

CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE



FOLDING SCREEN WITH INDIAN WEDDING AND FLYING POLE
(BIOMBO CON DESPOSORIO INDÍGENA Y PALO VOLADOR)

Mexico, circa 1690, oil on canvas, overall: 66 x 120 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Bernard and Edith Lewin Collection of Mexican Art Deaccession Fund (M.2005.54)

WE LIVE IN A GLOBAL WORLD. THE INTERNET connects us almost immediately with people living thousands of miles away. Air travel takes us to destinations our ancestors only imagined visiting. But is this interaction with people from other cultures something new?

The history of art proves that cultural exchanges have occurred for millennia. In fact, the intersection of cultures has provided fertile ground for artistic inspiration and creativity. This resource looks at examples, across cultures and eras, to explore the kind of art that may be made when cultures meet. Explore the significance of trade throughout history and the

resulting exchange of ideas, beliefs, goods, and technologies as manifested in works of art. Included are images and descriptions of artworks from LACMA's collections and questions and activities that can be used in the classroom.

- How do materials, motifs, and ideas travel across the globe?
- What happens when they arrive at a destination?
- How does art from one culture change or inspire the art of another?



PAINTED OVER 300 YEARS AGO, THIS DETAILED composition documents the events of a bustling festival in a Mexico City village. In the center of the composition (see detail at left), several figures climb up or dangle from a *palo volador*, or flying pole. Indians and Spaniards gather around to exclaim at the exciting displays of physical prowess. On the far right, a newlywed Indian couple in fine dress leaves a church along with their god-parents. Another group of figures in traditional Aztec dress perform the dance of Moctezuma. The busy scene is set against an imaginary landscape that includes hills and a body of water.

This iconic artwork in LACMA's collection illustrates the global influences that converged in colonial Latin America. Spanish explorers, intent on expanding the Spanish empire, established a system of territories—known as viceroyalties—in North and South America in the late fifteenth century. The global influences that converged in colonial Latin America resulted in a confluence of cultures and belief systems.

This composition is painted on a four-panel *biombo*, or screen, and alludes to the impact of trade on the Americas. Japanese folding screens were introduced to the viceroyalties at the end of the sixteenth century through the newly joined trade routes that brought exotic wares to the Americas. The landscape in the background of this painting is also similar to Flemish landscapes, which were imported to the region in the mid-sixteenth century.

- Visit lacma.org to learn more about LACMA's Latin American collection, specifically Spanish Colonial works that reflect the cultural exchange of indigenous and foreign traditions.
- Compare and contrast this screen with Enrique Chagoya's 1994 collage, *Uprising of the Spirit* (page 13). What is similar about the artist's illustration of the merging of cultures? What is different?

BLUE AND WHITE WARE

BLUE—SPECIFICALLY THE COBALT BLUE SEEN IN the following artworks—is responsible for one of the most popular and longest-lasting international trends in the history of art. "Blue and white ware" is a term for white ceramic wares decorated in blue. The story has a complex beginning, and involves Persian and Chinese merchants trading specialty products along the Silk Road, a network of trading routes on land and sea that extended more than five thousand miles, joining Mediterranean cultures with those in East Asia. This historical network was at its height from the second century BCE until about the fourteenth century, and made a wide variety of products available to various

cultures and regions. This availability led to artistic curiosity and experimentation.

The Silk Road introduced luxury goods to a large international market, creating a demand and also a market for imitations. The kind of blue-and-white ware seen in the *Foliated Platter* (page 4) inspired countless variations until well into the nineteenth century and even today. From elaborate serving pieces to small, decorative tiles, blue-and-white ware was made for the middle classes and royalty alike. And it all began in the exchange of products by merchants working their way along the Silk Road centuries before.



CHARGER WITH JAPANESE MAP DESIGN
Japan, Tenpo era, circa 1830–1843
Porcelain with blue underglaze, 3 x 19 in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Gift of Allan and Maxine Kurtzman (M.2000.52)



FOLIATED PLATTER (PAN) WITH THE EIGHT BUDDHIST SYMBOLS (BAJIXIANG), FLOWERS, AND WAVES
China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen, late Yuan dynasty c. 1340–68
Molded porcelain with blue painted decoration under clear glaze, 2¼ x 17¾ in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Gift of the Francis E. Fowler, Jr., Foundation and the Los Angeles County Fund, 55.40

THIS PLATTER WAS MADE IN CHINA ABOUT 600 years ago. Its various design motifs point to Buddhist and Islamic cultures. The blue color comes from Persia (present-day Iran), where the mineral cobalt was mined, and the porcelain material is from China.

