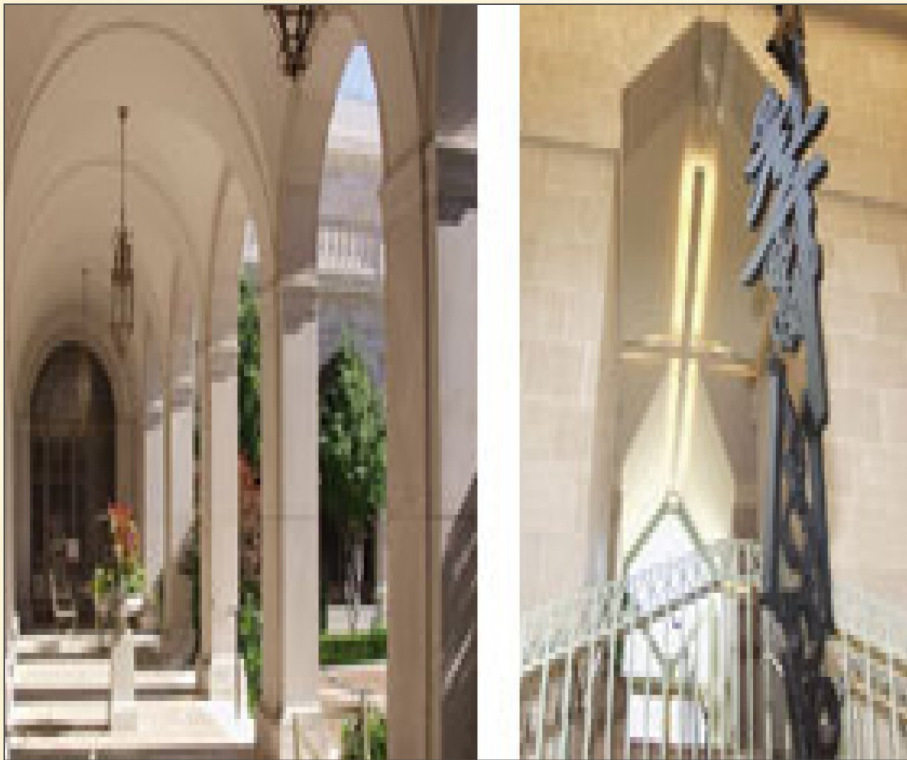


# Freer & Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution



1050 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC, United States

Director: Julian Raby Full-time employees: 145 (combined figure for Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery) Objects in the collection: 24,057 (Asian, Egyptian and early Christian), 1,708 (American) The Freer Gallery of Art was the first museum of the Smithsonian Institution to be dedicated to the fine arts. The Freer and the neighboring Arthur M. Sackler Gallery together form the national museum of Asian art for the United States. Besides Asian art, the Freer houses a collection of 19th- and early 20th-century American art, including the world's largest number of works by James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). The Freer is committed to expanding public knowledge of the collections through exhibitions, research and publications. The gallery, located on Jefferson Drive at 12th Street S.W., on the National Mall in Washington, is open every day except Dec. 25. Hours are from 10 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., and admission is free.

**COLLECTION AND EXHIBITIONS** Art in the Freer Gallery spans 6,000 years and many different cultures, reflecting the taste of its founder, Charles Lang Freer (1856-1919), a Detroit businessman. In his collecting, Freer followed the principles of English Aestheticism, or "art for art's sake," as it was more commonly known. Freer believed in the universality of beauty, and he delighted in finding aesthetic affinities among the art of such divergent cultures as Neolithic China and the 19th-century United States. Since his death, Freer's legacy of approximately 7,500 works of Asian art has grown through purchase and gift to 22,369 objects, and the collection includes art from China, Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Central Asia. There are also small but important groups of Early Christian art and art from Egypt. Freer considered his American holdings of 1,708 works by Whistler, Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1850-1938), Dwight William Tryon (1849-1925), Abbott Handerson Thayer (1849-1921), John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) and others to be complete, and so there have been no additions to the American works Freer collected. Only a small percentage of the gallery holdings are on view at any one time, and changing selections of light-sensitive paintings and metal ware also are changed regularly. The single permanent exhibition is "Harmony in Blue and Gold, The Peacock Room," an opulent interior made by Whistler for a London town house in 1876-1877 and brought to the United States by Freer.

**EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS** As part of their educational mandate, the Freer and Sackler galleries present a full schedule of public events, including films, lectures, symposia, concerts, book readings and discussions. Public tours are offered daily except Wednesdays and public holidays and are subject to docent availability. Many of the programs are enhanced through activity guides, program notes, brochures and other publications. There are special activities for children and families, and workshops to assist teachers incorporating Asian art and culture into their curriculum. The newsletter "Asian Art Connections: A Resource for Educators" is sent out in the spring and autumn. A calendar of events is distributed quarterly.

**MEMBERSHIP** Individuals and corporations are invited to join the Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries at membership levels from \$1,200 to \$10,000. The group provides yearly support for acquisitions and enjoys such benefits as the annual "Friends Day," monthly curator-led tours, travel and educational programs and shop discounts.

**RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

**Library** The Freer and Sackler galleries house the largest Asian art research library in the United States. Open to the public five days a week (except federal holidays) without appointment, the library collection consists of over 80,000 volumes, including nearly 2,000 rare books. Half the volumes are written and cataloged in Asian languages.

**Archives** The archives is a manuscript and photograph repository dedicated to furthering the study of Asian and Middle Eastern art and culture, as well as turn-of-the-century American art. The Archives collects, preserves, and makes available documentary materials supporting the holdings and research activities of the Freer and Sackler galleries, which together form the national museum of Asian art. The Archives house more than 140 collections – amounting to over 1000 linear feet of materials dating from the early 19th-century to the present and is open by appointment on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Appointments may be made by calling 202 633-0533.

Conservation and Scientific Research Conservation within the museum began with the hiring of Japanese painting mounters and the establishment of the East Asian Painting Conservation Studio in 1932. This facility remains one of the few in the United States that specializes in the conservation of Asian paintings. The Technical Laboratory was established in 1951 and was the first Smithsonian facility devoted to the use of scientific methods for the study of works of art. Over the years, the work of the Technical Laboratory expanded to include objects, paper and exhibits conservation. The merging of the Technical Laboratory and the East Asian Painting Conservation Studio in 1990 created the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research.

Publications The Freer and Sackler galleries publish books both scholarly and popular as exhibition catalogues and catalogues of the permanent collection, and such ephemera as *Asiatica* (an annual magazine), exhibit texts and labels, gallery brochures, guides, maps, and a quarterly newsletter. The museum also publishes symposium proceedings, the scholarly monograph series *Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers*, and cosponsors the annual scholarly journal *Ars Orientalis* with the Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

Awards and fellowships The Freer and Sackler galleries welcome scholars at the graduate and post-graduate levels, who may apply for study grants through the Smithsonian Office of Fellowships and Grants. Additional opportunities for scholarship at the Freer and Sackler include:

- The \$10,000 Shimada Prize for scholarship in the history of East Asian art is given biennially to the author of an outstanding recent publication in the field. The prize is named for Professor Shimada Shujiro (1907-1994), who was an eminent Japanese scholar of East Asian painting. The prize is sponsored by the Freer and Sackler galleries with the Metropolitan Center for Far Eastern Art Studies in Kyoto, Japan.
- The Dick Louie Internship, named for the galleries' late associate director (Richard Louie, 1938-1990), is a six-week museum internship awarded every summer to up to four high-school rising or graduating seniors of Asian descent.
- The Forbes Fellowship is awarded annually to a promising young scholar for the scientific study of the care, conservation, and protection of works of art.
- University of Michigan graduate students may apply for Freer Fellowships. Charles Lang Freer bequeathed funds to allow University of Michigan graduate students in art history to spend one or two semesters conducting research with full access to the library, the archives, and the Asian or American art collection in the Freer.

