RESEARCH TRIPS SOUTH KOREA

AN IMMERSION INTO KOREAN CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS



ARTCENA

ARTCENA is the National Centre for Circus, Street and Theatre Arts, created by the French Ministry of Culture. It coordinates Circostrada and has a permanent seat on its Steering Committee. It works closely with sector professionals and offers them publications and multimedia resources through its digital platform. It develops mentoring, training, tools and services to help them in their daily practices. It provides support to contemporary creation through national programmes and encourages international development of these three sectors.

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CIRCOSTRADA
European Network Circus and Street ArtS

Since 2003, Circostrada Network has been working to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond. With more than 100 members from over 30 countries, it helps building a sustainable future for these sectors by empowering cultural players through activities in observation and research, professional exchanges, advocacy, capacity-building and information.

FOREWORD

In October 2018, Circostrada embarked a dozen of its members to Seoul (South Korea) for a one-week research trip to explore circus and street arts and gain a better understanding of their ecosystem. This field exploration followed a first research trip to Japan, organized in December 2016 with the complicity of Setouchy Circus Factory, and a second one held in Ethiopia, in partnership with Fekat Circus, in February-March 2018.

This research trip took place from 4th to 10th October 2018, in the frame of the Seoul Street Arts Festival–the largest street arts festival in Korea–and the Performing Arts Market Seoul (PAMS), which hosted a European focus on the occasion, organized in close relation and with the support of the European Commission. This focus gathered key European networks and platforms from the sectors, among which: the IETM, In SITU, CircusNext, On the Move, European Dancehouse, European Theatre Convention, and Circostrada.

The programme included key professional meetings with local stakeholders – Korean artists, organisations, cultural operators–visits of central venues dedicated to circus and street arts, various showcases, a dense artistic programme, some qualitative networking time, and many other parallel cultural activities, all set up with a view of grasping the stakes of performing arts in Korea, creating bonds with the main players of the field, and expanding the network's understanding, vision and connections of these art forms.

This publication aims to render the learnings from this research trip, by sharing the knowledge, experience and resources acquired throughout this one-week immersion in another culture, on the traces of Korean circus and street arts.



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DRAGONS IN THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

Report on the Circostrada network's research trip to South Korea for the Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) and the Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF) in October 2018



© Arnaud Bertereau

Stéphane Segreto-Aguilar is Coordinator of Circostrada Network and Head of Development at ARTCENA. Together with a delegation of several Circostrada Network's members, he attended both SSAF and PAMS last October 2018, as part of a research trip he conducted to connect with the Korean circus arts and street arts scenes.

For the last five years or so, bilateral relationships between South Korea and European countries have flourished. Examples include the Institut Français' France-Korea Year in 2015-2016, the British Council's UK/KOREA Creative Futures initiative in 2017 and the various strategic partnerships implemented with Catalonia, Germany and Finland. In 2018, Europe was given pride of place and asked to present a focus session at the Performing Arts Market in Seoul (PAMS) and at the Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF). Buoyed by this dynamic, the Circostrada network took advantage of this major calendar event to organise a research trip to South Korea in an attempt to gain deeper insight into local issues and meet key figures from the country's street arts and contemporary circus scene. This is our report on a week in Seoul.

A World in a City

The city of Seoul is located on the Han River and has a population of around 10 million people, with a further 25 million living in the surrounding metropolitan area. As well as being home to nearly half the South Korean population, Seoul is also the world's fifth most populous city after Tokyo, Jakarta, Dehli and Manila, with a slightly higher population than Shanghai, Mumbai and New York. Over the past 20 years, the ancient capital of the former Kingdom of Joseon has been transformed into a key Asian megalopolis and is a contender for the title of North-East Asia's largest commercial hub in the face of strong competition from several cities in China and Japan. Buoyed by the economic success generated by the country's methodical industrial policy pursued since the early 1960s, the city also has designs on strengthening its cultural influence not only in Asia, but around the world.

Soft Power

Ever since poet Do Jong-whan was named Minister of Culture, Sport and Tourism in June 2017, South Korean cultural policy seems to have flourished. A new strategic cultural plan was launched on 16 May 2018 at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) following a year-long process involving the participation of 8,000 experts. Under the banner of an ambitious title ('Culture Vision 2030'), the government has committed to supporting cultural diversity, promoting artistic creativity and guaranteeing total freedom of expression for artists and cultural organisations [1]. The theme of cultural policy for the 2018-2022 period will be 'Culture With People', and there will be a focus on independence and transparency, the transformative power of the arts, the social role of culture, decentralisation and new forms of governance.

The Korean Wave

Commonly known as 'Hallyu', the export of South Korean culture overseas is a phenomenon that dates back to the 1990s. It began in China and now reaches right across the globe. Films, television series, reality TV shows, video games and, of course, K-pop are the spearheads of this strategy, but performing arts are also benefiting from this global prominence. The Performing Arts Market in Seoul [2] (PAMS) is certainly the best example of this: it is a key unifying event for the entire industry, and is one of the two leading performing arts markets in Asia, the other being the Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama [3] (TPAM). Organised every October by the Korean Arts Management

1 Around 10,000 artists, writers, filmmakers and painters had been blacklisted for having criticised Park Geun-hye, supported opposition candidates or implicated the government in the sinking of the Sewol ferry, which caused the deaths of over 300 people in April 2014. Park Geun-hye, who was President of South Korea between 2013 and 2017, was sentenced in 2018 to 25 years in prison for abuse of power, corruption, coercion and embezzlement.

2 The next event will take place from 7 to 10 October 2019. For further information, visit: http://en.pams.or.kr/.

3 The Tokyo Performing Arts Market (TPAM) was inaugurated in 1995 and takes place every February. Since 2011, it has been held in Yokohama, the capital of the prefecture of Kanagawa and Japan's second most populous city with 3.7 million inhabitants, located 40 kilometres to the south of the capital. The next event will take place from 8 to 16 February 2020. For further information, visit: https://www.tpam.or.jp/info/en/.

