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The 'Cultural Joint Security Area' in the Middle of New York City

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The 'Culture Joint Security Area' in the center of New York.

President Sang Joon Yoon, who made the Korean Contemporary Art Gallery in Manhattan.

"We will use major hotels in New York to support young artists"

Gallery JSA was opened on November 20th to promote Korean contemporary art in the center of Manhattan, New York, which is the heart of world contemporary art. Located close to Times Square on 39th Street in Manhattan, close to Broadway, promoting Korean young artists is a mission for Gallery JSA. Opened with such a goal, the gallery name carries a special meaning. JSA means 'Joint Security Area.'

Sang Joon Yoon, president of JSA, said, "just as the Joint Security Area is familiar to Korean people who are experiencing the reality of inter-Korean division as a place where two opposing sides come together, Gallery JSA is aiming for a cultural security zone for various artists as a space for communication and harmony of various cultures." He continued, "I expect Korean artists to be able to meet and communicate with American artists of different backgrounds," he said. Yoon is unique in that he is not from the art world. He is a business man who is engaged in the trade business such as running Solianus, a textile distribution company in Korea.

Yoon said, "I became very interested in the art world after I was first exposed to art through hobby. I then learned that there are many young and talented Korean artists. I subsequently opened the gallery to improve the reality that they are not well known on the world stage." He also said, "it is estimated that there are about 150,000 artists in Korea. Of these, there are less than 200 people who can work full-time," he said. "The idea of protecting young Korean artists is reflected in the name of the Gallery JSA." The point at which JSA is differentiated among the galleries in New York is that Yoon plans to utilize major hotels in New York. Yoon said, "We have been able to establish a network with major hotels in the United States while engaging in trade business," said Yoon. "It is our primary goal to make Korean young artists' works available to hotels." "If you come across Korean young artists' works at major hotels in New York that are sought after by tourists from all over the world, it will help increase recognition of Korean art," he said.

In this regard, JSA's first exhibition title is "Never Ending Stories", introducing five Korean artists who are active in Asia. The first opening exhibition will be held in Seoul and Beijing, and will be held until the 15th of next month. The second exhibition will consist of four artists, including Sung Won Kang, Young Mi Kim, Lee So and Young Sook Hong, and will be held from December 18th to January 12th next year.

Yoon said, "the purpose of the exhibition *Never Ending Stories*, is to improve this gallery steadily in the future as now we are starting small." "The ultimate goal is to create a movement called 'K-Art'. The artists who participated in the exhibition are artists who spent their adult years in the social and economic growth period of Korea from the 1980s to the 2000s. Therefore, these works reflect the situation of the era.

In the works of Tae Kyu Yim, "Kidults," an adult character and childlike appearance, are frequently shown. It is a visualization of the conflict of the desire to not become adults. *Erehwon*, which is a representative

GALLERY JSA

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work of the artist, is a work that freely expresses modern life in harmony with the imagination, fables, color and dynamism of traditional art. "Since I started my work in Beijing in 2008, I have held major exhibitions in London, Singapore, and Dubai, but I thought I would like to expand my activities further, and I became involved with Gallery JSA." "We will open an exhibition in Manhattan and it will be a great help for future development."

Young Mi Kim's art world also contains a complicated family history that was caused by the rapid development and change of Korean society. Hong graduated from UCLA with a master's degree from Brooklyn College and Pratt University. Sung Won Kang majored in traditional Korean painting and earned a master's degree in traditional Oriental painting from Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts. Lee So has studied art at the University of Paris 8, France.