FLORA AND FAUNA IN EAST ASIAN ART
Introduction

Flora and Fauna in East Asian Art is the fourth annual exhibition curated by students enrolled in the Art History Methods course. This exhibition highlights the academic achievements of six student curators: Samantha Frisoli ’18, Danella Snyder ’18, Gabriella Bucci ’19, Melissa Casale ’19, Kerri Koch ’19, and Paige Deschapelles ’20. The selection of artworks in this exhibition considers how East Asian artists portrayed similar subjects of flora and fauna in different media including painting, prints, embroidery, jade, and porcelain. This exhibition intends to reveal the hidden meanings behind various representations of flora and fauna in East Asian art by examining the iconography, cultural context, aesthetic and function of each object.

Literature is a quintessential inspiration for representations of flora and fauna in Eastern and Chinese art. The concept of unifying literature and art in China privileges scholarship over craftsman-ship. Butterflies among Wildflowers, painted in the style of the eleventh-century northern Song Academy exemplifies the perfect marriage of art and literature. The painting illustrates a scene of butterflies hovering over a bed of wildflowers and captures the scenic presentation filled with plants indigenous to a river surrounding bamboo groves and forest. In the embroidery, scholars are enthroned by bamboo, pine, and plum trees, which are considered the “three friends of winter” and represent the hoven of scholars and ideal qualities of strength and perseverance.

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The symbolic meaning of the flora and fauna to a desirable human quality is also manifested in the woodblock reproduction of a painting depicting a heron in a natural habitat. The original painting of Heron was created by Japanese artist Rano Gyoikurako who was active in the late sixteenth century (1575–1636). He was a pupil of the late sixteenth-century Mursamou period in Japan. Depictions of birds and flowers in the Chinese Song style were embraced by military artists from the Joyō clan, the primary patron of Gyokuraku. Because heron symbolizes strength and longevity, military patrons utilized this motif to display the power and endurance of their rule.

Plants have long been used to convey human emotions in Japanese art as exemplified by the Tale of Genji scroll created in the twelfth century. This tradition carried on into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the lacquer inro case was made. On the dark black surface of the inro, morning glory flowers are rendered in gold and mother-of-pearl inlay. The short life of the flower’s bloom traditionally conveys poetic and melancholy feeling, a symbol of the transience of life. Yet, despite their impending withering, the morning glory on the inro is still in full bloom, a display of exuberant but momentary life.

In East Asian art flora and fauna signify both knowledge and the glorious past of civilization. Ancestral Altar Hu in spinach colored jade of 950–960 CE in China reflects an appreciation for history through the reinterpretation of antique dragon and animal face totem motifs of the Shang dynasty (c. 1500–1046 BCE). These cultural icons are enshrined by Chinese descendants in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644 CE) as the embodiment of ancestral spirits through the practice of ancestor worship. Flora and fauna artistic motifs transcended the geographic boundaries of China and Japan as part of a larger cultural exchange between East and West. At the turn of the twentieth century China and Japan opened up the doors to the Western world, politically and culturally. Under these circumstances, export arts emerged in response to the increasing demand for East Asian art among Western consumers. The lotus flower and vines on the Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonne and the myriad flora motifs of four seasons on the Famille Rose Export Bowl, for example, were intended to be exported to Western viewers and aesthetics. The original symbolic meaning of these plants, however, is completely lost in translation.

The symbolism of flora and fauna in East Asian art depends on the status and taste of the intended viewer and evolves over historical periods. The meanings of the paintings Heron and Chrysanthemum must be understood in relation to Japanese culture during the Momotachi and Edo periods, respectively. In the early twentieth century, however, the reproduction of these paintings may have at first been intended to enrich the aesthetic appeal yamato-e or Japanese art, brief introductions into the life and works of Japanese artists. This exhibition will reveal not only the hidden treasures in our Gettysburg College collection but also demonstrate the valuable academic experience we have enjoyed at Gettysburg College. We owe sincere thanks to Shannon Egan, the Director of Schmucker Art Gallery, Carolyn Switzer, Catherine Perry, and Sydney Ger ‘17 for their expert curatorial insight and thoughtful suggestions during the preparation of the exhibition and catalogue. We thank Meggan Smith for her informative class on navigating the library search engine, and Robin Wagner, Dean of the Musselman Library, for her encouragement and tireless support for art on campus. Their patience, enthusiasm, and support demonstrate the valuable academic experience we have enjoyed at Gettysburg College. Last but not least, we owe special thanks to the following individuals who generously provided their expertise on the artwork: Yina Jia, Nami Omoto, Lu Sun and Dr. Junjie Luo. It is our hope this exhibition will reveal not only the hidden treasures in our Gettysburg College collection, but also demonstrate our genuine engagement and enthusiasm for art history.

