



## Impact Statement

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***Butterfly's Rebirth***, 2026

Acrylic, watercolor, colored pencil on paper, 21.5 x 15.5 inches

Seoul Scholars International Art & Design, Seoul, South Korea

Unsung Hero: Kim Hak-Sun

On August 14, 1991, Kim Hak Sun revealed the terrible reality of the Japanese, as a victim of Japanese military sexual slavery. For over forty years, she lived in silence, but after she decided to speak out, it broke the disgrace. As a result of her first testimony, it formed solidarity all over Asia by giving courage to other victims. In December, she visited Tokyo, Japan, to prove the truth because the Japanese government denied the existence of comfort women. Her concrete testimony attracted many people's attention, and she demanded an official apology and compensation from Japan. After her revelation, "Comfort Women" became an international issue and raised awareness of war crimes and women's rights. Therefore, Kim Hak Sun's courageous testimony became a turning point for bringing issues to the front from being concealed because of the shame.

The issues regarding Japan are very sensitive. However, without the testimonies of people like Grandma Kim Hak-Sun, we might never have known the truth. As a fellow Korean, I believe it would be far more shameful to live with concealed facts. Therefore, I wanted to spread the word of those people through my artwork, not only for Koreans, but worldwide because I wanted to raise awareness before similar things happen again. Also, I wanted to share Kim Hak-Sun's courageous action as my role model because she was the first one who broke the shame and came out to the public to reveal the truth and give a positive social impact.

My artwork contains many images of Kim Hak-Sun behind her statue. This is to showcase the path of her resistance behind the statue, serving as an enduring legacy. The old house, and *norigae* represent the past time of Korea. The yellow butterflies, and Cosmos represent the comfort women during Japanese colonization. It's because yellow butterflies symbolize freedom from trauma and hope. Cosmos flower represents resilience of the victims and the strength of the victim's spirit. Multiple newspapers about Kim Hak-Sun's testimonies and actions are there to show that her actions became a public issue, which taught many future generations.

I used 3 different materials, which are watercolor paint, acrylic paint, and color pencil. I chose to use two different kinds of paint because I wanted to give a texture difference between the statue and real people. It's because I wanted to give a symbolic contrast between the two. Acrylic for the statue represents the unshakeable truth of history and watercolor for the people represents humanity of the victims, which gives softer and more 'living' feeling compared to the rigid statue

By telling the story of Kim Hak-Sun, people including me will remember and commemorate the victims and participate in events occurring on 14, August, which is the "International Memorial Day for Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' Victims". Also, we will support the restoration of honor for survivors by visiting the 'War and Women's Human Rights Museum' by donating and participating in related activities. My goal for this artwork is to serve as a visual bridge between generations, ensuring her voice is never silenced again.