

the arts



The Korea Society introduces the traditional and contemporary arts of Korea to American audiences in collaboration with colleges and universities, theaters, museums, community organizations and schools throughout the United States.

the arts



Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan

April 9–June 22 • New York, NY

The first major international exhibition to focus on the formative links between the ancient states of Korea and Japan was mounted successfully in New York to universal critical acclaim. The works were selected to illustrate Korea's role in the introduction of Buddhist culture in Japan during the 6th to 9th centuries. Characterizing the exhibition as "perfection: ideally scaled, art historically innovative, with some of the most beautiful sculptures on earth," art critic Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* selected it as "the number one best show of the year." Similarly, the exhibition catalogue also drew very



(l-r)

Seated Bodhisattva in Pensive Posture

Korea

Silla, first half of 7th c.

Yangsan, South Kyongsang Province

Gilt bronze; h.27.5cm

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

Seated Bodhisattva in Pensive Posture

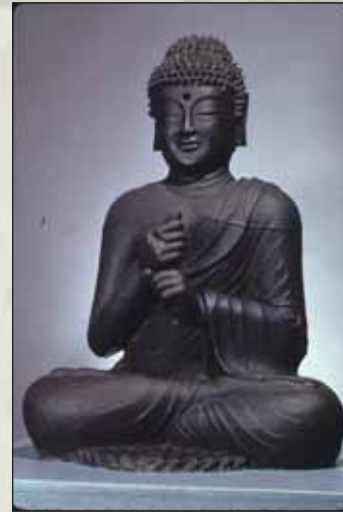
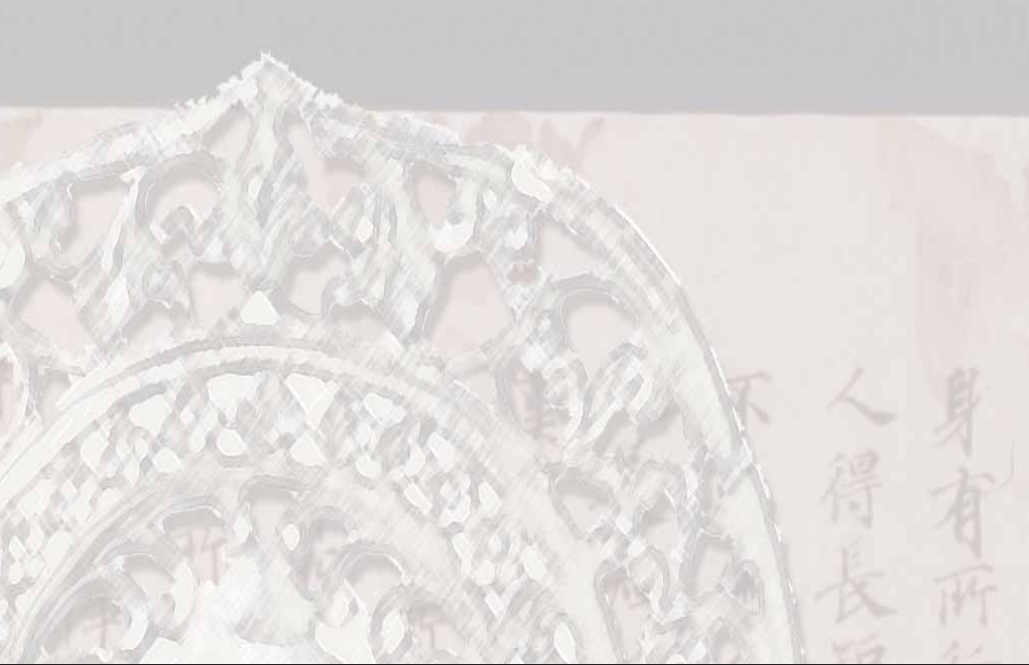
Japan

Nara Period (710-794)

