Analysing visual representations in the 
North Korean Refugee Movement for Social Change and Justice

Author: Pearl Jones  
Supervisor: Anders Hög Hansen 
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Dedications:

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ..........................................................................................................................1
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION ..............................................2
  Aim and Research Questions ..........................................................................................7
CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ....................................................................8
  Framing of movements; Movement Identity & Collective Action ....................................8
  Resource Mobilisation ..................................................................................................10
  Art as knowledge, Knowledge as Culture ......................................................................13
  Relevant Research ........................................................................................................16
CHAPTER III. CASES FOR STUDY .................................................................................19
  Case 1: Painting by Song Byeok ................................................................................19
  Case 2: Film: Jayu North Korean Human Rights Film Festival ....................................20
    i. Camp 14: Total Control Zone ..............................................................................20
    ii. Winter Butterfly .................................................................................................21
CHAPTER IV. METHOD ....................................................................................................21
  Mixed-Approach Analysis for Visual Communication ................................................21
  Audience Selection for Questionnaire ........................................................................22
  Limitations ....................................................................................................................23
CHAPTER V. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS ............................................................................23
  Outcomes: Qualitative Interview and Questionnaires ...................................................23
  Reflections .....................................................................................................................26
    i. Researcher’s role and position, Ethical problems ...............................................28
    ii. Reflexivity, Ethnocentricity, Pre-suppositions, Self-image .................................28
    iii. Interpretation ......................................................................................................29
  Analysis .........................................................................................................................30
    i. Take Off Your Clothes!! .....................................................................................30
    ii. Camp 14: Total Control Zone ...........................................................................33
    iii. Winter Butterfly ...............................................................................................35
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION ...........................................................................................38
  Further Discussion .......................................................................................................40
REFERENCES ....................................................................................................................41
APPENDICES ....................................................................................................................46

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.  ~ Margaret Mead
ABSTRACT
Art has the ability to give voice to the vast number of ordinary citizens suffering under totalitarian rule in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, both past and present. This paper uses a mixed-analysis approach to examine three selected examples of visual representations concerning the North Korean Refugee Movement in order to illustrate how Art functions as a strategic component of C4D, and how it can be effectively used by social movements as a way of framing movements’ identities in collective action, promoting awareness and enhancing resource mobilisation through the emotive communication of knowledge. Art has been found to play an important role in the communication and transfer of knowledge by creating powerful emotions and providing a voice to the otherwise voiceless. Visual texts can be used strategically by social movements in the area of C4D to reinforce/create a collective identity and aid in movement participation by enhancing solidarity and self-assurance while creating motivation for collective action.

**Keywords:** art, social movements, North Korea
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

Throughout history, visual texts have been used as an important means of communication, with the ability to create emotion by establishing strong bonds between the reader and the writer, and the power to produce both meaning and knowledge. Aware of the capacity of art to communicate across boundaries of economic and educational divides, governments and influential institutions often use visual texts to promote particular ideologies. These images, frequently in the form of propaganda, are used to create *shared maps of meaning* within a culture, and it is through the use of signs in various relationships that representations of material objects and people, as well as, imaginary or abstract ideas are meaningfully communicated (Hall, 1997, pp.25-29). In this same way, images can function as a tool for speaking out against the dominant culture, and thereby from a Communication for Development perspective, be used as a vehicle for social change and justice.

The use of art in social movements is particularly important as it acts as a “medium of artistic expression for communicating with the larger society” (Adams, 2002, p.27). Adams (2002) argues that “art plays a very important role in social movements, which use it for framing, to attract resources, to communicate information about themselves, to foster useful emotions, and as a symbol (for communicating a coherent identity, marking membership, and cementing commitment to the movement)” (p.21). Art can be strategically used to support social change by highlighting a particular social issue or message to a larger audience and create public debate, and thereby empower marginalised groups to collective action and further enhance social mobilization. Art, therefore, can be said to work much in

1Communication for Development, or C4D, can be defined as a participatory form of communication that “stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development” (United Nations, 1997). The role of C4D in development processes, as adopted by the United Nations, can be further defined as: “a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications” (The Rome Consensus, 2006).
the same way that Entertainment-education (EE)\(^2\) functions in development communication, in that it “serve(s) the agendas of social movements by making the core problems visible and thereby empower(s) audiences and put(s) pressure on politicians” (Tufte, 2005, p.160).

Images can become a ‘voice’ for the oppressed, and therefore operate not only as a device for social change and justice, but also as a communicative tool for emotional healing and rehabilitation. According to Laub (Felman & Laub, 1992), survivors of traumatic events have “an imperative need to *tell* and thus come to *know* one’s story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. One has to know one’s buried truth in order to be able to live one’s life” (p.78). Having survived trauma himself\(^3\), Laub (Felman & Laub, 1992) contends with the importance of witnessing and in the shared experience of “reliving and reexperiencing of the event [...] (becoming) part of the struggle to go beyond the event and not be(ing) submerged and lost in it” (p.76). This experience can subsequently be communicated to a larger audience through written language or visual images, such as paintings or film. By looking at the cultural meanings these images produce, along with the ways in which viewers respond to them, analysis on how images create meaning and knowledge can be established (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p.6).

**Visual texts and the North Korean Refugee Movement**

North Korea functions as a totalitarian socialist nation that “infringes on the basic rights of their people by tightly controlling political, social and cultural sectors in the name of national security” (KINU, 2002, p.14). Under constant supervision, the majority of North Koreans live without knowledge or recognition of basic human rights and freedoms and find themselves unable to establish a viable movement for social change and justice within the borders of their country without risk of severe punishment. If found guilty of disloyalty

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\(^2\) “Entertainment-education is the use of entertainment as a communicative practice crafted to strategically communicate about development issues in a manner and with a purpose that can range from the more narrowly defined social marketing of individual behaviours to the liberating and citizen-driven articulation of social change agendas” (Tufte, 2005, p.162).

\(^3\) In 1942, at the age of five, Dori Laub was sent to concentration camps in Romanian-occupied Ukraine.
to the state, North Koreans face up to three generations of ‘cleansing’ through execution, torture or hard labour at one of many political prison camps around the country. It is therefore up to those that escape, the defectors/refugees, to work in conjunction with the global community and secure a movement to empower the people and facilitate meaningful change.

The Kim Regime has used the Juche ideology of collective self-reliance, to “evoke a fiercely nationalistic drive for North Korean independence and to justify policies of self-reliance and self-denial in the face of famine and economic stagnation in North Korea” (Lee, 2003, p.105). After the great famine of the late 1990s, where an estimated one million people starved to death (Haggard & Noland, 2005), great efforts were made to maintain steadfast belief in Juche and the cult personality of the Kim Regime. In addition to this, Songbun, which is based largely on one’s loyalty to the state, continues to function much like South Africa’s apartheid race-based classification system, in that it is used to determine life opportunities such as education, home placement, and occupation (Collins, 2012). This, coupled with the misallocation of resources for military prowess and separation from the outside world, North Korea has become a nation rife with poverty and low standards of living. In 2012, the United Nations reported that:

16 million people [out of a total population of 24.1 million] continue to suffer from chronic food insecurity (at various degrees), high malnutrition rates, and deep-rooted economic problems. Inadequate medical supplies and equipment make the health care system unable to meet basic needs, while sanitation, water supply and heating systems continue to fall into disrepair (p.2).

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4 *Juche* became the official autarkic state ideology of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 1972 (Lee, 2003, p.105).

5 the exact number of deaths are not known, with some estimates reaching up to 3 million deaths

6 *Songbun* is North Korea’s socio-political classification system. It subdivides the population of the country into 51 categories or ranks of trustworthiness and loyalty to the Kim family and North Korean state (Collins, 2012, ii).
Due to economic turmoil, chronic food shortages, and a collapsed health care system, life in North Korea has been extremely difficult, leading many North Koreans to jeopardise their lives and cross the border into China in search of food, work and medicines. If caught, they risk forced repatriation by Chinese authorities, and torture and imprisonment as criminals back in North Korea. Because of this fact, they are extremely vulnerable in China, and often face financial, physical and sexual exploitation.

On the positive side, however, the physical crossing of borders has led to an increased flow of knowledge and information from both sides. Information about the outside world is reaching those within and counteracting the years of forced education and state doctrine. Real knowledge about the daily lives and experiences of ordinary North Koreans is also reaching the global community; thus raising awareness and concern over the matter of human rights and basic needs. As the number of North Korean defectors grow, so will this two-way flow of information. What LiNK\textsuperscript{7} refers to as the People’s Crisis has in large part been invisible to the outside world, but with growing interest and awareness in North Korea this is beginning to change. It the personal experiences and struggles of those who live/have lived in North Korea that show the reality of the situation and bring a sense of community to the movement.

*The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag*\textsuperscript{8} was the first real account of life in North Korea that I experienced through text. After this, I began to come across other works by North Korean writers, such as *Long Road Home: Testimony of a North Korean Camp Survivor*, *Escape from Camp 14*, and more recently, novels written from a journalistic perspective, such as *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*.\textsuperscript{9}

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\textsuperscript{7} Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) is a grassroots organization based in North America that works to redefine North Korea by “focusing on the people while rescuing and providing resettlement support to North Korean refugees and pursuing an end to the North Korea crisis” (Mission statement, www.libertyinnorthkorea.org)

\textsuperscript{8} Kang & Rigoulot (2005)

\textsuperscript{9} Kim (2009)

\textsuperscript{10} Harden (2013)

\textsuperscript{11} Demick (2010)
and *Escape from North Korea: The untold story of Asia’s Underground Railway*\(^{12}\). Since the
2000s, film documentaries, such as *Kimjongilia* (2008) and *Seoul Train* (2004), have used
vérité footage, personal stories and interviews with experts and government officials to gain
better insight into life in North Korea. As interest in North Korea grows, a trend towards
filmmakers using drama or fiction to explore the issue has also evolved. Two examples of
this are *Crossing* (2008) and *Winter Butterfly* (2011). Korean-Canadian filmmaker Ann
Shin has taken it even further by utilising new technologies and internet culture to develop
an interactive documentary that acts like a video game to accompany her 2012 film, *The
Defector: Escape from North Korea*.

