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## Witnessing the History of K-Culture in Global Pop Culture

**Special Exhibition: “The Pop Culture We Loved and Rise of the Korean Wave” Opened on July 19 (Wed)**

**In celebration of the 70th anniversary of the ROK–US Alliance, the performance costume of late HYUN Mi from the Eighth United States Army Band on display**

The National Museum of Korean Contemporary History (Director HAN Soo) presents “The Pop Culture We Loved and Rise of the Korean Wave” a special exhibition tracing the history of Korean Wave (Hallyu) within global pop culture. The exhibition runs from July 19 (Wed) to September 3 (Sun) in the special exhibition hall on the third floor.

This exhibition aims to showcase that the current popularity of K-Culture is a testament to Korea’s acceptance and adaptive approach to various global cultures, reminding audiences that, just as Hallyu thrives internationally today, various global pop cultures have also enjoyed popularity in Korea. It hopes to foster an appreciation of the diverse cultures enjoyed by different generations and establish a space for cross-generational understanding of K-Culture fandom.

### ■ Part 1: “America in Korean Pop Culture”

The exhibition explores the cultural exchange with America, an ally for 70 years that has significantly impacted the foundation of Korean pop culture since the liberation. Various genres of music, including pop, Hollywood films, and dramas, have profoundly influenced Korean pop culture. In particular, records were imported through the American military bases, and many Korean musicians could perform.

Rare exhibits include the record of OK Doo Ok (real name KIM Moon), who was the first to debut in the US in 1956, and an autographed album of The Kim Sisters, the first Korean girl group to break into the American market in 1959. In addition, displayed for the first time is the performance costume and invitation letter of HYUN Mi, a singer from the Eighth United States Army band who passed away last April. Visitors can listen to their music in the “Music Lounge.”

## ■ Part 2: “Hong Kong and Japanese Pop Culture that Connected Asia”

From the 1970s, Korean consumption of Asian pop culture, such as Hong Kong movies and Japanese manga, increased significantly. Hong Kong movies enjoyed a status akin to Hollywood, especially spreading rapidly in Korea with the proliferation of home videos. The exhibition displays nearly 400 nostalgic Hong Kong movie videos and offers the opportunity to watch them on a video home system (VHS) machine. Although Japanese pop culture was officially banned until 1998, many people already accessed Japanese comics and music through informal channels. Visitors can view and experience various forms of Japanese pop culture that Korea accepted, including inaugural comic magazines and multiple records.

## ■ Part 3: “From Korean Pop Culture to Hallyu”

Korean pop culture, having absorbed and grown through various foreign pop cultures like the United States, Hong Kong, and Japan, was poised for the potential emergence of Hallyu. Spurred by democratization, globalization, and technological advancements, Korean pop culture started spreading beyond East Asia from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, culminating in the Hallyu phenomenon. Exhibits include an H.O.T. album sold in China and the “Shiri” original soundtrack (OST) sold in Japan, symbolizing the start of Hallyu, while an array of international magazines and newspapers from the 2000s illustrate the global popularity of Hallyu.

Visitors can appreciate how the growth of Korean pop was possible through a fan’s precious album, filled with photographs taken while following S.E.S. Furthermore, a plethora of light sticks generously lent by fans for the exhibition showcase the evolving culture of fandom over time.

## ■ Engaging with Hallyu through Diverse Experiences

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to experience Hallyu firsthand. They can join young people from Europe and Asia who love Korean pop dancing through “Random Play Dance with the World.” In addition, visitors can sing popular idol remakes of 1990s songs in a *Noraebang* (karaoke) to relieve summer stress. Augmented reality (AR) experiences and poster activities also offer the chance to appear in Hallyu dramas and movies.

Director HAN Soo of the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History expressed, “The remarkable achievements leading Korean pop culture to Korean culture is the fruition of the collective love from every fan worldwide.” He added, “I hope many fans visit this exhibition and take pride in being the real protagonists of Hallyu.”

