

The Silk Road

IRAN-INDIA-CHINA-JAPAN

An Exhibition On
Cross Cultural Influences From
The Farjam Collection





HAFIZ
FOUNDATION

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The Hafiz Foundation was founded in 2008 to support outstanding initiatives within the visual arts, with a special emphasis on the Middle East. With the city of Dubai as its base, the Foundation aims to become a center for preservation and promotion of the arts at large. At the heart of the Foundation's goals is the development of educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Also central to the Foundation's mission is serving younger artists from the Middle East, students, scholars, curators, and art enthusiasts. As a partner to both local and international cultural initiatives, the Foundation's recent activities include having supported the founding of the award-winning Middle Eastern arts magazine Bidoun, support for local arts education programs, as well as the organization of a series of exhibitions of selected works drawn from The Farjam Collection.

**THE
FARJAM
COLLECTION**



THE FARJAM COLLECTION

The Farjam Collection is one of the most impressive privately-owned collections in the world today. Featuring Islamic and pre-Islamic art, Contemporary Middle-Eastern art and International Modern and Contemporary art, the Collection is born of a passion for art, exploration and travel, reflecting the affinities and tastes of a seasoned collector. Through a timeless journey into art, it embodies the fusion of cultures and traditions between East and West.

The Islamic section of the Collection spans the entire history of Islam, bringing together items produced throughout the vast region between Andalusia and Mughal India. Its treasures include Quranic manuscripts, miniatures and illustrated books on science, mathematics and poetry, woodwork, textiles, coins, jewellery, and fine carpets.

The Modern and Contemporary Middle-Eastern section of the Collection is one of the foremost collections of its kind including pivotal works by Farhad Moshiri, Mohammad Ehsaei, Abdul Qader Al Raes and Ahmed Moustafa to name a few. From established to emerging and cutting edge, the artists featured mirror the rich and dynamic Middle-Eastern art scene.

The Modern and Contemporary section of the Collection includes major pieces from the Impressionist, Expressionist, Modern, Pop, Minimal and Conceptual art movements. Its growing range of works includes International Modern and Contemporary masters such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Joan Miro, Fernand Leger, Alberto Giacometti, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Anselm Kiefer, Anish Kapoor and Gerhard Richter.

Selected works from the Collection are on view free of charge to the public through a series of curated exhibitions held at The Farjam Collection at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). A programme of educational events offers audiences the opportunity to learn more about the works on view and the context in which they were produced.

The Farjam Collection at the DIFC is generously supported by The Hafiz Foundation.



Preface

Although initially borne out of a passion for Islamic Art, over the past forty years The Farjam Collection has grown in depth and breadth to include artworks from all four corners of the globe. It therefore brings me enormous pleasure to introduce pieces from the Far East section of The Farjam Collection and exhibit them publicly for the first time.

The mission of The Farjam Collection has always been to encourage cultural dialogue and understanding. In bringing together works of art from different parts of the world we can trace the influences, similarities and divergences that become manifest as the result of centuries of cross-cultural exchange. What is revealed is a universal language of art that permeates arbitrary geographical borders.

The Silk Road exhibition was conceived with this principle in mind. Taking inspiration from history's most influential and celebrated trading route, the selection of artworks on display is designed to elucidate the flourishing of creativity that resulted from sharing ideas of empires as far apart as Persia and Japan.

This comparison of motifs and themes allows us to appreciate distinct cultural

movements in a new light, deepening our understanding of the context in which they were produced.

The Silk Road may have long fallen into decline, but in this age of information technology and digital communication we can employ its ethos of sharing artistic values, techniques and innovations without encountering the hazards of such a treacherous journey. I very much hope that this exhibition inspires the audience to engage with distant cultures in pursuit of creativity in the same spirit of our forefathers.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Fumio Nanjo, the Director of the Mori Museum, for his wonderful introduction to our inaugural display of Asian art, as well as to The Farjam Collection team for their hard work in making this unique exhibition a reality.

Farhad Farjam
September 2012



Foreword

In 2011, when I had first visited the collection of Mr. Farjam in Dubai, I observed a display of art consisting predominantly of Arabic calligraphy, Quranic manuscripts and Contemporary Arab art. I was astonished by the quantity and quality of the items in the collection. Now, I have reason to be surprised again, for unbeknownst to me, there is another aspect to The Farjam Collection, and that is its extraordinary holdings of Asian art.

The theme of the current presentation is topical and global. The Silk Road remains as one of the world's most important trade networks, linking different cultures and art to the history of mankind. In many ways it can be compared to what we would now call an "information infrastructure." The truth be known, I had planned a few years ago to create a large-scale biennale of contemporary art on the theme of the Silk Road, but unfortunately that dream has yet to come to fruition.

Here in Dubai, Mr. Farjam is presenting a similar vision with different types of artifacts: porcelain, painting, enamels, cloisonné, lacquer ware, miniatures, and potteries from China, Japan, India and Persia.

An art collection is a strange thing. Each object has its own narrative, yet the whole also tells a story and conveys its own context. In the case of Mr. Farjam, the diversity of the collection speaks to the breadth and all-encompassing nature of his vision. In this age of globalization, the opportunities for seeing and exposing different cultures will increase. As we confront the “remote and unknown,” a brand new dialog with the hopes of a more mutual understanding will be born. This exhibition itself demonstrates the quintessential encounter between different cultures, and I have no doubt that it will contribute to a better understanding between our neighboring nations.

I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the opening of this unique exhibition and hope many people will see and enjoy it. Sharing a vision and sharing the joy of life are the most essential needs in the world today.

Fumio Nanjo
Director, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo



The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a huge network of trade arteries splitting and converging across the breadth of Eurasia. It traces not only the establishment of trade and military armies, but also the passage of ideas, religions and inventions over the course of many centuries. The Silk Road is one of the world's oldest and most historically important trade routes. Its influence can be seen in the cultures of China, Japan, Central Asia, the Middle East, and in the West.

The Farjam Collection has selected specific pieces for the exhibition to highlight a number of cultures and artistic innovations ranging from the Persian to the Japanese Empires. The exhibition will provide the viewer with a chance to examine works of art from various cultures that expound upon the revolutions and developments during these historical periods, which have not only enriched the culture of the East but have also shaped the civilizations of the West.

The term "Silk Road" is something of a misnomer, as silk was not the only commodity that traversed this ancient trade route. The expressional term is accredited to Baron Von Richtofen, a 19th century German geographer, who studied the various trade routes along eastern Asia. It is impossible to say when silk came to be traded, as for a long time the Chinese were able to keep silk production, or sericulture, a closely guarded secret. A legend attributes the discovery of silk to Lady Si Ling-Chi (lady of the silkworm), the wife of Huang Ti, the Chinese emperor around 2500 BC. It was said that she was playing with a silkworm cocoon when it accidentally fell into a hot cup of tea, killing the worm, but allowing the cocoon's silk to be easily unraveled, revealing its qualities for the first time.

Extending over 6,500 km, the Silk Road came into being during the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) in China. The trading route was outlined when the Han government dispatched General Zhang Qian as an envoy to build good relationships with small nomadic states west of China. As relationships were established, the trade routes were extended, eventually stretching to Rome and the Persian Empire. The trade routes also traveled east into Japan, where Buddhism and the art of porcelain flourished.

The Mongol Expansion extended throughout the Asian continent from 1200 to 1400, bringing political stability and expansion to the Silk Road. Around the same time, the explorer Marco Polo became one of the first Europeans to travel the Silk Road into China, documenting his tales in *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The trade routes became the communication highways of the ancient world. They extended from Japan and Eastern Asia through India and the Middle East, all the way up to Western Europe. The trade brought about new inventions, religious beliefs, artistic styles, languages, and social customs, as well as imported goods and raw materials. The routes were also major conduits for conducting business and negotiations. Perhaps one of the largest contributions of the Silk Road passage way was the artistic exchange between neighboring nations. With the influx of cultures, artistic values and crafts were shared, which helped establish a foundational ethos of philosophical and creative culture.

The Silk Road was one of the first trading routes established between the East and the West, and its existence encouraged further exploration, eventually leading the Portuguese to discover trading routes in Africa and Christopher Columbus of Spain to discover North America. The remnants of the trading routes on the Silk Road can still be seen today. The last link of a railway route along the Silk Road was completed in 1990, when the railway systems of China and Kazakhstan connected in the Alatau Pass.

The Silk Road

IRAN - INDIA - CHINA - JAPAN



An Exhibition On Cross Cultural Influences From
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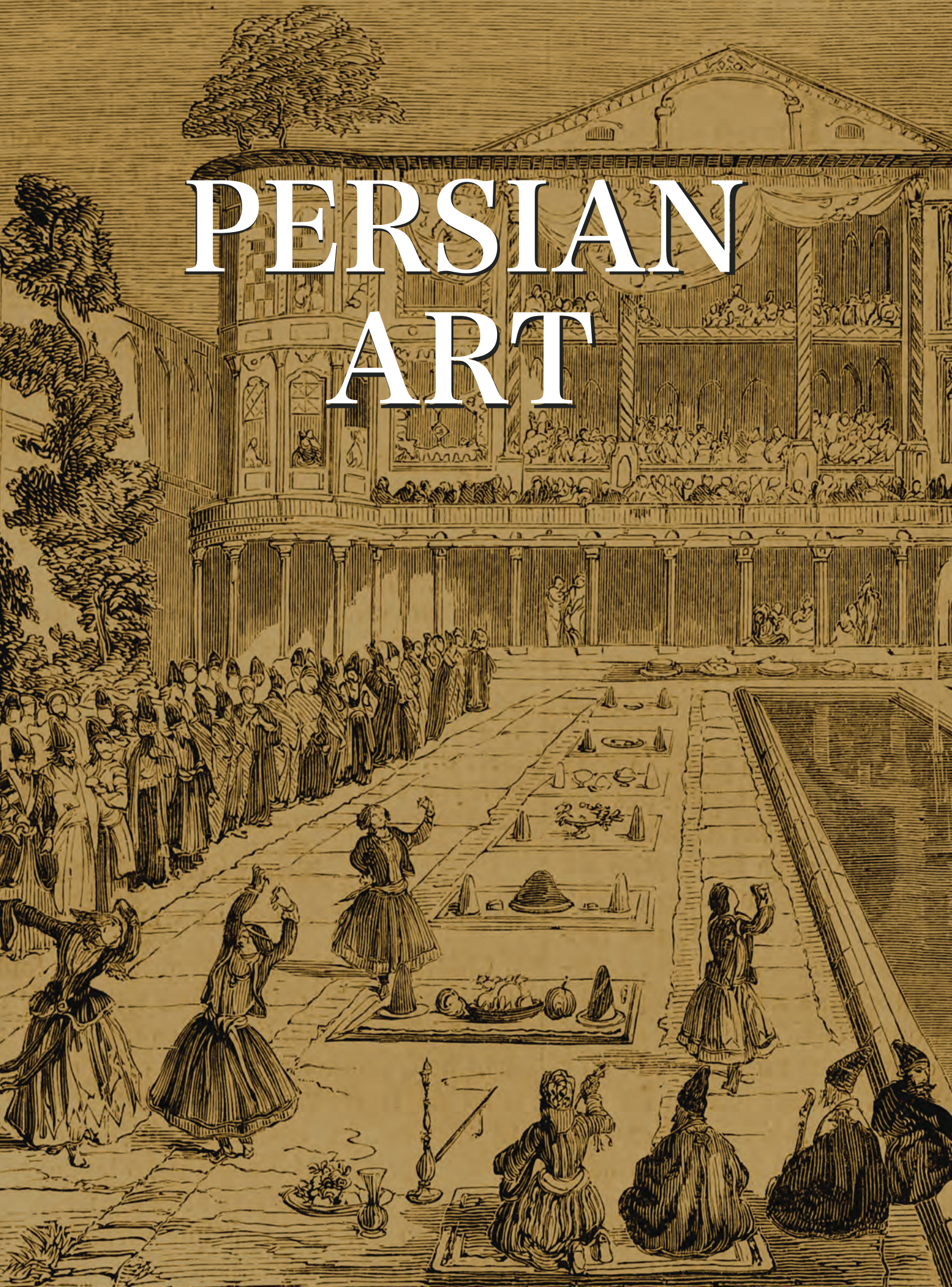
I. History of Persian Art

