

ASIAN ART
connections

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS

SPRING 2006

A black and white portrait of James H. Freer, a man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark tie. The portrait is set against a light background and is partially overlaid by a large, semi-transparent yellow circle.

Freer's Gift

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART



Smithsonian
Freer Gallery of Art and
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

POSTER
INSIDE!

exhibitions

THE FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY at the Smithsonian Institution together form the national museum of Asian art for the United States. The Freer Gallery also houses American art from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the world's most important collection of works by James McNeill Whistler.

FREER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Virtue and Entertainment:
Music in Chinese Art
THROUGH MARCH 26, 2006

Artists of Edo 1800-1850
THROUGH MAY 29, 2006

Freer and Tea: One Hundred Years
of *The Book of Tea*
THROUGH MAY 29, 2006

Pretty Women: Freer and
the Ideal of Feminine Beauty
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

Ongoing Freer Exhibitions

Ancient Chinese Pottery and Bronze
Art for Art's Sake (American)
Arts of the Indian Subcontinent
and the Himalayas
Arts of the Islamic World
Black and White Chinese Ceramics from
the Tenth to Fourteenth Century

Buddhist Art
Charles Lang Freer and Egypt
Japanese Screens
Korean Ceramics
The Peacock Room
Small Masterpieces: Whistler Paintings
from the 1880s
Vietnamese Ceramics

SACKLER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Closing Soon!

Gold: The Asian Touch
THROUGH FEBRUARY 26, 2006

Perspectives: Mei-ling Hom
THROUGH MARCH 12, 2006

Featured Exhibition

Hokusai
MARCH 4-MAY 14, 2006
Experience the genius of Japanese artist
Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) in this
exhibition of paintings that span his seventy-

year career. Works such as *Boy Viewing
Mount Fuji* will be displayed for the first
time alongside important works from
museums and private collections in Japan,
Europe, and the United States. The exhibi-
tion is co-organized by the Nihon Keizai
Shimbun, Inc. in cooperation with the
Tokyo National Museum.

Hiroshi Sugimoto:
History of History
APRIL 1-JULY 30, 2006

Facing East: Portraiture across Asia
JULY 1-SEPTEMBER 4, 2006

Bible and Book
OCTOBER 21, 2006-JANUARY 1, 2007

Ongoing Sackler Exhibitions

The Arts of China
Fountains of Light: Islamic Metalwork from
the Nuhad Es-Said Collection
Luxury Arts of the Silk Route Empires
Sculpture of South Asia and the Himalayas

TOURS

To request a tour, please contact us at 202.633.1012 or asiatours@asia.si.edu or submit your request online at www.asia.si.edu/education **at least four weeks in advance.** For detailed information about school tours, including descriptions, please visit our website: www.asia.si.edu/education/toursForStudents.htm

Current Exhibition Tours

Some current exhibitions are available as tours for school groups. Group size and grade levels vary for each exhibition.

Special Tours

Hands-on Tuesdays

45 participants total (including chaperones), grades 3-8, Tuesday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Join us for an interactive tour in the galleries, followed by a hands-on art activity in the Sackler classroom.

Arts of the Islamic World

30 students, grades 7-12, 1 hour

The Religions of Asia: Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism

45 students, grades 6-12, 1 hour

How to Look at Asian Art:

