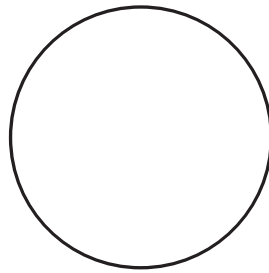


INTRODUCTION:

A CENTURY OF COLLECTING ART OF ASIA

JESSICA NICOLL



ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, in 1913, the noted collector Charles Lang Freer made gifts of the first Asian artworks to enter the collection of the Smith College Museum of Art (SCMA). This publication, and the exhibition it accompanies, commemorates this centennial anniversary by highlighting the Museum's holdings in Asian art and examining the institution's history of collecting in this area. It also announces SCMA's renewed commitment to developing its collection of Asian art, recognizing Smith College's increasingly international scope and its growing strength in Asian studies.

The collection of Asian art that has taken shape over the past century reflects the evolving aspirations for Smith's museum as well as the engagement of the College and its alumnae and friends with Asia's diverse countries and their rich cultures and history. Built largely through gifts, it is in many ways a collection of collections, telling the stories of the passion and experience of numerous collectors and their commitment to providing Smith students with the opportunity to study and learn directly from original works of art.

Freer's gifts came at a formative moment in the development of SCMA. The ambition to create an art collection to support the study of both the history and practice of art was rooted in the founding vision for Smith College and was actively pursued from its opening in the 1870s. Professor and painter Dwight Tryon played a defining role in the development of the collection during his thirty-seven-year tenure, which began in 1886.

Early collecting focused on contemporary American artists—with Tryon guiding the acquisition of works by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Abbott Handerson Thayer, and James McNeill Whistler, among others—but it also reflected contemporary aesthetic influences, notably the pervasive interest in “oriental” art among artists, designers, and collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹ Tryon's friend and patron, Charles Lang Freer, provided the opportunity for



FIG. 1. Ginling College Week exhibit at Smith College (March 1949). From left to right, Rose Sun (class of 1949), Chia-ting Chang (class of 1948), and Mary Elizabeth Ockenden (class of 1950) are shown examining materials in the display. Smith College Archives, Smith College. Photograph by the Smith College News Office.

Smith students to study East Asian art—initially through the loan of artwork for exhibition and, ultimately, through a series of gifts designed to establish a permanent Asian study collection. Freer also introduced the College to an international community of scholars in Asian art who brought their expertise to campus as lecturers and advisors on such early acquisitions as a choice group of *ukiyo-e* prints (cat. no. 18), placing Smith in the vanguard of institutions actively studying and collecting the art of Asia at the turn of the twentieth century. This foundational history is explored in greater depth in Dr. Fan Zhang’s essay in this catalogue, “Vision Beyond Borders: The Legacy of Dwight Tryon and Charles Freer.”

By 1913, Smith College was robustly established, having grown exponentially since it opened its doors in 1875 with fourteen students and a faculty of six. In 1915–16, Smith recorded an enrollment of 1,724 students and 163 faculty members, and it was an internationally visible and engaged institution.² That year it embarked upon a progressive partnership to support the development of Ginling College for women newly founded in Nanjing, China (cat. no. 34). Over the next four decades, Smith and its Alumnae Association nurtured this sister institution, which had been conceived on the model of American liberal arts women’s colleges (fig. 1). Representatives from Smith were regularly appointed to Ginling’s board of trustees, visiting professors spent sabbatical years teaching in China, and Smith raised and contributed up to one-quarter of Ginling’s operating budget.³ An expression of Smith College’s commitment to service, this partnership also brought the world to the Northampton campus in the form of visitors from Ginling, most notably when

Dr. Wu Yi-fang, a graduate of Ginling who became president of that college in 1928, traveled to Smith in 1943 to receive an honorary degree.⁴ The exchange between campuses is reflected in SCMA's collection by a Chinese painting after the style of Ma Yuan and a group of ancient Chinese coins,⁵ gifts from Ginling College that came in 1922 as expressions of appreciation to its American sponsor.

