

Kim Chongtai 1906-1935

Gimpo, Gyeonggi Province

Kim Chongtai (pen name: Hoesan, 1906-1935) passed away early at age 29. Despite his short career as an artist, he left a significant legacy in the history of Korean modern painting. After his works were selected for Joseon Art Exhibition successively, Kim, who had studied art by himself without taking a regular art course, became a famous artist. His new style of painting, different from that of existing artists, infused fresh vitality into the art world of the time. Moreover, he was also recognized for his active literary activities; His art critique on “local color,” a controversial issue at that time, caught a lot of attention as well. *Boy* (1929), characterized by Kim’s use of bold colors and unrestrained expression, is one of the four artworks which have been handed down so far. He intended to find the identity of Korean art in moments of daily life as in the image of a dozing boy. The painting depicts an everyday scene of ordinary life naturally, but its simple yet bold composition captured from the front attracts viewers’ attention. Besides, “dashing off with one stroke of a brush” and clear and transparent colors like watercolor painting show his own original sense of art.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Kim Chongyung 1915-1982

Changwon, South Gyeongsang Province

Sculptor Kim Chongyung (pen name: Woosung, 1915-1982) played a pioneering role in introducing and developing abstract sculpture in Korean sculpture history. Kim learned from Chang Bal (pen name; Wooseok, 1901-2001) at Whimoon High Common School and majored in sculpture at Tokyo Fine Arts School in Japan. He showcased *Bird* (early 1950s), an artwork recorded as Korea's first abstract sculpture, at the 2nd Korea Fine Arts Association Exhibition in 1953. He breathed new life into the world of Korean sculpture through his experiment with iron as well as stone and wood. Most of his works are of a small size because he limited the size and weight of works so that he could deal with materials and create works for himself. He pursued naturalness of asymmetry and imbalance rather than artificial beauty based on harmony and balance, and sought the "beauty" of non-sculpting which requires minimal touches to keep the material's own properties.

The asymmetrical structure of *Work 79-8* (1979) represents his search for natural beauty. In addition, rough texture of wood created by cutting the surface with a small chisel is noticeable in this piece.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Lee Jongwoo 1899-1981

Bongsan, Hwanghae Province

Lee Jongwoo (pen name: Seolcho, 1899-1981) is an artist who pursued an academic realist painting style. Working during the period of Japanese colonialism, Lee became known for his pieces *Memories* (1924) and *Self-Portrait* (1924) that were selected for the Western painting category at Joseon Art Exhibition. While creating Western paintings, he also emphasized the identity of Joseon in his work by maintaining traditional clothing and hairstyles.

Going abroad to study art has a significant meaning in his art world. Lee began to study at the Department of Western Painting of Tokyo Fine Arts School in 1918. After returning to Korea in 1924, he worked as an art teacher. Then he decided to travel to France to study in August 1925 once again, sticking to classicism calling for a return to tradition and realism based on accurate depiction. In 1927, he became the first Korean whose artwork, *Still Life with a Doll* (1927), was selected for Salon d'Automne in Paris. *Portrait of a Woman* (1927), one of the 18 works Lee produced during his stay in Paris, is focused on the impressionist effect of light, stable brushstrokes and realistic depiction of the figure.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Gu Bonung (pen name: Seosan, 1906-1953) is one of the leading artists in the Korean art scene of the 1930s. Nicknamed “Toulouse-Lautrec of Seoul,” Gu reflected the zeitgeist of the time by expressing his emotions boldly and briskly, stepping away from the painting style of plein air painters of the mainstream national school. Due to his eccentricity, he was also called a “Fauvist Expressionist.” He learned from Ko Huipdong (pen name: Chungok, 1886-1965) at “Goryeo Art Association” and from Lee Jongwoo (pen name: Seolcho, 1899-1981) at Joongang High Common School in a painting class. Later he graduated from the Department of Fine Arts of Nihon University in 1929 and graduated from Pacific Art School in 1934.

Committing himself to Orientalism after the 1940s, Gu developed Orientalist practice based on a combination of traditional Oriental ink painting and Western Expressionism and Symbolism arts. *Seated Buddha* (1940s, ink on paper) and *Seated Woman* (1940s, oil on wood) represent his rough yet bold and expressive strokes.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Born in Seoul, Paik Nam June(1932-2006) studied aesthetics at University of Tokyo and wrote his thesis on the music of Arnold Schonberg(1874-1951). In 1956, he left for Germany, where he studied European philosophy and contemporary music. During this period, Paik was engaged in various art practices, including radical performances different from the conventional art norms, while actively working with contemporary avant-garde artists. Then he began to seek artistic approaches using new media. In 1963, he showcased media art using television in his solo exhibition entitled *Exposition of Music – Electronic Television*, in which he presented his works created by manipulating internal circuits of televisions. After moving to the U.S. in 1964, he devoted himself to creating works with television and video. Paik produced different versions of the media installation work titled *TV Buddha*, in which a statue of Buddha is watching TV. In *TV Buddha*(1974/2002), a Buddha statue is watching its own image via a closed-circuit camera in real time. Through Buddha, commonly known as a spiritual seeker as well as a symbol of Oriental wisdom, watching television, which is a mass media and a symbol of modern civilization, and his narcissistic self-absorption or his way of reflecting on himself while watching his own image projected on a monitor, the work brings an important message as a medium in contemporary art.

New Season

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Lee Insung 1912-1950

Daegu

Lee Insung (pen name: Aso, 1912-1950) studied art at Daegu Art Company run by Seo Dongjin (pen name: Soheo, 1900-1970) and moved to Japan in 1931 to study at Pacific Art School. Starting from the 8th Joseon Art Exhibition in 1929 until the 23rd Joseon Art Exhibition in 1944, he participated in it every year without fail, winning major prizes, such as special selection and Changdeokgung Palace Prize, etc. After the liberation, in 1946, he served as vice chairman of Joseon Art Alliance and participated in the First National Art Exhibition as a judge. Having burst onto the Korean modern art scene, Lee, who was called “a treasure of Joseon” and “a star of the Western painting scene,” created his own art world based on his outstanding aesthetic skills and expert techniques. Lee seems to have been influenced by post-impressionists, including Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906). The artist primarily produced Korean-style paintings with a strong sense of local color.

