

Japan

Art Cart

Revised October 2016

The Tea Ceremony & Japanese Painting



Department of Interpretation and Participatory Experiences
Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

Art Cart Inventory

Art Cart Interpreters:

The lead guide for each Art Cart shift should inventory the contents of the cart before and after the shift. If this is not done and objects are missing or damaged, the lead guide may be held responsible. (The lead guide is the first guide listed on the tour confirmation form.)

As the Japan Art Cart has two themes, assigned partners together determine which of the two themes to present, the Tea Ceremony or Japanese Painting - Nihonga. Guides only need to inventory the materials used on the theme presented. Note: *Neri-ko* (incense) can be used for either theme and is listed on both inventory sheets.

If an object is missing or damaged, make a notation on the inventory and report it to the Tour Office.

If an object is suddenly missing during your shift, notify security immediately by alerting the guard in the gallery or by calling x3225.

INVENTORY SHEET: JAPAN ART CART

Date: _____ Guides/Docents: _____

Objects	Comments			
	In	Beginning of Shift	In	End of Shift
Tea Ceremony Materials				
Natsume, chaire, and shifuku (tea caddies (2) and pouch (1))				
Silk fukusa (2) and linen chakin (2)				
Sample teas (5)				
Whisks (2)				
Tea scoop				
Water ladle				
Tatami mats				
Bamboo and hinoki wood samples				
Raku bowl				
Seto bowl				
Oribe bowl				
Shigaraki bowl				
Tenmoku bowl				
Mizusashi (fresh) and kensui (waste) jars				
Incense (2), incense burner and utensils				
Fan and fan stand				

Check to see if you are low on any supplies (paper, pencils, etc.). Let the Tour office know if you need anything replenished.

Please share! Record visitor questions that “stumped” you and comments or observations you would like to share with fellow guides and staff. If you know the answer to someone's question, please record the answer! Staff will also periodically review questions and try to assist with finding answers.

INVENTORY SHEET: JAPAN ART CART

Date: _____ Guides/Docents: _____

Objects	Comments			
	In	Beginning of Shift	In	End of Shift
Nihonga - Painting Materials				
Pigments				
Brush set with ink stick				
Ink stick and ink stone				
paper (washi) samples				
Gold and silver leaf samples				
Handscroll (replica of "The Long Landscape Scroll" by Sesshu				
Hanging scroll				
Print				
Incense (2), incense burner and utensils				
Fan				

Check to see if you are low on any supplies (paper, pencils, etc.). Let the Tour office know if you need anything replenished.

Please share! Record visitor questions that "stumped" you and comments or observations you would like to share with fellow guides and staff. If you know the answer to someone's question, please record the answer! Staff will also periodically review questions and try to assist with finding answers.

Introduction

Mia's Art Carts are hands-on gallery stations outfitted with art objects, props and visual aids related to the museum's permanent collection.

Staffed by Interpretation and Participatory Experiences (IPE) volunteers, Art Carts provide visitors with a unique art museum experience where "Do touch!" is the rule.

Guides use the objects on the Art Carts as tools for facilitating learning experiences that encourage careful looking, thoughtful conversation, critical thinking skills, and further exploration of Mia's permanent collections. And, they are lots of fun for all ages!

Art Cart Goals

The goal of each Art Cart experience is to provide a multi-sensory interaction with art objects during which guides help visitors deepen their interest in and experience with the museum's permanent collection. Each object on the Art Cart is thoughtfully selected for its connections to the collection and its ability to engage the senses and inspire questions and observations. Although there are limitless possibilities for each Art Cart, we are constrained by several factors including cost, availability, durability/fragility, and safety and security of art and visitors in the galleries (i.e. most paint/ink are not allowed, nor are sharp objects).

Each cart also has a general theme or focus to tie the selected objects together (e.g. Africa - pattern and decoration of everyday objects; China - artist as master craftsperson; Americas - adornment /dress, environment; Japan - tea ceremony; South and Southeast Asia - symbolism; Modern - how artists at the turn of the century challenged conventional modes of artistic expression.

Best Practices

A successful Art Cart-visitor interaction:

- Sparks curiosity and inspires exploration in visitors of all ages
- Involves the visitor in conversation about the objects on the Art Cart
- Allows the visitor to direct the discussion/discovery and explore those things of interest to the individual

- Provides opportunities for visitors to handle art objects with care and to learn about the museum's role in collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world's diverse cultures.
- Stimulates as many of the five senses as possible/practical
- Encourages visitor exploration in the surrounding galleries to seek out related objects (ideas provided in the "Collection Connections" section of each Art Cart object entry)

Each docent or guide is expected to:

- Confirm with your assigned Art Cart partner, the date, day and time of your assignment. This is the lead guide's responsibility.
- Review the written Art Cart materials before each shift and be prepared to discuss all objects on the Art Cart.
- Arrive on time (20 minutes before the shift begins) and insure the cart is ready for visitors at the appointed time.
- Exhibit an outgoing, friendly and welcoming attitude while staffing the Art Cart.
- Be proactive and invite visitors to explore the Art Cart.
- Engage visitors in open-ended discussions about Art Cart objects rather than lecturing to them.
- Stress the fragility and authenticity of objects, where appropriate.
- Assist visitors in establishing connections between the objects on the Art Cart and the permanent collection.

Policies and Procedures

Refer to the Handbook for Collection in Focus Guides for detailed information concerning Art Cart assignments, arrival times, and responsibilities. Docents received this information as a handout during Art Cart training

Object Storage, Handling and Security

Each Art Cart includes items that can be divided into two main categories:

1. Art objects
2. Props, visual aids and general supplies

The art objects themselves are the main focus of each Art Cart. They are generally the most fragile, costly and difficult to replace items. To protect these objects, each is assigned a designated storage container or space, usually on the top shelf of the cart. It is

essential each object is returned to its appropriate storage place at the end of each Art Cart shift.

The props, visual aids and other supplies are intended to support the art objects on each Art Cart, helping volunteers and visitors to understand or explore certain aspects of the art objects. These ancillary items are usually more easily replaced or repaired than the art objects themselves.

All items (art objects and supporting materials) must stay on or near the Art Cart at all times. Visitors and volunteers are not allowed to walk away from the Art Cart with objects and props. (Art Cart items are not to be used as tour props.) It is imperative that one docent or guide on duty is present at the Art Cart at all times to assist visitors in carefully handling the objects to insure object and visitor safety.

Should a visitor intentionally or unintentionally leave the Art Cart with art objects, props, or visual aids and the volunteers on duty are unable to recover these items from the visitor themselves, security should be notified immediately. (Locate the nearest guard or call Security Control via a gallery phone at x3225.)

Bringing Personal Objects

Guides must refrain from bringing personal items from home to use on the Art Carts. All objects used on the carts a) must be vetted by Museum Guide Programs staff to insure they are appropriate for the Art Cart and b) need to remain on the cart/in the museum, so that Security is not put in the position of having to judge whether or not items are guides' personal property or the museum's property. Additionally, the museum cannot assume responsibility for the loss or damage of guides' personal property.

Museum Guide Programs is happy to consider your suggestions for possible additions to any of the Art Carts.

Bringing Guests or Family Members

Guides must refrain from bringing guests or family members to their assigned Art Cart shift without prior approval of the IPE Staff. This is your time to share your knowledge and interact with visitors.

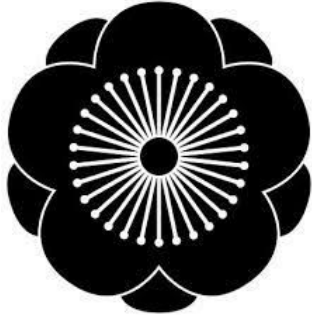
Art Cart Inventory

Each Art Cart is stocked with a binder containing inventory worksheets listing each of the art objects on the cart. (Not all supporting props, visual aids and general supplies are listed on the inventory.) The Japan Art Cart is unique in that it has two themes, the tea ceremony and painting. You are advised to present on only one theme as both themes are rich with information and hands-on materials to share with your visitors.

A thorough inventory of the Art Cart should be conducted at the beginning and end of each shift on your chosen theme. There is an inventory sheet for each.

At the end of each shift, any damaged or missing objects and/or depleted supplies should be recorded on the inventory and reported to a staff member in the Tour Office.

There is also space on the back of each day's inventory sheet to record any questions, comments or suggestions docents, guides or museum visitors may have about the Art Cart. Please take a moment to share your experience with fellow volunteers and staff!



Theme 1: The Tea Ceremony

TEA CADDIES NATSUME, CHAIRE AND SHIFUKU

What is a tea caddy?