Process, Function, and Meaning

60 students, grades 3-12, 1 hour

Introduction to Japanese Art

45 students, grades 3-12, 1 hour

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China

45 students, grades 3-6, 1 hour

Survey of Chinese Art

45 students, grades 7-2, 1 hour

The Art of Buddhism

30 students, grades 7-12, 1 hour

The Art of Hinduism

30 students, grades 6-12, 1 hour

Animals in Asian Art

45 students, grades K-3, 45 minutes

The Princess and the Peacocks

20 students (with at least 3 chaperones), grades K-3, 45 minutes

Charles Lang Freer, Collector

60 students, grades 9-12, 1 hour

Freer's Gift

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART



Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), the founder of the Freer Gallery of Art, made his fortune in the railroad industry of late nineteenth-century America. When health concerns prompted him to retire at the age of forty-five, he pursued a career of connoisseurship, collecting the finest works of art across both time and culture. The Freer Gallery is internationally recognized for its Chinese, Japanese, and turn-of-the-century American art, including an unmatched collection of works by James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). However, one of the lesser-known treasures of the collection are the Egyptian objects, most of which Freer purchased during three trips to Egypt between 1906 and 1911. After his first trip to Egypt in 1906–1907, Freer was so enthusiastic about Egyptian art that he declared, in a letter to his friend and business partner Colonel Frank J. Hecker, “I now feel that these things are the greatest art in the world, greater than Greek, Chinese or Japanese.” While that passion eventually subsided, Freer continued to believe that Egyptian art comprised an important part of his cherished collection.

This year, 2006, we mark the centennial of the Smithsonian Institution's acceptance of Freer's collection, paving the way for the Smithsonian's first art museum. To mark this anniversary, we have highlighted an object from this small Egyptian collection to hint at the breadth of Freer's aesthetic vision and to introduce the public to a little-known aspect of this extraordinary gift to the American people.

classroom activity

Suitable for Grades 6–12

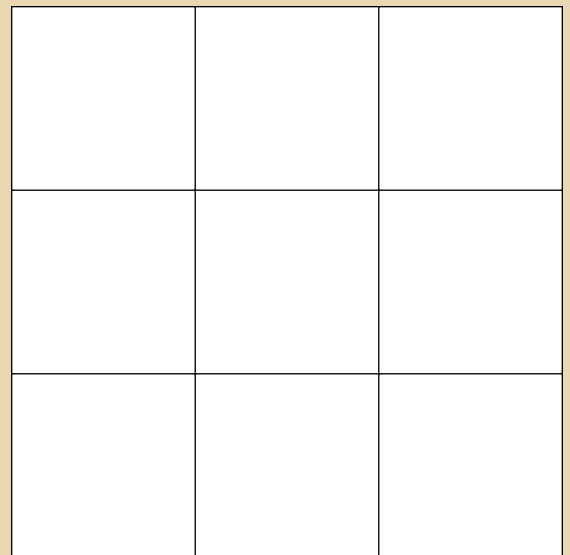
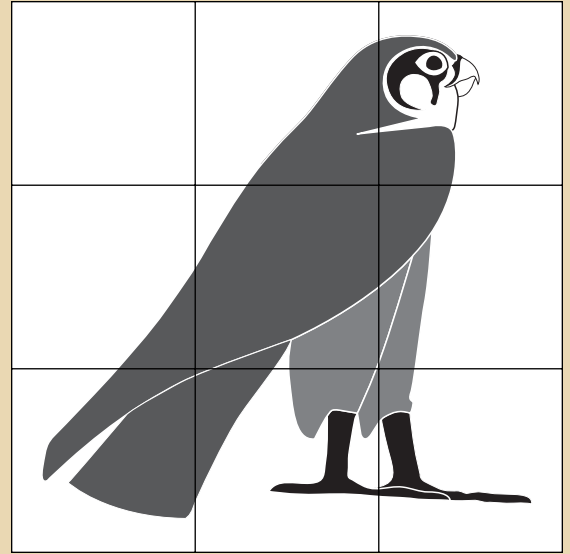
PART I

It's the night before Ted's grandmother's birthday, and he plans to make a card with a picture of her favorite animal—a falcon—on the front, copied from a nature magazine. But just as he starts working, he sees a flash of lightning. A thunderstorm is rolling through and the electricity goes out. He turns on his battery-powered radio, and the local station reports that power is out across the city. Now, there is no way he can use a copy machine, computer, scanner, or any other electronic device to duplicate the falcon picture. He's determined to put a picture of the falcon on the card, because it's the first animal his grandmother saw as a child after a long illness in the hospital. Falcons symbolize health and freedom to her. What does he do? Well, he's going to have to draw the falcon himself, so he turns on a flashlight and begins. He decides to try two different ways of drawing the bird to see which comes out best—drawing it free-hand and using a grid. Now, try Ted's two approaches yourself.