Service [1] (KAMS), PAMS is an opportunity to see South Korean and international performances and excerpts from future shows, visit creation and performance venues, participate in round-table discussions, and meet and exchange with professionals from around the world. New for 2018: several festivals were involved in PAMS, notably the Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF) [2], which now takes place at the same time. Another unique feature of the 2018 event was the European focus [3] of both the PAMS and SPAF programmes, which allowed several European networks and platforms – mainly those supported by the Creative Europe programme – to participate in two round-table discussions at these key events [4]. The first of these [5], 'How to build an international network', was an opportunity to highlight several examples of good practice in the development of European cultural networks. The second [6], 'EU-Korea: cooperation in contemporary circus and street arts', highlighted possible forms of collaboration relating to residencies, co-productions and crossover marketing in the two sectors.



Unity in differences © Seoul Street Arts Festival

"Unity in Differences"

The Seoul Street Arts Festival (SSAF) is another major annual event that provides the perfect opportunity to see the latest street arts performances and meet professionals from all over the world. The festival began life in 2003 as the Hi Seoul Festival, before refocusing its core mission on promoting street arts in 2013 and changing its name in 2016. It has been supported by the city of Seoul since its beginnings. It is also supported by the Seoul Foundation for Arts & Culture (SFAC), which was created in 2014 with a view to establishing Seoul as the creative capital of the world and encouraging the city's residents to get involved in the arts. SSAF 2018, designed by Kim Jong-seok, was a four-day event entitled 'Unity in Differences'. The programme featured 46 performances from 10 different countries, 33 of which were presented as part of the main festival and the other 13 presented in the fringe. The SSAF is an eclectic and bountiful event that covers the entire spectrum of styles and formats in existence, making clever use of a variety of spaces in the historic city centre near Gyeongbokgung Palace. The fantastic range of performances highlights the richness of this festival: the comedy of the CroquikyBrothers and the Long & Short Company, the delicate artistry of Yoo Ji-young with *Canon of Proportions*, the musicality of De BONGnJOULE with The *Road to Heaven*, the impudence of the Baram Company with *Meat, Pig*, the intensity of Theatre Momggol with *Impulse*, the dramatic force of Elephants Laugh with *MULJIL 2*, and the blazing prowess of Hwarang Art Pyrotechnics. Audiences are always involved and particularly enjoy performances tinged with wonder, absurdity or irony; they move from place to place, enjoying food purchased between performances from the dozens of street food stands erected for the occasion.

1 KAMS is the South Korean agency dedicated to developing international exchange and promoting South Korean performing arts. For further information, visit: http://eng.gokams.or.kr.

2 A month-long performing arts festival featuring South Korean and international performances. For further information, visit: http://spaf.or.kr/2018_eng/.

3 This focus session was developed in collaboration with the European Commission (via the DG EAC), the EU Delegation to the Republic of Korea and the various European diplomatic entities based in Seoul.

4 The other European organisations present alongside Circostrada included CircusNext, IN SITU, IETM, On the Move, European Dancehouse, the European Theatre Convention, the European Festival Association, Be SpectActive!, We are Europe and the European Music Exchange Office.

5 Meeting moderated by Monica Urian (DG EAC), with participation from Roberto Casarotto (European Dancehouse), Marie Le Sourd (On the Move), Stéphane Segreto-Aguilar (ARTCENA / Circostrada), Karen Stone (Germany Theater Magdeburg) and Nan van Houte (IETM).

6 Meeting moderated by Stéphane Segreto-Aguilar (ARTCENA / Circostrada), with participation from Nadia Aguir (IN SITU), Dong Hee Cho (Seoul Street Arts Creation Center) and Cécile Provôt (CircusNext).

Some History

Street arts in South Korea are extremely well funded, structured and dynamic. The contemporary history of this sector begins with the democratisation movements of the 1970s and 1980s, particularly 'Madanggeuk', a form of street theatre midway between social satire and observation. The major sporting events at the end of the 1980s [1] and the political changes of the 1990s [2] reinvigorated street arts creation, particularly through the use of unconventional venues, interdisciplinary experimentation and contact with international artists. Throughout the 1990s, a variety of festivals opened, but it was not until the 2000s that the sector was given its dues by audiences and the media, and recognised by the public authorities. Coordinated by the Korean Street Arts Association since 2007, artists, festivals and producers in the industry have worked tirelessly to champion and promote street arts through the development of research programmes, international relationships, street arts markets, networking sessions, publications, journals and advocacy.

Key Players

In addition to the Korean Street Arts Association, which is chaired by Yoon Jong-yeon and managed by Yim Jin, there are a number of other key players in the industry. The main one is the Seoul Street Arts Creation Center (SSACC), which is a hub of creativity, production, practice, education and promotion fully devoted to street arts and contemporary circus. Situated on the right bank of the Han River, a good hour from the city centre, it occupies a former pumping station transformed into an immense arts warehouse in 2015, covering around 18,000 m^2. Led by long-term director Dong Hee Cho, the SSACC is mainly active on the following fronts: artistic research and education, the provision of support for artists and new shows, skills development, the promotion of art forms and international exchange. It is also a leading light in the Circus Asia Network (CAN), which has recently united Asian organisations dedicated to the promotion and development of contemporary circus. Like the SSAF Festival, it is supported by the SFAC foundation and will soon open an artistic residency venue on the hillside above the pumping station. Another significant newcomer to the scene is Circus Cabaret, the first contemporary circus festival, held in May 2018, showcasing some European performances as well as several shows by South Korean companies. Major festivals promoting street arts outside of Seoul include the Ansan Street Arts Festival, the Goyang Lake Park Arts Festival and the Gwacheon Festival. Another key player is the Mapo Oil Tank Culture Park, one of the capital's first multidisciplinary venues devoted to street arts and contemporary circus.



Mapo Oil Tank Culture Park

Further information

In close collaboration with On the Move [3], the Circostrada network has recently produced a guide to Asian-European mobility for circus and street arts performers entitled 'SOYA: Stirring Opportunities with Yummy Asia' [4]. This document, which is available free-of-charge in English, lists existing projects and venues as well as funding opportunities and advice about initiating sustainable Asian-European collaborations. Those seeking a global perspective should also visit the KAMS and Asia-Europe Foundation [5] (ASEF) websites regularly. This foundation is a formidable resource that is also piloting the Mobility First! Initiative, which facilitates the mobility of individuals and organisations between Asia and Europe. Offering a more bilateral perspective, the Institut Français in South Korea is a great source of information with in-depth knowledge of the constantly evolving local issues, characteristics and stakeholders. Finally, a bilingual French-English publication exploring the knowledge and contacts gained during this research trip in greater detail will be published *pali-pali* [6] on the ARTCENA and Circostrada network resource portals.

