



From individualism to collectivism

1.

Collecting expensive objects in order to keep them locked up in specially designated buildings is a very costly endeavour. That is why, in the past, it was a way for rulers to showcase their wealth, power and influence: to strengthen their position and fulfill their imperial ambitions they would symbolically acquire bits and pieces of the world. The access to these collections, and to knowledge, was available to a select few, and so they were also a way to strengthen elitism.

With time, the exclusive holdings were made accessible to wider sections of the public. Today, (most) museums are not owned by rulers but states,

meaning societies. Some are even called national museums to highlight the fact that they belong to each and every citizen. They offer access to information about the world and help preserve cultural heritage.

For the access to be truly free, there should be no restrictions to it, including admission fees.

On the other hand, restrictions, limits to protection and returns of looted artefacts are among the main topics of discussion in today's museology.

Goddess Quan Âm /
author from Vietnam /
18–19th c. / **MAP 14787**



Sculpture conservation

2.

The climatic conditions in Poland are different to those in Vietnam, where humidity is high throughout the year.

The wide and long crack running down the right side of this sculpture's back was caused by the wood quickly drying and losing its moisture content. Conservators filled the crack with putty that bound both parts together. Next, they covered it up with a coating of lacquer that imitates the original finish.

The orange elements are covered with silver leaf and colourful lacquer, which gives a shine and transparency to the colour. The black flecks seen on the surface of the piece are bits of

silver which oxidised and darkened as a result of micro cracks in the resin. Lacquer (a kind of resin) needs high humidity, too. That is why, conservators in Europe often cover it with a mixture of wax and resin. It has to be replaced every few years, because it melts and combines with dust in warmer temperatures, creating a black layer on the sculpture's surface.

The goddess's face and hands are covered with gold leaf with many worn-away spots.

Goddess Quan Âm /
author from Vietnam /
18–19th c. / **MAP 14787**



What do the Medicis have in common with contemporary museums?

In the 15th century in Florence the Medici family set up the *Antiquarium*, a garden with a display of Greek and Roman sculptures. It was not open to the public but was visited by special guests, including artists such as Leonardo, Donatello, or Michelangelo. These direct interactions with antique sculpture influenced their style and way of depicting the human figure.

The preferences and choices of private collectors paved the way for museums as we know them and their, now centuries-old, division into galleries, which this exhibition replicates.

European renaissance collections included non-European artefacts. They were not, however, displayed among their European counterparts. Would Michelangelo's *David* look different if the artist had come into contact with Indian sculptures?

The separation of European and non-European heritage is deeply rooted in the culture management strategies in Europe and seems to control the way individuals participate in cultural life.

3.

Buddha's Head / author
from Java, Indonesia / 8th c. /
MAP 1810

Head of Lord Viṣṇu (?) /
author from the Khmer group /
Angkor, Cambodia / 12th c. /
MAP 16426

**Goddess Durgā slays the
Buffalo demon Mahiṣa** /
author from Nepal / 18th c. /
MAP 12403

Bodhisattva Guanyin /
author from China (?) /
8–10th c. / MAP 6266

Bell / author from Java,
Indonesia / 8–10th c. /
MAP 2092

Lord Kārttikeya / author
from India / 2nd half of the
19th c. / MA P 3760



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Influences in art

4.

We often focus on European influences in Asian art or Asian influences in European art, forgetting that Asia is 4.5 times bigger as a continent than Europe and therefore considerably less culturally homogeneous. Different countries have influenced one another in terms of culture and the arts as a result of trade exchanges, diplomatic relations and conquests.

Religions have been one of the main vehicle for forms, styles and genres in art. Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam spread almost everywhere in the continent, bringing along artworks, both sacred and secular.

Artists explored new subjects using local styles and means of expression. That is why, the art of Bali, Indonesia is different from the art of Tamil Nadu, India, although both share links with Hinduism.

The Indian subcontinent's artistic influences extended from Afghanistan, to Tibet, to Southeast Asia. Chinese and Persian art was equally influential, as seen in other sculptures and paintings on display.

Sculpting studio (stone) /
Bali, Indonesia / photo:
Andrzej Wawrzyniak /
WIZ/MAP 1/2520



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Anonymous art, unknown authors

5.

“Hail! There has not been, and there shall not be, in Jambudvīpa, any wise man, proficient in (the art of building) houses and temples, equal to Narasobba.”*

This is how the architect of the temple of Aihole, India signed his work in the 7th century. Although museums are full of artworks by unknown authors from Asia, it is not true that they never signed them. Why do European museums list them so rarely? There are a few reasons:

colonial practices. Asian art was considered inferior and its makers disregarded;

collectors. people who become collectors by accident do not acquire pieces in a deliberate and intentional

fashion and therefore do not inquire about their history, keep record of it or pass it on;

limited access to knowledge. museum resources are limited, sometimes they simply lack specialists able to identify the artist or make out their signature – this was the case of the painting “Goddess Kālī standing on the body of Lord Śiva” by Sana Devi. The author’s signature was deciphered only a year ago in the course of detailed studies;

local practice. different cultures understand authorship differently; for instance, illustrated Persian codes were signed with the name of the patron and the calligrapher, while the name of the painter was habitually omitted.

Sculpting studio (clay) /
Nepal / photo: unknown /
WIZ/MAP 10/5

*Source: Fleet, J. F. 1880.
“Sanskrit and Old-
Canarese Inscriptions.”
The Indian Antiquary IX:
74–76



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



The Gallery

"It is the lack of deliberateness, the shapelessness and unnaturalness of Indian fantasies embodied in the works of this people that gives them their heavy appearance, we will not dispute that; Goethe was right to deny each and every one of them any aesthetic quality. But a historian will say this to a shrugging beholder: 'My Friend, it is not about us at all; nobody asks if it appeals to our tastes or if we like it, it is about an alien way of looking and whether we are able to understand it – because it has the right to exist'."

This is an excerpt of a report from a show of Indian sculpture

in Vienna collected by a colonial official, published in Warsaw in 1883 in a supplement to "Przegląd Tygodniowy".

Since the 17th century Europe had seen a rising interest in the cultures of Asia, mostly as a result of colonialism. The Indian subcontinent attracted a great deal of this attention. While India's literature, philosophy and sciences were all considered superior to their European counterparts, with the likes of Goethe, Schopenhauer, Voltaire and Thoreau drawing on them, the visual arts did not get as much appreciation.

6.