A) First, draw the falcon by copying it freestyle from the image in the upper right corner.

B) Next, reproduce the falcon by copying the original image square by square into the grid on the right, drawing each part.

Compare the experience of drawing the falcon with and without the grid. Which was easier? Which image are you happier with? What differences do you notice between the two drawings?



PART II

Look carefully at the object on the poster. Read and answer the questions below to help focus your observations.

A) Looking

- What is the overall shape of the object?
- What are some shapes you see in the figure on the object?
- What colors do you see?
- What kind of material do you think the object was made from?
 - Why?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- What does it not look like?
- What are the details you see?
- What other things do you notice about it?

B) Interpreting

- How is the figure dressed?
- How is the figure positioned?
- What do you think the figure might be holding in his hands?
- What might the figure be doing?
- What might be the purpose of this object?
- Who might have made this object?

C) Exploring

- What else would you like to find out about this object?

PART III

Featured Object

Sculptors' Model, depicting kneeling king offering pots of wine

Egypt, Dynasty 26 (664–525 B.C.E.) or later

Limestone

18.9 x 16.5 x 3.9 cm

Freer Gallery of Art, Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1909.142

This stone relief is probably a sculptor's model of a kind used in Egypt from the Third Dynasty (ca. 2675–2625 B.C.E.) to Ptolemaic times (305–30 B.C.E.). Reliefs like these helped artists teach their apprentices how to depict images according to the style of ancient Egyptian art, which involved particular ways of showing human and animal figures at rest or in motion.

The sculpture presents the profile image of a king, kneeling and offering a pot in each hand. The ledge upon which he kneels is also the bottom edge of the model. The king wears a decorated collar or necklace, a kilt (skirt), and the uraeus crown, which features an image of a sacred cobra—a symbol for kingship in Egypt. A streamer attached to the crown falls down the figure's back. A depiction like this—of a king making an offering to the gods—is a common motif in ancient Egyptian art.



How did artists achieve a consistent style for images in ancient Egypt?

Ancient Egyptians believed that specific figural proportions could endow images with great power, because they reflected the eternal world of the gods. Artists used a grid system to create images in the proportions that were considered correct. For instance, in the case of the sculptor's model of the king above, the grid was first painted onto the limestone surface. Then, using the grid as a guide, the artist produced a carefully measured outline of the figure that was to be carved.

What might be some advantages of using the grid system? Have you ever started the process of learning something by copying or imitating? (For example, playing scales on a piano or writing the letter "A.") Do you think there might be room for creativity when learning this way? How? What about after the basic skill is mastered?

What was the reason for the particular style of images in ancient Egypt?

Most art in ancient Egypt was religious in nature and produced for temples and royal tombs. Ultimately, ancient Egyptian artists were working for the gods and the king, who was actually considered a demigod. Thus, their work had value beyond whether it looked beautiful. Artists had to follow strict rules of proportion, because they were presenting ideas considered to be eternal and powerful. For example, images of objects on the wall of a king's tomb had to be properly proportioned; otherwise, they would not later become

the actual items needed by the king in what he believed would be his afterlife. This system of strict proportions ensured that all images were basically of the same quality and consistency even if, for example, the artists had been trained in different workshops.

Are you familiar with any works of art that have importance beyond their pleasing appearance? What do they depict? What deeper ideas are the artists trying to communicate?

How did someone become an artist in ancient Egypt?