— Samantha Frisoli ’18, Danella Snyder ’18, Gabriella Bucci ’19, Melissa Casale ’19, Kerri Koch ’19, and Paige Deschapelles ’20, under the direction of Professor Yan Sun, Ph.D.
Ancestral Altar Hu

China

Ming Dynasty, 1500 CE

spinach jade

57 cm (h) x 14.5 cm (w)

Gift of Mildred T. Keally

Musselman Library

Gettysburg College

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During the mid-Ming dynasty it was important for the Chinese to reestablish their history and belief in the Chinese culture. In the center of the Hu is a distinctive motif, a widespread decoration on bronze from the Shang period. The identifying qualities that make up this motif are the two piercing eyes and wide open mouth. The facial characteristics are motivated by human and animals used in sacrificial ceremonies. Starting in the Shang dynasty, the morphological features and symbolic meanings for the motif began to adapt over time. The Hu's representation of the creature is taken from early Bronze Age depictions where it was primarily used on sacrificial vessels by ancestors. The sacrificial entities of the vessel convey the totemic embodiment of the process into the afterlife. The motif was primarily used by ancestors for sacrificial purposes during the Shang period.

Influenced by the ancestors of the jade carvers and the traditions of the Han period, the dragon motif gained popularity during the middle of the Ming Dynasty. The dragon's location was believed to contextualize its meaning; according to art historian Stanley Nott, “in the West, the dragon was a power for evil; in the East, the dragon becomes a protector of goodness.” On the Hu the dragon functions as an imperial symbol representing the power of the imperial family. The fish holds great cultural significance and is promoted in the Buddhist religion as well as in house-holds in China. Fish are admired for their brilliant colors and swift movements. They seem in pairs, the paired fish alongside each other symbolize wedded happiness in the Chinese culture. The Mandarin ducks featured on the Hu are typically depicted on pieces relating to weddings and married couples. They represent a loving couple that lives harmoniously since it is believed that the mandarin ducks mate for life.

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Given to Gettysburg College by alumnus Georgeanna “Dusty” Knisley, Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix initially was bought by her parents in Hong Kong while they were working as missionaries as a newly married couple in early twentieth century. The embroidery, filled with well wishes for newlyweds, was the perfect addition to their collection and was hung proudly in their home. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the Guangdong province was well known for the export embroidery known as the “Yue Embroidery” named after the abbreviation of the province. This type of embroidery is characterized by the “dense, decorative motifs; strongly contrasted, vivid colors; abundant use of gold thread.”

This fine silk embroidery depicts five types of birds as they live harmoniously amongst each other and the natural world within which they are presented. While these decorations are alluring, the symbolism in Chinese art is intended for much more than aesthetic admiration. The meanings of the figures and designs can be deciphered through understanding the rich history of Chinese culture. The birds collectively symbolize the Confucian thought of the Five Relationships; according to philosopher David Elstein, “ruler-minister, father-child, husband-wife, older brother-younger brother, and friend-friend... these emphasize the social nature of the person, and show that the individual cannot be abstracted from the community.” Such idea is further manifested in the poetry on the upper left side of the embroidery.

In the embroidery the phoenix represent the relationship between the ruler-minister, the cranes for the father-child, mandarin ducks for the husband-wife, wagtails to the brother-younger brother, and the oriole for the relationship between friends.

The main plants presented are the Chinese parasol tree, bamboo, lilies, and peonies. The Chinese parasol tree is the symbol for protection and spiritual power. The tree also holds religious meaning as one of the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism. In this embroidery however, and seen before in other examples, the oriole birds sit in the tree.

The Guangdong province is the conduit to which Western art and culture was introduced to China. The adoption of Western painting artistry is reflected by the techniques and qualities executed in this piece, including contrasting colors and the creation of subtle shadings. The inclusion of poetry in the painting was promoted by Emperor Hui Zong who reigned during the Song Dynasty. The embroidery adopted the composition and general style of bird and flower painting at Hui Zong’s academy. Poetry enhances the meaning of flora and fauna; unifying literature and art creates an intellectual dimension for the work rather than purely craftsmanship.

In the embroidery’s poem, the poet writes about nature and several forms of relationships. The poem sets the scene in a high point where the poet can view the body of water before him. The sky is vast and unconstrained embodying everything with the openness of the air to think and fly freely. It is a cold day where he (the poet) is freezing, only to be warmed by his coat made of crane feathers. He then engages in a joyous ride on a colorful phoenix. In this world described, relationships are built on healthy morals and guidelines. A romantic relationship between newlyweds is harmonious and faithful, the husband is loyal to his wife and is unaffected by desires. In brotherly relationships there is no conflict in violence, similarly, friendships have trust and joyous times where songs are sung and poems written. All people who participate in any form of a relationship value those connections. The context in which the embroidery was obtained, given, and passed along, while matching the values and meanings intended for its display, mirrors the cultural emphasis on visual and poetic symbolism so important to the Chinese.

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3 Transcription by Lu Sun, Graduate Institute of Art History, National Taiwan University.
5 Ibid., 83.
6 Ibid., 84.

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**Samantha Frisoli ’18**

**Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix**

Shunde, Guangdong Province, China

c. 1920
embroidery on silk

85 cm x 37 cm

Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

Gift of Georgeanna “Dusty” Knisley, class of 1954
The Peonies Embroidery with Butterflies

China
late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century
reproduction of a Qianlong era embroidery
silk
58 cm x 31.75 cm
Special Collections
and College Archives,
Musselman Library,
Gettysburg College
Gift of Dr. Frank Kramer,
class of 1934, Professor of
Education

The Peonies Embroidery comes from Frank Kramer’s extensive gift of Asian art in Gettysburg College’s collection. Kramer dates the embroidery to the Qianlong Reign of the Qing Dynasty, specifically between the years 1736 and 1796. A more critical analysis of the work, however, leads to the translation of the greater meanings and messages through the images of flora and fauna, as well as proof of the embroidery’s identification as a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century reproduction.

