

# Treasure Ships

Art in the Age of Spices

13 June – 30 August 2015

EDUCATION RESOURCE



ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE Open daily 10am–5pm [artgallery.sa.gov.au](http://artgallery.sa.gov.au)

## INTRODUCTION

The Art Gallery of South Australia's *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices* is the first exhibition in Australia to present the complex artistic and cultural interactions between the East and the West from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries – a period known as the 'Age of Spices.'

The modern era of global art commenced with Europe's insatiable appetite for spices, especially pepper, nutmeg and cloves – products found only in tropical India, Sri Lanka and the remote islands of Indonesia. These condiments were prized as symbols of luxury and status, providing flavouring for food and drinks, as well as being regarded as essential ingredients in medicines.

In 1498 the Portuguese discovered a direct sea route, via the Cape of Good Hope, to Asia. Spanish, Dutch and English ships soon followed, eager for access to sources of valuable new foodstuffs and exotic treasures. The Europeans arriving in Asia encountered established shipping routes extending from the Middle East to East Asia, along with cosmopolitan societies such as that in Indonesia, where art was valued both as a commodity and an expression of cultural identity.

The East–West trade in spices inevitably inspired the exchange of ideas, styles and fashions in diverse media in the fine arts, and in material culture, including book printing, which played a key role in promoting understanding of the East. The West's mapping of the world no longer referenced religious cosmologies, but emphasised maritime cartography, to ensure the success of the long sea voyages by which Europe engaged Asia.

Asian textiles, including carpets, and glazed porcelain were among the most desired cargoes carried by ships during the Age of Spices. Europe was yet to achieve a comparable level of technological sophistication in these art forms, and it was the attractive designs of these items as well as the industrial scale of production that ensured their continuing demand.

Indian dye-printed cloths were unequalled in the vividness of their colours and the variety of patterns, appealing to buyers in niche markets in destinations as distant as Europe and Southeast Asia. The Tree of Life motif, with its eclectic combination of Indian, Chinese and European elements, typifies the role of fashionable textiles as a medium for artistic exchange between East and West.

Chinese and Japanese high-fired ceramics, notably blue-and-white 'china', were likewise exported along the international shipping lanes of the spice trade. The decoration, vessel shapes and brilliant glazes of East Asian porcelain subsequently inspired Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern and European ceramic artists to imitate their appearance.

By the early seventeenth century, European sailors had landed on the shores of every continent, including Australia, either by intentional exploration or by accidental shipwreck. The discovery of new species of animals, birds and plants in foreign lands inspired artists to seek to accurately record their appearance in meticulous scientific drawings and paintings.

In the urban centres of Europe, the increasing availability of Asian art inspired a fashionable craze called 'chinoiserie', which expressed the West's fantasy vision of the distant 'Orient'. Ceramics, lacquerware, textiles and furniture were decorated with a pastiche of motifs derived from Chinese, Japanese, and Indian art.

The 'discovery' of Australia by Europe and the eventual establishment of the British settlement of Sydney town was a by-product of the Age of Spices and of Europe's shift from trade to the pursuit of geopolitical domination in Australasia. Nevertheless, it was Indonesian fishermen from South Sulawesi who first regularly sailed to Australian shores, calling the continent Marege, and who engaged in peaceful exchanges with **Indigenous** people.

Cover image:

image detail: Japan, *Dutch trading ship in Japanese waters*, c.1870, four-panel screen, opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper; 67.5 x 138.0 x 111.0 cm; Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.

## TEACHERS' NOTES

This education resource has been developed to assist teachers in supporting student engagement, inquiry, and understanding of the exhibition *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices*.

The learning experiences are designed to encourage students to take a closer look at selected works of art. The resource connects to the Australian Curriculum learning areas of History, Science and Geography, as well as to the Visual Arts area through the strands of 'Responding' and 'Making'.

The varied learning opportunities presented in the exhibition align with the Australian Curriculum Cross – curriculum priority areas of Sustainability, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, as well as supporting the General capabilities of building critical and creative thinking and ethical understanding.

Further information on selected works can be found in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices* by Curators James Bennett and Russell Kelty.

The exhibition offers opportunities for students to explore artistic, cultural and maritime interactions between the East and the West from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries through a variety of art forms. Key themes that can be explored include:

- trade
- exploration and significant maritime explorers
- development of mapping on a global scale
- the role of Asian spices in Europe
- art as a commodity and an expression of cultural identity
- the introduction of Christianity into Asian contexts

Consider and adapt the following pre- and post-visit activities to suit your curriculum needs by reading the relevant references in the AC: Visual Arts, Art, History, Science or Geography, to support the inquiry that you would like students to engage with during their visit.

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Adapt the information in this resource to suit your learning area, curriculum requirements, and to focus your students' learning experiences.
- Discuss the Glossary meanings at the end of the resource to deepen student engagement with the exhibition.
- Explore student knowledge of the use of Asian spices in food and medicinal preparations today.
- Find out about the existing understandings of students by asking them what they already know about artistic and cultural interactions between the East and the West from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.
- Consider what the term 'cultural exchange' meant for the period known as the Age of Spices as compared to today. Discuss the possibilities for 'cultural exchange' between Asia and Australia into the future.
- Discuss the positive and negative impacts of exploration from different perspectives.
- Visit the [Treasure ships: Art in the Age of Spices](#) website and familiarise students with the video resources created for the exhibition.
- Discuss with your class what they might see and learn as a result of their visit to the exhibition.

Ask students to look out for new things of interest they may discover or notice as they spend more time looking at the details of exhibition works. Encourage students to take notes, or make sketches to record them. Photograph works (without flash!) to record and support discussion and learning back at school. Please note that no flash is permitted, and that several works will have labels next to them indicating that permission for photography has not been granted.

## AFTER YOUR VISIT

You may wish to select several activities for students to complete:

- Think about the work of art or 'treasure' that they liked most, and to retell their experience of viewing the work - what it looked like, what it reminded them of, and how it made them feel and why.
- Discuss why the exhibition is titled *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices*. If students were in charge of curating the exhibition, what would they do differently? What is the overall conclusion about the exhibition – did you like it or dislike it?
- Choose and complete some of the responding and making activities in this resource.
- Research and write a report on a favourite work. Include the name of the artist, the country in which it was made, title of the work, materials used, and the art form. If the work was made initially as a functional object, describe its use. What is the key idea the artist is sharing with the audience? How might this have changed over time, and between various cultures?
- Write a review of the exhibition. Focus first on the overall impression of the exhibition. Discuss and evaluate the curators' success in telling the story of 'The Age of Spices' through the selection of works, key themes, layout and display, flow of the exhibition, signage, wall texts, choice of wall colours, and lighting.
- Visit the [Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices](#) website to view videos to support their review.
- A series of four short one minute videos about different aspects of the exhibition are being produced and will be available at [treasureships.com.au](http://treasureships.com.au) by mid-July.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Information for this resource has been derived from the accompanying exhibition publication *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices* with the support of Curators James Bennett and Russell Kilty.

Education resource support was also provided by Lisa Young, Educator & Visitor Experience Officer, Art Gallery of Western Australia; Ann Noble, Gallery Guide; and Mark Fischer, DECD Education Manager, Art Gallery of South Australia.

**This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Western Australia.**

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been called the Age of Discovery. During this time Europeans in ships travelled over the seas looking for new lands, in ships the Japanese called 'takarabune' (treasure ships). Europeans went in search of spices, but they also increased their knowledge about the geography of Earth and the heavens, and the life and culture of the people of Asia. They accumulated great wealth, and were able to spread the word of Christianity through Asia.

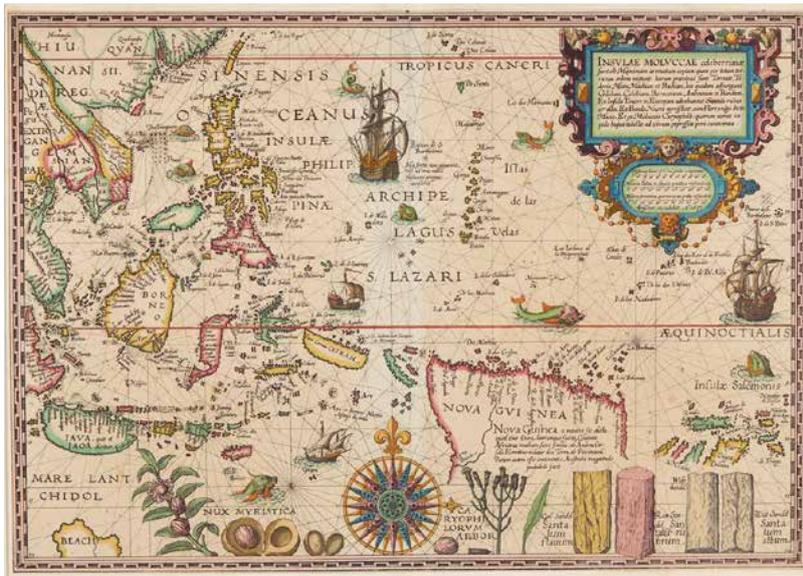
The Portuguese were the first great European explorers. The initial voyages of Portuguese ships followed Arab trade routes down the west coast of Africa in search of items such as gold, ivory and slaves. They learnt navigation techniques from the Arab people of North Africa, and also tapped into the navigation and exploration knowledge and experience of inhabitants of the nearby northern African Islamic countries.

In 1498 Portuguese navigator Vasco Da Gama became the first European to reach India by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern-most tip of Africa. Although Da Gama did not return with many new items or great riches, he established a route to Asia which the Portuguese exploited for the next two centuries. He also discovered that there was already a well-established trading network existing between the Africans, Arabs and Indians, and Southeast Asian nations. The Portuguese developed settlements in Asian lands, and through force, eliminated the monopoly held by Arab traders over the spice trade at that time.

The Europeans' discovery of highly sought-after spices in the **Spice Islands** of Indonesia marked the beginning of world trade, resulting in wealth, cross-cultural contacts and the creation and exchange of works of art and cultural objects. Inhabitants of Europe, Japan and Southeast Asian countries developed an interest in exotic novelties from other lands, and furniture, porcelain, textiles, lacquerware and carpets became highly prized, essential items of exchange. Lasting from around the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in India to the collapse of the Dutch East India Trading Company in 1800, the Age of Spices was a time of discovery, trade, and the combining of Western and Eastern art styles.

The Spice Islands, or the Moluccas (Maluku, East Indonesia), were seen by Europeans as gardens of paradise where exotic trees and plants such as clove, nutmeg and pepper were to be found. By the first half of the sixteenth century, pepper made up ninety percent of Portuguese cargoes returning from India. In Europe, spices were luxurious items for wealthy and important people, and they were used in many different ways. Most importantly, they were prized for their medicinal and healing qualities. Many books were published containing recipes for remedies, ointments and medicines using these special, newly-found ingredients. But in the eighteenth century, the demand for spices declined as people began to turn to medical remedies based on the discoveries of Western medicine.

Spices were also used to preserve cooked food and alcoholic drinks. They were used to make foods such as meat taste better. Later, Europeans' demand for the variety of vegetables that had been introduced from the **New World** eventually resulted in less demand for meat preserved and served with spices. The introduction of new consumables from distant lands also resulted in changes to eating habits, leading to further lessening of demand for herbs and spices.



### J. VISSCHER

Netherlands, active early 17th century,  
after Peter Plancius, Belgium, 1552–1622

#### *Islands of Maluku... (Insulae Molucae...)*

1617, Amsterdam  
engraving on paper, 39.0 × 55.0 cm  
Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.

The large numbers of European ships sailing in the waters of Asia led to an increase in demand for maps and charts. **Cartography** skills were highly valued, and detailed maps and shipping charts were produced to assist in navigation of the shipping lanes, and to help nations gain control of these waters. As a result, the art of map-making became competitive, and much attention was paid to it.

The Dutch East India Company established their own cartography section in 1617. They were thus able to keep information of value to themselves, and also to ensure that the quality of mapping was standardised.

This map, originally produced by Belgian Peter Plancius, was the most influential published map of the Spice Islands in the seventeenth century. The later **engraving** by Dutch cartographer J. Viisscher, shows, in accurate detail for the time, the islands of the Moluccas. The map has been completed with detailed illustrations of spices such as nutmeg and clove and the highly sought after Timorese sandalwood, which had been exported to India and China before the arrival of the Europeans.