Tea caddies are small jars used to store *matcha* (powdered green tea). These containers are important for maintaining the color and flavor of the tea, which can change if introduced to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. The containers are also meant to be admired during the tea ceremony and must fit into the overall aesthetic of the ceremony. In considering the fine points of a particular tea caddy, a guest would take into account the overall shape as well as observe five specific areas, from top to bottom: the mouth, shoulder, body, hips, and foot

What are chaire?

Chaire are glazed ceramic tea caddies used to hold the *matcha* for *koicha* (thick tea). The custom of using ceramic containers probably originated in the thirteenth century, and like many other tea accessories, was imported from China. One of the most classic and elegant Chinese shapes was the *katatsuki* (square shoulder). Early Chinese *katatsuki* are characterized by thinly-potted bodies, a purple-brown glaze that runs in streaks on the shoulder and an unglazed foot. (*Chaire* are usually fitted with an ivory lid backed with foil. The lid for the *chaire* on the Art Cart is imitation ivory (plastic).) The caddy on the Art Cart, a replica of a *katatsuki chaire*, resembles those imported from China and favored by early tea masters. During a very formal tea ceremony, a prized *chaire* might be displayed on a lacquer tray (also found on the Art Cart). At less formal occasions, the ceramic caddy is placed directly on the tatami mat

What is shifuku?

The shifuku is a cloth pouch that is used to protect the *chaire*. Opening the *shifuku* and removing the *chaire* is an integral part of *koicha* (thick tea) and the tea master carefully selects the textiles to complement the tea ceremony. They are made from a variety of *kireji* (fabrics) and act as wordless expressions of beauty. The choice of fabrics can express certain intentions or feelings on the part of the *chajin* (tea master), and can highlight feelings of splendor, humility, or artistic sentiment. Guests are supposed to appreciate both the thought that went into the selection and the quality and beauty of the material. The *shifuku* on the Art Cart is made from *kinsha*, fabric in which the background is *sha* (silk gauze) and the patterns are woven in with gold thread.

How to tie the shifuku:

休め緒の 仕方



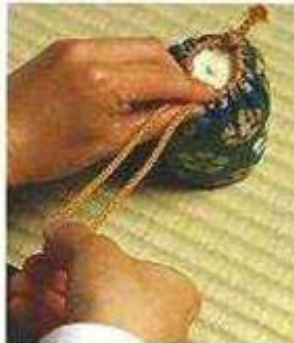
4

上の緒を、下の緒の輪にくぐらせます。



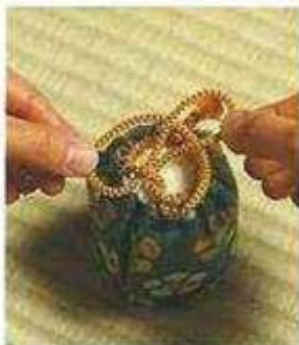
1

緒の結び目(打番・うちどめ)を上にして裏入を入れます。裏(表)が歪んでいるものもありますので、仕舞の口を絞るときはそっとおこないます。



5

くぐらせたその緒を結び目にかけます。かたらを揃えてできあがりです。



2

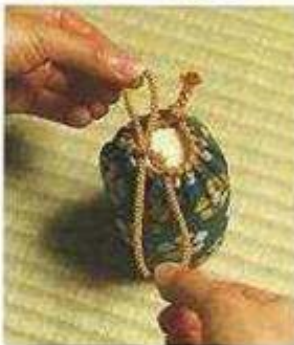
右の緒を上、左を下にして交差させます。



他の緒は、紐を保めない結び方です。裏入を使用しないときは、この結びにしておきます。

3

上の緒を下下の緒にくぐらせるようにして結びます。上下の緒の高さを均等にします。



完成!



What is Natsume? *Natsume* are wooden lacquered tea caddies that hold *matcha* for *usucha* (thin tea). *Natsume* (literally jujube), named for its resemblance to the fruit of that tree, are further classified according to shape and the particular tea masters who used them. The *natsume* on the Art Cart is the size and shape favored by Sen Rikyu.

What is Lacquer? Lacquer is the highly toxic sap from a variety of sumac tree, *Rhus vernicifera*. (This plant is in the same family as poison ivy and poison oak.

At any stage of the harvesting, refining or lacquer-making process, contact with the sap can cause an extreme allergic reaction.) The tree is harvested annually, during the warmer months of the year, by cutting through the bark and collecting a few ounces of sap. After the latex-like sap has been gathered, it is heated for several hours to purify it. The collection and handling of lacquer is both hazardous and time-consuming, and the raw material has always been relatively costly to produce.

Lacquer must be applied to an object in thin layers, allowing each to harden before applying the rest. A finely lacquered object in the Japanese style may require thirty or more applications (the Chinese produced a different type of lacquer that required carving or cutting away some of the layers to create designs in relief). Once properly hardened, lacquer produces a lustrous and extremely durable coating not unlike plastic. (It also becomes inert and will no longer cause adverse reactions on contact.) Lacquer effectively seals porous materials such as wood, bamboo, paper or fabric and, when hardened, is completely resistant to moisture, salts, hot liquids, or food. Lacquered containers are therefore very suitable for serving, storing and transporting foods and beverages.

Lacquer's shiny surface picks up fingerprints quite easily and the oils from fingerprints can slowly eat away at the

lacquer. Please use the cotton cloth provided to wipe off fingerprints. Remember to do this one last time before it is put away for the day.

What is the design on the natsume?

The stylized *matsu* (pine tree) design is a tradition adopted from the Chinese culture. In Japan, this evergreen is prized for its practical uses and attractive appearance and can be used to represent either longevity, good fortune or steadfastness.

The design was applied to the *natsume* by a technique called *maki-e*. *Maki-e* is a decorative technique that sifts sprinkled powders, usually silver or gold, through fine bamboo tubes onto damp lacquer. Once the lacquer has dried, the design can be polished to varying levels of shininess.

What is fukusa?

A *fukusa* is a fine silk cloth used to purify the *chaire*, *natsume* and *chashaku* (scoop). The cleaning of the caddies and scoop is an important act because it signifies a spiritual cleansing of the mind and heart. This is the point where all things involving the temporal world are dismissed. During the tea ceremony, the *fukusa* is folded to wipe the tea caddy and then re-folded to wipe the scoop. Folding the silk is another very important aspect of the ceremony and it is up to the host to learn the correct procedures from their tea masters. A man's *fukusa* is purple and a woman's is red or orange.

Questions and Activities

Pick up the *natsume* and *chaire*. How do they feel? What makes you say that? Compare the two containers. How are they the same and how are they different (shape, weight, texture, decoration)?

The tea caddies are used to store *matcha*, a very valuable type of tea. What would you store in these containers and why?

Do you have a container at home that you store precious things in? What is it? What do you store in it?

Examine the *shifuku* fabric. How does it feel? What makes you say that?

What might be some reasons why *chaire* are kept in *shifuku*? What other types of things would you store in a *shifuku*?

Describe the decoration on the *natsume*. Why might pine trees be admired? What qualities do they represent? (Explain the symbolism of pine trees.) What do you notice about lacquer (texture, color, etc.)? If you had a *natsume*, how would you decorate it? What symbols would you use and why?

Japanese artists often use symbols and images from nature in their work. Find other references to nature in the Japanese galleries.

Find other *natsume* and *chaire* in the galleries. How are they similar or different to the examples on the Art Cart (material, decoration, size, etc.)?

Find other examples of lacquer in the gallery. What other types of objects have been decorated with lacquer? How are they the same or different from the *natsume* (purpose, size, shape)?

Chinese artists had a different type of lacquer. Find examples of Chinese lacquer. What differences can you see? (Look at texture, color, decoration.)

Collection
Connections

TEA CADDIES AND SHIFUKU

Gallery 225: Tea house set for a ceremony
Look for Natsume, chaire, and shifuku periodically on display

LACQUER

Japan, Suzuribako (Writing Box)
Lacquer water vessels and teaware
Ancient Chinese lacquer
Chinese carved lacquer objects

REFERENCES TO NATURE

Landscape paintings and painted screens throughout the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean galleries



Shifuku



Shifuku and chaire



Natsume, top view



Natsume, side view

JAPAN TEAS

What is green tea? All types of tea (green, black, oolong, and white) come from evergreen plants of the *Camellia* family. *Camellia sinensis* thrives in Japan's cool climate. Straw and reed screens cover tea plants for anywhere from ten days to three weeks prior to harvest to reduce bitterness. Harvesting takes place in early May when the leaves are still young and green. After tea leaves are picked by hand they are inspected and sorted. Withering takes place as water evaporates and the natural process of fermentation or oxidation occurs.

