NUS MUSEUM

NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 7,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The Lee Kong Chian Collection consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the South and Southeast Asian Collection holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the Ng Eng Teng Collection is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, will be located at NUS’ Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent, National University of Singapore
Singapore 119279
Tel: (65) 6516 8817
Website: www.nus.edu.sg/museum
Email: museum@nus.edu.sg

Opening Hours:
10am – 7:30pm (Thursdays – Saturdays)
10am – 6pm (Sundays)
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays

Ways Of Seeing Chinese Art

欣賞中國藝術

Getting Around:
MRT: Red Line: NS22 near Kent Ridge (East Interchange) / NS21 near Geylang (West Interchange)
Bus: 131 from Geylang (West Interchange) / 132 from East Interchange

NGI/DC: 700 Raffles Ave, Singapore 039798
Tel: (65) 6774 1860
Website: www.ngi.org.sg
Email: info@ngi.org.sg

Opening Hours:
Monday – Thursday: 10am – 6pm
Friday: 10am – 9pm
Saturday: 10am – 6pm
Sunday: 10am – 6pm
Closed on Public Holidays
Ways of Seeing Chinese Art

Jades, bronzes, ceramics, paintings and calligraphy and other works of art were created for functional and aesthetic purposes. When exhibited in museums, they assume a new identity as works of art. They then have a new meaning to their purpose – to be displayed.

How do we define Chinese art? How do we link the qualities of these art works? How did artistic expression and technique evolve over the years? How did art affect social development?

As you join us in admiring these art works, try to answer all these questions.

Chan Jiazi, Exhibition Curator

Here are more than 200 objects on display featuring ceramic, jades and bronzes. The material culture presented covers the Neolithic period to the early 20th century. All the artworks displayed belong to the Lee Kong Chian Art Collection.

The 115 ceramic objects dating from prehistory to the early 20th century, are not only in complete chronological order, they represent works from the major kilns, and are grouped according to unique techniques. This exhibition presents a complete history of Chinese ceramic art.

Since the NUS Museum opened in 2002, this exhibition has provided educational opportunities for NUS students and the general public to admire ancient art and understand Chinese art history. Now, the exhibition has been refreshed, through rearranging, replacing and regrouping of the exhibits. We look forward to admirers of Chinese art savouring and appreciating this new presentation.

欣賞中國藝術

玉器、陶器、雕塑、書畫等是在滿足使用和審美功能的基础上而誕生的作品，當它們被放置在博物館或美術館以展示的時候，它的身份便有了新的稱呼——藝術品。它的功用便有了新的意義——展覽品。

如何豐富的中國藝術？這些琳瑯滿目的藝術品？藝術表現方法和技巧如何隨時間的演進而變化？它們對社會的發展又產生了怎樣的影響？

請讓我們一起欣賞這些藝術品之際，試著去解答這些問題吧。

陳家紫

在这里展示了200件陶瓷、玉器以及書畫等物，作品年代上自新石器時代下至二十世紀早期。所展出的藝術品均為李光前文物館收藏品。

展示的115件史前至二世紀初的陶瓷器，不僅在歷史年代順序上，還通過一些名作代表作，以及具有特色的工藝組合的呈現，呈現出一個完整的中國陶瓷藝術發展史。

自2002年新加坡國立大學博物館開業以來，這個欣賞中國藝術的機會，為大學的學生以及社會眾多提供了認識中國古代藝術、了解中國文化發展的機會。這次，博物館對展品進行了調整換裝。並且添加了一些新的結合，使展覽增添了新的意趣，我們誠摯期待著欣賞者去品味和欣賞。
Jade and Stone –
Function and Symbolism

For millions of years, human beings had used stone as the major resource to make tools. During the Neolithic period (6000 – 1500 BCE), the people living in what is now known as China's territories used stone tools for agriculture and other economic activities. When social hierarchies began to emerge during the late Neolithic period, some forms of stone weapons such as thinner stone axes, became associated with power.

In ancient China, jade referred to all kinds of beautiful stones and was always highly treasured. Jade ornaments were important ritual objects as well as markers of power and status.

Divination and Oracle Bone

During the Shang (16th – 11th century BCE) and Western Zhou (11th century – 771 BCE) dynasties, divination was a very important method for kings to legitimize their political rule. It was also believed to be the means to communicate with ancestors and supernormal forces and to ask for good fortune.

Diviners used turtle shells and shoulder blades of ox, deer, sheep, and other animals. They bored or chiselled hollows into the bones before heating them to produce cracks. Only the kings had the power to interpret the meaning of these fissures.

