

Be Korean

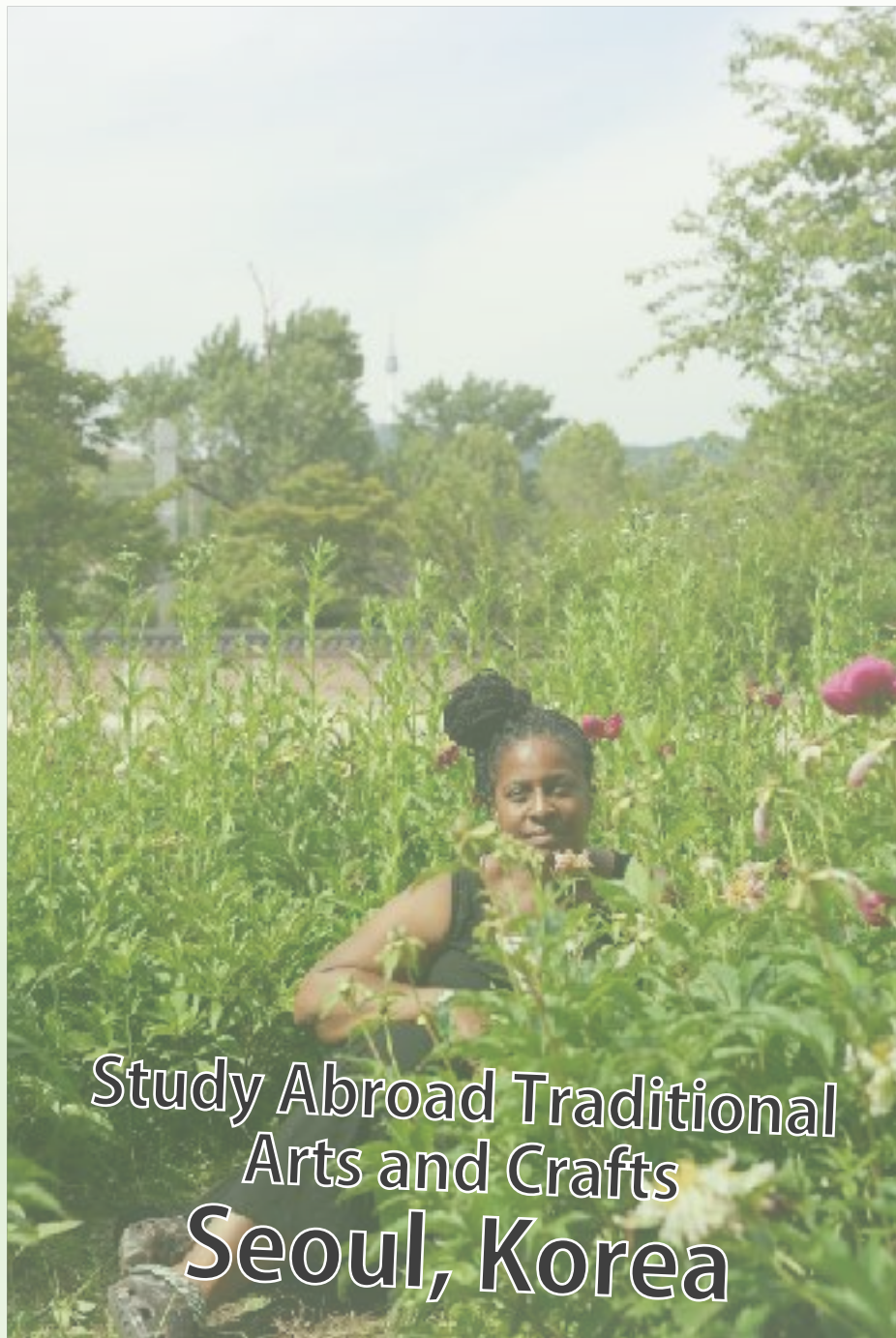


Tamla Boone May 22, 2023 – June 5, 2023

Study Abroad Korea

Be Korean

My dad always said, “When in Rome be a Roman.” I never really knew what that meant until I decided to study abroad in Korea. After being accepted into the Study Abroad program, I developed an anxiety about traveling. I never had a fear of flying, I’ve been on over 500 flights, packing is thoughtless, don’t have trouble meeting strangers, I’m not shy. This was different. After building up 12 years of fantasies, heroes and ideas from K-dramas, I was actually going to stay in another country I really wasn’t familiar with at all. Would they accept me, would they like me, how ill we communicate, I don’t speak Korean? So many questions and fears and arrangements!