Lord Śiva Naṭarāja /
author from Tamil Nadu,
India / 2nd half of the
20th c. / **MAP 11651**

Woman (Queen?) /
author from Timor-Leste /
3rd quarter of the 20th c. /
MAP 18926

Three Figures / author
from the Asmat group /
Agats, Papua (former Irian
Jaya), Indonesia / 2nd half
of the 20th c. / **MAP 17512**

*Source: Haberlandt, M.
1883. "Bogowie Indyj. Wystawa w muzeum austriackim w Wiedniu". *Przegląd Tygodniowy życia społecznego, literatury i sztuk pięknych. Dodatek miesięczny*, 523-534. Warsaw



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Is sacred art art?

Until the end of the 17th century a great majority of art made in Europe was religious. European researchers do not undermine its artistic merit, while adopting a completely different approach when it comes to Asian artefacts, considering sacred objects to be unartistic. So what makes an object a work of art?

Is it the technique used to make it? The form? The materials? The colours? Meticulous workmanship? Or does it all boil down to the person who made the object, their intentions, training and professional achievements?

Sacred art is not always an act of faith. Religious depictions are not always used in religious worship. Today's Europe is strongly secularised but we often forget that the whole world is not necessarily like the place where we live. The division into the sacred and secular has not been and still is not always clear-cut everywhere.

We are often surprised to see such practices as dressing sculptures, forgetting that similar conventions existed in Polish art and culture.

7.

Buddha Amida / author
from Japan / 18th c. /
MAP 7229

Lama Rgyal tshab rje
[Gyaltsab Je] / author from
Mongolia / mid-19th c. /
MAP 6273/1

**Buddha Calling the Earth
to Witness** / author from
Myanmar / 2nd half of the
19th c. / **MAP 19723**

Winged demon / author
from Bali, Indonesia /
2nd half of the 20th c. /
MAP 18140



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Art techniques: same but different

8.

There are as many genres in art as there are human needs and ideas. Some techniques, however, are seen almost everywhere in the world. Often they developed independently of each other, but sometimes they were spread by artists and artworks travelling along the main trade routes.

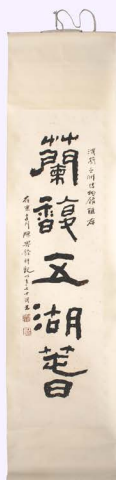
Gouache. A method of painting with opaque water-medium paints containing a plant-based binding agent, such as gum arabic. Popular in India, Persia, Uzbekistan, China, Tibet and Europe, among others. You can see it used both by the painters featured in this exhibition and the 20th-century French artist Henri Matisse.

Lost-wax casting. The oldest bronze casting technique known to humans.

The earliest example was discovered in the Indus Valley (now: Pakistan, India) and dates 6,000 years back! The technique was also used in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. In our Gallery, Art Cabinet and Treasury you will find many objects made this way, including a local variant from India – *ḍoukra* – which is decorated with ornaments made of thin rolls. Lost wax was also employed by Italian renaissance sculptor Donatello.

Woodcut. The oldest printmaking method. The images were usually impressed on paper or fabric, that is why not many ancient examples have survived to this day. Those that we know of originated in China (8th c.). In Europe renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer was a master of the technique.

A painter's studio /
Vietnam / photo: Janusz
Eysmont / **WIZ / MAP 11/73**



The Silk Road

The main trade routes influenced relationships and interactions between countries and were conduits for spreading knowledge, culture and the arts. They were partly established by humans, partly by nature (ocean currents, seasonal winds), which is particularly visible if you look at the connections between continental and maritime South Asia. Routes linking Asia and Europe had been in place since antiquity. They developed rapidly from 4th c. BCE. The most famous of all was the one called the Silk Road.

Trade was carried out there along three main routes, inspiring intellectual, religious, cultural interactions. They were the Chinese-Indian route, Islam-Mediterranean route and Byzantine-European route. As a result, most of the goods that arrived in Europe originated in the Byzantium. Silk and artworks from Samarkand or China were rare and that is why they did not influence European art until the establishment of the main sea trade routes (15th c.).

9.

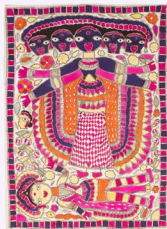
Illustration from the tale of Thạch Sanh, part 3 /
author from Vietnam /
2nd half of the 20th c. /
MAP 19915

Chinese Pantheon /
author from China /
mid-19th c. / **MAP 4399**

"Calm Wave" / Chen Chi
Chen / Taiwan /
1995 / **MAP 14844**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Popular art

In the 20th century, having gained independence from their former colonies, many countries started supporting and promoting local art styles.

Mithila painting practiced in the Mithila region by the Indian border with Nepal. For centuries it had been wall and floor art. In the 1960s the government launched a campaign to help out impoverished artists by providing them with paints and handmade paper, and buying their pieces once they were finished.

Dot painting originates in the art of the First Nations of Australia: illustrations of the Dreamtime on

sand and rocks. Since the 1970s it was executed in more durable and portable media (tree bark, canvas), so that it could be shared with a wider audience.

Batuan painting is one of the most recognisable new artistic trends in the Indonesian island of Bali. The style was prevalent in the 1950s–70s. It dates back to the 1930s, when new European paper and paints were first imported to the region.

10.

Rice Plantation / author
from Bali, Indonesia /
2nd half of the 20th c. /
MAP 14604

**Goddess Kālī standing
on the body of Lord Śiva** /
Sana Devi / Mithila, Bihar,
India / 1970s / **MAP 4560**

**Story of Calon Arang
Witch** / author from Bali,
Indonesia / mid-19th c. /
MAP 17367

"My Mother Nandi" /
Norman Manawila /
Garrawurra Liyagawumirr /
Millingimbi, Arnhem
Land, Australia / before
1982 / **MAP 6489**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Silk

Made from yarn obtained from the cocoon of butterflies, silk is mainly associated with luxurious clothing. It was, however, widely used by artists as the surface for their paintings, to make screens for scroll painting, clothing for human figures (figurative sculpture), and as a backing for painted scrolls or for collages.

Three-dimensional silk appliqué designs have been popular in China since antiquity. The one you can see on our display was made when the technique was widely popular. The knowledge of it was then lost and was only restored in the 1990s.

Silk was also used as a backing for scrolls depicting scenes (such as *Chinese Pantheon*), calligraphy (*Calm Wave*) or gods (e.g. *thankas* such as Akṣobhya Buddha). *Thankas* are also fitted with a silk cover on the front.

11.