II. History of Indian Art

III. History of Chinese Art

IV. History of Japanese Art

PERSIAN ART





Persian art has come to be appreciated for its illumination of the textured human experience, exalting the majestic and divine elements.

The art of Iran is particularly noted for its architecture, ornate carpets, poetry, calligraphy, and miniatures. When the Silk Road was at the height of its glory, it was the Persian Empire that acted as the middleman in the trading system. From the Abbasid Caliphate to the Safavid Empire, the Persian Empire had a lasting impact on the Silk Road trade system that can be traced in numerous cultures across the globe.

A Post Sassanian Faceted Glass Bottle
7th century AD,
Persia
11cm
The Farjam Collection



Calling themselves the Pars after their original Aryan tribal name Parsa, Persians settled on an area of land bordered on the west by the Tigris River and on the south by the Persian Gulf, which they named Parsua (Persis in Greek). Under the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258), which succeeded the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750) in 750, the focal point of Islamic political and cultural life shifted eastward from Syria to Iraq and into the Persian Empire. In the more modern era, the Safavid Dynasty became known as the “golden age” of the Persian Empire. It was the Safavids that brought about many new cultural and technological revolutions, including new military reforms, the trading of gunpowder, and the emergence of a clerical society where art and literature flourished.

In the Silk Road exhibition, The Farjam Collection presents a stunning collection of early Persian glassware, pottery, and miniatures. Despite their varied modes of expression, these artworks reflect an intrinsic connection with Iran and address issues of identity, political concerns, gender, and cultural pride.

Abbasid Caliphate

The Abbasid Caliphate was established in 750. The first three centuries of Abbasid rule were a prosperous age where Baghdad and Samarra functioned as the cultural and commercial capitals of the Islamic world. During this period, a distinctive style emerged and new technologies were developed that spread throughout the Muslim realm, greatly influencing Islamic art and architecture. During the 10th century, the Abbasid political unity weakened and independent or semi-autonomous local dynasties were established in Egypt, Iran, and other regions, leading to the eventual collapse of the Abbasid Empire and emergence of the Safavid Empire.

In Samarra (a city north of Baghdad), a new way of carving surfaces, the so-called "beveled" style, as well as a repetition of abstract geometric patterns, also known as "arabesque", were widely used for wall decoration and pottery. Samarra also witnessed the introduction of the technique known as "luster painting". Admired for its glittering effect, reminiscent of precious metal, luster painting (the most notable technical achievement at the time), spread from Iraq to Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Spain and eventually contributing to the development of ceramic decoration in the Western world.

A Rare Signed Glass Cut Cup
9th century AD,
Persia
7.4cm
The Farjam Collection





A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated, Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection

Samanid Empire

The Samanid Empire, (819-999), was first native dynasty to arise in Iran after the Muslim-Arab conquest. Under the loosely centralized feudal government of the Samanids a notable expansion of industry and commerce prospered, attested by the use of Samanid silver coins as currency throughout northern Asia. The main cities of Samarkand and Bukhara became cultural centers. Persian literature flourished with the works of the poets Rudaki and Ferdowsi. Philosophy and history were encouraged, and the foundations of Iranian-Islamic culture were established.

The most important contribution of the Samanid age to Islamic art was the pottery produced in Nishapur and Samarkand. The Samanids developed a technique known as "slip painting": mixing semifluid clay (slip) with their colors to prevent the designs from running when fired with a thin fluid glaze. Bowls and simple plates were the most common forms made by Samanid potters. The potters employed stylized motifs such as horsemen, birds, lions, and bulls' heads, as well as Arabic calligraphic design.



A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection

Polychrome pieces usually had a buff or red body with designs of several colors, bright yellows, greens, purples, and reds being the most common. The art of bronze casting and other forms of metalwork also flourished at Nishapur throughout the Samanid period.

From the mid-10th century onward, the Samanid Dynasty's power was gradually undermined, both economically by the interruption of the northern trade, and politically by a struggle with the confederation of nobles. Weakened, the Samanids became vulnerable to the pressures from the rising Turkish powers in Central Asia and Afghanistan, eventually leading to the collapse of the once prosperous empire.

Safavid Empire

The Safavid Empire was one of the most significant ruling dynasties in Iran, establishing the twelve schools of Shi'a Islam. Shah Ismail I founded the Safavid Dynasty in 1501. Although Ismail I initially gained control over Azerbaijan alone, the Safavids ultimately won the struggle for power in all of Persia after nearly a century of tumultuous interactions between various dynasties and political forces. After his victory in Tabriz, Ismail claimed most of Persia as his territory.

Perhaps the most distinguished of the Safavid rulers and the greatest patron of the arts was Shah Abbas (1587–1629). His reign was recognized as a period of military and political reform as well as of cultural florescence. Shah Abbas encouraged trade with Europe; silk being Iran's main export. Carpets and textiles were also important export items, and were produced in workshops set up under state patronage in Isfahan and other cities. The art of painting continued to flourish, with single-page paintings and drawings becoming more popular than earlier manuscripts. Artistic and architectural developments under Shah Abbas continued into the early 17th century.

Abbas brought the dynasty to the capital of Esfahan, which eventually became the center of Safavid architectural achievement. Shah Abbas was a stabilizing force in Iran following a period of civil war and foreign invasion. He strengthened the economy by establishing global trade links between Asia and Europe. The dynasty declined following Shah Abbas' reign, pressed by the Ottoman Empire and the Mughal Dynasty.



A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection



Pottery/Glassware

The importation of fine Chinese porcelain exercised an important influence on Persian pottery. With the availability of porcelain, coupled with the rise of Islam, there became an increased emphasis on abstract patterns as decorative motifs. Persian artists, like many Islamic artists in general, began to explore more fully the possibilities of non-figural forms, including natural floral shapes that were partly a legacy of earlier Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Sassanian traditions. Employing a sense of geometry, they transformed these motifs into highly organized patterns, or arabesques, that display a strong sense of control regardless of how dense or complex the design.

The distinct Islamic style in pottery was not firmly established until the 9th century in Iraq, Syria, and Persia. During this period, pieces mainly used a white tin-glaze finish. Tin-glazing is the process of giving ceramic items a tin-based glaze, which is white, glossy and opaque, normally applied to red or buff earthenware. The earliest tin-glazed pottery appears to have been made in Abbasid Iraq (750-1258). From Mesopotamia, tin-glazing spread to Egypt during the 10th century, and then to Spain, leading to the maximum development of Islamic lusterware.

Tin-Glazing

For tin-glaze, only one tin compound is used, tin oxide and tin dioxide (SnO_2), also called stannic acid. Tin-glazed pottery is pottery covered in glaze containing tin oxide, which is white, shiny and opaque. The pottery body is usually made of red or buff colored earthenware and the white glaze was often used to imitate Chinese porcelain.



A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection



A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection



A Collection of Eighty Four Decorated Unglazed Earthenware Vessels
8th-12th centuries AD, 2-6th centuries AH
Persia
The Farjam Collection



China Plate
19th century AD, 13th century AH
25cm
The Farjam Collection



China Bowl
19th century AD, 13th century AH
20.5cm
The Farjam Collection

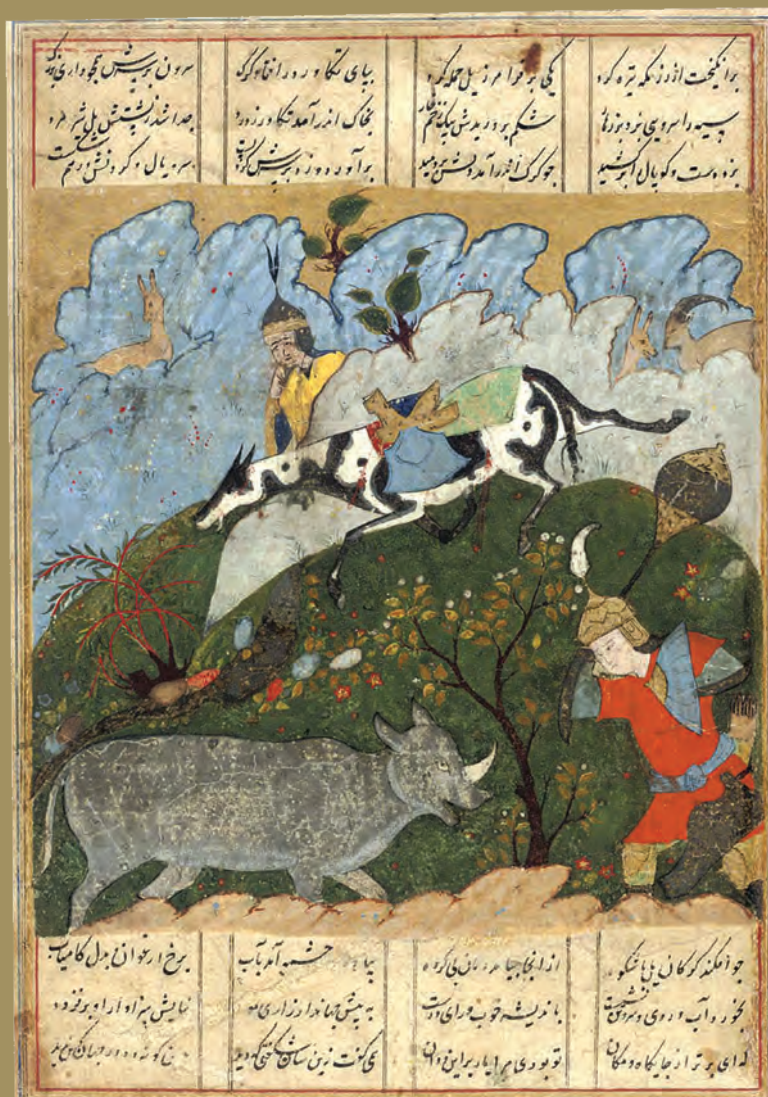


China Bowl
19th century AD, 13th century AH
20.5cm
The Farjam Collection



China Plate
19th century AD, 13th century AH
26.5cm
The Farjam Collection

Persian Miniatures



Faramarz Kills the Rhinoceros
16th century AD, 10th century AH
18 x 17cm
The Farjam Collection

Miniature painting became a significant genre of Persian culture in the 13th century, receiving Chinese influence after the Mongolian conquest. The invention of paper had reached Persia from China in 753. Hence, the Chinese artistic influence is very strong. The starting point of the Persian miniature is close to the emergence of Islam, although there have been discoveries of paintings on walls in Persia dating from 5,000 years ago. At the beginning of the Islamic period, Iranian painters began to adorn books and scriptural passages with narrative scenes and calligraphy.

