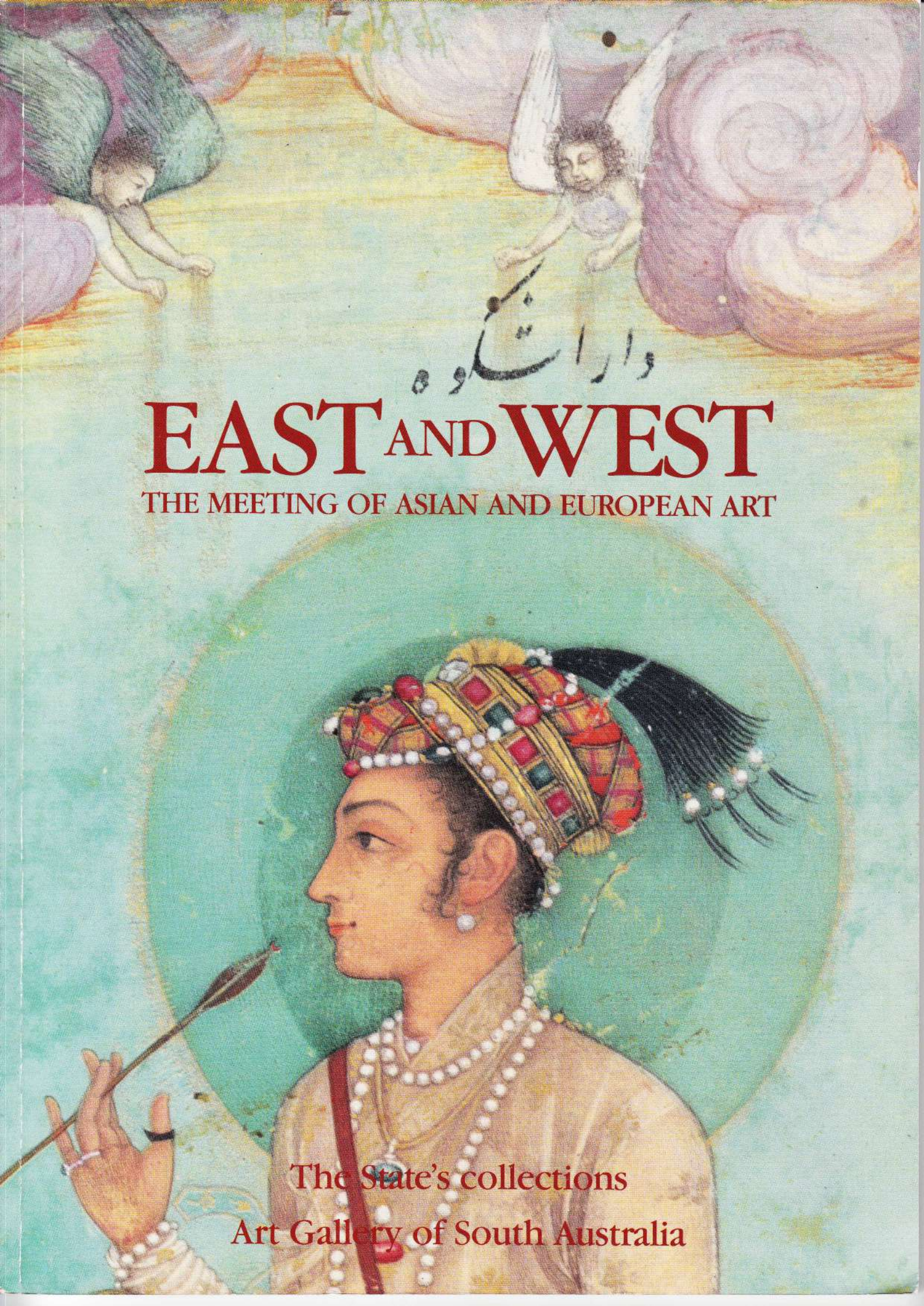


EAST AND WEST

THE MEETING OF ASIAN AND EUROPEAN ART

The State's collections

Art Gallery of South Australia

China, Plate, c1750 (no. 26)

Introduction

'Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat'.

Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*

East and West have met, however, on this earth for thousands of years.

We have chosen over 300 ceramics, prints, drawings, paintings, sculptures, photographs, lacquerwork, metalwork and textiles from the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia to show some of these patterns of meeting in art from the sixteenth century until today.

Kipling meant Asia and Europe by his East and West, a meaning still accepted today and, indeed, used here. A major reason for this exhibition is Australia's position between the historically named East and West, being for the last 200 years part of the West culturally yet geographically in the East. A separate section on Australian art's own relation with Asia follows those of Europe with the arts of China, Japan, South East Asia, India and the Middle East.

Many of the patterns of influence have been of great importance to the receiving culture, shaping it substantially. Major among these have been the movements called *chinoiserie* and *japonisme*, so named for the use the West has made of style, motif and technique developed, or thought to have developed, in China and Japan. Another important phase of European art, mostly based on a perception of Middle Eastern culture, is Orientalism. On the other side has been the interest in Western style, motif and technique in the East, which was at first cautious but later pursued with great enthusiasm.

All works in this exhibition have been chosen because they show some aspect of the meeting of East and West. Some are clear examples of *chinoiserie, japonisme* or Orientalism, and of their opposites in the East; others have used perhaps only one foreign aspect to further their own purpose.

Some are major works of art which show understanding and profitable use of the possibilities available from both sides. Others are just fun: amusing because of the pure surprise of the interchange.

All have the element conjured by Samuel Taylor Coleridge's romantic poem about Kubla Khan in his kingdom of Xanadu: they are all of strange and foreign worlds and because of this they are both literally and metaphorically exotic.

1 China and the West

The history of China's contact with the West can be relatively simply told. From the thirteenth-century journey of Marco Polo onwards, the names, dates and achievements of the Europeans who went there have been clearly recorded. Equally, the few moments when China showed interest in Western art forms can be quite easily distinguished.

The West's contact with Chinese culture is quite different: the influence was continuous and, though of varying success and judged at times very differently by Europeans, it was pervasive ideologically and artistically.

It began with the importation of Chinese silk and then porcelain into Europe, which helped establish China's, or fabulous Cathay's, reputation for beautiful and cleverly made goods. The secret of silk's manufacture had been stolen in Byzantine times and porcelain (though not the secret of its making) had been known in Europe from the fifteenth century, coming via the eastern Mediterranean. The sea route to the East was found first by Vasco da Gama in 1498 and direct trading of goods and ideas soon began.

The first large shiploads of porcelain were selling in Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the same years as Jesuit missionaries started to be allowed into Beijing.

Among these missionaries were a number of artists who brought Western books and engravings, and introduced Western techniques and ideas about art to the Chinese. A precise, contemporary response to this new art is recorded by a Chinese court artist Zou Yigui:

'The Westerners are skilled in geometry, and consequently there is not the slightest mistake in their way of rendering light and shade and distance. In their paintings all the figures, buildings, and trees cast shadows, and their brush and colours are entirely different from those of Chinese painters. Their views stretch out from broad (in the foreground) to narrow (in the background) and are defined (mathematically measured). When they paint houses on a wall people are tempted to walk into them. Students of painting may well take over one or two points from them to make their own paintings more attractive to the eye. But these painters have no brush-manner whatsoever; although they possess skill, they are simply artisans and cannot consequently be classified as painters.'[1]

The rendering of real space which the West so gleefully came to understand during the Renaissance was scorned by the Chinese as unimportant compared with the nobility of thought and gesture captured by the fine calligraphic strokes of their own artists in search of the spiritual essence of the subject.

However, although finally of small importance, there were instances of Chinese response to Western ideas about art. The Gallery owns four examples of one of the most interesting: four engravings (nos 39 to 42 illustrated p.5) made for the Emperors Qianlong and Daoguang in the period 1790 to 1830, copying not only Western ideas of space but also the new Western engraving technique. These images, by unknown Chinese engravers, which include continuous, understandable space from the foreground to the background, some perspective in the buildings, some shading of the forms, especially in the clumps of trees, and some shadows cast by the sun, were made to celebrate the Emperor's military campaigns. In

China, The Banquet given by the Emperor Qianlong before the Ziguangge Hall in Beijing 1792, c1793-99 (no. 39)

1760 the Emperor Qianlong had had sixteen wall paintings of the East Turkestan campaign made by Chinese artists under the direction of four European missionaries, including the finest of the European artists in China in the period, Giuseppe Castiglione. Qianlong then saw examples of engraved battlescenes by the German artist Georg Philipp Rugendas and asked for the large paintings to be redesigned in this medium, first sending them to be done in Paris, and later having his own Chinese artists trained in engraving.

The missionaries had another function in the link with European art. With the traders, they began the long history of direct Chinese influence on the West. The most successful Europeans in China, like the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, learnt to understand and fully appreciate Chinese culture, and were instrumental in sending back information about China to Rome. The engraving (no. 36 illustrated p.6) by the Bolognese Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, made some seventy-five years after Ricci first went to Beijing and at the same time as Chinese books first became known in Northern Italy, shows some knowledge of Chinese costume, even if the subject matter is somewhat capricious.

Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, **Priest of Idols and Death**, 1675 (no. 36)

Information about Chinese culture was also carried to France and England particularly in the eighteenth century. At its broadest, Enlightenment Europe was interested in Chinese political and philosophical ideas but there was little knowledge of the traditional high arts of China. Rather a fantasy idea of China arose where elements of 'Chinese' style and 'Chinese' life were incorporated into European Rococo decoration. It was a frivolous, amusing use of motifs applied in both two and three-dimensional objects, part of the impact of China called *chinoiserie*. Jean-Baptiste Pillement's etchings (nos 37 and 38) show fanciful little landscapes using empty space to create an airiness, with notational elements of a make-believe natural setting.

More specific motifs, often copied or developed from imported Chinese pieces, were used in the decoration of ceramics, metalwork, furniture, wallpapers and architectural details, though these works frequently retained their European shapes. The English silver Monteith bowl (no. 1) and chest of drawers (no. 3 illustrated p.8), both basically Western in design, are covered in imaginary scenes from Chinese life. The Meissen cup and saucer (no. 5 illustrated p.17) has a quite complex, brightly coloured *chinoiserie* scene painted on it. Other Chinese subjects recur again and again, like the 'bird and rock' motif, the 'bird and blossom', the 'flaming pearl', the 'tobacco leaf', and, pervasive still, the 'willow pattern'. Some, like the flaming pearl, had genuine origins in Chinese design but others, like the willow pattern, were entirely European fabrications.

