

A Historical Review of Cultural Influences on Korean Art Education

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Introduction

“The past and the present are connected to each other like a mountain range, and the present is gathered to form a sea of future.”¹

Reinterpretations of a particular historical event according to the present positions occur every year, to work towards a better future. Comparing the situation before and after Western art, culture and education were introduced to Korea, the different interpretations of the influences are being reassessed among Korean researchers who are trying to explore issues of cultural identity in Korean art education.² Western influences in the history of Korean art education have been strongly interwoven with the adoption of American pedagogies in the establishment of modern education, such as Creativity-Enhanced Art Education (Child-Centered Art Education), DBAE (Discipline Based Art Education) and VCAE (Visual Culture Art Education). Since the establishment of the new public Korean education system during the Japanese occupation and then American military occupation, the adoption of Western pedagogical ideologies was promoted among South Korean art educators because the adoption of these pedagogical methods was viewed to be crucial for economic development.³

Therefore, taking a critical view of identity formation, the adoption of American pedagogies can be seen as a significant factor which impacted the Korean notion of identity. The passive adoption of Western pedagogies within the context of

1 “과거와 현재는 산맥처럼 연결되어 있으며, 현재는 미래의 바다로 이어진다.”

This quote comes from a special documentary series to commemorate the 65th year since the Korean Declaration of Independence. The article was broadcasted by KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) in August 2010.

2 Kim 2008; Park 2009.

3 Jeong 2007.

modernization by Japan and the US might be a reason why Korean curriculum planners and art educators today are coming to advocate traditional Korean art and culture in order to overcome the influence of Western art and culture. The growing critical position towards Western pedagogical influences has also raised the further issue of cultural identity by the use of diverse views of tradition within the current South Korean social context of celebrating cultural diversity as well as maintaining cultural tradition. Within the interaction between economic and cultural factors by capitalist globalization in recent decades, the issues of cultural identity in South Korea is in a state of constant flux in relation to the South Korean political, social and economic conditions.

This paper investigates the history of foreign influences on Korean art education and addresses the current issues of the historical context of the globalizing time and place.

Confucian curriculum before the opening to the West

Before the opening to the West, Korean educational theories were influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism introduced from China during the Goryeo Dynasty (tenth to thirteenth centuries) and the Josun Dynasty (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries). The two main philosophical influences were Confucian teaching regarded as sources for political wisdom, and Buddhist teaching for instilling lessons for individual behavior. Korean art education was also influenced by the Chinese practice of teaching children how to read, write and decipher Chinese classics. According to the documents of Confucian educational thought, aesthetic education and character development could be achieved by imitating the masterworks of the great philosophers. The way of learning art was a form of apprenticeship, where copying master works was central to training and a means of understanding Confucian philosophy. Calligraphy was always closely connected to the training, and it is possible that paintings were taught alongside calligraphy in the schools. The style of monochromatic works in black brushwork was produced by literary artists and was much imported by Chinese artists of the Southern Song academy during the Middle Ages. The Korean artists internalized the Chinese style of this period while adding their own interpretation of the original works. Since educators in the Josun Dynasty believed that individual human minds could be trained by handling ideas through lectures and memorization, the Confucian curriculum was concerned principally with mental or cognitive subject matter and the process was designed to guide learners through a gradual expansion of mental awareness (» *Fig. 1*).

However, these forms of art education were given only to the upper classes. Historical documents show that the oldest available historical reference to formal education in



Fig. 1 Song Sung-Yong (Gangam), painting of *Sagunza* with *Daenam* (traditional Korean ink painting, used for moral education), early twentieth century, private collection.

Korea was the National Confucian Academy during the Josun Dynasty from 1392 to 1910.⁴ The influence of Confucian philosophy thus had a deep effect upon Korean social structures.⁵ The Academy of Painting called *Dohwawon* was established in order to educate and train the court painters at the request of the *Yangban* in a style suited to their patrons' tastes. Accordingly, most of these court painters painted landscapes in a style that portrayed idealized settings not found in the natural world. It is worth noticing that these views of art and art training were constructed within the political condition enforced by a Chinese political strategy of interference. Confucian philosophy served as the guiding principle of government by Confucian scholars, who received royal favors and were given important official positions.⁶ By gaining access to political power, many of the scholar-rulers of the early Josun Dynasty continued to hold positions of responsibility in educational institutions. This pathway of learning art has been considered until now to be the traditional form of Korean art training. This Chinese influence on the Korean education system is still powerful and current attitudes value academic qualifications as a means to upgrade their social class.