The early twentieth century also saw the maturation of the College's art program and the vision for its art collection. In the fall of 1906, Alfred Vance Churchill, who filled a new faculty position responsible for teaching the history and interpretation of art, joined Dwight Tryon, the head of the art department. Churchill played an important role in the development of the art collection, beginning to move it away from its dominant focus on American art. In 1919, he was appointed director of the College's Hillyer Art Gallery (which would officially become the Smith College Museum of Art in 1926), and the following year the trustees asked him to formalize a plan for the development of the collection. In response, he authored "Our Concentration Plan," which prioritized building depth in "modern" art—then understood as art from the time of the French Revolution to the present—while also remaining open to opportunities to acquire representative artworks from throughout the history of art. Churchill's plan, which aspired to the acquisition of works by artists from David to Cézanne, guided the formation of the collection that distinguishes SCMA today with its strength in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western European and American art.

As Charles Chetham (SCMA director from 1962 to 1988) explained to a collector, "in the 1920s the Smith College Museum of Art decided to concentrate on the collecting of Western European art The earliest directors chose not to collect 'Oriental' art. They did not regard it as inferior but they felt that 'modern' culture was directly linked with that of Western Europe and far less directly linked to that of the East. On the other hand, there was no policy of excluding works of art from the Orient. The simple fact is that they were never purchased."⁶

Indeed, the second quarter of the twentieth century was marked by the growth of the collection along the path envisioned in Churchill's concentration plan and under the leadership, from 1932 to 1946, of Jere Abbott. In each of his fourteen years as director, Abbott deployed an acquisition fund established in the late nineteenth century to make strategic purchases. He systematically built the scope and quality of the collection, acquiring such iconic works as Monet's *The Seine at Bougival*, Picasso's *Table, Guitar, and Bottle*, Seurat's

Woman with a Monkey, Sheeler's *Rolling Power*, and many others. When he collected art of other cultures, Abbott's choices reflected the aesthetic interests of modernist artists, such as the exquisite Luba ceremonial axe that he purchased in Paris in 1939 and a pre-Columbian *hacha* acquired in 1934.⁷

Asian art was largely absent from Abbott's program, with the exception of a modest number of gifts from alumnae. This began to change under the leadership of Edgar Schenck, who came to Smith in 1947 from the Honolulu Academy of Arts, where he had been director for twelve years. A Princeton-trained art historian, Schenck's expertise was in "Oriental and Polynesian arts and western painting," interests that informed his contribution to SCMA during his brief tenure. (Schenck left in 1949 to assume the directorship of the Albright Knox Art Gallery.⁸) His major acquisition for the Museum was a Yuan-dynasty painting, *Departure of Lady Wenji from the Nomad Camp* (cat. no. 8), a work with a significant provenance, having come from the important collection of Chinese paintings formed by Mr. and Mrs. G. Del Drago of New York. Schenck also nurtured gifts to the collection, notably a group of nine Chinese works given in 1947 by William S. T. Chang that included a lovely fan painting, *Solitary Monastery in Mountains*, by Yao Zhengyong (cat. no. 11).

In the decades following World War II, SCMA's collection began to grow more rapidly, substantially through gifts. While gifts had long played an important role in the collection's development, in the mid-twentieth century the proportion of acquisitions made by donation versus purchase shifted dramatically as a series of private collections came to SCMA, expanding and deepening the Museum's holdings. Some of these contributions built upon the foundations laid by Churchill and Abbott: for example, gifts made between 1950 and 1968 by sisters Adeline Flint Wing (class of 1898) and Caroline Roberta Wing (class of 1896) of more than 250 American and European works of art, or the gifts made between 1969 and 1983 by Selma Erving (class of 1927) of 757 superb Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works on paper. Other donations, notably collections of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian art, diversified the range of SCMA's holdings, establishing new areas of strength in Asian art.

The first of these was Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart's gifts in 1959–62 of a collection of fifty-three archaic Chinese jades, primarily dating to the Shang and Zhou dynasties, including the *Blade*, *Horned Owl* and *Bird-shaped Pendant* featured in this catalogue (cat. nos. 1, 2A, and 2B). This marked a turning point in the Museum's collecting in a number of ways. Not only were these SCMA's first

significant acquisitions of ancient Chinese art, they came as an intact collection contributed by donors with no prior connection to Smith College. Director Robert Parks was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Hart in 1958 by Ernest Gottlieb, a member of SCMA's newly formed Visiting Committee, an advisory body formed as part of an overall effort to professionalize the Museum's policies, governance, and operations.⁹ Parks found much to admire in the Harts' collection, including Delft tin-glazed ceramics and an Indian bronze sculpture, but he set his sights on the collection of archaic jades that the Harts had recently acquired.¹⁰