The Peonies Embroidery, a rectangular yellow and blue silk textile, features iconography of peonies, scrolls, swastikas, and, according to Kramer, bats. The symmetrically arranged motifs appear on the embroidery in varying shades of blue stitch work. The unadorned and flat yellow background rests behind the motifs. A larger blue floral embroidered border frames the yellow, flat background. In regards to composition, emphasis is placed on the two peonies in the center, as well as four butterflies depicted above and below the peonies in the bottom corners of the embroidery. The peonies, in springtime bloom, sit in small pots, while two swastikas float above them. Beneath the floral vases sit two sets of scrolls. This scene, an amalgamation of various flora and fauna motifs, does not resemble traditional Qianlong-era decorative embroidery, as they often depicted scenes in a naturalistic way, with backgrounds that featured bodies of water or mountains.

Chinese textiles spoke a mysterious language through the use of symbolism. Visual symbols and their verbal meanings developed over thousands of years, and The Peonies Embroidery serves as no exception.5 The scrolls evoke the “unwritten book of nature,” which comes from seventh century Chinese poetry. China’s deep-rooted relationship with the peony and butterfly serves as no exception.2 The peony and the butterfly were understood in Chinese artwork to signify a natural attraction, as the butterfly would “fall in love” with the peony and indulge in the flowers.4 The combined representation was popular in Chinese textiles, particularly within clothing.

A fascinating discussion arises when one considers the symbolic meaning of both the butterfly and peony motifs. While Kramer originally listed four of the examples of fauna in the four corners of the embroidery to be bats, the “bats” are most likely butterflies. Beyond the fact that visually these motifs more closely resemble a butterfly than a bat, butterflies are often mistaken for bats in Asian artwork, according to various Asian art symbol handbooks. The partnering of the butterfly with peony flowers conveys significant messages through the use of this flora & fauna symbolism. When combined, butterflies and peonies symbolize love and marriage. The peony and the butterfly were understood in Chinese artwork to signify a natural attraction, as the butterfly would “fall in love” with the peony and indulge in the flowers.3 The combined representation was popular in Qing Dynasty textiles, particularly within clothing.

The embroidery drastically differs from the traditional style. The Peonies Embroidery with Butterflies most likely came from a larger silk material, such as a garment of women’s clothing. The embroidery was then likely re-framed and re-bordered, taken out of its original context, in order for the embroidery to assume a more decorative purpose.

1 Susan Tai, Everyday Luxury: Chinese Silks of the Qing Dynasty, Santa Barbara, California: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2008.
In regards to color, traditional Yongzheng porcelain only features subdued or subtle colors. This color perspective to the “Flora and Fauna” theme of this exhibition.

Visually, the Famille Rose Export Porcelain bears little resemblance to the traditional Yongzheng porcelain. In an article on Yongzheng porcelain Hajni Elias states, “Decoration during Yongzheng’s reign is praised for its simplicity. It is generally less crowded in composition, white ground is used to soften the colors.” The chaotic composition on the bowl is the exact opposite of the Yongzheng decoration Elias describes. Not only are the flowers large and crowded on the bowl, each flower offers a different symbolic meaning. The orchid blossoms represent spring. The lotus blossoms represent summer. The chrysanthemums represent fall, and the plum blossoms represent winter. The peonies, both in bloom and also budding, also suggest the seasons throughout the entire year. This choice was most notably made to attract a Western consumer through a colorful, varied and exciting depiction of countless floral imagery, as more traditional Yongzheng porcelain did not feature such a wide variety of flowers. Realistically, these flowers would not have bloomed at the same time of the year. However, Western consumers were far more focused on the overall aesthetic appeal and quality of a work such as this, as opposed to focusing on small, minute details such as identifying the flowers and what they symbolize for. In this regard, The Famille Rose Export Porcelain offers a fascinating and unique quality of a work such as this, as opposed to focusing on small, minute details such as identifying the flowers on the bowl.

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In regards to color, traditional Yongzheng porcelain only features subdued or subtle colors. This color palette drastically differs from the bright and rich colors featured on the Famille Rose Export Porcelain. The red glaze underneath the flowers contrasts from traditional Yongzheng porcelain, as traditional Yongzheng style uses white glaze. The brighter colors were considered “foreign colors,” as the richer colors were used for porcelain designed only for foreign consumers. Finally, the floral imagery, understood by art historians as the “famille rose” pattern, differs from the traditional Yongzheng style. Famille rose is a characteristic technique of Chinese porcelain in which the “rose” color predominates the composition. The Famille Rose Export Porcelain is made of “eggshell thin” porcelain. This thinness in medium differs from the thicker quality of traditional Yongzheng porcelain. In eighteenth-century China, most Yongzheng porcelains were made at Jingdezhen, the center of porcelain production at the time. The Famille Rose Export Porcelain, extremely thin in nature, fails to resemble the stronger Jingdezhen porcelain, and is most likely made in Canton as inexpensive export wares.

