

Kiaf SEOUL

Kiaf 2023: Closing Report



Kiaf SEOUL 2023. Photo by Kiaf Operating Committee. Courtesy of Kiaf.

(Seoul, Korea, September 11, 2023) – Kiaf SEOUL closed on September 10, marking the largest-scale edition ever of the long-standing Korean art fair.

- Kiaf SEOUL welcomed over 80,000 visitors throughout their VIP opening and general admission days, including important collectors and institutions in Korea and around the world.
- The longest running international art fair in Korea, Kiaf SEOUL brought together 210 galleries from 19 countries and territories for its most international edition to date.
- Bunpei Kado, Ri Jong Ok, and Yi Youjin received the inaugural Kiaf Highlights Awards, which was launched aiming to promote and support emerging and mid-career artists exhibited at Kiaf, each receiving a grant of KRW 10 million.
- Two special exhibitions, *Gray Box Area: Space as an Event* and *Rehyun Park & Saengkwang Park: Hometown to the Unadulterated Colors*, engaged global audiences with a multitude of Korean art through experimental media art and traditional Korean painting respectively.
- The 2023 edition saw the return of the fair's curated Talks Program in collaboration with Frieze Seoul and Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS), as well as the third iteration of *We connect, Art & Future, Kiaf and INCHEON AIRPORT*.
- Kiaf SEOUL took place from September 7 to 10, 2023, with a VIP opening day on September 6, at Hall A & B and Grand Ballroom of COEX.

Kiaf SEOUL 2023 brought together a strong lineup of Korean and international galleries, reinforcing its position as the leading international art fair in Korea, as well as bridging the Korean art scene and international art market. Over 130 Korean galleries participated in the fair this year, including leading voices such as **Arario Gallery** (Seoul, Cheonan), **BHAK** (Seoul), **Gana Art** (Seoul, Busan), **Gallery Hyundai** (Seoul), **Hakgojae Gallery** (Seoul), **Johyun Gallery** (Busan), **Keumsan Gallery** (Seoul), **Kukje Gallery** (Seoul, Busan), **Leeahn Gallery** (Seoul, Daegu), **PKM Gallery** (Seoul), **PYO Gallery** (Seoul), **Woonson Gallery** (Daegu), as well as emerging galleries such as **2GIL29 Gallery** (Seoul), **Gallery Planet** (Seoul), and **KICHE** (Seoul). Local galleries were joined by their international peers, including **Carl Kostyál** (London, Stockholm, Milan), **Carvalho Park** (New York), **Galleria Continua** (San Gimignano, Beijing, Les Moulins, Habana, Rome, São Paulo, Paris, Dubai), **Ora-Ora** (Hong Kong), **Peres Projects** (Berlin, Seoul), **Whitestone Gallery** (Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, Seoul), **Rachel Uffner Gallery** (New York), and **Steve Turner** (Los Angeles), among others.

30 galleries participated in Kiaf SEOUL 2023 for the first time, including **Denny Gallery** (New York), **Galerie Marguo** (Paris), **Galerie Thomas** (Munich), **IAH** (Seoul), **Lucie Chang Fine Arts** (Hong Kong), **Pangée** (Montreal), **The Hole** (New York), **Triumph Gallery** (Beijing), and **Tuesday to Friday** (Valencia) among

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others.

Following its successful debut at SETEC (Seoul Trade Exhibition & Convention) in 2022, Kiaf PLUS returned this year with 30 galleries whose presentations were dedicated to emerging artists working with diverse genres such as new media. This year, Kiaf PLUS was integrated into the fair's main exhibition halls at COEX for improved accessibility and welcomed visitors from the Grand Ballroom entrance. Participating galleries included **Carlye Packer** (Los Angeles), **Cob Gallery** (London), **Everyday Moonday** (Seoul), **Gallery KUZO** (Seoul), **Gallery STAN** (Seoul), **Swivel Gallery** (New York), **ThisWeekendRoom** (Seoul), and **Tuesday to Friday** (Valencia), among others.



Gallery KUZO's booth at Kiaf PLUS 2023. Photo by Kiaf Operating Committee. Courtesy of Kiaf.

