Universität Zürich[UZH]

Chair in East Asian Art History

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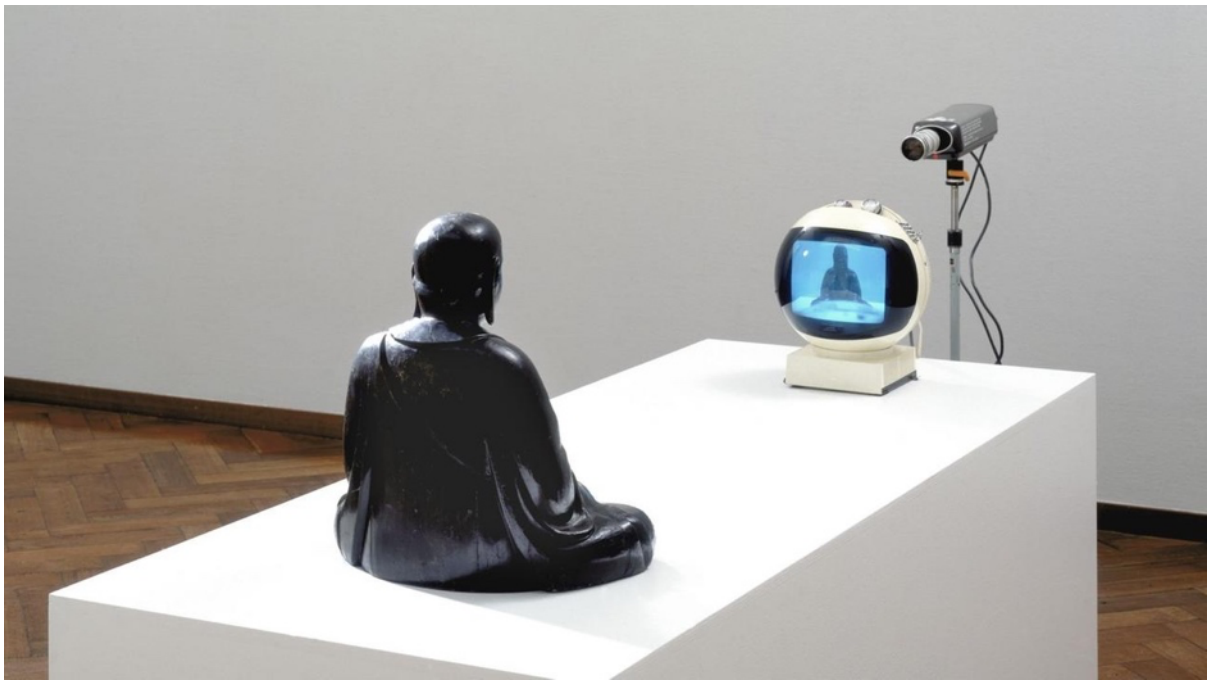
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien



Nam June Paik, TV Buddha, 1974, installation, Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

Colloquium
Spring 2025

Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture
University of Zurich – Museum Rietberg
16th – 17th of May 2025

3 ETCS

Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka
Alva Speth, M.A.

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Korean Wave(s): Global Itineraries of Korean Art

Instructor:	Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka
Contact:	ewa.machotka@khist.uzh.ch
Conference time:	Friday, May 16th, 14:00-17:00 and Saturday, May 17th, 9:00-17:15 (postponed from May 9th and 10th)
Locations:	UZH and Museum Rietberg
Language:	English
Format:	Conference
Module no:	06KO642m002a

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This colloquium is closely tied to the international conference "Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture", held at the University of Zurich and Museum Rietberg on May 16th-17th, 2025. The Conference, organized by the Chair in East Asian Art History, University of Zurich in cooperation with the Museum Rietberg, is held in conjunction with the special exhibition “Hallyu – The Korean Wave”. The Conference seeks to engage with the exhibition by examining the global entanglements of Korean art and culture in a broader historical framework. It engages with the notion of “object itinerary” (Joyce 2015) as a tool for analysis of transcultural exchange, which offers a constructive framework for discussing the production, dissemination, and reception of art in a global perspective. This way the Conference conceptualizes the phenomenon of the Korean Wave as part of a continuum of regional and global cultural exchange that has been ongoing throughout Korean history from its earliest days, while critically reflecting on the notion of the 'wave,' as an analytical instrument used in the context of transcultural study of art.

