No 'borders' exist in the world of ceramics

The cities of Ichon, Gwangju, and Yeou, venues of the GICBiennale for the last ten years, have been heavily engaged in production of ceramics throughout history. Ichon is so closely associated with ceramics that it was designated by UNESCO as part of the Creative Cities Network. There are as many as 840 pottery factories, small and large, throughout Ichon. Also in the city are Ceramips, a ceramic theme park of the Korea Ceramic Foundation, Sagimbok Ceramic Village, Korea Ceramic Art High School, and Haegang ceramics Museum.

Those who are interested in learning about the ceramics used by the royal court of Joseon are urged to come to Gwangju. Here, the Joseon government once operated the royal kilns to produce vessels for the royal household and government office. During the reign of King Sejong, Gwangju gained fame for the most exquisite white porcelain. Although there are only thirty-five kilns in Gwangju today, relatively few compared to the other two cities, there are many historic sites related to ceramics, such as Gyeonggi Ceramic Museum, kiln sites of Joseon white porcelain, Busan kiln sites, and sites of potters' tombstones, making Gwangju the perfect place to learn about or appreciate traditional ceramics.

Yeou is home to ceramics for use. More than 40% of all chinsware used in Korea is produced in Yeou. Yeou has a long history of livingware ceramics. The Geographical Description Section in the Annals of King Sejong states that there was a pottery in Yeou. Even during the Japanese occupation, a factory for livingware ceramics was founded in Yeou. A bone china factory called Moo, an arm of Haengnam Chinsware, the parent company which is the second largest chinsware company in Korea; some 600 companies involved with chinsware; and Dongajaejang, a ceramics shopping and culture complex of KOCEF, are all located in Yeou. If you want to buy livingware ceramics at lower prices, come to Yeou.
The world's best ceramics tourist spot with 'Seven Attractions' opens

GICBiennale 2011 opened on September 24 and will run for sixty days, until November 22, at three venues: Icheon Cerapla, Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park, and Yeouju Dojasesang. For the first time in ten years, the three biennale venues have all been transformed into ceramic theme tourist spots, which means that there are again as many things to see, enjoy, and feel as ever before. All visitors will come away with memories for a lifetime. There are seven 'must visit' places for tourists at GICBiennale 2011.

■ Gumho ‘Icheon Cerapla’
In front of Icheon Cerapla is Sangjoong Lake Gumho. Made of ceramics, Gumho is a nature-environment rest area. Gumho is the name of a legendary fox with nine tails, Gumi means nine tails and ho means either a fox or a lake. So Gumho here means a lake of nine tails. This name was an impromptu idea of KOCEF staff. Gumho is a nature-friendly space and a collaboration work of art by forty ceramic artists. It is interesting that all materials used for this artwork are ceramics purchased under the initiative to support small potteries.
In Gumho are a rock, the ‘Gumjeong’ pavilion, the Seo-’seol’ floating stage, the ‘Rendal’ outdoor stage, the Gumho-’gl’ path leading to the CeraMIX Creativity Center, and the Seeo-seok’ bridge.

■ Artworks at ‘Icheon Cerapla, Yeouju Dojasesang, Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park’
Like a ceramic theme tourist spot, works of art made of ceramics are found everywhere at Icheon Cerapla, Yeouju Dojasesang, and Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park.
Icheon Cerapla is Korea’s only ceramic theme park. Each and every facility from the toilet, to the playground, the cut, and the art museum, is filled with ceramic artworks.

All over Icheon Cerapla, wherever your feet take you Artworks made of ceramic shards grab your attention 150 prize-winning works of the international Competition exhibited

The ideas for the artworks come directly from the artists themselves. The ceramics used for the artworks were pieces kept long in inventory or were pieces made of shards. The artworks all over Yeouju Dojasesang were made by the staff of KOCEF. They broke ceramic pieces and put them together to create completely new artworks.

