

Introduction

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Art historians, critics, curators, and museum directors from Korea, Japan, Great Britain, and the United States presented historical and contemporary issues related to Korean art at a symposium at the University of Florida's Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art from November 30 to December 2, 2012. Sponsored by the Korea Foundation and locally by the university's Office of Research and the Cofrin Curator of Asian Art Endowment, *Arts of Korea: Histories, Challenges, and Perspectives* was organized by the Harn Museum's Jason Steuber, Cofrin Curator of Asian Art, and Allysa B. Peyton, assistant curator of Asian art.

This proceedings volume includes papers presented during the symposium as well as additional studies solicited and organized after the symposium. The volume's collected discussions are divided into two thematically distinct yet interrelated and sometimes overlapping sections. The first section, "Histories and Challenges," focuses on the varied and dynamic experiences encountered by museums in the United Kingdom and United States that have actively collected and exhibited Korean art over the past century. Collection building as well as issues of provenance and authenticity have been and continue to be central concerns in museum administrative and curatorial environments and academic studies at universities. The second section, "Perspectives," includes essays on the reception of Korean art in an international setting and critical reappraisals of key constructs, art historical periods, and patterns of influence.

Youngna Kim [Gim Yeongna], then director of the National Museum of Korea, gave the keynote address, which offers an overview of the history of Korean art history. She argues that "Korean art history has come a long way since the years after independence [in 1945], when it was entirely absent from academia, to its current position as one of the successful and expanded fields of the humanities." In her essay Kim traces the history of collecting Korean art both in Korea and abroad, previous and present Korean art scholarship, and the innovative and leadership roles that the National Museum of Korea has played in the process. "If this progress is to continue," she submits, "further efforts toward Korean art-historical research must be earnestly pursued, not only in Korea, but also abroad." Collective efforts on an international scale will be needed to sustain the widening of perspectives in Korean art research.

Facing: Detail of Jang Seung'eop, *Scholars in a Garden*, scroll painting, late 19th century. Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.26).

Beth McKillop, formerly Keeper of Asia at the Victoria and Albert Museum and then its deputy director, reviews the history of the V&A dating to the latter part of the twentieth century, a period when curators strengthened the Korean collection, particularly after the Far Eastern Department was founded in 1970. After three decades of inactivity between 1940 and 1970, John Ayers and his curators made some exceptional acquisitions, helped by the lacquer connoisseur and collector Sir Harry Garner (1892–1977). In 1990 the international corporation Samsung agreed to sponsor and fund London's first gallery of Korean art at the V&A; it opened in 1992. McKillop explores these decades and the various Korean art collecting strategies, especially the noticeable shift toward collecting contemporary craft and design since 1990. She suggests that in future the museum must establish a balance between the object types the V&A adds to the Korean collection, in accordance with the museum's collecting plan.

Sascha Priewe, former curator of Chinese and Korean art at the British Museum, now with the Royal Ontario Museum, offers new insights and promotes critical inquiries concerning museum galleries conceptually designed to generate "Korean" surroundings intended to enhance visitor experiences and appreciation of the arts and culture of Korea. His essay frames the issue on the use of architecture and its design elements in exhibitions and galleries of Korean material and visual culture at the British Museum. Through archival research and visitor surveys, Priewe is able to review the British Museum's history of Korean art displays and exhibitions in order to assess the importance of gallery design to visitor experiences.

Kevin McLoughlin, former principal curator for Central and East Asia at the National Museum of Scotland, outlines the formation and development of the Korean art collection at the museum from the 1880s up to the present day, focusing both on the role of collectors and donors of the largest and most significant groups of material gifted or sold to the museum and on the kinds of Korean artifacts collected and retained in the museum. In addition, he situates the pattern of collecting of Korean artifacts by the museum against that of comparable institutions elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and relates it to the activities of British expatriates in Korea.

Charlotte Horlyck, chair of the Centre of Korean Studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, and Sascha Priewe argue that the understanding of Korean art is a constructed notion, basing their contention on a case study of how museum display in the United Kingdom has shaped its construction. Their study covers nearly one hundred years of display in the United Kingdom, from the Korean Pavilion of the Japan-British Exhibition in 1910 to establishment of permanent galleries of Korean art at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. The essay addresses the aesthetic and political challenges of displaying the art and cultural achievements of a nation, also addressing issues of reception among the canon as perceived by Koreans, museum staff, and visitors.