Ivan B. Hart was a Dutch wool merchant who had immigrated to the United States in 1940 with his wife, Jenny Marthe Roselaar, and their children. Originally based in Boston, and then New York, he prospered during the war because of the demand for wool. He and his wife were avid collectors of a wide range of material including clocks, silver, antique furniture, Dutch paintings, and snuff boxes.¹¹ They were philanthropically inclined, contributing works particularly to academic museums. The Harts acquired the Chinese jades in 1956 upon the death of Samuel Minkenhof, who had formed the collection.

Like Hart, Minkenhof was a Dutch businessman who had left Amsterdam in 1939, settling in New York. His business in the import and export of textiles took him to China and South Asia, and while he collected European art, his interest gradually turned to Asian (primarily Chinese) art, which he began collecting in 1931.¹² In retirement, Minkenhof devoted himself to researching and building his collection of Chinese jades and bronzes.

The Harts' acquisition of the jades seems to have been motivated by the desire to preserve Minkenhof's collection and with the intent of donating it to a museum. They lent the collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and then, in 1960, formalized their commitment to giving it in its entirety to the Smith College Museum of Art. Eight years later, Diane Scharfield Isaacs (a member of the class of 1961 who had been a student at the time of the Harts' gift) broadened SCMA's holdings with a gift of nearly forty Ming and Qing dynasty jades.

The renewed interest in collecting Asian art evidenced by Robert Parks' pursuit of the Hart collection corresponded with the introduction of Asian studies to Smith's curriculum. Charles Whitman MacSherry had joined the history department as an assistant professor in 1952–53, teaching a year-long introduction to Far Eastern civilization. In 1956–57, he began teaching two new courses for the art department, "Oriental Art: The Art of China" and "Oriental Art: The Art of Japan."

The following year he was promoted to associate professor in the departments of history and art and his art history courses became a permanent offering.¹³ The Museum recognized this in the fall of 1957 with a special exhibition of Chinese objects lent by Pauline Baerwald Falk (class of 1932), including a group of Shang and Zhou dynasty bronzes. Professor MacSherry became a close collaborator with the Museum, helping to nurture development of the collection and its use for study and teaching (fig. 2).

Other significant gifts soon followed. In 1965, Major and Mrs. Oliver J. Todd donated forty-one Chinese bronzes to SCMA (cat. no. 3A), a gift that honored their daughter, Smith alumna Doris Todd Brown (class of 1949). The couple had met in the 1920s in China, where Major Todd was working as an engineer for the American Red Cross and the International Famine Relief Commission and his future wife was a medical missionary. They continued living and working in China until the late 1930s, and during that time built their collection of Chinese bronzes, with Major Todd publishing a book on their collection of bronze mirrors in 1935.¹⁴ Seventeen mirrors formed the core of their donation, which importantly expanded and diversified SCMA's Chinese holdings.

FIG. 2. Professor Charles W. MacSherry showing a Chinese scroll (SC 1922:2-1), a gift from Ginling College, to Eva W. Nair (class of 1928). Smith College Archives, Smith College.



Two years later the collection was further deepened by a transformational gift of more than 500 Japanese prints and objects, including *netsuke*, *inro*, and *tsuba*. This came from Margaret Rankin Barker (class of 1908) in memory of her father, Isaac Ogden Rankin (1852–1936), who had formed the collection in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rankin was a congregational minister and editor of the *Congregationalist* who was also a dedicated student and early collector of Japanese art.¹⁵ Based in New England, he actively followed exhibitions and sales of Japanese art in New York and Boston and enjoyed the help of his daughter Margaret after her graduation from Smith. Her gift fulfilled his aspiration that “the collection would be kept together and would take up an existence in some educational institution.”¹⁶ It included some 400 *ukiyo-e* prints, enormously expanding the nucleus of prints in this genre that SCMA had first acquired in 1915. Particularly strong in its representation of the work of Hiroshige and Hokusai, the Barker-Rankin collection includes a rare early impression of Hokusai’s *Clear Weather, Southern Breeze* (also known as *Pink Fuji*) (cat. no. 20), the only untrimmed first state of this print held in the collection of an American museum.