1 The Asian Games in 1986 and the Summer Olympics in 1988.

2 The transition to democracy took place between 1988 and1993 with the creation of the Sixth Republic.

3 On the Move is a mobility information network composed of around 50 cultural organisations operating in 20 countries in Europe and around the world. Its mission is to foster and facilitate cultural mobility and cooperation, and it works to provide information on mobility opportunities for artists and culture professionals. For further information, visit: http://on-the-move.org.

4 Download and read the guide here.

5 For further information, visit: http://asef.org.

6 Literally 'quickly quickly' in Korean. It is a very current expression used to describe many aspects of South Korean culture and lifestyle.

OVERVIEW OF KOREAN STREET ARTS

On the history of Korean street arts: 1980s to current days

Street arts in Korea have been developing and expanding through different formats through history and went through different stages of development. The following overview will only focus on the most recent history of street arts, which can be summed up by the emergence of festivals and state-led public events, as well as the emergence of popular entertainment and arts with open format [1].

State Influence on Culture

Culture and arts in Korea have been overseen by the government for a long time, which impacted the field, as the political authorities monitored, by sanctioning and censuring, what type of artists and artworks would be produced and exposed to the public audience. The government also had the role of programming art through state-led cultural activities, such as the event of *Gukpung 81* [2]. This last event partly originated from the concept of 'street parades' and compulsory 'mass games'.

Street arts were not developed as much as their potential allowed, because of diverse interests linked to modern cities, such as a general urban restructuration and a rural exodus. Public spaces of city centers were neglected and only used for special national events. When not used, it was the duty of public institutions to fill these empty spaces with artistic goods belonging to the state. This led to a situation where the local authorities in charge of festivals also had a big influence on street arts, as they wer choosing the performances that were to be presented in these public spaces. The fact that local authorities had power over festivals also resulted in altering, reducing and eliminating street arts contents for political and administrative reasons. As such, the usual inherent characteristics of street arts (popular, easy access, diverse, freedom of expression) were suppressed.

Nowadays, government's decisions and political context continue to impact street arts. Some examples can be found in 2014 Sewol ferry accident [3], after which the number of festivals programmed in the Spring that year was reduced and a lot of them ended up being canceled. In 2015, the city of Gwacheon unilaterally changed the festival theme from street arts to horse show, and the Goyang Lake Park Arts Festival [4] had to suffer severe budget cuts. These cases show the instability of festival organisations as independent institutions, and the fact that they circled back to being related to the government, as allocated budget and the general festival organisation lie on state decisions.

However, there are also some positive aspects coming from the relation between street arts and the state, such as the active investment put by local governments into hel-



Muljil 2 - Elephants Laugh © Seoul Street Arts Festival

1 This synthesis was based on a lecture given by Jung Jin-Se, chief editor of Independent Arts Webzine Indien- bob, programmer of Seoul Fringe Festival and director of Theater-Moon. This article was approved by the lecturer.

2 Translated as "Wind of the Nation 81", it is a government hosted festival that took place in Seoul from May 28 to June 1, 1981. It was presented by the government as a festival to promote the country's cultural heritage, however, it was said to try and shape public opinion in a positive light following the Gwangju uprisings of May 1980 (protests against martial laws) where lots of citizens and students were massacred.

3 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39415794

4 http://www.gylaf.kr/2018/

ping the 'cultural autonomy', that was in part helped by the introduction of the local autonomy system in 1995 [1]. Moreover, in 2005 the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (SFAC) initiated a programme called 'Seoul street artists' to have a representation of the field within their non-profit organisation, which is funded by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG). Through this program they wanted to allow street artists to freely conduct their artistic projects, but also give easier access to performances and arts to citizens in their daily lives. One example of activity allowed by this project is the redesigning of some unused spaces in subway stations as street art performances spots. A similar initiative arose later, when artists, art planners and public institutions gathered and set up the Korean Street Arts Center [2] in 2009. In addition to these initiatives, the efforts of art planners and artists summed into the blooming of local festivals as main cultural events that invigorate the communities.

Characteristics of Korean Street Arts

The field of street arts in Korea ends up having mixed value orientations: it tries to overcome the modernist conception of art, but at the same time, it doesn't exactly reject artistic elitism. There is this 'artist's attitude' to strive for aesthetic pleasure that occasionally comes prior to an 'activist's attitude' to strive for cultural democratization. This 'omnivorous way' is also present in the art itself, and not only its purpose: Korean street arts have borrowed some characteristics from interdisciplinary arts, public arts and outdoor arts, which furnish it with abundant and diverse features. Usually the performances and installations are thought to fit different spaces, indoors or outdoors, and each artwork has been produced with various possibilities in mind rather than devised as a unique possibility, so it makes it impossible to apply strict criteria to it.

Korean street arts also clearly show attributes of mass culture, as the perceptions of 'mass culture' and 'streets' have shifted from 'strangeness' to 'familiarity'. They are more often linked to subcultural genres as graffiti, street dance, busking, the type of entertainment that satisfies people's tastes and go well with the atmosphere of specific areas, such as Daehak-ro and Hongdae, which attract a variety of generations and popular arts. However, street arts do not only comprise these types of 'popular' street arts, but also live artistic performances that would usually be presented indoors, such as circus and visual art performances.



Seoul and Today - No-W-Here Dance Company © Seoul Street Arts Festival

In the 1990s, festivals turned their attention to streets and decided to explore and present this artistic field to a broader audience. First, there was the Chuncheon International Mime Festival [3] that open its doors to streets arts in 1994, closely followed by the Gwacheon Festival [4] in 1997, and the Seoul Fringe Festival [5] in 1998. Street arts became even more related to festivals when two events were defined with the objective to bring together in a common place street arts that would be considered as wild and free: Hi Seoul Festival in 2003 (which later became the Seoul Street Arts Festival [6]) and Ansan Street Arts Festival [7] in 2005.