4 Han 1963, 1982; Lee 1993.

5 Nahm 1988.

6 Park 1956.

Christian missionary pedagogy opening to Western art and education: 1885–1910

Even though Korean educational practices and pedagogies opening to the West were heavily influenced by Chinese political interference, Korean people tend to ensure Confucian education is traditionally Korean. During the last few decades of the Josun Dynasty, 1885 to 1905, the influence of Western civilization reached Korea, prompting the need to renovate the established education system. At the end of the nineteenth century, Western nations made ambitious efforts to develop contact with Korea for various purposes, mainly trade, and concurrently Japan proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations after the Meiji Restoration. In 1894 the Political Reform Movement by lower classes such as agrarians and merchants was the first modern revolution, requiring the transformation of the Yangban-centered society into a democratic society giving equal rights to everyone, most akin to ideologies in the French Revolution in the West. Nonetheless, the Korean government was too conservative to encompass a new direction for the country's development in the rapidly changing external and internal environment. Thus, "basically the isolation policy of the monarchy and the feudalistic sentiments of the people hampered and delayed the introduction of independent modernization and modern education."⁷

In the period from 1885 to 1905, Western modern education models were indirectly introduced to Korea along with Christianity by American Protestant missionaries.⁸ They influenced the underprivileged people to change their behavior and inspired them to accept Christian principles that were radically new, such as equality, freedom, individual dignity, and democracy. By establishing private missionary schools, they introduced the Western system of secondary school curriculum to Korea. Therefore, the Christian missionaries played an active role in cultivating a variety of revolutions in Korean education. The Western institutionalized education model for common people was one of the radical phenomena introduced at a time when women and the lower classes had few educational opportunities in Confucian societies. The contribution to Korean education was not only the teaching of Christian principles but also the theory of teaching and curriculum development. They spread the idea that education was for everyone – for the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor, men and women – and awareness of democracy became the nurturing ground of nationalism, the patriotic independence movement and political struggle for democracy during the period of the Japanese occupation (1910–1945).

In the early 1880s Western art was also introduced to Korea in a similar manner to Christianity and unequivocally exerted a by-no-means negligible influence. Among

7 Rhee 1996, p. 59.

8 Kim 1982.



Fig. 2 Hee-Dong Go, Self-portrait with a Hand Fan, 1915, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

foreign residents who came to Korea with the missionaries, there were some painters who implanted Western arts in the Korean language. Korean imports from the Western art world included Western paper, pencils, musical instruments, sculptures and paintings.⁹ The first Korean artist of Western painting, Hee-Dong Go (1886–1965), who had worked as an internal administrative manager in the Palace of Kyongbok, was exposed to Western painting through the French missionaries. He tried to imitate this sort of painting and exhibited his mimetic work in a salon. This was the first oil painting produced by a Korean artist (» *Fig. 2*).

9 Park 1972.

At this point, Chosun was taken over by Japan, and in 1909 he went to Japan to study Western painting at the Dokyo Fine Art School. Since the Korean artist's return to Korea in 1915 after completing his studies, Koreans have called such oil painting 'Western' painting. Until then, there was no word for art in Korea, there were only specific words such as calligraphy, painting, craft, and so on in the name of art practice. The art practice which was regarded as fine art was painting. When Western drawings and paintings were introduced to Korean culture, they were recognized as typical Western art practice, as other forms of art practice such as ceramics, sculpture and printmaking were not recognized as fine art but artisan work. These forms were introduced later than painting, during the period of Japanese occupation. The black brush literary drawing style, which was produced by high class literary artists, had been recognized as traditional fine art practice by the Korean people until Western painting was introduced to the society. Therefore, Western modern painting produced with typical materials and tools such as oil color was recognized as a style of Western culture, which had to be accepted along with Western modernization, as contrasted to the 'traditional' Korean painting.

