

ARTTABLE SOUTH KOREA

10 – 18 OCTOBER 2026



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Itinerary at a glance

Saturday 10th October



Individual arrivals into Seoul
National Museum of Korea

Sunday 11th October



Huwon Secret Garden
Changdeokgung Palace
Arario Gallery
Embroidery artist studio visit

Monday 12th October



National Palace Museum of Korea
Kookmin University

Tuesday 13th October



Gallery Hyundai
Kukje Gallery
Bukchon Hanok Village
Artist studio visit: Yee Sookyung

Wednesday 14th October



Leeum Museum of Art
Fashion Designer studio visit
SongEun Art and Cultural Foundation
Private collection visit

Thursday 15th October



Train: Seoul to Gwangju
Gwangju Art Biennale: Biennale Hall

Friday 16th October



Gwangju Art Biennale: satellite venues

Saturday 17th October



Korea Furniture Museum
Private collection visit

Sunday 18th October



Pildong ceramic studio
Korea House
LG Arts Centre
Individual departures

Welcome to ArtTable's South Korea Tour

Dear ArtTable Members,

Welcome to an ArtTable travel experience—where discovery, dialogue, and community come together. Our tours open doors to exceptional artists, institutions, and cultural landscapes around the world, offering unmatched access and a shared journey with fellow arts professionals and enthusiasts.

As we embark on this exploration of South Korea's dynamic art scene, we're excited to travel, learn, and connect with you. Thank you for being part of the ArtTable community and for joining us on this unforgettable cultural adventure.

Warmest wishes,

Jessica L. Porter
Lila Harnett Executive Director, ArtTable

Morning:

Individual arrivals into Seoul. Check-in is from 3.00pm; if you would like access to your room before the afternoon visits, please indicate on your registration form that you would like to book an additional night on Friday 9th October.

Check into [Lotte Hotel Seoul](#), an elegant and timeless five-star hotel centrally located in Seoul's vibrant Jung-gu district. The shopping streets of Myeong-dong are a short walk away, as are many of the city's excellent restaurants. There is a fitness centre and spa, including an indoor pool, and has multiple restaurants serving a variety of cuisines. The decor blends classic luxury is blended with contemporary sophistication, and service is excellent.

Deluxe Room, Lotte Hotel Seoul





National Museum of Korea

Afternoon:

We transfer by luxury coach to our first visit of the trip, the [National Museum of Korea](#); one of the largest museums in Asia, welcoming over three million visitors each year. The collections contain Korean archaeological artefacts, paintings and sculpture, as well as international objects. Some of South Korea's most beloved National Treasures are held here, including an imposing ten-story 14th-century pagoda. Here we will have a curator-led tour of the Museum's highlights and a private handling session in the Museum's state-of-the-art storage facilities.

Return to the hotel for some time at leisure.

Evening:

For our first night in Seoul, we will enjoy a welcome dinner at [hotel's Korean restaurant, Mugunghwa](#), where the chef's refined take on classic Korean cuisine is paired with views across the city.



Huwon Secret Garden

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

Our first visit of the day is [Huwon Secret Garden](#), located in [Changdeokgung Palace](#), one of Seoul's five royal palaces and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Constructed in 1405 at the order of King Taejong, it is an exceptional example of Korean palatial architecture set within extensive landscaped gardens. The Joseon dynasty built the 'Five Grand Palaces' in Seoul, all of which are located in the Jongno and Jung districts. Changdeokgung was

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the first palace to be rebuilt in 1610 after the Japanese invasion in 1592. The site was selected for the UNESCO World Heritage List for its exemplary architecture of the period, often revered for the way the buildings blend with the natural topography of the beautiful site. The 'Secret Garden' at the rear of the palace includes a hundred different species of tree and some trees over 300 years old.

