome hues, a homage perhaps to Warhol's celebrated silkscreen portraits. Here, Kang demonstrates his mastery of repetition as each recurring depiction invokes a different emotive angle to the pop artist.

What was perhaps more

haunting was Kang's solemn rendition of *Lincoln* (2008), a presidential figure that resonates in America's recent political discourse. Awash in dark grey against a stark white background, the withered skin and tussled neck hair of Abraham Lincoln were captured in such meticulous detail, the painting looked like a high-resolution photograph. Kang employs Q tips and brushes to bring forth details invisible to the naked eye, creating an incredible texture that is juxtaposed against the velvety slick canvas surface.

Having closely studied the works of artists like Chuck Close and Leonardo da Vinci, Kang betrays an affinity for hyperrealism, but he rejects a wholesale adoption of its formula, choosing instead to work within a monochrome palette that affords him greater precision. Other works on display include attempts to capture the youth of Audrey Hepburn as an adult, as well as *Monroe* (2009), a disconcerting image of the actress that Kang distorts to the point of caricature.

In all of his paintings, Kang paradoxically achieves a narrative through the neutrality of his subjects' facial expression. Endowing them with a vacuous but hypnotic gaze, Hyung compels the viewer to engage with his subjects a little longer, to contemplate their life trajectories amidst the ravages of time and nature. So the next time you decide there is more to Korea than *bimbimbap*, karaoke, and 'ethnic' *hanboks*, head down to Arario for a sense of where Korean artists today are headed.

Hyung Koo Kang
Arario Gallery New York
521 W 25th St.
(212)206-2761

May 2009 - June 2009

Upcoming Events at the WEAI

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2009

Asia Society Business Writers Series Lecture:

Getting China and India Right

Anil K. Gupta and Haiyan Wang, co-authors of *Getting China and India Right*

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Avenue at 70th Street

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009

Asia Society Business Writers Series Forum:

The Global Entrepreneurship Revolution

Linda Rottenberg, CEO and co-founder of Endeavor

Moderated by Sheridan Prasso, Contributing Editor, FORTUNE magazine; Associate Fellow, Asia Society

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Avenue at 70th Street

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2009

A Decade of Contemporary Prints: 1999 – 2009

The LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies

Opening Reception: May 29, 2009, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Exhibition Dates: May 29 – June 13, 2009

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2009

Kind of Red An Evening of New Jazz

Featuring players from the Columbia University's Louis Armstrong Jazz Performance Program, Beijing's Celebrated Red Hand Jazz band, and special guest artists Wu Na and Zhang Hongyan, China's "Queen of Pipa."

The Concert at Tsinghua University Center for Art-Education Function Hall will be followed by a reception and jam session at D-22!

8:00 PM

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2009

2009 Symposium in Beijing:

"Columbia and China: Past and Future"

12:30 – 9:30 PM

Treasury Ball Room, Westin Financial Street
Beijing, China

China and Columbia in Photos

An exhibition of photography chronicling the historical ties between the University and China will be unveiled at the cocktail reception following the symposium.

7:00 PM