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*Images available upon request.*

## The Denver Art Museum hosts South Korean National Treasures in *Lunar Phases: Korean Moon Jars*

Three-year partnership with the National Museum of Korea marks presentation of iconic South Korean artworks and national treasures



**DENVER – January 28, 2025** – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) continues its collaboration with the National Museum of Korea (NMK) and other institutions in Korea, inviting visitors to explore an important art form of Korean culture in the new exhibition [Lunar Phases: Korean Moon Jars](#), on view from March 2 to June 8, 2025. The exhibition features 21 objects including 12 moon jars. This show will be in the Charles P. and Diane Gallagher Family Gallery on the first level of the museum's Hamilton Building and included with general admission.

[Perfectly Imperfect: Korean Buncheong Ceramics](#), co-organized with the National Museum of Korea (NMK), was the first of this series of planned exhibitions and programs focused on Korean art, which opened at the DAM in December 2023 and will be on view through Dec. 7, 2025. Curated by Hyonjeong Kim Han, Joseph de Heer Curator of Arts of Asia

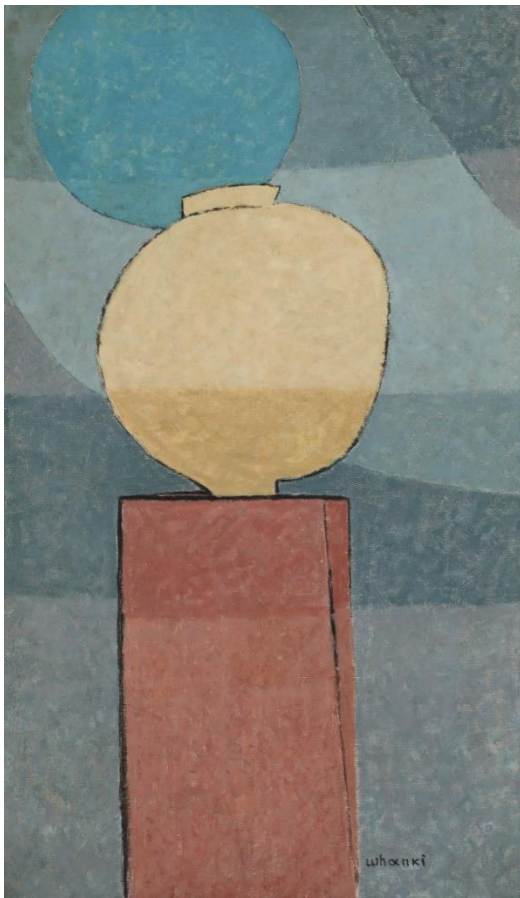
and Ji Young Park, National Museum of Korea Fellow of Korean Art at the Denver Art Museum, along with curators at NMK, *Perfectly Imperfect* inaugurated meaningful programs, exhibitions and collaborations between the NMK and the DAM.

*Lunar Phases* continues the DAM's focus on Korean art, serving as the second of a series of planned exhibitions, thanks to a grant of more than \$900K from the National Museum of Korea under its Overseas Korean Galleries Support Program. This exhibition is curated

by Hyonjeong Kim Han, Joseph de Heer Curator of Arts of Asia, and Ji Young Park, National Museum of Korea Fellow of Korean Art at the Denver Art Museum.

"Continuing to showcase the breadth and beauty of Korea's art and culture remain a priority for the DAM," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "With the generosity of the National Museum of Korea and expert knowledge of our curator and fellow, we are proud to contribute to a new appreciation of Korean art."

*Lunar Phases* welcomes visitors to explore how the moon jar from Korea's Joseon dynasty (1392-1897) has evolved into a national artistic icon of Korea and how contemporary artists, both within and beyond Korea, reflect on the moon jar. Moon jars are elegant white globular jars that flourished in Korea during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when naturalism and spontaneity became the desired aesthetic. At the same time, the simplicity of their shapes, as well as the ceramic's unique hue in each of them, have been esteemed and respected in Korea and across the world.



Traditional moon jars get their name in the mid-20th century from their unique shape and milk-like color homage to the moon - an important symbol in Korean culture. The artisan of these jars would build them in half, shaping and forming the halves using large wheels, constructing the walls of the jar. The two halves would then be carefully joined in the middle, glaze, and placed in a kiln to fire.

*Lunar Phases* traces the artistic phases of the moon jar with twelve exquisite ceramics spanning from the 18th century to the present, each implying a month of the lunar calendar. With twenty-one objects in total, this exhibition also features five paintings, two photographs, one video work and one installation work in addition to a mindfulness zone with a touchable moon jar from master ceramicist LEE Dong Sik (b. 1969). This interactive space will invite visitors to slow down and physically interact with a moon jar. A video of LEE Dong Sik, known for his use of historical techniques, will be on display in the show featuring his making of a moon jar.

