

THE UNITED STATES

Korean Painted Screens

Marking the Charles B. Wang Center's first major exhibition on Long Island, *The Power and Pleasure of Possessions in Korean Painted Screens* is presented at the center's three major galleries (the Skylight, Zodiac, and Jasmine galleries) through December 23, 2016. The show explores the genre of Korean still-life painting known as chaekgeori (loosely translated as "books and things.") Chaekgeori was one of the most enduring art forms of Korea's Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). It depicts books

and other material commodities as symbolic of knowledge, power, and social reform. For the first time in United States, more than 20 screen paintings dating from the 18th to 19th century are on view at the Charles B. Wang Center.

A diverse body of artists continues this genre in the 21st century, coming together to examine contemporary Korean society and its social, cultural, and political attitudes and ideals. By drawing a long artistic and historical lineage, as well as by making contrasts and comparisons to the traditional forms and objectives of chaekgeori, modern examples by Stephanie S. Lee, Seongmin Ahn, Kyoungtack Hong, Patrick Hughes, Sungpa,

Young-Shik Kim, and Airan Kang shine a light on Korea's diverse contemporary society, one that, from the Confucian Joseon era to the hyper-materialistic culture of today, is in constant flux.

All the paintings are on loan from both private collections and Korean national institutions, including the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art; the Seoul Museum; the Korean Folk Village; the Chosun Minhwa Museum; and the Sungok Memorial Hall.

Jinyoung A. Jin, director of cultural programs, Charles B. Wang Center, Sooa Im McCormick, assistant curator of Asian art, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Kris Imants Ercums, curator of global contemporary and Asian art, Spencer Museum of Art, curated the exhibition.

The exhibition is organized by Byungmo Chung (Gyeongju University) and Sunglim Kim (Dartmouth College), and co-hosted by the Korea Foundation and Gallery Hyundai. The exhibition will travel to the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas (April 8 – June 12, 2017) and then to the Cleveland Museum of Art (August 5 – November 5, 2017).

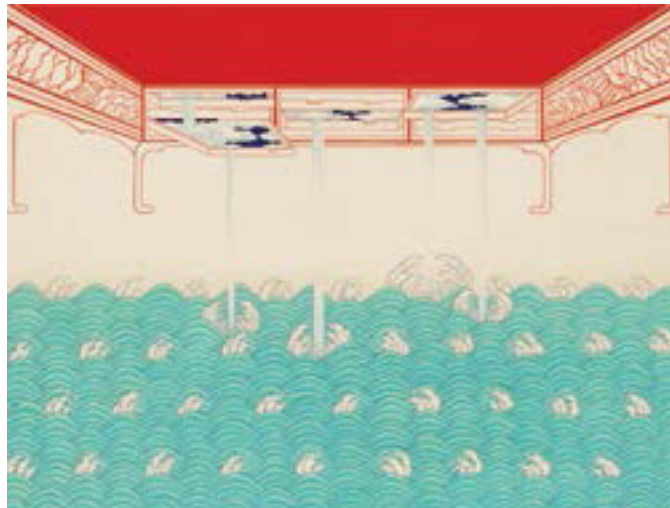
Jinyoung A. Jin said that this exhibition "offers an opportunity to learn about many rare chaekgeori screens from the Joseon dynasty of 18th- and 19th-century Korea. Many of the screens have not been exhibited outside of Korea. These screens emphasize books as a symbolic embodiment of knowledge, a theme we are eager to share with our students and the surrounding community. With an array of works ranging from the 18th century to the present, audiences will learn that people of Korea paint their desire for learning.

"Books are not only valuable as physical entities, but are also desirable commodities and powerful and complex modern socio-polit-

ical apparatuses. The exhibition reveals a timeless and universal curiosity for cultural exchange, humanistic values, and the pursuit of knowledge, which can also be a bridge for further intercultural understanding and dialogue.”