Famille Rose Export Porcelain
China
late nineteenth to early twentieth century
Canton porcelain
6.4 cm (h) x 12.7 cm (diameter)
Gift of John H. Hampihire

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Researchers have identified several distinct styles of porcelain made during the Yongzheng period. The most common styles are the “famille rose” and the “famille verte” patterns. The “famille rose” pattern, which is characterized by bright colors and floral motifs, was popular among European consumers. The “famille verte” pattern, which features green and blue colors, was more popular among Chinese consumers. Famille rose porcelain was often used as a form of currency in the eighteenth century, and was highly sought after by European collectors. Famille rose porcelain was also used as a form of currency in the eighteenth century, and was highly sought after by European collectors. Famille rose porcelain was often used as a form of currency in the eighteenth century, and was highly sought after by European collectors.

Orchid Pavilion Gathering

China
1875-1910
embroidery on silk
51.5 in x 27.75 in
Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College
Gift of Chester N. Frazier

Orchid Pavilion Gathering Embroidery, a late Qing dynasty work, depicts a scene written by Chinese poet Wang Xizhi in 353 CE, entitled Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion. The poem was created during the annual observance of the Spring Purification Festival in Zhejiang Province in the lower Yangzi Delta Region of China. In the poem, scholars sat along the banks of the stream, while servants floated cups full of wine down the stream. If the scholar-poet failed to compose a poem by the time the wine goblet reached him, then he would have to drink the cup as a penalty. This process led to a creative state of intoxication in which the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion were produced. This poem became a familiar subject of many paintings, scrolls, and embroideries in China throughout the following millennium. Many of the narrative details described in the poem appear in this embroidery. There are mountains and hills, bamboo groves, pine trees, plum trees, and a river running swiftly through the hills upon which men, young and old, sit playing a drinking game, while figures look on from the pavilion.

The identification of three main botanic motifs in the embroidery, including bamboo groves, and pine and plum trees, is essential to understanding the symbolism behind this work. Bamboo conveys flexibility and strength, as well as longevity, due to the durability of the bamboo. The men gathered at orchid pavilion on banks are enshrouded by bamboo groves, a haven of scholars, and the bamboo symbolizes the virtues of the ideal scholar. The pine or evergreen tree seen at the bottom of the embroidery represents nobility and longevity, due to their evergreen color and long life span. The last tree identified is a plum tree, also seen at the bottom of the embroidery clustered with the pine. Because the plum flowers bloom on old withered tree branches, they are a symbol of vigorous old age and longevity. When these three trees are depicted in the same scene, they are collectively known as “The Three Friends of Winter.” Because these trees flourish even under adverse conditions, they are metaphors for longevity and perseverance, qualities also often attributed to scholars. By including pine, bamboo, and plum trees, the artist of Orchid Pavilion Gathering Embroidery emphasizes the theme of scholarly qualities and pursuit.

At the top right of the embroidery is an architectural structure which is recognized as the Leifeng Pagoda on the West Lake in Hangzhou. This identification allows for a fairly specific dating and location of the work’s creation; the embroidery was made between the years of 1875 and 1910 in the Hangzhou Weaving Service, which was one of the three main imperial weaving services of the Qing dynasty and produced countless beautiful silks, weavings, and embroideries.

4 Ibid, 212.
The Pheasant Vase, created in the late Qing dynasty, depicts an elegant and engaging scene of flora and fauna. In the center of the globular shaped vase are two pheasants, perched on a large rock in front of a blossoming crab apple tree. Surrounding the focal scene of pheasants, scattered across the surface of the vase, are peony sprays in numerous different colors, including orange, yellow, and pink. On the back of the vase, two orange bats circle underneath a small grouping of clouds located on the neck of the vase. Pheasants are the symbol for civil officers of the second rank, and the Pheasant Vase appears to be a gift to a civil officer who had achieved the second grade rank due to the symbolic meanings of the imagery on the vase, good fortune, high rank, wealth, and honor.

The scene on the Pheasant Vase is created from famille rose decoration, a soft color palette of opaque enamels of rose, yellows, whites, and other similar colors. Famille rose decoration was brought to China by a Jesuit missionary from Europe during the early eighteenth century. Even though famille rose was originally a European technique, the differences between Chinese famille rose and European famille rose are evident. For instance, the colors of Chinese porcelain decoration are much softer and more opaque compared to the more distinct and richer colors of European porcelain. Because the colors on the vase are more muted, it can be identified as the Chinese famille rose design.

Once the practice of famille rose decoration gained popularity at court, the demand for these decorated pieces increased, and the production of famille rose porcelain moved to Jingdezhen during the Qianlong period (1711-1799). Jingdezhen is located in the southeast of China in the Jiangxi province and had been the largest center of Chinese porcelain production since the fourteenth century. By the eighteenth century almost all of the famille rose pieces were produced at the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. Because of this productivity, the Pheasant Vase was most likely made in the kilns at Jingdezhen. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Jingde- zhen kilns were under imperial control. When the Pheasant Vase was crafted during the Qing dynasty, six kilns and twenty-three workshops operated to produce wares such as this vase.