Persian art has its own distinct features. In Iran, miniature artists are recognizable for their emphasis on natural and realist motifs, as well as for the Persian technique of "layering" perspectives, which creates a natural sense of space. Content and form are fundamental elements of Persian miniature painting, and artists are renowned for their modest, subtle use of color, while still applying ornate detailing with gold and silver.

The great wealth of inspiring literature during the Safavid era gave rise to the emergence of many important miniature schools, each with its own unique style, creating a great diversity of paintings. It was through these schools that miniature painting achieved its splendid development both in Iran and in Central Asia. Three of the most influential schools were in Shiraz, Tabriz, and Herat.

Miniature Schools



Miniature
17th century AD, 11th century AH
Safavid Era
25.5 x 21cm
The Farjam Collection



A Prince with His Slave
16th century AD, 10th century AH
Safavid Era
25.5 x 21 cm
The Farjam Collection

Shiraz School

In Persian miniature painting, styles of a group of artists centered in Shiraz became known as the Shiraz school. The school, founded by the Mongol, Il-Khans (1256–1353), was active through the beginning of the 16th century.

The school reached maturity in about 1410, under the Timurids (the dynasty of the Islamic conqueror Timur, founded 1370). The paintings have a dream-like and very personal quality. Fewer figures are represented, and they are elongated and stylized in pose and gesture. Faces are expressionless and remote. The system of perspective and space is introduced. Landscapes, which replace solid color backgrounds, are represented in fantastic shapes and colors, thus adding to the dream-like effect.



بها و اشارت نه به لاله زار از
درب تو که دار دل غلبه ساز از
عشق آتش سلطان بود از این
این زشتی است نه هیچی که در است
کان میجو منت و در صومعه
این سینه در دست محمود و آواز

سلطان می بندد در قدم بند و خورشید
خونابه حسرت جگدم از زهر کاه
عشق ازین واسطه در سوز و درد
بنیم تو خداوند کسی بندد و آواز

فرستاد گفت ای خداوند
بمدهشت بردهشت بیل و سبیل
که و اند که خود چون بود در کار
متم نذر رسد چنان بود که
گفت در پیدایش سر سوزگند
که پستان رسد ز دل ساس

از سر کسب ما خاقان چین گرفتار شد خاقان
که پس در بزرگوار از کار
جز در سلسله است و به کام سبیل
سران سواران می گویند
در انداخت بر شاه آن فرخام

چو شید در تم بر کجاست خشن
چو خاقان چینی گند مرا
پایه نزدیک پیل سبیل
چو از دست رسد زان شد گند

برشت سوی ما که تیر خشن
چو خاقان که با تاج و کجاست
مهم گفت شیدا از تن تاج خشن
بپسند کنون شاکت مرا
شش شاه چین شد ز جان ما
سر شاه همین اندر آمد بر سر



ز پیل نزار آورد ز در زمین

بر سبیل بازوی خاقان چین

پایه و می را ز با کوه شید

بر پیل ز شخت و تاج و کلاه



An Illustration from a Safavid Shahnama
16th century AD, 10th century AH
Safavid Era
25.5 x 21cm
The Farjam Collection

Tabriz School

The Tabriz school of miniaturist painting was founded early in the 14th century. Reflecting the penetration of East Asian traditions into Islamic painting, early Tabriz works are characterized by light, feathery brush strokes, gentle coloring, and an attempt to create the illusion of spatiality.

The early artistic development of the Tabriz school differed from that of Shiraz, as their illustrations tended to combine Far Eastern traits with the Byzantine style of painting. This influence can be explained by the geographical situation of Tabriz, which is on the frontier of the Armenian region.

دلدار ام اذ بود و هم کام از
خردمند ز جبار بودی

همیشه ایستد از شتی نام
می خنسی در فرار و شب

بر در شکارش هر جوانی
را کاشین و زینس پنهانی

خردمندش بر با پای راستی
همان برگی کو سر کین می



همان زینس کین کانی
بیشتر از راهش هر دو

دلدار ز سر و آسین هر دو
خردمند خندان با داد



Miniature
16th century AD, 10th century AH
Safavid Era
25.5 x 21cm
The Farjam Collection

Herat School

The Herat school, a 15th century style of miniature painting, flourished in Western Afghanistan, under the patronage of the Timurids. Shah Rokh, the son of the Islamic conqueror Timur, founded the school.

Although Herat paintings were occasionally done on silk, illustrations for manuscripts, usually poems, were more commonly applied on paper. Literature was very popular at the time and therefore it largely governed the subject matter of the Herat school paintings. Many scenes from the Persian epic the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) by the poet Ferdowsi survive, as well as illustrations from the later works of Navai, Sadi and Jami.

Herat miniature painting became much more skillful and drawing gained greater accuracy later on. As the skill of the painters increased, the figures were placed more confidently and the rhythmic structure of the composition became more fluid. The Herat artists were exceptional at portraying people with their fine detailing to gestural postures.

One of the most well known and influential painters from the Herat school was Kamal ud-Din Behzad, whose creative art was greatly influenced by the works of the poets Jami and Navai. In his own works, there appeared a unique attention to portraying not just people but what surrounded them in their daily lives.