Okadera Prefecture

Gilt bronze; h.16.5cm

Important Cultural Property



Seated Vairocana
Korea
Unified Silla Dynasty
late 9th c.
Iron; h. 112cm
National Museum of
Korea, Seoul

positive reviews and was nominated as a finalist by the College Art Association for its annual Alfred A Barr Award for Museum Scholarship, which is the most prestigious recognition for museum publications in the field. The exhibition presented the earliest Buddhist art ever created in Korea and Japan. The pieces included Buddhist sculpture in gilt bronze, wood, stone and iron; architectural relics such as decorative and commemorative ceramic tiles for temples; precious reliquaries, ritual implements and sūtra scrolls. Highlighting the unique stylistic and iconographic expressions of early Buddhist art in Korea, the exhibition revealed how this style was the direct predecessor to Japanese Buddhist art. Alexandra Munroe, director of the Japan Society Gallery—the exhibition's sole

venue—summed up the importance of the exhibition with these words: "It is very important to have brokered this curatorial collaboration. This is the first exhibition anywhere in the world to fully position Korea as the mediating influence in the transmission of continental civilization in Japan, so crucial to our understanding of Buddhist art and culture in northeastern Asia." The exhibition was organized jointly by the Japan Society and The Korea Society in association with the Gyeongju National Museum in the Republic of Korea and the Nara National Museum in Japan and with the support of The Japan Foundation and The Korea Foundation. It featured 92 works of art largely from national museums and temple collections in Korea and Japan, including six National


treasures from the two countries, three treasures from Korea, and 23 Important Cultural Properties from Japan. Lenders from Korea included Gyeongju National Museum, Ho-Am Art Museum, the National Museum of Korea in Seoul, Puyo National Museum, and Taegu National Museum. Lenders from Japan included Nara National Museum, Tokyo National Museum, and historical monastic centers of Buddhism, including the temples of Hōryūji, Saidaiji, Tōdaiji, and others across Japan. The exhibition was presented in four sections: Introduction: Buddhist Sculpture of Korea's Three Kingdoms period (6th-7th centuries); Part I: The Transmission and Transformation of Buddhist Sculpture (7th-9th centuries); Part II: Decorative Tiles from Buddhist Temples; and Part III: Sūtras and Ritual Objects.



(l-r)

Standing Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva
Korea
Three Kingdoms Period, mid-7th c.
Sonsan, North Kyongsang Province
Gilt bronze; h. 33cm
Taegu National Museum
National Treasure No. 183

Standing "Jewel-Holding" Avalokitesvara
Japan
Hakuho Period, 658
Gilt bronze; h. 16.5cm
Kanshinji, Osaka
Important Cultural Property



Secret Wonderland: New York Korean Film Festival 2003

August 15–21 • New York, NY

August 22–24 • Brooklyn, NY

The Korea Society was a sponsor of the third annual New York Korean Film Festival, programmed and presented by the Korean Film Forum. The festival was held at Quad Cinemas in Manhattan for the first seven days and, by special invitation, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Rose Cinemas for the remaining three days. Following the previous two years' hugely successful Korean film festivals, this year's program featured 18 of the best contemporary South Korean films with English subtitles. Under the festival's theme "Secret Wonderland," the selected films covered a wide array of cinematic genres and portrayed people exploring unfamiliar physical and emotional territories. As a whole, the festival offered a unique Korean perspective on the universal experiences of growing up, moving on, falling in love and bidding farewell. The films included *Ardor*, *Bad Guy*, *Bet on My Disco*, *Green Fish*, *Jail Breaker*, *Jealousy Is My Middle Name*, *A Little Monk*, *Madeleine*, *Marriage Is a Crazy Thing*, *My Tutor Friend*, *No. 3*, *Oasis*, *Present*, *Road Movie*, *Spy Lee*, *Teenage Hooker Becomes Killing Machine in Daehakno*, *Two Cops* and *YMCA Baseball Team*. The film festival also featured a Q&A session with director Chu Kyong-jong (*A Little Monk*).