In the process of fermentation, the tea leaf turns brown (just like a tree leaf in the fall changes colors from green to brown). The three types of tea: green, oolong, and black, are categorized according to their oxidation levels created by the fermentation process. Green tea is steamed, baked or pan heated to prevent oxidation and thus, the leaves remain green. (In contrast, oolong tea is partially fermented and oxidation is cut short, and black tea is fully fermented.) The process of fermentation can be accelerated by increased heat and high humidity. As a result of these conditions, it takes only a few hours to turn green tea into black tea.

There are samples of several types of Japanese green teas on the Art Cart.

The Legend of tea According to Japanese legend, tea was first discovered by the Prince Bodhidharma, a young Buddhist monk. In homage to the Buddha, he vowed to stay awake for seven years of meditation. After three years of sleeplessness, he allowed himself to fall asleep. When he awoke, he was so angered by his weakness, that he tore off his eyelids, and threw them to the ground. The eyelids took root, and grew into a bush. Those who chewed the leaves of this plant easily stayed awake during long meditation sessions.

What is Sencha? *Sencha* (“common tea”) is green leaf tea drunk on a daily basis in Japan. There are many grades of *sencha*. *Matcha* is made from the finest *sencha* grade called *tencha*.

What is Matcha? *Matcha* is the powdered green tea used for *chanoyu*. There are two different types of *chanoyu* tea, *koicha* (thick tea) and *usucha* (thin tea). Both types are made with *matcha* powder whisked with hot water.

Why is Matcha so expensive? *Matcha* (powdered green tea) is the highest quality tea available in Japan. To create *matcha*, the stems and veins of each leaf are removed so that the tea will be very fine when ground (compare with everyday *sencha* on the Art Cart). Because only the “meat” of the leaf is used and the finished product is about 1/10 the volume of the original harvest, *matcha* is very expensive. (For example, 100 grams of *matcha* costs about \$100 [U.S.] and 100 grams of *sencha* costs about \$30 [U.S.])

How is Matcha used? The tea is stored in leaf form in the large jars until it is ground into a fine powder for the ceremony. (There is an example of a large tea leaf storage jar [79.4, G224] in the collection.) The amount of hot water and the method of whisking determine the type of tea. In the case of thick tea (*koicha*), three scoops of *matcha* are needed. The whisk is moved slowly and rhythmically, just enough to blend the tea into a smooth, thick liquid. As the name “thick tea” indicates, the proportion of tea powder used is very high in relation to the quantity of hot water used. The resultant tea is not quite a paste, but neither is it very liquid.

For thin tea (*usucha*), however, half as much *matcha* is used and the mixture is whisked briskly until it is frothy. The flavor is slightly bitter and at the same time sweet; the higher the grade of *matcha*, the more full and round the taste, and the sweetness becomes more intense.

What is Genmaicha?

Genmaicha is a specialty green tea that blends *sencha* with fire-toasted rice. During the firing, it is not uncommon for the rice to pop, hence the nickname “popcorn tea.” This tea is popular with Japanese cuisine, as it is well known for cleansing the palate and enhancing the taste of fine food.

Legend has it that during the 1400’s a samurai was having tea and discussing battle strategies with his patrol leaders. A servant named Genamai leaned over to pour tea for the warlord. Rice he had taken for a snack fell out of his pocket into the steaming hot tea and popped when hitting the hot tea. The warlord was furious, but, despite the fact that the tea had been tarnished, drank it. He enjoyed the unique flavor. In honor of Genamai, he pronounced that his rice and tea be served every morning and be called *genmaicha*.

What is Hojicha

Hojicha is a grade of *sencha* that uses the lower leaves and stems of the tea plant and is therefore coarser in texture. Popularized in the 17th century among the literati painters, this tea is often drunk at night because it has fewer stimulants.

Hojicha is hand stirred while being roasted on an iron plate over a charcoal fire. This is what gives the tea its smoky smell. There are two kinds of *hojicha* on the Art Cart – one with typical “crumpled” leaves and one unique variety called *sumi-bancha* that uses coarser, flat leaves that are dried in the sun and then charcoal roasted. *Sumi-bancha* was once a popular everyday drink in Kyoto. Today it is less common.

Questions and Activities

1. Pick up the jars and examine the various teas. Describe their characteristics (smell, texture, color, etc.). How are they similar or different? Which one would you most like to drink? What do you think each one would taste like?
2. How does this tea compare to the tea you buy at the grocery store or tea you have in your home?

3. *Matcha* is generally used only in tea ceremonies. What does this say about the importance of *matcha* and the tea ceremony?
4. Share the legend of tea with the visitor. What legends and stories do you know that tell us how something was created? Where did you hear it?

Collection
Connections

TEA and TEA CEREMONY

- Gallery 225: Teahouse, including tea accessories periodically on view within the teahouse, and throughout the galleries, including: teabowls, whisks, scoops, tea caddies, leaf tea storage jars, water jars, and water ladles.

Tea samples - DO NOT REMOVE OR SHAKE FROM PROVIDED CONTAINERS (OK TO OPEN AND SMELL THROUGH PERFORATED LID)



CHASHAKU

**What is a
Chashaku?**

The *chashaku* or tea scoop is a tool used to transfer powdered green tea from the tea caddy to the tea bowl. The style of scoop on the Art Cart (*nakabushi*) was originally created by Sen Rikyu and is the one most widely used.

How is it made?

Tea scoops most commonly used in the *wabi* aesthetic are made from bamboo and carved by hand using an ordinary knife. The bamboo is heated, bent and then carved, often by the tea master. In making a tea scoop, the tea master observes a number of important points, including the bend of the scoop, the treatment of the areas above and below the node (joint), the node itself, the stem, the curve between the node and the scoop, and the tip. It is in these points that the particular taste and skill of the maker emerges and allows each scoop to be unique. (Special tea scoops are kept in individual bamboo tubes which are usually signed by their makers or owners.)

**What aesthetic or
cultural values
does this reflect?**

Despite its small shape and minor role in the ceremony, the scoop is an important accessory that contributes to the overall effect of *chanoyu*. The scoop, made by a tea practitioner rather than a professional, is a direct expression of the personalities of the master who made it. Most *chashaku* used before the popularization of the *wabi-sabi* (rustic) tea aesthetic were originally made of ivory. Sen Rikyu, however, preferred the rustic beauty of the bamboo, especially as it deepened in color with decades or centuries of use.

Although all bamboo items employed as utensils are considered disposable, they are still treasured items and commonly named by their owners. Tea articles with poetic names, called *mei*, have a special place in the ceremony. Guests spend time during the ceremony admiring these utensils and discussing the creativity of the name. The idea is to produce a name fitting the occasion, the season, and

the situation of the tea ceremony. A great deal of literary, philosophical, and artistic knowledge is mixed with creativity to bestow a name that will impress guests. Examples of *chashaku* names include *mus ikui* (worm-eaten), *voroboshi* (shuffling monk), and *kusemai* (recitative dance).

HISHAKU

What is a Hishaku? The *hishaku* (water ladle) is used to scoop water for ritual purification in gardens, shrines and temples. It is frequently used in gardens for guests to clean their hands and mouths en route to a tea ceremony. The *hishaku* is also used during the tea ceremony to carry water from the *mizusashi* (water jar) to the *kama* (metal kettle) or from the *kama* to the *chawan* (tea bowl).

How is it made? The *hishaku* is made from two separate pieces of bamboo joined together. The *go* (cup) is made from a piece that has been cut at the *node* (joint). The handle, also from a single stalk, uses a piece of bamboo with the joint in the middle. The joint helps you hold the ladle properly. Lift the ladle by sliding your hand under the handle until you reach the joint. Once there, place your thumb on the joint and slowly begin scooping water.

Questions and Activities

1. Bamboo is a popular material to use and depict in Japan. Find other objects in the galleries that are made of or depict bamboo. How has bamboo been used as a building material, for decorative accessories or tea utensils? What are some of the visual characteristics that indicate what you are seeing is bamboo?
2. Pick up the *chashaku*. How does it feel (weight, texture, etc.)? Find other *chashaku* in the galleries. How are they similar or different than the one on the Art Cart (color, shape, size)?
3. *Chashaku* are often treasured items and are always named before they are used. What would you name your

tea scoop and why? (You might share examples of chashaku names provided above.)

4. Pick up the hishaku. Practice holding it like you would during a tea ceremony. How does it feel? What makes you say that?
5. Imagine yourself at a tea ceremony where all three of these implements are being used. What would you hear, see, smell, feel and taste? (This question is good for any object on the Art Cart.)



Hishaku (ladle) and Raw bamboo (shown here behind tatami)

CHASEN, CHASHAKU, HISHAKU

Collection Connections

Gallery 225: Teahouse set up for ceremony, with tea accessories

Bamboo

- Teahouse (building materials), Gallery 225
- Audience Hall (building materials), Gallery 222
- Look for paintings of bamboo throughout Asian galleries and Chinese brushpots carved from bamboo periodically on view throughout the galleries

For More Information

Anderson, Jennifer. *Introduction to Japanese Tea Rituals*. 1991.

