

FREER AND SACKLER ADVANCE EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

June 2009

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****Current exhibition listings as of June 9, 2009; disregard all previous versions.**

EXHIBITIONS AT THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

The Tale of Shuten Doji March, 21-Sept. 20, 2009

The tale of the conquest of the monster Shuten Dōji by the hero Minamoto Yorimitsu (948–1021) was retold by many Japanese artists during the Edo period (1615–1868). This popular tale appeared in works commissioned for elite patrons as well as in widely-available printed books. This exhibition will explore modes of visual narration through the museum's exceptional collection of works illustrating the Tale of Shuten Dōji. For the first time since their acquisition for the collections of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, this exhibition will display together two sets of handscrolls, a pair of screens, sketches for a set of fan paintings by Kawanabe Kyōsai and book illustrations by Hokusai and other artists together with paintings from private collections.



The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in The Moscow Kremlin May 9 - Sept. 13, 2009

Organized by the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, in collaboration with The Moscow Kremlin Museums, presents some sixty-four objects offered as lavish gifts and tributes by the Ottomans and Safavids to the Tsars through large embassies, diplomatic missions and trade delegations. Ranging in date from the late 16th century to the late 17th centuries, the works includes rarely seen arms and armor, bejeweled ceremonial vessels and regalia, intended for the Russian court or the Orthodox Church. The exhibition, only on view in Washington DC, explores the reasons for these extraordinary gifts, their artistic and cultural impact, and the aesthetic and ceremonial etiquette they inspired, one that became a defining characteristic of the Russian court and in the 17th century.





Falnama: The Book of Omens

Oct. 24, 2009 – Jan. 24, 2010

Media preview: Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009, 10 a.m.

Whether by consulting the position of the planets, casting horoscopes, or interpreting dreams, the art of divination was widely practiced throughout the Islamic world. The most splendid tools ever devised to foretell the future were a type of illustrated texts known as the *Falnama* (Book of Omens). Notable for their monumental size, brilliantly painted compositions, and unusual subject matter, the manuscripts, created in Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are the center piece of “Falnama: The Book of Omens.” This is the first exhibition ever devoted to these extraordinary illustrated texts, which remain largely unpublished, and sheds new light on their artistic, cultural, and pious significance. “Falnama: The Book of Omens” comprises some sixty works of art on loan from international public and private collections and is accompanied by a multi-authored, fully illustrated catalogue.

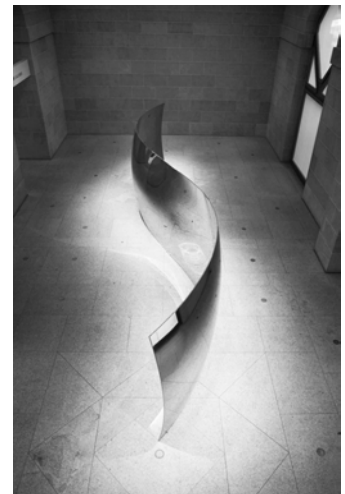
Perspectives Series

An ongoing series of contemporary installations—collectively titled “Perspectives”—is on view in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery pavilion. This series of exhibitions focuses on the work of leading contemporary artists from Asia and the Asian Diaspora, and bridges the gap between the traditional, often separate roles played by Asian art museums and modern art galleries. The works on view underscore dynamic facets of Asian art and culture that are unfamiliar to the casual visitor.

Perspectives: Anish Kapoor

Nov. 22, 2008- January 3, 2010, Sackler Pavilion

The “Perspectives” series of contemporary art resumes with “S-Curve” (2006) by internationally-renowned sculptor Anish Kapoor. Consisting of two 16-foot lengths of polished steel that are gently curved to create a continuous convex and concave curve, the work recalls the exploration of form most famously embodied in “Cloud Gate,” in Chicago’s Millennium Park. At a height of 7 feet and with highly reflective surfaces, “S-Curve” (2006) engages the viewer in a powerful physical experience. Known for his sublime approach to pure form, space and materials since the early 1980s, this work continues Kapoor’s examination of spatial perception and the immateriality of the object.



