Overseas Koreans Agency	
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Artist Shin Sun-nam, Who Preserved the History of Koryo-saram Through Art, Named November's "Overseas Korean of the Month"

A survivor of Stalin-era forced deportation, Shin portrayed the suffering and resilience of Koryo-saram in his acclaimed Requiem series

His 1997 exhibition and donation of 64 artworks to Korea's national modern art museum brought their history to the attention of the Korean public

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup) has named the late artist Shin Sun-nam (1928–2006) November's "Overseas Korean of the Month" in recognition of his artistic achievements and his contribution to preserving the history of Koryo-saram, ethnic Koreans of the former Soviet Union.

Born in 1928 in the Primorsky region of the Soviet Union, now part of Russia, Shin was just nine years old when he experienced the mass deportation of ethnic Koreans to Central Asia under Stalin's regime in 1937.
He later studied art in Uzbekistan, drawing on his childhood experiences and the struggles of the Koryo-saram community to develop his artistic vision.

His signature Requiem series captures the tragedy of forced

displacement, the grief of those who lost their homes, and the resilience of survivors who rebuilt their lives in unfamiliar lands. Among his most notable works is Requiem – Candlelight of Farewell, Red Grave (1990), a monumental painting measuring 44 meters wide and 3 meters high. The work depicts the anguish of separation and loss, paying tribute to those who perished during the deportation.

Through his art, Shin went beyond documenting historical events, inviting viewers to reflect on human dignity and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

In 1997, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) presented a solo exhibition of his work, Suffering and Glory: A History of the Displaced.

At a time when the history of Koryo-saram and their forced relocation to Central Asia remained largely unknown in Korea, the exhibition helped the Korean public better understand this chapter of their shared history.

Shin also donated 64 works, including Requiem, to the museum, ensuring that his artistic legacy and the history it embodies would be preserved for future generations.

In recognition of his artistic achievements, Shin received the Art Merit Award from the government of Uzbekistan. In 1997, the Korean government awarded him the Geumgwan (Gold Crown) Order of Cultural Merit, the country's highest cultural decoration.

"Shin Sun-nam transformed the tragedy of his childhood into a

powerful artistic legacy that connects generations and transcends borders," said Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup. "His works remind us that the history of overseas Koreans is an integral part of our shared history. They also offer a lasting testament to the courage and resilience of those who have rebuilt their lives in the face of adversity."

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