

2025



KOREA IN THE QUEEN CITY

# REPORT

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[www.HandsOnWell.org](http://www.HandsOnWell.org)

# Korea in The Queen City

## Letter from the Organizer



Thank you to everyone who has supported Hands On Well and the projects we bring to life with our community.

Korea In The Queen City began as a collaborative Korean photography exhibition developed by Hands On Well in partnership with a local gallery in the Charlotte area. What started as a single exhibition gradually grew into a series of programs introducing different aspects of Korean culture. Over time, the project has expanded into a space for sharing art, tradition, and everyday cultural practices. Looking ahead, we hope to continue this work in more suitable venues and through a wider range of formats, allowing Korean culture to be celebrated throughout the Charlotte community in meaningful and accessible ways.

On behalf of our entire organization, we extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who experienced and supported Korea In The Queen City through its programs, including participants, audiences, volunteers, partners, and sponsors. Your support made it possible for the Charlotte community to encounter Korean arts, traditions, and cultural perspectives in ways that are rarely accessible in this region.

Our programs are not intended as one-time events, but as thoughtful introductions to Korean culture that reach beyond what is commonly seen in mainstream media. Even when plans must shift, we remain committed to presenting each program with care and respect for both the artists involved and the community engaging with the work.

All contributions are allocated transparently and fairly, and used directly for program execution, including support for participating artists and educators, as well as essential project-related expenses. While some programs may be modest in scale, their impact is genuine and lasting. Through this work, Hands On Well seeks to deepen understanding of Korean culture and encourage meaningful cultural exchange within the Charlotte community.

We hope this initiative continues to serve as a foundation for future collaboration and dialogue. Thank you for believing in the value of this work and for being part of a community that supports art, culture, and connection.

Lee Ko  
Founder, Hands On Well  
Korea in the Queen City

# Korea through the Lens

## Photo exhibition by KiYong Kim



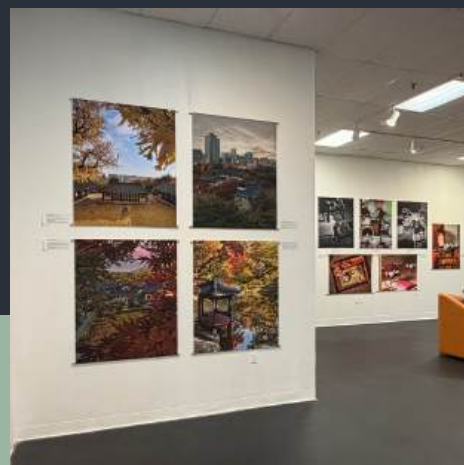
Where culture is seen, not told.

### What We Did

This exhibition featured photographs by Ki Yong Kim, a Korean smartphone photographer who captures the quiet beauty of traditional architecture, seasonal landscapes, and historic spaces. Kim believes that meaningful images come from perspective rather than equipment, using a smartphone to make Korea's heritage feel personal and accessible. Visitors were invited to slow down and view Korea beyond familiar pop-culture imagery.

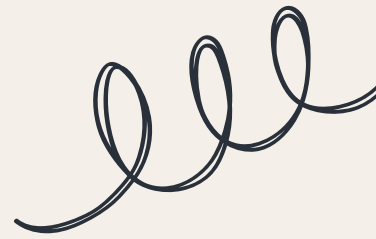
### Cultural Impact

Kim's work helped attendees see Korea not as a distant idea, but as a living culture shaped by places, memories, and everyday details. His approach resonated with viewers, showing that tradition can be preserved and shared through simple tools and a thoughtful eye. Several teachers and families expressed interest in returning with students, recognizing the exhibition's educational value.





# Sound of Korea *a mini Gala*



Korea's culture begins with sound.