There are differences of opinion about the importance of this *chinoiserie* to the arts of Europe. One point of view holds that the relationship was superficial and of little importance. Certainly, some of the motifs were of fanciful and transitory taste but on the other hand the technique of porcelain making, finally discovered by the scientists of Augustus of Saxony in 1710, the use of underglaze blue (or the famous 'blue and white') decoration, glazes like the 'three colour' type used on Whieldon plate (no. 6) deriving from Tang designs, certain shapes (starting with the tea cup), and certain developed subjects (indeed, like willow pattern) have remained of great importance to European design since the eighteenth century. Also, a major element which cannot be included here was the development of the 'English' landscape garden, derived from images of scenes of Cathay.

An important aspect of the 'China Trade' which flourished in the eighteenth century was the manufacture in China, specifically for the European market, of porcelain copied from European originals. The same engravings which inspired Qianlong to instruct his artists to make images for his own use, were copied by the porcelain manufacturers on items for use in Europe. The Gallery has one eighteenth century Chinese-made plate (no. 26 illustrated p.4) with the central part copied from a European marriage engraving inscribed around the edge with the Latin SEMPER AMOR PRO TE FIRMISSIMUS ATQUE FIDEL(I)S, or 'most strong and faithful love for you always'. The results of the Chinese workman struggling with the strange alphabet and the strange images are admirable, only slightly distorted in translation. Another plate (no. 27) includes European armorial devices, presumably especially commissioned. A further interesting aspect of the adaptation of European images by the Chinese for return to the West are the porcelain animals, like the spaniel (no. 32 illustrated p.11) of c1750-70, which copies an object type first made at Meissen in Germany in the 1730s. To complicate further the interrelationship, it shows a dog breed popularised in England during the reign of Charles II, a result of interbreeding with a type of animal originally brought from China. These are extreme examples of a huge industry making goods purely for export; there was no market for them in China itself.

The missionaries were the first European artists in China. Gradually, however, as the interest in topography and in details of the habits of life in strange lands grew in Britain and the Continent, a market was created for scenes in watercolour, oil and in prints made by professional, travelling artists. One of the first topographical artists to go to China was Thomas Daniell who with his young nephew William travelled via Macao on their way to India in 1785 (see no. 156).

A more important painter, as far as the local people were concerned, was George Chinnery who arrived in Macao in 1825 after twenty years in India (see no. 44). He remained there until his death in 1852, passing on the European ideals of portraiture and landscape of Joshua Reynolds and Antonio Canaletto to generations of Chinese artists. He directly influenced Macao-based artists like the brothers Tingqua (Guan Lianchang) and Lamqua and his work reinforced that of previous Europeans, like Castiglione, in developing the large export trade of watercolours of Chinese scenes. The Gallery has a number of these nineteenth century watercolours showing details of Chinese life, from women's hairstyles, to flowers, to carts, to shop signs (nos 45 to 60 illustrated p.13), all destined for the inquisitive middle classes of Europe. An extension of the trade are the glass paintings (see no. 61) which proliferated in Asia at the end of the century, again made for export.

All these images use European formal devices, in the tight brush strokes and the bright colours as well as in shading the figures; they show aspects of life that only would interest foreigners and would not be considered fit subjects for art in China, and they use foreign techniques like oil on glass. As with the export porcelain, the native Chinese connoisseur would have thought them poor objects of no consequence. Their vogue gradually was replaced in the late nineteenth century by photography.

At the same time as these export watercolours were being made, Europe continued to use Chinese motifs and designs in the applied arts. They became even more fanciful and extraordinary—miracles of craftsmanship like the Belleek teapot and stand (no. 14), a whipped cream of porcelain and gold enamel. The crowning glory is the pigtailed figure striding atop the lid. A further fantasy is the Minton teapot of combined Japanese Noh mask spout firmly clutched by a Chinese gentleman, all in pure yellow glaze (no. 16). Of relevance to Adelaide is a Doulton tea set decorated with dragons and the flaming pearl design with silver mounts made by Henry Steiner in South Australia in the late nineteenth century (no. 15). A final flowering of nineteenth-century Chinese taste is seen in the Carltonware (nos 17 to 20 illustrated p.9) which reflects the bright colours and intricate decoration favoured by the late Qing dynasty rulers in China.

In the past eighty years various threads of artistic influence have continued to bind China and the West. In China itself, for the first time since Qianlong, a real interest in Western ways of seeing developed again. It had two main manifestations, the first through European influenced academies of art set up in Nanking, Beijing and Shanghai with artists looking particularly to France for guidance. One later product of this is Zao Wou-ki (see no. 64 illustrated p.14) who has worked in Paris since 1947 within the tradition of Western abstraction, maintaining his Chinese identity and working with Chinese formal ideals of subtle colour, brushwork and loosely defined space, as well as, at times, incorporating Chinese ideograms into his work.

The other manifestation is the adaptation of the European social realist style in the People's Republic of China. The detailed realism of images like the social group (no. 72 illustrated p.3), the romantic heroism of the image of the young cadre (no. 68) which is so like Jacovleff's figures seen in Shanghai (see no. 63), as well as the Western techniques (of oil and poster paint and factory-made coloured paper, as used for the paper cuts nos 69 to 71) and the formal spatial elements, are all good examples of Mao Zedong's dictum of 'making foreign things serve China'.

In the West, Chinese traditions continue to interest ceramists. Some examples are the *sang-de-boeuf* or red flambé glaze derived from early Ming porcelain developed by Bernard Moore (no. 21) and by William Howson Taylor at his Ruskin Pottery (no. 25 illustrated p.10) in England in the early years of the century and Doulton's recreation of 'Chinese jade' in porcelain (no. 22 illustrated p.10), complete with moulded lizards (derived from dragons) on each shoulder.

It seems fitting to finish with a major period of Chinese influence on Western two-dimensional art which developed in the 1950s, interestingly at the same time as Western-derived social realist art was being developed in China at the expense of the traditional forms. For the first time serious Chinese art could be studied by Western artists in a significant way; reproductions were more frequently published in books and actual examples more often available in European public collections. Work by a number of major artists like André Masson, Hans Hartung, Karel Appel, Pierre Soulages, Pierre Alechinsky, Franz Kline and, notably, Mark Tobey show obvious debts to traditional Chinese art. Some like the Englishman Martin Bradley (see no. 66) remember how they discovered the 'magic of Chinese calligraphy'[2] and specifically worked with the combination of image and word, based on Chinese characters, while for others the influence was more general: the calligraphy of traditional painted scrolls, with its fluid, seemingly spontaneous lines and open, free control of space, attracted Western artists developing ideas of abstract expressionism.

1. Quoted in Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, London 1973, p.85.

2. See exhibition catalogue, Gallery One, London, March 1962.

Bow China Works, Stratford, Plate, c1755-60 (no. 7)

2 Japan and the West

Japan's contact with the West also began with traders and Catholic missionaries, allowed to enter the country in the late 1500s, but never welcomed in the same way as in China. The first real Western impact on Japan's art manufacture was in the development of an export porcelain industry in the seventeenth century, taking over when China was not fully able to supply European demand.

Japanese designs, following the taste developed in Europe for Chinese-inspired work, continue many of the qualities seen in the Ming and Qing dynasty works. The main Japanese qualities which infiltrated into European use were the Kakiemon and Imari styles. The first has a milky white body used with elegant enamel colours and spare sophisticated design, and the second uses specific gilt and polychrome decoration. The European manufacturers then incorporated these elements into their own work, as seen for example in the decoration (if not the shape which is Chinese based) of a Worcester vase of c1775 (see no. 97 illustrated p.23), and a Derby vase made two or so decades later (see no. 99).

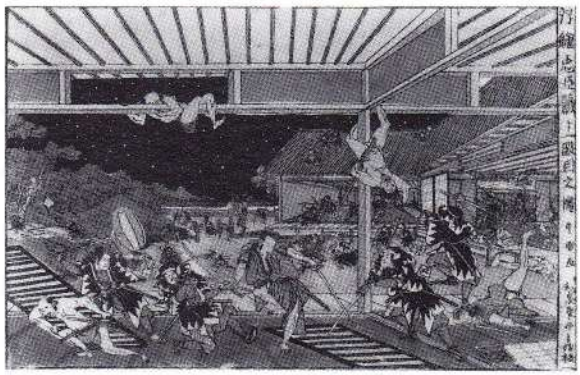
After the initial partial welcome of some Europeans, in 1640 Japan closed its borders to foreigners, who were then able to trade only from an island near Nagasaki. The missionaries and traders had brought European engravings and books to Japan, as they had to China, and unlike the passing appraisal which they commanded in China, in Japan a serious interest in European art ideas developed, remained, and with some ebbs and flows, grew stronger and stronger. Today Japanese artists' part in international contemporary art is by far the most important in Asia, and in certain areas can be said to lead the world.

Use of European ideas was, however, at first hesitant, the principal experimentation with Western forms being in the popular medium of woodcuts, or *ukiyo-e* (pictures of the floating, or enjoyable, world). In the higher arts of calligraphy and painting Japan maintained the strict traditionalism of its neighbour.

Again, as in China, when interested in using Western notions, the Japanese woodcut artists explored methods of including the enfolding, three-dimensional space of European art in their work, leading closer and closer to a European-based, clearly articulated capturing of 'reality'. It is appropriate that the *ukiyo-e* artists were interested in this, as their subject matter was firmly based on showing the detailed life of the ordinary people of Japan, first in the theatre and centres of entertainment, then in landscapes which people could see on their travels.

A first important step was the use of European linear perspective, seen in woodcuts from the 1720s. They were literally called *Uki-e*, or perspective prints. A major exponent of these was Toyoharu, the teacher of Toyokuni. Toyokuni II's image from the *Chushingura* of c1830 (no. 73 illustrated p.16) is a typical example. Kuniyoshi, a pupil of Toyokuni, developed other European-derived stylistic devices: compared with the usual highly stylised features, his Sumo wrestlers (no. 74) are portrayed with personalised, softened faces, and various of his works experiment with European shadows, again to create the illusion of space and reality. While two from his series *Selected Warriors of the Twelve Signs* (nos 75 and 76 illustrated p.19) in major aspects retain their Japanese form, Kuniyoshi shades the edges of his men and animals in a quite untraditional manner. Hiroshige's work often includes this exploration of space: two examples are the *Cotton shops at Otenma-cho* and *Tama River* (nos 77 and 79 illustrated p.20), scenes from his *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, both showing very obvious perspective.

One important aspect of Japanese response to Europeans was the development, from the time of the first Portuguese and Dutch visitors, of art in which the strange physiques, clothes and possessions of the Europeans were shown. This was called *namban* art and mostly centred around Nagasaki. The Gallery owns a late *netsuke* or ivory belt toggle in the *namban* tradition, shaped as a European sailor (no. 96 illustrated p.23).



