



Institutskolloquium HS 2020

«Celebrating Fifty Years of East Asian Art History at the University of Zurich»

«Rescuing Art History from the Nation:

Late Chosŏn Korea between Europe and Edo Japan»

Prof. Dr. JP Park

University of Oxford

Wednesday, 07 October 2020, 18:15–19:45

Zoom online video conference



For the past couple of decades, a growing number of historians of Korean art has investigated artistic connections between late Chosŏn Korea and Europe. By pointing out the acceptance of European painterly techniques such as one-point perspectives, chiaroscuro, camera obscura, repousoir, and visual artifice taken up by late Chosŏn elites, recent scholarship has explained how and why early modern Korean artists were able to adopt and learn the new styles and programs of Western art, which were based upon a completely different pictorial tradition. This research path may itself not pose any analytical disparities, but it rides on a certain level of historical nuance: Even though late Chosŏn was known to be a period of high conservatism and isolation, the seeds of modernity and globalization were nonetheless explored and largely embraced by its artists and critics. But the unbiased and unprejudiced minds of late Chosŏn artists celebrated in modern scholarship have not been equally illuminated when it comes to their relationship to the Japanese art of the time. By introducing evidence that testifies to the late Chosŏn public's active interest in Japanese art, this paper will point to the neglected exchange of art and ideas between early modern Korea and Japan, and expose how age-old academic conventions and nationalism remain firmly fixed in the study of East Asian art history.

The public lecture series is organized by the department for East Asian Art (Institute of Art History, University of Zurich), and is supported by the Swiss-Japanese Chamber of Commerce (SJCC) and the Swiss-Japanese Society (SJG). For further information on the anniversary lecture series, please contact Sabine Bradel (Sabine.Bradel@khist.uzh.ch) or visit us at: www.khist.uzh.ch/KGOA50

Illustration: Pak Chega (1750–1805), *Yŏnp'yŏng with His Mother in his Childhood*, ca. late eighteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 214.0 x 49.5 cm. National Museum of Korea.