Provocations: The 13th Annual Exhibition of the Asian American Arts Centre
September 26–November 7 • New York, NY

The Asian American Arts Center (AAAC) and The Korea Society presented “Provocations: The 13th Annual Exhibition.” Ten Asian American artists were featured in the exhibition mounted at the Asian American Arts Center in Manhattan from September 26 through November 7. Representing the diverse heritages of China, Hawaii, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam in contemporary America, their works consisted of multimedia, installation, video, painting, sculpture, works on paper and photography. A panel of five curators and art writers pored over 90 submissions from all over the country, and selected the 10 artists who best embody Asian America. The artists include: Tony Barnes, Irene Chan, John Yoyogi Fortes, Eunjung Hwang, Garrick Imatani, Lara Nguyen, Soon-Hwa Oh, Uijin Park, Gordon M. Sasaki and Soon Ae Tark.



Eye Contact
 Acrylic on Canvas
 32 x 32 inches
 tarkp008

Meet the Artist: New Works on Paper with Theresa Chong

October 10 • New York, NY

Theresa Chong, a recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant in 2003, gave a slide presentation and lecture on her current exhibition at Danese Gallery. The program, initiated by the New York Foundation for the Arts as part of the Artist Audience Exchange Program, also included an artist's talk at the gallery. This was Chong's fourth solo exhibition at Danese Gallery. Chong's drawings are said to be “inspired by Korean calligraphy, the Roman alphabet and Arabic numerals,” and are praised for “translating music into its visual equivalent.”

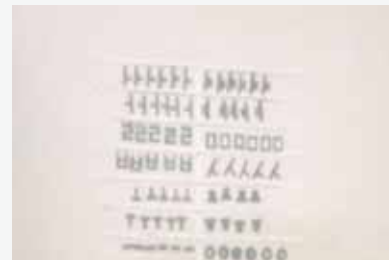



Untitled
 2001
 Oil on Linen
 60 x 80 inches
 CHON
 198

Provocations: The 13th Annual Exhibition Artists' Talk

October 17 • New York, NY

Five of the artists whose works were included in the 13th annual exhibition of the Asian American Arts Centre—Tony Barnes, Irene Chan, Eunjung Hwang, Soon-Hwa Oh and Gordon M. Sasaki—gave slide presentations on works in a panel discussion at The Korea Society. Robert Lee, the executive director of the Asian American Arts Centre, moderated the program.





Next Page: Readings from Six Korean American Playwrights

November 10 • New York, NY

An overflow crowd of over 100 mostly young people packed The Korea Society's conference room to hear members of the Ma-Yi Theater Company in the first staged readings of new works by Korean American playwrights. Produced by Sung Rno, the evening's program was a tour de force of writing and acting ability, featuring six Korean American playwrights and 16 Asian American actors. *Change*, by Rno, powerfully illustrated the generation gap between a Korean immigrant and his American-born son with a riveting portrayal of both characters by actor Paul Juhng. *We Spend our Lives*, by Mia Chung, could have been a familiar story of predicament for anyone who has ever needed money from a relative. But the situation is particularly complex when an immigrant woman asks for a loan from her sister to start her own business. *Worth*, by Suzanne Lee, examined the issues of self-awareness and self-worth colored by grief and loss. *El Santo Americano*, by Edward Bok Lee, was an at times funny and at times very moving metaphor of love and the American dream, superbly read and acted by Tim Kang and Angel Desai. An excerpt from *BFE*, by Julia Cho, dealt with the themes of illusion and perception, primarily based on the experience of a 14-year-old. Siobhan Mahoney gave a particularly good performance of a "clueless" teenager. The final piece, *Not all Korean Girls can Fly*, by Lloyd Suh, had the audience screaming with laughter from beginning to end, driven by the riotous portrayal of the mother by actress Cindy Cheung. The evening's directors were Mia Katigbak and Andrew Eisenman, both of the National Asian American Theatre Company.