## 1. Introduction to the Special Exhibition

### □ Exhibition Overview






- Period: July 19 (Wed) to September 3 (Sun), 2023
- Venue: Third-floor exhibition hall at the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
- Description: This exhibition describes the characteristics or success factors of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) by focusing on active exchanges with various foreign pop cultures (especially those from the United States, Hong Kong, and Japan) in Korean contemporary history and Korea's subjective acceptance of these cultures.
- Exhibition materials: About 720 items, including OK Doo Ok's album, The Kim Sisters' autographed album, and HYUN Mi's performance costume
- ※ Experience: K-pop dance experience, photo-taking with a movie poster as a background, augmented reality (AR) shooting of a Hallyu drama scene, *noraebang* (karaoke) experience, etc.


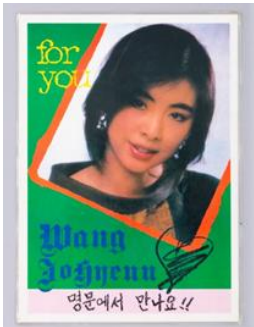



### □ Exhibition


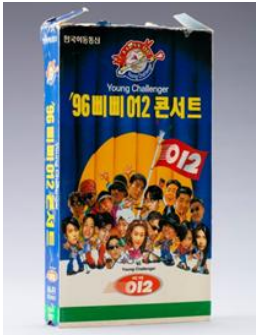


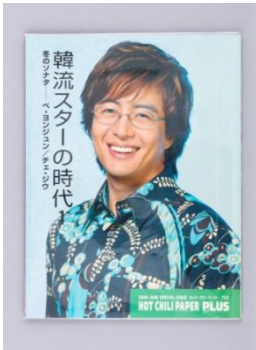
Category	Description	Main Material
[Prologue]	(Video) Hallyu as a global pop culture trend	
[Part 1] America in Korean Pop Culture	<b>1. US military base and pop music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Performance in the eighth US army: The Kim Sisters, HAN Myung Sook, SHIN Joong Hyun, etc.</li> </ul> <b>2. Various ways to enjoy foreign music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Music Lounge (C'est Si Bon)</li> <li>· Broadcasting: Radio, TV program "Show Show Show"</li> <li>· Album: Bootleg records (Record shops in Cheonggyecheon)</li> </ul> <b>3. Hollywood kids</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Imported films and Hollywood kids</li> <li>· Movies in the 1950s and 1960s and the impact of American culture on Korea (projection of American images)</li> </ul> <b>4. Craze for American dramas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Foreign movies and Korean dramas affected by them</li> <li>· "Detective Colombo – Chief Inspector," "Little House on the Prairie – Fields of Home"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Photos of performances in US military bases</li> <li>· Records of singers from the eighth US army band, (late) HYUN Mi's performance costume, etc.</li> <li>· Album and video of The Kim Sisters</li> <li>· Albums played at C'est Si Bon</li> <li>· "Madame Freedom" poster, movie magazines such as "Contemporary Cinema," "Film World," "Screen," etc.</li> <li>· Videos such as "Detective Colombo" and "Little House on the Prairie"</li> </ul>




