

The 5th BTS: A GLOBAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

THE NEXT GENERATION HALLYU & BTS

Dear Participants and Guests,

Today, K-pop has transcended the boundaries of popular music to establish a new cultural paradigm, arising from the complex interplay of aesthetics, philosophy, politics, digital technology, fandom culture, and global communication. In particular, the platform-centric digital environment, the rapid proliferation of artificial intelligence, and the transnational networking of fandoms are fundamentally reshaping the modes of cultural production and reception. These shifts are carving out new cultural territories that dissolve the traditional boundaries between locality and globality.

In the midst of this transformation, the journey of BTS and their fandom, ARMY, presents a vital academic inquiry. The identity, collective engagement, and the values of care and ethics they have cultivated have expanded beyond a mere fandom phenomenon into a profound sphere of social meaning and discourse. We have now reached a pivotal moment to discuss the next steps for Hallyu-to ensure it functions not merely as a transient trend, but as a sustainable and transformative cultural driver.

Under the theme “The Next-Generation Hallyu and BTS,” this conference seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of cultural phenomena in the technology-media age. We will place a particular focus on the cultural inclusivity and intercultural awareness necessary for Hallyu to achieve true global universality. Our goal is to foster a space where we can explore the possibilities of solidarity across nations, races, genders, and generations, while sharing ethical and critical directions for the future of Hallyu.

We look forward to the profound insights of researchers from around the world as we open new horizons for K-pop and BTS studies in this rapidly changing global environment. It is our sincere hope that your academic passion will serve as a significant milestone in shaping the future of Hallyu.

Sincerely,

The Organizing Committee of the 5th BTS: A Global Interdisciplinary Conference

Byong-jin Ahn (Professor, Kyung Hee University)

Jeeheng Lee (Assistant Professor, Jeonbuk National University)

Jiyoung Lee (Research Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)

Jung Eun Song (Lecturer, Jeonbuk National University)

Sung-eun Cho (Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)

Youngmi Kim (CEO, Big Movement)



Oh-Bong Yang

President,
Jeonbuk National
University

Distinguished guests, scholars, students, and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 5th BTS: A Global Interdisciplinary Conference. I am Oh-Bong Yang, President of Jeonbuk National University, and I also have the honor of serving as a member of the National Education Commission of Korea.

I am delighted to welcome you to Jeonju, a city that embodies the essence of Korean culture and serves as a treasured home of K-cultural heritage, and to Jeonbuk National University, a campus widely recognized for preserving and celebrating the spirit of Korea.

Since its inaugural conference in the United Kingdom in 2020, this gathering has evolved into a vibrant global forum for scholarly dialogue, traveling through the United States, South Korea, and Malaysia. It is particularly meaningful that this fifth conference is being hosted at Jeonbuk National University. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the International Society for BTS Studies (ISBS), the Namwon Glocal Campus Administration Headquarters, the Glocal University Project Promotion Team, and the Department of K-Entertainment for their dedication and hard work in organizing this conference.

Today, K-pop has grown far beyond the boundaries of popular music and has emerged as a new cultural paradigm. In particular, the journey of BTS and ARMY, which has transcended national, racial, generational, and gender boundaries while promoting the values of solidarity and inclusion, has fundamentally transformed conventional modes of cultural production and consumption.

At Jeonbuk National University, we are striving to establish a new model of a “glocal university” that connects local identity with global engagement. Building upon the richness of our cultural heritage and regional roots, we seek to foster meaningful connections with the wider world. In particular, our newly established Department of K-Entertainment is dedicated to nurturing creative talents who will lead the next generation of the global cultural industry.

The central theme of this conference, “The Next-Generation Hallyu and BTS,” closely reflects our university’s educational and academic vision of combining traditional values with innovative forms of global relevance. I am confident that the interdisciplinary discussions taking place over the next two days—spanning cultural studies, sociology, artificial intelligence, and the humanities—will open new horizons for K-pop studies.

I hope that this conference will serve as a forum for sharing ethical and critical perspectives on the future direction of next-generation Hallyu, while also exploring sustainable cultural momentum for years to come. During your stay at Jeonbuk National University, I encourage you to deepen your scholarly engagement amid the beauty of our green campus and to experience the rich cultural assets and warm hospitality of Jeonju.

Once again, I sincerely thank all of you for joining us at Jeonbuk National University. I hope this conference will become a meaningful milestone in each of your academic journeys.

Thank you very much.



Guido SONG
President,
The Korea Foundation

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I am Song Guido, president of the Korea Foundation.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the convening of the 5th BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference.

The Korea Foundation carries out public diplomacy that connects Korea with the world based on Korean values and culture.

In this regard, BTS serves as an exemplary model, embodying both the “distinctiveness of Korea” and the “global universality” that the KF seeks to promote.

Not only has BTS fostered empathy and connection with people around the globe through K-pop, but more recently, they have also delivered a universal message of comfort rooted in uniquely Korean sentiments through Korea’s traditional folk melody, “Arirang.”

Their two special addresses to the United Nations General Assembly and their participation in UNICEF’s campaign to end violence against children were proud achievements in public diplomacy that drew the world’s attention to Korea.

Furthermore, the various charitable donations and environmental initiatives, including on climate action, undertaken by their fandom, ARMY, demonstrate how cultural content can inspire meaningful social change.

I hope that this conference will foster rich, in-depth discussions on the positive impact that culture can have on the international community.

Once again, congratulations on the convening of the 5th BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to ask for your continued interest in the Korea Foundation and its public diplomacy efforts.

Thank you.

Conference Committees

➤ Organizing Committee

- Byong-jin Ahn (Professor, Kyung Hee University)
- Jeeheng Lee (Assistant Professor, Jeonbuk National University)
- Jiyoung Lee (Research Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)
- Jung Eun Song (Lecturer, Jeonbuk National University)
- Sung-eun Cho (Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)
- Youngmi Kim (CEO, Big Movement)

➤ Publication Committee

- Candace Epps-Robertson (Editor and Independent Scholar)
- Hyun-Kyung You (Professor, California Polytechnic State University, Humboldt)
- Jin-Ha Lee (Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, University of Washington)
- Kwangsik Kim (Professor, Seoul National University)
- Mi-Young Kim (Lecturer, University of British Columbia)
- Nur Lina Binti Anuar (Assistant Professor, UCSI)

➤ Activities Committee

- Hyo-Young Kang (Lecturer, Suwon Science College)
- Sunah Kim (Producer, Gina Dreams Pictures)

➤ Organized by

- ISBS (International Society for BTS Studies)

➤ Hosted by

- Namwon Glocal Campus Administration, JBNU
- Center for Glocal University Project, JBNU
- Department of K-Entertainment, JBNU
- Big Movement



Department of K-Entertainment

Global K-Wave Starts Here

K-Content Producer



Create global hit content for broadcasting networks and digital platforms.

Localization Expert



Optimize K-content for global fandoms through cultural translation and adaptation

Cultural Exchange Specialist



Plan and execute international cultural projects and policies for public institutions

From Theory to Field

Master the 'Why' through humanities and the 'How' through fieldwork. We cultivate leaders who can navigate the entire journey of content creation—from concept to global distribution.

Uniquely Local, Universally Global

We cultivate visionaries who reimagine local cultural assets as global phenomena. Our curriculum empowers students to envision, create, and launch cultural content that resonates across borders, transforming regional narratives into universal success stories on the world stage.

CONTACT US

- Global Campus

<https://nwgc.jbnu.ac.kr>



glocalcampus@jbnu.ac.kr
nkr@jbnu.ac.kr

- International Admissions

<http://top.jbnu.ac.kr/iooffice/index.do>



General Information

Campus Map



- The International Convention Center (1-40)
- Chambit Residence Hall (21-5)

Conference Venue

JBNU International Convention Center (전북대학교 국제컨벤션센터)

- Session Venue: Main Hall(1st Floor), Seminar Room 1&3(2nd Floor)
- Address: 49-10 Changpo-gil, Deokjin-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province (전북특별자치도 전주시 덕진구 창포길 49-10)



By Public Bus

Bus Routes: 9 / 9-1 / 19 / 49 / 62 / 86 / 87 / 89 / 102 / 103 / 103-1 / 104 / 131 / 165 / 350 / 354 / 355 / 554 / 559

Arrival Bus Stops

JBNU International Convention Center (전북대학교 국제컨벤션센터)
Jeollabuk-do Provincial Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts (도립국악원)

By Car / Taxi

Search: 'JBNU International Convention Center' or '전북대학교 국제컨벤션센터'

HOW TO GET TO JBNU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER

- FROM JEONJU EXPRESS/INTERCITY BUS TERMINAL
 - : By Bus - Approx. 5-10 minutes / On Foot - Approx. 15-20 minutes
- FROM JEONJU TRAIN STATION
 - : By Bus or Taxi - Approx. 10-15 minutes
- FROM IKSAN KTX STATION
 - : Take an intercity bus from Iksan to Jeonju, then transfer to a local city bus.

➤ Accommodation

• Chabbit Hall, Jeonbuk National University(전북대학교 참빛관)

- Address: 93 Changpo-gil, Deokjin-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province
(전북특별자치도 전주시 덕진구 창포길 93)



▶ **Building 2(참빛 2관):** Male Residence Hall

▶ **Check-in:** After 15:00, July 1, 2026

▶ **Building 4(참빛 4관):** Female Residence Hall

▶ **Check-out:** Before 11:00, July 3, 2026

※ Please bring your passport or valid ID to the front desk to receive your room key card upon arrival.

➤ Lunch Restaurant

• Deokjinheon(덕진헌)

- Address: 49-10 Changpo-gil, Deokjin-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do
(Rooftop of International Convention Center)



※ Please submit your meal coupon, which you received along with your ID badge, to the restaurant after your meal.

➤ On-site Registration

Venue	Information Desk(In front of the Main Hall), JBNU International Convention Center
Date	09:00 am ~ 12:00 pm, July 2-3
Payment Method	Cash or Wire Transfer (Credit Card Not Accepted)
Registration Fee	General Attendee: 50,000 Korean Won per a day
	Undergraduate Students: Free of Charge

➤ Pre-Conference Night

• **Date:** WED, 1 JULY, 19:00~22:00

• **Venue:** Cafe Hanol (Located on the rooftop of International Convention Center)

• **Details:** A casual networking session with light refreshments and drinks



Participation and Registration

Q I missed the pre-registration deadline. Can I register on-site? How much does it cost?

A Yes, on-site registration is available. The registration fee for general attendees is \$50 USD per day (or the equivalent amount in KRW), payable via bank transfer to the account provided at the on-site registration desk. Please note that complimentary services such as lunch and accommodations are not provided to on-site registrants, so you will need to utilize on-campus dining facilities independently.

Q Do undergraduate students need to pay the registration fee?

A On-site registration is completely free of charge for undergraduate students. Simply present your student ID at the registration desk for verification to gain admission.

Q Can I receive a registration invoice or a certificate of attendance?

A Yes, both are available upon request. Please ask the staff at the on-site registration desk, and they will issue the documents accordingly.

Q I am not completely fluent in English. Will I be able to understand the presentations by international scholars?

A Professional simultaneous interpretation (English-Korean) will be provided for special sessions held in the Main Hall, including the Opening Ceremony, Keynote Speech, and Special Sessions.

Program and Special Events

Q Can general attendees participate in the Special Media Focus interview and the Special Event documentary screening?

A Yes, all registered general attendees are welcome to attend. The Day 1 morning session, Special Media Focus: Bao Nguyen (Director of BTS: The Return) Interview, and the afternoon session, Special Event: Documentary “Forever We Are Young” Screening & Talk with Director Grace Lee, will both take place in the Main Hall.

Q What is the Pre-Conference Night held on the day before the event (July 1)?

A It is a pre-conference meet-up event held on the evening of July 1 from 19:00 to 22:00 at Cafe Hanol, located on the outdoor upper terrace of the convention center. Bakery items and beverages will be served, and a traditional Korean Pansori performance (Chunhyangga Sarangga) along with a networking program will be prepared, allowing domestic and international attendees to greet each other in a festive pre-event atmosphere.

Q I heard there is a special performance scheduled for the Closing Ceremony.

A Yes, traditional Korean vocalists and musicians from Jeonju will participate in the Day 2 Closing Ceremony to present a live performance of “Arirang”—the title track and overarching theme of BTS’s latest album—reinterpreted into various traditional Korean music (Gugak) versions. We invite you to join us and celebrate the grand finale of the conference.