(left) Tim Kang

(from top)

Mia Chung. left.
Paul Juhng
Sung Rno

Encounter 2003: An Evening with Authors Im Choru and Yang Kwija

November 11, 2003 • New York, NY

In an event cosponsored by the International Communication Foundation of Korea, authors Im Choru and Yang Kwija read passages from stories they had written. Im read a selection from *Tonghaeng* (A Shared Journey), a story about two friends conversing about their gloomy state of being as they flee from authorities during the 1980 Kwangju incident. Yang read from *Hangyeryong* (Cold Water Pass), a story describing the convoluted lives of people in Puchon, a satellite city of Seoul near Incheon. Bruce Fulton, a translator of Korean-language fiction and professor of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, read the corresponding sections in English translation.

Dongnae Yaryu: U.S. Debut Tour

November 13–14 • Chicago, IL; November 16 • New York, NY; November 18 • Stony Brook, NY; November 20 • Washington, DC; November 21 • Buffalo, NY

The Korea Society's fall performing arts tour featured *Dongnae Yaryu*, a 19-member troupe hailing from Pusan, South Korea. The three-part program of traditional dance and music—including three scenes from the masked dance play from which the troupe draws its name—was the debut performance of *Dongnae Yaryu* in any country other than Korea and Japan. The tour was kicked off on November 13 in Chicago with a performance that drew a rousing ovation from a near sold-out house at the Claudia Cassidy Theater in the Chicago Cultural Center. The troupe appeared the next morning at the National Council for Social Studies convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Though slightly abbreviated for the occasion, the performance received an enthusiastic response from the audience of 800 educators who were attending the conference. From Chicago, the troupe traveled to New York City for two appearances. On November 16, *Dongnae Yaryu* gave a matinee performance as part of the prestigious Margaret Mead Festival at the American Museum of Natural History. Noteworthy in this performance was the use of super-titles developed by The Korea Society. On November 18, *Dongnae Yaryu* appeared at the Charles B. Wang Center at SUNY-Stonybrook at the invitation of Dr. Theresa Kim of the university's theatre arts department who is a recognized expert on Shamanic cosmology. The Millennium Stage Series at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC was the troupe's next stop on November 20. Offered daily and free to the public, the Performing Arts for Everyone series draws large crowds to performing arts offerings from all over the world. Many attending the *Dongnae Yaryu* performance in this year's series had never seen a Korean performance of any kind before. Simultaneously broadcast over the Internet, the performance remains available for viewing in the Kennedy Center's archives on its Website. The final performance in this tour by *Dongnae Yaryu* was on November 21 as part of the Day Outreach Program at the University of Buffalo's Buffalo Center for the Arts. The troupe made this last appearance particularly memorable by inviting audience members up onto the stage during the concluding segment, an exciting rendition of *Samullori*. The *Dongnae Yaryu* tour was a part of The Korea Society's Old Roots-New Branches: Korean Performing Arts series, which is made possible in part by the generous support of The Freeman Foundation.

Tour Manager: Jang Kwang Ryul

The Artists: Back Jung-Gang, Han Jeong-Sook, Jung Hee-Jung, Jung Jae-Wook, Jung Young-Bae, Kim Kyung-Hwa, Kim On-Kyung, Kim Soo-Keun, KimYoung-Soo, Lee Do-Keun,* Lee Jang-Hee, Lee Seon-Koo, Lee Soon-Gyue, Lee Young-Whan, Park Sung-Ho, Ryu Keum-Sun, Seo Han-Seon, Shin Tae-Hyung, Sim Ok-Ja

*Human Cultural Treasure



Marking: Drawings by Contemporary Artists from Korea

November 17–22 • New York, NY

An exhibition of works by Korean artists was held to inaugurate the gallery space in the redesigned and expanded premises of The Korea Society. The event drew a large number of visitors, including renowned art critics, to its opening night reception on November 18. The exhibition was also a part of the second annual Contemporary Asian Art Week that was organized by a consortium of 15 institutions and 81 artists in New York City. It featured diverse and powerful works by eight artists, assembled by curator Jung Lee Sanders. The works offered insights into the modes of expression and the methodologies employed by each artist in representing and translating Korean culture. One of the artists,

