Highlights of the Asian Collection of the Smith College Museum of Art
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THE EXHIBITION Collecting Art of Asia (spring semester 2013) and this catalogue of the highlights of the Museum’s collection of Asian art grew out of an idea proposed by Dr. Fan Zhang, who is serving a three-year appointment at Smith College as the Freeman/McPherson Curatorial and Teaching Post-Doctoral Fellow in East Asian Art. In researching the Museum’s holdings in Asian art, he became intrigued with the relationship of the preeminent collector Charles Lang Freer and Smith College professor and painter Dwight William Tryon, who together were responsible for the early history of collecting and displaying Asian art at the College. His investigation revealed that we were approaching an important anniversary in 2013: the centennial of the first works of Asian art to enter the Museum’s collection, which came as gifts from Freer. At first, his proposal to mark this occasion was to mount a small show of Freer’s gifts and to write a short article describing how the two friends worked together to develop a fledgling Asian collection. Further discussions with Museum colleagues eventually resulted in the expansion of the project into a full-scale exhibition, including over 120 works from the Museum’s Asian holdings and promised gifts, as well as this publication, featuring a selection of highlights catalogued in 59 entries.

Dr. Zhang’s essay “Vision Beyond Borders: The Legacy of Dwight Tryon and Charles Freer,” which explores the foundational moments of collecting Asian art at the College, logically begs the question of what came after. Our Museum is internationally recognized for its holdings in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European and American art, but we do not have the same continuity of strength or collecting in our Asian holdings. The Museum’s various published histories concentrate on the development of its Western collections and the importance of Dwight Tryon’s role in advising on acquisitions particularly of American art, but there have been no comparable narratives tracing the collecting of Asian art here. My introduction, “A Century of Collecting Asian Art,” seeks to address, if not completely fill, that void by providing a timeline of Asian acquisitions and listing important donors, many, but not all of them, Smith alumnae. As I pieced together the story, it became obvious that collecting Asian art followed teaching trends at the College. As the acquisition and display of Asian art accelerated greatly in the last dozen years, led by former director Suzannah Fabing and spurred by highly important gifts and increased programmatic activity and exhibitions, this again reflected the more global
reach of the College's curriculum and the growing emphasis on East Asian Studies in particular. The story, obviously, is still being written as the exhibition and this publication celebrate Asian art's past and present at the Museum, with the future represented by promised gifts and plans for a dedicated curatorial position for and gallery of Asian art.

The catalogue portion of this publication is organized in four sections: three comprising traditional or historic art, including China, Japan, and South Asia and the Himalayas, and a fourth section consisting of art from 1950 to the present. Within those main categories, objects are grouped first by medium and then in chronological order. The following writers, in addition to Dr. Zhang, contributed insightful entries on the highlights of our Asian holdings: Aprile Gallant, Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, Smith College Museum of Art; Samuel C. Morse, Howard M. and Martha P. Mitchell Professor of the History of Art and Asian Languages and Civilizations, Amherst College, and Consulting Curator for Asian Art, Smith College Museum of Art; Linda Muehlig, Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs, Smith College Museum of Art; Marylin Rhie, Jessie Wells Post Professor of Art and Professor of East Asian Studies, Smith College; Thomas R. Rohlich, Professor, East Asian Languages and Literatures, Smith College; and Ajay J. Sinha, Professor of Art History, Mount Holyoke College.

There are many individuals to thank and acknowledge—donors, advisors, and others—who cannot all be listed in this preface, but whose names are to be found in my introduction, Dr. Zhang’s essay, and the credit lines for highlighted works. Artist Yong Soon Min is thanked for returning to campus to install her site-specific installation Movement (cat. no. 56), acquired for the Museum through the efforts of the Korean American Students of Smith (KASS). The members of the Museum staff, in their various capacities, did yeoman’s work on the exhibition and publication. There were three curators of the exhibition: Dr. Zhang, who organized the installation of traditional and historic art in Dalrymple Gallery (lower level); Aprile Gallant, who was responsible for the installation of post-war and contemporary prints in Sacerdote Gallery (main floor); and Linda Muehlig, who organized the installation of contemporary works in Targan Gallery (lower level) and videos in Ketcham Gallery (third floor). This challenging installation was managed by Exhibition Coordinator Kelly Holbert and achieved by Associate
Director for Museum Services David Dempsey, Chief Preparator William Myers, and Installation Assistant Stephanie Sullivan, with the help of Collection Manager/Registrar Louise Laplante. Associate Director for Academic Programs and Public Education Ann Musser, along with her colleagues Associate Educator for Academic Programs Maggie Lind and Program Planner Taiga Ermansons, arranged for programming and outreach. Linda Muehlig edited the catalogue, which was beautifully designed by Carolyn Eckert.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Louisa Stude Sarofim 1995 Charitable Trust and The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston, both through the initiative of Louisa Stude Sarofim ’58, and the General Asian Art Fund. Additional support for educational programming associated with Collecting Art of Asia was provided by the Carlyn Steiner ’67 and George Steiner Endowed Fund, in honor of Joan Koch Smith.

JESSICA NICOLL
Director and Louise Ines Doyle ’34 Chief Curator
September 26, 2012

INTRODUCTION:
A CENTURY OF COLLECTING ART OF ASIA

JESSICA NICOLL

NE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, in 1913, the noted collector Charles Lang Freer made gifts of the first Asian artworks to enter the collection of the Smith College Museum of Art (SCMA). This publication, and the exhibition it accompanies, commemorates this centennial anniversary by highlighting the Museum’s holdings in Asian art and examining the institution’s history of collecting in this area. It also announces SCMA’s renewed commitment to developing its collection of Asian art, recognizing Smith College’s increasingly international scope and its growing strength in Asian studies.

The collection of Asian art that has taken shape over the past century reflects the evolving aspirations for Smith’s museum as well as the engagement of the College and its alumnae and friends with Asia’s diverse countries and their rich cultures and history. Built largely through gifts, it is in many ways a collection of collections, telling the stories of the passion and experience of numerous collectors and their commitment to providing Smith students with the opportunity to study and learn directly from original works of art.

Freer’s gifts came at a formative moment in the development of SCMA. The ambition to create an art collection to support the study of both the history and practice of art was rooted in the founding vision for Smith College and was actively pursued from its opening in the 1870s. Professor and painter Dwight Tryon played a defining role in the development of the collection during his thirty-seven-year tenure, which began in 1886.

Early collecting focused on contemporary American artists—with Tryon guiding the acquisition of works by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Abbott Handerson Thayer, and James McNeill Whistler, among others—but it also reflected contemporary aesthetic influences, notably the pervasive interest in “oriental” art among artists, designers, and collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tryon’s friend and patron, Charles Lang Freer, provided the opportunity for
Smith students to study East Asian art—initially through the loan of artwork for exhibition and, ultimately, through a series of gifts designed to establish a permanent Asian study collection. Freer also introduced the College to an international community of scholars in Asian art who brought their expertise to campus as lecturers and advisors on such early acquisitions as a choice group of **ukiyo-e** prints (cat. no. 18), placing Smith in the vanguard of institutions actively studying and collecting the art of Asia at the turn of the twentieth century. This foundational history is explored in greater depth in Dr. Fan Zhang’s essay in this catalogue, “Vision Beyond Borders: The Legacy of Dwight Tryon and Charles Freer.”

By 1913, Smith College was robustly established, having grown exponentially since it opened its doors in 1875 with fourteen students and a faculty of six. In 1915–16, Smith recorded an enrollment of 1,724 students and 163 faculty members, and it was an internationally visible and engaged institution. That year it embarked upon a progressive partnership to support the development of Ginling College for women newly founded in Nanjing, China (cat. no. 34). Over the next four decades, Smith and its Alumnae Association nurtured this sister institution, which had been conceived on the model of American liberal arts women’s colleges (fig. 1). Representatives from Smith were regularly appointed to Ginling’s board of trustees, visiting professors spent sabbatical years teaching in China, and Smith raised and contributed up to one-quarter of Ginling’s operating budget. An expression of Smith College’s commitment to service, this partnership also brought the world to the Northampton campus in the form of visitors from Ginling, most notably when

**FIG. 1.** Ginling College Week exhibit at Smith College (March 1949). From left to right, Rose Sun (class of 1949), Chia-ting Chang (class of 1948), and Mary Elizabeth Ockenden (class of 1950) are shown examining materials in the display. Smith College Archives, Smith College. Photograph by the Smith College News Office.
Dr. Wu Yi-fang, a graduate of Ginling who became president of that college in 1928, traveled to Smith in 1943 to receive an honorary degree. The exchange between campuses is reflected in SCMA’s collection by a Chinese painting after the style of Ma Yuan and a group of ancient Chinese coins, gifts from Ginling College that came in 1922 as expressions of appreciation to its American sponsor.

The early twentieth century also saw the maturation of the College’s art program and the vision for its art collection. In the fall of 1906, Alfred Vance Churchill, who filled a new faculty position responsible for teaching the history and interpretation of art, joined Dwight Tryon, the head of the art department. Churchill played an important role in the development of the art collection, beginning to move it away from its dominant focus on American art. In 1919, he was appointed director of the College’s Hillyer Art Gallery (which would officially become the Smith College Museum of Art in 1926), and the following year the trustees asked him to formalize a plan for the development of the collection. In response, he authored “Our Concentration Plan,” which prioritized building depth in “modern” art—then understood as art from the time of the French Revolution to the present—while also remaining open to opportunities to acquire representative artworks from throughout the history of art. Churchill’s plan, which aspired to the acquisition of works by artists from David to Cézanne, guided the formation of the collection that distinguishes SCMA today with its strength in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western European and American art.

As Charles Chetham (SCMA director from 1962 to 1988) explained to a collector, “in the 1920s the Smith College Museum of Art decided to concentrate on the collecting of Western European art . . . . The earliest directors chose not to collect ‘Oriental’ art. They did not regard it as inferior but they felt that ‘modern’ culture was directly linked with that of Western Europe and far less directly linked to that of the East. On the other hand, there was no policy of excluding works of art from the Orient. The simple fact is that they were never purchased.”

Indeed, the second quarter of the twentieth century was marked by the growth of the collection along the path envisioned in Churchill’s concentration plan and under the leadership, from 1932 to 1946, of Jere Abbott. In each of his fourteen years as director, Abbott deployed an acquisition fund established in the late nineteenth century to make strategic purchases. He systematically built the scope and quality of the collection, acquiring such iconic works as Monet’s *The Seine at Bougival*, Picasso’s *Table, Guitar, and Bottle*, Seurat’s
Woman with a Monkey, Sheeler’s Rolling Power, and many others. When he collected art of other cultures, Abbott’s choices reflected the aesthetic interests of modernist artists, such as the exquisite Luba ceremonial axe that he purchased in Paris in 1939 and a pre-Columbian hacha acquired in 1934.  

Asian art was largely absent from Abbott’s program, with the exception of a modest number of gifts from alumnae. This began to change under the leadership of Edgar Schenck, who came to Smith in 1947 from the Honolulu Academy of Arts, where he had been director for twelve years. A Princeton-trained art historian, Schenck’s expertise was in “Oriental and Polynesian arts and western painting,” interests that informed his contribution to SCMA during his brief tenure. (Schenck left in 1949 to assume the directorship of the Albright Knox Art Gallery.) His major acquisition for the Museum was a Yuan-dynasty painting, Departure of Lady Wenji from the Nomad Camp (cat. no. 8), a work with a significant provenance, having come from the important collection of Chinese paintings formed by Mr. and Mrs. G. Del Drago of New York. Schenck also nurtured gifts to the collection, notably a group of nine Chinese works given in 1947 by William S. T. Chang that included a lovely fan painting, Solitary Monastery in Mountains, by Yao Zhengyong (cat. no. 11).

In the decades following World War II, SCMA’s collection began to grow more rapidly, substantially through gifts. While gifts had long played an important role in the collection’s development, in the mid-twentieth century the proportion of acquisitions made by donation versus purchase shifted dramatically as a series of private collections came to SCMA, expanding and deepening the Museum’s holdings. Some of these contributions built upon the foundations laid by Churchill and Abbott: for example, gifts made between 1950 and 1968 by sisters Adeline Flint Wing (class of 1898) and Caroline Roberta Wing (class of 1896) of more than 250 American and European works of art, or the gifts made between 1969 and 1983 by Selma Erving (class of 1927) of 757 superb Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works on paper. Other donations, notably collections of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian art, diversified the range of SCMA’s holdings, establishing new areas of strength in Asian art.

The first of these was Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart’s gifts in 1959–62 of a collection of fifty-three archaic Chinese jades, primarily dating to the Shang and Zhou dynasties, including the Blade, Horned Owl and Bird-shaped Pendant featured in this catalogue (cat. nos. 1, 2a, and 2b). This marked a turning point in the Museum’s collecting in a number of ways. Not only were these SCMA’s first
significant acquisitions of ancient Chinese art, they came as an intact collection contributed by donors with no prior connection to Smith College. Director Robert Parks was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Hart in 1958 by Ernest Gottlieb, a member of SCMA’s newly formed Visiting Committee, an advisory body formed as part of an overall effort to professionalize the Museum’s policies, governance, and operations. 9 Parks found much to admire in the Harts’ collection, including Delft tin-glazed ceramics and an Indian bronze sculpture, but he set his sights on the collection of archaic jades that the Harts had recently acquired. 10

Ivan B. Hart was a Dutch wool merchant who had immigrated to the United States in 1940 with his wife, Jenny Marthe Roselaar, and their children. Originally based in Boston, and then New York, he prospered during the war because of the demand for wool. He and his wife were avid collectors of a wide range of material including clocks, silver, antique furniture, Dutch paintings, and snuff boxes. 11 They were philanthropically inclined, contributing works particularly to academic museums. The Harts acquired the Chinese jades in 1956 upon the death of Samuel Minkenhof, who had formed the collection.

Like Hart, Minkenhof was a Dutch businessman who had left Amsterdam in 1939, settling in New York. His business in the import and export of textiles took him to China and South Asia, and while he collected European art, his interest gradually turned to Asian (primarily Chinese) art, which he began collecting in 1931. 12 In retirement, Minkenhof devoted himself to researching and building his collection of Chinese jades and bronzes.

The Harts’ acquisition of the jades seems to have been motivated by the desire to preserve Minkenhof’s collection and with the intent of donating it to a museum. They lent the collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and then, in 1960, formalized their commitment to giving it in its entirety to the Smith College Museum of Art. Eight years later, Diane Scharfield Isaacs (a member of the class of 1961 who had been a student at the time of the Harts’ gift) broadened SCMA’s holdings with a gift of nearly forty Ming and Qing dynasty jades.

The following year he was promoted to associate professor in the departments of history and art and his art history courses became a permanent offering.13 The Museum recognized this in the fall of 1957 with a special exhibition of Chinese objects lent by Pauline Baerwald Falk (class of 1932), including a group of Shang and Zhou dynasty bronzes. Professor MacSherry became a close collaborator with the Museum, helping to nurture development of the collection and its use for study and teaching (fig. 2).

Other significant gifts soon followed. In 1965, Major and Mrs. Oliver J. Todd donated forty-one Chinese bronzes to SCMA (cat. no. 3A), a gift that honored their daughter, Smith alumna Doris Todd Brown (class of 1949). The couple had met in the 1920s in China, where Major Todd was working as an engineer for the American Red Cross and the International Famine Relief Commission and his future wife was a medical missionary. They continued living and working in China until the late 1930s, and during that time built their collection of Chinese bronzes, with Major Todd publishing a book on their collection of bronze mirrors in 1935.14 Seventeen mirrors formed the core of their donation, which importantly expanded and diversified SCMA’s Chinese holdings.
Two years later the collection was further deepened by a transformational gift of more than 500 Japanese prints and objects, including netsuke, inro, and tsuba. This came from Margaret Rankin Barker (class of 1908) in memory of her father, Isaac Ogden Rankin (1852–1936), who had formed the collection in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rankin was a congregational minister and editor of the Congregationalist who was also a dedicated student and early collector of Japanese art. Based in New England, he actively followed exhibitions and sales of Japanese art in New York and Boston and enjoyed the help of his daughter Margaret after her graduation from Smith. Her gift fulfilled his aspiration that “the collection would be kept together and would take up an existence in some educational institution.” It included some 400 ukiyo-e prints, enormously expanding the nucleus of prints in this genre that SCMA had first acquired in 1915. Particularly strong in its representation of the work of Hiroshige and Hokusai, the Barker–Rankin collection includes a rare early impression of Hokusai’s Clear Weather, Southern Breeze (also known as Pink Fuji) (cat. no. 20), the only untrimmed first state of this print held in the collection of an American museum.

In accepting the Barker–Rankin collection for Smith College, President Thomas Mendenhall acknowledged its timeliness in light of the Museum’s growing interest in building its collection of Asian art. In 1967, plans were afoot to create a new, integrated fine arts center that would include expanded facilities for the art museum, as SCMA’s collection and exhibition program had outgrown the Tryon Gallery that had housed the Museum since 1926. Mendenhall reported the aspiration shared by Director Charles Chetham and Professor Charles MacSherry that the new space would allow for the display of Asian art, noting that the Barker–Rankin collection would “provide us with a magnificent core for this new venture.”

Chetham and MacSherry had the opportunity to act further on that vision when John Kenneth Galbraith and his wife, Catherine Atwater Galbraith (class of 1934), approached the College about a gift of Indian paintings in 1975. Among his many accomplishments, Galbraith was a devoted student and collector of Rajput and Mughal painting, ever since falling “in love with Indian painting” while “visiting India in 1956, and specifically the Bharat Kala Bhavan [museum].” Service as the United States ambassador to India from 1961 to 1963 gave Galbraith the opportunity to deepen this interest, yielding not only a choice collection of these intimate and evocative paintings but also a scholarly study, Indian Painting: The Scene, Themes, and Legends, written with his friend Mohinder Singh Randhawa. Returning to Harvard University in 1963, the Galbraiths shared their collection in a 1965 exhibition, Gods, Thrones, and Peacocks, and in the early 1970s gave a
substantial part of it to Harvard’s Fogg Museum of Art. Curator and scholar Stuart Cary Welch drew a poetic connection between these exquisite paintings and their collectors, noting that “Ken and Kitty Galbraith” were people who “not only appreciated the nuances of color, line, form, and depth of feeling or characterization seen in the pictures, but whose lives have been imbued with the beauty of their pictures.” The group of paintings subsequently offered to Smith duplicated works given to the Fogg or were collected after that gift was made. Attracted by the idea of having the balance of the collection preserved at a sister academic museum, Galbraith approached SCMA, noting his “wife’s great affection for Smith,” as well as the critic John Russell’s recent praise for the Museum in The New York Times. In expressing appreciation for the Galbraiths’ offer, Chetham observed that the gift would build on some recent “major gifts of oriental art” and that “far from being inappropriate to a western collection, it would create a new area for development by providing the link between art of the east and west,” recognizing the paintings’ integration of Asian and European pictorial techniques. Ultimately, SCMA received thirty-four paintings in 1981–82, with an additional six paintings and two Tibetan tangkas coming as a bequest from John Kenneth Galbraith in 2007, including the conspiratorial Mistress and Confidante Seated on Carpet in Courtyard (cat. no. 30).

