

Promoting the Study of Korean Art in the United States: Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida (2008–2019)

Introduction

Since its opening in the fall of 1990 at the University of Florida, the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art (Figure 1) has endeavored to acquire Korean art with documented provenance from private collections by either direct donations from collectors or purchases through art dealers and auction houses.¹ The Korean art collection at the Harn Museum is relatively new, and its size is modest in comparison with older collections. In 2008, the Harn Museum began a major effort to highlight its Korean art collections to scholars in the field as well as to promote the study of Korean art to the general public in the United States.² The following is a synopsis of the Harn Museum's previous five-year

1 For recent publications on the Harn Museum's Korean art collections, see Gang 2005, 58–61; Steuber 2012, 62–63; Han 2011, 53–57; Song 2011, 50–52; Steuber, Nemmers, and Pfaff 2010. See also National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art 2017.

Online articles in Korean and English on the Harn Museum collections were also published in 2012 by the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Korea Foundation Newsletter.

For examples of the Harn Museum's collections documenting provenance via early twentieth-century publications, see Joseon sajin tongsinsa 1922, for the Harn Museum's Kim Eunho 金殷鎬 painting (1988.1.280). For the Harn Museum's Kim Hongdo painting (1988.1.25) sold off in Seoul during March 1937 by former imperial court eunuch Yi Byeong-jik 李秉直 (1896–1973), see Gyeongseong Art Club auction catalogue number 6 in *Bunae Gogyongdang Yo Byeong-jik gaseo goldongmaerip dorok* 府內古經堂李秉直家書畫骨董賣立圖錄; Kim and Hwang 2005.

For additional information on the Harn Museum's Korean art collection, see online resources developed by the Museum in collaboration with the University of Florida's George A. Smathers Libraries, see "Korean Art: Collecting Treasures" (<https://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/harnkoreanart/>). For another online database centered on digital archival resources related to General James A. Van Fleet and his relationship with the University of Florida from the 1920s through the 1990s, see George A. Smathers Libraries' *James Alward Van Fleet collection*.

2 The Korean art collections at the Harn Museum range from items dated to the fourth century to contemporary art. The Korean art collection comprises architectural elements, ceramics, contemporary art, folk art, furniture, metalwork, paintings (album leaves, screens, and scrolls), rubbings, objects, scholar woodblock prints, photography, pottery, and video installations. Between 2008 and fall 2019,



Figure 1. Exterior of the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida

working plans and profile-raising activities as related to the museum's increased promotion of Korean art and culture through its permanent collections.

The summary is divided into several interrelated sections. The first gives a brief overview of the collecting histories and notable figures in the development of the Asian and Korean art collections at the University of Florida's Harn Museum. The second section notes significant acquisitions of Korean art with prominent provenance histories by the museum. It explores the process of provenance-minded acquisitions and, in particular, how the Harn's collection-building experiences have unfolded over the thirty-three years since its opening at the University of Florida in 1990. The third section offers a detailed and systematic overview of the various coordinated steps through which the Harn Museum worked to successfully promote the study of Korean art and culture in the United States from 2008 to 2019. It reviews the transformative process from a lesser-known Korean art collection in the southeastern United States to a newly installed, dedicated Korean art gallery sponsored by the Korea Foundation and the Korea Cultural Heritage Administration.

the Harn Museum actively acquired works for the Korean art collection. In 2008, the collection numbered 46 works; the current total of Korean artworks (Three Kingdoms through contemporary) is 261.

Collecting Asian and Korean Art at the University of Florida

The University of Florida is the state's oldest and largest land-grant³ and research university, tracing its beginnings to 1853, with the campus in Gainesville being established more than fifty years later in 1906. The University of Florida established the School of Architecture in 1925, from which developed the College of Fine Arts. In 1956, the College of Architecture and Fine Arts created the Division of Fine Arts (composed of the Department of Art and Music) and the Division of Architecture and Allied Arts (composed of the Departments of Architecture, Building Construction, and Community Planning).⁴ By 1965, the University Gallery had been established and built. Its functions were to exhibit contemporary art, to share student displays for semester final reviews for Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees and to display traditional and historical works from various countries. The University Gallery would come to house a collection of several thousand works of art that would eventually become the first core collection of the Harn Museum nearly three decades later.⁵

A University of Florida scholar of particular note during the period from the 1960s through the early 1990s was the pioneering Indian art professor Roy C. Craven Jr. (1924–1996) (Figure 2).⁶ Craven's crucial connections with important collectors of Asian art—such as George P. Bickford (1901–1991), who also helped establish the Cleveland Museum of Art's important holdings of South Asian art⁷—allowed the University Gallery Asian art collection to increase

3 A land-grant university (known also as a land-grant college or land-grant institution) can be defined as an institution of higher education in the United States designated by a state to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The Morrill Acts funded higher education institutions by granting federally controlled tracts of land to states so that they could raise financial support to develop and fund institutions. Although originally and primarily focused on engineering, agriculture, science, and the military, these institutions also offered arts and humanities.