Below Java appears the continent of Beach that is an old name for Australia.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- This map has been illustrated with plants, animals and other objects. Why do you think it was important for mapmakers to include these places and features on their maps at this time? Do you think this map was created to be functional, or is it merely decorative? Give reasons for your answer.
- Find an atlas and compare this 1617 map of Southeast Asia with a modern map of the same area. List all the places that you can find. Describe the similarities and differences of the features you can see.

#### Secondary

- Compare this map with a modern version of the same area from an atlas. How accurate was Peter Plancius in drawing land masses and islands in this map?
- The process used to reproduce this map was engraving. Research the engraving process. How is it used in art today?
- View satellite images of this area of the earth. Locate and discuss in class the different types of geographical phenomena you find. What might we learn from satellite images today, and in the future?
- Research Australia's global connections with these places and peoples today. How have they changed over time?

### MAKING

#### Primary and Secondary

Back at school, using pen and watercolour, create your own illustrated map of a journey you have been on. Include sketches of the different types of landscapes and their distinctive landform features, as well as places of interest. Include key items, and finish it with a decorative border.



image detail:

**John GERARDE**

Great Britain, c.1545–1612,

**Thomas JOHNSON**

Great Britain, d.1644,

**Rembert DODOENS**

Belgium, 1517–1585,

***The herball, or, Generall historie of plantes...***

1636, London; printed by Adam Islip, Joice Norton and Richard Whitaker; bound volume, hand-coloured woodcuts and letterpress on paper; 35.0 x 24.0 x 9.0 cm; Bequest of Sir Samuel Wray 1916, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SR OS 580.2 G356

In seventeenth century Europe, advances in printing processes and an increase in the number of publishing houses led to a growth in book and manuscript publishing. Books were written covering many topics, and there were numerous works produced on the subject of plants, gardens, and the mystical and healing qualities of the herbs and spices found in newly-discovered parts of the world.

Inspired by a previous work by the great Flemish **botanist** Rembert Dodoens, London surgeon John Gerarde, an enthusiastic botanist and gardener, produced *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes* to provide information about different plants, including the exotic spices from Asia. In this publication, Gerarde categorised the plants into species, rather than simply listing them in alphabetical order.

This volume, comprised of **woodcuts** and **letterpress** on paper; presented detailed illustrations of different plants, with written descriptions accompanying them.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- This page from Gerarde's book about plants shows nutmeg growing on trees. Why did people in England and Europe in the 1600s want to read books about plants like these?
- What did sixteenth century Europeans use nutmeg for? What do we use it for today?
- Find some nutmeg in your cupboard at home. Does it look like the picture in Gerarde's book? Explain the differences.
- Smell the nutmeg, and try to describe it to a family member.

**Secondary**

- What process was used to create this book? Research this process. Is it still in use today?
- In addition to an old style of English, what language is used in this book and why was it used?
- Find an artist today who makes botanical drawings. Describe the drawings and the kinds of plants illustrated. For what purpose has the artist made the illustrations?

**MAKING**

**Primary and Secondary**

Find a plant and at school complete a detailed botanical illustration of its foliage and flowers, buds or nuts, stem and roots. Make the drawing as accurate as you can, and use watercolours to complete your work.



## Abraham VAN DEN HECKEN

Netherlands, c.1615–c.1669,

### *A scholar in his studio*

c.1655, The Hague (?),

oil on canvas, 121.8 × 106.7 cm;

Gift of Kathy Booth, Anne Davidson, Dr Peter Dobson, Dr Michael Drew, Dr Michael Hayes, Peter McKee and Philip Speakman through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2012, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

The merging of six Dutch trading companies to form the United East India Trading Company in Amsterdam in 1602 marked the beginning of a period of great wealth and power for the **Netherlands**. The company was formed to dominate the spice trade and to eliminate competition, making it the world's first multi-national corporation, with settlements and trade centres all over the Far East.

During this period, the Netherlands became a modern, exciting and wealthy place. The riches acquired because of the spice trade, and new contacts with Asia, encouraged people's interest in works of art and decorative objects from new lands.

This portrait depicts a wealthy, well-dressed man in his studio, surrounded by valuable and rare objects from distant lands. The carpet is particularly important in the painting. Carpets were highly-valued items in European households, appearing in Dutch **still-life paintings** as symbols of wealth. Also visible in the painting are books, a journal, a world globe, bird of paradise feathers (from the Spice Islands) in the gentleman's cap, and an Indonesian Keris hanging on the wall, indicating he is both educated and well-travelled. The partly-concealed skull is a **vanitas** symbol, serving as a warning of the dangers of too much emphasis on worldly riches.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What can you tell about this man from the various objects included in the painting?
- Write an imaginative short story about this man and his life. Use the objects in the painting to help tell the story.

### Secondary

- Describe the composition of this painting. Do you consider it a portrait or is it more an interior scene? Give reasons for your answer.
- This is a painting in the still-life genre. Research this genre and discuss why it was popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Netherlands.
- Focus on the objects in the painting and discuss their symbolic meaning. Why did the artist include the skull as a symbol in this portrait painting?

## MAKING

### Primary

Use the Internet to search for images of Turkish carpets. Note the use of geometric shapes and repetition in the designs. Create your own geometric design for a carpet, inspired by the ones you have looked at. Colour it brightly, using textas or coloured pencils.

### Secondary

Create a painting of yourself in your room, surrounded by objects that say something about you, your personality, and what you like to do.



**Robert SAYER**

Great Britain, active early–mid-18th century,  
after Jan Van Ryne, Netherlands, 1712–1760

***The City of Batavia in the Island of Java and Capital of all the Dutch Factories & Settlements in the East Indies***

c.1740, London,  
hand-coloured copper engraving, 28.0 x 40.5 cm;  
Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth

Batavia (the city of Jakarta, today) became the capital of the Dutch East India Company's overseas empire and the centre of trade in the region. It was a well-located port town where the Dutch could easily obtain items of value from all over Asia to trade for spices. Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Company's fourth Governor General of the East Indies and the man responsible for forcefully taking Jayakarta in 1619 and renaming it Batavia, removed Portuguese and English merchants from the Spice Islands, making sure the Dutch could then control the spice trade.

The city was a wealthy, multicultural centre laid out around a river, with canals, similar to Amsterdam. Different cultural customs came together, resulting in a rich, vibrant city with a unique, cross-cultural feel.

This engraving shows Batavia at its peak. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the city was in decline, with the spice trade dropping off and diseases such as malaria spreading rapidly and killing many people. The collapse of the Dutch East India Company at the end of the eighteenth century, partly due to internal corruption, the high death rate amongst employees, and changes within the spice trade, resulted in Batavia becoming a colonial asset of the Dutch government.

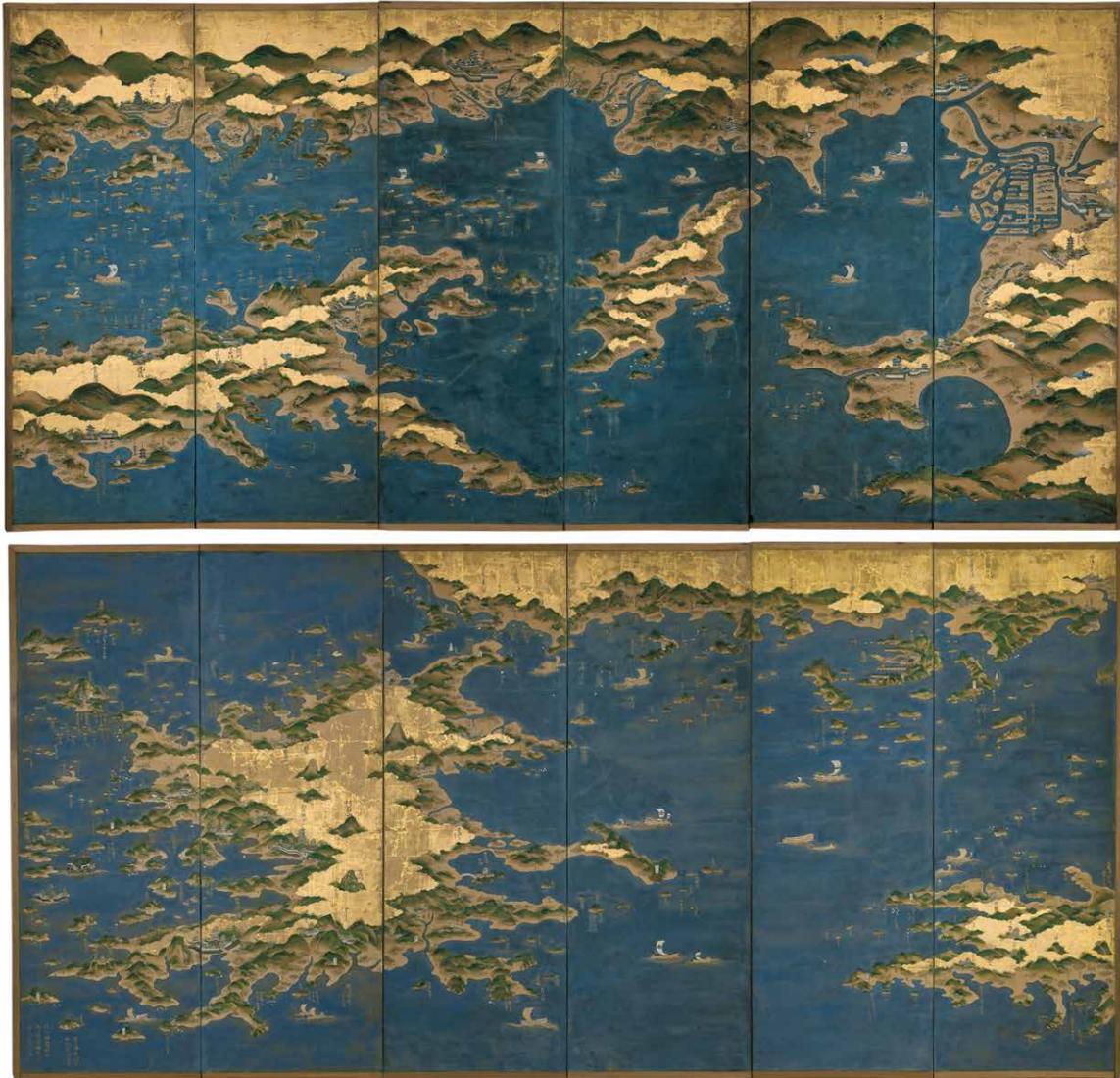
**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- Describe the layout of Batavia and consider how this layout would support trade activity.
- From what viewpoint has the artist presented his image of the city of Batavia in the 1700s?
- Find some images of modern-day Jakarta, the city that was once Batavia. Describe the differences.

**Secondary**

- Describe the process used to make this work.
- What do you notice about the way the artist has depicted the layout of the city, its buildings and the vessels in the harbour?
- To what extent might this engraving have been a work of propaganda for the Dutch? Consider the title and give reasons for your answer.



## Japan, Seto Inland Sea: Osaka to Nagasaki sea route map

late 17th century,  
pair of six panel screens, colour, gold on paper;  
137.0 x 282.0 cm, 137.0x 285.0 cm;  
Gift of Andrew and Hiroko Gwinnett through the Art Gallery of South Australia  
Foundation 2008, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

In 1641, the Dutch East India Company established Nagasaki as its main settlement in Japan. It was from here that local authorities handled imported items for trade. By the late seventeenth century Japanese merchants were using a sea route to ship cargo from Nagasaki to Osaka via the Seto Inland Sea. Goods were then transported overland to other centres in Japan such as Edo (Tokyo) and Kyoto. Over time, this route became increasingly used to transport people, as well as imported and domestic goods.

This pair of large painted screens shows a map of the Seto Inland Sea connecting Nagasaki, on the Japanese island of Honshu, with Osaka, on the island of Shikoku. There are around 3,000 islands in the region and the area is known for its rapid currents, many reefs and locations dangerous for sailing. The map shows the islands and reefs, hazardous to shipping, as well as the numerous shipping routes mapped in red lines. Details such as temples, castles and mountains are also shown.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- Look carefully at the map. Locate the sea route from Nagasaki to Osaka.
- How many different sailing boats can you identify?
- Locate the Portuguese 'black ship' or carrack. Where is it going? Where has it come from?
- Why might this map have been created? Was it made for navigation purposes, or other reasons? Discuss in class.

