

Luxury Tour

# Paintings That Peer Into The Past

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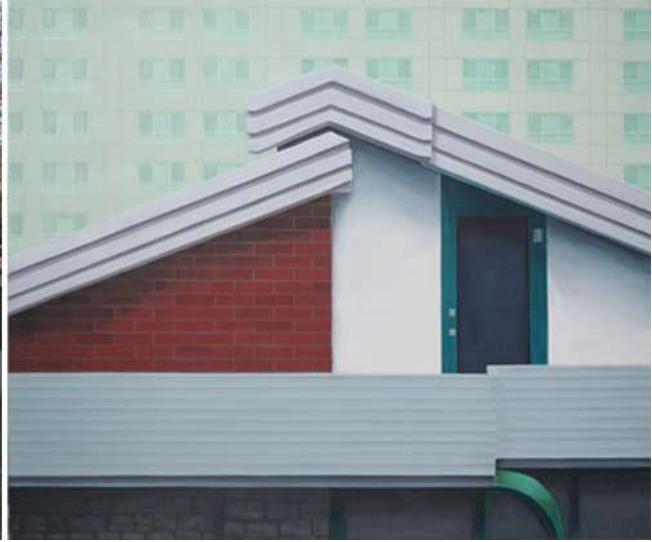


Ingo Baumgarten

German artist Ingo Baumgarten has spent the past fifteen years in Seoul observing his surrounding environment and portraying everyday life and the intriguing interplay of traditional and modern architecture within its vast urban walls. Baumgarten’s interest in concrete housing, built between 1970 and 1990, is very much apparent throughout his work, and his collection portrays a period of economic revival in a country ravished after the war, and a sense of optimism shared by its citizens. More so, his art offers intriguing insight into a rapidly evolving metropolis that is losing the connection to its historical roots.

“Most inspiring for me are the contrasting elements I can find in Seoul between the urban structures and constructions of the different periods,” Baumgarten notes. “Seen with a bit of distance, those different forms reveal the ideas they were built with.”

The source of Baumgarten’s inspiration has often stemmed from his perceptions and concerns relating to experiences and memories of those living in urban society. Having lived and experienced various societies and cultures throughout Europe and Asia, Baumgarten feels that a city’s architectural versatility consists of an individual collective and culture rather than a fractured cityscape.



Left:

The building that inspired his artwork.

Right: The inspired painting.

Photograph by Ingo Baumgarten



Left: The remodeled house that inspired Ingo's artwork.

Right: His painting derived from the original structure.