4 In 1975, the previous College of Architecture and Fine Arts was divided into two colleges, the College of Architecture and the College of Fine Arts.

5 The University Gallery collections were transferred to the Harn Museum facility by 1990.

6 Craven was not only a notable Indian art expert but also a leader for research on Mayan art. The University of Florida recognized his expertise by awarding Craven the honor of Teacher/Scholar of the Year in 1985–1986. For Indian art, see Craven 1997.

7 Bickford studied Chinese and worked as a missionary in Shanghai, China, in the early 1920s and then served in the army in the India-Burma Theater. For an introduction to Bickford's collection, see Czuma 1975.



Figure 2. Roy C. Craven, Jr. Pictured at the Entrance to University Gallery. University of Florida, Gainesville, June 1965

in number, quality, and variety. As founder and first director of the University Gallery in 1964,⁸ Craven also led the regional push to cultivate relationships with Asian art collectors in Florida and install important Asian art exhibitions on campus.⁹ Craven's credibility among scholars and collectors enabled him to develop new dialogues with the University of Florida's faculty and its donors through these exhibits. As a result, supporters began to work together to devise a plan to develop an art museum at the University.

⁸ The University Gallery building opened in 1965.

⁹ For example, see University Gallery, University of Florida 1971; Craven 1981, 1991. Craven also worked with the Harn Museum of Art.

The University Gallery Guild at the University of Florida started out in the 1970s as a group of art advocates across campus interspersed with local supporters who financially backed and worked with the University Gallery. Over the course of several years, the group pushed and fund-raised for the creation of a campus art museum. Following the formation of a formal, university-approved committee to explore the possibility of a new art museum, the University Gallery Guild eventually raised several million dollars for the construction of what would become the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art. Construction of the Harn Museum which began in 1988 and was completed by the fall of 1990. Since 1997, the Harn Museum has been accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) for its best practices in museum management and collection care.¹⁰

The University Gallery and Gallery Guild successfully wove a fabric of campus-wide support among various departments for the arts. This positive outlook ensured that Asian artworks across campus would be reviewed and transferred to the collections at the new Harn Museum. Not only did financial support and works of art come to the Harn Museum from various campus resources; the interest generated on the campus transferred directly to University of Florida alumni and donors.

Because Professor Craven was a scholar of Indian art, 111 Asian artworks from the University Gallery collection are now part of the Harn's permanent collection. Craven's relationship with George Bickford accounted for 53 gifts of South Asian art to the University of Florida. In addition, the Crayola Crayon heir Edwin Binney III (1925–1986) presented Craven with donations of 18 Indian miniature paintings and drawings for the collection.¹¹ At that time, there were no Korean artworks identified in the University Gallery's collection, nor any other Korean works from any other departments on the University of Florida campus that were transferred to the Harn Museum. However, exceptional and notable donations of Korean art began to be accessioned by the Harn Museum as early as 1988—a full two years prior to its public opening in 1990.

In 1988, General James A. Van Fleet (1892–1992) (Figure 3) donated the

¹⁰ For an extended history of the Harn Museum, see Steuber, Nemmers, and Pfaff 2010, 1–13.

¹¹ Edwin Binney III donated more than 1,450 Indian miniature paintings to the San Diego Museum of Art in 1990. See Goswamy and Smith 2005.



Figure 3. General James A. Van Fleet at the University of Florida. Photo courtesy Joe McChristian and Division of Public Relations, University of Florida

first Korean artworks accessioned by the Harn Museum. Van Fleet was an active participant on the University of Florida campus from the 1920s through 1992, having important roles with university athletics as well as the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) military and educational programs.¹² As a United States Military Academy graduate from West Point and a highly decorated serviceman from numerous international military campaigns, Van Fleet was appointed in 1951 as the commanding general of the Eighth Army and United Nations troops in Korea.