Coincident with this growth in collecting was the expansion of curricular offerings in Asian studies and languages. Smith was one of the first liberal arts colleges to offer instruction in Chinese language, beginning in 1965 when Henry Li-Hua Kung joined the faculty, and a decade later Japanese language was introduced by Mutsuko Minegishi. (Today, Korean language is also taught.) In 1974, Charles MacSherry was succeeded by Marylin Rhie (fig. 3), a scholar with particular expertise in Buddhist art of Central Asia, who sustained courses on the art of China and Japan, while also introducing new courses on the art of India, Tibet, Korea, Central Asia, and Buddhist art, as well as a survey of Asian art. In this same time period, new members of the faculty arrived with specialization in diverse areas of Asian studies including government, history, literature, philosophy, and religion. This emerging strength coalesced in the early 1980s in the establishment of the East Asian Studies Program, which brings together faculty from different disciplines to offer a program of study of the region. The establishment of a major and a minor and the creation of a distinct Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures soon followed.

With the growth and diversification of SCMA’s collection, Museum staff forged new connections with the curriculum. A catalytic 1992 grant from the Andrew W.
Mellon Foundation’s College and University Art Museum Program allowed SCMA to launch a program that supports faculty in developing courses substantially taught from the collection and within the Museum. This transformational (and ongoing) program of Museum-based courses has stimulated greater integration of the collection into teaching and much broader use across disciplines. For example, within the first few years, faculty in the departments of American studies, art, chemistry, dance, English, music, philosophy, and theater developed courses. East Asian Studies also utilized this new opportunity for collaboration with the Museum, offering “Japanese Aesthetics, Landscapes and Gardens,” an early Museum-based course taught by Professor Taitetsu Unno that drew on SCMA’s *ukiyo-e* prints and diverse faculty expertise to study Japanese aesthetics and their broad influence. When plans took shape in the late 1990s for a complete renovation of the Fine Arts Center including an expansion of the Museum, the Museum-based course program informed the redesign of spaces, with the introduction of on-site classrooms that allow direct teaching from original works of art and the creation of the Winslow Teaching Gallery, a dedicated space for the display of art being used in classes. As part of the strategic planning undertaken by Director Suzannah Fabing (1992-2005) in conjunction with this project, the exhibition and collecting of non-Western art was articulated as an important institutional priority in support of Smith College’s expanding and increasingly international academic program.

Within this non-Western initiative, the focus on Asian art took on immediate momentum thanks to the combination of extraordinary alumnae support, the depth and breadth of expertise among faculty partners, and the interest and enthusiasm expressed by students. Advocacy for SCMA’s renewed efforts in this area has been led by an Asian Art Task Force, an advisory body of dedicated and knowledgeable Smith alumnae, formed in 2001 and chaired with vision and energy by Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954). Consulting Curator Samuel C. Morse, a scholar of Japanese Buddhist art and professor in the Departments of Art and the History of Art and Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst College, has served as a scholarly advisor and guest curator of numerous exhibitions. The Museum’s curatorial expertise was further expanded in 2010 with the arrival of Dr. Fan Zhang on a three-year appointment as the Freeman/McPherson Curatorial and Teaching Post-Doctoral Fellow in East Asian Art, a position supported in part by members of the Asian Art Task Force. Beginning with the reopening of the renovated Brown Fine Arts Center in 2003, SCMA has mounted an ambitious roster of exhibitions of Asian art, including: *The Floating World* (2003); *The Hart Collection of Archaic Chinese Jades* (2004);

Many of these exhibitions introduced new acquisitions to the Smith community and all of them were met with active interest and engagement by faculty, students, and the Museum’s broader audiences, affirming the value of this focus on Asian art. Professor Thomas Rohlich (Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures) actively used the exhibition Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto (fig. 4), which was curated by Samuel Morse, for his first-year
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Seminar “Kyoto Through the Ages.” Even after the close of the exhibition, he continued to draw on its content for this course, which was complemented by a January trip to Kyoto and visits with several of the artists included in Confronting Tradition. Speaking about the impact of this exhibition, Professor Rohlich observes, “the connections that came from the exhibition have been maintained and strengthened even to this day.”

Subsequently, Professors Rohlich and Morse co-taught “The Tea Ceremony and Japanese Culture,” which intensively utilized the objects featured in Fashioning Tradition: Japanese Tea Wares from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (fig. 5). Theirs was the first Five College course taught on two campuses (Smith and Amherst Colleges), and it attracted lively interest, enrolling students from four of the five colleges. The works in Fashioning Tradition were borrowed primarily from Peggy Block Danziger (class of 1962) and Richard M. Danziger, whose collection is noted for the quality, rarity, and historical importance of its tea ceremony objects (fig. 6). At the conclusion of the exhibition, the Danzigers made a gift of objects—including works of painting and calligraphy, a screen (cat. no. 17), vase, kettle (cat. no. 27), storage container, and ceramic tea bowl—that would be found in a ritual tea arrangement or toriawase, providing the foundation for continued study of the Japanese tea ceremony at Smith.

A trustee of the College and founding member of the Asian Art Task Force, Peggy Danziger typifies the extraordinary knowledge, leadership, and generosity
embodied by Smith alumnae, who are transforming the place of Asian art within the Smith College Museum of Art. Their contributions are too numerous to be fully described here, but a few examples will suggest the variety of their experience and the depth of their impact.

When SCMA reopened with expanded spaces and aspirations in 2003, Wan Kyun Rha Kim (class of 1960) and her husband, Dr. Andrew Byong Soo Kim, stepped forward with gifts of an important group of works representative of the visual culture of post-revolutionary China, including Tang Muli’s *Young Bugler* (cat. no. 32). Mrs. Kim, who was one of a tiny constituency of Korean students at Smith in the late 1950s, has also helped expand the Museum’s holdings in contemporary Korean art with the recent donation of two paintings by Suk Ju Lee and a gift in support of the purchase of a print portfolio by Chunwoo Nam (cat. no. 53).

The twentieth-century Chinese prints, drawings, and paintings contributed by the Kims are complemented by gifts from Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954) and Jerome A. Cohen of more than forty works dating to post-Mao China.
The Cohens’ collection grew from their association with Chinese artists forged during frequent travels and periods of residency in China since the 1970s. As art historian Julia Andrews has written, “The body of work collected by the Cohens in those years, as a whole, reflects the first steps taken by the Chinese art world as it began to overturn the totalitarian standards that had so harshly squeezed creative expression in the Maoist era.”

Collector and gallerist Ethan Cohen, son of Joan and Jerome, has expanded the Museum’s holdings of contemporary Chinese art with numerous gifts, including an important group of prints published and given in partnership with Pace Editions and Richard and Ann Solomon (class of 1959) (cat. nos. 51 and 52).

These works, in turn, augment a growing strength in the representation of printmaking in East Asia nurtured by a series of gifts from The Tolman Collection Tokyo, the major dealer and publisher of contemporary Japanese prints, in honor of Hilary Tolman (class of 1987) (cat. nos. 47, 48, and 54). Significant gifts have continued to enter the collection as this exhibition and catalogue are in production. In 2012, SCMA received an important gift of thirty-nine prints from Mr. and Mrs. Lucio Noto by the influential Japanese artist Sekino Jun’ichiro, a vital force in the Creative Print Movement (sōsaku hanga) (cat. no. 46).

A member of the class of 1965 has endowed SCMA with an extraordinary collection of contemporary ceramics by Japanese women artists (cat. nos. 43A–D). The collection, formed with Smith in mind, documents the role that women have played in transforming the world of Japanese studio ceramics, which was traditionally male-dominated, as a result of their access to education in this...
field after the Second World War. These gifts and many more have established a new and growing area of strength in contemporary East Asian art at Smith (fig. 8).

The future development of SCMA’s holdings in traditional Asian art is also being nurtured by the generosity of collectors. An anonymous member of the class of 1957 has pledged a gift of a group of evocative Tang-dynasty figurines of Musicians and Maids (cat. no. 5) while Patricia Mertens Beckwith (class of 1968) and Stephen R. Beckwith have made promised gifts of three elegant Song-dynasty tea bowls, two of which are included in this catalogue (cat. nos. 6a and 6b). Dr. Elizabeth E. Force has made a commitment to leave to SCMA her extensive collection of East Asian art, which includes superb lacquer objects such as the Edo period Document Box (cat. no. 22) and the Western Han dynasty incense burner (cat. no. 4) in this catalogue.
Students have also participated valuably in the development of SCMA’s collection of Asian art, demonstrating the distinctive importance of this area of collecting to Smith’s growing community of students and alumnae of Asian heritage. In 2005, Sohl Lee (class of 2006) and other members of the Korean American Students of Smith (KASS) approached Museum staff with their proposal to mount a campaign among students and alumnae to raise funds to purchase a work of art by a contemporary Korean or Korean-American woman artist. As Sohl Lee explains, a course on museums and society at Amherst College had introduced the students to issues affecting museum collections, exhibitions, and missions and had led them “to ask some questions about SCMA and its place within the College,” such as, “Can a museum respond to its socio-political environment in a productive rather than a passive way? How can there be a greater focus on contemporary art from Asia or art about contemporary Asia at SCMA? Can SCMA’s contemporary art collection engage current Smith students in ways that are relevant to them? Can students acquire an artwork for the Museum’s permanent collection and thereby affect the Museum’s dynamics?” In answering these questions, they impressively researched relevant contemporary art, surveyed the Museum’s and faculty’s needs and interests, and raised funds, resulting in the acquisition of Yong Soon Min’s installation Movement (fig. 9), a tangible meditation on notions of Asian identity and the idea of a great, diasporal “Asian wave” in art and culture (cat. no. 56).
One hundred years after receiving the first gifts of Asian art from Charles Freer, the Smith College Museum of Art is poised to expand its Asian collection as an important part of its program of scholarship, display, and teaching. The work of curators Samuel Morse and Fan Zhang has deepened our understanding of the scope of the Museum’s history of collecting in this area and the significance of its existing holdings. A gift to establish the Jane Chace Carroll (class of 1953) Curatorship of Asian Art has ensured that SCMA will permanently have staff expertise to continue to develop and utilize its Asian collections to support learning at Smith. A leadership gift from Peggy Block Danziger is allowing the Museum to create a gallery that will be dedicated to the display of Asian art. As we look forward to the next century, history encourages us that—with the shared commitment of the College and its Museum, plus the interest and involvement of Smith alumnae and friends—an exciting new chapter in collecting Asian art is waiting to be written (fig. 10).
ENDNOTES


5 SC 1922: 2-1 and SC 1922:34.1-14, respectively. The scroll, previously attributed to Zhou Chen, is a Qing copy, inscribed: “Painted after the style of Ma Yuan [Qinshan; sobriquet] in an autumn day of Renchen year of the Chenghua Reign [1472].”


7 SC 1939:9-1 and SC 1935:9-1, respectively.


9 Gottlieb invited Parks to join him on a visit to the Harts’ New York City home, promising, “You will meet a nice couple and see a few nice things.” Ernest Gottlieb to Robert O. Parks, May 23, 1958, SCMA archives.

10 In writing to thank them for the visit, Parks expressed appreciation for their “willingness to continue to think of us in terms of the future of your jade,” adding that he was “permitting myself the luxury of imagining all the distinguished ways in which it could be put to use here and how its usefulness might grow and grow and grow (to your undying credit).” Robert O. Parks to Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart, December 17, 1958, SCMA archives.

11 Email from Liz Hart to Linda Muehlig (SCMA senior curator and curator of painting and sculpture), July 25, 2012.


13 Marylin M. Rhie, “Asian Art at Smith College,” Image and Word, 79. Rhie dates MacSherry’s arrival to 1953–54, but The Smith College Bulletin 1952–53 confirms that he joined the faculty that year as an assistant professor in the history department (Smith College Archives).


16 J. M. Barker to Thomas Mendenhall (president, Smith College), November 7, 1967, SCMA archives.

17 Thomas Mendenhall to J. M. Barker, December 8, 1967, SCMA archives.


Welch, Between Friends, 68.

John Kenneth Galbraith to Elizabeth Mongan, December 26, 1975, SCMA archives.


Henry Li-Hua Kung was an assistant professor of Chinese Studies at Smith College 1965–88; Mutsuko Minegishi was an instructor in Japanese language 1974–82. Smith College Archives.

Rhie, Image and Word.

“Religion 277a Colloquium: Japanese Aesthetics, Landscape and Gardens” was taught by Taitetsu Unno, professor of world religions, in 1997–98.

Email from Professor Thomas Rohlich to Jessica Nicoll, September 8, 2012.


In 2011–12, there were 281 international undergraduate students (non-resident aliens) accounting for 10.9% of the Smith College student body, including students from the following Asian countries (the number of students is indicated in parentheses): Afghanistan (1); Bangladesh (7); India (20); Japan (5); Kyrgyzstan (1); Mongolia (2); Myanmar (2); Nepal (6); Pakistan (8); People’s Republic of China (167); Republic of Korea (53); Republic of Singapore (12); Sri Lanka (3); Taiwan (5); Thailand (3); and Vietnam (6). These 239 Asian undergraduates comprised more than three-fourths of the entire international student body. These statistics do not reflect the significant number of students of Asian-American heritage. Statistics provided by the Smith College Office of Institutional Research and the Smith College 2012–13 Course Catalogue, 27.

VISION BEYOND BORDERS:  
THE LEGACY OF DWIGHT TRYON AND CHARLES FREER

FAN ZHANG

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), a wealthy railroad industrialist and art collector, gifted to the nation his collection of Asian and American art, along with a museum in which to house it in Washington, D.C. (fig. 11). Yet few people are aware that, after Freer settled his donation agreement with the federal government in 1906, over the course of the rest of his life he also gave small portions of his collection, as gifts or bequests, to several art institutions and college museums in this country.1 The Smith College Museum of Art was fortunate to be among these institutional recipients, with Freer’s first group of gifts to the Hillyer Art Gallery (as it was then known) constituting its inaugural collection of Asian art in 1913.

Smith was among the first American colleges to include the study of fine arts within its liberal arts curriculum, whose design was described in an 1872 prospectus by the trustees: “More time will be devoted than in other colleges to aesthetical study, to the principles on which the fine arts are founded, to the art of drawing and the science of perspective, to the examination of the great models of painting and statuary . . . .”2 To reach this goal, Smith College installed an art gallery in College Hall (built in 1875) and made its first acquisitions of original art in 1879. The College also founded its art department in 1882 and a year later dedicated its new art gallery to Winthrop Hillyer, a local businessman who had bequeathed a substantial fund to support its construction and for the purpose of acquiring original art. In 1886, Dwight William Tryon (1849–1925), a successful Hartford-born landscape painter, was invited to instruct studio classes and advise on art acquisitions (fig. 12). During his thirty-seven years at Smith, Professor Tryon took the lead in educating women artists and worked with the College’s first president, L. Clark Seelye (1837–1924), to establish a first-tier college art museum.

Smith College’s acquisition of Freer’s gifts and bequests of Asian art mainly resulted from Tryon’s association with Freer, who was his major patron and friend for many years. Tryon and Freer had common interests in American and Asian art and jointly contributed to the College’s pioneering commitment to displaying and acquiring Asian art at the turn of the last century. Yet given the Museum’s strengths in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western art, the Tryon–Freer relationship and its formative role in establishing a legacy of exhibiting Asian art at Smith College have been largely unexplored in the general history of the Museum. Therefore, this essay, and the Collecting Art of Asia exhibition as a whole, seeks to restore the place of Asian art in the Museum’s history and to establish a firm base for building on the groundwork that Tryon and Freer had laid together.

Freer never married, but pursued his true love—Asian (though then termed “Oriental”) art—which he enthusiastically collected for more than two decades. In fact, his collecting choices rarely conformed to those of his contemporaries during the late nineteenth century. When most American collectors were only interested in European master paintings and sculpture, Freer began by collecting contemporary American art and focused on a few artists he liked, including the famous expatriate artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). Although less well known than Whistler, Dwight Tryon was also a key member of Freer’s circle of artist friends whose works Freer passionately collected. In 1889, Freer first met Tryon in New York City, where Tryon had established a studio after spending nearly five years studying art in France. In Tryon’s studio, Freer was immediately attracted to Tryon’s outdoor scenes and purchased his first Tryon painting—The Rising Moon: Autumn (the Freer Gallery)—an exceptional work that would soon help Tryon win two principal awards in international art exhibitions. Freer’s aesthetic sensibility and taste responded well to the subtle colors and carefully structured composition of Tryon’s paintings.

Believing that Freer was one of the few people who truly understood his work, Tryon offered to decorate the wall panels of the living and reception rooms in Freer’s Detroit home, a proposal Freer happily accepted in 1891. Anxious to meet his patron’s expectations, Tryon spent two years finishing a set of seven paintings that included four seasonal landscapes, two seascapes, and an ethereal landscape. These paintings contributed to a harmonious atmosphere that Freer sought to create in his home, where his collections of art were displayed in...
settings decorated in subdued color schemes. The Tonalist experiments Tryon pursued during this long project greatly shaped his later stylistic development. In particular, Tryon must have considered the principles of Asian art in order to cater to Freer’s taste. While commenting on the successful application of colors in the first panel painting of this project, Springtime, Tryon told Freer that the color and formal elements of this painting reminded him of some very old Japanese works, which encouraged his search for an indefinable mingling of real and ideal in this landscape (fig. 13).7 In the following years, Freer became Tryon’s principal patron and assembled a group of more than seventy works by this artist, which eventually became second in size only to his collection of Whistler’s paintings. Freer repeatedly expressed his admiration for the evocative scenes and mood shifts of different seasons and times of day in Tryon’s landscapes, which he thought often possessed a poetic splendor rivaling nature herself.8

At the suggestion of artist and collector friends such as Whistler, Freer, then in his thirties, began to collect Japanese art. His first acquisition of quality was a small fan painting by Ogata Korin (1658–1716), purchased from a New York dealer in 1887.9 Attracted by the aesthetic principles of the Orient, Freer expanded his collection as his interest grew over time. It is not surprising that the paintings of both Whistler and Tryon played a key role in shaping Freer’s vision for collecting Asian art, allowing him to better appreciate subtleties of color and texture with his cultivated eye.10 The elaborate surface quality of Tryon’s work, for instance,

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**FIG. 13.** Dwight Tryon. Springtime. 1892. Oil on canvas, 38 x 83¼ in.; 96.8 x 211.4 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1893.14.
particularly attracted Freer, leading him to compare Tryon’s *Daybreak–May* (the Freer Gallery) with a Japanese ceramic piece that belonged to the painter. Freer told him, “I think when you put the finishing touches to the sky you must have in mind the pink flush on the big white bowl.” This comment calls to mind a photograph showing Freer examining Whistler’s *Venus Rising from the Sea* side-by-side with a piece of Babylonian pottery and searching for parallels in these two works of very different origins (fig. 14). Similarly, Freer compared the surface of Tryon’s painting with the glaze of Japanese ceramics, appreciating Tryon’s subdued, suggestive layers of color that found their echo in the tonal changes of the ceramic glaze. Like Whistler, who creatively applied “oriental principles to express occidental feeling,” Tryon also sought to achieve a resonance of color and texture in his landscape paintings.12 Interestingly, a later photograph of the studio in his Harperley Hall apartment shows that Tryon displayed Asian ceramics and prints, from which he could draw inspiration while painting (fig. 15).

Indeed, Freer was among the first American collectors who learned to appreciate elements common to the arts of the West and the East and dedicated himself to sharing his inspiration through his collection. Freer’s friend and consultant in Asian art, Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), formerly the curator of Japanese art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, once described Freer’s collection and refined taste this way: “A mural painting by Kano Eitoku, a tea bowl by Kenzan, and an oil seascape by Whistler achieve similar delicate tonal effects.”13 In fact, this pioneer collector specifically aimed to acquire works that would create a

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harmony of beautiful surfaces, forms, and colors from different regions and cultures, presenting a balance within his collection and revealing an ultimate sense of beauty (fig. 16). This fruitful artistic synthesis, therefore, became Freer’s powerful personal statement as an eccentric collector of Asian and American art.

