

Kukje Gallery holds solo exhibition of Min Jung-ki

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Kukje Gallery on Tuesday began a solo exhibition featuring local painter Min Jung-ki, who regained attention after South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un posed for pictures in front of his painting "Mount Bukhan" during their summit in April last year.

Born in 1949, Min gained recognition here in the early 1980s with what the artist refers to as his "barbershop paintings" — named for their unsophisticated and kitschy appearance. In 1987, after moving from Seoul to Yangpyeong in Gyeonggi Province, he began to paint landscapes centered on mountains.

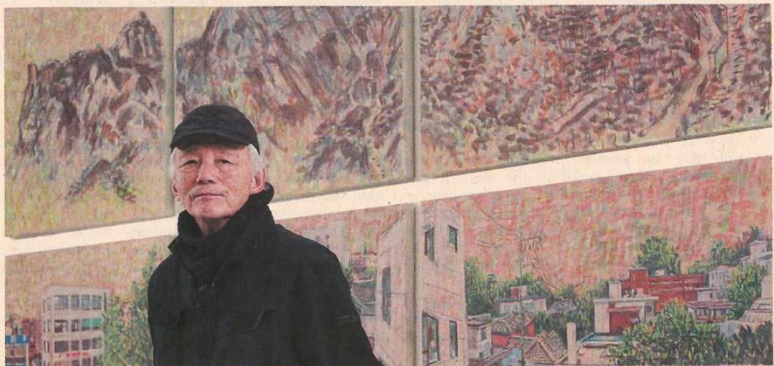
The works being displayed at Kukje Gallery feature the artist's unique style of composition, in which he mixes elements from both Western and Asian traditional landscape paintings. Painting with oils, Min also borrows the formats of old maps, traditional landscape paintings and folding screens.

In "Roving Mongyudowon" (2016), Min offers a view of Buam-dong in Seoul at the bottom of the painting, with a mountain in the backdrop. In this instance, Min renders the town in a realistic way while depicting the mountains in the backdrop in a dreamlike manner, based on a motif in painter An Gyeon's "Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land" (1447).

"Soop-ri (Yangpyeong)" (2016) also shows how Min presents a landscape with the traditional bird's-eye view and perspective used in traditional paintings. Another example is his 2007 work "Jangsudae: Mugan-ri at Mt. Yongmoon."

In addition to his paintings of mountains, the solo exhibition showcases a group of works in which he has recomposed buildings and historic sites around Seoul. The locations addressed in the new works include Jongno-gu's Cheonggye Stream, Sajikdan, Segeomjeong and Baeksasil Valley.

Min's works are heavily based on his field



Min Jung-ki poses for pictures in front of his 2019 work "Mt. Inwang" Kukje Gallery



Min Jung-ki's 2007 work "Jangsudae: Mugan-ri at Mt. Yongmoon" Kukje Gallery

trips and research. He makes visible a location's history by collaging scenes and objects found on-site with historical elements.

In "Cheongpung Valley 1-2" (2019), Min has painted a contemporary view of a town nearby Inwangsan. However, near the cluster of residential units is an ostentatious French-style building that no longer exists after a fire in the 1970s. Min's inclusion of the 2,000-square-meter compound built by Yoon Deok-young, a bureaucrat of the Great Korean Empire, reveals the history of the area.

"Park Taewon's Scenes from Cheonggye Stream" (2019) is another painting series by Min that aims to underscore major transformations that have taken place around the Cheonggye Stream area in Seoul. The works are based on a novel of the same name by Park Tae-won in the 1930s.

The exhibition at Kukje Gallery consists of 14 new works and 14 earlier works by Min. It runs through March 3.

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