Gosotei Toyokuni, Toyokuni II, **Chushingura, act eleven,** c1830 (no. 73)

This exotic European subject matter re-emerged for similar reasons in Yokohama in the mid-nineteenth century, again based on showing the peculiar features of strange foreign life highlighted by the arrival of the American Commander Matthew Perry in Edo Bay in 1853 and the opening of the port again to Europeans. The five prints by Yoshikazu (nos 80 to 84 illustrated p.21) have the further twist of purporting to be informational travel documents: showing to potential Japanese travellers scenes from the life in North America, England, Russia and Holland, and in their inscriptions listing some important facts about the country and what the visitor could expect to see.

One wonders what the Japanese who enjoyed the *Yokohama-e* woodcuts would have thought of a major contemporaneous development in Western art: the excited recognition by French artists in the second half of the nineteenth century of some basic principles of the traditional Japanese *ukiyo-e*. At the same time as Japanese artists were striving to understand Western methods of creating an illusion of three-dimensional space, European artists realised the formal strength of the traditionally flat Eastern images. Interpretations of Japanese style, subject matter and technique dominated much of European art and design from the 1850s on. In its heyday called *japonisme*, it rivalled eighteenth-century *chinoiserie* for impact on European art.

The story of the influence of Japanese prints on French artists has often been told: how the artist Félix Bracquemond (see nos 117 and 118 illustrated p.26) first discovered a book of prints by Hokusai in the shop of his printer Delâtre in Paris in 1856 and showed it to his friends, and how, at the same time, information on this newly opened Far Eastern country was quickly becoming available in books, some of which reproduced more prints from Japan. Within five years influential writers like Charles Baudelaire could say 'Quite a while ago I received a packet of *japonneries*. I've split them up among my friends. .'[1] and a year later, in 1862, the shop *La Porte Chinoise* opened in Paris, becoming a major source for the sale of *ukiyo-e* prints and other Japanese items.

Some works from the Gallery's collection can be directly compared to show how direct and important this influence was: Hiroshige's woodcut *Iris garden at Horikiri* of 1857 (no. 78, a non-traditional Japanese travel subject) has direct correspondence with the George Woodall glass vase made in Worcestershire in 1894 (no. 102) and in later works made half a world away again in Australia: Sydney Long's painting of irises of c1898 (no. 216 illustrated p.48) and even later, as a direct return to the woodcut medium, Murray Griffin's woodcut *Cannas* made in Melbourne in 1935 (no. 241 illustrated p.55). The Japanese influence on the two-dimensional Australian works comes through Europe, as did almost all Asian styles until World War II, but despite the circuitousness of the links the two main elements of all the Western works remain strongly *japonaise*: firstly the choice of the natural flower subject matter, rejecting academic themes in favour of simple scenes of the beauties of nature or of everyday life, and secondly the way these scenes are depicted. The artists chose startlingly different compositional devices of a very low viewpoint and close vantage point, showing simplified, sometimes cropped and asymmetrical shapes enclosed in a fluid, calligraphic line, on a flat background, using radically different colours. The Japanese used water based inks for their prints and printed them in large flat areas of colour, producing a feeling of transparency and light. This was translated in the European works here either literally in the use of glass or using oil paint to create the illusion of this light.

The French works owned by the Gallery which show Japanese influence most strongly are four lithographs by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (nos 123 to 126 illustrated p.18), made in the 1890s. His debt is both in the formal qualities (flattened space, clear colours, fluid, calligraphic lines) and in the depiction of the 'floating' entertainment world of the capital, and also—even more importantly—in his ability to use these elements to create an excitement and intensity in his work. All the other French artists included here (Paul Gauguin, Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, Pierre Bonnard illustrated p.27, Henri Rivière illustrated p.27 and Édouard Vuillard) found elements in Japanese art which helped them reassess the course of Western avant-garde art.

Similarly, French applied arts reacted to the Japanese influence: the colour and decoration of an otherwise traditional vase by Sèvres (no. 101) for example, and more obviously the glass work of René Lalique (nos 107 to 110 illustrated p.24).

Royal Saxon Porcelain Manufacture, Meissen, **Chocolate cup and saucer**, c1730 (no. 5)

The course of *japonisme* in England is less obvious, more diluted, and consequently has received less attention. It easily slips away into the Aesthetic Movement, where the elements rather than the essence were used to create purer and purer forms and less and less subject. W. S. Gilbert's lines from *Patience* satirises the type:

> 'A Japanese young man,
> A blue-and-white young man,
> Francesca di Rimini, miminy, piminy,
> Je-ne-sais-quoi young man!
> A pallid and thin young man,
> A haggard and lank young man,
> A greenery-yallery, Grosvenor Gallery,
> Foot-in-the-grave young man!'

Whistler had first introduced *japonisme* to England in the 1860s and quickly books and objects followed, many entering the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) in the 1870s. A number of Whistler's subjects are Japanese costume pieces or else they use, more subtly, the reduced formal elements seen in Japanese prints (see no. 120). Whistler's disciple, the Adelaide-born Mortimer Menpes, was an unusual follower of Japan in England as he took it more seriously and literally than any of his peers. He went to Japan in 1887 and revisited it in 1896, producing paintings, prints and books on the country and its life. His *Alone in a Shoe Shop* (no. 121 illustrated p.26) is a successful amalgam of freshly seen seen Japanese subject matter with the formal *japoniste* elements used in both image and frame.

Again the applied arts played an important part in England in the acceptance of *japonisme*, as they previously had in *chinoiserie*. The old firms like Minton used Japanese motifs (see no. 100), and new manufacturers specialised in both motif and design shapes. One example is George Woodall's glass for Thomas Webb and Sons; another is William Moorcroft's ceramics, using for example, in his Flamminian ware for Liberty's, the Japanese 'mon' motif in particular Japanese shaped and coloured vases (see no. 105). The Liberty shop, opened in 1875, was an important outlet for Japanese-inspired design in London.

Direct Japanese influence on the West in woodcut printmaking was strong in England in the first decades of the twentieth century but was also seen on the Continent and in Australia. A number of Japanese artists went to Europe; Yoshijiro Urushibara (see nos 87 to 89 illustrated p.22), who worked in London and Paris for twenty years from 1908, was noted for giving demonstrations in the woodcut technique. The subject matter, cut, finish and colour of these works retained a central harmony, unlike the simultaneous tradition coming from Gauguin's and Edvard Munch's woodcuts which led to the German expressionist print tradition. Further, the use of water-based inks and other Japanese techniques added to the direct associations between the two traditions. Sydney Lee's print of *The Bridge* (no. 135 illustrated p.28) shows another association, a direct reference to a famous image by Hokusai. Similar shapes and colours to the prints also occur contemporaneously in Clarice Cliff's earthenware pieces (see nos 111 to 113 illustrated p.25), though, as she recognised herself in entitling a series *Bizarre*, they go one step further than the prints into a recreation of the eighteenth-century fantasy of the Far East.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi, **The goat with warrior Kanu**, c1840 (no. 76)

The twentieth century in Japan has seen a continuation of the interest in Western ideas first expressed in the 1500s. As in China (indeed, as in all colonially influenced countries), in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the mixture of ideas apparent in European art was experimented with to various degrees of success. The

depiction of space and reality remained the main issues. Some artists like Hiroshi Yoshida combined traditional Japanese subject matter and technique with a much more Europeanised atmospheric spatial element, related to Monet's waterlily paintings (see no. 90). Yoshida also learnt the European habit of cutting and printing his own woodblocks. Others like Tsuguharu Fujita, who lived in Paris from 1913, developed a successful amalgam of East and West in restrained but vigorous calligraphy, flattened but essential forms and intimate and self-analytical subject matter (see no. 86 illustrated p.22).

Numbers of Japanese artists travelled to and from the West. Some, like a Mr Takekoshi, whose etching of Bath Abbey is in the Gallery's collection, were noted in *The Studio* in 1917 (p.152), for 'the absolutely European eyes with which he appears to see his subjects'.

A new era began after World War II. Unlike China which so severely limited her willingness to accept things from the West after 1949, Japan's relationship has intensified, diversified and become more and more significant. The relationship between potters Bernard Leach (see no. 114) and Shoji Hamada (nos 115 and 116 illustrated p.25) has influenced all ceramists of the mid century, either following or reacting against the simple materials, forms and decorations of their pottery, which ultimately derives from early Chinese and Korean wares. Japanese arts have retained a strong reference to their own traditional forms while looking to the West: sculpture based on traditional materials and using traditional Eastern philosophical concepts has been significant; performance art seems an appropriate development from the highly symbolic gestural drama seen in Kabuki and Noh theatre, and the use of paper and indeed the conscious revival of the woodcut is another important link with tradition (see nos 94 and 95). It can also be said that the extraordinary facility and sympathy of the Japanese for electronic goods makes the Art and Technology interests of international contemporary art seem appropriately not the West's, but theirs.

1. Quoted in Colta Feller Ives, *The Great Wave*, New York 1974, p.7.

Utagawa Hiroshige, **Tama River, cherry blossom on the embankment**, 1856 (no. 79)

Japan and the West

Catalogue

a) Japanese Fine Arts

Gosotei Toyokuni, TOYOKUNI II
Japan 1777-1835

73 **Chushingura, act eleven**
c1830 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper 22.6 x 34.8cm (image)

South Australian Government Grant 1974

Utagawa KUNIYOSHI
Japan 1798-1861

74 **Sumo wrestlers, with referee and judge**
c1833-34 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper, triptych each image 36.5 x 25.0cm

South Australian Government Grant 1975

Utagawa KUNIYOSHI
Japan 1798-1861

75 **The horse with warrior Sogo no Goro̅**
c1840 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper 36.4 x 12.3cm
from the series *Selected Warriors of the Twelve Signs*

South Australian Government Grant 1983

Utagawa KUNIYOSHI
Japan 1798-1861

76 **The goat with warrior Kanu**
c1840 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper 36.1 x 12.5cm
from the series *Selected Warriors of the Twelve Signs*

South Australian Government Grant 1983

Utagawa HIROSHIGE
Japan 1797-1858

77 **Cottonshops in Otenma-cho**
1858 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper 34.0 x 22.6cm (image)
no. 7 from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*

David Murray Bequest Fund 1952

Utagawa HIROSHIGE
Japan 1797-1858

78 **Iris garden at Horikiri**
1857 Edo (Tokyo)
colour woodcut on paper 33.5 x 22.0cm (image)
no. 16 from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*

David Murray Bequest Fund 1942

3 South East Asia and the West

Compared with the very obvious and important artistic links between Europe and the easily identified cultures of China, Japan, India and of the Middle East, evidence of artistic interchange between South East Asia and Europe is sparse and diversified. The artistic products of the various South East Asian countries were less in demand in Europe and these countries lacked the centralised, powerful and rich cultural base which had attracted European attention to the other regions. Correspondingly, European artistic influence is also less obvious in the South East Asian countries.

Nevertheless, the cultural interplay between Europe and the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, and various nations of the Pacific can be seen in very specific and very different ways.