Moreover, Korean street arts often have as main purpose to satisfy an aesthetic value, whereas its social impact might be overlooked. However, this idea slightly changed in the past decades, as after a series of tragic events, artists decided to rethink their art and to unit and denounce these events and use their art as political means. Compared with the Western situation, where arts soaked in cultural democratization, Korean street arts have not been saturated with these characteristics, and art

1 https://www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/profile-Korea.pdf

2 https://www.facebook.com/pg/streetarts.kr/about/. The purpose of this project is to encourage communications between genres, broadening the scope of 'street arts' from street theater-oriented activities to include fields as diverse as visual arts, dance, music, and has served to facilitate greater networking between people involved in street arts.

3 For more info: http://www.mimefestival.com/2018/en/main

4 For more info: http://www.gcfest.or.kr/

5 For more info: http://eng.seoulfringefestival.net/

6 For more info: http://www.festivalseoul.or.kr/html_eng/

7 For more info: http://www.ansanfest.com/_en/

is not often used as means to denounce and spread a politically or socially infused message. Through a series of incidents and events within the country, the artistic scene began to really realize the potential and possibilities within street arts and to question their own objectives, missions and the purpose of their art, trying to go beyond the simple aesthetics of their creations, but also trying to tackle social issues by voicing their opinions. Through these events, they realized that uncritical acceptance of popular appeal (trying to please the general mass) and unquestioned pursuit of the arts (not being critical on their own artistic process and not going beyond their art pieces to understand the meanings it can hold) could weaken and tarnish the meaning and possibility of street arts. They wanted to focus more on the 'public and social commitment' that making art requires.

Two recent examples that made artists rethink this are the 2014 Sewol Ferry accident and the 2016 Candlelight Rally [1], which was a peaceful demonstration held in the vast space spanning from Gwanghwamun Square to the Seoul Plaza, and led up to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. This last event served as the historic momentum to revive street artists' inspirations again and refresh their perception of democracy. The protesters not only shouted political slogans but at the same time gave spontaneous cultural performances and colored the squares and streets in a festive mood, and some of the blacklisted by the government and disadvantaged theater artists set up a makeshift theater called *The Black Tent* and other performed to mourn the Sewol Ferry disaster in the square, thus fulfilling their duty as citizens and artists, coming together for peace and social cohesion.

Urban and Social Spaces

Street arts in Korea also helped to change citizen's vision of their surroundings in the city: it can grow and diversify in terms of its influence and contents, and that process makes artists, planners and the audience more aware and help them renew their visions of the city, community and arts. The public recognition of city streets shifted from 'crossroads of everyday lives' to 'fields of cultural politics', which is also linked to artists trying to find a deeper meaning to their art. Artists increasingly developed their activities in outdoor spaces, and street art started to integrate into the urban landscape, notably in the Munrae-dong area, where artists were looking for cheap rent for their studios in the vacant factory buildings of the area to attempt their own street arts, representing the peculiarity of the area. The artists tried to reflect their views and perceptions of the city into their creations, to help revive this decaying city space.

Moreover, throughout the development of street arts in Korea, there was a shift from only organising festivals to promote street arts, to creating and opening centers specifically dedicated to street arts, that are grounded and integrated into the urban space. Two main examples of this shift are the industrial reconversion of two sites turned into arts centers: the remodeling of the water intake station in Guui-dong into the Seoul Street Arts Creation Center in 2015 and the remodeling of a huge oil storage tank in Sangam-dong into the Oil Tank Culture Park [2] in 2017.



The road to heaven - BONGnJOULE © Seoul Street Arts Festival

Also linked to the question of the place of arts within public spaces, there are multiple thresholds to reach the point of being able to perform in theaters: a lack of artistic infrastructures, especially regarding theaters, as there are not enough public theaters to accommodate all theater designers, moreover, professionalism and excellence are prerequisites to perform in the traditional indoor theater. That is why a lot of artists tend to experiment with their art outdoor, in alternative spaces, before they enter the theater. However, the aim to enter the theater slightly died down as some artists deliberately choose the public space as their stage because they cannot afford the high cost of performing indoors. Moreover, after trying out and presenting their work indoor and experiencing with street arts, some artists give up entering the theater and choose to stay in the streets, to avoid putting limits around their work and being able to expand beyond traditional spaces and venues, and meet a new, different audience in the streets.

1 https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/revolution-by-candlelight-how-south-koreans-toppled-a-government

2 http://parks.seoul.go.kr/template/sub/culturetank.do

ARTISTIC FOCUS : *C'EST PAS LÀ, C'EST PAR LÀ* AN INTERVIEW WITH JUHYUNG LEE



© Michel Somville

Linked to the Candlelight Rallye and other social demonstrations that happened in Korea, we can take a look at Juhyung Lee's work *C'est pas là, c'est par là*, which is a participative installation performance. This piece revolves around social issues and is performed internationally. Juhyung Lee was born in 1991 and studied at FAI-AR (Marseille, FR), and then founded the Galmae Company.

Your show *C'est pas là, c'est par là (It's not here, it's over here)* begins with a soundscape created from recordings of a demonstration in South Korea. Could you tell us a bit more about why you chose these sounds, and what the significance of this demonstration was?

The sounds were recorded at a demonstration that took place on 18 April 2015 in Seoul, South Korea in response to the sinking of the Sewol ferry. It was the vessel that sunk off the coast of South Korea with 299 young people aboard. The whole of Korea watched the disaster unfold in real time. We demonstrated to demand that the government explain what had happened, and to express our sadness and anger in the street. This tragedy revealed the true Korea. The ferry sank because the company wanted to earn more money by carrying passengers, equipments and goods over and above the vessel's official capacity. The students on-board that day had decided to take the boat because it was cheaper than flying, and they weren't from wealthy families. The captain escaped first, while the students followed instructions telling them to 'stay exactly where they were'. In the aftermath, those responsible for the tragedy sought only to find reasons that would absolve them of their actions. I wanted to use sounds from this demonstration because I was there, and it is where my project took root.

It seems that you want to reach the widest possible audience. Why is it important for you to involve your audience in your art?

It makes me feel good. It makes me feel good to see a mixed audience. It makes me feel good to see that people who don't want to pay for a ticket still come to see my show.