During the Qing dynasty, Chinese porcelain objects were produced for both the domestic and foreign markets, and the differences between the porcelain made for each is noticeable. Export porcelain was intended to look “Chinese” for non-native viewers, with foreign designs and bright colors such as deep reds and yellows. It is unlikely foreigners would understand the symbolism behind the decorative motifs on an object, so export porcelain focused more on aesthetic design and not the underlying meaning behind the symbols and images depicted. However, for the domestic market, the symbolism was key. Not only would domestic market porcelain have the soft famille rose colors such as pinks and opague yellows, it would also have designs with symbolic meaning decorating the porcelain. Because the Pheasant Vase is characterized by its symbolic meaning and beautiful opaque famille rose colors, it unquestionably was created for the domestic porcelain market.

The ornately painted nature scene on the Pheasant Vase is concentrated at the bottom of the vase; more areas of white appear at the top of the vessel. Vases like this one were extremely popular during the Qianlong period (1711-1799), and many globular shaped vases were produced with scenes of flowers, birds, and landscapes in famille rose enamel. The globular shape of the Pheasant Vase was also very common during the early Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Due to the popularity of antiquarianism, the connoisseurship of ancient artifacts during the Qing dynasty, ceramic craftsmen frequently copied earlier Ming works, such as is the case with the Pheasant Vase. The Qing dynasty rulers had great respect for previous dynastic cultures and their traditions and encouraged the stylistic appropriations of the Ming dynasty aesthetic on works of art.

Chrysanthemum is a Japanese woodblock print, a replica of one of Tosa Mitsuoki’s original paintings. Woodblock printing was adopted in Japan during the Edo period (1615-1868). The original painting would have been produced sometime during the early seventeenth century. Many of Mitsuoki’s works show depictions of nature, and even more specifically, chrysanthemums. Mitsuoki was known for reintroducing the yamato-e style in Japanese paintings which had somewhat faded from popular usage during the time which Mitsuoki took over the Tosa school of painting.

This style of Japanese painting is inspired by the aesthetic of earlier Japanese dynasties. Variations of yamato-e concentrated on showing the beauty of nature, famous places, or the four seasons of winter, fall, spring, and summer. Most importantly, these paintings specialize in subject matter and techniques derived from ancient Japanese art as opposed to schools influenced by Chinese art. Yamato-e is considered the classical Japanese style, unfortunately, by the time that Mitsuoki became head of the Tosa school, it had fallen out of the popular use of artists during the time. Mitsuoki was one of the key figures who brought the style back into Japanese art.

Tosa Mitsuoki was the son of Tosa Mitsunori, the painter who reintroduced the Tosa school to Kyoto after more than half a century in the merchant town of Sakai. In 1654, Mitsuoki became the first Tosa edokoro azukari, head of the court painting bureau, since the end of the Muromachi period. With the renewal of Tosa status at court, the school prospered throughout the Edo period. Mitsuoki is generally considered the last major painter of the Tosa school. Like his contemporaries of the Kano school (specializing Chinese style paintings), Mitsuoki revitalized the Tosa-school style by incorporating the spaciousness and lightness of touch found in Song and Yuan period Chinese court painting and in some fifteenth-century Japanese ink painting. He also put greater stress on ink brushwork. Mitsuoki’s style is known for its delicate lines and fine delineation, which is typical of the Tosa school. He became one of the most renowned Japanese exponents of bird-and-flower (kacho) painting in the Chinese court manner.

The chrysanthemums in Mitsuoki’s painting are clearly the focal point of his work. During Mitsuoki’s life, chrysanthemum is said to represent longevity and rejuvenation. The chrysanthemum is considered the flower of autumn, as it starts blooming in September. In Japan, each month and season has its representative flower, and people gather to enjoy the sight of them, during the specific times of the year in which they are in bloom. White chrysanthemums hold the meaning of either truth, peace, or grief. The connection with grief is a more contemporary practice, because white chrysanthemums are most commonly used for funerals and graves in Japan, whereas the connection with peace and truth is a symbolic meaning that arose during the time in which Mitsuoki would have been active. Therefore, Mitsuoki’s white chrysanthemums are likely meant to represent peace and longevity.

Of all the sophisticated traditional arts and crafts of Japan, woodblock prints are probably the most widely known in the West. As woodblock prints became more popular among the Japanese market and beyond, paintings that displayed the skills of master Japanese painters would have been reproduced, printed as woodblock prints, and distributed to the masses. The paintings that would have been selected to be distributed as woodblock prints would have been the paintings that displayed the skills and characteristics of the master Japanese painter and their revered paintings. These paintings were quite popular and well loved during the time in which they had been created because they represented the mastery of Japanese painters. Woodblock publishers made these prints available for mass consumption. Such was the case with Mitsuoki’s painting Chrysanthemum. Mitsuoki was, and still is, considered to be one of the great masters of the Japanese painting style and his paintings represent the quintessential Japanese paintings. Woodblock publishers recreated his works as woodblock prints and sold them to the general population of Japan. As these prints gained more popularity outside of Japan, they were soon printed and sold in foreign markets.

2. Ibid.
The Jade Carp is attributed to the Qing dynasty, most likely produced between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unlike most objects depicting carp during the late Ming or early Qing dynasty, this sculpture is flat, thin, and almost two-dimensional and lacks the massiveness and plasticity typical for the time period. The object is cleverly carved with fine undercutting, representing a legendary leaping carp about to be transformed into a dragon. It is supported by fine high-relief waves. The uplifted head of the dragon-fish is crowned with an openwork horn. The fins, scales, and oversized tail have simple enclosing stippling and fine striations.