Moving Perspectives: Video Art from Asia

Continuous video presentation

The expressive possibilities of moving image, sound, and the flow of time have inspired many Asian artists to examine

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the relationship between past and present through the medium of video. "Moving Perspectives" presents for the first time at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery a year-long series of exhibitions focusing on recent works of video art that provide rich sensory experiences of the many changes taking place in contemporary Asia. The series will begin with two works that effectively use the medium to explore the tension in a society adapting to rapid change.



Moving Perspectives: Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Fiona Tan
March 14 - July 5, 2009. Level 1

In the single-channel video, "The Ground, the Root, and the Air: The Passing of the Bodhi Tree (2007)" by Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, the lush landscape of Laos is the setting for a series of performances by art students from Luang Prabang. The work culminates in a dramatic moment that captures the younger generation's struggle to reconcile a rich cultural and religious heritage with the rapid currents of global economic and social change. The endurance of ritual in contemporary

society is a starting point in Fiona Tan's stunning video installation, "Saint Sebastian." With careful attention to image composition and sound, Tan transports the viewer into a sensual experience of a centuries-old Japanese tradition. In so doing, she comments on the history of moving image and the role of the visual in shaping perceptions of "exotic" cultures.

Moving Perspectives: Shahzia Sikander/ Xun
July 18 - Nov. 18, 2009, Level 1

Trained in Pakistan and in the United States, Shahzia Sikander (b. 1969, Lahore, Pakistan) deftly reinterprets miniature painting by isolating and abstracting formal compositional elements often found in this densely layered and intricate art form. The dynamism of her paintings is further set in motion in her video works, where the repetition of abstract forms becomes a buzzing hive, calligraphy whirls in and out of view, and imaginary curves morph into vivid landscapes. Similarly, Sun Xun (b. 1980, Fuxin, China) creates hundreds of paintings and drawings using sheets of old newspapers or entire blank walls. Filming his hand-drawn images, he transforms clocks, magicians, words, and insects into animated symbols flickering across the screen in dark allegories on the nature of historical consciousness and the passage of time.



Next Rotation:
TBD

Taking Shape: Ceramics in Southeast Asia
Through 2010

Approximately 200 diverse and visually striking ceramic vessels from Southeast Asia going on view April 1, 2007 will remain on display for three years. These clay pots and jars, made permanent by firing in bonfires or kilns, form the most enduring record of human activities, interactions and ideas about form and decoration in mainland Southeast Asia. Given to the Sackler between 1996 and 2005 by brothers Osborne and Victor Hauge and their wives Gratia and Takako, these remarkable objects provide the focus for a detailed narrative of the migration of pots from their makers to their users.

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CONTINUING INDEFINITELY AT THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

The Arts of China

A variety of materials, techniques, and motifs, which span almost six thousand years, are explored in this exhibition of 228 objects highlighting the Sackler Gallery's permanent holdings of Chinese art. The exhibition features jades and bronzes, Buddhist sculpture and wall paintings, glass, lacquer ware, furniture, and paintings from the Neolithic period to the 20th century.

Contemporary Japanese Porcelain

Twentieth-century Japanese artists give fresh interpretations to the time-honored art of porcelain in this selection of works from the Sackler Gallery's collection. The distinctive decorations, which range from natural motifs to more abstract designs, are created using iron and cobalt pigments and platinum, gold, and silver enamels.

Sculpture of South and Southeast Asia

A group of Hindu stone, bronze, brass, and terra-cotta sculptures from South India dating from the 8th through the 14th century.

EXHIBITIONS AT THE FREER GALLERY OF ART

Writing, Carving, and Rubbing: China's Calligraphic Arts

April 4–Oct. 26, 2009

The exhibition will showcase the evolution of Chinese calligraphy through six major script types, oracle-bone, seal, clerical, cursive, running, and standard script, in the past three millennia. The six major scripts, each with its own distinct characteristics, evolved and eminent calligraphers both reinterpret the accomplishments of past masters and create original works with unique personal styles, illustrating the art of Chinese calligraphy continues up to date. Also included in the exhibition are writing tools such as The Four Treasures of Scholar's Studio, namely paper, ink stick, brush, and ink stone, as well as seal and seal paste.