The colloquium offers a unique opportunity to engage with leading scholars and experts in the field of Koran Art History and reflect on the global mobilities of Korean art and culture. Students are expected to attend all conference sessions, engage actively by listening to lectures and panel discussions, and formulating questions for the speakers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The course aims to:

- Introduce students to current discourses in Korean art history, encouraging reflection on the transcultural and global mobilities of Korean art objects.
- Foster an understanding of global transcultural exchange and its broader implications within Global Art History.
- Provide students with opportunities to engage with leading scholars in the field, while developing critical thinking skills and the ability to articulate ideas effectively both orally and in writing.

TEACHING AND EXAMINATION:

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- Instructions are given in the form of the conference presentations.
- The Conference programme will be posted on KGOA website in due time.
- The instructions will be delivered in English.
- The course is examined through 6 web postings on OLAT, active participation in scholarly discussions during the conference, and a reflection paper to be submitted after the conference.
- 6 web postings (ca. 200-300 words each) should summarize and critically reflect on the course required readings and should be submitted on OLAT before the conference (**by May 15th, 2025**).
- Active participation in scholarly discussions during the conference (**May 16-17th, 2025**) will be evaluated on the basis of the submission of at least 3 relevant questions to the speakers, both on-site and via OLAT.
- The final paper (ca. 1500 words) reflecting on the conference and required readings should be submitted on OLAT after the conference (**by May 30th 2025**). In your final paper you are asked to reflect on following questions: How did the conference presentations or discussions challenge or expand your understanding of the topic or field? What key ideas or arguments from the conference did you find particularly thought-provoking, and how might they influence your future research or academic work?
- The guidelines on the assignments are posted on OLAT ("Course Information").
- For referencing use The Chicago Manual of Style https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html
- A signed Statement of Independent Work (Selbständigkeitserklärung) must accompany the written assignment, confirming that the work is original, independently completed, and free from plagiarism. The statement also needs to cover the issue of use of AI tools. Note that generative AI tools are not permitted for completing course assignments. Using Grammarly or similar applications for spelling and grammar checks ONLY is permitted. Using these programs' Generative AI extensions is NOT permitted. A signed Statement of Independent Work can be submitted as a scanned document.
- More information on the content and format of the assignment will be provided in due course.
- Changes of the schedules may occur and will be announced via OLAT.

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REQUIRED READINGS:

Baker, Donald L. "Introduction: The Contours of Korea's Cultural History." In J.P. Park, Burglind Jungmann and Juhyung Rhi, eds. *A Companion to Korean Art*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2020: 1-25.

Hahn, Christine Y. "Unearthing Origins: The Use of Art, Archaeology, and Exhibitions in Creating Korean National Identity, 1945–1962." *Visual Resources* 28:2 (2012): 138-170. DOI: 10.1080/01973762.2012.678811

Joyce, Rosemary A. "Making Things out of Objects That Move." In Rosemary A. Joyce and Susan D. Gillespie, eds. *Things in motion: object itineraries in anthropological practice*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School for Advanced Research Press, 2015: 3-20.

Kikuchi, Yuko. "Yanagi Sōetsu and Korean crafts within the Mingei movement." In Susan Pares and Jim Hoare, eds. *Korea: The Past and the Present* (2 vols). Leiden: Brill, 2008: 80-91.

Lee, Jiyoon. "In the Eye of the Hurricane of Change: Korean Contemporary Art of the New Millenium." In Susan Pares and Jim Hoare, eds. *Korea: The Past and the Present* (2 vols). Leiden: Brill, 2008: 507-517.

Park, J.P. "Rescuing Art History from the Nation: The Late Chosŏn between Europe and Edo Japan." In J.P. Park. *A New Middle Kingdom: Painting and Cultural Politics in Late Chosŏn Korea (1700–1850)*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020: 175-220.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Conference "Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture"
University of Zurich – Museum Rietberg, 16th – 17th of May 2025

The Conference "Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture", organized by the Chair in East Asian Art History, University of Zurich in cooperation with the Museum Rietberg, is held in conjunction with the special exhibition "Hallyu – The Korean Wave". The Conference seeks to engage with the exhibition by examining the global entanglements of Korean art and culture in a broader historical framework. It engages with the notion of "object itinerary" (Joyce 2015) as a tool for analysis of transcultural exchange, which offers a constructive framework for discussing the production, dissemination, and reception of art in a global perspective. This way the Conference conceptualizes the phenomenon of the Korean Wave as part of a continuum of regional and global cultural exchange that has been ongoing throughout Korean history from its earliest days, while critically reflecting on the notion of the 'wave,' as an analytical instrument used in the context of transcultural study of art.

