

LACMA UNVEILS NEWLY REINSTALLED KOREAN GALLERIES

Galleries comprise largest permanent space dedicated to Korean art outside of South Korea; reopen with a hundred objects on view



Reinstallation of LACMA Korean art galleries, September, 2009



The Pensive Bodhisattva, late sixth century

Los Angeles—As part of its ongoing Transformation, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) will unveil its newly reinstalled Korean galleries, which comprise the largest permanent space devoted to Korean art outside of South Korea, on September 10, 2009. LACMA's Korean collection is recognized as the most comprehensive outside of Korea and Japan, despite a relatively short history of collecting. Representing work from the fifth through twentieth centuries, the installation features a hundred objects from the Three Kingdoms, Goryeo, and Joseon periods, including Buddhist and literati art, ceramics, lacquer, paintings, and sculpture. Many masterpieces from the museum's collection will be on view, along with *The Pensive Bodhisattva* (late sixth century), a national treasure on loan from the National Museum of Korea that has rarely been exhibited outside of Korea. The Korean galleries reopen during LACMA's special exhibition *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea* (on view through September 20, 2009), continuing the museum's efforts to enrich the public dialogue on Korean art and culture.

"I am especially proud to see our permanent galleries for Korean art reopen to the public," says Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "After the success of *Your Bright Future*, which was able to bring so many new visitors from Los Angeles's thriving Korean community,

it is extremely gratifying to keep that momentum going by giving traditional Korean art a permanent—and prominent—home in our galleries.”

Highlights from LACMA’s collection on view

Organized thematically, the new galleries explore the cultures of women and men during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, modes of visual representation and expression in Korean painting, Buddhist spirituality and rituals, and the exquisite beauty of Korean ceramics. A significant number of masterpieces will be on display illustrating these themes. Highlights include a finely detailed eight-panel screen, the only one of seven versions known to remain in existence (1868); a rare scholar’s portrait by the renowned court painter Byeon Sangbyeok (1750); a gilt bronze seal created for one of the most celebrated queens in Korean history (sixteenth century); and a well-preserved jar characteristic of the rich porcelains from the Joseon period (eighteenth century).

Other key works from LACMA’s collection will be on view for the first time including more than 130 objects from the Asakawa-Henderson Korean Ceramic Shard Collection, which consists of more than 850 ceramic shards gathered from all around the Korean peninsula during the 1910s and ‘20s by Japanese researchers. A valuable resource for research on Korean ceramics, the collection consists of a large variety of ceramic types, spanning many centuries. The shards also serve as archaeological documentation for their original kiln sites. LACMA is the only institution outside Korea and Japan to hold such a comprehensive collection of the historic shards. Other works that will be on display for the first time include three works from an important series of Buddhist paintings, *Ten Kings of Hell*, which have just been conserved and were never previously exhibited due to their delicate condition; the *Amita Buddha* (1735), another masterpiece from the museum’s collection, accompanied by materials illustrating the process of creating a Buddha sculpture that were discovered inside the work; and recently acquired Korean ceramics from the Joseon and Goryeo periods.

Major loans from Korea on view

A selection of twenty-six works from Korea will be on display in the new galleries. The highlight is *The Pensive Bodhisattva*—a rare opportunity to view an extraordinary national treasure outside of Korea. Created during the Three Kingdoms period (57 BC–AD 668), the sculpture was cast by a sophisticated, now lost wax technique that was rarely used at the large scale of this work. The remarkable quality of the work’s modeling and its smoothly silhouetted body represent a high point in Buddhist sculpture. Communicating strength and elegance, the Bodhisattva’s balanced posture, exquisite drapery, and meditative expression are all attributes associated with the work, which today is one of Korea’s most recognized icons. In LACMA’s installation, the work is installed in the center of the galleries, allowing visitors to view the sculpture from all angles.

Casework and multimedia didactics

Taking a unique approach to displaying traditional Korean art, LACMA has commissioned Korean architecture firm One O One Architects to design the casework for the installation. Although the overall look of the cases is contemporary, One O One infused traditional elements into the design. The cases contain two kinds of traditional Korean paper: thick floor paper, commonly laid on heated floors of Korean buildings, has been applied to the outer walls of the cases, and thin, organic paper, typically used to line building windows and walls, has been placed in the interior of the cases to lie underneath the objects. The proportions of the cases were also influenced by traditional Korean furniture.