Study Abroad Traditional
Arts and Crafts
Seoul, Korea

Be Korean

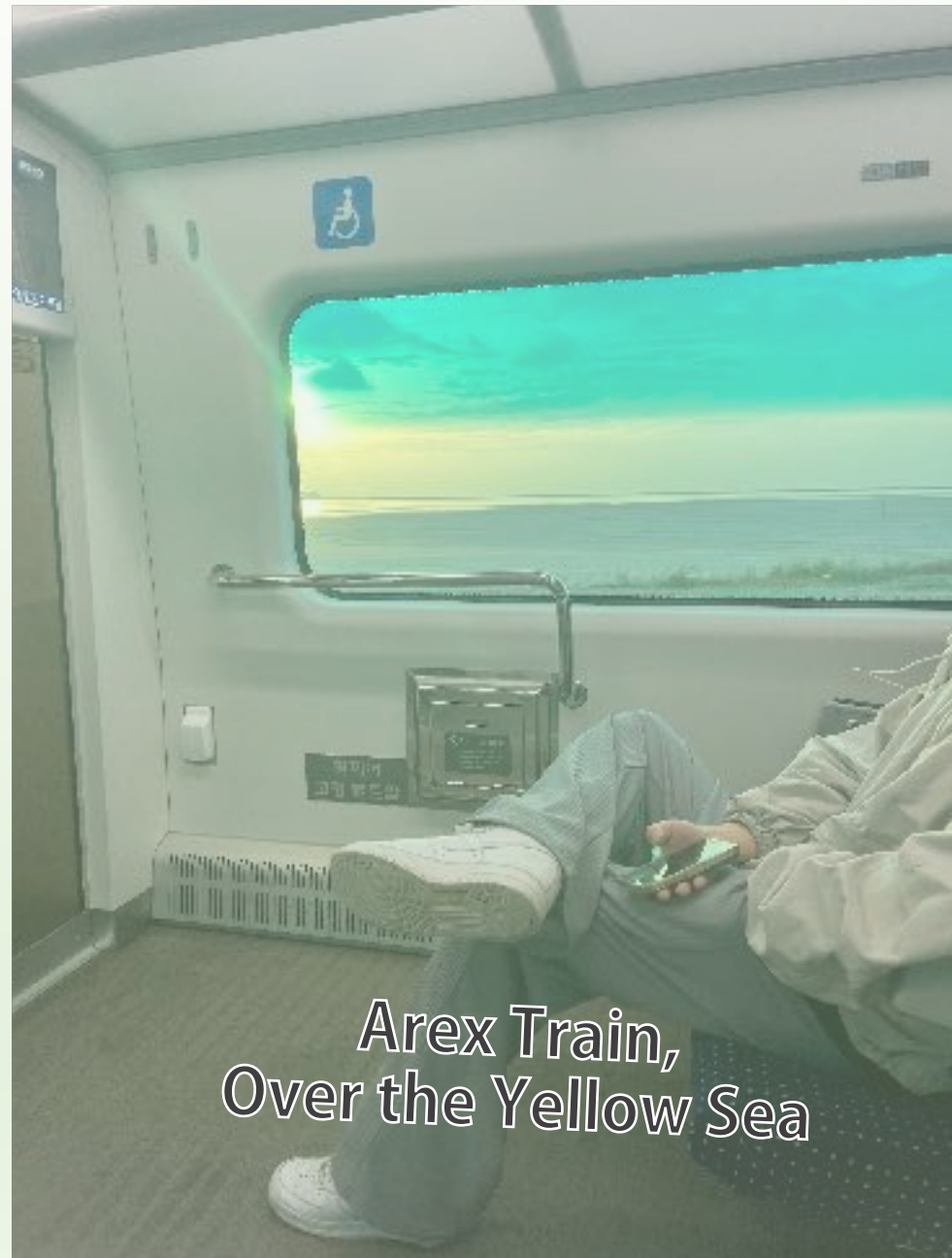
Jetlag and time changes are not my friend, I'm actually allergic to barometric pressure changes. To enjoy my study abroad, I knew I had to arrive a little early so I could be lucid during class. I mean it is a "study" abroad, not a party time. But, the arrangements! How do you book a hotel in another country! I decided to use Expedia for this trip, with a limited budget for extra travel days, Expedia is thrifty. The hotels were so cheap, \$35 for a night. I knew enough from watching K-dramas that Korean hospitality is not the same as American. In the movies, economical rooms are very small, extremely small, like the size of our closets. When I saw that the shower head stands above the commode and the toilet was in the shower, fear came in for 5 seconds. I thought to myself, "When in Rome, Be a Roman". After developing my travel Mantra, I booked the room and decided, "When in Korea, be Korean".



Guest Hostel,
Myeondong

Be Korean

Anxiety was relieved as soon as I set foot on Korean soil. I had to take a train from the airport to the city of Seoul. There was another student on the train. He studied at Brown in America and was home for the summer. He was super friendly, asked where I was from and started a conversation with me. This was the circumstance with most Koreans, they were interested to know where you are from, how did you find yourself in Korea. I knew enough from K-pop dramas to throw the “Oh, Im here studying abroad at Seoul National University”! SNU, is like our Harvard, so everyone is super impressed when you mention that school. So, while I’m “being Korean” I’ll study at SNU.