■ Toyuseum ‘Icheon Cerapla’
Art Museum Toyuseum was originally an office building of KOCEF. Once quiet administrative building, it was transformed into an art museum under the public reform plan initiated after Chairman Kang Woo-byun took office in 2009.
The art museum cum administrative building was such a success that it is now being frequented and benchmarked by government officials and representatives of agencies of Gyeonggi-do Province. In Toyuseum are traces of the administrative building such as broken walls and a toilet for the top management, which were intentionally left in their original condition. The men’s room on the second floor and the ladies room on the third floor were decorated by ceramicists themselves. The ladies room, in particular, is very popular among visitors.

■ The three biennale venues have all been transformed into ceramic theme tourist attractions, and each of Icheon Cerapla, Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park, and Yeouju Dojasesang presents main exhibitions for sixty days.

During the biennale, the exhibition ‘Journey from Porcelain’ is on, with 30,000 pieces from 150 piece. This exhibition is dedicated to the 150 years of porcelain production. Some 2,000 pieces are on display, and the exhibition is expected to attract some 150,000 visitors.

■ Sundaymorning Ceramics ‘Icheon Cerapla’
Showing ceramics fused with other fields, this is an interesting exhibition specially organized for the GICBiennale by the ECOW European Ceramic Work Center from the Netherlands. The exhibition has two sections: Ceramics and Sound, and Ceramics and CAD/CAM. The participating ceramics and sound were selected, as were artists who work with ceramics and CAD/CAM.

■ The Highest-Priced Ceramics: ‘Yeouju Dojasesang’
The most expensive ceramic piece on sale at Yeouju Dojasesang is a 12 million won ‘Lacquered Jar with Porcelain Design’ by Moon Seung-hun. The entire surface of a white porcelain jar is exquisitely decorated with porcellana designs in openwork and then lacquered. It imparts a unique feeling.
The cheapest ceramic piece of Yeouju Dojasesang is a ceramic tea spoon of the ‘Yeungang Pottery’ sold for only 600 won at the Living Shop. Thus, the most expensive piece is 60,000 times more expensive than the cheapest one. Some 3,500 works by over 2,000 artists are on sale at Yeouju Dojasesang.

■ Ceramic Fashion & Table Story ‘Yeouju Dojasesang’
As the theme of Yeouju Dojasesang is livingware ceramics, the exhibitions at Yeouju Dojasesang focus on artworks closely related to living. This is especially so at Ceramic Fashion and Table Story. Ceramic Fashion, an exhibition which mixes fashion with ceramics, shows the harmony of ceramic jewelry and fashion. With seven young fashion designers and ten ceramic artists participating, this exhibition explores new possibilities for ceramics.

Come to Yeouju Dojasesang to see the Ceramic Fashion Exhibition Wide range of livingware ceramics exhibited and sold

At Gwangju the Korea-China Ceramic Arts Exhibition

Table Story tells us stories unique to each table with ceramic vessels and other art. At Interactive Table Deco Corner, a culinary expert and a media artist demonstrate by a touch screen how to decorate a table with virtual vessels and food.

■ Main exhibitions ‘Icheon Cerapla, Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park, Yeouju Dojasesang’
The main exhibition of each biennale venue is a must for tourists to see. At Icheon Cerapla are exhibited 150 pieces selected from among the 3,700 entries from 71 countries all over the world for the International Competition of GICBiennale 2011, the largest ceramics competition in the world.
At Gwangju Gonjiam Ceramic Park is the Korea-China Ceramic Arts Exhibition, Traditional ceramic works by representative ceramic artists from Korea and China are shown at one place for comparison and exploration into the direction of development of the ceramics of the two countries,
A story about the GICBienneles told by Chairman Kang
A ticket to the GICBiennele is a work of art?
- Story about only one ticket in the world

A ticket to GICBiennele 2011 is actually an artwork made of ceramics. That is, the ticket is a souvenir, and there is no other ticket like it in the world. It is truly unique. With this ceramic ticket, you are admitted to twelve galleries at the three biennale venues of Icheon, Gwangju and Yeou, and can participate in some ten hands-on experience programs, performances, and events including the Joy of Clay class, where you can make your own ceramics.