The Jade Carp portrays a scene from a popular Chinese folk story, specifically a Dragon Gate that exists in north China. Its waters plunge a hundred feet and the strong currents pull anything and everything into their depths. It is said that many carp gather in the basin below, hoping to climb the falls and that any that succeed will be transformed into a dragon. However, hardly any carp complete this difficult task and are transformed into fearsome dragons. Some are swept away by the strong currents, some fall prey to eagles, hawks, kites, and owls, and others are netted, scooped up, or even shot with arrows by fishermen who line both banks of the falls.1 Because of the carp’s challenging quest to become a dragon, the fish is a symbol of vigor, endurance, perseverance, and power in Chinese culture. Overall, it is admired for its struggles against the current and has therefore captured the imaginations of Chinese storytellers and artists.

However, this particular depiction of the story does not show the carp’s impressive feat; instead it shows the carp while in mid-transformation, with the head of a dragon and the body of a carp. The carp has already completed the task of jumping over the Dragon Gate and is now receiving its reward. The moment of the story that is usually depicted is when the carp jumps over the Dragon Gate. It is arguably the most critical and important point in the story and also where the overall moral of the tale comes into play. The image of the carp in the process of becoming a dragon, due to its unwavering determination and resolve, exemplifies the possible outcome of persisting through difficulties and obstacles.

Regarded as the most valuable and precious material in Chinese culture, jade has been used throughout the centuries for important and highly prized objects. Both due to the limited supply and difficulty in manipulating the stone, jade in China was extremely expensive and became a symbol of an individual’s power and status. Strict hierarchical systems of jade usage and ownership for those of different social status were in place throughout the dynasties. Carved ornamental and decorative jade were reserved for the wealthiest and most powerful. The appreciation of jade has long been a Chinese tradition, and current market prices for jade works of art reflect its continued worth.2

The Jade Carp would have been produced to be a purely decorative piece for the home or office of a high-ranking official of the Qing dynasty. It holds no practical purpose, such as being used for ritual or spiritual ceremonies, other than to be a decoration. No doubt due to its high value, it became associated with the aristocracy and it was regarded as virtuous for gentlemen to adorn their houses.3 The carp is a symbol of longevity and perseverance because of the folk story of the Dragon Gate, and jade itself is often seen as representing these same qualities. These attributes would ultimately be extended to and associated with the person who owned the piece as well. A person in a high-ranking government position would want to be recognized as also having these characteristics, to prove the person’s effectiveness, and to assert one’s influence and power.

1 Senchū Murano Kumārajīva, and Shinkyo Warner, The Lotus Sutra the sutra of the lotus flower of the wonderful dharma (Hayward, CA: Nichiren Shu, 2012), 1002.
3 Gu Fang and Hongjuan Li, Chinese jade: the spiritual and cultural significance of Jade in China (New York: Bettersfield Press, 2013), 121.
Butterflies Among Wild Flowers, a Chinese silk album painting produced during the reign of Emperor Hui Zong (1100-1126 CE), reflects the artistic development of Northern Song Dynasty painters and illustrates the style of Northern Song Imperial Academy. The painting is a realistic rendering of a scene of five different butterflies prancing among a bed of white wildflowers. The butterflies and flowers are depicted with a clarity that illustrates the painter's knowledge of flora and fauna. Yet, the painting also urges the viewer to see beyond the naturalistic depiction of nature; the butterflies and flowers represent the inner invisible spirit of the subjects. When viewers gaze upon the peaceful scene, they are infused with poetic and emotional ideas that transcend the physical painting.

An examination of Emperor Hui Zong’s Imperial Academy and additional Northern Song paintings provides an important context and a fuller understanding of the work. The two most prominent aspects of the painting, the realistic and spiritual nature of the butterflies, have stylistic ties to the Emperor Hui Zong’s Imperial Painting Academy. Emperor Hui Zong emphasizes realism, poetry, reverence to old masters, and inner meaning in the Imperial Academy. In order to fully encompass and master all four elements, poetry often accompanied Academy paintings. Although no particular poem is printed on Butterflies Among Wildflowers, it is highly likely that the painting was inspired by a poem by Emperor Hui Zong. In Hui Zong’s poem the emperor uses butterflies to illustrate the pleasant fragrance of nature. With this literary work in mind, Butterflies Among Wild Flowers appeals to the senses of both sight and smell. Reading the poem as a part of the painting, the viewer fully understands the painting’s visual and poetic nature.

Comparing Butterflies Among Wild Flowers with other paintings produced during the Northern Song dynasty offers additional insight into the painting’s style. Life Drawing of the Butterflies by Zhao Chang (1008-1016 CE) and Butterfly in Spring by Li Anzhong (1136-1163 CE) were both produced during the Northern Song Dynasty. Similar to Butterflies Among Wild Flowers, both Life Drawing of the Butterflies and Butterfly in Spring offer depictions of butterflies. Life Drawing of the Butterflies illustrates three different butterflies flying among a bed of flowers and vines. Butterfly in Spring depicts a group of seventeen butterflies among a neutral background flying in the wind. Each painting illustrates deep knowledge of plants and animals and is designed to make the viewer feel as if they stumbled upon the physical scene of nature.