This prominent position in Asia allowed Van Fleet to amass an exceptional

12 As mentioned in note 3, as a land-grant university, military service and training were core academic values, especially for male-only higher education schools such as the University of Florida in the 1920s. Co-education at the University of Florida began in 1947 when women were accepted into the university. The current University of Florida's ROTC building facility is named General James A. Van Fleet Hall. It is home to the university's ROTC programs, which include army, navy, and air force divisions.

collection of Korean works as well as limited examples from China and Japan. Of Van Fleet's gifts of Asian art to the Harn Museum, there were twenty-three Korean works, five Chinese works, and one Japanese work. Many personal notes, correspondences, official invitations, and personal photographs suggest that Van Fleet was a well-received and socially active military commander during his leadership tenure with the Korea-based Eighth Army.

In 1989, Dr. Don Q. Vining donated to the Harn Museum nearly three hundred Asian ceramics and porcelains from various regions that he collected during his years in South Asia during the 1960s. These ceramics date from the eleventh century through the early twentieth and mostly consist of works from Vietnam and Thailand with blue-and-white export wares from Chinese kilns.

In the fall of 1990, the Harn Museum of Art opened its doors for the first time with a much smaller staff than it employs today. The museum had a director, a curator of collections, and a small registration and education staff, and the impetus to grow all the collections through purchases and gifts was in full swing. During the Harn Museum's first thirty-three years of acquiring Asian art, it acquired on average ten to twenty pieces each year, with most objects coming into the collection after the year 2000. This late blossoming was due in part to the hiring of the Harn's first Asian art curator, who joined the staff in 2003.¹³ The Asian art collection has tripled in size since 2008, from approximately 1,200 works to 3,677.

During the first thirty-three years, other important developments occurred at the Harn Museum that positively affected the development of the Korean collection. On April 29, 1991, the Harn Museum's very first endowment was established: Robert and Kathleen Axline made a commitment to create and fund an acquisition endowment.¹⁴ The endowment was designated specifically to fund acquisitions of Asian art and allowed the naming of the Harn Museum's Axline Gallery. In Florida, endowments qualify for state-matching funds. By

13 Charles Mason was the first curator of Asian art at the Harn Museum (2003–2007). Jason Steuber was hired as the endowed chairperson of the Harn Museum's Asian art department in late 2007 and remained through fall 2019. This chairperson position endowment is known as the Cofrin Curator of Asian Art and was funded by Dr. David A. Cofrin (1923–2009).

14 The Axline endowment serves as a permanent resource for funds for acquiring Asian art. The endowment is invested by the University of Florida Foundation (UFF) and pays quarterly dividends to the Harn Museum. The Cofrin Curator of Asian Art directs this fund for all Asian art-related acquisitions.

1994, the endowment was fully funded by the estate of Robert H. Axline, and the state of Florida then matched it. The Robert H. and Kathleen M. Axline Acquisition Endowment was first put to purchasing use in 1996 to fund the acquisition of a Chinese Eastern Zhou-period (770–221 BCE) bronze dagger with ornamental handle (1996.27). To date, the Axline Endowment has fully and partially funded 27 acquisitions of Korean art, with a total of 483 Asian artworks acquired for the collection. This constitutes approximately 13 percent of the Harn Museum's Asian art holdings.

During the 1990s, the Harn also witnessed the emergence of local benefactors and supporters of the museum who took a keen interest in Asian art—Dr. David A. Cofrin (1923–2009) and Mary Ann Harn Cofrin (1924–2022) as well as the Harn family.¹⁵ The Cofrin and Harn families had previously led financial contributions to fund the building of the Harn Museum during the 1980s Gallery Guild drive to establish an art museum at the University of Florida.

Dr. Cofrin not only led the way financially to fund the establishment of the original Harn Museum (measuring 64,470 square feet). He also assisted in the funding of new wing expansions: the Mary Ann Harn Cofrin Pavilion (measuring 18,000 square feet), which opened in 2005, and the US\$20 million David A. Cofrin Asian Art Wing (measuring 26,000 square feet), which opened in 2012 and houses the Korean art gallery as well as four other Asian art exhibition spaces.

