

Exhibition Schedule: Winter/Spring 2019



MEDIA CONTACTS

Director, Marketing and Communications John Gibbons,
gibbonsjp@si.edu | 202.633.5187

Marketing and Communications Specialist Megan Krefting,
kreftingm@si.edu | 202.633.0271

PRESS ROOM freersackler.si.edu/press

NOTE TO EDITORS: The following information is current as of **February 2019**; please discard all previous versions. All listings are subject to change; dates and titles should be confirmed with the Office of Marketing and Communications at 202.633.0271 or PressAsia@si.edu. For press releases, images, and captions, visit freersackler.si.edu/press.

Above: **Empress Dowager Chongqing at the Age of Eighty**; Ignatius Sichelbarth (Ai Qimeng, 1708–1780), Yi Lantai (act. ca. 1748–86), and Wang Ruxue (act. 18th century); China, Beijing, Qianlong period (1736–95), 1771; hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; Palace Museum, Gu6453 © The Palace Museum

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Empresses of China's Forbidden City, 1644–1912

March 30–June 23, 2019 #FSEmpresses

Media Preview: Thursday, March 28, 2019

The lives of the Qing dynasty empresses offer a compelling tale of opulence and influence as told in this first-ever, in-depth exhibition of the subject. Their vital presence over the 260-year course of the Qing is brought to light through an unprecedented assembly of spectacular objects, from royal portraits to costumes and jewelry they used in the imperial complex known as the Forbidden City. The exhibition breaks stereotypes by showing the empresses' influence in the realms of art, religion, politics, and diplomacy. In actively recovering their position, we are reminded that history often leaves women's accomplishments untold.

Most of these artworks are from the Palace Museum, and many have never been exhibited outside of China. The exhibition is organized by the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts; the Freer | Sackler; and the Palace Museum in Beijing, China.

FREER | SACKLER



Office of Marketing and Communications
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

freersackler.si.edu | PressAsia@si.edu | 202.633.0271



The Peacock Room in Blue and White

May 18, 2019–ongoing
Freer, gallery 12

The Peacock Room in Blue and White fills the room's shelving with blue-and-white Chinese porcelains. This installation is inspired by the room's appearance in 1876, when it was the dining room of Frederick Leyland, a shipping magnate in London.

With the sinuous patterns and brilliant blue and white colors of Leyland's Kangxi ware in mind, Whistler, a proponent of aesthetic harmony, painted over the room in a flurry of blue and gold. The intricate blue, green, and gold patterns invoke the plumage of the peacock, creating a tonal counterpoint to the bolder patterns and colors of the porcelains.

Blue-and-white porcelains from the Freer collection adorn the shelves of the east and north walls of the room, and newly commissioned blue-and-white ceramics in the Kangxi style line the west and south walls. These porcelains are not reproductions of historical blue-and-white ware. Instead, they reflect the continuity of a fifteen-hundred-year-old porcelain-making tradition in Jingdezhen, China. Porcelain production during the Kangxi period greatly expanded China's export trade with Europe, sparking the East-West exchange that endures to this day. The resulting installation allows visitors to experience the room in much the same way Whistler originally envisioned it.

Detail, *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room*; James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903); 1876–77; oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, leather, mosaic tile, and wood; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1904.61



Whistler in Watercolor

May 18–October 6, 2019
Freer, gallery 10–11

For renowned artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), watercolor was the medium through which he reinvented himself in the 1880s and painted his way into posterity. No one was more smitten with Whistler and his works than museum founder Charles Lang Freer, who amassed the world's largest collection of watercolors by the artist and included them in his bequest to the Smithsonian in 1906. Freer's collection comprises more than fifty examples—figures, landscapes, nocturnes, and interiors—of Whistler's watercolors, yet these works have never left the confines of the Freer Gallery of Art. *Whistler in Watercolor* introduces museum visitors to the artist's vast creative output and provides wide access to a rarely seen segment of his work.

The Ocean Wave; James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), 1883; watercolor on paper; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1906.54a–b

ONGOING EXHIBITIONS IN THE SACKLER



Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice across Asia

Through November 29, 2020

Visitors can step into a Tibetan Buddhist shrine, linger at a Sri Lankan stupa, travel with an eighth-century Korean monk, and discover remarkable objects in *Encountering the Buddha*. The exhibition draws upon the museums' collections of Buddhist art from Afghanistan, India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan. By exploring new narratives and technologies, *Encountering the Buddha* invites visitors to reconsider Buddhist practices and concepts of beauty.

