

# A Parkville Frame Gallery Newsletter “Supplement”

## 2024 Newsletter Supplement #24-2

### Subject: Asian Art

#### Background

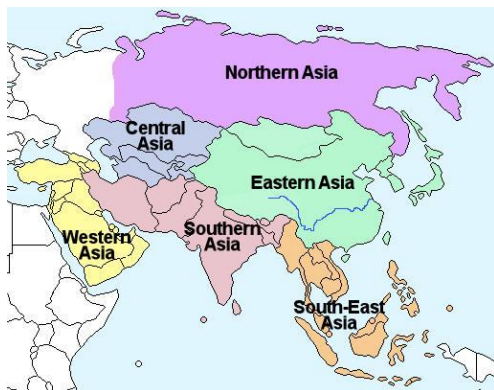
When you think about Asian art, what images come into your mind? That is a loaded question, of course, but seriously, what do you see? No matter what each of us sees, I would argue that what we all see is based on our past experiences. I have traveled to many Asian countries, some of them many times. At one point I lived in a Japanese community.



My past experiences vis-à-vis your experiences will likely differ. In this newsletter supplement I will offer you a perspective on so-called Asian art from my experiences. A perspective that you may not have considered. First, let's take a brief look at Asia itself.

#### Asia

Asia is a very large and diverse place. It is the largest continent on earth. Based on statistics from the United Nations there are currently forty-eight countries in Asia. Russia is the largest country in Asia and in the world, even after excluding its European portion. Sixty percent of the world's population lives in Asia. India (not China) has the largest population. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population. Three of the six so-called cradles of civilization originated in Asia: Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), the Indus Valley Culture (India/Pakistan), and China (see [Newsletter 23-5](#)).



Consider this: Afghanistan is in Asia; Israel is in Asia (yep); and so forth. I mention all this because it would be hard to put a label on all of the art from Asia simply as “Asian art”. Like its people, the art from Asia is very diverse. Please join me and we will look at some of that art. We will begin our journey in Indonesia.

## Asian Art Forms

**Indonesia** is well known for [Wayang Kulit](#) a form of entertainment using leather puppets accompanied by music and story-telling. One of these puppets (available online) would look great framed.



**China** has a history of silk, jade, and ceramics. In fact the Chinese were the first to perfect porcelain. [Chinese ceramics of the Song Dynasty](#) (960 – 1279 C.E.) constitute perhaps the foremost expression of ceramic art, not only in China but in the world.



**Wayang Kulit Puppet**

During the [Yuan dynasty](#) the technique of producing blue-and-white ware was perfected, while underglaze copper-red ware using copper-oxide pigment also began to appear. You can learn more about ceramics in our 2024 Newsletter #24-2. There you will see examples of Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese ceramics.

[Carved Jade](#) is also ingrained in the Chinese culture. It has been revered from the Neolithic Period (c. 3000–2000 B.C.E.), but interestingly upwards of 70% of the world's supply of high-quality jadeite (differs from [nephrite](#)) comes from Myanmar (formerly Burma), not China. Most nephrite jade comes from Canada, Russia and China.

## Japan

[Hiroshi Yoshida](#) born September 19, 1876, died April 5, 1950, was a 20th-century Japanese painter and woodblock printmaker. He is regarded as one of the greatest artists of the [shin-hanga style](#), and is noted especially for his excellent landscape prints. Hiroshi Yoshida was trained in the Western oil painting tradition, which was adopted in Japan during the Meiji period. Yoshida often used the same wood blocks, varying the use of color to suggest different moods. The best example of that technique is his [Sailing Boats](#) series from 1921. Yoshida's extensive travel and acquaintance with Americans influenced his art considerably.

[More Here](#)



## Viet Nam

Embroidery from the [Quat Dong village](#) in the Thuong Tin district, Ha Tay province, Viet Nam, has been famed nationwide as the place where embroidery has set a benchmark of excellence for generations.



The embroidery technique in Quat Dong has been significantly improved over time from sewing simple patterns on cotton fabric, to today, where talented artisans create embroidered pictures on thin silk. The exquisite embroidery motifs have reached perfection.

*"Quat Dong embroidery painting is embroidered with two sides on thin chiffon material with silk thread. Looking at the embroidery picture, the viewer cannot tell where the first stitch begins, and where the last stitch ends.*

*When looking at these vivid pieces, people will feel as if they are seeing a real landscape or scene of Vietnamese daily life right in front of their eyes. Some embroideries even look exactly like a photo,"* an experienced embroiderer at Quat Dong village said. (Source: [Hanoi Times, December 2020](#)) [More Here](#)

## Thailand

[Benjarong ware](#) is a kind of hand-painted Thai ceramics. While the name literally means "five colors", it is a figurative description and actual decoration can have anywhere between three and eight colors. For the decoration, repetitive forms, usually geometric or flower-based are used. A design is usually named after the decoration base name and a background color, for example, Phum Kao Bin on dark blue.



[More Here](#)

Note: If shopping, be sure to [convert Thai Bhat to US dollars](#).



## Iran and Beyond

Beautiful hand-woven carpets are made in Iran, Afghanistan, India, Türkiye, and Pakistan, among other places. The best of these carpets are typically those made primarily from silk, and those with a very high [knot count](#). Silk and antique carpets can be quite expensive. Note, however, that not all hand-woven carpets are so expensive so as to put them out of reach.

Hand-woven carpets are broadly divided into three types: [City, Village, and Tribal carpets](#). City carpets are generally known to be of the highest quality, but the tribal group has some very unique designs. The carpets from the city of Isfahan in Iran are classified as “City carpets”. They are typically woven with a floral design as seen below. They have a high knot count and have a reputation as being some of the best and highest quality rugs in the country. The city carpet weavers in Iran are known as 'master weavers'. Some of them even sign their work, like a piece of fine art (which in my opinion they are).



**Isfahan Carpet**

Smaller carpets can be framed and displayed as decorative art on a wall. **Caution!** Be careful, these beautiful carpets can become addictive--trust me! But they will also become one of your most prized possessions. Like me, you will enjoy looking at them each and every day. I would be happy to share some of my knowledge of these lovely works of art with anyone who is interested. Because of possible trade restrictions between the US and Iran be careful if you buy a true Iranian carpet. Like any piece of art, I suggest that you visit a few reputable local dealers and explore your options before you buy.

## More Ideas

I suggest that you visit our web page: [parkvilleframegallery.com](http://parkvilleframegallery.com). Click on the Art Advisor tab, and then click on the “Series Docs” tab.

- See Item #20 ([The Icons Series](#)) and item #23 ([The Asia Series](#))

As you become more familiar with Asian art and sculpture I am available to assist you.

### Relax (Asian style)

Let's say that you recently purchased a woodblock print titled [Moon and Autumn Grass](#) by Ohara Koson (1877-1945) one of the most important *kacho-ga* (bird and flower) woodblock print artists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century *shin-hanga* (new print) movement. You found this print at the [Scholten Japanese Art gallery](#) in New York City and we framed it.

Now, sit back and relax with a *choko* (cup) of sake (Japanese wine) while enjoying the painting and listening to [Kōhachiro Miyata](#) play *Tsuru no Sugomori* (“Tenderness of Cranes”) on the Japanese [shakuhachi](#) (a wind instrument).



*Moon and Autumn Grass*

*The Art Advisor*

*Enjoy fine art--well framed*