An all-venue ticket to the biennale is W60,000 per adult, but a ceramic ticket is worth W10,000. In order to widely publicize the ceramics of the biennale, KCCBF decided to incur a loss to produce these unique ceramic tickets. This extraordinary idea was the brainchild of Chairman of KCCBF Kang Woo-hyun (57), the force behind the success of Nami Island.

Chairman Kang said, “If a ceramic ticket gives visitors joy and good memories about the GICBiennele, even much greater profit will be created.” By making ticketing out of ceramics, Kang helped create more jobs for ceramic artists and reinvigorate the ceramics industry, and he made sure that the profits from ticket sales were returned to the ceramic artists. The catchphrase of the GICBiennele this year put on by Kang is ‘Come! See! Enjoy! The GICBiennele!’

The ceramic ticket is truly a work of art. An idea contest for the ceramic ticket was announced for ceramic artists last June. A total of 54 entries were entered, and three were finally selected after assessing their convenience of carrying and practicability. The three final winners were a ceramic bow–tie for men, ceramic brooch for women, and clay pipe pencil for students.

The GICBiennele hosted by Gyeonggi-do Province and arranged by KCCBF is held for two months, from September 24 through November 22, at Icheon Cerapia, which was reborn as a ceramic theme park, Gwangju Gjonim Ceramic Park, and Yeou Jiusesang. Founded in 2001, this year marks the fifth GICBiennele. ‘The GICBiennele is now regarded as one of world’s three greatest ceramic biennales along with Mino Ceramic Biennale of Japan and Faenza Ceramic Biennale of Italy.’

Tickets to GICBiennele 2011 can be bought on-line at www.kocef.org and www.ticketlink.co.kr and at branches of NH Bank and GS convenience stores. An all-venue ticket is W8,000 for adults, W6,000 for youths, and W4,000 for children older than 4 years old. If purchased in advance, an all-venue ticket for an adult is discounted to W6,000, W4,000 for youths, and W3,000 for children older than 4 years old. Participants in this program make pots and fire them in a kiln themselves. They can also make other ceramic pieces on the wheel. This program is offered five times for a month starting on September 24. The change for a family of four is W84,000, which includes meals and a tent. Up to ten teams are admitted at one time. Applications for this program should be submitted by e-mail at least one day in advance to 1514@kocef.org. Inquiries by phone: +82–31–861–6501.

Yeou Jiusesang ‘Ceramics Triathlon’
At Deyangnam, a traditional Korean octagonal corridor, are the ‘Ceramics Triathlon’ and ‘Building High with Clay Contest’ every weekend. The Triathlon awards a winner for throwing clay the farthest, carrying clay the fastest, and hitting the ceramic target. The winner of each weekend enters into the final on October 30. The first prize is awarded a ceramic plaque with certification.

The ‘Building High with Clay Contest’ involves family teams of three members or more and groups of seven or more members. A family team that builds the highest structure out of 10 kilograms of clay in twenty minutes or a group team that builds the highest structure out of 20 kilograms of clay in forty minutes wins. The highest scoring family team and group team are awarded prizes of W500,000 and W1,000,000, respectively. Anyone holding an admission ticket or sales receipt of Jojesang can enter this contest. Inquiries by phone: +82–31–884–8844.

Gwangju Gjonim Ceramic Park ‘Making Inlaid Tripitaka Koreana’
At Gwangju Gjonim Ceramic Park is an event to make Inlaid Tripitaka Koreana. Participants can try their own hand at the unique Korean inlay technique for ceramics. They press a clay stamp shaped like one of the Tripitaka Koreana woodblocks at Haeinsa Temple in Hapcheon and letters modeled after Hunminjeongeum, the Korean alphabet; apply white slip on the pressed surface; and scrape out the design to make an inlaid ceramic piece. The admission charge is W5,000. Other hands-on programs are drawing on mugs (charge: W1,000) or ceramic cell phone rings (charge: W2,000). Inquiries by phone: +82–31–799–1500.