The Eight Immortals /
author from China /
2nd half of the 19th c. /
MAP 15993

Buddha Akṣobhya /
author from Tibet /
2nd half of the 19th c. /
MAP 4359



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



What is art?

The German word “Kunstkammer” literally translates as “art cabinet”. What items did it hold? What was considered art?

The room was supposed to be representative of the owner, to project a desirable image of them and be a testament to their comprehensive education. Royal kunstkammers were meant to demonstrate imperial magnificence and power. This way they became a tool in diplomatic negotiations.

They held *artefacta* (objects made by human beings), and *scientifica* (scientific instruments).

Artefacta included ceramics (pots, plates, vases); ivory objects; paintings; containers and caskets, etc. What made an object fit for a collection and considered as art was its uniqueness, artisanship, meaning that it was crafted with great attention to detail, and the fact that it was representative of the culture and knowledge of the time. In other words these were objects that best illustrated the trends, fashions, and styles of the period. Private kunstkammers owned by rulers in the “Age of Discoveries” evolved into public encyclopaedic (or universal) museums in the colonial era.

12.

Container / author from Vietnam / 15–16th c. /
MAP 14484

Bottle / author from China / 14th c. / **MAP 14462**

Cosmetics container / author from Rajasthan, India / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 8041**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Conservation of glass objects

13.

The glassware of Herat is easily recognisable thanks to its colours, shapes, and adornments. It is also very fragile and delicate. This display cabinet showcases glass objects restored in the 2nd half of the 20th century and in the 21st century.

Today, it is standard to use reversible methods in conservation of cultural heritage, that is why the latest example of restoration uses glue and resins that can be removed. In the mid-20th century conservators experimented with a new material: polymers. Back then, it was not customary to perform ageing tests and you can see the results of that when you look

at the other objects. Originally, the gluing was indiscernible, however, polymers quickly turn yellow and cross-link, meaning they change their internal structure, which causes matting, cracking, and crumbling. Unfortunately, the use of polymers is a non-reversible method and many objects were destroyed this way.

The flask was restored in 2021 at the Department of Ceramic and Glass Conservation and Restoration of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław.

**Documentation of the
process of restoring
glass vessels from Herat,
Afghanistan / Wrocław /
2021 / photo: P. Birger**



Collector/expert

14.

A scientist, specialist, or linguist experiences other cultures and countries differently than a traveller or tourist would. Thanks to their training, knowledge of foreign languages, history, and religions, expert collectors are mainly motivated by the desire to document cultural heritage. They choose objects that are evidence of artistic changes: both short-lived trends and long-lasting tendencies. They wish to account for the technologies, methods, and processes involved in the making of different cultural objects. They are sensitive to artefact diversity and see them as a testament to everyday life. Such collections become valuable research

materials for the next generations of scientists.

About the photo:

The objects held by the Museum hail from different private collections. One especially expansive and diverse collection was amassed by Tomasz Kamiński, an expert on Afghanistan who was able to use different languages spoken in the region. The artefacts he gathered fall into different categories, one of which is Herati glassware. Kamiński's intention was to give an account of the diverse forms, colours, and adornments used by the makers.

Glasses and bottle /
authors from Herat,
Afghanistan /
1980–2000 / **MAP 8886 /**
MAP 8877 / MAP 8882 /
MAP 17224 / MAP 19308



From the 17th century onwards – mainly as a result of colonisation – Europeans were developing an increasingly strong interest in the cultures of Asia. The first European outposts on the continent were established by the Portuguese in the 16th century in China and Japan. The last two – Hong Kong and Macao – separated from the UK in the 1997 and 1999, respectively.

With time, the Chinese started to produce special objects to be exported to Europe. Considered quintessentially Chinese by Europeans, they were disregarded in their country of origin. Examples include shells rendered in relief with scenes from everyday life.

European perceptions about Chinese art translated into the chinoiserie style seen in the art of the 18th century.

We form our views about different cultures based on our experiences: the books we have read, or the shows we have seen. For some, the essence of Japanese culture lies in snuff boxes (which were actually brought to the country by the Portuguese), because they have seen one or two on display somewhere, while others may associated it with *netsuke*, or minuscule sculptures you tie around the waist, because they saw some in an illustrated book in childhood. We tend to develop a general image of a culture based on its snippets.

**Genre scene set in
a garden** / author from
Canton, China / 19thc. /
MAP 21148



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Collector/animateur

Having travelled to Asia as a young sailor, Andrzej Wawrzyniak decided to introduce this fascinating continent to his compatriots. He changed his career to diplomacy and on his postings abroad started amassing a collection that later became the core of the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw. More importantly, however, Wawrzyniak used his platform to promote cultural integration.

About the photo:

Andrzej Wawrzyniak's collection strongly reflects his personal interests. It includes a large group of accessories

such as pipes (for smoking tobacco and opium), snuff boxes, and betel containers.

Betel is a stimulant that enjoys particular popularity in South and Southeast Asia. It is made of areca nut and spices, such as clove, wrapped in a fresh betel leaf. Users chew the preparation, sometimes together with tobacco, often socially, which is why there is a diversity of ornamental containers for the different ingredients.

16.

Snuffbox / author from China / 18th c. / **MAP 10138**

Snuffbox / author from China / 2nd half of the 19th c. / **MAP 12986**

Hip maak betel spice container / author from Myanmar / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 19212**

Betel spice container / author from Sumatra, Indonesia / 2nd half of the 19th c. / **MAP 2050**

Betel spice container / author from the Khmer group, Cambodia / 3rd quarter of the 20th c. / **MAP 17884**

Betel spice container / author from Sumatra, Indonesia / 2nd half of the 19th c. / **MAP 2037**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Collector/diplomat

Opportunity makes the collector. In communist Poland, members of the diplomatic corps had a unique opportunity to travel to different countries. While abroad, they were becoming familiar with the local culture. Their salaries were very high as compared with average earnings in Asia in the second half of the 20th century. On top of being able to afford to acquire large collections, they were in the position to have all of their possessions shipped back to Poland as personal belongings when their mission was over.

About the photo:

Everyday exposure to the local reality strongly inspired Tadeusz Findziński as an artist and collector. Although he was a diplomat, the collection he acquired during his posting to Vietnam is a testament to his passion for art, which he explored from the technological perspective. His collection of ceramics displays a wide spectrum of techniques and forms used, including examples of glazes unique for the region, such as *jun* or celadon.

17.