The Texture of Night: James McNeill Whistler Through June 2010

"The Texture of Night: James McNeill Whistler" features 15 Nocturnes, the term the artist used to describe the moonlit landscapes that were his main focus throughout the 1870s. Over the course of that decade he produced more than thirty oil paintings with this theme, and their evocative, nearly abstract depictions of urban darkness became his signature contribution to nineteenth-century art. Whistler subsequently expanded his exploration of night in London, Venice, and Amsterdam through the use of lithography, watercolor, and above all, etching to document and transform the texture of night. These small scale works on paper, which range in date from 1871 to 1889, are the main focus of this exhibition, which also includes one oil, "Nocturne: Cremorne Gardens, No. 3."

More of Whistler's oil Nocturnes are on view in "Freer & Whistler: Points of Contact," in Gallery 10.

4

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Golden Seams: The Japanese Art of Mending Ceramics Through Nov. 8, 2009

Clay vessels are remarkably durable, yet they are vulnerable to breakage if mishandled or dropped. Japanese craftsmen created a unique method of mending ceramics. They drew on the longstanding practice of using the plant resin lacquer as an adhesive to rejoin broken ceramics but transformed the appearance of the repair by sprinkling the lacquer with powdered gold, thus creating a new component for appreciation. “Gold” lacquer repairs became closely associated with ceramic utensils used for tea (*chanoyu*). This small exhibition presents thirteen ceramics from China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan mended and enhanced by this distinctive Japanese technique.



Moonlight and Golden Clouds: Silver and Gold in the Arts of Japan Through November 8, 2009

Beginning in 17th century, Japanese artists developed a distinctive repertoire of techniques for applying gold and silver to objects made of materials ranging from paper and silk for calligraphy and painting to lacquer, metal, and wood. Gold and silver had a prominent and integral role in the technical and aesthetic history of Japanese painting, calligraphy, lacquer, metalwork, and architecture. Japanese methods for lacquer decoration in gold and silver through a variety of techniques that enabled refined pictorial designs are a distinctive achievement in the arts of East Asia. This exhibition features 32 examples of lacquer, painting, calligraphy, ceramics, and metalwork.

ALSO CONTINUING INDEFINITELY AT THE FREER GALLERY OF ART

Freer & Whistler: Points of Contact

The juxtaposition of Asian and American art at the Freer Gallery is due largely to the influence of the expatriate American artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), who played an important role in the aesthetic education of Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), the Detroit industrialist and founder of the Freer Gallery of Art. This two-room exhibition of some 23 oil paintings represents a choice selection of the more than 1,300 paintings, prints, and drawings by Whistler in the Freer Gallery of Art. The works on view were chosen to exemplify both Freer’s philosophy of collecting and Whistler’s own self-conscious synthesis of western and Asian artistic traditions. Highlights include a sequence of views of the Thames from Whistler’s Chelsea residence; an ensemble of Nocturnes (Whistler’s term for his paintings of the moonlit urban landscape), and a pair of full-length portraits, including the magnificent “Arrangement in Black: Portrait of F.R. Leyland,” which depicts the patron of the renowned Peacock Room, now permanently on view in the Freer Gallery, adjacent to this exhibition.

Surface Beauty: American Art and Freer's Aesthetic Vision

When Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), the Detroit industrialist and founder of the Freer Gallery of Art, began to collect contemporary American paintings in the early 1890s, he concentrated on a small group of artists—most

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notably Thomas Dewing (1851–1938) and Dwight Tryon (1849–1925)—whose interest in surface beauty resonated with the work of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), the expatriate American whose work had already attracted Freer’s interest. By the turn of the century, Freer’s focus would shift to Asia, but his interest in tonal, textured surfaces remained constant, allowing him to establish “points of contact” between his Asian and American collections. This one-room exhibition brings together a group of decorative paintings by Dewing and Tryon, together with a selection of ceramics from the Detroit Pewabic Pottery, to highlight the importance of “surface beauty” to Freer’s aesthetic philosophy.