In addition, Dr. Cofrin provided the funds that established the endowed chair titled Cofrin Curator of Asian Art in 2007 at the Harn Museum. This curatorial endowment provides crucial operating funds for a myriad of projects and Asian department needs, such as budgets for staff, publications, library books, and other curatorial expenses. Finally, before his death in 2009, Dr. Cofrin provided in his estate plans a provision to establish a new acquisition endowment for Asian art. This endowment is similar in size and scope to the Axline Endowment mentioned above. Thus far, the Cofrin Asian Art Acquisition Endowment has provided funds for sixty-five Asian acquisitions, of which twenty-nine are Korean artworks.

Harn Museum Provenance Histories and Korean Art Highlights

This section turns to the continued importance of provenance as it relates to select Korean art highlights at the University of Florida's Harn Museum. Although quite young in comparison with other museums, at thirty-three years old, the Harn Museum is diligent and conscientious in its drive to collect works of Korean art with clear provenance histories. For example, in 2004 and 2008 the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) released statements, guidelines, and resolutions that address the acquisition of archaeological and cultural heritage materials within the context of the 1970 UNESCO ruling on the trafficking of such items (Association of Museum Art Directors 2008). The Harn Museum adheres to this best-practices endeavor, which states that museums that acquire new works lacking provenance prior to 1970 must publicly share their new acquisitions on the AAMD website to provide transparency and public dissemination of works that were collected on the current market, either through donations, from auctions, or from dealer purchases.¹⁶

These best practices for collecting works with known provenance ensure that the Harn Museum remains an AAM-accredited museum and that Korean cultural and artistic heritages are respected and maintained in a collaborative and mutually beneficial atmosphere. The Harn Museum is a leader in provenance-minded endeavors and original research by an international array of scholars of Asian art, as demonstrated by its hosting two international symposia since 2009 on the importance of provenance studies in Asian art. In 2009, the Harn Museum co-organized and hosted the Chinese art symposium "Collectors, Collections and Collecting the Arts of China: Histories and Challenges" (Steuber 2009, 80–81; Steuber and Lai 2014). In December 2012, through generous grant support from the Korea Foundation, the museum organized and hosted "Arts of Korea: Histories, Challenges and Perspectives" (Steuber 2013, 164–65).

These two successful symposia generated active dialogues on collecting and provenance, and the subsequently published symposium proceedings volumes

15 See note 9. In 2012, the inaugural David A. Cofrin Asian Art Manuscript Series began with Pearce and Steuber 2012. For current and future manuscript series titles, see <http://upf.com/>.

16 For the Harn Museum's complete collection policies related to cultural heritage and archaeological materials, see Harn Museum of Art 2013, 2015.

yielded new research findings and provided strong theoretical and academic touchstones for current and next-generation scholars and students.

In terms of notable provenance histories, the most significant works related to the Harn Museum's Korean art collection are the inaugural General Van Fleet gifts in 1988.¹⁷ The twenty-three Korean artworks gifted included ceramics and paintings dating from the Goryeo dynasty through the Joseon dynasty.¹⁸

Van Fleet was a well-received public figure during his leadership tenure with the Korea-based Eighth Army. As would have been possible during this period, the works acquired by Van Fleet during his service abroad would have been received as gifts from dignitaries from the respective regions or countries within which Van Fleet was serving his tour of duty. Many personal notes, correspondences, official invitations, and personal photographs showing Van Fleet with high-ranking political and military officials attest and confirm this provenance history. Even after returning to the United States, Van Fleet fully supported the establishment in 1957 of the New York-based Korea Society, the first nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States and Korea through cultural, artistic, and other exchanges.¹⁹

Four paintings from the Van Fleet donation are of particular note.²⁰ The first is a landscape with figures mounted on horseback while falcon hunting by Kim Hongdo 金弘道 (1745–c. 1806) (1988.1.25) (Figure 4). This painting is also famously noted for being auctioned off in Seoul during March 1937 by former Korean court eunuch Yi Byeong-jik 李秉直 (1896–1973). The second is the hanging scroll by Jang Seung'eop 張承業 (1843–1897) (1988.1.26) (Figure 5) of scholars gathered in a garden retreat, which is a colorful and well-executed painting. The third is the massive modern painting by Kim Eunho 金殷鎬 (1892–1979) (1988.1.28) (Figure 6) that depicts two female dancers



Figure 4. Kim Hong-do (1745–c. 1806), *Hunting with Falcons* (detail), Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), 18th century, ink and color on silk, 54.9 x 39.4 cm. (image), Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.25)