Plate / author from China
or Vietnam / 18–19th c. /
MAP 21183

Dish / author from China /
12–13th c. / **MAP 21186**

Dish / author from
Thailand / 1st half of the
20th c. / **MAP 6519/2**

Bowl / author from
Vietnam / 15th c. (?) /
MAP 21228

Vase / author from
Vietnam / 15/16th c. /
MAP 14587

Incense burner / author
from Vietnam / 16–17th c. /
MAP 21268



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Removal of archeological objects

18.

Who do archeological artefacts belong to? Many collectors are willing to pay exorbitant sums to call such objects their own. Acquisitions of this kind are, nevertheless, controversial because the artefacts are part of the heritage of their country of origin. When relocated, they can be taken out of the context that is necessary to understand their role and significance.

Many museums possess items whose legal status is disputed.

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco held two lintels hailing from ancient Thai shrines, dating to

9th–10th century. It was established that the objects were looted in the 1960s. After four years of government negotiations, the artefacts were restituted in March 2021.

On 7 June 2019 the European Union introduced regulations limiting the import of cultural goods older than 250 years to its territory. This limited the trade in illegally acquired artefacts, yet it did not put a complete end to it.

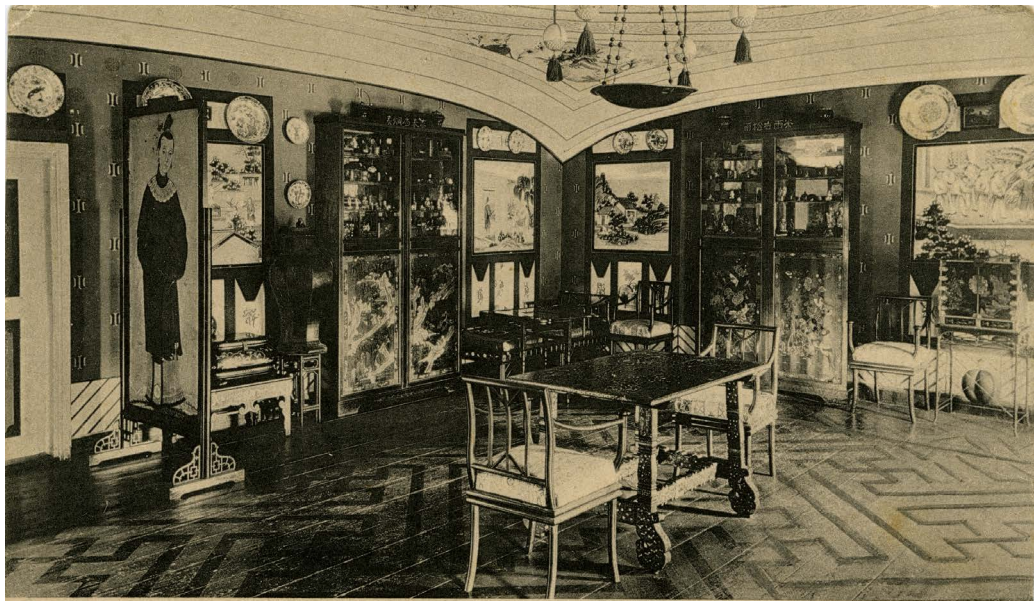
Glass / author from
Palestine / 3–6th c. /
MAP 6617

Perfume bottle / author
from Palestine / 2–5th c. /
MAP 6612

Dish / author from
Mesopotamia (Iraq, Iran,
Turkey, Syria, Kuwait) /
1st c. BCE / **MAP 15941**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Wilanów.

Pokój chiński jadalny

A chinoiserie painter

19.

From the 17th century onwards Europeans became more and more interested in the cultures of Asia, in large part due to colonial expansion that had started in the 16th century. Sometimes, when visiting Western museums, we see Chinese artistic influences without realising it. What became particularly popular in Europe was Chinese porcelain. It inspired the distinctive white tiles with light blue patterns produced in Delft, the Netherlands, and Portugal. Europeans mastered the craft of making porcelain only in 1708. The Dresden makers sent their first wares to Augustus II the Strong, king of Poland.

The fashion for *chinoiserie* [ʃɪn wa zəri], or objects adorned in a way that imitated or was inspired by Chinese art, started a bit earlier.

The pieces were displayed in special Chinese rooms, one of which existed at King Jan III's palace at Wilanów. Europeans took to imitating original lacquerwork to create objects "in the Chinese style". They were adorned by specially trained court painters. Despite its initial popularity, lacquerwork did not take root in European art.

The interior of the Chinese Room (dining section) / Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów



If war builds civilisations...

20.

We associate war with the most uncivilised, barbarian moments in human history. Yet, in the past it has on occasion spurred progress and social development, especially in terms of statehood.

Scientists have concluded that maintaining state structures is so expensive for citizens that they would not be willing to pay their share if it were not for a spectre of external threat. Sadly, this means that civilisations are built on fear of violence, not willingness to build something together and support one another.

In the past wars did accelerate progress and technology exchange: gunpowder, crossbow, saddle, and brewing coffee all arrived in Europe from Asia in the wake of different military campaigns.

A civilisation that is considered by some to have been truly peaceful is the Indus Valley Civilisation. It existed in an area that today belongs to Pakistan and India. We still know relatively little about it. To date, archeologists have discovered only one depiction of war associated with the Indus Civilisation. Can a peaceful civilisation really exist?

Headgear / author from the Naga group, Chin State, Myanmar / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 19261**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Religious missions

Cultural imperialism, that is spreading or enforcing one's cultural values on others, may be achieved using a variety of methods. One of them, apart from trade and military invasions, are missions, the primary instrument of religious expansion.

In the colonial period, Europeans established many missions with the view to spread Christianity. In some countries, for instance in India, the missionaries wiped out centuries-old Christian traditions, which they considered to be heretic. Christian missions were sent all across the world, and that is why Christians are today the dominant religious community

in South Korea, the Philippines, or South America, while Christianity is the official state religion in the Pacific island countries of Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

Some contemporary missionaries become collectors of local cultural heritage. For instance, our museum holds a collection amassed by Henryk Szella, a Divine Word Missionary. Incidentally, among the pieces are objects not hailing from Asia and the Pacific Region. That is how museums can come into possession of artefacts that do not exactly correspond with their profile.

21.