In accepting the Barker-Rankin collection for Smith College, President Thomas Mendenhall acknowledged its timeliness in light of the Museum’s growing interest in building its collection of Asian art. In 1967, plans were afoot to create a new, integrated fine arts center that would include expanded facilities for the art museum, as SCMA’s collection and exhibition program had outgrown the Tryon Gallery that had housed the Museum since 1926. Mendenhall reported the aspiration shared by Director Charles Chetham and Professor Charles MacSherry that the new space would allow for the display of Asian art, noting that the Barker-Rankin collection would “provide us with a magnificent core for this new venture.”¹⁷

Chetham and MacSherry had the opportunity to act further on that vision when John Kenneth Galbraith and his wife, Catherine Atwater Galbraith (class of 1934), approached the College about a gift of Indian paintings in 1975. Among his many accomplishments, Galbraith was a devoted student and collector of Rajput and Mughal painting, ever since falling “in love with Indian painting” while “visiting India in 1956, and specifically the Bharat Kala Bhavan [museum].”¹⁸ Service as the United States ambassador to India from 1961 to 1963 gave Galbraith the opportunity to deepen this interest, yielding not only a choice collection of these intimate and evocative paintings but also a scholarly study, *Indian Painting: The Scene, Themes, and Legends*, written with his friend Mohinder Singh Randhawa.¹⁹ Returning to Harvard University in 1963, the Galbraiths shared their collection in a 1965 exhibition, *Gods, Thrones, and Peacocks*, and in the early 1970s gave a

substantial part of it to Harvard's Fogg Museum of Art.²⁰ Curator and scholar Stuart Cary Welch drew a poetic connection between these exquisite paintings and their collectors, noting that "Ken and Kitty Galbraith" were people who "not only appreciated the nuances of color, line, form, and depth of feeling or characterization seen in the pictures, but whose lives have been imbued with the beauty of their pictures."²¹ The group of paintings subsequently offered to Smith duplicated works given to the Fogg or were collected after that gift was made. Attracted by the idea of having the balance of the collection preserved at a sister academic museum, Galbraith approached SCMA, noting his "wife's great affection for Smith," as well as the critic John Russell's recent praise for the Museum in *The New York Times*.²² In expressing appreciation for the Galbraiths' offer, Chetham observed that the gift would build on some recent "major gifts of oriental art" and that "far from being inappropriate to a western collection, it would create a new area for development by providing the link between art of the east and west," recognizing the paintings' integration of Asian and European pictorial techniques.²³ Ultimately, SCMA received thirty-four paintings in 1981–82, with an additional six paintings and two Tibetan *tangkas* coming as a bequest from John Kenneth Galbraith in 2007, including the conspiratorial *Mistress and Confidante Seated on Carpet in Courtyard* (cat. no. 30).



FIG. 3. Professor Marylin Rhie, 2007.

Coincident with this growth in collecting was the expansion of curricular offerings in Asian studies and languages. Smith was one of the first liberal arts colleges to offer instruction in Chinese language, beginning in 1965 when Henry Li-Hua Kung joined the faculty, and a decade later Japanese language was introduced by Mutsuko Minegishi.²⁴ (Today, Korean language is also taught.) In 1974, Charles MacSherry was succeeded by Marylin Rhie (fig. 3), a scholar with particular expertise in Buddhist art of Central Asia, who sustained courses on the art of China and Japan, while also introducing new courses on the art of India, Tibet, Korea, Central Asia, and Buddhist art, as well as a survey of Asian art. In this same time period, new members of the faculty arrived with specialization in diverse areas of Asian studies including government, history, literature, philosophy, and religion. This emerging strength coalesced in the early 1980s in the establishment of the East Asian Studies Program, which brings together faculty from different disciplines to offer a program of study of the region.²⁵ The establishment of a major and a minor and the creation of a distinct Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures soon followed.

With the growth and diversification of SCMA's collection, Museum staff forged new connections with the curriculum. A catalytic 1992 grant from the Andrew W.