## What We Did

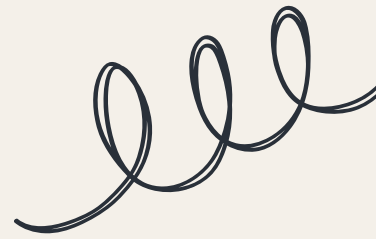
Serving as the official opening event of KQC, Sound of Korea introduced audiences to the lyrical beauty of Korean art songs and contemporary classical music. Performed by local Korean musicians on cello, violin, piano, and flute, the one-hour concert offered a refined and intimate encounter with Korean musical expression. Rather than presenting traditional folk performance, the program showcased modern interpretations that revealed how Korean emotion and storytelling continue to evolve within classical forms.

## Cultural Impact

Many attendees shared that the concert reshaped their understanding of Korean music, which they had previously associated primarily with K-pop or mainstream pop culture. The nuanced phrasing, emotional depth, and delicate interplay between instruments conveyed sentiments of longing, reflection, and quiet strength—resonating with audiences regardless of language. The performance became a powerful entry point into KQC, setting a contemplative and elegant tone that invited participants to experience the festival not only through activities, but through feeling.



# JoGakBo workshop



Where tradition meets intention and  
patience becomes art.

## What We Did

Over six sessions, participants were introduced to the foundations of traditional Korean jogakbo. The workshop began with learning how to thread fine silk thread through a very small needle—a delicate skill essential for working with Korea's lightweight silk fabrics. From there, attendees studied traditional patchwork principles and applied them to create their own tea mats inspired by historical jogakbo patterns.

## Cultural Impact

Although the process required patience and precision, participants embraced the challenge with enthusiasm. By connecting each piece of fabric, they discovered the rhythm, intention, and emotional depth behind Korean textile traditions. Many shared that the slow, attentive nature of the work helped them see Korean craft not merely as a technique, but as a cultural mindset shaped by time and intention.

To ensure every participant can complete the piece they began, a complimentary follow-up session will be held on December 27 at the Pineville Library. This responsible conclusion provides a meaningful finish to the learning experience and reinforces the program's commitment to participant success.





# BoJaGi workshop



Where a single cloth carries meaning.

## What We Did

Participants explored bojagi, the traditional Korean art of wrapping. Through hands-on practice, they learned how fabric, knots, and intentional gestures transform wrapping from a simple packaging method into an expression of care and respect. Using prepared cloth bojagi, attendees practiced various folding and tying techniques, discovering the balance of beauty and function that defines this cultural tradition.

## Cultural Impact

Many participants were moved by the idea that wrapping is not the end of a gift, but the beginning of a gesture filled with intention. The colors, textures, and knot styles revealed the Korean aesthetic of thoughtfulness and subtle communication. Several attendees expressed interest in using bojagi in their own daily lives—not only as a sustainable alternative to disposable wrapping, but as a way to carry cultural meaning into ordinary moments.



# Korean Tea Ceremony

Where hospitality, mindfulness, and tradition meet.



## What We Did

This program was conducted over two sessions, during which participants connected with a Korean tea master via Zoom and were introduced to the foundations of traditional Korean tea culture. Rather than simply tasting tea, they learned about tea varieties, brewing methods, and the etiquette embedded in Korean tea service. From preparing tea leaves to offering a cup with intention and respect, attendees experienced how mindfulness and hospitality shape every part of this cultural practice.

## Cultural Impact

Many participants remarked on how different this experience felt compared to Western tea traditions. The quiet pace and intentional movements encouraged reflection, allowing attendees to understand tea not simply as a beverage, but as a cultural practice rooted in harmony, mindfulness, and hospitality. Participants were intrigued to learn that tea comes from one plant, yet becomes white, green, oolong, or black tea depending on how the leaves are dried and fermented. This realization shifted their perception of tea from something familiar to a cultural practice shaped by technique, time, and tradition.