Dormitory (Accommodation) Guidelines and Check-in / Check-out

Q What are the check-in and check-out times for the provided dormitory (Chambit Hall), and are there any rules I should be aware of?

A Check-in is available on July 1 between 15:00 and 19:00, and check-out must be completed by 11:00 AM on July 3. Please maintain a quiet environment inside the dormitory after 23:00.

Q I am arriving late in the evening. Where should I go to check in?

A Since there is no security office at Chambit Hall 2 (Male Dormitory), male attendees arriving after 19:00 must go to the security office at Chambit Hall 4 (Female Dormitory) to verify their names and proceed with check-in.

Q Are toiletries and towels provided in the dormitory rooms?

A While bedding, pillows, and towels are rented and provided as basic amenities, personal toiletries such as shampoo are not provided. Any necessary personal care items can be purchased individually at the Emart24 convenience store or the daily supplies store located on the 1st floor of Chambit Hall 1.

Q Where should I return my room card key when checking out?

A Upon check-out, please return your room key to the designated collection box at the International Convention Center registration desk.

Venue Amenities and Services

Q Is Wi-Fi available at the venue?

A Inside the JBNU International Convention Center, you can freely access the internet by connecting to the guest Wi-Fi network, “JBNU_guest” (no password required). Inside the dormitory rooms, you can connect via the QR code attached to the router.

Q Is there a place to store large luggage (suitcases) after checking out of the dormitory?

A For the convenience of our attendees, a luggage storage area has been set up in the waiting room next to the Main Hall following the Day 2 (July 3) dormitory check-out. You may safely store your bags there and comfortably attend the remaining conference sessions and tours (please keep valuable items with you at all times).

Q Are there options or considerations for vegetarians (vegans) and those with specific food allergies?

A For attendees who submitted their dietary restrictions during pre-registration, a separate vegan meal (Bibimbap + Nurungji) will be provided at Deokjinhon upon verification of your meal coupon. Please note that separate meals are not provided to on-site registrants.

Special Program : ARMY Tour

Q What is the detailed schedule for the ARMY Tour?

A The tour will depart at 16:30 following the conclusion of the official Day 2 events, visiting famous BTS filming locations including Awon Hanok Gallery (exterior), Wibong Sanseong Fortress, and Oseongje Pond. Afterwards, participants who pre-registered for the cultural program will move to Jeonju Hanok Village for a handmade stamp-making experience. The tour will conclude with a post-event networking dinner at a nearby venue.

Q Are there any specific requirements or things to keep in mind for the tour's after-party?

A The dinner gathering will be held at Seulgine Gamaek (JBNU Branch). Because alcoholic beverages are served at this venue, international participants must bring their passports and domestic participants must bring their national IDs for age verification. Please make sure to carry a valid ID with you.

2026 The 5th BTS: A Global Interdisciplinary Conference Program

Day 1 (THU, 2 JULY)

09:00 ~10:00	Registration				M
10:00 ~10:30	Opening Ceremony (Moderator: Sung-eun Cho) ▶ Opening Address (Moderator) ▶ Welcome Message Oh-bong Yang (President, Jeonbuk National University) ▶ Welcome Message Guido Song (President, Korea Foundation)				I M
10:30 ~10:50	Keynote Speech Jeeheng Lee (Jeonbuk National University)				I M
10:50 ~11:30	Special Media Focus Bao Nguyen (Director of 「BTS: The Return」) Interview				I M
11:30 ~13:00	Lunch				
13:00 ~14:30	Special Session 1	Fandom Moves Industry : The Achievements of K-pop Climate Action and Challenges for Sustainability		Dayeon Lee (Kpop4Planet Campaigner)	I M
	Session 1	Scaling Locality & Glocalization Re-examined	Los Santos Más Bravos: Latinx Engagement and the Next Generation of Hallyu	Giselle Peralta	SI
			Popular Music as a New Cultural Heritage and Source of National Identity: In Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam	Michal Schwarz Veronika Mattová	
			The BTS Effect and the Physicality of Hallyu : A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Korean Wave in Post-Nomadic Mongolia	Tsengel Davaasambuu Anujin Mungunkhuu	
14:40 ~16:10	Session 2	BTS and Languages : K-pop Transcending Language & Communication	“Hip-hop Boy Band” with Global Resonance : How BTS Fosters Inclusivity	Mi-Young Kim	M
			“I purple you”: BTS’s ELF and Translanguaging Practices	Eun Sung Park	
			Counter-Hegemonic Voices : Multilingual Resistance in BTS’s U.S. Late-Night Show Appearances	Shim Lew	
			“If you think I’m overreacting, I think you’re underreacting” : Reaction Videos as a Third Space for BTS Fan Identity Negotiation	Joowon Suh	
	Session 3	Re-Imagining Fandom : AI Frontiers and Inter-generational Dynamics	AI as a Disruptor: BTS ARMY TikTok’s AI-Generated Self-Insert Fantasies and Effects on Fandom Practices	Jhertau Her Kathryn Ringland	SI
			“Dope Old People”- Participatory Culture and the Reimagining of Women in Their Prime	Vicki Ronn	
			From Role to Responsibility: Intergenerational Mutuality in the Glocal Infrastructure of BTS Fandom	Zarah Gagatiga	
	Session 4	Aesthetics, Philosophy, and Politics in K-pop	BTS and K-Philosophy: The Power and Weight of Love	Minhyang Yun	S3
			The View of Temporal Mourning and its Aesthetics in BTS’s “Spring Day”	Jihye Kim	
Koreaness as a Field of Global Resonance			JIN Youngsun		
16:20 ~18:30	Special Event	Documentary 「Forever We Are Young」 Screening & Talk with Director Grace Lee (Moderator: Sunah Kim)			I M

Day 2 (FRI, 3 JULY)

Co-organized by Dongguk University Hallyu Convergence Academy & ISBS					
09:00 ~10:30	Special Session 2	But That's not Satisfactory	Beyond BTS, The Necessity and Possibility of Next Generation Hallyu	Kilhwa Jung	I M
			Hallyu Fandom: The Psychological Narrative of Foreign(外邦) Hallyu	Wonjae Choi	
			Beyond Korea: Hallyu as Continuity and Autonomy - Focusing on the Vietnamese Case	Nguyen Thi Ha	

09:00 ~10:30	Session 5	Digital Technology and Fandom	잠깐 기다리면 돌아오겠지: “Pump Up the Volume!” as Co-creation Between Virtual Idol Group PLAVE and Its Fandom PLLI	Allison Anne G. Atis Dame B. Avelino	S3	
			Bring the Synthetic (Posts): Artificial Intelligence, Transnational Crime, and Ethical Fan Creativity under South Korea’s AI Basic Act	Karlina Octaviany		
			The BTS ARMY on Twitter Flocks Together	Kyungjin Nam Heewon Kim		
10:40 ~12:10	Session 6	Negotiating the Global: Minds, Words, and Glocalization	INTERACTIVE INTIMACY: Media Characteristics and the Spectrum of Parasocial Bonds Analyzed through BTS Media	Maria Bernadett Carandang Veronika Mattová	M	
			A Comparative Analysis of Korean Audio Description and English Audio Description of Netflix Movies: Focusing on Informativity	Kunyoung Park		
			The Cultural Politics of Fandom and Foreignization in Translation : The Impact of K-pop Reception on the Translation of Korean Culture-Specific Items	Eun-Kyoung Choi		
			“Behind the Scenes”: A Media Industry Approach to Cultural Flows in K-pop	Kathryn M. Frank		
	Session 7	Re-Imagining Agency and Authenticity in BTS’s Artistry	Arirang and the Long Road: The Lyrical Journey of BTS	Alice Kim	S1	
			Louder Than Bombs: Vulnerability as Soft Power-BTS and the Symbiotic Cultivation of Post-Authority Agency	Robin Fiedler		
			Right People, Right Place: BTS and Local-self/Global-other Authenticity	Sharon Becker		
	Session 8	Archive, Art, and the Sustainability of Cultural Value	Telling the Story: Temporality and the BTS Archive in 「BTS: The Return」 (2026)	Despina Kakoudaki	S3	
			The RM Effect: Fan Culture Within the Fine Art	Camryn Bazan		
			Soft Power in the Platform Age: BTS & Mediation of Cultural Influence	Giang Thu Huynh		
			Beyond the Stage: How BTS is Reshaping Artist-Led Business Blueprints	Cecilia V. Perez		
12:10 ~13:30	Lunch					
13:30 ~15:00	Session 9	Fandom Subjectivity in Global Transformation	Planetary Fandom as Methodology: Can We Stan the Earth?	Nako Shigesada	I M	
			BTS ARMY as the New Power of Youth Activism in Indonesia	Nita Roshita		
			I Wanna Be the One, 넘버원이 아닌 Only One : BTS’s Magic Spell for the Next Glocal Generation	Kwangsik Kim		
			Three Modes of Theoretical Approach to BTS in Global Transformation: The 2026 Comeback Performances	Sang-jin Han		
	Session 10	케이팝 서사의 확장 and 변형 : 고전, 팬실천, 가사, AI 기술 (Expansion and Transformation of K-pop Narratives: Classics, Fan Practices, Lyrics, and AI Technology)	차용과 창조 사이: 셰익스피어와 BTS 예술 세계 (Between Borrowing and Creation: The Artistic Worlds of William Shakespeare and BTS)	Osook Kweon	K S1	
			방탄소년단 진의 팬 콘서트 <달려라 석진>에 나타난 쌍방향 증여 실천 연구 (A Study on the Practice of Gift Exchange in BTS Jin’s Fan Concert)	Jumi Kim		
			인공지능 기술이 구현하는 ‘아이돌-되기’: 케이팝과 팬덤을 관통하는 인공지능 기술과 젠더성 읽기 (The Implementation of “Becoming-Idol” through AI Technology: A Reading of AI Technology and Gender Identity Across K-pop and Fandom)	JongIm Lee		
			BTS 2.0 시대 : 군백기 전후 가사와 의미 구조 분석 (BTS 2.0 Era: An Analysis of Lyrics and Semantic Structures Before and After the Military Hiatus)	Erin Lee		
	Session 11	Networked Ethos: Philosophy and Religious Practices of K-pop Fandom	Faith Goes Fandom: The Hybridization of K-pop Culture and Religious Practice on Social Media	Bintan Humeira Fauziah Muslimah Nabila Khoirunnisa Harliani	S3	
			K-pop and Hwajaeng: What Gets Created When Nothing Gets Erased	Michelle Ocriciano		
			BTS and ARMY as Transnational Cultural Actors: Reconfiguring Soft Power through Networked Participatory Diplomacy	Tanya Chaudhary		
15:00 ~16:00	Closing Ceremony (Moderator: Byong-jin Ahn)					I M
ARMY TOUR						

I Simultaneous Interpretation 동시통역
 K Korean Session 한국어
 M Main Hall 메인홀
 S1 Seminar Room1 세미나룸1
 S3 Seminar Room3 세미나룸3



Jeeheng Lee

Assistant Professor,
Dept. of K-Entertainment,
JBNU

The Future of Hallyu : From Unidirectional Export to Affective Relationality

This speech re-evaluates the trajectory of Hallyu and BTS, navigating through their historical origins, contemporary crises, and alternative futures. Historically rooted in geopolitical vulnerability and post-colonial deficiency, Hallyu and BTS catalyzed an unprecedented aesthetics of cultural hybridity by boundary-crossing diverse global genres. However, achieving global hegemony has trapped the Korean cultural industry in an illusion of "originality," provoking sharp critiques of "sub-cultural imperialism"—a top-down replication of Western cultural dominance over regional neighbors, evidenced by recent backlashes in Southeast Asia.

To counteract this crisis and ensure Hallyu's sustainability in the transition from an industrial to an AI-driven society—where cultural styles are effortlessly replicated by algorithms—this address proposes a radical paradigm shift from unilateral commercial export to horizontal, affective relationality.

Jeeheng Lee is an assistant professor of the Department of K-Entertainment at Jeonbuk National University, South Korea. Her research focuses on contemporary popular culture and audience subjectivities in the New Media era.

Recent work focuses on the politics of fandom as a transient crowd. She also has interest on posthuman identity and affect-economic dynamics represented in pop culture media content.