Mellon Foundation's College and University Art Museum Program allowed SCMA to launch a program that supports faculty in developing courses substantially taught from the collection and within the Museum. This transformational (and ongoing) program of Museum-based courses has stimulated greater integration of the collection into teaching and much broader use across disciplines. For example, within the first few years, faculty in the departments of American studies, art, chemistry, dance, English, music, philosophy, and theater developed courses. East Asian Studies also utilized this new opportunity for collaboration with the Museum, offering "Japanese Aesthetics, Landscapes and Gardens," an early Museum-based course taught by Professor Taitetsu Unno that drew on SCMA's *ukiyo-e* prints and diverse faculty expertise to study Japanese aesthetics and their broad influence.²⁶ When plans took shape in the late 1990s for a complete renovation of the Fine Arts Center including an expansion of the Museum, the Museum-based course program informed the redesign of spaces, with the introduction of on-site classrooms that allow direct teaching from original works of art and the creation of the Winslow Teaching Gallery, a dedicated space for the display of art being used in classes. As part of the strategic planning undertaken by Director Suzannah Fabing (1992-2005) in conjunction with this project, the exhibition and collecting of non-Western art was articulated as an important institutional priority in support of Smith College's expanding and increasingly international academic program.

Within this non-Western initiative, the focus on Asian art took on immediate momentum thanks to the combination of extraordinary alumnae support, the depth and breadth of expertise among faculty partners, and the interest and enthusiasm expressed by students. Advocacy for SCMA's renewed efforts in this area has been led by an Asian Art Task Force, an advisory body of dedicated and knowledgeable Smith alumnae, formed in 2001 and chaired with vision and energy by Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954). Consulting Curator Samuel C. Morse, a scholar of Japanese Buddhist art and professor in the Departments of Art and the History of Art and Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst College, has served as a scholarly advisor and guest curator of numerous exhibitions. The Museum's curatorial expertise was further expanded in 2010 with the arrival of Dr. Fan Zhang on a three-year appointment as the Freeman/McPherson Curatorial and Teaching Post-Doctoral Fellow in East Asian Art, a position supported in part by members of the Asian Art Task Force. Beginning with the reopening of the renovated Brown Fine Arts Center in 2003, SCMA has mounted an ambitious roster of exhibitions of Asian art, including: *The Floating World* (2003); *The Hart Collection of Archaic Chinese Jades* (2004);

The Legend of Hachiman: A Handscroll of the Tosa School (2004); *Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto* (2004); *Fashioning Tradition: Japanese Tea Wares from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (2007); *Aesthetics of the Sacred: The Buddhist Art of Tibet* (2007); *20/20 Vision: Contemporary Japanese Prints Given in Honor of Hilary Tolman '87* (2007); *Movement 움직임* (2008); *Post-Mao Dreaming: Contemporary Chinese Art* (2009); and *Touch Fire: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics by Women Artists* (2009–10). Two recent exhibitions—*Transcending Boundaries: The Art and Legacy of Tang China* (2011) and *Pursuing Beauty: The Art of Edo Japan* (2012)—were presented as part of an innovative collection-sharing partnership with the Yale University Art Gallery.

FIG. 4. Katsushige Nakahashi and installation volunteers with *Phantom Zero*, created by the artist for the exhibition *Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto* (2004). Photograph by Derek Fowles.

Many of these exhibitions introduced new acquisitions to the Smith community and all of them were met with active interest and engagement by faculty, students, and the Museum's broader audiences, affirming the value of this focus on Asian art. Professor Thomas Rohlich (Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures) actively used the exhibition *Confronting Tradition: Contemporary Art from Kyoto* (fig. 4), which was curated by Samuel Morse, for his first-year



seminar “Kyoto Through the Ages.” Even after the close of the exhibition, he continued to draw on its content for this course, which was complemented by a January trip to Kyoto and visits with several of the artists included in *Confronting Tradition*. Speaking about the impact of this exhibition, Professor Rohlich observes, “the connections that came from the exhibition have been maintained and strengthened even to this day.”²⁷

Subsequently, Professors Rohlich and Morse co-taught “The Tea Ceremony and Japanese Culture,” which intensively utilized the objects featured in *Fashioning Tradition: Japanese Tea Wares from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (fig. 5). Theirs was the first Five College course taught on two campuses (Smith and Amherst Colleges), and it attracted lively interest, enrolling students from four of the five colleges. The works in *Fashioning Tradition* were borrowed primarily from Peggy Block Danziger (class of 1962) and Richard M. Danziger, whose collection is noted for the quality, rarity, and historical importance of its tea ceremony objects (fig. 6). At the conclusion of the exhibition, the Danzigers made a gift of objects—including works of painting and calligraphy, a screen (cat. no. 17), vase, kettle (cat. no. 27), storage container, and ceramic tea bowl—that would be found in a ritual tea arrangement or *toriiawase*, providing the foundation for continued study of the Japanese tea ceremony at Smith.