### Secondary

- Apart from landmarks and the sea route, list what else has been illustrated in this map.
- What materials have been used to make the screens? How do the materials add to the impact of the work?
- Who do you think these screens were initially made for in the late seventeenth century? Research how they were traditionally used. What role do they play today in Japanese society?

## MAKING

### Primary

Select a sailing boat on the map from the online [Google Art Project](#). Draw the boat, including its crest.

### Secondary

Sketch your favourite part of the map from the online [Google Art Project](#), including details of events and activities you see. Discuss how this is more than just a map of the way this area looked at the time.

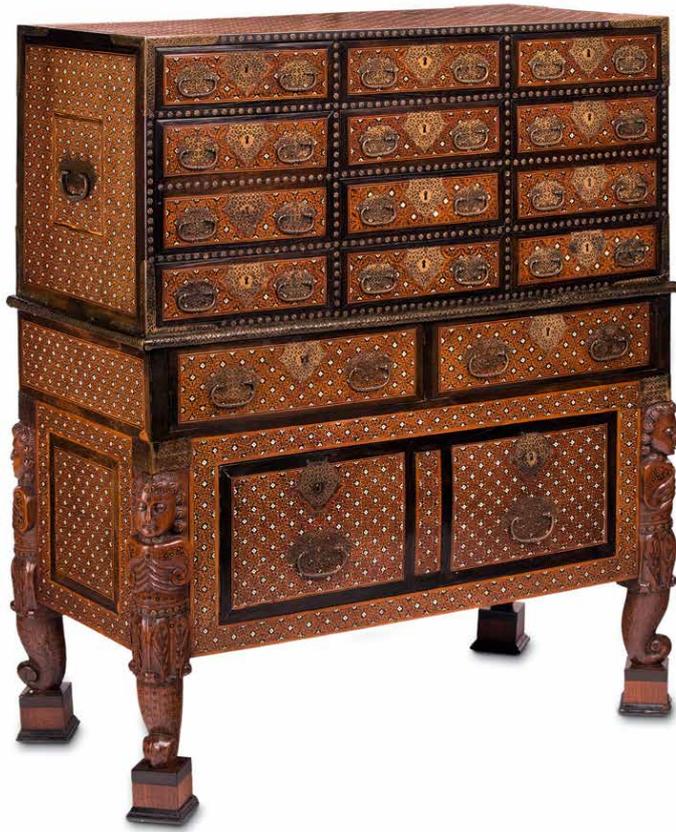
## CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA DURING THE AGE OF SPICES

In 1510, Portuguese Admiral Alfonso de Albuquerque was successful in a campaign to conquer and occupy the city of Goa in India, making it the base of the Portuguese mercantile empire. The Portuguese were great navigators and seafarers, and explorers such as Vasco Da Gama became legends as they 'discovered' far distant and new sea routes. The contact between previously separate and isolated civilisations resulted in cultural exchange.

The main aim of the Portuguese in India was to establish commercial relations with Asia in order to share in the riches of the spice trade, and also to spread Christianity. The rulers of Portugal believed that God had directed them in the discovery of new worlds, and in return, the spread of Christianity was their duty. Priests and monks accompanied soldiers on board ships to India. The Catholic Church became one of the most influential forces promoting cross-cultural exchange in the Age of Spices.

Most influential was the Society of Jesus, or the **Jesuits**, a religious order founded with Papal approval in 1540. The Jesuits were committed to travelling to spread Christianity, and established missions in centres such as Melaka and Nagasaki. The Jesuits were flexible in the manner of their introduction of Christ to Asia. They were interested in the arts, establishing art schools in many cities, and encouraging local artists to create art both for export and for the local Christian populations. Very few European artists travelled to Asia, so local Goanese craftsmen and artisans created Christian art for devotional use, under instruction from the Catholic clergy. They developed a unique and lively style that fused aspects of Indian art with European **Baroque** style.

In 1543 the Portuguese set sail for Japan with the aim of trading and establishing Christian missions here. Catholicism became widespread in Japan, and was generally tolerated due to the link with trade. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese Catholics had established themselves in Nagasaki, a major trading city. From the early 1600s, however, persecution of Catholics became widespread, with successive Japanese rulers ordering Christians out of Japan, believing that Christianity was a negative influence. Many were driven out, killed, or forced to renounce their faith, and consequently Catholicism in Japan was driven underground. Despite this disruption, the Portuguese left a lasting legacy in Japan, influencing trade, fashion and religion, and even inspiring an art and fashion style, termed **Nanban**. Loosely translating as 'southern barbarians' this term was widely used by the Japanese to describe European arrivals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



### India, *Standing cabinet (Contador)*

second half 17th century, Goa or Bombay (Mumbai),  
wood, ivory, bronze, 126.5 x 103.0 x 51.0 cm;  
Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2011, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Europeans arrived in Asia without furniture or other household effects, discovering that locals had little use for such items, preferring to sit on mats or rugs on the floor. As a result, they commissioned local craftspeople to create items to meet their needs, and for exporting back to Europe. These unique pieces, while used as items of furniture in the European fashion, often contained elements of local style and exotic materials such as ebony, tortoiseshell and inlays of mother of pearl and ivory. They became highly desirable items throughout Europe.

This cabinet, made in India, is an example of European design fused with Hindu stylistic elements. The traditional Baroque **caryatid** legs, common on this type of European cabinet, have been combined with carved Hindu serpent beings.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- What materials has this cabinet been made from?
- What do you think this piece of furniture was used for? How would you use it in your home?

#### Secondary

- What materials and stylistic motifs in this piece of furniture are uniquely Indian?
- Research mid-seventeenth century European furniture and find an example of a free-standing cabinet. Compare it to this cabinet and list the similarities and differences.



### Japan, *Portable altarpiece with devotional image*

late 16th–early 17th centuries,  
wood, urushi lacquer, gold lacquer, mother-of-pearl and gilt copper (fittings),  
pigment on wood (painting), 37.5 x 29.2 x 5.1 cm;  
Museu do Oriente/Fundação Oriente, Lisbon, Portugal,  
photo: Hugo Maertens/BNP Paribas, FO/0636

This altarpiece was probably made by Japanese artists for the local Christian population or for the Portuguese export market. The two panels either side of the painting of Joseph and the Christ Child fold inward, and latch together to enclose the whole altarpiece into a case, which allowed it to be easily transported.

The central painting was most likely produced by a Japanese artist trained in a European art academy set up by Jesuits in Nagasaki. It contains stylistic elements from a school of painting popular in Portugal at the time.

The frame is black lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlays. The panels either side of the painting depict a stylised mandarin-orange tree design in gold and mother-of-pearl inlays on a black lacquered background. Inlaid lacquer techniques became popular in Japan in the sixteenth century, partly due to inspiration taken from objects brought to Japan by European missionaries and merchants which were a mix of Indian and Portuguese styles. This elaborate, highly-detailed style is typical of Nanban work made for the export market.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- This is an altarpiece. What is an altarpiece used for?
- Locate and describe the elements of geometric and organic design in this object.
- Find other examples of lacquerware and inlays in other works in the exhibition.

#### Secondary

- This altarpiece contains stylistic elements and materials from different countries and times. What is the history of the use of such elements and materials in religious art?
- Explain how these materials might contain symbolic meaning.
- Research the history of **icon** making in Europe. Why were images of the Christ Child, such as those found on this altarpiece, so important in Christian devotion?



### India, *Christ in Dormition*

1680–1730, Church of St John the Baptist, Thane, Mumbai,  
wood, pigment, 184.0 x 46.0 x 30.0 cm;  
Archdiocesan Heritage Museum, Mumbai, S-J-M-0004

This sculpture is a dramatic representation of the body of Christ after being lowered from the cross. It was originally made for the Catholic Church of St John the Baptist, in Thane, now a suburb of Mumbai, India. The sculpture is full of emotion, complete with dramatic wounds and blood. It is typical of the way local Indian craftsmen at the time incorporated aspects of European Baroque style into their unique objects of Christian worship.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- What materials has the sculpture been made from?
- What part of the Christian story does this sculpture describe?
- How would the craftsman who made this sculpture have wanted people to respond when standing in front of it? How does the sculpture make you feel?

#### Secondary

- What function did sculptures such as these have in Christian churches?
- Discuss the techniques used by the craftsman to infuse the work with heightened emotion.



### Portugal, Reliquary cross of St Francis Xavier

first half 17th century,  
silver; 36.0 x 18.5 cm;  
National Museum Machado de Castro, Coimbra, MNMC 6210

St Francis Xavier of Spain was perhaps the most famous Jesuit missionary to travel to Asia. His first journey was to India in 1541, marking the beginning of eleven years of adventurous travel throughout the region. His travels were documented in stories and works of art. This **reliquary** cross illustrates the famous legend that developed from an incident in his travels. St Francis held the cross out over the stormy sea to calm the waters – but he lost the cross overboard! It was later ‘returned’ by a crab on a beach at Maluku (the Moluccas, Indonesia).

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What material has been used to make this object?  
Research the casting process to find out how it was made. Find other objects in the exhibition made from the same material.
- Find out more about the life of St Francis Xavier.

### Secondary

- What is a reliquary?  
What is its function in Christian worship?
- Why do you think it was important for Christians in India to have items such as this in their churches?

## MAKING

### Primary

Sketch the crab, making sure you include all the marks and textures on its shell.

### Secondary

Find another reliquary in the exhibition and make a detailed drawing of it. Back at school annotate your drawing, describing the Christian story the relic represents.



### India, *Infant Jesus, Saviour of the World*

17th century, Basilica of Baby Jesus, Old Goa, Goa, ivory, 88.0 x 20.5 cm; Museum of Christian Art, Goa, Inv. 01.1.109

Roman Catholics in India wanted devotional images of Jesus Christ in their churches to add drama and visual impact to these spaces. The Portuguese brought religious objects from Europe, but in the 1600s local artisans in places such as Goa, India, where many people had converted to Catholicism, started creating their own versions of these sculptures.

This sculpture depicts Jesus as an infant, standing on what appears to be a world globe. He is represented as Saviour of the World, his right hand held up in a gesture of blessing. The sculpture has been carved from ivory, a precious material often used for religious carvings in India and Sri Lanka during this time.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What was the sculpture originally used for? Where was it housed?
- This image of the infant Jesus, made in India, has been carved from ivory. Discuss the situation that has arisen as a result of the use of ivory in works of art and other objects over centuries.

### Secondary

- Explain the symbolism in the gesture Jesus is making with his right arm, and the globe upon which he stands.
- Find another devotional sculpture in the exhibition carved from ivory and made in India. Describe the subject and identify local influences in its depiction.
- Why do you think ivory was often used for carving Christian religious objects in Asia at this time? Research the impact of the use of ivory for object production on elephant populations. What further restrictions might be necessary to ensure the survival of the species?

## EUROPEANS IN JAPAN DURING THE AGE OF SPICES

The first Chinese junk carrying Chinese, Korean, and two or three Portuguese passengers arrived at the small island of Tanegashima, Japan, in 1543, marking the first recorded contact between Europeans and Japanese on Japanese soil. Portuguese ships followed, many bringing goods from China. These goods included silks and porcelain, which were highly prized by the Japanese, and which they 'bought' with Japanese silver. The Portuguese acted as mediators in trade between Japan and China, as Japanese trade with China had been forbidden by the Chinese Emperor in retaliation for pirate raids on Chinese ships. With the Portuguese ships came missionaries, keen to spread the word of God in Asian lands.

The Portuguese black ships, called carracks, were huge and commanding, with hulls made black ('kuro' in Japanese) by layers of protective tar. The arrival every two to three years of these imposing ships was met with great excitement. The Japanese were fascinated by the foreigners and their exotic treasures.

In 1580 the Japanese city of Nagasaki became a major trading port for the Portuguese, with the Jesuit missions there financed through trade. The Jesuits, together with the large number of foreign merchants in Japan, helped to inspire the art and fashion of a unique period in Japanese cultural history. This style affected equally fashion, painting, lacquer work, and ceremonial objects.

Trade between the Japanese and Portuguese continued until 1638, when it was prohibited on the grounds that the ships were smuggling priests into Japan, after Christianity had been banned.



