Thoughts on K-pop, Korean culture, Korean drama, Korean food, etc.

Sometimes, I feel like I was born at the wrong time. For example, when I was a kid growing up, it wasn’t really a thing or interesting or cool to be Korean. It was all about Japan; Japanese things were cool. Even all of my Asian American friends, we would all watch Japanese animes, play Japanese video games, and like Japanese manga, Japanese culture etc.

But it seems now, Korea is now on top. In terms of popular culture, music like BLACKPINK and BTS, food, Korean drama, etc.

Something on my mind; how did it get on top? And also, why is it so good?

I love BLACKPINK

Currently, besides Kanye West, Jay Z, black pink is my favorite musical group ensemble. Why? I just think their music is really good. I like the music, I like the way it sounds, I like the way it feels, and I find all of the characters likable.

It was actually very interesting watching the documentary on BLACKPINK, how essentially, they were sent to a K-pop training camp at a young age, sequestered from the rest of society, and are essentially bred to become Korean Pop stars. One person I find particularly interesting is Lisa, who is now the star attraction, who is actually not even Korean, but from Thailand. But I think most people would agree that Lisa is probably the most talented one, followed by Jenny, then rosé, then Jisu.

Korean American producers and songwriters
YG entertainment group, the mega media conglomerates which bred BLACKPINK and many other popular stars, has been around for a long time. At least 20 years plus. I knew about them ever since I was a teenager, and I was born in 1988. A lot of rappers, who are once under the YG entertainment group umbrella, I believe are now the producers and songwriters for BLACKPINK.

For example, something I find very interesting, how does Lisa and his black pink members know all of these American cultural references, like the Flintstones? Lisa has a rap lyric, something that does with the ice on her wrist and rocks on her wrist like the Flintstones. There is no way in hell that Lisa would have come out with that line herself, definitely some sort of Korean American, or American songwriter.

**It has been a long time making**

Something I think that people don’t understand is this, it seems that K-pop, K drama, and all of these things pop up overnight. This is not true, it has been in the making for a very long time. My thought is simply that now that South Korea has strong ties with America, and now that a lot of entrepreneurial Korean Americans are now coming into fruition, finally the gap is being bridged. Also, assuming that American media and culture is the dominant one on the planet, having some sort of hybrid crossover with American culture in Asia makes sense.

**Why Korea?**

But why Korea, South Korea? I think because first of all, it is not China or Chinese, because America doesn’t have strong ties with China. However, after America’s intervention in the Korean War, America has very strong ties with South Korea. My personal thought is that South Korea is essentially a neo colony of the states. This is evident through the IMF, international monetary fund bail out, as well as the military presence in South Korea.
Korean food?

Also, something that has never been considered fancy, high-end, luxury, or popular is Korean food. For example, in America, all the high-end places seem to be Japanese, like sushi. But the funny irony is that in Japan, sushi is essentially like takeout; Salmon, salmon sashimi, is actually considered the lowest of the low. In Japan, the supreme cut is actually fatty tuna, Otoro.

As a kid growing up, I didn’t really eat kimchi, because my dad for some reason or another didn’t like it. But now as an adult, I love kimchi! I like the taste, and I think it also eats in my digestion, and allows me to eat more meat. However my critique of kimchi is that a lot of modern day kimchi, especially Kim she had restaurants, have too much sugar added. And yes, you can make kimchi without sugar.

Korean cultural things

Even currently being here in Phnom Penh Cambodia, everyone seems to know a little bit of Korean, or Korean gestures, like crossing your index and thumb to create a mini heart, and saying “saranghaeyo”. It means I love you.

It is important to consider Asia, as it looks like 80% of the worlds population is Asia. Also, Asia has deep history. China has been around forever, far longer than any western state.

Why I personally prefer living in Asia, Southeast Asia

I suppose now that because Korean culture is so prevalent and popular, and well-regarded, I do have additional cultural capital clout, being here in Asia. Being Korean, and people knowing that I’m Korean, I’m treated like the new royalty. Compare this to the states, where essentially, I don’t get any bonuses.
So what is the future?

My brother-in-law John Narciso, who is one of the head designers of the blackrhino rims, part of the wheel pros company, is a graduate of art center in Pasadena. It seems like a lot of the main car designers come out of art center, and he told me that the Korean, Korean American car designers were actually the most ambitious and the best. And now, when I look at it, all of the new and most innovative designs and car designs are coming out of Hyundai/Kia, Kia is owned by Hyundai. Also genesis, which is essentially the luxury version of Hyundai, very much how Lexus is a luxury version of Toyota.

My practical thought is that Hyundai Genesis is essentially the new king of automotive design, I actually prefer the genesis G90 over Rolls-Royce, Mercedes Maybach, etc.

Chinese stars, or K-pop stars?

“Who is your favorite BLACKPINK member? I love Lisa, she is so hot” (me talking to a kid who just immigrated from mainland China)

Something else I find interesting; even mainland Chinese would prefer blackpink and BTS, over their own homegrown stars. Why is this? A lot of the appeal of BLACKPINK, and Korean popstar groups is that they actually mix in Korean and English. For example oppa Gangnam Style by PSY, I think it took off because it is both in Korean and English. If it was 100% Korean only song, it probably wouldn’t have gone viral.