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, over 25,000 North Koreans have sought refuge in
South Korea (Strother, 2013b), with a handful of others finding homes in Canada, the
United States, and various countries throughout Europe. Despite this figure, the number of
defectors that willingly become involved in movement activities is relatively small.
Although many feel strongly about issues in North Korea, such as human rights, most
defectors are hesitant in participating in movement activities “out of fear that their friends
and families back home may be punished by the state” (PSCORE, 2013, pp.8-9).
Retaliation by the North Korean state against the relatives and associates of defectors is a
reality that must be faced. As a result many defectors struggle with survivor guilt, and the
feeling of helplessness at not being able to protect or save those they left behind. For those
that do join the movement, many assume pseudonyms and wear disguises so as to remain
hidden from the public view and keep their identities unknown to North Korean authorities.
One exception is Kim Young-II a North Korean defector now living in Seoul who in 2006
helped create PSCORE, an organisation that works to guarantee human rights and freedom
to all North Koreans (PSCORE, 2013). He is boldly outspoken and through PSCORE’s
activities, which include human rights data collection and analysis, international
conferences and seminars, educational programs, fundraising concerts, online and street
campaigns, Kim has become one of the leading figures of the North Korean Refugee

\(^{12}\) Kirkpatrick (2012)
Movement. Furthermore, in 2012, PSCORE, of which Kim is Executive Director, attained UN ECOSOC Consultative status; thus enabling the movement official channels of communication with the United National Human Rights Council.

As the North Korean defector community expands, so will the feeling of safety and with it a growing sense of duty to speak out against the Kim regime and for those still living under its rule. Former North Korean propaganda artists, such as Song Byeok and Sun Mu (*nom de plume*) now use their talents to raise awareness and give ‘a face’ to the movement in order to speak out for freedom, social justice and change. Sun Mu states, “In North Korea art exists to promote political propaganda. And North Koreans exist to promote the regime. Now my mission is to describe how life is for North Koreans, how painful it is through art” (Strother, 2012a). As these and other artists gain international recognition, whether it be as authors, public speakers, painters, or filmmakers, it is of growing importance to look at how their texts are being received and if/how it is enabling the North Korean movement for social change and justice.

**Aim and Research Questions:**

Since the ‘cultural turn’, social scientists have begun to explore how language, in all its forms, has the power to both convey meaning and produce knowledge. Visual texts, in particular, can be seen as historical representations of a culture or society over time, and therefore the study of the unique cultural codes and signs within these images is of great importance.

This project work focuses on the plight of North Korean refugees and how they are communicating their fight for freedom and personal experience through visual art; in particular paintings and film. It is the aim of this paper to look at how visual representations can function as a strategic component of C4D and effectively be used by social movements as a way of **framing the movement’s identity in collective action, of promoting awareness and enhancing resource mobilisation**, and as a way of **communicating knowledge**.
I look to answer the following questions:

• How have visual texts been used by the North Korean movement for social change and justice? How do these texts form a collective identity for the movement? How are these visual texts used to frame the North Korean Refugee Movement and spread global awareness? What message/knowledge do these particular texts communicate? And how effective is this transfer of knowledge in terms of C4D?

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing of movements; Movement Identity & Collective Action

According to Teune, (2005) social movements, much like critical communities, help to “frame the perception of a problem in a new way” (p.3) and thereby create “the best channel for the translation of critical values into topics of public discourse” (Rochon, 1998, cited in Teune, 2005, p.3). The participants of such movements, i.e. student movements, women’s rights movements, peace movements, however, are often difficult to characterise as their backgrounds can vary in age, gender, sexual orientation, and profession (Johnston, Laraña & Gusfield, 2009). Therefore, as Hunt, Benford & Snow (2009) state, in order to “facilitate our understanding of collective action mobilization” (p.185) a better understanding of the process of framing and consequent constructions of identity must be made.

Globalization and advancements in Information and Communication Technology, or ICT\(^\text{13}\), (especially social media and the internet) now enable movement participants to possess a wide range of social, economical and cultural identities. In accordance with Turner and Killian (1987, cited in Hunt, et. al., 2009), a key aspect of collective action is the ability of social movements to create a strong continuity of group identity. It is therefore important for actors of social movements to “provide appropriate vocabularies and stories for participants and sympathisers to (re)connect their personal identities in ways that link or

\(^{13}\text{The UNDP (2005) defines ICTS as “information handling tools - a varied set of goods, applications and services that are used to produce, store, process, distribute and exchange information. They include the ‘old’ tools such as of radio, television and telephone, as well as the ‘new’ ICTs of computers, satellite and wireless technology and the internet”.}
further commit them to the movement (Hunt et al., 2009, p.190). In order to accomplish this, the framing of social movements is needed (Hunt, et al., 2009). Collective action frames work to “focus and punctuate reality” while at the same time “serve as modes of attribution and articulation” (Hunt, et al., 2009, p.190). In other words, frames are used to highlight a problem, make attributions concerning who or what is to blame, and articulate a course of action that will bring about change (Hunt, et al., 2009). As Snow and Benford suggest (1998, cited in Hunt, et al., 2009), social movements must accomplish three core framing tasks in order for success, these being: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. However, as Hunt et. al., (2009) warn, framing processes can “underscore the dynamic quality of movement participants’ belief systems by fixing attention on the dialectical interplay between interpretive processes and cognitive structures” (p.192).

There has been little research into the relationship between framing and identity construction processes and although it can be said that “actors follow certain lines of collective action rather than others based, in part, on their perceptions of the parameters implied by particular framing and identity constructions” (Hunt et. al., 2009, pp.203-4), more studies into their interconnectedness need to be done. This is particularly true when looking at the North Korean refugee community, which in many ways shadows the diaspora of the Jewish people. Having what Faist (2010) considers the three characteristics of diaspora; the dispersal of a people from their homeland, a desire to return to their homeland, and difficulties with integration into the country of settlement, North Koreans often struggle with different identities: Korean/North Korean/Defector/Refugee. By building a collective community, the North Korean Refugee Movement moves to facilitate a unified bond of ideas and national identity, while at the same time securing a social movement that functions transnationally.

In terms of motivational framing and movement identity, the use of art (music, drama, film, painting) has gained considerable attention in recent years, especially through new media and ICTs (Teune 2005, Lievrou 2011). Much in the same way that African-American artists
came together to show support in the Black Arts Movement and publicise their struggle, the use of literature and visual arts has facilitated the creation of collective identity and given participants of the North Korean Refugee Movement or *North Korean Refugee Arts Movement* a voice to stand behind. This voice has enabled solidarity and self-assurance for movement members, while at the same time helped to frame the movement diagnostically, and to a greater extent, motivationally. Furthermore, it is through the framing of collective action and the reinforcement of shared identity that the movement has been able to gain momentum and reach a larger audience; thereby gaining visibility and a better chance at success.

**Resource Mobilisation**

Time, effort, and money are the resources most available and appreciated by collective actors working to build a successful social movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005). However, as Edwards & McCarthy (2005) explain “the simple availability of resources is not sufficient; coordination and strategic effort” (p.116) are needed for the utilisation of resources into productive action. There are four key processes in resource mobilization, these being; the mobilization of money, the mobilization of labour, the creation of movement structures, and collective action itself (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005). While the first three of these are of great importance, this discussion will focus on how “collective action itself [...] can generate new resources” (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005, p.118).

While previous analysts of movement mobility may have neglected to develop clear specification of resources types (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005), Bourdieu (1992) demonstrates how economic, cultural and social capital can “explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies” (cited in Edwards & McCarthy, 2005, p.125); and thereby differentiate between moral, cultural, social-organisational, human, and material resources (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005). Moral resources, which include legitimacy, sympathetic support and celebrity can often be difficult to attain as it usually originates from outside of the social movement. However, once secured, moral resources become
invaluable. Celebrity commitment to a movement can generate other resources such as human participation and money capital. As Meyer & Gamson (1995) discuss, celebrities can bolster turnout and media coverage in order to increase movement participation, as well as provide critical help with monetary funds, through both personal resources and in fundraising activities, such as public service announcements, dinner events and stage performances. Movements, however, should not get too focused on celebrity involvement; as Gitlin states (1980, in Meyer & Gamson, 1995), “even celebrities drawn from the ranks of social movement groups often ultimately obscur(e) the movements that created them” (p.187). However, as artists or other prominent members of movements gain recognition, it is possible that they themselves gain celebrity status. These grassroots celebrities, much like Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei, can then solidify the identity of the movement and communicate to the public in a much more powerful way.

Cultural resources, which include music, literature, art, and film, are important components of movement mobility as they “facilitate the recruitment and socialisation of new adherents and help movements maintain their readiness and capacity for collective action” (Edwards & McCarthy, 2005, p.126). Collective actors are increasingly looking at the motivational value of art as art provides social movements with a way in which to transmit its “specific framing of societal problems” (Teune, 2005, p.16), and expresses ideas that are otherwise difficult to communicate. In addition to being what Teune (2005) calls “a societal sphere of innovation and production of meaning” (p.16), artistic forms can also serve to increase media awareness and ultimately “narrow the gap between actors and a politically remote audience” (Teune, 2005, p.13). This is especially important for the North Korean Refugee Movement as many outsiders know very little about the true situation in North Korea. Their knowledge system is based on what is reported by mainstream media, which more often than not, focuses on the eccentricities of the Kim leaders and on the looming dangers of the North Korean nuclear program. Through art, whether it be literature, paintings or film, North Koreans are able to better communicate the true nature of the problems they
face in society and thereby give the audience a better understanding of the movement itself.

The internet has also become an invaluable instrument in movement mobility. With the ability to transcend physical, cultural and socio-economic borders, ICTs have permitted both social movements and potential participants greater global reach and accessibility. North Korea, ranked by Reporters Without Borders as one of the worst countries in the world in terms freedom of information (Kirkpatrick, 2012), exists for the most part, in an information time warp. All forms of communication are tightly controlled by the state:

radios are fixed to state-run stations and must be registered with the government, (o)nly government-approved shows are broadcast on television, (c)ellphones are configured so as to be limited to domestic calls [...] (and) (c)omputer users -about 15 percent of the population14- may access only the government-run Intranet, and even then they must receive special clearance by the state (Kirkpatrick, 2012, pp.276-6).