Division into 'traditional' Korean and 'Western' style during the period of Japanese colonization: 1910–1945

Although Western educational ideas were introduced to Korea in 1895, Korea's development was halted by the Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945, which involved political suppression, economic exploitation and cultural assimilation. Rhee remarks that the Japanese desire for territorial expansion and colonization was quite different from European colonization:

Whereas Britain, France and Holland, for example, used their colonies as suppliers of raw materials and did not intend to make the people of the colonies citizens of their own country, Japan intended to make Korea a part of the Japanese country in terms both of territory and race. Given the racial similarities between Koreans and Japanese, the Japanese colonial rulers attempted to suppress Korean nationalism and identity whenever possible. It was largely for this reason that they did not want to produce highly educated Koreans.¹⁰

10 Rhee 1996, p. 79: “영국, 프랑스, 네덜란드가 그들의 식민지를 자신들의 물질공급처로 여기고 자신들의 나라의 시민들로 만들고자 한 것과 달리 일본은 한국을 자국으로 완전한 동화를 시도하였다. 한국과 일본 간의 인종적 유사점을 생각했을 때 일본식민통치는 가

This remark is supported by the document outlining the educational principles which Japan employed in Korea during this period. The Japanese colonial government adopted a system of public education designed to help incorporate Koreans into the Japanese culture and to make them useful citizens in a new industrialized, exploitative society. The Japanese authorities forced Koreans to speak Japanese. Korean students were not allowed to speak their mother tongue under the penalty of expulsion from school. Textbooks were no longer printed in the Korean language during the colonial time in the 1920s.¹¹ Within the education system that was conducted in Japanese, there was no way to develop the desired harmony between the rational system of Western art education and the Korean tradition in education. According to Rhee, the content of art education under Japanese colonial rule concentrated on skill and techniques to manufacture military supplies for the Japanese Army. He argues that, “it was a critical loss for Korea not to be able to develop their own art education.”¹²

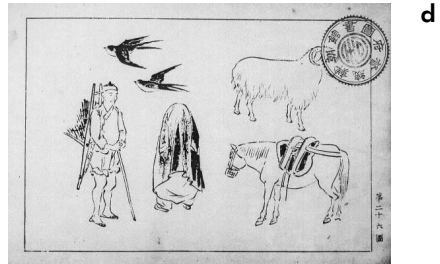
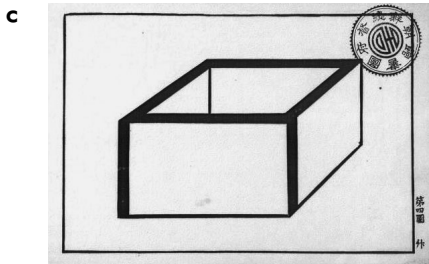
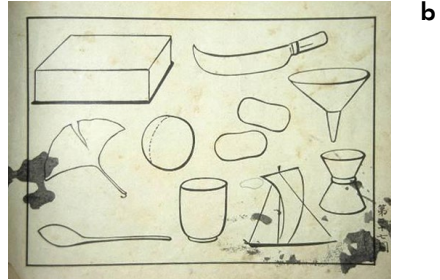
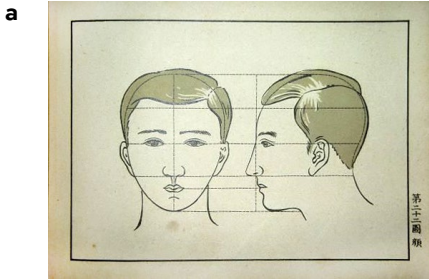
The power of Japan’s colonization permeated through the art textbooks called *Dohaimbon* (» Fig. 3), which were published in Korea during that period. The art textbooks produced by the Japanese curriculum planner played a powerful role in controlling Korean people. The methods of instructing how to draw objects with the brush were completely different from the teaching approaches to traditional Korean paintings and drawings with black brushes (see and compare with » Fig. 1).

These illustrations were used for art classes in schools during the period of Japanese domination in South Korea. The drawing methods were recognized as ‘Western’ ways for Korean art teachers who were used to drawing in different ways in the form of black brush paintings. The art textbook was focused on observing the objects and expressing the figures by applying geometric perspective, while the “traditional” drawing methods were not concerned with the use of perspective but only with imitating great masters’ works or imagining the objects with skillful brush techniques.

능한 한 한국의 국민주의와 정체성을 억압하고자 하였고 고도의 지적이고 엘리트적으로 한국인들이 교육받는 것을 원하지 않았다.”

11 Rhee 1996.

12 Rhee 1996, p. 250: “한국인들이 그들만의 미술교육을 발전시켜나갈 수 없게 한 비평적 손실이었다.”



Figs. 3 a–d Drawing example in the First Korean National Textbook that was published during Japanese colonization period Dowhaimbon, 1920, Textbook Museum, Korea.