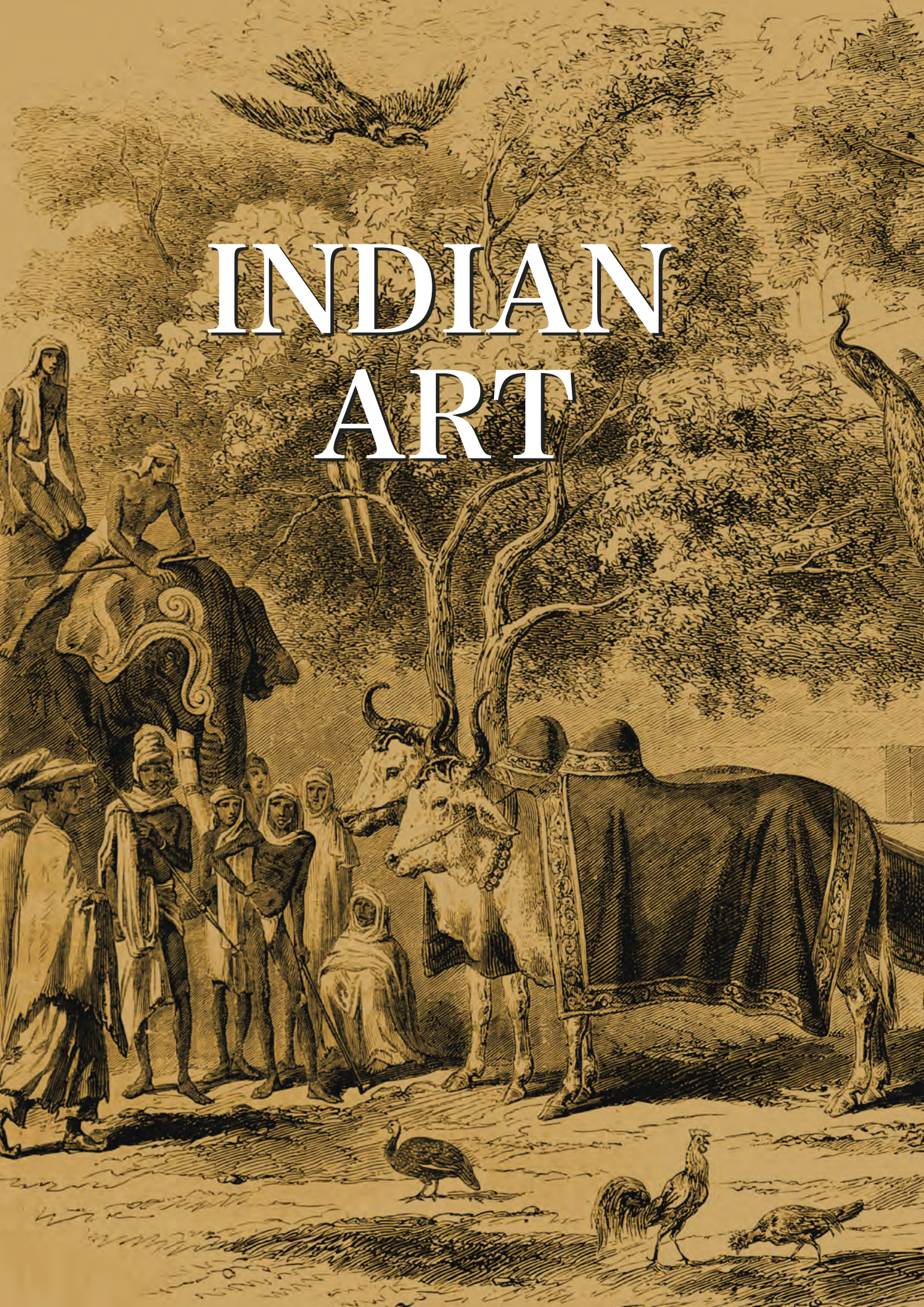


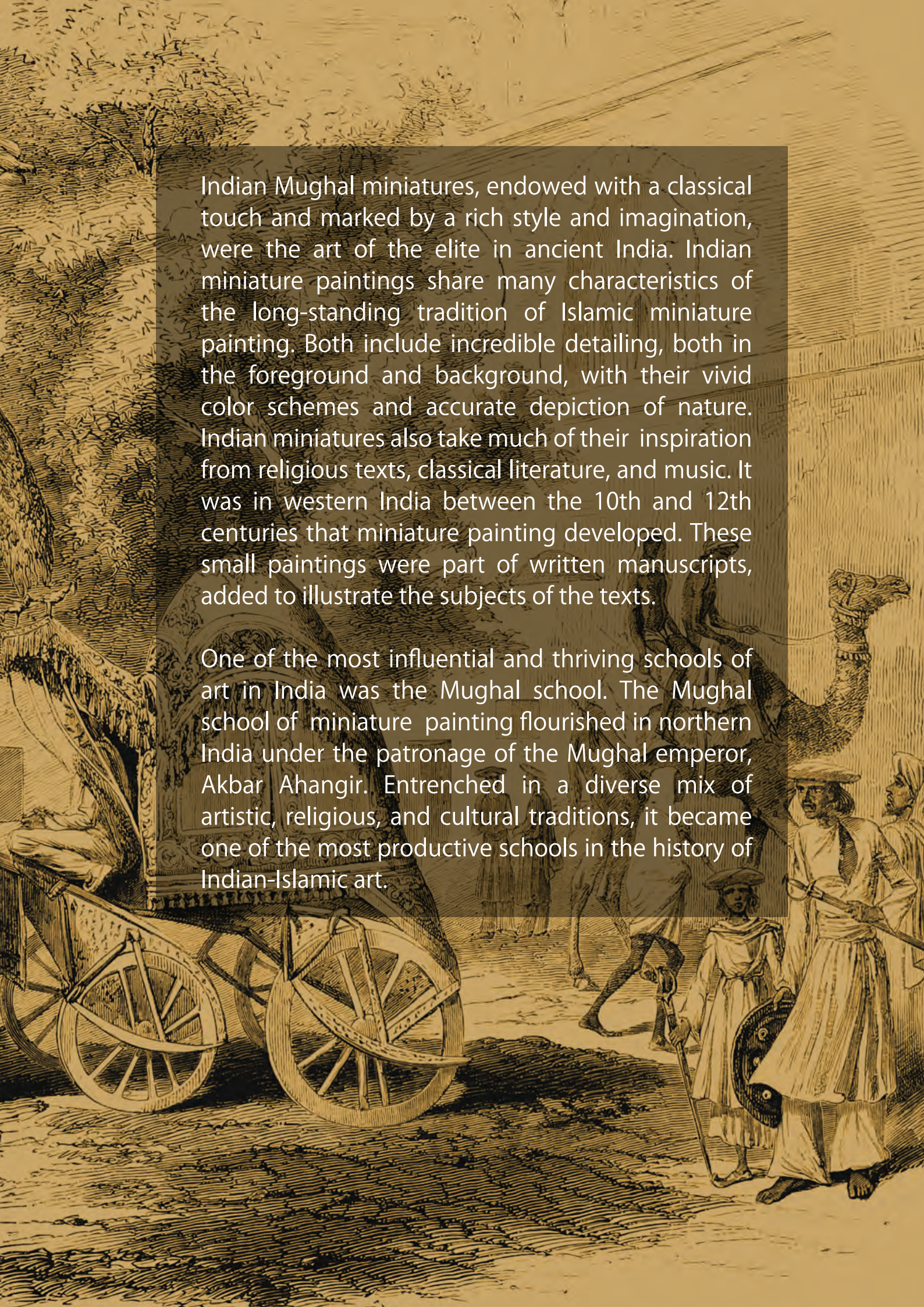
Iskandar Entering the Land of Darkness
 16th century AD, 10th century AH
 Safavid Era
 25.5 x 21cm
 The Farjam Collection



Catching a Demon
16th century AD, 10th century AH
Safavid Era
25.5 x 21cm
The Farjam Collection

INDIAN ART





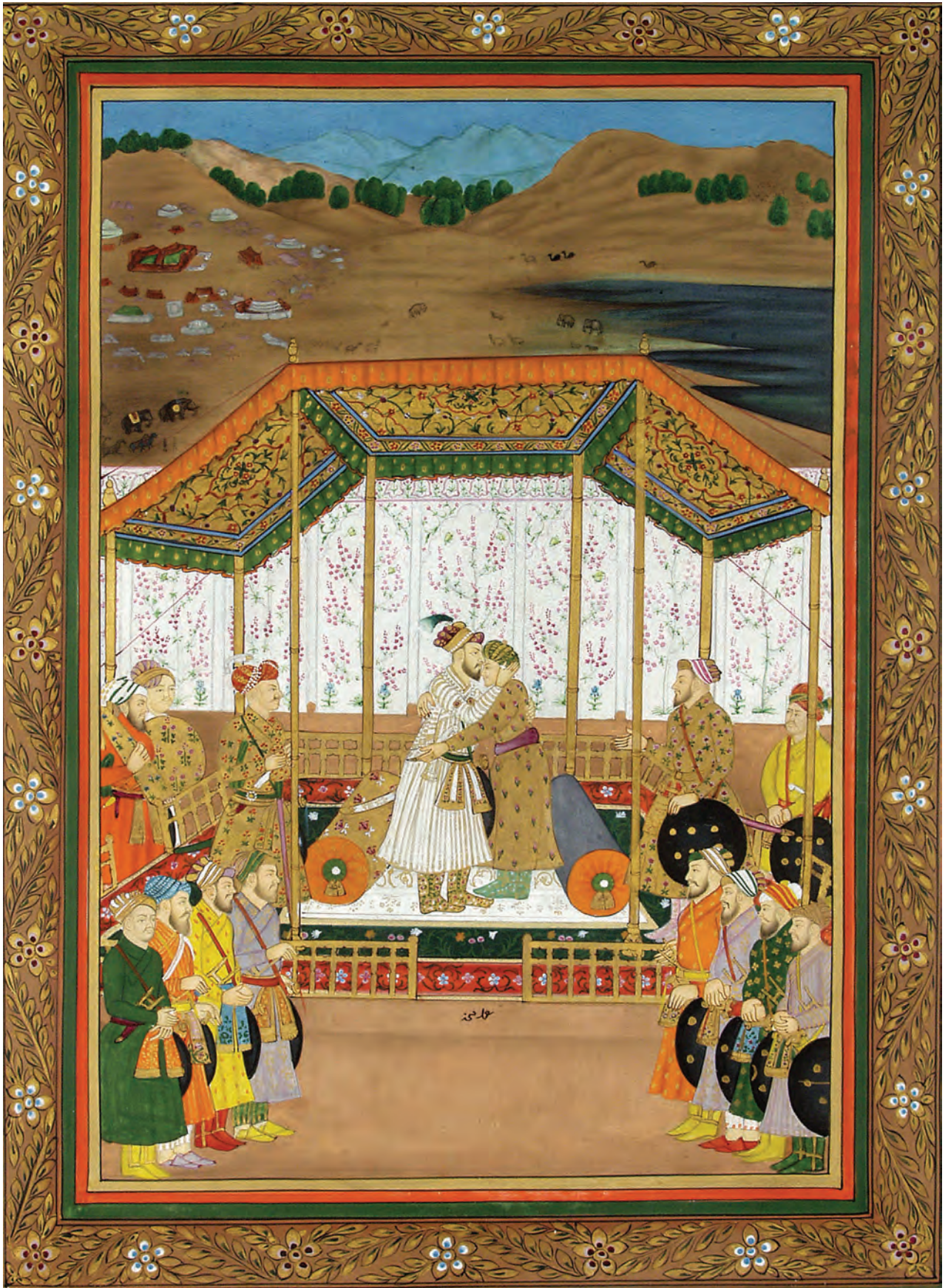
Indian Mughal miniatures, endowed with a classical touch and marked by a rich style and imagination, were the art of the elite in ancient India. Indian miniature paintings share many characteristics of the long-standing tradition of Islamic miniature painting. Both include incredible detailing, both in the foreground and background, with their vivid color schemes and accurate depiction of nature. Indian miniatures also take much of their inspiration from religious texts, classical literature, and music. It was in western India between the 10th and 12th centuries that miniature painting developed. These small paintings were part of written manuscripts, added to illustrate the subjects of the texts.

One of the most influential and thriving schools of art in India was the Mughal school. The Mughal school of miniature painting flourished in northern India under the patronage of the Mughal emperor, Akbar Ahangir. Entrenched in a diverse mix of artistic, religious, and cultural traditions, it became one of the most productive schools in the history of Indian-Islamic art.



The Indian miniatures presented in The Farjam Collection offer a fascinating insight into Indian courtly life, depicting a variety of leisure activities such as polo playing, elephant fighting, falconry training, and hookah smoking. The exhibition includes a plethora of visually captivating miniature paintings, created in the commemoration of art, politics, entertainment and commerce. In addition, many of the miniatures in the collection illustrate the close ties to spirituality within the Hindu tradition. The exhibition will significantly enhance the understanding of Indian Mughal miniature history, as it traces the medium's complex and changing relationship within traditional Indian culture and modern society through the Silk Road journey.

Mythological Scene
20th century AD, 14th Century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 15cm
The Farjam Collection



Mythological Scene
20th century AD, 14th century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 15cm
The Farjam Collection



شهباز و دولت و وزیر شاه صفی مرزا
دارای ایران

◀
Miniature
19th century AD, 13th century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 15cm
The Farjam Collection

▶
Miniature
19th century AD, 13th century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 15cm
The Farjam Collection



The Mughal Dynasty

The Mughal Dynasty, also spelled Mogul, ruled most of northern India from the early 16th to the mid 18th century. The Mughal Dynasty was notable for its effective rule over much of India for more than two centuries. Emperor Akbar, also known as Akbar the Great, or Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar, was the third emperor of the Mughal Empire. He was the son of Nasiruddin Humayun, and succeeded him as the emperor in the year 1556, when he was only 13 years old. One of the most successful emperors of the Mughal Empire, Akbar also made many significant contributions in the field of art.

During Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire tripled in size and wealth. Akbar created a powerful army and instituted effective political and social reforms. By abolishing the sectarian tax on Hindus and appointing them to high civil and military posts, he was the first Muslim ruler to win the trust and loyalty of his Hindu subjects. He had Hindu literature translated, participated in Hindu festivals, and introduced many Hindu holidays.

Akbar was strong willed, fearless, and compassionate with an inquiring mind. He invited holy men, poets, architects and artisans to his court from all over the Islamic world for study and discussion. Akbar himself was illiterate, but after his death, he had created an astounding library of over 24,000 volumes of texts written in Hindi, Farsi, Greek, Latin, Arabic and Kashmiri.