<p><b>[Part 2]</b> <b>Hong Kong and Japanese Pop Culture that Connected Asia</b></p>	<p><b>2. Hong Kong films, the rise of Asian visual culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Martial arts·Action (Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan), noir (John Woo), romance (Leslie Cheung), etc.</li> <li>· Videos and Hong Kong films</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Japanese pop culture, the nearest forbidden area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Impact of Japanese comics on Korea and opening of Japanese pop culture to Korea (1998–2004)</li> <li>· Japanese idols and rock groups, animations, (trendy) dramas, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Hong Kong movie posters, videos</li> <li>· Japanese animations such as “Astro Boy”</li> <li>· Japanese pop songs X-JAPAN, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>[Part 3]</b> <b>From Korean Pop Culture to Hallyu</b></p>	<p><b>(Origin of the Hallyu)</b> First used in Chinese media; a Hallyu promotional album by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism</p> <p><b>1. Background of Hallyu</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Democratization and post–Cold War</li> <li>· Development of technology and media</li> <li>· New Kids on the Block and idol planning systems</li> <li>· The government has paid attention to the cultural industry ever since “Jurassic Park”</li> <li>· The Korean cultural industry tried to enter overseas markets during the 1997 Asian financial crisis</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Development of Hallyu</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Chinese-speaking region: Hallyu started with “What is Love,” “Stars in My Heart,” H.O.T. (China), and Clon (Taiwan)</li> <li>· Hallyu spread from Chinese-speaking regions to Southeast Asia</li> <li>· Japan: BoA, “Winter Sonata,” etc.</li> <li>· “Jewel in the Palace” entered the global markets (e.g., Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe)</li> <li>· Remake rights for Korean dramas and movies were exported to overseas nations</li> </ul> <p><b>(Video)</b> Hallyu in the world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Hallyu affected by the world</li> <li>· Hallyu beloved by the world</li> <li>· Fandom culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· An article from “Lianhe Wanbao,” a Taiwanese media outlet, and a Hallyu promotional album by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism</li> <li>· Sentencing that censorship is unconstitutional</li> <li>· New Kids on the Block album</li> <li>· Plan to promote the advanced video industry</li> <li>· “Shiri” related material</li> <li>· Hallyu materials about H.O.T., etc., from the Chinese side</li> <li>· BoA and “Winter Sonata”–related materials from the Japanese side</li> <li>· Chinese and Japanese cultural magazines related to Hallyu</li> <li>· K-pop fandom goods</li> </ul>
<p><b>[Experience space]</b></p>	<p>K-pop dance experience, photo-taking and AR shooting with the background of Hallyu movies and dramas, <i>noraebang</i> (karaoke) experience, etc.</p>	
<p><b>[Epilogue]</b></p>	<p>(Video) Quotations related to cultural diversity and inclusion that served as the foundation of Hallyu</p>	

## □ Main Exhibition Materials

No.	Material Name	Image	Owner	Year	Description
1	HYUN Mi's performance costume		CHOI Kyu-Sung		HYUN Mi wore this dress for her performance. In the past, she sang songs in the eighth US army band. This talented singer participated in overseas song festivals and won many prizes. She released many hit songs, such as "Night Fog," and performed various activities in broadcasting. For a very long time, she enjoyed widespread acclaim. Unfortunately, she left us in April 2023.
2	OK Doo Ok's album "East of Make Believe"		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1956	It is known that The Kim Sisters first performed their musical activities in the United States as Korean singers. However, this album, released in 1956, shows that OK Doo Ok (real name: KIM Moon) was the first singer to begin her career in the United States. This album contains two songs: "East of Make Believe (subtitle: Dong Chok Na Ra)" and "Kanda Kanda."
3	The Kim Sisters' album, "Their First Album"		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1964	The Kim Sisters were regarded as Korea's first girl group. They entered the American market in 1959 and received considerable love. This is their first album, produced by "LKL Records" in 1964; it contains 11 songs, including "Try to Remember." Each member's autograph is on the album.
4	The Beatles' single album		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1964	This album was played at C'est Si Bon, a 1960s music lounge in Myeong-dong. Music lounges were popular because they played American and European pop albums that were difficult for the public to find at the time. They also led the youth culture at the time by showing performances and holding diverse cultural events.
5	"Screen"		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1956–1958	This popular film magazine was first published by Shinyoung in 1956. Its cover featured photos of foreign actors and actresses. It also delivered news from the domestic and overseas film industry, such as news about the Academy Awards.