Related publications are *BTS and ARMY Culture*(2019), *Femidology*(2022), *Hallyu: The Formation of Cultural Capital and Cultural Nationalism*(2024), *Affective Geographies of the Gendersphere*(2024), and *From Koreanness to K-ness*(2026). Her translations include *Mapping Affect Studies*(2025).

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Special Program

Fandom Moves Industry: The Achievements of K-pop Climate Action and Challenges for Sustainability

Date: Day 1 (THU, 2 JULY), 13:00~14:30 / Venue: Main Hall

Presenter: Dayeon Lee (Kpop4Planet Campaigner)

This presentation shares the remarkable five-year journey and achievements of “Kpop4Planet,” a global K-pop fandom platform mobilizing for climate action. Over the past five years, more than 90,000 individuals from over 90 countries, representing more than 30 diverse transnational fandoms, have passionately engaged in our campaigns. This global movement has been featured in major worldwide media outlets more than 1,400 times, proving that fandom is no longer just a subculture, but a powerful force for social change.

The driving force sustaining this vast movement is, unequivocally, “love.” What began as affection for artists has evolved into a profound sense of solidarity and mutual care that transcends borders, religions, and identities. Utilizing social media as a vehicle for solidarity, fans refuse to tolerate climate injustice and stand as one. Furthermore, through our newly launched “Climateers” program—initiated in Indonesia and expanding sequentially across Asia—we are empowering fans to take greater ownership as digital campaign strategists.

For too long, the K-pop industry has operated as a “sanctuary” insulated from eco-friendly transitions due to plastic-heavy album marketing. However, fans have already begun to fracture this inertia, demanding tangible corporate and policy changes. Our message to the industry is clear: you must look beyond short-term profits and realize that the sustainability of Hallyu is inextricably linked to the sustainability of our planet. After all, there is no K-pop on a dead planet.

We truly believe that the academic insight of the researchers gathered here today has the power to document these grassroots actions, articulate them into academic language, and amplify them to the wider world. I sincerely hope today’s gathering marks the meaningful beginning of that shared journey.

After all, there is no K-pop on a dead planet. Fans already know this, and they are already taking action.

I believe your research has the power to document these actions, articulate them into academic language, and amplify them to the wider world. I sincerely hope that today’s gathering will serve as the meaningful beginning of that journey.

But That's not Satisfactory

Date: Day 2 (FRI, 3 JULY), 9:00~10:30 / Venue: Main Hall

Beyond BTS, The Necessity and Possibility of Next Generation Hallyu **Kilhwa Jung**

The BTS comeback performance at Gwanghwamun this past March opened a highly contested arena. Within Korea, the performance ignited a clash of divergent perspectives and cultural values. Moving past these domestic controversies, the group embarked on a successful world tour across the United States and Mexico, followed by a critically acclaimed 10th-anniversary mega-event in Busan this June. Having established a new epoch in Hallyu and K-culture, and while wishing them continued success, the academic community must now prepare for and rigorously deliberate upon the discourse of the “Post-BTS” era.

Structurally, Hallyu has completed a foundational thirty-year cycle, signaling the transition of a cultural generation. Defining a generation as three decades implies that such a timeframe is essential for a distinct cultural identity—or genetic code—to become firmly established. Today, the field and discourse of Hallyu stand at the threshold of welcoming a new generation. As suggested by its Latin etymology, *generare* (meaning “to bring forth”), a generation is not merely a chronological successor in a sequence; rather, it represents a dynamic and procreative cycle that births a new cultural ecosystem based on past achievements.

Presently, it is widely recognized that K-culture has transcended the hands of Korea and the Korean people. Consequently, the primary academic task is no longer to rigidly police the boundaries of a singular, monolithic “Koreanness,” but to build a robust discourse capable of hosting pluralistic histories and global interpretations. Without such intellectual and reflexive mechanisms, cultural phenomena face rapid consumption and eventual obsolescence. This presentation seeks to explore whether the philosophical expansion initiated by BTS can ultimately provide the resilient, sustainable roots necessary for K-culture to endure as a permanent fixture on the global stage.

Hallyu Fandom: The Psychological Narrative of Foreign(外邦) Hallyu **Wonjae Choi**

Overseas Hallyu is a unique socio-psychological phenomenon formed through the alignment of participants' psychological needs and emotional bonds. Participants of Overseas Hallyu are recognized as active agents who foster a sense of community, achieve psychological well-being, and construct new identities through fandom activities. The core psychological narrative of Overseas Hallyu fandom is best manifested through psychological well-being and emotional solidarity. Fandom activities among youth in countries such as Mongolia, Vietnam, and Japan tend to go beyond mere entertainment, enhancing psychological well-being and strengthening a sense of community. In the 2020s, Hallyu fandoms have evolved beyond passive consumers; they have begun to serve as “cultural mediators” who actively promote, translate, and disseminate content. Driven by their passion for Korean culture, Overseas Hallyu fandoms are growing into autonomous communities that generate new emotional and social values.

Beyond Korea: Hallyu as Continuity and Autonomy- Focusing on the Vietnamese Case

Nguyen Thi Ha

This presentation argues that contemporary Hallyu can no longer be understood merely as a one-way cultural flow spreading outward from Korea to overseas audiences, focusing specifically on the case of Vietnam. In particular, within the context of increasingly participatory fandom culture and digitally mediated platform environments, Vietnamese fandoms have moved beyond content translation, online community management, and offline cultural practices to actively reconstruct and disseminate Hallyu elements throughout Vietnamese popular culture and everyday life. This presentation interprets such phenomena not simply as processes of localization, but as the emergence of an “autonomous Hallyu ecosystem” that partially transcends Korea-centered cultural dynamics. Furthermore, it proposes that the core of next-generation Hallyu lies less in Koreanness itself than in structures of connection and participation, suggesting that the future of Hallyu will be increasingly produced and expanded through the practices of local fandoms outside Korea.

Bao Nguyen(Director of *BTS: The Return*) Interview

Date: Day 1 (THU, 2 JULY), 10:50~11:30 / Venue: Main Hall



*Source: Official poster of *BTS: The Return* (Netflix)

Documentary 「Forever We Are Young」 Screening & Talk with Director Grace Lee

Moderator: Sunah Kim / Date: Day 1 (THU, 2 JULY), 16:20~18:30 / Venue: Main Hall



*Source: Official poster of *BTS ARMY: Forever We Are Young*

Closing Ceremony

Traditional Korean Music(Guk-ak) Performance

Date: Day 2 (FRI, 3 JULY), 15:00~16:00 / Venue: Main Hall

Piri **Min-jeong Jeong**

- Gyeonggi Folk Songs: *Gu Arirang*(Old Arirang), *Bonjo Arirang*(Standard Arirang)
- Gangwon Folk Songs: *Han O-baek Nyeon*(Five Hundred Years), *Gangwon Arirang*

Taepyeongso **Min-jeong Jeong**

- *Miryang Arirang*
- *Jindo Arirang*

Vocal **Do-gyeong Lee**

- *Arirang* (Featuring *Body to Body* by BTS)
- *Jindo Arirang*

The 5th BTS: A GLOBAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE
THE NEXT GENERATION HALLYU & BTS

General Session

DAY 1 (THU, 2 JULY)

Scaling Locality & Glocalization Re-examined

Venue: Seminar Room 1 / Time: 13:00~14:30 / Moderator: Michal Schwarz

Los Santos Más Bravos: Latinx Engagement and the Next Generation of Hallyu

Giselle Peralta

This paper centers Santos Bravos as a primary case study to examine HYBE's evolving strategies for producing "global" idol groups. Building on my broader research project, Latinx Waves in K-pop, which investigates Latinx engagement within K-pop fandom, I analyze how Santos Bravos functions as both an industrial experiment and a cultural intervention within the genre's transnational expansion. The transnational groundwork for this shift can be traced to BTS, whose incorporation of Latin-inspired tracks such as Airplane Pt. 2 and Filter introduced Latin musical aesthetics into mainstream K-pop performance. What began as sonic and stylistic influence now appears to be evolving into embodied representation.

Rather than positioning Latin America as a secondary market for K-pop consumption, HYBE's production model signals a shift toward incorporating Latinx identities, aesthetics, and performance traditions into the structure of idol creation itself. Drawing on ethnographic methodologies, including fan observation and community-based analysis, this paper argues that Santos Bravos represents a reconfiguration of K-pop's cultural center. Through the integration of Spanish-language elements, Latin-influenced choreography, and hemispheric marketing strategies, the group challenges dominant East-to-West narratives of globalization and instead foregrounds multidirectional cultural exchange. I examine how these incorporations are received, negotiated, and interpreted within Latinx fan spaces, where questions of representation, authenticity, and belonging are actively debated.

By situating Santos Bravos within broader discussions of transnationalism, diaspora, and cultural hybridity, this research demonstrates how the category of "global K-pop" is being redefined in real time. Ultimately, this paper contributes to conversations about globalization and media industries by illustrating how idol production is increasingly shaped by cross-cultural dialogue rather than unilateral cultural export, revealing Latinx fandom not as peripheral, but as central to the genre's evolving global identity.

Popular Music as a New Cultural Heritage and Source of National Identity : In Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam

Michal Schwarz & Veronika Mattová

This paper examines how contemporary East Asian popular music functions as a medium for articulating new cultural heritage and national identity on examples from three socioeconomically different countries: South Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam. Drawing on the Korean concept of spoon class theory (수저 계급론), the study explores, how social issues and cultural customs are reflected in popular culture.

In South Korea, BTS's Baepsae (2015) serves as a central case study. The song reinterprets a traditional proverb contrasting crow-tits and storks to highlight disparities between those with and without structural advantages. In this particular case, BTS was able to show not only musical skills but also provide a deep reflection of the current state connected with everyday hardships in society. In Mongolia, The Hu represents a form of cultural assertion rooted in historical continuity. By integrating traditional instruments such as the morin khuur and throat singing into a global rock framework, the band exemplifies local cultural production and connection to traditional folk songs (*ardyn duu*). In Vietnam, Sơn Tùng M-TP and several new groups navigate tensions between tradition and global pop aesthetics. Their incorporation of traditional instruments into contemporary production reflects an ongoing integration of Vietnamese cultural heritage with modern influences from Korea and Western culture.

All of the three mentioned countries, represent different stages of Asian self-expression in relation to the modern history: In Mongolia, folk music was the earliest pop-music, constituting national identity (after the repression of Buddhist culture in 1930s/1940s) and national pride with the role of Mongols in world history. Korean groups music rising since the 1990s are now representing Korea on a world stage, while V-pop is the newest participant with growing popularity and positive post-war self-expression. Together, these cases demonstrate that popular music in Asia serves as a site for expressing identity and negotiating social realities within specific historical and socioeconomic contexts.

The BTS Effect and the Physicality of Hallyu: A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Korean Wave in Post-Nomadic Mongolia Tsengel Davaasambuu & Anujin Mungunkhuu

This research investigates the profound socio-cultural and economic reconfiguration of Mongolia under the influence of the global phenomenon BTS. While the “Korean Wave” (Hallyu) has been a staple of Mongolian media since the late 1990s, the emergence of BTS has transitioned this influence from a passive viewing habit into a pervasive, active lifestyle. This study argues that the group’s “Love Myself” philosophy has uniquely resonated with Mongolia’s “Generation MZ,” providing a modern framework for mental health advocacy and youth agency within a society currently navigating the tensions between nomadic tradition and rapid urbanization. A primary focus of this analysis is the Mongolian BTS ARMY, a digital-native fandom that has evolved into a sophisticated social actor, mobilizing for environmental philanthropy and civic engagement in Ulaanbaatar. Furthermore, the “BTS Effect” is no longer confined to digital spaces; it has manifested physically through the aggressive expansion of South Korean retail infrastructure. As of early 2026, the Mongolian retail landscape is dominated by CU with approximately 490 stores and GS25 with 274 locations. These outlets serve as the physical nodes of Hallyu, transforming urban consumption patterns through the localized availability of K-lifestyle products and curated brand experiences. Finally, the paper examines the emergence of a “reciprocal physicality” in K-content, notably through Netflix’s Physical: Asia reality franchises. By highlighting Mongolian athletes who embody the nation’s traditional nomadic strength, these programs have created a unique cultural feedback loop, positioning Mongolian identity as a vital component of the broader Asian media narrative rather than a mere consumer. Ultimately, this research contends that through the synergy of BTS’s soft power and physical retail expansion, Hallyu has become a foundational pillar of contemporary Mongolian creative culture.