Fujioka Ryaoichi. *Tea Ceremony Utensils*. 1973.

TEABOWLS

What are teabowls? Japanese teabowls are made in certain specific sizes, types and shapes. The varying types and sizes are used as per the season, the rank of the guest attending the tea ceremony and the kind of tea that is served during the ceremony.

In the Muromachi Period (1338-1573), teabowls were for domestic use, but they came to play a pivotal role in Japanese history under the creative influence of leading tea masters of the day, such as Sen-no-Rikyu (1522-1591), which emphasized ritual to reinforce the communal nature of life and the spiritual bond that its practitioners believe exists between all people.

How are teabowls used? The tea bowl is always warmed before it is used. The bowl is filled with hot water, emptied, and then dried with a *chakin* (linen cloth). During the ceremony, powdered green tea (*matcha*) is scooped into the bowl, hot water is added, and a whisk is used to mix the two. During *koicha* (thick tea), the host passes the tea bowl to the main guest who bows to accept it. The bowl is raised and rotated in the hand and admired. The guest then drinks some (3½ sips) of the tea, wipes the rim of the bowl with a piece of white linen called a *chakin*, and passes the bowl to the next guest, who does the same. Before returning any empty bowl to the host, the guest is expected to spend a few moments examining and remarking on the bowl's finer points (size, shape, texture). For thin tea (*usucha*), the tea master prepares a new bowl of tea for each guest in turn. A tea ceremony last up to 5 hours. Food and sweets are also served along with the tea or matcha.

What is Raku ware?



Raku is the name given to a type of pottery characterized by the use of monochrome black or red glazes, a wax-like sheen, and irregular forms. The *Raku* kiln was established in Kyoto at the direction of Sen-no- Rikyu in the sixteenth century. It was led by the potter Chojiro and was legendarily named by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the reigning warlord, when he awarded his son Tokei a gold seal with the character “*Raku*” on it. (*Raku* translated means “pleasure,” but it is also the middle character in the name of Hideyoshi’s Kyoto palace). *Raku* ceramists used this stamp on the objects they create. The surname *Raku* has been adopted by each successive master of the Kyoto kilns for 14 generations.

How is Raku made?

Under the artistic guidance of the tea master Sen-no- Rikyu, ceramists developed a new low-fired ware that embodied the rustic aesthetic of the tea ceremony. The glaze is generally black with a high wax-like sheen and is removed from the kiln while it is still hot. Removing the hot piece from the kiln introduces an element of chance into the process. The potter does not know exactly what effect the cooler air outside the kiln will have on a bowl, and can further enhance the unpredictability by placing the vessel in a reduction kiln, submerging it in cold water, or placing it in organic matter like straw, which is ignited by the pot’s heat. The aesthetic of sudden chance seemed to fit in with the idea of Zen enlightenment and the roughly modeled quality of the *Raku* tea bowl agreed with Sen-no-Rikyu’s preference for simple, unelaborated ceramics.

What is Seto ware?



Seto ware refers to ceramics made from kilns in the town of Seto, near Nagoya. These kilns are some of the oldest in Japan, and began in the 13th century by copying newly introduced Chinese and Korean forms. The kilns wanted to replicate Korean celadon glaze. The ceramicists of the Seto kilns have carried on the longest tradition of high temperature glazed pottery in Japan. Although seven types of glazes have been developed at these kilns, *Kisetō* (yellow Seto) is perhaps the most famous. *Kisetō* is characterized by a delicate pale greenish-yellow finish that accentuates the typically thin-walled bowls.

Seto ware was influenced by Korean pottery, particularly the rustic, expressive punch'ong pottery of the Choson Dynasty. In the late 16th century Japan invaded the Korean peninsula, destroyed many kilns, and kidnapped Korean potters. The Japanese invasion caused a major setback in Korean pottery but, at the same time, caused a boost to the ceramic industry in Japan. The Korean potters greatly influenced Japanese ceramics and Seto ware and *Raku* most obviously show these influences.

What is Oribe ware?



Oribe is a classic style of Japanese aesthetics and was named after the late 16th-century tea master Furuta Oribe (1544-1615). It captures the essence of wabi tea in its natural colors and motifs and the spirit of Japan in its beautiful simplicity. You can't find *Oribe* anywhere else. *Oribe* ware is often characterized by the use of green and brown glazes and abstract designs. Its informality was groundbreaking and it remains a wildly popular style of ceramic to this day. *Oribe* ware's soft contours and muted colors provide the perfect stage for *matcha*, along with simple and elegant foods, such as *sashimi* (a Japanese delicacy consisting of very fresh raw meat or fish sliced into thin pieces).

What is Shigaraki?



The name *Shigaraki* describes a group of ceramics created mainly in the Shigaraki area in Koka city. *Shigaraki* ware is wood-fired and buried under embers during firing. Its reddish coloring is a result of the oxidization of iron in the clay and its natural ash glaze comes from the deposit of ashes in the kiln. Pieces of quartz, feldspar, or silica can also be found on the surface of *Shigaraki* ware, contributing to its rustic appearance.

What is Tenmoku?



Tenmoku ware is characterized by a dark glaze and a surface that resembles oil spotting. The more quickly a piece is cooled, the blacker the glaze will be. *Tenmoku* ware is made of iron oxide, feldspar, and limestone. During the heating and cooling process, many different factors influence the iron crystals in the glaze, so this ware is known for its variability.

What is Chakin?

The *chakin* is a white linen cloth used to wipe the *chawan* (tea bowl) during the ceremony. It is also folded and used as a mat for the *chasen* (whisk) when it is carried into the room in the *chawan*. After it is used, it is refolded into a bow-tie shape and set aside. *Chakin* are replaced after each tea ceremony. It would be considered improper to use a soiled *chakin*.

In early tea gatherings the influences of the *shoin* style of tea was still strong. *Shoin* style architecture is opulent and characterized by intricate wood carvings and wall paintings adorned with gold. (Mia's audience hall is a great visual representation of the type of sumptuous interior.)

The style of the tea ceremony changed, however, as more tea masters embraced the aesthetic ideals of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi* (austere) and *sabi* (lonely) emphasize simplicity and understatement. *Wabi-sabi* is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent and incomplete. Sen Rikyu incorporated these ideas into his tea ceremony and selected utensils that represented the *wabi-sabi* ideal.

Tea sweets



Elegant and beautiful sweet cakes (*kashi*) are served before the tea. There are two categories of tea sweets:

1. Namagashi—moist sweets, usually served before thick tea (*koicha*)
2. Higashi—dried sweets, usually served before thin tea (*usucha*)

Higashi (dried sweets) are provided on the Art Cart. They are made in molds from glutinous rice flour, sugar, and starch.

Higashi are served on a lacquer tray and are eaten using one's fingers. The colors and shapes of the sweets are seasonal and also often make subtle literary or poetic references to be acknowledged and admired by tea ceremony guests.

Questions and Activities

1. Carefully hold the bowls in your hands. (Use the illustrations provided on the Art Cart to imitate the way it would be done in a tea ceremony.) How does it feel? Would you like to drink tea this way? Why or why not?
2. Compare the Art Cart tea bowls to cups and bowls you have in your home. How are they similar or different from these (size, shape, color, decoration)? How might the experience of drinking tea from a tea bowl differ from drinking from a Western-style tea cup?
3. Compare Japanese tea bowls to tea accessories found in other galleries in the museum. (Look at British, French and American tea services.) How are they similar or different from the bowl on the Art Cart? How do ways of drinking tea differ in each culture?

4. These tea bowls are intentionally made to look the way they do and reflect styles representing two main artistic centers associated with specific kilns in Japan. Describe the various characteristics of two or more teabowls. How are the various teabowls similar or different? Find other examples of teabowls in the galleries.

After explaining *wabi-sabi*, ask:

1. How is the aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* (rustic simplicity) present in the *Raku* teabowl? What do you see that makes you say that? What other objects on the cart and in the galleries exhibit *wabi-sabi* characteristics?
2. Find examples of Korean pottery in the galleries. How are they similar to Japanese pottery? What ideas, techniques and styles have been shared between the two countries?

TEA SERVICES AND ACCESSORIES

Raku, seto, shigaraki, oribe, and temoku tea wares and other tea ceremony objects are all represented in Mia's collection periodically on view throughout the galleries.

- Teahouse set for a ceremony, Gallery 225
- Korean ceramics (especially punch'ong wares), 2nd floor
- Chinese tea ceramics, 2nd floor and 3rd floor in European and United States Period Rooms
- United States, Paul Revere II, Federal-style tea service, 1792, 3rd floor
- United States and European porcelain tea services, 3rd floor
- United States and European pieces from silver tea services, 3rd floor

Collection Connections

For More Information

Piepenburg, Robert. *Raku Pottery*. 1998.
Iwamiya, Takeji and Kaxuya Takaoka. *Katachi: The Essence of Japanese Design*. 1999.