Jane Portal, Keeper of Asia at the British Museum, who served for six years as the Matsutaro Shoriki Chair of the Art of Asia, Oceania and Africa at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, begins the section on the United States by exploring the history of the

Korean collection at the MFA. As one of the oldest collections in the West, it is strong in Korean Buddhist paintings, many of which came from Japan thanks to a group of Bostonians who were early travelers there in the late nineteenth century. Portal discusses the Hoyt Collection of Korean ceramics and more recent acquisitions that include contemporary works—many of which are now displayed in a renovated Korean gallery that opened in late 2012.

Hyonjeong Kim Han, associate curator of Korean art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, details a history of collecting on the West Coast through the early connoisseurship of Avery Brundage (1887–1975). Because of his transformative gift to San Francisco, the museum was established with a foundation of 7,700 Asian art objects. As Han chronicles the overall momentum behind Brundage’s acquisitions, she also discusses the prevailing taste among collectors, especially as they related to Korean art in the 1950s and 1960s. Of the 900 works of Korean art in the AAM collection today, 212 were a part of Brundage’s founding gift. Han highlights some of the masterpieces from the Brundage gift and demonstrates the importance of the collection today.

Katherine Anne Paul, curator for the arts of Asia at the Newark Museum, offers an exploration of the various ways Korean art came to the museum and the unusual exhibition history of the collection. Beginning with the purchase of the museum’s founding collection in 1909, she shows how the Newark Museum has always included Korean art—and showcased it, from its earliest Korean art exhibition in 1918. Since that time, ninety-five individual donors (along with select purchases) have expanded the collection to approximately 450 works. Paul goes on to detail important collectors and their donations and how Korean art is continuing to be exhibited and highlighted by the museum.

Shawn Eichman’s essay “Early Collecting of Korean Art: The Honolulu Museum of Art” reviews the ninety years of acquiring Korean works and discusses how the works donated in 1927 helped to establish and define the collection up through today. The diverse makeup of the local community that surrounded the museum in the late 1930s provided the working model to display an international array of works from many Asian nations in dedicated galleries. Eichman’s review and discussion of the museum’s founder, Anna Rice Cooke (1853–1934), offers a unique perspective on not only the collecting of Korean art but also its earliest displays in a dedicated Korean art gallery during the first part of the twentieth century.

The symposium proceedings’ second section, “Perspectives,” includes chapters that illuminate the reception of Korean art in an international setting. Hyunsoo Woo, the Maxine and Howard Lewis Associate Curator of Korean Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, chronicles the first diplomatic relations between the United States and Korea in the nineteenth century and proceeds to outline the introduction of Korean art and culture through the efforts of American missionaries, individual collectors, government officials, and ethnologists in Korea. Woo also writes about the arrival of the first Korean delegation and the first Korean student in the United States, and about the role of Korean delegations in the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 and in the establishment of several founding gifts to United States museums.

Unsok Song, assistant professor in the Department of Archaeology and Art History at Dongguk University, offers new findings from his extensive research concerning Korean Buddhist sculptures in American collections, which feature many statues from the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE–668 CE) through the Goryeo (918–1392) and Joseon (1392–1910) dynasties. Song presents an overview of important wooden Buddhist images created during the Joseon dynasty, some of which contain sacred objects inside, including prayer wishes that provide information about who commissioned and created the works and when, enabling Song to identify the sculptors, their school, and the age of the sculptures in the American collections.

Seinosuke Ide, professor in the Faculty of Humanities at Kyushu University, reviews the transmission and reception of Goryeo Buddhist painting in premodern Japan and notes that before the early Edo period these works would often have been documented as preeminent works by Chinese painters. Even today scholars disagree on whether several famous works originated in Korea or China. Ide suggests that Buddhist paintings imported to Japan during the premodern period may be conceived as a kind of “border art” that has fallen through historical cracks due to the limitations of national art historical narratives in East Asia.

