GWANGJU ART BIENNALE
THE INFLUENCE ON THE CITY’S CULTURAL LIFE

BACKGROUND

Founded in September 1995 to commemorate those who died for the Gwangju Democratization Movement of 1980 and to transform this social value into cultural arts.

2015 is the twentieth anniversary of this international art event. Each of the ten biennales held in Gwangju has showcased different themes about contemporary society and contemporary art that relates to the Gwangju Democratization Movement.

THEMES - 1995 TO 2016

- Beyond The Borders 1995 (Sept 20 - Nov 20)
- Unnapping the Earth 1997 (Sept 1 - Nov 27)
- Man and Space 2000 (Mar 29 - Jun 7)
- P_A_U_S_E 2002 (Mar 29 - Jun 22)
- A Grain of Dust, A Drop of Water 2004 (Sep 10 - Nov 13)
- Fever Variation 2006 (Sep 8 - Nov 11)
- Annual Report: A Year in Exhibitions 2008 (Sep 5 - Nov 9)
- 10000 Lives 2010 (Sep 3 - Nov 7)
- Roundtable 2012 (Sep 7 - Nov 11)
- Burning Down the House 2014 (Sep 5 - Nov 9)
- The Eighth Climate 2016 (Sep 2 - Nov 6)

DEMOCRATIZATION MOVEMENT

In May 1980 over 150 citizens were killed and 3,000 wounded by Korean soldiers

The military proclaimed martial law on the entire town of Gwangju, and the government passed laws that criminalized even the expression of political opposition. The martial law suppressed the people’s democratic desire since the October 16th incident when the previous government was assassinated. The military placed soldiers everywhere. They took over and owned the town. "A glorious vacation" in Gwangju where the best of the Democratization movement was in action during the Spring of 1980 when college students began to demonstrate against the martial law. The first uprising was ignited at the front gate of Chonnam University at 10 AM on May 16th.

The May 16th democratic uprising started as a citizens’ resistance against the wrong doing of government, through the formation of an autonomous community and through self-sacrifice in the cause of righteousness. This laid a foundation of a global human-rights movement against dictatorships.

The May 16th uprising documents were registered in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register positioning Gwangju, Korea as a global human-rights city.

HYPOTHESIS

Now orders and relationships between the arts and the city of Gwangju are established through a major cultural event, the Gwangju Art Biennale.

METHODOLOGY

By analyzing past exhibitions of the Gwangju Art Biennale, I studied the influence of the biennial events on Gwangju society and specifically how the cultural life of Gwangju city has changed since the Biennale was instituted in 1995.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Travel to Korea in January 2016
- Photo documentation
- Literature Research
  - Public Culture in the Gwangju Art Biennale: A Survey of the Biennale’s Impact on Gwangju,
  by Namkoong Hee, 2006.
- Interviews
  - With Lee Sun-Young, a former member of the Gwangju Women’s Association.
  - With Cho Yong-Geun, a former member of the Gwangju Troublemaker’s Association.
  - With Park Young-Soo, a former member of the Gwangju People’s Movement.

GWANGJU DESIGN BIENNALE

- Founded in 2004 for the business of design
- Design the whole process of experience so that viewers themselves discover how to view their lives through design and learn why design exists
- Show designs to learn new methods of communication, while preparing for a sustainable future, realizing that East Asian cultural rules is truly emerging new futures

GWANGJU FOLLY

- In the architectural sense, a ‘ foll’ means an architecture that plays a decorative role after losing its original function
- Architecture that contribute to urban regeneration, playing both decorative and functional roles in public spaces
- Gwangju Folly is aimed at playing the roles of an urban get-away and place providing exhibitions and performances while achieving urban regeneration under the mission of establishing Gwangju as a cultural city and creating cultural attractions to be passed down to future generations

HUB CITY OF ASIAN CULTURE (HCAC)

- Hub City of Asian Culture (HCAC) project, administered by the national government of Korea, is the single-largest cultural project in the history of the nation.
- The project aims to forge cultural ties and establish a forum of exchange with the various countries of Asia, and enhance the overall quality of life of the Asian community by transforming Gwangju, one of the six largest cities in Korea, into a culture city of novel concepts.

INTERNATIONAL BIENNALE ASSOCIATION (IBA)

- The aim of this meeting is to discuss common objectives for biennale organizations and their role in society, and to jointly look into the possibilities and benefits of stronger professional alliances and collective and cooperative actions
- Over 60 biennale representatives attended the ‘Biennale Representatives’ Meeting’ and as an outcome from the discussions, the International Biennale Association (IBA) was formulated in 2013

BEFORE AND AFTER: BIENNALE PHENOMENON

Number of Galleries/Museums

- Before 1995
  - There were few art museums (Namgul, Jeonju), there were a few galleries, which artists used as studios
- After 1995
  - There are several museums (private and public) including the Gwangju National Museum, Gwangju Museum of Art, Gwangju Art Biennale.
  - As well, there are three university museums (Hanyang, Chosun, Chonnam).
  - There are also three big art galleries in the mall (Hyundai, Shinnak, Lame)
  - And there are countless small art galleries.

Main Cultural Activities

- Before 1995
  - They did not have any special cultural activity in the museums or galleries.
- After 1995
  - They have the Gwangju Foundation of Culture which has established many conventions centers which are held many cultural activities including the Gwangju International Movie Festival, the Kimchi festival, the Spring festival, the Culture Education program for kids, and many other programs for children.

Population Growth from 1995 to Present

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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