

Intact Projects that Reshape Cultural Landscapes at Home and Abroad

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Abstract

The extended duration of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a prolonged stagnation within the cultural and artistic spheres. With quarantine regulations and social distancing measures in place, numerous scheduled exhibitions and performances have faced cancellations and delays, amplifying the detriment to the culture and arts community. In response to this challenging scenario, attention has turned towards the concept of intact projects. This paper seeks to delve into the analysis of various intact projects undertaken by both domestic and international cultural and artistic institutions. In particular, it aims to scrutinize the cases, current status, and impact of these initiatives. Focusing on Studio Mon, a dedicated studio associated with the National Museum of Korea, amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic will be a primary focal point of this analysis. Furthermore, the paper explores the innovative strategies employed by cultural and artistic institutions to adapt to the evolving circumstances including the utilization of digital platforms, virtual exhibitions, and online performances.

Keyword : Intact projects, Museum, Studio Mon, Status Analysis

1. Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant portion of the exhibitions and performances initially slated for the first half of 2020 have either been canceled or faced disruptions in their normal execution. As highlighted in the results gleaned from the Performing Arts Sector Damage Survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the predominant fallout arising from COVID-19 encompassed the ‘cancellation or postponement of scheduled performances and events’. This upheaval resulted in staggering revenue losses amounting to KRW 264.6 billion, directly impacting employment within the cultural and artistic domain.

The repercussions of this substantial revenue downturn were acutely felt by cultural and artistic workers, particularly freelance artists, whose employment suffered the brunt of these financial setbacks. Estimates suggest employment losses ranging from KRW 58.8 billion to KRW 126 billion, contingent upon the individual recognition and scope of engagement of these freelance artists within the cultural landscape [1]. As shown in [Table 1], the ripple effect of revenue losses directly translated into an

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adverse employment scenario, amplifying the financial strain and uncertainty faced by those integral to the cultural and artistic fabric of society [2].

[Table 1] The number of performances by national performing arts organizations during the first half of 2019 and the first half of 2020

Institution name	Performances in the first half of 2019	Performances in the first half of 2020	Increase	Attrition rate
National Opera	47	13	+34	72%
National Choir	23	15	+8	65%
Korean Symphony Orchestra	45	22	+23	51%
National Ballet	22	5	+17	77%
National Contemporary Dance Company	23	3	+22	87%
Seoul Arts Centre	45	-	+45	100%
National Theatre of Korea	160	10	+150	94%
Jungdong Theatre	198	41	+157	79%
Traditional Esul Jinhong Foundation	88	3	+85	97%
Gugak Broadcasting	4	-	+4	100%
Korea National Radio	106	82	+24	23%
National Theatre of Korea	21	10	+11	52%
Esul Leaflet	42	16	+26	62%

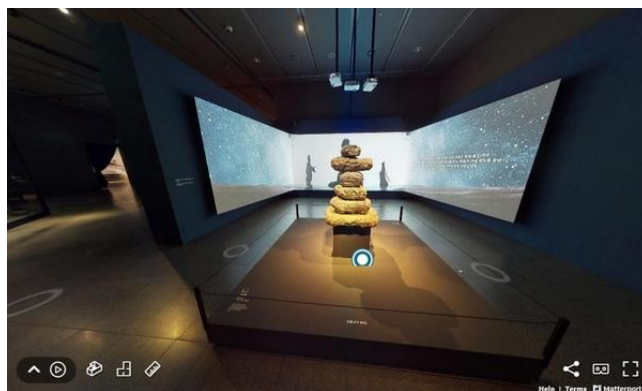
As the COVID-19 pandemic has prolonged, the downturn in the cultural sector has also prolonged, and the cultural sector is trying to implement unconventional untact businesses. In order to enable visitors to watch exhibitions and performances without having to visit cultural facilities in person, they live-streamed exhibitions and performances through online platforms, provided Virtual Reality (VR) exhibitions, and enabled real-time communication with academic researchers online, and strengthened real-time communication with visitors through Social Networking Service (SNS).

