



Opening Ceremony of the KIA Festival

Dear President Han Young-Keun,
Dear architects, colleagues, and friends,

It is an honour to address you once again at the opening of the Korea International Architecture Festival, this year in-person.

Since its creation, this event has stood out for its ability to bring together architects and the general public in celebrating the cultural value of architecture and its role in shaping our societies.

This year's theme — Relativity in Architecture — invites us to reflect on how architecture shapes and is shaped by relationships: between people, and between people and nature; between culture and technology, and between local traditions and innovation. Amidst global challenges, the Festival reminds us through space, architecture communicates, connects, and builds harmony and beauty. It adapts and transforms with context, yet remains grounded in responsibility, creativity, and care.

Today – when rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, and social inequalities converge – we are reminded that architecture is not only an abstract reflection on change but also a tool to guide and realise it.

The question is not how architecture can remain relevant, but how it can remain human. How we can ensure that it puts the human dimension at the core of its creation. An architecture that respects and reveals the characteristics, memory, history and culture of a place, reinforces its identity, and creates a sense of belonging.

In this respect, Korean architecture offers a remarkable example. Rooted in a deep cultural consciousness, yet open to experimentation, it shows that innovation gains meaning when it serves community, continuity and the well-being of people.

Across its global network, the UIA advocates for architecture as a discipline of public interest — one that contributes to social wellbeing, cultural identity, and environmental balance. The Union advocates for sustainable rebuilding, the use of resilient materials, and methods that integrate traditional knowledge with innovation.

As architects today we must remain open and continue to reinvent our practices as digital tools and artificial intelligence reshape our profession, but we must remain vigilant to ensure that these technologies serve the public interest and not private interests, that they do not undermine professional judgement and cultural diversity. We should not lose our human dimension.

Let us see this Festival as a call to strengthen our collective voice as architects. To remind society that architecture is a public and ethical act, that beauty and sustainability must coexist in our designs, that our shared goal is to build a world that endures, includes, and inspires.

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I congratulate the organisers of the 2025 Festival and wish you fruitful discussions and a successful celebration, renovating my wishes from last year: that we use this moment of celebration to commit to our collective potential to shape a better, more sustainable, and equitable future through architecture.

Thank you.

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