### Japan, *Arrival of the Black Ship*

early 17th century,  
six-panel screen, opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper; 94.0 x 290.0 cm;  
The Gwinnett Collection, Adelaide

Folding screens or Byōbu ('to block the wind') in Japanese interiors have long been used to define and separate spaces. These screens were often lavishly decorated with scenes that were designed to be viewed from a sitting position on the floor.

With the arrival of the Portuguese ships, Japanese screen painters and other artists had new subjects to depict in their work. This screen is an example of Nanban art, showing the arrival of one of the Portuguese carracks in Nagasaki. Depictions of these ships were initially created by members of the *Kanō School*, the oldest and most influential school of painting in Japanese history. The images were stylised and followed compositional **conventions** that include the ship being positioned on the left, and the crowd of people meeting the vessel on the right.

This large screen, designed to be read from left to right, shows a three-masted ship, complete with canons, being greeted by the Christians of Nagasaki. The Portuguese merchants and their servants leaving the ship have brought exotic animals collected on the long journey, – as gifts for the Japanese.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- Look carefully at the many different people in this painting. Describe their faces and the different kinds of clothing they are wearing.
- The Portuguese have brought unusual animals as gifts for the Japanese. List the animals you can find.
- One of the materials used in this screen is gold leaf. Why do you think the artist chose this material? How is gold leaf applied to a painting?

#### Secondary

- This image depicts a scene of contact between the Portuguese and the Japanese. Consider the outcome of this contact as depicted on the screen.
- What materials have been used to create this screen? What effect do these materials have visually? How do they help to communicate meaning in the work?
- This work is a painting, but it is also a functional item. Research the history of Japanese screens (byōbu), as well as the skills, techniques and processes used in making them. What were screens used for at this time? Compare with their use today.
- Traditionally, Japanese text and imagery was read from right to left. Why do you think the artists who painted in the 'black ship' genre have reversed this convention?

### MAKING

#### Primary

Make your own horizontal screen that reads from left to right, telling a story of an arrival after a journey. Draw your design onto card, and paint it using tempera or watercolour paint. Add gold paint in some areas and a border to finish it off. Plan a class display of the screens.



**Japan, Matchlock hand cannon, with dragon and cloud design**

18th century,  
 metal, wood, brass, silver; 13.4 x 13.1 x 101.8 cm;  
 Felton Bequest 1927, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2892–D3

When the Portuguese arrived in Japan for the first time they brought guns, including the matchlock gun. The young Japanese lord Tanegashima Tokitaka 1528–1574 was presented with a pair of matchlock guns and this marked the beginning of the Japanese fascination with firearms. The manufacturing of firearms based on European examples became a profitable industry, and the Japanese applied the same high degree of craftsmanship to it as they did to their sword production.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- Describe what you see on the barrel of the gun.
- What sorts of weapons did the Japanese use before the Europeans introduced them to guns?

**Secondary**

- The design on the barrel of the gun depicts the three-clawed Japanese version of the Dragon King, one of the eight guardians of Buddhism. What is the significance of this design on this gun?
- Why did the Japanese ban the use of guns as weapons during the Edo Period (1615-1868)?



## Hakuin EKAKU

Japan, 1689–1769,

### 'They kick when fired...'

c.1750, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 30.0 x 89.0 cm; Gift of Andrew and Hiroko Gwinnett through the Art Gallery of South Australian Foundation 2008, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

This hanging scroll, created by Buddhist monk Hakuin, is one of a small number of *zenga* or 'zen pictures' showing guns, highlighting their destructive power. A **haiku** in **calligraphy** accompanies the illustration of the firearm. It reads:

*They kick when fired*

*They roar, too –*

*The hell of guns*

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What is the Japanese word for an illustrated hanging scroll?
- The artist has also written a haiku on the scroll, in calligraphy. Does the haiku change the way you feel about the object in the drawing?

### Secondary

- Japanese hanging scrolls often contain calligraphy. What role does calligraphy play in communicating ideas on scroll paintings?
- What did the artist want the **audience** to see and understand when they viewed this scroll?

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Using the link below, practise some Japanese calligraphy. Make your own scroll from newsprint or rice paper, and use brush and ink to draw one of your favourite images on the scroll. Using calligraphy write a haiku about the item you have chosen and position it on the scroll. See the creation of the [calligraphic characters](#) and their elements depicted in the *Ichikawa Beians'* six panelled screens



### Japan, Dish, with Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) mark

17th century, Arita, Saga,  
porcelain, underglaze blue decoration, 62 x 36.6 cm (diameter);  
The Gwinnett Collection, Adelaide

The manufacture of blue and white **ceramics** has a long and complex history and tradition. For hundreds of years, the Chinese were the exclusive producers, closely guarding the recipe for the **porcelain** and the blue **pigment** with which the items were decorated. Many tried to imitate the recipe, with the Dutch being the most successful, creating blue and white tin glaze earthenware, called **Delft**, in the 1600s. The Delft potters imitated the characteristics of porcelain's **kaolin** body, but true porcelain was not made in Europe until 1710 when production began at Meissen, near Dresden in Germany.

Arab traders obtained large quantities of blue and white porcelain by trading spices, silk and lacquerware. Prior to the sixteenth century, the Portuguese broke the Arab monopoly on trade with China, and took great quantities of porcelain in carracks to trade throughout Europe. Europeans collected this porcelain, often creating decorative displays in their homes and palaces. In the second half of the seventeenth century, because of political instability, supply from China dried up.

The Dutch East India Company looked to the kilns of Arita in Japan for their blue and white ceramic supplies once those from China dwindled. **Arita ware**, in blue, red and gold, became popular with European collectors for its unique designs called *Imari* ware.

This large Arita ware dish is an example of ceramics specially created for officers of the Dutch East India Company, who were living in Japan and other countries of Asia where the Dutch had outposts. The VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) logo, inscribed on this dish, became the first worldwide trademark, and was stamped on ceramics and the Company's other overseas commercial products such as textiles, furniture and weapons. The placing of the large emblem of the Company centrally on the dish signifies the importance of both the item and the person for whom it was made. The design on the dish is distinctly Japanese, featuring **stylised** flowers and plants, including cherry blossoms.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- This large dish has a diameter of nearly 37cm. What do you think it could have been used for?
- The logo of the trading company is at the centre of the dish. Describe the patterns surrounding this logo.

### Secondary

- Why was blue and white ceramic ware so popular in Europe from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries?
- Discuss the importance of the design (monogram) in the centre of the dish.
- Was this dish intended as a functional item or was it produced for other reasons?

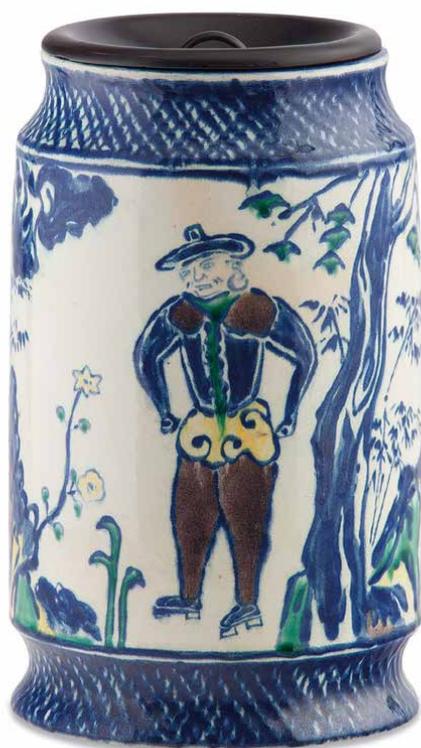
## MAKING

### Primary

Make some drawings of the plant and flower designs you see on the dish. Use blue watercolour paints, keeping the paint watery and transparent. In a similar circular design try making some designs of your own based on Australian flowers and plants.

### Secondary

This large dish has been made from porcelain with blue underglaze decoration. Research the qualities of porcelain and the materials and processes used to create the blue design.



### Ogata IHACHI (Kyoto Kenzan II)

Japan, active 1720–1760.

#### *Water jar (mizusashi), with foreigner and ostrich*

c.1750, Kyoto, earthenware, white slip, polychrome underglaze decoration, lacquer and wood, 21.5 x 12.0 cm (diameter); Gift of Andrew and Hiroko Gwinnett through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2012, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

By the end of the seventeenth century, Japanese porcelain production had shifted from Arita to Kyoto. The ceramics of the artist Ogata Kenzan took on a more fluid painterly appearance than had been evident on ceramics previously. Although some of Kenzan's designs were inspired by Delft ware, it was not until his adopted son, Kenzan II, took charge of production after 1731, and Japanese trade restrictions were loosened, that the Kenzan Delft style became the major focus of the ceramics workshop.

This water jug, attributed to Kyoto Kenzan II, is typical of the ceramicist's Delft-inspired works of cylindrical jars and square dishes. Used in tea ceremonies, these covered jars held fresh water for refilling the kettle. The unusual choice of illustration on this jar fits with European influence and Japanese interests at the time. The figure's costume appears European in style, apart from the shoes, or clogs, which could be Japanese; and the ostrich reflects Japanese fascination at the time with exotic creatures from other lands.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- This water jar was used in a tea ceremony. Why do you think it has a lid?
- The foreigner who is pictured on this jar wears European style clothes. Find some images of outfits Portuguese men would have worn around 1750, and compare them to the figure on the jar. What do you notice?

### Secondary

- Identify both Japanese and Dutch inspired **design elements** and **design principles** on this water jar.
- Why might this object have been a desirable one for a Japanese person to own in the mid-eighteenth century?
- Find an example of blue and white ceramics in the exhibition from around the same time, produced in the Netherlands. Compare the two objects, outlining the similarities and differences. Discuss the ways the objects reflect eighteenth century cross-cultural fashion and taste.

## MAKING

### Primary

Research the Japanese tea ceremony. What other objects were important in the ceremony? Set up your own tea ceremony, and invite some friends.

The growth of the spice trade signalled the beginning of global commerce. Nations embarked on sea travel to distant lands where they exchanged objects, and then traded for precious spices. From the early seventeenth century, as European trading companies were established across the Asian region, prized items such as porcelain, textiles and lacquerware became available in large quantities to many Europeans.

Exploration, discovery and trade brought wealth to European countries. The Dutch East India Company monopolised trade in spices and other items of value. Cities such as Amsterdam and Antwerp became flourishing centres of art, and there was an increased interest in the vast treasures of the New World. Specialist shops in Amsterdam sold rare Asian objects, and many people began collecting objects for display in what were to become known as *Cabinets of Curiosities*. This practice eventually led to the development of the modern day museum.

In Asian trading centres such as Goa in India, and Nagasaki in Japan, items were crafted for the European markets and were often made from materials such as mother-of-pearl and ebony, specific to the areas of origin. These items were functional, meeting the needs of the Europeans, but were distinctly Asian in the way they were decorated.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, with the Portuguese purchasing cloth from India to trade for spices, textiles became the most profitable trade industry. Abundant supplies of cotton, a capacity to fix and vary vegetable dyes, and a plentiful supply of cheap, skilled labour meant that Indian textiles dominated trade. Eventually, cloth became the most important commodity traded between Asia and Europe, even overtaking the trade in spices that had started it all.



### India, Wall hanging, with flowering tree

c.1750, India, made for the Portuguese market, embroidered wall hanging, cream cotton ground, polychrome silk embroidery, 191.0 x 154.0 cm; Purchased 1984, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, photo: Sotha Bourn, A10590

Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European trade partnerships with India resulted in large quantities of Indian-made textiles being imported into Europe. While the majority of the exported cloth was dyed with **mordant dyes**, some, such as this wall hanging, were embroidered using silk threads. Designs included decorative motifs borrowed from both the Indian and European traditions.

Europeans developed a taste for Indian textiles to use in their homes, and items such as this wall hanging were prized for their level of craftsmanship and their visual appeal. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the popularity of **Chinoiserie**, and an interest in nature, meant that designs such as the flowering tree were very popular. Changes were made by the craftsman to suit European tastes, such as incorporating a white background, as can be seen in this hanging.

The flowering tree, often called the Tree of Life, is an Islamic symbol. Believed to have come originally from the idea of the Tree of Bliss from the history of garden design and romantic poetry in Islamic culture, the Tree of Life was a hugely popular motif in European household decoration, and had become widely available through the textile trade.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- Look closely at the wall hanging. What makes it embroidery?
- Describe or name the flowers in the design.
- Hangings of this type were used in the homes of wealthy Europeans. What do you imagine they might have used the hangings for?

