Inside

The Way We Were
Page 2

Events
Page 3

Department News
Pages 4–6

Acquisitions
Page 6–7

Exhibition Review
Pages 7

Calendar
Back cover

The Way We Were: Russell Tyson, 1867–1963

—Elinor Pearlstein, associate curator of Chinese art

A grandiose neo-Gothic structure on Shanghai’s waterfront stands today as a testament to America’s powerful commercial presence in late 19th-century China. Now a complex of designer boutiques, this building was the imposing headquarters of Russell and Company, one of Asia’s largest shipping firms in 1881. George Tyson served as its managing partner until 1868, when he moved with his wife and infant son, Russell, to Boston. Russell came to Chicago in 1893 to join the Aldis real estate firm and subsequently became one of this museum’s strongest supporters—as a trustee, honorary vice president, and a member of the Department of Asian Art’s advisory committee since its inception in 1922, when he also co-founded the Orientals.

Russell Tyson would recall growing up with Chinese antiques and gleaned his interest in Asian art through osmosis. His connoisseur’s taste first blossomed during travel to Korea, sometime before 1920. Several of his Korean ceramics, first exhibited at the Art Institute that same year, were collected on that trip. Chinese textiles and jade; Chinese, Japanese, and Indian painting; and Japanese ceramics would subsequently catch his perceptive eye. Tyson’s primary sensibility, however, always focused on Chinese ceramics. These include some of the museum’s finest vessels and tomb figures, which together represent most major periods and many types of ware. Gallery 105, featuring artworks from Tang dynasty China, deservedly bears Tyson’s name, but one needs only to skim labels throughout our galleries to glean but a partial sense of his extraordinary legacy. Altogether his bequest constituted almost 1,000 works of art—primarily but not exclusively Asian—some from his personal collection, others through requisite purchase funds. Through an additional endowment, his passion continues to enrich the Art Institute.
Events

Encounters with Asia: Art of the Islamic World
—Heather Black, Asian Art Council vice president for programs

Entering its third year this spring, the Encounters with Asia series will focus on “Art of the Islamic World: Glory in Diversity” and will be sponsored by AAC in cooperation with the Sustaining Fellows. The immensely popular annual series featured “Japanese Art Today” in 2012 and “Pursuing China’s Past” in 2013.

The Islamic world represents a vast geographic area—extending at times in history from southern Spain and Morocco in the west to western China or India or southeast Asia in the east. It comprises many different cultures and historically covers the time from 622 a.d. to the present day.

The four lectures in this series consider key themes that both bind the various manifestations of Islamic visual culture together and celebrate the broad diversity of expression found in different Islamic lands and times. The first lecture establishes a visual foundation for the series by considering the most important types of ornamental forms found in Islamic art and how they originated and developed. The second focuses on the development of early Islamic art and its debt to earlier and contemporary civilizations in the eastern Mediterranean world. The third lecture looks at the architecture of the Islamic world from the standpoint of both historical monuments and contemporary structures that reflect varying degrees of influence from Islamic traditions. The final talk considers the development and current status of contemporary Islamic art and one historically trained curator’s approach to collecting in that area for her institution.

AAC Spring Travel
May 2-4

This spring the Asian Art Council is traveling to Cleveland on a tour led by Elinor Pearlstein, associate curator of Chinese art. As many of you know, the Cleveland Museum of Art has a world-renowned collection of Asian art. Their Asian galleries were only recently reopened to the public. The trip will also include a visit to the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Reid to see their fine collection of Chinese ceramics.

Should this trip fill, a second trip may be scheduled. For more information, contact Susan Packard at (312) 443-7282.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

The Language of Islamic Ornament
Daniel Walker, Pritzker Chair of Asian Art, curator of Islamic art, and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Chair and Curator of Textiles, The Art Institute of Chicago

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

Early Islamic Art and the Late Antique World
Elena N. Boeck, associate professor, Department of History of Art and Architecture, DePaul University

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

Islamic Architecture: A Rejuvenated Tradition
Nasser Rabbat, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

Islamic Art Now and Then: Contextualizing Contemporary Middle East Art within a Historical Collection
Linda Komaroff, curator of Islamic art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

As in the past, the series is open to AAC and SF members at a discounted rate; guests and Art Institute members are welcome as well. One may attend both the lecture and lunch or solely the lecture.

For further information and reservations, contact Susan Packard at (312) 443-7282 or visit www.artic.edu/calendar and search for “Encounters with Asia.”

Lecture Review: “Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art” by Tim Clark
November 14, 2013 at 6:00

—Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art

For the fourth annual Trapp Japanese Art Lecture this past fall, we were treated to a lecture by Tim Clark of the British Museum on his landmark exhibition of Japanese erotic art or shunga.