WATER CONTAINERS: MIZUSASHI AND KENSUI

What is mizusashi?

The *mizusashi* is a ceramic container that holds clean water for replenishing the kettle and rinsing the tea bowl. The *mizusashi*, because of its function and size, is placed in a prominent position and is required to blend with the other utensils. The *mizusashi* on the Art Cart is Seto ware made by a Japanese artist named Koushu.

How is mizusashi stored?

It is a custom in Japan to provide boxes for the safe keeping of precious objects. These objects are themselves objects of beauty and are meant to be appreciated. Well-proportioned and particularly beautiful boxes are highly valued and considered "alive" by tea masters. The boxes generally have writing on the outside. Generally speaking, the inscription on a box will be by the head of one of the tea-ceremony schools and will give the kind of ware, the particular name of the object and the signature and seal of the inscriber.

What is Kensui?

Kensui (waste water jars) are used as receptacles for the water with which the tea bowl has been rinsed. Because the *kensui* served as a disposal container, it is placed in an unobtrusive yet convenient position in the teahouse. The *kensui* on the Art Cart is bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. Although the color of the bronze is affected by the amount of copper, tin and impurities in it, it is most often reddish-brown. Over time, oxidation causes bronze to develop a greenish outer crust, called a patina.

What is the cultural significance of water and water jars?

Water serves an important function during the tea ceremony. First, it is used for purification, for the washing of hands and rinsing of the mouth in the garden and the ritual cleansing of the tea bowls with hot water before tea preparation. During the tea ceremony, water is also needed to replenish the kettle and to make *matcha*. To ensure the best possible taste, tea masters go to great lengths to find fresh, pure water. The water jar, as the receptacle for this precious liquid, is an important element among the many

objects used in serving tea. In fact, during the ceremony, the *mizusashi* can only be touched by the host.

Questions and Activities

1. Describe the characteristics of the two jars (size, shape, texture, material, etc.). How are they the same? How are they different? How are these jars similar or different from ones found in the teahouse and related galleries?
2. The *mizusashi* is more prominent during the ceremony and is placed in front of guests. What characteristics suggest it is more important?
3. If you could take these objects home with you, where would you display them? What would you use them for (would you store something special in them)? Why?
4. Tea utensils often have special wooden storage boxes. What does this signify about the importance of these utensils? Do you have a container at home where you store special things? What does it look like? What special items do you put in there?
5. Find other bronze objects in the galleries. What are these objects used for? How do they compare to the *kensui*?

Collection Connections

Water containers used in tea house display, Gallery 225
Contemporary Japanese ceramics periodically on view
Bronze vessels in the Japan and China galleries

Mizusashi (seto) and Kensui (bronze)



NERI-KŌ

What is Neri-kō? *Neri-kō* is a paste type blended incense made with variety of powdered natural spices, incenses and herbs mixed with charcoal powder and then kneaded with connectors such as honey, sake and/or vinegar. *Neri-kō* is shaped into a small sphere, approximately 1cm across. *Neri-kō* may contain over 20 finely ground ingredients. The incense mixture is sealed in a ceramic jar and buried in the wet ground to age for at least 3 years. Once the process is complete, *Neri-kō* must be kept moist.

Neri-ko is used to add a pleasing fragrance to a room. During the Heian period it was used by the aristocracy for scenting garments and their hair. It may also be used during the tea ceremony when placed near the charcoal in the ash beneath the kettle.

How to enjoy blended incense (*neri-kō*) (Translated by CIF Guide Eri Shiraishi)



There are two ways to enjoy *neri-kō*; individual use (*mon-kō*) and as a room fragrance (*karadaki*).

Care

When *neri-kō* gets dried and/or shows of signs of mold, first clean the surface by wiping and then place it on a plate. Add a little amount of lukewarm water and roll it to get moist evenly.

May be also kneaded again with some water mixed with a hint of honey.

**How to enjoy incense for individual use
(casually altered “mon-kō” style)**

What you need

Incense burner (*kō-ro*)

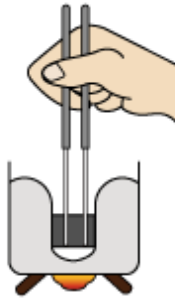
Kō-tadon (small cylindrically formed charcoal made with charcoal powder and glue)

Incense burner ash

Utensils (metal chopsticks, small paddle, tweezer)

Gin-yō (small piece of thin mica leaf)

1



Kindle the charcoal well ahead of the time.

Make sure the ash is clean and dry.

Use the metal chopsticks to dig a hole in the middle of the ash, and then place the burning charcoal at the bottom of it.

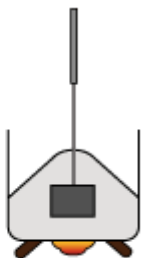
2



Pour the surrounding ash onto the charcoal with the chopsticks to create a mountain shape.

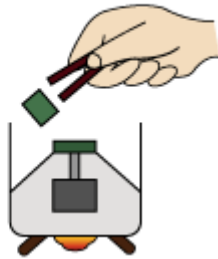
Pat gently the slope of the mountain with the small paddle to shape and settle the ash.

3



Poke at the top of the ash mountain with one of the chopsticks until hitting the buried charcoal to create a heat path.

4



Pick up the mica leaf with the tweezers and place it carefully on top of the opening. Make sure that the mica is leveled.

5



Place a piece of incense on the center of the mica.

The incense will be heated indirectly and start making a delicate scent

Note

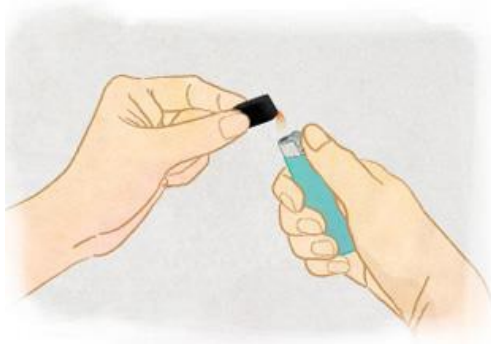
Make sure not to burn the incense. If it starts making a smoke, the temperature is too high. Control the heat by changing the distance between the charcoal and the mica leaf.

How to enjoy incense as a room fragrance ("soradaki" style)

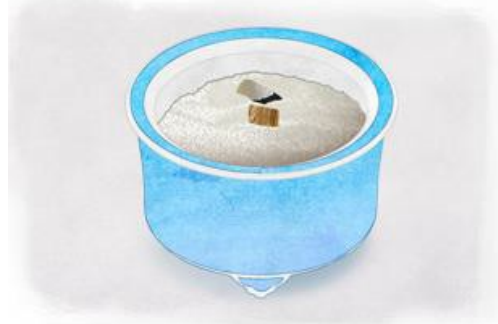
What you need

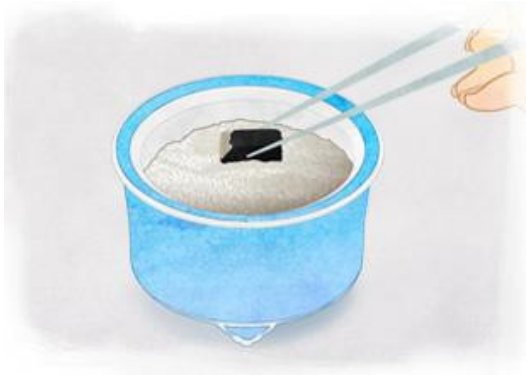
Incense burner

Incense burner charcoal
Incense burner ash
Metal chopsticks



Fire the charcoal, place it on the ash surface and wait for about 5 minutes





Bury the half of the charcoal to heat the ash.



When the ash is heated, place one or two *neri-kō* spheres near the charcoal. Make sure that they are not touching the charcoal directly.

Resources

Kiyoko Morita, *The Book of Incense: Enjoying the Traditional Art of Japanese Scents* by, 1992, Kodansha International Ltd. GT 3032 .M67 1992 (See Resource section in back of manual)

Shoyeido How to use incense. (In Japanese, but visual narrative is easy to follow)

<https://www.shoyeido.co.jp/incense/howto.html>



Incense utensils



Neri-ko (incense)

TEA TIMELINE

552-645: Asuka period

Buddhism first arrives from China through Korea. Buddhist monks bring tea to help in meditation. (The caffeine keeps them awake during long sessions.)

794-1185: Heian period

Chinese culture dominates the Japanese court and the tea ceremony becomes a popular diversion.

1185 - 1333: Kamakura period

1191: Practice of drinking whisked green tea (*matcha*) is brought from China with Zen Buddhism.