Western pedagogies accepted during the US military service: 1945–1955

Even though the colonization ended and the Second World War finished in 1945, Korea was still suffering from political exploitation because it was divided into two parts: the southern part was occupied by the US while the northern part was controlled by the Soviet Union. Since dividing into north and south, South Korea had been helped by the Commanding General of the American forces. In 1948 the First Republic of Korea was established, but in 1950 came the Korean War triggered by North Korean invasion. Many schools were destroyed and many of the teachers and college faculty members were killed for political reasons. As a result of this, South Korea constantly needed US military assistance.¹³

During this period, the development of the educational system was hindered and Western educational theories were introduced to South Korea by the US. The new public education implemented by the US was fundamentally reconstructed to eliminate any previous colonial vestige and to introduce American pedagogies and Western educational theory and practice. The pedagogies and ideologies were based both on a “scientific outlook” and “democratic ideals and values”¹⁴ which were in contrast to the metaphysical ideologies of Confucianism and Buddhism. The differences between Western and Oriental ideas on education became apparent to the Korean people. For those who argued that education should concern mental awareness influenced by the Confucian scholarship, the adoption of the Western pedagogies grounded on the scientific ideology seemed inappropriate to Korean art education, and they were reluctant to the adoption of Western art and educational approaches to the National Curriculum. However, in contrast some of the oriental approaches to art works were regarded as old and unscientific in the practices of the Korean art world.

In South Korea after the acceptance of Western painting, tradition was regarded as the opposite of “modern”, or “Western” in the particular context. According to art critic Kyung-Sung Lee, the viewpoint of traditional painting prevailed during the 1950s, and young artists were paying attention to the Informal Art of post-war Europe and the Abstract Expressionism of the US.¹⁵ They felt affinity with the spontaneity and subjective expression of these movements and looked for a model of modern art. The issues confronting the Korean art world were rationalization, modernization and globalization, according the Korean art critics in the 1950s. In the light of such atmosphere in the contemporary Korean art world, the viewpoint of tradition affected Korean modern school art education that was established after the war. Through the

13 Dobbs 1981.

14 Kim 1982, p. 25.

15 Kyung-Sung Lee 1954.



Fig. 4 Cover of a primary school textbook (전시부독본 - 겨울공부용), Textbook published by Korean Education Association, 1951.

stream of Western modern art in 1951, it can be seen how such Western approaches to drawing were embedded and assimilated into school art practice.

In 1955 the first National Curriculum was announced by the Ministry of Education in Korea. The first major task was the construction of an educational law in order to insure the efficient conduct of the educational system because it regarded education as essential to nation building. Regarding the National Curriculum for Art, the curriculum planners were influenced by the American military and politicians who had the authority to select the contents of the art curriculum (» Fig. 4).¹⁶

This means that the Korean National Curriculum has been institutionalized to meet domestic goals for economic development in the South Korean context of American intervention.¹⁷

16 “전시부독본 - 겨울공부용” After the war, the text book consisted of making planes, ships and technical vehicles.

17 Kim 2000.

Figs. 5 a, b Images from an art exhibition pamphlet of children's paintings accompanied by art teachers' training sessions in the 1950s, private collection.



a



b

At the beginning of establishing the curriculum, the Ministry of Education invited the Peabody Delegation on Education in the United States to provide advice on a new beginning for teacher training. Re-educating art teachers was an important stimulus for improving the ideals, goals, materials, methods and evaluation of art education. The Peabody Delegation's goal of school art education was that students should be encouraged to develop self-expression and creativity.¹⁸ Art was regarded at that time as a necessary subject for the development of perception through creative expression in the US. This art education philosophy for free expression was based on the educational writings of John Dewey.¹⁹ Equally, Lowenfeld's model²⁰ of Creativity-Enhanced education by means of art and educational developmental processes formulated by Herbert Read²¹ helped towards a systemization of art education and the improvement of teaching art in schools. These models, which emphasized therapeutic experience and the role of art activities to educate students' abilities and responsibilities for well-being

18 Kim 2000.

19 Dewey 1934, 1938.

20 Lowenfeld/Brittain 1947.

21 Read 1954.

in society, looked quite reasonable for the curriculum planners in the context of the contemporary Korean social chaos after the war (» *Figs. 5 a, b*).

