

V&A Academy

ARTS OF KOREA

V&A

Introduction

From ancient tomb arts to contemporary fashion and popular culture, this course introduces the rich material and visual culture of Korea. Early interactions between Korea, China and Japan highlight the role of trade and diplomacy, as well as religion along the ancient Silk Routes, notably Buddhism. The transmission of artistic influences and technological advances across the region stimulated the production of innovative ceramics, metalwork and lacquer which was highly valued at home and abroad.

The traditional Korean hanbok remains a potent expression of Korea identity, highlighting the key role of fashion and dress up to the present. The role of women will be explored through the skilful manufacture of silk and rami and representations of the New Woman in the Modern Age.

During the twentieth century, the impact of colonialism and division can be observed through the visual arts, including posters and prints, cinema and film offering insights into the culture of North Korea. The continuing importance of contemporary craft in Korea allows us to observe the prominence of Korean art and design on the global stage.

Information

Mondays, 20 April – 29 June, 11.00-15.30. Onsite and Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 7 September 2026.

Your course leader

Dr Helen Glaister is an art historian specialising in Chinese Ceramics and Decorative Arts. She worked at the British Museum and Birkbeck before joining the V&A as Course Director, Arts of Asia. Helen was awarded her MA and PhD from SOAS, University of London where she regularly teaches. Current research focuses on collections history, Chinese lacquer and ceramics of the late modern period.

Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.

Week 1 – 20 April

Art in Early Korea

- 10.45 Course Welcome **Helen Glaister**
- 11.00 Early Korea and Politics of Archaeology **Ariane Perrin**
- 12.30 Ancient Tombs of Korea and interaction with China and Japan
Ariane Perrin
- 14.30 Early Korean Buddhist Art **Minyoung Choi**
- 15.45 Meet and Greet (Online Audience)

Week 2 – 27 April

Art in the Three Kingdoms

- 11.00 The Buddhist Kingdom of Baekje **Minyoung Choi**
- 12.30 Across Seas and Lands: Silla and the Silk Roads **Ariane Perrin**
- 14.30 Pictorial Art of the Goguryeo tombs **Ariane Perrin**

Week 3 – 4 May (*Pre-recorded*)

Goryeo Material Culture

- 11.00 Goryeo Metalworks **Dasom Sung**
- 12.30 Goryeo ceramics **Charlotte Horlyck**
- 14.30 Buddhist painting and manuscripts **Ariane Perrin**

Week 4 – 11 May

Joseon Visual Culture

11.00 True view Painting **Beatrix Mecsi**

12.30 Genre Painting **Beatrix Mecsi**

14.30 Minhwa **Beatrix Mecsi**

Week 5 – 18 May

Joseon ceramics

11.00 Porcelain from the Joseon dynasty **Rosalie Kim**

12.30 Buncheong ware **Rosalie Kim**

14.30 Onggi and Christianity **Dasom Sung**

Bank Holiday – 25 May

No Lectures This Week

Week 6 – 1 June

Korean Decorative Arts

11.00 Furniture in Joseon domestic interior **Rosalie Kim**

12.30 Women task force: Silk and Rami weaving and Textiles
Rosalie Kim

14.30 Hanbok as Korean cultural identity **Rosalie Kim**

15.45 Meet and Greet (Online Audience)

Week 7 – 8 June

Colonial Period

- 11.00 Korea representation in world fairs **Yunah Lee**
- 12.30 Early Twentieth Century Ceramic Production **Dasom Sung**
- 14.30 The New Woman in Korea **Yoojin Choi**

Week 8 – 15 June

North Korean Art

- 11.00 North Korean History **Owen Miller**
- 12.30 Art of North Korean **Nick Bonner**
- 14.30 North Korean Mass Culture **Nick Bonner**

Week 9 – 22 June

Modern Arts in Korea

- 11.00 Korean pop culture **Rosalie Kim**
- 12.30 Rise of industrial design **Yunah Lee**
- 14.30 Korean fashion **Amber Kim**

Week 10 – 29 June

Contemporary craft and design, China, Japan, Korea

11.00 Contemporary Craft in China **Xiaoxin Li**

12.30 Garment Fasteners **Adam Huxley-Khng and Jimin Jeon**

14.30 Contemporary Craft in Korea **Rosalie Kim**