

The Fascination of Lacquer – Artwork from Asia and Europe

4.4.2025 – 27.7.2025

Curator: Dr Patricia Frick

In this exhibition, the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur is for the first time putting on display a selection of objects from the collection of lacquer art, which it took over in 2023 from the Museum für Lackkunst, Münster. At the centre of the exhibition are works of Asian lacquer produced for the European market from the late 16th century onwards. These export works form a bridge between the cultures of East Asia and Europe and are eloquent testimonies to the earliest links between the worlds of the West and the Far East.

After introducing the harvesting and processing of Asian lacquer, the exhibition presents works ranging from Chinese lacquerwork of the earliest period through Korean lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay to the Japanese 'sprinkled pictures' executed in gold on black lacquer grounds. It then turns to its central focus on Asian lacquer produced for export to the West. The special exhibition then proceeds to show how Europeans were fascinated by the strange and exotic material and sought to imitate it with their own means. Early pieces of European lacquerwork are complemented with lacquer recipe books and treatises from the museum library's extensive collection, which are followed by examples of European production from the 18th and 19th centuries. Finally, the exhibition closes with works of contemporary lacquer art from both Asia and Europe.

The exhibition is being mounted with the support of the Freunde des Museums für Kunst und Kultur e. V.

The takeover of the collection of the former Museum für Lackkunst, Münster, is being carried out as a pilot project in close cooperation with and with the generous support of the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States.

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