Freer’s experiences of traveling in Asia also helped him to appreciate Tryon’s art and to find a spiritual resonance between the East and the West. In a letter written to Tryon from Japan, where he spent two months sightseeing and viewing art in many famous cities, Freer said:

>I also sympathize with your affection for the character of New England scenery, but I think one grows to greater intimacy, keener appreciation of the object he most loves after his memory has been toned by other agreeable impressions—shadowy recollections of unknown places, glimpses of faraway coasts and strange horizons leave a mysterious something which I think, in part, is the basis of what we call the imagination. . . .

Soon after his return from Japan in 1907, Freer received Tryon’s new painting The Sea: Evening, which embodied an overwhelming feeling of the vastness and power
The subtle gradation of dark blue in this seascape also reflects a cold austerity that possibly inspired Tryon while traveling to Maine earlier that year. In a letter to Tryon, Freer expressed his excitement about the quality of this painting, comparing it to the famous masterpieces he saw in Kyoto:

It is a wonder! Marvelously convincing, tremendously powerful and extremely dignified. Nothing could be more truthful and, at the same time, so subtle. . . . Certainly, I have seen nothing more suggestive of that particular mood of the sea. The coloring is very beautiful, and its directness recalls the work of the great masters of the early Kano school—Sesshu, Sesson, and Masunobu. In one of the great Kyoto temples, there is an ink painting of a huge waterfall by a Sung painter called Okamatsu. . . . I believe it to be one of the greatest pictures in existence. You, I am sure, would be fascinated by it. Its great qualities are simplicity, line, and notan (light and dark). . . .

Freer particularly compared Tryon to one of the best Asian masters, Wang Wei (699–759) of Tang-dynasty China, citing the work of both artists as sources of spiritual inspiration. In his reply, Tryon agreed that artists of different cultures and periods all had the ability to capture, in form and composition, the subtle effects of nature, because they all belonged to a timeless community of creative individuals. Indeed, the artist and his patron shared a refined taste and belief that came to fundamentally shape their views of art education and collecting: the
great artistic traditions of West and East had parallels in capturing the wonders of nature and conveying spiritual inspiration.

As a dedicated collector, Freer by no means only wished to possess works of art as symbols of personal cultivation and wealth. Instead, he regarded himself as the guardian of fine examples of art, which he intended for the education and inspiration of others. In late 1904, Freer proposed a plan to give much of his collection to the nation, along with a fund for the construction of a gallery to house it and for making future purchases. With the help of his brother, William L. Freer, and President Theodore Roosevelt, the Smithsonian Institution accepted his proposal in early 1906. In the following years, Freer managed to expand his donation to the nation and amassed the majority of his Asian collection. He particularly wished for it to be used to teach students and specified in his will that special arrangements be made for students and scholars to view any objects not on exhibition.

In 1923, the Freer Gallery of Art finally opened in Washington, D.C., housing more than 9,000 works, one of the largest collections of Asian art at that time.

Aware of the dedication of his friend and the significance of his collecting mission, Tryon introduced Freer to a promising exhibition opportunity within the Smith community. With Tryon’s help, Freer organized the first public exhibition of his Asian collection at the Hillyer Art Gallery in February 1897, a year after his initial trip to Japan. This exhibition, which included twenty-six Japanese paintings and four screen panels, was among the earliest Asian art exhibitions in New England. A local newspaper, the Daily Hampshire Gazette (February 17, 1897), reported that this exhibition was received with great enthusiasm by Northampton residents and about six hundred visitors attended the opening. The public was delighted by the fantastic display of paintings in the large gallery and by the exceptional quality of Japanese art, about which most knew little. This response inspired nearby Williams College to invite Freer to bring his show to its own campus that same year. The warm reception in western Massachusetts, as well as the rising public interest in Japanese art, encouraged Freer to withdraw completely from the railroad business and devote himself, over the next two decades, to collecting Asian art.

From their correspondence, we know that Tryon was very pleased that Freer offered this introductory Japanese art exhibition as an opportunity for the Smith
community to appreciate art from other cultures and the principles it shares with Western art. He particularly praised a number of interesting paintings, including Kuroda Toko’s *Carp*, which is now at the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 18).  

Interestingly, Tryon himself was a lover of boating and fishing and often enjoyed summer outdoor activities on the coast of New England. Surely Freer was remembering this pastime of his old friend when he sent Tryon a Ming–dynasty hanging scroll of a giant jumping carp, a work that Tryon eventually gave to the Museum in 1921 (cat. no. 9). Influenced by Freer, Tryon also began to collect Japanese prints and Chinese ceramics in the mid–1890s, receiving occasional gifts over the years as well as a bequest of Asian antiquities from Freer.

Of course, Freer was a significant influence in persuading Tryon of the important role that art from non–Western cultures could play in the development of students’ ability to create and appreciate art. In a letter to Tryon, Freer wrote, “the appreciation of beauty could be strengthened, deepened, and broadened by intelligent comparative study,” suggesting that Asian art should be used to help students of Western art search for ultimate beauty. Tryon certainly had learned through Freer’s exhibition the value of Asian art for teaching students and offering viewers inspirational moments, especially at a time when the Arts and Crafts Movement began to thrive in New England. As a result, in March 1901,
Tryon arranged for Freer to have a second exhibition in the Hillyer Art Gallery, which featured thirty-five *ukiyo-e* paintings from Freer’s recent acquisitions. Not long before, Freer had purchased several genre paintings from the former Fenollosa collection, and was particularly interested in the unconventional styles and artistic innovations of *ukiyo-e* artists. Thus, instead of providing an ensemble of examples from different schools, Freer chose to exhibit these genre pictures to offer viewers “the keener pleasure and more direct knowledge of the aims and methods of the principal masters of the school which was first to break away from academic practices.”

After his second trip to Japan in 1907, Freer became increasingly interested in Chinese art, because he had learned from Japanese collectors that it was the source of inspiration for many Japanese and Korean works. He also found that few collectors were competing over an increasing supply of Chinese art which, when compared to Japanese art, was still undervalued. Therefore, Freer made two special, long trips to China, where he found many acquisition opportunities and brought back a large group of beautiful antiquities. Because the majority of collectors did not bother to make their own search in China, Freer was able to seize the opportunity to obtain paintings believed to be works of Tang and Song painters, a focus that he enthusiastically pursued for the remainder of his life.

However, in May 1911, just a month after his return from China, Freer suffered a sudden stroke that prevented him from undertaking any further international travel. Yet he did not lose his strong sense of mission to bring works of art from the Far East to America. Instead of traveling to Asia himself, he now focused on buying works from dealers in the U.S. and agents in Asia. He also began to assist the development of Asian art collections in new public and academic museums across the country, for example, with a special gift to the Oberlin College Museum of Art, in the hope that appreciation of Asian art would eventually take root within college museums in this country. Freer also showed a willingness to preserve Asian art objects in their original contexts. He not only joined in the successful lobbying for the American government’s inspection of imported antiquities to keep out those with questionable provenance, but also planned on founding a school of archaeology to conserve and excavate antiquities in Beijing.

It is in this context that Smith College received its first gift of Asian art from Freer in January 1913, a gift comprising twelve carved wooden and lacquer panels with various floral and figural subjects. Given that the College previously had almost no Asian art, Tryon and Alfred Vance Churchill (1864–1949), the chief curator
and first director of the Hillyer Art Gallery, were deeply aware of the value of Freer’s gifts and the potential for further assistance from this generous collector. Soon after the arrival of his gifts, they selected some of them to display in the gallery. Through Freer’s introduction, Laurence Binyon (1869–1943), keeper of Oriental prints and drawings at the British Museum, was invited to give six consecutive lectures on Oriental art at Smith in November 1914. The College also invited Professor Masaharu Anesaki (1873–1949), the founder of the first religious studies program in Japan, to present a talk that month on Japanese Buddhism. In fact, Freer loved to invite scholars to give lectures and often persuaded museums to organize educational programs linked to Asian art exhibitions based on his loans.

A valuable byproduct of the lecture invitations was the expert help that the Museum would soon receive. With money from the Hillyer Fund, on behalf of the Museum, Binyon purchased in Europe more than thirty representative Japanese prints. After the renovation of the interior of the second–floor galleries, a selection of these prints, along with gifts of ceramic wares from Tryon and a few others, was added to complete the inaugural gallery installation of Asian art. A photograph taken around 1915 records Tyron and Churchill working together in a room next to the Asian art gallery, which was among the earliest such display areas set aside for Asian art in college museums of that time. Japanese prints and Chinese woodcarvings are displayed on two walls of this gallery, while ceramic works are gathered on shelves and pedestals (fig. 19). The tasteful installation of this gallery demonstrates the accomplishments of Tryon and Freer in their effort to develop the Museum’s collection in the early years of the twentieth century.

In 1915, Freer moved from his Detroit home to a New York City hotel room in order to have easier access to his doctors. There, despite failing health, he continued purchasing large quantities of art and assisting the development of a few museums that he favored by offering advice on their acquisitions of Asian art and providing loans to their exhibitions. Freer also helped some private collectors of Asian art, including Eugene and Agnes Meyer of New York and Margaret W. Parker of Detroit, who were inspired by him to eventually donate their Asian collections to other museums in this nation. Through offering both gifts of art and his personal expertise in collecting, Freer managed to encourage his fellow Americans to recognize and appreciate the beauty of Asian art.

Freer continued his support of Smith College through gifts and advice on art education. He learned from Tryon of the work being done there and sent
photographs of his collection with an inquiry about the Museum’s interest in further gifts. In the winter of 1916, he asked Tryon to bring to Smith a panel painting, *The Flying Duck*. In May 1917, Freer personally selected a group of teaching samples, including eighteen Japanese and Chinese paintings, nine ceramic works, and three gilt bronze Buddhist sculptures from Siam. He wrote to Churchill, “Return of strength has enabled me recently to go through the collection in my care, and from it I have chosen for presentation to Smith College certain objects which I consider may be useful to your students, and which I trust, if agreeable, you will accept with my compliments.” To facilitate these gifts, Freer prepaid their packing and shipping charges and provided short notes on their provenance. The value of his gifts was recognized in a letter from Churchill to College President Marion L. Burton: “It is a representation of the art of the East, which of late years is coming to be more and more considered by the best judges, and it will be of particular value in the teaching of abstract qualities of design in the courses in Design given at Smith College.”

Freer’s assistance to the Museum in collecting Asian art was cut short by his death on October 25, 1919. Yet he still remembered the Museum’s future development in his last days and particularly noted in his will a bequest of...
additional artworks to support art instruction at Smith College. Based on Freer’s specific wish, his executors provided additional examples of East Asian paintings in 1919 and 1920, along with over a hundred etchings, lithographs, and engravings by French and American masters. The Museum, in turn, organized an exhibition in Freer’s memory, Oriental Paintings and Lacquers from the Permanent Collection of the College, Bronzes and Pottery Lent by T. Ono (November 26–December 19, 1919). Garrett C. Pier (1875–1943), a scholar of Oriental art and friend of Freer, was invited to offer an exhibition lecture on Chinese influence on the painting and sculpture of Japan. After the arrival of the final objects from Freer’s bequest, they were all exhibited in the gallery in May 1920.

If Freer sought to donate and exhibit his collection as a way of nurturing public appreciation for Asian art, Tryon passionately used his art and knowledge to teach students in museums and studios. As Alfred Churchill recalled, Tryon would leave his studio work in New York and come to Northampton every two or three weeks during the semester. His train normally arrived Thursday afternoon and he then read in the Forbes Library that night. His studio classes on Friday morning often had more than sixty students. During his stay on campus, Tryon loved contact with young minds and was always ready to provide inspiration. He often spoke with enthusiasm of his own teacher, the French Barbizon painter Charles–François Daubigny (1817–1878), and his friend Whistler, whom he considered one of the great artists of his time. It is not surprising that Tryon also spoke about Freer, one of the great connoisseurs of American and Asian art.

In addition to his teaching duties, Tryon was always interested in promoting the Museum as a means of fostering and supporting education in the arts. He not only employed his own connoisseurship skill and exquisite taste to make suggestions on acquisitions, but also used his reputation and personal connections to encourage artists to give their works to Smith. Tryon continued to give his own works during his tenure at Smith, including River Maas at Dordrecht (1881) and October Fields (1914), which represented his early and late landscape styles, respectively. Following his guidance, the Museum assembled a large number of exceptional works that demonstrated the development and achievements of American art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Like his friend Charles Freer, Tryon believed that access to and knowledge of non-Western art would foster a more general appreciation of universal principles
of beauty. It is noteworthy that Tryon himself had contributed to the growing Asian art collection at Smith—he made his first gift of Asian art in early 1914, soon after Freer gave his twelve carved panels. In 1921, Tryon gave the Museum his collection of seventy-five Japanese _ukiyo-e_ prints, which he believed would have value in cultivating students’ taste in art and design. The Museum received an additional bequest from his widow, Alice, in 1930, including some eighty pieces of Asian ceramics and metalwork. More importantly, this art professor and his collector friend shared the view that unique works of art should be available to the public. The pioneering gesture of Freer to donate his collection for public benefit must have inspired Tryon’s gift to the College of his own art collection, along with an endowment for future art purchases. Convinced that the exhibition space of the old Hillyer Art Gallery was inadequate to provide a comfortable, spacious environment for students to study art, Tryon also donated funds to build a museum to house the College’s growing art collection. A two-story Neo-Georgian style building, designed by Frederick L. Ackerman (1878–1950), a close friend of Tryon, became the new home of the Smith College Museum of Art, which opened to the public in September 1926 (fig. 20).

Given that the systematic collecting of Asian art was just beginning in this country during the early twentieth century, Freer’s and Tryon’s donations to the Museum demonstrate a pioneering vision of the value of non-Western art to a liberal-arts education. Through his gifts to the nation, Freer successfully made his personal quest to bridge East and West into a public venture. He also spread the
seeds of Asian art among numerous college museums to enable more students to be exposed to Far Eastern art and culture. Tryon, on the other hand, used his friendship with Freer, as well as the donation of his own collection, to bolster art education and collecting at Smith College.

In short, these two close friends were partners in a pioneering venture—they explored the aesthetic resonance they found between Eastern and Western art and collaborated to spread knowledge and appreciation of Asian art. Their efforts, of course, successfully laid the groundwork for Smith College’s commitment to collecting and displaying Asian art to support a global curriculum. Their vision, ideas, and enthusiasm have inspired generations of Smith students and faculty members to learn about the art of Asia and to appreciate the cultures of others.
For instance, Freer made gifts to the Oberlin College Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, the Memorial Hall of the University of Michigan (the former University Museum), and the Art Department of Williams College. For more information about the institutional recipients of the Freer gifts, see Subseries 5.25: “Art Inventories: Estate Distribution of Personal Property” in the records of Freer’s documents and letters at the Freer Gallery of Art (hereafter Freer papers/FGA archives).


Merrill, An Ideal Country, 56–60.

Tryon to Freer, March 21, 1896, Freer papers/FGA archives. For the discussion of this panel painting, see Merrill, An Ideal Country, 112.

In a letter to his friend, William K. Bixby, who had just purchased his first Tryon painting, Freer praised the sublety of color and integrity of space in Tryon’s works, and expressed his conviction that viewers could truly experience the wonder of nature after meditative viewing of his paintings. Freer to William K. Bixby, March 5, 1900, Freer papers/FGA archives.


Freer to Dwight Tryon, March 21, 1898, Freer papers/FGA archives. For the image and discussion of this painting, see Merrill, An Ideal Country, 130–31 (pl. 22).


James Whistler is a major artist who inspired the European appreciation of blue–and–white porcelain and ukiyo–e prints during the second half of the nineteenth century. Influenced by this artist friend whom he first met in 1890, Freer apparently believed that subject matter was not important. He instead believed that it was absorbed by the beauty of form in the lyrical world of vision and thus loved to compare the textural and tonal quality of historically or culturally unrelated works to appreciate the varied but perfectly balanced trends that collectively conveyed a harmony in art.


Freer to Tryon, June 17, 1895, Freer papers/FGA archives.
At Chishaku-in Temple in Kyoto, Freer saw this great painting that was traditionally attributed to Omakitsu, the Japanese equivalent for Wang Wei, a famous painter of Tang–dynasty China. But he mistakenly spelled the artist name as Okamatsu. See Merrill, *An Ideal Country*, 144–46 (pl. 33).

Tryon to Freer, August 7, 1907, Tryon papers/FGA archives.


It is worth noting that most American museums did not have Asian art departments at that time, except the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which launched its Japanese Art Department in 1890, with Ernest Fenollosa as its first curator. It was not until 1915 that the Metropolitan Museum of Art founded its Asian Art Department by separating it as a unit from its Department of Decorative Arts. For more discussion, see ibid., 666.

Tryon to Freer, February 20, 1897, Tryon papers/FGA archives.

Freer probably purchased this painting around 1915. Because of its auspicious implication of good luck, the carp was a popular subject in paintings for reciprocal gifts between friends in traditional China.

Freer to Tryon, July 7, 1907, Freer papers/FGA archives.

Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy*, 207.

Freer to Mary K. Williams, March 4, 1901, Freer papers/FGA archives.

In 1909, Freer made a special trip to China, where he spent two months visiting many places of great interest, seeing “the real classical Chinese scenery of the ancient Chinese paintings: serrated mountains, varying distances and great water spaces.” (Freer to Frank J. Hecker, September 20, 1909, Freer papers/FGA archives). He also tracked down treasures in the hands of native collectors and visited renowned private collections. Freer’s productive trip in 1909 convinced him to make another foray to China in the autumn of 1910. He spent several months in Beijing and Shanghai negotiating with dealers and visiting private collectors, shipping back several hundred Chinese artworks at the end of his stay. He also visited the Buddhist cave temples at Longmen in Luoyang and traveled by boat on the West Lake in Hangzhou to see the scenes often depicted in Song paintings. Tomlinson, *Charles Lang Freer*, 557–78. For a brief introduction to Freer’s Chinese collection, see Thomas Lawton, “China’s Artistic Legacy,” *Apollo* CXVIII, no. 258 (Aug. 1983): 127–35.

Oberlin College was another major recipient of Freer’s gifts of Asian art. In 1910, its President, Henry Churchill King, learned that Charles Freer was giving some duplicates from his collection to museums and academic institutions around the country. King quickly wrote to Freer and requested a donation for Oberlin College. In 1912, Freer sent Oberlin a gift of about one hundred Chinese and Japanese paintings, ceramics, and sculptures that he hoped would, in his words, “aid some of your students to a better knowledge of the Far East.” I am grateful to Stephanie Wiles, former director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, for providing information about Oberlin’s Freer collection.
The comparison and contrast between pictorial art and ceramic works in the same gallery space reflect a search for aesthetic harmony and unity of different forms and colors, something that Tryon possibly learned from the displays of Asian art in Freer’s house.

For instance, Freer was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and an honorary fellow of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He also lent Japanese paintings to the new Cleveland Museum of Art to support its inaugural Asian art exhibition in 1917. For more information, see Tomlinson, Charles Lang Freer, 665–71.

It is notable that Freer extended his help to the art department through Tryon and Churchill. Churchill once expressed his wish to Freer for the department to receive some lantern slides of Whistler’s paintings for lecture purposes. In his reply, Freer explained that ordinary slides could not capture the elusive quality of his finest Whistler paintings and promised to provide the best slides he had. On another occasion, Freer advised the department when it was looking for a lecturer on Florentine painting, suggesting that direct correspondence with the American School in Rome might help find someone worthy. Freer to Alfred Churchill, February 20, 1914, and March 6, 1916. The records are in the Smith College Museum of Art archives, hereafter SCMA archives.