Ancient Egyptian artists occupied a fairly low position in society—on par with laborers. Typically, the profession was hereditary, passed down from father to son. Training commenced with an apprenticeship, during which the student learned to copy carefully such standard images as the one pictured above. Workshops were attached to temples and tombs, and thus artists were on hand whenever the need for them arose. Opportunities for creativity came when powerful individuals hired artists to design the decorations for their tombs.

How does the description of the ancient Egyptian artist match or contrast with your own idea of an artist today? Can you support your answer with specific information and examples?

VOCABULARY

- aesthetic** relating to the beautiful.
- apprentice** a person who learns a skill or trade by working with an expert in that skill or trade.
- motif** a single or repeating design.
- relief** a figure or design that stands out from a flat background.
- symbolize** to represent something; for example, in the case of this sculpture, the uraeus crown—an object—stood for an idea—kingship. The position of the king and the wine jars symbolizes the act of worship by giving offerings to the gods.

Sculptors' models

Egypt, Dynasty 26 (664–525 B.C.E.), or later
Limestone
8.3 x 12.5 x 1.6 cm.; 17.9 x 18.8 x 3.6 cm.; 14.7 x 16.3 x 2.0 cm.
Freer Gallery of Art
Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1908.58; F1909.374; F1908.61

Ancient Egyptian artists also needed to know how to depict with accuracy the images used in hieroglyphs, the pictorial writing system of ancient Egypt. The Egyptian phrase for hieroglyphs literally translates as “the god’s words.” Egyptians believed that the gods had bestowed hieroglyphs on humanity. Consequently, hieroglyphs were considered to be very powerful. They were used for royal and religious purposes, not for everyday record keeping, for which another script was developed. The images below of the crocodile, falcon, and goose (often identified as a pintail duck) may have been used as models for hieroglyphs.



PART IV

In ancient Egypt, an artist was valued according to his ability to produce a correctly proportioned image that accurately portrayed and honored the eternal world of the gods and the king. What do we value in artists today?

Charles Lang Freer, founder of the Freer Gallery of Art, purchased the ancient Egyptian sculptor’s model featured on the poster, because, although his primary interest was Asian and American art, he had a vision of bringing together the best art from different cultures and time periods. Freer had a definite view about what makes good art and assembled his collection based on that view. Today, who decides what good art is? And who decides what makes an artist valuable or not?

Poster captions:

Top:

Sculptors’ Model. Egypt, Dynasty 26 (664–525 B.C.E.) or later.
Limestone. 18.9 x 16.5 x 3.9 cm. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1909.142.

Bottom from left to right:

Detail, Vessel. Egypt, New Kingdom Dynasty 18 (ca. 1539–1295 B.C.E.).
Glass. 8.4 x 6.7 x 3.8 cm. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1909.416.

Detail, Falcon. Egypt, Ptolemaic Dynasty (305–30 B.C.E.). Stone. 57.1 x
26.6 x 54.1 cm. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1909.141.

Detail, Pomegranate flask. Egypt, New Kingdom Dynasty 18
(ca. 1539–1295 B.C.E. or later). Glass. 10.2 x 8 cm. Gift of Charles Lang
Freer, F1909.423

Detail, Face from a coffin. Egypt, New Kingdom Dynasty 18 or 19
(ca. 1539–1190 B.C.E.). Wood and glass. 20.3 x 16.1 x 8.4 cm. Gift of
Charles Lang Freer, F1909.143

TEACHER RESOURCES 2005–2006

Free Semiannual Newsletter

Asian Art Connections: Resources for Educators

To subscribe, please write to
fsgasiaeducation@asia.si.edu

Online Resources: General

New!