### Secondary

- Identify and describe several design elements and design principles the maker has used in creating this wall hanging.
- Research the history of the flowering tree or Tree of Life motif in art and design. Why is it such an important image?

## MAKING

### Primary

Fold a piece of A4 paper in half lengthwise. Create a drawing on one half based on flowers and plants. Using tracing paper, trace your drawing using a soft lead pencil. Turn the tracing paper over and place it edge to edge with your drawing. Rub or scribble over the back of the tracing paper to transfer your drawing to the space next to your original drawing. You should now have a symmetrical design to colour with watercolour pencils or coloured pens.

### Secondary

Design your own Tree of Life image, and include natural objects such as flowers and fruit, drawn from life. Use the design elements and design principles as a guide. Colour your image using pens and watercolours. Organise a display of the works of art made by the class.



**Vietnam, Dragon ewer, salvaged from the *Cu Lao Cham*, sank late 15th century, late 15th century, Chu Dau, Red River delta**

stoneware, moulded with underglaze blue decoration, 22.3 x 17.0 x 7.8 cm;  
Purchased 2000, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, photo: AGNSW, 523.2000

A ewer is a pouring vessel with a handle on one side and a spout on the other. This ceramic dragon-shaped ewer, made in Vietnam in the late fifteenth century, was created in stoneware using a two-piece mould, with the two parts joined together along a seam. The surface design on the ewer has been delicately painted using a blue underglaze.

The ewer was found amongst the cargo of the Vietnamese ship, *Cu Lao Cham*, that sank off the coast of Hoi An, Vietnam. It was one of around 150,000 ceramic pieces packed on the ship, bound for centres in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Dragons were popular in many Asian creation stories and myths about water and the ocean. The Vietnamese believed that very old fish could transform themselves into dragons, capable of flight.

At the time the *Cu Lao Cham* sank, Hoi An was a major international port and trading centre. By the eighteenth century the city was a powerful and exclusive trade centre for trade between Europe, China, India, and Japan, especially for the ceramic industry. Shipwreck discoveries have shown that Vietnamese and Asian ceramics were transported from Hoi An to as far as Sinai, in Egypt.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- This ewer was found at the site of a ship sunk off the coast of Vietnam in a place called Hoi An. Find a contemporary world map and locate Hoi An, Vietnam. Look for the route European traders may have taken to this part of the world in the fifteenth century.
- Look closely at the ewer: Where would you hold it, and where would it pour from?

### Secondary

- Find another ewer in the exhibition and compare and contrast the two forms. Consider line, shape, colour, repetition, emphasis and balance. Explain how each ewer has been designed to suit the market for which it was intended.

## MAKING

### Primary

Make a drawing about a fish of great age, rising from the ocean and transforming into a mythical dragon that can fly. You can use the dragon ewer as a model to draw from.

### Secondary

Use clay and hand-building techniques to create a ceramic ewer based on a mythical creature. Inspired by the dragon ewer, create a pattern to paint the surface with underglazes. Finish the piece with a clear glaze, inside and out, so it can contain liquid.



## George GOWER

Great Britain, c.1540–1596

### *Portrait of a Lady*

c.1590, London,  
oil on wood panel, 94.7 x 82.0 cm;  
South Australia Government Grant 1984, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

This sixteenth century portrait, by British artist George Gower, depicts a woman wearing lots of jewellery and an elaborate costume, the sleeve cuffs of which are embroidered with a design incorporating fruits, flowers, and pomegranate motifs. The pomegranate came from Northern India, Afghanistan and Iran, and was a fruit associated with paradise. It was also prized for its medicinal value, and was considered a symbol of love and fertility. The costume incorporates embroidery, which had become both popular and fashionable as a result of embroidered fabrics and silk thread being imported from India.

## RESPONDING

To view this work of art in more detail, click on the [Google Art Project](#).

### Primary

- Describe what the lady is wearing in this sixteenth century English painting. What might it be like to wear something like this?
- She is dressed in her finest clothing and jewellery for her portrait. Make a list of the materials and precious items you can find.
- What kind of clothing might a person wear for a portrait today? What would you wear?
- How is she holding her hands? What do they tell us about her?

### Secondary

- This painting contains symbols that tell us about the woman and her position in society. Identify these symbols and what they reveal about her and about the time of the reign of Elizabeth I.
- Describe the woman's facial expression, in particular her eyes. What is the painter communicating about her?
- Research the career of the artist George Gower. In what ways do you think **patronage** affected the works of European painters such as Gower in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Paint a detailed portrait of a friend or family member using watercolour on paper or oil paint on canvas or board. Incorporate symbols into the painting that tell more about that person.

Prior to the sixteenth century, Islamic (Arab and **Persian**) merchants had monopolised commerce in the Mediterranean basin and the Indian Ocean. They became accustomed to travel as a result of their pilgrimages to Mecca, and used opportunities to engage in trade during these journeys. But from the sixteenth century the nations of Europe including Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Great Britain began to journey in search of spices. Over time they took control of major sea routes and established trade outposts, forcing the Arabs to relinquish their control of the spice trade.

Throughout the Age of Spices there was a lively exchange of goods and ideas between Christians and Muslims. This sharing resulted in the creation of works of art, including ceramics and carpets that reflected cross-cultural influences.

Early Islamic ceramic production had been highly developed, and techniques introduced by Islamic craftsmen later had a great impact on ceramic production and trade during the Age of Spices. In an attempt to imitate Chinese porcelain, which they prized highly, craftsmen invented high firing tin glazes, their shiny, opaque surfaces capturing the look of porcelain. The techniques for making these tin glazes influenced the Dutch in the creation of their signature Delftware ceramics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



### Iran, *The Yakob 'Polonaise' carpet*,

1625–30, Isfahan region,  
silk pile with brocading in silver thread, 266.5 x 164.0 cm;  
Gift of William Bowmore AO OBE through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2000,  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Carpets were among the most spectacular and expensive objects traded from the Middle East and Southeast Asia to Europe during the Age of Spices. Highly valued for their designs and quality, they were used in European homes and palaces as wall, floor and table coverings. They can be seen in seventeenth century paintings, for example in those of the Dutch and Italian Masters, who often included them as symbols of wealth and power.

Carpets were also used as diplomatic gifts, commissioned and presented to important officials, merchants, religious leaders and heads of state. *The Yakob Polonaise carpet* was most likely created as a gift, made for the European market. Woven in Iran by an Armenian Christian, it contains Persian, European and Chinese designs. Polonaise or Polish carpets, similar to this one, were exported to Europe and Asia.

Although designs in Middle Eastern carpets were derived from nature, there was never any attempt to replicate nature. Instead, designers created **stylised** motifs and used elements such as geometrical floral or vegetal designs in a repetition known as the **arabesque**. The arabesque in Islamic art is often used to symbolize the infinite nature of God. *The Yakob Polonaise carpet* contains floral and arabesque designs but it also contains elements of European design, which would appeal to the tastes of those likely to buy.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- How many different flower designs can you see in the wide border around the carpet? Compare your results.
- What makes this carpet symmetrical? Where is the point of reflection?
- Look closely. What other material, apart from silk thread, has been used in the weave?

### Secondary

- Research the arabesque motif in Islamic design.
- Discuss the main design principles you can see in the overall design of the carpet.
- Research the techniques used to make these carpets. Why were they such valuable items of trade during the Age of Spices?

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Find the arabesques in this carpet and make sketches of them. Extend the sketches by designing your own arabesques. Using watercolour or oil paints add colour to your design.



### Turkey, Dish, with tulips and poppies,

late 16th century, Iznik, Bursa,  
frit body, polychrome underglaze decoration, 28.7 cm (diameter);  
Gift of William Bowmore AO OBE through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2003,  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

This Turkish dish provides an example of the way different cultures and fashion trends intersected to create desirable objects for trading. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, in the Turkish town of Iznik, already well-known for its pottery production, craftsmen began to manufacture high quality ceramics with a **fritware** body painted with cobalt blue under a transparent lead glaze. The detailed designs on the surface of these ceramic items combined Chinese elements with traditional Turkish **Ottoman** patterns. This development was almost certainly a result of requests made by the recently-established Ottoman court in Istanbul, which greatly valued Chinese blue-and-white porcelain.

The surface design of the *Dish, with tulips and poppies* depicts a symmetrical floral design, popular with Iznik ceramic craftsmen and inspired by fifteenth century Chinese blue and white ceramics. Tulip motifs were popular with the Ottomans because of the association of the flower's beauty with divinity. Tulips were exported from Turkey to the Netherlands, becoming extremely popular and eventually leading to what has been termed a 'tulip craze' (1634–1637) during which the Dutch considered that tulips were too valuable to plant!

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- Identify which flowers are tulips and which are poppies on the dish. Discuss their differences with a friend.
- Later, look at tulips in your garden, a florist shop, or at pictures of them on the Internet. How do they compare to the shape of the tulips on the dish?

### Secondary

- Research the history of the tulip, including the reasons for the 'tulip mania' financial crash of 1637.
- Identify the Chinese and the Turkish parts of the design on this dish.

## MAKING

### Primary

Set up a still life arrangement of a vase of tulips or poppies. Use torn tissue paper shapes to make a large collaged image of the still life.

### Secondary

Create a radially symmetrical design based on drawings of flowers, using tracing paper to transfer one quarter of the design to the other quarters. Use this design to complete a painting, or as the basis for a relief block print, or for a surface design on a ceramic plate.



## Jan VAN OS

Netherlands, 1744–1808,

### *Flowers,*

c.1780s?, The Hague,  
oil on wood panel, 70.5 x 61.0 cm;  
Gift of Gladys Penfold Hyland in memory of her husband Frank 1964,  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

The Dutch are famous for the still-life genre of painting which they perfected during the seventeenth century, sometimes called the Golden Age of Dutch painting. Dominance of world trade at this time meant that the Dutch nation was the most prosperous in Europe. They were leaders in art, science and exploration, and they expressed this prominence, and their great wealth, through still-life images, which went beyond the merely skilful and realistic depiction of collections of objects. The arrangements usually contained items that had symbolic meaning, or which held lessons for the viewer. For example, skulls were used as vanitas symbols to remind the viewer of human mortality, and that striving to own many possessions is a pointless pursuit.

This painting was made in the century following the Golden Age of Dutch painting; it reflects, however, many aspects of the seventeenth century still-life paintings. The objects painted are improved beyond reality, and the various exotic flowers in the arrangement, including tulips, appear to have come from different parts of the world. In reality, the painting was probably composed from individual studies of flowers over a period of time, because these varieties would not all have been in flower at the same time. Or, they may have been painted from book illustrations, as the Dutch also led the world in botanical and other scientific drawings, prints, and book illustrations.

Within the work individual items hold symbolic meaning, which would have been understood by viewers at the time. For example, the tulips

represented wealth. Butterflies, bugs and birds' nests with eggs symbolised that beauty and life change. Grapes meant wine and celebration; and ripe, opened peaches represented fruitfulness and love.

### RESPONDING

To view this work of art in more detail, click on the [Google Art Project](#).

#### Primary

- There are many butterflies in the painting – but what other insects can you find?
- Describe what you see in the painting behind the still-life arrangement.

#### Secondary

- Identify the symbolism behind the objects chosen for this still-life arrangement.
- Where is the focal point in the painting? Consider why the artist chose to emphasise this part.
- What mood or atmosphere is this painting conveying?
- Find a still-life painting in the exhibition by an Australian artist. What are the similarities and differences between the two works?

### MAKING

#### Primary

Set up a still-life arrangement of your favourite flowers. Draw the arrangement using a white pencil on dark coloured card. Colour the drawing using either brightly coloured acrylic paint or soft pastels.

#### Secondary

Research the history of vanitas still-life paintings. Collect objects that could be used in a modern day vanitas still life. Arrange the objects and complete an oil or acrylic painting on canvas, using a realist style.

The 'discovery' of Australia by Europe and the eventual establishment of the British settlement of Sydney town was a by-product of the Age of Spices and of Europe's shift from trade to the pursuit of geopolitical domination in the region. Nevertheless, it was Indonesian fishermen from South Sulawesi who first regularly sailed to Australian shores, calling the continent Marege, and who engaged in peaceful exchanges with **Indigenous** people.