The all-venue ticket is W8,000. A single venue ticket is W6,000 for Icheon and W3,000 for Yeou or Gwangju. An admission ticket can be exchanged for a brooch made of ceramics or a clay pipe.
Kang Woo-hyon declares 'Major shake-up of ceramics community'

GICBiennale 2011 - You will regret missing it.

"My name is Kang Woo-hyun. I am fifty—seven years old, only a few years away from my sixtieth birthday, but I am still spending each day as the busiest man in the world. Most people know me only as the CEO of Nami Island. They are, of course, not wrong. I am indeed the CEO of Nami Island. I became the CEO ten years ago. At that time, the island was a ruined amusement park with empty, stained liquor bottles here and there, but we have since transformed it as a representative tourist attraction of Korea.

However, many other things besides Nami Island have kept me busy. Two years ago, I was given another important mission. I was appointed chairman of the Korea Ceramic Foundation. I have been interested in ceramics for a long time. Some people consider me to be very unpredictable and may have wondered where I would end up next after taking public office of Gyeonggi-do Provincial Government. Especially so when my second term as chairman was announced when my first two-year term ended.

As an artist who love ceramics, I had strong conviction that the practices of the ceramic community should be completely reformed. It was barely surviving and would have died without local government handouts, and it was certainly not going to keep alive in Korea’s unique ceramic art the way it was operating. I desperately wanted ceramics to become self-supporting.

The last two years were spent improving the structure of KOCIEF. As soon as I became involved in ceramics, I changed the name to the Korea Ceramic Foundation, and remodeled the administrative building as an art museum type storage facility. The staff of KOCIEF was moved to the 2nd floor of Ceramics Shopping Hall of Ichon No. 1, 1st Icheon City, I discontinued subsidies for ceramic artists and instead purchased inventories stocked in warehouses from those ceramic artists and recycled them, basically, recycling is my specialty.

Two years have passed since I was invited to play a role in the ceramic circle. Now, the fruits of all my efforts will finally show on the 24th of September, That is, GICBiennale 2011. The ceramics biennale naturally recalls a festival of ceramic artists. However, I believe that the ceramics biennale should not be a festival for only 1000 ceramic artists across Korea. I hope to see all the Korean people enjoy ceramics 365 days a year even after the biennale ends.

The GICBiennale this year is very different. If it were predictable, we would know that it had not been arranged by Kang Woo-hyun. I cut the budget for the biennale allocated by Gyeonggi-do Province by two-thirds. The 5th biennale in 2009 cost 8.7 billion won, but this year, the budget for the biennale is only 2.7 billion won. No celebrities will be invited to a gala show of the opening ceremony because I think that kind of thing is a waste of money. It was reported that the last biennale attracted three million visitors, which I think is an over-estimation, as is the case with so many festivals.

Last month, I declared the “Three Nos” in front of the governor of Gyeonggi-do Province: no requests to government agencies to make mass purchases of tickets, no dispatches of government officials, and no mobilization of visitors. These kinds of practices have long been taken as a matter of course, but I totally reject them. GICBiennale 2011 has been arranged with the utmost attention to detail – even a single shard of ceramics used for pavement at a venue was treated with care. I have no intention of begging anyone to come and see biennale, but I have no doubt you will miss something truly special if you do not come. This was how I handled Nami Island, and the results speak for themselves. So, are you not curious about GICBiennale? Come and see the imaginary world of ceramics created by Kang Woo-hyun,

Chairman Kang Woo-hyun of KOCEF painting a plaque to be given to a prize winner of the International Competition. He wrote and painted on the ceramic plaques and then baked them to award them to the prize winners of the GICBiennale.