The art of the Spanish missionaries remains important in Philippines culture, as in other parts of Catholic Asia like Goa and Macao, with early architecture and figures of saints being the principal reminder of the past. *Santos* figures were introduced in the Philippines in the sixteenth century, and local carvers made copies from the Spanish originals for churches and households. It was a relatively easy and successful move for the carvers, used to making *anito* or pagan idols. The *St Joseph* (no. 148 illustrated p.30) combines sensitive modelling with awkward proportions, resulting from repeated copying of other sculptures, and its removal further and further from the original human figure.[1]

Philippines, **St Joseph**, c1780-1800 (no. 148)

In comparison the two cloths from Indonesia (nos 147 and 151 illustrated p.35) show eclectic, fanciful borrowings, this time appropriately from the Netherlands, the European nation which colonised that country. The batik from Java shows what appears to be a European ship with a figurehead included in the design, while the woven *hinggi*, or man's cloth, from East Sumba, has incorporated the rampant lions from Dutch coin designs into the border pattern. Javanese batiks, especially those made along the north coast, did occasionally draw from foreign sources, sometimes from actual European textiles, illustrations and pattern books, sometimes from Indian and Chinese sources, but the borrowings remained exotic details for the Indonesian craftspeople, assimilated into their own design. The coins on which the Sumba cloth is based would have been given to the local rulers as objects of prestige and marks of trading partner status, then subsequently woven into the cloths as evidence of this privilege; they are part of the design of even modern examples. Other foreign objects, from Chinese dragons taken from ceramics to bicycle riders and cupids, were included in the cloths.[2]

Europeans generally remained oblivious to South East Asia's culture until the nineteenth century, when anthropology began to interest the intelligentsia of Europe. The British were very interested in seeing all they could of China, with whom they had traded for so long, and of India, which they ruled. It was the French who turned their attention to South East Asia, both to their own colonies of French Indochina and to the unknown, mysterious, exotic, romantic region in general. Notions of the French-created 'noble savage' were heightened by the developing collection of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris and later by a number of visits by exotic South East Asians to France, for example the Cambodian dancers who came to Paris and Marseilles in 1906 and who Auguste Rodin followed and drew attentively, or the Royal Bangkok Ballet which performed in 1900 in Francophile Russia and was seen by, and influential on, artists like Léon Bakst. An event of great interest in Paris was the 1889 Exposition Universelle which included a reconstruction of the Cambodian Angkor-wat temple and a complete Javanese village, with a native hut and dancing girls.

Paul Gauguin saw this 1889 exhibition, was enthusiastic about the Javanese village (writing a little misleadingly to Emile Bernard 'All the art of India can be found there'[3]) and probably there purchased photographs of carvings on the temples of Borobodur in central Java. Gauguin was continually searching in different cultures for information and ideas he could use and images from Peru, Japan, Egypt, Greece and even Maori culture can be traced in his art. Gauguin certainly owned two photographs of Borobodur and probably others, which, it seems, he thought were from Cambodia.[4] However it was the ideas found in them, not the exact detail of their origin, which interested him, especially the continuous, rhythmic interplay of light and dark forms, the shallow picture plane, the sensuous figures, the way of including specific, seemingly naturalistic symbols into the image, and the

enigmatic timelessness achieved. All these aspects can be seen in his woodcuts (see nos 149 and 150 illustrated p.31) made five years after the Exhibition, on his return to Paris from his first visit to Tahiti. Also, these images are very obviously carved, a revolutionary, tactile quality which Gauguin introduced into woodcut prints.

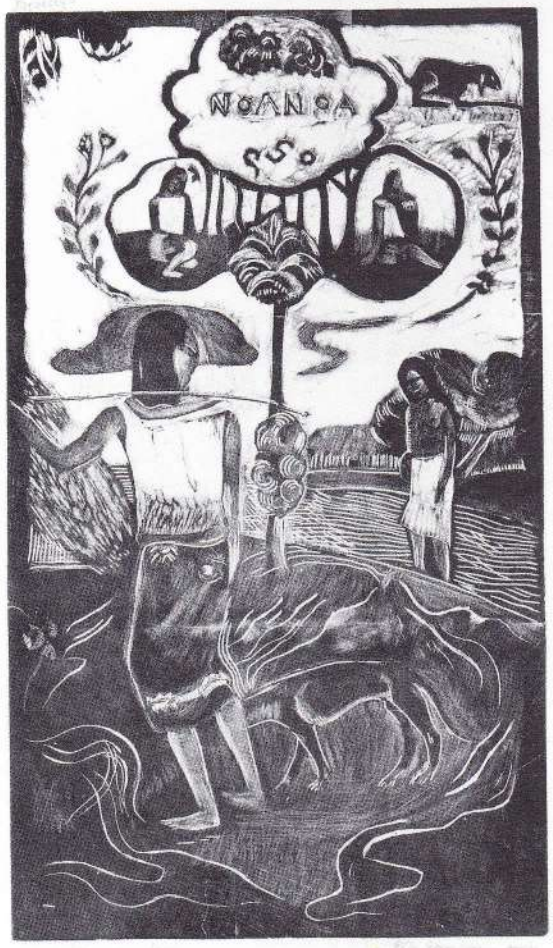
Gauguin's vision of South East Asia has always seemed romantic and this short chapter should mention his continuing influence on Australian artists like Donald Friend, who as a young artist saw the Frenchman's work in reproduction and who subsequently spent long periods in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Ray Crooke, whose *Island Priest* of 1964 is in the Gallery's collection, retains elements of the flattened forms and timelessness of Gauguin's work.

1. Ron Radford has provided the information on the *Santos* figure.

2. Dick Richards has pointed out these details. Information on such cloths is found in Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Splendid Symbols, Textile and Tradition in Indonesia*, Washington 1979, pp.127 and 159.

3. Quoted in Richard S. Field, *Paul Gauguin, the Paintings of the First Voyage to Tahiti*, New York 1977, p.238, note 42.

4. Ibid., pp.36, 238 and illustrations 4, 12, 13 and 14.



Paul Gauguin, **Noa Noa**, 1894 (no. 149)

South East Asia and the West

Catalogue

Netherlands Indies (Indonesia) 18th century

147 **Cloth**
c1750 Cirebon or Pekalongen, Java
cotton, batik dyed 95.0 x 218.0cm
South Australian Government Grant 1976

Philippines 18th century

148 **St Joseph**
c1780-1800 Bicol region, Luzon
molave wood 91.0cm high
A. M. Ragless Bequest Fund 1984

Paul GAUGUIN
France 1848-1903

149 **Noa Noa** (Fragrant Tahiti)
1894 Paris, printed 1921
woodcut on paper 35.5 x 20.3cm (image)
South Australian Government Grant 1984

Paul GAUGUIN
France 1848-1903

150 **Auti te Pape** (By the river)
1894 Paris, printed 1921
woodcut on paper 20.3 x 35.5cm (image)
South Australian Government Grant 1984
Gauguin wrote to Daniel de Montfried, from Tahiti, in 1897: 'Have always before you the Persians, the Cambodians and a bit of the Egyptian' (quoted in Colta Feller Ives, op.cit. p.96).

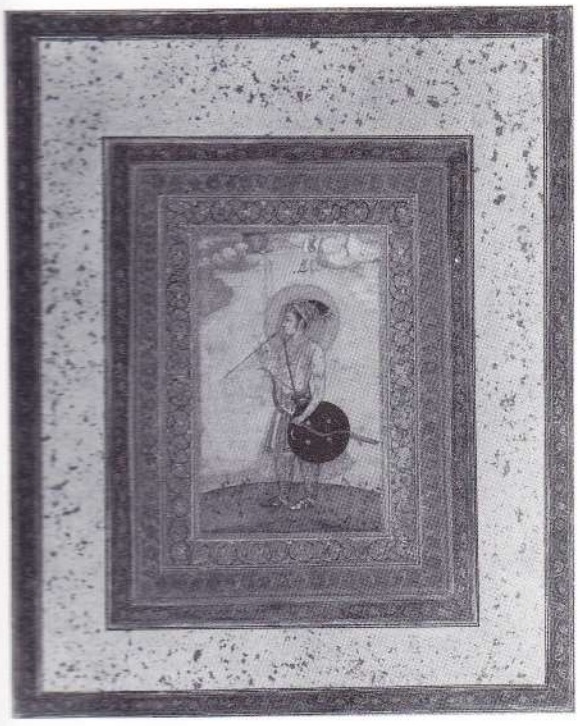
Indonesia 20th century

151 **Hinggi, man's cloth**
c1965 East Sumba
cotton, woven, fringed 242.0 x 112.0cm
South Australian Government Grant 1973

4 India and the West

The gouache portrait of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh (no. 152 illustrated p.33) is an example of the open interest in different cultures which marked the reign of his father Shah Jehan, the emperor best remembered for commissioning the Taj Mahal. The elegance of the young man, the simplicity of the design of the whole, the delicacy of the detail and the brilliance of the colour are distinctive of Mughal painting at its finest. And yet introduced into the image are distinctive European details, painted in the novel European style: most obvious are the little angels and the rounded clouds at the top; less obvious is the prince's halo or nimbus, a symbol of holiness or rank originally developed in Persia but, like the angels and clouds, introduced into India in Christian images brought by the European traders and missionaries. Further, the realistic treatment of the flowers through which the prince walks owes some debt to European herbals also known in the Mughal court. The portrait was painted around 1628-1630[1], some fifty years after the court had first had contact with western art.

Another Mughal painting, made during the reign of Dara Shikoh's brother Aurangzeb, of an Indian mother with her child playing at her feet (no. 154) was probably inspired by European Virgin and Child scenes for it shows Western influence in both the treatment of the woman's drapery and in the playful intimacy of the two figures.



India, **Dara Shikoh as a boy**, c1628-30 (no. 152)

The interest which the Indians displayed in the newly arrived foreigners themselves is seen in a painting of a Gujarati lady in Western, perhaps Portuguese, dress and holding a Western wine cup and flask (no. 153 illustrated p.32). Gujarat was notable for its involvement with early Portuguese traders, though English visitors like the Ambassador Sir Thomas Roe also were in the area from the seventeenth century.