A trustee of the College and founding member of the Asian Art Task Force, Peggy Danziger typifies the extraordinary knowledge, leadership, and generosity

FIG. 5. *Toriiawase* in a tea house setting for the exhibition *Fashioning Tradition: Japanese Tea Wares from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (2007). Photograph by Petegorsky/Gipe.





FIG. 6. Professor Thomas R. Rohlich, Peggy Block Danziger (class of 1962), and Professor Samuel C. Morse in the exhibition gallery for *Fashioning Tradition*.

embodied by Smith alumnae, who are transforming the place of Asian art within the Smith College Museum of Art. Their contributions are too numerous to be fully described here, but a few examples will suggest the variety of their experience and the depth of their impact.

When SCMA reopened with expanded spaces and aspirations in 2003, Wan Kyun Rha Kim (class of 1960) and her husband, Dr. Andrew Byong Soo Kim, stepped forward with gifts of an important group of works representative of the visual culture of post-revolutionary China, including Tang Muli's *Young Bugler* (cat. no. 32). Mrs. Kim, who was one of a tiny constituency of Korean students at Smith in the late 1950s, has also helped expand the Museum's holdings in contemporary Korean art with the recent donation of two paintings by Suk Ju Lee and a gift in support of the purchase of a print portfolio by Chunwoo Nam (cat. no. 53).

The twentieth-century Chinese prints, drawings, and paintings contributed by the Kims are complemented by gifts from Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954) and Jerome A. Cohen of more than forty works dating to post-Mao China



FIG. 7. Installation view of the exhibition *Post-Mao Dreaming: Contemporary Chinese Art*, 2009. Photograph by Petegorsky/Gipe.

(cat. nos. 33, 35, and 41 and fig. 7). The Cohens' collection grew from their association with Chinese artists forged during frequent travels and periods of residency in China since the 1970s. As art historian Julia Andrews has written, "The body of work collected by the Cohens in those years, as a whole, reflects the first steps taken by the Chinese art world as it began to overturn the totalitarian standards that had so harshly squeezed creative expression in the Maoist era."²⁸ Collector and gallerist Ethan Cohen, son of Joan and Jerome, has expanded the Museum's holdings of contemporary Chinese art with numerous gifts, including an important group of prints published and given in partnership with Pace Editions and Richard and Ann Solomon (class of 1959) (cat. nos. 51 and 52).

These works, in turn, augment a growing strength in the representation of printmaking in East Asia nurtured by a series of gifts from The Tolman Collection Tokyo, the major dealer and publisher of contemporary Japanese prints, in honor of Hilary Tolman (class of 1987) (cat. nos. 47, 48, and 54). Significant gifts have continued to enter the collection as this exhibition and catalogue are in production. In 2012, SCMA received an important gift of thirty-nine prints from Mr. and Mrs. Lucio Noto by the influential Japanese artist Sekino Jun'ichiro, a vital force in the Creative Print Movement (*sōsaku hanga*) (cat. no. 46).

A member of the class of 1965 has endowed SCMA with an extraordinary collection of contemporary ceramics by Japanese women artists (cat. nos. 43A-D). The collection, formed with Smith in mind, documents the role that women have played in transforming the world of Japanese studio ceramics, which was traditionally male-dominated, as a result of their access to education in this

field after the Second World War. These gifts and many more have established a new and growing area of strength in contemporary East Asian art at Smith (fig. 8).

The future development of SCMA's holdings in traditional Asian art is also being nurtured by the generosity of collectors. An anonymous member of the class of 1957 has pledged a gift of a group of evocative Tang-dynasty figurines of *Musicians and Maids* (cat. no. 5) while Patricia Mertens Beckwith (class of 1968) and Stephen R. Beckwith have made promised gifts of three elegant Song-dynasty tea bowls, two of which are included in this catalogue (cat. nos. 6A and 6B). Dr. Elizabeth E. Force has made a commitment to leave to SCMA her extensive collection of East Asian art, which includes superb lacquer objects such as the Edo period *Document Box* (cat. no. 22) and the Western Han dynasty incense burner (cat. no. 4) in this catalogue.