E-Gallery

Create your own exhibition using objects from the Freer and Sackler online collection.
www.asia.si.edu

Online Educational Resources

www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineGuides.htm

Freer and Sackler Collections

www.asia.si.edu/collections/default.htm

Online Exhibitions

www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online.htm

Tour Information

www.asia.si.edu/education/toursForStudents.htm

Online Resources:

Publications

Style and Status: Imperial Costumes from Ottoman Turkey

*Asian Art Connections:
A Resource for Educators*

www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineGuides.htm

Himalayas:

An Aesthetic Adventure

*Asian Art Connections:
Resources for Educators*
www.asia.si.edu/education/ConnxsFall03.pdf

The East Asian Painting Conservation Studio

*Asian Art Connections:
Resources for Educators*
www.asia.si.edu/education/ConnectionsFall2004.pdf

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide

www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineGuides.htm

The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide

www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtofBuddhism.pdf

Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide

www.asia.si.edu/education/islam.pdf

The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide

www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineGuides.htm

Devi: The Great Goddess (Hinduism)

www.asia.si.edu/education/devi/index.htm

Japan: Images of a People

smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/japan_images_people/index.html

Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion

www.asia.si.edu/education/pujaonline/puja/start.htm

Teacher Resources for Sale

Sackler Gallery Shops

All teacher resources listed below are available for sale through the Sackler shops. Order these materials online at www.freersacklershop.com, by phone at 202.633.0535, or by fax at 202.633.9838. In addition to Freer-Sackler publications, the shops also stock children's books on Asia that our Education Department has recommended.

New!

The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide

Appropriate for grades 3–12, \$20

The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

The Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

Silk Road Resource Packet

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$12

Video

Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion

This award-winning video introduces Hindu worship through moving images and interviews. 1996. 20 min. (close captioned) \$10

CD-ROM

Chi's Adventure in Ancient China

Appropriate for grades 3–6
Join Chi the chimera as he introduces viewers to ancient Chinese civilization through objects from the Freer and Sackler collections. \$10

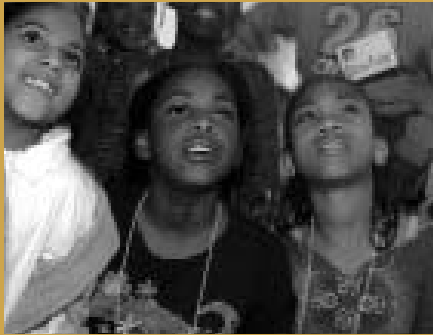
CD

Silk Road Stories

An audio CD of stories told by Freer and Sackler volunteers who have cultural ties to countries along the ancient Silk Road. The recording features stories from China, Japan, Turkey, and Bangladesh. \$10

Slide Sets

Slides and digital images are available from our Rights and Reproductions Department. To preview the sets or to order online, go to www.asia.si.edu/visitor/rnr.htm and click on *Slide Sets Now Available!* Order sets by fax at 202.633.9770.



ImaginAsia

In our popular family program, children ages six to fourteen accompanied by an adult use an activity book to explore an exhibition and then create a related art project to take home. Family programs take place on the

dates and times listed at www.asia.si.edu and do not require a reservation. Special programs will be offered in conjunction with *Hokusai* in the spring.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Freer Gallery of Art
Jefferson Drive at 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20560-0707

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
1050 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20560-0707

Hours

10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily;
closed December 25
Admission is FREE to the museum,
exhibitions, and programs.

Information

www.asia.si.edu
202.633.1000
202.357.1729 TTY
Information desks open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Food Service

For information on food services
at the Smithsonian, please visit
www.si.edu/dining/default.htm

Transportation

Ride the Metro's orange or blue line to
Smithsonian Station. Parking on the Mall
is extremely limited.

Library

The museum's non-circulating research library
specializes in Asian art as well as American
painting at the turn of the twentieth century.
It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays,
except for federal holidays.

Accessibility

Accessible entrances to the Freer and
Sackler Galleries are located at Independence
Avenue. Wheelchairs are available at the
guard's desk at each museum entrance.
Information is available in large type or
Braille and on audio-cassette or disk.

Smithsonian Institution
Freer Gallery of Art
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
P.O. Box 37012, MRC 707
Washington, DC 20013-7012

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