BTS and Languages: K-pop Transcending Language & Communication

Venue: Main Hall / Time: 14:40~16:10 / Moderator: Mi-Young Kim

Based on the edited volume *BTS and Languages: K-pop Transcending Language and Communication* (Routledge, 2025), this panel examines how BTS's communication practices generate meaning across linguistic, cultural, and media contexts, fostering affective solidarity through song lyrics (Kim), enabling translanguaging with global fans (Park), enacting multilingual resistance in U.S. late-night media (Lew), and facilitating identity negotiation in YouTube reaction videos (Suh).

“Hip-hop Boy Band” with Global Resonance: How BTS Fosters Inclusivity **Mi-Young Kim**

Social media has long functioned as a public sphere where opinions and sentiments are circulated and negotiated. Drawing on discourse and content analyses of fans' reactions on social media to BTS songs such as *Ma City* (2015) and *You Never Walk Alone* (2017), this presentation examines how BTS communicates messages of inclusivity that validate minority voices and identities, arguing that these messages foster affective solidarity, ultimately empowering and comforting fans through shared experiences and collective meaning-making.

“I purple you”: BTS's ELF and Translanguaging Practices **Eun Sung Park**

This presentation illustrates how BTS members adeptly deploy diverse linguistic resources to connect with international fans. Drawing on data from online and offline fan interactions and informal interviews, it examines their use of EFL innovations, creative coinages, iconic expressions and hybrid words, which are then taken up and reproduced by fans. Over time, these expressions accumulate and consolidate as part of what I call “BTS lingo,” which constitutes a key element of BTS's multilingual repertoire.

Counter-Hegemonic Voices

: Multilingual Resistance in BTS's U.S. Late-Night Show Appearances **Shim Lew**

Focusing on BTS's appearances on *The Late Late Show* with James Corden and *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, this study examines how their multilingual and translanguaging practices disrupt the English-dominant linguistic hierarchy. The analysis frames these televised multilingual interactions as counter-hegemonic moments that resist such linguistic norms. It argues that BTS's linguistic practices not only enable them to articulate their authentic voices and negotiate their professional and personal identities, but also contribute to creating equitable pathways for non-Western, non-English-speaking artists to access and thrive within the global pop industry.

“If you think I'm overreacting, I think you're underreacting”

: Reaction Videos as a Third Space for BTS Fan Identity Negotiation **Joowon Suh**

This presentation examines the BTS phenomenon as manifested in YouTube reaction videos, a user-generated space characterized by layered interactions. Showcasing a YouTube channel managed by a Korean American reactor, the study analyzes how reactors discursively and multimodally construct and perform their BTS fan identity, intersecting with linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identities as Korean Americans. It is argued that reaction videos function as a new third space (Soja, 1996), where reactors' different identities are (re)constructed and mediated as developing YouTubers and Korean American fans, and where linguistic norms and cultural hierarchies are reordered and renegotiated.

Re-Imagining Fandom: AI Frontiers and Intergenerational Dynamics

Venue: Seminar Room 1 / Time: 14:40~16:10 / Moderator: Vicki Ronn

AI as a Disruptor: BTS ARMY TikTok's AI-Generated Self-Insert Fantasies and Effects on Fandom Practices **Jhertau Her & Kathryn Ringland**

Policing as a fandom practice establishes the bounds of a fandom and enforces community-created rules. This acts as a gatekeeping mechanism to enforce certain behaviors that align with the fandom's values and identity. Inherently, policing is not harmful to fandoms and instead draws lines on appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, especially to new or inexperienced fans. Policing can take on the form of condemning behaviors, public "call-out" posts, and expose threads that break down inappropriate behaviors. However, the growing presence of AI technologies and content in fandom spaces has led to newfound problems that diffuse fans' policing powers. For example, self-insert content is a popular type of fan creation where fans imagine/insert themselves into stories. Fans often seek self-gratification and community engagement to fulfill romantic fantasies with celebrities or fictional characters. This has taken on many different forms in BTS ARMY, the fandom of the music group BTS. One such example is on TikTok where self-insert content includes fanfiction, social media alternative universes (AUs), and deepfakes. This case study explores how BTS ARMY views and responds to self-insert content on TikTok through a longitudinal ethnographic study of BTS ARMY online and an analysis of BTS deepfakes and responses to them. We find that ARMY TikTok lacks policing and gatekeeping mechanisms to maintain consistent appropriate fandom behaviors when it comes to posting AI content. AI content tests and breaks pre-existing community norms with some fans attached and defending it, even if it violates pre-agreed norms of self-insert content. BTS ARMY's growing inability to police AI-generated content reflects a larger issue in online community spaces where self-policing becomes an insufficient response to the new technology. In identifying these issues, this study shows how AI content disrupts long-standing fandom practices and removes agency from fandoms on how their communities run.

"Dope Old People"- Participatory Culture and the Reimagining of Women in Their Prime **Vicki Ronn**

While it is now widely accepted among BTS scholars that the ARMY fanbase is not primarily composed of young adolescent girls, there is less research into those fans who are over 40, sometimes known as Silver ARMY. Even a brief foray into various social media sites like Facebook, Reddit, and YouTube, unearth a plethora of older female fans, highlighting the age diversity "on the persistence of the BTS phenomenon." In her book, *In Our Prime: How Older Women Are Reinventing the Road Ahead*, Susan Douglas discusses why women over 40 no longer are content to fade into the background as they age. I will be using her theories as well as using Harold Jenkins criteria for a participatory culture to examine how those ideas align with the growing number of BTS fans over 50. The participatory criteria include, according to Jenkins, "relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices." These also include a culture "in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another" and one that "shifts the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement." RM, in an interview in 2021, once commented that "Dope old people in their thirties and forties... They got the attitude, you know? They've experienced so many things." I would like to extend his definition to examine how BTS fans in their fifties, sixties and beyond also exhibit "the attitude" in their experience with the participatory culture of BTS ARMY.

(This paper will be a critical expansion on a previous presentation at SWPACA to be used as a possible book chapter.)

From Role to Responsibility: Intergenerational Mutuality in the Glocal Infrastructure of BTS Fandom

Zarah Gagatiga

This autoethnographic study examines how a mother–daughter pilgrimage from the Philippines to Seoul during Festa 2025 illuminates BTS fandom as a glocal infrastructure shaping next-generation subjectivity within Hallyu. Drawing on travel journaling as primary data, the paper traces how maternal authority shifted from role-based caregiving toward relational mutuality through shared navigation, embodied attentiveness, and co-responsibility in transnational space. As the daughter assumed responsibility for communication, orientation, and ethical awareness of others within Korean public and fandom contexts, the mother moved from supervision to accompaniment, experiencing care as reciprocal rather than unidirectional.

Occurring amid BTS’s “New Chapter” following military service, this pilgrimage reflects how the group’s evolving discourse on growth, responsibility, and global citizenship is metabolized within intimate family structures beyond Korea. Rather than positioning fandom as consumption or affective attachment alone, the study frames BTS/ARMY as a transnational ethical formation in which locality and global belonging are negotiated through everyday practices: waiting in café silence, navigating subway systems, sustaining one another through fatigue, and recognizing oneself as guest within another cultural landscape.

By situating lived intergenerational transformation within the broader trajectory of next-generation Hallyu, this paper argues that BTS functions not only as cultural content but as a mediating agent of glocal subject formation. The pilgrimage reveals how fandom reorganizes kinship, redistributes responsibility across generations, and cultivates forms of ethical citizenship grounded in attentiveness and mutual care. In doing so, the study contributes to BTS Studies by demonstrating how glocal fan practices operate as infrastructures of relational repair and social becoming across national contexts.

Aesthetics, Philosophy, and Politics in K-pop

Venue: Seminar Room 3 / Time: 14:40~16:10 / Moderator: Minhyang Yun

BTS and K-Philosophy: The Power and Weight of Love Minhyang Yun

This presentation examines BTS's music and narrative through the lens of Korean philosophy (K-philosophy) and explores the cultural and intellectual possibilities that K-philosophy may hold within the discourse of the next generation of Hallyu. While previous BTS scholarship has often focused on fandom, identity, youth culture, and global cultural translation, this presentation concentrates on the philosophical features embedded in BTS's narrative of love, healing, and relationality.

I argue that BTS's discourse of love can be read in relation to several key characteristics of Korean philosophy: a view of the self as something to be continuously cultivated and formed, a view of the mind as relational rather than enclosed, and an understanding of love as an ethical practice involving responsibility, endurance, and responsiveness to others. In this sense, the trajectory from Love Yourself to Speak Yourself is not merely a rhetoric of self-affirmation, but a process in which a wounded self is healed, recovers its voice, and moves toward coexistence. As I argued in my earlier paper, "Hak-i-si-seup(學而時習), The Fluttering Wings of Healing and Growth through 'Loving'—Focusing on Narcissism and the BTS Phenomenon," BTS's self-love is best understood as an ethical movement of healing and growth that expands from "I" to "you." The paper also incorporates BTS's 2026 album ARIRANG, officially released on March 20, 2026, as a crucial case study. By invoking "Arirang," one of Korea's most resonant cultural symbols, the album invites reflection on identity, memory, distance, reunion, and roots. Read in this context, BTS's recent work suggests a movement beyond the language of self-love toward a deeper meditation on the power and weight of love within Korean philosophical and affective traditions.

The View of Temporal Mourning and its Aesthetics in BTS's "Spring Day" Jihye Kim

Global audiences and critics alike have praised BTS's "Spring Day" as a masterpiece of mourning that deeply heals social and personal traumas. The aesthetics of mourning in "Spring Day" follow the traditional Korean way of mourning, which accepts loss as a natural part of life through a cyclical view of time based on the changing seasons. This study aims to show the process of how a melancholic subject, stuck in deep sadness after a loss, moves toward active mourning through this cyclical perspective of time.

In the early stage of mourning, the most noticeable thing people experience is that time feels frozen or distorted. While physical time flows forward and cannot be turned back, a person's inner time stays trapped in the painful moment of loss. In the lyrics, this frozen time is shown through the image of winter. Also, the grieving person feels angry at the outside world's time, which does not match their inner feelings. This anger does not come from time itself, but from social pressure telling them that "time heals all wounds" or that they should "forget and let go"—which is a form of forced forgetting. Forced to end their sadness by following the straight flow of modern time, survivors internalize guilt toward the lost person and even blame themselves. This creates mixed emotions—a painful struggle between wanting to erase the memory and desperately wanting to hold onto it—leaving the subject stuck in a melancholic state.

However, when "snowflakes" change into "cherry blossoms," the person's view of time completely shifts from a straight line to a repeating circle. At first, the person just watched the falling snow move further away, wishfully thinking they could become the snow just to reach the lost person. Here, snow is not something that simply disappears, but a symbol of a repeating cycle, where water turns into vapor and falls again as rain and snow. The falling snow helps them realize that the lost person has not truly disappeared forever, but has simply changed form, remaining connected to them. This shift in thinking leads to the statement, "The morning will come again / Because no darkness, no season / Can last forever." As a result, the snowflake is no longer an enemy of the cherry blossom, but the very foundation that prepares for it to bloom.

In the end, the grieving person accepts the universal rule of cyclical time: that no winter lasts forever. This visual change—where falling snow is replaced by blooming cherry blossoms—shows that the time of painful trauma is over and the time of healing is coming. Along with this, the person, who only asked “How much longer do I have to wait to see you?” in the beginning, changes into an active person who takes control by the end of the song, declaring, “I will come to meet you, I will come to pick you up.” Instead of burying the loss in the past, keeping it alive in the repeating flow of time is the deep politics of mourning and the aesthetic achievement of “Spring Day.”

Koreaness as a Field of Global Resonance JIN Youngsun

This study examines how Nam June Paik and BTS, though belonging to different eras and media, reconfigure the East Asian cosmological order of Cheon–Ji–In (Heaven–Earth–Human) within the shared architectural cosmos of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Nam June Paik visualized the relationships among Heaven, Earth, and Human through laser installations, electronic media, and video sculpture, while BTS contemporizes and performs this same order through collective movement and the performative body. This study argues that the Guggenheim’s spiral architecture functions not merely as an exhibition site, but as a cosmological field connecting Paik’s media installations and BTS’s collective performance. By analyzing the structural correspondences between Paik’s Three Elements and BTS’s recent visual language and logo system, the paper explores how a distinctly Korean worldview evolves into a global structure of emotional resonance. Ultimately, this research proposes a new interpretation of “Korean cultural DNA” at the intersection of technology, collective embodiment, architectural space, and East Asian cosmology.