In *Peach Tree* (1935), a red peach on the left from the center of the canvas attracts the attention first. Then the branches of the tree almost touching the ground and its trunk forming an arch together lead viewers to shift their gaze. The contrast between sunlight and shadow cast on the branches creates a sense of space and depth through Lee's unique short brushstrokes.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Lee Quede 1913-1965

Chilgok County, North Gyeongsang Province)

Lee Quede(1913-1965) is an artist who worked in the 1940s, going through the periods of the late Japanese colonial rule, the division and the war. He was forgotten for many years after he left South Korea during the Korean War. But after the ban on the artists who had defected to North Korea was lifted in 1988, he became famous for his figure paintings in the style of history painting, such as Crowds I — Notification of Liberation(1948) and Crowds IV(ca. 1948). Self-portrait in Blue Long Coat(1940s) is hailed as a masterpiece which reflects the artist's serious sense of vocation thinking about his roles in the new liberated land. Lee made his debut as his work was selected for Joseon Art Exhibition in 1932. He was admitted to the Department of Western Painting of Teikoku Art School in Japan the following year. After coming back to Korea, he formed the "Neo Art Association" in 1941. "Joseon Art Alliance" he established during the liberation period was a so-called politically moderate art organization. By running Seongbuk Painting Institute(1947~1950) together with Nam Kwan and Lee Insung, in which Kwon Jinkyu, Kim Tschangyeul, Jeon Loijin and Hwang Chongnye participated, he had a considerable influence on the Korean art world despite a short period of time. Lee had a great proficiency in figure painting based on his superb drawing skills. Exploring traditional colors and drawing techniques under the influence of his elder brother Lee Yeoseong, a historian, a politician as well as a painter, he attempted to establish Korean-style realism as an oil painting artist.

Harbor(1960) on display in this exhibition is a work he produced after defecting to North Korea. The painting depicts three ships that are about to sail in a harbor at sunrise. The ship in the front shows a classical painting style which is commonly seen in his work, but his expressions of parts of the ships and light reflected on the waves have an impressionist feel. In the 1960s when a fierce debate over the direction of modernism began, his brother Lee Yeoseong was purged for political reasons. Considering the year of 1960, the painting was produced around the time when this controversy started. The work featuring the ships set to depart the harbor appears to deliver both tension and an initiative spirit, implying the beginning of a bitter debate.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Moon Hakjin 1924-2019

Seoul

Moon Hakjin(1924-2019) graduated from the College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University and was awarded the special selection at the National Art Exhibition from 1953 to 1955 consecutively. In the 7th National Art Exhibition, he won the Ministry of Culture and Education Award for his work *A Driver Hit by a Bicycle*(1958). His main subjects of work were figures and still lifes rather than landscapes of nature, a popular subject in the art world of the time. While attempting to adopt Cubist techniques based on the reinterpretation and recomposition of objects, he also produced composition works and documentary paintings emphasizing realistic depiction.

Lady Musician(1969) portrays a musician who is playing a stringed instrument, probably a cello, sitting on a chair, in a Cubist style. Moon reconstructs the image of a musician playing the instrument using simplified lines and geometric color fields, expressing rhythmic movement with the composition of the canvas and texture of paints.

Autumn(1966), a piece in GMoMA's collection, depicts people sitting and resting under the trees in autumn, the season of harvest, in a serene landscape. Unlike *Lady Musician*, this painting expresses figures in a figurative manner, but its arrangement considering the composition on canvas is still remarkable.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Kim Kichang 1914-2001

Seoul

Kim Kichang (pen name: Unbo, 1914-2001), who learned painting from Kim Eun-Ho (pen name: Yidang, 1892-1979), a preeminent Korean modern artist known for polychrome painting, began to receive attention for his outstanding polychrome paintings presented at “Joseon Arts Exhibition” during the Japanese occupation period. After liberation, Kim continued to work on formative experiments to break away from the Japanese-style polychrome painting. In his later years, he completed his own style called “Babo (meaning fool in Korean) style” based on the reinterpretation of folk painting and genre painting. Besides, he is also well-known as an “artist who lost his hearing but tried to overcome his disability” and famous for an anecdote with his wife Park Rehyun (pen name: Uhyang, 1920-1976).

An Ox and a Woman (Early 1960s) can be seen as an outcome of Unbo’s bold abstract experiments carried out in the 1960s.

At the time, the Korean art world was under the great influence of Art Informel. He integrated expressive touches and physical properties of material itself, the main elements in Art Informel, into his work. The canvas composed of divided color fields shows a rough texture of paper, arousing fundamental nostalgia. Furthermore, a pastoral Korean subject of “an ox and a woman” is expressed in a highly abstract style in the painting, making it difficult to recognize the form. But the black line drawn at the bottom of the painting appears to be an ox.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Lee Ungno 1904-1989

Hongseong County, South Chungcheong Province

Lee Ungno (pen name: Goam, 1904-1989) established a view of art focused on the contemplation of the human world while seeking the harmony of East and West aesthetically. He learned to paint the Four Gentlemen at Calligraphy and Painting Institute formed by Kim Gyujin (pen name: Haegang, 1868-1933) in 1923. Lee made his debut in 1924 by winning a prize for his work *Cheongjuk* (1924) at Joseon Art Exhibition. After moving to Japan in 1935, he studied Western painting at Hongo Painting Institute, and Oriental painting at Kawabata Painting School. In 1946, he was appointed to professor of the Department of Oriental Painting at Hongik University and participated in organizing Dangu Art Association dedicated to examining traditional paintings from a new perspective. He showcased semi-abstract artworks based on interpretative expression of nature until he settled in France in 1958. Influenced by Art Informel during his stay in France, Lee combined Oriental and Western formative elements in his collage works, in which he turned pieces of abandoned paper into calligraphic forms under the proposition of “Composition” until around 1965, attracting international attention. Later, having discovered the abstract aesthetic of Western modernism in the style and structure of Chinese characters, he presented a series of works of “calligraphic abstraction” and “character-based abstraction,” part of which is *Composition* (1976). Another piece *Crowd* (1985), one of the *Crowd* series (1979-1989) bringing together his insights into human life and aesthetics in his later years shows the harmony of human figures and all sorts of human emotions, as if dancing altogether through Lee’s calligraphic strokes and patterns.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Ko Younghoon 1952-

Jeju

Born in Jeju, Ko Younghoon(1952-) earned his B.A. and M.A. in Fine Art in Western Painting from Hongik University. After participating in the 6th India Triennale(1985) and the 42nd Venice Biennial(1986), he emerged as a leading artist of hyperrealism paintings. Ko has maintained his international status artist through a number of solo and group exhibitions.

As an artist who represents hyperrealistic painting, Ko also served as a founding member of the hyperrealistic painting group, “Message of Sight.” He started getting the spotlight with his work *This is a Stone*(1974) showcased at Indépendents held at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea that created a sensation in the art scene of the time.

From the 1980s, he attempted to produce a metaphorical effect created by conflicts of incompatible things by harmoniously arranging objects, such as birds, feathers, clocks, shoes and stones with shadows on a newspaper or an open book. Ko’s work is often compared to *This is Not a Pipe*, a Surrealist work by René Magritte (1898-1967). For example, announcing this is not a pipe even if he actually drew a pipe, Magritte reveals the fact that painting is an illusion. On the contrary, Ko makes it clearer that this is a stone by drawing a stone in his painting. This implies that the artist explores the world where the boundaries between an imaginary stone and a real one are blurred.

New Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
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Kim Heungsou 1919-2014

South Hamgyong Province

Born in Hamheung, South Hamgyong Province, Kim Heungsou(1919-2014) graduated from Tokyo Fine Arts School in Japan in 1944 and studied at Académie de la Grande Chaumière in France in 1958. Kim made his debut as his work was selected for the 16th Joseon Art Exhibition. He won a number of awards, including the Vice Minister of National Defense Award at the Military Painters Exhibition in 1952, the Grand Prize at the Korean Art Grand Award Exhibition in 1976, the Golden Crown Order of Cultural Merit in 1999 and the Special Award at Seokju Art Award in 2011. Kim established his original style of “Harmonism” painting, declaring the perfection of art through the balance of yin and yang in Formative Art Manifesto in 1977. Pursuing formative painting based on a combination of abstract art and figurative art as well as Korean painting and Western painting through a harmonious contrast of different elements, he brought a high level of artistry to his work. The artist depicted different human emotions through the motif of a woman in his work. *Pose*(1970s) is a work which represents the characteristics of his harmonism painting. This painting gives a strong impression through a juxtaposition of a woman in dynamic pose with an abstract form and sensuous colors on a canvas.

New Season

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Byeon Gwansik

1899-1976

Ongjin, Hwanghae Province

Byeon Gwansik (pen name: Sojeong, 1899-1976), whose maternal grandfather is a renowned artist in the late Joseon Dynasty, Cho Seokjin (pen name: Sorim, 1853-1920), learned art at the Association of Calligraphy and Painting. After moving to Japan in 1925, he studied under Komuro Suiun (1874-1945), a master of Southern School painting. Byeon's unique painting style, which portrays the beauty of Korean mountains and streams with his original touch based on real-view landscapes, is considered to inherit the genealogy of the true-view landscape painting of Jeong Seon (pen name: Gyeongjae, 1676-1759). However, it was not until his later years in the 1970s when the Korean studies promotion policy was in full force that he achieved his current fame. In the late 1930s, he began drawing real-view landscape paintings, traveling famous mountains across the country, including Mount Geumgang. His style called "Sojeong Style" is typically characterized by "Jeokmukbeop," a technique of gradually layering ink from a light tone to a dark tone, emphasizing the vitality of ink, and "Hochojeom," a technique of making dots as small and round as a grain of pepper. Besides, he always tends to include figures in his paintings, thereby highlighting magnificent nature and giving an impression that these figures are actually enjoying the landscapes in the paintings at the same time. One of his pieces, *Autumn Colors of a Riverside Village* (1960), shows his own painting style in which the lyrical atmosphere of autumn and its colors are harmonized with his unique expressive calligraphy.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Noh Suhyun 1899-1978

Goksan, Hwanghae Province

Noh Suhyun (pen name: Simsan, 1899-1978) is one of the most renowned Korean traditional landscape painters succeeding Ahn Joongsik (pen name: Simjeon, 1861-1919). Whereas Lee Sangbeom (pen name: Cheongjeon, 1897-1972) and Byeon Gwansik (pen name: Sojeong, 1899-1976), who worked around the same period as Noh, concentrated on the modernization and individualization of Korean traditional painting, Noh is viewed as an artist who broke new ground while carrying on the legacy. Simsan is especially known to have enjoyed painting “rocky mountains.” In the early days of his artistic career, Noh introduced elements of sketch to his work partially without just following tradition while focusing on the traditional concept of landscape painting. The 1940s marks the beginning of new changes in his artwork: The depiction of the forms of rocky mountains is emphasized, and the expression of ink becomes noticeable. These changes integrated into his own characteristic style of landscape painting are finally completed in the 1950s.

***View of Mountain Geumgang, (1940)* is a painting with the subject of Mount Geumgang that he frequently painted in the 1940s. In retrospect, he said, “When I was young, I would visit most of the famous mountains across the country.**

Among them, Mt. Geumgang is the best. There is nothing better than that.” This piece also clearly shows his affection and longing for the mountain. Splendidly portrayed mountains covered with clouds and fog demonstrate Simsan’s remarkable artistic skills.

From Nature

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Lee Sangbeom

1897-1972

Gongju, South Chungcheong Province

Hailed as a master of modern and contemporary Korean painting, Lee Sangbeom (pen name: Cheongjeon, 1897-1972) established his original art style named “Cheongjeon Style.” He devoted his whole life to painting Korean landscapes that exist in reality, instead of idealistic paintings of mountains and rivers brought from China. Lee learned painting under Ahn Joongsik (pen name: Simjeon, 1861-1919), well-known as the last court painter of the Joseon Dynasty, and studied at the Association of Calligraphy and Painting, Korea’s first modern art education institution founded in 1911. Submitting his works to Joseon Art Exhibition which began in 1922, he grew into one of the leading modern Korean artists. However, his paintings depicting desolate and dreary landscapes of Joseon under Japanese colonization could not be free from controversies over the influence of Japanese painting and “local color.” In the 1950s, Lee started painting Korean mountain villages with low and gentle hills in a romantic style, completing his “Cheongjeon Style.” *Lofty Mountain and Long River* (1966), is a masterpiece whose expressive shading differences are particularly impressive. The painting features a man at the bottom right of the painting heading to the village on the hillside. The life of a village man living in close interaction with nature seems to be the theme the artist wanted to depict eventually.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Yoo Youngkuk 1916-2002

Uljin County, North Gyeongsang Province

Yoo Youngkuk(1916-2002), the first-generation Korean abstract painter, went to Japan to study in 1935 and participated in the Free Artists Association Exhibition, a Japanese avant-garde group exhibition, every year from 1937 to 1942. After his return to Korea in 1943, he served as a founding member of the “New Realism Group” in 1947 and the Modern Art Society in 1957, playing a pioneering role in the Korean modernist art movement. In his work, nature reduced to simple forms can ultimately be viewed as a subject exploring the beauty of the abstract inner world and its harmony on canvas.

His *Mountain* series characterized by simplified lines and vibrant primary colors accentuates pure formative beauty based on the motif of mountains just like its title. This *Mountain* series presents a harmony, tension and concerto of basic formative elements, including lines, colors and planes.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Lee Jongsang 1938-

Yesan, South Chungcheong Province

Lee Jongsang (pen name: Illang, 1938-) graduated from the Department of Painting of Seoul National University and earned his doctorate in philosophy from Dongguk University. In 1962, his work titled *Jang* (meaning artisan in Korean) submitted to the National Art Exhibition won the special selection, making his name known in the art scene. Then he worked actively in a variety of genres, producing landscapes, portraits, documentary paintings and murals, etc. In the late 1980s, he began to create the “*Original Form*” series, portraying the “Korean sense of beauty” which he had continuously explored and the “fundamental force” to maintain the beauty on canvas. *Homeland, Original Form 91-65* (1991) is seen as a miniature of highly symbolized Korean mountains and rivers. Winding mountains are turned into triangles, complicated roads into dots. Vivid five cardinal colors against the dark background on the whole bring vitality to the canvas. Among the “*Original Form*” series that the artist produced using various materials and techniques, this piece was inspired traditional Korean mural paintings, and Lee applied cloisonne enamel glaze to the copperplate he invented. This series epitomizing the ideals he has pursued can be considered the essence of his art in terms of themes and expressions.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Ryu Kyungchai 1920-1995