Freer to Churchill, May 16, 1917, SCMA archives.

Churchill to Marion L. Burton, May 22, 1917, SCMA archives.

The checklist from the Freer estate executors to the Hillyer Art Gallery, March 18, 1920, SCMA archives.

Smith College Bulletin (1919–1920), 43 and 45.

Cohen, East Asian Art, 57–58.


Cohen, East Asian Art, 56.

The comparison and contrast between pictorial art and ceramic works in the same gallery space reflect a search for aesthetic harmony and unity of different forms and colors, something that Tryon possibly learned from the displays of Asian art in Freer’s house.

For instance, Freer was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and an honorary fellow of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He also lent Japanese paintings to the new Cleveland Museum of Art to support its inaugural Asian art exhibition in 1917. For more information, see Tomlinson, Charles Lang Freer, 665–71.

It is notable that Freer extended his help to the art department through Tryon and Churchill. Churchill once expressed his wish to Freer for the department to receive some lantern slides of Whistler’s paintings for lecture purposes. In his reply, Freer explained that ordinary slides could not capture the elusive quality of his finest Whistler paintings and promised to provide the best slides he had. On another occasion, Freer advised the department when it was looking for a lecturer on Florentine painting, suggesting that direct correspondence with the American School in Rome might help find someone worthy. Freer to Alfred Churchill, February 20, 1914, and March 6, 1916. The records are in the Smith College Museum of Art archives, hereafter SCMA archives.

Freer to Churchill, May 16, 1917, SCMA archives.

Churchill to Marion L. Burton, May 22, 1917, SCMA archives.

The checklist from the Freer estate executors to the Hillyer Art Gallery, March 18, 1920, SCMA archives.

Smith College Bulletin (1919–1920), 43 and 45.


Henry C. White, “D. W. Tryon—An Appreciation,” The Hillyer Art Gallery Bulletin, March 20, 1924, 3–4. SCMA archives. Henry C. White (1861–1952), a Hartford–born artist and biographer of Tryon, was particularly interested in collecting Tryon’s works and documents. His son, Nelson, acquired these paintings formerly in SCMA’s collection. October Fields was purchased from a sale of deaccessioned works at Gimbels in the mid-1940s and River Maas was purchased from the Museum a decade later.

Although most of Tryon’s Asian art gifts were unfortunately deaccessioned in later years, surviving registrar’s records that document those objects demonstrate his insightful vision and generosity.

Merrill, An Ideal Country, 87.

The Tryon Art Gallery was demolished to make way for the new Fine Arts Center in 1970. For more information about the building of the Tryon Art Gallery and today’s Brown Fine Arts Center (renovated 1999–2003, and renamed) see Helen Searing, “A History of the Art Buildings at Smith College,” in Image and Word, 43–47.
A NOTE ON THE CATALOGUE

WORKS IN THE CATALOGUE are organized according to traditional art (three sections consisting of China, Japan, and South Asia and the Himalayas) and post–World War II and contemporary art (one section), and ordered within the sections by medium, then chronology. Inclusive date ranges are given for dynasties or historic periods the first time they appear; thereafter, historic periods are referred to by name only. Artists are listed with family name first, except in cases in which the artist is more commonly known (or chooses to self-identify) by first name then family name. Dimensions are given as height by width by depth.

FREQUENTLY CITED SOURCES:


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In East Asia, jade refers to a range of fine minerals including nephrite, jadeite, and other hard stones. The veneration of their beauty, rarity, and durability has lasted more than 5,000 years. Jade objects that simulated practical tools and weapons, such as bi (disk), cong (tube), and dao (blade) were frequently found in Neolithic and Bronze Age burials and other sites. This trapezoidal blade, which has a sharp cutting edge on the slightly concave side and two large perforations near the straight back, simulates a flat, broad stone knife tied to a wooden stick. Yet given the relative thinness of its blade, this knife was not meant to be used as a practical implement. It was most likely made as a ceremonial object symbolizing power and wealth. The material of black nephrite with mottled gray areas of tremolite, a softer form of nephrite, gives the blade an unusual luster and a mysterious appearance.

This blade belongs to a collection of nearly sixty archaic Chinese jade carvings given to the Museum over a three-year period (1959–1962) by Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart of New York, who wished to make them accessible for public viewing and study at Smith College. The collection was originally assembled in the 1930s by the Dutch financier Samuel H. Minkenhof while he lived in Amsterdam, Paris, and New York. The collection was included, either in whole or in part, in some important exhibitions of early Chinese jades (e.g., at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1959 and at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1963). This group of early jades was later supplemented by another group of small jade carvings from Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) China that were given to SCMA by Mrs. Stephen Isaacs (Diane Scharfeld, class of 1961) in 1968. — FZ

1 Archaic Chinese Jades, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart Collection (Northampton: Smith College Museum of Art, 1963), 5 and 16.
Because jade is too hard to be carved with metal implements, ancient people could only use abrasives such as quartz sand to cut, grind, and engrave its surface. Despite the technological difficulty of this time-consuming process, jade carving of the Shang dynasty developed to new heights. A pendant in the form of a standing owl from the Hart collection exemplifies an important innovation of the time, as animal and bird pendants began to be fully carved in the round (cat. no. 2A). This bird, carved from pale green jade, has two horned ears, a proboscis-like beak, and an upright body with wings carved in C-shaped lines. It contrasts with another green pendant from the Hart collection that represents a different relief-carving style. This flat pendant has two identical surfaces showing the hooked beak, double-ring eye, spiraled wing, and erect plumes of a mythical bird (cat. no. 2B).

Possibly symbolizing a protector of the dead in the darkness of the underworld, the owl was often represented in Shang mortuary art in the form of stone sculpture or bronze vessels. Many burials in the late-Shang capital of Anyang (c. 1300–1050 BCE) also had jade carvings in the shapes of owls or other mythical birds of prey that could be used as finials or as pendants for decorative and ceremonial purposes. These small carvings showcase the enigmatic forms and skillful craftsmanship of Chinese jade art from about 3,000 years ago. In the following millennia, Chinese people continued to use jade articles as personal items or household ornaments, developing a jade culture that venerated the five human virtues embodied in this fine stone: clarity, rectitude, wisdom, courage, and equity. — FZ
This ram-pommel dagger and two belt buckles exemplify the animal-style bronze art of China’s northern and northwestern frontiers during the late Bronze and Iron Ages (eighth–second century BCE). The works reflect the presence of nomadic traditions and their influence in East Asia. Steppe peoples preferred animal motifs—such as felines, wolves, horses, and deer—to decorate their weapons, saddles, and clothing, and these items were eventually incorporated into burials. The powerful stylization and animated naturalism of steppe art had a profound impact on early Chinese art.

Major Oliver Todd of Palo Alto, a former Army engineer who directed river engineering and flood control projects in China, was a lover of Chinese bronze art and collected over 1,000 bronze mirrors, vessels, and small metalwork items.1 In 1965, his daughter Doris Todd Brown (class of 1949) facilitated her father’s gift to the Museum of forty-one mirrors and small metalwork items, including this bronze ram-pommel dagger. Considering the inscription of four seal-script Chinese characters on its handle, this dagger most likely simulated a steppe prototype and belonged to a Han-Chinese warrior, reflecting the rise of steppe traditions on the borders of northern China during the Spring and Autumn Period (eighth–fifth century BCE). The Museum also purchased two Warring States Period (fifth–third century BCE) bronze plaques that were once ornaments on a belt or a saddle. One portrays a tiger opening its mouth to devour its prey; the other shows two deer standing back-to-back and turning their heads toward the viewer. Belt buckles with animal motifs are often discovered in the Ordos region of modern Inner Mongolia, where cultural exchanges between the Eurasian steppe and early China thrived for centuries. — FZ

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1 Oliver Todd, Chinese Bronze Mirrors: A Study Based on the Todd Collection of 1,000 Bronze Mirrors Found in the Five Northern Provinces of Suiyuan, Shensi, Shansi, Honan, and Hopei, China (New York: Paragon Books, 1966 reprint of 1935 edition).
This incense burner has a mountain-shaped cover decorated with motifs of wild animals and human figures and a round base embellished with an encircling double band of wave-like motifs. The design suggests a mountain floating in the ocean, referring to the popular notion of the isles of immortals in the Eastern Sea. A powerful, naked man kneeling on a roaring feline-like beast holds aloft the burner with his right hand. When filled with smoldering incense, smoke would coil from the small holes behind the peaks, evoking an illusion of the auspicious vapor exhaled by the mountain. During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Chinese people believed all nature was alive and breathing and that deities and immortals resided in remote isles and sacred mountains, such as the mythical Penglai Isles and Kunlun Mountains. This incense burner is the promised gift of Dr. Elizabeth E. Force, a former pharmaceutical executive for whom collecting Asian decorative arts has been a lifelong passion. (The Japanese lacquer Document Box, cat. no. 22, is also part of the promised gift of her collection.) Dr. Force’s incense burner is very similar to a bronze censer discovered in the tomb of Princess Dou Wan, who was buried around 113 BCE in Mancheng, Hebei.1 They are examples of boshanlu, which refers to a censer type that has a mountain-shaped cover decorated in relief with animals, hunters, and trees. Because of their association with immortals, censers of this type were often used by noble people to burn scented powders in their residences. They also became favorite burial items in elite tombs during the Han dynasty. The popularity of decorative motifs and vessel forms associated with immortals and mythical animals reflects the prevailing wish for longevity and immortality in Han China and religious and mythological ideas dominant before the rise of Buddhism. — FZ

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During the Tang dynasty, economic prosperity and material wealth prompted luxury burials among the nobility, whose tombs often incorporated beautiful wall paintings and rich burial goods as a display of wealth and social status. In addition to exotic objects and valuable materials, Tang aristocrats often buried in their tombs large groups of pottery figurines of entertainers and maids, so that these replicas of living people could continue to offer service in the underworld. These pottery figurines might also have played an important role in burial rituals of the time.

The anonymous alumna owner of this all-female orchestra, a promised gift to the Museum, has a small but refined collection of Chinese mortuary pottery figures acquired over the years from European dealers. Because music was a significant part of the daily entertainment of Tang aristocrats, figurines of musicians and dancers were always entombed to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. This set includes four engaging musicians playing flute, lute, and drum, accompanied by two maids seated on the sides. They are modeled in gray earthenware and covered by a white slip and additional pigments.

These young ladies have round faces, high coiffures, and graceful garments; their appearance reflects the ideas of elegant female beauty at the Tang court. The addition of facial details and makeup gives these figurines great individuality and expressive charm. Their high-waisted skirts, narrow sleeves, and thin shawls also represent fashionable clothing of the time that incorporated elements from Central Asia. These vivid figurines showcase the accomplishments of seventh-century mortuary pottery making, heralding the coming pinnacle of sculptural art in the high Tang era. — FZ
During the Song dynasty (960–1279), the fashion of tea-tasting competitions spread from the upper class to common townspeople. Dark-colored tea bowls were particularly desirable among tea connoisseurs, who believed the foamy, whisked tea looked better and the froth lasted longer in black bowls. Many Song kilns responded to this fashion with a variety of new decorations and glazes specially designed to enhance the tea-drinking experience. The bowl with a leaf-shaped decoration (cat. no. 6a) is a characteristic example of Jizhou ware from modern Ji’an County, Jiangxi Province. A specially-processed leaf would be pasted onto the black-glazed bowl and, during the firing, the leaf would transform into ash such that its outline and its veins would become clearly visible, as if floating on a dark background.

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The Jian-ware bowl (cat. no. 6b) made in Jianyang County, Fujian Province, has a more complicated glaze that was enthusiastically sought by tea connoisseurs including officials, scholars, and monks. Known as the “hare’s fur” effect, it features fine streaks of light brown and patches of ochre in the iron-rich dark glaze, which required an efficient control of the kiln temperature to a little over 1300° C.

Song-dynasty Jizhou and Jian kilns are known for their tea bowls. These innovative objects, produced in large quantities, were popular in southeastern China, and later were brought back to Japan by visiting Zen monks. The Japanese particularly prized these imported ceramics, and called them tenmoku ware. Tenmoku tea bowls, which first became popular in Japan in the fourteenth century, became an important component of the traditional tea ceremony (chanoyu), a late fifteenth-century phenomenon. — FZ
Porcelain is a marvelous invention of Chinese culture, and its production has continuously evolved from the third century to the present day. The Kangxi-reign porcelain of the Qing dynasty was famous for its high-fired varied monochrome glazes made in Jingdezhen, the largest center of ceramic production in China. Jingdezhen was particularly renowned for its production of copper-based red glazes, and the Qing emperors even sent special officials to supervise imperial kilns there. Depending on the thickness of the glaze, the kiln temperature, and the glaze composition, a variety of red glazes from dark to pale could be produced. These types of glazes are known in the West as sacrificial red, oxblood (or *sang de boeuf*), and peach-bloom. Compared to other red glazes, peach-bloom glaze was harder to produce because it required extra procedures such as blowing layers of red glazes onto a clear glaze with a bamboo tube. Additional treatments before firing and expert control over the flow of glaze while firing resulted in an exquisite aesthetic effect: mottled pale green shades and patches covering the red glaze, suggesting peach blossoms waving in a spring breeze. Because of the difficulty of creating this glaze, peach-bloom red was only applied to small vessels for the private appreciation of the elite. — FZ

This vase, which has a flared mouth, slender neck, round shoulder, and long belly, is part of a set of eight elegant vessels made for display and use in a scholar’s studio. The seal mark at the bottom reads “Made in the Kangxi Reign of the Great Qing Dynasty.” (See detail.) In addition to its form, this vase is notable for the unique beauty of its peach-bloom glaze, which represents the pinnacle of red-glaze artistry during the early eighteenth century. Although monochrome copper-red glaze was produced in the fifteenth century, pure red glaze of high quality was not successfully made until the Kangxi reign.
Edgar C. Schenck (1909–1959), an expert on Oriental and Polynesian arts, directed the Honolulu Academy of Arts for twelve years before coming to Northampton to serve as the director of the Smith College Museum of Art from 1947 to 1949. During his short tenure at Smith, Schenck made a notable acquisition: Departure of Lady Wenji from the Nomad Camp, a large Yuan-dynasty silk painting from the former Del Drago collection of New York.1

A popular theme in Song and Yuan art, the story relates the life of Lady Wenji of the Han dynasty. Wenji was captured by the troops of the Xiongnu, a northern nomadic people, and forced to marry one of their chieftains. After she had spent a dozen years with the nomads and given birth to two sons, Wenji was finally ransomed by the Chinese minister Cao Cao (155–220) and reunited with her father. This painting depicts the last moment before Wenji’s departure for her homeland. Her husband waits to present her with a cup of wine to see her off, while her two young boys grab her hand to make her stay. (See detail.) A bleak landscape of twisted rock masses and leafless trees emphasizes the emotional charge of the moment.

Because the inscription on the painting states it was painted by the famous Yuan artist Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) in 1301, this large scroll was widely known among early Western scholars of Chinese art and was considered among the best works in the Del Drago collection. In 1949 Schenck purchased it for the Museum for $8,000, a considerable sum of money for a Chinese painting at the time, though an inexpensive price for a Zhao Mengfu work. A decade later, Asian art scholars Max Loehr and James Cahill determined that the inscription was spurious and postulated that the work was painted by a northern Chinese artist in the fourteenth century. Although this painting is not by a famous artist, it remains among the finest Chinese paintings acquired by the Museum and is evidence of the Museum’s early ambition to acquire important works of Asian art for the collection. Schenck later directed the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo and the Brooklyn Museum of Art and contributed to the development of the Asian collections at both institutions.

—FZ

Like many American artists of his time, Dwight Tryon began to collect Japanese woodblock prints and Asian ceramics in the mid-1890s. He displayed works from his collection in his New York studio to draw artistic inspiration from them while painting landscapes. Tryon received occasional gifts of Asian art from his friend Charles Lang Freer, including this hanging scroll, which depicts a giant carp, along with two smaller ones, leaping out of the water. Formerly attributed to Recluse Wei (Weidaoren), a thirteenth-century painter renowned for his elaborate fish paintings, this scroll is most likely the work of an unknown but skillful artist of the fifteenth century. With its careful delineation of the scales of the carp and the waves of the water, this scroll exemplifies the subtle ink strokes and washes of the fish painting tradition during the Ming dynasty. Because the carp was considered an auspicious symbol of good luck and wealth, pictures of them were often used for household decoration or reciprocal gifts among friends in East Asia.

Freer was undoubtedly aware of Tryon’s hobby of boating and fishing, and the subject of the scroll made this an appropriate gift to his fisherman friend. Tryon gave this work to the Museum in 1921. The pioneering gesture of Freer to donate his entire Asian art collection to the College, including seventy-five Japanese woodblock prints and some eighty Asian ceramic and metal works. — FZ
Charles Lang Freer, whose gifts to SCMA inaugurated its Asian collection, purchased *Spring Landscape with Travelers* (cat. no. 10A, right) from Zhang Yinchun, a Hangzhou collector who sold him a number of paintings attributed to the Song and Yuan dynasties. In 1915, Zhang personally inscribed the title of this painting and attributed it to the Northern Song artist Chen Yongzhi (active first half of the eleventh century), a court painter known for religious wall paintings, although none of his works survive today. Given that it features a composition combining a Northern-Song-style towering mountain in the background and a Southern-Song-style corner scene in the foreground, this painting was most likely painted by an unknown Ming artist in association with the fifteenth-century Zhe school, whose artists excelled at copying both Northern and Southern Song landscape styles.

Another Freer scroll, *Recluse with Attendants under a Pine Tree* (cat. no. 10B, left), depicts a reclusive scholar under a pine tree contemplating a bamboo grove in the mist. This landscape has a style close to that of academic painters serving the Ming court, and possibly bears the artist’s original signature at the lower right corner, which reads “Gusu Zhou Chen xie” (painted by Zhou Chen of Gusu). A versatile professional artist in Suzhou (also known as Gusu), Zhou Chen was renowned for his works that catered to customers’ demands.

Zhou once served as a ghost painter for his young protégé Tang Yin (1470–1523), a celebrated Wu-school artist who received many requests and commissions for his works. These paintings are valuable examples of the landscape styles of middle-Ming professional artists in South China. They also reflect Freer’s taste in his enthusiastic pursuit of Song-Yuan paintings during the last years of his life. — FZ
Scholar, collector, and artist Yao Zhengyong lived as a wealthy gentleman in Taizhou prefecture near Shanghai and once served as a high provincial official of Jiangsu province. In the early 1860s, Yao hosted gatherings of literati and associated with a group of officials and scholars when they fled to Taizhou to evade the Taiping Rebellion, a widespread political and religious upheaval in southern China. This elaborate, round fan painting, executed in an archaistic blue-and-green style, portrays a mountain landscape with carefully orchestrated hills, trees, and ravines where a solitary monastery is hidden. The depiction of this mountain refuge possibly represents the hope of scholars and officials for a peaceful, reclusive life and a longing for the beauty of nature at a chaotic moment in time.

Yao explained in his inscription that this fan painting was created as a gift to Ma Shiqiao (d. 1864), a respected Nanjing painter (known as the Elder Shiqiao). Its style is after the Ming artist Lu Zhi (1496–1576), a native of Wuxian, Jiangsu, whose sobriquet was Baoshanzi. A disciple of the famous Wu-school literati artist Wen Zheng-ming (1470–1559), Lu is renowned for landscape paintings featuring elaborate brushwork and energetic expression. Yao’s delicate brushwork demonstrates his skill in evoking the old masters, but this work also exemplifies the lofty ideas and elegant taste embodied in fan paintings, which were often used as reciprocal gifts among late Qing scholars.