As shown in [Fig. 1], the Curator Exhibition Tour at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) refers to a guided tour or presentation led by a curator employed by the museum. During these tours, the curator takes visitors through an exhibition to provide insights, interpretations, and contextual information about the artworks on display. This type of tour offers a more in-depth understanding of the exhibition, and provides visitors with the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation for the artworks, the artistic intentions behind them, historical contexts, and thematic connections within the exhibition. In addition, [Fig. 2] shows that The National Museum of Korea VR exhibition titled Gaya Bonseong. This type of VR exhibition utilizes VR technology to offer visitors an immersive and interactive experience related to the historical heritage, artifacts, cultural elements, or

archaeological discoveries associated with the Gaya kingdom.



[Fig. 1] Curator Exhibition Tour in the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary



[Fig. 2] Gaya Bonseong in National Museum of Korea VR exhibition

The aim of this paper is to investigate the evolving trends in the cultural and art realms post the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it will analyze Studio Mon, an in-house studio established by the National Museum of Korea, amidst a variety of untact initiatives. It seeks to understand the anticipated impact of Studio Mon within the untact era precipitated by the pandemic. The assessment will focus on the effectiveness of Studio Mon, an exclusive broadcasting platform at the National Museum of Korea, by scrutinizing the institution's program implementations and conducting a comparative analysis of their merits and demerits vis-à-vis existing projects.

Moreover, this study will delve into domestic and international cultural institutions within South Korea, investigating how the National Museum of Korea's untact project distinguishes itself in response to the COVID-19 crisis in comparison to its counterparts. Employing qualitative research methodologies, this paper will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of Studio Mon's

program. This will involve content analysis drawing from various resources including the websites of pertinent cultural institutions and related online articles.

In addition, this analysis will present diverse intact projects undertaken by both local and foreign cultural institutions, offering insights into the transformations witnessed in the cultural landscape due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to provide a thorough examination of the shifts occurring in the cultural sphere and the emerging dynamics influenced by the pandemic's contactless paradigm.

2. Intact Programs in Studio Mon

2.1 Studio Mon, National Museum of Korea

As the largest museum in South Korea, the National Museum of Korea is a place to learn and enjoy the important values of our history and culture, and seeks to communicate not only between the past and present, but also between regions and countries, cultures, and disciplines. Under the vision of Museum for All, the museum aims to be a museum with life that reaches out to people's lives, a museum leading the future that creates future values, and a museum going to the world that shares a paradigm of sharing, and is striving to create a cultural foundation to overcome the non-face-to-face society by developing online history and culture programs and expanding contents after the COVID-19 outbreak.

As shown in [Fig. 3], the National Museum of Korea has inaugurated its exclusive broadcasting station, Studio Mon (M:ON). This innovative platform, integrating M representing museum and ON signifying play, introduces a studio-oriented interactive online education program. Studio Mon is designed to center around the enrichment of one's cultural life, encompassing elements of inspiration and healing. It aims to cater to individuals from diverse backgrounds in their daily routines, irrespective of their location, aligning with the vision of a 'museum for everyone' as an integral facet of a smart museum framework.

The platform curates an array of content comprising lectures, experiential sessions, practical exercises, and virtual exhibition tours. Its core focus lies in fostering an appreciation for the cultural realm, offering accessible and engaging experiences to a broad audience. Studio Mon endeavors to navigate the current intact era by providing events that transcend face-to-face interactions. Traditionally, museum visits necessitated timing and physical presence. However, this initiative presents the novel opportunity to access museums anytime and from any location, dismantling temporal and spatial barriers previously associated with museum engagement.



[Fig. 3] Studio Mon(M:ON) in National Museum of Korea.



[Fig. 4] Education for exploring cultural properties with Koreans

2.2 Live remote education program

Studio Mon creates and shares various educational contents of the National Museum of Korea online. The studio focuses on providing various educational contents that have been implemented by the National Museum of Korea online. Since 2018, the National Museum of Korea has been conducting live remote education for school students in island regions such as Ulleungdo, where it is difficult to visit the museum in person due to distance. With Studio Mon, these remote education programs have become more stable and professional so that it can allow the museum to provide better online education services as shown in [Fig. 5].