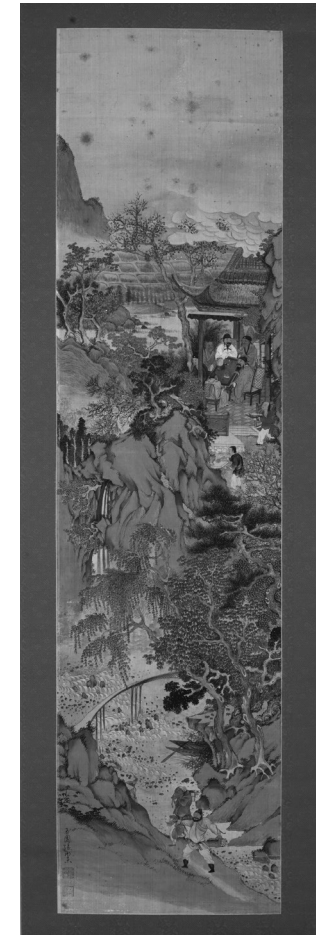


Figure 5. Jang Seung'eop (1843–1897), *Scholar in a Garden*, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), late 19th century, ink and color on silk, 212.7 x 52.1 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.26)

17 Other interesting provenance histories related to the growth of the Harn Museum's Korean art collection include the ten Korean artworks acquired through direct purchase from descendants of Dr. Leon Sinder (1922–2001), noted anthropologist and UNESCO field representative to Korea during the 1960s. See his obituary in the *New York Times*, October 21, 2001, for a brief yet informative biography of this notable Korean scholar; and Eldred's Auction House catalogue, *The Korean Art Collection of Dr. Leon Sinder* (August 23, 1996).

18 See George A. Smathers Libraries' "Korean Art: Collecting Treasures—Van Fleet" (<http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/harnkoreanart/vanflect.html>).

19 For further detail, see the Korea Society's website (<http://www.koreasociety.org/>).

20 See Han 2011, 53–57. Also see note 1 for more resources on these paintings.

dressed as Buddhist nuns.²¹ Dated to 1922, this painting was exhibited and awarded fourth place (thirty-four awards were announced) in the first Joseon Art Exhibition. The final Van Fleet-donated painting to highlight is the river scene by Kim Ki-Chang 金基昶 (1914–2001) (1988.1.22) that dates to 1954.

21 This conserved painting was exhibited in *The Arrival of New Women*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2017.

The gift of this mid-twentieth-century painting demonstrates that Korean art gifts ranged from traditional works to cutting-edge contemporary examples.

In sum, these four scrolls serve as the original core of the Korean painting collection at the Harn Museum. The Kim Hongdo and Jang Seung'eop paintings were conserved in Seoul with funds granted by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, while the Kim Eunho painting was conserved in Seoul through generous funding by the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation.

Besides paintings, Van Fleet also gifted ceramics from both the Goryeo and Joseon periods. Examples to note from the Harn Museum collection are the *maebyeong* vase (1988.1.4) (Figure 7), a blue-and-white vessel with Buddhist motifs (1988.1.10) (Figure 8), a small blue-and-white footed dish (1988.1.16), and a blue-and-white hexagonal vase with scrolling floral designs (1988.1.13) (Figure 9). The quality and design motifs of these delicate ceramics are quite extraordinary, especially considering that they all would have been packed and shipped via military transport vessels.

The Van Fleet gifts to the Harn Museum provide interesting notes to his extraordinary biography and remind us of the importance of collaboration. In terms of Korean art, the provenance histories for these paintings and ceramics add to the rich diversity of the histories of collecting Korean art. These Van Fleet examples demonstrate how Korean art served and continues to serve bilateral diplomatic, social, and educational purposes.



Figure 6. Kim Eunho (1892–1979), *Folk Dancers Dressed as Buddhist Nuns*, 1922, ink and color on silk, 271.8 x 114.9 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.28)



Figure 7. Maebyeong vase, Korea, Goryeo dynasty (918–1392), glazed stoneware with slip inlay, 30.5 x 17.8 x 17.8 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.4)



Figure 8. Vessel with Buddhist motifs, Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), 19th century, porcelain, 14.6 x 11.4 x 11.4 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.10)



Figure 9. Hexagonal bottle, Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), 19th century, porcelain, 21 x 14 x 14 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.13)

Promoting the Study of Korean Art in the United States: The Harn Museum Experience

The following synopsis of the Harn Museum's five-year working plans and activities recounts the museum's increasing promotion of Korean art and culture through its permanent collection between the years 2008 and 2019. As demonstrated above, the Harn Museum and its Asian art department enjoyed tremendous support through donors directly associated with the Harn Museum and the University of Florida during these years. The chronological presentation of the Harn Museum's five-year plan of 2008–2013 serves as a useful reference to better understand the roles of overseas collections (regardless of their size and location) in increasing the promotion, study, and appreciation of Korean art abroad. This five-year campaign to highlight and raise awareness of Korean art was directly linked to the new Asian art wing, which was slated for completion by spring 2012.