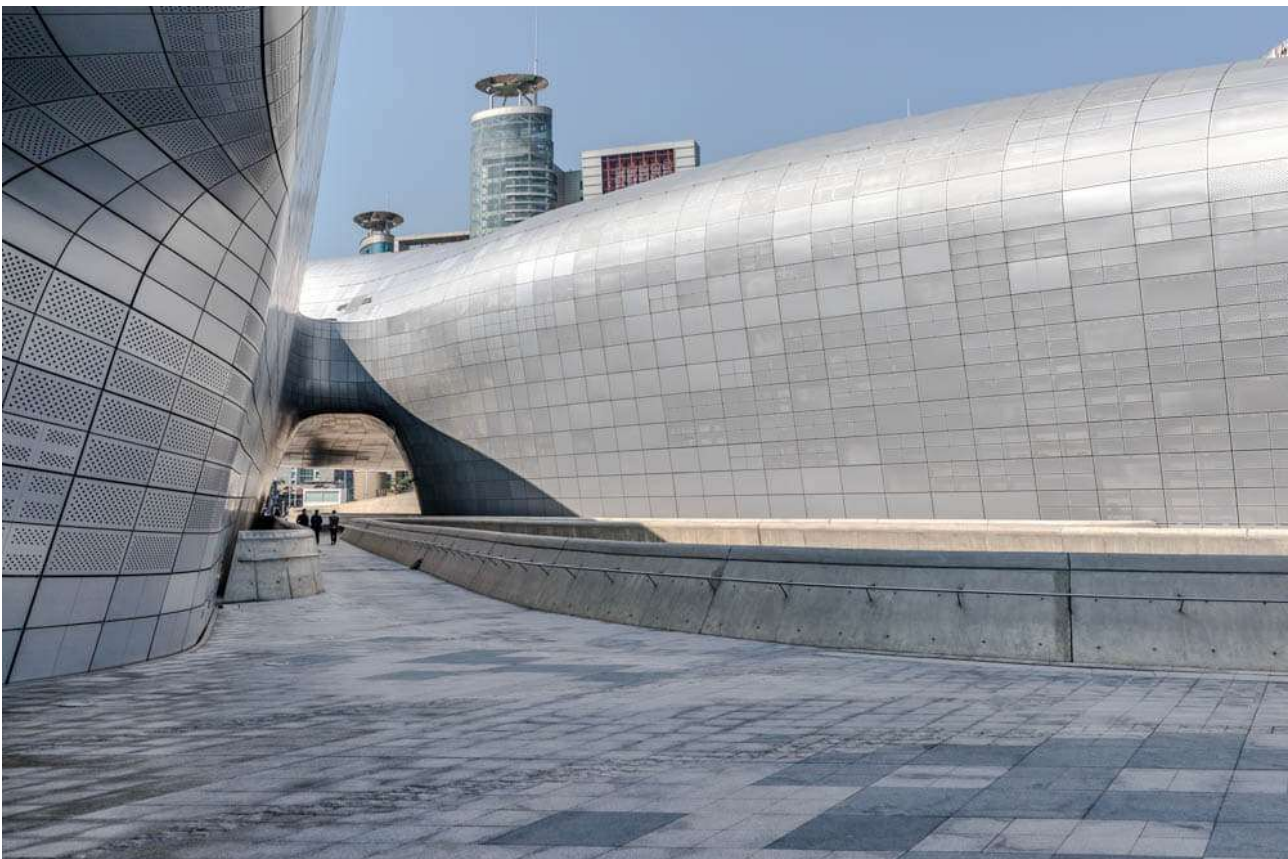
Photograph by Ingo Baumgarten

As for points of interest in Seoul that he considers must-see attractions for newcomers, Baumgarten has several he would share with family and friends during visits. “With guests I like to take a walk from Gwanghwamun or City Hall to the east and the older craft and trade areas of Dongdaemun or Shindang,” he says. “A walk like this might feel like a trip through the history, as the new office city pushes away the older commercial areas of Euljiro and Dongdaemun with its very specialized small scale businesses and markets.”

Highlights he points out are Cheonggyecheon Park, the Sewoon Building with its outdated modernity, along with Zaha Hadid's Dongdaemun Design Plaza.



Gwanghwamun Square  
Photograph by Seoul Tourism Organization



Dongdaemun Design Plaza  
Photograph by Seoul Tourism Organization



Sewoon Sangga  
Photograph by Seoul Tourism Organization

Baumgarten’s time spent observing Seoul’s urban environment has kindled a fondness for concrete structures and feels that its prevalent presence throughout Seoul has changed Korea’s traditional architectural style. Although the material was an attempt to replicate the idealized Western modern day house, visitor to Korea’s capital may mistake such housing as being traditionally Korean. Yet Baumgarten asserts that Seoul is unique on many levels.

“One of the biggest differences of Seoul to other metropolitan cities is the structure of the terrain, comprising many hills, mountains, and even a national park,” he remarks. “Seoul is very different to other European capitals I know, because in Europe buildings are hardly torn down, and therefore the cities do not change so quickly as Seoul does.”

Baumgarten’s current “Compromises” exhibition showcases a selection of themes produced between 2000 and 2023 and are truly representative of his artistic vision.

“What all the paintings on display have in common is that they represent my view and encompass all the characteristics that pique my interest within my surroundings,” he notes. “My approach balances proximity and distance, and my works might ultimately change the angle of view of the spectator upon their surroundings, sparking interest for effects similar to those I highlighted in my paintings.”



Photog

raph by IMSOOBIN Gallery

All in all, Baumgarten's artworks paints a unique perspective on Seoul's lesser-known, and perhaps often overlooked urban areas, and breathes new life into the city's aging architectural framework and culturally relevant areas of a sprawling metropolis that are seemingly overshadowed by rapid urbanization.

His exhibition will run at IMSOOBIN Gallery. Founded in 2016, the gallery focuses on nurturing and fostering artistic talent.

## Tags

# Korean art #urban evolution # concrete housing # urbanization #Ingo Baumgarten # Seoul architecture #Dongdaemun Design Plaza # Compromises exhibition #traditional vs modern # IMSOOBIN Gallery