Arts of the Indian Subcontinent and the Himalayas

"I am over my head in love with India!" said Charles Lang Freer, founder of the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art, in an 1894 letter he wrote home from his first trip to the subcontinent. Now, visitors to the gallery will be able to share in Mr. Freer's enthusiasm in a long-term installation, showcasing the extraordinary range of South Asian and Himalayan art in the collection—considered to be among the most important in the world.

Increasing by half the space previously devoted to this region and expanding the scope of works on view, the exhibition includes sublimely beautiful Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and Islamic objects, as well as masterpieces of Mughal and Rajput paintings and lavishly decorated court arts and daggers made for the Mughal emperors.



Divided into several sections, the Buddhist art charts the emergence of the Buddha image in India and its transmission throughout Asia and includes fine Buddhist images from Nepal, Tibet, Southeast Asia and China.

Several Rajput paintings on the theme of love, which demonstrate the bold colors and rhythmic compositions of the Hindu courts, are also on view. Exquisitely crafted, imposing late 19th to early 20th century examples of gold jewelry complete the exhibition.

Black & White: Chinese Ceramics from the 10th-14th Centuries

This exhibition showcases the remarkably rich variety of glossy black-glazed wares and brilliant white porcelain, as well as eye-catching combinations of both colors on single vessels, created during the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties. These beautiful objects—produced as the result of important developments in Chinese ceramic technology—elicited lyrical commentary by contemporary users, who compared the streaked dark glazes to "hare's fur" and likened the bluish-white "qingbai" ware to "icy jade." Most of the 43 objects on view are tablewares, wine jars, and vases and range from extremely handsome everyday goods to examples fit for an emperor. Drawing on the strengths of the Freer Gallery collection (notably its Ding, Cizhou, Jian, and Jizhou wares), this exhibition presents the aesthetic, social, and technical dimensions of these ceramic achievements by highlighting their variety of color and effect. In some of the most striking works, the color of the clay or texture of the glaze itself is the focal point of the otherwise undecorated object. Others feature modes of decoration that emerged to suit the colors and materials

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including black-on-black painting, black-on-white painting, incisions through the glaze or into the body, and mold-impression.

The Religious Art of Japan

Important works from the Freer's collection of Japanese religious art will be exhibited in several thematic rotations over a period of two years. Buddhist iconography was first introduced to Japan from the Asian mainland in the 6th century and the complex belief systems and sacred cosmologies of diverse Buddhist sects have since continued to influence Japanese art. The massive infusion of Buddhism into the Japanese culture at first overwhelmed the local Shinto animistic belief systems that initially had no substantive program of visual representation. Later Buddhism would absorb, accommodate and suggest imagery for Japanese Shinto deities, as it had for so many other local belief systems in Asia. Internationally noted works of Buddhist sculpture on view will include delightfully animated representations of the Guardians of the Four Directions and a serenely poised image of a bodhisattva, all firmly attributed to the realistic Kei school of sculptors. Paintings will include complex, geometric mandala forms, imagined visions of heavenly beings and the austere ink-monochrome visual meditations of Zen masters. In addition to representations of iconography from the dominant Buddhist sects--Pure Land, Esoteric and Zen—Shinto sculpture and paintings will also be on view.



Vietnamese Ceramics from the Red River Delta

Coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the normalization of relations between Vietnam and the United States, this installation of approximately 25 works reflects recent scholarship linking Vietnamese ceramics in the Freer collection with 12th to 16th-century production centers in the Red River delta in northern Vietnam. The exhibition—the first major presentation of Freer's Vietnamese ceramics collection—supplies new understanding of the sources and dates of these works and highlights their ties to major recent archaeological projects. Works on view include some originally thought by Freer founder Charles Lang Freer to be Japanese, as well as a unique glazed stoneware pillow in the shape of a tortoise and white bowl thought to

be Chinese when it was acquired in 1929, but now known to be identical to bowls recently excavated from the 15th century layer of the Thang Long citadel site in Hanoi.

