

ART INSPIRED BY THE NATURE OF HOKKAIDO

Hokkaido's unique environment has been an inspiration for generations of artists. This can be seen in Jomon pottery from as early as 12,000 BC and in the expert craftsmanship of the Ainu, Hokkaido's indigenous people. Modern times have seen Hokkaido-born artists such as Kan Yasuda honing their craft all over the world, bringing back with them new techniques and contemporary artistic approaches.

A great place to start your tour is the Hokkaido Museum, where you can learn about the historical and cultural background of Hokkaido's art before diving in. After enjoying lunch at one of Sapporo's plethora of great restaurants, head to Arte Piazza Bibai. Located 1.5 hours from Sapporo, this park features the work of Kan Yasuda, a Bibai-born sculptor with a studio in Italy. 40 abstract sculptures are dotted throughout the park, with each one carefully positioned to show its connection to the other works and create the perfect harmony between the sculptures and the surrounding nature. Other works are exhibited in a converted schoolhouse from Bibai's days as a coal mining city.

From here, it's just one hour to Asahikawa by train. After a bowl of Asahikawa's famous ramen noodles and a good night's rest, head to Shikisai-no-Oka. Colorful flowers are planted in a rainbow formation, creating a stunning combination of nature and art.

Just a stone's throw away is the Goto Sumio Museum of Art, where you can admire around 130 stunning landscape paintings – several of which have been designated as National Treasures – by renowned watercolor painter Sumio Goto. The museum has a restaurant with a breathtaking view of Furano's rolling hills and the Tokachi mountains. This natural splendor contrasts beautifully with the captivating urban nightscape you'll see upon your return to Sapporo.

Spend your final day soaking up Sapporo's art scene. Why not start at Moerenuma Park? Located around 30 minutes from Sapporo, the whole park is one work of art by renowned sculptor Isamu Noguchi. With features such as the Glass Pyramid and Play Mountain, you'll feel like you've stepped inside a giant sculpture.

Another great spot is Hill of the Buddha, around 1 hour from downtown Sapporo. World-renowned architect Tadao Ando transformed the previously unassuming cemetery into an awe-inspiring memorial ground by building the Atama Daibutsu, or Buddha's Head Statue, named for the fact that only the head can be seen when viewed from a distance. The artistic beauty is accented by fragrant lavender in summer and powder snow in winter.



Courtesy of Moerenuma Park

Flight to New Chitose Airport

Hokkaido Museum, Sapporo
Arte Piazza, Bibai

Stay in Asahikawa

Shikisai-no-oka, Biei
Goto Sumio Art Museum, Kamifurano

Stay in Sapporo

Moerenuma Park
Hill of the Buddha

Return flight from New Chitose Airport