The five-year working plan for promoting Korean art began to take shape in 2008. A collection review of the Harn Museum's Korean art holdings and Asian art publications showed that the Van Fleet materials had been published by a Korean scholar just once (Gang 2005, 58–61). The Van Fleet collections had been used in gallery displays since the museum's opening in 1990. However, the collections were to a degree isolated.

Several actions were taken to remedy the lack of proper exposure of these Van Fleet gifts, centering first on developing a new set of high-resolution digital photographs for all objects. With new photography, the Asian art department would be able to produce professional articles, publications, websites, marketing and public relations materials for journalists, and in-gallery didactic materials. The images would also be shared with Korean scholars in the United States and abroad. Beginning in 2008, with images of the Van Fleet collection, the Asian art department initiated contact with the Korea Foundation to request participation in its yearly workshop for overseas curators of Korean art.

Because Van Fleet donated these works, the Asian art department began meeting with campus partners at the campus library archives, athletic department, and ROTC. These early meetings uncovered new resources, such as historical documents and items, housed on campus. The Smathers Libraries staff on campus were instrumental in partnering with the Harn Museum's Asian art department to envision websites and web-based archival sites related to Van

Fleet and the museum's Korean art collections.²²

Also in 2008, a Harn Museum donor generously provided the funds to acquire a significant Korean Buddhist sculpture of a bodhisattva (2008.20) (Figure 10) (Steuber 2012, 62–63; Song 2011, 50–52). The seventeenth-century Buddhist gilt lacquer wood bodhisattva was purchased in the spring of 2008. A previous owner was John D. Rockefeller Jr. (1874–1960), the noted collector and supporter of Asian art in the United States.²³ This acquisition resulted in new partnerships on and off campus, such as with the Digital Library Center at Smathers Libraries as well as with the University of Florida's Shands Hospital and the North Florida Regional Medical Center (Steuber, Nemmers, and Pfaff 2010, 226–31). Digital “virtual photography” provided new ways of viewing the sculpture in 3-D, while X-ray images, CAT scans (computed axial tomographic scans), and endoscopic digital photographs illustrated the construction methods and hidden interiors of the sculpture.²⁴ These extraordinary imaging techniques offered the Asian art department additional visual narratives that combine both art and science—a mix that broadens the public appeal and, therefore, understanding of Korean art. By appealing to learning about art through science, technology helps to promote the study and appreciation of Korean art at the Harn Museum. Technical art history opens new collaborative opportunities with campus departments, the general public, and international partners.

The most important results for the promotion of the study of Korean art from 2008 arose from the photographic documentation of the collection mentioned above, outreach to the Korea Foundation, and in-depth self-reviews of campus holdings related to Korean art. It became clear that it was counterproductive to consider the Harn Museum as a newcomer to the field of Korean art. In fact, the Asian art department came to realize that a new,

²² See note 1.

²³ John D. Rockefeller Jr. established the Asia Society in 1956 in New York City (Asia Society 2006).

²⁴ Digital 3-D photography offers an “in the round” viewing experience. Such images require that the sculpture be placed on a turntable and systematically photographed at 108 precise angles. These images are then color corrected and combined to provide a 360-degree view that can be magnified for closer inspection—closer than can be available even when the object is on view in the Korean art gallery. For the various types of images captured by Smathers Libraries, Shands Hospital, and North Florida Regional Center, see Smathers Libraries’ “Korean Art: Collecting Treasures—Bodhisattva” (<http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/harnkoreanart/bodhisattva.html>), and “Gilt Wood Seated Bodhisattva,” <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00087051/00001>).



Figure 10. *Seated Bodhisattva*, Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), 17th century, wood with gold, polychrome and lacquer, 64.8 x 43.8 x 34.3 cm., Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, museum Purchase, gift of Michael and Donna Singer (2008.20)

illustrated narrative needed to be written and shared with colleagues in the United States and abroad. This new narrative's goal was to spark academic, curatorial, and academic queries related to what kinds of Korean art materials, if not undiscovered treasures, were in the Harn Museum's Korean art collection. The final project to enhance the promotion and understanding of Korean art

was to produce a peer-reviewed collections catalogue documenting the Harn Museum's collection in commemoration of its twentieth anniversary in 2010.