A large number of Japanese prints created in the Edo period (1615–1868) fall into this genre and are by some of the same artists we are very familiar with, such as Utamaro and Hokusai. However, because shunga was not collected in the West until very recently, erotic prints are often misunderstood or largely unknown to most museum audiences.

Despite their often-graphic nature, many shunga display a tenderness and intimacy between couples. The depiction of diaphanous fabric and mesmerizing patterns eroticize the everyday. Sometimes the images make us laugh—which was their intention. Tim described how many of these were not naughty items to be hidden away from sight but family treasures to be shared with honored guests (much to the dismay of those guests when they were Westerners).

The talk was extremely well attended. Although the auditorium was “standing room only,” all enjoyed Tim’s tour through this fascinating aspect of Japanese prints.

Above: Kitagawa Utamaro. Lovers in the upstairs room of a teahouse, from Utamakura (Poem of the Pillow), 1788, The British Museum, Asia, OA+ 133.6. © The Trustees of the British Museum.
In a whirlwind of names, events, and places, Elinor Pearlstein introduced the state of Chinese American cultural relations in the first half of the 20th century. Illustrating her talk with an archive of thumbnail sketches and biographies, she focused on the roles played by Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago—beginning with the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the “unflattering image” presented by China’s Disney-esque Chinese folk village rather than its fine art and culminating in a network of endowments, collectors, donors, Chinese scholars, and dealers who created the foundation for the museum’s Chinese art collection.

Among the milestones mentioned was the seminal Nickerson Endowment, which has enabled major purchases over the decades. The first serious Chinese object to enter the collection, a Qing Dynasty lacquer teacup, donated in 1888 by Martin Ryerson, is currently on display in the galleries. Louise and Edward Sonnenschein bequeathed a huge trove of jades, 230 of which are also currently on view. Kate Buckingham, one of the “most important collector ... donor(s),” donated Buddhist sculpture, whiteware ceramics, and ancient ritual bronzes, all in the name of her invalid sister Lucy Maud Buckingham. Potter Palmer II, a collector and an early president of the museum, donated Chinese burial ceramics. Russell Tyson, another “preeminent donor” (see “The Way We Were” p. 2), contributed primarily Chinese ceramics. And early 20th-century curators such as Charles Fabens Kelley, who was with the museum from 1923 through 1956, facilitated and published the “vast preponderance of works [seen] on exhibition.”

Other major sources for the collection include the legendary dealers C. T. Loo of Paris and New York and Yamanaka, who established prominent galleries worldwide and visited Chicago as well. Prominent Chinese scholars also came to the museum: Duanfang in 1906 and Chen Megjia in 1944 who translated and published many of the Chinese bronze inscriptions in the collection. All of these collectors, dealers, and scholars contributed to the formation of an invaluable Chinese cultural presence and a priceless exchange of intercultural relations at both the Field Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago.
Reinstallation: Gallery 134
—Elinor Pearlstein, associate curator of Chinese art

Gallery 134 has had a facelift! For many years the displays here focused exclusively on Chinese ceramics from only as late as the mid-17th century. Beyond a much-desired renovation, this project was stimulated by the need to bring to view later ceramics, other decorative arts, and—most importantly—Chinese paintings and prints. Some of these works had been previously exhibited in the adjacent Gallery 108, which in 2009 was integrated into the then-new Weston Wing for Japanese art. Others had been tucked away in storage for many years, and still others are newly acquired.

Craig McBride, our department specialist, conceived a central alcove for pictorial art by linking two existing central cases with a partition wall. The first rotation in this intimate viewing area featured works of painting and calligraphy on the theme of the “Three Perfections”—calligraphy, painting, and poetry—and centered on Hsu Kuo-huang’s Cursive Script purchased by the AAC in 2012; the second rotation featured contemporary prints. The back of this wall, bracketed by two classic 17th-century armchairs, may accommodate large paintings or textiles.

Chinese ceramics have been reorganized to follow major developments in Chinese stoneware and porcelain successively, from early celadons and whitewares through the most refined and technically complex 18th-century monochromes and polychromes. One case devoted to lacquer opened with a loan of stunning pieces from the Weston Collection. Two cases feature small, elegantly crafted desk accessories of ceramic, lacquer, ivory, bronze, rhinoceros horn, and wood, which combine and contrast imperial and literati taste. A wood brush holder also purchased by the AAC is among those pieces shown to exemplify the latter.