1211: Zen teacher Eisai authors the first academic work on tea in Japan, titled "Maintaining Health by Drinking Tea."

1392 - 1573: Muromachi period

1479: Shogun Ashikagaa Yoshimasa builds the Silver Pavilion and its famous tearoom. Yoshimasa is the first to practice the tea ceremony.

1560-1582: Nobunaga, a member of a wealthy Japanese family, begins to consolidate power. Nobunaga's tea master, Sen Rikyu, gains access to the imperial court.

1573 - 1615: Momoyama period

1583: Sen Rikyu becomes the official tea master to shogun Hideyoshi (1536-1598) and becomes the national tea authority.

1592: Sen Rikyu is ordered to commit ritual suicide by Hideyoshi, who regrets the order for the rest of his life and atones by keeping the spirit of Sen Rikyu's tea ceremony alive.

1615 - 1868: Edo period

Japanese rulers, fearing military conquests, initiate the complete isolation of Japan by excluding foreigners and prohibiting foreign travel.

1843: Commodore Perry arrives with American ships to open Japan for trade.

1868 - 1912: Meiji period

The West is re-introduced to Japanese traditions, and an international demand for Japanese tea begins.

1926 - present: Showa period

Early 1900's: The Urasenke school attempts to widen the popularity of the tea ceremony and reorganizes its education system. The Urasenke school is the largest in Japan and traces its beginnings back to Sen Rikyu. Its founder was one of Rikyu's grandsons.

There are many tea ceremony schools throughout Japan, and the study of the tea ceremony can be a lifelong pursuit.

TATAMI MATS and HINOKI CYPRESS WOOD

What is it?

The *tatami* mat is a woven floor covering used in almost all traditional Japanese architecture. Both the Audience Hall and Teahouse have *tatami* floors. The Art Cart features a variety of *tatami* mat samples, including a booklet of different quality mats, a square sample with brocaded borders, and a book of different border samples.

How is it made?

There are three different parts to an authentic *tatami* mat – the reed or rush cover, the straw core, and the decorative cloth edging. The quality of the reed cover depends on the quality of the rush that is used and how tightly the reeds are woven together. Higher quality mats are made from rush that is more mature and thicker (the thicker reeds will take the constant abuse of being walked on for a much longer period of time). Lower quality mats are made from the younger, thinner plants. New *tatami* mats are green and emit the distinctive fragrance of fresh *tatami*. As the mats age, they turn brown and their fragrance diminishes. When the outer cover wears out, it can easily be replaced.

The inner core of the mat is made of straw, a material favored for its great elasticity. It is pressed tightly and bound with cords. The tightness of the stitching is also very important. If the stitching is loose the mat will be too flexible. Today, some *tatami* mat cores are made of modern materials like Styrofoam.

The cloth borders between mats come in a wide variety of colors, patterns, and level of quality. It is considered rude to step or sit on the mat borders.

How is it used?

In the 12th century, *tatami* mats were luxury goods used by emperors, nobles, religious leaders and high-ranking officials. Tatami came in a variety of thicknesses and sizes, and the color of the border fabric indicated the rank of the individual household that owned it. This custom carried on until the 17th century, when tatami found their way into the homes of ordinary

people. The look and feel of these mats fit into the environment of the tea house, whose decorations are humble and modest. Today, a typical mat measures about 3' x 6' and the size of a Japanese room is expressed by its number of mats.

How much does a tatami mat cost?

Mat prices vary, depending on the quality of reed and the style of border. The price of one 3' x 6' mat costs approximately \$100-\$200 (U.S.).

Questions and Activities

1. Describe the *tatami* mat's characteristics. How does it look, feel, smell? What makes you say that? What do you think it would feel like to sit on a tatami mat?
2. Look closely at the fabric samples used for borders? Which is your favorite? Would you use different fabrics for different rooms? Why
3. Find other *tatami* mats in the galleries. How do they compare to the samples on the Art Cart? *Tatami* mats are very common in Japanese architecture and design. Would you like to have a *tatami* mat room in your house? Why, or why not?
4. Compare the floors in the Chinese period rooms to the Japanese period rooms. How are they similar or different? How do the different floors impact the furniture and design of the rest of the room?
5. The tea master Sen Rikyu wanted to stimulate the five senses (sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell) during the tea ceremony. Which of the senses do you think the *tatami* mats stimulate? How does it feel? What does it look like? Smell like?

**Collection
Connections**

Tea House, Gallery 225
Audience Hall, Gallery 222

**For more
information**

Plutschow, Herbert. *Rediscovering Rikyu and the Beginning of the Japanese Tea Ceremony*, 2001.



Tatami sample with brocade borders

**Hinoki Cypress
Wood**

The slow growing Hinoki Cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtuse*) is grown in Japan for its very high quality timber. It is used for building palaces, temples, shrines and tea houses. Mia's Teahouse and Audience hall are both built of hinoki wood. The wood is lemon-scented, light pinkish-brown, with a rich, straight grain, and is highly resistant to moisture and decay.

The strength of Hinoki increases about for 200 years even after the tree is cut. After 200 years, the Hinoki gradually returns to its original strength which takes about 1000 years. The oldest wooden temple in Nara Japan called Horyu-ji is made with Hinoki. It has been 1300 years since it was built. It is said that you can smell a scent when you scrap the bark off the Hinoki even after 1300 years passed

**Questions and
Activites**

1. Close your eyes and smell the hinoki wood. How would you describe the scent? What does it remind you of?
2. Where might you see hinoki wood in the Audience Hall and Tea House?

SENSU

What are sensu?

Sensu are Japanese folding fans. The production of these folding fans rapidly grew in Kyoto after the 14th century when artists made folding fans to match styles of the earthy performing arts of *Nō* (masked drama). Nobility and court members favored these items as beautiful accessories for their kimono. *Sensu* were an integral element of court etiquette as well as a means of staying cool in the hot weather. Early fans were reserved for royalty and the nobility and were regarded as expensive accessories and status symbols. As time went on, *sensu* began to take on new uses and meanings. The shape of the unfolded fan began to symbolize rising prosperity and used as a memento or a prop for celebrations. Today, the *sensu* is an essential element in traditional Japanese etiquette, traditional performing arts, the tea ceremony and in games, as well as maintaining the original purpose of keeping oneself cool. When wearing traditional attire, no person is considered properly dressed unless they carry a *sensu*.

What are chaseki-sen?

Chaseki-sen is the type of *sensu* used at a tea ceremony. They are decorated with a variety of designs, including passages from the 100 poems about the rules of preparing and serving tea by Sen Rikyu, symbolic emblems, flowers and sweets suitable for the tea ceremony. The decoration on the fan is important and must be appropriate for the season and occasion. The fan's role in the tea ceremony is decorative and ceremonial, rather than for cooling oneself. A closed fan laid on the *tatami* mat is used as a border or boundary between the guest and the tea master, *tokonoma*, and/or tea utensils, as a sign of respect.

How is it made?

The frame of a *sensu* is formed by cutting bamboo into strips, punching a hole through one end of each strip, and inserting a thin skewer into the holes to hold the center together. Layers of thin Japanese *washi* papers are glued together and exposed to air and sunlight to dry naturally. When the paper is dry it can be decorated with gold leaf, hand painted, or left its natural color. Once decorated, the paper is then folded into fixed widths. The thinly cut bamboo ribs are inserted between the sheets of fan-

shaped paper.

Questions and
Activities

1. Pick up the fan and unfold it. How does it feel holding the fan? How and when would you use a fan like this?
2. Describe the decorations on the fan. What do you see? If you could design your own, how would you decorate it? What patterns and images would you use? If you were to make one fan for each season of the year, what kinds of symbols would you use?
3. Find woodblock prints and screens that have depicted fans in them. How are the fans used? Who is using them? How are the fans decorated? How are they similar to or different from the fans on the Art Cart?
4. Fans like these were once status symbols among the elite in Japan. What are some ways people today display their status (dress, cars, gadgets, etc.)?

For more
information

Sen Soshitsu, *Tea Etiquette for Guests: A Practical Guide for Chanoyu Study*, 1993



Sensu



Theme 2: Japanese Painting

NIHONGA

What is Nihonga?

Nihonga are paintings made according to traditional Japanese artistic conventions—conventions that are over one thousand years old. *Nihonga* painters use pigments made from minerals (*iwa-enogu*), insects, and organic matter. These pigments were typically mixed with animal hide glue (*nikawa*) and diluted with water as needed.

Here are the pigments included on this Art Cart:



Enjimushi: a crimson red pigment made from dried insects known as cochineal, a parasite native to South America, Mexico and Arizona. The insects are found on the pads of prickly pear cacti, then are brushed off, sun-dried, crushed, and put into an acidic solution (lime juice) to produce carminic acid - the pigment. It takes about 70,000 (female) insects to produce a pound of pigment.