However, in the social conditions following the war there were not enough teachers with awareness of such pedagogies based on the post-war modern art world. South Korean art education practices continued to teach the approaches that focused on developing art skills as implemented during the period of Japanese occupation. Most Korean teachers also found it difficult to eliminate these educational methods and to adopt art education towards an emphasis on creativity and self-expression. Although the government had to recruit a number of teaching staff to teach art in schools, and although the teachers were aware of the purpose of teaching art to encourage children's self-expression and individuality in accordance with Western pedagogies, the teachers could not help but teach art by the methods which were taught during the Japanese colonial period, and put these methods into practice in Korean school art education. In contexts that had been modernized by the Japanese and the Americans, Korean art teachers' educational ideas and perceptions by the 1980s were still deeply rooted in Confucian philosophy, which had become ingrained in Korea's way of living. It can be argued that the fusion of educational ideologies and approaches between the Western pedagogies, Japanese approaches to skill and the Chinese philosophy were what constituted South Korean art education at this time.

Influences of Western pedagogies on the national curriculum for art: 1960 – present

Since the establishment of the first national curriculum in 1955, there have been eight revisions due to policy changes of the elected government. In the 1960s, the idea of nationalism began to be established and the trend of advocating nationhood reached a new prominence as the Korean government wanted real independence from the US. The first step in justifying nationalism was to establish Korean cultural identity against the background of outside influences. With the advent of the Park presidency in 1962, the curriculum planners tried to invent a revival of Korean tradition by focusing on "Koreaness." As a result of this, the national curriculum in the 1970s promoted Korean tradition and cultural heritages. At this time, tradition seemed to be defined as the spirit, customs, values, or heritage that was formed and passed down through history belonging to a certain community, ethnic group or nation.²²

Under the Park regime in 1973, the Third National Curriculum for Art consisted of four sections including painting, sculpture, design and craft. In the painting section,

22 Kim 2008.

Western paintings were separated from traditional Korean painting while the sculpture and design sections consisted almost entirely of Western art practice. This might have been because the planners recognized “traditional” sculpture, design and craft as artisan work at the point when Western sculpture works and design works were introduced during the Japanese occupation along with Western painting. Such “traditional” Korean sculpture and craft works were included to understand traditional arts and cultural heritage in the sections of art history and art appreciation in the art textbooks published in the 1970s. This demonstrates how the South Korean curriculum planners recognized the view of “traditional” art. At that time during the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, there were enormous changes in the Korean contemporary art world as well as in the whole of society precipitated by the political democratic movement and rapid economic development. During this period, the typical art practices with representational images had almost disappeared and were being replaced with work in monochrome. Most South Korean painters used a single color usually white or a neutral color. These artworks reveal abstract forms such as space, strength, order, and harmony of nature (» *Figs. 6, 7*). Some of those artists sought to become at one with nature through a profound understanding of the East Asian tradition of art. South Korean artists, who were trained in the US, were trying to represent the differences between Korean art and Western art by bringing traditional images of Korean art to the fore. They used the beauty of white as a key traditional color. As a traditional Korean color, white was the symbol of ‘white-ism’, which Yanagi Muneyoshi demonstrated as ‘the beauty of sorrow’ and ‘naïve’ in a sense of oriental aesthetics.²³ This sense initially comes from the tragic Korean historical experience when it was colonized by other people and the color white was the typical color of clothes, representing a symbol of sorrow for Korean people who were exploited by the ruling group during the colonized period. For Korean artists who were trying to overcome poor conditions, the monochrome art movement was interpreted as a representation of Korean tradition by using white.

At this time, the content of the curriculum consisted of art education theory based on modernity and progressivism adopted from the US, in common with other countries which had been colonized. For these countries, modernization was often regarded as ‘Westernization’. In the 1980s and 1990s these Korean art educators introduced Western contemporary art theories into South Korean art education practice. At that time Western modern art was speedily introduced to South Korean art education theories and practices, whereas the South Korean contemporary art world started to recognize the dominant Western influences on Korean art practices, and sought a way to combine Western art approaches with traditional Korean themes and media as illustrated in » *Figures 6 and 7*.

23 Jeong 2006.

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Fig. 6 Chang-sub Jeong, Dock, 1986, 330 x 190 cm, traditional Korean paper (한지/韓紙), Kimdaljin Art Research and Consulting.