The 5th BTS: A GLOBAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE
THE NEXT GENERATION HALLYU & BTS

General Session

DAY 2 (FRI, 3 JULY)

Digital Technology and Fandom

Venue: Seminar Room 3 / Time: 9:00~10:30 / Moderator: Karlina Octaviany

잠깐 기다리면 돌아오겠지: “Pump Up the Volume!” as Co-creation Between Virtual Idol Group PLAVE and Its Fandom PLLI Allison Anne G. Atis & Dame B. Avelino

The song Pump Up The Volume! was developed and released by the South Korean virtual idol group PLAVE in 2024. This song can serve as an example of how the group underscores the human touch in their rather virtual connections, given that it is a product of a live entertainment content interaction. Apart from demonstrating their songwriting skills, this co-creative process involved fans as the group brainstormed with them.

In this work-in-progress paper, we ask: what are the co-creative dynamics between PLAVE and its fandom PLLI? Guided by the tenets of digimodernism, media practice, and value co-creation, we further explore the facets of the song as a digimodernist text and inquire how varied practices of both parties contribute creatively and pragmatically in realizing this specific text.

We look into the song, the process, and all relevant interactions as a case study of co-creation, as we emphasize how PLAVE operates as a virtual idol group – relying on livestreams and online platforms to nurture and engage with fans, therefore providing a space for PLLI to communicate directly with them. During the song’s composition, PLAVE solicited ideas from the viewers through livechat – with fans suggesting lyrics and themes that the members can use for the demonstration. In several accounts, the group actively mentioned that they co-created the song with the fandom.

By critically analyzing the texts involved in this co-creative process, we attempt in this exploratory study to understand the varying themes that would aid in realizing emerging mediated dynamics within inherently virtual instances.

Bring the Synthetic (Posts): Artificial Intelligence, Transnational Crime, and Ethical Fan Creativity under South Korea’s AI Basic Act Karlina Octaviany

In January 2026, South Korea became the first country in the world to fully implement a holistic AI Basic Act with mandates for safe and transparency for AI generated content, which will impact the K-pop industry and the use of AI for idols’ content. The law regulated the mandatory labelling of AI-generated music, audio, and images with strict fines of up to 30 million won. The Korea Music Copyright Association (KOMCA) has also implemented the “0 percent AI” rule to verify 100 percent human creation in music production with penalties for false reporting.

The South Korean AI law showed concern about protection against AI abuse, which targets idols. In April 2025, HYBE worked with the South Korean Police’s anti-deepfake initiative, which provided information that led to the arrest of eight suspects for creating Telegram chats to produce and distribute deepfake videos using HYBE artists. After enlisting in the military in January 2024, an attempt was made to impersonate Jungkook’s identity to gain his stock security account. The Chinese leader of a hacking group that attempted to steal 8.4 billion won worth of Jungkook’s HYBE shares was extradited from Thailand to Korea.

HYBE claimed to have a “Zero Tolerance and No Settlement Policy” against the crime of using HYBE artists’ images and informed fans had proactively reported defamatory synthetic posts to help identify criminal activities. While ARMY raised concern through protest with #HYBEProtectJungkook is related to AI-generated deepfakes and malicious content, ARMY also uses generative AI content to create deepfake videos for gaining social media engagement or synthetic audio of BTS singing other country songs. With the vast amount of generative AI content on social media, data breaches, and fame, BTS poses risks in AI and transnational crime.

This paper will analyse the potential risks of AI and transnational crime based on existing cases of BTS impersonation and deepfakes. While the ARMY fans are taking a creative role in feeding AI training data using BTS copyrighted images, ARMY also sparks a growing concern about AI risks by initiating the reporting of deepfakes to HYBE and educating the risks of generative AI. This research will set out discourse in ethical AI to mitigate harms against BTS and ARMY in the time of South Korea's AI Basic Act.

The BTS ARMY on Twitter Flocks Together **Kyungjin Nam & Heewon Kim**

This presentation introduces an article published in 2024 by the presenters in *Telematics and Informatics*, which is highly relevant to the conference's theme, "Governance of global fandom practices in digital platform environments." The world's largest transnational fandom community for BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan), ARMY (Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth), is structured to achieve common goals and exert influence. To identify a mechanism that explains the organizational structure of transnational virtual communities, we empirically investigate how global fandoms pursue their activities autonomously and adapt to their environments on social media, despite their massive size and complexity, without coercive governance. Using social network analysis and the viable system model, we identified structural differences between Twitter communities with viable and non-viable structures. First, the BTS ARMY network is sustained by a systematic structure of key players who voluntarily play distinct roles. In contrast, the Arianator network is relatively unorganized and dispersed. Moreover, multi-fandom accounts can serve as potential tools for user acquisition. Finally, two different diffusion types, text-based information and image-based media, are carried by distinct roles of subsystems. As one of the first studies to empirically examine the viability of online transnational fandom from an organizational structure perspective, this paper provides practical implications for fandoms from three perspectives: (1) resource mobilization and sustainability, (2) influence of fandom dynamics, and (3) economic impact. The results suggest that fandoms taking strategic actions upon the viable structure on digital platforms could represent a new cultural hegemony, promoting global unity and pop cosmopolitanism.

Negotiating the Global: Minds, Words, and Glocalization

Venue: Main Hall / Time: 10:40~12:10 / Moderator: Eun-Kyoung Choi

INTERACTIVE INTIMACY: Media Characteristics and the Spectrum of Parasocial Bonds Analyzed through BTS Media **Maria Bernadett Carandang & Veronika Mattová**

Fandom culture is increasingly recognized as a dynamic psychosocial environment capable of shaping psychoemotional states through the formation of parasocial relationships with a specific fandom object (e.g., ARMY-BTS). From an object relations perspective, parasocial bonds may be understood as the projection and internalization of relational patterns onto media figures, resulting in emotionally charged yet structured attachments. Although inherently one-sided, these interactions can provide a subjective sense of safety, stability, and control. Media in its diverse forms may function as transitional objects, mediating between internal representations and external reality while facilitating affect regulation and behavioral expression.

This paper presents a structured theoretical review grounded in Object Relations Theory and contemporary parasociality research. Media selection for the broader study was guided by three criteria: the presence of identifiable, narratively consistent character representations; the degree of interactivity or immersive storytelling; and empirically established parasocial potential. Selected media include narrative-driven games (*BTS World*, *Save Me*, *BTS Island: In the Seom*), anthropomorphized character systems (*TinyTAN*, *BT21*), and story-rich literary formats (*Save Me* webtoon, *The Notes 1 & 2*). In addition, audiovisual performances featuring the actual artists, including official music videos, live streams, and concert broadcasts by BTS, were also incorporated. Excluded media lacked sufficient character centrality or narrative structure to meaningfully support parasocial bond formation.

The framework is extended to AI-mediated platforms, where generative chatbots introduce quasi-reciprocal dynamics that blur boundaries between parasocial and interactive relationships. The review examines this spectrum of mediated attachment and discusses its implications for fandom psychology within evolving digital environments.

A Comparative Analysis of Korean Audio Description and English Audio Description of Netflix Movies: Focusing on Informativity **Kunyoung Park**

The proliferation of audio description in over-the-top (OTT) media platforms is a salient trend that merits close examination. This study analyzes two audio-described works available on Netflix, a globally popular over-the-top (OTT) platform, selected based on release date and genre. The study employs the concept of informativity as a benchmark to analyze the information provided in the audio descriptions of these works. This analysis also explores the differences between languages and their implications for audio description production. To this end, two films from the OTT service platform Netflix were selected for analysis: The initial film selected for this study was *Okja* (2017), which was notable for being the first film to offer both Korean and English audio description simultaneously. The most recent film available on Netflix with both Korean and English audio description at the start of this research was *K-Pop Demon Hunters*. The objective of this study is to identify the characteristics of audio descriptions in films using the concept of text informativity. To this end, a comparative analysis will be conducted of the narrative elements (characters, setting, events), on-screen text (writing, images), and cultural elements of the audio descriptions in these two films—one an early work and the other a recent one.

The Cultural Politics of Fandom and Foreignization in Translation: The Impact of K-pop Reception on the Translation of Korean Culture-Specific Items Eun-Kyoung Choi

This study examines why the translation of Korean culture-specific items (CSIs) in the context of K-pop reception increasingly favors foreignization over the domestication that has long dominated Anglo-American translation practice. In Lawrence Venuti's terms, the Anglophone regime of fluency has made domestication the default way of serving the reader, smoothing away the foreignness of the source so that a translation reads as if originally written in the target language. In the global diffusion of Korean popular culture led by K-pop, however, a markedly different preference has emerged, one that preserves the distinctive cultural texture of Korean rather than dissolving it into familiar equivalents.

The study takes non-translation as its central analytic category. Rather than rendering a CSI through a familiar equivalent, translators and fan-translators retain the source item itself, as in keeping 육회 as "yukhoe" instead of "Korean beef tartare." Within established taxonomies of CSI translation, such retention occupies the conservation pole, the most source-preserving option available, and it serves as the concrete, sub-lexical realization of Venuti's foreignization, leaving a degree of opacity that prompts readers to register cultural difference rather than have it smoothed away.

To explain why this preference takes hold, the study turns to actor-network theory. Rather than treating non-translation as the expression of a pre-given fan disposition, it traces the sociotechnical network that stabilizes the retention of source items, one in which fans, fan-translators, idols, romanization standards, fan-built glossaries and wikis, subtitling tools, and streaming platforms all participate as actors. Within this network the untranslated term operates as an immutable mobile: a form such as "yukhoe" or "oppa" travels across languages while holding its shape intact, and that very immutability lets a globally dispersed fandom converge on a shared signifier and sustain an affective proximity to the artists and to the source culture. On this account, fandom's cultural politics does not reside in individual fans but emerges from a network of human and non-human actors. By reading non-translation as the visible trace of this network, the paper analyzes how K-pop reception reshapes the strategic choices that govern the translation of Korean culture.

"Behind the Scenes": A Media Industry Approach to Cultural Flows in K-pop Kathryn M. Frank

In both academic and fandom spaces, the relationship between K-pop/Korean idol music as a genre and other genres of music – particularly Black American hip-hop and R&B – is hotly debated. Common questions and concerns around whether or not K-pop is cultural appropriation, whether it's become too "Western" and "Korean" enough, and whether K-pop fans (either Korean or international) are aware of the cultural histories of different musical forms circulate frequently. While questions of representation in K-pop are fruitful territory for inquiry, I propose another method of understanding globalization and glocalization via media industry studies. Rather than approaching K-pop as a genre, we can ask different questions about global cultural flows by thinking about K-pop as an industry. What are the social and corporate structures in different countries' music industries that underlie the production of this music? Who is writing and producing the music, and how are decisions made? How do transnational collaborations between artists, record labels, or media companies come about? BTS has often been at the center of questions about cultural dynamics in K-pop, with their clear centering of Black hip-hop influences, massive success with English-language songs, collaboration with numerous international artists, and travel shows such as *American Hustle Life*, *Bon Voyage*, and *Are You Sure?!*; this project aims to examine key "global" and/or "glocal" BTS content from a media industries perspective to understand transnational flows of culture and power beyond on-stage representation.

Re-Imagining Agency and Authenticity in BTS's Artistry

Venue: Seminar Room 1 / Time: 10:40~12:10 / Moderator: Robin Fiedler

Arirang and the Long Road: The Lyrical Journey of BTS Alice Kim

The lyrics of BTS's songs form an intensely personal body of work that fuses autobiography with social critique, literary allusion, concept storytelling, and explorations of loneliness and love. Through complex metaphors, multilingual wordplay, and intertextual references to pop culture, literature, and philosophy, BTS's lyrics go beyond typical pop conventions, inviting deeper interpretation.

I will trace the progression of BTS's music through their lyrics: from their early work, which channels the anger and restlessness of youth against social strictures and the commodification of dreams; to their struggles as developing artists and the sharing of their individual histories; to their meditations on the fragmentation of identity and the precariousness of artistry; and to their reflections on the joy and pain of love, and the giving and receiving of comfort in this world. Examples will be taken from specific songs that showcase their multi-layered wordplay (Trivia: Love, Not Today), including cross-lingual wordsmithing (Dis-ease, Telepathy), the regional pride that animates their messages (Paldogangsan), and a throughline of imagery (the maze in Young Forever, Lost, Anpanman, Louder Than Bombs, etc.).

