

## CONSERVING TREASURES

An important part of the mission of the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art is to care for and preserve the collection for future generations. These three Korean hanging scrolls have been recommended for conservation by a specialist in Asian art. That is why there are reproductions on display, while the actual scrolls are in storage. Each of these hanging scrolls have distinctly different condition issues that prevent it from being safely exhibited. The deterioration of the mounting structure and exposure to humidity and light have caused these hanging scrolls to become unstable.

### What is a Hanging Scroll?

Simply described, an Asian painting or calligraphy is a thin layer of pigments adhered with animal glue to a flexible support of paper or silk. Typically, silk fabrics chosen to surround the central "image" create a protective and decorative border. These elements are lined with several layers of paper and wheat starch adhesive and are combined to create an overall supporting structure. This integral mounting structure allows a painting to be "opened" for display and "closed" for storage.\*

### What is Conservation?

Conservation includes any steps taken to minimize deterioration of any object through time with as little change to the object as possible. These steps can be preventative (controlling light, temperature and humidity) or interventive (cleaning, stabilizing, and repairing or replacing elements).

### What is Remounting?

Remounting is defined as the process of detaching, repairing, and reattaching a surface to its support; in the case of a hanging scroll, a painting made of paper or silk is detached from silk borders, and its paper backing is repaired and reattached to new silk borders and fresh paper backing.

\*Andrew Hare, "Guidelines for the Care of East Asian Paintings: Display, Storage and Handling," *The Paper Conservator* 30 (2006): 73.



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**Museum Hours**  
Tuesday - Friday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday, 1 - 5 p.m.  
Second Thursday of every month,  
open 6 - 9 p.m. for Museum Nights  
Closed Mondays and state holidays

The inaugural installation of this gallery is made possible through the generous support of the Korea Foundation with additional support from the Korea Cultural Heritage Administration.

Prepared by Sarah Jean Smith, Asian Art Curatorial Assistant, Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art

Front cover: Kim Eunho (1892-1979), **Folk Dancers Dressed as Buddhist Nuns** (detail), 1922, ink and color on silk, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.28)



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## Mounting Structure

The painting **Folk Dancers Dressed as Buddhist Nuns** by Kim Eunho (front cover) suffers from problems relating to the mounting structure. While the painting itself is in stable condition, the mounting structure has several major issues that prevent it from being displayed. It is incapable of properly supporting the painting due to the separation of mounting elements and exposure to light.



### Light Exposure

These blue stripes are where the scroll tie was wrapped around the scroll to keep it closed. The lighter tan areas show where light exposure has caused the silk to fade and lose its brilliance.



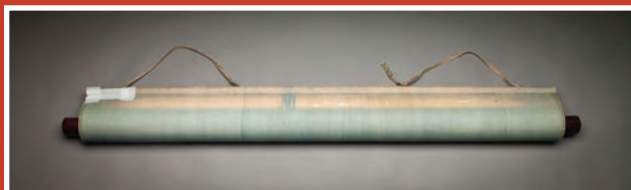
### Ripped Hanging Cord

The center hanging cord has ripped and a new cord needs to be attached to the scroll in order to support the scroll's weight.



### Roller Rod Separation

The large wooden roller rod at the bottom of the scroll has become almost completely detached.



## Foxing

Mold and fungi grow as a result of poor environmental conditions, especially high humidity caused by poor air circulation. This can result in damage visible on the front and back of a hanging scroll. The brown spots of mold and fungi visible on this painting are called foxing. The scroll has foxing throughout but it is most visible at the top where there is less pigment.

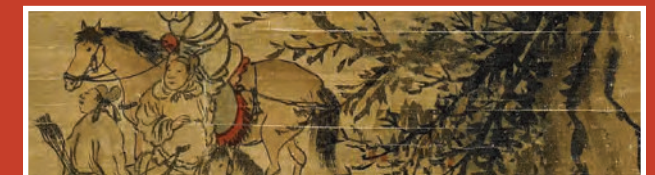
Jang Seung'eop (1843–1897), **Scholar in a Garden**, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), late 19th century, ink and color on silk, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.26)



Spot of foxing magnified 60 times

## Creases and Cracks

Creases and cracks are usually present in older hanging scrolls and can be a result of a variety of interrelated issues related to construction, wear, and materials. These detail pictures show extreme splitting and breaking across the painting surface. These cracks may have resulted from the adhesives used for mounting becoming stiff over time and causing the silk fibers to lose their flexibility and break. Scrolls are rolled for storage and open for display, and the repetitive action of rolling and unrolling can cause a dry and brittle painting surface to crack.



Kim Hongdo (1745–c. 1806), **Hunting with Falcons**, Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), 18th century, ink and color on silk, gift of General James A. Van Fleet (1988.1.25)