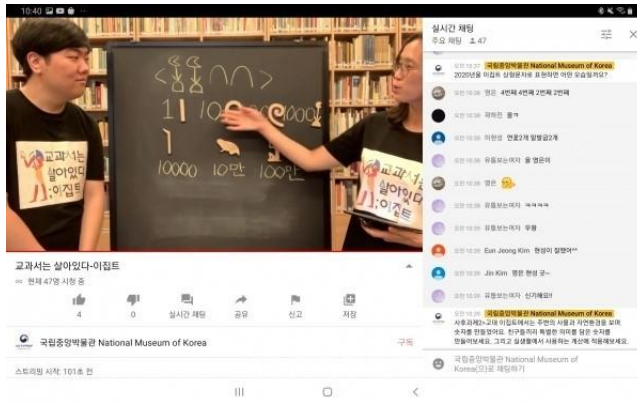
[Fig. 5] Digital remote history class

The program is aimed at elementary and junior high school students and is based on the theme of appreciation education for major exhibits in the textbook *Textbooks Are Alive*. Previously, the program was held by prior reservation for students who were unable to visit the museum due to the online school opening due to COVID-19, but now the program has been improved to an online education that can be accessed at a set time without any reservation for the participation of more learners and their enhanced accessibility [3].

As shown in [Fig. 6] and [Fig. 7], learners who participated in the program were able to observe and explore the artefacts in the textbooks in a variety of ways, such as experimenting with writing and patterns, rather than the traditional simple and rigid explanation of the artefacts.



[Fig. 6] Textbooks are alive - ceramics



[Fig. 7] Textbooks are alive - Egypt

2.3 Rest, Relax with Culture

Rest, Relax with Culture is a program for high school seniors who have completed the Korean college entrance exam.



[Fig. 8] Commentary on the special exhibition -As Spring Comes After Midwinter



[Fig. 9] Shando

This program is designed to help students who have been preparing for the exams for a year to relax and enjoy themselves by participating in the museum programs. Originally, the program was conducted offline by engraving seals with their names, writing thank-you notes on postcards to parents, teachers, and other people who have been grateful to them, and writing messages of praise to themselves, but due to the pandemic it was conducted untact. What sets this program apart from previous ones is that it focuses on self-directed appreciation and understanding education in conjunction with the special exhibition *As Spring Comes After Midwinter* as shown in [Fig. 8] on display at the National Museum of Korea. Students will watch a representative video of the exhibition at school, explore the highlights of the exhibition, Kim Jung-hee and Sehando as shown in [Fig. 9], and draw Sehando themselves to understand the meaning of the artwork and reflect on it.

2.4 Wonder Cart

The Museum Wonder Cart, a program aimed at international visitors, is now online as the Virtual Museum Wonder Cart. As shown in [Fig. 10] and [Fig. 11], it not only provides information about the museum, but also provides exhibition guides for foreign visitors who are visiting the museum for the first time, introduces collections using replicas, and provides various self-guided treasure hunting activities for foreign visitors who visit the museum frequently. Currently on view at the Seohwa Room until May 2021 is *Clap Your Hands and Admire: Kim Hong-do's Feng Shui Notebooks* exhibition is on display. It is to introduce foreigners to Kim Hong-do, a representative Korean painter [4].