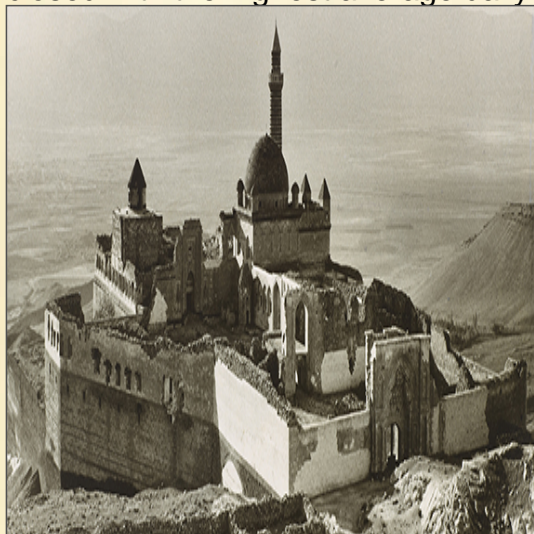
GALLERY SHOP The Freer Gallery Shop, located on the first level, offers Asian jewelry; antique and contemporary ceramics and textiles; cards, posters and reproductions; recordings, and a wide selection of books for children and adults about the art, culture, history and geography of Asia and other areas related to the Freer collection. The shops also host such special events as opportunities to sample Asian foods and meet and hear readings by authors who have published fiction or non-fiction about Asia. The shop is open daily (except Dec. 25) from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

HISTORY OF THE FREER GALLERY Charles Lang Freer, a self-taught connoisseur, began purchasing American art in the 1880s. He limited his selections to the work of a few living artists and concentrated especially on American expatriate James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). Freer eventually formed the world's most-important collection of Whistler paintings, drawings, watercolors and prints. Whistler's aesthetic sense was influenced significantly by the Chinese and Japanese textiles, ceramics, screens and other arts that he could purchase from London dealers of the time. With Whistler's encouragement, Freer also began to collect Asian art in 1887 and, by the time of his death, he had assembled a pre-eminent group of masterpieces that he purchased in Asia, as well in Paris, London and New York. In 1904, Freer offered his art collection to the nation, to be held in trust by the Smithsonian Institution. Its governing body, the Board of Regents, wished to maintain the Smithsonian's scientific focus and hesitated to accept the gift. Only after President Theodore Roosevelt took a personal interest in the matter did the regents finally accept the deed of gift in 1906. Freer then devoted his time to augmenting and refining his gift of art. Afflicted by debilitating illness, Freer died in 1919 without ever seeing the gallery. It opened to the public in

1923. **THE BUILDING** Along with his art collection, Freer pledged funds for the building to house it. He had planned to hire Stanford White (1853-1906), a leading architect of the late 19th century, but before the project could begin, White was assassinated in Madison Square Garden by a jealous husband. Eventually Freer hired Charles Adams Platt (1861-1933), and the two men agreed on an Italian-Renaissance-style building featuring exhibition galleries surrounding a courtyard lined by raised loggias on two sides. The builders broke ground in September 1916, but the United States' entry into World War I interrupted construction and the gallery was not completed until late 1919. Freer, who had been ill throughout the project, died in September of that year and never saw the building. The exterior of the Freer is pink granite quarried in Milford, MA; the courtyard, with a carnelian granite fountain, has walls of unpolished Tennessee white marble. Interior walls of the building are Indiana limestone, and the floors are polished Tennessee marble. In a major renovation of the building which culminated in a grand reopening in 1993, a greatly expanded storage area was added beneath the courtyard and the west side, and an exhibition space was excavated to connect the Freer and Sackler buildings. The original structure designed by Platt remains intact. With the addition of the connecting gallery, the Freer has 39,039 square feet of public space. The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium, located at the Independence Avenue entrance to the Freer, serves as the venue for many public programs.

