

## Artists team up for DMZ project

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A rendition of Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behman's "Condensation Pavilion (working title)" as part of the "Dreaming of Earth" project

Courtesy of the Studio Other Spaces

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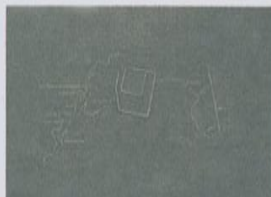
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The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Cheorwon, Gangwon Province, sitting on the border between South and North Korea, is one of the most dangerous areas in the world with numerous landmines and tangible tension, but is also an accidental heaven for flora and fauna since the area has been closed to the public since 1953.

The symbolism of the DMZ has inspired many artists and Korean artist Choi Jae-eun is no exception. She took part in the Real DMZ Project 2014, installing the neon and sound installation "No Borders Exist in Nature" at Woljeong-ri Station.

"During the opening of the Real DMZ Project, I immediately imagined hanging gardens connecting South and North," Choi recalled the beginning of her "Dreaming of Earth" project.

Architect Shigeru Ban joined and



Concept model of Choi Jae-eun's "Dreaming of Earth" project in DMZ  
Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

gave more shape to the project. Choi and Ban came up with the concept of a park crossing the DMZ and "jeong-ja," or pavilions, scattered throughout the promenade.

"The two conditions were that it should be a hanging structure above the ground and the structure should be as close to nature as possible. It's a park and people will want to rest, so we disposed pavilions and towers through the trail," Choi said.

The project received an invitation to the Venice Architecture Biennale

2016 after Choi announced the project in late 2015. "I presented the draft of Dreaming of Earth in Venice. It's a project that transcends borders and I feel a sense of duty to let more people know about this."

The concept model of "Dreaming of Earth" only has the outline of the Gung Ye castle and the trail, not the border dividing the DMZ.

Choi took an interest in the ruins of Gung Ye's castle in the DMZ, which is now off-limits to the public. Gung Ye was the king of the short-lived Taebong Kingdom (901-918), which later became the Goryeo Kingdom (918-1392).

The Gung Ye castle will be the centerpiece of the project and Choi plans to afforest the ruins. "Gung Ye dreamed of an ideal community and the castle of Gung Ye holds the spirit of a democratic utopia. Now the castle ruins are in the DMZ and the division of North and South Korea left the area uninhabited and untouched

for decades. The DMZ is now governed by the laws of nature and I think this is a true paradise," Choi explained.

The star-studded list of participating artists include Olafur Eliasson, Lee Bul, Lee U-fan, Tadashi Kawamata, and Seung H-Sang as well as the architect collective Studio Mumbai. Architect Cho Min-suk and brain scientist Jeong Jae-seung also joined hands with Choi.

Hanging gardens designed by Ban will be installed three meters to six meters above the ground and the total length runs about 20 kilometers. The participating artists submitted cottage designs using existing materials such as soil, rock, trees, wind and light.

As the project developed, it became interdisciplinary. At first, it was a collection of public artworks, but now it encompasses a seed bank and a knowledge bank as well as a comprehensive plan to remove landmines in the area.