Booth highlights across the fair included **Madeleine Bialke's** solo presentation at **Newchild** (Antwerp); **Ana Kakar's** new paintings inspired by cult films and Korean psychological thrillers at **Galerie Marguo** (Paris); **2GIL29 Gallery's** (Seoul) booth featuring **Junyoung Kang's** works with intense colors and brush strokes reminiscent of pop art and graffiti; **ARTSIDE Gallery** (Seoul) showcasing **Suin Choi**, one of the recently named Forbes Korea's "20 Young Powerful People"; New works by artist duo **Ksusha Lastochka** and **Maxim Trulov** at **Lazy Mike** (Riga); Duo show of Spain artist **David Oliver**, also known as **Grip Face**, and Korean artist **Miju Lee** at **LA BIBI Gallery** (Palma de Mallorca); and **Antony Gormley's** sculptures that explore the intricate connection between the human body and the universe at **Cristea Roberts Gallery** (London) and **GALLERIA CONTINUA** (San Gimignano, Beijing, Les Moulins, Habana, Rome, São Paulo, Paris, Dubai).

First-time and returning exhibitors at Kiaf SEOUL remarked on robust sales and international attendance, saying:

"Hakgojae has been participating in Kiaf for 10 years, and I feel that this year's Kiaf has increased in quality and number of visitors compared to last year and the year before. This year, 15 artists participated, and Hakgojae continues to highlight domestic artists. Visitors have also told us that they like the fact that we continue to highlight domestic artists. From the gallery's point of view, I am happy that many people who come to visit also say that this year's Kiaf is better than last year's."

Chungwoo Woo, Managing Director, Hakgojae Gallery (Seoul)

"Participating in Kiaf SEOUL for the first time was a truly enriching experience. We had a chance to introduce Madeleine Bialke's work to a whole new collector base and meet some of her pre-existing collectors from the region in person for the first time. Interacting with local collectors, who were both incredibly hospitable and knowledgeable, provided a great introduction into the dynamic and evolving art

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landscape in Seoul. The Kiaf team has been absolutely wonderful to work with and we look forward to the possibility of returning next year.”

Sarah Vanwelden, Co-Founder, Newchild Gallery* (Antwerp)

“Collectors from around the world visited Kiaf SEOUL, showing great interest in our works and leading to sales. We are confident that Seoul will become the hub of the Asian art market.”

Youngho Jang, Director, GALLERY MAC (Busan)

“We were pleased to have the honor of participating in Kiaf SEOUL 2023 for our first international art fair. This is also the first time for the artists in our presentation, Sawako Nasu, Yosuke Yamanouchi, and Yurina Okada, to exhibit outside of Japan. The energy of the Korean art world and the warm welcome we have received in Seoul has been wonderful. We hope to return next year.”

Mahiko Kobayashi, CEO, Biscuit Gallery* (Tokyo)

“It has been a very inspiring atmosphere, not only at the fair but the city itself. The people of Seoul treat art as everyday experience and it seems to encompass the entire city. The enthusiasm and sincerity around contemporary art here is equivalent to the Renaissance or the early 20th century in Paris, where art is a part of daily life; it is a refreshing attitude which is hard to match. We are proud to have brought our artists to such a generous, welcoming city and plan to return many times.”

Graham Wilson, Founder, Swivel Gallery* (New York)

“Kiaf provides an exceptional platform for fusing international and local arts; it cultivates a vibrant and dynamic exchange among art enthusiasts from all over the world, which offers us an excellent opportunity to introduce our programme to a broader audience.”

Ella Tse, Associate Director, Over the Influence (Hong Kong)

“We were delighted with the strong sales this week from our group painting show of Camilla Engström, Scout Zabinski, Meeson Pae, Jeremy Lawson, Leonard Baby, Caroline Zurmely, Tony Toscani, Ji Woo Kim, and Deborah Brown. It was great to reconnect with our Korean collector base and meet new collectors and curators too – this year it feels like there was new energy and interest in the air for emerging artists.”

Katharine Kostyál, Co-Owner, Carl Kostyál Gallery (London, Stockholm, Milan)

“We were thrilled to be at the 2023 edition of Kiaf, our first art fair in Asia! It was such an amazing opportunity to introduce Korean audiences to our gallery and the works of our artists Darby Milbrath, Jane Corrigan, and Rose Nestler. The reception of our booth was incredible, and everyone loved the bright, warm, playful works we presented.”

Julie Côté, Founder & Director, Pangée* (Montreal)

“At our second year here at Kiaf we presented the work of Drew Dodge and Tiger Rocha. The audience here was enthusiastic, and we were happy to place works with collections and foundations based in Beijing, Jeju, Shanghai, and Seoul. It was great to see a more international audience at this year’s edition, as well as a larger number of international galleries exhibiting.”