All three paintings capture the poetic inner and realistic outer appearance of the insects. The butterflies in all three paintings are captured mid-motion, inviting the viewer to analyze the small interactions of nature. Each painting engages and follows Emperors Hui Zong’s standards of art. Although Life Drawing of the Butterflies was painted before Hui Zong’s reign, his painting could have served as inspiration for Butterflies Among Wild Flowers. Through the realistic depictions of the subjects, the poetic spirit of the butterflies and the illustration of movement, Butterflies Among Wild Flowers, Life Drawing of the Butterflies, and Butterfly in Spring transcend their physical states and illustrate the deeper emotional spirit of their subjects. Comparing Butterflies Among Wild Flowers to these other paintings further authenticates Butterflies Among Wild Flowers as an example of Northern Song painting. Through the prism of Emperor Hui Zong’s Imperial Painting Academy, Butterflies Among Wild Flowers allows viewers to both enjoy and understand the complex meanings found in Northern Song Dynasty paintings.

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3 Ebrey, Emperor Hui Zong, 207.
Atributed to the early twentieth century, Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonné is adorned with decorations from lid to foot. Standing only 9.7 centimeters high, this oddly shaped jar is primarily decorated with pink lotus flower scrolls and red lingzhi fungus surrounded by vine and green leaf decorations. Lotus flower designs have been repeatedly used throughout the history of Chinese decorative arts and have been long held as symbols of purity. These beautiful and vibrantly colored flower motifs all stand out from the swirling imperial yellow background. All designs, decorations, and motifs that adorn this jar reflect the craftsmanship and skill of Chinese cloisonné workshops. However, Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonné invites viewers to look beyond the beauty of the jar. Hidden within the lotus flowers and vine decorations one can find a rich narrative of modernization, industrialization, and Western imperialism.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese export cloisonné was produced in Guangzhou. Advancements in technology and chemistry allowed for cloisonné objects to be made more efficiently and economically. The cloisonné produced in Guangzhou offered a less expensive alternative to support the rising industry. The color, form, and shape of Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonné reflect the modernization of the cloisonné industry, as the bright yellow, pink, green, and red enamel colors featured on jar illustrate the advancements in chemistry and technology. The shape and form of the cloisonné object cannot be classified as classically Chinese; rather, the form closely resembles nineteenth-century European pottery. The traditional lotus flower design combined with untraditional colors and form denotes Western ideas of the East. The lotus flower motifs imply a foreign and exotic aesthetic, while the modern color and European form would be familiar to a Western buyer. Catering to the Westerners’ ideas of the East, Guangzhou craftsmen created sumptuously decorated cloisonné objects that conveyed the opening of the East to the West.

The Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonné reflects a transitional time in Chinese history. Since the early Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), cloisonné was made exclusively for the Imperial courts. Only the wealthiest members were able to admire the beauty of Chinese cloisonné. However, Imperial Yellow Export Cloisonné was produced during a time when China was experiencing great social, political, international, and economic change. The Second Opium War in 1860 forced China to participate in foreign trade, and as a result, Western audiences were exposed to Chinese art for the first time. This major shift in China’s international status led to a rise in export cloisonné. Exhibitions of Chinese objects were held throughout Europe, and Western buyers quickly sought to purchase their own authentic Chinese cloisonné objects.

The inclusion of both Chinese and Western styles in this object illustrates the artist’s desire to attract a Western buyer. The scrolling lotus designs on the object, while inspired by traditional Chinese cloisonné designs, were only intended for Western eyes. Along with color and form, the lotus designs on Imperial Yellow Cloisonné comply with nineteenth-century Western ideas of the East. For the first time ever, cloisonné was no longer reserved for the Imperial court. China became officially open to the West, allowing the Western world to view the beauty of Chinese cloisonné from the comfort of their homes.

4 Rawson, “China, Enamel.”
5 Beatrice Quette, 59.
6 Ibid., 58.
7 Ibid., 59.
This print on paper, created in 1926, is based on an original painting titled *A Heron* created by Kano Gyokuraku during the Muromachi period (1392-1573) in Japan. The reproduction was a result of increasing trade between Japan and the West during the mid and late nineteenth century and the growing appreciation of native Japanese art and design known as *Japonisme.* The style prevalent in the work is the Chinese style landscape as well as bird and flower (*ling mao hua hui*) which was typical in the painting of the Kano school founded in the fifteenth century by Kano Masanobu and his son Motonobu, who was Gyokuraku’s teacher. The school was organized in a hereditary fashion with older artists teaching newer members the traditional design and techniques.

Herons were a favorite theme in Japanese art during the Muromachi period. Kano Tan’yu (1602-1674), a prominent member of the Kano school, produced an album with a total of forty-seven designs of different species of birds which were utilized as tracing models for young Kano painters. One leaf in the album was dedicated to the Bittern and Heron illustrating the importance of herons in the Kano school training. As the student of Kano Motonobu, Gyokuraku must have painted such a motif. The heron alone symbolizes strength and longevity, however, when paired with lotus leaves, the combination denotes purity. In regards to the heron’s positioning, Gyokuraku made the conscious decision to place the bird with blue regel and maack flowers in the water on the right side of the picture. Such asymmetrical composition illustrates Gyokuraku’s adoption of the Chinese Southern Song academy (1127-1279) painting style. On the left side, details and color begin to dwindle as it eventually disappears in the distance.