Detail, The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection; photograph: 2010; objects: Tibet, China, and Mongolia, 13th–20th century; mixed media; gifts and promised gifts from the Alice S. Kandell Collection



Resound: Ancient Bells of China

Through mid-2020

The Sackler Gallery holds an unrivaled collection of ancient Chinese bells, including six bells of different sizes from the same set. In *Resound*, modern technology allows visitors to “play” these bells cast in the Bronze Age, explore music and sound theory, and listen to contemporary compositions that were written for the ancient set and were specially commissioned for this exhibition.

Bell (*bo*) with birds and dragons, from a set of four, China, Shanxi province, State of Jin, Houma foundry, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 500–450 BCE, Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1941.9; Two bells (*bo*) with felines and dragons, possibly from a set of four, North China, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 550–500 BCE, Gift of Arthur M. Sackler, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1987.274, 307; Bell (*bo*) with felines and dragons, China, Shanxi province, State of Jin, Houma foundry, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 550–500 BCE, Gift of Arthur M. Sackler, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1987.282



Shaping Clay in Ancient Iran

Through September 2019

Potters in ancient Iran were fascinated by the long-beaked waterfowl and rams with curled horns around them. This exhibition of ceramics produced in northwestern Iran highlights animal-shaped vessels as well as jars and bowls decorated with animal figures. These ceramics, the most common objects to survive from ancient Iran, date from the Chalcolithic period (5200 BCE–3400 BCE) to the Parthian period (250 BCE–225 CE). Their distinct shapes and lively decoration illustrate the creative attempts of potters to experiment with clay and to lend originality and even whimsy to utilitarian vessels thousands of years ago.

Tripod ewer; northwestern Iran, Iron Age I–II, 1350–800 BCE; burnished earthenware; Gift of Joan and Frank Mount, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1994.14



A Glimpse of Ancient Yemen

Through August 18, 2019

Frankincense and myrrh, the fabled aromatics, have long been associated with south Arabia (modern Yemen), which the Romans called *Arabia Felix* (Arabia, the Prosperous). Caravans transported the luxury commodities to the Mediterranean world and the Indian subcontinent. Timna and other cities along the trade routes prospered and became known for their artistic production, such as fine alabaster figures and impressive metalwork. This long-distance trade with the Greeks, Romans, and Persians also introduced new artistic and cultural traditions to ancient Arabia, a once-vital area now marred by war and destruction.

A Glimpse of Ancient Yemen highlights a small selection of objects that were excavated from the region by the pioneer archaeologist Wendell Phillips and his team in 1950 and 1951.

Lion with rider; Yemen, Kingdom of Qataban, Timna, 75 BCE–50 CE; bronze; gift of the American Foundation for the Study of Man (Wendell and Marilyn Phillips Collection), Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S2013.2.77.2

ONGOING EXHIBITIONS IN THE FREER



Engaging the Senses

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 3–4

As our experiences become increasingly mediated by digital technologies, direct sensory perception and appreciation of the world have become all the more important. The sound of a voice, the glimpse of a painting, the taste of food, the touch of fabric, the scent of a flower—all stimulate the senses. According to classical and Arab philosophy, the five outer senses—sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell—are directly connected to the inner senses that define us as human beings: understanding, imagination, and memory.

Some works, such as manuscripts of the Qur'an, were made in the service of the faith and were frequently recited and viewed in public. Other creations were intended for personal enjoyment and contemplation. As artists, objects, and ideas moved across the Islamic world—a vast geographic span from Morocco and Spain to the islands of Southeast Asia—certain formal and sensory features spread across borders. Still, every region, province, and even city developed its own artistic language with rich sensory resonances, many of which are explored in these galleries.

Bowl; eastern Iran, Samanid period, 10th century; earthenware painted under glaze; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1957.24



Looking Out, Looking In

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 13

Many of the powerful emperors of China's last dynasties—the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912)—were patrons, collectors, and casual practitioners of the arts. They used art to legitimize and glorify their rule. It served many functions: for state rituals, for expressing piety, to dazzle palace visitors, to build diplomatic relations, and for personal pleasure.

The emperors' officials oversaw the palace painting academy, imperial porcelain factory, and numerous other workshops. Their artists creatively reworked earlier traditions, which bolstered the emperors' legitimacy by showing their command of China's long history.