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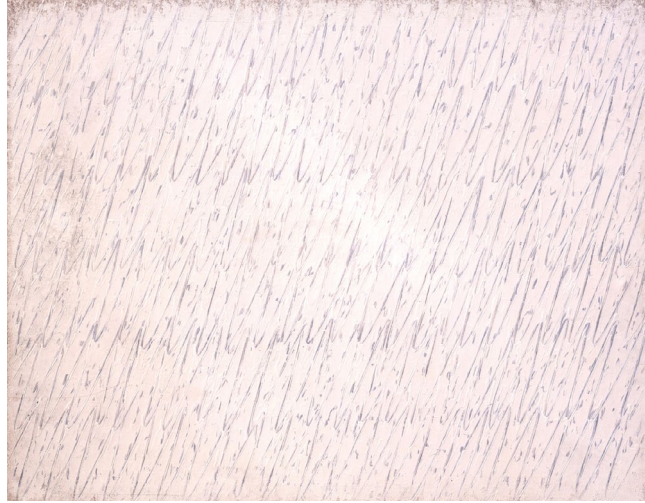


Fig. 7 Seo-bo Park, Ecriture No. 910614, 1991, 130 x 162 cm, private collection.

During the period from the late 1980s and the 1990s, change in South Korean art education theory and practice was both gradual and revolutionary. By the time the Olympics opened in Seoul in 1988, the government had attempted to introduce traditional Korean culture into the curriculum, however, at the same time it realized that in relation to economic development and developing an international trade position, it needed to maintain Western influences on the curriculum. In the 1990s a close connection between education and economic planning occurred and the Ministry of Education designed educational development plans in close cooperation with the Economic Planning Board. The intention was to promote the people's abilities through economic development. Their concern of 'internationalism' was an effort that gradually accepted the Western influence in the educational, political, and cultural fields to respond and communicate great changes in the context of globalization, and concurrently enforced in people the revival of tradition to inspire national consciousness.

With these concerns, South Korean art educators adopted Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) from the US in 1997, which was an approach to art education comprising four parts: art history, aesthetics, art criticism and art practice. DBAE was considered as a positive development for the Korean national curriculum which was reformed under the recent open-market policy of the South Korean Government, termed "internationalization". Consequently, the seventh Korean National Curriculum for Art, starting in 2000, was structured to include the adoption of DBAE. However, in common with other countries which adopted the DBAE movement, South

Korean art educators and the Ministry of Education believed that the discourse of cultural diversity and the introduction of multiculturalism by the adoption of DBAE were appropriate for the central aim of “internationalization” in Korean educational policy at the time. But the multiculturalism was used for the policy which is to conserve, develop and introduce Korean national culture and heritage to the global open market from an economic position, rather than to celebrate cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, the South Korean government introduced the more recent development in “Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE)” to the new Korean curriculum, which was revised in 2010.²⁴ As evidenced in international conference programs and art education publications, the proponents of visual culture art education, such as Duncum, Freedman, Wilson and Tavin,²⁵ argue that art education must expand to embrace all forms of visual culture and seek to contribute to an ongoing understanding of the socio-cultural and political production of the visual. This shift requires replacing traditional forms of art and art education and placing emphasis on the deeper values, meanings and purposes in the light of critical views of culture. The purpose of art teaching according to this pedagogy should be “about students making and viewing the visual arts to understand their meanings, purposes, relationships and influences.”²⁶ This very much concerns identity formation in the pedagogical context of visual art practices. The adoption of VCAE could be a reasonable development in the South Korean contemporary position, which is encountering a diverse cultural environment through the advance of foreign labor, international marriage, and the development of economic exchanges. It is increasingly being noticeable that South Korea is now no longer a mono-cultural nation and is in a position to recognize other cultures and to demand cultural and educational policy for diverse ethnic students.²⁷

The above art works of current secondary school students in South Korea show the influences of the pedagogic practice of Visual Culture Art Education. Nonetheless, skill-based art practices are still more dominant in school art practice because of the entrance systems of higher education and art teachers’ conservative attitude toward art education embedded in the institutionalized school art educational discourses and practices.

24 Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 2006.

25 Duncum 2000, 2002, 2004; Freedman 2003 a, b; Wilson 2004; Tavin 2000.

26 Steers 2007, p. 148.

27 Jeong 2009.

Current issues of Western influences on Korean art education

Since the modern education system was established during Korean modernization by Japan and the US, the subjects of art practices in the university education system and the national curriculum have been divided into Korean painting (oriental painting), Western painting, sculpture, design and craft in South Korea. This division of the curriculum of art practices was established by Japanese influences on Korean modern education. This has affected Korean school art education practice and the national curriculum for art. Students who are taking higher education are trained according to their chosen curriculum of art practice. What we need to consider concerns the division of Korean painting and Western painting.

