

Soojin Kim

Academy of East Asian Studies,

Sungkyunkwan University

## **Representation of Women and the Roles of Women Artists in Korean Art**

### **Abstract**

This lecture will explore the various roles of women in pre-modern Korea who contributed to the production and consumption of visual arts. Specifically, we will examine how women, as painters, played a role in creating visual arts. To do this, we will review the artistic activities of upper-class women and the artistic strategies of courtesans. Secondly, we will investigate how virtuous women, courtesans, and female shamans were represented in visual arts. In particular, we will discuss why the state consistently visualized virtuous women through prints with less formal language (Hangeul) and how courtesans took on the role of exposing the duality of a male-centered society. Finally, by highlighting the roles of female members of the royal family who commissioned visual arts and women who commissioned portraits, we will explore the role of women as patrons of the arts. Through this lecture, we can understand pre-modern Korean society by discussing the Confucian values that enforced women's subordination, major discussions of the time, and the messages that contemporary artists sought to convey through the imagery of women in art.