The first recorded European visits to the Australian continent were by Dutch explorers employed by the Dutch East India Company. In 1606 Willem Janszoon reached northern Queensland and the Gulf of Carpentaria, on board the *Duyfken*. He was followed in 1616 by Dirk Hartog who explored parts of the Western Australian coastline around Shark Bay on board the *Eendracht*.

A number of the seventeenth century visits to Australia by the Dutch came about accidentally as a result of ships travelling off-course and becoming shipwrecked off the Western Australian coast. The Dutch East India Company established trade routes which followed the yearly monsoon season, relying on the southern Indian Ocean's '**Roaring Forties**' to assist the ships on their journeys to the Southeast Asian archipelago. But several ships ran aground, including the *Batavia*, named for the Dutch trading centre in Java (formerly Jayakarta), which was wrecked on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands off the coast of Western Australia in 1629.

In 1642, on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, Abel Tasman sailed to Australia to record and document as much as he could about the southern continent, referred to at that time as 'Beach'. After being blown off course by storms, Tasman sighted the west coast of Tasmania, naming it Van Diemen's Land after Antonio van Diemen, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. After a second voyage in 1644, Tasman mapped the north coast of Australia, naming it New Holland. Interestingly, the Dutch East India Company deemed the expeditions failures as Tasman had not found any new trade opportunities, nor had he discovered new shipping routes.

William Dampier was the first Englishman to set foot on Australian soil in 1688 when his ship the *Cygnets* was marooned in King Sound, a large gulf in northern Western Australia. Before leaving, he gathered information about the flora, fauna and Indigenous inhabitants of the area.

In 1696, another Dutch East India Company employee, Willem de Vlamingh, commanded a rescue mission to Australia's west coast to look for survivors of the *Ridderschap van Holland* that had gone missing two years earlier. Although he found no trace of the ship, he mapped parts of the Western Australian coast, including Rottneest Island, the Swan River and Dirk Hartog Island, thereby improving navigation on the Indian Ocean route from the Cape of Good Hope to the Dutch East Indies.

In 1768, James Cook sailed from England on the *Endeavour* on a voyage of discovery in the South Pacific region, with the aim of locating the much-discussed great southern land, at that time known as Terra Australis. He first reached New Zealand, then Australia in 1770, his expedition becoming the first documented European expedition to reach the eastern coastline. He returned to England, taking with him much information about the suitability of Australia for British settlement.

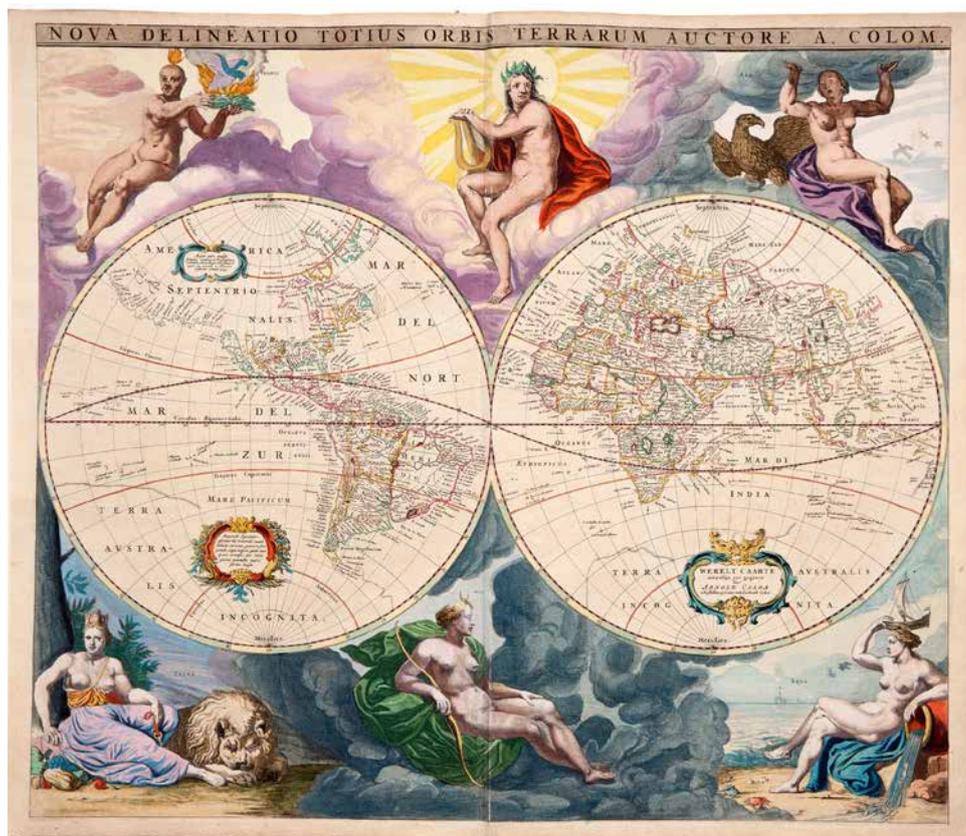


image detail:

### Arnold COLOM

Netherlands, 1624–1668,

***Sea atlas of the water world: Containing a short description of all the well-known sea coasts of the earth. Newly issued (Zee-atlas...)***

1658, Amsterdam; printed by de Nieuwen-brugh, vellum bound volume, hand-coloured engraving and letterpress on paper; 58.0 x 36.2 cm; Royal Geographical Society of South Australia, Adelaide, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, RG 912 C 718 dSP

The Dutch were great describers of the places where they established trading ports. They took a keen interest not only in mapping the world, but also in describing the various plants and animals that inhabited it. Maps, particularly to the 'spice islands' in Indonesia, were often considered so important that they should remain secret, and not be published. But the Dutch developed a taste for things new and exotic, and were interested in the many books and other publications that were produced about travel and different lands. In the seventeenth century large, beautifully illustrated volumes such as this atlas became available.

Atlases first appeared in the sixteenth century, named after Atlas, who, in ancient Greek mythology, was the God of astronomy and navigation. This 'sea-map' in a calfskin-bound volume, shows the world as round. The sea-map is lavishly illustrated with hand-coloured engravings and letterpress on paper. As little was known

of the great southern continent at this time, Australia is represented as an indistinct land mass labelled ***Terra Australis Incognita***. We see only the coastline of Western Australia and part of the Cape York Peninsula.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- Look carefully at the illustrations around the circular maps. Describe the objects associated with each of the figures. What might these objects suggest about exploration and discovery in the seventeenth century?
- Look for Australia. Why do you think it appears drawn only in part? The clue is in the title!
- Find the Equator on the maps. What does the equator mark? What stories do sailors tell about crossing the Equator?

#### Secondary

- What symbolism can you detect in the illustrations on the maps?
- Consider the title of the atlas. Why is the word 'sea' included?
- Consider how old maps such as these serve to reinforce the way our understanding of the world has changed over time.



image detail:

### William DAMPIER

Great Britain, 1651–1715

#### *A new voyage round the world...*

1697, London; printed for James Knapton, bound volume, engraving and letterpress on paper; 19.5 x 12.0 x 10.0 cm; Bequest of Sir Samuel Way 1916, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SR 910.4 D16n

In 1688 William Dampier circumnavigated the world. On this journey he became the first Englishman to reach Australia. He produced an account of the journey in the form of a book, which included observations he made of flora and fauna, as well as grand adventure stories and carefully drawn maps. The book created a sensation when it was published in English in 1697.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- Compare Dampier's map to a map of the same area today. What are the similarities and differences?

#### Secondary

- Why do you think people in seventeenth century England were so fascinated by books such as this?

### MAKING

#### Primary and Secondary

Make your own illustrated book that tells a story of a journey you have made. You may want to refer to photos, or talk to relatives to help you with the story.



image detail:

### Johannes VAN KEULEN

Netherlands 1654–1715, after Victor Victorszoon, Netherlands 1653–?

#### *Black swans near Rottnest Island, from François Valentyn Old and new East India ... (Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien...)*

c.1724–26, Dordrecht and Amsterdam; published by Joannes van Braam and Gerard Onder de Linden, vol. 3, part 2, facing page 70, detached sheet, engraving on paper, 30.4 x 18.5 cm; J.C. Earl Bequest Fund 2011, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

This engraving was made from drawings completed by Victor Victorszoon, who sailed on board Willem de Vlamingh's ship *Cygné*, which arrived on the Western Australian coast in 1696. As with many other explorers who reached Australia, he was fascinated by the flora and fauna of the area. This image records the many black swans seen on the river where the city of Perth now stands, prompting Vlamingh to name it the Swan River.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- Look carefully at the engraving and describe what is happening.
- This image shows the mouth of the Swan River as it was in 1696. What changes would you find at the mouth of the Swan River today?

### Secondary

- The title of the engraving mentions Rottnest Island. Locate this island on a contemporary map. How far away from the Swan River is it?
- How close to reality do you think this image is? Why did artists such as Victor Victorszoon move away from complete pictorial truth in favour of presenting a more romantic view of distant lands?

## MAKING

### Secondary

Engravings are made up of many lines. Visit a park or an area of bushland near you and using a fine liner pen make a landscape drawing using a variety of different lines. Later, use the drawing as a basis for an engraving on acetate.

## CHINOISERIE IN EUROPE

The establishment of trade ports throughout Asia had a direct effect on European fashion. The wealthy benefited from new styles, fashions and precious items such as pearls and ivory, which arrived as an offshoot of the search for spices. As these new goods were often quite expensive European artisans and craftsmen began to create copies which used Asian or 'oriental' motifs. These artistic creations were often called **Chinoiserie**. *Chinoiserie* comes from a French term *chinois* ('the Chinese') and *a la chinois* ('in the Chinese style'), which referred to works of art created in Europe, in European or Asian forms decorated to imitate Asian works of art. The style reflected people's interest in the exotic lacquer, textiles, ceramics and furniture from places such as Japan, India, and China, rather than any deep understanding of what made these cultures different.



### China–Europe, Covered jar, with ormolu mounts,

c.1625, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, China, ormolu mounts applied in France, porcelain, underglaze blue decoration, gold, bronze, 65.0 cm (high); The David Roche Foundation, Adelaide SA, TDRF 3013

Chinese blue and white porcelain items were one of the most traded and desirable goods during the Age of Spices. As a result of the high demand in Europe for blue and white porcelain, production developed in several Asian trade centres where skilled craftsmen imitated the style of decoration as well as the diamond-like quality of porcelain, using materials such as red earthenware, stoneware and tin glazes.

Over time, there developed a fashion for 'dressing up' blue and white porcelain. European metal workers, keen to respond to the fashion for Chinoiserie, added extra ornamentation, such as gold, to lids, feet and handles, to make them appear more ornate and spectacular. This practice became very popular in France during the eighteenth century, where imported porcelain objects embellished with gold were presented by European trading companies to royal courts as gifts. These ornamental pieces displayed features of the Rococo style, which was highly fashionable in Europe at the time. Rococo was playful, decorative, and very ornate. Rococo rooms were designed as total works of art with elegant and ornate furniture, small sculptures, ornamental mirrors, wall hangings, and paintings.

This porcelain jar, originally produced in China, has been embellished with mounts made from ormolu, a mix of metals giving the appearance of gold, but not as soft or as precious. The metal ornamentation is typically Rococo in style, highly ornate, with fancy decoration.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What might this jar have been used for?
- List the animals you see on the covered jar.
- What else has been included in the blue and white design? What do you see on top of the lid? Describe the ornamental additions in gold.

### Secondary

- What effect does the gold ornamentation on the blue and white porcelain have on the overall appearance of the jar?
- Find another porcelain work in the exhibition made in the Rococo style, with Chinoiserie ornamentation and metal mounts. Compare and contrast the two.

## MAKING

### Secondary

Design a ceramic vessel with added embellishment made from recycled materials such as wire, plastics, metal pieces etc. Using hand-building techniques such as coil and slab, create the vessel from clay, and add the embellishment once the vessel is fired and glazed.



**Pierre JOLLAIN**

France, 1720–1762

***Oriental Scene***

1754, France,  
oil on canvas, 100.0 x 88.0 cm;  
The David Roche Foundation, Adelaide SA

This painting by Pierre Jollain, court painter to the French King Louis XVI, shows that the fashion for Chinoiserie also extended into the visual arts and music. An idyllic scene is presented in which a man dressed in oriental costume plays music to a woman, also dressed in oriental clothes, who is holding an elaborate parasol. In the background, through the open window is an Asian-inspired landscape. In the foreground a small child, dressed in a robe, holds a percussive triangle as if he is about to strike it. Although the figures are dressed in oriental-style clothing, they do not appear to be Asian.

