
Title of Object

Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Scholars at the Lanting Pavillion

Photo of Object (optional)



Object Information

Artist: Unknown

Culture: Chinese, Qing Dynasty

Date of Object: 1790

Country: China

Accession Number: 92.103.13

File Created: 11/15/2016

Material/Medium: Jade

Author of File: Sara Wagner

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Asian Art

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Last Updated/Reviewed: 7/10/2017

Tour Topics

Betrayal, Group 5, Highlights 1600-1850, Love_Honor_and_Betrayal, Celebration, Writing/Calligraphy, water, nature, Minnesota/local, Walker, Food and drink, entertainment, landscape, stories/storytelling, festival, game, drinking contest, spring season, literati, Qianlong emperor, Wang Xizhi, Daoism, poetry

Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. Here we are at Jade Mountain, one of Mia's treasured highlights. For some people, a visit to this museum is not complete without a stop at this spectacular, 640 pound jade carving – apparently the largest such carving outside of China. So, whether this is your 10th or 100th time viewing Jade Mountain, take a moment to look at this sculpture from as many angles as possible. Perhaps you will notice something different this time.

WHAT IMPRESSES YOU MOST ABOUT THIS SCULPTURE? (Give background of the event commemorated by this sculpture, show iPad images of Orchid Pavilion and stream)

2. The Chinese consider calligraphy to be the highest of all art forms, and the Chinese refer to Wang as the greatest of all calligraphers. His 28-line poem, written to commemorate this gathering, is still held in high regard, both in China and Japan. (Point out this poem/calligraphy on the front of the jade.) Listen to a few lines of this poem: "Although the occasion may change from this one and although the next

generation may be different from this one, what touches one's heart remains the same. Posterity will be inspired by these verses." Human emotions cross the centuries...these words from the 4th century could have been written today. Emperor Qianlong's seal is above this preface.

On the other side of the mountain, is a poem written by the Emperor himself, honoring the work of Wang in the 4th century.

3. Chinese artists are known for imitating painting quality in jade carvings. What about Jade Mountain reminds you of a picturesque, landscape painting?

4. Do you have groups that you gather with, and perhaps enjoy a time of rest and rejuvenation? Do you have rituals to commemorate your time together?

5. Consider for a moment your own dining room or kitchen table.....and what it is currently displaying. (My dining room table is often "homework central" for my daughter (show ipad image)). TB Walker (namesake and early benefactor of our neighboring Walker Art Center) had Jade Mountain – all 640 points of it – on his dining room table. (show iPad image, see prop photo below). It was part of his collection until his death in 1928. It stayed with the Walker Art Center until 1976, when it came to Mia. While Mia now has permanent ownership of Jade Mountain, it did make a trip back to Walker Art Center in 2015, in honor of the Center's 75th birthday.

Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

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Current Mia Label Information (optional)

The theme represented on this jade boulder, the largest piece of jade carving outside of China, refers to an event that occurred on March 3 in the lunar calendar of 353. Wang Xizhi (303-361), a scholar official and one of the most esteemed Chinese calligraphers of all time, together with 41 renowned scholars and officials, gathered at Lanting or Orchid Pavilion in Shaoxing (in present-day Zhejiang province), celebrating the Spring Purification Festival. The scholars engaged in a drinking contest: Wine cups were floated down a small winding creek as the men sat along its banks; whenever a cup stopped, the man closest to the cup was required to empty it and write a poem. In the end, 26 of the participants composed 37 poems.

Wang Xizhi was asked to write an introduction to the collection of these poems. Written in semi-cursive script and known as Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion (transcribed on the top of the mountain by the Qianlong Emperor), it is the best known and most copied calligraphic work in art history. While the mountain image alone is enough to convey a close association between the jade sculpture and many painted landscapes, the Qianlong Emperor's seal and poem carved at the top on the other side of the boulder reinforces the idea of the jade mountain as a three-dimensional landscape painting.

Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

TB Walker's dining room:

