

Korean Cultural Heritage (Dresden, 12–13 Jun 25)

Haus der Kathedrale, Schloßstr. 24, D-01067 Dresden, Jun 12–13, 2025

Registration deadline: Jun 11, 2025

Claudia Brink, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

Korean Cultural Heritage in German and Central European Museums: Collections, Reception and Research Perspectives.

On the occasion of the exhibition “100 Ideas of Happiness: Art Treasures from Korea,” organized by the Green Vault (Grünes Gewölbe), Dresden State Art Collections (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden), the conference explores the history, reception, and future of Korean cultural heritage in museums across Germany and Central Europe. The relationship between Korea and Central Europe in the field of art and cultural exchange dates back to the 19th century when Korea opened its doors to foreign powers. Scholars, diplomats, and collectors from Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire played a key role in documenting and acquiring Korean artifacts, many of which entered newly established ethnographic museums.

European museums in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were shaped by expanding academic disciplines such as ethnography, archaeology, and art history. Institutions across Europe sought to document and categorize the material culture of non-European societies, leading to the systematic collection of Korean objects. Museums in Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Vienna, Prague and Budapest, initially focusing on broader East Asian art, began incorporating Korean artifacts through diplomatic gifts, scientific expeditions, and international exhibitions. Over time, these collections transitioned from being viewed through an ethnographic lens to being recognized as significant components of global art history.

Spanning two days, the conference will first examine the collection histories of Korean art in selected European museums, museological approaches to their presentation, and the impact of cultural diplomacy in shaping these collections. The second day will focus on an in-depth exploration of Korea’s cultural heritage, presented by curators from Korean National Museums. Through keynote lectures, panel discussions, and case studies, the event will foster dialogue on past, present, and future perspectives on exhibiting and interpreting Korean art in European institutions.

By bringing together scholars, curators, and cultural professionals, the conference aims to advance academic research, facilitate museum collaborations, and enhance public engagement with Korean art. These discussions will contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical and contemporary role of Korean cultural heritage in European museums, shaping future curatorial and scholarly approaches.

The conference is free and open to the public. A registration for the event at SKD is required:

<https://event.skd.museum/#/events/08e34e02-1869-4ebc-97c1-3f5fcb733ab7>

PROGRAM

DAY 1: Thursday, 12th of June 2025

9:30 – 10:00 Registration

10:00 – 10:10 Opening address by Dr. Sylvia Karges, Deputy Director of Saxonian State Collections of Ethnography (Staatliche Ethnografische Sammlungen, SKD)

10:10 – 10:20 Welcome address and introduction by the conference organizers, Dr. Claudia Brink (Grünes Gewölbe, SKD)

Panel 1: Collection History and Museological Perspectives in Berlin and Saxony

10:20 – 11:00 Prof. Dr. Jeong-hee Lee-Kalisch (Freie Universität Berlin)

The Beginning of Korean Art Collections and Exhibitions in Germany: Strategies & Values

11:00 – 11:10 Questions

11:10 – 12:00 Dietmar Grundmann (Former GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, SKD) & Sojin Baik (Grünes Gewölbe, SKD)

History and Significance of the Korean Collection in Leipzig and Dresden: The Role of Korean Collections in Shaping European Perceptions

12:00 – 12:10 Questions

12:10 – 13:45 Lunch break

14:00 – 15:30 Viewing of the exhibition "100 Ideas of Happiness: Art Treasures from Korea" in Dresden's Residence Palace

15:45 – 16:30 Coffee break

Panel 2: Collection History and Museological Perspectives in Vienna

16:30 – 17:00 Dr. Bettina Zorn (Weltmuseum Wien)

The Impact of International Exhibitions on the Eastern European Perception of Korean Art: From the Vienna World's Fairs of the 19th Century to Today in Austria

17:00 – 17:10 Questions

DAY 2: Friday, 13th of June 2025

9:00 – 9:30 Registration

9:30 – 9:40 Welcome and opening remarks by Sojin Baik (Grünes Gewölbe, SKD)

Panel 3: Korean Cultural Heritage

9:40 – 10:10 Dr. Daehwan Kim (Gyeongju National Museum)

The Royal Tombs and Gold Ornaments of Silla: The Age of Monumental Grandeur

10:10 – 10:20 Questions

10:20 – 10:50 Dr. Hyeong Uk Her (National Museum of Korea)

Monk Artisans of the Joseon Dynasty: Production and Characteristics of Their Buddhist Sculpture

10:50 – 11:00 Questions

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 12:00 Dr. Yun-Hee Seo (National Museum of Korea)

Harmony and Order: The Confucian Way of Life in Traditional Korea

12:00 – 12:10 Questions

12:10 – 14:00 Lunch break

Panel 4: Collection History and Museological Perspectives in Central Europe

14:00 – 14:40 Prof. Dr. Beatrix Mecsí (Eötvös Loránd University Budapest)

A Korean Collection in Budapest in the 20th Century

14:40 – 15:10 Prof. Dr. Miriam Löwensteinová (Charles University Prague)

Cultural Politics between Korea and Czech Republic: Exchange and Diplomacy Through Art in 20th Century

15:10 – 16:00 Questions and Closing Discussion

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee

In case of further questions, please contact:

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Reference:

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