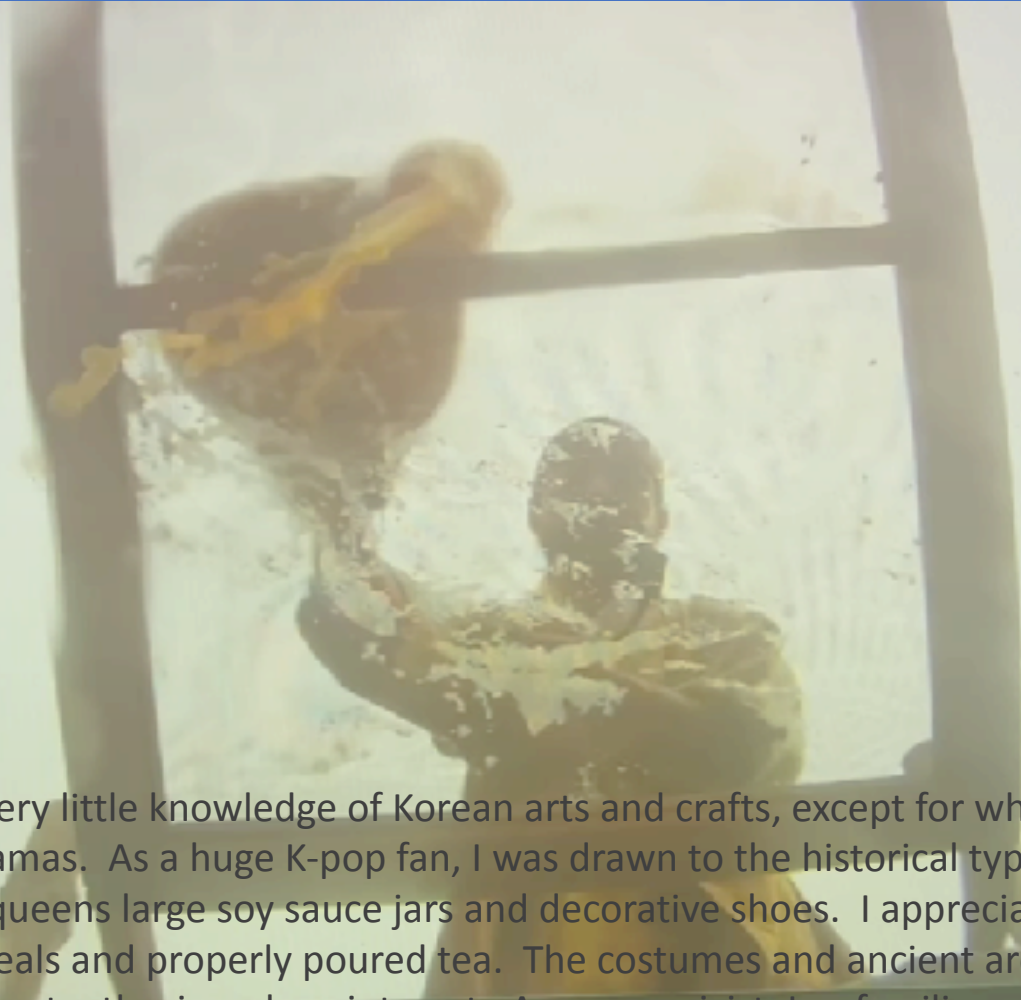
Be Korean

Instead of being Afraid, I decided to be Korean. The first night out, what in the world do I eat? I'm allergic to gluten and Jewish. I was so AFRAID, I wouldn't be able to find anything to eat. The K-dramas taught me that Koreans ate a lot of pork, squid and octopus. As I was walking down the street, this gentleman with a very nice smile waved me into his Korean Barbeque restaurant. He didn't speak English, but he handed me a menu and pointed to me, to point out what I wanted. Ok, the menu is in Korean and that's what I am, Korean, right? I pull out Google translate and order my food. I had a beef brisket barbecue. It was amazing! I went to that restaurant several times during my study. They were always glad to see me and shouted hello when they saw me at the door. Fear was unnecessary cause Koreans eat beef, eggs, and chicken.



Beef Brisket Barbecue

INTRODUCTION



Before this trip, I had very little knowledge of Korean arts and crafts, except for what I had witnessed on historical Korean Dramas. As a huge K-pop fan, I was drawn to the historical type media that featured Korea's kings, queens, large soy sauce jars, and decorative shoes. I appreciated the traditions of bowing, extensive meals, and properly poured tea. The costumes and ancient architecture are certainly alluring and constantly piqued my interest. As a ceramicist, I am familiar with the porcelain styled pots and ceramic wares featured in the museums of Korean Art, but hadn't been exposed to Korean specifics. My goals for this program are simple, gain rich cultural exposure from this beautiful country, understand, experience, and retain her historical arts and crafts and feature in my current works.