In 1947, William S. T. Chang donated a group of fan paintings and calligraphic scrolls from a former Taizhou collection to SCMA. Another fan of about the same date from this collection (SC 1947:12-7), which includes calligraphic inscriptions by two scholar-officials (Qian Guisen in 1860, and Xu Shenxi in 1863), was also given to the same recipient—the Elder Shiqiao. These works provide a rare glimpse into the literati associations and artistic productions of scholar-officials and local gentry in nineteenth-century Jiangnan, the region in the southern reaches of the Yangtze River where most of China’s wealth and talent was concentrated.

— FZ
Qi Baishi was the best known artist of traditional ink painting in China during the 1920s and 1930s. Because of his humble peasant beginnings, Qi had to make a living as a carpenter at a young age. He later became a professional painter and sold pictures of popular deities and other approachable subjects. Qi diligently applied his talents to learn from the old masters and began to develop his own style, favoring rustic elegance and spontaneous brushwork in a tall, narrow scroll format. In 1917, Qi moved to Beijing, where he achieved success and eventually became famous worldwide.

Qi Baishi was a prolific artist particularly noted for his ink paintings of birds and flowers, as well as of crabs and shrimp. To catch their movement with spontaneous brushwork, Qi often sketched shrimp from life and observed details of their claws and body segments. This scroll is a case in point, showing how Qi excelled at using efficient brush strokes to reduce the subject to its essentials yet at the same time vividly catching its characteristics. In addition to calligraphy and painting, Qi was also proficient at seal carving and had carved hundreds of stone seals by the time he reached middle age. As seen in the inscription on this painting, Qi called himself “a rich man with three hundred stone seals” to commemorate his seal collection.

Helen White, the donor of the scroll, received this and five other scrolls from her friend Margaret Sheets, a Christian missionary who taught in Nanjing during the late 1940s. Ms. Sheets collected scrolls through gifts and purchases and brought them with her to the U.S. early in 1951, soon after America and China ceased diplomatic relations with the outbreak of the Korean War. — F Z
Poetry was central to the public and private lives of aristocratic men and women in Heian Japan (794–1185). Courtiers were expected to create poems in a variety of situations, such as for the poem-matching contests that began at court during the ninth century. In these contests participants were divided into left and right teams, with group leaders chanting the poems one pair at a time. A judge or judges determined individual matches with a brief rationale for the decision, and the tally of individual victories determined the overall team winner. The competition was intense but genteel. The aesthetics of the match were often enhanced by placing the written poems on tables decorated as miniature landscapes, such as seashores, pine forests, or cherry trees in full bloom. An elaborate banquet with music and exchanges of sake cups usually followed. The ultimate goal was to merit inclusion in an imperial anthology; slightly more than 6 percent of the over 30,000 poems found in the twenty-one imperial anthologies come from these competitions.

The art of matching poems was also practiced individually; poets would create a virtual competition either among his or her own poems, or among poems by other poets, even those who lived in different times. This particular drawing is of the genre known as kasen-e, hand-scrolls depicting famous poets accompanied by examples of their poems.

The painting by an unknown artist is from a fourteenth-century version of the fictitious Competition Between Poets of Different Periods as compiled by Emperor Go-Toba a century earlier. It depicts the competition between the tenth-century poet Fujiwara no Kanesuke and the early twelfth-century poet Fujiwara no Toshitada. — T R
Bodhidharma (Japanese: Daruma) is the legendary Indian patriarch of the Zen Buddhist tradition. According to tradition, he came to China in the sixth century. Following a meeting with Emperor Wu of the Liang state (464–549; r. 502–549) he is said to have crossed the Yangtze on a reed before arriving at the Shaolinsi monastery, where he meditated in a cave for nine years. Both his passage across the river and his lengthy meditation became popular subjects for paintings in China and Japan. This painting is executed in highly modulated ink lines that vary in their tonality, adding dimension to the figure of the patriarch. The greatest detail has been reserved for the face and the darkest ink used for the pupils of his eyes, resulting in a piercing gaze.

This painting is now accepted as an early work by the great Muromachi period ink painter, Sesshū Tōyō. Sesshū did not take the name by which he is now well known until his forties, just before he journeyed to Ming China in 1467. Little information exists about Sesshū’s early career; however, scholars have come to believe that Sesshū Tōyō and Sessō Tōyō, an early fifteenth-century monochromatic ink painter for whom no biographical information is known, were in fact the same person. Furthermore, it is likely the characters for Sessō’s name were read “Sesshū” during the fifteenth century. While the painting is not signed, the cinnabar red seal in the lower right reads “Sessō.”

The date of the painting can be inferred from the inscription by Jikushin Keisen (d. 1462), a Zen monk who resided at Hekiunji in Yamaguchi in far western Honshū. Sesshū is known to have gone to Yamaguchi in 1454, so if Sesshū and Sessō are indeed the same person, then this is the earliest datable work by Sesshū, executed between the ages of thirty-five and forty-three. This painting was certainly well known during the nineteenth century, for a copy that is now in the Tokyo National Museum was made by an otherwise unidentified Hayashi Kyōsetsu in 1840. The painting was sold at auction in Tokyo in 1928. It eventually made its way to the United States before being acquired by the Danzigers.¹ —SM

¹ For a discussion of the 1840 copy and the importance of this work, see Sesshū e no tabi (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi kenritsu bijutuskan, 2006), 53; Sesshū (Tokyo: Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2002), 47, 254.
The origins of the Shinto kami Hachiman are obscure. His main shrine is in Usa on the island of Kyushu, and he is frequently associated with support for the imported Buddhist faith. As early as the eighth century, however, Hachiman was also seen as a loyal defender of the imperial institution. At about the same time, he came to be understood as a manifestation of Emperor Ōjin, one of the legendary early rulers of Japan. The popularity of Hachiman increased after the thirteenth century, when Japan was attacked by Mongol forces in 1274 and 1281. The invaders were repulsed off the northern shore of Kyushu by a great wind that was believed to have been caused by divine intervention. Wishing to associate Hachiman with the Japanese victory, Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine, the main sanctuary dedicated to the deity in Kyoto, commissioned a new legendary history of the deity in the early fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, this text was shortened and transformed into an illustrated version in two scrolls known as Hachiman no honji.

The first scroll depicts the early history of the deity, and in this account the successful defense from marauding continental forces is recast into Japan’s distant past. The second scroll details events leading to the founding of
Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine. The detail shown here is from the first scroll: Sumiyoshi Myōjin performs a dance to summon Isora, a deity of the ocean who brings with him sacred jewels that control the tides from the undersea palace of the Dragon King, which Empress Jingū will use to drown the invading Korean troops.

The scrolls are superb examples of a type of painting known in Japanese as Yamato-e, notable for its thick pigment, saturated colors, and minimal use of modulated ink lines. Although the origins of the technique can ultimately be traced back to Tang China, in Japan it was most often used for paintings of Japanese subject matter. Yamato-e was favored by members of the aristocracy, who often commissioned works such as this one that celebrated the legendary history of the imperial family or life at court. The decoration of the paper of this work is particularly sumptuous and includes motifs stamped in gold and silver as well as gold leaf. The box attributes the work to Sumiyoshi Jokei, one of the most influential practitioners of Yamato-e during the middle decades of the seventeenth century; however, it is unsigned. It was most likely done in his style by a highly accomplished but anonymous artist in Kyoto. —SM
Born in Kanazawa, Kishi Ganku was a prolific painter known for his paintings of tigers during the late Edo period. As a teenager, he had begun to study new painting styles both by Nanga artists, who worked in styles inspired by Chinese literati painting, and by Maruyama-Shijō artists, who fused ink painting techniques with realistic rendering. Kishi moved to Kyoto in his early twenties and soon received attention from noble patrons.

This delicate portrait in color, dated in the inscription, represents the early style of this artist. It depicts Lord Guan Yu—a legendary third-century Chinese general famous for his valor, righteousness, and loyalty—sitting on a chair and looking to the side. His imposing appearance is based on Chinese folk imagery, which often shows the general with his characteristic features: a pink face, a confident gaze, and a long, flowing beard.

Above the portrait is a five-character, eight-line poem that praises Lord Guan’s military prowess and noble virtue, which were particularly venerated by Japanese samurai warriors. (See detail below.) This poem was quoted from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, a famous work of fiction in Ming and Qing China. The inscriber, Mawatari Gouki of the Satsuma prefecture, must have been familiar with the story associated with this poem, in which Lord Guan spared the enemy Cao Cao because he wished to show gratitude to his previous benefactor even if they met as rivals on the battlefield. Lord Guan often appeared in narrative and theatrical arts and was worshiped as the god of war in China. In Edo Japan, Guan became not only a famous character in literature and kabuki theater, but also a popular subject of screen paintings, woodblock prints, and netsuke carvings. — FZ
This six-panel folding screen recreates the view from inside a room across a verandah and out into a garden. The season is early summer, since brightly colored azaleas bloom among moss-covered rocks. The background is covered in silver leaf, indicating dusk or evening.

Bamboo blinds (sudare) are a constant feature of Japanese genre painting. Hung most often from the summer into the autumn, they provided protection from the sun and insects, but they also afforded a degree of privacy from prying eyes. Thus, they are frequently associated with romantic liaisons. The earliest poetic mention of sudare is in the Manyōshū, the first collection of poems written in Japanese and compiled in the eighth century. This verse written by Princess Nukata (b. c. 638–c. 690), one of the most accomplished female poets of the seventh century, makes mention of unrequited love as well as a room protected by hanging sudare:

While I wait for you,
My lord, lost in this longing,
Suddenly there comes
A stirring of my window blind:
The autumn wind is blowing

The screen was in all certainty the left-hand element of a pair, of which the right-hand work is now lost. This painting only hints at the possible subject matter of the missing screen. It would have been an interior scene—perhaps the interior of an aristocrat’s residence. Whatever the subject, there is an air of informality conveyed by the central blind that is wrapped carelessly around the bamboo pole running along the top edge, as if someone raised the blinds on the spur of the moment to look outside.

The anonymous master who produced this work was highly skilled in Yamato-e painting, which relies primarily on color rather than modulated ink lines. While the silver has now oxidized, lessening its luster, originally the background would have shimmered as if the garden were illuminated by moonlight. The gold blinds further heighten the decorative effect of the work. — S M

Among the best known works in Japanese art are *ukiyo-e*, or “pictures of the floating world,” which were made to cater to the taste of the growing urban populace during the Edo period. These pictures depict the transitory moments and fleeting pleasures of the city of Edo (present day Tokyo), including scenes from the *kabuki* theater, brothels, streets, and popular venues. By the nineteenth century, landscape had become an important subject in *ukiyo-e* as well.

In 1915, Laurence Binyon (1869–1943), then the keeper of Oriental prints and drawings at the British Museum, helped the College purchase over thirty *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints in Europe. A notable example from this group is *Fireworks at Ryogoku* by Utagawa Hiroshige (also known as Andō Hiroshige). This print depicts the spectacular summer night fireworks over the Ryogoku Bridge on the Sumida River. This area was a center for evening entertainment in the city of Edo, where local residents would gather in the restaurants, on the bridge, and in private pleasure boats to enjoy the fireworks as part of summer celebrations.

This famous image is number ninety-eight from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (1856–58), Hiroshige’s last and largest print series which eventually included 120 images. The series features unusual perspectives, striking colors, and bold designs in its illustrations of places throughout Edo. Because works by this prolific artist responded to popular interest in travel and city life of the time, this print series was very popular and was reissued in several versions. — FZ
Okabe Station was located near Mount Utsu in the province of Suruga (modern Shizuoka prefecture), one of the most desolate places on the Tōkaidō, the highway that linked the shogun’s city of Edo with the imperial capital of Kyoto. The site was known for an oddly shaped stone located near a local temple that was thought to resemble a cat. In Japan, cats were not considered benign, rather they were believed to be shape-shifters or shaligasters, taking the form of young women or old hags who preyed on the unsuspecting. Over time this “cat stone” became associated with a number of fantastic legends, which were the inspiration for Kuniyoshi’s print and a number of kabuki plays. The basic plot always involves a young girl who stays the night at a temple, where she is welcomed by a woman. The woman later transforms into a cat demon and devours the girl.

In the print, Kuniyoshi shows a demon with cat-like ears attacking a young girl. The silhouette of a cat appears on the lantern and an image of a ferocious cat fills the background. To heighten the drama, Kuniyoshi adds broken reed blinds between the old woman and the monstrous cat.

Kuniyoshi was one of the most popular print artists of the late Edo period. He is particularly well known for his prints of historical figures, many of whom were the subject of kabuki plays. This series of fifty-eight images was a collaboration with two other leading print artists of the day. Kuniyoshi made thirty-one prints, Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) nineteen, and Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1864; known as Toyokuni III after 1844) eight. As the scholar Timothy Clark observes, the pairing in the title probably refers to the juxtaposition of each post station with a local legend or some other subject associated with the place. The fan-shaped cartouche at the top provides a brief description of the legend of the “cat stone.” — SM

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This print design in its later editions is popularly titled Red Fuji, and is one of the best-known works of Japanese art in the West. It is part of the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (actually comprised of forty-six images) designed by Hokusai between 1831 and 1833.

This rare, early impression of the design is sometimes called “Pink Fuji” because of the more delicate tonalities of the colors.

The importance of this work was first recognized by the eminent print scholar Roger A. Keyes. Keyes convincingly proposed that this image is the first impression of the first state of the design; thus it reveals how Hokusai intended the work to appear. None of the subtleties present in this impression can be found in the later versions, which are dominated by the intense red of the mountain and the deep blue of the sky. As Keyes has observed, Hokusai frames the top of the volcano’s cone with light blue. In addition, the sky is not uniform in color; in some areas the blue is darker than in others, adding movement to the clouds. The season is late summer and the time of day is dawn. Keyes noted that the morning light illuminates the upper slope of the mountain unevenly, brightening the lower slope of the front of the mountain. Most of the snow near the peak has melted and the gray peak turns pink, giving the work its informal name.

Keyes also convincingly suggested that this image was a transitional one in the series. The prints were issued in groups of five or six, and the first group was done exclusively in indigo. In the second, Hokusai adds one color, and in the third group (to which this image belongs), he adds another. For Keyes, this “return to color” marks a return of Hokusai’s artistic confidence after a particularly hard period in his life. — SM

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The first subway in Asia was opened in Tokyo in 1927. It first linked Asakusa, the site of one the city’s oldest temples and a vibrant entertainment district, with Ueno, the location of the Imperial Museum, the zoo, and numerous expositions. By 1932 it reached Nihonbashi in the center of the city. In 1939 the line from Asakusa was joined with a second line built eastward from Shibuya in the southwest, making it possible to travel across the city underground. The subway quickly became associated with the consumer culture of the city. Riders could enter the two largest department stores—Matsuzakaya near Ueno and Mitsukoshi near Nihonbashi—directly from the subway, a point noted by Koizumi in his commentary on the print.

This print depicts three fashionably dressed women most probably at the back of a train as it leaves an elaborately decorated station. Two are dressed in kimono, one in Western style; all three have the short hair style that was popular in the city during the 1930s.

Koizumi Kishio began his series of prints One Hundred Views of Great Tokyo in the Shōwa Era in 1928 and completed it in 1940. In producing one hundred views, he was clearly making reference to Hiroshige’s One Hundred Famous Views of Edo produced at the end of the Edo period. Koizumi’s prints document the revival of the city following the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923 and its expansion in the 1930s. Koizumi originally trained as a block carver and began making prints only after he made the acquaintance of some of the pioneers of the Creative Print Movement—artists who designed, carved, and printed their own works. — SM
This sumptuously decorated box was made to store documents or writing paper. It combines a number of lacquer techniques—raised lacquer (takamaki-e), flat lacquer (hiramaki-e), and two different types of inlay, one using mother-of-pearl and stones and the other using aogai (blue-green shell).

The lid is ornamented with a group of five deer gathered by a mountain stream over which extend the branches of a maple tree entwined with those of a pine. The season is autumn and the anonymous artist represents the changing foliage by fashioning the leaves in gold, bronze, black, and aogai. Further emphasizing the season is a willow that has dropped its leaves and a hollyhock with bright red berries.

The underside of the lid has two interlocked vignettes (upper left). The lower one continues the autumnal theme. In the foreground is another rushing stream. Maple leaves fall into the water from a tree that clings to an overhanging cliff edged with bamboo grass. Both the cliff and the rock below are ornamented with inlaid stones and small pieces of aogai; bright red hollyhock berries add further color to the scene. Above, the top edge of the cliff transforms into the front compound of a two-story structure with an elaborate tile roof—most likely a temple. In the distance, barely visible, are the tile roofs of two more buildings. All three structures are surrounded by a mixture of broad-leafed and coniferous trees. Autumn trees and rushing water dominate the ornamentation on the sides of the box as well.

This box is fitted with a tray (upper right) decorated with more autumnal plants and a baku, a mythological creature of Chinese origin that traditionally is said to possesses the body of a bear, the trunk of an elephant, the eyes of a rhinoceros, the tail of a bull, and the legs of a tiger. Baku were believed to consume nightmares and thus were thought to be felicitous despite their bizarre appearance. —SM

Document Box (ryōshibako). Edo period, 18th century
Black and gold lacquer with mother of pearl and stone inlay
5¼ x 15¼ x 12½ in.; 13.33 x 39.37 x 31.11 cm
Promised gift of Dr. Elizabeth E. Force
Kajikawa Bunryūsai II was a member of a family of lacquerers that traced its roots back to the seventeenth century. They worked primarily for the Tokugawa shogunate and other members of the military elite in Edo. The name Bunryūsai was taken by the third artist in the lineage as well as by two others who were active from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. They are best known for making inrō, medicine cases with multiple interlocking compartments.

Japanese artists frequently turned to classical literature for inspiration for their works. One of the most popular sources was the Tales of Ise, a ninth-century collection of poems with prose prefaces written by the courtier Ariwara no Narihira (823–880). Chapter nine describes the travels of the poet and some companions in eastern Japan, far from the capital. When they came upon a marsh filled with irises and crossed by eight bridges, Narihira composed a poem that succinctly conveyed his longing for a woman he had left in the capital.

When the first syllables of each of the five lines were read in succession, the result was kakitsubata, the Japanese word for iris. As a result, many artists of later periods, including Kajikawa Bunryūsai, chose to illustrate the moment by showing only the irises and the bridges. The planks of the bridge have been fashioned out of lead; the iris blossoms are inlaid mother of pearl.

— SM

This tray, ornamented with a dramatic representation of tropical fish swimming among coral and sea weeds, was given the title *Treasures of the Sea* by the artist. While the technique of building up many layers of lacquer and then carving it has a long history, the subject matter is not traditional and reflects an interest in the exotic that had captured the imagination of the Japanese in the interwar period.

Yōzei was born into a Kyoto family that had carved lacquer since the fourteenth century. During his apprenticeship he studied not only traditional raised-lacquer techniques but also sculpture and painting. This diverse training is visible in the pictorial qualities of his composition and the realism of his forms. By using black lacquer for the coral and plants, he immediately draws attention to the three groups of colorful fish, yet by adding detail to all the elements, the result is a high degree of illusionism. In contrast the back of the tray is decorated with a traditional motif of waves.