This kind of painting would typically have been displayed in the living rooms of great homes during the Rococo era, to display the owners' refinement and good taste. Music was a popular interest in eighteenth century French homes, and this extended to opera, where Chinese themes influenced the dramatic stories that were presented.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- Describe the clothes the French people are wearing. Why do you think they are wearing these clothes?
- What is the lady holding? What would it be used for?

**Secondary**

- Describe the clothing featured in the painting, and the furnishings. What is the painter communicating about this scene?
- Describe the landscape in the background. Why did the artist include this in the painting?
- Why might wealthy people in eighteenth century Europe wish to have paintings with subjects like this on display in their homes?

**MAKING**

**Primary**

Buy a commercially-made white paper parasol (or make your own) and create a repeat design to be placed all over it, inspired by oriental floral patterns. Use acrylic paint to paint your design onto the outside of the parasol.

**Secondary**

Complete a painting of a clothed, seated model in an oriental setting. Use acrylic paint, and include details with metallic colours to add richness to the surface.



attributed to:

### Pierre-Antoine FOULLET

France, c.1732–1780

#### *Commode*

c.1765, Paris,  
wood, lacquer, gilt bronze, marble, 86.0 × 147.0 × 64.5 cm;  
The David Roche Foundation, Adelaide SA

Desirable objects and exotic materials from distant lands, imported into Europe from the beginning of the spice trade, inspired European manufacturers to create their own versions using local materials. In Europe the technique for creating lacquer was often called 'japanning,' as lacquer from Japan was highly valued. The fashion for Chinoiserie meant that expensive items such as lacquerware, imported from China and Japan, became very popular. This led to European furniture makers developing various, often inferior methods of lacquer production using varnishes instead of the sap from the lacquer trees in Asia.

This commode, a chest of drawers used for storing personal items, is a fine example of how Chinoiserie influenced the manufacture of Rococo style furniture in France in the eighteenth century. The European-made lacquered panels show inlaid scenes of Chinese landscapes, while the top is made from marble. The rest of the decoration is typically French Rococo style with its flamboyant decoration and ornate legs and handles made from ormolu.

#### RESPONDING

##### Primary

- Find the people within the image on the front of the commode. What are they doing?
- What things might have been stored in this commode?

##### Secondary

- Identify European and Asian design influences in this piece of furniture.
- What is the significance of the gold ornamentation?
- Compare the lacquer work on this cabinet to another lacquerware object in the exhibition, made in Japan. What are the differences?

#### MAKING

##### Primary and Secondary

Choose your favourite scene from the cabinet and make some sketches of the gold ornamentation. Annotate your drawings, explaining what you like about the part you have chosen.



### Japan-Great Britain, Men's dressing gown [*banyan*], from the wardrobe of King George IV (1762–1830)

1800–30, yuzen paste-resist dyes, silk;  
Gift of The David Roche Foundation 2012, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney,  
photo: Sotha Bourn, 2012/132/1

Chinoiserie greatly influenced European men's and women's fashions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was a huge demand for silks from China, and cotton textiles from India. People were exposed to various designs and patterns on these fabrics, such as the flowering tree design. Floral patterns were very fashionable in garments for both men and women.

This coat, called a **banyan** in England, was a jacket for a man, usually worn at home. It became very popular in the eighteenth century. Neither overly casual nor formal, and looking like a cross between a Japanese kimono and an Indian robe, the banyan was often made from imported fabrics with floral designs. This one belonged to King George IV of England, who was a great fan of the Chinoiserie style.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What is this jacket made from? What would make it comfortable – or uncomfortable – to wear?
- The jacket was made for King George IV of England. Where do you think he would have worn it?
- Find other robes or jackets in the exhibition. What do they all have in common in terms of design?

### Secondary

- Describe the floral design on the fabric.
- How does the structure of the garment display influences from Japan, Persia and India? Research the history of these influences.

## MAKING

### Secondary

Inspired by other printed cloth in the exhibition, create a floral repeat design for a 2 colour, subtractive lino block print. Print a length of fabric and make the fabric into a garment of your choice.

The Age of Discovery, a period of European global exploration between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, also affected Australia, with sea voyages made by both Europeans and Asians impacting on the lives and culture of Australian Aboriginal people. Those who visited the shores of Australia were also influenced by what they experienced, taking news of the flora, fauna and Indigenous inhabitants of the Great Southern Land back to Europe.

Asian people such as the Makassans of South Sulawesi (now Indonesia), had long been regular visitors to Australia's northern coastline, fishing and conducting trade with the local people. Sailing with the monsoonal winds to the Kimberley and Arnhem Land shores, the Makassans were regular visitors, and parts of their culture and religion found their way into Aboriginal stories and customs. The contact led to both groups incorporating aspects of each other's culture and way of life into their own. For example, the Makassans' dugout canoes influenced the Yolngu to make similar vessels, allowing them to travel further out to sea to fish than they had been able to do in their traditional bark canoes.

Captain James Cook's voyage on the *Endeavour*, was to dramatically change the lives of the Australian Aboriginal people forever. Arriving on the east coast in 1770, Cook's expedition charted the coastline, assessing its suitability for British settlement. Cook claimed the land under instruction from King George III of England on 22 August 1770 at Possession Island, naming eastern Australia 'New South Wales'. Eighteen years later, Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay, with the purpose of establishing the first British Colony in Australia.



## Minimini MARMARIKA

Australia, 1904–1972

### *The Malay Prau,*

1948, Umbakumba, Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, natural pigments on bark, 43.7 × 86.0 cm (irreg.); Gift of Charles P. Mountford 1960, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Courtesy of the estate of the artist licenced by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company completed its dominance of the Southeast Asian region by taking control of Makassar, the main town on the island of South Sulawesi. Many local and foreign traders were forced out, allowing the remaining Chinese to trade freely in the markets. The most popular item for the Chinese in the Makassar market was the trepang (or sea cucumber), a marine invertebrate prized for its culinary and medicinal value.

Each year the Makassans sailed to the northern parts of Australia, including the Kimberley in Western Australia, which they called Kayu Jawa and Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory (or Marege), to fish for trepang. At the height of the trepang industry, Makassans travelled thousands of kilometres along Australia's northern coast, arriving with the northwest monsoon each December on board vessels they called perahu or praus.

This bark painting made by Minimini Marmarika from Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory depicts a Malay prau, complete with its crew of Makassan fishermen. Although painted in the twentieth century it shows that for a long time Aboriginal people have incorporated stories of Asian visitors into their history and language, and that these stories have been passed on through generations.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What materials has the artist used to make this work of art?
- Describe the colours in the painting. What do they remind you of?
- Look closely at the men on the deck of the prau. Describe what they are wearing.

### Secondary

- Research the materials and processes of traditional bark painting of the Anindilyakwa people of Groote Eylandt. What aspects of this painting are typical of the region?

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Make a painting that tells a story about a journey in a boat over water. Start with a famous story or poem such as *The Owl and the Pussycat*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Noah's Ark* or *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.



**Japan, Square flask in shape of Dutch bottle,**

late 17th century, Arita, Saga, porcelain, underglaze blue, 23.3 x 10.3 cm (wide); David Button Collection, Adelaide

The form of this Japanese-made Arita Ware porcelain bottle has a history shaped by trade and contact between different cultures. Its design is based on the Dutch green glass bottles.

The green glass bottle with four flat sides was a Dutch innovation, designed to enable easy packing on ships making long sea journeys. These bottles held liquids such as oil and alcohol, and later particularly gin. In the seventeenth century Arita, Japan, became a centre for the production of Japanese blue and white ceramics. Ceramic items were made to order; and this square, four-sided bottle would most likely have been commissioned by Dutch traders to imitate the shape of the traditional green glass bottle.

The jar-like flask with square sides is elegant in its form, and decorated with a blue underglazed design incorporating flowering plants on the sides, and a floral pattern on the shoulders.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- What makes the shape of this flask so unusual?
- What do you see on the sides of the flask?
- Do you think the flask was designed to be used, or was it just for decoration? What would you use it for?

**Secondary**

- What processes were used to make this porcelain vessel?
- How has the craftsman used the surface design to emphasise the vessel's form?

**MAKING**

**Primary and Secondary**

Use a slab technique to make a hand-built vessel. Close it off at the top to create a bottle form or keep it open so it is a vase. Develop a design based on natural plant or flower forms to repeat on each side of the vessel, using underglazes.



### Australia, Dutch Gin bottle

early 20th century, Elcho Island,  
Northern Territory,  
natural pigments on carved wood,  
44.0 x 7.0 x 6.5 cm;  
South Australian Museum, Adelaide

This object, created by Aboriginal people from Elcho Island in the Northern Territory, is also based on the form of the Dutch green glass gin bottle. Makassans fishing for trepang in the waters off the north west coast of Australia most likely introduced the Aboriginal people in these areas to cigarettes and to alcohol, which came stored in these bottles. The bottles were left behind and the Aboriginal people used the glass to make tools. The vessel's form found a place in the stories and ceremonies of Arnhem Land people. This particular item was used in ceremonial rituals passed down through generations on Elcho Island.

### RESPONDING

#### Primary

- Compare this object with the Japanese Square flask in the shape of a Dutch bottle. What are the similarities and what are the differences?
- How do the colours of the object reflect where it comes from?

#### Secondary

- Is this object a vessel or a sculptural form? How do you think it was made?
- Aboriginal people from Elcho Island in the Northern Territory used this object in initiation rites. How did the form of the square-sided Dutch gin bottle find its way into the cultural history of these people?

### MAKING

#### Primary

Papier-mâché a bottle and create a pattern in your favourite colours.

#### Secondary

Back at school, create a totemic sculpture from a solid piece of plaster of Paris, soft wood, or Hebel stone. Use a hammer and chisels and other carving tools to extract pieces; refine the surface of the form with sanding tools.



John Hamilton MORTIMER,

Great Britain, 1740–1779,

***Captain James Cook, Sir Joseph Banks, Lord Sandwich, Dr Daniel Solander and Dr John Hawkesworth***

c.1771,  
oil on canvas, 120.0 × 166.0 cm;  
National Library of Australia, Canberra, 351529

This painting portrays the significant members of the party who sailed with Captain James Cook on the *Endeavour*, reaching Australia's east coast in 1770. The journey was made on behalf of the British Royal Society and at the express wish of King George III in order to search for new territory and to witness and record the movements of the in the Southern Hemisphere.

The figure on the left of the painting is John Montague, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, who despite not being present on Cook's voyage of discovery, took a great interest in it and wished to contribute to Cook's subsequent voyage in order to further his own personal and political ambition. Lord Sandwich commissioned John Hamilton Mortimer to paint this portrait of himself with Captain Cook, Joseph Banks, Dr John Hawkesworth and Dr Daniel Solander.

On the right of the painting, botanist Joseph Banks sits amongst plants, giving us clues about his profession. Above him stands Dr Daniel Solander, an important naturalist. Both men were notable English scientists who accompanied Cook to record information about new lands discovered. Centrally-placed in the painting is Captain Cook, who tips his hat, gesturing towards the ocean beyond, perhaps referring to the next journey he will undertake. Cook looks meaningfully towards Lord Sandwich, who leans casually on a classical-looking marble sculpture. The figure to Cook's right is Dr John Hawkesworth, a writer who had written and illustrated a publication about the journey.

The large painting is presented in the manner of history paintings of the time, recording important events in grand and dramatic ways. Through commissioning this work, Lord Sandwich aimed to honour these men and the journey they had undertaken in the name of Great Britain, and to single out James Cook as a hero. He also wished to communicate his own importance in providing the opportunity for a second voyage.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- According to the painting, what clothes and accessories were worn by men at the time?
- Joseph Banks, the man sitting down, has papers in his hand. What do you think they might be?

### Secondary

- Locate and discuss the clues the artist included in the painting that tell us about the men and who they were.
- Why did the artist include a marble statue of a semi-naked woman in the painting?
- Lord Sandwich, standing on the left, commissioned this painting. How has he presented himself and what does this say about his intentions in having the work painted?

The arrival of Europeans in the Indonesian archipelago during the Age of Spices had an enormous impact on the coastal cities. The nature of trade changed, with Europeans forcefully taking control of port cities and using any means to obtain items of value which they could ship home to Europe to sell. They came in search of spices but found so much more, and in the process changed Indonesian societies forever.