Namsan Tower and Mountain

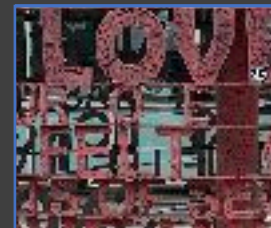
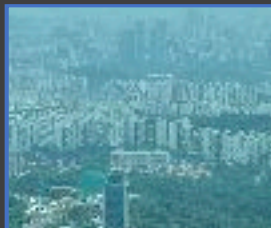
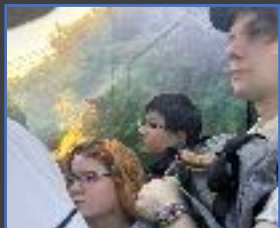
Namsan Seoul Tower was built in 1969 as Korea's first integrated transmission tower beaming television and radio broadcasts across the capital. Since opening to the public in 1980, it has become a much-loved Seoul landmark. Each year, approximately 8.4 million visit the Tower located in North Seoul.

Many visitors ride the Namsan cable car up the Mt. Namsan (777 ft) to walk to the tower, renowned as a national landmark for its cityscape views. It attracts thousands of tourists and locals every year, especially during nighttime when the tower lights up. The panoramic views are surrounded by many other attractions South Korea offers, including Namsan Park and Namsangol Hanok Village.

There are four observation decks (the 4th observation deck, which is the revolving restaurant, rotates at a rate of one revolution every 48 minutes), as well as gift shops and two restaurants. Most of the city of Seoul can be seen from the top. The tower has many historical, social and cultural meanings. Socially it is a meeting place for couples to express their affections by hanging named padlocks on the Tower fence as a symbol of their eternal love.

The Namsan Tower views were breathtaking, I loved walking from side to side to see the views. The Han river can be seen from East to West, and the locks of love display was very fun, it reminded me of K-Drama movies where couples met to declare their love. I didn't have a love to declare but since that's what Koreans do, I wrote my daughter and her boyfriend's name on the lock.

"N Seoul Tower." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 11 Mar. 2023. Web. 11 June 2023.



National Museum of Korea

The National Museum of Korea is where history and culture come alive and the past, present, and future coexist. Visitors can fully enjoy its six galleries in the Permanent Exhibition Hall arranged by period and theme, special exhibition galleries that feature various contents, diverse guided-tour programs to deepen one's understanding. The museum is also a healing space in the metropolitan city, where you can spend a leisurely time strolling through the adjacent garden, where beautiful flowers bloom according to the season. It was relocated to Yongsan in 2005, which coincidentally used to be a US military base.

We started our English guided tour at the Gyeongcheonsa Pagoda, a National Treasure of Korea. An inscription on the first story of the pagoda states that it was erected in the fourth year of King Chungmok in 1348. The pagoda stands 13.5 m in height and is ten stories tall. Unlike most Goryeo-era pagodas, this pagoda is made from marble. The preferred material of Korean sculptors was generally granite.

It was very interesting to discover the history of these statues and their cultural and religious value to Koreans. During this visit, it was Buddha's Birthday, I saw illustrated artwork about his journey and its influence on Korean Culture. This museum is huge with various traditional Korean art forms displayed throughout the floors. My favorite exhibit was the Celadon Ceramics. I didn't believe the ancient Koreans caved out the vessels only to reload with various colored clay, until I saw the video. It was an incredible experience where I gained valuable knowledge about my own crafts.

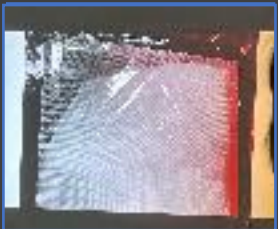
"Director General's Message." NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA. n.d. Web. 11 June 2023.



Hanji, Traditional Paper fo Korea

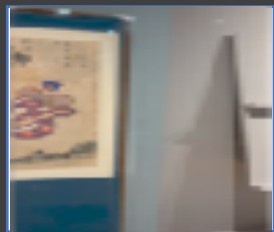
Hanji Paper is the name of traditional handmade paper from Korea. Hanji is made from the inner bark of the mulberry, a tree native to Korea that grows well on its rocky mountainsides, known in Korean as *dak*. The pulp made from the mulberry bark is processed and broken down with soda ash. The pulp is then blended and suspended in a water bath, with the help of with a formation aid that thickens the bath. The fibers are then picked up by a screen and formed into a page. The pages are dried with absorbent cloth and hung to dry.

In previous art projects, I worked with various herbs to make paper. The process is the same, break down fibrous material and run it through a screen, I did not have the material to make the water bath thicker, I will certainly use that next time. I think it helps the fiber stick together before running through the screen. I used felt to dry my paper, I actually liked the absorbent towels better. The end product for this projects was unavailable for two days, I can't wait to see my dried Hanji paper, the freedom to create art in another country adds to my creativity and passion about ancient crafts. The Hanji master was very knowledgeable, I enjoyed seeing her work as well. She was a patient teacher and shared her art with our group. As a Korean, I got to learn traditional arts and crafts.