No.	Material Name	Image	Owner	Year	Description
6	Scripts of 421 episodes of “Chief Inspector”		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1979	This was Korea’s first police drama dealing with crime cases and aired on MBC from 1971 to 1989. This drama was popular with the public for 18 years. Its popularity was incomparable to other investigative dramas aired by other broadcasting stations. Much like “Detective Colombo,” an American drama, the answer to a case was given first, then the narrative was developed.
7	Plastic hard sheet for Joey Wong’s notebooks		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1972	As a Taiwanese-born Hong Kong actress, Joey Wong gained much popularity in East Asia and Korea after appearing in “The Ethereal Spirit of a Beauty.” She was popular as a Chinese actress along with Brigitte Lin and was one of the goddesses shown in plastic hard sheets for notebooks among middle and high school students in Korea in the 1980s.
8	Hong Kong movie videotape		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1985–2008	Hong Kong films received global acclaim and were popular in Korea from the 1970s to the 1990s. Action films featuring Bruce Lee or Jackie Chan, a noir film with Chow Yun-fat and Leslie Cheung of “A Better Tomorrow,” and Wong Kar-wai’s Hong Kong New Wave are some examples of this. As the home video market grew in Korea in the late 1980s, Hong Kong films began to spread rapidly. The films also affected the revival of Korean movies in many ways in the late 1990s.
9	First issue of cartoon magazines		Seoul Animation Center	1988–2002	These cartoon magazines officially introduced Japanese comics after the publication of Japanese comics was legalized in Korea. Popular comics such as “Dragon Ball,” “Slam Dunk,” and “Cardcaptor Sakura” were serialized.
10	Copy cassette tape of X-JAPAN		Cho Eun-Sung	1990s	This is a copy cassette tape of X-JAPAN, a Japanese rock group. The group had the largest fan group alongside Amuro Namie, who was famous for J-pop, and had a lot of influence on rock music in Korea. Some of its hit songs include “Endless Rain,” “Tears,” and more. It was difficult to officially buy its albums before Japanese culture was opened to the public, so people listened to pirated records or possessed pirated albums.

No.	Material Name	Image	Owner	Year	Description
11	“Hallyu II – Song from Korea” album		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1999	As more and more Chinese and Taiwanese people showed their interest in Korean dramas and pop music, the Ministry of Culture (currently the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) released and distributed an album with the title “韓流-Song from Korea” to support the overseas promotion of Korean pop music. It is one of the first mentions of the term “Hallyu” in Korea.
12	“96 Beeper 012 Concert” videotape		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1996	This videotape plays a live concert performance by top singers at the time. H.O.T., Turbo, KIM Gun Mo, Solid, KIM Won Joon, and more joined in the concert, which was held under the name of a wireless terminal carrier. At the time, the singers who participated in advertisements or performances held by mobile carriers were regarded as top singers.
13	H.O.T. album released in China		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	1990s	This album was released in China. H.O.T.'s popularity was at its peak in Korea. The group captured the Chinese-speaking region markets. This package contains an album CD with 12 popular songs and a VCD of live performances.
14	“Shiri” OST released in Japan		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	2000	This is the original soundtrack (OST) for “Shiri,” a Korean film directed by KANG Je Kyu. This OST was released in Japan. This movie was evaluated as the first Korean blockbuster and was also successful in overseas markets. It showed great success in Japan, in particular, attracting over 1 million viewers and earning JPY 1.8 billion.
15	“The age of Hallyu stars”		National Museum of Korean Contemporary History	2004	This Japanese magazine covers Korean actors and idols. Male actors and groups such as EXO, Seventeen, and BTS were very popular, in addition to BAE Yong Joon, LEE Byung Hun, KWON Sang Woo, and JANG Dong Gun.

No.	Material Name	Image	Owner	Year	Description
16	“Billboard,” where PSY appeared as a cover model		CHOI Kyu-Sung	2012	PSY changed the way Billboard charts counted records. Because of the existing practice of using radio popularity for ranking rather than YouTube views, PSY's “Gangnam Style” only reached no. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100. This magazine covers Billboard's willingness to change its existing practices.
17	Fan-made S.E.S. photo album		CHOI Kyu Sung	1990s	This album is a collection of photos taken by a fan. The cover is decorated with collected ticker photos. Idol fans may be the primary contributor to the growth of K-pop.
18	BTS “Army Bomb 2”		CHOI Kyu Sung	2017	Cheering is the key to showing fan spirit in K-pop performances. Fans cheer for their idol singers with their symbolic colors, and their light sticks evolve by incorporating various ideas. Recent idol light sticks achieve impressive cheering performances with Internet of Things (IoT) technology. The Korean idol cheering culture, represented by light sticks, attracts much attention from around the world.

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