



ASIAN ART MUSEUM

200 Larkin St • San Francisco • asianart.org • 415-581-3500

ASIAN ART MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO EXHIBITION SCHEDULE THROUGH SUMMER 2009

Contact: Michele Dilworth
(415) 581-3713
Tim Hallman
(415) 581-3711 or pr@asianart.org

Digital images are available

The Asian Art Museum is a public institution whose mission is to lead a diverse global audience in discovering the unique material, aesthetic, and intellectual achievements of Asian art and culture. Holding more than 17,000 Asian art treasures spanning 6,000 years of history, the museum is one of the largest museums in the Western world devoted exclusively to Asian art. Once located in Golden Gate Park, the museum now resides at its new, expanded facility at Civic Center Plaza. An architectural gem featuring a dynamic blend of beaux arts and modern design elements, the museum's new home is the result of a dramatic transformation of San Francisco's former main library building by renowned architect Gae Aulenti (designer of Paris's Musée d'Orsay) into a showcase for the museum's acclaimed collection and exhibitions.

Later Chinese Jades: Ming Dynasty to Early Twentieth Century

November 10, 2007–August 17, 2008



The Asian Art Museum presents 73 superb examples of later Chinese jades in a special installation to coincide with the publication of a major catalogue documenting the museum's collection. The core of the museum's collection of Chinese jades was donated by Avery Brundage (1887–1975), an avid and discerning collector who formed most of his collection of approximately 1200 pieces between 1935 and 1960, a time when Western study of jade was in its infancy. In 1996 the Asian Art Museum began a systematic study of the jades in the Brundage collection with experts from China to survey the collection. Armed with a new understanding of Chinese jades, the museum has published a major catalogue focusing on the period from the beginning of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) to the early 20th century. Many of the featured objects will be showcased in this display. *Organized by the Asian Art Museum.*

Drama and Desire: Japanese Paintings from the Floating World 1690–1850

February 15–May 4, 2008

The first exhibition to highlight the world's largest and finest collection of Japanese ukiyo-e paintings, *Drama and Desire* is drawn from the unrivaled holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and features 67 masterpieces illustrating the so-called "floating world"—the pleasure quarters of Edo (modern-day Tokyo), which were frequented by actors, courtesans, rich patrons, and bohemians. While

-- more --



many of these artists featured in the exhibition—Hokusai, Utamaro, and Harunobu—are well known in the West for their woodblock prints, the unique, custom-made paintings they produced are far more rare. The works on view depict elegant interiors with beautifully dressed courtesans, expressive portraits of Kabuki actors, and large screens that vividly illustrate the varied activities and denizens of the pleasure quarters, as well as contemporary life in Edo. As the last venue on a national tour, the Asian Art Museum provides the last opportunity to see these paintings before they are returned to storage for safekeeping. *Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.* Media preview: February 13, 10:00 am – 12 noon.

On Gold Mountain: Sculptures from the Sierra by Zhan Wang

February 15–May 25, 2008



One of the most respected artists in China, Zhan Wang is world-renown for his stainless steel sculptures of “scholars rocks,” the graceful, craggy boulders found in several provinces around China that were traditionally used for contemplation and reflection. For his exhibition at the Asian Art Museum, Wang has selected rocks from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, alluding to the nineteenth-century Chinese immigrant experience of mining gold during the California gold rush. Both the actual rocks and their stainless steel versions will be exhibited. The

artist will also create a topographic San Francisco cityscape—one of his “urban landscape” series—using steel rocks, mirrored surfaces, silverware, and stainless steel pots and pans. *Organized by the Asian Art Museum.* Media preview: February 13, 10:00 am – 12 noon.

Power & Glory: Court Arts of the Ming Dynasty

June 27–September 21, 2008



For centuries, Ming porcelain vases have been regarded as the epitome of priceless beauty. This exhibition demonstrates why vases and Ming art of many types have earned such acclaim. Timed to coincide with the summer games in Beijing, the exhibition explores the grandeur and opulence of one of the most important dynasties in Chinese history. *Power & Glory* marks the Asian Art Museum’s first collaboration with three of China’s most prestigious institutions — The Palace Museum (Forbidden City) in Beijing, the Nanjing Municipal Museum, and the Shanghai Museum. Some of the most precious artworks from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) from these museums, along with some of the finest items from this period owned by the Asian Art Museum, make up the

first exhibition to focus on the full range of Ming court arts. Many of the more than 240 objects — porcelain, paintings, textiles, lacquer, jade, jewelry, architectural elements, etc. — are on view for the first time in the United States. The exhibition provides a rare opportunity to experience the breadth and depth of Ming achievement, through an unequalled collection of works from the dynasty most renowned for its refined aesthetic and standards of perfection. The exhibition will travel to the Indianapolis Museum of Art (October 26–January 18, 2009 tentative) and the St. Louis Museum of Art (February 21–May 17, 2009). *Organized by the Asian Art Museum.* Media preview: June 25, 9:30 am – 12 noon.

Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul

October 24, 2008–January 25, 2009



This unique exhibition will explore the rich cultural heritage of ancient Afghanistan at the height of Silk Road trade (from the third century BCE through the first century CE). The exhibition will highlight important and beautiful objects saved from the National Museum of Afghanistan (known as the Kabul Museum) which was severely damaged in the fighting in Kabul from 1982–1986, and most, if not all, of its collections were considered lost or stolen until their recent re-discovery in 2003. The roughly 200 artifacts, which document ancient cultural influences from as far away as China and the Mediterranean, as well as unique and

sophisticated local artistic and cultural traditions, constitute an exemplary collection for understanding the history of this region. The exhibition will also chronicle the heroic story of how individual Afghan citizens hid their country's most precious treasures and artifacts from invading forces. Through interpretive materials including text panels and film, *Lost Treasures of Afghanistan* will illustrate how Afghans see their history, and how historical artifacts can become elements of competing historical world views. *Organized by the Asian Art Museum in partnership with the National Geographic Society.*

The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan

Mid-February, 2009–Mid-May, 2009



Located in the Himalayas to the east of Mount Everest and Nepal, and bordered by India and Tibet (China), Bhutan is unique as a sovereign nation that has maintained its ancient culture, arts, and religious and political traditions intact. Significantly, Bhutan is one of the few countries in Asia that was never colonized by its neighbors or Western powers. The first exhibition of its kind, *The Dragon's Gift* provides an exceptionally rare opportunity to view some of the most sacred and beloved Buddhist arts in Bhutan. Many of the objects remain in ritual use in temples and monasteries and have never before been accessible to a Western audience. In an unprecedented effort, the exhibition also documents ritual Buddhist dance forms through video footage and photographs. The exhibition will

include roughly one hundred fifty (150) works of art, comprising paintings, sculptures, clay and stone carving, metalwork, textiles, and ritual objects. *The Dragon's Gift is organized by the Honolulu Academy of Arts and the Bhutanese Department of Culture. Terese Bartholomew, Curator of Himalayan Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco served as Guest Curator.*

Samurai: From the Hosokawa Collection (working title)

Mid-June–Mid-September, 2009



The samurai were a class of warriors in pre-industrial Japan who were thought of as military nobility. As professional soldiers, they were fierce fighters, but they could also be cultivated artists, writers, and philosophers. Among the most important samurai families were members of the Hosokawa clan, a powerful *daimyo* ("great name") family whose lineage dates back some 600 years. The approximately 160 works on view are drawn from the Hosokawa family collection housed in the Eisei-Bunko Museum in Tokyo, the Kumamoto Castle, and the Kumamoto Municipal Museum in Kyushu. Objects include suits of armor, armaments (including swords and guns), formal attire, calligraphy, paintings, teaware, laquerware, masks, and musical instruments. *Organized by the Asian Art Museum.*

In a New Light: The Asian Art Museum Collection

Ongoing



More than 2,500 extraordinary works from the museum's renowned collection are displayed in its new galleries. Together these works constitute a comprehensive introduction to the major cultures of Asia. Immense Indian stone sculptures, intricately carved Chinese jades, vibrant Korean paintings, mystical Tibetan *thangkas* (ritual paintings on cloth), serene Cambodian Buddhas, richly decorated Islamic manuscripts, and colorful Japanese kimonos are just a few of the treasures on view. Every six months, the museum refreshes dozens of artworks in each geographic region—especially light-sensitive materials—with new selections from storage, providing visitors a unique perspective with each visit. These items have a blue “Newly on View” tag on the corresponding label.

Dates and exhibitions are subject to change. Please visit www.asianart.org to confirm information.

- **Information:** (415) 581-3500, or www.asianart.org
- **Location:** 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.
- **Hours:** The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, with extended evening hours until 9:00 pm every Thursday.
- **Admission:** \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$7 for youths 13–17, and free for children 12 and under. Admission on Thursdays after 5 pm is just \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and members, who are always admitted free). **Target Tuesdays:** The museum offers FREE admission to all on the **first Tuesday** of every month, courtesy of Target Stores. **Beginning May 2008, Target Tuesdays will be replaced with Target Sundays, with FREE admission offered on the first Sunday of the month, courtesy of Target Stores. Regular admission fees will apply the first Tuesday of the month beginning in May.** Admission includes a complimentary audiotour of the museum's collection galleries (offered in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese).
- **Access:** The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access, please call (415) 581-3598; TDD: (415) 861-2035.

###