Haeju, Hwanghae Province

Born in Haeju, Hwanghae Province, Ryu Kyungchai (pen name: Pyunjung, 1920-1995) is a pioneer of Korean contemporary abstract painting. He debuted as an artist by winning a prize at Joseon Art Exhibition in 1940. Ryu gained attention by receiving the President's Award for *Neighborhood of a Bare Mountain* (1949) at the First National Art Exhibition in 1949. Serving as professor at Ewha Womans University (1955-1961) and Seoul National University (1961-1986), he also trained many next-generation artists. In his early stage of career, he painted figurative paintings of a literary atmosphere, but from the 1960s, he was devoted to abstract painting. Around the 1980s, his work developed into symmetric geometric abstract artwork consisting of circles, quadrangles and rhombuses. Unlike these changes in his painting style, he explored the same theme of "communion with nature." In *Season* (1965), Ryu lyrically portrayed the flavors of nature by composing the canvas in an abstract expressionist manner using rhythmic brushstrokes. In *Celebration 88-5, 88-6* (1988), the world of absolute abstraction that he completed is reflected through the use of simplified colors and the composition of restrained lines and planes. The *Celebration* series is his attempt to represent the original form behind the natural phenomena through the motif of a circle symbolizing perfection.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
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Oh Jiho 1905-1982

Hwasun, South Jeolla Province

Oh Jiho (pen name: Mohusanin, 1905-1982) is an influential artist in the history of Jeolla Province's local art as well as Korean modern painting. Oh is evaluated as an artist who realized Korean impressionism. The artist, who graduated from Tokyo Fine Arts School, was influenced by Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924) and Fujishima Takeji (1867-1943). During his time studying in Japan, he primarily explored natural scenery, change of light and relationship between light and color as Western impressionist and Japanese plein air painters did. He intended to express the sentiments of Joseon through "lively lines" and "bright colors." Most of his early works are rural landscapes portraying nature with seasonal changes. Among the major works are *Landscape of Peach Garden* (1937), *Apple Field* (1937) and *House with a Southern Exposure* (1939). Oh painted common rural sceneries that can be seen everywhere, and his early works are also viewed as naturalistic landscapes.

Landscape of Yeosu Port (1978) is one of his later works. Many of his artworks in later years depict landscapes of ports. His pieces during this period reflect his rough skills and diverse artistic experiments after going through the stages of bright and cheerful early paintings and dark and gloomy mid-stage paintings. This work shows the characteristics of expressionism by portraying the waves of the sea with brushstrokes, impressionism with warm and soft colors of the ships and objects using the effects of light as well as emotionalism reflecting the artist's view of painting.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Park Kosuk 1917-2002

Pyongyang

Park Kosuk(1917-2002), called the “painter of mountains,” portrays the spirits of mountains. After learning painting at Soongsil Middle School in Pyongyang, he moved to Japan in 1935 and graduated from the Department of Fine Arts of Nihon University. In the 1950s, he painted urban landscapes, and his representative work is *Landscape of Beomil-dong*(1951) which depicts people fleeing the land devastated by the war with thick brushstrokes and an impressionist approach.

In 1957, Park established the “Modern Art Society” with Kim Whanki(pen name: Suhwa, 1913-1974) and Han Mook(1914-2016) to examine the ideology of contemporary art from an avant-garde perspective. During this period, he also experimented with abstract art emphasizing lines based on realistic elements. In the 1960s, he took a break from his work to have some time to reflect on his view of art. In 1967, he formed the Gusangjeon Fine Art Association with artist Lee Bongsang to encourage creation of figurative works and started presenting mountain paintings in earnest. After he exhibited 24 works depicting the four seasons of Mount Dobong and Mount Seorak at Gallery Space in 1974, he became well-known as a painter of mountain. To Park, a mountain is an object of healing, joy and thrill. Especially, his *Seorak Mountain*(1980s) series, which he painted several times under the same title, is seen as having maximized the dignity and sublimity of the mountain. This work captures the clarity and splendor of the mountain with the use of rough lines and vibrant colors reminiscent of Fauvist paintings.

From Nature

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
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Born in Jeju, Kang Yobae(1952-) studied at the Department of Painting of Seoul National University. Kang served as a teacher at Changmun Girls' High School from 1980 to 1986 and worked as a member of the collective, "Reality and Utterance" from 1981 to 1990. His early works deliver messages critical of reality by borrowing traditional Buddhist paintings or folk letter paintings, most of which are a kind of new experiment using poster colors or pastels on kent paper while avoiding traditional mediums. He made illustrations for *The Island Sailing on the Wind*, a serial story published in the newspaper Hankyoreh by novelist Hyun Kiyoung from 1988 to 1989, and it motivated him to investigate the history of the sufferings of the people of Jeju, including the Jeju April 3 Uprising. From 1989 to 1992, he completed a total of some 50 artworks on the Jeju Incident. Since then, he has been living in his hometown Jeju Island, depicting its natural sceneries as well as the troubled history of Jeju people such as the Jeju April 3 Incident.

Tree-Light(2005) captures an illusion of light, which is rarely seen in Kang's previous works. In this work, twigs of an old tree looking like a nettle tree, glazed with a hazy light, conveys a dreary feeling. As Kang said he tried to portray the wind, land and sky of Jeju Island from a new perspective, he began to reflect the feelings of the public who were suffering in the vortex of history from this point of time, embodying the landscape of nature using his own dry brush technique. *Rough Waves I*(2002), in GMoMA's collection, is one of the *Rough Waves Series* together with *Rough Waves II*(2002). The scene expressed with rough brushstrokes in the color of earthy yellow looks like rocks and waves in the sea of Jeju at a glance. But the work blending the nature of Jeju with the landscape of the mind can also be understood as the inner landscape like a kind of imaginal trauma.

From Nature

Do Sangbong 1902-1977

Hongwon, South Hamgyong Province

Do Sangbong (pen name: Docheon, 1902-1977) was born into a rich family in Hongwon, South Hamgyong Province. Entering Boseong High Common School in 1916, he learned oil painting from Ko Huidong (pen name: Chunkok, 1886-1965). In 1921, he went to Japan to study law at Meiji University, but entered the Department of Western Painting of Tokyo Fine Arts School in 1923, graduating in 1927. After his return home in 1928, he started working as an art teacher at Kyungshin Common School in 1930 and also taught at Paiwha Girls' High School and Kyunggi Girls' Middle School. In 1948, he was appointed to professor of fine arts at Sookmyung Women's University. Serving as a judge as well as a recommended artist for the First National Art Exhibition in 1949, he began to concentrate on creating artwork. Later, he also served as Chairman of Daehan Art Association, a member of an art academy and a committee member of the National Art Exhibition while acting as a central figure within the institutional system of the Korean art scene.

