A new partnership agreement between DutchCulture and Arts Council Korea for 2021-2022 has been signed, setting out a multidisciplinary collaboration on the theme of ‘inclusivity and innovation’, and celebrating 60 years of Dutch-South Korean diplomatic ties.

On 14 October, DutchCulture signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Arts Council Korea (ARKO) in the presence of Ms. Joanne Doornenwaard, Dutch ambassador to South Korea. This MoU formulates a new framework of collaboration for the cultural sectors in the Netherlands and South Korea in the next two years.

Arts Council Korea (ARKO) is a national organisation for the arts in South Korea. It supports art organisations and artists in South Korea and overseas through various services, programmes and initiatives as well as grant-based support. For more than a decade, the ARKO has been consistently sponsoring Korean artists for their residencies at Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam and since last year also at Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. It has considerably helped establish a strong reputation of the Dutch art scene and art education in South Korea.

Since 2017, when South Korea became one of the priority countries in the international cultural policy of the Netherlands, DutchCulture has started a direct dialogue with the International Exchange Department of the ARKO through visitor’s programmes and thematic events. This newly signed MoU sets a milestone for the mutual efforts of the two organisations to bring Dutch and Korean cultural sectors one step closer.

It also timely celebrates the 60th year anniversary of diplomatic relationship between the Netherlands and South Korea (1961-2021).

Connotated by the MoU, in 2021 and 2022 Dutch-Korean joint artistic research, cultural collaboration, artist and knowledge exchange will be actively supported by the two partnered organisations, particularly around the theme of ‘inclusivity and innovation’, through...
a joint funding programme. The ARKO will also expand their collaboration with the Netherlands from visual arts to, among others, performing arts and literature.

The signing ceremony was held digitally. Despite the physical distance, we still feel close with our Korean partners and cherish the mutual understanding and possibility to cooperate. The COVID-19 pandemic might bring uncertainties in the upcoming plans, but ‘we always have a plan B’, as said by the directors of the two organisations.

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