Kim Il-Sung, and subsequent leaders from the Kim family have understood the power of information and have taken great pains to monopolise it through restrictions in the use and availability of modern technologies. In doing so, they have avoided uprisings such as those seen in Burma by Buddhist monks in 2007, who “communicated to each other and the outside world through text messaging” (Kirkpatrick, 2012, p.277), or the 2010 Arab Spring which succeeded in large part due to communication through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Despite this, the North Korean diaspora in South Korea and abroad, is slowly opening up the hermit nation to information from the outside world. Through the use of illegal Chinese cellphones, shortwave radio broadcasts, and the smuggling in of DVDs and USB drives, North Koreans are able to find out more about the world beyond its heavily guarded

14 According to the CIA World Factbook, as of 2013 North Korea had a total estimated population of 24,720,407
ICTs have become essential to North Korean Refugee Movement and functions in both the formation and growth of the movement by provide the community with crucial platforms for engagement. Visual representations and social media enable individuals to create strong ties which can lead to greater emotional involvement and motivation in collective action. It can therefore be said that movement mobilization, and in particular, cultural resources, aid in the success of global movements, such as the North Korean Refugee Movement for Social Change and Justice. Even though “the role that art can play is not very obvious” (Sun Mu, cited in Strother, 2013a, p.15) at first, it has undeniably become a critical component of movement mobility aiding in the generation of interest and understanding, as well as moral and financial support.

**Art as Knowledge, Knowledge as Culture**

According to the Social Constructionist view, *culture*, rather than being a mere reflection of society, functions to shape subjects and historical events (Hall, 1997: pp.5-6). Within the context of culture, various forms of representation, including the visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic give “access to expressive possibilities that would not be possible without their presence” (Eisner, 2008, p.5). In terms of the transfer of knowledge, Eisner (2008) asserts
that there are three main areas of knowledge acquisition through art, these being: the development of “dispositions and habits of mind that reveal to the individual a world he or she may not have noticed but that is there to be seen if only one knew how to look”; the creation of empathic feeling, “a kind of empathy that makes action possible”; and gaining new ways in which to perceive and interpret the world” (p. 11). Art therefore, provides an avenue for the transfer of knowledge which otherwise would be difficult to express in ordinary discourse. It opens up new worlds to the viewer, while simultaneously facilitating a connection with personal, subjective emotions. It is through the awareness of our capacity to feel, that our humanity is discovered (Eisner, 2008).

As knowledge becomes part of culture through the use of language, art, music and other forms of communication, it begins to hold the power to influence social change and therefore carries great responsibility. As Wolferen (1990) points out, culture can be used as “an excuse for systematic exploitation, for legal abuses […] and for other forms of uncontrolled exercise of power” (cited in Pieterse, 2010, p.67). Gandhi often spoke out against the construction of tradition and the misuse of culture in India. He believed that, “caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know […] I do know that it is harmful both to the spiritual and national growth” (cited in Schech & Haggis, 2000, p.134).

Much like the caste system in India, the North Korean Songbun system determines almost every aspect of life, from educational opportunities, admittance into the army and permission for marriage to job assignments, and housing allocations, to name a few. Based on loyalty to the party during and after the Korean War\textsuperscript{15}, Songbun under the guidance of Kim Il-Sung, has systematically reconstructed the culture of its nation. To further cement his grip over the country, Kim Il-Sung enforced the ideals of Juche philosophy using art as an instrument of power. Following in his father’s footsteps, Kim Jong-Il continued to use

\textsuperscript{15} For example, descendants of war veterans, factory workers and poor, uneducated farmers make up the desirables at the top, while non-desirables at the bottom consist of former bourgeoise and educated professionals (Hunter, 1999).
the arts as a way of communication or education for the masses. These messages “like a seed in fertile soil [...] (are) transplanted into the brains of the audience and develop into a beautiful object, into the right ideas and attitudes” (Rüdiger, 2011, p.14). According to Yoon (2012), art in North Korea is used as “an external manifestation of the state’s needs” and that “images (are turned) into reality, history into the sublime” (p.53).

In North Korea, propaganda artists are trained to fulfil a function: to use images to portray the *Great Leader*, and later the *Dear Leader* as god-like beings; pictured in vibrant colours, smiling and grandiose, bringing peace and prosperity to the North Korean people. In the face of economic hardships, art has been used by the state to rally the masses in support of the regime with images depicting life far from reality; images of “chubby children, tractors and pylons [...] designed to provide an artistic and propagandistic counterbalance to malnutrition, lack of fuel and of electricity” (Rüdiger, 2011, p.19). Art has therefore become an essential component of the Kim Regime; used as an instrument of knowledge to indoctrinate new realities and cement old ideologies so as to dampen any sparks of dissidence or challenges to the ruling party.

As a counterbalance, artists of the North Korean Refugee Movement are using visual representations to inform the world of real life experiences in North Korea. Former North Korean political prison camp survivor and subject of Marc Wiese’s film *Camp 14: Total Control Zone*, Shin Dong-Hyuk states: “There is nothing that people in North Korea can do for themselves, so we should raise awareness in global society, and work together to pressure North Korea into relieving people of their pain. I believe my story can be a little seed of that” (Ramstad & Shin, 2012). Art, in the form of paintings and film enables artists to capture and retell a story or event in a much more powerful, emotive way. Painful memories of starvation, torture or even death, which are often difficult to speak publicly about, are more easily communicated by the movement in this way. Visual representations

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16 Kim Il-Sung is known as the *Great Leader*, Kim Jong-Il as the *Dear Leader* and new head of state Kim Jong-Un as the *Supreme Leader*. 
therefore not only help to produce knowledge systems and emotive responses in the viewer, but also function as a way of witnessing; with art enabling the healing process of the artist and other members of the movement. North Korean artist Song Byeok, whose father drowned while they were trying to cross over to China in search of food, explains:

(Starvation) in one word, it's just despair. It is despair in its entirety. Such hunger and sorrow should not exist for human beings. Not being able to sleep because you're starving - one needs to experience it to really know how it feels. I not only think about my father, I think of all the souls of the people who tried to defect […] I realized my responsibility was to deliver an exact message to people's hearts […] And I realized that I needed to show my work for (North Korean people) (CNN Talk Asia Interview, 2012).

The healing of trauma, such as that experienced by many North Koreans, “can and does occur through the doing, the being in, or the witnessing of artistic expression” (Woodward, 2012, Arts in Healing and Identity Formation section, para.1). Artists in the movement are able to transform the unspeakable into visual testimony and in this way communicate truths about the experiences and daily lives of ordinary North Koreans to the global community. As Laub (1992) explains, through act of bearing witness, the listener (or in this case the viewer) comes to experience and in part understand the trauma of the artist him/herself. In the same way that victims of the holocaust used art as a way of “maintain(ing) a grip on their inner reality, (as) a reminder of their cultural identity and (as) a sense of personal dignity amidst external degradation” (Woodward, 2012, Art as a Survival Strategy section, para.3), North Korean artists use art to not only confront their own tragedies, but as a way of healing the North Korean diaspora and strengthening the community through common identity.

**Relevant Research: Art in Social Movements**

Just as art has been used by governments and powerful organisations to communicate particular views, it is being successfully utilised by social movements to “(produce)
meaningful images which make complex social interrelations visible” (Teune, 2005, p13). Art, according to Yoon (2012) “does things, evokes things, is a catalyst for things; it is the articulation of human needs” (p.53) and as more artists commit themselves to movements, more research on the effectiveness of art in collective action is being made. One particular area of study is the use of community murals by movements, such as the Chicano movement, or el movimiento, in the 1960s. Inspired by Mexican muralists of the 1920s and 1930s, Mexican Americans used murals as a symbol of resistance, as a way of retelling Mexican history and as a celebration Mexican culture through artistic representations. (Reed, 2005) Leading figures of the movement were celebrated in the murals and symbols, such as “the black Aztec eagle against a red background” (Reed, 2005, p.109), became identified with the movement. Christian imagery was later incorporated in the murals linking “the Catholic faith of the majority of [...] members to the struggle, as black Christianity helped form a base for the civil rights movement” (Reed, 2005, p.109). According to Reed (2005), the Chicano murals brought “a spirit of common struggle [...] despite ideological, tactical, regional, gender, class, and other differences” (p.111). From this, we can see that art, if used effectively, can bring together participants from different backgrounds and create a unifying identity, ethos and solidarity in collective action. Reed (2005), however, presents an important question, “If a community must at times speak as one voice in order to generate the utmost power, is it possible still in that voicing to recognize dissent, internal otherness, or difference?” (p.127). One wonders, then, does art confine a movement’s identity, or can it facilitate a movement’s ability to develop and diversify identities over time?

According to Adams (2002), more attention is needed on the subject of art and it’s importance for social movements. She states that “(s)ocial movement analysts should examine art not only because it is pervasive in many movements, but also because it is instrumental in the achievement of a movement’s objectives” (p.21). By examining the

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17 The Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was a struggle against the negative stereotype and low-status of Mexicans as second-class citizens in America. It addressed the issues of land grants, farm workers’ rights, education, and equal voting and political rights.
protest movement against Pinochet and the use of art by women in Chilean shantytowns, Adams (2002) demonstrates the political power of art and how it can be used to mobilise protest; in the way it raises consciousness, reinforces values, creates bonds, lends authority, generates resources and provides “a renewed feeling that social and political change is possible” (p.27). Through the production of arpilleras\(^\text{18}\) women were given a ‘voice’ and a way in which they could testify to the brutality and dark realities of Chilean people during Pinochet’s dictatorship. The women incorporated “pieces of clothing or photographs belonging to lost loved ones [...] literally sew(ing) a piece of their lives into their work (“Memory as Art,” n.d). Because of this, the ‘voice’ they found through art, not only gave solidarity to the shantytown movement, but also worked as a vehicle for healing and hope for a better future. The arpilleras were not distributed in Chile, but were instead secretly exported out of the country and sold to “nongovernmental organisations, human rights organisations, and groups of Chilean exiles, in Europe and North America; these institutions in turn would sell them to the public” (Adams, 2002, p.31) thereby bringing the cause to a global audience and gaining international support.

In her study of the Chilean Shantytown Movement, Adams (2002) shows how art can be used successfully to frame a movement (by for example, providing information about the difficult conditions of life in Chile or through the portrayal of Pinochet and his government as evil), be a key component in resource mobilization (in the form of emotion, hope, and solidarity), as well as having the power to communicate a movement’s ethos to the public (Adams, 2002). Adams (2002) argues that recent studies on social movements tend to focus on the impact of media (Gitlin, 1980; Kielbowicz and Scherer, 1986; Klandermans and Goslinga, 1996; McAdam et al., 1996; McCarthy et al., 1996, cited in Adams, 2002) rather than on media, or art, produced by a movement itself. However, as art becomes a more permanent component of social movements, it will only be a matter of time before art is clearly demonstrated as being an effective and powerful tool for successful collective action.