Indonesian kingdoms were sophisticated and prosperous, with strong spiritual belief systems and well-established cultural traditions. Rulers appointed powerful harbour masters who oversaw trade and commerce in the port **emporiums**, ensuring that spices and other natural products, which came from inland centres, were exchanged for valuable textiles and Chinese porcelain. The influence of the Javanese kingdoms was widespread in the archipelago, so there was high regard for Javanese art forms such as **gamelan** music and **wayang** puppetry, and associated literary forms.

Textiles made in India were highly prized by Indonesian royal courts and, by the seventeenth century, the Dutch were purchasing cloth in huge quantities from three major centres in India – Gujarat, Bengal and the Coromandel Coast – in order to trade for spices. The great demand for textiles in Southeast Asia was linked to the value placed on dress and body adornment, rather than on decoration for the home. Some societies valued textiles so highly that they believed the textiles had special powers. They were used as **talismans** in important ceremonies. Some animals depicted on them, such as elephants and tigers, were considered to have royal or mystical powers.



### Indonesia, *Royal keris*

17th century, Bima, West Nusa Tenggara,  
nickel, iron, gold, diamonds and semiprecious stones, 51.0 x 13.0 cm;  
Gift of Geoffrey Hackett-Jones in memory of his brother Frank through the Art Gallery of South Australia  
Foundation 2008, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

**Keris** daggers held considerable significance for the cultures of the Indonesian archipelago. Apart from being a superbly crafted and highly functional weapon conveying the wealth and status of the owner, the keris and its sheath was said to have special magical powers. Keris were part of formal dress, always worn tucked into waistbands.

This keris came from the island of Sumbawa in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Its design reflects the style of the Makassar courts which had invaded Sumbawa early in the seventeenth century. Its handle and sheath have been lavishly decorated with gold and semi-precious stones. There are diamonds, too, but these have been polished with a different technique to modern gemstones to give them a 'smoky' appearance.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- Describe the shape of the keris blade. Why do you think the blade was shaped like this?
- What materials were used to make the blade?
- Do you think the keris was used as a weapon, or was it used more as an accessory to wear?

### Secondary

- Research the materials and processes used to make the blade of a keris.
- Explain the symbolism incorporated in the keris, both as a cultural object and as a weapon.

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Design and draw your own version of a keris and its sheath, using decorative elements on the handle and the sheath.



**Indonesia, Ceremonial cloth (palepai),  
with two ships**

18th century, Kalianda district, Lampung,  
cotton, natural dyes, supplementary weft weave, paper threads with traces of  
metallic gilding, 75.0 x 336.0 cm; South Australian Government Grant 1974,  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

This ceremonial cloth, or palepai, was made in the Indonesian province of Lampung on the island of Sumatra. South Sumatra was one of Southeast Asia's main production locations for black pepper. The aristocratic women of the area created colourful textiles, many of which had precious gold and silver threads woven into them. This large cloth is over 3 metres long, and depicts two large ships, with cabins containing human figures and elephants, animals that were considered to contain mystical powers.

The ship motif was common in ceremonial cloths produced Southeast Asian cultures at this time, as it was a universal symbol representing the journey of the soul and also ancestral journeys from distant places to present-day villages. The palepai were ritual cloths, hung by the nobility during important feasts, ceremonies, and life-cycle events, and were said to contain special powers.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- How would you describe the shape of the ships? How are they different?
- Describe the colours you see in the cloth, and find the precious metal threads woven into the fabric.

**Secondary**

- What processes were used to make this cloth?
- Research the history of the Sumatran 'ship cloths'. What were they used for?

**MAKING**

**Primary**

Make a simple piece of weaving using a cardboard loom and wool woven through the vertical warps. Incorporate designs into the cloth using different coloured wools.



### Indonesia, Churlish courtier, rod puppet [wayang klitik]

1931, Central Java,  
wood, leather, pigment, gold leaf, horn, 53.0 cm (high including handle);  
d'Auvergne Boxall Bequest Fund 2013, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Puppetry is a well-established and popular art form in Java and Bali. An inscription on this rod puppet records that it was made in 1931. Such puppets are part of an old tradition. The puppet was probably a character from the famous Javanese story cycle, the *Damar Wulan* epic, a tale of love and battle between two kingdoms – the Majapahit and the Blambangan.

Used to play the role of a villain in the *Damar Wulan* story, this puppet has a pink 'mask' face, and slightly grotesque, exaggerated features. This indicated the manner in which Europeans were satirised in Javanese culture at the time. In Javanese stories, untrustworthy characters such as this one were sometimes given distinctly European features. This character is dressed as a Javanese aristocrat in the service of the Dutch rulers. He has a Western-style black velvet coat, worn over the top of a traditional hip wrap. This was the colonial dress code imposed by the Dutch on native officials at the time. In a subtle way the puppet ridicules the Javanese aristocracy bowing down to the Dutch colonists.

## RESPONDING

### Primary

- What is a 'courtier'?  
What does 'churlish' mean?
- This courtier puppet was used to perform particular stories. How was it operated and how were the stories performed?
- The puppet seems to be wearing a mask. Describe the mask. What do you think the mask says about the kind of person this puppet is representing?

### Secondary

- What materials and processes have been used to make this puppet?
- Research the history of Wayang Klitik puppetry in Indonesia. How is it different from Wayang Kulit?
- Discuss the ways in which puppetry contributes to Indonesia's cultural heritage.

## MAKING

### Primary and Secondary

Write a story and make your own shadow puppets to perform the narrative. Use cardboard and pieces of dowel, and set up lights and a screen for the performance. Use video to record your performance.



**India-Indonesia, Cloth length [patolu], with 'flowering basket' design**

18th–19th centuries, Gujarat, India, found in Indonesia, handspun silk, natural dyes, double ikat, 106.0 x 400.0 cm; Gift of Michael Abbott AO QC and Mary Abbott 1987, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

This garment, called a *patolu* (plural: *patola*), is an example of the very fine silk cloths made in Gujarat, India, transported to Indonesia to be traded for spices. Patola were worn in Javanese courts as waist scarves, cut and assembled as pants, and also used as drapes. They were highly prized cloths as they were made from dyed silk and woven using a time-consuming technique called *double ikat*. Cloths woven using this technique have both the warp and the weft fibres dyed using a resist process before they are woven to form the pattern.

The 'flowering basket' or 'eight-rayed flower' design frequently appears in patola cloths. Indonesians sometimes called this design 'chicken's feet'. It was so popular that cloths featuring this pattern were traded from India to Indonesia for over two hundred years, and inspired many weaving and batik patterns there. Patterns featuring flowers and geometric designs on Indian trade cloths have had a lasting impact on locally-produced cloths in Southeast Asia.

**RESPONDING**

**Primary**

- What do the designs in the cloth look like? How many colours has the artist used on the cloth?
- What various uses might the cloth have had?

**Secondary**

- Research the process of double ikat weaving. How did the maker incorporate patterns into the design?
- Find another patolu cloth in the exhibition and compare the design to the design on this one. What similarities and differences do you see?

**MAKING**

**Primary and Secondary**

Use drawing or photography to record the patterns in sections of patola cloths in the exhibition that interest you. Inspired by these patterns, create your own pattern based on plants, flowers or animals.

**Arabesque:** intricate linear surface decoration with curves and flowing lines (often based on plants)

**Arita ware:** porcelain made in the town of Arita, on Kyushu, Japan; designs on Arita ware are known as Imari style

**Audience:** individuals or groups of people who experience the arts in a range of settings and contexts (formal, informal, virtual or interactive) through intellectual, emotional and social engagement. The artist is audience to their own works of art.

**Baroque:** an ornate style used in architecture, sculpture and painting, developed in Italy in the sixteenth century (extravagant ornamentation)

**Botanist:** a person who is trained or skilled in the study of plants

**Cabinets of Curiosities:** a term used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to describe a cabinet containing a collection of precious objects (OR a term for the collection itself)

**Calligraphy:** ornamental writing, originating in China and Japan, and done with ink and brush

**Cartography:** the drafting and production of maps

**Caryatid:** a female figure used in place of a column or pillar (in architecture, or furniture-construction etc.)

**Ceramics:** a term for porcelain and pottery

**Chinoiserie:** a term for any artistic creation imitating, or associated with, Chinese art and design

**Conventions:** accepted usage or standard procedure

**Delft:** (Delftware) a type of tin-glazed earthenware decorated in blue and white patterns inspired by Chinese porcelain; made in Holland from the mid-seventeenth century

**Design elements:** include line, colour, shape, texture, space and form found in works of art, and incorporated in the design of performance spaces (including sets) for dance and drama

**Design principles:** accepted conventions associated with organising design elements and can include unity, balance, hierarchy, scale, proportion, emphasis, similarity and contrast

**Emporiums:** large stores selling a variety of articles

**Engraving:** a design on a hard surface made by inscribing the surface with a pointed implement

**Fritware:** also known as Islamic stone-paste, is a type of pottery in which frit is added to clay to reduce its fusion temperature. As a result, the mixture can be fired at a lower temperature than clay alone.

**Gamelan:** a percussion instrument of Southeast Asian origin; sometimes a gamelan orchestra is comprised of woodwind and string instruments

**Haiku:** Japanese verse form, developed in the sixteenth century, usually containing 17 syllables

**Icon:** a painting of a religious subject, on wooden panel; established traditions are followed in terms of representations

**Indigenous:** Originating and living naturally in an area.

'The Aboriginal people of Australia do not trace their heritage to foreign shores, but understand that they were created here by ancestral figures. Their connection to this land is therefore *indigenous* — native-born.'

**Jesuits:** members of the Roman Catholic religious order, the Society of Jesus

**Kano School:** a school of painting in Japan, founded in the late 1300s; Kano artists worked within Japanese decorative traditions and also those of Chinese ink painting

**Kaolin:** fine white clay used in the manufacture of porcelain

**Keris:** a short, heavy dagger with a wavy blade

**Letterpress:** a printing technique that transfers ink by pressing raised type or illustrations onto paper

**Mordant dyes:** mordant is the substance used to fix the colour in dyeing or fabric printing

**Motif:** a particular element or theme in a painting, sculpture or pattern

**Nanban:** Japanese art showing the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch visitors to Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – often with a focus on European fashions

**Netherlands:** another word for Holland, the European country bordered by the North Sea, Germany, and Belgium

**New World:** used to describe the Western hemisphere (The West) or the Americas

**Ottoman:** Muslim Turkish art and architecture (from mid-1300s to 1920s, when the Turkish Sultanate was abolished)

**Patronage:** In the history of art, arts patronage refers to the encouragement and financial support that kings, popes, and the wealthy have provided to artists

**Persia/Persian:** ancient empire in western/south-western Asia (from Egypt to India); also the former official name of Iran

**Pigment:** the colouring agent in paint or dye

**Porcelain:** extremely hard, translucent variety of ceramic ware, fired at very high temperature; originally popular in China and later in Europe

**Reliquary:** a container for sacred relics (objects belonging to a Christian saint, or to Buddha for example)

**Roaring Forties:** area of ocean between 40 and 50 degrees south characterised by strong winds

**Spice Islands:** the former name of the Maluku Islands; the islands were also historically known as the 'Spice Islands' by the Chinese and Europeans, but this term has also been applied to other islands outside Indonesia.

**Still-life paintings:** label for a particular genre; paintings of inanimate objects, particularly flowers and fruit

**Stylised:** conforming with a particular style in terms of representation or treatment

**Symmetrical:** well-proportioned or regular form or arrangement of corresponding parts

**Talisman:** an object supposed to possess special (supernatural) powers; a charm

**Terra Australis Incognita:** Although Indigenous Australians had lived here for thousands of years, for the Europeans it was '*Terra Australis Incognita*', the great-unknown land. Early maps of the world showed a single land mass at the bottom of the world to balance, as one would with a set of scales, the land masses of the northern hemisphere.

**Vanitas:** a type of painting extremely popular in the seventeenth century, particularly in Holland, in which certain objects are included as reminders of the temporary nature of human life

**Wayang (puppetry):** a performance with dances or puppet plays originating in the religious epics of Java and Bali

**Woodcuts:** a carved or engraved block of wood for printing from; OR the resulting print or impression



**Government of South Australia**  
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