What is the main message that you would like to convey to the public through your show?

I need to think how to answer that. I think your question assumes that I have a message to convey to the public and that, in addition, audiences need to 'understand' my intention, that they have to understand my message in order to fully engage with my work. That's not what I'm trying to achieve because I feel that this implies that there is only one correct response to it (mine). This way of addressing the relationship between the artist and the audience creates a hierarchy. I don't believe that a work is merely the realisation of an artist's intentions. I create because I have a need to do so and afterwards, the work connects with audiences on its own. It leaves the artist behind because audiences perceive the work in their own way. In any case, that's what I wish for my work. I don't have any particular message to send to the audience. I do what I need to do.

Could you tell us a little more about your journey as a Korean artist who trained in France and performs internationally? How have these experiences influenced your work?

It's hard to analyse the impact my experiences have had at the moment because *C'est pas là, c'est par là* is my first show and I have only just started a new production. I can only really comment on what has happened so far. In the past, I was pretty distanced from the arts. The first time I encountered street arts in my area of Seoul was in 2012 when I saw *Bivouac*, a guest show that had been invited to the Seoul Street Art Festival. It was a powerful moment. I moved to Marseilles in 2014 and spent a year as a trainee at Générik Vapeur meeting students from the FAI-AR School of Street Arts. I wanted to see more things, to find out about training opportunities and, above all, to create my own work. So I trained at FAI-AR. I met lots of different people and made friends with other artists. And I created this show, which is strongly linked to my experience in Korea. I created the production with French colleagues. My work gained visibility in France thanks to the 'Panorama des Chantiers' event organised by FAI-AR, which gives students the opportunity to present part of their work at the end of their training. This recognition in France had an international impact, and we have performed in nine different countries this year. Touring in different countries has made me realise that the things we have in common (in the positive as well as negative sense, as it also reveals a certain global homogenisation) are more important than our differences.



C'est pas là, c'est par là - Juhyung Lee © Sujin SON

Further information

For more info about *C'est pas là, c'est par là*:
https://www.productionsbis.com/juhyung-eng

KEY KOREAN PERFORMING ARTS ORGANISATIONS

Korea Street Arts Association

Korea Street Arts Association

한국거리예술협회

Korea Street Arts Association is an organization for street theater companies, artists, festivals and producers in Korea, which was founded in 2007 in the name of Korea Street Arts Research Institute. Since its establishment as an association based on memberships, it has had more than 200 companies and artists as core members of the organization. The Association works for following tasks:

- Research and education programmes on arts in public spaces
- Street Arts Market and professional networking programmes
- Programming, promoting, and planning for street arts events
- International outreach programmes for the companies and artists
- Publications, reviews, and consultancy of cultural policies and activities

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ⓕ Korea Street Arts Association



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KAMS / PAMS

Korean Arts Management Service (KAMS)[1] was established in January 2006 as a non-profit, public organisation for the development of Korean performing arts. Supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, KAMS offers multi-faceted assistance that aims to boost the industrial competitiveness of the Korean arts within international exchanges and bolster the sustainability of arts organisations by developing diverse and effective support systems for more efficient arts management. This initiative is an important pillar of South Korea's cultural policies, that focuses on fostering the development of arts and culture contents and their expansion into foreign markets.

As such, KAMS operates as a center for evaluating professional arts organisations and providing them with comprehensive support. It functions as a bridge between different levels: from the government to the creators, from the creators to the distribution network, and finally onto the audience.

KAMS mainly tackles 3 areas of assistance: planning and administration, international exchange, research and development consulting. It includes several services, such as:

- designation and fostering of professional arts organisations/groups,
- analysis of operating performance and publication of whitepapers,
- discovery of best practices,
- solicitation of support for marketplace development and grant support,
- organisation of preliminary workshops and promotion of general projects to the public.

KAMS was able to develop partnerships and expand relations with multiple areas in the world, and tailor various exchange strategies for different regions to tap into overseas markets through its network of international partners.



© PAMS 2018

Every year in October, KAMS hosts the Performing Arts Market in Seoul[2] (PAMS), which gathers hundreds of professionals in Seoul. Each event is organised with an ambitious vision of serving as Asia's representative contemporary performing arts market and is organised around different types of activities: showcases, booth exhibitions promoting artists and their works, varied academic sessions on current issues of the arts world, and networking programmes for arts professionals. In this regard, it has several missions, including:

- invigorate Korean performances' distribution and exportation based on diverse and active creation and production,
- gather international performing arts professionals to share trends and information and discuss issues regarding global performing arts, such as changing art policies, economic turmoil and changing relationships with the audience,
- create an opportunity for Korean local artists to meet with international cultural players and their global counterparts,
- be a networking occasion for performing arts professionals to share their expertise, experience and new ideas to inspire artists and form a rich discourse on exploring bigger markets and attracting audiences.

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1 http://eng.gokams.or.kr/main/main.aspx
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Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture & the Seoul Dance Centre

서울문화재단

SFAC is a non-profit public organisation established and funded by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG).
The Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture and the Seoul Dance Center (SDC) reopened in April of 2016 and has been operated as a space to view and support Korean dance ecosystem by supporting dance creation, running projects such as international exchange programs, dance film project, and monthly webzine as well as continuing venue rental for those who are involved in dance field. Seoul Dance Center is trying to be a space where experiment both relationship between dance, dance artists, and audience and possibilities of art of dance.
The Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture and the Seoul Dance Center (SDC) support artists in dance field to arrange creative base and offer opportunities to attempt diverse experiments so that they can extend their capabilities. As a part of this effort, especially, the 2019 residency is open to both national and international to stimulate exchanges and networking among artists.*

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CAN – A brand new Asian network for Circus Arts

CAN
Circus Asia Network

The Circus Asia Network (CAN) was officially created in 2017 thanks to 12 founding organisations based in 7 Asia-Pacific countries (Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan). Its main objective is to cultivate an environment for contemporary circus companies and organisations in Asia thanks to the collaborations of its members.