FIG. 8. Installation view of the exhibition *Touch Fire: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics by Women Artists* (2009–10), with works by Katsumata Chieko in the foreground and a screen by Maio Motoko. Photograph by Petegorsky/Gipe.



Students have also participated valuably in the development of SCMA's collection of Asian art, demonstrating the distinctive importance of this area of collecting to Smith's growing community of students and alumnae of Asian heritage.²⁹ In 2005, Sohl Lee (class of 2006) and other members of the Korean American Students of Smith (KASS) approached Museum staff with their proposal to mount a campaign among students and alumnae to raise funds to purchase a work of art by a contemporary Korean or Korean-American woman artist. As Sohl Lee explains, a course on museums and society at Amherst College had introduced the students to issues affecting museum collections, exhibitions, and missions and had led them "to ask some questions about SCMA and its place within the College," such as, "Can a museum respond to its socio-political environment in a productive rather than a passive way? How can there be a greater focus on contemporary art from Asia or art about contemporary Asia at SCMA? Can SCMA's contemporary art collection engage current Smith students in ways that are relevant to them? Can students acquire an artwork for the Museum's permanent collection and thereby affect the Museum's dynamics?"³⁰ In answering these questions, they impressively researched relevant contemporary art, surveyed the Museum's and faculty's needs and interests, and raised funds, resulting in the acquisition of Yong Soon Min's installation *Movement* (fig. 9), a tangible meditation on notions of Asian identity and the idea of a great, diasporal "Asian wave" in art and culture (cat. no. 56).

FIG. 9. Artist Yong Soon Min installing *Movement*, 2008. Photograph by One Match Films.



FIG. 10. Dr. Fan Zhang discussing the exhibition *Transcending Boundaries: The Art and Legacy of Tang China* (2011) with Asian Art Task Force member Betty Hamady Sams (class of 1957), left, and AATF chair Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954), right. Photograph by Derek Fowles.



One hundred years after receiving the first gifts of Asian art from Charles Freer, the Smith College Museum of Art is poised to expand its Asian collection as an important part of its program of scholarship, display, and teaching. The work of curators Samuel Morse and Fan Zhang has deepened our understanding of the scope of the Museum’s history of collecting in this area and the significance of its existing holdings. A gift to establish the Jane Chace Carroll (class of 1953) Curatorship of Asian Art has ensured that SCMA will permanently have staff expertise to continue to develop and utilize its Asian collections to support learning at Smith. A leadership gift from Peggy Block Danziger is allowing the Museum to create a gallery that will be dedicated to the display of Asian art. As we look forward to the next century, history encourages us that—with the shared commitment of the College and its Museum, plus the interest and involvement of Smith alumnae and friends—an exciting new chapter in collecting Asian art is waiting to be written (fig. 10).