The year 2009 began with an important milestone: the celebratory groundbreaking event for the construction of the new David A. Cofrin Asian Art Wing. This event's media coverage inaugurated a three-year public relations and marketing campaign by the Harn Museum. Korean art was front and center for the majority of the stories that would be published in the subsequent years. It was in 2009 that the Asian art department began outlining the possibility of working with a journal to celebrate the new wing's opening. During this year, the Korea Foundation granted an invitation to participate in its yearly workshop for curators overseeing Korean art outside of Korea. The international exposure for the Harn Museum's Korean art collection was an important component of subsequent visits to the museum by Korea-based scholars as well as Korean art curators based in the United States.

The goals for 2009 concentrated on continued professional photography of the collection, expanding the contact list of Korean art scholars who would be interested in the Harn Museum collections and documenting scholarly research materials that would be published online and in print during 2010 and beyond. A primary goal was to designate funds to help support visiting scholars and curators. Plans for travel to Korea by Asian department staff to meet with scholars, artists, conservation scientists, curators, and cultural foundations were designated as well.

The year 2010 witnessed the publication of the Harn Museum's twentieth-anniversary catalogue celebrating the collections. Korean art was specifically highlighted as a cover image as well as being a major component of four of the thirteen chapters (Steuber, Nemmers, and Pfaff 2010). The publication was awarded the gold medal by the Florida Humanities Council's Florida Book Awards. Because Korean art was well-illustrated and scientific images of the Korean bodhisattva sculpture highlighted, the catalogue enhanced public appreciation and awareness of Korean art in Florida.

Also during this year, the Harn Museum hosted visits to Gainesville by Korean art curators, professors, and conservation scientists. The person-to-person exchanges resulted in new knowledge for the Korean art research files. In an exceptionally kind gesture in support of Korean art research and

exchange, Korean art curator Hyonjeong Kim Han²⁵ accompanied Korea-based conservation scientist and university professor Park Chi-Sun to the Harn Museum. With their respective expertise on Korean paintings, the Harn Museum learned more about the Van Fleet works by Kim Hongdo, Jang Seung'eop, Kim Eunho, and Kim Ki-Chang. These relationships offered new opportunities for conservation treatments as well as for advice on publications. In addition, the Harn Museum hosted Korea-based professors so they could view paintings and sculptures in the collection. Professor Song Unsok (Department of Archaeology and Art History, Dongguk University) and Professor Chung Moojeong (Department of Art History, Duksung Women's University) visited the Harn Museum and were able to add to the research files for the bodhisattva sculpture and Korean painting files, respectively. The four visitors were each provided with new digital images of the Korean art collection for their research files and publication needs.²⁶ Finally, during the Korea Foundation's 2010 Workshop for Korean Art Curators at Overseas Museums that focused on Korean Buddhist art in an East Asian context, Harn Asian art department staff presented a brief lecture titled "Technology and the Study of Korean Buddhist Sculpture" (Korea Foundation 2010, 112–14). This was the first public presentation of the original research findings that resulted from the technical art history and scientific testing data.

These Harn Museum visits generated much-needed information that enhanced gallery labels and publications. Sharing Harn Museum collection images with these visitors enriched the promotion of Korean art in the United States as these images will continue to serve as comparative materials for future essays and publications. The lecture provided to the Korea Foundation and its workshop participants was significant as well because it demonstrated that university museum collections can provide cutting-edge research findings through scientific testing and digital imaging.

In 2011, the temporary de-installation of the Asian art galleries began in preparation for the new wing's opening in March 2012. The new Asian art wing and its collections were the focus of the October 2011 issue of *Orientations*

journal; its cover featured a detail of the Kim Eunho painting donated by Van Fleet, and it contained two essays dedicated to Korean art written by Hyonjeong Kim Han and Song Unsok, respectively.