Nilima Sheikh: Each Night Put Kashmir in Your Dreams
Through May 18, 2014
—Madhuvanti Ghose, Alsdorf Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian, Himalayan, and Islamic Art

The first solo museum exhibition of work by revered Indian artist Nilima Sheikh is a collaboration between the departments of Contemporary and Asian Art co-curated by James Rondeau and Madhuvanti Ghose. It features eight banners painted by the artist between 2003 and 2010 for a series focusing on both the multicultural history and contentious present of Kashmir. Currently owned by collectors throughout India and Southeast Asia, these scroll paintings come together at the Art Institute for the first time since their original display. Additionally, Sheikh has created two works especially for this Chicago installation.

The title of the series and exhibition is derived from a line in the poem, “I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight” by the Kashmiri American poet Agha Shahid Ali. Sheikh’s scrolls combine Ali’s poems with excerpts from myriad sources, ranging from medieval poetry to contemporary perspective which encourages viewers to reflect and think afresh about this contested territory.

Nilima Sheikh (born 1945) studied history at Delhi University and painting at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. She was the Roman J. Witt Resident Artist and Penny W. Stamp Lecturer at the University of Michigan in 2004 and artist in residence at the Montalvo Artists Studios, California, in 2005. She is married to the artist Gulammohammed Sheikh and lives in Vadodara and New Delhi.

Dayanita Singh
Through June 1, 2014
—Michal Raz-Russo, assistant curator of photography

Over a period of more than 30 years Dayanita Singh (born 1961), who began her career in photojournalism, has developed a way of working on interconnected projects that she revisits in various forms, such as artists’ books, photographic series, and most recently, the Museum structures. This presentation brings together one of Singh’s earliest photographic series, Myself Mona Ahmed (1989–2001), newly acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago, with a recent related Museum structure, Museum of Chance (2013).

Singh met the outcast eunuch Mona Ahmed (a combination of female and male first names) on assignment in 1989. The two, who became fast friends and remain very close to this day, have together endeavored to think through and explain what it means to be truly unique in the world. Although the project culminated in a book published in 2001, Singh has
continued to photograph Mona and her images appear frequently in recent projects, including Museum of Chance. While the artists’ book has been Singh’s primary mode of display and communication, in 2013 she began constructing the Museum works—large wooden structures that can be opened and placed in various architectural configurations, each containing a group photographs that span her artistic oeuvre. Museum of Chance, which features more recent photographs of Mona Ahmed, was selected for the Art Institute’s presentation for its use of images connecting the artist’s past and present, making it an anchor of the Museum series.

**Director’s Tour to India 2014**

—Madhuvanti Ghose, Alsdorf Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian, Himalayan, and Islamic Art

Douglas Druick, President and Eloise W. Martin Director, along with Madhuvanti Ghose, Alsdorf Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian, Himalayan, and Islamic Art, visited India in late January 2014. They were joined by James Rondeau, the Dittmer Chair and Curator of Contemporary Art, in New Delhi for the 6th annual India Art Fair featuring modern and contemporary art from India and around the world. In conjunction with the fair, Rondeau, Ghose, and the eminent Indian artist Nilima Sheikh held a panel discussion for Outset India on January 31 to celebrate Sheikh’s exhibition at the Art Institute, *Each Night Put Kashmir in Your Dreams* (on view through May 18, 2014).

Druick was honored at a luncheon hosted by and held at the home of one of India’s premier art collectors, Kiran Nadar, chairperson of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. The lunch welcomed guests from India’s influential arts community and Viscount Linley, Chairman of Christie’s UK.

Druick was also invited to present the inaugural lecture at the National Museum in New Delhi as part of their new monthly NM Lecture Series. The lecture, “The Art Institute of Chicago: Embodying Excellence in American Museum Practices,” showcased the museum’s ongoing commitment to Indian programming.

The Art Institute also held a joint press conference with India’s Ministry of Culture on January 29 in New Delhi, which shared the significant outcomes of the Vivekananda Memorial Program for Museum Excellence including the implementation of Jatan, an indigenously developed database management program that is now being rolled out in ten major museums of India.

**Acquisitions**

**Recent Acquisition of Islamic Art**

—Daniel Walker, Pritzker Chair of Asian Art and curator of Islamic art

In these two contiguous pages from a dispersed Qur’an manuscript made in southern Spain during the period of Islamic rule in Andalusia and North Africa under the Almohads and Almoravids in the late 12th or 13th century, the sublime majesty of God’s message as revealed to the prophet Muhammad is treated with full respect by an accomplished calligrapher, aided by the opulent use of gold and color.