» *Figure 8* is the example photo of Western painting training for teaching instruction.

On the other hand, the training for Korean painting is conducted differently by teachers qualified as Korean painting artists because traditional art practice was focused on traditional painting.

Comparing the two different types of painting called Korean and Western, we see that the painting differences are based on the materials and skills, but the objects are not differentiated significantly. Due to this division in painting subjects, South Korean students are trained separately according to their choice of subject. The tension of two divided types of painting in Korean art education can be found in the issues of political, economic and cultural factors affecting the revisions of the Korean national curriculum for art. The photo of Korean art education practices show what kinds of art practice are being taught in schools and how the Western pedagogies and the “traditional” attitudes are now influencing the practical Korean art education. The current South Korean school art practice shows that, in the rapid processes of globalization, such concerns and practices of the issues of tradition and cultural heritage still remain in the paradigm of multiculturalism that is no longer a mono-cultural society given the increasing population of foreign workers and international marriages. Even if such social changes resulted from the rapid economic development that has led the Korean people to try to form curriculum and policy appropriate for a multicultural society, there is the need to keep their own national tradition appropriate for the current South Korean multicultural society, beyond the political ideologies assumed under American colonial-cultural influence. What should be considered here is that such a flow of globalization, which involves an interaction between economic and cultural factors and constructs a complex map of cultural spaces all over the world, is questioning of culture and identity in diverse and complex ways.



Fig. 8 Studio photos of art institution for students who are going to do Western painting as a subject at art college, taken in 2009 by the author.

Summary and implications

According to the history of cultural influences on Korean art education, and taking into account changes in the political and economic backgrounds, I have come to the conclusion that Korean people have considered Japanese and Western cultural influences to be the only foreign elements in the formation of their cultural identity since the time of the Japanese occupation of Korea between 1905 and 1945. However, it is necessary to examine the elements that existed before the opening of Korea to the West, such as the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism during the political intervention of China, passive opening to the West under Japanese colonization and the dominant Western cultural influences from the USA within the context of rapid economic development. Korean art education before the opening to the West had been conducted with art training through mimetic activities and the copying of masters' work, which was influenced by the educational thought of Confucianism and Buddhism from China. This mimetic art training was perceived as the traditional Korean art education prior to the adoption of modern art education from the West. During the period of Japanese colonization and US military government, American educational ideology and pedagogies were transmitted and adopted within a milieu of economic, political and social chaos. It can be argued that the Western aesthetic approach and art educational models were passively adopted from the political and cultural forces of Japan and the USA. The dominance of American (Western) influence on South Korean education demonstrates how education emerged as a significant factor that has had an impact on South Korean art educators' and curriculum planners' perceptions of cultural identity.

It can be argued that the strong American influence on Korean art education introduces the issues of cultural hegemony and “ever-greater resentment on the part of those who feel disempowered by the dominance of Western capitalism.”²⁸ On the other hand, it can also be seen that the rapid economic developments and the process of globalization could be perceived as being achieved under the impact of American culture and educational ideologies. Within the political and social condition of the cultural influences of China, Japan and the USA, South Korean people including art educators might have perceived “tradition” as a means of overcoming the dominant Western cultural influences. In the current globalizing cultural flow, the position for advocating nationalism to establish Koreans’ own cultural identity may be differently debated according to how the adoption of Western culture, art and education theories into Korea is recognized by South Koreans. Bearing in mind the fact the colonial influence of both China and Japan in Korea, it is questionable how the educational ideology of Confucianism and Buddhism can be considered as “traditional” to Korea before its opening to the West. This question is concerned with the issue of “identity politics” according to recent globalization phenomena, in which the reassertion of a “perceived” national identity might conflict with the celebration of cultural diversity.²⁹

In order to understand this constitutive process, the imposition of a model of the past on the present is necessary to situate the mirrors in space and their movement in time. The past is a past constructed and reproduced in the present. Therefore, it is necessary to account for the processes that generate those contexts in order to account for the nature of both the practice of identity and the production of historical schemes. The debate between acceptance of cultural diversity and revival of tradition within the globalizing context is an issue which can be analyzed in the light of critical insights of the cultural formation of pedagogic identities.

28 Steers 2007, p. 149.

29 Hall 1990, 1996, 1997; Woodward 1997a, b.

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