The Asian art department also prepared for the opening of the new wing by applying for grants in 2011. Successful award support came from the Korea Foundation and the Korea Cultural Heritage Administration. These funding opportunities allowed the Harn Museum to designate an entire gallery to Korean art—the *only* gallery in the new David A. Cofrin Asian Art Wing dedicated solely to a single national collection. With the expert assistance of Professor Song Unsok, the Harn Museum produced bilingual (English and Korean) educational gallery brochures to be distributed to visitors.²⁷ In addition, these funds provided state-of-the-art case displays and lighting for the Korean art gallery and the installation of a touch-screen monitor to access the Korean art website created in collaboration with the Smathers Libraries.²⁸

In March 2012, *Korean Art: Collecting Treasures* was the inaugural exhibition in the Korean art gallery of the newly opened David A. Cofrin Asian Art Wing (Figure 11). This focus gallery measures 960.75 square feet (89.26 square meters) and displayed works from the Harn Museum's permanent collection of Korean art. Displays included bronzes and ceramics dating from



Figure 11. Exterior of the David A. Cofrin Asian Wing, Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida

25 Hyonjeong Kim Han is currently the Joseph de Heer Curator of Asian Art at the Denver Art Museum.

26 In addition, Professor Chang Chin-Sung from Seoul National University generously advised the Harn Museum's Asian art department on related collections, research, and publications.

27 These brochures are also available online (<http://harn.ufl.edu/linkedfiles/publication-asian-koreatranslation.pdf>).

28 See George A. Smathers Libraries' "Korean Art: Collecting Treasures" (<http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/harnkoreanart/>).

the Three Kingdoms period through the Joseon dynasty as well as Joseon dynasty furniture, paintings, and sculpture. The new wing and exhibits were well received, and attendance increased—there were more than 150,000 visitors in the first eighteen months. Positive reviews appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, and the Korean art gallery was highlighted in several publications (Lawrence 2012).²⁹

Another important highlight from 2012 demonstrating the promotion of the study and appreciation of Korean art in the United States is the focus exhibit designed collaboratively by Sarah Jean Smith (University of Florida museum studies graduate student and Asian art curatorial assistant), Andrew Hare (supervisory East Asian painting conservator, Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, Freer and Sackler Galleries), and the Harn Museum's Asian art department. The gallery's focus exhibition, *Conserving Treasures*, provided the scientific research and best practices for collection care of the Harn Museum's Korean paintings (Hare 2006, 73–92).³⁰ The brochure, didactic images, and installation provided a rare gallery installation that educated the public and scholars alike on considerations regarding the treatment of Korean painting scrolls.

At the conclusion of 2012, the Harn Museum hosted an international symposium on Korean art that was funded by the Korea Foundation. “Arts of Korea: Histories, Challenges and Perspectives” brought together experts from Korea, Japan, Europe, and the United States (Steuber and Peyton 2018). The symposium was the culmination of the five-year goals from 2008 to 2012.

The subsequent five-year plan (2013–2018) to promote the study of Korean art led to the successful achievement of more projects of note. The 2012 Korean art symposium proceedings were published in 2018 as a peer-reviewed book of more than four hundred pages by the University Press of Florida (2018). A publication on Korean art totaling nearly seven hundred pages was produced in 2014 as an international collaboration between *Orientations*, the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, Seoul National University, and the Harn Museum's Asian art department (Lee and Steuber 2014). This massive

volume is an anthology of all the articles related to Korean art and culture produced by the journal between 1970 and 2013. The final project to highlight is a modern and contemporary Korean art exhibition drawn from the collection that took place in the fall of 2014. This exhibit showcased newly acquired works by artists, such as ceramics by Kim Ki-Chang (2012.42.1, 2012.42.2), video installations by Lee Lee-Nam (2013.40.1), and mixed-media light and sculpture installations by Yang Haegue (2013.12).

Conclusion

The Harn Museum's two five-year working plans and promotional activities have directly resulted in the improvement of the study within the Harn Museum's Korean art collection and also in enhanced opportunities for scholarship by colleagues in the field. The increase in attendance at the Harn Museum's Asian art wing and its Korean art gallery means that more than 100,000 visitors a year will be exposed to Korean art in new and innovative ways—in the gallery, online, and in print.

To promote the study of Korean art in the United States, the Harn Museum focused on high-quality digital photography, working with fellow scholars nationally and internationally, publishing the Korean art collection, supporting symposia, and addressing provenance issues and their critical roles regarding cultural heritage regulations. These efforts benefited the international Korean art community and the Harn Museum by bringing new understanding and appreciation of Korean art and culture.

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29 Online articles in Korean and English were published on the websites of the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Korea Foundation Newsletter from May 2012.

30 See also “Conserving Treasures” (<http://harn.ufl.edu/linkedfiles/publication-asian-conservingtreasures.pdf>).

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