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© Seoul Circus Festival

ARTISTIC FOCUS : WHITE CUBE PROJECT, *SIGNAL* SUNGTAE JUNG'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATE OF CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS IN KOREA



© Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture

Sungtae Jung is the artistic director and choreographer of the White Cube Project. He founded the White Cube Project in 2017, seeking to harmonize breathing, emotions and movements in expression, while tirelessly attempting to experiment and communicate with the audience. Recently, he became interested in the use of space, audience participation, and performances in moving format, and his goal is to absorb the audience into the performance.[1]

What has the contemporary South Korean circus to tell us? And how are their creators?

First of all, I would like to say what contemporary circus is, from my point of view. It is considered a genre that builds consensus through a narrative and the effective delivery of messages through movement expressions and emotion transfer, involving contemporary performing arts in addition to the circus of the past. I also believe that it has the possibility to embrace all the elements of art.

Contemporary circus demands a lot of power for the creator. You need to know the technique, understand the movements, create interesting images and stories, and understand the various elements of the performance, such as music and lighting to create good works. The result when a talented circus performer meets a director who does not know the context of circus is sometimes sad and frustrating. I noticed that circus performers are usually creators and performers. So, I've graduated in dance and worked as a choreographer, trying to understand circus by learning, training and experimenting with different techniques. There are so many things I want to do and so many things to learn. Looking back, early creative work came by trial and error, allowing us to understand the direction of future development.

In 2013, I've started working with a group called Project Fly in a workshop and started working with them at the end of 2015 by invitation of the group leader. To find the right circus for me, I've learned and trained



White Cube Project, *Signal* © Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture

hand-in-hand with balancing, acrobatics, aerial rope, Chinese pole, juggling and trapeze. In the summer of 2016, I attended a trampoline workshop in between France and Sweden and returned to Korea to train and practice in the 'Spiders' project. Since then, I have been doing circus with Chinese pole and trampoline as main techniques. I've studied and trained circus instead of dance as main axis and began to feel thirst for joint creation between dance and circus.

In 2017, I was selected as emerging creator by the Seoul Arts Foundation's artistic support project in the field of dance. This process has created two projects with the group, *The Most Valuable Thing* and *Signal*, developed from the context of literary works.

Most Valuable Thing is a small princely project that launches dancers who are not circus performers. On the other hand, *Signal* is a creative discovery developed from a white cube with objects and structures, originally created on a terrace and using Chinese pole and trampoline as techniques. At the time of this creation, I was interested in a site-specific type of work and the idea of moving performance.

The creative work methodology varies according to the context, and *Signal* focuses on expressing the message to be conveyed through various objects and movements, and all performance objects and elements are investigated as sending signals. Looking at this work, we can see how I think about the contemporary circus considering the

1 This interview was released in the frame of the Circus Forum, held and organised by LEME – Festival of contemporary circus on December 6th 2019 in Ílhavo (Portugal).

way as the performance is oriented. During the two years of creation, for both works, I've faced several difficulties and limitations.

First, **there was no precedent model in Korea** for this artistic context. In other words, there was no information on how to create a show in between circus and dance. Although I know how to create a dance choreography, the creative methodology for combining dance and circus was a new approach for me. As the first time we learned circus arts, the best methodology was to observe, track and analyze international work through YouTube or other platforms. Although there is a lot of information about the arts in general, details about circus creation were unclear and I had to develop processes.

The second problem is **the technical limitation of artists**.
My creative work did not require the same level of difficulty as Cirque du Soleil, but there were some levels I wanted to ensure. However, when working with dancers, there was a lack of time for circus exercises and choreography, and the lack of skills was noted by the expressiveness of the intended work. And I felt that it was not enough to follow foreign artists who were professional circus performers. The lack of systematic education and my own age led me to put aside greed: many burns, broken ribs, torn jaws, and muscle aches that seemed to be typical of an emergency room.

Third, **casting is difficult**.
By trial and error, I've tried to elevate dancers to circus performers for efficient production. But they didn't exist in Korea and I didn't know artists with circus technical skills. So, I've started looking for a circus performer who had a talent for dancing, but it was also hard to find in Korea. I've tried to find a dancer to train for circus skills, or a circus artist to train in dance. No dancer was interested in the circus field. But the transformation has happened. The artists started their skills in circus techniques just two years ago.
I think the three difficult points above are not only my problem. I think now that all groups and circus director who do contemporary creation in Korea should think and solve these three points.

How can we excel and develop a contemporary circus work environment in Korea?

First, **human infrastructure needs to be protected**. In short, exposure and education. Let the artists learn.

- Active exposure to the contemporary circus: many people in Korea do not know what contemporary circus is. Through the production of digital circus magazines, media exposure and openness to circus transmission over the internet, we can allow people to get to know contemporary circus.

- Expansion and revitalization of educational programmes at Seoul Street Arts Creation Center (training of trainers): this is the only place to learn circus in Korea. The acquired educational programme must be even more active.

- Circus in the university education system: when I went to Sweden to attend a circus workshop, I felt the need for systematic education. The existence of a university level for circus creation in Korea is essential.

Basic education for circus must be created and developed. But the creators need a circus performer to act at the creative moment. There is already a circus training programme in Korea, but there are very few candidates. Therefore, it would be good to extend the degree of influence to other arts courses (eg dance and theater).

Second, **it is necessary to safeguard the development of circus arts**.

- Safety training and equipment: air performance is particularly demanding. It is necessary to train technicians for safety.

- Acquisition of movement skills (dance, gymnastics, performance, etc.): I think the expressive power of art will bring a direct improvement in the quality of the work.

Third, **think about the repertoire and the distribution plan for the works**.
Promote the convergence in between circus and other artistic domains. A systematic process of work production is necessary to boost multidisciplinary.
Contemporary circus in Korea is just beginning. As a country that has achieved short-term economic growth, I am sure that Korea's contemporary circus can grow rapidly if it is recognized and energized. I hope many countries will watch and encourage with interest.

