

Press Release

Glashütte, March 2025

100 Ideas of Happiness. Art Treasures from Korea

A. Lange & Söhne proudly supports the collaborative exhibition between the Dresden State Art Collections and the Korean National Museum

From 15 March to 10 August 2025, the Dresden State Art Collections will present "100 Ideas of Happiness. Art Treasures from Korea", the largest exhibition of art treasures from the Korean National Museum's collections showcased in Germany in 25 years. Around 180 artefacts created over 1,500 years provide an insight into the country's culture, in which elaborate craftsmanship is held in high regard. This heritage of craftsmanship is particularly important to A. Lange & Söhne, as the German watch manufacturer's mechanical masterpieces are crafted in a similar pursuit of perfection.



Objects from the royal tombs Geumgwanchong: the famous Silla crown and a gold belt with pendants, both made of gold and jade: Photos: Korean National Museum

On display in the Royal State Apartments at the Dresden Royal Palace, the exhibition "100 Ideas of Happiness. Art Treasures from Korea" offers an exciting dialogue between cultures. Precious jewellery, royal garments, valuable grave goods and exquisite porcelain creations provide a fascinating insight into Korea's diverse artistic heritage from the time of the Three Kingdoms (1st century BC - 7th century AD) to the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897). Special attention is given to the different notions of happiness and how they are expressed through art.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by a partition typical of the late Joseon Dynasty (18th century), which shows many variations on the two symbols for happiness and longevity. Found

in royal palaces and wealthy homes, calligraphic works of art like this symbolised happiness, spiritual enlightenment and a long life. The "100 Ideas of Happiness" symbolise the different ways in which the joy of living, wisdom and prosperity can be expressed.



"100 Ideas of Happiness and a Long Life", partition from the late Joseon Dynasty (18th century). Photo: Dresden State Art Collections, The Dresden Museum of Ethnology, Photo: Sylvia Pereira

The exhibition's other highlights are also displayed in this context, including precious grave goods from the Geumgwanchong royal tombs. These extraordinary relics were discovered in 1921 during excavations in what is now Gyeongju – the former capital of the Kingdom of Silla (57 BC - 935 AD), which stretched across the south-east of the Korean peninsula. The illustrious history of the 'City of Gold' is reflected in a selection of outstanding jewellery pieces that are considered to be among some of Korea's national treasures. These include one of the famous Geumgwanchong crowns, which serve as a bridge from mortal existence to the afterlife and highlight the spiritual importance of jewellery. Created in the second half of the 5th century using impressive craftsmanship and great attention to detail, the royal headpiece was made of the finest gold and decorated with embellishments, sequins, jade pendants and embossed hallmarks. The central motif of the gold crown is the decorative tree, which is said to symbolise divine power and was regarded as an emblem of the king and the royal family of Silla. A precious grave good, it promised power and prosperity in the afterlife.

The craftsmanship of this work of art reminds Lange CEO Wilhelm Schmid of the art of Saxon precision watchmaking as practised today at A. Lange & Söhne. "The exhibition provides us with fascinating insights into the unique yet diverse craftsmanship of Korean culture and encourages us to explore the deeper symbolism behind it. Such symbolism addresses universal

questions in which the concept of time plays a major role. Everything in this exhibition revolves around the meaning of life and beauty and what remains. Many of these aspects are also reflected in our timepieces, which are crafted in a similar pursuit of perfection and to which their owners also attach very personal ideas and values. It is for this reason that we are delighted to be able to support the Dresden State Art Collections in this great project, which promotes a cultural exchange with Korea and strengthens the mutual appreciation for art and culture in both countries".

"In 2017 and 2018, the Dresden State Art Collections staged the exhibition 'The Dream of the King' at the Korean National Museum in Seoul and the Gwangju National Museum", explains Dr Marius Winzeler, Director of the Green Vault and the Armoury at the Dresden State Art Collections. "The treasures on display from the Dresden collections were very well received by the Korean public. We are even more delighted that the Korean National Museum is now returning with the first comprehensive exhibition of Korean art in Germany for 25 years. Such an ambitious project can only succeed with the support from strong partners. We would therefore like to thank A. Lange & Söhne for their generous support, which will allow us to showcase the splendour of Korean art in Dresden".

"It is both a pleasure and an honour for us to be able to display a selection of our most valuable national treasures in Dresden, following the impressive exhibition 'The Dream of the King' in Seoul and Gwangju", says Kim Jae Hong, General Director of the Korean National Museum. "These exhibits have been carefully curated and are characterised by both their outstanding craftsmanship and profound symbolic meanings. The beauty of Korean cultural heritage will, just like the exhibition's title, bring a smile of happiness to the faces of visitors. Craftsmanship has a long heritage in Korea and is an important part of our identity. We are therefore grateful that we can bring the diversity and richness of Korean art to a wide audience in Germany and, in turn, contribute to intercultural exchanges, which is essential for promoting mutual understanding and appreciation between our cultures".

About A. Lange & Söhne

Dresden watchmaker Ferdinand Adolph Lange laid the foundations for Saxony's precision watchmaking industry when he established his manufactory in 1845. His precious pocket watches remain highly coveted among collectors all over the world. The company was expropriated after the Second World War, and the name A. Lange & Söhne nearly vanished. But in 1990, Walter Lange, Ferdinand Adolph Lange's great-grandson, had the courage to revitalise the brand. Today, Lange crafts only a few thousand wristwatches per year, mainly in gold or platinum. They are equipped exclusively with movements made in-house that are elaborately finished and assembled by hand. With 73 calibres manufactured in-house since 1990, A. Lange & Söhne holds a leading position in the watchmaking world. Some of the major successes include the LANGE 1 with the first outsize date in a regularly produced wristwatch and the ZEITWERK with its precisely jumping numerals. Extraordinary complications such as the ZEITWERK MINUTE REPEATER, the DATOGRAPH PERPETUAL TOURBILLON or the TRIPLE SPLIT represent the manufactory's quest to take its traditional art to increasingly new heights. Launched in 2019, the sporty and elegant ODYSSEUS in stainless steel marks the beginning of a new chapter for the manufactory.

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