Blowpipe with 6 arrows / author from Papua (former Irian Jaya) or Nias, Indonesia / 1st half of the 20th c. / **MAP 276**

Arrow for shooting pigs / author from Baliem Valley, Papua, Indonesia / pre-2017 / **MAP 21059**

Three arrows / author from Papua New Guinea / 2nd half of the 19th c. / **MAP 11992** / **MAP 11994** / **MAP 12017**

Lun arrow / author from the Yala group, Waniok, Papua (former Irian Jaya), Indonesia / 2001 / **MAP 19203**

Arrow for shooting birds / author from Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 8937**

Signal arrow / author from China / 1st half of the 20th c. / **MAP 20438**

Quiver with 12 poisoned arrows / author from Tanzania, Africa / 1st half of the 19th c. / **MAP 16310**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Conservation of metal objects

Silver is an excellent indicator of air quality. The greater the air pollution, the faster it tarnishes. Why? Silver oxidises when exposed to hydrogen sulfide. As a result, a dark layer forms on its surface along with black stains. If they are not removed, they can be dangerous to the silver object. In the past, items made of silver maintained their lustre and perfect colour for longer periods of time. Industrialisation and the resultant factory pollution and car fumes accelerated the process of silver corrosion.

Conservators remove tarnish from silver objects using chemical agents, then coat the surface with a protective layer of polymer substance. As a result, the object is restored to its original state. Pictured in the photo is the sculpture before restoration. In the display cabinet, you can see the result of the restoration process.

22.

Musician with sārangī /
author from Rajasthan,
India / 2nd half of the
20th c. / **MAP 3730**

Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī /
author from Nepal or
Tibet / 18th c. / **MAP 3940**

**Goddess Durgā slays
the Buffalo demon
Maḥiṣa** / author from
India / 2nd half of the
20th c. / **MAP 7193**

Buddha Śākyamuni /
author from Thailand /
2nd half of the 19th c. /
MAP 9095



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE. Presqu'île de BANKS.

Etat de la petite colonie Française
d'AKAROA

Vers 1845 — Voyage du RHIN

C. M. del. sculp. 1846 1847

Paris. Perron Imp. r. Moitrucon. 1

First Nations

23.

Present-day countries are inhabited by different cultural groups and homogeneous communities are rare. Although some groups may be dominant, the heritage of the less numerous ones is part of the country's culture as a whole. Examples include the Naga and Rohingya people in Myanmar, India, and Bangladesh.

There are also the first inhabitants of territories now predominantly populated by the descendants of colonisers. Decolonisation of social relations is about ensuring equal treatment of the minority groups, and using terms they prefer instead of colonial terminology.

First Nations is a term referring to the first inhabitants of Australia, Oceania, and Canada. The previously used colonial terms included Aboriginal and Indian.

Aotearoa is the precolonial name of New Zealand used by the first inhabitants of the island, the Māori people. It is also used in public discourse today, with the media, official documents, and government announcements referring to the country as "Aotearoa New Zealand".

A small French colony in Akaroa, Banks Peninsula, New Zealand / ca. 1845 / Charles Meryon, 1865 / photo: Cleveland Museum of Art



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Jewellery or adornments?

Decolonising the language we speak

When discussing non-European countries and cultures, we sometimes get confused. What do these terms mean? Why should some words not be used? The simplest solution is to use the same words you would use if you were talking about European phenomena.

jewellery. small items worn to adorn the body or outfit of the wearer, including bracelets made of seashells, necklaces made of bird feathers, etc.
Use instead of: adornments.

god, goddess. divine beings in all religions.

Use instead of: deity, idol.

(local) groups. communities living in a given area and sharing a cultural identity.

Use instead of: peoples, primitive peoples, indigenous peoples, ethnic groups, national groups.

(local) art. the production of material (e.g. painting) and immaterial (e.g. dance) cultural objects that share the same technique, style, materials, motifs, themes, or production processes.

Use instead of: folk art, high art, fine arts.

24.

Necklace / author from Tahiti, French Polynesia, France (?) / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 12479**

Fragments of hairpins / author from China / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 19467-19468**

Fragments of hairpins / author from China / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 19467-19468**

Hairpins / author from Myanmar / 3rd quarter of the 20th c. / **MAP 19567**

Hat finial / author from Mongolia / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 8666**

Ear-plugs / author from the Naga group, Myanmar / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 19271/a-b**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



A new science: Anthropology

25.

"To'uluwa sat, ate, and talked about his journey to myself and some of the village elders assembled there. He spoke of the amount of *mwali* at present in Kitava, told us from whom and how he obtained those at which we were then looking, naming the most important ones, and giving bits of their histories. (...) He spoke also about future Kula arrangements, expeditions to arrive from the East in Kiriwina, and of his own planned movements."

Between 1914 and 1918 Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski made field trips to the islands of Melanesia. He is considered the father of contemporary anthropology based

on fieldwork, which superseded previously used ethnographic methodology, or what is called armchair ethnography.

Malinowski described the **Kula ring**, which is a system of exchanging gifts between the inhabitants of the islands off the easternmost part of New Guinea. Two items of trade travel along the route in two opposite directions: *soulava* necklaces circulate clockwise, while *mwali* armbands circulate counterclockwise. The terms of participation in the exchange and travels are strictly defined and often accompanied by ceremonial activities.

Mwali armband / author from Kiriwina Islands (Trobriand Islands), Papua New Guinea / 2nd half of the 20th c. / **MAP 4866**

* Bronisław Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific. An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*, London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1922. p. 472.



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Travelling abroad was not easy in communist Poland. The journalists, reporters, and photographers who went to Asia for work were the only narrators of that part of the world that Poles had. It was through their eyes that we looked at the wonderful cultures, extraordinary landscapes, and terrifying war atrocities.

About the photo:

Irena Jarosińska was an artist, photographer, and photojournalist whose pictures from Afghanistan include many female portraits that showcase intimate relationships that can develop between women regardless of their descent and the

languages they speak. They provide us with an insight into the everyday life, interactions, and emotions of the subjects. It is no wonder that the author started a rich jewellery collection in Afghanistan. At the opposite end of the spectrum lie pictures of armed men and an assortment of weaponry. It is a collection of materialities and contexts.

For more photographs by Polish reporters go to:

zbiory.muzeumazji.pl

Women / Afghanistan /
photo: Irena Jarosińska /
WIZ/MAP 12/2016



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Nusantara Archipelago Museum

27.

On 22 February 1973 Andrzej Wawrzyniak gifted the Polish state 4,000 cultural items hailing from Indonesia. They became the founding collection of the Nusantara Archipelago Museum (Nusantara is an Old Javanese term for the islands of Southeast Asia between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific).

Each museum object has a unique accession number, which includes a code standing for the name of the institution. The number is physically attached on the object in the least visible place.