Many emperors supported international trade with Japan and Korea, Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, and the Indian subcontinent as well as the Islamic world and Europe. These exchanges helped shape the development of Chinese art, especially in the early fifteenth-century and eighteenth-century courts emphasized in this gallery.

While the Ming and Qing courts followed many of the same practices in government and art, the Ming emperors were native Chinese, and the Qing rulers were not. Heirs of Manchu chieftains who swept into China on horseback from the north, the Qing emperors embraced all things Chinese, but also steadfastly maintained their own traditions.

Dish with copper-red glaze; China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen, Ming dynasty, Xuande mark and period (1426–35); porcelain with copper-red glaze; on the base, a six-character cobalt-oxide (blue) reign mark under colorless glaze; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment and Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Freer Gallery of Art, F2015.2



Setting the Bar

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 15

China's Song dynasty established many prototypes in government, society, and the arts. A system of schools and examinations for entering public office led to an efficient, centralized government headed by the emperor but staffed by well-educated commoners. Emerging as a class of scholar-officials, who were both artists themselves and consumers of art, these men looked to ancient tradition as a source for moral principle and creative inspiration.

At the same time, a spirit of inquiry and close examination of nature led to advances in art and science. Widespread gains in literacy and disposable income also stimulated growth in the arts.

Elegance and refinement in form, line, and color characterize the visual arts of China during the Song dynasty. As new technology enhanced ceramic production and the number of kilns rose, fresh approaches to decoration developed. The rise of ink painting paralleled a taste for monochrome ceramic glazes. A multitude of other painting styles and techniques emerged as well, with a strong preference for realistic detail, modulated colors, and individualized faces and postures.

Sixteen Luohan; Fanlong (act. mid-12th century); China, Southern Song dynasty, mid-12th century; handscroll, ink on paper; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1960.1



Center of the World

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 16

Located in northwest China, Chang'an (modern Xi'an) served as the gateway to the so-called Silk Road, overland trade routes that linked the prosperous Tang empire with Central, West, and South Asia. Foreign merchants joined Buddhist missionaries, diplomatic envoys, translators, craftsmen, entertainers, and other skilled immigrants to transform Chang'an into a cosmopolitan city. This wealthy, worldly hub offered a ready market for exotic imports, including silver and gold objects, delicate glassware, and even grape wine. To meet accelerating demand for stylish goods, local artisans translated foreign designs into a Chinese style.

Of all the travelers to Chang'an, the most successful group came from the distant kingdom of Sogdiana, located far to the west in modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. These Persian speakers seamlessly connected the cultural realms of China and Iran. While some traders and artisans traveled back and forth across Asia, others settled in China, where they helped fuel a fashion for Central Asian culture. One Sogdian community leader who died in China chose to be buried in a Sino-Sogdian manner and commissioned the funerary couch on view in this exhibition. Over time, the Sogdian population was gradually absorbed into Chinese society. Today, the Sogdians are regarded as a lost people.

Wine cup with elephant heads on ring handle; Central Asia, Sogdiana, probably Uzbekistan, early 7th century; hammered silver with mercury gilding; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F2012.1



Promise of Paradise

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 17

Siddhartha Gautama, a prince born some twenty-five hundred years ago, is recognized as the Historical Buddha, or "Awakened One." His enlightenment freed him from the cycle of rebirth, and his teachings became Buddhism's foundation.

The religion spread at a phenomenal pace. By 100 CE, missionaries had taken the Buddha's teachings from his birthplace in South Asia to China. Within a few hundred years, Chinese Buddhist thinkers and translators were expanding the canon, also making it available to believers in Korea and Japan.

Buddhism's rapid evolution transformed China's artistic landscape. To modern eyes, Chinese Buddhist sculpture from the sixth through the eighth century is among the most appealing in the history of art. As explored in this gallery, the period produced massive cave sites, grand temples, and monumental stone figures, as well as smaller images for domestic altars.

The buddhas, bodhisattvas, and disciples in this exhibition were made to inspire and guide believers on their spiritual path. Their beauty imparted the promise of paradise.