Since the introduction of Korean art to the United States in the late nineteenth century, Goryeo celadon has been recognized as one of the most exquisite and valued symbols of Korean culture. Soyoung Lee, associate curator of Korean art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, explores how American perceptions of Goryeo celadon were formed. Lee suggests that individual collectors served as ambassadors for Korean art, and details how the exhibitions and early museum collections shaped the trajectory of the collecting and dissemination of Korean art in the United States. Lee also discusses collectors and museums in Europe for purposes of comparison and, much like Horlyck and Priewe’s chronicle of the exhibition of Korean art in the United Kingdom, offers a history of the exhibition of Korean art as it unfolded in the States and the subsequent establishment of permanent galleries dedicated to the display of Korean art.

The second division in “Perspectives” is a compilation of case studies that function as critical reappraisals of topics dating from the Joseon to the present day. It begins with an essay by Richard Pegg, curator and director of the private MacLean Collection. Pegg presents an overview and discussion of maps of the world in Korean atlases. During the late Joseon dynasty, interest in cartography and the production of maps in general became widespread in Korea. Perhaps the most popular format, given extant examples, was the *yeojido*, or atlas. Pegg shows how sets of maps bound together, while not new, became more commonplace in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These atlases specifically contained a map of the world (commonly referred to as *cheonhado*), an overall map of Korea, a map of each of the eight provinces (*paldo*) with administrative bodies and general topography, the capital region, and the capital city itself, along with maps of neighboring countries, typically China, Japan, and the Ryukyu Islands. Pegg focuses on the *cheonhado* found in these *yeojido*, pointing out that there are primarily two different types of *cheonhado* based on two different historical sources.

Chin-Sung Chang, professor of art history at Seoul National University, writes that the formation of Korean art history is inseparable from the rise of nationalism in the modern era. In nationalist art historical writings, works of art are considered the cultural and visual expressions of national identities. Korean art historians have greatly emphasized the unique Korean characteristics and qualities in interpreting works of art. As a result, the notion of Koreanness has been highly celebrated in art historical studies. Chang explores how issues of nationalism, colonialism, and postcolonialism have been intertwined with potential complications of the concept of Koreanness. His critical examination of the origins and current status of Korean art history offers an alternative theoretical framework to assist in understanding how Korean art can be evaluated and interpreted beyond the boundaries of nationalism.

Moojeong Chung, professor at Duksung [Deokseong] Women's University, introduces the subject of Korea's postwar Informel art movement, the Korean abstract expressionism that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Chung explains that the term, derived from the French phrase *art informel*, was introduced to the Korean art community through Japanese art magazines, and that Korean artists were not necessarily fully aware of the Art Informel movement in Europe. In contrast to European art, which Korean artists could learn only through magazines, several exhibitions afforded them firsthand experience of concurrent American art. Chung examines some exhibitions that would have influenced Korean Informel artists, as well as the political and cultural background of the sudden increase in exhibitions sent to Korea in the second half of the 1950s.

In the final essay, Seoul-based independent scholar Hyeyoung Cho examines the histories, artists, and successful university programs that have influenced Korean ceramic artists and continue to do so today. Viewed from an artistic and technical standpoint, Korea has a long ceramic tradition, and it developed traits that are unique to its own culture over the course of time. The main branches of its development stem from the different types of ceramics that existed from ancient times—*onggi* ware, earthenware, Goryeo celadon—as well as the buncheong and porcelain wares of the Joseon period. Cho notes that contemporary ceramics developed in a university environment that recognized the need to preserve Korea's cultural assets following the Japanese occupation and the Korean War.

In summary, the range of topics and approaches offers not only an overview on the current state of the fields of Korean art history, collecting Korean art, and provenance issues in Korean art but also critical inquiry avenues for future research. The scholars in this international array have provided trenchant analyses of topics and materials heretofore never found in a single volume. The accessibility of these new contributions to the Korean art field benefits not only general readers and art lovers but also peer specialists of the arts of Korea and its myriad histories. The scholarly placement of Korean art in historical contexts will support and expand future studies and interpretations.