ENDNOTES

- 1 Michael Goodison, "Founding a Museum: Laenus Clark Seelye, Dwight William Tryon, and Alfred Vance Churchill, 1870–1932," *Image and Word* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 2003), 117.
- 2 "Smith College History," en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smith_College, accessed July 23, 2012.
- 3 Ellen Widmer, "The Seven Sisters in China, 1900–1950," in Bays and Widmer, eds., *China's Christian Colleges: Cross-Cultural Connections, 1900–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 88.
- 4 Julia Franz, "Wu Yi-fang, Smith College, and Early Women's Education in China," http://www.smith.edu/world/global_past_franz.php, accessed August 21, 2012.
- 5 SC 1922: 2-1 and SC 1922:34,1-14, respectively. The scroll, previously attributed to Zhou Chen, is a Qing copy, inscribed: "Painted after the style of Ma Yuan [Qinshan; sobriquet] in an autumn day of Renchen year of the Chenghua Reign [1472]."
- 6 Charles Chetham to John Kenneth Galbraith, February 23, 1976, Smith College Museum of Art archives (hereafter SCMA archives).
- 7 SC 1939:9-1 and SC 1935:9-1, respectively.
- 8 Adelyn D. Breeskin, "Edgar C. Schenck 1910–1959," *College Art Journal* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1960): 256.
- 9 Gottlieb invited Parks to join him on a visit to the Harts' New York City home, promising, "You will meet a nice couple and see a few nice things." Ernest Gottlieb to Robert O. Parks, May 23, 1958, SCMA archives.
- 10 In writing to thank them for the visit, Parks expressed appreciation for their "willingness to continue to think of us in terms of the future of your jade," adding that he was "permitting myself the luxury of imagining all the distinguished ways in which it could be put to use here and how its usefulness might grow and grow and grow (to your undying credit)." Robert O. Parks to Mr. and Mrs. Ivan B. Hart, December 17, 1958, SCMA archives.
- 11 Email from Liz Hart to Linda Muehlig (SCMA senior curator and curator of painting and sculpture), July 25, 2012.
- 12 Minkenhof initially sought the advice of H. F. E. Visser at the Stedelijk Museum. He later studied at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University with Alfred Salmony, a renowned scholar of Asian art with particular expertise in Chinese jades. Alfred Salmony, "In Memoriam: Samuel Hubert Minkenhof (1879–1956)," *Artibus Asiae* 20, no. 1 (1957): 72. Elizabeth Lyons, "S. H. Minkenhof: 1879–1956," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, vol. 10 (1956): 6–7.
- 13 Marylin M. Rhie, "Asian Art at Smith College," *Image and Word*, 79. Rhie dates MacSherry's arrival to 1953–54, but *The Smith College Bulletin* 1952–53 confirms that he joined the faculty that year as an assistant professor in the history department (Smith College Archives).
- 14 Oliver Julian Todd, *Chinese Bronze Mirrors* (China: San Yu Press, 1935).
- 15 "Isaac Ogden Rankin 1852–1936," www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/r/a/n/rankin_io.htm, accessed July 16, 2012.
- 16 J. M. Barker to Thomas Mendenhall (president, Smith College), November 7, 1967, SCMA archives.
- 17 Thomas Mendenhall to J. M. Barker, December 8, 1967, SCMA archives.
- 18 John Kenneth Galbraith, *A View from the Stands: Of People, Politics, Military Power and the Arts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 157.
- 19 John Kenneth Galbraith and Mohinder Singh Randhawa, *Indian Painting: The Scene, Themes, and Legends* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

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- 20 *Gods, Thrones, and Peacocks* was shown at the Asia House Gallery in New York City, the Baltimore Museum of Art, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute of Utica, New York, and the Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard University. Stuart Cary Welch, “Big Man, Little Pictures,” in *Between Friends: Perspectives on John Kenneth Galbraith* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 69.
- 21 Welch, *Between Friends*, 68.
- 22 John Kenneth Galbraith to Elizabeth Mongan, December 26, 1975, SCMA archives.
- 23 Charles Chetham to John Kenneth Galbraith, February 23, 1976, SCMA archives.
- 24 Henry Li-Hua Kung was an assistant professor of Chinese Studies at Smith College 1965–88; Mutsuko Minegishi was an instructor in Japanese language 1974–82. Smith College Archives.
- 25 Rhie, *Image and Word*.
- 26 “Religion 277a Colloquium: Japanese Aesthetics, Landscape and Gardens” was taught by Taitetsu Unno, professor of world religions, in 1997–98.
- 27 Email from Professor Thomas Rohlich to Jessica Nicoll, September 8, 2012.
- 28 Julia F. Andrews, “Artists of China’s Reform Era: 1979 into the Millennium,” *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art* (Northampton, MA: Smith College Museum of Art, 2009), 2.
- 29 In 2011–12, there were 281 international undergraduate students (non-resident aliens) accounting for 10.9% of the Smith College student body, including students from the following Asian countries (the number of students is indicated in parentheses): Afghanistan (1); Bangladesh (7); India (20); Japan (5); Kyrgyzstan (1); Mongolia (2); Myanmar (2); Nepal (6); Pakistan (8); People’s Republic of China (107); Republic of Korea (53); Republic of Singapore (12); Sri Lanka (3); Taiwan (5); Thailand (3); and Vietnam (6). These 239 Asian undergraduates comprised more than three-fourths of the entire international student body. These statistics do not reflect the significant number of students of Asian-American heritage. Statistics provided by the Smith College Office of Institutional Research and the *Smith College 2012–13 Course Catalogue*, 27.
- 30 Sohl Lee, “Toward Movement: Conversation, Collaboration, and Coproduction,” *Movement 움직임* (Northampton, MA: Smith College Museum of Art, 2008), 2.