We will also visit the neighbouring [Arario Gallery](#), a quirky contemporary art collection housed in a maze-like building featuring a 1970s brickwork façade, a traditional *hanok* and an ivy-draped building. The courtyard contains a stone pagoda believed to date back to the Goryeo Dynasty. The older building was designed by one of Korea's leading architects, Kim Swoo-geun, and was designated as a national heritage site in 2014. The museum's architecture reflects the collection inside, blurring the lines between traditional and contemporary.

Lunch:

We continue on foot for lunch at [The Green Table](#), a French restaurant run by Chef Kim Eun-hee.

Changdeokgung Palace



Ham Kyungah, 'Needling Whisper, Needle Country/ SMS Series in Camouflage', 2015 (detail)

Afternoon:

This afternoon we visit the [studio of celebrated embroidery artist Ham Kyungah](#) (subject to confirmation). Through a lengthy and dangerous process, Ham smuggles her designs into North Korea, where they are secretively hand-sewn by anonymous embroiderers. Each brightly coloured work becomes an embodiment of the struggle and political friction between North and South. Her embroideries are an attempt to reunite through art people who were forcibly separated as a result of the Korean War.

There is some time to rest before dinner.

Evening:

We walk the short distance from the hotel for dinner at [Crystal Jade](#), a popular Chinese restaurant serving a wide array of Asian dishes.

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We spend the morning at the [National Palace Museum of Korea](#), situated within the grounds of Gyeongbokgung Palace. The Museum holds over 40,000 artefacts and royal treasures from the Joseon dynasty, 14 of which are National Treasures of South Korea. The collection demonstrates the highly skilled artistry of Korea's longest-ruling dynasty: gold-embroidered *hanbok* (traditional robes), silk screens depicting royal court life, furniture, portraits of revered Joseon royals and exquisite jewellery.

Lunch:

We continue on foot for lunch at nearby [Yonggeumok](#), which has been offering piping hot bowls of loach soup (an indigenous freshwater fish) since 1932: a popular local dish believed to boost energy.

Afternoon:

Our afternoon visit is to [Kookmin University](#). Established in 1946, it was the first private university to open after Korean independence from Japan. Kookmin's Department of Metalwork and Jewellery is internationally renowned, offering state-of-the-art facilities to students, with several notable alumni. We will hear about jewellery and metalwork design from a leading professor.

We return to the hotel for some free time.

Evening:

A short drive brings us to [A Flower Blossom on the Rice](#) for dinner, which serves organic seasonal ingredients from local farms and specialises in the popular Korean rice-based dish, *bibimbap*.

Opposite: Temple courtyard, Seoul



Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We begin our day at [Gallery Hyundai](#). Founded in 1970 by Park Myung-ja, the gallery is now the oldest contemporary art gallery in Korea. It has helped foster the careers of major artists such as Nam June Paik, and important Dansaekhwa artists such as Lee Ufan.

We continue on to [Kukje Gallery](#), which has presented the work of significant Korean and international artists since its opening in 1982, such as Jenny Holzer and Donald Judd, and contemporary Korean women artists including Ham Kyungah and Suki Seokyeong Kang. Its early programmes showed a commitment to bridging the gap between contemporary art and the public, playing a significant role in reviving international interest in Dansaekhwa. The gallery was founded by renowned Korean collector Hyun-Sook Lee.

Kukje Gallery



Bukchon Hanok Village

Lunch:

Lunch is at [The Restaurant](#) at Kukje Gallery: a fine-dining restaurant serving an eclectic range of seasonal menus, including French-Japanese fusion and Italian, by chef Abe Koichi. Artworks by Haegue Yang are suspended from the ceiling.

Afternoon:

This afternoon there is some free time to explore [Bukchon Hanok Village](#). This village is home to over 900 *hanoks* (traditional wooden Korean houses) which date back to the Joseon Dynasty. Today many of the *hanoks* operate as shops, tea-houses and cultural centres.

There is some time at leisure at the hotel before the evening visit.