The main ingredient of porcelain is kaolin, a white substance that was discovered in tenth-century China. The first to refine the use of porcelain clay, Chinese artists made very hard, nonporous vessels, which were not only good for storing liquids but beautiful to behold. As Chinese porcelain wares became known to

people in other countries through trade and travel, many people—including kings and queens throughout Asia and Europe—wanted their own artists to learn how to make such delicate-looking yet sturdy ceramic ware.

- Porcelain, or "china," is closely associated with the country where it was invented. Many countries produce goods for export that come to be strongly associated with their national identity. Brainstorm a list of countries and the products for which they are famous.



JAR

Turkey, Iznik, early 16th century
Fritware, underglaze-painted, Height: 9½ in.; Diameter: 4¾ in.
The Edwin Binney, 3rd, Collection of Turkish Art at the
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.85.237.80)

CHINESE PORCELAIN WAS COLLECTED AND admired at the Islamic courts from the eighth century onward. Beginning in the fourteenth century, blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from the Yuan dynasty, like the *Foliated Platter* (page 4), began to pour into the markets of the Near East. The taste for such imported wares may have inspired Islamic potters to develop an artificial clay body known as fritware, intended to approximate the white color and light weight of porcelain. This jar is an example. Painted with floral patterns of Chinese inspiration, jars of this type were made for courtly or urban patrons and were most likely used as storage containers.

Iznik is an important site for the study of Islamic ceramics during the Ottoman Empire (1281–1924). Located in present-day Turkey, Iznik was on one of the main trade routes extending from Istanbul (Constantinople) to the East. Following the Ottoman conquest, Iznik—long an active site for the production of simple earthenware pottery—developed a more distinctive and sophisticated style of ceramics. In addition to table ware, the city’s artisans began producing quantities of tiles for Ottoman palaces, mosques, and other monumental buildings.

- Search for the term “Iznik” on lacma.org to see the range of plates, bowls, vases, and tiles produced in that region. Note the diversity of geometric and floral motifs.



JAR WITH DRAGON AND CLOUDS

Korea, probably Kwangju, South Cholla Province, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910),
18th century, wheel-thrown porcelain with blue painted decoration
under clear glaze, Height: 17½ in.; Diameter: 13½ in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Purchased with Museum Funds (M.2000.15.98)

THIS CERAMIC JAR, MADE BETWEEN 200 AND 300 years ago in Korea, was probably used by the upper classes or court for ceremonial purposes. Wrapped elegantly around the surface of the jar is a depiction of a dragon journeying through the clouds. Throughout East Asia, the dragon is considered to be a sign of good things to come and is a symbol of royalty and prosperity.

- Describe the dragon's eyes, his scales, his teeth, and his nose. What is the dragon doing? What are some other symbols of good luck? If you were going to decorate a useful object with a good luck symbol, what would the object be and what symbol would you pick?

Porcelain vessels with underglaze designs painted in blue, like this jar, were first made in fifteenth-century Korea. The artist who painted this vessel used cobalt—a hard, metallic element found in the earth—to create the decoration. Cobalt's salts can be ground up, mixed with liquid, and used as a paint that gives a blue color to glass or ceramics. At this time, local sources of cobalt were discovered; however, the cobalt native to Korea produced a muddy color. Korean artists, therefore, preferred to use cobalt imported from China. At first it was quite costly to import this cobalt, and only the royal household could afford the expensive porcelain. By the eighteenth century, however, Korea had entered a period of prosperity that allowed for the wares to be enjoyed by a broader range of Korean society.



THE TYRANT'S FOE, THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND
 England, Staffordshire, circa 1820–1840
 Earthenware, blue transfer printed, Diameter: 10½ in.
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 Gift of the Hearst Corporation (50.28.23)

CHARGER WITH JAPANESE MAP DESIGN
 Japan, Tenpo era, circa 1830–1843
 Porcelain with blue underglaze, 3 x 19 in.
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 Gift of Allan and Maxine Kurtzman (M.2000.52)

- Although these artworks share the same colors, they each have a unique design. Compare and contrast the design of the two plates.
- Find examples of blue and white ware today.

FASHIONING FASHION

THE FOLLOWING ARTWORKS ARE FEATURED IN THE exhibition, *Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700–1915* and represent a selection of the museum’s major collection of European men’s, women’s, and children’s dress and accessories. The tumultuous period

represented in *Fashioning Fashion* is similar to our own. The Old World was being rocked by the forces of revolution, global trade expansion, and technical advances. Cross-cultural exchange contributed to the evolution of textiles, tailoring techniques, and trimmings.