The prefix MAN in some of the seashells' accession codes stands for

our museum's old name, which means the object was part of our founding collection. After the name changed to the Asia and Pacific Museum, the prefix changed to MAP.

Many accession numbers and inventory labels have a story to tell about the item's journey between collections and institutions. This is the case of many objects on this display. Read the captions to find out which ones they are and investigate them closely to find out more about their previous owners.

**Corals, starfish,
minerals** / Indonesia /
MAP 2843–2849



We all have souvenirs from holidays, be they near or far. We keep them hidden from public view or display them proudly for the world to see. No matter their size, shape, or specific nature, they all play an important role in our life because of the emotions and stories they evoke. The same goes for seashells, the most popular memento of seaside holidays. We collect them since early childhood, wading barefoot in frothy water or browsing among the stalls on the seaside promenade. They have something “magical” about them: once home to maritime creatures, they have the ability to conjure up the sound of the ocean and rekindle our memories.

But what I like the most is to shut my eyes,
Hold it to my ear and hear its humming sound:
It takes my soul back under distant skies,
Deep into memories that life blurred and drowned.

Shell, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer
(trans. Monika Tacikowska)

Seashells / Indonesia /
MAP 2836–2842 / MAP 3224



History of great names or popular genres and styles?

29.

What is more representative of a period, country, region, or art form?

origin? What are the consequences of these decisions?

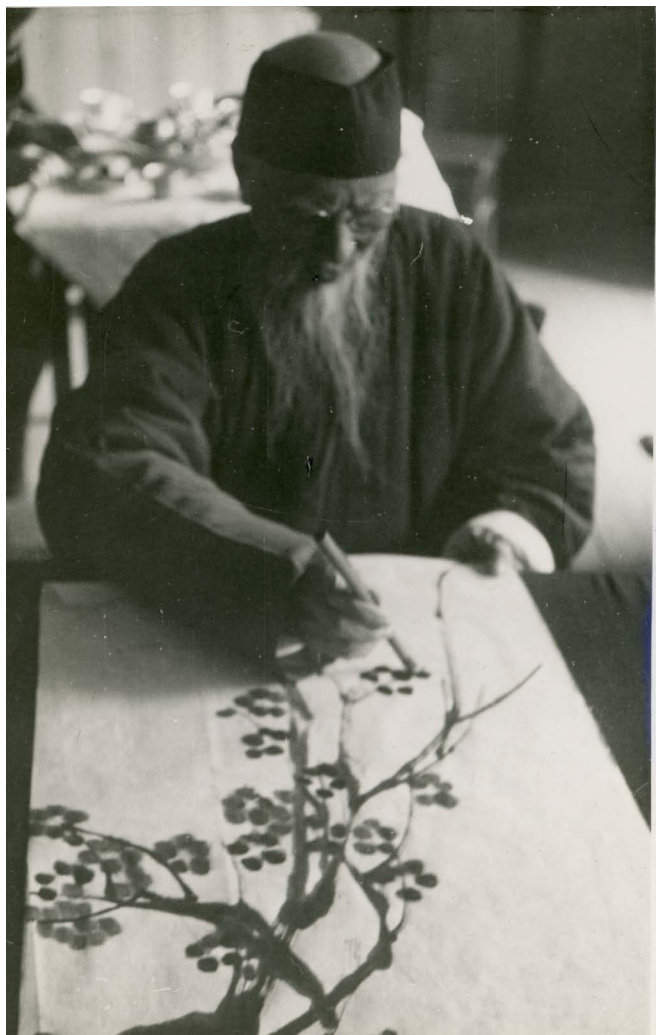
Museums choose which paintings they want to showcase. This way, they decide which paintings will typify a culture and represent the history of its art. How do they make these choices? On the basis of the pieces' material value or popularity at home? Should museums select paintings that are recognisable in Europe and fetch the highest sums at auctions, or those that take pride of place at private homes and public spaces in their country of

The selection we present here and our choice of popular art is equally biased. The first part of the show features examples of contemporary painting hailing from China, India, and Indonesia. Although visually they are completely different from the pieces displayed in this section, they too are representative of the most popular genres and styles of painting in their respective countries.

Immortal Magu / author
from China / 1st half of
the 20th c. / **MAP 19069**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Glass paintings and Qi Baishi

30.

This painting by Qi Baishi is juxtaposed with three anonymous paintings on glass.

Qi Baishi is one of the most famous Chinese painters of the 20th century. His pieces are sought-after by collectors around the world. His techniques and styles derive solely from Chinese art.

If Qi Baishi's work is a continuation of motifs popular in Chinese art and does not diverge from its style, what made them so popular around the globe? Could these glass paintings fetch similar prices?

The Qi Baishi painting on display was gifted to our museum by Andrzej Strumiłło, Polish painter who travelled across Asia. The photos he took document the whole creative process.

A painter's studio
(Qi Baishi works on the
painting "Fresh Aroma
and Rich Colours") /
photo: Andrzej Strumiłło /
WIZ/MAP 2/3



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU

Dan Mèo Pa cò Hôelinh A. F. Varmitto Xⁿ 199 R



Do artists look at the world differently? Do they see it in a special way? Looking for artistic inspiration, Andrzej Strumiłło travelled across Asia. What fascinated him the most was Buddhist art: *thankas* and woodcuts from Mongolia and Nepal.

Strumiłło's artistic tastes have strongly influenced the present shape and form of our museum. On one hand, its collection includes a few hundred items he personally amassed. He also had a say on new museum acquisitions when travelling with the founder and long-time director of the museum, Andrzej Wawrzyniak. On the other hand, Strumiłło was for