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Evening:

We drive to the [studio of sculptor Yee Sookyung](#). Inspired by the Korean tradition of destroying any ceramic works which are not perfect, Yee began using these mismatched discarded fragments to create striking sculptures, fused together using the tradition of gold lacquer. Her work is represented in the collections of major international institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

For dinner this evening we enjoy traditional Korean royal court cuisine (*gungjung hanjeongsik*) at [Seokparang](#). Housed in a *hanok* which was originally the guest house of a villa owned by Heungseon Daewongun, the regent to King Gojong during the late Joseon Dynasty

Opposite: pottery by Yee Sookgung



Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We begin our final day with a short drive to the [Leeum Museum of Art](#), which opened in 2004 and was designed by three world-renowned architects: Mario Botta, Jean Nouvel and Rem Koolhaas. Each architect designed a separate space within the complex, resulting in a unique and visually striking juxtaposition of styles. The collection ranges from traditional Korean art to contemporary international, including artists such as El Anatsui, Jeong-hwa Choi, Kwang-young Chun, George Baselitz, Louise Bourgeois, Gabriel Orozco and Lee Ufan.

We continue to [visit the studio of fashion designer Kim Young-Jin](#) (subject to confirmation) for a private presentation of her work. Kim's reinterpretations of the traditional Korean *hanbok* are modern, elegant and ready-to-wear, designed with contemporary lifestyles in mind. Her brand, Tchae Kim, has been featured in Vogue, as well as in several Korean films, TV series and stage performances.

Lunch:

For lunch we dine at [Jungsik](#), a contemporary Korean restaurant boasting two Michelin stars and a sister restaurant in New York. Chef Yim Jung-Sik is credited with introducing Korean cuisine to the world; his innovative flair combined with traditional recipes create an authentic and unique culinary experience.

Opposite: Kim Young-Jin



Afternoon:

The afternoon will be spent at [SongEun Art and Cultural Foundation](#) which offers a variety of exhibitions and performances. Established in 1989, the non-profit organisation supports the work of young Korean artists, including through the SongEun Art Award which nurtures contemporary artists. The building itself opened in 2021, designed by Swiss architectural duo Herzog & de Meuron who intended it to become a cultural hub.

We continue for our final visit, to visit the home of a [renowned Korean private collector](#) (subject to confirmation)

Evening:

The evening is free for independent arrangements.

SongEun Art and Cultural Foundation



Gwangju

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

We transfer by fast train from Seoul to [Gwangju](#) (2 hours); our luggage is transferred separately by road. Situated on the Han River and in the heart of the Gyeonggi Province, Gwangju is the origin of traditional Korean culture. It is also known as the 'City of Light' due to the richness of its arts and cultural scene. While it is a hub for contemporary arts, Gwangju also supports the traditional Korean arts, including neighbourhood festivals which draw on both ancient and modern Korean cultural offerings.

Lunch:

On arrival in Gwangju, we enjoy lunch at a [local restaurant](#).



Mountains and vineyards, Gwangju

Afternoon:

This afternoon we enjoy our first visit to the [Gwangju Art Biennale](#). Established in 1994, it is Asia's oldest biennale of contemporary art. The Biennale Hall was built in 1995 and is the exhibition's pivotal venue, bringing together the numerous narrative threads of the art fair's theme. The Singaporean artist, filmmaker, and curator Ho Tzu Nyen has been appointed artistic director for 2026; the theme of the 16th edition is 'You must change your life', and aims to explore the transformative power of art and how a significant work can inspire profound change and expand human potential.

Evening:

Check in and free time at [Holiday Inn Gwangju](#). The best place to stay in Gwangju, it is a polished and comfortable international hotel with an indoor pool, fitness centre and spa.

Dinner:

We depart the hotel for dinner at [Ohga-heon Restaurant](#), which serves traditional Korean cuisine.

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel.