The exhibition is the result of the collective efforts of many international scholars. Professor Byungmo Chung of Gyeongju University said: “When people think of old Korean paintings, they typically recall landscapes done in black ink, depictions of the daily lives of commoners, or images of the Buddha. The Korean still-life painting, *chaekgeori*, has been popular for the past two centuries. No other genre or medium in the entire tradition of Korean art, in both literati and folk paintings, has so engaged and documented the image of books and collectable commodities. When it transitioned into folk-style painting, unexpected, and creative visual elements emerged. The folk versions of *chaekgeori* often show an exquisite fusion of Korean and Western composition that makes the screens of the 18th and 19th centuries feel modern and contemporary. Not only books, but many other symbolic commodities are depicted to represent the commoner’s desire for a higher social status, wealth, and knowledge.”

“This is the first international exhibition to focus on *chaekgeori* painting in a comprehensive manner and to explore its artistic, social, historical, and cross-cultural significance in early modern East Asian visual culture,” said Professor Sunglim Kim of Dartmouth College. “With possible origins in the traditional Renaissance *studioli*, *chaekgeori* screens are the first Korean works of art to employ the European *trompe l’oeil* technique and other Western methods of modeling and linear perspective. With screens on loan from both private collec-



Seongmin Ahn, *Its Inside Is Bigger Than Its Outside Waterfall*, 2016, ink and color on mulberry paper, 36 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.

tions and national institutions, the exhibition will introduce a wide stylistic spectrum of *chaekgeori*, most of which have not been shown publicly or outside of Korea before.”

A catalog, published by Dahal Publishers, Seoul, accompanies the exhibition. It offers a fresh and extensive examination of Korean still-life painting *chaekgeori*. The first major American survey of this genre in nearly 50 years and the most extensive English-language book on the subject, the catalogue offers an integrated presentation of *chaekgeori* production across the 18th and 19th centuries to contemporary works by artists including Stephanie S. Lee, Kyoungtack Hong, and Airan Kang. Contributing writers include: Byungmo Chung, Kris Imants Ercums, Jinyoung A. Jin, Jawon Lee (University

of California, Los Angeles), Sunglim Kim, Joy Kenseth (Dartmouth College), and Sooa Im McCormick.

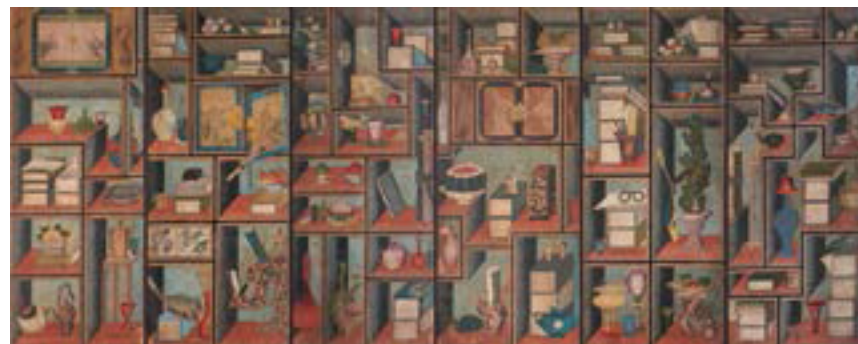
Central to the Charles B. Wang Center’s mission is the encouragement of an ever-deeper understanding and enjoyment of Asian and Asian American arts and culture by diverse local, national, and international audiences through public programs. These programs include exhibitions, films, lectures, workshops, performances, and educational discussions. For more information on cultural programs visit www.thewangcenter.org.

Since its establishment in 1991, the Korea Foundation has implemented a variety of public diplomacy activities—including culture and arts exchanges, support for Korean studies abroad, global networking, and media pro-

grams—to cultivate understanding and friendship between Koreans and people from all around the world. As a leading public diplomacy organization in Korea, the Korea Foundation creates programs to share the dynamic aspects of Korea and to contribute to the international community.

Charles B. Wang Center is at 100 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook, NY 11794. Website: thewangcenter.org.

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Chaekgeori with the scholar’s accoutrements, late 19th-century Korea, six-panel screen, ink and color on paper. 60 x 157 inches. Collection of the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art.