The Peacock Room (permanent)

The Peacock Room was once the dining room in the London home of Frederick R. Leyland, a wealthy shipowner from Liverpool, England. Leyland commissioned the American-born artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) to paint the dining room. Between 1876 and 1877, Whistler brightened the room with golden peacocks, painting every inch of the ceiling and walls to create an elegant setting in which Leyland could display his blue-and-white porcelain as well as Whistler's painting, "The Princess from the Land of Porcelain."



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Purchased by Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) in 1904 and installed in the Freer Gallery of Art after his death, the Peacock Room is on permanent display.

Ancient Chinese Pottery and Bronze

Clay, jade, and bronze are the dominant materials used in the art of ancient China from around 4000 B.C.E. to the early centuries C.E. Of these, clay and bronze appear to have been closely linked in their developments. Both materials were used to make pots and containers in a variety of shapes, the best of which were buried with their owners as status symbols or signs of wealth. Both required an intimate knowledge of the materials and expert handling to create the finished product. The selection of ceramic and bronze vessels on view begins at the important juncture between the end of the Neolithic pottery tradition and the emergence of the metalworking tradition (around 2000 B.C.E.), and stops at the end of the Bronze Age and the rise of glazed stoneware (around 200 C.E.). The exhibition shows the complex, changing relationship between two of China's oldest artistic traditions.

Arts of the Islamic World

The arts of the Islamic world flourished in a vast geographic area extending from Morocco and Spain to the islands of Southeast Asia. Although distinct in their cultural, artistic, ethnic, and linguistic identities, the people of this region have shared one predominant faith, Islam. The works on view here represent the three principal media for artistic expression in the Islamic world: architecture (both religious and secular), the arts of the book (calligraphy, illustration, illumination, and bookbinding), and the arts of the object (ceramics, metalwork, glass, woodwork, textiles, and ivory). The works date from the 9th to the 17th century. On view are brass bowls and candlesticks, folios from the Koran, earthenware and ceramics, and paintings representing the traditions of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and other parts of North Africa, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan.

Buddhist Art

Buddhism, a religion that originated in India during the sixth century B.C.E., spread eastward across much of Asia during the next thousand years. While its followers are now established worldwide, Buddhism continues to have an especially strong religious and cultural presence throughout the Asian continent. Each of the civilizations that has embraced Buddhism has given a local and distinctive interpretation and sensibility to the representation of the Buddha as well as to the other images and symbols characteristic of Buddhist art.



Small Glass Vessels and Sculpture Collected by Charles Lang Freer

During his three trips to Egypt between 1906 and 1909, gallery founder Charles Lang Freer purchased a number of ancient Egyptian sculptures of wood, stone, and bronze, as well as amulets, beads, inlays, vessels, and other objects made of glass and glazed materials. Freer was deeply attracted to the rich blue and green colors of Egyptian glass and glazes and their often luminous appearance. This exhibition highlights Freer's little-known Egyptian collection and his thoughts on Egyptian art.

Korean Ceramics

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Ceramics have always been an integral part of Korean culture and an important vehicle of the Korean aesthetic. This gallery presents Korean ceramics made between 200 and 1900, ranging from tableware and Buddhist cinerary urns made for courtiers to bowls, bottles and storage jars used by peasants.

Japanese Screens

The nearly two hundred screens held by the Freer Gallery constitute one of the most important collections of its type in the world. Ranging in date from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, the screens represent the major thematic and stylistic examples of this popular format.

The Freer Gallery of Art, located at 12th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., and the adjacent Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, located at 1050 Independence Ave. S.W., are on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day, except Dec. 25, and admission is free. The galleries are located near the Smithsonian Metrorail station on the Blue and Orange lines. For more information about the Freer and Sackler galleries and their exhibitions, programs and other events, the public is welcome to visit www.asia.si.edu. For general Smithsonian information, the public may call (202) 633-1000.

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****NOTE TO EDITORS:** The following information is current as of **June 9, 2009; please discard all previous versions.** All listings are subject to change; dates and titles should be confirmed with the Office of Public Affairs and Marketing at 202-633-0271 or publicaffairsAsia@si.edu. For press releases and image and caption reports, visit www.asia.si.edu/press.

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