National Folk Museum

Korea's National Folk Museum exhibited Korea's lifelong history and folklife. There were galleries dedicated to traditional living in Korea. Some of the current exhibits are the wedding ceremonies, traditional foods, fish growing and harvesting. My favorite display was the net dance. Fishermen were dancing in rhythm as they spread out the nets to harvest fish. They also showed the importance of the pollack, roe sardines and cod. It was important for museum to show the pattern of growth from historical and modern items, such as clothes, tools and furniture. The historic cook books, were extremely fun. Cookbooks are a huge part of my own culture and the association was familiar. I want to write cookbooks in the historic style of Korea. The historic and contemporary mask reminded me of Native American Masks used in Potlatch ceremony. They are also similar to the mask at the African Art museum on JEJU island. There was very little pottery or music. This museum is connected to the Gyeongbokgung palace in Jongno-Gu, which was closed due to a national holiday.



[Click to play Video](#)



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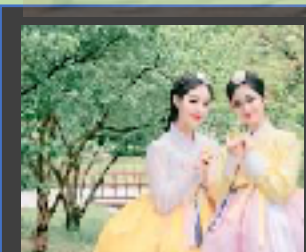


Gyeongbokgung Palace

The ornate Gyeongbokgung Palace was originally built in A.D. 1395 and served as the focal point and governmental seat of the Joseon Dynasty (1392 to 1910). In Korean, its name translates to "Palace Greatly Blessed by Heaven," but its history seems to paint it as anything but blessed. Gyeongbokgung was destroyed in the 1590s during a Japanese invasion, after which Korea's rulers abandoned the palace and set up camp about a mile east in Changdeokgung (Changdeok Palace). That is, until King Gojong began Gyeongbok Palace's restoration during his reign from 1863 to 1907. The site once housed some 500 buildings. But the king's efforts were for naught: Another Japanese invasion resulted in the demolition of the majority of the complex. Restoration of the twice-destroyed palace began afresh in 1990, and visitors today can once again marvel at its magnificent architecture, lustrous grounds and historical significance.

Gyeongbokgung palace is a must-see for anyone interested in Seoul's Joseon Dynasty. Travelers love learning about the history of the palace and how it played into the larger story of both Seoul and South Korea. This is the largest of all five grand palaces built in the Joseon Dynasty, remaining in Seoul. Gyeongbokgung Palace is arguably the most beautiful, and remains the largest of all five palaces. For fun visitors wearing a Hanbok entrance is free.

I thought the palace was beautiful, I am obsessed with architecture and the paintings and animals on the roofs.



Kwangjang Market

First established in 1905, Kwangjang Market is known to be the oldest continually functioning market in all of South Korea. The market still remains authentic and retains its Korean cultural heritage, style, and charm. This is a place in Seoul where you'll find both tourists and Koreans, all enjoying the same delicious food. There are a couple sections of the market, and when you're walking around you'll come across stalls selling clothes, fresh vegetables, and some random other market goods. But the main section of the market is dedicated to prepared food, and it's set up sort of like an indoor street food court, kind of like a food warehouse. Some of the staple foods are Soondae, The Korean version of blood sausage is remarkably juicy and moist, partly because it contains a mixture of blood and a good amount of sticky and soft mung bean noodles or sticky rice. Gimbap is among the essential list of Korean foods to eat, rice and a few pickled veggies packed into seaweed, rolled up and sliced into bite sized pieces. Another one of the most common Korean street foods is tteokbokki, these sticky dense rice rolls are stewed in a thick red chili sauced the favorite for our group was the Bindagetteo. Among all the delicious Korean food available, Gwangjang Market is particularly famous throughout Seoul for the mung bean pancakes known as *bindaetteo*. The market also featured nuts and dried fruit, I enjoyed the dried persimmons. The market was a long hollow tunnel that met in the middle on a four wa intersection. The intersection had outdoor restaurants, tables, chairs and thousands of people sitting around eating as families. It was a little overwhelming, but my tteokbokki was amazing.



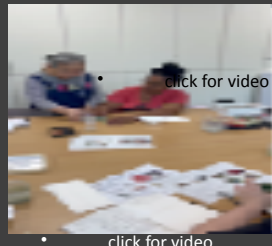
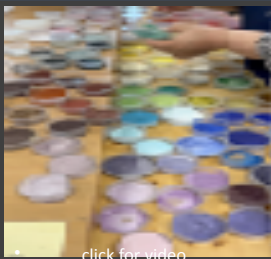
Korean Chilbo (Enamel)

Korea is known for her exceptionally high quality of Chilbo (cloisonné) work. Korea's unique culture brand which combines beautiful traditional craft of cloisonné with the modern design to create a new value.

