

Wong, Faith. "South Korean artist Ran Hwang creates scene from Korea's Joseon Dynasty era with needle pins." *Today*. (April 22, 2017).



South Korean contemporary artist Ran Hwang drew on the Korean Joseon Dynasty for her piece, *Becoming Again; Coming Together*. Photo: Asian Civilisations Museum

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Ran Hwang's bride and groom seem to walk towards each other, as plum blossoms fall around them. Her backdrop was painstakingly created using 50,000 pins and buttons, and is illuminated to create the illusion of a garden. Photo: Asian Civilisations Museum

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Ran Hwang with senior assistant director of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Bernard Tan. They are seen with Hwang's phoenixes, which are made of 5km of coloured thread. Photo: Asian Civilisations Museum

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The artist, who will showcase her work at the ACM, uses pins, buttons and thread to create wall murals



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BY FAITH WONG

faith.wong@mediacorp.com.sg

PUBLISHED: 10:25 PM, APRIL 22, 2017

UPDATED: 5:10 PM, APRIL 24, 2017

SINGAPORE – South Korean contemporary artist Ran Hwang painstakingly hammered a total of 50,000 needle pins onto a wall and an acrylic sheet, then weaved 5km of multi-coloured threads between the pins – all by hand – to create a wall art installation of two brightly-coloured phoenixes set within a garden.

Titled *Becoming Again; Coming Together*, the artwork, inspired by Korea's Joseon Dynasty (from 1392 to 1897), combines video graphics with Hwang's handiwork and can be viewed at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM).

The two phoenixes were crafted by hand with more needle pins hammered into the wall, and coloured threads woven between the pins.

To create the backdrop, Hwang hammered pins and black and white buttons onto a wide panel, while another 50,000 white pepper pods were suspended from the ceiling behind the panel.

The entire piece, which is illuminated, is a backdrop that creates the illusion of a night-time garden with visual graphics.

As visitors enter the room, video projections of a bride and bridegroom dressed in traditional luxurious clothes from the Joseon Dynasty era are cast onto two pillars. The couple appear to walk toward each other, as red and pink plum blossoms rise around them.

Hwang hopes that the imageries, from the soaring phoenix to the white pepper pods and plum blossoms, transport visitors to the Joseon period.

On whether her fingers cramped or bled in the process of putting her work together, Hwang was nonchalant.

"I am a professional, not a beginner," she said dryly.

Hwang's work piece is part of the ACM's Josean Korea: Court Treasures and City Life exhibition, brought to Singapore in collaboration with the National Museum of Korea.

Some 150 artefacts, from clothing (hanboks and bridal robes) to stoneware and portraits of royalty, from the era are on display.

ACM assistant director Bernard Tan, who curated Hwang's exhibit, described Hwang's work as a good interpretation of "one of the most splendid and brilliant moments in Korean history, and one of the longest dynasties".

*Becoming Again; Coming Together can be seen at the Asian Civilisations Museum for free from April 22 to July 23. The Josean Korea: Court Treasures and City Life exhibition is on during the same period, but required admission of S\$10 for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. The fee is S\$15 for foreigners.