Mughal Painting School

The Mughal painting school had its beginnings during the reign of Emperor Humayun (1530–1556), who invited Persian artists to join him in India. There, they helped establish the foundations of the Mughal painting school. The earliest example of the school is the illustrated folktale, *Tutinameh*. The *Tutinameh* is a collection of 52 moral tales told by an enterprising parrot to distract his mistress from her lover during the long absence of her husband. The story was taken from an ancient Sanskrit tale and translated into Farsi around 1335 by Ziya' al-Din Nakhshabi, a Persian physician and Sufi mystic who served in the court of a pre-Mughal Islamic ruler in India. Completed in 1809 in northern India, the folktale is a beautiful example of how the tradition of the handmade Persian book continued into 19th century India.

▲
Mythological Scene
20th century AD, 14th century AH
Mughal India
31.5 x 20cm
The Farjam Collection

▶
Mythological Scene
20th century AD, 14th century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 16cm
The Farjam Collection



The Miniature Technique

Almost all Mughal manuscripts were produced either in the imperial atelier or ateliers that belonged to princes or nobles. These work areas were in large halls where the painters would sit on the floor with a wooden drawing board resting on their thigh. A master painter or *ustad* was delegated to visualize the composition and make the preliminary *tarh* (drawing). This was done either on a separate piece of paper and pressed onto the *wasli* (type of handmade paper) by an apprentice, or directly drawn onto the page by the *ustad*. The design was then drawn over with a red pigment, and reinforced in black ink. An *astar* (thin coating) of white was applied to the entire surface of the paper before less experienced artists colored in the drawings. In between applications of color, the *wasli* was burnished repeatedly to ensure that the pigments were compressed with the paper and would then render a smooth surface.

Miniatures are often painted with opaque mineral pigments such as malachite, lapis, and precious metals such as gold and indigo. The delicate images are created using a fine brush, which allows the pigment to be applied to a laminated sheet of paper made from linen fibers. Colors are then created using natural techniques, using animal or plant extracts for pigmentation. The color green was often extracted from green beetles, while dried cow's urine was used to intensify yellow pigments.

The Chinese introduced paper to the Arab world in the 8th century. Before that vellum, which was prepared animal skin, was used for writing. The first paper factory was established in Baghdad in 794, and by the 11th century paper manufacturing spread to the entire Islamic world through Turkey, Egypt and Persia. Paper was not readily available in India until the 14th century, but it soon became the preferred material for the preparation of manuscripts as it offered greater possibilities for size and format.



Styles of Miniature Paintings

Indian miniature painting's can be classified according to their place of origin.



Profile of an Old Man Standing
18th century AD, 12th century AH
Mughal India
21.5 x 15cm
The Farjam Collection

Mughal Paintings

Paintings created during the Mughal period often depict an Indo-Islamic style of painting. Mughal paintings have a particular style of South Asian painting with Buddhist influences. Mughal painting flourished during the late 16th and early 17th centuries with spectacular works of art by master artists such as Basawan, Lal, Miskin, Kesu Das, and Daswanth.

Rajasthani Paintings

These are miniature paintings of the finest quality, made both on paper and on large pieces of cloth. Miniatures in manuscripts or single sheets to be kept in albums were the preferred medium of Rajasthani or "Rajput" painting. In the final decades of the 16th century, Rajput art schools began to develop distinctive styles by combining indigenous with foreign influences (Persian, Mughal, Chinese, European). Rajasthani painting consists of four principal schools that have within them several artistic styles and sub-styles. The four principal schools of this era include: the Mewar, the Marwar, the Hadoti, and the Dhundar schools.

Madhubani Paintings

The paintings of this genre belonged to the small town called Madhubani, a region of the Bihar state, and the adjoining parts of Terai in Nepal. At first, they were made on the mud walls of small huts but later they were completed on paper. The subject matter involves Hindu gods and goddesses, the natural objects like moon and sun, and sacred plants like tulsi. They were painted with fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens, and matchsticks, using natural dyes and pigments, and are characterized by their eye-catching geometrical patterns.

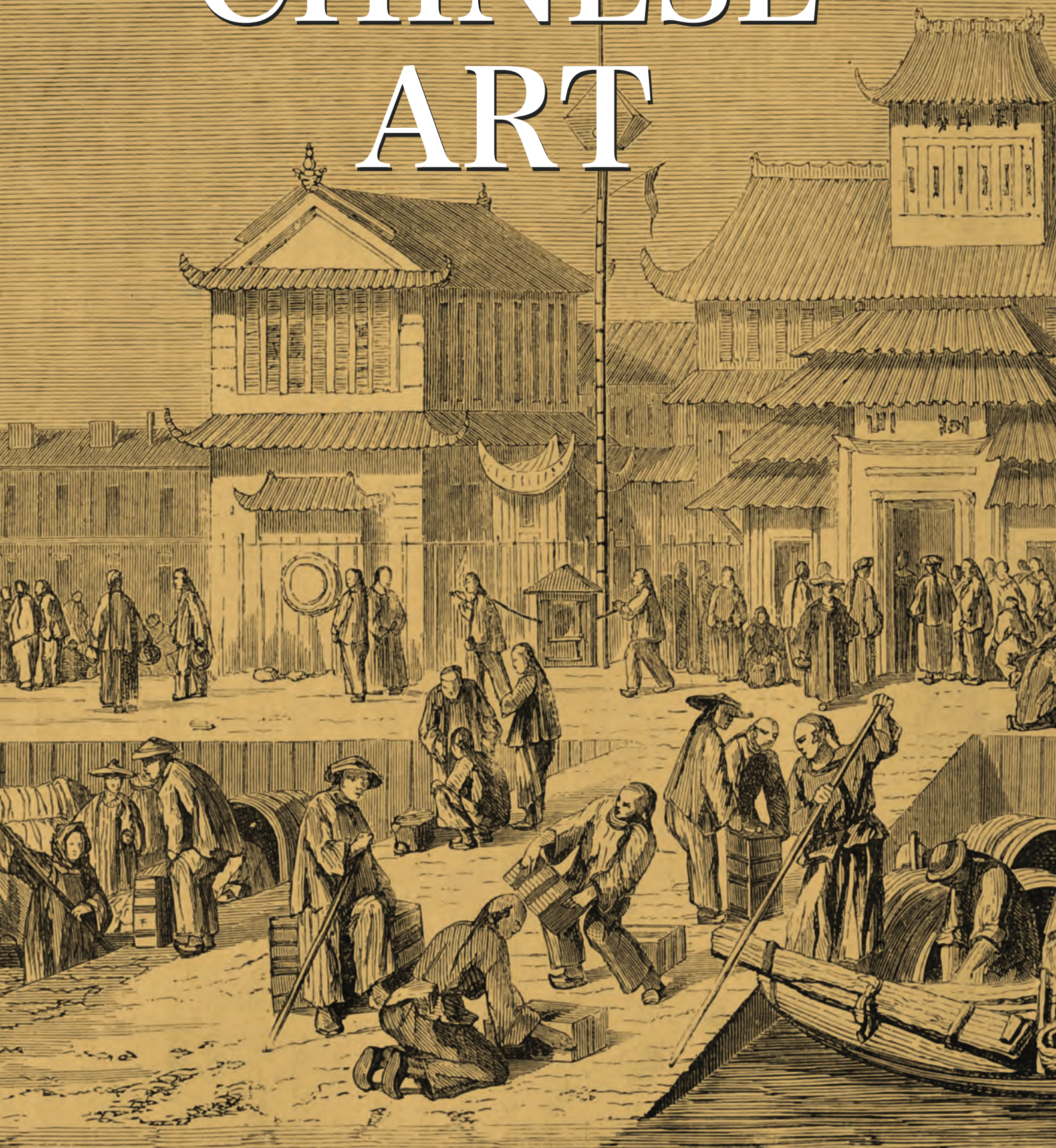
Pahari Painting

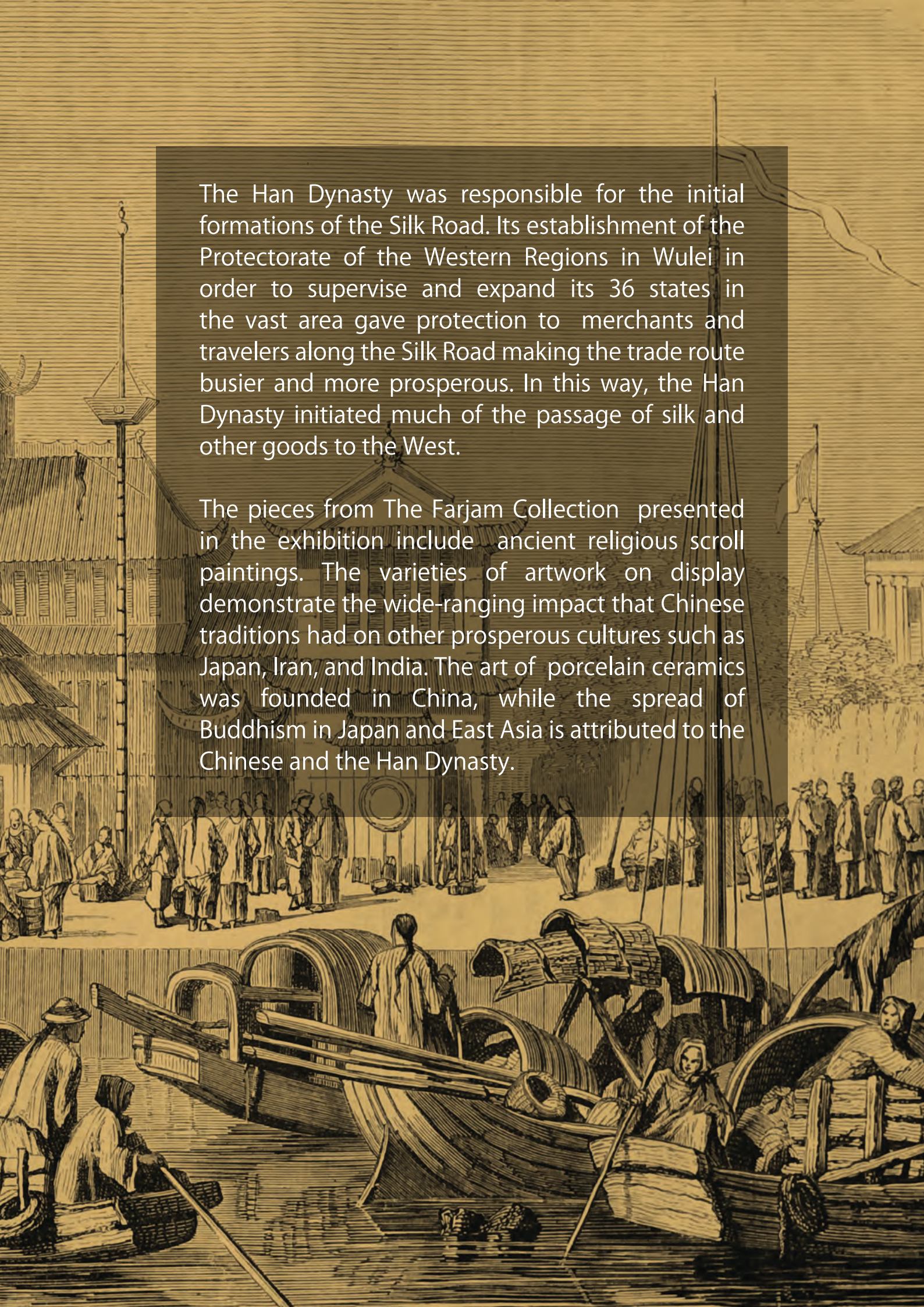
Pahari is the style of miniature painting that evolved in the hilly states of Kashmir and Punjab during the Rajput period. These paintings have beautiful scenes of the Himalayas as the backdrop. There are three distinct schools of this style: the Basholi, Guler-Kangra and Sikh.