Chilbo in Korea is considered one of the few most beautiful jewelries works made by human beings. Cloisonné (Chilbo) has been treasured since long ago by esteemed people as an amulet to keep good luck and happiness. Cloisonné, as the name implies, has the meanings of seven treasures--gold, silver, glass, white coral, agate, pearl and coral--as well as containing all seven colors. The process is to add moistened enamel grains to a piece of silver or other metal. It is difficult to move the material around the silver without compromising the design, this type of method problem releases a satisfying type of adrenalin. I loved working with Master Kno, the silver pin/broche designs were fantastic examples of her craftsmanship. She was very excited to mentor the students in her craft.

I left the enameling class with a new love and passion, I can't wait to get back to the states and try this art out more. Spreading the glass across the silver was very satisfying, I really liked the cleaning process and methods.

<http://www.koreapost.com>



Master Cho Seong Jun

- Visiting Master Cho's studio was interesting.. He is a 80 year old National treasure. I couldn't understand how hw was getting around so well. He seemed to take great pride in his work and I loved his show and tell. He presented many pieces of art that he wanted students to touch, feel and analyze. I have never experience metal smithing. He showed me what a silversmith is and done. I loved all of the homemade tools and processes.



Korean Folk Village

Lying in a spacious site of 990,000m² and in nature-given geomantic location ‘facing water and backgrounded by mountains’, Korean Folk Village (KfV) is a village from the Joseon period composed of real houses relocated from provinces of the country. Located in Gyeonggi-do and Reconstructed through a long survey of houses remaining in different parts of the country and authentication by specialists, it is a real village from the Joseon period that unfolds in seasonal transformation scenes from everyday folk culture meticulously collected.

The village was created with common people’s houses and aristocrats’ houses relocated or restored from different parts of the country such as south, middle, north, and islands. It presents the real life from old Joseon life, which includes gwana (provincial government office), seowon and seodang (the educational institutions), hanyakbang (the medical institution), Buddhist temples and seonangdang (the religious buildings), and the fortune-teller’s place. One of my favorite K-Dramas, My Love from the Star is a South Korean television series about an alien who landed on Earth 400 years ago in the Joseon Dynasty, who then falls in love with a top actress in the modern era. This movie was filmed in this village as well as other movies and dramas.

I enjoyed the music and dancing the most, it was a mixture of bales and traditional moves. The drums in the music made me feel alive. I was very sad when it started raining and the dancing stopped, but running in the rain was fun.

• <https://www.koreanfolk.co.kr/multi/english/contact/contact.asp>



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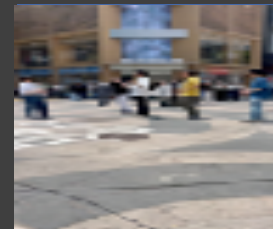
Namdaemun Market

Namdaemun market dates back to 1414, during the reign of King Taejong, as a government-managed marketplace. In 1608, King Seonjo set up the office of seonhyecheong in the district to manage the tributes of rice, cloth and money. A trading marketplace took its form around that time and commercial activities flourished as traders set up various shops. Trade was active in grains, fish, fruit, and miscellaneous goods.

Namdaemun Market is one of the oldest continually running markets in South Korea, and one of the largest retail markets in Seoul.^[6] The streets in which the market is located were built in a time when cars were not prevalent, so the market itself is not accessible by car. The main methods of transporting goods into and out of the market are by motorcycle and hand-drawn carts. It occupies many city blocks, which are blocked off from most car traffic due to the prevalence of parking congestion in the area. The market can be reached by subway or bus; the location is within a 10-minute walk from Seoul Station and is even closer to the subway Hoehyeon station, Line 4.

Much of the market is outside, but there are also many stores which line the streets. Many retailers buy their items, particularly clothing, at wholesale prices at Namdaemun, to resell in their own stores in other cities. Namdaemun is a popular tourist attraction. The Market is on the Seoul list of Asia's 10 greatest street food cities for the hotteok the market can certainly be overwhelming with its markets up top and markets down below in the tunnels. I bought aprons, jewelry and a stamp for my nickname.

