

Flowers for Kim Il Sung.

Art and Architecture from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Press Preview Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 10:30 a.m.

Opening Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 8 p.m.

Exhibition Venue MAK Exhibition Hall

Weiskirchnerstraße 3, 1010 Vienna

Exhibition Dates May 19 – September 5, 2010

Opening Hours Tue MAK NITE© 10 a.m.–12 midnight

Wed–Sun, 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon closed

The art of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is largely unknown outside its home country. The exhibition *Flowers for Kim Il Sung* at the MAK offers a first-ever comprehensive look at this country's contemporary art, poster art and architecture. In the spotlight is a culture that seems foreign to us, determined by the all-encompassing worship of "Eternal President" Kim Il Sung (deceased in 1994) and his currently reigning son Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defence Commission, and characterized by the Chuch'e Idea, a specific interpretation of socialism. "Art is the only societal force capable of overcoming borders," asserts Peter Noever, director of the MAK, in reference to this exhibition. Noever adds: "*Flowers for Kim Il Sung* should in no way be viewed as a political statement, but rather purely as a unique opportunity to examine the idealizing art of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is hardly known at all. With this showing at the MAK, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has broken through its isolation—at least in terms of artistic production."

In close cooperation with the Korean Art Gallery, around 100 works of fine art—oil paintings, Chosonhwa paintings and watercolors—and 30 selected posters will be presented. Large-format portraits of the president Kim Il Sung and his successor Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defence Commission, will also be on display. Supported by the Paektusan Academy of Architecture, a separate section will be devoted to architecture; at its center there will be a model—made specifically for the MAK—of the so-called Chuch'e Tower, the highest stone tower in the world. This is one of the many monuments that were put up on the occasion of Kim Il Sung's birthday, and it gives an impression of the city-planning idea upon which the reconstruction of Pyongyang was based.