Buddha, probably Pilushena (Vairochana), with the Realms of Existence and other Buddhist scenes; China, probably Henan Province, Northern Qi dynasty, 550–77; limestone; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1923.15



Art and Industry: China's Ancient Houma Foundry

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 18

The largest bronze foundry complex from antiquity was excavated at Houma in northern China in the mid-twentieth century. At the two-acre site, archaeologists discovered evidence of extremely sophisticated manufacturing techniques. Fragments of reused clay models, master pattern blocks, and decorated clay molds indicate the adoption of ceramic pattern transfers to cast ornamented bronze objects. Using pattern blocks to increase the speed and volume of production without sacrificing quality was an astonishing innovation. Their presence proves foundries at Houma operated with a specialized workforce and a division of labor.

The facility was established around 585 BCE by the rulers of the State of Jin, who remained its chief patrons for about 150 years. Houma produced ornamented objects with complex, abstract designs, inlay, and what is now considered to be the earliest pictorial narratives in China. More than half of the objects featured in this exhibition were made at Houma. Other pieces illustrate the factory's long-lasting influence and legacy that extended into the Western Han period (206 BCE–9 CE).

Wine container in the form of a bird with dragon interlace; China, Middle Eastern Zhou dynasty, ca. 500–450 BCE; state of Jin, Houma foundry; bronze with gold inlay; Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1961.30



Afterlife: Ancient Chinese Jades

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 19

A construction boom in China more than a century ago resulted in new railways and factories—and the accidental discovery of scores of rich ancient cemeteries. Buried in these tombs for thousands of years were jewelry and ritual objects, all laboriously crafted from jade. When Charles Lang Freer acquired many of them, their precise age was unknown. The modern science of archaeology was not practiced in China until 1928, when the Smithsonian sponsored its introduction. With the advent of archaeology came a better appreciation of the evolution of ancient Chinese mortuary culture and China's art history.

Today we know these jades represent the earliest epochs of Chinese civilization, the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Many came from the prehistoric burials of the Liangzhu culture (circa 3300–2250 BCE). These Stone Age people flourished in a large, fertile region between the modern cities of Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Nanjing. The graves they left behind now function like time capsules, providing insight into the dynamic character of ancient Chinese civilization during life and after death.

Halberd; China, Liangzhu culture, late Neolithic period (ca. 3300–2250 BCE), Erlitou culture, ca. 1800–1600 BCE; jade (nephrite); Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1919.13



Painting the Classics

Through May 2019
Freer, galleries 5, 6a & 7

Painting the Classics comprises three exhibitions that explore how early modern Japanese artists reimagined narratives and poetry from Japan's classical age. Literary accomplishments of the Heian period (794–1185) have survived for a millennium. As the original text, written in ancient prose, became increasingly difficult to understand, pictures helped keep those tales alive. During the Momoyama and Edo periods (1573–1868), literacy levels rose, and the well-to-do urban population sought connection with the classical tradition. Paintings and other artworks representing classical tales spoke to this nostalgia.

As artists typically illustrated a limited selection of famous episodes, the public understanding of old stories became centered on a few key moments. At the same time, this repetition motivated artists to invent new ways of interpreting literary subjects, even while using traditional formats.

Detail, *Court ladies among cherry trees*; style of Tawaraya Sotatsu (fl. ca. 1600–1643); Japan, Edo period, early 17th century; pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, gold, and silver on paper; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1903.101–102



Imperfectly Beautiful: Inventing Japanese Ceramic Style

Ongoing
Freer, gallery 6

Holding a bowl to drink freshly whisked green tea—this is the central experience of the Japanese tea ceremony (chanoyu). Until the late sixteenth century, Japanese tea drinkers viewed Chinese ceramics as the ideal: standardized, symmetrical, and impeccably glazed. But as the innovators of chanoyu began to emphasize individuality, they turned to local potters for fresh interpretations of tea ceramics. New traditions were born.

As taste and opportunity converged, chanoyu participants and potters collaborated on creating a new kind of tea ceramic. Turning away from the impersonal, wheel-thrown form, they favored bowls that looked handmade. They sought vessels that communicated the feel of the potter's hands on the soft clay and the fire's kiss on the flowing glaze. Such bowls conveyed a message from the maker to the user through sight and, especially, touch. These early experiments sparked an approach to clay that still inspires many potters and tea drinkers today.

Vase; Japan, Iga kilns, Momoyama period, 1590–1615; stoneware with wood-ash and iron glazes; gold lacquer repairs; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1898.451



The Historical Buddha and Friends

Through May 5, 2019

Freer, gallery 8

Buddhism's history began in the fifth century BCE with the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, the Historical Buddha, known as Shakyamuni in Sanskrit and Shaka in Japanese. Shakyamuni was a prince who shunned his luxurious life to pursue enlightenment. After trying extreme measures, he discovered that only a middle path between extremes would lead to his goal.