Myong Hi Kim, working out of an abandoned elementary school in a remote mountainous area near the DMZ in South Korea, created an oil pastel drawing on chalkboard, powerfully evoking the social and cultural connection between Korea and New York City. Il Lee's work, an obsessively drawn ballpoint pen drawing, explored line density and the space and non-space created by his process. Jyung Mee Park's two drawings challenged the traditional notion of a drawing while offering an opportunity to better appreciate the wonderful culture of handmade objects in Korea. Choong-Sup Lim's oval-shaped drawing blurred the boundaries between drawing and sculpture, organically exploring the canvas by manipulating suggestive lines and shapes without the physical presence of a drawn line. Theresa Chong's sheet-music-like abstract

drawings on rice paper evidenced her cellist background while conjuring up images of a night sky filled with stars. Further exploring the nature of the drawing medium itself, Beom Kim's humorous caricatures of a rabbit and dog footsteps were created by thread sewn on canvas. In-Hyung Kim offered studies of hues, lines, and forms in her drawings, conjuring alluring abstract forms and a romantic atmosphere. Tchah-Sup Kim's work used Renaissance styles to explore topics ranging from the politics of geographical representation to the relationship of the number *pi* to daily life. Drawings are often the first gestation of artists' masterpieces. Much in the same way, Marking: Drawings by Contemporary Artists from Korea portends a promising future for The Korea Society's art programs.



Living Through the Forgotten War: Portrait of Korea

Korean War Photo Exhibition Preview

November 20 • New York, NY

Bruce Cumings of the University of Chicago, John K.C. Oh of The Catholic University of America and Patrick Dowdey of Wesleyan University were presenters for an evening preview of *Living Through the Forgotten War: Portrait of Korea*, an upcoming photo exhibition. Cumings was the first to speak and offered a compelling analysis of the root causes of the divisions between North and South Korea that, according to him, originated during the Great Depression of the 1930s. He maintained that the tensions between the two Koreas had been exacerbated first by the Korean War itself, and then during the following decades of cold war sensibilities that persist to this day. "[The tensions] will only dissipate when all Koreans are back in touch with their history," Cumings said. "Who started the war?" is, for Cumings, the wrong question, often asked

by those still in the grip of ideology rooted in the bipartisan American strategic failure of the second half of the 20th century. The so-called "forgotten war" will continue as long as the culture of blame continues. He argued that the key to an eventual reconciliation is to acknowledge the immeasurable human cost of the war and to recognize the shared heritage of the two Koreas, both amply documented in the exhibit. Oh followed with an account of his own experiences—contrasting, in his words, the micro-view and Cumings' macro-view. In his very poignant personal history, Oh described the North Korean occupation of Seoul and his first experience of hunger and fear. During his subsequent military career, Oh also encountered the deep divisions among Koreans, which persisted long after the armistice. Oh argued that disposition of POWs and other problems of repatriation, for example, point to the divided histories and loyalties that have plagued families, villages and all social groups. In Oh's view, the dividing line among Koreans today is



(from top right)

John K.C. Oh
Patrick Dowdey
Bruce Cumings

their experience, or lack of experience, of the war. Dowdey then introduced the exhibition itself and described the curatorial process. He explained his intention to try to make a story of the photos. Photographers during the Korean War took pictures either for military or propaganda purposes, leaving little scope for images of ordinary lives. The curators wanted especially also to pay respect to those who died. Dowdey's slide presentation included examples both of photos that are included in the exhibit and some that were left out for aesthetic, qualitative or technical reasons. He remarked that some of the most difficult choices centered on showing pictures of the wounded or killed because of their potential impact on young viewers. Dowdey reminded the audience that seeing the photos in an exhibition is an environmental experience while viewing them in a catalog is a sequential one. A lively question and answer session followed. The exhibition will be shown at The Korea Society during February and March, 2004. Exhibition catalogs are available for sale.