\(^{18}\) cloth which was hand-sewn into three dimensional textile pictures
CHAPTER III. CASES FOR STUDY

North Korean artist Sun Mu states, “The role that art can play is not very obvious. But I still think I can reach out to ordinary people, effect [sic] their thinking, I want to change the mindset of these people” (cited in Strother, 2013a, p.15). It is in this way that art has the ability to enrich awareness and create knowledge. In order to look more closely at the possible effects art can have on social movements, I examine three selected cases of visual representations concerning the North Korean Refugee Movement. Firstly, I look at North Korean defector and former state propaganda artist, Song Byeok’s painting Take Off Your Clothes!!, and then move on to the study of two film selections from Jayu’s North Korean Human Rights Film Festival, which was held in Toronto, Canada on October 25-27, 2013. The two films under study are Marc Wiese’s film, Camp 14: Total Control Zone, which documents the life of former political prisoner and North Korean defector Shin Dong-Huyk; and Winter Butterfly, a film by North Korean director Kim Gyu-Min that looks at the struggles of a North Korean mother and son during nationwide food shortages.

Case 1: Take Off Your Clothes!! painting by Song Byeok

Before his escape to South Korea in 2002, Song was employed as an official propaganda artist in Pyongyang. Song’s paintings were under strict State control19, and without any freedom of expression, he was restrained to creating “grinning portraits of ‘Dear Leader’ Kim Jong-il and vibrant billboards depicting ranks of revolutionary workers and peasants” (Strangio, 2011b). Since his arrival in Seoul, however, Song has used his canvas as an instrument to publicly ‘speak’ out against the North Korean regime.

Each of Song Byeok’s paintings hold a unique message, and so it was difficult to select just one piece for study. He has painted many moving pieces around his past experiences in North Korea (starvation, imprisonment, etc.) that would be interesting to look at as they have the dual function of sending a message to the viewer, and helping the artist to

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19 Song states that, as he had no freedom of expression, he does not consider anything he painted while working in North Korea as art. Everything was preconceived and painted accordingly under strict guidelines: “Every line, every angle, it was all presented in the model. It was just copying. There was no creativity, none of the artist’s personality, nothing” (Strangio, 2011a).
overcome painful memories. For the purpose of this paper, I chose the painting titled Take Off Your Clothes!! (see Appendix A) in order to examine Song’s use of art in the struggle for social change and justice. In this unique painting, Song strays away from realism and makes use of iconic figures in a life-size caricature. Song has received much criticism for this painting (especially in South Korea), but continues to show it as he believes that it holds a “great message announcing (exposing) the reality of North Korea” (2012).

Case 2: Jayu North Korean Human Rights Film Festival
The Jayu North Korean Human Rights Festival held in Toronto, Canada has gained much recognition since its launch in 2012, including an invitation to participate in the 21st session of the United Nations human rights council session in Geneva. Born from the need to raise awareness of the human struggle in North Korea, Jayu works to highlight human rights issues in North Korea through the arts. With a variety of films and special guests, including North Korean refugees from various regions of the country, journalists, filmmakers and academics, Jayu works to provide audience members with an understanding of the intricacies of the North Korean people and the issues they face. Executive Director, Cohen (2013) explains:

Before discussing the complex issue of human rights in North Korea, we should understand who North Koreans are as people. Because there are so many misconceptions surrounding North Korea and its people, we want to use films to tell their stories, whether they’re living in Pyongyang or concentration camps, and engage in meaningful and thought provoking discussions.

i. Camp 14: Total Control Zone, film by Marc Wiese
This documentary film, much like Blaine Harden’s book Escape from Camp 14: One Man’s Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West (2012), follows the life of North Korean defector, Shin Dong Hyuk. Born inside a North Korea prison camp, Shin spent the first two decades of his life imprisoned in a world founded on punishment, mistrust and torture. It wasn’t until his miraculous escape in 2005, that he has been able to
come to terms with these past experiences and learn to understand the meaning of love, of family bonds, and of basic human rights. Wiese weaves together intimate interviews with Shin and two former North Korean prison guards, along with animated reenactments, to create a powerful story that strives to gain an in-depth understanding of life within the walls of prison camps scattered throughout the DPRK. The film was followed with a Q&A session between audience members and author, Blaine Harden.

ii. *Winter Butterfly*, film by Kim Gyu-Min

This fiction-based-on-reality film follows the story of an 11 year old boy, Jin Ho and his mother during the harsh years of famine in the North Korean countryside. Jin Ho and his mother are able to buy small portions of rice by collecting and selling firewood. One day, however, Jin Ho gets lost on the mountain whilst searching for firewood. His mother desperately looks for him, but receives little help from the authorities. Surviving the elements, Jin Ho finds his way home after a few days, only to discover his mother sick and delirious from starvation. The film was followed by a discussion period with out-spoken activist and North Korean defector, Kim Young-II.

CHAPTER IV. METHOD

Mixed-Approach Analysis for Visual Communication

Images, whether they be still or moving, can hold immense power in the ability to create emotive responses in the viewer. This power comes not only from the image itself, but is produced by social, cultural and or even political knowledge systems already in place (Wolff, 2012). Due to these facts, in my analysis I look specifically at discursive practices; that is, how are the specific texts produced and consumed? And in particular, the social and cultural elements associated with how these images are seen and interpreted, better known as *visuality* or *scopic regime* (Foster 1988, Metz 1975 in Rose 2012). In line with the multilayered nature of visual texts, I follow Lester’s (2013) six perspectives for visual analysis, these being: *personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural,* and *critical perspectives.* Using more than one approach provides a greater breadth of information and
deeper understanding of the texts being studied. By providing more evidence, arguments are better supported, and consequently, the validity of the study strengthened. In this way I make use of numerous analytical tools such as visual semiotics, composition, discourse and narrative. When examining visual representations it is important to remember that “(w)hat is important about images is not simply the image itself, but how it is seen by particular spectators who look in particular ways” (Rose, 2012, p.13). The knowledge and meaning of codes can vary between cultures, and a certain familiarity of such knowledge is needed in order to read codes accordingly (Gripsrud 2006). Therefore it is often necessary to look at the cultural background and experiences of both the producer and the viewer in order to compare the intended meaning and interpreted meaning. By exploring, for example, choice of colour, subject placement, and imagery type, this paper looks at how the artist uses his own experiences and knowledge to convey a specific, emotive message, and how this message is interpreted by the viewer. In order to get a better understanding of the artist’s intended meaning in relation to the viewer’s interpretation, both an artist interview and an audience questionnaire are administered in addition to the use of numerous analytical tools such as visual semiotics, composition, discourse and narrative.

Audience Selection for Questionnaire

The audience for Case 1 is made up of fifty respondents, mostly between the ages of 30-50. I chose to administer the questionnaire to university students attending classes at Stockholm University in the areas of Art History, History, Oriental Languages and Political Science as they were more likely to have some interest or previous knowledge on art, social movements, journalism, and/or North Korea. The questionnaire was given online so that respondents could view the painting without interruption and respond to questions in their own time after some reflection.

The audience for Case 2 is made up of 117 film festival attendees; 64 in attendance for Camp 14: Total Control Zone, and 53 in attendance for Winter Butterfly. The questionnaire was handed to the audience as they arrived and then collected after the film and discussion
period were completed. The respondents varied in age, with the majority (64%) under the age of thirty, working in disparate fields, such as Office Administration, Law, Chemistry, Art, Computer Software, Education, Photography and Real Estate.

**Limitations**

One of the challenges of using the qualitative interview method is concerning the question of access, and whether or not it was possible to attain cooperation for a personal interview. In addition to this, as Burgess (1987) warns, the personal experiences of the interviewer, as well as, his/her age, social status, race and ethnicity can also place limitations on the quality of interaction and response of interviewees. To overcome these challenges there was a need to show personal links with the subculture in order to possibly gain the confidence and willingness of interview participants. In the case of the interview with Song Byeok, a personal email was sent to the artist detailing the purpose of this paper and the reasons why an interview with him would be of great value. I believe my sincere interest in both his creative works and in the North Korean social movement, coupled with our shared Korean heritage⁴⁰, helped to facilitate a relationship of trust and permit an opportunity for a successful interview.

**CHAPTER V. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

**Outcomes: Qualitative Interview and Surveys**

Through these excerpts I am confronting the explanation of the artist against the public’s reading of the films.

**Case 1**

Following are some examples from the interview with Song Byeok. The full interview transcription is available in *Appendix B*. I conducted the interview in Korean and then translated it into English.

I: How do you express North Korean Society through the figure of Marilyn Monroe (“Take Off Your Clothes!!”)? Why did you chose her specifically? What does she symbolise for you? What is the connection between Marilyn Monroe and Kim Jong-il?

*SB: Most of the people in North Korea do not know who Marilyn Monroe is and why she is so famous. The life of Marilyn Monroe is free; in her lifestyle/activities. In particular, I was*

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⁴⁰ the author of this paper is half-Korean
inspired by the clothes she wore—her body is seen but not really seen through her skirt; it is just like Kim Jong-il’s statues. He is shown but the truth is not exactly shown; therefore I used Marilyn Monroe’s figure as Kim Jong-il.

I: Is there any reason why the background of the painting is left white?
SB: I try to show the Oriental way of blank space in the painting by using a white background.

I: Why is Kim Jong-il smiling? How is this image different from the smiling images of him in North Korea?
SB: In Kim Jong-il’s smile I tried to show the irony of poverty - so many North Korean citizens are dying without food.

I: What is the significance of the red goldfish?
SB: The red goldfish represent North Korean citizens kept in a fish bowl.

I: What is your intended message with this piece?
SB: My intention was to tell people that the North Korean citizens also have right to possess freedom.

I: How has art helped you to overcome difficult experiences and memories?
SB: I express myself. I was born in and lived in North Korea in the past, but I still have spiritual torment which remains in my body. I can overcome this through my artistic emphasis.

I: What is the main objective/message you want to communicate through your artwork?
SB: I wish to be like ‘salt’ to those who live on earth and do not know/recognise the importance/value of freedom and rights.

Following are some responses to the Take Off Your Clothes!! questionnaire. More details are available in Appendix C.

Q: What do you think the artist is trying to ‘say’ through this painting?
A: Decadence and oppression of small people; to show the absurdity of Kim’s regime; that underneath everything, oppressors and dictators of the world are fragile, insecure and vulnerable

Q: What are your feelings about this painting?
A: I like the ridiculousness of it, and also get angry that such a person is responsible for so many peoples lives without anybody reacting or being able to save them in a successful way; I wish I understood the fish part, but interests me; On one hand it’s not hard to sense the artist’s disdain for Kim yet on the other hand it’s not all clear as to why the artist merges him(self) with the American icon of Marilyn Monroe. Is it a critique of American politics as well?