Yōzei received recognition both inside and outside Japan. In 1900 he won a bronze plaque at the Paris Exposition Universelle followed by a second prize at the 1907 Tokyo Industrial Exposition. This pattern was repeated in the 1920s with a prize in 1925 at the Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs and the receipt of a prestigious domestic award in 1928. His first solo exhibition was at the Takashimaya Department Store in Osaka in 1924; ten years later he had a second solo exhibition at the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Tokyo. — SM

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1 http://www.kagedo.com/collections/2/KJA0222.html
The Ainu people are most likely the descendants of the earliest inhabitants of northern Japan. They showed a deep respect for nature and lived as hunter-gatherers, fishing and harvesting wild plants and vegetables. By the seventeenth century they had been pushed from the main island of Honshū and resided only in Hokkaidō, the Kuril Islands, and Sakhalin. The Ainu had little contact with the outside world, trading primarily with the Matsumae clan who controlled the southern end of Hokkaidō. Throughout the Edo period, the Tokugawa shogunate increased its control over the resident Ainu population. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, colonization of Hokkaidō increased rapidly and the Ainu lost all independence. As a result, many intermarried with Japanese and they gave up their traditional way of life.

Ainu art was “discovered” by the Japanese and Westerners in the nineteenth century. Most of what they made were household objects decorated with simple carved designs. The most elegant objects were textiles made from elm bark, linden, or a nettle-like plant (*Urtica thunberaiana*) bleached in the snow. Cotton and silk were acquired from the Japanese or from the continent to use as appliqué and embroidered ornamentation. As Robert Moes, the former curator of the Brooklyn Museum, writes:

> While [the patterns] are always symmetrical, because of the free-hand manner of work and the shapes of the designs themselves, they are never static. On the contrary, the variations on the traditional motifs of spirals (moreau), thorns, and bracings seem alive with movement.¹

This robe with indigo stripes and indigo dyed cotton cloth appliqué embodies the design principles that Moes describes. It is in particularly fine condition, which highlights the contrast between the rich blues and the bleached bark ground. —SM

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Tokyo in the 1920s and 1930s was a place of great cultural hybridity. Influences from Europe and the United States flowed into the city with unprecedented frequency. Its residents did not accept outside cultural forms uncritically, however, but adapted them to Japanese taste and ways of life. The most fashionable promoters of Western manners were known as Modern Boys and Modern Girls and they frequented the Ginza, a district distinguished by its department stores, cafés, dance halls, and beer parlors. Some of the Modern Girls dressed in a Western-inflected manner; those who favored Japanese fashion abandoned kimonos with traditional patterns and in their place often donned robes with bold geometric designs in bright colors. The type of kimono that was preferred by the Modern Girls is generally known as meisen: plain-weave garments of raw silk with stencil-dyed warps and wefts. The robes resembled ikat, but could be made quickly and sold cheaply. In fact, meisen were some of the first “ready-to-wear” kimono, produced in standard sizes and sold off the rack in department stores and other shops that targeted Tokyo’s ever-expanding population of consumers. — SM
A tea room has two major focal points. The visual focus is the alcove adorned with a hanging scroll and a flower arrangement. The functional focus is the hearth or brazier with an iron kettle to boil water for the preparation of tea. Upon entering the tea room, the guest is expected to first examine the objects in the alcove and then direct attention to the kettle, which is either set into the floor or placed on a ceramic or metal brazier. The sound of the boiling water is frequently likened to that of the wind blowing through pines and provides a subtle backdrop for the preparation of tea.

The first kettles made in Japan were to boil water for the preparation of tea at Zen monasteries. By the fifteenth century kettles for the tea ceremony were being made at a number of locations around Japan including Kyoto. The term *shinnari* designates the most standard type of kettle thought to have been used to boil water before the advent of the tea ceremony. *Shinnari* kettles are characterized by their broad profile and the gentle curve from the mouth to the shoulders. This kettle, cast by Nagoshi Jōmi VI, a member of an illustrious family of kettle makers from Kyoto, has been fashioned with a protruding flange between the sides and base so that it can rest directly on the mouth of the brazier. Its surface is ornamented with a regular pattern of numerous raised dots described as hailstones in the tea tradition. Korean-style braziers are characterized by the dramatic reduction in size from the wide mouth which supports the kettle to three closely-spaced feet. Kettle makers also made braziers. Ōnishi Jōgen I was the first artist in a line of kettle makers directly associated with the Sen family of tea masters, which traced its lineage back to Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). — SM

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**ŌNISHI JŌGEN I**

Japanese, 1689–1762

*Korean-style brazier.*

Edo period, 18th century

Polished bronze

**NAGOSHI JÔMI VI**

Japanese, d. 1759

*Kettle of the Shinnari type.*

Edo period, 18th century

Iron with polished bronze lid

Overall (with brazier):

height: 13 in.; 43.92 cm;
diameter: 12¼ in.; 31.11 cm

Gift of Peggy Block Danziger, class of 1962, and Richard M. Danziger

2008:17-4a–d

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**ONISHI JÔGEN I**

Japanese, 1689–1762

*Korean-style brazier.*

Edo period, 18th century

Polished bronze

**NAGOSHI JÔMI VI**

Japanese, d. 1759

*Kettle of the Shinnari type.*

Edo period, 18th century

Iron with polished bronze lid

Overall (with brazier):

height: 13 in.; 43.92 cm;
diameter: 12¼ in.; 31.11 cm

Gift of Peggy Block Danziger, class of 1962, and Richard M. Danziger

2008:17-4a–d
This scene, carved in high relief, depicts the time in the life of the Buddha when, as Prince Siddhartha, he is contemplating renouncing his royal heritage as crown prince of the kingdom of the Shakas in order to seek the truth concerning suffering in the world. Specifically, it represents a time just prior to his action of renunciation by leaving the palace and abandoning his worldly heritage.

Here, Siddhartha is seated in a posture of contemplation on the side of the bed as his wife, Yashoda, sleeps. Two attendants stand nearby and two musicians sit in the corners. They indicate the circumstances of his lavish lifestyle, which was famously provided by Siddhartha’s father, the king, who tried to keep his son on the path toward royal lineage rather than becoming a “Buddha” or enlightened one—a choice that was foretold at Siddhartha’s birth. It is rare to see this particular contemplative posture used for Siddhartha in Gandharan scenes of the renunciation.

This relief comes from the top portion of a gable that originally adorned a Buddhist stupa in the ancient region of Gandhara (northern Pakistan). As monasteries proliferated in Gandhara during the Kushana dynastic period, stupas, the main object of worship at this time in Buddhist monasteries, became more elaborately decorated with sculptural reliefs. In the earlier phases (c. first–second century CE) these reliefs primarily focused on depicting the events of the Buddha’s life. The gable was placed on the solid dome that rose from the square base of the structure. Usually one gable was placed at each of the four cardinal directions and comprised various levels of reliefs. Here the scene is from the level of the roof eaves. Bird-head ornaments curl out from the ends, two birds sit atop the curved side of the rooftop, and clusters of fruit, possibly grapes, hug each side of the rectangular canopy over the central figures. A band of leaves appears at the bottom, separating this relief from the larger main part of the gable (now missing) below. — M R
In this tangka painting from Eastern Tibet, Shakyamuni Buddha appears in the center with two standing monks, Shariputra and Maudgalyayana, representing the wisdom and method lineages of Buddhist practice. Shakyamuni’s “earth witness” gesture (mudra) is indicative of his enlightenment. In his left hand he holds the monk’s bowl. An array of halos framed by vari-colored clouds creates a brilliant mandorla behind him as he sits in a yogic posture on an elaborate lotus pedestal. A small offering table is placed in front of him. The robes, pedestal, and halos are richly and masterfully gilded.

Surrounding the large central group is a dense array of scenes depicting Shakyamuni’s life. They are portrayed without change of perspective, but each discrete scene is clearly separated by dark green trees hung with jewels or by clouds and hills. The scenes are presented on a tilted plane and are arranged from bottom to top within a vivid landscape of dominating green with gold outlines modeling the hills—a style derived from Chinese Buddhist painting of the eighteenth century.

Buddha’s life unfolds in five main sections in clockwise order beginning at the lower left with the birth sequence: Queen Maya in waiting is followed by the birth as she holds onto the limb of a tree. The infant Buddha is not depicted, but, interestingly, seems to be mystically implied by a little shrine. In the upper left corner are scenes in the royal palace. The third group shows Siddhartha’s renunciation as crown prince (by cutting off his hair), and, in the right corner, his meditation and final triumph in defeating illusion and achieving enlightenment as Buddha. Down the right side appear three episodes from his teaching life, and in the final group at the bottom are events of his parinirvana.

In general, the composition and figure style derive from the New Menri school of painting used prominently by the Gelukpa Order from the seventeenth century. The spread of Tibetan Buddhism to China and Mongolia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by this order strongly influenced the art of the Amdo and Mongolian regions, the possible provenance of this tangka.

— M R
Mistress and Confidante
Seated on Carpet in Courtyard.
Rajasthan (probably Bikaner),
India.
c. late 18th century

Opaque water base colors
and gold on paper
Sheet: 17¾ x 10½ in.;
44.9 x 26.9 cm

Bequest of
John Kenneth Galbraith
SC 2007:4–5

Two women sit across from one another conversing on an open terrace. Their features and demeanor indicate something of the nature of the conversation. The young woman bends slightly forward, right hand resting on her upright knee, as if to share a secret with an elderly confidante, who points a finger to her lips in a gesture of astonishment. In erotic poetry, on which the court paintings of Rajasthan such as this one were based, a confidante is a go-between for lovers. The Rasikpriya of Keshavdas (1555–1617) recommends a class of experienced women for this purpose: a maidservant, a faithful nurse, a barber’s spouse, a woman recluse, and so on.

In this painting, the maturity as well as lower class of such a confidante is communicated in her body. While the young woman’s round face in profile, as well as her arched eyebrow and narrow waist, accord with the pictorial conventions for female form in court paintings of Rajasthan, the shriveled, washed-out, elderly figure indicates close observation of the natural and social world in which the painter lived. The avid use of naturalism indicates that this painting belongs to the Rajasthani court of Bikaner, whose artists looked closely at imperial Mughal painting. Mughal artists were the first to include Flemish-style naturalism in their Persian idiom, using illustrated Bibles printed in Antwerp and brought to India by Jesuit priests in the sixteenth century. Bikaner’s hybrid style reflects that court’s close alliance with the Mughals and assistance in Mughal military expeditions in the Deccan region of South India. Elongated figures and a palette of mauve, purple, wine-red, and salmon bring Bikaneri style closer to Deccani paintings and distinguish it from the stocky figures and spritely palette of bright orange, cobalt blue, acid yellow, and terre verte common in other Rajasthani styles.

Surprisingly, the architecture in this scene does not provide a three-dimensional spatial setting for the naturally rendered figures; instead, rectangular architectural shapes turn the compositional grid itself into a solid form. In this painting, the pavilion on the left and the horizontal terrace wall behind it mark the chief coordinates of the grid, locating the women in the lower right quadrant. Chalk-white walls contrast with velvety details of rolled-up curtains and carpets. Crisp lines make the architecture stand out against the freely painted indigo sky and hills, conveying the spirit of experimentation for which the Bikaneri court painters become distinguished by the late eighteenth century. — AS

1 References consulted for this entry include: Shanane Davis, Bikaner School Usta Artisans and Their Heritage (Jodhpur, RMG Exports, 2008); Catherine Glynn, “Bijapur Themes in Bikaner Painting,” in Andrew Topsfield, ed., Court Painting in Rajasthan (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2000); and Naval Krishna, “The Umrani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and Their Genealogy,” in Andrew Topsfield, ed., Court Painting in Rajasthan (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2000).
Horror unfolds in the central panel of this album painting. Four caparisoned elephants, goaded by drivers, charge into an open field, attacking prisoners. At the upper left, two prisoners, surrounded by officials, await their turn under the gallows. To the right of this group, a tusker descends on two cowering prisoners. Another, in the center of the composition, having crushed two men, lifts a third man in its trunk. The elephant at the lower right tramples two more prisoners and skewers a third with its tusk. The fourth elephant enters the picture from the lower left and treads on a man’s spine. Above it, a mauled prisoner is splayed like a starfish on the ground, with limbs pointing toward the array of violence across the field. The bloody execution is intended as a public spectacle, to be watched by courtiers on the crest of the hill.

The painting is a direct copy of a leaf from the Akbarnama (The Book of Akbar), titled Trained Elephants Executing the Followers of ‘Ali Quli While Mirza Mirak Mashhadi Was Spared (c. 1586–87), now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (IS 2:90—1896). While the original painting belonged to a manuscript commissioned by the Mughal emperor, Akbar (1556–1605), the copy is a stand-alone album picture (muraqqá).

Blocks of Persian inscriptions capture the voices of multiple witnesses to the scene. The top middle panel reads like a verdict on behalf of the ruler or official for whom the scene is staged: “The head of each branch is inclined to be killed by you.” The central bottom panel celebrates the patron: “Every rose’s freshness ensues from the generosity of your fragrance.” By contrast, a couplet connecting the right and left top panels inserts a tone of silent lament: “The musicians began a hidden, soulful cry in answer to the minstrel in the veil of secrecy.” The bottom side panels, continuing from right to left, convey astonishment possibly about a narrow escape, in a first-person voice, presumably the patron’s: “My god! What good fortune I had last night by remaining awake to the luck in my embrace!” The conflicting voices suggest a sub-imperial commission. The inscription on the verso, written in a beautiful cursive style called nasta’liq, seems unrelated to the imagery in the recto and is attributed to a certain “Shirin Qalam” (Sweet Pen), a title for famous calligraphers whose written specimens were also purchased separately and reused for paintings in Mughal India.1 — AS

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Tang Muli began painting at the age of six and received his first international award when he was twelve years old. Schools were closed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and Tang was assigned to work in a dairy farm commune outside of Beijing and, subsequently, as a designer for the Shanghai agricultural exhibition. He honed his artistic skills by painting model revolutionary compositions, such as *The Young Bugler*. This painting depicts a group of young people engaging in Lalian, which means “pull out to drill.” When relations were failing between China and the former Soviet Union during the late 1960s and early 1970s, official policy dictated that rotating groups of civilians be mustered into regiments to engage in long field marches through the countryside. *The Young Bugler* was based on drawings Tang executed during his Lalian in 1971, and displays a key memorable figure from his experience: the bugler who regulated the daily routines of the march.

After the Cultural Revolution ended and the art colleges reopened in 1979, Tang Muli was admitted to the master’s program at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. He won a Chinese government scholarship to study abroad in 1981, and finally settled in Montreal, Canada, where he is active as a portrait and landscape painter. — AJG

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1 Tang Muli, “My Memory of The Young Bugler” (December, 2008), unpublished document, SCMA curatorial files.
After gaining admission to the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing in the mid-1950s, Yuan Yunsheng deviated from the rigid Communist Party-line dictates on art. Instead of painting massive, muscular, socialist-realist heroes, his figures were elongated and graceful.

In April 1957, Mao began the Hundred Flowers Campaign by inviting intellectuals to express their suggestions and criticisms to the Chinese Communist Party without fear of reprisal. (“Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred thoughts contend.”) Less than six weeks later, he issued a directive that would begin the Anti-Rightist Campaign to purge those allegedly holding opinions to the “right” of the party. In an informal conversation with fellow students, Yuan was overheard condemning Stalinist-style socialist realism, the official style of art in China. Yuan was branded a Rightist for his comments. Because he refused to confess his “errors,” he was sent out of Beijing for labor and reeducation for two years, and then allowed to return to the Central Academy of Fine Arts to graduate in 1961. His postgraduate work assignment was teaching workers in a local cultural palace in remote Changchun (Ever Spring), the capital of Jilin Province, where he was separated from his wife and three children for almost sixteen years.

In 1979 Yuan returned to work on Water-sprinkling Festival: Song in Praise of Life, a mural for the dining room of the new Beijing airport. As his subject, he chose to depict the Dai people in southwestern Yunnan Province celebrating the Water Festival, which occurs each April at the beginning of the hot season. Spanning two walls, the mural had a lush landscape populated by figures that included two women bathing. The nudes caused a great scandal. Authorities first curtained off the nudes, then walled over the mural. Only in 1986, after the restaurant was bought by a private entrepreneur, was the mural again revealed to public view. 

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1 This entry is based on a biography of the artist by Joan Lebold Cohen in the exhibition catalogue Post-Mao Dreaming 2009.
To celebrate the long relationship of Smith and Ginling College, Ginling’s alumnae association gave Smith this painting depicting Ginling’s main campus. Ding Zhan, a Nanjing artist who taught traditional ink painting at Nanjing Normal University, was invited to paint this image of the main campus, which consists of seven major buildings.1 The social and athletic building is located to the west (pictured as the top building in the scroll), flanked by two student dormitories. They are connected by covered walkways to other buildings in the courtyard, including the science and chapel buildings to the south and the recitation and library buildings to the north.

Founded by five American Christian missionary boards, Ginling College opened its doors to students in 1915 and soon became the most influential women’s college in modern China. In 1919, Matilda C. Thurston (1875–1958), the first president of Ginling College and a graduate of Mount Holyoke College (class of 1896), commissioned the American architect Henry Murphy (1877–1954) to design Ginling’s new campus. (Murphy was later hired by Chiang Kai-shek to transform old Nanjing into a modern capital for the Republic of China.) Murphy and his architects adapted Chinese traditional architectural styles and compositions and incorporated Christian symbols and Beaux-Arts principles.2 Finished in 1923, this building complex became one of Nanjing’s architectural landmarks and is now preserved as an important historical heritage site in China.

For more than three decades, Smith College was a supporter and model for Ginling College, providing it with financial and academic support until 1952. Enthusiastic Smith alumnae installed a Ginling representative in every Smith club in America and contributed at least one-fourth of Ginling’s operating budget for years.3 Smith alumnae also raised $50,000 to cover the entire cost of the social and athletic building, the central building on Ginling’s campus, pictured here in a photograph from 1923. — FZ

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1 Old Ginling College was partly incorporated into Nanjing Normal University in 1952 when it was closed. In 1987, Ginling College was refounded on its original site by Nanjing Normal University.


The gift from Jerome and Joan Cohen of nearly forty Post-Mao and contemporary Chinese paintings marks an extraordinary addition to the Asian art holdings of the Museum (see also cat. nos. 33 and 41). The Cohens were among the first Americans who traveled to and lived in China soon after the Cultural Revolution and thus became friends with many artists, young and old. The paintings in their collection, mainly created in the 1980s and 1990s, represent works of several generations of Chinese artists and their efforts to revive traditional styles and explore new artistic forms. In the U.S., the Cohens also became friends of many Chinese artists in the United States, including Gu Wenda and Ai Weiwei, who have become influential trendsetters in the contemporary art world.

Gu Wenda is considered one of China’s most creative artists of the 1980s. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1987, where his ideas began to attract international attention. Rock in Rock is a representative work reflecting a transitional moment in his art, when the artist made a bold move away from traditional Chinese ink painting to explore new forms and non-conventional materials. Painted in the manner of a traditional ink painting, this abstract work can be read as a landscape with rocks standing upright. But these forms may also suggest body parts or sexual organs. The vertical striations in the lower half of the painting resemble interwoven hair. Gu would soon find inspiration from the combination of body material and fiber art to launch his famous ongoing installation series—the United Nations—in which he used human hair to create various works that call for “the growing self-awareness of regionalism and otherness.”

