



Title, Pyongyang, North Korea, May 2004 // September 2018

Artist, [Veronika Schäpers](#)

Date, 2019

Medium, Inkjet

Binding, Flexible binding made from Satogami paper

Edition Size, 20

Collection, [Limited Edition Artists Books](#)

Related, [North Korea](#), [photography](#)

\$ 2,500.00

In the spring of 2004, I had the chance to take part in an organized trip to North Korea. It started with a request from the Goethe Institute in Seoul for projects comparing North and South Korea, for which I wanted to submit a proposal. I had visited South Korea several times by that point, and I was surprised and shocked by how strongly the period of Japanese occupation, the Korean War, and its status as a divided nation continued to affect the country. That made me all the more curious to see how North Koreans lived. The photo book from 2004 shows my impressions of this trip. Except for the last photo – of the main thoroughfare in Kaesong – all of the images were taken in Pyongyang, where we spent five of our seven days under the constant supervision of two tour guides, who also dictated what we could photograph. My original idea of capturing everyday life, unfortunately, turned out to be impossible –

so I started photographing small details, and the buildings next to the monuments that our tour guide was showing us. I had the impression that many of the things we were shown were not normal everyday life, but rather a production staged for foreigners, and it seemed that only small details on the sidelines could break through this staging.

The dominant gray color of the buildings, interrupted only by red slogans, made the city feel very dismal. The impression was reinforced by the fact that there was no visible sign of its inhabitants – no flower boxes on the balconies or laundry hung out to dry. Later, from a hotel room on a higher floor, I was able to confirm that those things did exist, but only below the level of the balcony railings.

From the birds-eye perspective of my hotel room, I saw another example of the strict regulations imposed on the population. The intersection in front of the hotel was almost empty of cars; many minutes could pass before even one car drove by. Nonetheless, all of the pedestrians – of which there were many – used the designated underground crossings; no one dared to simply cross the street.

In the summer of 2018, I was talking with a good friend, a professor of Korean studies who visits North Korea occasionally. She told me how much the city had changed. In addition to numerous new buildings, many of the formerly gray buildings have been painted in colorful shades. More kiosks are opening in the downtown area, and people's clothes have become more colorful and varied. Mobile phones and cars are now normal sights, along with electric bikes.

I became curious and asked her to take photos of the same places I had depicted in my 2004 book so I could compare them. However, I ended up with so many pictures that I decided to divide them into 6 groups and make a "picture viewer" TV for each one – a

popular city souvenir from the 1960s that, to me, seems to suit North Korea's still very artificial, staged-feeling architecture and aesthetics.

Book one in the set of two: *North Korea, May 2004*: Inkjet print on Chinese bamboo paper, laminated with Chinese Kozo paper and primed with Konnyaku nori.
24 pages. 15 x 10.25 inches

Book two in the set of two: *North Korea, September 2018*: six 2 x 3-inch picture viewers with 10 images each. Box made from white and green acrylic glass with screen printed title. (Photographs taken in 2004 and 2018)

All Click T.V. images and descriptions [here](#).

COLLECTIONS

Clark Library University of California, Los Angeles

Wellesley College, MA

140 58th St, Building B-7G, Brooklyn, NY 11220 917-406-1038 mweber@booklyn.org











조선 평양 이천십팔년 구월

P'ongjang, Nordkorea im September 2018



kiosks

TV screen



[청량음료] soft drinks

// shop selling small things like sweets and ice cream

photo 1



[꽃] flowers

photo 2



[청량음료] soft drinks

// shop selling small things like sweets and ice cream

photo 3



[케피르] kefir

// shop selling small things like sweets and ice cream

photo 4



photo 5



[백승] 100 victories

// cigarette package

photo 6



[꽃] flowers

photo 7



left // [빙수] korean ice cream, shaved ice

right // [꽃] flowers

photo 8



handpainted recycling-mark at the facade of a dormitory for international students