Gamboge: a bright yellow pigment made from gamboge, an orange to brown gum resin from southeast Asian Gamboge trees of the evergreen family. The resin is extracted by making spiral incisions in the bark and letting the milky yellow resinous gum drip out. The resulting latex is collected in hollow bamboo canes. After the resin is congealed, the

bamboo is broken away and large rods of raw gamboge remain.



Gofun: white pigment made from ground oyster shells. The main component is calcium carbonate. The ratio of top shells to bottom shells of oyster determines the rank of gofun. The more top shell is used, the purer the white and brighter the pigment.



Gunjō: an inorganic blue pigment known as azurite. Azurite is a soft, deep blue copper mineral produced by weathering of copper ore deposits. Azurite's deep, intense blue color has been considered a precious, premium pigment from antiquity. The finer the grind, the lighter the color (indicated from No. 5 to No. 13), with white being the finest. The examples on the cart include No.s 7 and 9.



Ōdo: a yellow pigment known as yellow ochre. It is a natural earth pigment containing hydrated iron oxide, which ranges in color from light yellow to deep orange or brown. Iron oxide is one of the most common minerals found on earth, and there is evidence that ochre pigment was used in prehistoric times by many different civilizations on different continents.



Rakkudai and wata-enji: *Rakkudai* is a deep red ground pigment made from lac, a resinous material secreted by the *Laccifer lacca* insect found in India, Myanmar, and Southeast Asia. The ground pigment is kept by soaking the pigment into disc-shaped cotton batting which is dried, *wata-enji*. The dyed cotton is rehydrated in sugar-water and the extracted liquid is boiled twice to create the liquid pigment.



Rokusho: an inorganic green pigment known as malachite. Malachite is often found together with azurite, and like azurite malachite results from weathering of copper ores. Malachite is more common than azurite. The finer the grind, the lighter the color (indicated from No. 5 to No. 13), with white being the finest. The examples on the cart include No.s

7 and 9.



Shinsha: an intense red pigment made from ground cinnabar. Cinnabar is a mercury sulfide mineral. Because of its mercury content, cinnabar can be toxic to humans. The pigment has a bright red color that people have used for thousands of years in many parts of the world. The most popularly known use of cinnabar is in Chinese carved lacquerware.



Taisha: brown pigment made from a mineral of hydrated iron oxide, essentially rust-stained clay, known as brown ochre. The name comes from Taishu province in China.



Indo-ai or Indigo: indigo, with its distinctive blue color, comes from *Indigofera* plants. The leaves are soaked in water and fermented to convert the sugars present in the plant to the blue dye *indigotic*. Indigo is among the oldest dyes to be used for textile dyeing and printing, dating to 6,000 years ago. Many Southeast and East Asian countries, such as India, China, Japan, have used indigo as a dye for centuries.

Resources: How is iwa-enogu made?

You can watch a video that illustrates how blue ochre pigment is created. You can find this video by searching “Vivianite pigment – the blue ochre” on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww2QRpSG4fA>

Fabricating Gofun: Nakagawa, Kyoto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bk05SLptuns>

Pigments: Nakagawa, Kyoto

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD66_5shmwg

What other materials and tools are used to create a Nihonga painting?

Nihonga artists use paint brushes on silk (*eginu*) or paper (*washi*). Gold (*kin*) and silver (*gin*) leaf could also be added to *nihonga* by mixing the gold and silver leaf with animal glue and rubbing it onto the painting. Japan’s gold and silver leaf is the thinnest in the world, so this is a very delicate process.

Nikawa is the animal glue that traditional Japanese painters used to create paint. It was made by boiling animal hides for several hours. The resulting liquid was poured into containers, formed into sticks, and dried for use. Synthetic binding materials are used in place of *nikawa* today.

The paint brush is made of layers of animal hairs shaped to a point and attached to a supporting tube made of bamboo, lacquered wood, ceramic, etc. Brushes were made in many different sizes. The brush is like an extension of the artist's hand. It is not held like a pencil, but is held at a right angle perpendicular to the paper. Not only the artist's wrist moves, but the entire arm.

What kind of surfaces were Nihonga produced for?

Initially, *nihonga* were produced for large decorative surfaces, such as hanging scrolls, folding doors, and sliding screens, but they were also produced for more personal formats, such as handscrolls (*emaki*).

Questions and Activities

1. Using the pigment photo props and the pigment chart, consider how you might mix the various colors to make new colors.
2. Compare the whole, raw form of the minerals and plant-based pigments with the ground forms. Which would be most difficult to make?
3. Using the color chart, look at the paintings, screens and fans within the galleries. Which of the pigments might the artists used for making their works of art? Where did they use gold or silver leaf in their painting?

PAINTING FORMATS

Replica handscroll by Sesshū

The handscroll on this cart is a replica of a painting by a painter of the Muromachi period (1338–1573) named Sesshū Tōyō (b. 1420-1506). Sesshū was one of the greatest masters of monochrome ink paintings (*sumi-e*). A stamp of his signature can be found in red ink at the end of this scroll.



This handscroll is a smaller-sized replica of his so called “long landscape scroll”, or “*Sansui Chōkan*” probably painted in 1486. Now in the collection of the Hōfu Mōri Hōkōkai, Yamaguchi Prefecture, it is generally considered his masterpiece and is often regarded as the greatest Japanese ink painting. Depicting the four seasons, beginning with spring and ending with winter, it extends more than 50 feet (15 meters). Though based in both theme and style on Chinese models, it nevertheless is Japanese in character; heavier lines, sharper contrasts of dark and light tones, and a flatter effect of space are employed than was customary in Chinese Song dynasty painting.

The construction of a handscroll

Like a book, a handscroll or *emaki* is an intimate object that is held in the hands and is ideally viewed by only a few people at a time. The scroll is never opened in its entirety for viewing, but rather unrolled slowly for the viewer from right to left revealing the narrative in small sections as the story unfolds. Separate pieces of paper are often attached to the mounting after the work of art (which can be on numerous sheets of paper or silk arranged end to end) to provide space for later viewers to inscribe commentaries. The entire mounting is attached to a wooden dowel at the end on the far left, on which the handscroll is wound. The right edge of the handscroll typically has a length of woven silk to serve as a wrapper when it is closed, as well as a ribbon and clasp (if applicable) to secure the roll.



Sesshū (1420-1506), *Landscapes of the Four Seasons*, 1486, registered as a National Treasure in Japan

This famous scroll illustrates changing seasons of the year interwoven with various aspects of the lives of the nobles and common people. Considered his masterpiece and most ambitious work, Sesshū painting this scroll at the age of 67, as stated in his inscription at the end of the scroll. Note the variation in color where the sheets of paper are joined horizontally.

Questions and Activities

1. Carefully unroll the scroll right to left, revealing small segments of the narrative. Ask viewers to narrate the story. What clues has the artist presented in each scene to tell the viewer what season is depicted?
2. Look closely at the painting. Where has the artist used a very light touch with the brush to create fine lines? Where has the artists made bold, thick lines? Where and how has the artist used color? Where has the artist used lots of water with the ink to make a misty wash?
3. Look in the galleries for examples of hand scrolls. What scenes are depicted? What stories do they tell?
4. Look for scenes of the four seasons throughout the galleries. What plants and animals are represented and human activities take place during each of the seasons?

**Hanging scroll:
forgery of Kameda
Bōsai, Lake
Landscape**



This hanging scroll is a forgery, or copy, of the Japanese artist Kameda Bōsai (1752–1826). Trained as a Confucian scholar, Bōsai spent the second half of his life as a literati painter from the Nanga school during Japan's Edo period (1603 and 1868). Nanga ("Southern painting"), was a school of painters who considered themselves literati, or intellectuals. Nanga artists, by definition, were unique and independent, but they all shared an admiration for traditional Chinese culture. Their paintings, usually in monochrome black ink, sometimes with light color, and nearly always depicting Chinese landscapes or similar subjects. Literati painting focused on expressing the rhythm of nature, rather than the technical realistic depiction.

This scroll depicts three small cottages in a craggy mountain landscape (detail left) with a view of mountains over a misty lake. A small figure seen through the window is a reminder of humans' place the vastness of nature. The image is painted on silk and mounted on silk brocade. A (fake) signature, Bōsai Rōjin ("the old man Bōsai"), and seal appear in the upper right-hand corner.

**The construction of
a hanging scroll**

A Japanese hanging scroll commonly referred to as a *kakejiku* "hung scroll", with a vertical format for hanging on a wall. Painted on silk or paper, the painting or calligraphic passages are mounted on a flexible backing allowing them to be rolled for compact storage. Depending upon the style and subject, they are mounted on select pieces of silk brocade to border the top and bottom of the painting. This is in turn surrounded by plain or patterned silk and attached to a wooden dowel.

