

# Emperors' Treasures

Chinese Art From The National Palace Museum, Taipei



Hibiscus-shaped bowl by the Imperial Workshop, Beijing. Qing dynasty, reign of Emperor Yongzheng (1723–1735). Agate.



Vase with revolving core and eight-trigram design, approximately 1744. Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, Qing dynasty, reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736–1795). Porcelain with golden glaze, multicolor decoration and appliquéd sculpture.

By Kristin Nord

**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.** — “Emperors’ Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei” brings to the new world an opulent, thought-provoking exhibition spanning 800 years. On view at the Asian Art Museum through September 18, it showcases approximately 150 masterworks, most never before exhibited in the United States. While Chinese art aficionados have been drawn to this collection since the National Palace Museum opened in Taiwan in 1965, the last traveling display offering a glimpse into its collections was in 1995.

Asian Art Museum director Jay Xu was a young research fellow at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art when the



Vase with flower designs. Ming dynasty (1368–1644), reign of Emperor Yongle (1403–1424). Carved red lacquer (tihong).



last show was organized. He has been working for nearly a decade behind the scenes with the National Palace Museum to bring these masterworks to San Francisco for the Asian Art Museum's 50th anniversary.

"These pieces describe what 'Chineseness' has meant, means and maybe what it will mean. More narrowly, the exhibition helps to teach us about what defines enduring value in Chinese art as well as what makes Chinese art cutting edge," he said.

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Jade belt plaque with dragon design, approximately 1300–1400. Yuan (1206–1368) or Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Nephrite, with wood stand made in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

Xu continued, “What I’m hoping the viewer will come away with is an awareness that there is a core of consistency across certain media, like the consistent use of jades and ceramics, that spans 800 years. Yet each generation had its own contemporary take on these materials. Each piece featured in the show, even if it is in what we would call a traditional medium, was the most cutting-edge art of its time and place.”

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Pillow in the shape of a recumbent boy. Ding kiln, Hebei province, Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). High-fired ceramic with glaze.

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