Jonathan Hoyt, Partner/Director, Steve Turner (Los Angeles)

“Gallery Hyundai presented Ryan Gander’s solo exhibition ‘The Origins of Choice’ at Kiaf SEOUL 2023, which attracted a lot of attention. This year’s edition was particularly encouraging in that it attracted numerous international art insiders and collectors to Kiaf. Ryan Gander’s experimental and witty conceptual works received many inquiries, and sales were successful.”

HyungTeh Do, President, Gallery Hyundai (Seoul)

“We are returning to Kiaf after a positive experience last year. Kiaf is a fruitful meeting place for the international art community, and helps bring our collectors to Korea. In the coming years, it will play an

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important role in developing Korea towards its full potential.”

Dr. Henrietta Tsui-Leung, CEO and Co-Founder, Ora-Ora (Hong Kong)

“We were very excited to participate in Kiaf SEOUL for the very first time. We met so many fantastic collectors who have come all the way from New Zealand, Asia, or Europe. What a vibrant mix of people, exhibitors, and great artworks!”

Silke Thomas, Galerie Thomas* (Munich)

“There is greater interest and demand in art from the younger generation in Korea. It’s exciting to see the collecting base in Korea diversify, and we look forward to next year’s Seoul Art Week.”

Keumjo Yoo, Curator, 2Gil29 Gallery (Seoul)

**First-time exhibitors*

The fair’s program this year also included:

Kiaf Highlights Award

Kiaf Highlights Award is a brand new initiative presented by the Kiaf Organizing Committee with the support of co-organizer COEX, aimed to promote and support emerging and mid-career artists exhibiting at Kiaf whose practice represents and shapes today’s zeitgeist. The inaugural cohort of awardees include **Bunpei Kado**, **Ri Jong Ok**, and **Yi Youjin**, each receiving a grant of 10 million Korean won after rounds of selection review by a panel of art world leaders as well as visitors to Kiaf SEOUL 2023. **Bunpei Kado** (Art Front Gallery) is an emerging Japanese sculptor whose recent works focus on environmental issues. **Ri Jong Ok** (Gallery Q) is a third-generation Zainichi Korean artist, who presented five new works from her ‘Blueprint’ series investigating the current situation in East Asia, the relationship between Japan, South Korea, and North Korea, and their military. **Yi Youjin** (Wooson Gallery) is an abstract artist whose work tells a story using the imagery and perception of humankind and nature.

The jury included Kye-hoon Ha, critic and Operating Committee Chair of Gangwon Triennale; Henna Joo, Professor of Hongik University Graduate School, Dept. Arts and Cultural Management; Bog-gi Kim, President of *Art in Culture*; Jin-yup Kim, Chairman of Korea Art Critic Association; and Iain Robertson, Honorary Fellow at Sotheby’s Institute of Art.

Media Art Special Exhibition – Gray Box Area: Space as an Event

Co-curated by Dae-chan Heo, Editor-in-Chief of Aliceon, Korea’s first-ever online news platform dedicated to new media culture, and artist Jae-hyung Lee, a researcher and planner in the field of technology-mediated culture, the special exhibition *Gray Box Area: Space as an Event* was on view during Kiaf SEOUL 2023. The project focused on the developing concept of immersive exhibitions and explored the current state of media art in Korea and its impact on society, life, and culture. Presenting different works each day inside the two immersive spaces that utilize projectors, or “Gray Boxes,” the exhibition invited fair visitors to experience the spatiotemporal changes of the works inside the Gray Box, while their viewing experience in turn interconnected, evolved, and developed into a “space as event” in real time. Participating artists included renowned Korean new media artists such as Sungrok Choi, Seunghyo Jang, KoHui, Leenam Lee, Yeseung Lee, Mooni Perry, Joon Moon, Kiwoun Shin, Studio Artech, and a group of artists representing Korea Media Arts Association.