[Fig. 10] Museum Wonder Cart

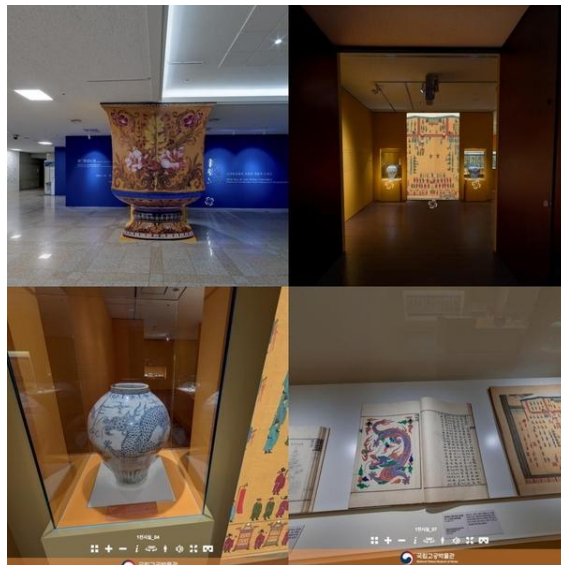


[Fig. 11] Virtual Museum Wonder Cart

3. Comparison with other domestic institutions

3.1 National Palace Museum

Various institutions other than the National Museum of Korea are also implementing various unctact projects to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak [5].



[Fig. 12] AR and VR assisted exhibitions at National Palace Museum

The National Palace Museum of Korea has announced that it will actively develop online content incorporating Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technology, and has replaced the New Royal Porcelain, Western-style Porcelain Used by the Joseon Dynasty' exhibition with a VR exhibition. As shown in [Fig. 12], visitors can view a total of 400 artefacts including Western-style ceramics made in France, England, Germany, Japan, and China, in the VR exhibition. It is designed to make visitors feel as if they are visiting the actual exhibition, and includes hands-on videos and explanations of the artefacts [6][7].

3.2 Buyeo National Museum

The Buyeo National Museum held a vote to select a character to play an active role in online channels such as YouTube and Facebook, which provide information about cultural assets in the intact era. The selected characters will be used as SNS characters to communicate with followers by using real cultural assets to tell stories in an easy and fun way [8]. As shown in [Fig. 13], Hoja's Story on Instagram, a story about the museum told through the Hoja character selected by the voters, is attracting attention.

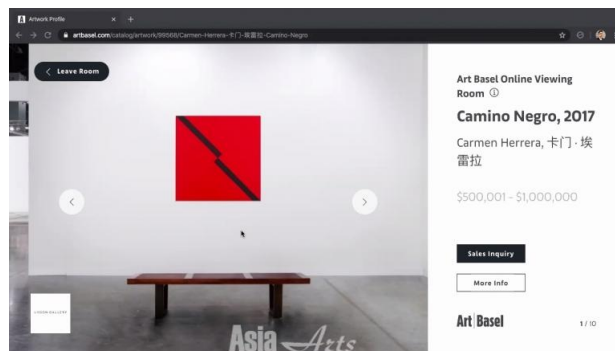


[Fig. 13] Hoja Diary on the Instagram

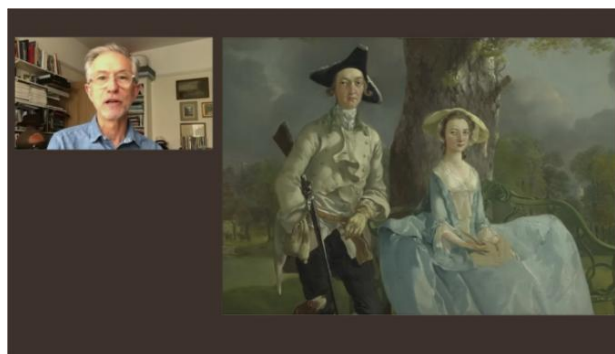
3.3 Art Basel Hong Kong

Overseas, the art world is also embracing online platforms. Art Basel Hong Kong, Asia's largest art

fair, cancelled its event in March and instead launched an online viewing room. The Online Viewing Room allows visitors to view thousands of artworks that were scheduled to be exhibited at Art Basel. During the operation of the Online Viewing Room as shown in [Fig. 14], there were some cases where officials had to deal with people who were not computer literate and older collectors and art lovers who could only access the Art Basel online site by signing up for a membership and logging in, much like the phone bidders at art auctions [9], but in the end, Art Basel Hong Kong 2020 was praised as a success, with more than 250,000 visitors. In addition, as shown in [Fig. 15], many cultural organizations are using online platforms such as VR exhibitions and online exhibition commentaries to show how they are changing in the intact era.