# KimBap workshop

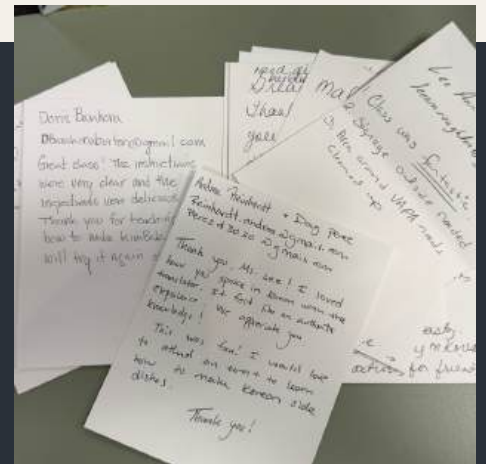
Where food becomes culture, and  
ingredients become community.

## What We Did

This hands-on culinary workshop introduced participants to one of Korea's most recognizable and beloved dishes: kimbap. Over the course of the session, attendees prepared and rolled their own kimbap using a variety of fresh ingredients while learning about the cultural history and everyday significance of this dish in Korean households. From seasoning rice to arranging vegetables and proteins, each step revealed how flavor, color, and balance work together in Korean cuisine.

## Cultural Impact

Many participants were surprised to learn how kimbap reflects Korean values of preparation, intention, and sharing. The process of rolling ingredients into a single, cohesive form became an engaging metaphor for bringing different people and experiences together. Several attendees commented that making kimbap themselves helped them understand Korean cuisine not just as food, but as a cultural expression rooted in community and care. The workshop also sparked ongoing interest in Korean cooking, with participants requesting additional culinary programs in the future.





# Lecture series

## #1 Chopsticks

Where everyday tools become cultural language.



### What We Did

Participants explored the cultural meanings and etiquette behind Korean chopsticks and table settings. Through hands-on practice, attendees learned how chopsticks differ across East Asian cultures in shape, material, and usage, and how these differences reflect cultural values. The session also introduced key Korean dining customs —such as table hierarchy, serving order, and respectful gestures during shared meals.

### Cultural Impact

Many participants noted that something as familiar as chopsticks became a window into Korean history, craftsmanship, and cultural values. Understanding why Korean chopsticks are made of metal, and how their use reinforces respect and awareness at the table, helped participants recognize dining not as routine behavior but as an expression of cultural identity.

This program expanded their perception of everyday tools into meaningful carriers of tradition.



# Lecture series

## #2 Hanok

Where architecture becomes a way of living.



### What We Did

Participants were introduced to the design principles and cultural philosophy behind hanok, traditional Korean architecture. Through visual examples and guided discussion, they explored structural elements such as ondol (floor heating), maru (wooden floor), and courtyard layouts, learning how these features shape daily life, movement, and relationships within Korean homes.

### Cultural Impact


Participants expressed strong interest in understanding that architecture is not merely a technical practice, but a cultural expression of how people choose to live, relate, and belong. They were particularly struck by how the materials and spatial composition of hanok reflect Korean values of harmony with nature and communal living. After the lecture, attendees viewed photographs of hanok displayed in the gallery and engaged in a Q&A session, which helped deepen their perception of hanok as a space infused with intention, philosophy, and a distinctive way of experiencing the world.



# Impact Made Possible by Your Support

KQC began with ten planned programs. Although 'Korean Playground' and the closing traditional performance, 'Korea In Motion', were canceled due to unforeseen venue-related circumstances, the series successfully delivered all remaining activities as scheduled.

While the performance-based program could not be relocated, the Korean Playground initiative will move forward at local libraries around the Lunar New Year, ensuring that this cultural experience continues beyond the original event timeline.



We are grateful to share that all sponsorship funds were used responsibly and transparently for artist honorariums, instrument rentals, instructor fees, and materials for the programs that took place.

Although the scale of each event was modest, the impact was meaningful: KQC created an opportunity for the Charlotte community to learn, experience, and appreciate Korean culture in authentic and lasting ways.

Thank you for supporting this journey.

This is not an ending; it is the beginning of what we hope will grow into a lasting cultural exchange.

- 8 programs successfully delivered
- Broad community participation across all programs
- 16 artists, educators, and performers involved
- 100% of funds allocated to programming costs