

THE GWANGJU BIENNALE

The Gwangju Biennale was founded in 1995 as a biennial, international contemporary arts exhibition to honor and pay tribute to the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Struggle. The Biennale aims to express the democratic spirit of the people of Gwangju through cultural exchange on an international level, provide a central voice for Asian contemporary art, and a cultural axis between East and West.

A collaborative effort between its co-sponsors, the Gwangju Biennale Foundation and the City of Gwangju, it is held every two years for two months, centering on the Culture Belt of Jungoui Park, but occasionally extending into other sites in the city. The core of the Biennale is the International Contemporary Art Exhibition, which reflects on contemporary art and culture through thematic exhibitions. The main exhibition of the Biennale is joined by academic symposia and ancillary events.

The Biennale traditionally places an emphasis on exhibiting artists from a wide variety of countries. Collateral programs and events, including the academic symposia, are usually linked to the theme of each edition. In keeping with the goals of the Biennale, invited academics and professionals to these corollary events represent diverse nations and cultures.

Jungoui Park, the primary site of the Gwangju Biennale, was created to celebrate art, democracy, and traditional culture. The park hosts many institutions and museums devoted to art and culture. **The Gwangju Art Museum** – that will also serve as one of the venues of the 8th Gwangju Biennale – houses modern and contemporary art works by local artists. **The Gwangju Folk Museum** – another venue for the exhibition – displays objects and reconstructions of traditional customs of the Namdo region, while the **National Museum of Gwangju** exhibits traditional artifacts and craftwork of the Namdo region such as stoneware, metalwork, vases, ceramics, and writings from prehistoric times to today. **The Gwangju Culture and Art Centre** is the city's primary venue for Korean classical music and performing arts. The core site of the Gwangju Biennale is the **Biennale Hall**, which has the total floor space of over 140,000 square feet across two conjoined three story buildings, and an outdoor performance area.