The inscribed words on oracle bones are currently the earliest known pictograms and they hold certain significance for the Chinese script. The inscriptions cover a large variety of topics such as disasters, agricultural output, military strategy, hunting trips and health.

玉、石器的功用与象征

玉是数百万年前，人类开始使用石头的工具来制作各种形式的用品。新石器时代(公元前6000 - 1500年)，生活在今中国境内的人类就已经开始从事农业和其他经济活动。当时社会的等级制度开始形成，一些形式的石头工具被赋予了象征权力的意义。

在中国古代，玉和石器被用于各种象征权力的用途。它们不仅是权力的象征，经过琢磨和装饰的玉器也是权力和地位的标志。同时，玉器也被用作贵族和官员的装饰品。

占卜与甲骨文

商代(公元前16 - 11世纪)和西周时期(公元前11世纪 - 771年)，占卜是统治者统治社会的一种手段，也是人们向祖先和超自然之神进行交流、祈求好运的一种方式。

当时的占卜材料多用甲骨文。占卜师会在甲骨文上刻下各种图案，通过火烧使其产生裂缝，只有圣人才能够对这些裂缝进行解释的占卜。

龟甲骨上的文字，是目前世界上最早的象形文字，具有一定的书法意义。它内容记录了当时诸如天文、历法、军事、狩猎以及生活习俗等。

Political Significance of Chinese Bronze

Besides being used as dining ware, ancient Chinese bronze was used for ritual and war. Ritual and war were the major affairs of the state as well as the instruments of political power.

The Chinese began to cast bronze vessels around the 21st century BCE. Kings, nobles, and priests of the Shang (16th - 11th century BCE) and Western Zhou (11th century – 771 BCE) dynasties used bronze vessels in rites dedicated to deities and ancestors. There were strict regulations to ensure monopolistic use of bronzes by the royal family and the nobility.

By the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 – 220), the weights of the Bronze Age in China were numbered. Bronze was used primarily for coins, mirrors and decoration for horse carriages.

青铜器的象征意义

古代中国的青铜器除了作为饮食器外，还用于祭祀或战争。祭祀与战争是当时国家的重要工具，同时锻造青铜器也是统治者的重要权力。

中国青铜器制作始于约公元前16世纪。到了商朝(公元前16 - 11世纪)和西周时期(公元前11世纪 - 771年)，青铜器的制作和使用在祭祀和战争中占据了重要地位。青铜器被用来制造祭祀和战争的工具。

青铜武器和镜

When bronze casting technology appeared about 4,000 years ago, the prehistoric weapons made from stone and bone were gradually replaced by the sharper and stronger bronze arrowheads, spears and swords.

During the Warring States period (475 - 221 BCE), frequent wars between small rival states spurred the development of the bronze armaments industry to its peak in Chinese history. Bronze weaponry dominated these wars.

The bronze mirror as an art form was the beneficiary of a long history of bronze casting. Besides the apparent function of luminous reflection, the designs on the back of a bronze mirror provide rich information about the aesthetics, thoughts, myths or legends of the period in which it was made. Bronze mirrors thus assumed symbolic, spiritual and artistic significance.

青铜武器和镜

约在四千年前出现的青铜铸造技术，使人类早期使用的玉石或骨器制成的武器逐步被青铜制的箭头、长矛和短剑所代替。它们更为锋利和坚韧。

战国时期(公元前475 - 221年)，各国间的频繁战争促进了青铜武器的发展。青铜武器的发展促进了当时的美学追求、思想发展，以及神话传说多方面的资料，成为象征、宗教和艺术等深层次的载体。

作为一种艺术形式，青铜器发展于漫长的青铜器铸造史，除了其自身的实用功能外，还是一种美学上的艺术创作，展现了当时人们对生活和艺术的追求。
The Invention of Pottery

Chinese production of pottery started in the early Neolithic period. In China the earliest known pottery comes from the south and dates back to 12,000 years ago.

The appearance of pottery transformed human lifestyles drastically. It changed the ways people stored and cooked their food. People could stay indefinitely in one area. The fostered settled village life.

Early pottery had simple and abstract decorations. Most of the motifs are related to things from everyday life, such as the sun, the moon, fish nets, frogs, fish and different animals. The development of social structures led to technical advances in ceramic production which laid the foundation for many other technologies, such as bronze metallurgy, brick making and engineering.

Breakthrough in Ceramic Technology: Glazing

The discovery of glaze is a great advancement in Chinese ceramic industry. The earliest evidence of glazed stoneware dates back to the middle of the Shang Dynasty (16th – 11th century BCE).