At the peak of their global fame, the BTS members paused their careers to fulfill South Korea's mandatory military service, just like millions of other Korean men. It was another example of the interplay between the extraordinary and the ordinary that has defined BTS's story. Their newest album, *Arirang*, the group's first album since completing their military service, arrives with a daunting list of expectations. It serves as a homecoming to their loyal fans, a reaffirmation of their artistic and commercial influence, and a reflection on their place in music history. Most importantly, it launches "BTS 2.0", a new chapter in the group's story. Shaped by a period in which each member developed a distinct artistic identity through solo work, the album brings together the familiar spirit of BTS ("you know how we do") with something entirely "brand new," redefining the group for its next era.

Louder Than Bombs: Vulnerability as Soft Power-BTS and the Symbiotic Cultivation of Post-Authority Agency Robin Fiedler

BTS's "Louder Than Bombs" and "Anpanman" demonstrate how vulnerability, when transformed from private fragility into public legitimacy, becomes a form of cultural soft power that co-creates post-authority agency in an era of spiritual and political disillusionment. Situating BTS within a transhistorical lineage of love, suffering, and spiritual endurance, my research draws on Rainer Maria Rilke, Erich Fromm, Friedrich Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and the Korean folk song "Arirang" to frame vulnerability not as weakness, but as a disciplined practice of individuation and collective renewal. Rilke conceptualizes love as disciplined interiority; Fromm frames it as an ethical practice rooted in courage and responsibility; Nietzsche advances self-overcoming through suffering; and "Arirang" encodes collective endurance within Korean historical consciousness.

BTS synthesizes these currents in a quiet sea where waves rise and break, pouring out pain and transforming vulnerability into sustenance—most explicitly in "Anpanman," where humble bread becomes a metaphor for spiritual provision rather than heroic dominance. Rather than valorizing invulnerability, BTS redefines softness as strength and emotional exposure as a site of relational becoming.

Through lyrical analysis and cross-cultural hermeneutics, my study proposes that legitimized vulnerability functions as a predictive soft power variable: increased interiority signaling, relational ethics, and narrative self-disclosure correlate with heightened transnational identification and loyalty among international fans, and even more powerfully, ARMY. In this model, vulnerability becomes not merely an aesthetic expression but an exportable cultural asset—one that amplifies agency by authorizing individuals to reconceive fragility as power and interior life as resistance.

Right People, Right Place: BTS and Local-self/Global-other Authenticity Sharon Becker

To understand BTS's trajectory in their New Chapter, attention must be paid to their solo era spanning from 2023 to 2025. Most importantly, it is the music videos of this era that make the clearest argument for how BTS as a group will navigate the horizons of their New Chapter while also influencing the future of K-pop. In this paper, I will discuss videos from each group member which present imagery evoking the surreality accompanying the journey to, and expression of, an authentic self. For BTS's members the authentic self is both a stable destination and a malleable, ever-changing, and often contradictory state of being. This expression differs from *Map of the Soul's* investigations of self and ego by moving the conversation from the psyche to the body, foregrounding the performance of authenticity in images of desire and displacement. From the tactile sensuality of j-hope's "Killing It Girl" to the multiple selves mired in a maze of lives and choices in RM's "Come Back to Me," the individual members of BTS explicitly argue that their strength and artistry as one of the world's most famous musical groups is best maintained after the body has been encouraged to run wild. In K-pop, performing authenticity has been an essentializing demand issued most commonly from Western media. The performance of authenticity within the solo era videos, however, is accomplished on BTS's terms and it extends the project already begun with the group's previous output, fastening a localized self to a collective global other, reflecting notions of exile and return as well as an indulgence in embodied appetites.

Archive, Art, and the Sustainability of Cultural Value

Venue: Seminar Room 3 / Time: 10:40~12:10 / Moderator: Despina Kakoudaki

Telling the Story: Temporality and the BTS Archive in *BTS: The Return* (2026)

Despina Kakoudaki

In the critical discourse that has emerged around BTS, we often describe their productions through concepts such as “transmedia storytelling,” in order to explain the complex relationships that emerge among musical and visual texts, performance spaces, platforms, distribution venues, formats, and genres. This paper focuses on methods for understanding and managing the archive of BTS related media through an analysis of storytelling in relation to time and genre. As the BTS visual and textual archive continues to expand, it also tends to fold into itself, becoming self-referential, intra-textual, and increasingly dense. We see this effect in documentary productions that tend to weave new performance footage and interviews together with older material, blending times and eras and producing a sense of temporal continuity that prioritizes the present moment and folds the past into ever-new narrative lines. Every text that enters the ecosystem of BTS productions strengthens the BTS archive and blends times and spaces together into a fluid present tense. But while this tendency is experienced as coherent, positive, and intimate for fans and critics, it does not describe the way BTS choose to tell their story, which tends towards moments and processes that are unsettled, in progress, unstable, open-ended. This paper aims to explore this paradox of time zones, in which the uncertainty of BTS’s in-progress narratives is absorbed into an archive of timelessness and continuity.

In order to trace this effect, this paper will examine the narrative, visual, and textual treatment of the BTS story in *The Return*, the new documentary production on the comeback of BTS with the *Arirang* album, directed by acclaimed director Bao Nguyen and scheduled to be broadcast on Netflix on March 27, 2026. While this documentary is not available yet, my plan is to approach its treatment of certain elements of storytelling that tend to characterize previous documentary productions, such as *Burn the Stage: The Movie* (2018), and *Bring the Soul: The Movie* (2019). Despite the media quest and need for a definitive storyline for the “Rise of Bangtan,” BTS has opted for documentary productions that approach a particular time and event, whether that is the build-up for the Wings tour, or the build-up now for Arirang. Documenting BTS thus becomes an always limited enterprise, a way of telling the story of a present moment that is striving, hopeful, and unsure, rather than interpreting a settled and successful past. With some variations among genres and platforms, visual texts that document the story of BTS tend to focus on what the members think they are about to do, rather than what they have done. Personal points of view, accessed through interviews of the members as they anticipate and work for a new goal, and performance preparations, rehearsals, research, and personal introspection have been the hallmark of the individual members’ documentary productions of the last few years as well, as seen in *Suga: The Road to D-Day* (dir. Park Jun-soo, Weverse and Disney +, April 21, 2023), *Hope on the Street* (dir. Park Jun-soo, Amazon Prime Video, March 28, 2024), and *RM: Right People Wrong Place* (dir. Lee Seokjun, Busan International Film Festival, September 3, 2024). Taken together, these projects present a style of storytelling that has implications for interpreting the relationship between the documentary as a textual object and the evanescent present moment it attempts to capture, both in terms of performance, and in terms of personal point of view of the performers themselves.

The RM Effect: Fan Culture Within the Fine Art **Camryn Bazan**

My paper explores the phenomenon of fan culture in application to art market value and fine art spaces, answering questions such as how is the value of art determined in the 21st century? How can fan and celebrity culture affect art value? And is this indicative of a potential change for art institutions? I will be narrowing my focus on the BTS and ARMY, having them act as their namesake “representative” for broader fandom culture, and directing attention where their actions as makers and users of fan culture have led to increases in social/symbolic and market value for select modern and contemporary art and artists. As the concept of value is central to this paper, I specify its construction

based on the cultivation of social/symbolic value and market value as discussed by Isabelle Graw in *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture* (2009) and Jiyoung Lee in *BTS, Art Revolution: BTS Meets Deleuze* (2019). I provide three primary case examples of BTS and ARMY interacting and influencing art value and art spaces: first by the direct depictions of BTS in the artwork with Korean artist Lee K.. Second, through usage of collaboration with the idols with BTS and Taiwanese-American artists James Jean. Lastly, through BTS coopting fine art spaces and artworks by collaboration and interaction. I hope to indicate for art institutions like museums and galleries that appealing to pop culture fanbases can lead to relevancy amongst a willing and able audience and to direct art curators and historians towards respecting the influence of fandoms like ARMY who in many facets possess the potential of generating immense social and market value.

Soft Power in the Platform Age: BTS & Mediation of Cultural Influence **Giang Thu Huynh**

Over the past years, BTS is often mentioned in academic, policy, and media discourse as a phenomenon and a key driver of South Korea's contemporary soft power. However, most of the existing literature remains state-centric and outcome-oriented, focusing on indicators such as global popularity, revenue, tourism, or national image while offering limited insight into the media processes through which cultural influence is produced and sustained. This paper argues that BTS's global impact can be alternatively understood not as a soft power "resource" possessed by the state, but as a mediated cultural practice shaped by platformised media environments, affective circulation, and participatory publics.

Drawing on media and cultural studies, the paper expects to reconceptualise Hallyu as a transnational media infrastructure rather than an organic cultural wave. Within this framework, BTS is examined as a platform-native cultural formation whose influence emerges through narrative coherence, strategically managed authenticity, and sustained interaction with global audiences across digital platforms. Rather than treating fandom as a passive recipient of cultural content, the paper frames ARMY participation as a circulatory force that actively amplifies, translates, and stabilises cultural meaning across borders.

By shifting analytical attention from national outcomes to mediated processes, this study contributes to ongoing debates on soft power, popular culture, and the "next Hallyu." It demonstrates how cultural influence in the platform age is co-produced through media infrastructures and relational labour and argues that understanding these conditions is more analytically productive than attempts to replicate singular cases of success. In doing so, the paper offers a media-centred perspective on soft power that moves beyond state-led explanations and towards a process-based understanding of contemporary cultural power.

Beyond the Stage: How BTS is Reshaping Artist-Led Business Blueprints **Cecilia V. Perez**

This study examines the strategic evolution of the global phenomenon BTS, analyzing their systematic transition from musical performers into sustainable corporate and cultural architects. While dominant discourse frequently highlights their commercial charting success and streaming metrics, this paper investigates the underlying structural framework of their longevity and intellectual ownership.

This paper examines how BTS leveraged a symbiotic relationship with their global fandom, ARMY, alongside strategic digital and physical touchpoints—specifically the Weverse platform and immersive tour ecosystem pop-ups—to successfully bypass traditional Western industry gatekeepers. The analysis demonstrates that BTS's trajectory operates as a multi-layered model of sustainable infrastructure: macroeconomically, they have lowered market entry barriers for domestic lifestyle brands and enhanced South Korea's soft power; operationally, they have independentized their creative output through autonomous intellectual property (IP) assets like BT21 and TinyTAN; and structurally, they have bridged the gap between talent and industry leadership through strategic portfolio diversification and corporate governance.

Ultimately, this study concludes that BTS offers a novel blueprint for artist-led sustainability, redefining the contemporary artist not merely as an entertainer, but as a sovereign owner of creative, commercial, and socio-economic influence.

Fandom Subjectivity in Global Transformation

Venue: Main Hall / Time: 13:30~15:00 / Moderator: Kwangsik Kim

Planetary Fandom as Methodology: Can We Stan the Earth? **Nako Shigesada**

Why does planetary knowledge fail to mobilize sustained care? Despite mounting scientific consensus, a persistent knowledge-action gap separates ecological awareness from durable behavioral change. BTS and ARMY offer an unlikely yet instructive counter-model: a transnational participatory culture sustained not by one-way broadcasting but by cycles of co-creation, translation, and mutual care—a “two-way” exchange that has endured shared disruptions from the pandemic to mandatory military service. This study treats those participatory mechanisms not as a metaphor but as a transferable design pattern, asking whether they can be adapted to cultivate “planetary care”: a durable sense of belonging and responsibility toward Earth.

Using the Second-Phase Global Perspective Protocol (SPGP), we conduct a multi-sited, non-extractive co-creation process across three contrasting environmental lifeworlds: coral reefs (Kikai Island, Japan), tropical rainforest (Baka communities, Cameroon), and desert and night-sky landscapes (Atacama Desert, Chile). In each site, local residents collaboratively produce immersive VR/360° media that foregrounds lived relationships with land, water, and nonhuman beings. Participants then experience VR from the other two sites and join structured dialogue sessions designed to elicit perspective-taking, narrative response, and reciprocal reinterpretation. Rather than “showing the Earth,” SPGP supports a circulatory exchange in which participants re-edit, re-narrate, and respond to each other’s environmental realities—treating Earth’s diversity as a shared object of care—a “planetary oshi” (the Japanese term for an actively supported beloved figure)—a collectively maintained commitment to care.