Lepakshi Paintings

Another genre of Indian painting is the Lepakshi style, which originated and developed in paintings made on the walls of the temple of Lepakshi, located in a small village in the Anantpur district. The paintings of Lepakshi have been a crucial element in maintaining the continuity of paintings in Karnataka. They are outstanding pieces of the Vijayanagara architectural style, and their color and composition are remarkable to observe.

CHINESE ART





The Han Dynasty was responsible for the initial formations of the Silk Road. Its establishment of the Protectorate of the Western Regions in Wulei in order to supervise and expand its 36 states in the vast area gave protection to merchants and travelers along the Silk Road making the trade route busier and more prosperous. In this way, the Han Dynasty initiated much of the passage of silk and other goods to the West.

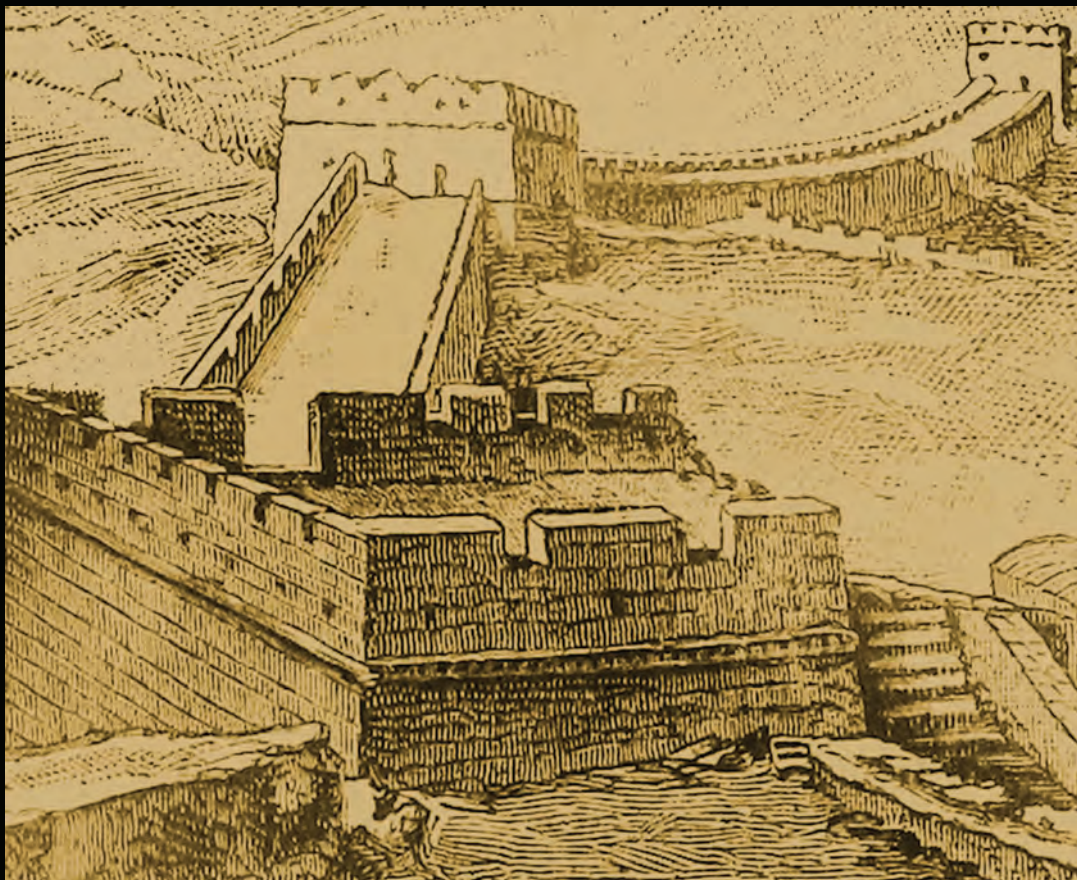
The pieces from The Farjam Collection presented in the exhibition include ancient religious scroll paintings. The varieties of artwork on display demonstrate the wide-ranging impact that Chinese traditions had on other prosperous cultures such as Japan, Iran, and India. The art of porcelain ceramics was founded in China, while the spread of Buddhism in Japan and East Asia is attributed to the Chinese and the Han Dynasty.

The Han Dynasty

The Han Dynasty was an age of economic and cultural prosperity. Science and technology during the Han era saw significant advances, including papermaking and the use of negative numbers in mathematics.

Emperor Wu Di is perhaps the most celebrated emperor of the period. He is known for his numerous accomplishments and additions to the Chinese society, the most noteworthy being the development of the Silk Road. Like the Qin before them, the main goal of the Han was to unify China. This process was finally completed during Emperor Wu Di's reign, a period of great military expansion. Emperor Wu Di also started a system of public schools, which were developed around the ideals and teachings of Confucius.

With Emperor Wu Di, the Silk Road's success soon grew both eastward and westward. The Chinese also began to import horses, cattle, cucumbers, walnuts, and even grapes for wine. The trade the Silk Road fostered was truly a remarkable development in Chinese history. The Chinese civilizations were able to spread knowledge and influence to other parts of the continent that has had a lasting impact on many parts of the world today.





The Art of Porcelain

Porcelain is a ceramic made by heating raw materials, generally including clay in the form of kaolin, in a kiln with temperatures between 1,200 and 1,400 °C. The toughness, strength, and translucency of porcelain arise mainly from the formation of glass and the mineral mullite within the fired body at these high temperatures. Porcelain can informally be referred to as "china" or "fine china" for English speaking countries, since China was the birthplace of porcelain creation.

Porcelain manufactured during the Tang Dynasty was exported to the Islamic world, where it was highly prized and emulated. Early porcelain of this type includes the tri-color glazed porcelain. By the reign of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), porcelain art was being exported to Europe. Some of the most well known Chinese porcelain art styles arrived in Europe during this era, such as the coveted blue-and-white wares. The Ming Dynasty controlled much of the porcelain trade, which was further expanded to all of Asia, Africa and Europe through the Silk Road. Later, Portuguese merchants began direct trade over the sea route with the Ming Dynasty in 1517 with Dutch merchants following suit in 1598.

In the early 16th century, the Portuguese brought back samples of kaolin clay, which they discovered in China to be essential in the production of porcelain wares, but the Chinese techniques and composition to manufacture porcelain was not yet fully understood. In 1712, it was the French, who introduced the art of porcelain creation to the West, finally revealing many of the elaborate Chinese manufacturing secrets to communities across Europe.

Types of Chinese Porcelain

The true, or hard paste porcelain was made first in China during the Han and Tang Dynasties, and is composed of two natural ingredients: clay and stone, which form porcelain when they have been mixed together and heated to a temperature of 1,300 to 1,400°C.

Porcelain can be divided into the three main categories: hard paste, soft paste and bone china; each depending on the composition of the paste, the material used to form the body of a porcelain object, and the firing conditions.

Hard Paste

The hard paste technique produced some of the finest quality porcelain wares. The earliest porcelains were produced in the early 18th century. They were formed from a paste composed of kaolin and alabaster and fired at temperatures up to 1,400°C in a wood-fired kiln, producing a porcelain of great hardness and translucency. Later, the composition of the hard paste was changed and the alabaster was replaced by feldspar and quartz, allowing the pieces to be fired at lower temperatures. Kaolinite, feldspar and quartz continue to provide the basic ingredients for most continental European hard paste porcelains.

Soft Paste

Soft paste porcelains date back from the early attempts by European potters to replicate Chinese porcelain by using mixtures of clay and ground-up glass (frit) to produce soft paste porcelain. Soapstone and lime were known to have been included in these compositions. These were not yet actual porcelain wares as they were not hard and vitrified from firing kaolin clay at high temperatures. As these early formulations suffered from slumping in the kiln at raised temperatures, they were unprofitable to produce and of poor quality. Formulations were later developed based on kaolin clay with quartz, feldspars, nepheline syenite or other feldspathic rocks. These were technically superior to the previous models. Soft paste porcelains are fired at lower temperatures than hard paste porcelain, therefore these are in general less durable than hard paste porcelains.

Bone China

Although originally developed in England in 1748 to compete with imported Chinese hard-paste porcelain, bone china is now made worldwide. The English had read the letters of the Jesuit missionary, Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles, which described Chinese porcelain manufacturing secrets in detail. In China, kaolin clay was sometimes described as forming the "bones" of the paste, while the refined rocks suitable for the porcelain body provided the "flesh". Traditionally, English bone china was made from two parts of bone ash, one part of kaolin clay and one part stone, although this has largely been replaced by feldspars from non-UK sources.



The Spread of Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy based on the teachings of the Buddha Siddhartha. Buddhism arrived in China at the start of the 1st century from monks in Central Asia and India. Buddhism's official introduction to China was with the coming of the two monks Moton and Chufarlan. Buddhism directly contradicted the core of Confucianism (China's main religion) teachings and principles of family and society. Confucianism promoted social stability, order, strong families, and practical living. Chinese officials questioned how a monk's personal attainment of Nirvana benefited the empire of China.

Buddhism had to transform itself into a system that could exist within the Chinese way of life. Thus, obscure Indian sutras that advocated filial piety became core texts in China. Buddhism was made compatible with ancestral worship and participation in China's hierarchical system. Many Buddhist scriptures and artworks were produced during this period. Paintings depicting Siddhartha and the cosmic wheel are often the main subjects of Chinese Buddhist art. The uses of exaggerated features, attention to detail, chaotic foregrounds and backgrounds with bursts of red and blue colors are often characteristics of traditional Chinese Buddhist paintings.