21 This comparison is often used by other North Korean defectors, such as in the novel Aquariums of P'yongyang (Kang Chol-hwan & Pierre Rigoulot, 2001)
Q: Does this painting make you want to know more about North Korea?
A: It makes me want to know more about the Korean artistic scene, and through that, to learn about what is going on there; No. It’s an ugly picture and it doesn’t raise any desires to learn more about the country; it makes me want to know more about the artist; Yes, I’ve actually been searching around for NK people living in the “outside” world and what they have to say about NK and their experience.

Q: Does this painting make you want to see Song Byeok’s other works? Or perhaps the works of other NK artists?
A: Possibly, I am interested in the freedom of expression and how it is portrayed; Yes, it’s very creative and symbolic; Yes, because this is art which I would not have expected coming from NK, it is much more “modern”, cynical, provocative than I would have expected; Perhaps, but I feel I wouldn’t understand it, knowing so little about North Korea.

Case 2
Following are some responses to the questionnaire concerning the films shown at the Jayu North Korean Human Rights Film Festival. More details are available in Appendix D.

i. Camp 14: Total Control Zone
Q: What were your feelings about this film?
A: educational; feel the torture and pain that was experienced by those in the camps; eye-opening; raw, sad portrayal; I enjoyed the film-it opened up about the experience of prisoners in NK and how their lives differ vastly from ours; this one was disturbing but had an effect on me; disgrace that nothing is being done for these people;

Q: Were there any scenes/characters that stood out for you? Please explain.
A: talk about food and reasons for escape, seems like a unifying theme; shin's depression; survivor's guilt stood out to me as an immensely powerful insight into post-camp life and consequences; that Shin felt no emotion watching his mother and brother die; I enjoyed how the animation really helped bring Shin's story to life and allow you to experience it too.

Q: What message do you think the filmmaker is trying to portray through this film?
A: how repression/fear controls; trying to put a face to the prison camp narrative of NK; The unspoken human element of NK prisoners; how Shin had freedom physically but not emotionally; to expose NK human rights abuses and the effects it has on humans even after they've escaped.

Q: Did this film make you want to know more about North Korea?
A: Yes, the more humanitarian aspect of NK (not political); no; brought awareness to forefront about injustice and how real and prevalent it is; yes, there has to be a change and only a movement like this can realise the awareness needed to make a change; yes, my obvious ignorance to the state of human rights has inspired me to get more involved.
**ii. Winter Butterfly**

Q: What were your feelings about this film?

* A: different perspective on NK, very emotional; moving; very sad; the world needs to assist with change in North Korea; powerful; informative but difficult to watch; shocking and devastating and filled me with a deep sadness; heart wrenching; accurate portrayal of the famine/starvation issue in NK.

Q: Were there any scenes/characters that stood out for you? Please explain.

* A: The bond between mother and son; Resilience comes to mind, how much we can endure as humans; mother killing son; soldier feeding dog in front of mother; final scene is heartbreaking; mother's hallucination scene.

Q: What message do you think the filmmaker is trying to portray through this film?

* A: The despair in NK; hardship of NK people; that human issues exist outside of ideology; that people realize how difficult life truly is in North Korea; the human narrative is important; the kind of desperate measures it takes the individual in order to survive.

Q: Did this film in any way change or reinforce your previous understanding of North Korea?

* A: that the way of life for North Koreans is much more serious than I thought; it gave me a deeper understanding of the human stories behind the headlines; Yes, but not sure what I can really find out (secretive state)

Q: Did this film make you want to know more about North Korea?

* A: Yes, I’d like to know more about everyday life; Yes, how does this continue?; yes, messages that are most powerful are as visuals.

**Reflections**

**Case 1:**

I am very pleased with the outcome of the interview with Song Byeok as he provided insightful information in regards to his paintings and in the message(s) he is hoping to communicate to the public. Initially, I was worried that an interview in the form of email correspondence would not provide the necessary information needed for a productive, in-depth analysis; however, as he permitted me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, I believe the outcome was successful.

My interpretation of *Take off Your Clothes!!* was enriched through the interview process. Without open communication with the artist, it would have been difficult to obtain a truly comprehensive understanding of the way in which the production and communication of
knowledge transpires. For example, it was revealed that the inclusion of goldfish at the bottom of the painting does not, in fact, symbolise wealth and prosperity, but rather symbolises the people of North Korea who are trapped in a country without freedom, much like fish in an aquarium. It was also interesting to learn why Song chose to use the iconic image of Marilyn Monroe; especially as most people living in North Korea do not know who she is. Some viewers may have interpreted this sign as a representation of Western ideals, and in particular the United States of which Kim Jong-il’s regime has repeatedly publicised as an enemy of the State. This, however, is not the case. The image of Monroe relates instead to artist’s desire for liberty and freedom from the confined world Kim Jong-il and his father, Kim Il-Sung, have created and maintained for more than half a century.

Due to time restraints I was unable to conduct the questionnaire in person and had expected more online respondents. I am slightly disappointed with the results as this was not the case, and would mostly have attained greater, more detailed responses with a face-to-face approach rather than online. Despite this, I did collect interesting data to enrich the analysis of Song’s painting at both levels of intended meaning and interpreted meaning.

Case 2:
The staff at Jayu facilitated the success of information gathering in Case 2. I was granted full access to the event, and with the assistance of Jayu staff was able to collect questionnaires from all audience members at both film screenings. The one drawback in terms of audience size and response was the time of screening. As Winter Butterfly was screened during the day, there were less in attendance than at Camp 14: Total Control Zone, which was shown in the evening when more people were free to attend. Also as the questionnaire was in written form, rather than in person, many of the questions were left blank or lacked detail.

I found the Q&A sessions after each film extremely important in the understanding of both the films and the North Korean Refugee Movement itself. However, as the sessions were quite short due to venue time restraints, it would have been beneficial to have personal
interviews with the speakers, as well as with those involved in the movement to better appreciate their thoughts and reactions to the films being shown.

i. Researcher’s role and position, Ethical problems
My role as researcher, as well as, the objectives of my study were clearly defined and communicated to all those who participated in this study. As the primary focus of my research centers around the communication of knowledge through visual representation, my position as participant observer was easily established; thus enabling me to view the images as perhaps any other ‘viewer’ or ‘receiver’ of meaning would have. During the course of this study I did not face any ethical problems and believe my behaviour towards the subject matter and participant(s) to be both appropriate and respectful. Tensions were not experienced by either party during the interview process, and as participation was entirely voluntary and adjusted to meet the schedule and comfort of the participant, a positive relationship was formed. This created a feeling of trust and reduced any feelings of “embarrassment, stress, (or) discomfort” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.185); allowing, I believe, for more meaningful responses.

ii. Reflexivity, Ethnocentricity, Pre-suppositions, Self-image
Although distance and objectivity is often thought of as important components of successful research, it is crucial to be critical in the analysis of the study’s results. In order to do this, researchers must address factors of reflexivity, including any biases, cultural differences/similarities, and/or pre-suppositions concerning the study and its participants which could shape both the research and cultural representations. Being of Korean decent, the subject of North Korea and of inter-Korean relations has always been of great interest to me, and although my family comes from the south, we have many acquaintances that have defected from the North (mostly during the 1970s). Despite being only half-Korean, I feel extremely close to my Korean heritage, and because of this, find myself more empathetic towards the plight of North Koreans and inherently connected to their struggle for social change and justice. In regards to this study, I was initially intimidated by Song Byeok and
insecure about the chances of him agreeing to an interview; however, I believe our cultural similarity enabled access and the development of a trusting relationship based on mutual respect. The fact that he could answer freely in Korean without the insecurities of communicating in a second language was also an important factor in the success of the interview. In addition to this, my experiences of living in communist countries, such as China and Vietnam, have left me with a certain intolerance against Party ideals and the ways in which society is meant to function under such regimes. Due to this fact, I have developed some bias against aspects of modern-day North Korean society, which, I admit, may affect the ways in I conduct and/or communicate the research and analysis of my study.

iii. Interpretation

According to Pickering (2008), “experience always involves interpretation of what happens in life, of what makes our perceptions, feelings, and actions meaningful” (p.19). This is an important concept for researchers to consider, not only in terms of reflexivity, but also when analysing any information provided by participants. Furthermore, as the interpretation of experiences are entirely subjective; it is vital to the success of the study to look at what these experiences may mean, rather than simply accepting them as knowledge (Pickering 2008). I have attempted to be as transparent as possible about my own subjectivity whilst analysing and interpreting Take Off Your Clothes!!, Camp 14: Total Control Zone, and Winter Butterfly. I have also taken into consideration how the pieces may be interpreted through other lenses, as well as, the actual meaning that the artists wished to portray. As Pickering (2008) states, visual representations are effective ways for individuals to communicate their experiences to the public, and allows viewers to “learn from how (these experiences) have been endured, handled, assimilated, (and) resisted” (p.20). It is my hope that this study has enabled the reader to understand the importance of representation, especially that of visual texts, and how culture and experience may influence both the production and interpretation of meaning and knowledge during the communication
process. Images, when used properly, can be powerful development tools, that can help social movements spread awareness and bring about positive change.

**Analysis**

i. *Take Off Your Clothes!!*, painting by Song Byeok

*Take Off Your Clothes!!* takes a satirical approach towards Kim Jong-il and his leadership of North Korea. Satire is an influential art form that uses literature, drama or visual arts to display “human or individual vices, follies, abuses or shortcomings” (satire, 2013) in order to ridicule public figures, stimulate political debate, or remark on public behaviour and morality. Satire, in all its forms, bears the characteristics of critique and encouragement for social change, irony through humour, and implicitness, where “the critiqued behaviour deconstructs itself within the satirical work by being obviously absurd, most often because it is exaggerated or taken out of its normal context” (LeBoeuf, 2007, p.5). The absurd, comical nature of satire has the power to entertain, and thus holds the ability to reach a wide audience in a way that can be used to create or facilitate social reform. In Song’s painting or visual satire, he employs the use of caricature, to grotesquely exaggerate already salient characteristics or features of an individual for public amusement; in this case, late North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Il.