Outcomes are evaluated with mixed methods, combining validated measures of awe, perspective-taking, empathy, and perceived social norms with qualitative analysis of dialogue transcripts and participant-produced media. Initial debriefs from the Kikai Island phase indicate increased perceived interconnectedness with distant environments and clearer articulation of feasible pro-environmental actions.

Positioned at the intersection of fandom studies, environmental communication, and immersive media design, this paper proposes “planetary fandom” as an actionable methodology: a way to prototype Earth-care communities that operate across borders through participatory translation and mutual responsibility. It reframes fandom not as consumption but as a reproducible structure of planetary responsibility.

BTS ARMY as the New Power of Youth Activism in Indonesia **Nita Roshita**

In 2024, ARMY Indonesia in collaboration with Kpop4Planet successfully pushed Hyundai to drop their agreement with the mining company Adaro. ARMY Indonesia against the use of aluminium from Adaro Smelters for Hyundai car that are fuelled by coal. This has been a shocking action for environmental activism in Indonesia who has been fighting for years against coal. Two years earlier, ARMY Indonesia managed the crowd funding for the victims of the football tragedy in Kanjuruhan that killed 182 people with almost half of billion rupiahs collected.

Using the concept of New Power by Timms and Heimans, BTS ARMY Indonesia is unstoppable in making change. New Power is open, participatory, and peer-driven. It uploads and it distributes and the new power goal according to Timms and Heimans is not to hoard it but to channel it. I aim to use mixed methods of open survey and semi-structured interview to BTS ARMY Indonesia to analyse the level of their participation in this new power and their communication strategy within this organic movement of fandom.

I Wanna Be the One, 넘버원이 아닌 Only One: BTS's Magic Spell for the Next Glocal Generation

Kwangsik Kim

What is the magic spell for the next glocal generation that can be found in BTS' songs? Above all, it is the "I wanna be the one, 넘버원이 아닌 only one" that can be found in BTS' song <We On>. Globality and Locality appear to be contradictory. However, BTS clearly demonstrates that local songs can become global, precisely, glocal songs.

Glocality is not simply a combination of Globality and Locality. Only when we consider the dialectical process by which locality becomes glocality can we properly understand glocality.

The next generation is entering an era of artificial intelligence dominated by hyperconnectivity or globality. The age of artificial intelligence seems to herald the end of Locality. If the next generation believes the world without Locality is not a utopia, they must chant the above magical spell of BTS for a glocal world.

The process by which a local cultural paradigm transforms into a global or glocal one mirrors the revolutionary process of scientific paradigms described by Thomas Kuhn. The stronger the dominance of a specific global cultural paradigm, the more difficult it is for a local cultural one to flourish. As long as local culture dreams of becoming "number one" by merely imitating the existing global cultural paradigm, it will struggle to become a global culture.

As BTS has demonstrated, for local culture to become global culture, it must create a revolutionary cultural paradigm that replaces the existing global cultural one and aspire to become the "only one." I intend to support this cultural paradigm revolution or the dialectic of Glocality, demonstrated by BTS with Kuhn's philosophy of revolution, which says, "To bring about a revolution, man must change the paradigm!"

Three Modes of Theoretical Approach to BTS in Global Transformation: The 2026 Comeback Performances

Sang-jin Han

This paper proposes three modes of theoretical innovation in the scholarship of BTS and ARMY, grounded in an empirical analysis of the 2026 comeback performances, especially the multi-level interactive processes among various actors and agencies engaged in the Gwanghwamun event in Seoul.

First, the paper advances a conceptual shift from the classical concept of public sphere of discourses advocated by Jürgen Habermas toward an in-between affective public world emerging through the dynamic interplay of affect, communication, spatial presence, and global mediation. While preserving communicative orientation and mutual recognition, the paper goes beyond the concept of deliberative rationality to foreground affective synchronization, embodied interaction, and communicative reciprocity between BTS and ARMY.

Second, the paper interprets BTS and ARMY through the lens of Ulrich Beck's theory of global risk society and the metamorphosis of the world. The consequences of risk society—particularly isolation, uncertainty, and disconnection intensified by the COVID-19—are addressed through the healing effects of BTS. Fans' narratives reveal how BTS fosters emotional recovery and relational proximity, transforming dispersed individuals into affectively connected participants. In this sense, ARMY emerges as a response to global risk, reconstituting social bonds through shared affect.

Third, the paper analyzes the dynamic reconfiguration of Korean-ness (tradition) and global-ness (modernity). The Gwanghwamun performance exemplifies a relational articulation in which historical space, cultural memory, and global media circulation are co-constituted in an in-between mode of cultural development.

By integrating these three approaches, the paper argues that BTS should be understood not merely as a manifestation of K-pop cultural phenomenon but as a site of theoretical innovation, revealing new forms of publicness, healing, and reflexive citizenship in an era of global transformation.

Expansion and Transformation of K-pop Narratives : Classics, Fan Practices, Lyrics, and AI Technology

Venue: Seminar Room 1 / Time: 13:30~15:00 / Moderator: JongIm Lee

차용과 창조 사이: 셰익스피어와 BTS 예술 세계(Between Borrowing and Creation : The Artistic Worlds of William Shakespeare and BTS) **Osook Kweon**

This presentation critically examines a critique on the global success of BTS, reconsidering the relationship between cultural identity and universality. The critique characterizes BTS as “mysterious Koreans” and interprets their success as a result of adopting global popular culture, questioning their cultural authenticity. In response, this study draws on the case of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare extensively borrowed plots and forms from foreign sources, yet achieved universal recognition by transforming them into works that explore fundamental human issues. Similarly, BTS employs global musical forms such as hip-hop and rap, while embedding in their lyrics the concerns and emotions of Korean youth—elements that resonate universally with audiences worldwide. This suggests that the value of culture lies not in formal purity but in creative adaptation and thematic universality. Furthermore, considering that Shakespeare himself was a popular writer in his time, this presentation argues for a reconsideration of hierarchical distinctions between high art and popular culture.

방탄소년단 진의 팬 콘서트 <달려라 석진>에 나타난 쌍방향 증여 실천 연구 (A Study on the Practice of Gift Exchange in BTS Jin's Fan Concert) **Jumi Kim**

This study analyzes BTS member Jin's fan concert *Run Seokjin* (2025) through an autoethnographic lens, examining how the fan concert as a performance format enacts reciprocal gift-exchange practices between the artist and fans.

The fan concert is a performance genre that combines elements of fan meetings and concerts. Unlike general concerts centered on recorded repertoire, fan concerts incorporate talk segments, events, and fan participation programs as core structural components. The physical and emotional distance between the artist and audience is comparatively close, and direct communion with the artist and the live experience itself — rather than musical appreciation — function as the primary focus of the event. These formal characteristics transform the fan concert from a site of passive performance consumption into an interactive space co-constructed by the artist and fans together.

In *Run Seokjin*, numerous events were staged in which fans acted as active agents — guessing song titles based on fan-performed singing, or solving challenges using fan gestures as clues. This study engages with these configurations through the circulatory structure of “giving-receiving-reciprocating” outlined in Marcel Mauss's *The Gift*. Of particular significance is that this gift cycle operates in a dual register within *Run Seokjin*. Two simultaneous flows are at work within the performance: one in which the artist provides the stage and fans respond through participation, whereupon the artist reciprocates through events and gifts; and a counter-flow in which fans first offer their participation and the artist responds in turn through the stage and reactions.

This dual structure of gift-exchange transforms the performance into a practical space of mutual meaning-making. Fans' imperfect singing, unexpected laughter, and spontaneously generated episodes accumulate not as unilateral memories centered on the stage, but as shared recollections belonging to all participants — and may further be interpreted as rituals that reinforce the identity and solidarity of the fandom community. This study seeks to reexamine fan concerts within K-pop as a central mode of interaction in fandom culture and to contribute to the expansion of analytical frameworks in fandom studies.

인공지능 기술이 구현하는 “아이돌-되기”: 케이팝과 팬덤을 관통하는 인공지능 기술과 젠더성 읽기 (The Implementation of “Becoming-Idol” through AI Technology : A Reading of AI Technology and Gender Identity Across K-pop and Fandom) Jonglm Lee

This study investigates the political implications of how women’s bodies and identities are represented through artificial intelligence (AI) within the K-Pop industry. While contemporary technological discourse often highlights efficiency and interactive immersion, this paper critically engages with how advanced technologies socially construct and commodify gender. Drawing upon Judith Butler’s framework in *Gender Trouble*, which posits gender as a forced social norm rather than an essential reality, we examine the accelerated re-enactment of fixed gender binaries through AI.

An active paradigm shift driven by technological utilization within the K-Pop industry gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, as entertainment agencies like SM Entertainment introduced hybrid real-virtual groups like aespa to bypass physical restrictions. However, the development and training of these virtual influencers and idols rarely account for algorithmic gender bias. Through both supervised and unsupervised machine learning, AI systems systematically label, quantify, and replicate stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity based on superficial social cues (e.g., hairstyles, makeup, and physical proportions). Consequently, the industry reduces complex gender identities to a bio-socially reductive binary, presenting highly curated, idealized bodies for unhindered consumption. By analyzing examples ranging from humanoid robots like Sophia to virtual K-Pop idols and gender-biased conversational agents, this study concludes that the digital synthesis of K-Pop identities does not liberate the body, but rather institutionalizes and rigidifies conventional gender norms under the guise of technological innovation.

BTS 2.0 시대 : 군백기 전후 가사와 의미 구조 분석(BTS 2.0 Era: An Analysis of Lyrics and Semantic Structures Before and After the Military Hiatus) Erin Lee

This study defines the period following BTS’s return to full-group activities after their mandatory military service as the “BTS 2.0 era,” and aims to analyze how the narrative structures of their lyrics and audience discourses have been reconstructed across this transitional period. While existing research has largely focused on interpreting lyrical texts within discrete timeframes, this study designates the transitional phase following the group’s activity hiatus as a single unit of analysis, undertaking a comparative examination of inter-period changes from both textual and reception-oriented perspectives. To this end, the study addresses three research questions: first, what differences can be observed in the core motifs and cultural metaphors appearing in BTS lyrics before and after the 2.0 era; second, in what ways have the internal narrative structures and messages of the lyrics been reconstructed across periods; and third, how are the transformed lyrical messages interpreted and emotionally received within global audience responses.

Methodologically, the study employs qualitative research combining semiotic narrative analysis with netnography. The corpus comprises albums and title tracks representative of both the BTS 1.0 period (full-group activities prior to enlistment) and the BTS 2.0 period (solo projects during the hiatus and full-group activities following discharge), with the former centered on the <花樣年華> series and <WINGS>, and the latter on solo releases during the hiatus and post-discharge group recordings. Qualitative data for audience discourse analysis were collected from fan communities across global media platforms including YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and Weverse.

The analysis confirms that whereas pre-enlistment BTS lyrics foregrounded the intensity, anxiety, and sense of lack characteristic of youth in one’s teens and twenties, the texts produced before and after the military hiatus exhibit a deepening and expansion toward narratives of waiting, community, identity, and conviction—marking a discernible maturation in lyrical orientation. Notably, the hiatus imposed by military service functioned not merely as a suspension of activity but as a text of inner reflection, serving as a catalyst for reconstituting the Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa motif—a cornerstone of the group’s early narrative—into an enduring mythology. Through close textual analysis, the study traces how concepts such as youth, lack, temporality, and solidarity undergo shifts in narrative status across the hiatus.

Furthermore, by examining the ways in which ARMY members project specific lyrical passages onto their own lived experiences and fan identities, the study offers an integrated analysis of the relationship between structural transformations in the text and the active interpretive processes of its audiences. This study contributes to the field by proposing the concept of the “BTS 2.0 era” as a framework for examining diachronic change in popular music lyrics, and by presenting a methodological approach that integrates semiotic narrative analysis with audience-centered discourse analysis. In doing so, it seeks to establish a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding K-pop lyrics as a dynamic discourse continuously renewed within the emotional registers and cultural contexts of its time.