After the 1950s, he embarked on establishing his unique world of art, mainly painting still lifes and portraits. Around this period, he began to enjoy drawing still life paintings featuring his treasured Joseon white porcelain and flowers. The artist expressed the harmony of Eastern and Western beauty in addition to his love for porcelain in his work. His still life characterized by mild and calm colors is considered to have been influenced by Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924), his adviser during his time of studies in Japan.

From Nature

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Kim Joungsook(1917-1991) graduated from Hongik University in 1953, where she learned sculpting human body and moved to the U.S. in 1955 to study abstract sculpture. Influenced by Constantin Brancusi(1876-1957) and Henry Moore(1898-1986), she created works of organic and simple abstract forms. Kim also established the “Korean Women Sculptors Association” with another female sculptor Yoon Youngja in 1974 to promote the artistic activities of female sculptors. According to art critic Oh Kwangsu(1938-), Kim’s artistic tendencies can be divided into four periods as follows: From late 1950s to early 1960s when she embodied human figures; late 1960s when she simplified human figures; early 1970s when she created abstract works of sculpture under the theme of “totem”; from late 1970s to late 1980s when she showcased wing-shaped abstract sculptures with the subject of “flight.” The artist gradually sculpted highly abstract pieces based on the exploration of the archetypes of life and nature or presented works expressing aspirations to transcendence.

Flight(1985) embodies the ultimate form of the wings of a bird through simplification as an attempt to attain to the essence of “flight.” In her artistic journey of seeking the transcendent nature of art, the works *Kiss*(1956) and *Untitled*(1971) are viewed as both pursuing the essence and expressing the flow of energy as a simple and organic mass. Especially *Life*, whose surface is impeccably smoothly finished through a grinding technique, shows the artist’s perfectionist mindset in sculpting.

Another Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Chun Kyungja

1924-2015

Goheung, South Jeolla Province

Chun Kyungja(1924-2015) is an artist who contributed to the modernization of Korean paintings, establishing her own world of polychrome paintings. She studied at Joshi University of Art and Design in Tokyo in 1943 and was selected for Joseon Art Exhibition two consecutive years in 1943 and 1944. In 1952, she became widely known for *A Mode of Life*(1951), in which she projected her inner feelings while struggling with personal and societal problems into a provocative painting featuring 35 snakes. In 1954, she began to serve as professor at Hongik University. In 1955, she received the President's Award from Daehan Art Association. In 1957, she worked as a member of the artist collectives "Baegyanghoe" and "Modern Art Association" in pursuit of new art through a variety of experiments.

Since the mid-1970s, Chun had showcased autobiographical works using the motifs of flowers and women. In the 1980s, she started producing paintings depicting foreign landscapes based on her trips to different countries around the world since 1969. *Who's Crying 2*(1989) is painted after her trip to the American Midwest. This painting, whose title was inspired by the song "Who's Crying" by the Korean singer Bae Ho, features a woman appearing to reflect on something against an exotic background.

Calves(1950s) shows her techniques in drawing and coloring in her early days of career.

Considering her later autobiographical works, a simple background, sentiment of solitude and overlapping of ink are noticeable. In the 1960s, the artist presented more fantastic and surrealistic paintings, mainly using blue and gray toned colors. This tendency is reflected in *The Door of Youth*(1968), in which she painted the portrait of an actress of the film "The Door of Youth" in a dreamlike and surrealistic style.

Another Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Rha Hyeseok 1869-1948

Suwon, Gyeonggi Province

Hailed as the first female Korean painter and novelist as well as feminist activist, Rha Hyeseok (pen name: Jeongwol, 1896-1948) made unrivaled achievements in multiple fields. In 1913, she studied Western painting at Joshi University of Art and Design in Tokyo and after returning to Korea in 1918, she served as an art teacher at Chungshin Girls School. Rha was imprisoned for five months for joining the March 1st Movement in 1919. In March 1921, she had her exhibition at Gyeongseong Ilbo's Naecheonggak Pavilion, which was Korea's first solo exhibition held in Seoul. In 1927, she went on a tour of inspection abroad with her husband Kim Wooyoung, becoming the first Korean woman to travel to Europe and America. Impressionism and Expressionism that she encountered during this period influenced her later works.

Rha's *Self-Portrait* (ca. 1928) and *Portrait of Kim Wooyoung* (ca. 1928), a portrait of her husband, are estimated to have been drawn while she was staying in Paris during her trip to Europe. In *Self-Portrait*, in particular, the figure's gender and race are difficult to distinguish. It can be seen as the result of her exploration and analysis of Western art style applied to her work.

Another Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Park Rehyun 1920-1976

Jinnampo, South Pyeongan Province

Park Rehyun (pen name: Uhyang, 1920-1976), an Oriental painter, was born in Jinnampo, South Pyeongan Province. After graduating from Jeonju Girls' High Common School and Gyeongseong Women's Normal School, Park learned Japanese painting at Joshi University of Art and Design in Tokyo in 1939. During this period of study in Japan, she was awarded the Governor General's Award at Joseon Art Exhibition. After coming back to Korea, she met and married Kim Kichang (pen name: Unbo, 1914-2001). The couple continued to hold exhibitions together. Receiving the President's Award at Daehan Art Association Exhibition for *Early Morning* (1956) and at the National Art Exhibition for *Street Stall* (1956) consecutively, she developed her own world of art. Staying in New York until 1974 via her trip to Central and South America to participate in São Paulo Art Biennial in 1967, Park broadened her artistic scope to include print and tapestry.

In the 1940s, Park primarily painted realistic figure paintings influenced by Japanese traditional polychrome paintings.

In the 1950s, she would integrate geometric elements, including lines and planes, into figurative paintings. In the mid-1960s, her work gradually transforms into pure abstraction in which she filled the canvas with colors and outlines. Then, various shapes like patterns or weavings of round straw mats, tissue cells of living organisms, concentric forms, holes, circles and parabola-shaped pockets began to appear continuously with intense color fields consisting mainly of red, yellow and black in the background, seeming to symbolize a feminine image and an origin of life. Such expression further extends the meaning of artwork using tapestry technique and feminine materials, such as thread, twine and pieces of cloth.

Another Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Bang Haija 1937-2022

Goyang, Gyeonggi Province

Bang Haija (pen name: Suim, 1937-2022), a painter who worked in Korea and France, explored light and color. Inspired by the light and vitality of the stream where she would play in her childhood, she came to delve into light through art. She studied art at the College of Fine Arts of Seoul National University under Chang Ucchin (1917-1990). After moving to France in 1961, she began to learn a range of techniques, including oil painting, fresco, printmaking and stained glass, at École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts de Paris in 1963. Later, she combined Western techniques with traditional Korean materials such as hanji, dak paper and red clay. In 2002, she created the effects of light and the cosmic imagery by exploiting accidental effects of materials by folding nonwoven fabric or layering colors.