The painting is very large, measuring 3.11 x 6.04 metres, and is painted in stark contrasts of red and white acrylic on handmade, traditional Korean Hanji\(^{22}\) paper. Song uses “the oriental way of blank space in the painting by using a white background”, to emphasise the idea that the “image really exists only in our mind and heart and is thence projected or reflected onto space” (Coomaraswamy 1934, cited in Bradt 1997, p.46). In this way, *Take Off Your Clothes!!* not only communicates meaning about Kim Jong-Il and North Korea, but also in the way people see; that “(w)hat we look for and identity as real and meaningful and what we ignore and dismiss as meaningless is […] a function of our education,

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\(^{22}\) translates as “the paper of Korea”; a traditional handmade paper made from the bark of mulberry trees native to the Korean peninsula. Lacking impurities, Hanji paper is known for it’s strength and durability and has a life span of ca.1000 years. (KTO, n.d.)
formation, training, and cultural conditioning” (Bradt, 1997, p.47). The way in which the painting is viewed is also of importance. Created with a low eye-level perspective, it gives the effect that the image is to be seen from below. This positions the viewer below the subject matter, and gives the feeling of being “in some way inferior to it” (Rose, 2012, p. 66). In this way the painting mimics the many grandiose statues of Kim Jong-Il displayed throughout North Korea, demanding power over those that stand before it.

Most viewers, especially those influenced by Western culture will easily recognise the iconic image of Marilyn Monroe, made famous by the Hollywood star’s 1955 film, The Seven Year Itch (See Appendix A). In her famous white dress, Marilyn was known for her glamorous beauty and outgoing, bubbly nature and makes up the body of the figure in Song’s painting. Although most Western audiences would not relate the visual sign of Monroe with freedom, in our interview, Song reveals:


The life of Marilyn Monroe is free; in her lifestyle/activities. In particular, I was inspired by the clothes she wore—her body is seen but not really seen through her skirt; it is just like Kim Jong-il’s statues. He is shown but the truth is not exactly shown; therefore I used Marilyn Monroe’s figure as Kim Jong-il.

As the majority of North Koreans do not have access to Hollywood films or American pop-culture, it is not surprising that the artist’s view of Marilyn does not fit the view of a Western audience. This clearly demonstrates how signs, regardless of their seeming popularity, can hold different meanings dependent on the cultural background and experiences of the reader.

The perception of reality that Kim Jong-Il gave to the masses of ordinary North Koreans, was an enormous divergence from reality. Known internationally for his eccentricities, he has been described as a malignant narcissist, who “drinks in the adulation of the unwashed masses” (Breen, 2012, p.87). Song uses the irony of Marilyn’s dress, revealing parts of her body in the painting, to show the true nature of Kim Jong-il; beyond his signature dark, glasses and painted smile. In the painting, the late North Korean leader, dressed as Marilyn,
reaches down desperately to hide his genitalia, just as he hides the truth about real life in North Korea.

Many viewers were able to interpret a meaning similar to this, with one respondent coming to the conclusion “that underneath everything, oppressors and dictators of the world are fragile, insecure and vulnerable.” While this is a valid connection, it is not a sentiment experienced by all, as one viewer responds, “On one hand it’s not hard to sense the artist’s disdain for Kim yet on the other hand it’s not all clear as to why the artist mergers him(self) with the American icon of Marilyn Monroe. Is it a critique of American politics as well?” Moreover, Song remarks that ordinary North Koreans, censored from the world outside of the one created for them, would have no idea who Marilyn Monroe was and if somehow were able to view his painting, would have difficulty in understanding the message Song is trying to communicate. These results, therefore, clearly demonstrate that the interpretation of visual texts is dependent on the viewer, and previous knowledge/cultural background or clarification by the artist (producer of the signified) is often needed for accurate analysis.

To examine this further, we can consider the other signs in the painting. In the orient, images of goldfish are often used to symbolise wealth and prosperity; however, as they are also a docile and easily domesticated fish, it is difficult to discern the intended meaning of the ten goldfish swimming around Kim Jong-il’s feet. The number of fish may also be of significance as the number 10 is associated with abundance but also with death, due to its pronunciation in Chinese (Brown, 2006). Perhaps the ten goldfish are a representation of Kim Jong-il’s personal wealth or perhaps they have a different connotation altogether, such as communicating a meaning of domestication, entrapment, or death? Or perhaps they are a symbol of intense gender struggles, with the fish (male) violently jumping up and attacking the figure’s genital region (female)? Due to unfamiliarity with Oriental art and culture, many viewers also had difficulty in discerning the meanings associated with the painting’s goldfish. Without clarification from the artist, it would have been almost impossible to understand that the red goldfish are in fact a direct representation of North Korean citizens;
being kept alive and forever watched by Kim Jong-II in a society much like that of a fish bowl. Jumping out from the isolation of the fish bowl, the people of North Korea continue to reach furiously for freedom (the West/South Korea).

**ii. Camp 14: Total Control Zone, film by Marc Wiese**

Dynamic visual narratives, such as the Wiese’s film *Camp 14: Total Control Zone* tell a story, and in doing so give meaning to experience (See Appendix E for still shots from the film). A powerful medium of expression, film has the ability to reach a large, varied audience and lead the viewer through a series of events without him/her needing much previous knowledge in terms of cultural and social practices. In a fixed viewing position, the audience has little control over the time in which they are able to view or contemplate each event of the narrative, but instead, are introduced to characters, background information and circumstances as the film progresses before them. Dynamic visual narratives can be considered to be important devices in the transfer of knowledge across cultural and social backgrounds, giving the viewer insight or deeper understanding of the norms, beliefs and functions of a particular knowledge system in order to make sense of it. It is therefore, the moral obligation of the documentary filmmakers, such as Wiese, to see that the transfer of knowledge is narrated truthfully and indiscriminately through the use signs or symbols that can be clearly understood by the intended audience.

Documentaries are not reproductions of reality but rather “a *representation* of the world we already occupy […] a particular view of the world, one we may never have encountered before even if the factual aspects of this world are familiar to us” (Nichols, 2010, p.13). By definition, a documentary film:

speaks about situations and events involving real people (social actors) who present themselves to us as themselves in stories that convey a plausible proposal about, or perspective on, the lives, situations, and events portrayed. The distinct point of view of the filmmaker shapes this story into a way of seeing the historical world directly rather than into a fictionally allegory (Nichols, 2010, p.14).
Camp 14: Total Control Zone can be further categorised into the sub-genre of testimonial documentary, where witnesses (Shin, a former North Korean prison guard commander, and a former North Korean secret police) give a subjective account, or memory, of events. By approaching the story from more than one perspective, Wiese is able to give greater validity to his narrative and create greater depth of understanding.

Wiese utilises interesting technical and symbolic elements, such as camera shot, duration of shot, and sound to enhance the overall impact of his film. Interviews with Shin are mostly filmed mid shot, isolating him from his environment and giving a feeling of personal relationship. He is also at times shot close-up, giving the audience a feeling of intimacy, and a close sense of Shin’s pain and vulnerability. There are a number of extended, silent pauses as Shin struggles with his inner turmoil and reluctant recollection of his traumatic past. Although slow and difficult to sit through, these long durations, without sound or movement, add a powerful element to the film; creating emotion and empathy through silence.

Another interesting aspect of Camp 14: Total Control Zone, is the use of animation to illustrate scenes from Shin’s past life in the prison camp. Created by artist Ali Soozandeh with direction from Shin, sequences of camp life are visualised in child-like, pencil sketches, coloured sparingly in light shades; mostly in black and white. The mixing of reality and fantasy contributes to the documentary’s ability to “show what is otherwise difficult or impossible to represent” (Landesman & Bendor, 2011, p.354), and harrowing scenes of torture, including the execution of Shin’s mother and brother are brought to life in a stark, cold reality. Without any background music, only Shin’s bleak voice is heard through these slow-moving, animated sequences. The slow movement of the animated figures further exemplify the depression of prisoners and the difficult and almost hopeless reality in which they survive. One viewer relates, “I feel the torture and pain that was experienced by those in the camps” while another states, “this one was disturbing but had an effect on me I was devastated at the degradation of living the people were forced to
Wiese is successful in producing a visual text that creates emotional connections with the viewer, and actively constructs new ways of seeing, or knowing. Although one viewer “didn’t understand why there was a disconnection, lack of feelings, love for his mother”, many agreed that “you got a feeling of (Shin’s) thoughts and feelings about life and how his experiences affected him”. Wiese reveals that “this was never a victim story […] (but) a film which is showing how a system is able to condition three people” (Applebaum, 2013); a sentiment which was widely understood by viewers. When asked about what message they thought the filmmaker is trying to portray through Camp 14: Total Control Zone, they answered as follows:

There is more to the DPRK than most people think; freedom shouldn't be taken for granted, ideology has real consequences; the hardships felt by all sides impacted by the NK regime; we are all people; that one never gets over these experiences; how Shin had freedom physically but not emotionally. Him and the other two officers were both victims and were suffering though guilt and their pain.

Through his film, Wiese is able to effectively communicate knowledge to the viewer and create emotional responses and new belief systems. “When we believe that what we see bears witness to the way the world is, it can form the basis for our orientation to or our action within the world” (Nichols, 2010, xvii); and subsequently aid in greater participation, better awareness and a move towards meaningful social action. One viewer states, “yes, there has to be a change and only a movement like this can realise the awareness needed to make a change”.

iii. Winter Butterfly, film by Kim Gyu-Min

Based on the lives of real people from North Korean director, Kim Gyu-Min’s hometown, Winter Butterfly follows the tragic story of mother and son living in a rural village during the famine years of the late 1990s (See Appendix E for still shots from the film). Falling into the genre of docudrama, Kim strategically brings to life memories of his childhood in
mountainous North Hwanghae Province. The genre of docudrama merges aspects of narration and documentary in a way that envelops the audience in the experience of a story, and thereby persuades them to believe that real events occurred much in the same way as they are visualised on the screen (Lipkin, 2002). As “a narrative representation of ‘real people’ and ‘real events’” (Lipkin, 2002, p.1), the docudrama uses fiction as a “powerful, attractive persuasive argument” (Lipkin, 2002, p.4) through an emotive visual experience.

It is in this way that Kim communicates knowledge about the daily struggles of ordinary North Koreans, as well as highlighting complex issues in North Korean society. In the mode of melodrama, Winter Butterfly makes use of dualities, especially in terms of power, gender and class, to demonstrate the disastrous effects of “destructive social powers applied against weak, domestically imaged victims” (Lipkin, 2002, p.5). These dualities of power include stark differences between high status officials and poor villagers, male authority figures and weaker females, as well as, those with food and those facing hunger and starvation. Through these dualities the question of community versus every-man-for-himself is also brought into focus. Kim states, “Every human being, regardless of his nationality, has a right to live in dignity” (Lee, 2011).

