

NATIONAL MUSEUM of **ASIAN ART**

Visual Description

Exhibition: Connecting Stories at the National Museum of Asian Art

On the north wall is a topographic Fuller Map that centers on Asia and includes labels of the continent's countries. The North Pole is featured on the map with North America above it, upside down. This design illustrates the ways in which maps are drawn to influence how we view the world.

Also on the north wall is the Symbols interactive, which features various symbols, patterns, and designs seen in our collections. Explore a few of their different meanings and look out for these symbols in artworks around the museum.

In the center of the gallery are four objects with five labels each. The labels address the themes of landscapes, skills and techniques, and global Asia.

Here are the details about each artwork:

Bottle

Probably Egypt, Cairo, Mamluk period, mid-14th century

Glass with enamel and gilt

Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment

Freer Gallery of Art

F1934.20

This glass bottle is richly decorated with gilt and blue and red enamel. It is twenty inches tall and nine inches at its widest point. The base tapers into a wide midsection that gently rounds to a long, skinny neck. An elaborate Arabic inscription appears on the bottle's body.

"Lotus Root" Teapot

Lu Wenxia (b. 1966)

China, Jiangsu province, Yixing, Modern period, 1994

Yixing ware; stoneware; clay, slip, and pigments

Purchase—funds provided by David and Lois Raphling

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

S1995.114a-b

This stoneware teapot is the smallest object on display, at six inches tall and seven inches long. It is made in the shape of a lotus root, with the body of the teapot forming the root of the tuber and the handle comprising the stems and leaves, curled in a nighttime position. One end of the tuber culminates in a pointed, ragged spout. A small lid sits on the top center, and a snail forms the knob. Its detailed decoration is an example of "art imitating nature."

Jar

Producer: Pewabic Pottery

Designer: Mary Chase Perry Stratton (1867–1961)

United States, Michigan, Detroit

ca. 1914

Pewabic ware; glazed clay

Gift of Charles Lang Freer

Freer Gallery of Art

F1914.117

This jar is one foot tall and has an ovoid, or egg, shape. It is tapered at the bottom, wide in the middle, and then tapers again to a small cylindrical opening at the top. The color and shape of the glaze is irregular. The glaze at the bottom is orange-red, while a greenish cream glaze overflows at the top. The entire surface has a purplish iridescence.

Ritual bell (*dotaku*)

Japan, Kansai region, Yayoi period, 2nd century

Bronze

Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment

Freer Gallery of Art

F1968.73

This bell has a striking presence. It is three feet tall and over one foot wide, making it the largest object on display in the gallery. A green patina covers the bronze surface. The shape is very symmetrical, with decorative ridges running along the surface and an arch over the top. Small spiral designs run symmetrically along the two edges of the bell.

In the center of the room on a stand is a touchscreen interactive that features stories written by museum staff and volunteers about their favorite objects in the museum's collections. A QR code at the bottom of each person's page leads to more information about the object on our website.

On the south wall is a series of images that cover the wall, extending twenty feet high, with natural lighting filtering down. Some of the images are on panels and some float on transparent fabric banners. From left to right, the images highlight the four thematic sections of this exhibition: the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room, Global Asia, Skills and Techniques, and Landscapes. The images on the panels are bright and contemporary, while the banners are color coded to correspond with the section they identify. The banners all feature images from the National Museum of Asian Art's collections.

The south wall contains our final display of objects. The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room is an immersive experience, showcasing a shrine like one you might encounter in a grand Tibetan home. The room contains an audio recording of chanting, a rich display of objects, and lighting that mimics flickering candlelight. Over two hundred objects are on display in the room, including Buddhas, offerings, and *thangkas* (cotton paintings).