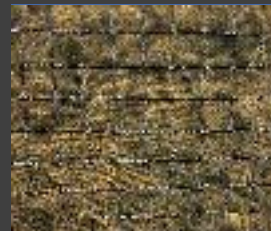
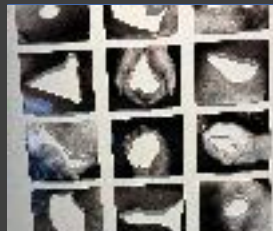
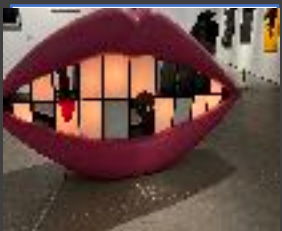
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namdaemun_Market



Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art

The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea is a contemporary art museum with four branches in Gwacheon, Deoksugung, Seoul and Cheongju. The museum was first established in 1969 as the only national art museum in the country accommodating modern and contemporary art of Korea and international art of different time periods. Founded to contribute to the development of Korean contemporary art by systematically conserving and exhibiting artworks created since 1910, the museum's area of 73,360 m² spreads over three floors, and has an outdoor sculpture park occupying 33,000 m². The motif of the architecture is that of a traditional Korean fortress and beacon mound, and the building has a unique spiral- formed interior where Dadaigseon, one of the most famous video artworks by Nam June Paik, is located. In recent years, The Seoul branch of the museum opened on November 13, 2013, next to Gyeongbokgung. Built on and next to the former Military Defense Security Command building, the architectural design adopted the madang (yard) concept, which successfully integrated the exterior and interior of the building to the surrounding environment. The madang also serves as a public leisure space as well as a space to hold outdoor artistic events and programs. I visited the Seoul location, located at 30 Samcheong-ro, Sogyeok-dong, Jongno-gu in Seoul. The most provocative piece I saw was the lips with the missing teeth. I really liked the size of the piece. The rock garden in the outdoors entrance were very engaging. They seem ceramics with glazed patterns and details.

<https://www.mmca.go.kr/eng/>



Seoul Craft Museum

The Seoul Museum of Craft Art, the first public museum of craft art in Korea, opened its doors in Anguk-dong, Jongno-gu in July 2021 after renovating five buildings of the former Pungmoon Girls' High School. SeMoCA studies and shares not only works, but also information, records, people and environments concerning craft art with the goal of becoming a dynamic platform for experiencing the technical, practical, artistic and cultural values of craft.

SeMoCA holds a collection that comprise various crafts and craft materials covering various fields and eras from the traditional to the present. SeMoCA also holds exhibitions that feature the history of craft from traditional to contemporary craft as well as local craft and children's craft, along with programs that utilize the museum's craft installations, craft archives, craft library, and craft resource management system.

The site of the museum has deep historical roots as it was once the site of Andong Byeolung, a detached palace constructed as a royal residence for King Sejong's son Prince Yeongeung, and served as a venue for royal celebrations, such as the wedding of King Sunjong. The site is also at the center of Jongno-gu where Joseon-era master artisans ("gyeonggongjang") of the royal palace produced and delivered works of craft. Visitors can also experience various cultural experiences as it is near Bukchon, Insa-dong and Gyeongbokgung Palace. We appreciate your continued interest and support for the museum's journey at this symbolic site to become a "craft hub" that connects tradition with the modern, Seoul with the world, and art with life through the medium of craft.

This was my favorite museum, I loved the exhibits that had a hands-on aspect. The most alluring part of the museum was the mother of pearl demonstration. It made me feel like I could reproduce this art at home.

<https://craftmuseum.seoul.go.kr/eng/main>



DMZ

The Korean Demilitarized Zone is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula near the 38th parallel north. The demilitarized zone (DMZ) is a border barrier that divides the peninsula roughly in half. It was established to serve as a buffer zone between the countries of North Korea and South Korea under the provisions of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953, an agreement between North Korea, China, and the United Nations Command.

The DMZ is 250 kilometers (160 mi) long and about 4 kilometers (2.5 mi) wide. There have been various incidents in and around the DMZ, with military and civilian casualties on both sides. Within the DMZ is a meeting point between the two nations, where negotiations take place: the small Joint Security Area (JSA) near the western end of the zone.

The experience was kind of eerie, there seemed to be a silent energy in the atmosphere. I did enjoy the walk down to the tunnel. It was really cool and wet down below and hot and humid up top. I bought this amazing tea and the best rice snacks in Korea. I did enjoy the viewfinders on the top floor.

• https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Demilitarized_Zone



Secret Garden

The Secret Garden is hidden inside Changdeokgung a unique palace to visit. Instead of making the surrounding nature work with its layout, architects designed the palace to work in harmony with nature. When they worked on the Secret Garden, they kept artificial landscapes completely minimal to better highlight its natural setting.

The Secret Garden was used for everything from banquets to recreation and even some farming throughout the centuries. Huwon Secret Garden is a rear garden at Changdeokgung Palace that flows naturally with nature and was used as a place of leisure by members of the royal family. The garden, which has also been known as Bukwon, Geumwon, and Biwon. At 78 acres, the garden takes up about sixty percent of the palace grounds.

The grounds were extensive, the walk was overwhelming with bug bites. I loved learning about all of the details and plans made in the garden. It was fun to run around the grounds with other families who were interested in the same history.