MAN'S SLEEVED WAISTCOAT

France, circa 1715

Silk satin with supplementary weft patterning bound in twill (lampas), 35 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Suzanne A. Saperstein and Michael and Ellen Michelson,
with additional funding from the Costume Council, the Edgerton Foundation,

Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer, Maureen H. Shapiro, Grace Tsao, and Lenore and Richard Wayne (M.2007.211.40)

THIS GARMENT WAS WORN BY FASHIONABLE MEN OVER 300 years ago. The pattern of this sleeved waistcoat features a tiered motif resembling an exotic plant or a stylized pagoda (see detail above). From the end of the seventeenth century through the first quarter of the eighteenth century, silks

with bold asymmetrical patterns that combined realistic and imagined motifs emerged from the looms of London, Lyon, and Venice. Inspired by the influx of imported Asian textiles, these types of silks were utilized for both furnishings and fashionable dress.



MAN'S AT-HOME ROBE (BANYAN)

India, probably Coromandel Coast; for the Western market, 1700–1750
Cotton plain weave, mordant-painted and resist-dyed, Center back length: 63½ in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Costume Council Fund (M.2005.42)

IDEAS ABOUT MEN'S FASHION HAVE CHANGED A LOT over time. In the late seventeenth century, European men wore an at-home garment called a banyan, influenced by East Asian and Persian robes. Made of silk or cotton, it was used for lounging around at home or other informal occasions. Calico banyans, made of coarse cotton cloth with a bright printed pattern, frequently exhibit European influence on Indian cotton-painters; this banyan's convoluted columns entwined with branches, curling leaves, and urns are fundamental design

elements of English crewel embroidery from the late seventeenth century. (Crewel embroidery is completed with loosely twisted woolen yarn.)

- Is this garment similar to anything you or your family members wear? When and where would you wear a robe like this?
- Design your own textile. What symbols or motifs would you include? What might the details of the pattern tell others about you and your interests?



WOMAN'S ROBE À LA FRANÇAISE

England, circa 1765

Silk satin with weft-float patterning and silk passementerie, 50¼ in.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Henry Salvatori (M.79.19.1)

FOR MOST OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, women had two fashion choices: the loose, flowing French-style gown, the *robe à la française*, and the form-fitting English-style gown, the *robe à l'anglaise*. Although named for their countries of origin, both styles were worn simultaneously throughout Europe. By the 1780s, however, the *robe à la française* appeared only on very formal occasions. This late example is shaped to fit the wide, rectangular hoop petticoat worn at the English court.

Petticoats are a type of undergarment made to hold the wide skirt away from the body. In French it's called a *panier*—the word for basket—because of its shape.

- Imagine what it might be like to walk or sit in this dress.
- Visit the exhibition website at lacma.org and play the Children's Game, *Fashioning Fashion* to learn more about this dress, the undergarments worn with it, and other historical garments.



WORTH (HOUSE OF) (FRANCE, PARIS, FOUNDED 1858)

Woman's Opera Coat, 1910–1911

Silk cut and voided velvet on silk- and metallic-thread satin foundation with metallic lace, and jet- and glass-bead trim. Center back length: 54½ in. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Kerckhoff Young (M.69.10)

THIS ELEGANT COAT WAS INSPIRED BY THE Japanese kimono. In the detail above, notice the placement of the blossoming lily plants rising from the hem. The drape of the cocoon opera coat delicately exposes the nape of the wearer's neck. Gold-metallic thread is woven throughout the foundation of this luxurious velvet; however, its presence is indiscernible to the naked eye except in the

limited voided-velvet areas where the exposed gold wefts (horizontal threads) delineate the lilies.

- What do you wear on special occasions?
- What makes those clothes unique? Consider the way the garment is designed or the details of the textile's pattern or trimmings.



PAUL POIRET (1880–1944)
Woman's Turban, 1911

Silk and metallic-thread plain weave, silk plain weave, turquoise cabochon, and egret feathers, 10½ x 8½ x 9½ in. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Purchased with funds provided by Suzanne A. Saperstein and Michael and Ellen Michelson, with additional funding from the Costume Council, the Edgerton Foundation, Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer, Maureen H. Shapiro, Grace Tsao, and Lenore and Richard Wayne (M.2007.211.979)

THIS TURBAN EPITOMIZES THE EARLY TWENTIETH century European conception of "Persian" dress. *The Arabian Nights*, a collection of tales of ancient Indian and Persian origin, contributed to the French fascination with East Asia. Designer Paul Poiret threw a party in 1911

inspired by *The Arabian Nights* that featured a spectacle of brilliantly colored textiles, exotic fauna, and sumptuously costumed guests. This turban was worn by Poiret's wife, Denise, as the extravaganza's Queen of the Harem.