ZOOM ON KOREAN FESTIVALS

Seoul Street Arts Festival

Inspired by the street chants of the Seoul citizens during the 2002 World Cup, the city decided to launch an annual project in 2003: the Hi Seoul Festival. The festival has changed its format several times since its creation and started to focus on non-verbal performances in 2010 and being hosted in the Hangang and downtown area. It actively embraces works based on motion and performance and focuses on "Street Arts With Citizens", allowing diverse local and international street arts projects to debut there. The format of the festival that selected 'non-verbal' as a proper format for ordinary citizens rather than knowledgeable art audiences was set till 2011. In 2012, the festival has started to advocate itself as a street arts festival, as it uses squares, large roads, the Cheonggyecheon area and other public venues in downtown area. Hi Seoul Festival underwent a name change in 2016, and is now called the Seoul Street Arts Festival, as it is more in line with what the festival aims to represent.



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La fin demain - Zirkus Morsa © Seoul Street Arts Festival

Seoul Fringe Festival

Seoul Fringe Festival is an independent creative arts festival where artists from diverse fields team up to present original artworks through a collaboration of performing arts, music, exhibitions, media, and others.
Seoul Fringe Festival originated from 'Indie Arts Festival' held at Daehak-ro in 1998. It was renamed in 2002 as 'Seoul Fringe Festival'.



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ANSAN Street Arts Festival

Ansan Street Arts Festival, held annually, was initiated in 2005 and consists of local and international street performances in diverse formats. It has now become an iconic festival in the area, being praised by the citizens for its unique freedom and friendliness. Around 20 to 50 companies are represented at every edition, and the festival is usually attended by about 50,000 to 100,000 people. It is divided into separate programs and helps revive the Ansan area, encouraging residents to participate by performing plays, shows, making something or buying diverse artifacts. Since 2011, it has been held at the Ansan Culture Plaza and the multicultural street in Wongok-dong, acting as a leading festival in Korea, presenting citizen's daily life stories and new artistic creators through its range of opportunity programs. This festival aims to focus on street performances as a theme and change how people see street from a space of daily life to street as an art space.

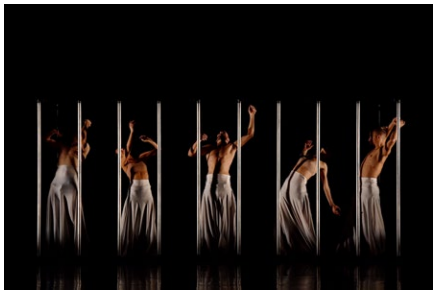


Nuun - La Fura dels Baus © ANSAF

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Seoul Performing Arts Festival

Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF), created in 2001, is an annual festival hosted and organized by the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS). It is one of the most prestigious and inspiring performing arts festival in Korea, featuring works from both Korean and international artists in all genres including theater, dance and multi-genre art. SPAF hosts the most outstanding directors, artists and theatre experts from all around the world. Being one of the leading performing arts festival in Asia, SPAF strives to raise great interest of the spectators, media and artists. It is recognized as an event shaping and defining international standards in contemporary performing arts.



Borderline - Compagnie Wang Ramirez
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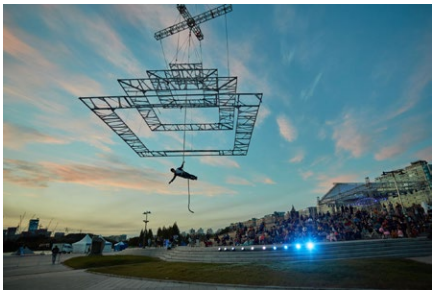


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Goyang Lake Art Festival

The Goyang Lake-Park Arts Festival is a representative street arts event in Korea. It was held 10 times in 11 years in Goyang Lake-Park Goyang City.
The festival includes performances of street theatre, street dance, pantomime, puppet show, and complex genre. In 2016, 91 Korean teams took part in the festival, showcasing 86 pieces in total. The show 'Les interventions Mobiles' from Les Commandos Percu (France) was presented in the frame of the closing ceremony, along with four other performances from international companies.
The festival finds and supports new artists through qualification of the Korea representative Arts Festival. Performances combine pieces based on Korean tradition and trendy street arts programmes.



SPIDERS - Project NALDA © Goyang Lake Art Festival

The festival reflects Goyang City's story through the participation of Goyang City's Art teams and Goyang citizen.

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Goyang Lake Art Festival

Gwacheon Festival



© Gwacheon Festival

Gwacheon Festival is one of the leading street arts festivals in Korea starting from 1997. The festival usually takes place in late September, presenting theater, dance, visual art, music in public space and Korean traditional outdoor theater. The name of the festival has been changed recently from "Gwacheon Hanmadang Festival" to "Gwacheon Festival". The festival aims at the contribution to the development of street arts and introducing various street arts to Korean audience. It also contributes to international cultural exchange and encourages collaboration between Korean and international artists. Every year, the festival gathers around 20 Korean companies, 10 from overseas, and more than 100,000 audiences.

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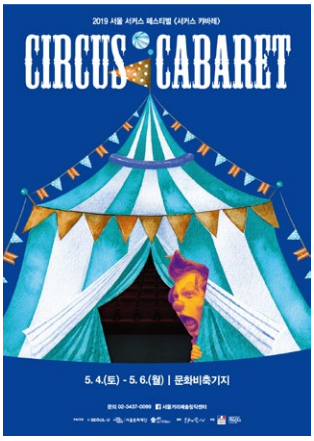
Seoul Circus Festival

Since its opening, the Seoul Street Arts Creation Center in 2015, the SSACC supports artistic projects and organises trainings for circus and street artists.
In 2018, the SSACC created the Seoul Circus Festival "CIRCUS CABARET". At the moment, it appears to be the only contemporary circus festival in Asia. For its first edition, 7 Korean companies and 3 international companies were invited to perform, while the second edition programmed 10 Korean companies and 4 foreign companies. Before and after the festival, circus workshops with international companies are organised for Korean artists.

The aim of this initiative is to create a real exchange and connection between Korean and foreign artists, and to take the time to construct joint projects. On the occasion of this event, CAN (Circus Asia Network) was inaugurated: 7 countries were invited to reflect upon current issues related to contemporary circus.

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© Seoul Circus Festival

SEOUL STREET ARTS CREATION CENTER [1] (SSACC), A KEY VENUE FOR CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS

Managed by WOO Sang-Uk, the Seoul Street Arts Creation Center (SSACC) is a project initiated by the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (SFAC) [2], with the support of the Seoul Metropolitan Government. From this year onwards, the SFAC has changed its organisational structure, with the Seoul Street Arts Festival and the SSACC being combined under a single team of Arts and Festival, directed by SUH Myung-gu.

