

Principles of the Collection

The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (FAAM) systematically collects modern and contemporary artworks that show the originality and distinctive aesthetics of Asian art without adhering to the framework of 'fine art' derived from modern Western values. It sets the principle below aiming at creating a new criterion of the Asian art.

The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum collects;

- (1) works that show the streams of Asian art from the modern to the contemporary period
- (2) folk art, ethnic art and popular art that are important in considering Asian modern and contemporary art
- (3) other traditional art and craft that are important in considering Asian modern and contemporary art

Asian modern art here means the art rose after the Asian countries and regions met Western modern art and culture, after which they began to seek for the new expressions different from the traditional art by focusing on the individual creativity. The FAAM will keep tackling this issue of 'modern' in the different contexts of art in each country and region.

Asia defined here is 23 countries and regions* eastwards from Pakistan, southwards from Mongolia and northwards and westwards from Indonesia. The FAAM continually examines the definition of Asia through exhibitions and expansion of the collection.

As to Japanese artists, the FAAM divides the role with the Fukuoka Art Museum. Their works collected for the FAAM are those resulting from the encounters with other Asian countries.

※ 23 countries and regions;
Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan



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Exhibition Opening Hours: 9:30 - 18:00 (Until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)
* Last admission is 30 minutes before closing.

Museum Opening Hours: 9:30 - 19:30 (Until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)

Closed: Wednesday (or the following day if Wednesday is a national holiday)
New Year Days (26 December - 1 January)

Fukuoka Asian Art Museum Collection

Asian Art: From Modern to Contemporary

The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum currently holds approximately 5,000 works (as of April 2023) of modern and contemporary art in Asia. This is one of the largest collections in the world focusing on Asian art since the modern period. In the Asia Gallery, we explore various streams of modern and contemporary art in Asia through the works in the collection created between the end of the 18th century through the present in the 23 countries/regions of East, South East and South Asia.

* The works appearing in this leaflet represent each period. Due to the conditions of the exhibition or conservational concerns, some may not be on permanent displayed.



Jamini Roy (India)
"Fawn" year unknown (detail)

1 In Dawn of Modern Art —Western Style Paintings in Asia



Anonymous (China)
"The Hongs, Canton" c.1850

After mainly the 19th century, under the influence of colonialism and trade with the Western countries, Asian artists began to create Western style paintings with Western materials (oil and watercolour paints) and techniques (linear perspective and chiaroscuro) to depict local people, customs, landscapes and myths. This section presents Western style paintings which were created during the period when Asia encountered the Western modern world.

Gobindram Chatera (India)
"Portrait of Asaf-ud-Daula"
early 19th century

Such paintings were largely made as exports or souvenirs for the Westerners visiting Asia. For this reason, these paintings are characterised by the exotic charm reflecting the exoticism of the Westerners who purchased them. Examples of the Western style paintings include the China Trade Paintings from Canton (Guangdong) region, Western style paintings from Calcutta (the capital of British India, Kolkata as known today), and the Company School miniatures made for the officers of the East India Company in India.



Saya Saw (Myanmar)
"Portrait of Royal Family"
late 19th - early 20th century



Later on, these Western style paintings were no longer made for the Westerners only, but also catered to the local upper class who had adopted the Western lifestyle. One such example is the Western style painting made by court painters in Mandalay, the Royal capital of Burma (Myanmar) under the British rule. These paintings were mainly offered to temples by Burmese nobles. At the same time, religious paintings employing Western chiaroscuro and perspective such as Kalighat paintings and Varma prints also spread among the general population in India.

2 Emergence of Modern Art and the Development of Modernism

During the first half of 20th century, the spirit of independence was gaining momentum with the rising nationalism in various parts of Asia. More and more movements were being organized toward forming the modern independent nation-states. Also in the realm of art, modern systems of art education and exhibition were rapidly being laid out responding to such social situation. Young artists, who had studied in the West or received Western art education locally, played pivotal roles in forming their own modern art particular to their countries.