Chandeokgung Palace

Changdeokgung, also known as Changdeokgung Palace or Changdeok Palace, is set within a large park in Jongno District, Seoul, South Korea. It is one of the "Five Grand Palaces" built by the kings of the Joseon dynasty. Changdeokgung Palace is the second UNESCO World Heritage Site in Seoul. It was selected as a representative palace for its notable beauty in the history of palace architecture in East Asia and for its excellent arrangement with the surrounding natural environment. Changdeokgung Palace was built by King Taejong in 1405.

At the palace you can see how ancient royal Koreans lived. You can see their homes, offices and the grounds of their palace. It is connected to the Secret Garden, a hidden family resort. The palace also has the only painted roof in all the palaces. The architecture is amazing with painted roofs and awnings.

• <https://english.visitseoul.net/attractions/Changdeokgung-Palace/ENP000295#:~:text=Changdeokgung%20Palace%20is%20the%20second,by%20King%20Taejong%20in%201405.>



Bongeunsa, Buddhist Temple

Gyeongseongsa was refurbished in 1498 by Queen Jeonghyeon. At this time, it was renamed as Bongeunsa. The temple was then moved to its current location during the reign of Myeongjong (1545-1567). During the Joseon Dynasty, the government oppressed Buddhism and supported Confucianism. With the help of Queen Munjeong and Monk Bo-wu, Buddhism was revived in Korea.

Bongeunsa Temple is a Buddhist temple that dates back to 794 located south of the Han River and just north of the Starfield COEX Mall in Gangnam-gu. It was originally known as Gyeongseongsa when first built. This was during the rule of King Wonseong of Silla. Its location was 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) southwest of its current location.

• <https://www.theseoulguide.com/bongeunsa-temple/>

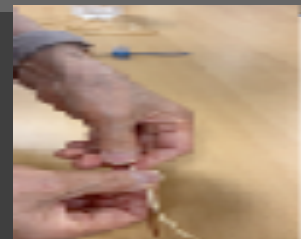
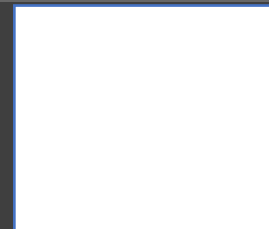
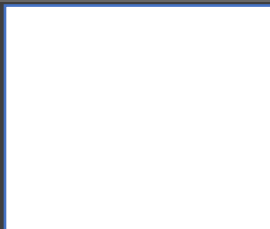
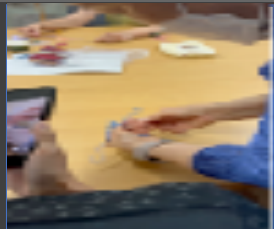


Korean Knots

Korean knots, also known as maedeup, is a traditional Korean handicraft which dates back to the Three Kingdom periods and have been deeply influenced by Chinese knots. The Korean knotting techniques are believed to originate from China, but Korean knots evolved into its own rich culture as to design, color and incorporation of local characteristics.^{[1]:16} Korean knotting uses a unique braiding technique.^[2] Korean knotting is derived from the ancient practice of using knots for practical purposes; e.g. in fishing nets, agricultural tools, stone knives and axes.

Traditionally, the knots were used primarily to hold hunting tools around the waist and their usage was initially limited to royal families, spreading later to common people. Today, modern Korean artists are using the traditional knots in their works, such as accessories, jewelry and home interior decorations. I found the medium to be very difficult, it was interesting to see the master do her craft. I don't think this is a medium, I would pick up as a new hobby.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_knots



Conclusion

This trip was so much more than what I ever dreamed it could be. My previous expectations were very limited, I had no idea what to expect. I set out on this trip alone, yet hungry. The hunger overpowered my fear to set off on a journey to learn a new culture, and that's what I was allowed to do. The experience was overwhelming, most days I cried, realizing how blessed I am to be allowed to come on this trip.

It seems shallow to say South Korea is just like the tv, but it is. There were so many places I visited and recognized from a scene on tv. The people are so kind, respectful and peaceful, I was unaware of all the art in South Korea. It seems Seoul is a huge art district. There were hundreds of art galleries, stores, supply houses.

My favorite part of the trip was the enamel and Hanji paper making class. While enjoying learning from museums about the South Korean culture, the hands-on workshops were the best part of the trip. I loved going to Seoul National University and learning from other master artists. The student studio tour was very special, it was nice to see up and coming artists.

I felt proud that my teacher was once from Korea. It was very rewarding to follow her around the city and having the privilege to enjoy the benefits from her connections. Mi-sook was knowledgeable, kind, loving and fierce as she navigated our group through South Korea. I learned so much and cried, because I wasn't ready to come home. The study and stay was absolutely amazing. I left on this trip, afraid, fearful and nervous. Once I decided to be a Korean, while in Korea the beauty of the city, people and culture provide a safe loving atmosphere to learn about this wonderful country.

Conclusion

This trip was the most knowledgeable, conclusive experience I've ever had. We experienced most of the national treasures hidden and prominent.