In *Heart of Earth* (1960), the artist depicts her impression of Seokguram Grotto in Gyeongju on canvas. This piece meaning the “center of the earth” was produced when she worked at “Contemporary Art Institute” established by Kim Byungki (pen name: Taekyung, 1916-2022) and Yoo Youngkuk (1916-2002). From the 1960s, she portrayed the world of transcendence through abstract images elaborately, influenced by abstract art. Using “Baechaebeop,” a coloring technique of applying pigments on the backside of the paper several times, she embodied the energy of light, creating shading effects. *Dance of Universe* (2010) reflects her contemplation on the universal and fundamental world through abstract forms painted with natural pigments on nonwoven fabric.

Another Season

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Lee Jungseop 1916-1956

Pyongwon County, South Pyongan Province

Lee Jungseop (pen name: Daehyang, 1916-1956) is a preeminent artist in modern and contemporary Korean art history.

The images of “bulls” and “family” that he painted with his simple but bold strokes during the dark times of Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War solidified his standing symbolically in the history of Korean modern art. Born in Pyongwon County, South Pyongan Province, Lee met his art teacher, Lim Yongryeon (1901-unknown), at Osan Common School. After moving to Japan, he studied art at Bunka Gakuen and began to make his name known as a promising artist. Lee also met his future wife, Yamamoto Masako (1921-2022), who attended the same school, around this time. But in 1952, he had to send his wife and two sons to Japan following the outbreak of the Korean War, being left alone in Korea. The letters he exchanged with his family while taking refuge show how much he loved and missed his family. Most of his works which have been handed down so far were produced during this period.

It is estimated that *Studio in the Shack* (1954) was drawn when he was staying in Sinsu-dong after moving to Seoul. In the painting, there is a shanty house, and it is getting dark outside. A man inside the house is smoking a pipe with his face flushing red as if having finished bottles of liquor lined up on the floor. While painting tools including brushes are scattered across the room, a small crab and bugs are crawling along the floor. A single room is all he has, but it looks full of warmth toward his family as a chimney emitting a plume of smoke suggests. The wall is filled with paintings, including *Fighting Ox* (1954) and *Chicken and Chicks* (early 1950s) presumably. *Urinating Man, Chicken and Frog* (early 1950s), which is also on display, is a piece that Lee produced while taking refuge. In the work showing his typical innocence and humor, a chicken is running away as if surprised by a urinating man, while a frog is watching the scene. The line drawing reflects his ability to depict objects in an expressive yet anatomically accurate way.

Season of Nostalgia

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Yoon Jungsik 1869-1954

Pyongyang

Born in Pyongyang, Yoon Jungsik(1913-2012) started gaining attention from his early years of career as he won prizes at the Nokhyang Association Exhibition and Joseon Art Exhibition in 1931. After traveling to Japan to study at Musashino Art School in 1936, he developed his own painting style characterized by a bold simplification and use of intense colors based on Fauvism and Expressionism that he learned under the influence of Kigen Nakagawa(1892-1972), a pupil of Henri Matisse, in a relatively free academic atmosphere. After coming back to his home country, Yoon taught art at Boseong Girls' High School in Seoncheon, North Pyeongan Province. After the Korean War broke out, he defected from North Korea and settled in South Korea in 1953. In 1963, he began to live in Seongbuk-dong, Seoul and continued to present paintings portraying the pastoral beauty of local landscapes. Since he often painted sunset landscapes, he got the nickname of "a painter of sunset." *Work*(1970s) seems to represent a combination of objects within his mind rather than a real landscape through an arrangement of independent objects, including women, statues and fruits put on the table, on a canvas divided into three.

The moon over the terrace at the center of the canvas indicates it is night, and dominant blue and black tones filling the whole canvas express the atmosphere of a silent night.

Season of Nostalgia

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Chang Ucchin 1917-1990

Yeongi County, South Chungcheong Province

Born in Yeongi County, South Chungcheong Province, Chang Ucchin(1917-1990) won the First Prize at Joseon Student Art Exhibition for his work *Jacks*(1938) when he was a student at Yangjeong High Common School. In 1939, he studied Western painting at Musashino Art School in Japan. For two years after Korea's liberation, he worked as a researcher at the National Museum of Korea, where he interacted with Choi Soonwoo, Director of the National Museum of Korea, and Kim Wonryong, Professor of Department of Archaeology and Art History at Seoul National University. And this experience led him to be interested in Korean beauty and tradition. Chang also worked as a member of the New Realism Group with Kim Whanki and Yoo Youngkuk, but not for a long time. During this period, he produced paintings with a strong sense of local color, including *Poison*(1949) and *Village*(1956). After resigning his professorship at Seoul National University in 1960, he moved to Deokso in Namyangju, Gyeonggi Province, and began painting in earnest in a riverside studio. His works, which express objects using simple lines without considering the proportion of the objects, seem to be reflective of his own simple and genuine life, evoking a sense of childlike innocence, wit and simplicity. Chang usually produced small-scale pieces, in which objects like a miniature of the human world, such as the sun and the moon, hills and trees, children and farm animals, are well arranged on a canvas. At a glance, these works look like common landscapes of human lives. But he translated his Taoist aesthetic into painting, rather than drawing specific objects. *Magpie*(1987), *Tree*(1986) and *Three Trees*(1987), which the artist painted while staying in Suanbo in Chungju, North Chungcheong Province, show his later style of intuitive and expressive paintings unlike previous constructive style, together with *Untitled*(1982), an artwork in the collection of Chang Ucchin Museum of Art Yangju. In these paintings, pigments are applied so thinly, instead of thick layers of pigments, that the canvas texture shows through, giving an impression of ink-and-water painting. Besides, traditional subjects, such as a house, animals, a group of trees and a magpie, are expressed with simplicity in three-part composition.

Season of Nostalgia

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Park Sookeun 1914-1965

Yanggu County, Gangwon Province

After graduating from Yanggu Common School in Gangwon Province, Park Sookeun (pen name: Miseok, 1914-1965) studied art on his own. He started his artistic career in 1932 as his work was selected for the 11th Joseon Art Exhibition. Park, who moved to South Korea after Korea's liberation, won the special selection at the 2nd National Art Exhibition and the selection at Korea Fine Arts Association Exhibition in 1951. After 1958, he participated in a number of domestic and international art exhibitions. Currently, there is a museum named after Park Sookeun in Yanggu County, Gangwon Province.

Park portrayed lives of ordinary people on a simple canvas mainly using light gray tones, dealing with typically sentiments of Korean people. Park is known to have prayed to become a painter like Jean François Millet (1814-1875) after seeing his painting *The Angelus* (1857-1859), which gave him a great impression when he was 12.