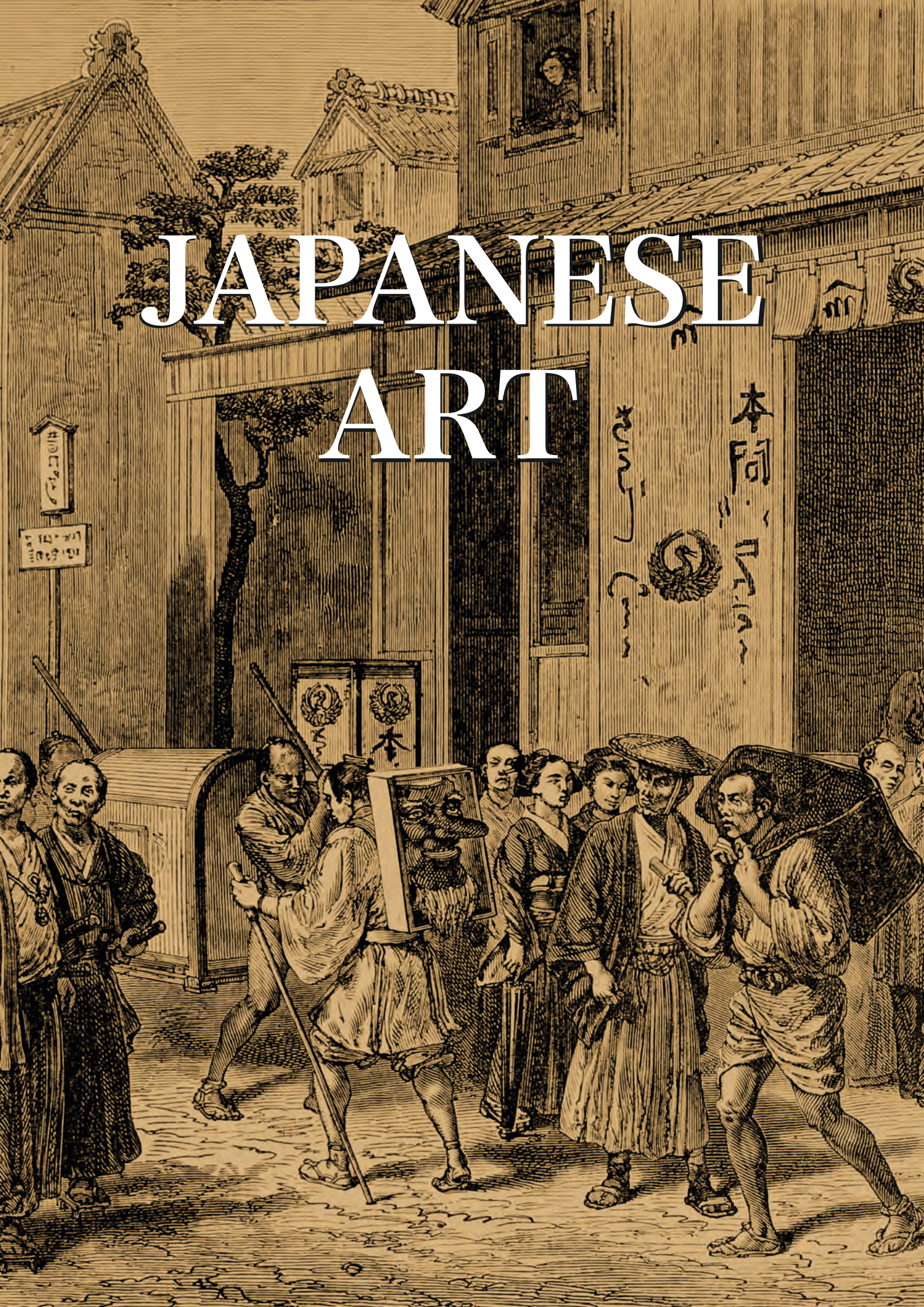
The sudden collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220 and the resulting period of social upheaval and political unrest known as the Three Kingdoms period may have helped the spread of Buddhism. It was not until the reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty that saw the official support of Buddhism. The popularization of Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty is evident in the many scripture-filled caves and structures surviving today. With the assistance of the Silk Road, Buddhism quickly spread throughout Asia, particularly flourishing in Japan and Tibet.

A Lady with Elephant
Han Dynasty
78 x148 cm
The Farjam Collection



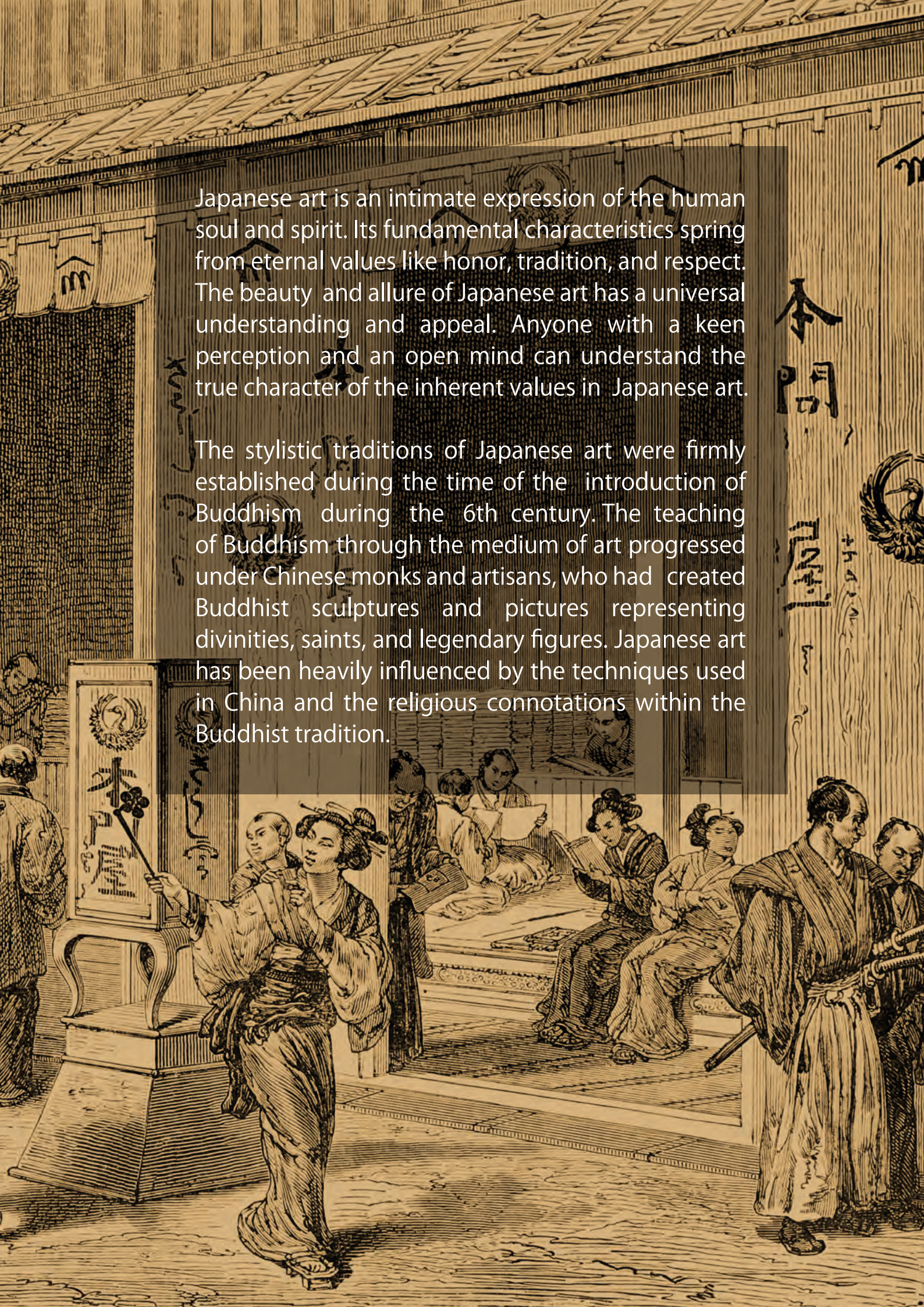
A Lady with Lion
Han Dynasty
78 x 148 cm
The Farjam Collection

JAPANESE ART



Japanese art is an intimate expression of the human soul and spirit. Its fundamental characteristics spring from eternal values like honor, tradition, and respect. The beauty and allure of Japanese art has a universal understanding and appeal. Anyone with a keen perception and an open mind can understand the true character of the inherent values in Japanese art.

The stylistic traditions of Japanese art were firmly established during the time of the introduction of Buddhism during the 6th century. The teaching of Buddhism through the medium of art progressed under Chinese monks and artisans, who had created Buddhist sculptures and pictures representing divinities, saints, and legendary figures. Japanese art has been heavily influenced by the techniques used in China and the religious connotations within the Buddhist tradition.





A Lacquer Kogo Incense Box
Meiji Period
15cm
The Farjam Collection

In the exhibition, The Farjam Collection will display works dating primarily from the Momoyama to the Meiji Period. Japanese culture has a very special and distinctive relationship with art, customs, religion, and history. Much of the religious and decorative art from Japan derives from China and the Silk Road trading routes. The exhibition exemplifies the extraordinary innovative achievements of these talented artists, ranging from delicate porcelain vases to lacquered furniture.



A Jubako Box
Edo Period
34cm
The Farjam Collection

Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573-1603)

The decorative art that hallmarks the Momoyama period is characterized by a grandiose, polychrome style, with the extensive use of gold and silver foil. The lavish design was applied to paintings, architecture, garments, and furnishings. The flamboyant décor enveloped the fortresses and cities built by the daimyo. The Azuchi-Momoyama period was an age of magnificence and ostentation, when the construction of castles and mansions replaced the building of temples, and the rise of urban centers and a prosperous merchant class created a demand for art and culture.



A Kogo Incense Box
Edo Period
6.2cm
The Farjam Collection

Kano Painting School

The Momoyama era is distinguished by the creation of the Kano painting school. Kano Masanobu (1453-1490) and his son Kano Motonobu (1476-1559) founded the Kano school in what initially began as a protest against the Chinese ink painting technique. The Kano school quickly became the dominant movement and extended into the Edo period.



A Satsuma Chawan
Edo Period
10cm
The Farjam Collection



Using bright colors and introducing daring compositions with large flat areas, the Kano school was also responsible for the creation of monumental landscapes on traditional Japanese sliding screen panels. These large screens and wall paintings were commissioned to decorate the castles and palaces of the military nobility. The works of the Kano school became the official sanctioned art for the shogun and Imperial court of Japan.



A Large Pair of Imari Vases
Edo Period
74cm
The Farjam Collection

Edo Period (1603-1868)

After the battle of Sekigahara, Tokugawa Ieyasu usurped control of the country, establishing his seat of power in the small fishing village of Edo (modern-day Tokyo). As the city of Edo's economy and population grew with trade and commerce, there was resurgence of artistic activity. Several schools of painting and decorative arts were founded, including the Rinpa school.