We will enjoy the full day at the [Gwangju Art Biennale](#)'s satellite venues, including: Horanggasy Artpolygon, a multi-cultural space promoting multifaceted thinking, as the name suggests; Mugaksa Temple; and Gwangju National Museum. We will also return to the Biennale Hall for a second visit.

Lunch:

Lunch is at the Biennale or a local restaurant.

Evening:

Our final meal in Gwangju will be at [Daegwang Sikdang](#), originally made famous by its *gukjeon* (pan-fried battered beef).

Marguerite Humeau, "Stir", Gwangju Biennale 2024



Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

Transfer by high speed train back to Seoul, with a *dosirak* (**Korean packed lunch**) to enjoy en route.

Afternoon:

On arrival in Seoul, we head straight to **Korea Furniture Museum**. Set in landscaped gardens with panoramic views of the city, this privately owned collection of Joseon furniture is housed within ten joined *hanok* structures. After the tour, we will enjoy some tea in this beautiful setting, and hope to also be treated to a demonstration by **Hong Jeong-Sil**, a National Living Treasure and master arisan of *ipsa* (silver inlaying) (subject to confirmation).

The museum is currently closed for renovation, but we hope it will have reopened by October 2026.

Korea Furniture Museum



Seoul

We continue for a late-afternoon visit to visit a private art collection, before returning to the hotel for some free time.

Evening:

For our final meal today, we dine at the hotel's French restaurant, **Pierre Gagnaire**, opened by the celebrated French chef in 2008. The elegant space is adorned with Murano chandeliers and gold trim walls.

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Pavilion by Kay Aplin, Pildong Ceramic Studio

Morning:

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.

This morning we visit [Pildong Ceramic Studio](#), where a group of young emerging ceramicists have converted an old house in the centre of Seoul into a communal studio and teaching space. Here, we will see the next generation of Korean artists at work.

Lunch:

We continue to [Korea House](#), for a visit followed by lunch: a high-end cultural complex offering *Hanjeongsik* (Korean table d'hôte), traditional refreshments, performance arts, and weddings. There is also the opportunity to see a traditional dance performance (subject to confirmation).

Afternoon:

Our final visit of the trip is a tour of [LG Art Centre Seoul](#), the non-profit performing arts centre in Seoul Botanic Park. The centre supports cultural interchange by fostering creative activities and promoting diverse values which contribute to the development of performance culture in Korea. The stunning building was designed by Tadao Ando, and reflects his architectural philosophy of letting nature blend into the architecture.

We transfer to the airport for individual departures, arriving at around 5.00pm.

LG Arts Centre



The cost of the tour to South Korea (8 nights) is:*

- \$8,080 per person for double/twin occupancy
- \$9,030 per person for single occupancy

**The cost is based on a minimum of 12 participants. If we reach 14+ participants, the cost will be reduced to \$7,640 per person, based on double/twin occupancy; or \$8,590 based on single occupancy.*

The tour cost includes:

- 6 nights accommodation in Seoul at the 5-star **Lotte Hotel** (Deluxe Rooms)
- 2 nights accommodation in Gwangju at the 4-star **Holiday Inn** (Superior Rooms)
- Full breakfast in the hotel restaurants each day
- Meals at restaurants as per the itinerary
- All visits and special private arrangements as per the itinerary
- Transportation by deluxe motor coach
- All museum entrance fees
- Services of an ArtsAbroad tour director throughout
- Expert Guides and Curators
- All gratuities for restaurants, guides, porters, drivers

The tour cost does not include:

- International flights to/from Seoul
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenditure (such as laundry / telephone calls etc)
- Independent meals