HISTORY & IDENTITY

THE ARTISTS FEATURED IN THIS SECTION WERE all born in the twentieth century and represent a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Although they use a wide range of materials in their work, each artist explores issues of identity, both individual and collective. The artists are also often aware of historical events or conditions, which are then juxtaposed with contemporary experiences.

Students can discuss the political and social content of these works as well as the artists' choice of materials and display.

- How do beliefs and ideas circulate today?
- What are the systems that support the exchange of goods and ideas? How is this exchange reflected in our culture?



ENRIQUE CHAGOYA
(Mexico, born 1953)

Uprising of the Spirit (Elevación del espíritu), 1994

Acrylic and oil on paper, 48 x 72 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Ann and Aaron Nisenson
in memory of Michael Nisenson, AC1995.183.9 © Enrique Chagoya

ENRIQUE CHAGOYA DRAWS ON A WIDE RANGE OF symbols in his work. He combines American popular culture elements, like Superman, with historic images from Pre-Columbian mythology to pose questions about the way we understand history. Chagoya calls his art "reverse anthropology," digging through the past and rearranging what he finds. Layers of art become a question with no answer: What do we find when we reconsider the past?

- Identify the popular images and cultural icons that the artist uses in this work. What do you think were the original contexts for these images? How does Chagoya's combination of images alter their meanings?
- Chagoya used the medium of collage to create this artwork. Collect an assortment of collage materials from your home and classroom and create a composition that tells a story about your heritage or identity.



DO-HO SUH

(South Korea, Seoul, born 1962)

Gate, 2005

Mixed media/assemblage/collage, Silk and stainless steel tube

Installation: 128½ x 83¼ x 39¼ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Purchased with funds provided by
Carla and Fred Sands through the 2006 Collectors Committee (M.2006.104) © Do-Ho Suh

FOR THE KOREAN-BORN ARTIST DO-HO SUH, THE memory of his childhood home inspired this artwork. The fabric sculpture, made to scale and suspended from the ceiling by steel tubes, allows visitors to experience a familiar act from Suh's childhood in Seoul: walk-ing through the entrance to his home. With his fabric architecture, Suh has created a version of home that he can carry with him.

- Advances in communication and transportation are creating an increasingly mobile world society. The place that we call home is often an important aspect of our individual identity. How do we define home and ourselves as our culture becomes increasingly porous? How might you represent your definition of home?



SHADI GHADIRIAN
(Iran, born 1974)

Untitled (Qajar Series), 1998

Photograph, Gelatin-silver bromide print,
Image: 6⁷/₁₆ x 9⁹/₁₆ in.; Sheet: 8 x 9¹⁵/₁₆ in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by the Art of the Middle East Acquisition Fund, Art of the Middle East Deaccession Fund, the Ralph M. Parsons Fund, the Joan Palevsky Bequest by exchange, and Catherine Benkaim, with additional funds provided by Angella and David Nazarian (M.2008.35.8)

© Shadi Ghadirian



SHADI GHADIRIAN
(Iran, born 1974)

Untitled (Qajar Series), 1998

Gelatin-silver bromide print

Image: 9⁵/₈ x 6¹/₂ in.; Sheet: 10 x 8 in.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by the Art of the Middle East Acquisition Fund, Art of the Middle East Deaccession Fund, the Ralph M. Parsons Fund, the Joan Palevsky Bequest by exchange, and Catherine Benkaim, with additional funds provided by Angella and David Nazarian (M.2008.35.1)

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IRANIAN PHOTOGRAPHER SHADI GHADIRIAN created the *Qajar Series* of photographs inspired by nineteenth-century studio portraits of women. The series include photographs of women dressed in vintage clothing from the 1800s including headscarves and short skirts worn over baggy trousers. The women are posed against painted backdrops that recall those used in early photographic

portraits. In many of the images the sitters hold modern objects such as a Pepsi can, a radio, or a bicycle. Ghadirian has stated, "My pictures became a mirror reflecting how I felt: we are stuck between tradition and modernity."

- Create a self-portrait or a portrait of a friend or family member. Include details representing their unique cultural history and identity.

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