Glaze gives a glossy, vitreous finish to ceramics. It is not only decorative; it also protects the clay body. Chinese scholars refer to this type of early highfired glazed ware as yuanshi (proto-porcelain). The fine-grained proto-porcelain led to the eventual production of Chinese porcelain.

Wares with impressed designs appeared about 4,000 years ago. The glaze was applied onto these wares as a new kind of decoration.

Eternal Life and Worldly Desires

In the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), it was generally believed that human life consisted of the spirit and the body. Each was governed by a soul. At death, the soul governed the hun (spirit) and the soul governing the po (body) separated. The hun ascended into the realm of the immortals. The po stayed in the grave where the body was buried.

Manifesting the idea that the afterlife was a continuation of the present, burial items provided the material comfort for the po. The burial items revealed a vision of eternal life in which worldly honours and pleasures were prolonged. The commonly seen burial items are made of ceramic watch tower, house, animal pen, stove, lamp stand and other daily accessories.

Burial Attendant

In the Shang Dynasty (16th century – 256 BCE) human attendants were buried alive in burial rites. In the Spring and Autumn period (770 – 221 BCE), figurative representations of live animals and attendants gradually became the new practice. The use of clay models of attendants was a way of displaying the deceased’s status and wealth. The clay models’ appearances, decoration and clothing provide information of the cultures and aesthetics of the society at that time.

Tombs guarding deities were intended to ward off evil. Different types of strange beasts and the Buddhist Lokapalas, all assumed this symbolic role in the grave. Burial items such as door gods and tomb guarding beasts appeared during the Three Kingdoms (220 – 280), Northern and Southern (255 – 589) and Tang (618 – 907) dynasties. They were well-known for their sacrail glaze of yellow, green and white.

制陶工艺的飞跃 — 施釉

釉的发现大大地提升了中国的制陶工艺。现存最早的上釉陶器产生于商末（公元前16—11世纪）。商末陶器表面呈现玻化光泽，这不仅起到了装饰作用，还有着保护陶釉的功效。中国学者称这种高温烧制的早期上釉陶器为“原釉”，这些胎骨细的容器孕育了中国瓷器的产生。

约在4000年前就有了印文陶器，施釉已经作为一种新装饰手法，应用在这些陶器上。

随葬俑

商周时期（公元前16世纪—256年）还流行用人俑殉葬的习俗，春秋战国时期（公元前770—221年）陵墓以随葬品俑和人俑更常见，随葬俑制作为一种陵寝墓主人生前身份和财富的表现形式，其造型和排列，也提供了当时的社会风尚和审美信息。

坟墓守护神即随葬神。各种神兽及天王俑在墓中承担着守护者的职责，门的陶俑随葬俑葬在墓底（220—280）南北朝（255—589）和唐代（618—907）尤其盛行。绿白三彩釉饰的俑，唐代（618—907）尤其盛行。
Green Glazed Ware and Yue Ware

The earliest green glazed ware appeared in the middle of the Shang Dynasty (16th - 11th century BCE). A transition from proto-pottery to early porcelain took place during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 - 220) and production boomed in the north and south. By the Tang (618 - 907) and the Song (960 - 1279) dynasties, the firing techniques of green glazed wares reached their peak before gradually losing their lead. Yue kilns are one of the earliest kilns in the history of Chinese ceramics. These southern kilns are famous for their green glazed ware. Yue kilns continued to develop after the Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE). By the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907), they had developed a unique style. Yue wares come in a rich variety of forms. Its jade green color was admired by the literati.

Changsha, Black Glazed and White Glazed Wares

Changsha kiln is an important kiln of the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907). The greatest contribution of Changsha ware is its underglaze painting of brown and green colors, flowers and birds, animals, and decorations of sayings, proverbs and poems. Such painting and decorative styles of Changsha ware created an excitement over the craftsmanship of ancient Chinese ceramics. The wares were exported in large quantities to South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Black glazed ware developed from the foundation of the green-glazed ware. Its production reached its peak in the Tang and the Song (960 - 1279) dynasties. White glazed wares appeared around the Northern Song Dynasty (986 - 581), but its glaze still has a tinge of yellow or grey. During the Tang Dynasty, craftsmanship for white glazed wares progressed rapidly, such as Xing kilns in Hefei province that were able to produce glazes that are pure white.

