



DMZ PHOTOGRAPHY: 60 YEARS

Through June 16th, 2013 | Dream Forest Art Center

National Geographic and LIFE journalists show the many sides of the DMZ.

To be standing in the world's most heavily militarized border, Korea's DMZ, is an experience that simultaneously evokes excitement and fear. In 2008, when I conjured up the bravery to venture to the DMZ, the trip served as a reminder of the dark perpetual conflict between the North and South. Like hawks scoping out their next prey, the North Korean soldiers scrutinized every visitor's movements with their intrusive binoculars, creating an unnerving atmosphere. The tension was as sharp as a needle.

This approximately 4 km wide buffer zone runs 240 km in length across the Korean peninsula, slicing it in half. And for the past 60 years, since the end of the Korean War, the DMZ has been a highly controlled zone, with armed soldiers vigilantly guarding the borders of their respective countries. For most people, even the name "DMZ" brings forth images associated with warfare,

painful family separations, and desolate land fenced by merciless barbed wire.

A visit to the **DMZ: 60 Years** exhibit at The Dream Forest Art Center, however, provides an insightful perspective on the beauty of this zone in addition to its all-too-familiar wretched history. It is a short but very informative exhibition of 63 photographs shot by National Geographic and LIFE Magazine journalists. Within the DMZ lie pristine, untouched natural surroundings bustling with incredible biodiversity. The area is now home to bountiful wildlife. There are photographs of birds roaming over landscapes blanketed with white snow, deer huddled around a lake, and seals swimming wildly in the midnight-blue waters; all are testaments to the existence of thriving life. The photographs also capture the flourishing vegetation in its different seasons, further unveiling nature's picturesque scenery.

The latter part of the exhibition highlights themes revolving around the Korean War. A display of black and white photographs conveys the heartache suffered by Koreans who were separated from their families and friends due

to the war. In one, a senile man's weathered face expresses his anguish as he leans hopelessly against the barbed wire, which has separated his loved ones from him for years. In another, a man places generous offerings at the fence, praying for the lives of his family in the North. The devastating effects of war are further portrayed with photographs of buried soldiers and poverty-stricken civilians.

This exhibit will leave the visitor with a better understanding of both the beauty and disfigurement that surrounds this deadly no-man's-land, a site that continues to employ massive fire-power on both sides.

The exhibition will be showcased until June 16th, 2013. Admission: ₩2,000 - ₩3,000. Hours: 10 am - 6 pm. For more information visit www.dfac.or.kr or call 02-2289-5401.

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