

Korea handcraft highlight Hong Kong art show

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Some 239 galleries from 35 countries and territories are exhibiting works at the show, which opens to the public for three days starting Thursday. Tuesday, the Art Basel organization launched Art Basel Cities, a business initiative that will link selected partner cities with the Art Basel network to develop cultural content created to raise each city's profile in the global art world.

As ACAS director Mark Saunderson explained, the fair puts together works in what he calls art spaces - "much as you would see art presented in a home or office", a layout he hopes is "far more welcoming and engaging than a normal gallery or exhibition space". It's expected to draw tens of thousands.

Projects from partner cities will be showcased at various Art Basel shows, in Basel, Switzerland, Miami Beach and Hong Kong.

Coco Li, who runs a Shanghai company buying art on behalf of corporate Chinese clients, scratched the Chinese characters for "interactive art" onto one cube. Opened this week to coincide with Art Basel fair in Hong Kong, the frenzy surrounding the British artist's major new show might only be overshadowed by the startling revelation she married a large, ancient stone in her garden in southern France last summer.

South Korean Kyungah Ham's embroidery gold chandeliers also glitter, but make a political point — they use textiles made in North Korea to highlight the contrast between the two nations, and the gulf between the impoverished and political class. She said she sends materials and digital images of her designs to the unidentified North Korean artisans through secretive middlemen who travel through China.

Bradbury says there will likely be discussions about an Emin exhibition in mainland China in the future, but for the time being the artist is about to take a year out from exhibiting to focus on her work.

"I feel sometimes the art fair is quite detached — people fly in and fly out", says Wulia, born in Indonesia and based in Australia.