photo 9



[청량음료] soft drinks

// shop selling small things like sweets and ice cream

photo 10



mass games

TV screen



mass games //

formerly known as // [아리랑 축제] / arirang-festival

since 2018 // [빛나는조국] / bright country

photo 1



photo 2

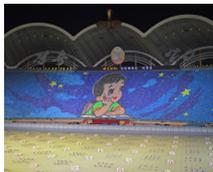


photo 3



approx. 30.000 students performing card stunts

photo 4



approx. 30.000 students performing card stunts

photo 5



photo 6



[전반적 12년제 의무교육] 12-year general school attendance

// was introduced in 2017

photo 7



photo 8



[새로운 조선속도] new korean speed

// part of the propaganda for the economical mobilization

photo 9



photo 10



[천하무적 자위의 국방성새] literal / insurmountable

fortress on earth for the self defense of the country

Pyongyang

TV screen



view over Pyongyang from the Chuch'e-tower

photo 1



road to Pyongyang

photo 2



square between Chuch'e-tower and Taedong-river

photo 3



in the background you see the flats of the Ryomong /
[려명] / daybreak / district
// despite the sanctions constructions took only 6 months

photo 4



photo 5



view over Pyongyang from the Chuch'e-tower

photo 6



view over Pyongyang from the Chuch'e-tower /
the reddish-brown twin towers are part of the Koryo-Hotel

photo 7



view over Pyongyang from the Chuch'e-tower

photo 8



view over Kim-Il-Sung square from the Chuch'e-tower

photo 9



Sitz der Rodong Sinmun // [로동신문] Arbeiterzeitung
Organ des Zentralkomitees der Partei der Arbeit Koreas

photo 10



Ryugyong Hotel
// under construction since 1987 / never completed

transport

TV screen



photo 1



photo 2



photo 3



photo 4



photo 5



photo 6



photo 7



photo 8



photo 9



photo 10



propaganda

TV screen



elementary school in Pyongyang //
[조선을 위하여 배우자] Let's study for Korea

photo 1



Kim-II-Sung-square // view of a bronze sculpture at the Chuch'e tower
// bronze sculpture // woman farmer with sickle / worker with hammer / intellectual with brush
// hammer / sickle / brush // emblem of the Workers' Party of Korea

photo 2



mural at the Children's Palace Mangyongdae

photo 3



mural at the Children's Palace Mangyongdae
// the mural shows Kim Il Sung with a red scarf, symbol of the corps of the young pioneers
[아버지대원수님은 영원한 우리의 해님] our great father and leader, our eternal sun

photo 4



reunification-monument / arc of reunification /
// two women in traditional a hanbok-dress /
below the peninsula // [3대헌장] 3-Point-Charta

photo 5



[당창건기념탑] monument of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea /
written on the monument // [조선인민의 모든 승리의 조직자이며 향도자인 조선로동당 만세!] Hurrah for the Workers' Party of Korea, guarantor and signpost to all victories of the Korean people

photo 6



[전당, 전군, 전민이 조선로동당 제7차대회과업관철에 총매진하여 주체혁명의 최종승리를 앞당기자] the entire party, the entire army, the entire nation / let's put all decisions and tasks of the 7th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea bravely into practice and bring forward the Chuch'e-revolution's final victory

photo 7



flag // [혁명적인 총공세] revolutionary / uncompromising / offensive
four banners with yellow writing // [일심단결]unity / [자립성] economic independence / [주체성] Chuch'e- independence / [과학기술] science and technology
blue writing // [모두다 올해 신년사과업관철에로!] let's realize together the tasks and regulations of the new year's speech

photo 8



somewhere in the outskirts of Pyongyang // unknown building // centered / bloodlike type // [a thousandfold revenge]
right // [Let's return the price of drained blood a thousand times!]
left // [Don't forget the imperialistic US-Wolves / Red Wolves]

photo 9



photo 10



emblem of the Workers' Party of Korea // hammer / sickle / brush

bus stop

TV screen



photo 1



photo 2



photo 3



photo 4



photo 5



photo 6



photo 7



photo 8



photo 9



photo 10