Driven by a personal duty to tell his story to the public, Kim moves away from typical political issues highlighted in the media, and focuses instead on the human aspect of life in North Korea. When asked about the title of the film, he reveals:

> When we think of butterflies, most of us would imagine something beautiful as it searches for flowers in spring. My question was, what if a butterfly was born in the winter time? Would its life be happy? In the similar context, I wondered what could’ve been different if the mother and the son were born in South Korea. So I named the movie Winter Butterfly (Lee, 2011).

Through the use of symbolic elements such as colour, costume and objects, Kim questions the sincerity of the North Korean ruling party and the steadfast belief of the people in their leaders. Two scenes are of particular interest: the first is when Jin-Ho’s mother kneels in
front of the photos of Kim Jong-II and Kim Il-Sung\textsuperscript{23}, begging them to help her son find his way home; even if they had forgot about her before, to please help her son now. The second scene is near the end of the film, when the mother, now destitute and disillusioned, burns the photos to fuel the stove to cook the dog\textsuperscript{24} she has killed. This is a very strong symbolic gesture, and would result in extreme punishment (death) if Kim were still in North Korea. To this he responds, “I did it on purpose. I wanted to show how people are dying under the rule of Kim II-sung and his son Kim Jong-il. If the scene ever becomes a problem politically, I will take responsibility for it” (Lee, 2011). Another interesting symbol or duality is the wedding or \textit{Paebaek}\textsuperscript{25} photo of Jin-Ho’s parents. Pasted on the wall, it shows them smiling, dressed beautifully in Hanboks\textsuperscript{26} with plates of food piled in front of them; a sharp contrast from their dull, tattered clothes, and growing hunger.

Food is a reoccurring theme in the film, and Jin-Ho’s dream sequences stand in stark opposition to the reality in which they live. The colours used in the filming of these sequences are vibrant and clean. Jin Ho is dressed in the classic blue and white uniform of North Korean students, with bold red scarf and the North Korean Party emblem pinned over his heart. His mother wears a beautiful Hanbok, her hair pulled back, her skin healthy and clean. Set against a white background, she teaches Jin-Ho how to cook \textit{SamGaeTang}\textsuperscript{27}, a traditional, stuffed chicken soup known for its revitalising properties. It is made with ginseng, dates, garlic, chestnuts and ginger; ingredients that Jin-Ho has never seen nor tasted.

Although many of these symbolic elements might be lost on western audiences, the

\textsuperscript{23} “Every North Korean household is required to have a picture of both Kims hanging on a wall. Nothing else may hang on that wall and they are given special cloths to clean the images daily” (Demick, 2010, p.316).

\textsuperscript{24} her son

\textsuperscript{25} A Korean wedding custom

\textsuperscript{26} Traditional Korean dress

\textsuperscript{27} chosen as one of the 100 Ethnic Cultural Symbols of Korea
intended message of Winter Butterfly transcends cultural barriers; that one “should not turn away from people who are suffering” (Kim in Lee, 2011). When asked about this message, audience members responded that, “Ideology can be a huge factor in what a person perceives as a good society; That the human narrative is important” and that “civilization is fragile”. One respondent expressed the need “to expose the devastating effects the ill-conceived regime has on the population at large and (for others to understand) the kind of desperate measures it takes the individual in order to survive”. Despite differences in social, cultural and educational backgrounds, audience members at the Jayu Film Festival were able to understand the filmmaker’s message and gain new knowledge about North Korea and the people living within its borders. Through strong narrative visualisation, Winter Butterfly produces powerful emotions in the viewer, with many agreeing that it is “eye opening; very emotional (and) difficult to watch”. One viewer comments that the film “gave a me a deeper understanding of the human stories behind the headlines” while another says the “complexities revolving around NK are not able to be completely deciphered in a weekend. Makes me want to read (know) more”.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION
The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. - Aristotle

This paper follows an interpretative approach to research methodology through its examination of visual representations, and the use of signs and symbols in the construction of meaning and knowledge. Through a mixed-approach analysis of visual texts produced by members of the North Korean Refugee Movement, it has been shown that images can effectively be used in the framing of collective identity through shared experience, and in the facilitation of resource mobilisation, especially in terms of social and cultural resources. By visualising memories of daily life in North Korea and illustrating hardships of starvation, persecution and torture, art is being used by participants of the North Korean Refugee Movement to create a shared identity to interlink and bind the North Korean diaspora together. As artists and filmmakers in the movement gain international recognition
for their work, they create a platform for their voice to be publicised and become part of mainstream media. Moreover, through the use of ICTs, these visual texts are easily accessible to a wide-range of audience. With the power to penetrate barriers of educational, social, and to some extent, cultural backgrounds, art therefore has the ability to create or communicate new knowledge. Art has been shown to reveal new perspectives of the world to the viewer, and with it generate a deeper, more emotive response to what is being visually communicated. Artistic language enables the viewer to experience complex issues that are often difficult to represent; and to better understand what cannot be said through words.

That being said, it is important to remember that the cultures of the both the artists and the audience are intrinsically embedded in the practices of representation. Therefore, as cultural studies become an increasingly important part of the development process, researchers must address the question of whose voice is being heard? and examine the processes in which culture and knowledge affect one’s interpretation of experience. The examination of visual texts is a comparatively new method of research in the area of cultural studies, as emphasis has traditionally been placed on written or oral language; however, as this paper shows, it is important for researchers to make use of visual cultural analysis and look at the meanings within images, the way in which they are produced and the role of the viewer at the site of interpretation.

Art has been shown to play an important role in the processes of communication and the transfer of knowledge with its ability to create powerful emotions and provide a voice to the voiceless. Visual texts can therefore be strategically used by social movements in the area of C4D to reinforce/create a collective identity and aid in movement participation by enhancing solidarity and self-assurance while creating motivation for collective action. In accordance with C4D goals put forth by the United Nations Development Program, art can therefore be used to:

i. Raise the awareness of vulnerable and marginalized groups
Further Discussion

North Korea, and the activities of Kim Jong-Un have increasingly appeared in international news media. However, reports on ‘Basketball Diplomacy’ and recent purges have the danger of overshadowing more important issues, such as the growth of prison labour camps, human rights abuses, and the low standard of living for the majority of those living in North Korea. It is for this reason that witnessing and art as testimony is of great importance and an area of research that could be looked at further. North Koreans who have escaped the country continue to find ways to tell their stories and work to better the lives of those who remain. It is these voices which need to be heard and focused on rather than on the antics of the new leader contaminating the media. While many defectors have given testimony for important publications, such as the White Paper for North Korean Human Rights, readers of these texts are low in number, and as a result the transfer of knowledge limited. Art therefore plays an important role in the act of witnessing and visual testimony, in addition to protest and cultural survival. Art facilities the act of remembering and in doing so engages a wide variety of audiences to question their common humanity and their role/duty in the international community.

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28 highly publicised American basketball player Dennis Rodman is working together with Kim Jong-Un to train North Korean basketball players to play a friendly against former NBA players in Pyongyang.

29 Jang Song-Thaek, Kim Jong-Un’s uncle and the second most powerful figure in North Korea was executed, along with his aides.
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Appendix A

Marilyn Monroe, from The Seven Year Itch (1955)

Take Off Your Clothes!! -Song Byeok (2010)
[Acrilic on Hanji, 3.11 x 6.04]
Appendix B - Transcription of Interview with Song Byeok:
(English Translation made by the author of this paper)

1. I understand that when you lived in North Korea, you were recruited by the government to be a propaganda artist in Pyongyang. Can you tell me a little about the work you did there? While I was in North Korea, I was not an Advertiser artist but an artist for Propaganda; namely working to announce things and to stir citizens.

2. What do you feel are the main differences between being an artist in North Korea and in South Korea? I believe that North Korea is not protected (secured) in the freedom of arts; yet the Republic of South Korea is well protected and guarded with freedom and creation in arts.

3. Why did you use the iconic figure of Marilyn Monroe in “Take Off Your Clothes!!”? I try to express North Korean Society through the figure of Marilyn Monroe.

4. How do you express North Korean Society through the figure of Marilyn Monroe? (Why did you chose her specifically?) What does she symbolise for you? What is the connection between Marilyn Monroe and Kim Jong-il? Most of the people in North Korea do not know who Marilyn Monroe is and why she is so famous. The life of Marilyn Monroe is free; in her lifestyle/activities. In particular, I was inspired by the clothes she wore—her body is seen but not really seen through her skirt; it is just like Kim Jong-il’s statues. He is shown but the truth is not exactly shown; therefore I used Marilyn Monroe’s figure as Kim Jong-il.

5. Is there any reason why the background of the painting is left white? I try to show the Oriental way of blank space in the painting by using a white background.

6. Why is Kim Jong-il smiling? How is this image different from the smiling images of him in North Korea? In Kim Jong-il’s smile I tried to show the irony of poverty - so many North Korean citizens are dying without food.

7. What is the significance of the red goldfish? The red goldfish represent North Korean citizens kept in a fish bowl.

8. I understand that this painting initially received a lot of criticism in South Korea. Why do you think that is? Yes, this painting received much criticism, but through this painting, there is a great message announcing (exposing) the reality of North Korea.

9. Why did you decide to include it in your exhibition? What was the public’s reaction to it? Why do you think that is? It meant a new product of my painting but I think it was a shocking painting which caused bigger reactions from the public.
10. What is your intended message with this piece? *My intention was to tell people that the North Korean citizens also have right to possess freedom.*

11. How has art helped you to overcome difficult experiences and memories? *I express myself. I was born in and lived in North Korea in the past, but I still have spiritual torment which remains in my body. I can overcome this through my artistic emphasis.*

12. What is the main objective/message you want to communicate through your artwork?

*I wish to be like salt to those who live on earth and do not know/recognise the importance/value of freedom and rights.*

I believe that art can make a difference in social change and awareness and look forward to seeing your future artwork and messages for peace. Thank you again.

*Thank you! --Song Byeok*
Appendix C (excerpts from Questionnaire administered for *Take Off Your Clothes!!*)

Q: What comes to mind when you think of North Korea?
A: That they are like Chinese and Japanese; Kim Jong-Il; starvation, dictatorship; cult, oppressive state; illegal immigrants; closed country with no information about it at all; no freedom of speech or even thinking; I think about talented (North Korean) kids on youtube; military power, obedience, isolation; lack of food; cold weather, strict rules.