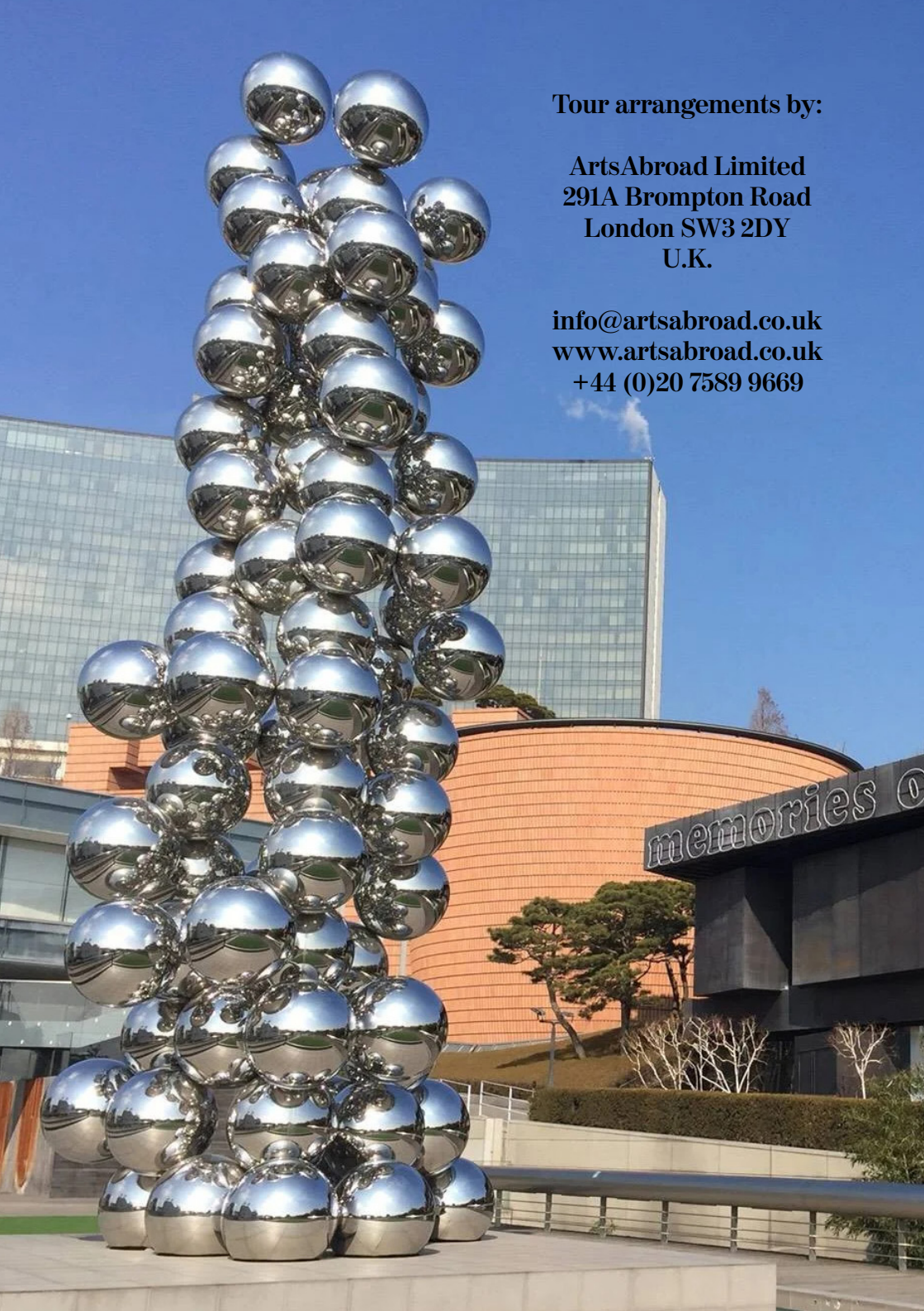
Room upgrades may be available – please call ArtsAbroad if you would like further information. We will also be pleased to book additional nights before or after the tour.

Please note that this itinerary is subject to change.

Opposite: Korean lacquerwork

Back cover: Anish Kapoor, 'Tall Tree and the Eye' (2009), Leeum Museum





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