

**NEWS & EVENTS** > Exhibition: "Metal, Iron and Steel: the Cultural History of Iron"

BY JORDI BALTÀ PORTOLÉS  
26 SEP 2017 - 26 NOV 2017

## Exhibition: "Metal, Iron and Steel: the Cultural History of Iron"



The **National Museum of Korea**, an

ASEMUS member, presents the exhibition **"Metal, Iron and Steel: the Cultural History of Iron"**, the purposes of which are to ascertain the role and value of iron in human history and shed light on the development of iron in Korea's history. The exhibition examines the process of how iron has become the most actively used metal in our lives. The exhibition displays 735 pieces in 429 categories that show the iron culture of Korea, China and Japan in East Asia as well as in West Asia. It goes over various aspects of iron in history from the perspectives of life and power. Since

iron emerged as a symbol of power, it has infiltrated into the lives of people and is used in the daily lives of the modern industrialised society. "Metal, Iron and Steel: the Cultural History of Iron" is made up of three parts:

- Part 1, "Iron Meets Human", focuses on the human effort of making stronger iron and the social phenomena generated by it. Since humans started using iron from nature, iron developed in various forms by region. **The emergence and development of iron culture are different in the East and the West.** Through examining historical events, the section seeks to discover the role and value of iron in world history.
- Part 2, entitled "Iron Makes Power", describes how the emergence of iron has led to increased productivity, which led rulers to want to own more iron. **The possession of iron symbolised power.** This symbolism of iron had appeared in various forms from the Prehistoric Age to Joseon Dynasty. Struggles to maintain power brought about wars. The increased productivity through iron can be said to mean "growth" while the war caused by power means "destruction". Part 2 goes down to how iron-birthing power created numerous contradictory events.
- Finally, Part 3, "Iron Enters Life", explains that **iron has been used for everyday tools, building materials, religious icons, colouring materials, etc.** Folk paintings from the Joseon Dynasty contain many iron tools used for basic living, ancestral rites and rituals. The property of iron, which is rough and rugged, is used to express the beauty of iron Buddha and the original color of iron. Part 3 shows how people tried to use iron to achieve their purposes.

A range of additional activities will be held alongside the exhibition. Among them are the **Academic Seminar "Recent Research Trends in Northeast Asia's Iron Culture"** (13 October) and the **International Symposium "The Trend of Iron Manufacturing Technology in Northeastern Asia"** (21 October). Other lectures, guided visits and curator talks will also take place. "Metal, Iron and Steel: The Cultural History of Iron" can be visited at the National Museum of Korea, in Seoul, between **26 September and 26 November 2017**. For additional information, please visit

<http://www.museum.go.kr/site/eng/exhiSpecialTheme/view/upcomming?exhiSpThemId=174666&listType=list>

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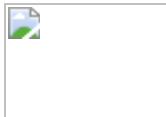
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**National Museum of Korea**



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BY **JORDI BALTÀ PORTOLÉS**  
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