Ding, Yaozhou and Jun Wares

Ding ware of Hebei province has been highly cherished to this day for its beautiful form and elegant decoration. Its beautiful vessel shape is adorned with carved, incised or moulded decoration. A unique feature is concealing the unglazed rim with a metal band. Ding ware has been used as tributes during the Tang (618 - 907) and Jin (1115 - 1234) dynasties. In Northern China, Yaozhou ware enjoyed equal prominence as Ding ware. It is decorated using similar carving and moulding techniques of the Ding ware, and has a glaze colour of olive green or brownish yellow. Yaozhou ware attained such a high standard that it was given as tributes to the imperial court of the Northern Song Dynasty (960 - 1126).

Jun ware is appreciated for its deep, rich glaze that ranges from blue to lavender tones. The colours are obtained by firing in a reduction kiln atmosphere. Although the imperial kilns closed after the Northern Song Dynasty ended, private kilns continued to operate during the Jin and Yuan (1271 - 1368) dynasties.

Jizhou and Jian Wares

Jizhou ware was the folk ware of Jizhou in southern Jiangxi province. The best-known wares are those with underglaze leaf and papercut decorations. Jizhou kilns also produced "oil spot" glazes, golden brown and black "tortoiseshell" glazes, bearing a close relationship with Jian ware in the south.

The glaze used by Jian kilns has complex compositions. The addition of iron oxide in varying proportions produced a dark, shiny surface that is motled densely with spots or streaks. The resultant "oil spot" or "hare's fur" effect gives Jian ware its distinctive character.

Zhou Ware, Ru Ware, and Ding Ware

Northern stooge kilns were famous for their dark, exquisite glaze, which was highly valued for its elegance and beauty. Its glaze formed a noticeable brownish spot on the base of the kiln. The glaze is achieved by firing in a reduction kiln. The glaze is made up of iron oxide, and the glaze color is brownish black or yellowish brown.

Jizhou kilns were famous for their rich colors and refined glaze, with a distinctive "oil spot" effect. The glaze is made up of iron oxide, and the glaze color is brownish black or yellowish brown.

Jian kilns were famous for their unique "hare's fur" and "tortoiseshell" glazes, with a distinctive "oil spot" effect. The glaze is made up of iron oxide, and the glaze color is brownish black or yellowish brown.
Qingbai and Longquan Ware

The glasy glaze of Qingbai ware carries a faint greenish tinge. The production of Qingbai ware during the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279) represented the transition from green to white wares in the south. Many kilns in Ruchou in Jiangxi province produced Qingbai wares. Jingdezhen kilns were the most prominent. These wares were made for the local market, with some exported to Southeast Asia and the Near East.

Longquan ware is a new type of green glazed ware which replaced Yue ware in the south. The glaze of Longquan ware is thick and opalescent. Its varied shades of green give the pottery a jade like quality. The flourishing domestic and foreign trade during the Southern Song (1127 – 1279) and Yuan (1271 – 1368) dynasties boosted the production of Longquan ware. The major kilns were located in eastern and southern Zhejiang province. There were also kilns in Jiangxi and Fujian provinces that were imitating the Longquan style.

Blue and White Ware

Blue and white ware is derived by using cobalt blue in underglaze painting on white-bodied porcelain, and glazing the porcelain with increasingly transparent glazes. Underglaze blue decoration on pottery was already in use during the Tang (618 – 907) and Song (960 – 1279) dynasties. During the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368), Jingdezhen kilns were already skilled in producing blue and white wares. During the Ming (1368 – 1644) and the Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties, Jingdezhen became famous for its blue and white ware.

Exports

Ceramics such as Yue ware, Chongsha ware, Qiongcai ware, Longquan ware, and blue and white ware, had long been China's important export wares.

The old trade networks linked China to other countries in Asia, Middle East and North Africa. As shipping networks expanded, China integrated into the rapidly expanding global economy through continual involvement in maritime trade. Exquisite wares were produced in large quantities to meet the diverse demands of different markets.

Jingdezhen Export Ware

During the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province was China's only ceramic city. The strategic location of Jingdezhen allowed all of its products to be transported to Fanyang Lake and Yangtze River to be distributed to the rest of China, and exported overseas from the ports at Guangzhou and Fuzhou.

From the mid to the late Ming Dynasty (early 17th century), high demands for export wares made Jingdezhen a huge production and distribution point for ceramics. Jingdezhen export ware became Europe's most expensive luxury good and was indispensable to their royalties' daily use. They named it "white coloured gold". At that time, many shops specializing in Chinese ceramics appeared in Europe, Southeast Asia and Japan.

