

Kiaf SEOUL Unveils Gallery Standouts, Special Exhibition Programming, and 'Kiaf HIGHLIGHTS' Semi-Finalists

Korea's largest international art fair returns this September with a "Coexistence" theme, bringing elevated programming and fresh artistic perspectives to COEX

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For its 25th anniversary edition, Kiaf SEOUL 2026 returns with a renewed vision led by Creative Director Kuho Jung and centered on the theme "Coexistence," exploring the evolving relationship between humanity and technology. Organized by the Galleries Association of Korea, the fair will take place at

COEX in Seoul from September 2 – 6, 2026, bringing together 175 galleries from 18 countries and territories. Through a dynamic presentation of contemporary artistic practices, Kiaf SEOUL 2026 reconsiders the enduring value of human perception and artistic expression at a moment when artificial intelligence and digital innovation are reshaping everyday life, while fostering dialogue around new forms of coexistence in an increasingly technology-driven world.

This year's edition will feature a broad spectrum of established and emerging galleries and artists, based both in Korea and internationally, as well as a strong cohort of first-time exhibitors. Together, they will offer collectors and audiences a compelling overview of the contemporary art landscape, reflecting both regional perspectives and global currents shaping artistic practice today.

Complementing the main gallery presentations, signature initiatives including Kiaf PLUS and the expanded Kiaf HIGHLIGHTS program will spotlight emerging voices, experimental practices, and artist-focused exhibitions. Beyond the fair halls, Kiaf will once again serve as a central pillar of Seoul Art Week, extending its reach across the city and connecting international audiences with Seoul's vibrant cultural ecosystem.



Kiaf SEOUL 2025. Courtesy of Galleries Association of Korea □ Creative Resource

Gallery Standouts

Reflecting the fair's commitment to presenting art-historical depth alongside contemporary perspectives, this year's edition features notable works by internationally acclaimed artists whose enduring influence continues to resonate across the global cultural landscape. Highlights include a tempera painting by Marc Chagall from 1982, presented by Art of the World Gallery, capturing symbols of love, vitality, and emotional connection; Sol LeWitt's *Irregular Grid* (1999), a dynamic visual structure, balancing order and variation from Obscura; a limited edition print *For the Love of God* (2012) by Damien Hirst at Yeasung Gallery, with the eponymous diamond-encrusted sculpture having been exhibited in a major solo show at MMCA (Seoul) earlier this year, and more.

The fair will also feature significant works by some of Korea's most influential modern and contemporary artists, highlighting their enduring legacy in shaping the international recognition of Korean art. Highlights include pieces from Lee Ufan presented by various galleries across the fair, including piece from his *Wind* series, known for their freer and more dynamic compositions; mixed media works by Seobo Park, a central figure of the Dansaekhwa movement, presented by Wellside Gallery; Kim Tschangyeul, known for his abstract water droplet paintings, will be shown at PYO Gallery, and more.

Leading contemporary artists with strong international profiles will also be presented, showcasing practices that span cultures, disciplines, and artistic traditions while engaging with some of the most pressing ideas of our time. Highlights include a relief sculpture carved from soap by Meekyoung Shin, capturing a scene of dancing angels, exhibited at Gallery JJ; Korakrit Arunanondchai's *The Angel* (2025), a mixed media work on bleached demin from one of Southeast Asia's most internationally recognised contemporary artists at Kukje Gallery; a painting by KAWS using bold colors, graphic contours, and transparent overlays to capture the tension between human connection and emotional distance at Opera Gallery; and more.

Special Exhibition Programming

Expanding the fair experience on a curated platform beyond the marketplace, special exhibition HUMAL will explore the coexistence of humanity and technology, while Invisible will extend those themes into augmented reality (AR): offering distinct yet complementary perspectives on the relationship between humanity and technology.

HUMAL, a portmanteau of 'human' and 'animal', examines human instinct, embodied perception, and vitality in an age increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems. The exhibition brings together seven interdisciplinary artists, including Kang Kun, Kwak Ji Su, Sung Byunghee, Oh Heinkuhn, Lee Dongwook, Yi Hwankwon, and Hwang Sueyon. In Invisible, visitors scan QR codes installed throughout the exhibition to view AR artworks integrated into the exhibition space.

Semi-Finalists Announced for 'Kiaf HIGHLIGHTS'

The 10 semi-finalists for Kiaf HIGHLIGHTS have been announced, spotlighting artists whose practices engage with contemporary themes including ecology, materiality, and Eastern philosophy. Launched in 2023 to support artists developing their careers in Korea and internationally, the program returns in an expanded format for 2026, with selected artists presented in dedicated in-booth exhibition spaces by their galleries, offering audiences and collectors a deeper engagement with their work.

Semi-finalists include Gosari (Gallery Shilla); Lee Jaesam (Gallery Grimson); Lee Chaeyoung (Sun Gallery); Lim Nosik Arario Gallery); Lim Hyunjung (Atelier Aki); Cho Kyungjae (Gallery Palzo); Ji Geunwook (Hakgojae Gallery); Matthew Stone (CHOI&CHOI Gallery); Xevi Solà (Opera Gallery); and Yui Suzuki (mizusai). The shortlist was determined by a panel of art professionals comprised of Laurencina Farrant (Director of Songeun), Seo Jinseok (Director of Busan Museum of Art), Chung Yeon Shim (Professor at Hongik University), Lee Daehyung (Director of Hzone / Artistic Director of the 2026 Gyeonggi Ceramics Biennale), and Ha Kyehoon (Director of Yangpyeong Art Museum).

Kiaf Classic: Seong-Jin Cho Brings Art and Music into Dialogue

Extending this year's theme into the realm of music, Kiaf Classic will present Kiaf Classic: Resonance of Coexistence with Seong-Jin Cho at the COEX Auditorium on September 4, featuring internationally acclaimed pianist Seong-Jin Cho. Renowned for his exceptional artistry and global career, Cho's performance will offer a distinctive interdisciplinary experience, expanding the fair's exploration of creativity, perception, and cultural exchange.

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