[Fig. 14] Online Viewing Room at Art Basel Hong Kong



[Fig. 15] Thomas Gainsborough's online content at National Gallery of Art

4. Discussion

The programs initiated by the National Museum of Korea through Studio Mon play a pivotal role in

fostering interactive educational experiences, unlike traditional video lectures, enabling real-time communication between learners and knowledgeable artistic researchers. This departure from one-way communication structures enhances understanding and engagement in education. Furthermore, these educational offerings cater to a diverse audience, spanning from elementary to high school students, adults, foreigners, and Korean residents. The online real-time content delivery transcends physical barriers, extending learning opportunities to remote areas and culturally marginalized groups historically deprived of museum access, such as students in distant islands across the country and overseas Korean residents [10].

Studio Mon stands out as an innovative post-COVID platform among the world's foremost museums, pioneering contactless education and specializing in history and artifacts. Although its launch was highly anticipated, there seems to be some limitations in the development of online-exclusive content. Additionally, it incorporates educational programs for professionals, including academic job training, which raises questions about the comparative quality and effectiveness of such training when compared to offline alternatives [11].

The National Museum of Korea envisions an all-encompassing museum experience through its inclusive online content, yet it falls short in catering adequately to people with disabilities within culturally marginalized groups. While the accessibility of museums from anywhere and at any time is enticing, this accessibility remains a challenge for individuals with visual and hearing impairments. Despite being the largest museum in Korea, the issue of accessibility has only recently come under discussion. These concerns underscore the imperative need for future efforts to transform the National Museum of Korea into a truly inclusive institution that caters comprehensively to all individuals, including those with disabilities. Addressing these issues is crucial for the museum to fulfill its vision of being a museum for everyone.

Looking at both domestic and overseas institutions aside from the National Museum of Korea, it is evident that they are similarly planning to leverage technologies like intact systems, online platforms, and AR and VR technologies. What distinguishes the outcomes of projects sharing similar concepts is primarily the allocation of resources such as manpower and budget.

The National Museum of Korea enjoys the advantage of being the largest museum in South Korea and a national institution. Consequently, it has secured considerable professional staff and a substantial budget, enabling the establishment of initiatives like Studio Mon within the framework of the smart museum project. Moreover, in comparison to many overseas counterparts, Korea boasts an exceptionally high level of high-speed internet penetration and internet speed. This advantage significantly positions it

for successful implementation and widespread dissemination of intact projects.

5. Conclusion

Studio Mon is a dedicated studio of the National Museum of Korea that provides online content such as lectures, experiences, practical exercises, and exhibition viewing related to the museum. The content provided strives to enhance learners' understanding through interactive communication with professional staff such as art researchers, and is also linked to current exhibitions at the museum. In line with its vision of a museum for all, the museum is making efforts to include members of the cultural marginalised through various contents targeted at all walks of life. The high internet penetration rate and speed in South Korea will be an advantageous factor in the implementation of such contactless projects. Ultimately, the time is gradually approaching when the physical barriers between cultural facilities, including museums, and their visitors will be broken down, allowing visitors to enjoy cultural contents anytime, anywhere regardless of location and time.

However, there are many things that need to be improved. As a dedicated studio, the lack of content exclusively for online platforms is regrettable, except for the online content of existing projects. As transitioning into endemic phases, the intact approach in the arts and culture industry has been increasingly prioritizing interactive communication, unlike previous practices. Despite the various methods employed for online exhibitions and performances, replicating the inherent sense of presence from physical exhibition halls and performance venues remains impossible. This tangible presence fosters a unique concentration that's challenging to emulate virtually. Furthermore, not all online platforms can generate high-definition, top-quality content that can match the standards set by offline experiences. Issues such as compromised sound quality during online performances or a perceived lack of refinement in VR exhibitions detract from the immersive nature of these experiences. There's a distinct challenge in recreating the seamless quality and engagement found in physical settings.

Moreover, the deficiency in resources, especially in terms of manpower and budget, within domestic cultural institutions, particularly those in rural areas, has been previously highlighted. Addressing these shortcomings remains critical to ensuring the viability and success of untact approaches in these regions. Efforts to allocate adequate resources and expertise are imperative to overcome these challenges in the future.

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