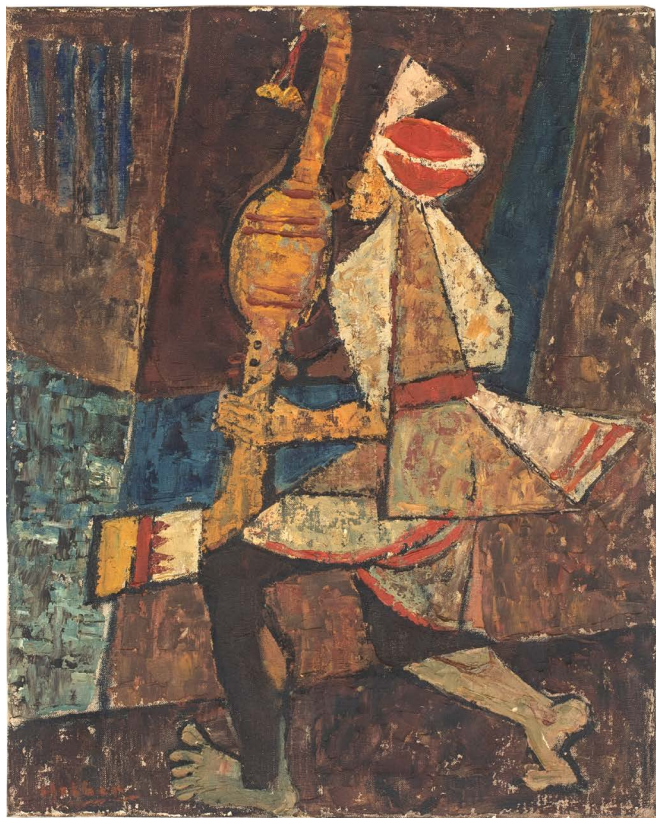
many years in charge of the design of the museum's exhibitions and the posters that advertised them. The artist's visual sensitivity influenced the museum's shape and image.

Items from the collection of Andrzej and Danuta Strumiłło are distinguished for their outstanding ornamentation and meticulousness, whether they are *lâgan* plates from Uzbekistan or architectural sculptures and clay censers from Nepal. The paintings and graphic art pieces share an affinity with the original style developed by Strumiłło himself.

**Village in Hoà Bình
province, Vietnam /**
Andrzej Strumiłło /
1969 / **MAP 5707**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Chromolitographs and K.K. Hebbar

32.

One of the most recognisable visual art genres from India are multi-colour prints made using the technique of chromolithography. On their edges you can often find the names of their authors. They did not, however, go down in art history. An artist that did was K.K. Hebbar, a painter who received both classical Indian education (his master was his sculptor father) and Western academic one (he studied in Bombay and the Académie Julian in Paris).

The themes, subject-matter, and essence of his paintings are aligned with the “spirit” of Indian art, yet

their form is distant from it (European oil painting technique, form, and composition inspired by the work of Paul Cézanne). Was that what earned Hebbar his appreciation and recognition in Europe? The historical section of the exhibition includes a few paintings from India that represent different styles and techniques, and never became popular beyond their country of origin. Why do you think that was?

Tarpa player /
K.K. Hebbar / India /
2nd half of the 20th c. /
MAP 3774



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Conservation of textile works

33.

The batik technique used to make this piece involves soaking the cloth in a succession of dyes to achieve the pattern. The parts that do not need to be dyed with a particular colour are covered with wax. The process is repeated for each colour separately. This way, an identical pattern is achieved on both sides of the piece.

Seen here on display is the reverse of the work (you can see the mirror image of the signature in the lower left-hand corner). The obverse (seen in the photo) is much paler because of

its exposure to sunlight. The dye has lost its original brilliance as a result of photochemical processes. Ultraviolet light affects dyes very quickly (sometimes you can see a difference after just a few hours), in particular synthetic ones like these used in this piece.

The darker margin was concealed by the frame and thus protected from sunlight.

**Scene from the
"Rāmāyana" – Sitā and
the deer** / author from
Java, Indonesia / 2nd half
of the 20th c. / **MAP 9062**



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Art and endangered species

34.

Many cultures have been making sculptures, lamps, jewellery pieces, and other objects from **ivory** (elephant's tusks) ever since the antiquity. An ivory sculpture from India was discovered in the ruins of Pompei. (It is now held by the National Archeology Museum, Naples).

Tortoiseshell (material produced from the shells of marine turtles) was used to make jewellery, bibelots, and inlaid veneers of furniture.

The characteristically light blue hair accessories made in China owe their colour to the **feathers of the kingfisher**. All of these objects were considered as luxurious: they boosted the status and demonstrated the wealth of the

owner. From the 18th century onwards Europe saw rising demand for objects that conferred prestige on the buyer. The materials were sourced by way of great hunts. Their scale was so massive that many species became close to extinction as a result and are today considered endangered.

Should museums participate in the circulation of such objects? Is it ethical to acquire and display them publicly? On one hand, museums' mission is to document cultural heritage, which includes ivory statues. On the other hand, however, they are supposed to promote attitudes based on moral and ethical values. What is the right way to talk about history and culture?

A sculptor's studio (ivory) / Myanmar /
photo: Andrzej
Wawrzyniak /
WIZ/MAP 1/4488



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Biography of the object

35.

Knowing an item's history, its provenance, is as important as its cultural context when you want to understand its role. Objects end up in museums in different ways and we do not always know their full stories.

The **club** was acquired from another institution. Before World War II it belonged to a Wrocław-based museum. After the region of Lower Silesia was incorporated into Poland, German institutions did not move their entire collections abroad. The objects that were left behind were taken over by the Central Museum Depository in Kozłówka, where they were allocated to different Polish museums. Institutional acquisitions also take place when museums exchange objects that do not exactly fit the profile of their collections.

The **postcards** became carriers of personal stories. Their first owner wrote letters on them. This way, their original function and context were maintained. Their museum records read: "The postcards were brought from Japan to the United States by an American citizen, Mr Joshua Parker, who stayed in Japan between 1905 and 1919. After World War II, Mr Parker's widow gifted them to her sister Ms Maria Konic, who sold it to the Asia and Pacific Museum in 1992."

The history of the **seal** was driven by coincidence: it was lost by an unidentified person on the street in a Japanese city. The finder, a Pole visiting Japan, gifted it to the Museum, where the experts identified it as a seal used by private individuals to sign bank and official documents.

Club / author from
Oceania-Polinesia /
2nd half of the 19th c. /
MAP 11980

Seal / author from Japan /
pre-2015 / **MAP 20921**

**Postcards – seaside
landscape and Tokaido,
Fujisawa Station** /
author from Japan /
before 1919 /
MAP 13168–13169



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



"A collection is a work of art."

36.

The sentence was written by Feliks "Manggha" Jasieński, a promotor, advocate, and curator of Japanese art. He was active at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Like his predecessor, Izabela Czartoryska, his main motivation was to revive artistic life in Poland. He believed that Japanese influences were the best that happened to European art of the period.

At the time, Asian art was a complete novelty in Poland. Exhibitions of Japanese art held in Warsaw caused uproars. Interestingly, they were much better received in Kraków or Lviv, partly because Jasieński would

develop a different narrative around them during his talks.

He was a conscious collector. He knew that he had to acquire specialist knowledge about the objects he amassed and that is why, apart from Japanese woodcuts and other artworks, his collection includes a large library. In 1994 the Manggha Museum opened in Kraków to house Jasieński's rich collection.