India, **A female cupbearer in European costume**, c1650 (no. 153)

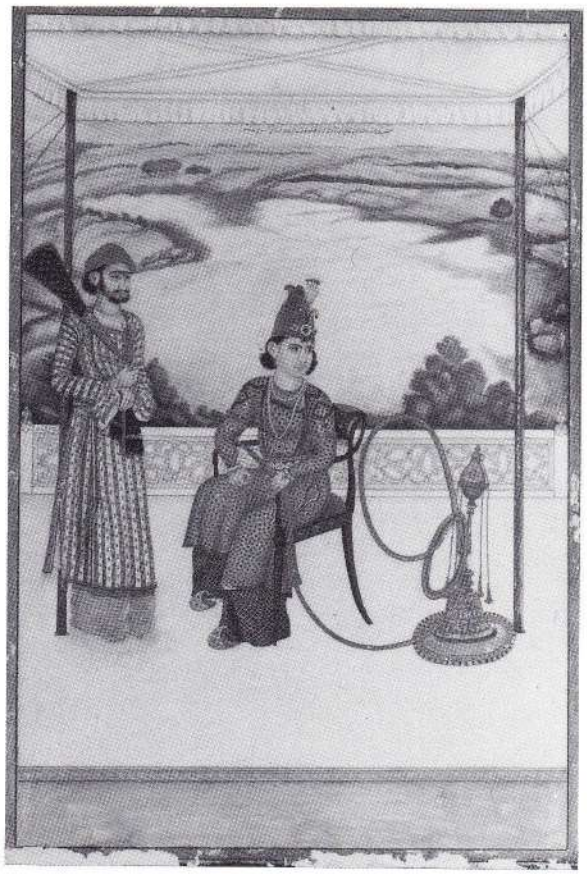
The decline of the Mughals left India more vulnerable to outside commercial powers, and in the late eighteenth century the British Government took responsibility for Indian affairs from the East India Company. This period established the rules and habits for co-existence in India of British visitors and local residents for the next 150 years. The complexity of the relationship is reflected in the art of both sides. The major manifestations in England in two dimensional art were documentary: either satires of political issues emphasizing the intrigue and riches of the East (no. 155) or exciting tales of life in India (nos 156 and 157). The book illustrating *Wild Sports of the East* shows all the variety, colour, danger and general exoticism which has been a major part of British sentiment about India since the eighteenth century.

The most important Indian influence on European style occurred in the applied arts, especially in textiles, where the patterning and colour of Indian design remain in common Western usage today. Chintz was a major part in this and so was the Kashmir or Cashmere shawl (see no. 165 illustrated p.37)

In the fifteenth century migrating Persian weavers and designers found a home in Kashmir near to the source of fine wool from Himalayan animals. Their floral border designs had gradually developed into the so-called 'cone' which eventually in the nineteenth century covered the whole fabric. Their shawls were exported to the West from the 1770s, with growing pressure on the Kashmiri weavers to adapt their designs to European taste. The industry in India, which continued to make the finest shawls, remained strong for about a century. However English and Scottish weavers started to copy the Indian designs, becoming centred in Paisley near Glasgow, with the 'cone' gradually becoming known as the 'paisley'. Other textiles,

like table covers (see no. 167), were made in the style which also spread to the Continent, for example to France (see no. 168), though with more modified designs.

Nineteenth-century painting in India went through a number of Europeanised forms. One was the depiction of the landscape such as seen in the two portraits of the sons of the second last and last Mughal emperors painted in Delhi around 1810 and 1825 (nos 158 and 159 illustrated p.33). Perspective and atmosphere, as well as the gestures of the figures and the furniture, all show the influence of Europe. Two further portraits made in Oudh in the mid-nineteenth century show head and shoulders of members of the ruling family (nos 160 and 161). They probably derive from two introduced European portrait traditions—the oil paintings by expatriate British artists like Robert Home and Tilly Kettle who enjoyed success in the Oudh cities of Lucknow and Faizabad from the 1770s to the 1800s, and the miniature portraits painted on ivory which were popular with the British themselves.



India, **Mirza Mohammed Salim Shah**, c1825 (no. 159)

Another nineteenth-century development was Company Paintings (nos 162 and 163 illustrated p.37), so called after the East India Company whose officers were the first to commission them. Made by Indian artists to show the local customs and mostly intended to be taken back to Britain as souvenirs, they use forms and techniques most acceptable to their audience: topographically detailed scenes, made in soft colours in the European medium of watercolour on factory-made paper.

Very different are Kalighat paintings (nos 170 to 175 illustrated p.36). These were produced for a purely Indian popular market—souvenirs for the pilgrims visiting the Kali temple near Calcutta. The Kalighat style appeared around 1800, made possible by the large sheets of cheap, thin paper manufactured by the British (in contrast to the small expensive sheets of local hand-made paper) and exploiting the free washes possible with the new watercolour medium. There is also British influence in the characteristic 'shaded' modelling of forms. All this is incorporated into the Hindu subjects, painted with typically Indian rhythmic forms and bright colours.

Kalighat remains one of the most lively Indian forms of painting of the century. The fluid, broad brushwork and pure, simplified forms of Kalighat painting (enforced because their necessarily low price meant they could not be labour intensive) relate to Toulouse-Lautrec's lithographs in their vigorous, successful amalgam of East and West.

Twentieth-century Indian art has continued its interest in the West generally, though the major influence is from expressionism, ultimately derived from an exhibition of German art held in Calcutta in 1922. Various traditional motifs and forms continue in much contemporary Indian work, with images like Kaiko Moti's *Fish* (no. 176), made in the 1950s, for example, combining Western technique and subject with an extraordinary Indian (Persian-derived) blue.

1. This date, like much of the information in this section on India, has been provided by Barbara Shields.'B. S.' in the catalogue refers to her.

India and the West

Catalogue

India 17th century

152 **Dara Shikoh as a boy**
c1628-30 Agra or Delhi
gouache on paper 41.0 x 32.0cm
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1940

India 17th century

153 **A female cupbearer in European costume**
c1650 Gujarat Province
gouache on paper 30.5 x 22.1cm
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1940
The costume could be Portuguese, Dutch or English. Its type was worn in Europe approximately 100 years before this painting was made.

India 17th century

154 **Woman and child**
c1680 Deccan
gouache on paper 31.2 x 23.4cm
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1940.

5 The Middle East and the West

Since the Romans united the Western world from Britain to the Levant and the subsequent invasion of the West by the Eastern religion of Christianity, Western Europe has been in close contact with the Middle East. However, apart from the continued links between Byzantine culture and Venice, the relations between Europe and the non-Christian Middle East have always been dominated by a strong sense of difference.

The first such manifestations in post-medieval European art were benign: the Renaissance interest in all manner of things included the depiction of the Middle Eastern merchants, who brought to the seaports of Europe goods from the Far East and from their own countries. Two major Renaissance artists, Albrecht Dürer and Gentile Bellini, included Middle Eastern figures in their work; Gentile Bellini actually visited Constantinople in 1501 and made drawings of various people there. The etching of Memet Cicala, 'Admiral of the Grand Turk', attributed to Giacomo Franco (no. 177 illustrated p.39), made in Venice around 1596, is a typical extension of the same interest.

attributed to Giacomo Franco, **Memet Cicala, Admiral of the Grand Turk**, c1596 (no. 177)

A major trading item from the Middle East often shown in Renaissance paintings was the Turkish or Persian carpet. The Gallery's large oil portrait of *Lady Aston* painted in the 1620s by Marcus Geeraerts contains a good example.

By the seventeenth century, Holland had become a trading force taking over from Mediterranean ports and artists in Amsterdam like Rembrandt started to draw the strange visitors in the streets. His work is an important stage in the development of interest in the Middle East,[1] with details taken from Eastern life around him in the form of merchants and the local Jewish population and also from Mughal drawings (similar to the Gallery's portrait of Dara Shikoh) which he owned. Some of those drawings of elegant, beautifully dressed Indian princes show the same loose, open lines and spaces which create so strong a feeling of light in Rembrandt's own work. Rembrandt used Eastern details as props in domestic scenes (see no. 178), to add authenticity to his Old and New Testament subjects which had taken place in the Middle East, and he also used formal attributes which he could study in his Mughal drawings. An important quality gained by Rembrandt from the exoticism of the details and the fluidity of the line was the creation of universally moving, mystic works like his paintings of the so-called *Polish Rider*. He recognised a quality which others explored in the eighteenth century and which had enormous impact in the nineteenth: what has become known in art history specifically as Orientalism—images of the Middle East by the West, ranging from quite close observation to wild fantasy. The emphasis was always on images of contemporary life, not on recreation of historical or biblical scenes.

Particularly in Italy in the seventeenth century a number of other artists like Stefano Della Bella (see nos 180 and 181) whose work is close to Rembrandt's also depicted Turkish or Persian visitors to Europe, while Rembrandt's direct influence is seen in his etching of *Orientals* copied in Italy 130 years later (no. 179). Further manifestations can also be seen later in the work of the Tiepolos (no. 183).

At the same time as Rembrandt was working in the Netherlands, the Middle Eastern painting tradition centred in Persia was beginning to be influenced by European styles. Shah Abbas in Isfahan had commissioned European murals in oil paint for his buildings from 1600, and by 1660 a Persian painter, Muhammad Zaman, was learning European technique and style in Italy. The two paintings in oil on canvas (nos 189 and 190 illustrated p.43) were made in Persia around the time of the stabilising of power in Shiraz by Karim Khan, a ruler who had probably seen the murals in Isfahan and who encouraged the development of oil painting. The technique of oil paint on these large-size canvases meant that the delicate details, patterns and colours of traditional Persian miniature painting in gouache were sacrificed to loosened brush strokes and broad areas of colour. The other major change was the desire, again, to capture Western space and 'reality'. The shading of the figures, the golden atmospheric light contrasting with the aqua greens, and the perspective of the trees are all European. The figures do remain stylised however, too stiff and frontal for Western standards, and gradually this formality developed its own course into late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Persian Qajar painting.

Direct relations between Persia and Britain were aided in the early seventeenth century by Sir Robert Shirley who wore an exotic eastern costume when painted by Anthony van Dyck in 1622 and who acted as Persian Ambassador at the Court of St James; by the 1660s 'Persian', or 'Eastern' or 'Turkish' fashion in dress had been introduced generally into England, an attempt to break reliance on French taste (see no. 185). Two engravings of Sultanas by European artists who worked in England (nos 182 and 184 illustrated p.40) both show fashionably dressed ladies, and also introduce an important image of Orientalism based on fanciful stories of the harem: that of the Eastern woman, either mistress or servant, as the embodiment of exotic, sensual pleasure. The captions beneath these two engravings read: 'the Sultana, a lover of strange things, comes with a loving flower to her Lord to make peace', 'if I am in irons, my glory has no equal because I make the greatest kings of the world wear them', and 'O let me press thee, pant on thy bosom, sink into thy arms, and lose myself in the luxurious fold'! These works of course are not derived except in some costume details from the East but they were fuelled by stories of the East. In providing the basis for what became a major aspect of nineteenth-century imaginative imagery they hold an important part in the interrelationship of East and West in art.

