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Creation Center Opens Doors to Artists



A view of the recently opened Gyeonggi Creation Center, located in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province / Courtesy of Gyeonggi Creation Center

By Cathy Rose A. Garcia
Staff Reporter

Local and international artists will now have a new place to find inspiration, do research and create fresh artwork, with the recent opening of the Gyeonggi Creation Center (GCC), located in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province.

The center offers an art residency program to support creative work and research by local and foreign artists.

“GCC acts as a platform to gather artists from all over the world for international exchange, to share a nomadic spirit, and to collectively engage and cultivate creative synergy among artists of various genres as an experimental and progressive contemporary art center,” the organizers said, in a statement.

A total of 24 artists, 16 Korean and eight foreign, have been invited to participate in the center's pilot art residency program. The artists will reside in the center for three months through December.

“Foreign artists and a few Korean artists will create works based on local issues, or participate in local collaboration programs together with residents. They will partake in field investigations, seminars and workshops to construct basic ideas and to prepare proposals based on research. Artists of the selected proposal will be



Mario Caro, president of Res Artis

invited again to GCC to realize the project in 2010," organizers said.

The Korean artists are Jeong So-youn, Shin Mee-kyung, Lee Seul-gi, Park Jee-eun, Yee Soo-kyung, Debbie Han, Park June-bum, Lee Hyung-koo, Ham Kyung-ah, Rhee Jaye, Yoo Hyun-mi, Sasa[44], Yi Sang-jun, Kim Seung-young, Min Joung-ki and Kim Eul.

Participating foreign artists are Francisco Valdes from Chile, Luchezar Boyadjev from Bulgaria, Brendan Fernandes from Canada, Kael Greco and Dan Kwong from the United States, Beate Engl from Germany, Dave Southwood from South Africa and Wael Shawky from Egypt.

The GCC is an affiliated organization of the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, which makes for an unusual collaboration between an art residency program and museum.

Fittingly, the center last week hosted the 2009 Res Artis Conference on the theme "The 21st Century Art Residency and New Institutional Collaborations." It was organized by Res Artis, a global network of artist residencies.

"The theme is about collaboration. This is a unique situation where the creation center is being developed in conjunction with the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art. ... This meeting looks at efforts of collaboration between the institutions like residencies and museums, which may not be a natural fit," Caro told The Korea Times, in an interview last week.

In light of the global economic downturn, there is an even greater need to explore the possibilities for collaboration between artist residencies, museums and other institutions. Unlike in the U.S. where most programs are privately funded, programs in Korea are being financially supported by government institutions.

"In Seoul, I understand there is a new exciting initiative where some 15 new centers are coming up. It is an incredible endeavor and one that the world will be watching closely. I don't know of another city planning a project of this scale," Caro said.

For any new art residency program, such as the one at GCC, to be successful, Caro said it would have to strike a balance at addressing different audiences _ the artists, the funders and the community. But most importantly, Caro said "there will be success if you have a visionary leader, who can understand those relationships and be creative in addressing all of them."

Currently, there are only eight art residencies in Korea out of the 363 members of Res Artis, but Caro hopes there will be more in the future.

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