—FZ

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Hung Liu was born in Changchun, China. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution she was sent as a young woman to the country, where she worked in the fields, sometimes taking care of horses, while secretly continuing to draw. After earning a graduate degree in mural painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, she came to the United States in 1984 to pursue graduate studies at the University of California at San Diego. Chinese history is the subject of her work, and though she no longer believes in a socialist utopian society, fundamental Chinese values and ideologies have remained with her.1

In *The Judgment of Paris*, Liu poses two different conflations of East and West, both involving male gaze and choice. In the central canvas, Liu has painted a version of a Qing dynasty export-ware vase featuring the story of a Greek myth: a “beauty contest” among the goddesses Athena, Aphrodite, and Hera, judged by the mortal Paris. While such wares were produced in China, with Western subjects to appeal to Western buyers, the body of the vase, doubled with two lids, is a fiction created by Liu. This doubling refers in form to female breasts and to the figures of two young girls in the outer panels based on photographs of prostitutes from an archive the artist discovered in Beijing in 1991. Images of young prostitutes were produced by Chinese photographers for their Chinese clients in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century using cameras imported from the West. As Liu has written, “They represent the way Chinese were seen from the West and the way such a perception was internalized by the Chinese themselves. . . . The equation is always the same: woman [as] object. In this way the prostitutes were made to appeal to the customer’s desire to associate himself with the accouterments of Western Civilization.”2

According to Smith alumna and gallerist Rena Bransten, who gave this painting to the Museum, the small, pink, open-ended box inserted into the middle of the vase represents “an opening to look into China,”3 and a “surprise 3-D object which not only interrupts the surface of the painting but also extends the painting . . .”4 — L.M

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3 Letter from Rena Bransten to Aprile Gallant, January 28, 2004, SCMA curatorial files.
4 Letter from Rena Bransten to Linda Muehlig, April 30, 2005, SCMA curatorial files.
YASUKI MASAKO
Born Japan, 1970

The Presence Between Things
2001

Tempera and oil on canvas mounted on three wood panels
Overall: 78 3/4 x 117 3/4 in.;
200.02 x 299.08 cm;
each panel: 78 3/4 x 39 1/4 in.;
200.02 x 99.69 cm

Purchased with the Janet Wright Ketcham, class of 1953,
Acquisition Fund SC 2004:49a-c

Yasuki Masako’s The Presence Between Things is one of three works purchased by the Museum from objects shown in SCMA’s 2004 exhibition Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto (see also cat. nos. 42 and 55). At the time of the exhibition, the work of the young painter Yasuki Masako had rarely, if ever, been shown in the United States. The Presence Between Things belongs to the artist’s series of the same title, which dealt with Japanese cities that were bombed and destroyed during World War II.¹ According to the artist, “I started this series to represent some sort of gap between historical images or knowledge and memory . . . and the physical world we really face, the actual landscape in front of us. . . . Gradually, though, I started using more explicit titles, such as ‘obliterated ground.’”²

Although the cityscapes in this series are based on actual locations, the artist chooses not to identify them. The Museum’s painting is constructed from the artist’s memory of a view from a hill above a strategic target of U.S. air raids and photographs of the city taken after the war.³ She also used frottage, as she says, “copying the land itself onto sheets of paper by rubbing the actual . . . city asphalt ground with charcoal. I incorporated these images into the painting as well. So the painting was set up by at least 3 different layers.” Buildings and architecture emerge and dissolve in the dappled surface of this and other landscapes by Yasuki, which often take the form of a triptych reminiscent of traditional Japanese folding screens.⁴ In The Presence Between Things, roads transect the painting, creating grid patterns and a diagonal coursing from the lower left to the upper right. The image is elusive, reading as an almost representational nightscape lit by thousands of lights and, at the same time, as abstract patterning. The artist uses a combination of Japanese and Western techniques and materials. More recently her work has included paintings on gold leaf and blue waterscapes that evoke Monet’s Nymphéas paintings. — L M

¹ The Presence Between Things was also the title of Yasuki’s exhibition at Gallery TE Tokyo in 2001.
² Email from the artist to Linda Muehlig, July 27, 2012.
³ Email from the artist to Linda Muehlig, July 29, 2012. Although the artist does not intend her landscapes to be recognizable sites, she has shared with the Museum that the city depicted in The Presence Between Things is Hamamatsu, which was destroyed by U.S. and Allied bombing raids in summer 1945. The city was a frequent military target, where armaments factories, a major airfield, and a flight school for the Japanese Army Air Force were located. It was also a bomb dumping ground for flights returning to base.
Saira Wasim trained at the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan, an art school well known since the 1980s for a creative revival of the miniature painting style that flourished in South Asia during the Mughal dynasty. The Lahore experiment has produced internationally acclaimed artists who reuse the Mughal style for contemporary purposes. Buzkashi (“goat-grabbing”), the title of this painting, is a sport of the rough, tribal region of Northwest Pakistan in which groups compete to bring a goat carcass to a flagpole at the end of an open field. Wasim uses the sport as a metaphor for the politics of modern Pakistan, which have been marked by a series of military dictators.

Just as Mughal emperors were celebrated in iconic paintings, here curtains are drawn aside to reveal Pervez Musharraf, the president of Pakistan from 2001 to 2008, kneeling on a golden throne; however, in this case he does not preside over a group of respectful courtiers but a clownish group of military generals carrying the trophy goat. The copper sun above him looks menacing. The curtains are decorated with phallic missiles and stars vaguely resembling those of the American flag, while the orange bolster of Musharraf’s throne is embroidered with question marks. The president has four arms, as if he were a Hindu deity in military uniform. His attributes and hand gestures communicate the figure’s contradictory nature: in one hand he holds a wrestler’s mace, in another he holds a balloon, and makes a peace sign and a military salute with the other two. Two onlookers are shown at the lower edge of the painting bearing witness to the scene, as is typical of court paintings of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan (1628–1658). Here the witnesses are the president’s rivals: at the left, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, president of the Muslim political party Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, is shown dressed in a tiger skin, and at the right, nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan wears a bear skin. Unlike witnesses in Mughal paintings who legitimize the emperor’s right to the throne, the religious fundamentalist and the scientist are locked in a heated debate, possibly over the dubious legitimacy of the dictator or the future of Pakistan.  

Painter Jiha Moon combines references to traditional Asian landscapes with images and icons mined from popular culture to create cross-cultural “mindscapes.” ¹ Moon’s *Fabulous Fiction* series of 2007 began as a way of telling stories or fables that, according to the artist, generated mythic narratives of their own, influenced by her own research and by her experience moving to this country from South Korea.

Moon usually begins by working spontaneously, building the layers of paint while searching for interesting spaces and shapes. Departing from her usual palette of florid colors, Moon planned the rich, but subdued background of *Comfort Zone* to evoke Renaissance etchings or sepia drawings, with Dürer, Rembrandt, and even Hieronymus Bosch in mind. The abstract aspect of the painting is countered by details hidden in smaller spaces, a characteristic of traditional Asian landscapes that interests Moon. Bubbles, animal shapes, and details quoted from the Korean national flag (which the artist uses to create her own symbols), are seeded in the composition. The artist uses what she terms “fast” and “slow” brushwork to suggest wind, water, and other elements of nature. ² Calligraphic lines and objects infused with joyful energy are drawn with a deft ink pen on handmade *hanji* paper. The viewer is free to interpret the work as he or she wishes.³

—LM

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1 Artist’s statement, 2004 (http://thinkingaboutart.blogs.com/art/2004/07/the...work_of_jih.html). See also cat. no. 10 (*Comfort Zone*) in *Movement* 움직임 2008.
2 Email from the artist to Linda Muehlig, May 21, 2012.
3 Ibid. The artist does not intend the title to be a reference to the “comfort women” of World War II, who were forced into prostitution.
YURIKO YAMAGUCHI
Born Japan, 1948

Origin #1, 1989
Wood, wire, and glass jars
64 x 84 x 9½ in.;
162.56 x 213.36 x 24.13 cm

Purchased with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and Museum Members
SC 1989:26

Yuriko Yamaguchi began carving wood sculptures during graduate study at the University of Maryland, where she received her MFA in 1979. Her large-scale sculptural assemblage Origin #1 was acquired by the Museum at a time when the artist’s work was not well known outside the Washington, D.C. area, where she still resides. It is an early work concerned with natural materials and processes—birth/death, growth/waning—and with intensive hand-working of its sculptural forms, which were carved from wood and then burnished and smoothed. It forecast the fundamental and resonant themes of life and death, and interdependence and relationship that her work continues to address.

The artist recalls that Origin #1 was conceived during an illness, five years after the birth of her son and the death of her father in 1984. Thoughts about the philosophical and physical aspects of the life cycle began to take shape in the forms she carved and assembled: “plus” and “minus” signs for yin and yang, wires spreading across the central element to suggest cell division, seed-like and sprouting forms to symbolize birth, change, and growth, and a “boat” or coffin shape (center left) suggesting passage and death. Four glass jars with small sculptures inside confine themes of life and death and are associated, in the artist’s mind, with Egyptian canopic jars, in which organs of the deceased were placed and preserved, and also with “test tube babies.” Below the jars, the “up and down” motion of a wire strung at intervals with small spheres symbolizes heartbeats, and at the right, the looping, carved form is associated with DNA.

In 1991, Yamaguchi embarked on an ambitious project entitled Metamorphosis, in which sculptural “cells” resembling components of Origin #1 were carved over a period of years to culminate in a grid of 108 rows. She developed a corollary Web series in which suspended clouds of wire netting were strung with thousands of seed pods; these evolved into works resembling constellations of jewel-like elements made from computer components and cast resin. Since the death of her mother in 2008, the artist has created work inspired by bubbles as an expression of the fragility of life.

—LM

1 Yamaguchi notes commonalities in her work with ideas expressed in Fritjof Capra’s The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), stating: “I found my purpose in creating works that remind people that we are connected in many overlapping webs woven out of the common forces that affect the human condition: family origin, economic stress, religious beliefs, nature, time, place, and technology. After all, we are only human beings who were born and who will die, to be replaced by others in the community of man” (artist’s statement, August 29, 2010).

Described by one writer as a “veteran of visual combat,” Pan Xinglei is an artist-provocateur who works with sculpture, “scrolls” painted with bold calligraphic statements, installation, video, and performance art. Born in northern China in the city of Shenyang, Pan Xinglei was one of the artists responsible for the Goddess of Democracy monument constructed as part of the student-led protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. After receiving his BFA in painting from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, the artist moved to Hong Kong, where he engaged in performance works anticipating the end of its history as a British colony in 1997. In the most notorious of these actions, the artist poured red paint over a sculpture of Queen Victoria (by Mario Raggi, 1821–1907) in Hong Kong’s Victoria Park and smashed the statue’s nose, for which he was arrested. In 1999, he moved to the United States, where he now lives and works in Brooklyn.

Pan Xinglei’s “rubber men” are made from casts of his own body and were created in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations. Flexible versions made from polyurethane or latex, whose surfaces are marked with paint and characters by the artist, are used in performances and installations. In their “soft” form they appear as deflated bodies or cast-off skin. Some are cast in solid form in plaster, fiberglass, or bronze. According to scholar Julia Andrews, Pan Xinglei’s rubber men play “on Chinese proverbs that refer to a person with an empty skin—a person with no heart, no spirit, no compassion, no humanity. In the context of the contemporary Chinese post-socialist economy and society, this is either a dire warning or the ultimate cynicism.”

—LM

At first glance Akiyama Yō’s ceramic sculptures appear to be less the result of artistic manipulation than the product of some natural phenomenon. On close examination, however, it becomes clear that they are made with a potter’s wheel. Fragments of thrown forms—the outer surface of a bowl, the interior of a vessel—are found in most of his works, but their traditional function has been lost.1

Akiyama came to Kyoto from Hiroshima to study ceramics at Kyoto Municipal University of Arts. There he met Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979), one of most influential Japanese potters of the post-war period, known for his abstract ceramic sculpture. Although Akiyama mastered the traditional techniques of throwing on a potter’s wheel and glazing, he has never been interested in making traditional ceramic shapes.

For most of his works Akiyama begins with a simple ring of clay thrown on the potter’s wheel. Using a gas burner, Akiyama applies the flame over either the interior or exterior surface of the ring, drying the clay and inducing cracks to form. He then cuts through the ring and either lays it flat or folds it back onto itself to form another ring; both types of manipulation produce further changes to the surface. For example, on those rings on which the interior has been dried, the result is a series of smooth, concave forms interrupted by deep jagged fissures; on those on which the exterior has been dried, the result is a honeycomb pattern of shallow cracks and smooth surfaces. Finally, Akiyama carefully works into the surface of the ring or slab, eroding it with water or further hardening it with flame until he achieves the effect he desires. Akiyama repeats this process with rings of different thicknesses and diameters and then constructs his pieces, joining the sections together with slip.

Akiyama does not view his ceramic sculptures as finite creations that aspire to permanence. Rather, like the material that carries their forms, he sees his work as deriving its most fundamental elements from natural processes that are controlled and manipulated by the artist. Thus, he fully expects that at some indeterminate point in the future those processes will overtake his works and they will return to the earth from which they were originally formed. —SM

In 2009–2010, the Smith College Museum of Art presented the exhibition *Touch Fire: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics by Women Artists* drawn from the personal collection of a member of the class of 1965. As a collector of contemporary Asian ceramics at the forefront of trends in the West, she acquired works directly from the artists and their galleries, forming a group of highly innovative and technically complex works spanning the relatively short history—from the post-World War II era to the present—of independent Japanese women ceramists. More than thirty works from *Touch Fire* were generously given by the collector and her family to the Museum as a permanent source of inspiration for Smith students.

The gift includes objects created by the first generation of artists, such as Tsuboi Asuka, the charismatic leader of *Joryū Tögei*, the first women’s association of ceramic art; and Ono Hakuko (cat. no. 43A), who mastered the demanding Yuri-kinsai technique of glazing over metal leaf. The second generation of college-trained artists, such as Shigematsu Ayumi (cat. no. 43B), often departed from traditional vessel forms and teawares to create objects inspired by female sexuality and nature. The third and current generation of academically trained artists includes practitioners such as Takano Miho (cat. no. 43C), whose humorously figurative works are influenced by pop culture and animé. Miwa Hanako (cat. no. 43D), the first female ceramist in a family of twelve generations of traditional ceramic artists, first worked as a sculptor and installation artist. Her signature, wheel-thrown form—the lotus—is a reference to the flower remembered from her childhood, which she views as an allegory of ceramics: of beauty arising from the mud and soil. 

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43B  
**SHIGEMATSU AYUMI**  
Born Japan, 1958  
*Yellow Orifice.* 2003  
Stoneware, clay slip, pigments  
14½ x 17½ x 17 in.;  
36.83 x 44.45 x 43.18 cm  
Anonymous gift from a member of the class of 1965  
SC 2009:28-15

43C  
**TAKANO MIHO**  
Born Japan, 1971  
*Chattering Girls in Spring.* 2006  
Stoneware, clay slip, enamels  
Varying sizes,  
height: 9¼–10½ in.;  
22.86–26.67 cm  
Anonymous gift from a member of the class of 1965  
SC 2009:28-16a-e

43D  
**MIWA HANAKO**  
Born Japan, birth date undisclosed  
*Love Lotus; Flower.* 2006–2007  
Stoneware with Hagi glaze and platinum luster  
Overall: 9½ x 17 in. diameter;  
24.13 x 43.18 cm  
Anonymous gift from a member of the class of 1965  
SC 2009:28-22b
Sopheap Pich lives and work in Phnom Penh, where he maintains his studio. He first studied at the Ecole National d’Art in Cergy Pontoise, France in 1993–94, and went on to earn a BFA at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1995, and an MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1999. Pich’s signature medium is woven rattan, which he uses to create three-dimensional biomorphic and architectural sculptures. In 2004 he began experimenting with strips of rattan as an armature for a form he intended to collage with cigarette packages, but at the urging of Guy Issanjou, then the director of the French Cultural Center in Phnom Penh, Pich left the sculpture uncovered. This form, a pair of lungs, was titled Silence and was followed by other rattan sculptures based on bodily organs, as well as animal, architectural, and plantlike forms, including an enormous morning glory. His most recent work is based on painted grid constructions that incorporate burlap and encaustics.

Pich created a full-length Seated Buddha for an exhibition in 2011 and half-figure Buddhas, with the head and a portion of the torso, leaving lengths of rattan curling underneath as if to suggest the rest of the body. SCMA’s Seated Buddha holds its right hand with the palm facing outward in the abhaya mudra, a gesture signifying protection and fearlessness. It is related to the Seated Buddha of 2011, which Pich transported to different sites and photographed, in one case among other stone Buddhas, in another instance, to a sandy plain, where the sculpture was photographed tilting backwards as if falling. Pich describes the 2011 Buddha as the first “realistic” Buddha he had made, attempting to copy a small bronze he owned.

Born and raised in a Buddhist culture and family, Pich has said that Buddhist teaching correlates with his ideas about daily life and accords with his respect for nature, but that for him “My studio is my temple, and when I travel my sketchbook and my laptop are my portable temples.” As one writer has noted, the artist’s rattan figures of Buddha engage materiality and immateriality in a way that traditional stone sculptures do not and in that sense play with Buddhist teachings that posit the invisible presence of Buddha. —L.M.

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1 Purchase in process during preparation of this catalogue.
Munakata is perhaps the best-known artist associated with sōsaku-hanga, also known as the Creative Print Movement. Born to a family of blacksmiths in Aomori, Munakata first learned about European art from local painters, and he was particularly enamored of Vincent van Gogh’s work. After becoming disillusioned with oil painting early in his career, Munakata found a way to combine his interest in Japanese tradition and modern Western art through printmaking. Although he devoted himself to woodcuts beginning in 1928, Munakata did not develop an international reputation for his prints until the 1950s, winning top prizes at print exhibitions in Lugarno (1952), São Paulo (1955), and Venice (1956).

Severely nearsighted from his childhood, Munakata kept his face very close to the block as he cut, sometimes following his drawing, but often creating the image spontaneously during the cutting process. He was equally idiosyncratic in his printing, titling, numbering, and dating of works, frequently reworking and printing blocks many years after they were first cut. This is undoubtedly the case with this impression of Sand Nest, a work first created in 1938 as part of a series of thirty-one woodcuts illustrating the Nō play Uto No Hangasaku (Birds of Sorrow). Most of the blocks in this series were destroyed in an air raid during World War II, but this block is clearly registered as having been printed in 1957. — A J G
Sekino is an important figure in the development of modern printmaking in Japan. Artists associated with sosaku-hanga (Creative Print Movement) sought to break with the tradition of ukiyo-e prints, in which the design of the print and its cutting and printing were done by different people. Sekino began making prints as a child in Aomori, inspired by the artist Munakata Shikō, who was also from the same town. His first medium was etching, which he studied with Junzo Kon, and later opened an etching studio, where he taught the technique to other artists. The subject of this woodblock print, Onchi Koshiro (1891–1955), was an important figure in the early development of sosaku-hanga. He was particularly vital in developing a community and encouraging younger artists, as the Creative Print Movement had little support in Japan before World War II. Onchi became a mentor for Sekino after the younger artist’s move to Tokyo in late 1930s, and Sekino served as one of Onchi’s assistants.

Both Sekino and Onchi adapted ukiyo-e techniques, using large areas of color without the black outlines commonly found in earlier prints. Their styles, however, were quite different. Sekino favored realist subjects, executed detailed preliminary sketches, and was painstaking in his preparation of his blocks. In this moving portrait of his friend and teacher, Sekino depicts Onchi with one of Onchi’s own prints, which were often abstract compositions executed using experimental techniques. — A J G
Iwami Reika uses simple materials—ink, wood, and metal leaf—to create abstract compositions that capture the subtle qualities of nature. Using woodblocks with distinct textures as her matrices, the artist creates exquisitely crafted prints combining sensitively printed areas of black, white, and grey with blind embossing, metal leaf, mica, and handmade paper. According to collectors Mary and Norman Tolman, “Iwami’s subject is water and its flow, and her genius lies in the almost mystical ability to transmute the grain and texture of pieces of wood she has found into visual images of patterns of water.”