For the first time in a permanent installation, the new galleries feature multimedia didactics that combine text and imagery on screens to provide greater context for the galleries’ narratives. The didactics are image-driven and their texts nonlinear so that the visitors can begin viewing the screens at any time while in the galleries. The screens focus on key gallery themes, such as Korean Buddhist art and ceramics, while also highlighting specific genres and objects on view. Together with the installation’s thematic approach and unique design, the multimedia

didactics seek to provide the museum's diverse audiences greater accessibility to and interactivity with Korean art and culture.

Related Public Programs

Special event: Korea: Future/Past

Saturday, September 12, 8 pm-12 midnight

LACMA presents *Korea: Future/Past*, the museum's second Late Night Art event this year, celebrating Korean art and culture. The evening's program will feature traditional and contemporary offerings of Korean art, music, and dance performances, along with interactive art making, in-gallery readings, and more. On view will be the newly reinstalled Korean galleries and *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea*.

Film series: Cigarettes & Alcohol: Eight Films by Hong Sang-soo

September 11-19, varying times, Bing Theater

LACMA will screen eight feature films from award-winning Korean filmmaker Hong Sang-soo. His consistent oeuvre eschews the genre tropes beloved by his contemporaries in Korean cinema and instead focuses on the human-scale drama of intimate relationships. The series will begin with a preview screening of Hong's latest work, *Like You Know it All*, and also include the Los Angeles premiere of 2008's *Night and Day*, Hong's first film predominantly set outside Korea.

For more details on screenings and times, visit lacma.org.

Lecture: Visual Images of Buddhist Architecture and Sculpture in Korea

Sunday, September 13, 2 pm, Brown Auditorium

To celebrate the newly reinstalled galleries of the museum's collection of Korean art, distinguished art historian You Hong June will discuss the topic of harmony in Korean art and nature. Dr. You, professor of art history at Myongji University, is the former director of the Cultural Heritage Administration (Republic of Korea) and author of the best-selling books *My Exploration of Our Korean Heritage* (1991) and *Smiles of the Baby Buddha* (1999).

Reception to follow in the Director's Roundtable Garden.

Andell Family Sundays

Join NexGen for artist-led workshops, an in-gallery activity, and interactive bilingual tours!

All events: 12:30-3:30 pm, free, children 12 and younger plus family

Celebrate Korea!

Sundays, September 13, 20, 27*

Join in on a celebration of the reinstallation of the Korean art galleries! Make your own music with the performers and join in art workshops with Hadley Holliday, Robert Morse, and Quan Yen Trang. Special on September 13: Korean dance and music performance with the Korean Classical Music Institute of America.

*Family day starts at 11 a.m., just after the Tarfest Run!

See Tarfest.com for more information on Tarfest festivities.

Brush & Ink: Korean Painting

Sundays, October 4, 18, 25

Be inspired by the varied Korean paintings in LACMA's collection—find delicate bamboo and peonies, beautiful landscapes, and animals. Paint with artists Sean Gall, Peggy Hasegawa, Jenny Ly, and Quan Yen Trang

Boone Children's Gallery: Korean Brush Painting

A mini-version of the Boone Children's Gallery reopens Sunday, September 13, inside the Korean Art galleries in the Hammer Building. Children will learn about brush painting used in Korean art. For more information and hours, visit lacma.org or call 323 857-6128.

Docent Tours

In Focus Tours

Museum docents will offer two themed twenty-minute tours on the permanent collection of Korean art. Topics include "A Day in the Life of a Korean Scholar Official" and "Korean Ceramics." Meet at the entrance to the Korean Art galleries. Tours will be offered on various dates; visit lacma.org for more information.

Permanent Collection Tour: Art of Korea

Museum docents will lead one-hour gallery tours focusing on the newly reinstalled galleries of Korean Art. Meet at the entrance to the Korean Art galleries. Tours will be offered on various dates; visit lacma.org for more information.

Credit

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About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography—and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon–8 pm; Friday, noon–9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am–8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's

"Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

Images (page 1)

(Left) Reinstallation of LACMA Korean art galleries, September, 2009, photo © 2009 Museum Associates/LACMA

(Right) *Pensive Bodhisattva*, Korea, Three Kingdoms period (57 BC-AD 668), late 6th century, gilt bronze, lent by the National Museum of Korea, National Treasure number 78, photo © 2009 Museum Associates/LACMA

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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