Fubako Letterbox
Edo Period
42cm
The Farjam Collection



A Kogo Incense Box
Edo Period
6.2cm
The Farjam Collection



A Cabinet
Meiji Period
15.8cm
The Farjam Collection
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Rinpa School

The Rinpa school (also pronounced Rimpa) was a key part of the revival in the Edo period. The name "Rinpa" describes a uniquely Japanese, highly decorative style of painting and applied arts, chiefly using lacquer and ceramics. Rinpa paintings are often in the format of small hand scrolls, album leaves and fans, but many folding screens were also made with gold and silver backgrounds. Rinpa is distinguished by its lavish and bright colors and gold leaf detailing. Often precious stones and metals will be included in the design. Also known for its extravagant and bold nature, Rinpa was loved by the Chounin (merchant) class.



Two Satsuma Dishes
Meiji Period
24cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Kabuki

Drama and theatre enjoyed success during the Edo Period. Playhouses were established that held puppet plays (joruri) and Kabuki dramas to entertain the burgeoning merchant classes. The written characters that make up the word "Kabuki" mean dance, music, and craft. The plots of the Kabuki plays would often focus on the social-class system developed by the Tokugawa shogunate.



An Imari Ewer
Meiji Period
15cm
The Farjam Collection

Meiji Period (1868 – 1912)

The Meiji period or "Meiji Restoration" saw Japan advance from a medieval society to Asia's leading economic and military power. However, as a result of this rapid industrialization, the artistic renaissance of the Edo period came to an end. The Namban style became more popular and the highly stylized format of traditional Yamato-e and Ukiyo-e were sidelined to the more popular Westernized subject matter. Industrialization undermined traditional values, emphasizing more efficiency, independence, materialism, and individualism. During these years Japan saw the emergence of a "mass society" very similar to the "Roaring 20 s" in the United States.



A Large Imari Rectangular Dish Han Mark
Meiji Period
50.5cm
The Farjam Collection

A Cloisonné Vase
Meiji Period
24.5cm
The Farjam Collection
©Christie's Images Limited [2005]





▲ An Embroidered Hanging
Meiji Period
210cm
The Farjam Collection

▼ A Group of Metalwork
Meiji Period
36cm, 22cm, 9cm, 6cm
The Farjam Collection





Yamato-e

Yamato-e is a genre of painting that first flourished during Japan's Heian Dynasty. The term yamato-e, literally means "Japanese painting." Initially, yamato-e was coined to differentiate those paintings concerned with traditional Japanese subject matter from those featuring themes imported from China's Tang Dynasty.

The yamato-e style includes tales from classic Japanese literature and history. Many of the traditional motifs are associated with nature, especially the four seasons of Japan. After the Heian period, yamato-e soon evolved from a descriptive style into a movement that observed certain formal conventions. Figures are generally stylized, with exaggerated and sometimes abbreviated facial features. Characteristics comprise of the inclusion of many small figures and careful depiction of the details of buildings and other objects. In many paintings, only few elements of a scene will be fully depicted, the rest either being ignored or covered by a "floating cloud."

Yamato-e painting has endured as the distinctive style of Japanese art and has been celebrated for generations as the "golden age" of Japanese culture.

Abstract
Meiji Period
71 x 55cm
The Farjam Collection



Standing Female
Edo Period
55 x 33cm
The Farjam Collection



A Pair of Cloisonné Vases
 Meiji Period
 31.4cm
 The Farjam Collection
 © Christie's Images Limited [2005]



A Cloisonné Vase
 Meiji Period
 63cm
 The Farjam Collection
 © Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Two Pairs of Cloisonné Vases
 Meiji Period
 15 x 12.3cm
 The Farjam Collection
 © Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Cloisonné

Cloisonné is a decorative technique used to create designs on metal vessels using copper or bronze wires which have been bent or hammered into the desired pattern. Known as "cloisons" (French for "partitions"), the wires are either pasted or soldered onto the metal body. A glass paste, or enamel, is colored with metallic oxide and painted into the contained areas of the design. The vessel is then fired at a relatively low temperature of 800°C. Afterwards, the surface of the vessel is rubbed until the edges of the cloisons are visible, and they are then gilded, often on the edges, in the interior, and on the base.

The technique was used in China from the 14th century onward. Cloisonné objects were intended primarily for the furnishing of palaces, as their flamboyant splendour was considered more appropriate for secular structures rather than for the more restrained atmosphere of religious temples. During the 18th century, cloisonné enamel objects using Japanese-derived styles began to be copied and produced in the Western world.

A Cloisonné Vase
Meiji Period
46.3cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]





A Cloisonné Tray
Meiji Period
29cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]



A Cloisonné Tray
Meiji Period
29cm
The Farjam Collection
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Porcelain

The Japanese have one of the oldest and most continuous ceramic cultures in the world. Porcelain production began in Japan in the early 17th century. This refined white ceramic requires a more advanced technology than other ceramic types. Considered a treasured luxury item in today's modern world, porcelain is made from a specific clay mixture that includes a soft, white combination called kaolin. The kilns are fired at very high temperatures so that the clay becomes very strong and vitrified. The smooth, semi-translucent surface of porcelain forms an ideal base for the painting of delicate designs, and it has been prized in both the Eastern and Western cultures.

The popularity of the tea ceremony from the 15th century onwards fostered an aesthetic appreciation of ceramics, especially of imported Chinese porcelain wares. The strong demand for ceramics resulted in a surge of creativity during the Momoyama period, with thousands of kilns developing their own distinct regional characteristics. A technique of using colored enamels over the glaze was developed in the 1630s, and in addition to blue-and-white porcelain, multicolored objects could now be made. Since this new style appeared attractively exotic to European buyers, it was frequently employed in the decoration of Japanese exported porcelain. One such type of over glaze-enameled porcelain is known as Kakiemon ware, because it was made at the Kakiemon kiln in Arita. These objects feature motifs derived from Japanese paintings, such as figures, animals, and flowers, which were then painted in a distinctive palette of red, yellow, green, blue, and black on a milky white background.

Many of the porcelain objects made in the Edo and Meiji periods still survive today, and are sold at various prestigious auction houses and galleries around the world.



A Satsuma Vase
Meiji Period
23cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Types of Japanese Porcelain



A Satsuma Vase
Meiji Period
22cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Satsuma

Satsuma porcelains were mainly produced in and around the city of Kagoshima in Kyushu. Wares of this type are finished in ivory luster with fine crackles. The typical Satsuma ware can have a yellowish earth tone, and it is usually decorated with miniature Japanese figures, expressive faces, and detailed oriental landscapes, or sometimes embellished with vivid dragons in relief. This ware is in fact an export product specifically designed in the mid 19th century to cater to the Western export market.



A Pair of Satsuma Vases
Meiji Period
55cm
The Farjam Collection



A Satsuma Vase
Meiji Period
27cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]



Satsuma Ewers
Meiji Period
12cm
The Farjam Collection

Arita

Arita porcelains are produced in Kyushu. Arita porcelains of the early days were typically made in the Chinese style of the period, with deep-blue patterns on a white background, called "sometuke" (blue-and-white). In the 1640's, a new style called "aka-e" was invented, characterized by bright colors and bold patterns principally in red.

Kutani

Kutani porcelains were produced in the prefecture of Ishikawa in Honshu, the Japanese main island. Kutani porcelains are characterized by their elaborate picture decorations in thick gold, red, and blues.

A Nagasaki Lacquer Escritoire
Meiji Period
115cm
The Farjam Collection



Japanese Lacquer

In a general sense, lacquer is a somewhat imprecise term for a clear or colored wood finish that dries by solvent evaporation. It is also often a curing process that produces a hard, durable finish. This finish can be of any sheen level from an ultra matte to a high gloss, and it can be further polished as required. Japanese lacquerware is prized because it contains the highest proportion of sap that gives lacquerware its coveted qualities. Urushiol, or sap, is borrowed from the Japanese word for lacquer. The value of the sap from the lacquer tree has been prized in Japan and it was often used as an adhesive to mend pottery and fix arrowheads. Lacquer can be applied to many materials including wood, silk, metal and plastic, as creates as it creates a beautiful high-gloss finish, typically in black or red.

Japanese lacquer has been a part of the country's tradition from its earliest history. Artisans in Japan are recognized all over the world as having brought the art of lacquer to its aesthetic and technical zenith today. Japanese lacquer originates as a sap and after a long period of aging and processing, it can be applied using many methods to a structured surface. These surfaces can include tea sets, boxes, bottles, furniture, shrines and altars, personal accessories of all kinds, as well as room interiors.

A Large Kagamibako Mirror Box
Edo Period
48.8cm
The Farjam Collection



A variety of decorative techniques were used for lacquered objects in early Japanese history. The Japanese developed *makie*, a method of creating intricate illustrations by sprinkling gold filings onto the surface of an object. During the Momoyama period, the Japanese developed *takamakie*, a method of building up layers of lacquer in high relief. Throughout the Edo period, lacquer artists were in great demand, working as official craftsmen to the shogun and daimyo. The Rinpa school and artists such as Shibata Zeshin encouraged bolder designs in lacquerware. From the Meiji period onward, the imperial family sponsored the lacquer industry directly, thereby ensuring its continuity.



An Ivory Tusk Vase
Meiji Period
25.7cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]



A Pair of Ivory Tusk Vases
Meiji Period
34cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]

Sculpture and Okimono

Japanese sculpture was heavily influenced by the Silk Road culture. Most Japanese sculptures derived from the idol worship of the Shinto deities that were central to Buddhism. Traditionally, the materials used for sculpture were metal, especially bronze, and wood, which was often lacquered, gilded, or brightly painted. Early Japanese figurative sculptures from the Azuchi-Momoyama and Edo periods were characterized by almond shaped eyes, upward-turned crescent-shaped lips, and symmetrically arranged folds in clothing.

During the Meiji era, the use of ivory for sculptural art became very popular. Ivory has had great religious significance to many cultures throughout history. Because ivory is a natural, organic material which is at the same time virtually indestructible, it has been viewed as having mystical powers. Ivory was often used in religious ceremonies to pay tribute to gods and goddesses. Elephant ivory became the medium of choice for okimono artists in the 19th century.



The art of okimono is the least studied form of Japanese arts. Okimono is typically a Japanese miniature sculpture, usually made of carved ivory. The Japanese define "okimono" as something "free-standing." The term embraces all things tangible, including art objects, dolls, souvenirs, and craftworks.

As an ivory carving epicenter, Japan owes much of its fame to such names as Asahi Gyokuzan, Ishikawa Komei, and Takamura Koun. It was these influential artists who became founding fathers of the Tokyo Fine Arts School (now the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music), established in 1888, and made a lasting impact in the art world with their sculptural medium.

A Tokyo School Okimono Sculptural Ornament
Meiji Period
30cm
The Farjam Collection
© Christie's Images Limited [2005]

“I did not tell half of what I saw”

MARCO POLO



THE
FARJAM
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