Gabriel Scorodomoff, after Philipp De Loutherbourg, **A sultana**, 1777 (no. 184)

The English satirists were never slow to work on a new folly or to use one image which would be recognised to lampoon another. Sensual pleasure became but one element of the British idea of the Middle East; a less positive perception was bad government caused by indulgence and sloth, exploited to the full in Charles Ansell's comment on George III as a 'Persian' sultan, lying in full odalisque pose, richly dressed in oriental costume, and fast asleep (no. 187). Less overt is Richard Dighton's portrait of the actual Persian ambassador, His Excellency Mirza Abdul Hassan Khan (no. 188 illustrated p.40), made at the time of his arrival in London when he caused a sensation because of the 'fair Circassian', Dill Arum, veiled and with two black servants, who accompanied him. It was, and was seen as, a fantasy turned remarkably real.

Richard Dighton, **His Excellency the Persian Ambassador**, 1819 (no. 188)

A number of factors made the Middle East important to artists in the nineteenth century. Napoleon's campaigns had increased interest in the Middle East and had raised an emotional nationalist link with the region for both Britain and France; the Greeks' struggle for independence from the Turks had gained the particular interest of writers and artists from other nations; there was general growth of interest in foreign lands and customs, and, most importantly, derived from journals of travellers and aided by later fictional writing (as well as the mid-century translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*), the area was linked with subject matter suitable to the new Romantic movement, throwing aside the cold didacticism of Neo-classicism in favour of contemporary, colourful displays of passion and emotion. Further, there were possibilities in Middle Eastern subject matter for strict nineteenth-century morality to be conveniently side-stepped in the name of documentary realism. Most of the major artists of nineteenth-century France, from Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres to Théodore Chassériau to Jean-Léon Gérôme made a number of images based on the Middle East.

There was also the direct influence of the region on the artists' style. Eugène Delacroix had seen Persian and Indian miniatures and was noted as saying 'the most beautiful pictures I have ever seen are certain Persian carpets,'[2] and on his visit to Morocco and Algeria in 1832 he had become aware of both the whiteness of the light and the strong colours of the local culture. He translated both into his work, notably including pure colour in his shadows. The subject matter of his *Lion and Arab* etching of 1849 (no. 192 illustrated p.41) and the dramatic use of light show his continued interest in Middle Eastern references, which were carried on throughout the century by other artists, for example in Charles Courtry's

etching (no. 194), and into the twentieth century with watercolours like Raffaele Mainella's (no. 198) and Robert Talbot-Kelly's (no. 199). The easy association of the Middle East with sensual excitement survives in this century, as Hollywood so ably understood in casting Rudolf Valentino in his most successful motion-picture role as *The Sheik*.

Eugène Delacroix, **Lion tearing the breast of an Arab**, 1849 (no. 192)

Worcester Royal Porcelain Co. Ltd, Worcester, **Vase**, c1890 (no. 202)

Two other aspects of nineteenth-century Orientalism are topography and history painting, both quasi-documentary. Many artists, like Delacroix, actually journeyed to the Middle East. Among them were Edward Lear who drew pearly landscapes on his travels (the Gallery owns a large drawing of Greece), and William Müller who wrote on first seeing an Eastern bazaar: 'The sun streams through a little opening in the wall and falls on the figures, lighting them up with all but a supernatural brilliancy; reflection plays its part and bit by bit the whole is revealed; and as figure after figure pass by, some in the richest dresses and superb stuffs, while others, such as the pipe-cleaners, walk on shouting their avocations, and literally clothed in rags, you have a constantly changing picture before you'[3]. Müller's watercolour (no. 195) is an example of the European artist's response to the heightened effect of light and a corresponding emphasis upon strong colour.

Artists also used newly discovered details of what seemed like unchanged life from Biblical times. A number of works in the Gallery's collection make direct use of realistic Oriental details, for example William Holman Hunt's biblical paintings (like the *Risen Christ with two Marys in the garden of Joseph of Aramathea*) and etchings (like the *Abundance* and *Desolation of Egypt*), while others make more general use of Orientalist motifs like Herbert Schmalz in his *Zenobia's last look on Palmyra*. An image of contemporary Eastern life, with the richness of detail and colour of Orientalism, but which also alludes to the life of the young craftsman Jesus of Nazareth is Gordon Coutts's *The Brass Worker of Fez* (no. 200), painted against a very obvious saintly halo.

Interest in the Middle East was also seen in Europe in the manufacture of what were deemed Islamic amphorae (nos 201 and 202 illustrated p.41). Elaborately made fretwork porcelains or earthenware with made-up 'Arabic' around the shoulders, they are wonderful pieces of fully developed Orientalism.

A much less fanciful, more closely studied interest in Middle Eastern design occurred in Europe from the end of the nineteenth century among a less conventional group of artists. The designs and images of these people count among the past one hundred years' most original creations.

In the applied arts the most notable are the Englishmen William Morris, William De Morgan and the designers of the Pilkington Company in Manchester. All had studied and been impressed by the newly acquired Islamic ceramics, carpets and textiles in the South Kensington Museum. Arabesque patterns (derived from our notion of Islamic intertwining forms), flatness, shape, and, most obviously of all, colour were all derived from the Middle East. The Morris curtains (no. 206 illustrated p.45) relate to his designer Henry Dearle's designs like *Persian Brocatel*; De Morgan's tiles reproduce clear Islamic blues and turquoise colours as well as the stylised curling leaf designs (nos 203 and 204 illustrated p.2) and his lustre-ware (no. 205), he acknowledged, had a long history in the Orient. The Royal Lancastrian design from Pilkington's (no. 207) also uses the lustre technique with the deep blue and curled leaf of traditional Persian designs.

Amongst others, five important Western painters and printmakers in various ways were influenced by the Middle East: Léon Bakst, Eric Gill, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall and David Hockney. Bakst was probably the most deeply interested and influenced by Eastern design: he was a Russian, with Byzantine reminders all around him, but he became deeply interested in the East only after his first period in Paris in the 1890s and, a little later, on the publication of the translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. For Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* he designed costumes and sets for a number of overtly Oriental themes, most particularly *Cléopâtre* in 1909, *Schébérazade* and *Les Orientales* in 1910, *Le Dieu Bleu* in 1912, *La Tragédie de Salomé* in 1913, and *Aladin* in 1919; he also made drawings of odalisques, erotic studies

of women in Oriental costume and designs of Orientalist costumes for his friends (no. 208 illustrated p.54). All show his knowledge of Persian painting and design in the flowing lines, brilliant colour, Islamic motifs and, most especially, in their sensuality of subject and of style.

Henri Matisse also was influenced by the paintings, books and tradition of Orientalism which had developed so strongly in France. In 1906 he travelled to Biskra in Algeria where he bought Oriental rugs, in 1910 he saw an exhibition of Islamic art in Munich, in 1912 there was a major exhibition of Persian miniatures at the Musées des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and in 1911-12 and again in 1912-13 he was in Morocco. The flatness, patterning and colour of Islamic art were of great interest to him from this time, but it took another fifteen or so years for his great series of odalisques to be drawn, painted and printed (no. 209). In the 1920s he developed his 'Hindu' pose for his odalisques—arms up, breasts bare, faces blank, often with trousered legs crossed, posed against a patterned background. They have become the major image of the Eastern woman of this century yet owe direct reference to Delacroix, and ultimately to the type depicted by Gabriel Scoromodoff in the eighteenth century.

Eric Gill, the unconventional Englishman, also equated the East with sensuality and used a scene of the harem (no. 210) both to illustrate literally sexual conflicts and to develop the swaying line he had found and studied in Indian drawings.

Marc Chagall had studied with Bakst in Russia but developed his purity of colour later in Paris. Always interested in the oriental side of Russian tradition, and as a theme in romanticised mythmaking and symbolism, his choice of the *Arabian Nights* to illustrate (no. 211), using the pure blue of Islam, is not surprising.

Perhaps more surprising in this context is the work of David Hockney. Hockney was interested in the frontality of the ancient Egyptian tradition, and also in the contemporary Middle East in literature, art and ambience. He illustrated the works of the Alexandrian poet C. P. Cavafy in 1966, and visited Beirut to be closer to the cosmopolitan atmosphere, noting that he thought Beirut would be more like the Alexandria of Cavafy's day (see no. 212). The flatness, flowing line, jewel colours and sensuality of much of Hockney's work has close connections with both the Islamic and Orientalist traditions.

1. The Gallery owns an engraving by Hubertus Quellinus, 1619-1688, made in Amsterdam showing depictions of Asia and Europe. Asia is represented by an arab holding a camel, not by any images of the more distant, almost totally unknown Cathay.

2. Quoted by Robert Irwin, 'The Orient and the West from Bonaparte to T. E. Lawrence' in *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse,* Royal Academy, London 1984, p.26 .

3. *The Orientalists* ibid. p.216.

The Middle East and the West

Catalogue

attributed to Giacomo FRANCO
Italy born 1566

177 **Memet Cicala, Admiral of the Grand Turk**
c1596 Venice
engraving, etching on paper 20.2 x 13.1cm

David Murray Bequest Fund 1909

The Gallery has a similar portrait, also attribued to Franco, of 'Sinan Bassa, Captain of Manoeuvres of the Emperor of the Turks'.

REMBRANDT van Rijn
The Netherlands 1606-1669

178 **Bearded man in furred oriental cap and robe: The artist's father**
1631 Amsterdam
etching, drypoint on paper 14.6 x 12.3cm
provenance: Thomas Wilson, 1787-1863, Mayor of Adelaide

David Murray Bequest Fund 1942

Pietro SARDI
Italy working 1780-95
after REMBRANDT van Rijn
The Netherlands 1606-1669

179 **The three Orientals**
1791 Venice
etching on paper 14.8 x 12.0cm

Bequest of David Murray 1908

Stefano DELLA BELLA
Italy 1610-1664

180 **Four Turks wearing turbans**
c1640 Rome
etching on paper 7.7 x 14.6cm (image)

Bequest of David Murray 1908

Stefano DELLA BELLA
Italy 1610-1664

181 **Four Turks (including self-portrait) and an African**
c1640 Rome
etching on paper 8.2 x 13.7cm (image)

Bequest of David Murray 1908

6 Australia and the East

Fine Arts

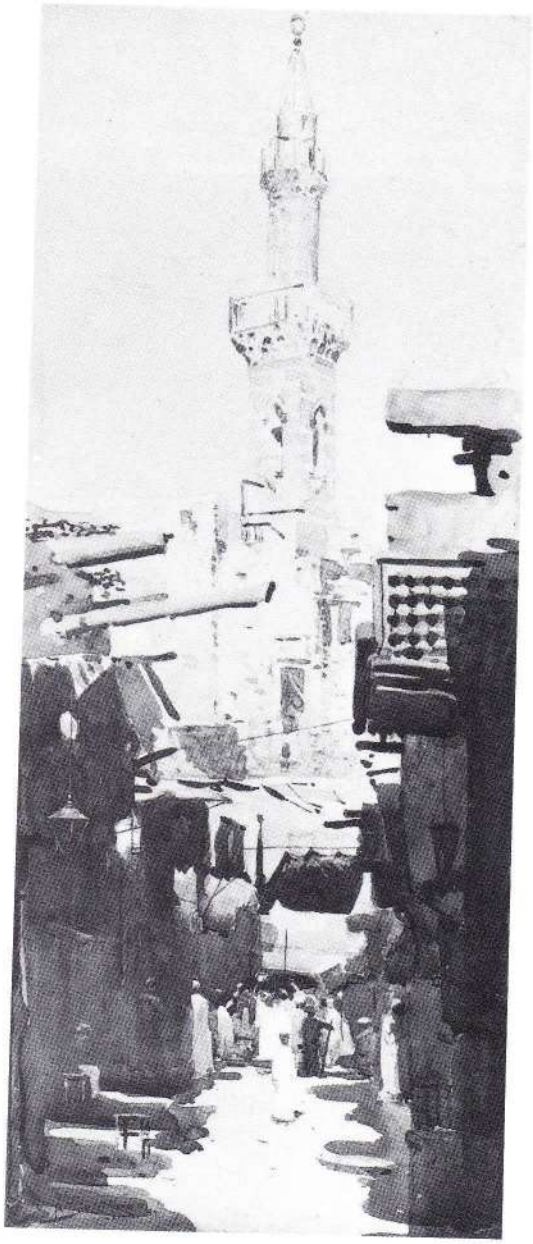
A separate section on Australian art in relation to the East is appropriate because of this continent's position in the world: our culture since the late eighteenth century has been predominantly of the West yet we are situated in the East; the interaction of the European Australian with the East has been different from that of people living in Europe.