The distinctive script style is known as Maghribi because it was the style favored in the Islamic west, known as the Maghrib. The style is characterized by a relative balance between overall vertical and horizontal emphasis, appropriate to the squarish format favored for the page. Scythe-like hooks sweep below the lines of script, and some letters typically have parallel horizontal lines exaggerated in length. Maghribi is the only cursive script in Arabic that developed directly from Kufic, the early angular style, perhaps explaining this style’s relative stiffness compared to more elegant contemporary cursive scripts of the central and eastern Islamic lands.

Our double page is an excellent example of the fondness for color demonstrated by the finest Maghribi manuscripts. It is evident in the vivid pink of the paper; in the letter-pointing and vocalization added in gold, blue, brown, and yellow; and in various illuminated roundels found in the text and especially the large triangular medallion in the margin. The small roundels give the respective verse numbers, while the larger margin medallion, which has not yet been fully deciphered, unusually seems to provide some instruction about reading this Qur’an during the month of Ramadan, the traditional time for fasting.

Despite the presence of informative colophons in some Maghribi Qur’ans, a clear distinction between North African and Andalusian examples based on script style has proven difficult to establish. However, we follow most authorities in assigning our proposed leaves and others from the same manuscript to Andalusia based on the use of paper as opposed to vellum. Paper, a great specialty of Jativa, near Valencia, Spain, was not used for manuscripts in North Africa until much later.
The latest addition to the Japanese art collection at the Art Institute, a colorful pair of 17th-century screens showing six tethered horses in their stables, has been acquired just in time for the Year of the Horse. Inside the stables, workers bring hay and other items for the animals and converse with one another. A samurai, presumably the stable master, finds time for a nap. On green tatami mats in front of the horses sit small groups of men and children entertaining themselves by playing games such as go and sugoroku (a kind of backgammon). Between the stable buildings, grooms can be seen wading in a stream to wash their horses. The stables and stream are all set into a landscape made up of a golden sky and ground enveloped by large gold clouds.

The artist of these screens displays considerable inventiveness compared to other known works of this genre. Clearly, he excelled in painting landscape elements and has therefore featured the finely rendered trees and flowers in the center of the composition. In addition, the horses themselves are extremely expressive and are painted in a mannered style rather than realistically.

The subject of horses in stables was one favored by warriors in Japan, whether they were daimyo who owned their own stables or wealthy samurai who wanted possession of the screens to signal their ties with elite warrior culture. Furthermore, the depiction of tethered horses in paintings almost certainly had spiritual connotations, having close links with painted panels donated to shrines known as ema (literally “picture horses”).

This pair of screens, along with other works featuring horses, is on display in an exhibition celebrating the Year of the Horse in Gallery 109 (Andō Gallery), through April 6.

Exhibition Review: Yoga—The Art of Transformation
—Marion Wood Covey, visiting scholar and Asian Art Council secretary

“Like a rope composed of many different threads—some of which are present at any given moment, but none of which are always there—yoga’s history has been one of continual modifications and transformations.”
—Debra Diamond

This exhibition of more than 130 objects—paintings, sculpture, photographs, books, and videos—highlights the spiritual, physical, philosophical, and medical practice of yoga, an ancient tradition of India, which to many people worldwide lies at the core of its culture. It is organized thematically, with the earliest works dating to second-century Gandhara, the ancient Buddhist kingdom that straddled present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan, and continuing through the 20th century with modern yoga diagrams and manuals.

The exhibition focuses on yogis and yoginis (male and female practitioners of yoga) in their diverse guises as gods, gurus, or ascetics, and their various religious backgrounds as Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, or Sufis. A highlight is the miniature painting The Goddess Bhairavi Devi with Shiva by Payag (c. 1630–35), a depiction of a fiery red goddess seated on a headless body in a cremation ground, while a blue, ash-smeared god Shiva in his yogic form gazes at her adoringly. Another work of import is a large painting on cotton from the noted Hamzanama series (c. 1560), Misbah the Grocer Brings the Spy Parran to his House. Sculptural highlights include three life-sized 10th-century stone yogini goddesses, reunited for the first time since they left their original home—a temple in South India’s Tamil Nadu, near Kanchipuram. A comprehensive section is devoted to colonial photographs, a selection featuring Swami Vivekananda, who attended Chicago’s Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893 where he made a legendary speech. It is believed that it was he who revived classical yoga in a modern form, bringing it to a global platform for the first time through his lectures and his publication and exhibition Raja Yoga.

Organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery’s curator Debra Diamond, who also curated the exhibition Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur in 2008, the exhibition can now be seen at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (through May 25, 2014) and then travels to the Cleveland Museum of Art (June 22–September 7, 2014).
Calendar of Asian Art Events

EXHIBITIONS

The Art Institute of Chicago

Hiroshige’s Winter Scenes
Gallery 107
Through March 30

Amar Kanwar: The Lightning Testimonies
Gallery 291
Through April 13

The Year of the Horse
Gallery 109
Through April 16

Dayanita Singh
Gallery 292
Through June 1

Nilima Sheikh: Each Night Put Kashmir in Your Dreams
Galleries 182–184
Through May 11

Utamaro: Aspects of Beauty
Gallery 107
April 5–July 13

Onchi Koshiro: The Abstract Prints
Gallery 107
July 19–October 5

Chicago

Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture
Smart Museum of Art
Through June 15

Inspired by Opera: Contemporary Chinese Photography and Video
Smart Museum of Art
Through June 15

Silk Road and Indian Ocean Traders: Connecting China and the Middle East
The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
Through June 29

Artist in Residence: Sanjeev Shankar
Hyde Park Art Center
June 8–August 2

New York

Golden Visions of Densatil: A Tibetan Buddhist Monastery
Asia Society
Through May 18

Tibet and India: Buddhist Traditions and Transformations
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Through June 8

Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia, 5th to 8th Century
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
April 14–July 27

Nalini Malani: Transgressions
Asia Society
Through August 3

Bodies in Balance
Rubin Museum of Art
Through September 8

Points of Departure: Treasures of Japan from the Brooklyn Museum
Japan Society
Through June 8

Inspired by Dunhuang: Re-creation in Contemporary Chinese Art
China Institute
Through June 8

V. S. Gaitonde: Painting as Process, Painting as Life
Guggenheim Museum
October 24–February 11

Washington, DC

Chigusa and the Art of Tea
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Through July 27

Kiyochika: Master of the Night
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Through July 27

California

The Carved Brush: Calligraphy, Painting, and Seal Carving by Qi Baishi
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
Through July 14

Yoga: The Art of Transformation
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
Through May 25

Enter the Mandala: Cosmic Centers and Mental Maps of Himalayan Buddhism
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
Through October 26

Massachusetts

Return of the Dragon: Shohaku’s Dragon and Clouds
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Through July 6

Ohio

Remaking Tradition: Modern Art of Japan from the Tokyo National Museum
Cleveland Museum of Art
Through May 11

Beijing: Contemporary and Imperial: Photographs by Lois Conner
Cleveland Museum of Art
March 30–June 29

Yoga: The Art of Transformation
Cleveland Museum of Art
June 22–September 7

Pennsylvania

Treasure from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Through May 26

Texas

Nur: Light in Art and Science from the Islamic World
Dallas Museum of Art
Through June 29

Washington

A Fuller View of China, Japan, and Korea
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Through April 14

Hometown Boy: Liu Xiaodong
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Through June 29

Inked: Wan Qingli
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Through June 29

EVENTS

AAC Lecture: Beneficial to See—Early Tibetan Painting of the Drgung Kagyu School
Thursday, April 3 at 6:00
Price Auditorium
Christian Luchianis, Rubin Museum of Art

AAC Lecture: The Spirit of Sakura—My Artwork and Family Legacy
Thursday, April 10 at 6:00
Price Auditorium
Artist Ayomi Yoshida

Lunch and Lecture Series: Encounters with Asia

Art of the Islamic World: Glory in Diversity
Wednesdays at 11:00
Nichols Board of Trustees Suite

The Language of Islamic Ornament
Daniel Walker, Pritzker Chair of Asian Art, curator of Islamic art, and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Chair and Curator of Textiles, The Art Institute of Chicago
April 23

Early Islamic Art and the Late Antique World
Elena N. Boeck, associate professor of art and architecture, DePaul University
April 30

Islamic Architecture: Rejuvenated Tradition
Nasser Rabbat, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
May 7

Islamic Art Now and Then: Contextualizing Contemporary Middle East within a Historical Collection
Linda Komaroff, curator of Islamic Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
May 14

AAC TRAVEL: CLEVELAND

May 2–4, 2014
Join curator Elinor Pearlstein for a visit to the Cleveland Museum of Art to view the reopening of its Asian art galleries.

AAC ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 8 at 5:00
Nichols Board of Trustees Suite

EVENTS IN CHICAGO

Envisioning China: A Festival of Arts and Culture
Multiple events and venues
Through June 15
See www.arts.uchicago.edu/envisioning-china for details.

Eye on India
Multiple events and venues
June 13–June 29
See www.eyeonindia.com for details.

Residency Dialogue: Sanjeev Shankar and Shawn Decker
Hyde Park Art Center
Thursday, June 26 at 6:00