Initially trained in doll-making at Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, the artist refocused her creative energies on printmaking during the mid-1950s, studying with three of the most important modern printmakers in Japan: Onchi Koshiro, Sekino Jun’ichiro, and Shinagawa Takumi. In addition to making woodblock prints, Iwami is also a poet, and sees a distinct relationship between her two art forms: “Haiku is a disciplined study. It forces one to eliminate what is not necessary, and that’s why I use it as a spiritual exercise for my prints.”

Norman Tolman served as a diplomat attached to the Cultural Office of the American Embassy in Japan, and his career brought the Tolmans in close touch with artists all over the country. Now, the work of The Tolman Collection—which includes operations in Tokyo, New York, Singapore, and Hong Kong—supports the study and appreciation of contemporary Japanese prints throughout the world. Gifts from the Tolmans in honor of their daughter Hilary, class of 1987, have significantly enriched SCMA’s holdings in this area (see cat. nos. 48 and 54).

—A J G

2 Iwami Reika, quoted in ibid, 33.
Shinoda is regarded by many as the most important woman artist in contemporary Japan. Trained as a calligrapher by her father, she has pursued a career as an abstract painter, calligrapher, and printmaker for almost eighty years.

Although she was trained in a traditional manner, Shinoda has always followed her own artistic vision: “Certain forms float up in my mind’s eye. Aromas, a blowing breeze, and rain-drenched gusts of wind . . . The air is in motion, my heart is in motion. I try to capture these vague, evanescent images of that instant.”1 She lived in New York from 1956 to 1958, at which time she was exposed to Abstract Expressionist painting and participated in exhibitions at the famed Betty Parsons Gallery, among other U.S. venues. She returned to Japan in 1958 and has continued to show internationally.

Shinoda began making prints in 1960, and has worked with The Tolman Collection, the largest print publisher in Japan, since the mid-1970s. Lithography is the natural printmaking medium for the artist, as her imagery depends on subtle layers of texture and the vitality of her brushwork. The variety of brushstrokes visible in Drama aptly shows her range, from the thin black calligraphic slashes at the upper center to the delicate but energetic application of the golden strokes that overlay the composition’s central elements. Shinoda stopped making lithographs in 2007 when Kimura Kihachi, her longtime printer, retired. — AJ G

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1 The artist, quoted in Mary and Norman Tolman, Toko Shinoda: a New Appreciation (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1993), 14.
Xu Bing grew up in Beijing, where his father was a professor and his mother a librarian at Beijing University. He spent his earliest years playing in the library stacks, looking at books filled with Chinese characters he could not read. When he was in school the government was experimenting with ways to simplify the written Chinese language, which meant that characters he learned one week often changed the next. This, compounded with his father’s practice of requiring him to copy classical Chinese characters at home, made learning to read and write particularly challenging. Xu Bing has said that this experience influenced his vision of books, legibility, and meaning, the themes he has explored throughout his career.

Xu studied printmaking at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, joining the faculty following his graduation. Creation is an impression of a print created as part of his master’s thesis: a series of sequential woodblock prints that trace the development of an image. In this case, a teeming pool of tadpoles is depicted. That same year Xu began one of his most well-known projects, Book of the Sky. This installation, which took four years to create, includes 400 hand-printed books and 800 feet of printed scrolls. Although the books are bound to look like the Confucian classics and the scrolls resembled historical examples, they are all illegible, as they are written in meaningless characters of the artist’s invention.

Xu Bing left China in 1990 and settled in New York until 2007, when he returned to China to become vice president of his alma mater. He has continued to create profound word-based works, including the invention of a new English alphabet based on Chinese characters. — A J G

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1 This entry is based on a biography of the artist by Joan Lebold Cohen in Post-Mao Dreaming 2009.
One of the most famous contemporary Chinese artists in the West, Fang Lijun rose to prominence during the late 1980s and early 1990s. He is regarded as a pioneer of Cynical Realism, a style of painting that features anonymous figures, singly and in groups, adopting postures that display boredom, contempt, and disillusion with Chinese society.

Born and raised in the southern province of Hebei, Fang was shunned as a child because his grandfather had been a landowner before the revolution and his family was therefore classified as “rich peasants.” This outsider status allowed the young artist to develop a critical eye toward the contradictions inherent in the Communist system as well as strategies to circumvent them while appearing to comply. Fang first studied at the Hebei Light Industry Technical College, focusing on ceramics and propaganda art, and was admitted to the printmaking department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing in 1985. While at the Academy, he met the influential critic Li Xianting, who was responsible for Fang’s inclusion in the ground-breaking China Avant Garde exhibition in 1989.

Although now best known as a painter, Fang never abandoned making prints, and specifically, woodcuts. Made from sheets of plywood carved with power tools (an electric planer and jigsaw), prints such as 2000.6.25 are distinguished by their rough appearance, as plywood tends to splinter and electric tools are hard to control. These visual qualities also support the message of the prints: the heads of his figures are flat, abstracted, and almost dehumanized, although they are clearly recognizable as faces. Using large sheets of plywood also allows the artist to create expansive multi-part prints, such as the series of monumental grisaille woodcuts similar to 2000.6.25 that were prominently displayed at the Shanghai Art Museum as part of the third International Shanghai Bienniale in 2000.

— A J G

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Yue Minjun is one of the most-recognized Chinese artists on the international scene. His distinctive work features a laughing self-portrait (often seen in multiples). Although the settings and situations change, the hilarity of the figure always seems forced and out of place. Yue explained his use of the laughing figure as a symbol of coping with the confusing difficulties of life: “Smiling is a refusal to think deeply when you feel there are things about which you have no way of thinking deeply or which are too difficult to think about and you need to get rid of the thoughts.”

Yue’s work is often categorized as part of the Cynical Realist Movement inspired by the work of artists such as Fang Lijun. This movement emerged during the 1990s in the wake of the Tiananmen Square protests and the subsequent brutal crackdown. Idealism and hope for future freedoms soured, and artists began to express their disappointment and detachment by infusing their work with irony and indifference.

In 2008, Pace Prints and Ethan Cohen Fine Arts began an ambitious partnership publishing prints by some of the most important contemporary artists in China. As part of this project, Yue Minjun created four screenprints and four woodcuts (of which this is the first image). SCMA received twenty-four prints from this collaboration.

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Zhang Dali attended the prestigious Central Academy of Art and Design in Beijing, studying traditional Chinese ink painting. After graduation he developed a career as a successful abstract painter. Zhang left China after the student demonstrations in 1989, living in Italy for six years. During this time he discovered graffiti art, and began spray-painting a stylized self-portrait as a method of engaging artistically with his adopted city of Bologna. Zhang returned to Beijing in 1993 and adopted the pseudonym AK-47 (otherwise known as 18K). AK-47 refers to the assault rifle used by the Soviet Army, and is used by the artist as a symbol of the infiltration of aggression and violence into everyday life. Throughout the 1990s, AK-47’s distinctive human profile paintings marked buildings across Beijing, many of which were tagged for demolition. When asked why he adopted this practice, the artist replied: “[O]rdinary people see my work every day, and it makes some of them think about what it means to live in an urban environment. It is like an exchange of ideas with the people who live in this city.”

More recently, as in this print, Zhang has used his former moniker AK-47 as a mark-making device for a series of portraits of migrant workers. These workers represent an underclass in Chinese society that is, nonetheless, a crucial part of the county’s modernization. —AJG

Artist and master printer Chunwoo Nam received his BFA from the University of Hongik in Korea, his MFA at the University at Buffalo (SUNY), and training in lithography at the Tamarind Institute in New Mexico. The portfolio *We are Here* continues Nam’s printed explorations of cultural identity, interdependence, and displacement.

The portfolio includes two diptychs that layer Chinese and American cultural symbols and that explore visually how the two “superpowers” are intimately connected and intertwined via the world’s financial systems despite profound cultural differences. *We are Here I* includes a ghostly teal shadow of a figure marooned amongst the buildings, signage, and traffic of Times Square in New York, a visual meditation on American individualism and isolation. The companion piece, *We are Here II*, overlays an etching in red of a combined Chinese/American flag marked with the words “made in money.” Replacing the teal figure is a dancing couple silhouetted in gold leaf. These figures are the artist and his printer, Mark Patsfall, and represent the delicate collaborative dance between artist and printer as well as that between cultures. The two other prints in the series depict a similar scene enacted in Tiananmen Square. — A J G
The Tolman Collection—a labor of love for founders Mary and Norman Tolman—grew organically from their own collecting interests. In the wake of the natural, economic, and political disasters that marked life in Japan in 2011, Norman Tolman conceived of a print project that would reflect what he saw as the typical response of Japanese people to adversity: “[they] dug in with dignity, held their heads up high, worked hard, and never complained.” He charged eight of the artists who regularly work with The Tolman Collection to “transcribe their feelings into abstract form” on the subject of “Hope for the Future.” The resulting portfolio, consisting of nine prints in a variety of media, captures the range of imagery and approaches, as well as the continuing vitality, of contemporary printmaking in Japan.

Two contrasting uses of woodcut exemplify the diversity of work in the portfolio: Hasegawa Yuichi’s Sky of Hope—Sparkle to the Future (p. 9), a dazzlingly complex and colorful reduction-process woodcut, and the serene and nuanced Silent Light (pictured here) by Goto Hidehiko. The works exhibit varied approaches to the theme: an evocation of spring in the work of Imamura Yoshio, a vision of sprouting rebirth by Nagai Kenji, and a simple vision of plenty by Zhou Hao, a Chinese native living in Yokohama. Nakazawa Shin’ichi employs the subtle glow of metal leaf, pristine balance is displayed in two compositions by Tsubota Masahiko, while Tamekane Yoshikatsu’s inextinguishable flame is testament to the resilience of the Japanese people.

— AJG
Agano Machiko is a master textile and fiber artist who began her career as a weaver. A graduate of Kyoto City University of Arts, she now teaches at Kyoto Seika University. In her early installation works from the 1980s, Agano used sheets of silk organza, at first creating long swathes of the fabric descending in graceful pleats from the ceiling and later combining the organza with suspended bamboo structures resembling box kites or insect pods.

In the 1990s, she began making work with kozo (mulberry pulp), bamboo, sisal, and other natural materials, allowing the materials to speak for themselves and to determine the form of the finished work, which she planned with preliminary drawings. Later in the decade, she developed what would become her signature works of fishing line and stainless steel wire knit together with large needles into large skeins and dipped into wet kozo. The untitled work that was shown in SCMA’s 2008 exhibition Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto and purchased for the collection (with cat. nos. 37 and 42) is one of these gossamer installations, adapted by the artist to fit the space of the Dalrymple Gallery on the Museum’s lower level. The nets, which catch and spill light along their surfaces, are suspended from the ceiling and anchored at the floor to create diaphanous mountainscapes. Although they appear at once transparent and fragile as spider webs, they are correspondingly strong and resilient.

More recently, the artist has incorporated color in her work. In 2008 she began to create installations made with brightly hued inkjet prints from snapshots of daily life backed with mirrored sheeting to create what she describes as “multiple layers showing the contradictions and uncertainty in modern life.” She noted at the time that her previous work had attempted to express a “kind of nostalgia” for nature that is increasingly being lost. —LM

1 This entry is drawn from Samuel C. Morse’s discussion of Agano Machiko’s work in Confronting Tradition 2008.

In 2005, the Museum was approached by members of KASS (The Korean American Students of Smith), who expressed interest in purchasing a work by a female Korean or Korean-American artist for the collection. Their project was sparked by questions they posed to themselves: how could a greater focus on contemporary Asian art be created at SCMA, and could they, as students, directly affect the Museum by acquiring a work of art for its holdings? With the Museum’s approval to go forward, KASS officers, led by Sohl Lee (class of 2006), conducted their own research and met with advisors in the field. After selecting the installation Movement by the Korean-American artist Yong Soon Min, they launched an international fundraising effort to acquire it.

As described by Hong-hee Kim, former director of the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (Suwon, South Korea), Yong Soon Min’s work “explores post-colonial discourses of immigration, exile, loss, and confusion, as well as the ironies of dual identity... Her multimedia art practice encompassing words, texts, drawing, photography, and video is conceptual yet concrete, private yet political.” Movement was originally commissioned, with other new works by leading Asian artists, by the Asia Society, New York, to celebrate the opening of its new building in 2001. Min substantially revised the installation when it was acquired in 2008 by SCMA. As it was first conceived for the Asia Society, Movement was composed of 150 transparent LP records affixed with colorful, Pan-Asian music labels and mounted with clock mechanisms (each with three hands) on large mirrored panels. For SCMA, the LPs (with clock mechanisms removed) were supplemented by Asian music CDs (actually, DVDs imprinted with images from record and music CD covers) and the mirrored background was replaced by many small, circular mirrors. These elements were arrayed in sweeping arcs to create a wave pattern referring not only to the “Asian Wave” phenomenon in popular culture and the arts, but also to Katsushika Hokusai’s famous woodblock print The Great Wave off Kanagawa. Min’s wave, unlike the print, breaks from right to left and was originally surmounted by a shiny, green painted disk at the top left of the compositional field. For the exhibition Collecting Art of Asia, Min revised the green circle, replacing it with an “energy source” enclosing multiple, overlaid rings of various sizes in a palette of muted greens, blues, and oranges. (See frontispiece opposite the half-title page and endpaper.) — LM

2 Hong-hee Kim, “Yong Soon Min's Movement,” in ibid.
Huang Yan is one of a number of contemporary Chinese artists who use the body as the vehicle of expression for their work, a trend emerging in the Chinese art world in the 1990s. Some artists have used their bodies as artistic agents in performance-based work involving social protest and, in some cases, endurance or ordeals. Huang Yan uses the body as the canvas for classical landscape paintings, which are the basis for his performative photographs. He has become a leading voice among Chinese artists who extend the *shanshui* (literally “mountain–water”) classical landscape tradition as part of current global artistic discourse.

Huang Yan became interested in the landscape paintings of literati artists, a tradition of highly educated scholar painters. In the mid 1990s he began to paint classical landscapes on his face, hands, and body, a practice in which “man was the subject, landscape was the object, [and] a landscape painted on the human body was the materialization of the union between subject and object.” In this set of fourteen photographs given by gallerist and collector Ethan Cohen, a landscape of forested mountains, executed by artist Zhang Teimei (Huang’s wife), covers the artist’s chest and back, and trees extend their long trunks up his arms. The blue-and-green landscape style of the Northern school seems to be reflected here, perhaps as a nod to the artist’s birthplace in Jilin province in northeast China.

The landscape is reconfigured in each of the photographs as the artist adapts his position, by folding his arms, clasping his hands, and spreading, closing, or interlacing his fingers. A small dwelling that appears at the base of the trees on his left hand implies human presence in the natural setting, but in this work the artist literally embodies the *shanshui* landscape tradition:

> ... mountains and rivers are proof of my emotional expression; mountains and rivers are the place where my heart and soul find peace; mountains and rivers are sites where my physical body belongs.

By referring to tattooing, an ancient form of body art practiced by many cultures, in the title of this work, the artist further reinforces the intimacy of his connection with the landscape. —L M

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Nam June Paik is widely credited as a pioneer of video art. While Paik’s video installations and sculptures are the work for which he is best known, his international career encompassed avant-garde music, the Fluxus movement both in Europe and the U.S., performance and action art, as well as mass media and technology-based arts. Born in Seoul, Korea, Paik fled with his family following the partition of the country in 1948, resettling in Japan in 1950. Paik attended the University of Tokyo, and then moved to West Germany to continue his studies. While in Europe, Paik met the avant-garde American composer and theorist John Cage, who became an important artistic influence on his work, as did George Maciunas, the founder of the Fluxus movement. The altered television set—a recurring motif in Paik’s long career—was introduced in 1963 in his one-artist exhibition Electronic Music—Electronic Television.

Internet Dweller: btjm.twelve.jhgd

1997

Two altered tv sets are the centerpiece of the Museum’s Internet Dweller sculpture. The screens run an approximately eight-minute, synchronized video program of images created using a system based on chance (adapted from John Cage’s composition strategy of randomness) and then selected through later editing. The video includes fleeting glimpses from a dizzying collage of landscapes, ancient monuments such as Stonehenge, the Mona Lisa and other famous works of art, the artist Joseph Beuys, an excerpt from a Paik/Charlotte Moorman performance piece, Korean dancers and dolls, newspapers, talking heads, graphics, texts, brand names, television static and test patterns, and many other images, which are layered, dissolved, and distorted as they flash through the visual field. — L.M.

The literature on Nam June Paik’s work is extensive. John G. Hanhardt’s catalogue for the Whitney Museum’s 1982 exhibition Nam June Paik remains a principal resource, as does the 1996 exhibition catalogue Nam June Paik Video Sculptures (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen). In addition to drawing on these sources, this entry is adapted from the acquisition proposal prepared by Linda Muehlig, October 7, 1998, SCMA curatorial files, and also from cat. no. 14 in Movement.
In 2007, the young Chinese artist Cao Fei became intrigued with the internet platform Second Life (http://secondlife.com), which allows millions of users around the globe to create animated “avatars” and to interact in virtual environments. She decided to construct her own virtual metropolis for Second Life, dubbing it RMB City after the Chinese unit of currency (RMB/Renminbi). The animated video The Birth of RMB City “documents” the city’s creation after its launch on the internet, with a figure of a construction worker orchestrating the building process, as structures appear (or collapse and reassemble) in the virtual space of an island city surrounded by water. The video is the first purchase of the Museum’s newly established Contemporary Associates group, whose membership dues are used annually to acquire a work of contemporary art for SCMA’s collection, primarily in the area of new media and photography.

Working with Vitamin Creative Space, the artist designed her city as an assemblage of old and new Asian architectural landmarks: the People’s Palace in Beijing, fronted by a flooded Tiananmen Square; Rem Koolhaas’ and Ole Scheeren’s CCTV building in Beijing, a glass and steel structure with two leaning towers and a dramatically cantilevered prow; Herzog & de Meuron’s “Bird’s Nest” stadium from the 2008 Beijing summer Olympics (portrayed by the artist as the rusted-ribs remnant of the structure); and Jiang Huancheng’s Oriental Pearl Tower in Shanghai. A spoked-wheel “observation” platform rotates above the city, and at street level there are marketplaces and a series of identical, low row houses surrounded by barbed wire. A factory tower continuously belches fire and smoke, and a panda, the city’s “love center,” floats like a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon above the skyline. The camera moves from bird’s-eye to ground-level views, alternately coursing along or below the streets and hovering above or entering structures. At the end of the video, all the structures disappear, as RMB City itself will ultimately disappear from the Second Life platform. —LM

1 This entry is based on the purchase proposal by Linda Muehlig for The Birth of RMB City, October 12, 2009, SCMA curatorial files
2 The houses are possibly a reference to contemporary “socialist housing,” such as Huaxi Village, a “model of common prosperity” in Jiangyin, east China’s Jiangsu Province.
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Artists are listed with family name first, except in cases in which the artist is more commonly known (or chooses to self-identify) by first name then family name (e.g. Hung Liu, Nam June Paik, Yuriko Yamaguchi, etc.). In all cases, names are alphabetized according to family or last name.

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