The artistic connection of European Australia with Asia began with the first explorers' ships, many of the artists aboard sketching scenes of their journeys around the Pacific and Indian oceans and on their return to Europe publishing them in volumes showing life in foreign lands. From the time of European settlement a more particular relationship developed between Australia and Asia, again because of geographic placement, with Australia becoming a major port on the fast Antarctic Circle sea route from Europe to China. As a result, goods from all over Asia, from Indian chintz to Chinese export oil paintings, became available in Australia. Australians were following European taste in the acceptance of these items, taking advantage of their position rather than making such decisions themselves.

One part of nineteenth-century Australian life, like America's and unlike Europe's, was the immigration of Chinese, especially in the 1860s, to escape trouble at home and to find work in the new lands, in particular in the gold fields. These immigrants often grew wealthy enough to import goods of late-nineteenth-century Chinese style.[1] This style is still often seen in Australian Chinatowns but it had little direct effect on the mainstream of Australian art.

Instead, the first important influences of Asia on Australian art came via Europe. There was first the imported taste for Orientalist images of both exotic scenes of the contemporary Middle East and for history paintings which included Middle Eastern details. (Again the small number of Afghans in Australia had no effect on the Europeans' art.) Numbers of these usually grand paintings toured Australia or were acquired directly in Britain for Australian public collections. A number of artists who either emigrated to Australia like Chester Earles, or who visited here like William Strutt, or who had grown up here but returned to England to work like Robert Dowling, made paintings in England which were brought out and shown to popular acclaim. The most famous image was Robert Dowling's *A Sheikh and his son entering Cairo on their return from a pilgrimage to Mecca* painted in 1874, a year after the artist's visit to Cairo, and acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1878.[2]

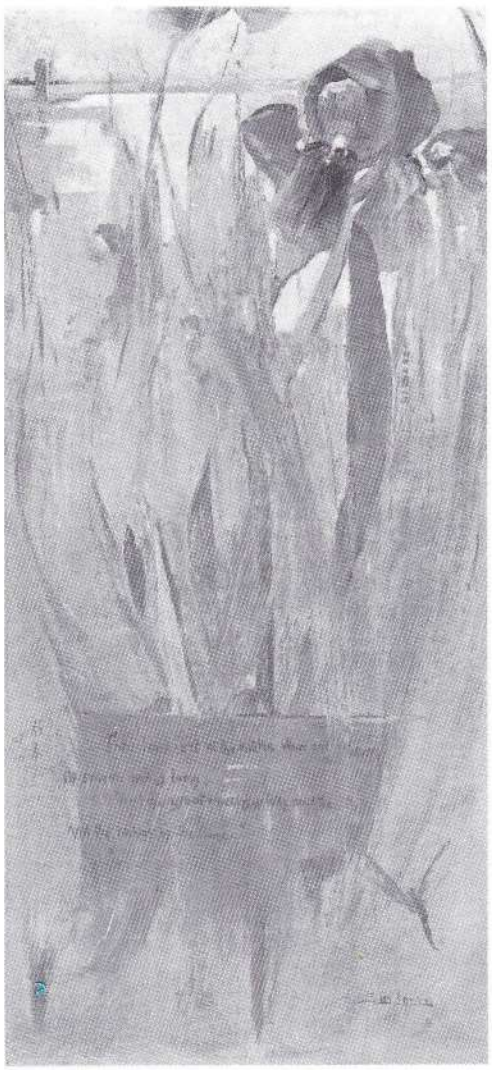
Among the first artists based in Australia to follow this interest was Arthur Streeton who passed through Egypt on his way to Europe in 1897 (see nos 214 and 215 illustrated p.47). However, by the time of his visit didactic history painting no longer seemed important to leading artists; Streeton was attracted by the intense light and by the exotic scenes before him. He wrote 'I've been so excited endeavouring to get some of the Cairo brightness in my work that I left everything aside', and ''Tis a wonderful land this Egypt; I've been time after time through the slipper, brass and bronze, jewellery, perfume, silks, ring, curio bazaars—and yesterday I did a quick sketch of a spice bazaar . . . All are orientals here.'[3] A number of other Australian artists followed the interest in the Islamic Middle East and North Africa (like Hilda Rix Nicholas, Will Ashton and Arthur d'Auvergne Boxall), and produced travellers' images, while others, like Rupert Bunny indirectly through the images of the *Ballets Russes*, explored more overt Middle Eastern-derived style in their work.



Arthur Streeton, **The Spice Market, Cairo**, 1897 (no. 215)

A more vital Asian interest for artists lay first in Japan and then in China. Whistler eulogised the artists of Cathay and followed the tenets of Japanese prints, and Australian artists, studying Whistler's work, again used ideas about Asian style chiefly in European translation. The remarkable '9 x 5 Exhibition' of 1889 in Melbourne, writes Ron Radford, 'was conceived along the lines of a Whistler exhibition, which Tom Roberts would have seen in London. The exhibition's display in the Buxton Rooms in Melbourne was described by "Table Talk": "Draperies in soft Liberty silk of many colours, drawn, looped and knotted among the sketches of Japanese umbrellas, screens and handsome Bretby jardinieres, completed a most harmonious arrangement of colour".'[4]

Charles Conder's work stands out for its debts to *japoniste* formal structures. His *Holiday at Mentone* owes much of its design and lucidity to Japanese prints, as do his small paintings like *How we lost poor Flossie*, in its narrow format, its play with space and its casual domestic theme, or images like *Dandenongs from Heidelberg* (no. 213), with its painted frame extending the central image. Other artists, like Sydney Long and John Shirlow, were interested in Japanese-derived forms, from the actual subject matter (as in Long's painting of irises, no. 216 illustrated p.48) to format and structure (as in Shirlow's print of Melbourne, no. 219).



Sydney Long, **Landscape with irises**, c1898 (no. 216)

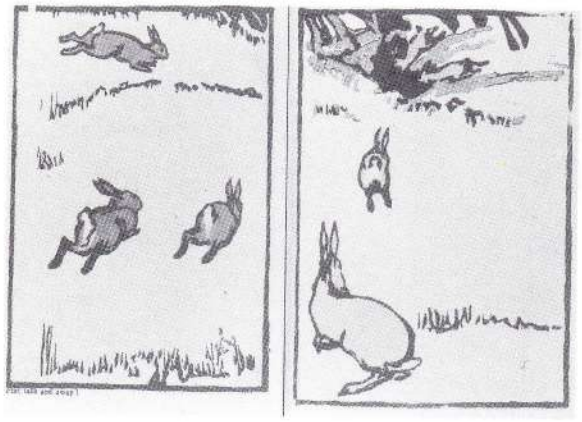
Besides two-dimensional works based on Japanese prints, Australian applied arts were most influenced by Chinese ceramics. (A separate essay by Judith Thompson pp.60-1 discusses Asian influence on Australian applied or decorative arts.)

Australian taste generally was fed by European books on Eastern art. Among the most influential ones were Owen Jones's *Examples of Chinese ornaments* of 1867, Charles Eastlake's *Hints on household taste* of 1872, Rutherford Alcock's *Art and industries of Japan* of 1878 and Christopher Dresser's *Japan, Its architecture, art and art manufactures* of 1882. Later on magazines like *The Studio*, which reproduced European images based on Eastern forms and also had articles on Asian arts, were acquired by Australian libraries and available for study. The very important books translated from the French as *Artistic Japan* by Samuel Bing published from 1889 to 1891 were available in Adelaide almost contemporaneously.[5] Also, wealthy Australians travelled to Europe and could see various collections and the new displays of applied arts at the South Kensington Museum. In Adelaide the leaders of taste at the turn of the century who decided what public art collections should hold acquired, for example, a major drawing by Aubrey Beardsley, based in part on Japanese form, and, in 1904, a number of high quality Chinese porcelains, a selection of which is included in this exhibition.

It is no wonder that paintings like Bernard Hall's *After dinner* (no. 217), acquired by the Gallery in 1902, show examples of Asian metalware and porcelain such as would be seen on the most stylish Melbournian table. Another painting in the Gallery's collection emphasizes the hold of the exotic Asian object in Australia: by Ethel Bishop, painted in Adelaide around 1915 and entitled *Treasures*, it shows three young women unpacking a chest while around them spill oriental ornaments, vases and bowls, and on the wall behind are narrow, vertical *japoniste* paintings. A later watercolour, by Gwen Barringer, shows how this interest extended into the 1920s (no. 232).

Japanese forms remained influential to much of Australian painting and design into the first decades of this century. However they became most overt in printmaking, particularly those following precisely the Japanese woodcut technique favoured in Britain. A precursor was Geraldine Rede's and Violet Teague's woodcut printed book *Nightfall in the Ti-Tree* of 1905 (no. 218 illustrated p.49). Violet Teague had perhaps learnt the technique of water-based inks and the form from her time in England with Hubert von Herkomer. She showed her Japanese-inspired prints in Melbourne from 1905 to 1914 but had no direct followers in Australia. Gradually people who had also learnt the technique and form in Britain either returned home, like Margaret Preston (see nos 222 to 224 illustrated p.52), or emigrated to Australia, like Mary Packer Harris (see no. 226). These artists brought books on Japanese printmaking with them (F. Morley Fletcher's on *Woodblock printing—a description of the craft of wood-cutting and colour printing based on the Japanese practice* of 1916 was an important one); others imported actual works of art, some for sale; *Art in Australia* advertised Japanese 'prints' and books and promoted the new modern forms, and by the 1930s the Japanese style of flat, frontal, often truncated designs was well established. Relief prints (that is, woodcut, linocut and

wood-engraved works) continued to be seen as most suitable for the style and a number of artists produced them, including Thea Proctor (nos 230 and 231), Dorothy Lungley (no. 233), May Voke (nos 236 and 237), Ethleen Palmer (nos 238 to 240 illustrated p.55), Murray Griffin (nos 241 and 242 illustrated p.55) and Gladys Osborne (no. 243). Many works by these artists are of the 'bird and blossom' subject matter so often found in conventional Japanese and Chinese images.