**DIRECTORS** In its 75-year existence, the Freer Gallery has had only seven directors, each recognized as an authority in his chosen field of Asian art. Each has made important acquisitions of art and guided a growing staff of scholars in the identification and acquisition of works in their areas of expertise. John Ellerton Lodge (served 1920-1942), a connoisseur with broad knowledge of Asian art, was noted for the ancient Chinese bronzes he purchased for the Freer. Fifty years after Lodge's tenure, the "fangyi," or ceremonial container, he acquired remains the most famous bronze in the collection and is well-known internationally. The vessel, made around 1000 B.C., is known for its flamboyant ornamentation as well as its lengthy inscription, which describes the contemporary political system and its attendant rituals in detail. Under Director Archibald G. Wenley (served 1943-1962), the Freer made many purchases of art from the Near East, including important works of Islamic art. An outstanding addition was a magnificent 16th-century volume, the Haft Awrang (Seven Thrones), a set of poems by Jami, a Persian mystic. Throughout the Islamic world, books provided the vehicle for innovation in painting. The Freer Haft Awrang is the spectacular culmination of that tradition during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1732). John Alexander Pope (served 1962-1971), a specialist in Asian ceramics with particular expertise in 14th-century Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, developed the Freer holdings of Chinese and Japanese ceramics. His particular interest was the collection of Chinese wares of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) that were produced at the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. Pope acquired many fine examples, including a rare porcelain bowl with underglaze blue decoration that he considered his greatest addition. Under Director Harold P. Stern (served 1971-1977), the Japanese collection at the Freer expanded in size, range and quality. In addition to the many examples of painting, calligraphy and ceramics Stern acquired, he enlarged the gallery's holdings in Japanese sculpture. Among his most important acquisitions was a sculpture of Aizen Myoo, the fierce Buddhist deity who is traditionally credited with protecting Japan against two attempted invasions by the Mongols, in 1274 and 1281. The Freer sculpture, a rare example with a dated inscription, was made at the height of Japanese devotion to this deity. Among the acquisitions made under the leadership of Thomas Lawton (served 1977-1987), a scholar of ancient Chinese art, were the Freer's first major additions of Chinese calligraphy. In 1979, 12 rare examples came to light in private hands, and the gallery was able to purchase them with assistance from the Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program. Among the prizes of this important collection was a large and spectacular hanging scroll with a poem by Wen Zhengming (1470-1559), a painter and calligrapher of the Ming dynasty who influenced generations of China's artistic and literary figures. One of the

outstanding South Asian objects purchased for the Freer by Milo Cleveland Beach (1987-2001), a scholar of Indian art, is also among the finest Hindu paintings in the collection. The page from a manuscript of the Bhagavata Purana (Ancient History of the Lord), made about 1520, has an intensely magical quality appropriate to a devotee extolling the god Vishnu as supreme lord of the universe. Julian Raby (2002-present) distinguished himself as a teacher and scholar of Islamic Art while on the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford, England. Raby's broad and varied background includes a career rich in the research, study and teaching of Asian art and culture. A well-known scholar of Islamic art, Raby has a wide range of scholarly interests, from Byzantium to China, Late Antiquity to the Renaissance. Raby has championed international exhibitions such as "Return of the Buddha: The Qingzhou Discoveries" (2004); "Style and Status: Imperial Costumes from Ottoman Turkey" (2005); "Hokusai" (2006), "Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries (2007), which closed with the highest average daily attendance in the galleries' history.



### In focus: ara güler's anatolia

14.12.2013 - 04.05.2014

Freer & Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution

1050 Independence Ave SW

DC 20013-7 Washington DC

United States



### The Peacock Room Comes to America: Exhibit

16.11.2013 - 16.02.2014

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# One Man's Search for Ancient China: T

19.01.2013 - 07.07.2013

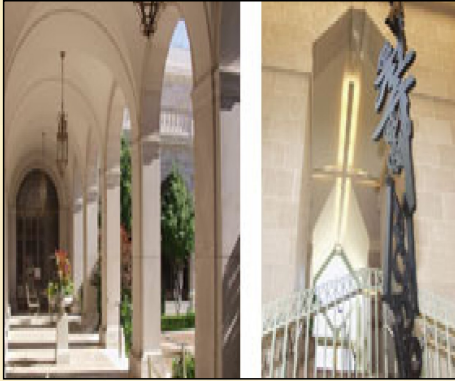
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PO Box 37012, MRC 707

DC 20013-7 Washington DC

United States

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1050 Independence Ave SW  
DC 20013-7 Washington DC  
United States  
Tel: (202) 633-4880  
Fax: (202) 357-4911  
[www.asia.si.edu](http://www.asia.si.edu)  
Email: [publicaffairsAsia@si.edu](mailto:publicaffairsAsia@si.edu)

Hours and Admission The Freer and Sackler Galleries are open 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except December 25. Admission is free. Freer Gallery of Art Jefferson Drive at 12th St SW  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery 1050 Independence Ave SW



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