*Lunar Phases* features 11 Korean artists who are active in South Korea and in the U.S.:

- Minjae KIM 김민재 (b.1989)
- KIM Whanki 김환기 (1913-1974)
- Yikyung KIM 김익영 (b.1935)
- KOO Bohnchang 구본창 (b.1953)
- LEE Dong Sik 이동식 (b.1969)
- Inchin LEE 이인진 (b.1957)
- Steven Young LEE (b.1975)
- YoungJune P. LEW 박영준 (b.1947)
- Ken Gun Min (b.1976)
- Youngsook PARK 박영숙 (b.1947)
- TO Sang Bong 도상봉 (1902-1977)

*Lunar Phases* was designed with families in mind and invites them to participate in a seek-and-find activity to help kids spot the differences between the moon jars and identify the causes of those differences.



Museum members will have a chance to join Hyonjeong Kim Han, Joseph de Heer Curator of Arts of Asia, for a conversation with artists, YoungJune P. Lew, Ken Gun Min, and Minjae Kim, on March 1, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. With diverse backgrounds and a varied use of materials, these artists have reflected the meaning of Korean moon jars. The artists will share their own creative processes of reinterpreting moon jars while conveying their experiences as artists and immigrants.

On May 17, artist LEE Dong Sik will host an artist demonstration open to the public at the museum, which includes a live demonstration of creating and shaping a moon jar. Attendees will have the opportunity to create their own moon jars.

An accompanying catalog, available in softcover print, will be available at the Denver Art Museum's Shop. Both programs and the catalog publication are supported by the National Museum of Korea Overseas Korean Galleries Support Program.

"This show highlights the ongoing reinterpretation and reinvention of the moon jar over time. Visitors will have a chance to learn about Korea here at the DAM through the lens of an iconic cultural symbol," said Hyonjeong Kim Han. "*Lunar Phases* captures the connection between moon jars and the moon in nature, the aesthetics of traditional moon jars, the fascination with moon jars among artists and connoisseurs, their status as a national icon and their influence on contemporary art. However, most importantly, visitors can appreciate the beauty of Korean moon jars and witness how contemporary artists in Korea and the United States reinterpret and reinvent the tradition. Moon jars bridge the differences of time and space."

*Lunar Phases: Korean Moon Jars* is organized by the Denver Art Museum. This exhibition is generously supported by the National Museum of Korea Overseas Korean Galleries Support Program. Additional support is provided by Gay-Young Cho, the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by 5280 Magazine and CBS Colorado.

Support for the Gallagher Gallery is provided by Your 6 Front Range Toyota Stores.

### **Planning Your Visit**

The most up-to-date information on planning a visit to the Denver Art Museum can be found online under the [Plan Your Visit](#) tab. Use this page to find details on ticket pricing, public transit options and access information. General admission for museum members is free every day. Youth aged 18 and under receive free general admission everyday thanks to the museum's Free for Kids program. Free for Kids also underwrites free admission for school and youth group visits.

### **About the Denver Art Museum**

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its mission is to enrich lives by sparking creative thinking and expression. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro residents support the [Scientific and Cultural Facilities District \(SCFD\)](#), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations.

For museum information, visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org) or call 720-865-5000.

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**Image 1:** *Moon Jar* 달항아리, 1700s, Joseon dynasty (1392–1897). Porcelain with clear glaze 17 ½ x 16 ⅞ in. Private collection. Photograph by Kim Hyun-soo (K2 Studio) and © Private collection. National Treasure of Korea (2007-1).

**Image 2:** *Moon Jar* 달항아리, 1700s, Joseon dynasty (1392–1897). Porcelain with clear glaze 17 ½ x 17 ⅞ in. Amorepacific Museum of Art. © Amorepacific Museum of Art, photograph by Kim kwang seop. Treasure of Korea (2005-4).

**Image 3:** KIM Whanki 김환기 (Korean, 1913-1974, active internationally), *La Lune Symphonie en Blanc* [The Moon, Symphony in White] 달빛교향곡, 1954. Oil on canvas, 64 ⅞ x 38 ¼ in. Leeum Museum of Art. Photograph by Kim Hyun-soo (K2 Studio) and © LEEUM Museum of Art. Copyright © Whanki Foundation·Whanki Museum.

**Image 4:** Steven Young LEE (Born 1974 in the United States, active in the United States), *Brown Moon Jar*, 2024. Porcelain with aventurine glaze, 15 x 14 x 15 in. Denver Art Museum: Funds from the Sam F. and Freda R. Davis Charitable Trust, 2024.874 © Steven Young LEE. Photography by Christina Jackson, © Denver Art Museum.