**Feliks Jasieński's
apartment in Kraków /**
photo: Zakład
Fotograficzny Tadeusza
Jabłońskiego / National
Museum in Kraków /
MNK XX-f-27114



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



The main threat faced by sacred objects that are part of museum collections and exhibitions is their depreciation: taking away their special status and role they played in their original context. Here are some of the reasons why this may happen:

aestheticising. showcasing them as works of art, objects of beauty, while the way they are displayed should not focus on the visual aspect;

decontextualisation. without knowing the object's original context, we run a risk of attaching a completely different meaning or value to it.

Institutions should, therefore, collect and make available documents concerning sacred objects' religious context;

deconsecration. or its lack: religions usually have procedures of changing the status of sacred objects into non-religious ones. The process should take place before an object is included in a museum collection.

These threats are faced by all objects, including everyday and secular ones, as well as visual artworks.

**Buddhist shrine in
Myanmar /**
photo: Jerzy Chociłowski /
WIZ / MAP 14/452



The Art of Regime and Authoritarian Countries

38.

"The General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society (...) shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms (...)."

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948

As public institutions, or organs of society, museums have the duty to promote human rights. Should they, then, showcase the heritage of countries that are known to violate these rights and act against the values of the Declaration? Where is the red line?

Autumn in the Kumgang Mountains / Kim Cheol / North Korea / 1994 / MAP 15628

Winter in Myohyang Mountains / Kim Cheol / North Korea / 1997 / MAP 15627



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Sculpture

39.

These openwork ivory orbs are examples of master craftsmanship of the highest order. It took great skill and weeks of labour for sculptors to complete these precious masterpieces. Uncertain how they come into being, the first Europeans who came across them called them “devil’s work balls”.

What the makers did, in fact, was to carve a large ball from one piece of ivory or jadeite, and hollow out a succession of balls inside it, one smaller than the other.

Each of the orbs moves independently. In 1915 a piece consisting of 24 balls

was presented at the International Exposition in San Francisco.

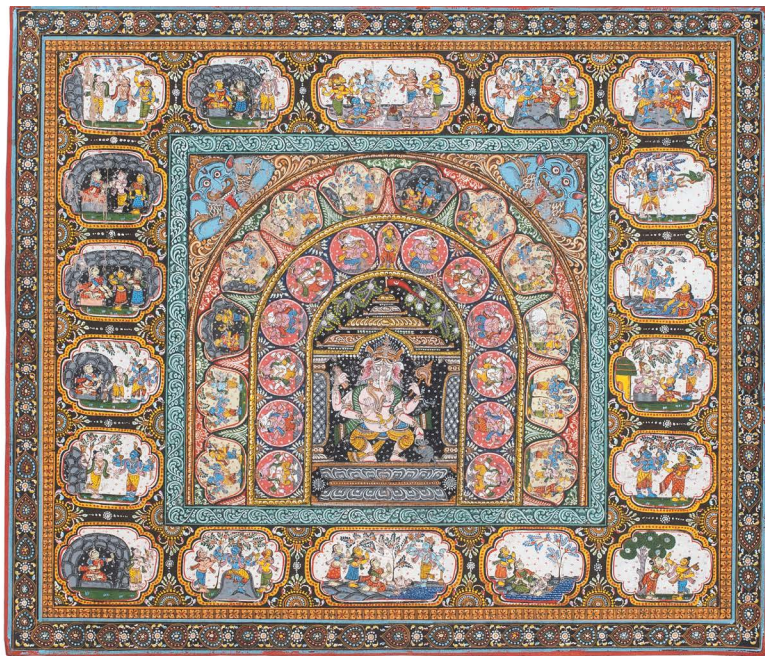
Each orb is adorned with a different ornament of symbolic meaning. The dragons and phoenixes on the outer layer were supposed to bring good luck and fortune, and to strengthen marital bonds.

An orb of this kind was held by the first Polish public museum: it was bought by Stanisław Kostka Potocki for Wilanów Palace in 1814.

Devil’s work ball / author
from China / 1950s /
MAP 20706



MUZEUM AZJI
I PACYFIKU



Have a look at the painting.

40.

Now, read the text below and look at it again.

The scenes featured in the middle band:

1. Śiva and Brahmā.
2. Śiva and Viṣṇu.
3. Pārvatī takes a bath in a house on the mountain of Kailāsa.
4. So as not to be disturbed, she asks Ganeśa, her son whom she has just created, to keep guard. Ganeśa does not let Pārvatī husband Śiva go in, because he does not know him.
5. Enraged, Śiva loses his temper.
6. He severs Ganeśa's head with a trident.

7. He enters into the house and tells Pārvatī what happened.

8. Holding her son's body across her lap, Pārvatī explains her husband what he did.

9. Śiva sends two attendants for Ganeśa's head.

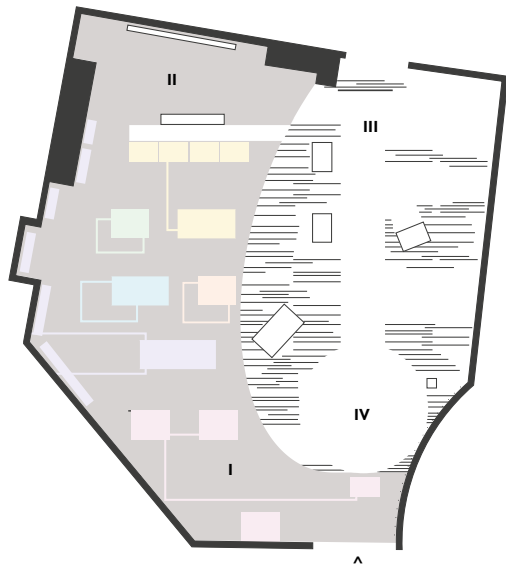
10. The friends kill the first animal they encounter, an elephant.

11. They bring it to Śiva.

12. Śiva attaches the elephant's head to Ganeśa's body.

Do you see the painting in a different way knowing what each scene is about and the names of the characters?

Lord Ganeśa / author
from Odisha, India /
2nd half of the 20th c. /
MAP 18519



Part I – Historical

Section 1

Cabinet of Antiquities

Section 2

Gallery

Section 3

Art Cabinet

Section 4

Armoury

Section 5

Cabinet of Natural History

Section 6

Treasury

Part II – Interaction Room

Part III – Problem-based

Part IV – Contemplation Room