Chen Chin (Taiwan)
"The Women of Shantimen Area" 1936

In the first half of this section, we feature works made during such process of modern nation-building. While many Asian modern artists were drawn to the work of Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse and other Western artists since Impressionism and learned from them, they also sought to create their original expression by actively employing traditional or indigenous subject matter and material in their works. In some regions of Asia since the 1930s, some artists and artist groups also experimented with abstract painting after having drawn to the idea of pursuing pure form from the Western modernism.

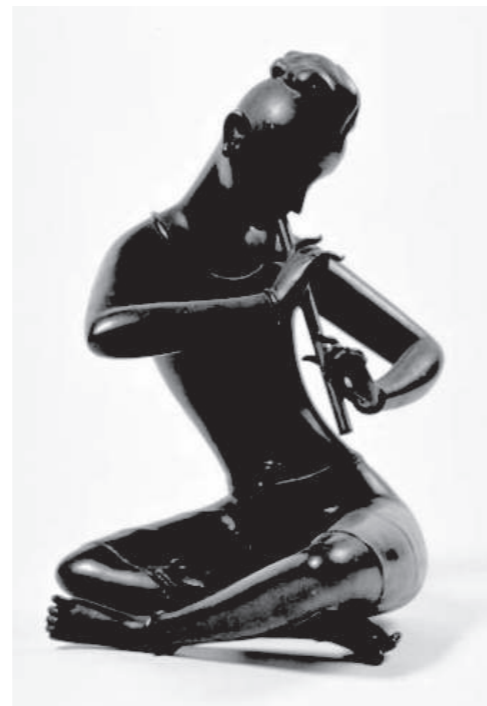
In the second half of the 20th century following the Pacific War, most countries in Asia became independent from the Western and Japanese colonial rules and started to advance as independent states on the international platform. Accordingly, the abstract expression seen from the 1930s was more actively pursued in wider regions. The latter half of this section presents works that address the blossoming of abstract expression.



Luong Xuan Nhi (Vietnam)
"A Reading Girl" 1940



George Keyt (Sri Lanka)
"Still Life with Lemons" 1946



Khien Yimsiri (Thailand)
"Musical Rhythm" 1949

3 Contemporary Art in Asia – From Social Themes to Diversified Expressions

After the Second World War, Asian countries entered the era of diversity and globalization. While each country/region underwent different changes, many of them faced continuous social instability – military dictatorship and democratic movement that reacted against it, negative effects of economic liberalization and capitalist economy, the growing divide between urban and rural areas and discrepancies in wealth distribution. Under these large social changes, artists raised voices to criticize politics, questioned social injustice, and called attention to small matters and the underprivileged that are often overlooked in our society through their works. From the 1980s, many works dealing with social issues were created. The end of the 80s especially saw the rise in new expressions such as performance and installation.



Ravinder Reddy (India)
"Woman Holding Her Breasts" 1998



Fang Lijun (China)
"Series 2 No.3" 1992

In the 1990s, the surge of globalization and economic development in Asia led to the formation of art markets and large-scaled international exhibitions which were started in various parts of Asia. More and more artists are moving away from hometown to various places in the world, and human relationships and art international networks are becoming diversified and segmentalized. In these situations, artists dealt not only with social and historical issues, but have also found themes in the everyday or in the individual personal realm. As for means of expression, media art employing video or computer continues to expand and spread. Furthermore, new art practices involving projects and audience participation are also being explored.

This section presents contemporary art in Asia from the 80s to the present mainly with artworks exhibited in the series of "Asian Art Show" that were organized by the Fukuoka Art Museum, the cradle of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (FAAM), and in "Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale" which has been held in FAAM.

Tserennadmidin Tsegmed (Mongolia)
"Orkhon" 1993



Amanda Heng (Singapore)
"Another Woman No.2" 1996