By the mid and the late 17th century, Jingdezhen's volume of production and export reached its peak. New export ware appeared, such as rolowan, long neck vase, brush pot, gu vase, lotus jar and large plates.

Zhangzhou Pottery

Zhangzhou porcelain is renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship and exquisite designs. The production of porcelain in Zhangzhou is vast, with various types of porcelain, including blue and white porcelain, famille rose porcelain, and famille verte porcelain. The name "Zhangzhou porcelain" is also associated with the famous "Zhangzhou porcelains" in the Ming and Qing dynasties, which were highly valued in Europe.
Zhangzhou Ware

What is known all along as Swatow ware was mostly ware produced in Zhangzhou in Fujian province. During the Song (960 – 1279) and Yuan (1271 – 1368) dynasties, Zhangzhou was already an important production centre for Fujian export ware. After the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), its production volume increased, and so did the variety of ware.

Ceramic ware from Pinghe, Zhangpu and Nanjing counties in Zhangzhou usually have sand grains attached to their foot, and are therefore known as "sand foot ware". The purpose of the sand layer is to prevent the wares and the saggar from sticking together, and the base from collapsing or distorting in high temperature.

Zhangzhou kilns produced green glazed ware, white glazed ware, blue and white ware, coloured ware and wares with glazes of dark brown, blue and yellow. Green glazed ware was the main type of ware and formed the largest quantity.

Dehua Ware

More than 180 kiln sites have been found in the Dehua county of central Fujian province. From the Song (960 – 1279) to the Qing dynasties (1644 – 1911), Dehua was one of China’s important coastal producers of export ware.

During the Song Dynasty, Dehua kilns produced green glazed, Qingbai glazed and near white glazed wares. During the Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368) it produced mainly Qingbai glazed ware. During the Ming (1668 – 1644) and the Qing dynasties, it successfully produced wares that were hard and had an ivory white glaze. These included daily wares and sculpted Buddhist figures.

Dehua ware has many decorative styles, using techniques such as underglazed blue and white, moulding, incising, decalcomania and sculpting to portray flowers, insects, fish, and animal motifs.

Dehua ceramics are made primarily of kaolin, coal and feldspar. After refinement and mix, the clay is fired to 1300°C. After cooling down, the products are decorated in monochrome or polychrome with underglaze or enamel glazes. Thereafter, they are fired a second time, resulting in a semi-translucent body colour. The wares include Teapot, Vase, Tea Cup and Sealed Bottle.

Colourless Ware

Chinese wares are identified by their glazes, glaze quality, and the general appearance of the product. For example, the Song (960 – 1279) kilns of Cizhou produced a Pottery ware with a greyish black glaze, whereas the Jingdezhen ware of the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties produced a Porcelain ware with a white glaze.

Sancai, Wucai and Famille Rose refer to colours on the glaze, which are usually red, yellow, green, blue and purple. During the middle and the late periods of the Ming Dynasty, the wares of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province was popular. Famille Rose ware however appeared only in the late Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty (1661 – 1722).

Imperial Ware

The wares are usually known as "Imperial Porcelain". The wares are made for the imperial household and are of high quality. The glazes are usually monochrome and the wares are often decorated with various patterns, such as flowers, birds and animals.

The imperial wares were first produced in the late Qing Dynasty (17th – 18th century) and continued to be produced until the Republic of China (1912 – 1949). They were considered the highest quality wares and are highly prized by collectors today.

Imperial wares are generally marked with the "Imperial Mark" on the base. The wares are usually made from high-quality clays and are fired at high temperatures. The glazes are usually monochrome and the wares are often decorated with various patterns, such as flowers, birds and animals.

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## Chinese Historical Periods and Dynasties

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<td>Shang Dynasty</td>
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- **Western Zhou Dynasty:** 11th century - 771 BCE
- **Eastern Zhou Dynasty:** 770 - 256 BCE
- **Spring and Autumn Period:** 770 - 476 BCE
- **Warring States Period:** 475 - 221 BCE
- ** Qin Dynasty:** 221 - 206 BCE

- **Hun Dynasties:** 206 BCE - 202 BCE
- **Western Han:** 202 BCE - 25 CE
- **Eastern Han:** 25 - 220
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- **Southern Dynasties:** 280 - 618
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- **Northern Song:** 960 - 1127
- **Southern Song:** 1127 - 1279
- **Jin Dynasty:** 1115 - 1234
- **Yuan Dynasty:** 1271 - 1368
- **Ming Dynasty:** 1368 - 1644
- **Qing Dynasty:** 1644 - 1912
- **Republic of China:** 1912 - 1949