America and China are the only two real players

I think about a lot of things more simplified now, for example, the only two dominant world powers I consider include America and China. Everything else seems to be just an offshoot of the two.
The good thing is that I don’t really fear a World War III, or anything like that. Why? Whether America or China likes it or not, the both are deeply interwoven. For example, if it wasn’t for Foxconn in China, Apple would not be able to make her stellar profits and products.

**Perhaps one day “made in China“ will be considered a luxury thing, just like being made in France or Italy.**

Actually, it is funny that the notion “made in China“ is considered being such a bad thing, as it seems that almost everything, is made in China. What is simply different is the levels of quality control. Once again, why is it that everyone discounts the fact that all Apple products are made in China? And now a little bit in Vietnam, but essentially 99% in China.

**Where do you want to live?**

I think when push comes to shove, what it comes down to, is it a money thing, or wealth or power or prestige thing. It becomes very basic; where do you want to live? What country, what city, what neighborhood, etc?

For example, the really really rich and successful people from mainland China seem to prefer buying property and homes in Vancouver, because it is so much cleaner than mainland China. Vancouver is probably one of the best clean air and beautiful natural environment cities I’ve been to in the world, Even superior to California. Even if you’re a quadrillionaire in Shanghai or Beijing, if you’re choking in smog, is it really worth it?
How pollution is an issue

And I think this is where a lot of Americans don’t understand issues about pollution and production. Much of the developing world runs on dirty energy and coal. And let us consider, for all these products to be manufactured, a lot of pollution is being made. But all the pollution is being made overseas in Asia, China and Vietnam. Some in Indonesia.

Therefore, let us see you’re from the states for California, you can enjoy your convenient Amazon products, with prime day delivery, and still breathe so much clean air. Yet, even when I was living in Hanoi, which is very close to China, on Sundays the smog and pollution was unbearable. Until you’ve smelt or felt smog, through your own nostrils and throat, by literally being here and some of the developing parts of Asia, you don’t know what real pollution is. Or how bad it is. Or why it matters.

My personal thought is I do not fear earth death. I just fear a future dystoic landscape, something like Blade Runner (the original, or the new one), where everyone is still living on planet Earth, but in misery. And it seems that this is the trend; clean air, greenery, and nature is now being a privilege of the rich, and the poor are forced to live in polluted places.

Sustainable things

At least this is one thing I love about digital photography, it produces less waste than film photography. I love film photography, but consider all of the ways being manufactured through the little canisters, the film itself, and all of the movement necessary to process the film. It is probably not that substantial in the grand scheme of things, but in terms of convenience, I think the convenience of digital is a quadrillion times better. For example, if you want to become the best photographer possible, I really do believe that having a Ricoh GR 3 or Ricoh GR 3X digital camera is key.
What is “sustainable“?

I like the notion of sustainability in terms of creativity. Sustainable creativity is what I like. Without aid of drugs, alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, etc. The least bad thing being caffeine, which is still a very potent drug.

How to sustain your creativity

So the simple thought; how can you maintain and sustain your creativity, and your creative output, and the act of creation, every day, all day?

Some thoughts:

1. Digital is key: digital creativity is a quadrillion times more sustainable than anything based in physics, or atoms. Why? Analog, and atom-based art and creativity is often too expensive, too time-consuming, and has too much friction to start. The ideal is to just jump in to your creative activity, requiring the least amount of activation energy possible. This is where I am such a huge proponent of digital calligraphy, via the Zen Brush 2 app, and also digital illustrations and artwork, which you could do with the iPad and procreate app. Also you can do it on the iPhone.

2. Lift weights, at least once a week or every two weeks. I recommend the powerlifting one rep max style, the deadlift squat and bench press. Everything else seems to be superfluous.

3. Think of creativity as a hormonal thing: why do I feel so creative when I drink a bunch of coffee? The hormonal adrenaline rush that accompanies it. The same thing with powerlifting, the huge surge of testosterone, adrenaline, and other unknown bodily hormones which hype you up.

4. Hype yourself up. Hype yourself up via watching the Māori hakka dance, slapping your body and thighs, screaming, and getting into hypelifting. In fact, the thing I enjoy most about doing one rep max deadlift is the hype and the hyping up of myself which accompanies it.

5. Delete Instagram.
CONQUER THE STREETS OF SEOUL

The streets of Seoul South Korea await you:

Learn more about ERIC KIM SEOUL South Korea travel street photography experience >
Witness all upcoming ERIC KIM EXPERIENCES >

HAPTIC INDUSTRIES

Fight the creative static with HAPTIC:

1. HENRI SHOULDER STRAP: Lighten your creative load
2. ERIC KIM NECK STRAP MARK II: I put my creative soul on it.
3. ERIC KIM WRIST STRAP MARK II: True creativity never dies.

Discover all creative products >

CREATIVE EVERYDAY

Be creative every day:

1. DIGITAL OPEN EDITION
2. PRINT
Share your creative photos

Not sure what to do with your creative photos? Share them to arsbeta.com

Feeling a little bit more creative than before?

If so, feel free to forward this to a friend, needing a little shot of creative motivation!

ERIC KIM CREATIVITY NEWS