When looking at *A Heron* in its entirety, the viewer is brought to a relaxing state. The colors of the composition—white, blue, and green—evince a calm feeling. The green stems and leaves are bent to create the appearance of soft wind blowing and to bring the piece to life, just like the ripples in the water. The focus of the work, however, resides with the heron that stands on one leg and its left foot scratches the beak on its bowing head. Kano Gyokuraku captured the bird in mid-action which was a signature style in his work. Such representation can be observed in another painting *Jakō-neko* (Musk Cat) attributed to Gyokuraku. In this painting, Gyokuraku portrayed a musk cat actively turning its body, and a small bird singing a song. The compositions and the neutral background in both pieces are treated very similarly indicating Gyokuraku’s interpretation of the natural world around him and the bird and flower painting style of the Chinese Northern Song Academy (920-1127).

Artists working in the Kano school were considered as masters of ink, lacquer, and many other media, as they had to surpass a rigorous training agenda for many years. Unfortunately, very little is known about Kano Gyokuraku or his work. Only two pieces of historical record mentioned Gyokuraku’s name: one is Kano Ikkei’s (1599-1663) *Tansei Jakuboku-shū* (Paint and Brush Collection) where Gyokuraku is said to be the student of Motonobu. He is also listed in the *Bengyokushū* (Classification of Painters and their Seals) of 1672 where he is described as a painter serving lord Hōjō Ujimasa (1538-1590). The Hōjō, a militaristic clan in the Odawara area that controlled numerous territories, is the major patron of the Kano school. Artists that worked for these celebrity patrons formed the Odawara branch of the Kano school led by Gyokuraku. The original painting of *A Heron* therefore was likely commissioned by a member of the Hōjō clan.

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This lacquered wood Four-case roiro inro consists of four individual compartments that stack on top of one another creating a cohesive and unified appearance. On the shiny black surface of the inro, a scene of ivy-leaf morning glory climbs on bamboo on a grassy cliff throughout the front and back of the piece. The morning glory flower had a very large role in the city of Edo, as it was cultivated widely and often celebrated in the arts through all media. The flower is able to grow in very small spaces and shady spots and therefore brings life to the very crowded urban living in the city of Edo. The popularity of morning glories among the common people stimulated the interest in raising alternative types of flowers to cater to the taste of different social classes in the city. One artist active in Edo, Utagawa Hiroshige, created a print titled Morn-
ing Glories in 1843 to celebrate the flower. The print includes a poem by Gyōkō which Barbra Ford translated as "the flowers of the grass spend their brief life while we gaze at them;" the emphasis on the bloom's short life serves as a metaphor for the transience of life. A parallel could be drawn from this piece to the Four-case roiro inro since the morning glories in both works are depicted in pure isolation as well as in full bloom and symbolize an assiduous life lived momentarily. Flora and foliage on the Four-case inro are rendered in mother-of-pearl inlay and gold in an opulent fash-ion. These were common decorative materials on lacquer wares which can be traced back to the Heian period (794-1185). This inro is attributed to the Yamada workshop as indicated by the gold inscription on the top of the box. The Yamada clan was one of the greatest lacquer dynasties from the seventeenth to nineteenth centu-
ries. Although it is known that Yamada Jōka was the founder of this generation of artists, it is not possible to attribute the Four-case roiro inro to one specific artist since each generation of lacquer makers had one of two names. Jōka or Jōkasai. An inro in London’s Victoria and Albert Museum created by Yamada Jōka, the found-
er of the Yamada school, is stylistically very similar to the Gettysburg inro in terms of the use of continuous illustration on both sides of the case and the depiction of the subject.

The Yamada production of inro became so popular in reaction to the lack of functionality of Japanese men’s attire. The inro was created to offer a place for men to store and carry small items due to the lack of pockets on their garment. Dangling a few inches below the hip, inro were attached to men’s belts allowing for easy access. When inros were first created in the Edo period, only the wealthy could afford them since they were considered as status symbols. However, during the mid-Edo period (1681-1764), the rise of well to do chonin townsman, including merchants and artisans, fueled the demand for inros. In response to this, numerous lacquer workshops were founded that eventually led to its collapse in 1867 along with the end of Tokugawa rule. 

3 Translation provided by Gettysburg College student Nami Omoto.
7 Jahs, INRO and other miniature forms of Japanese Lacquer Art, 187.
FLORA AND FAUNA IN EAST ASIAN ART

January 26 – March 9, 2018

RECEPTION
January 26, 4:30 – 6:30 pm

GALLERY TALK WITH STUDENT CURATORS
February 8, noon

Curated by Samantha Frisoli ’18, Daniella Snyder ’18, Gabriella Bucco ’19, Melissa Casale ’19, Keira Koch ’19, and Paige Deschapelles ’20 under the direction of Professor Yan Sun, Ph.D.

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COVER: Tosa Mitsuoki (1583-1638), Chrysanthemum, Japan, woodblock print, Edo period, 18th-19th c., original painting, 17th c., 20 cm x 30.16 cm, Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, Gettysburg College. Gift of Dr. Frank Kramer, class of 1914, Professor of Education

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