Special Exhibition – Rehyun Park & Saengkwang Park: Hometown to the Unadulterated Colors

Hometown to the Unadulterated Colors, a special exhibition of 20th century masters Rehyun Park and Saengkwang Park that reexamined the history and significance of polychrome painting in Korea, was on view during Kiaf SEOUL 2023. The exhibition highlighted both artists’ roles at the forefront of reviving the tradition of polychrome Korean painting and continuing its legacy in their own independent styles, by showcasing selected works from the artists’ recent duo exhibition at Hangaram Art Museum in Seoul. *Hometown to the Unadulterated Colors* is organized by art critic Bummo Youn and independent curator

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Yoonsub Kim.

We connect, Art & Future, Kiaf and INCHEON AIRPORT

After the success of the previous editions in 2021 and 2022, Kiaf and the Incheon International Airport presents the third edition of *We connect, Art & Future, Kiaf and INCHEON AIRPORT*, featuring more than 60 contemporary artworks by 30 emerging artists under 49 and focusing on contemporary paintings with a youthful sense. On view on the mezzanine floor of the Terminal 1 Transportation Centre of the Incheon International Airport from August 28, the exhibition continues to welcome travelers from across the world through September 17, 2023.

We connect, Art & Future, Kiaf and INCHEON AIRPORT features 20 galleries selected from the exhibitors of Kiaf SEOUL 2023, including Gallery Artsoop, Gallery Bakyoung, Gallery FM, Galerie Gaia, Gallery iLHO, Gallery Jeon, Gallery We, Gallery Woo, Gallery Yoon, IAH, K.O.N.G. Gallery, Keumsan Gallery, Leeseoul Gallery, Gallery Miz, Park Ryu Sook Gallery, Pnc Gallery, Seojung Art, Seoshin Gallery, Spacenamuro Aura Gallery, and Sun Gallery.

Further details on the participating galleries and artists are available [HERE](#).

Talks Program in Association with Frieze Seoul and Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS)

Kiaf, Frieze Seoul, and KAMS co-presented a Talks program from September 7 to 9 at Studio 159, located on the second floor of COEX. Nine sessions took place across three days under topics including 'New Media Art's Today and Future', 'Asia Art Fairs', 'INSIDE INSIGHT K-ART', 'What makes an art collector?', 'It's dark under the lamp: Climate Change in Art World', 'Infrastructure, Intimacy, Affective labor: Artist talk', 'Korean Experimental Art (Silheom Misul): Inside & Outside', 'AI Effects', and 'Accelerating Realities: Artist talk'. The Talks program created a platform to cultivate new ideas through spirited debate, reflecting on some of the most salient issues in the international art world today.

Gangnam Art: Cheongdam Night

Kiaf SEOUL 2023 collaborated with Gangnam Art to host 'Cheongdam Night' on September 6, featuring a wide range of programs such as docent tours, DJ parties, and wine tasting events, with galleries and institutions in the Cheongdam-dong area of Gangnam participating. Participating galleries and institutions included Gallery NoW, Gallery Planet, Songeun, Atelier Hermès, Espace Louis Vuitton Seoul, Opera Gallery, UARTSPACE, Lee Eugene Gallery, G Gallery, König, Perrotin, White Cube, Gladstone, and Duarte Sequeira Seoul.

Samcheong Gallery Night

Galleries and institutions—including Kiaf exhibitors Kukje Gallery, Gallery Hyundai, PKM Gallery, Hakgojae—located in Samcheong-dong area welcomed visitors to 'Samcheong Gallery Night' on September 7, during which participating galleries in the historical neighborhood were open for extended hours and showcased the most recent exhibitions with the audiences from all around the world.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Kiaf SEOUL

Founded in 2002 by the Galleries Association of Korea, Kiaf SEOUL is South Korea's first international art fair. Today, the fair serves as a unique meeting point that bridges the Korean art scene and the international art market, showcasing over 160 galleries each year. In 2022, Kiaf SEOUL expands with a satellite fair Kiaf PLUS, a platform dedicated to ambitious and experimental presentations across diverse genres and practices including new media art and art NFTs. For more information, please visit <https://kiaf.org/> and follow us on [Instagram](#).

About the Galleries Association of Korea

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The Galleries Association of Korea was founded in 1976 with a mission to facilitate broader and deeper appreciation of art in Korea, contribute to fostering a healthy art market, and to advance Korean art on an international stage. Today, the Association – consisted of more than 160 galleries nationwide – organizes art fairs (Kiaf and Galleries Art Fair) and operates The Art Appraisal Committee and The Art Policy Research Centre.

Images

Please see general and gallery images from Kiaf SEOUL and Kiaf PLUS 2023 [here](#).

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