Unique in its genre, as it underwent an industrial remodeling, the SSACC is the only creative space in Korea combining several activities, such as art experimentation, project development, trainings, providing rehearsal space, hosting workshops, and so on, making it a central organism for circus and street arts in Korea, and one of the first in Asia. Indeed, as Seoul and Korea in general witness a lack of cultural infrastructures, the SSACC has a pivot role in Korea's circus and street arts today, allowing the Korean art scene to take a leap forward towards a more promising future.
Therefore, the SSACC is a place of practice but also research and development, where art originates and takes form to present it to a bigger audience all around city streets. It is a key player in developing and bringing circus and street arts to a common place in an organised manner, but it also wishes to promote these forms of art to citizens and raise public awareness. They wish to do that by giving all the right keys to professionals of the sector, but also by trying to change the public opinion on street arts that sometimes has a negative connotation to it as some still view street arts as "somewhat antisocial, amateurish, and inferior to theater and indoor arts".
However, through the center's activities and involvement, professionals want to show that street arts can be enjoyed and are accessible to anyone, just as the more 'mainstream' types of art. However, the younger generation is often keener on participating in art and creation nowadays, which could be very positive on order to bring a new wave to the street arts.



© SSACC

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Seoul Street Arts Creation Center

1 http://ssacc.sfac.or.kr/en/design/index.asp
2 http://www.sfac.or.kr/english/engMain.do

AN INTERVIEW WITH DONG HEE CHO, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE SSACC



Dong Hee Cho started his career within the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture in 2010 as Director in charge of festival planning and production team. In 2015, he also started managing the Seoul Street Arts Creation Center, and was appointed Director of the place in 2016. As of 2019, he became the Artistic Director of the Seoul Circus Festival and co-artistic director of the Seoul Street Arts Festival.

One of the SSACC's key missions is the international development of Korean artists and the creation of international connections. Why do you think it is important to develop this kind of strategy?

Ever since it opened in 2015, the SSACC (Seoul Street Arts Creation Center) has supported artistic projects and provided training for street and circus artists. The SSACC seeks to forge links with several parts of the world, including Europe, to promote street and circus arts in Korea and across Asia.

The Korean scene has been developing rapidly since the beginning of the 2000s, stimulated by the emergence of arts festivals and young arts companies. In other Asian countries, however, street arts are often still associated with folklore and tradition. While contemporary expressions of street arts have been flourishing in Europe and gaining traction around the world, Asian countries need a platform to explore and share this idea of street arts.

Street arts (in the contemporary sense of the term) are a universal form of artistic expression capable of transcending the borders erected between countries and cultures. The SSACC hopes that street arts in Asia will act as a hub for interaction with other cultures.



© SSACC

What are the main challenges facing the SSACC and the street arts sector in general at the moment?

Street arts are still in their infancy in Korea, so we need to establish a system for training young artists. In my view, the street arts sector enjoys tremendously diverse forms of expression but the SSACC's visibility and networks are still limited.

Its main challenge is thus to establish an education system that will allow young Korean artists to train and study the expressive wealth of street arts. To do this, cooperation with international partner institutions is essential, as is training experts in Korea who will then be able to share their knowledge and experiences with emerging artists.

The SSACC opened a residency venue in 2019 to allow different artists from around the world to work together and develop collaborations.We are studying existing good practices and experiences in order to make this space a real hub for artists.

How do you see the SSACC evolving over the next 10 years?

The SSACC is involved in all aspects of the street and circus arts scene: research, creativity, training, promotion, and so on. However, in light of the rapid pace of development in each of these areas, it will become increasingly difficult to manage all of these functions within the SSACC. We might be able to develop training programmes for professionals and audiences by creating schools, for example. My hope is that the SSACC's development will turn it into a major cultural venue in Asia, and a meeting place for artists from around the world.

TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: A FEW REFERENCE PARTNERS

Asia-Europe Foundation

Established in 1997, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Its goals:

- Strengthen Asia-Europe ties
- Create shared experiences for learning and dialogue
- Enhance mutual understanding
- Explore opportunities for cooperation

ASEF runs more than 25 projects a year, consisting of around 100 activities, mainly conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, publications, and online platforms, together with about 125 partner organisations.

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TheApro

TheApro encourages international exchanges within the performing arts sector by promoting the richness found in Korea's traditional and contemporary theater, music, dance and etc. This website provides detailed information about numerous international exchanges between the performing arts sectors of Korea and other countries; facilitates opportunities for performing arts professionals to meet worldwide and build informative networks based on person-to-person contact.

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Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange

Founded in 2003, KOFICE is the institute for international cultural exchange, designated under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

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RESOURCES

Resources related to mobility between Europe and Asia

- Publication: ***Circus and street arts Mobility Guide#1 Asia/Europe*** – Published by Circostrada in collaboration with On the Move

- Guide: **Mobility funding guides (Updates since 2014 – EN and other languages)**
22 Asian guides and 33 European guides – Published by On the Move and the Asia-Europe Foundation (for the Asian guides). With the support/in collaboration with ASEF, Creative Europe Desk- Flanders, Flanders Arts Institute, Theatre Institute, Ars Baltica, Touring artists, French Ministry of Culture, DutchCulture, Polish National Centre for Culture, Russian Theatre Union, Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Wales Arts International, etc. Including funding opportunities related to other fields than performing arts

- Guide: **Fund- finder, *Guide to funding opportunities for arts and culture in Europe beyond Creative Europe (2017 - EN)*** – Published by IETM in collaboration with On the Move

- Guide: ***Green mobility guide for the performing arts* (2011 – EN, FR, IT, DE, CN)**
Commissioned by On The Move to Julie's Bicycle

- Toolkit: ***Beyond curiosity and desire: towards fairer international collaborations in the arts* (2018 – EN, FR)**
Published by IETM. In collaboration with On the Move and DutchCulture

- Glossary: ***E-connector Asia-Europe | A glossary on cultural mobility* (2016 – EN)** – Supported by ASEF Culture360 in partnership with On the Move, the Luxemburgish Agency for Cultural A airs and Planting Rice