The idea of mounting calligraphy or paintings on a hanging scroll is said to have originated in China during the T'ang dynasty (618-907). The first hanging scrolls probably developed from sutra scrolls that could be rolled up for portability. Early hanging scrolls were imported to Japan from China in the Heian period (794-1185) for use in Buddhist ceremonies. By the Muromachi period (1392-1573), hanging scrolls became associated with the tea ceremony and were

commonly used among the aristocracy and tea masters to decorate *tokonoma*, a small alcove. Over the years they came to be appreciated more for their aesthetic qualities and as works of art in their own right.

Questions and Activities

1. Describe the scene in this hanging scroll. What is happening in the foreground (bottom of the image), middle ground (middle third) and background (top third of the painting)?
2. Where do you see people in this scene? How does the images of person compare to the surrounding landscape (mountains, rocks, and trees) in terms of scale and importance to the scene? What, do you think, the artist might feel is most important in this image?
3. Compare the hanging format (vertical) to the format of the handscroll (horizontal). Discuss how each would have been used - one hung on a wall for many to see, and one opened in an intimate setting for only a few.

Resources

See “Basic Terminology of a Hanging Scroll” (Sandán-hyōgu format) and “How to Tie a Hanging Scroll” in the Resources section of the manual.

Keijiku - Making a Japanese Hanging Scroll (about 14 minutes long, in Japanese with English subtitles)

<http://kouseidou.jp/works/keijiku.html>

Freer Sackler Museum: Safe Handling Practices for Japanese Hanging Scrolls

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_dktRBlx8

Fans (Sensu) as a format for painting and printing

Sensu (fans) in Japan were produced in specialized shops and came in different shapes and sizes. Round or oval fans (*uchiwa*), made of stiffened silk mounted on a bamboo stick, duplicated Chinese prototypes. The folding fan (*ōgi*), was



invented in Japan in the seventh century. (See section on *sensu* under the Tea Ceremony for history of the fan.)

All of these fans were refined by the skill of an artist and transformed into charming, lightweight accoutrements that brought relief from the heat and delight to the eye.

The surfaces of these fans were often decorated with small-scale paintings or calligraphic inscriptions. To better preserve the work of art, fans are often removed from their bamboo frames and mounted onto album leaves.

The rise of the Ukiyoe woodblock print during the Edo period had a lasting impact on fans in Japan. The Ukiyoe print which depicted scenes of everyday life became a popular source of fan illustration for the masses. Printed fan leaves were produced in both folding and rigid format. In some cases, it is evident that the print was never actually used as a fan while, in others, the fold lines indicate that it was used as a fan for a while before being removed and preserved.

Brushes

A Japanese brush is extremely responsive and sensitive, unlike the stiffer oil paint brushes of the West. Ink wash and *nihonga* paint brushes are traditionally made from bamboo with goat, cattle, horse, sheep, rabbit, marten badger, deer, boar, raccoon, weasel and cat hair. Different brushes have different qualities. Thick brushes enabled the artist to create a wash in broad strokes, while brushes made of two or three hairs allowed the artist to make thin and precise lines. The brush hairs are tapered to a fine point, a vital feature to achieve astonishing nuance and variations in tonality from subtle to dramatic brushstrokes. Tonality and shading are achieved by varying the ink or pigment density, both by the dilution of the pigment or ink with water and by varying the pigment load and pressure within a single brushstroke.

How the brush is properly held



The brush is held in a horizontal position with the hand suspended freely, with only the elbow supported. The thumb, turned slightly upwards, supports the handle of the brush against the first two fingers, which point slightly downwards. These three fingers hold the brush. The nail of the third finger and the tip of the fourth finger guide the more delicate movements. The vertical position of the brush makes the finest subtleties of movement possible. The forearm and wrist make the larger brush gestures.

Once the brush touches the paper or silk, the stroke cannot be changed or erased. This makes ink and pigment painting a technically demanding art-form requiring great skill, concentration, and years of training.

Questions and Activities

1. Practice properly holding the brush in your hand. Pretend you are painting a picture. How would you make very fine lines? What parts of the brush would touch the paper? How would you make a strong, bold line?
2. Look at the painting in the galleries. Where do you see different kinds of brushstrokes?



Anatomy of a Japanese paintbrush

Inkstone and inkstick



Inksticks (*sumi*) are a type of solid ink used traditionally in several East Asian cultures for calligraphy and brush painting. They are made primarily of soot and animal glue made from animal hide, such as cow, pig, deer, rabbit or sheep. Soot may be made from pine (*shōenboku*), but the higher quality ink comes from vegetable oil soot (*yuenboku*), such as rapeseed, sesame, or paulownia. The ingredients are mixed together into a dough of precise proportions. The dough is kneaded until smooth and even, pressed into a mold and slowly dried into sticks.

To make ink from the inkstick, it has to be continuously ground against an inkstone with a small quantity of water to produce a liquid ink. Artists and calligraphists may vary the thickness and darkness of the ink by reducing or increasing the intensity and time of ink grinding.

Questions and Activities

1. Look for examples of ink painting in the galleries. Where has the artists used ink diluted with lots of water? What types of objects were painted with kind of ink? Where has the artist used a thick, rich ink in his artwork? What kind of objects were painted with type of ink?

UKIYO-E

What is ukiyo-e?

During the Edo Period (1615-1868), a uniquely Japanese art form developed known as *ukiyo-e*, or "pictures of the floating world." During this time, *ukiyo-e* came to be associated with the momentary, worldly pleasures of Japan's rising middle class.

Development of Ukiyo-e Prints

In the 17th century, commoners had enough money to commission works that reflected their own interests and activities. They patronized artists who created a new style based on sinuous lines and bright colors.

Soon, these artists also did woodblock prints as inexpensive alternatives to paintings, making *ukiyo-e* available to everyone. At first, they used only black ink for their images, but by the 1760s they had developed techniques for printing up to twenty colors. They called these works *nishiki-e*, or brocade prints.

Creating a print depended on a collaboration: of a publisher, who funded the project; an artist, who designed the image; and block carvers and printers, who produced it. This division of labor led to a high degree of technical perfection. While demand for images of beautiful women and dashing Kabuki actors remained strong throughout the 18th century, artists in the 19th century expanded the *ukiyo-e* repertoire to include landscapes, birds-and-flowers, legendary heroes, and even ghoulish themes.

“Art of Asia” article and video in the [artsmia.archive.org](http://archive.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/explore/explore-collection-ukiyo-e.cfm)
<http://archive.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/explore/explore-collection-ukiyo-e.cfm>

**16th station: *Yui*
from *The Fifty-
Three Stations of
the Tōkaidō* by
Hiroshige**

The woodblock print by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797- 1858) is entitled *Yui (Travellers on a high cliff by the sea)*. *Yui* is one stop along the Tōkaidō Road (Eastern Sea Road) which extended from Edo to Kyoto. The 53 post stations along the Tōkaidō provided stables, food, and lodging for travelers. Hiroshige made the journey in 1832 and the views had a profound effect on him, inspiring him to create 55 prints in the Tōkaidō series: one for each station, plus one apiece for the starting and ending points.

The scene depicted at *Yui* is of three small figures traveling the pass along Satta-mine cliff (in modern day it is called Satta-tōge), one of most difficult passages along the road. The woodcutter carries his large bundle, while other travels gesture towards Mount Fuji across the Suruga Bay. The title of the print appears in the upper right-hand corner. Hiroshige's

name and the name and seal of the publishing house appear in the lower left-hand corner.

Hiroshige's prints were extremely popular. Woodcuts of this style commonly sold as new for between 12 and 16 copper coins apiece, approximately the same price as a pair of straw sandals or a bowl of soup.



16th station: Yui from *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* by Hiroshige

Questions and Activities

1. Discuss the difference between a printed work of art, of which you can make multiple copies and a painting, which is a singular object. Consider the process for each producing each format. Which do you think would more difficult to make? Why might you think that? Which of the products do you think might be more valued in its time? Why might you think that?
2. Look closely at this print and consider how many colors are used. How many wood blocks might the artist have used to create this print? (We don't know the answer, but multiple wood blocks would have been used to create this print.)

3. Discuss the many constituents involved in making a print and point out the artist's name, title of the painting, and name and seal of the publishing house.

**Printmaking
Resources**

Mia's Teaching the Arts:

<http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/japanese-ukiyo-e-prints/>

How to Read a Woodblock Print from Asian Art Museum:

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/how-read-woodblock-print>

PDFs on the development of color printmaking and printmaking materials and techniques. (see Resources in back of manual)

A short video on the process of printing multiple colors/blocks from the Art Gallery of New South Wales:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8uF3PZ3KGQ>

