

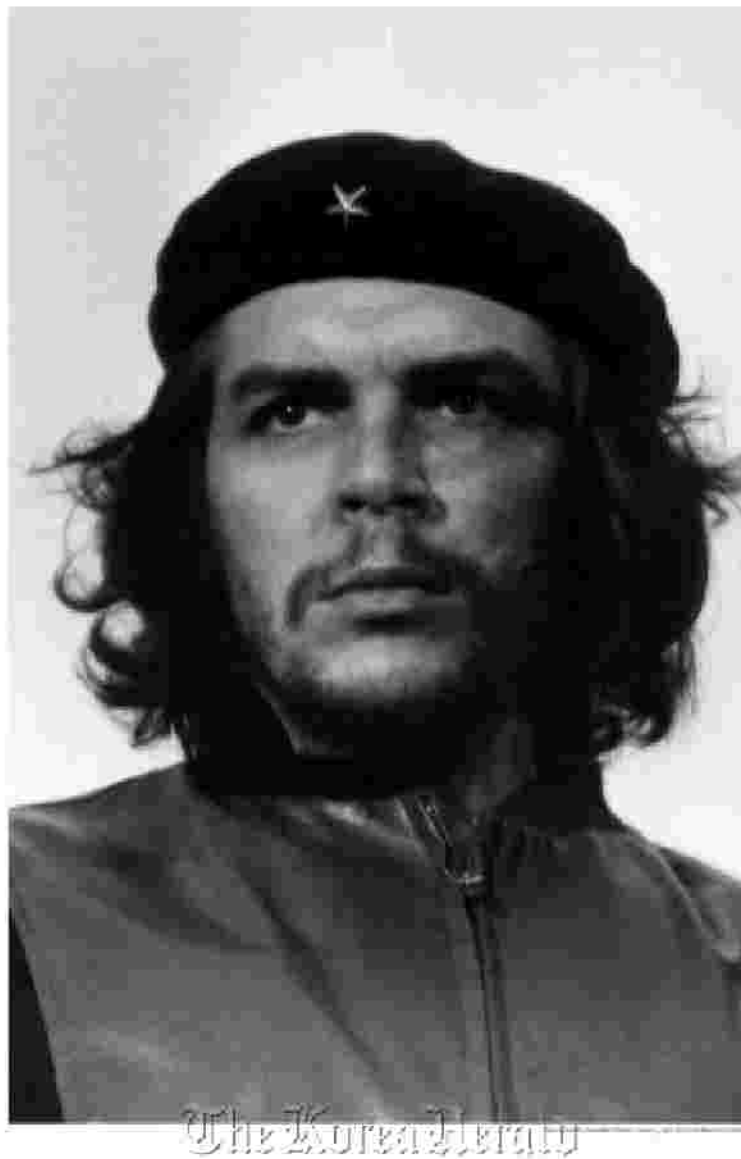
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Familiar artists reveal unfamiliar sides

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An artist is often so well-known for a single piece of style or work that the rest of his world remains in the dark.

In Pablo Picasso's case, that would be his signature cubism paintings of women. Even more starkly, most would immediately recognize Alberto Korda's photo of Che Guevara even though the photographer's name might not ring any bells.



"Guerrillero Heroico, March 5, 1960" by Alberto Korda. (Korda Estate/La Fabrica)

Two different exhibitions currently underway in Seoul each showcase unfamiliar sides of the two artists, which would come as a delightful surprise for most gallery goers.

Did you know, for example, that Picasso in his 70s had been so deeply absorbed in ceramics that he even settled down in Vallauris, a town in southern France known for its pottery, to explore the media?

The exhibition “Pablo Picasso, His Passion” at 63 Sky Art Museum in Yeouido-dong, central Seoul, introduces 100 pieces of his lesser-known ceramic works, print works and photographs. All exhibits were lent by two anonymous collectors in Korea.



“Jacqueline at the Easel” by Pablo Picasso. (63 Sky Art Museum)

The exhibits are, well, so Picasso. His classic style is as perfectly expressed on the prints and ceramics as it is on any other media.

His passionate, freewheeling and womanizing character are obvious in the exhibited photos of him as well. The photos were taken by photographer Andre Villers who accidentally got to know Picasso in Vallauris and was allowed to take his photos during his whole stay. Villers’ career had naturally flourished after becoming known as Picasso’s photographer.

At COEX in Samseong-dong, southern Seoul, the exhibition “A Revolutionary Lens” points out that there were more to Korda’s world than the monumental photo of Che Guevara, titled “Guerrillero Heroico.”

Yes, the photo had instantly lifted the Cuban photographer to fame. It was reproduced by numerous artists including Andy Warhol, and is in fact the world’s second-most reproduced photo, right after the image of Marilyn Monroe.

As much luck the photo brought to Korda, however, it was Korda's lifelong task to try to create something that could outdo it.

The photographer failed to do so, but his descendants and friends did not give up. The crew at Estate Korda dug up about 200 photos from his archive, of which about 160 have never been printed or shown to the public yet, and sent them off for a traveling exhibition in Havana, Madrid, Lisbon and here in Seoul.

"We really wanted to go deeply into his works, beyond the image of Che. We wanted to research and prove that he was a great photographer beyond the only work that is recognized," Cristina Vives, curator of the exhibition, told the press last week.

Vives added that although image of Che gave Korda a reputation as a revolution photographer, he had actually started his career by shooting fashion photos in his studio and was very interested in women and beauty all his life.

The exhibition is divided into five sections ? "Studio Korda," "Leaders," "People," "Women" and "Sea" ? which best demonstrate the photographer's character, career and life.

"This is not a political show. Korda was an artist. I hope visitors do not see his photos as a record of Cuba or what had happened at the time, even if it is in fact a record, but as pieces of art," said Vives.

"Pablo Picasso, His Passion" runs through March 6 at 63 Sky Art Museum in Yeouido-dong, central Seoul. Tickets are 11,000 won for children and adolescents and 12,000 won for adults. For more information, call (02) 789-5663 or visit www.63.co.kr.

"A Revolutionary Lens" runs through March 1 at COEX in Samseong-dong, southern Seoul. Tickets are 6,000 won for children, 8,000 won for adolescents and 10,000 won for adults. For more information, call (02) 6000-3331 or visit kordaphoto.co.kr.

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