Although living as a struggling artist, he never gave up on his career as an artist who paints the lives of ordinary, poor people and continued to commit himself to painting. His hometown Yanggu is a place where Park's passion for work was ignited; He sketched trees, women doing daily chores, women picking herbs and those doing laundry, numerous times. Ordinary people he depicted, including a woman pounding grain, a woman carrying a basket on her head, street vendors, a girl carrying a baby on her back and a grandfather and a grandson, and an old tree with dry branches in the kimchi-making season, are not the images of lives of common people reflecting Park's subjective emotions, but those of complete objects independent of personal emotions.

Season of Nostalgia

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Kwon Okyon 1923-2011

Hamheung, South Hamgyong Province

Kwon Okyon (pen name: Muija, 1923-2011)'s gray-tone Surrealist world of art has an unrivaled position in the history of modern and contemporary Korean art. Kwon studied art at Teikoku Art School in Japan and then moved to France to build international experience in 1957. Art Informel and Surrealism that he encountered in France affected the works he created after returning to Korea. During his stay in France, he started portraying the realm of fantasy close to unconsciousness on canvas while paying attention to indigenous motifs symbolizing ethnic identity. The full moon and birds are the subjects which frequently appear in Kwon's work. They are also seen in *Flying Bird* (1997).

If you take a close look at it, you can see that the beak and feet of a bird flying over the moon are cut. It is as if capturing the afterimage which is fading away like a dream on canvas. Subdued and calm tones flowing across the canvas reflect his efforts to express our own sentiments. He mixed paint with stone to make colors matching our tastes, inspired by ancient Goguryeo tomb murals. As a result, his work looks crude at first glance, but shows the beauty of moderation.

Season of Nostalgia

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Jeon Loijin(1929-) entered Seoul National University but left school following the outbreak of the Korean War. He continued his artistic career as an art instructor in South Chungcheong Province. Then Jeon transferred to the Department of Sculpture of Hongik University, where he concentrated on studying sculpture, especially stone sculpture. He won awards in a number of competitions and served as professor of sculpture at Hongik University. Since the 1990s, he has been working as a member of the National Academy of Arts and was also awarded the Hwagwan Order of Cultural Merit.

Jeon's stone sculpture is focused on the purity and essence of humans and nature. The artist, who was dedicated to carving stones for his whole life in search of the most peaceful world, embodied his unique form of "Sculpture of Childhood" by representing the elegance and lines of traditional sculpture. All his works stayed true to the material of marble. Jeon is said to have been much impressed by the stone arts of the periods of the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla. His artworks not only emphasized the forms and materials, but also reflected the Korean sentiments exquisitely. His original warm fairy-tale themes and stone-carving skills were already established in the 1960s, and he newly created his own world of art by inventing "Shaking Sculpture" without adhering to the traditional techniques. Jeon, who takes an affectionate look at the relationships between humans or between humans and nature, expresses the praise and affirmation of the origin of life in his work. Main subjects of his work include boys, girls, a mother and a son, family, people, flowers, trees and children, etc. The surfaces smoothly carved with chisels and gouges and his outstanding sculpting techniques highlighting the beauty of marble itself attest to his unrivaled skill as a sculptor.

Season of Nostalgia

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Kim Whanki 1913-1974

Sinan County, South Jeolla Province

Born in Sinan County, South Jeolla Province, Kim Whanki (pen name: Suhwa, 1913-1974) is well-known as a pioneer of Korean abstract painting. Kim's artworks can be categorized by place where he stayed. While staying in Japan for his study in the 1930s, he learned and adopted different art trends ranging from Japanese national school art to Cubism, to abstract art. In 1937, he participated in the Japanese avant-garde movement led by Saburo Hasegawa (1906-1957), submitting his work to the exhibition in commemoration of the founding of the Free Artists Association. After coming back to Korea, Kim formed the "New Realism Group" and produced works that incorporated Western painting techniques into Korean folk items and natural scenery until the late 1950s. Major works produced during this period are the ones using the motif of "moon jars." Then he moved to Paris, where he created experimental works, devoted to the exploration of traditional Korean motifs and formative expression.

After his relocation to New York in the 1960s, he made changes to his artwork. His works become more abstract with lines and dots instead of concrete forms. *Untitled* (1966) shows his unique sense of arranging dots and lines. His paintings from 1970 to 1974 are characterized by "pointillism." The works of this period demonstrate the process of stylizing the abstraction on non-objective subjects, which begins to appear in the 1970s, containing formative elements seen throughout his art practice.

Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Choi Jongtae(1932-) has mainly sculpted human figures in a restrained manner, crossing the boundary between abstract and figurative art. In the 1960s and the '70s when abstract art was the mainstream in Korean sculpture world, Choi established his own formative language, blurring the border between the figurative and the abstract. From the early days of his artistic career, he constantly explored the essence of human life and spirituality while working on three-dimensional sculpture of frontality with simple lines and the forms transcending the boundaries of figurative and abstract through experiments with forms and shapes.

In *Standing Figure*(1980), he sculpted a man who seems to be lost in thought with his right hand on his face. The piece shows the typical characteristics of his work: simplicity, frontality, stillness and conciseness. In it, the thinking man, whose facial expression is not clearly seen, appears to represent existential absoluteness with his own innate rhythm, bringing out the thoughts and feelings of viewers.

**Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring**

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Park Saengkwang 1904-1985

Jinju, South Gyeongsang Province

Born into a poor farming family as the second son in Jinju, South Gyeongsang Province, Park Saengkwang (pen name: Naego, 1904-1985) went to Kyoto, Japan to learn painting at 17. His study in Japan was started on the recommendation of his Japanese teacher who early recognized his talents. The artist studied at Kyoto City University of Arts, which led the Modern Kyoto School, until 1944, and learned from Takeuchi Seihō (1864-1942), a master of the new Japanese painting.

In the Korean art scene after liberation, strong opposition against the Japanese style of polychrome painting began to form, and there were attempts to turn focus towards ink-and-wash painting style. After returning to Korea, Park sought a variety of changes, living in seclusion in his hometown Jinju while staying away from the mainstream art world.

His “Guedaero (meaning as it is in Korean) Style” is the result of such efforts. Park replicated folk paintings and adopted traditional icons, examining shamanist and Buddhist paintings. In addition, without giving up on his “coloring,” which was suspected to take on Japanese-style colors, he made his own pigments mixed with pigments used in Dancheong, traditional Korean decorative coloring. In this way, he completed his own style of painting based on his study and reinterpretation of traditional coloring seen in folk art and Buddhist art.

Fighting Bulls (1984) was created after he traveled to India and France with difficulty in his last years in 1984, one year before his death from laryngeal cancer. This masterpiece portrays his impression of the places he visited during his trip in search of the origin of Eastern and Western culture that he had been longing for. Drawing orange outlines of the images and coloring them in pale black and red with the application of pale ink, the artist completed the fighting bulls in a simple yet powerful manner. The two bulls fighting each other reflect not only the artist's feelings towards the clash of civilization between the East and the West, but his fervent artistic spirit that made him fully devoted to exploring and completing Korean painting.

Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Kwon Jinkyu 1922-1973

Hamheung, South Hamgyong Province

Sculptor Kwon Jinkyu(1922-1973) was born in Hamheung, South Hamgyong Province.

Thinking about how to express sound through a sense of volume while listening to music, he came to decide to become a sculptor. After studying at Seongbuk Painting Institute, a private art institute run by Lee Quede(1913-1965) and Lee Insung(1912-1950), for six years, he entered Musashino Art School to learn sculpture. During his study in Japan for about eight years, he learned art under Takashi Shimizu(1897-1931), a student of Antoine Bourdelle(1861-1929) and a master of Western sculpture. Influenced by Shimizu and Bourdelle, Kwon attempted to sculpt human body precisely based on drawings. His interest in Buddhist statues came from his exploration of Oriental classicism. His work reflects his pursuit of “eternal beauty.” Using terracotta and dry lacquer technique, he intended to portray the archetype of classical Orientalism.

***Head of Horse*(ca. 1965) is one of the works showing the characteristics of his art ranging from his early works to later ones. Throughout his entire life, he was interested in horses and created a variety of works using the theme of horses. From his student days, Kwon drew horses or sculpted them in stone. In the 1950s, he began to develop and produce them in terracotta. His horse sculptures can be seen as a blend of European medieval art and non-European sculpture, in particular, traditional Korean stone sculpture of horses.**

**Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring**

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Kim Kyung 1922-1964

Hadong, South Gyeongsang Province

Kim Kyung(1922-1964) was born in Hadong, South Gyeongsang Province. Kim moved to Japan in 1940 and entered the Department of Fine Arts of Nihon University. But he had to come back to Korea in three years without finishing his study because of poverty and concerns about conscription. After his return home, he taught students at Jingyo Elementary School in Jinju for a while. Afterwards, he went to Masan and then settled in Busan. His artistic career began after the Busan-based artist collective “Tobyuk Group” was formed in 1953 when the Korean War Armistice was signed. Working as a member of Tobyuk, he painted ordinary local objects, such as cows and chickens, using brown tones to represent local sentiments.

The works he created during this time tend to be realistic. Kim moved to Seoul to work as a teacher at Inchang High School in 1958. In the same year, he was engaged in the activities of “Modern Art Society” consisting of artists who were inclined to abstract art and against academism. His artworks of this period showed more compressed forms while keeping the previous themes. After 1959, his work developed into complete abstract art composed of lines and planes. However, he was felled by a stroke in 1964 and passed away the following year at the early age of 43.

Encounter(1960) shows his painting style of the time when he worked as a member of Modern Art Society. This simply compressed geometric painting reflects his attempt to abandon figurative art and pursue abstrat art. In it, the matière is highlighted by slowly layering matte oil paints on canvas, and a moderate division of the canvas adds balance to the work.

Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Kim Youngjoo 1920-1995

Wonsan, South Hamgyong Province

Born in Wonsan, South Hamgyong Province, Kim Youngjoo (pen name: Nodam, 1920-1995) studied at Pacific Art School in Tokyo. After settling in Seoul in 1946, Kim also worked as a critic who criticized conservatism prevailing in the National Art Exhibition at that time while pursuing contemporary art. He won the Arts and Culture Grand Prize in 1990 and the Silver Crown Order of Cultural Merit in 1992.

Kim portrayed the selves that contemporary people lost in a symbolic manner using such motifs as humanity, family, goddess and the hill of Golgotha, etc. In the 1960s, he attempted to create improvised abstract paintings composed of straight lines and intense primary colors like red and yellow. His work after the 1970s contains clearer lines together with symbolic representations like scribbles or memos. Kim's artworks not only demonstrate his own style of painting, but also reflect his unique way of expressing inner feelings. In the 1980s, he starts using brighter colors and playful lines in his work in general.

It is estimated that the expression of automatized lines in his painting is an influence of his participation in "Art and Culture Association," an organization to promote Surrealist art while he was studying in Japan. As an artist and critic who made a significant impact on the Korean contemporary art scene, Kim's works, attitudes and his artistic spirit highly contributed to the development of contemporary art in Korea after the 1950s, continuing to have a great influence even afterwards.

**Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring**

**Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art**

Ha Indoo 1930-1989

Changnyeong County, South Gyeongsang Province

Ha Indoo(1930-1989) is the first-generation postwar artist who spent the tumultuous times of Korea's liberation and the Korean War as a young man. He formed the "Modern Artist Association" with Kim Tschangyeul(1929-2021) and Park Seobo(1931-) in 1957 and played a major role in Korea's Art Informel movement, which led the founding of the art organization "Actuel" and its exhibitions. Ha's *Mandala* and *Fire of the Spirit* series are viewed as artworks that translate the respect for life and the meaning of the Buddhist nirvana into abstraction. Having encountered the sentiments of grief and resentment, which are the spirits of abstraction, Ha presented the work *Mandala* as a means of healing that he found in the course of experiencing hardships and frustrations during the turbulent times of the war and the division. In *Mandala* of his earlier years, unstable and unbalanced shapes of circles and triangles are basically arranged within an entirely red circle. This is a visualization of the structure of the human ego through the notion of "Myogyehwanjung" found in *Kumgang-sammae-kyong-non* by Wonhyo. The *Mandala* series, created by communication with psychiatrist Kim Jonghae, who used the creation of mandalas for self-formation or healing, serves as an illustration of life as the source of cosmic order as well as a psychological map. *Mandala*(1977), one of his relatively early works, is a masterpiece demonstrating such characteristics. His later piece *Untitled*(1986), in GMoMA's collection, shows a composition of color fields reminiscent of stained glass full of light, acting as a premonition of the *Fire of the Spirit* series, masterpieces produced in his last years.

Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art

Quac Insik 1919-1988

Daegu

Quac Insik(1919-1988) is an artist who explored the properties and uses of materials in diverse ways. Following his study at Nihon Art School in Tokyo from 1937, he had his first solo exhibition in 1942 in Daegu. After returning to Japan in 1949, he worked as a Korean-Japanese artist. His early works have aspects of Surrealism and Fauvism as if reflecting the gloom of the war years. In the 1960s, Quac showcased works which emphasized properties of materials by attaching glass, stone and wood to the canvas. The artist, who experimented with physical properties by capturing the accidental effects, is viewed as a pioneer of the Mono-ha movement led by Lee Ufan. After the late 1970s, he primarily focused on creating two-dimensional artworks in the form of colored ink painting created by overlapping oval-shaped color points like grains of rice on traditional Japanese paper. In the 1980s, his works on Washi, traditional Japanese paper, in which light monochrome color points overlap with each other, as if light is transmitted through them, reached full maturity, creating a harmony of the mid-realm.

Spring, Summer, Autumn,
Winter, Spring

Seasons – Lee Kun-hee Collection:
Modern and Contemporary Korean Art