Violet Teague and Geraldine Rede, **Flirt tails and away!**, 1905 (no. 218)

In the later 1930s the influence of Japan waned as that of China grew—this time clearly based on serious appraisal of classical Chinese art and with direct interaction between Asia and Australia. One of the first Australian artists to study in China was William Hardy Wilson, who went there in 1922. He included Chinese motifs in his architecture from 1924 and later in his drawings and watercolours. Margaret Preston, an admirer of Chinese art, visited there in 1934 (though her art shows only marginal effect from this, see no. 225). Lionel Lindsay developed the delicate tendrils and details of specifically Chinese images in his wood-engravings of the mid-1930s (see nos 228 and 229). One impact on Australian artists was the availability of collections of Chinese art brought back by expatriates and travellers. The major acquisitions of Chinese ceramics by the National Gallery of Victoria occurred at this time.

In painting appeared a lone but major figure who had spent a number of years in China—Ian Fairweather (see nos 244 to 247 illustrated p.53). Scots-born, Fairweather had studied Japanese and Chinese before he sailed for Shanghai in 1929. He lived and painted in China, the Philippines, Bali, Sri Lanka and India as well as, from 1933, in Australia, where he finally settled in 1943. The lucid spaces, fluid lines and subtle colour of Fairweather's art from the 1930s show his response to Chinese painting. Murray Bail in his book on Fairweather sums up his later debt to China: 'From 1954 his work displays a mounting influence of Aboriginal painting, and of Chinese calligraphy—the calligraphy especially of the language. His finest work was invariably a merging of all three: Cubism, trace elements of Aboriginal art, the expressive force of the Chinese line. Among Australian painters Fairweather was a pioneer in mixing with the cultures of the region—while maintaining his European origins. But because his experiences of the East were both physical and spiritually deep his influence could, at best, only be by remote, exalted example.'[6]

There was, however, generally in the 1950s in the Western world, an interest in Chinese art and philosophy. The calligraphic line is seen in gentle washes like Ronald Steuart's (no. 251) and in more aggressive work by James Cant (no. 252).

Donald Friend, too, was influenced by Chinese line and subtle colour washes. His sojourn however in Sri Lanka from 1956 to 1962 affected his work in a different way. He studied Sri Lankan temples, frescoes and sculptures and, as a result, his work became more monumental, frontal, and abstract (see nos 249 and 250).

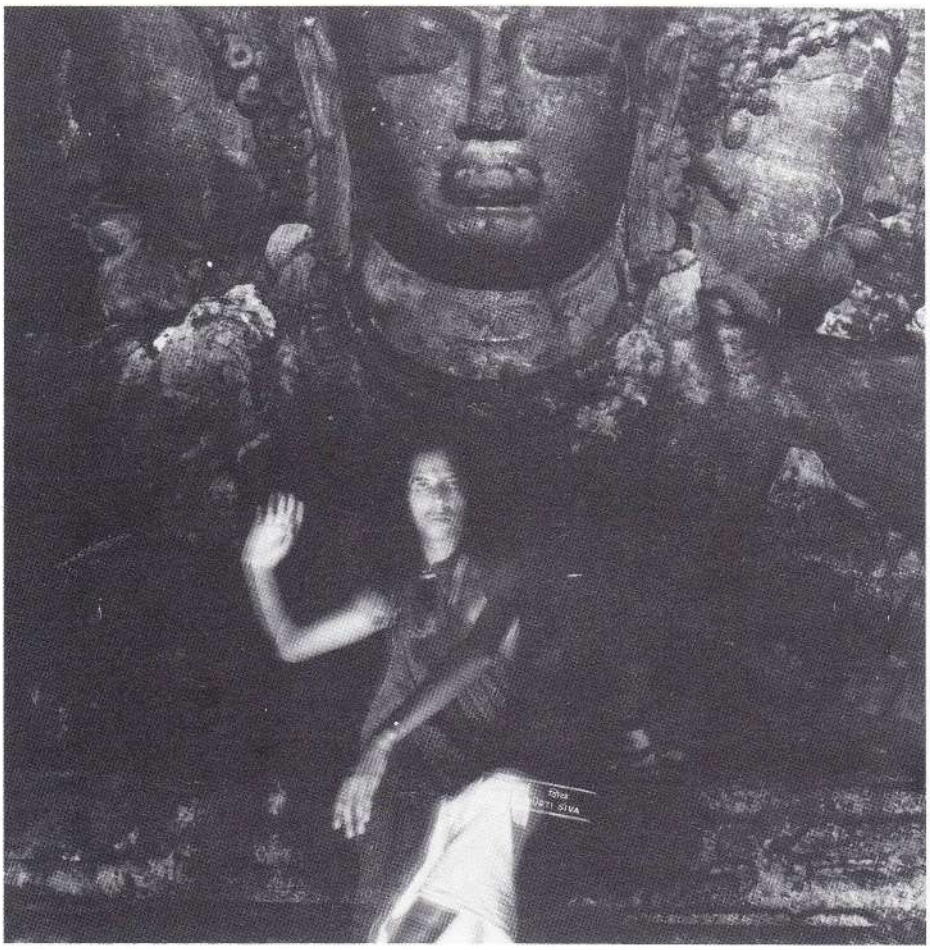
The 1960s in Australian art also show a most important direct influence from Asia, this time from Japan. Artists who had trained in Australia went there, including Robert Grieve (see no. 258) in 1962, George Baldessin (see no. 253 illustrated p.57) in 1966, and numbers of architects, designers and ceramists. Printmaking in Australia, of which Grieve and Baldessin were part, was stimulated in Melbourne by contemporary Japanese prints which were to be seen in the 1960s both in dealers' galleries, like that run by Tate Adams, and also by travelling exhibitions officially organised from Japan. The various State Galleries acquired many contemporary Japanese prints at this time and interest was further stimulated by articles on contemporary artists, one example being by R. G. Robertson in *Art and Australia* of May 1963 entitled 'Hanga'. The influence remains today with various Australian printmakers like Jörg Schmeisser, David Rose, Max Miller and Brett Whiteley (see nos 267 and 268) using Japanese motif, form and technique in their images.

Sculptors also travelled to Japan. William Clements from 1964 to 1967 involved himself there in the study of Buddhism and made pieces like *No. 5* (no. 255) which resulted from that study. Others like Tony Bishop, Rosalie Gascoigne and more recently Ken Unsworth have included Japanese forms and motifs in their work. The possibility of travel between Japan and Australia has become more and more important for artists in the 1980s. One artist previously based in Australia who now lives in Japan is Stelarc. His work is sympathetic to the Asian notions of personal, isolated concentration and is recognised in Japan as important in a general context (see no. 269).

The most recent major example of interchange between Australia and Japan is the *Continuum* series of exhibitions, involving numbers of artists and critics coming together in each country alternatively. The 1983 event was celebrated in a special issue of the magazine *Art Network* (Spring 1984).

Another facet of Asian culture which greatly affected all Western youth from the late 1960s was the meditative, non-materialist, transcendental possibilities of traditional Indian Buddhism. The Westernised psychedelic style was omnipresent for some time, though more subtle references occurred in the forms of Sydney Ball and Alun Leach-Jones as well as in the romanticised photography of archetypal Asian subjects by Paul Cox (see nos 259 to 262) and the ethereal work of Max Pam (see nos 263 to 266 illustrated p.50).

A very different kind of Asian influence comes from the Chinese didactic posters which have inspired political



Max Pam, **Ricardo, the rainbow dancer, in the Shiva cave temple on Elephant Island**, 1971 (no. 263)

screenprints like those by Toni Robertson on the nuclear threat (see no. 271).[7] Awareness of these and of Chinese classical and folk art has been markedly increased by the number of important travelling exhibitions brought to Australia since the opening of relations with China in the 1970s. An Australian exhibition sent to China in 1975 included a painting by Hans Heysen; this painting's success in China, in turn, became a central motif for Imants Tillers in his book *Three Facts* of 1978 (no. 270).

A final Asian model for Australia has appeared in a less overt way in recent years, again due to the travelling undertaken by so many Australians, either as immigrants or as explorers away from home. These are the various manifestations of interest in the Middle East. This particular interest started this essay but in a much more pertinent way finishes it. People who were born in the Middle East, like Alberr Shomaly (see no. 257) and Hossein Valamanesh (see no. 273 illustrated p.58), have incorporated aspects of their original culture into their art, whereas others who have travelled there, like Richard Larter (see no. 276), show the stylistic impact of the visit in their work. Shomaly's work relates to the brilliant colour and reflections of imperial Islamic architecture; Valamanesh uses forms and natural materials of Iran's ordinary people, while Larter's patterns and white light come from a visit to North Africa.

This essay has discussed Asian art's influence on Australian artists over the last 200 years. So far, with Stelarc being an obvious exception, Australians specifically have made little contribution to art in Asia. Perhaps, with more travel on both sides, residencies and exhibitions, and, as well, a reassessment of the special qualities of our global position, a greater cross pollination will occur in the future.

Britain has strong links with Indian art, and California with those of China and Japan, but art in Australia has had a much more intense and diverse relationship with Asia than has the art of either Europe or the United States generally. We have become involved in world trends, from Orientalism and *japonisme*, to 1950s abstraction and 1970s spiritualism, but, for the last fifty years particularly, our physical closeness has increasingly inspired travel of both works of art and of people to such a degree that our own culture has been more significantly affected by Asia than any other based in Western ideals.

1. The nineteenth-century Chinese painting on glass of the philosopher, included in the section on China (see no. 61), has a newspaper article from *The Bendigo Advertiser* dated 1869 pasted on its backing support.

2. I am indebted to Daniel Thomas for discussion of this information, as well as for raising many issues and suggesting many examples in this section.

3. See Ann Galbally, *Arthur Streeton*, Melbourne 1969, pp.32-33.

4. Ron Radford *Art Nouveau in Australia* Ballarat Fine Art Gallery n.d., p.20.

5. The Gallery owns a set of these sold by Cawthorne booksellers who operated in Adelaide from 1886 to 1906.

6. Murray Bail, *Ian Fairweather*, Sydney 1981. p. 219.

7. See note 2.