

WHO SAID IT?



We always got along.
You're obviously
bright and committed
but it just doesn't work

DONALD RUMSFELD TO
CONDOLEEZZA RICE, AS QUOTED
IN HER NEW MEMOIR
> **WORLD A11**



I'm confident that this
visit will enhance political
trust between China and
North Korea and deepen
practical trade and
economic co-operation

LIU HONGCAI, CHINA'S ENVOY
TO NORTH KOREA
> **CHINA A6**



Barrier-free is not only
about how wide the
walking paths are; it is
also about the software

IDA LAM CHOI-CHU, CHAIRWOMAN
OF ARTS WITH THE DISABLED
ASSOCIATION HONG KONG
> **CITY C3**

Monday, October 24, 2011 C1



Golden moments
Hearing impaired artists scoop top awards

> **CULTURE C4**

CULTURE

Gold medals in the arts for hearing-impaired duo

Painter Ko Nam and photographer Jack Li take top international awards at competition in Seoul

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Ko Nam and Jack Li need sign-language interpreters to understand speech, but hearing impairments did not stop them from scooping top international awards that celebrate their artistic achievements.

Ko, 48, and Li, 36, were gold medalists at the 8th International Abilympics – coined from the phrase “Olympics of Abilities” – held in Seoul last month. Ko edged out 23 competitors to win the painting category with a work titled *Flowers and Passion*, drawing praise for his “very unique and excellent skill”.

Li took a gold medal in photography for a black-and-white portrait of a man. It was his second Abilympics gold, after winning for documentary photography in Japan in 2007.

Born with impaired hearing on the mainland, Li moved to Hong Kong at 15. He studied typing and won two awards for it in 1995, at a contest that introduced him to the

Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong – a link that profoundly affected his life. He took up photography at the association in 2005.

“There are many photography classes in Hong Kong, but only those run by the association have signing interpreters,” Li said. “Photography has opened up a whole new world for me. I take part in various competitions, both in Hong Kong and overseas. My life would have been plain and unexciting [otherwise].”

Ko lost his hearing because of a high fever as a child. “It was during the Cultural Revolution. My parents

were under persecution as they were intellectuals. They were unable to live with me, so when I had the fever, there was no adult around to take care of me and I lost my hearing.”

After the Cultural Revolution, his school noticed his talent and encouraged him to take up painting. Ko moved to Hong Kong in 1993, where he worked in a printing factory for a few years before he could earn a living by selling his Chinese paintings.

Since 2000 the association has helped him with his artistic career. “They promote my paintings and organise exhibitions for me,” Ko said.

Ko and Li teach art classes for the association, and want to bring the arts to more people. They also hope to raise public awareness that Hong Kong is far from a barrier-free city.

Association chairwoman Ida Lam Choi-chu said: “Being barrier-free is not only about how wide the footpaths are. It is also about the software [how society caters for the disabled].”

The association recently opened the Jockey Club Arts Accessibility Service Centre. It provides signing interpretation, audio descriptions and tactile diagrams for the blind, and other services to help people with disabilities enjoy the arts.



Jack Li (left) and Ko Nam with their winning work. Photo: Herbert Tsang