The Historical Buddha is a key source of worship and inspiration for Buddhists. In Japan, his story has played a central role since the religion's arrival in the sixth century. Often he is shown flanked by two bodhisattvas, benevolent beings who help others reach enlightenment. Pairing Shakyamuni, symbolizing personal enlightenment, with Samantabhadra and Manjushri, symbolizing religious virtue and wisdom, respectively, reminded viewers that enlightenment was available to all.

Along with this trio, the Buddhist cosmology includes many other bodhisattvas, deities, and manifestations of the Buddha. This exhibition features several figures that hold great meaning in Japanese Buddhism.

Shakyamuni (Shaka); Ryozen (ca. 1328–ca. 1360); Japan, Nanbokucho period, mid-14th century; hanging scroll; ink and color on silk; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1904.311



Rediscovering Korea's Past

Ongoing

Freer, gallery 14

Today we admire the translucent gray-green celadon glaze on Korean ceramics of the Goryeo period as one of the great achievements of world potters. It is startling to realize that once this ware was all but forgotten. In Korea a millennium ago tastes changed. Other styles of ceramics replaced celadon in temples, palaces, and homes of the elite.

In the late nineteenth century, long-respected tombs of royal figures and nobility from the Goryeo period (935–1392) became vulnerable to looting. Celadon and other cherished possessions of the deceased, preserved as burial offerings, were plundered and sold in the antiquities market. American doctor and diplomat Horace Newton Allen witnessed this rediscovery while he lived in Seoul from 1884 to 1905, and he formed his own sizeable collection of celadon, it seems, from objects on the open market.

Charles Lang Freer purchased Allen's collection in 1907. This large acquisition sparked Freer's deep interest in this distinguished Korean ware. In turn, Allen, Freer, and other early collectors inspired generations of scholars to clarify the styles and dating of Goryeo celadon. Archaeologists have now identified and excavated the kiln complexes at Gangjin and Buan, which produced the finest celadon wares during the Goryeo dynasty.

Ewer; Korea, Gangjin or Buan kilns, Goryeo period, mid-13th century; stoneware with copper-red pigment and white slip under celadon glaze; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1915.50



Body Image

Ongoing

Freer, gallery 1-2

The human body, particularly the beautiful body, is central to artistic expression on the Indian subcontinent. Through the body, artists express fundamental beliefs about the nature of being, social ideals, gender roles, and hierarchies of power, both earthly and divine.

The subcontinent, which extends from Pakistan eastward to Bangladesh and from Nepal southward to Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, has long been culturally and religiously diverse. By grouping and juxtaposing masterpieces from the museum's collection, this exhibition explores concepts and aesthetics of the body. The first room considers the perfect bodies of the Hindu gods before turning to the Indian courtly body as site of both pleasure and power. The rear gallery introduces the enlightened bodies of Buddhist and Jain traditions, as well as divine conceptions that transcend physical form.

If the artworks themselves invite the sheer joy of looking, the theme of the body provides a portal for appreciating how India's extraordinary culture is woven from distinctive but interrelated traditions. On a personal level, these works compel us to reconsider how our own ideals of beauty and gender, including the ways we hold, adorn, or modify our bodies, are shaped by our cultures.

Shiva, Lord of Dance (Nataraja); India, state of Tamil Nadu, Chola dynasty, ca. 990; bronze; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment and funds provided by Margaret and George Haldeman, Freer Gallery of Art, F2003.2



The Peacock Room Revealed

January 19–mid-April 2019

Freer, gallery 12

For a limited time, enjoy the Peacock Room as Whistler saw it—as a work of art in itself. The shelves of the Peacock Room are empty prior to an installation of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain of the type that filled the room in the late nineteenth century. Here is a rare chance to examine the peacock patterns and color harmonies Whistler created in this icon of American art.

Detail, *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room*; James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903); 1876–77; oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, leather, mosaic tile, and wood; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1904.61

ADDITIONAL ONGOING EXHIBITIONS

[Feast Your Eyes: A Taste for Luxury in Ancient Iran](#)

[Gods, Companions, and Devotees](#)

[Power in Southeast Asia](#)

[The Power to See Beauty](#)

[Xu Bing: Monkeys Grasp for the Moon](#)