

Press Information



City View of Gwangju, South Korea

Open Call: Austrian Pavilion at the 16th Gwangju Biennale 2026 in South Korea

Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art is launching the open call for the concept and realisation of the Austrian Pavilion at the 16th Gwangju Biennale in 2026.

The Gwangju Biennale in South Korea is considered the oldest and most renowned biennial for contemporary art in Asia. The last edition in 2024 attracted over 700,000 visitors. The biennial was established in 1995 to commemorate the violent suppression of the Gwangju Democratisation Movement by the military dictatorship in 1980. Since 2018, the Gwangju Biennale has hosted national pavilions and satellite exhibitions by international art institutions at cultural venues across the city alongside the main exhibition. Initiated by Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art, and in collaboration with the Federal Ministries for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport as well as for European and International Affairs, and the Austrian Embassy in Seoul, artist Liesl Raff designed the first Austrian pavilion at the Gwangju Biennale in 2024 under the title *Club Liaison*. Following its success and international

visibility, Raff's expansive, sculptural installation entered the collection of the mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien.

The 16th Gwangju Biennale in 2026 now marks the second time featuring the Austrian Pavilion. The project is commissioned by Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art and jointly funded with a grant from the Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

“The Gwangju Biennale in South Korea is one of the most important art events in Asia. Following the successful debut of the Austrian Pavilion in 2024, a curatorial concept is now once again being sought for the realisation of Austria's participation at the Gwangju Biennale in 2026. I am delighted that Austria will also be represented at the upcoming edition, further consolidating our cultural presence in Asia. The fact that the Gwangju Biennale has its origins in the democratisation movement shows once again how closely free art and free democracy are linked. I am looking forward to receiving diverse and convincing submissions,” says Andreas Babler, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

“Liesl Raff's contribution to the 15th Gwangju Biennale in 2024 made a strong artistic statement. The success of the first Austrian pavilion at the Gwangju Biennale has shown the potential of international networking and visibility of Austrian contemporary art in Asia. As an institution that has been committed to supporting the international presence of Austrian art for many years, it is a key priority for us to further develop and strengthen the dialogue with new partner institutions and biennials. We are therefore all the more pleased to once again commission Austria's contribution to the Gwangju Biennale in 2026,” says Margherita Belcredi, Director of Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art.

Open Call

Submission Deadline: 15 July 2025

As part of the open call, curatorial concepts for the realisation of the Austrian Pavilion at the 16th Gwangju Biennale can be submitted until 15 July 2025. The 16th Gwangju Biennale will take place between September and November 2026 and will be curated by curator, media artist and filmmaker Ho Tzu Nyen. The Austrian contribution will be chosen independently of the general theme of the Biennale but should reference the central theme of the main exhibition. In addition to newly developed and produced projects, previously realised projects can also be considered in the context of a new presentation. Applications must be submitted jointly by curator and artist. In addition to the exhibition concept, important components of the submission include a clear communication concept and financing plan for the exhibition as well as a sustainability concept that prioritises climate protection and resource conservation during the planning and execution of the Austrian contribution.

Austrian Pavillon at the Eunam Museum of Art

The Austrian Pavilion at the 16th Gwangju Biennale will be hosted by the Eunam Museum of Art. The museum is located in the Dong-gu district, in the immediate vicinity of the National Asian Culture Centre. In addition to Austria, the Eunam Museum of Art will also present the Swiss Pavilion. The Austrian and Swiss Pavilion, which is commissioned by Pro Helvetia, will

be presented as two independent projects, and do not have to overlap in terms of content.

The museum's exhibition space is divided into two levels. The upper floor is dedicated to the Austrian Pavilion. The exhibition area is around 183 m². The exhibition space on the ground floor will present the Swiss Pavilion. The administrative realisation of both pavilions will be carried out in cooperation and mutual support by the commissioners Pro Helvetia and Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art.

Selection process

All submitted projects will be assessed in a two-stage selection process by a jury of national and international experts. In the first round, a shortlist of projects will be selected. The winning project, and thus the winning team consisting of both the curator and the artist, will be nominated in the second round. The nominees will be publicly announced on 23 September 2025.

The **open call documents** and **eligibility requirements** are available on the website of Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art:
www.phileas.art/austrian-pavilion-gwangju/opencall

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Press material: www.phileas.art/austrian-pavilion-gwangju-press

About Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art

Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art supports artists, curators, galleries and institutions in Austria and works to strengthen their international presence through long-term partnerships, dialogues and exchange programs. From its office and exhibition space at Opernring 17 in Vienna, Phileas works with museums, biennials and art institutions around the world to enable the production and exhibition of new artworks and their donation to public collections. Phileas was founded in Vienna in 2014 as an independent philanthropic organisation and is funded by contributions from its private members and the Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport. Additional support is provided by the City of Vienna.

www.phileas.art

About the 16th Gwangju Biennale

The 16th Gwangju Biennale in 2026 will be curated by curator, media artist and filmmaker Ho Tzu Nyen. Under his artistic direction, the 16th Gwangju Biennale aims to highlight collective artistic practices and commonalities that respond to the crises of our time – from climate change and unpredictable pandemics to democratic backsliding – as well as overcoming the sense of individual powerlessness that often accompanies them.

“This edition will bring together the energies, propositions, practices, and ideas that have inspired and propelled me over the past two decades. It will be an opportunity to explore how the practice of artistic transformation resonates with Gwangju's legacy of democratic change. Rather than delivering a single message, this Biennale will seek to generate propositions for change that are shared and shaped by all of us.” (Ho Tzu Nyen)