Networked Ethos: Philosophy and Religious Practices of K-pop Fandom

Venue: Seminar Room 3 / Time: 13:30~15:00 / Moderator: Michelle Ocriciano

Faith Goes Fandom: The Hybridization of K-pop Culture and Religious Practice on Social Media

Bintan Humeira, Fauziah Muslimah & Nabila Khoirunnisa Harliani

This study explores how Muslim K-Pop fans negotiate their faith identities within global fandom spaces, illustrating how digital media enables the hybridization of religious expression and popular culture. Drawing on qualitative multimodal analysis of the Instagram community @XKWaver, the research investigates how religious values are translated into fandom narratives and visual aesthetics. Particular attention is given to globally influential K-Pop acts such as BTS, whose transnational appeal, lyrical themes, and strong fan culture of BTS; Adorable Representative M.C for Youth (ARMY) serve as a key reference point for meaning-making among Muslim fans. The findings reveal that the intersection of spirituality and fandom constitutes a form of hybrid religiosity, where Islamic devotion and fan affect coalesce into new modes of pious self-expression. Within this hybrid space, fans employ K-Pop-specific language—including references to BTS’s music, symbolism, and member personas—in religious reflections, reinterpret idol figures through Islamic moral frameworks, and construct digital “safe spaces” where piety and fandom coexist. These practices demonstrate how young Muslims creatively navigate between sacred and profane domains, mediated by social media’s participatory, affective, and aesthetic logics. By situating BTS as a cultural node within global fandom discourse, the study highlights how specific pop-cultural icons facilitate the articulation of lived faith in contemporary digital environments. The study contributes to digital religion scholarship by foregrounding religious hybridity as an emergent form of lived faith among global Muslim youth, challenging dichotomies between religion and entertainment, devotion and pleasure, and faith and fandom.

K-pop and Hwajaeng: What Gets Created When Nothing Gets Erased **Michelle Ocriciano**

BTS’s global reach has millions learning Korean, sparked interest in K-dramas and Korean culture, and made East Asian aesthetics cultural capital. In January 2026, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum sent a diplomatic letter to South Korea requesting additional BTS concerts after one million people attempted to buy only 150,000 tickets. Yet K-pop is persistently called derivative—a charge that reveals less about K-pop than about the epistemic order through which it is evaluated.

I argue that “derivativeness” operates as an onto-epistemic category. It presupposes a linear ontology of creation in which novelty must emerge through displacement: the new supersedes the old, the original negates the copy. Within this ontology, influence is tolerated only if it culminates in rupture. Creative practices structured by accumulation, layering, or co-presence become legible only as a lack. This is not merely aesthetic misrecognition. It is onto-epistemic injustice.

Against this regime, I turn to the seventh-century Korean Buddhist philosopher Wŏnhyo’s hwajaeng (和靜), “harmonization of disputes.” Hwajaeng does not synthesize opposites into unity, nor does it subordinate one position to another. It sustains divergent perspectives as co-present and irreducible within a shared horizon. Difference is not overcome; it is held. This logic resonates with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui’s Aymara concept of ch'ixi, which names coexistence without fusion. Read together, hwajaeng and ch'ixi articulate an additive ontology of creation.

I argue that BTS—and K-pop more broadly—enacts this logic. Drawing on global R&B, Korean linguistic and affective registers, regional performance lineages, and transnational production practices, K-pop layers without erasing. When BTS’s forthcoming album *Arirang* invokes Korea’s unofficial national anthem, historical memory and global pop form remain distinct while sounding together. K-pop is not derivative, nor merely hybrid. It makes visible a grammar of creation Western aesthetics has struggled to recognize.

BTS and ARMY as Transnational Cultural Actors: Reconfiguring Soft Power through Networked Participatory Diplomacy **Tanya Chaudhary**

In the era of globalization, the cultural industry has become a central manifestation of national soft power. As a global musical phenomenon and cultural representative of South Korea, BTS occupies a distinctive position at the intersection of culture, economy, and diplomacy. This paper examines BTS's 'past' and 'new' chapters as foregrounding the continuity of fan subjectivity within a digitally networked transnational public sphere. The March 21 comeback concert at Gwanghwamun Square, staged as a globally livestreamed civic spectacle in the symbolic heart of Seoul through Netflix, serves as a contemporary illustration of this transition: a moment in which cultural performance, national space, and digitally mobilized publics would converge to produce diplomatic meaning beyond formal state channels.

Aligning with the theme of *Inclusivity and Fan Subjectivity*, the paper reconceptualizes ARMY as a networked public operating within platform capitalism and global media infrastructures. The theoretical framework integrates Carniel's (2024) concept of *Participatory Diplomacy*, Castells' (2006) concept of the *Network Society*, and Kim's (2019) notion of the *Exponential Power of Networks* to build a new theoretical model of Networked Participatory Diplomacy. Drawing on Participatory diplomacy, as a portmanteau bridging state-driven public diplomacy and fan-driven participatory culture, the framework enables analysis of how audiences disrupt top-down communicative hierarchies and actively shape political meaning within popular cultural platforms. Within these structural conditions, digitally connected actors or the network society operate through horizontal communication flows. In this formulation, diplomacy is no longer confined to state actors but becomes a relational process negotiated between states, cultural producers, and foreign publics. Building on the concept of the exponential amplification of civic networks in both digital and physical spheres, this study examines how ARMY's collective practices scale influence through relational linking, emotional resonance, public visibility, and narrative storytelling. These dynamics align with what Kim (2019) identifies as third-party communication effects: the credibility of messages increases when articulated by publics rather than official state actors. ARMY thus functions as a decentralized yet structured intermediary, advancing awareness, interest, advocacy, and public diplomacy.

Methodologically, the study employs phenomenological and digital ethnographic analysis of multilingual translation networks, algorithmic streaming coordination, philanthropic mobilization, and advocacy campaigns such as *Love Myself*, collectively addressed as 선한 영향력, translating as good-hearted influencing. These practices are interpreted as performative enactments of inclusive fan subjectivity across gender, race, religion, and nationality. The paper argues that BTS's and ARMY's signals a next-generation configuration of Hallyu in which soft power emerges not as a unilateral state asset but as an exponentially amplified, participatory, and networked process. By situating fandom at the nexus of civic engagement, affective labour, and diplomatic communication, this study contributes to debates on fan networks, inclusivity, and the evolving architecture of public diplomacy in a post-Anglophone cultural order.

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Sharon Becker is a Teaching Professor in English at Towson University where she teaches the 21st century American short story, first year writing, and an Honors seminar on storytelling in K-pop. Her current research focuses on K-pop music videos, particularly those of fourth and fifth generation male idol groups whose videos feature monsters, horror, dystopia, and other dark concepts which reflect negotiations with masculine identity. Her chapter, “‘We Dance Across This Line into a New World’: Transformative Horror in ENHYPEN’s Vampire Universe” will be published in *The Cultural Politics of Transmedia Storytelling in K-pop* by Bloomsbury in September, 2026.

Shim Lew

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Shim Lew is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of West Florida. Her research focuses on multilingual/multicultural education, teacher education, and disciplinary literacy in STEM subjects. She has led multiple grant projects bridging language, science, and technologies. Her recent work has been published in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *Applied Linguistics Review*, *Science Education*, and *Educational Review*.

Tanya Chaudhary

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Tanya Chaudhary is a doctoral candidate in International Relations at Ewha Womans University, Seoul, and a POSCO Asia Fellow. Her research examines the intersection of soft power, cultural diplomacy, and global cultural flows, with particular attention to the role of culture in shaping contemporary international relations. Her scholarly interests were significantly shaped in 2017 through her engagement with Korean popular culture, which prompted a sustained inquiry into the diplomatic implications of cultural industries and digital networks. Situating her work within debates on cosmopolitan world politics, Tanya explores how soft power operates beyond formal state policy frameworks, emerging instead through participatory, affective, and media-driven processes.

Tsengel Davaasambuu

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Dr. Tsengel Davaasambuu is the recently appointed Director of the School of Film, Television and Media Arts at the Mongolian National University of Arts and Culture (MNUAC), where she also serves as a Professor within the Department of Creative Cultural Studies. An alumna of the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) program, she earned her degree from Cheongju University in 2012 and later expanded her academic background at Cal State LA and MNUAC, where she received her Ph.D. As an academic scholar, her research primarily focuses on cultural studies, language, and the creative industries. In addition to her academic roles, Dr. Tsengel is an active film producer and distributor. She has been a dedicated member of the Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema (NETPAC) since 2015. A respected figure in the international film community, she frequently travels to global film markets and has served as a jury member for major international and South Korean film festivals, including the Busan International Film Festival, Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, and the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. Dedicated to the advancement of the Mongolian film industry, she actively mentors young filmmakers and facilitates collaborative opportunities to introduce Mongolian cinema to international markets.

Veronika Mattová

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Veronika Mattová is an assistant at the Department of Mongolian, Korean, and Vietnamese Studies, focusing on Korean cultural concepts in media. She is also a PhD student in Korean Studies at the University of Vienna. With a background in cognitive science, her research explores parasociality, and her work includes multiple academic projects connected to K-pop, particularly BTS.

Vicki Ronn

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Dr. Vicki Ronn is a professor of English at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas. A member of ARMY since 2019, she has presented several papers on BTS at the Southwest Pop Culture Association Conference, including ones entitled “The Comeback Plan of BTS: We Never Really Left,” “Going Live: The Solo Performance Choices of BTS” and “Showing the Love? BTS YouTube Reactors: Critics, Fans, or Birgers?” Her scholarly interests also include the portrayal of older women in fantasy literature, gender in U. S. history, and women in fairy tales.

Wonjae Choi

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Wonjae Choi is a Full-time Researcher at the Dongguk University Hallyu Convergence Academy (DUHA). His research interests include Korea and the Korean Wave (Hallyu). He traces the pulse of the Korean Wave by distinguishing between the medieval and modern periods. He is also passionate about personally seeking out, collecting, and widely disseminating research content on the Korean Wave. He is particularly renowned as a scholar who studies the 19th-century Korean educational encyclopedia *Songnam Japji* and the Anglican missionary magazine *The Morning Calm*. Furthermore, as an educational technologist, he developed a digital education methodology called “Digital Data Narrative,” placing humanities disciplines such as history, literature, and art at the center of convergence studies. Thanks to his work, many people have been able to easily overcome the entry barrier of the digital era. The formation of analog backgrounds within the digital virtual world and the psychological changes of Homo sapiens are the researcher’s main research topics. Beyond his digital capabilities, what we truly need to learn from the researcher is his adventurous spirit, concentration, agility, and predictive ability.

Youngsun JIN

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JIN Youngsun studied Painting at Seoul National University, Pratt Institute in New York, and the Royal College of Art in London, and received her PhD from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She trained in fresco mural painting at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and at ICCROM in Rome, experiences that later enabled her to reproduce a Goguryeo Tumulus mural for the National Museum of Korea. Since 2018, JIN has explored the artistic and cultural significance of BTS through lectures, exhibitions, and interdisciplinary conferences, including “Planet Paik · BTS Universe” at The First BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference, Kingston University London (2020); Beyond The Scene (BTS) with The 3rd BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference (2022); main artist for “Hallyu Korean Wave” Exhibit, National Gallery of Malaysia with The 4th BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference (2023); “The Future Is Now: NJP/BTS” at Ewha Womans University (2024); and “RM’s Favorite Artists” at PURPLE FESTA in JEJU (2025). She also contributed to *Bangtan Remixed: A Critical BTS Reader* (Duke University Press, 2024). She collaborated with Nam June Paik on media-fresco projects including installations at the Haeinsa Buddhist Museum and Tiger Lives at the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts in Seoul. JIN is currently Professor Emerita at Korea University and serves on the Board of the Nam June Paik Cultural Foundation. She was awarded the Ok-gwan (Jade) Order of Cultural Merit by the President of Korea.

Zarah Gagatiga

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Zarah C. Gagatiga is a storyteller, internationally published and award-winning author, and teacher-librarian from the Philippines whose work centers on memory, care, and everyday meaning. Her stories for children include *Tales From the 7,000 Isles* (Bloomsbury), *Big Sister*, and *The Day Max Flew Away* (Lampara), which have been recognized by local and international literary institutions. Zarah engages in creative practice such as pottery, clay therapy, watercolor, and cyanotype as forms of reflection and meaning-making. Her interdisciplinary work is shaped by her background in librarianship, literacy advocacy, and community service, with a focus on relationality and lived experience. She shares her creative work at [@silver_linings_t.zee](https://www.instagram.com/silver_linings_t.zee) and writes at lovealibarian.blogspot.com.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.