The term "Korean Wave" or *Hallyu,* refers to the global surge in popularity of South Korean pop culture, which began in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and rapidly expanded soon after. Key elements driving this movement include pop music (K-pop), TV series (K-drama), and film (K-cinema) that over time grew to encompass other cultural genres like food and

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fashion, as well as the art scene experiencing a rapid rise in recent years. Due to its astonishing success among diverse audiences worldwide, the Korean Wave is commonly recognized as a global phenomenon reliant on the quality of the Korean productions, their innovative content keeping its offerings fresh and relevant, and favourable governmental policies and infrastructure that bolster the South Korean cultural industry and its exports. These interpretations of the Korean Wave often emphasize contemporaneity and singularity of the phenomenon positioned vis-à-vis the notion of the "Hermit Kingdom", orientalist moniker of isolation and insularity, used to characterize Korea and its cultural relationships before the 20th century. They also tend to accentuate South Korea's exclusive agency as the origin of the 'wave,' that may obscure the multidirectional and reciprocal nature of the processes of transcultural exchange that can be observed throughout the history of the Korean Peninsula.

For example, as early as the Three Kingdoms period (trad. 57 BCE – 668 CE), historical evidence points to active cultural exchange between the kingdoms on the peninsula and their neighbors. The spread of Buddhist art in East Asia is a significant example of cultural flow during this early period of Korean history. During the Goryeo period (918 – 1392), a range of cultural products, such as highly valued celadon wares and the Buddhist canonical texts known as the Goryeo Tripitaka, fueled multidirectional regional trade and diplomatic exchange. Despite self-imposed restrictions on international exchange, the Joseon dynasty (1392 – 1910) witnessed an intensification of these trends on both regional and global levels, leading to the circulation of various cultural products, including literati paintings linked to Neo-Confucian thought.

Considering these mobilities, the ever-shifting temporal and spatial contexts of Korean transcultural exchange emerge as particularly significant topic, prompting numerous considerations. For instance, should the Korean Wave be viewed as a singular contemporary phenomenon, or is it one in a series of discrete, historically situated 'Korean waves' involving distinct artistic expressions? Moreover, what are the benefits, risks, and limitations of the notion of a 'wave' in this context, considering the diversity of agents, sources, and directions of cultural flows pertinent to these historical exchanges?
Lastly, how do diverse spatial and temporal trajectories and contexts shape the reception and adaptation of art objects and related art historiography?

These issues demand critical examination and will form the core focus of the conference, which will examine mobilities of art objects through different environments over time. This exploration will encompass their production, circulation, and transformation as they traverse various cultural and social spaces within East Asia and beyond. Importantly, these concerns are relevant not only to the Korean Wave but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the global entanglements of Korean art and culture. This includes their positioning and role within the broader narratives of global art history, as well as the processes of transcultural exchange and globalization at large.

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Conference Structure

Session 1: Exhibiting Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture

Friday, 16th of May, Museum Rietberg (schedule TBA)

In the afternoon of Friday 16th of May, the conference will focus on the exhibition "Hallyu! The Korean Wave" at the Museum Rietberg, featuring a curator talk, an exhibition viewing and the first keynote lecture (broadcasted online) thereby offering a point of departure for discussion on the second day.

Session 2: Debating Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture

Saturday, 17th of May, UZH, Aula RAA-G-01 (schedule TBA)

On May 17th the conference will explore the discourse on the global mobilities of Korean art. Focused on the nexus of object itineraries—specifically their topographies and temporalities—the Conference is organized around the intersection of three main themes. Each theme is covered by one of three panels that collectively explore how spatial and temporal trajectories shape the reception, adaptation, and interpretation of Korean art objects in transcultural exchange.

Panel 1: Transcultural Mobility of Art Objects: Production and Circulation
This panel explores the production and circulation of art objects in the context of Korean transcultural exchange. It discusses how art objects are created, disseminated, and exchanged across different spatial and temporal contexts, considering factors such as artistic materials, techniques, trade routes, and cultural networks.

Panel 2: Transcultural Reception of Art Objects: Transformation and Adaptation
This panel examines how art objects from Korea are received and adapted in various cultural and social environments over time. It analyzes how cultural contexts shape the interpretation and reinterpretation of art objects, leading to their transformation and adaptation in different cultural settings.

Panel 3: Art Historiography in Motion: Tracing Korean Art Across Time and Space
This panel focuses on the role of art historiography in tracing the spatial and temporal trajectories of Korean art. It discusses methodological approaches and challenges in studying the movement of art objects, as well as the implications for our understanding of Korean art history and its global entanglements.