Q: How closely do you follow news about North Korea?
A: 1 - 23%
   2 - 23%
   3- 32% (1 being not at all, 5 being a lot)
   4 - 18%
   5 - 5%

Q: Which issues interest you concerning North Korea?
A: Human Rights 26%
    North Korean Politics 18%
    Kim Regime 14%
    Inter-Korean Relations 12%
    Nuclear Program 11%
    North Korean Culture 11%
    North Korean Defectors 8%

Q: How involved are you with social movements/issues? (i.e. through funding, awareness building, activism, etc)
A: 1 - 27%
   2 - 14%
   3- 32% (1 being not at all, 5 being a lot)
   4 - 14%
   5 - 14%

Q: Do you think Art has a place in Social Movements?
A: 1 - 0%
   2 - 14%
   3 - 27% (1 being not at all, 5 being a large part)
   4 - 14%
   5 - 45%

Q: Have you heard/seen of any paintings by North Korean artist Song Byeok or any other North Korean artists?
A: Yes - 15%
   No - 85%
Q: What do you think the artist is trying to ‘say’ through this painting?
A: Decadence and oppression of small people; to show the absurdity of Kim’s regime; that underneath everything, oppressors and dictators of the world are fragile, insecure and vulnerable

Q: What are your feelings about this painting?
A: I like the ridiculousness of it, and also get angry that such a person is responsible for so many peoples lives without anybody reacting or being able to save them in a successful way; I wish I understood the fish part, but interests me; On one hand it’s not hard to sense the artist’s disdain for Kim yet on the other hand it’s not all clear as to why the artist mergers him(self) with the American icon of Marilyn Monroe. Is it a critique of American politics as well?

Q: Does this painting make you want to know more about North Korea?
A: It makes me want to know more about the Korean artistic scene, and through that, to learn about what is going on there; No. It’s an ugly picture and it doesn’t raise any desires to learn more about the country; it makes me want to know more about the artist; Yes, I’ve actually been searching around for NK people living in the “outside” world and what they have to say about NK and their experience.

Q: Does this painting make you want to see Song Byeok’s other works? Or perhaps the works of other NK artists?
A: Possibly, I am interested in the freedom of expression and how it is portrayed; Yes, it’s very creative and symbolic; Yes, because this is art which I would not have expected coming from NK, it is much more “modern”, cynical, provocative than I would have expected; Perhaps, but I feel I wouldn’t understand it, knowing so little about North Korea.
Appendix D (excerpts from Questionnaire administered for films shown at the 2013 Jayu North Korean Human Rights Film Festival)

General Questions
Q: What comes to mind when you think of North Korea?
A: poor living conditions; closed-off society, communism, oppression; injustice, disparity; Kim Jong-Il, censorship; lack of freedom; dictatorship, poverty; nuclear arms; aggression; a country that is build on a propaganda machine; communist country from the 1950s; poor quality of life; lack of human rights; poor living conditions; difference from S. Korea; instability, turmoil; taking a veneration cult to new levels; 1984-Orwell

Q: How closely do you follow news about North Korea?
A: 1 - 24%
   2 - 26%
   3 - 16% (1 being not at all, 5 being a lot)
   4 - 24%
   5 - 10%

Q: Which issues interest you concerning North Korea?
A: Human Rights 24%
   North Korean Culture 15%
   Inter-Korean Relations 14%
   North Korean Politics 12%
   Kim Regime 12%
   North Korean Defectors 12%
   Nuclear Program 10%

Q: How involved are you with social movements/issues? (i.e. through funding, awareness building, activism, etc)
A: 1 - 32%
   2 - 25%
   3 - 29% (1 being not at all, 5 being a lot)
   4 - 6%
   5 - 8%

Q: Do you think Art has a place in Social Movements?
A: 1 - 0%
   2 - 8%
   3 - 5% (1 being not at all, 5 being a large part)
   4 - 41%
   5 - 46%
Camp 14: Total Control Zone

Q: What were your feelings about this film?
A: educational; feel the torture and pain that was experienced by those in the camps; eye-opening; life not as bad in camp in comparison to free societies; raw, sad portrayal; heartbreaking; I enjoyed the film—it opened up about the experience of prisoners in NK and how their lives differ vastly from ours; sad but enlightening; devastating but realistic, well done, needs to be seen/heard; Interesting -re: how camps dehumanize people and how the older man nursed him, showed him affection and how this changed him emotional; this one was disturbing but had an effect on me I was devastated at the degradation of living the people were forced to endure; opened my eyes to those prisoners that never know life outside of prison; disgrace that nothing is being done for these people; amazing, eyeopening; scary to learn the horror in these camps, interesting to learn more about the mentality of the prisoners in these camps; very interesting; good complex; very moving and thought provoking holy shit!; very emotional.

Q: Were there any scenes/characters that stood out for you? Please explain.
A: emotional connection with elderly man that took care of Shin in prison; old man helping Shin; Shin wanting to go back, as long as he can be self-sufficient; talk about food and reasons for escape, seems like a unifying theme; shin's depression; survivor's guilt stood out to me as an immensely powerful insight into post-camp life and consequences; when he (Shin) chose to betray his brother/mother -> didn’t understand why there was a disconnection, lack of feelings, love for his mother; the man in prison who nursed him and showed affection; the man who helped Shin escape spoke of life outside; Shin, when he talks about moving back to NK to the camp where he was born; that Shin felt no emotion watching his mother and brother die; Shin, you got a feeling of his thoughts and feelings about life and how his experiences affected him; when he (Shin) described ratting out his own family, which led to their death; where Shin was forced to see his mother's execution; I enjoyed how the animation really helped bring Shin's story to life and allow you to experience it too. I also thought is was excellent to involve the guards view as it shows abuse at both ends.

Q: What message do you think the filmmaker is trying to portray through this film?
A: how repression/fear controls; North Koreans are suffering more than we know; trying to put a face to the prison camp narrative of NK; The reality that these camps still exist today; isolation; There is more to the DPRK than most people think and to portray the human side of North Koreans; freedom shouldn't be taken for granted, ideology has real consequences; the hardships felt by all sides impacted by the NK regime; we are all people; That oppression in NK may not be stoppable from within; that the mental state of camp prisoners is that there is nothing better than being in the camp; The unspoken human element of NK prisoners; That one never gets over these experiences; how Shin had freedom physically but not emotionally. Him and the other two officers were both victims and were suffering though guilt and their pain; Living in S.K he was a slave to earn money; To expose NK
human rights abuses and the effects it has on humans even after they've escaped; tried to show rationale of prisoners and guards to educate about the Kim Regime

Q: Did the film differ in any way from other written material you may have read on the subject? Please explain.
A: No; Watching the pain and struggle of Shin answering the questions is truly a life changing experience; Mostly reaffirmed what I already knew; It was more detailed than any information that I previously knew about Korea much more human perspective; different insights into Shin; More focus on emotional legacy of survivors; Yes, human aspect of prisoners portrayed honestly without focusing just on human rights issues; Haven't read much on the subject so can't compare; interesting to see it visualized.

Q: Did this film in any way change or reinforce your previous understanding of North Korea?
A: increased human interest/rights aspects; it made me even more aware; a little, that the people are intrinsically good but forced to play roles of evil; yes, opened up my eyes to camps and treatment; not really, no; not entirely, I knew prison camps were horrible; strengthened what I knew, but also learn more; expanded it; reinforce HR violations perception.

Q: Did this film make you want to know more about North Korea?
A: Yes, the more humanitarian aspect of NK (not political); no; brought awareness to forefront about injustice and how real and prevalent it is; Yes, to gain more understanding of the people; yes, there has to be a change and only a movement like this can realise the awareness needed to make a change; yes, I want to learn more about how they live; not sure; yes, about camps and defectors; yes, my obvious ignorance to the state of human rights has inspired me to get more involved; will dutifully follow HR issue more closely; yes, I would like to find out more about the successes and/or failures of humanitarian organisations. How effective in exposing human rights abuses/creating change?; Yes, continue with this HR festival yearly;

Winter Butterfly
Q: What were your feelings about this film?
A: sad, eye opening; different perspective on NK, very emotional; moving; very sad; the world needs to assist with change in North Korea; powerful; informative but difficult to watch; how the film ended is a very real possibility for North Koreans, really emotional; difficult to watch sometimes because of the content but well worth the experience; informative, felt I learned a lot about a culture I knew little about; very strong emotional reaction; Winter Butterfly confirms the darker side of NK society; It was shocking and devastating and filled me with a deep sadness but also relieve because I have privilege to live in a safe and free country; Truely moving and this story needs to be told and shared to make change; heart wrenching accurate portrayal of the famine/starvation issue in NK.
Q: Were there any scenes/characters that stood out for you? Please explain.
A: The bond between mother and son stood out. No matter the circumstances, illness, lack of food, absent husband/father, they took care of each other; Resilience comes to mind, how much we can endure as humans; mother killing son; soldier feeding dog in front of mother; ending of film; final scene is heartbreaking; mother’s hallucination scene.

Q: What message do you think the filmmaker is trying to portray through this film?
A: The despair in NK; To make the idea of famine settle in; hardship of NK people; human aspect of the story; alienation of people during terrible times; that human issues exist outside of ideology; To make people realize the reality of the serious conditions the people are living in; Ideology can be a huge factor in what a person perceives as a good society; that the famine issue is more serious; that people realize how difficult life truly is in North Korea; That the human narrative is important; what people are capable of when starving, how people can change, civilization is fragile; To expose the devastating effects the ill-conceived regime has on the population at large and to the kind of desperate measures it takes the individual in order to survive.

Q: Did this film in any way change or reinforce your previous understanding of North Korea?
A: It defn taught me that the way of life for North Koreans is much more serious than I thought, reinforced feelings and understanding of how bad NK is; confirms what I have read in newspaper accounts about hardships; reinforce my perceptions I already had of NK; Yes, see now how bad it has been for average North Koreans; it gave me a deeper understanding of the human stories behind the headlines; yes, learn more about people living there; especially those that are content with life there. Why is there such discrepancies?; Yes, but not sure what I can really find out (secretive state)

Q: Did this film make you want to know more about North Korea?
A: Yes, I’d like to know more about everyday life; yes, makes me want to know about regular life in NK; I’m always looking to learn more about NK; Yes, how does this continue?; yes, complexities revolving around NK are not able to be completely deciphered in a weekend. Makes me want to read more. Interesting to see the future of NK; Yes, I’d like to learn more about NK and the status of it both politically and how the local population is doing; yes, messages that are most powerful are as visuals.
Appendix E

Stills from *Camp 14: Total Control Zone* (2012)
Stills from *Winter Butterfly* (2011)