



Supporting Information for Teachers

**Encounters: the meeting of Asia and
Europe 1500 -1800**

23 September – 5 December 2004

Booking and Programme Information

- Bookings Office: 020 7942 2211
- Entrance to the exhibition is free to pre-booked School Groups only. Bookings must be made at least 2 weeks in advance.
- **Free** 45-minute workshops are available which must be booked in advance.
- **Private View for Educators** on 1 October 18.30-21.00. Tickets are free but must be booked in advance.
- Visit the micro-site <http://www.vam.ac.uk/encounters> for further information about the exhibition and events programme.

Background information

The final years of the 15th century heralded a new era in the relationship between Asia and Europe. In 1498 the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed on the west coast of India. His arrival established the first direct contact between western Europe and maritime Asia, ushering in a period of commercial, cultural and technological exchange.

The quest for a route to India, and further east to China and Japan, was driven by the desire for spices and Asian luxury products. But its result was far greater than the mere exchange of commodities and currencies. The meeting of Asia and Europe heralded not only the beginnings of a global market but also a profound change in taste and lifestyle that still influences our lives today.

The exhibition explores the dynamic period from 1500 to 1800 through the fascinating objects that are a legacy of this encounter. Rather than presenting a narrative history, it addresses the subject in three themes. **Discoveries** examines how Europe discovered Asia and how it reacted to the Asian wonders that came to the West. **Encounters** tells the human dimension of the story, and **Exchanges** looks at the luxury goods traded between East and West.

About 200 objects are displayed, including rare porcelain and magnificent jewel-encrusted caskets, miniature paintings, 'Tippoo's Tiger' and pages from Mughal manuscripts. The exhibition includes objects from the V&A's collections and from major institutions and private collections in Europe, America and Asia. Many of these objects have never before been exhibited in Britain.

Exhibition themes

Three hundred years of cultural, artistic and technological exchange between western Europe and maritime Asia are explored through the themes of Discoveries, Encounters and Exchange.

DISCOVERIES

In the late medieval period merchants transported Asian spices and luxury goods along lengthy land and sea routes to the Levant. From here European traders carried the goods to Mediterranean ports. In 1453, however, Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, rendering the shipping lanes of the eastern Mediterranean virtually impassable. The supply of Asian goods was no longer reliable, and those that did reach Europe were extremely expensive. A new route to the East was needed.

Portuguese navigators, supported by royal patronage, were already exploring the west coast of Africa. These voyages were greatly facilitated by important advances in shipbuilding and naval gunnery. In 1488 the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Ten years later Vasco da Gama succeeded in reaching the Malabar Coast of India, crossing the Indian Ocean with the aid of monsoon winds.

Rarities and Novelties

Western fascination for exotic goods from Asia existed even before direct contact was established. Whether products of nature or man-made wonders, objects from the East were much prized in Europe. They were often richly mounted to emphasise their value.

After the Portuguese discovered the sea route to India, Lisbon became the leading marketplace in Europe for Asian rarities and novelties. Princes and scholars avidly collected these exotic objects and arranged them in cabinets of curiosities. These chambers of art and wonder enhanced the status of these collectors, who sought to symbolically possess and understand the diversity of the outside world.

ENCOUNTERS

In the 16th century the Portuguese established a coastal trading empire that stretched from India to Japan. However, managing and policing this empire was to prove financially crippling. After 1600 the Portuguese monopoly was further undermined by competition from the Dutch and English East India companies. These leaner organisations were driven purely by profit and unencumbered by the missionary zeal of the Portuguese.

Maritime Asia was as vast as it was varied, and the response to the arrival of the subsequent waves of Europeans was correspondingly diverse. In China, Japan and early Mughal India, the encounter took place on Asian terms. By contrast, in coastal south India and the Indonesian archipelago, Europeans were able to dictate their terms, sometimes using superior firepower. Many of the encounters were marred by greed, misunderstanding and violence. Yet this was also a period of cross-cultural enrichment and mutual fascination between East and West.

Diplomatic Encounters

On arriving in Asia Europeans needed to negotiate with local rulers to obtain favourable conditions for their trading activities. Such negotiations demanded an understanding of the often complex local diplomatic conventions, such as prostrating before the prince or lord and recognising his authority. Europeans also had to establish credibility with Asian rulers, who sometimes had no way of verifying that what they said was true. In order to prove their legitimacy, officials arrived with credentials in the form of a letter from their sovereign.

The presenting of gifts, ideally rare and novel products from Europe and other parts of Asia, was also central to the success of these diplomatic missions. In return, Asian rulers bestowed presents on their foreign visitors. Some even sent embassies to the West, motivated by their own desire to trade and form alliances.

Religious Encounters

The Portuguese established a presence in Asia in order to spread Christianity as

well as to trade. The Pope granted the Jesuits and other religious orders the right to establish churches and proselytise in the East.

These missionaries used art to cross the language barrier. The paintings, sculpture and devotional objects that they brought with them were copied by local Asian artists, both for Christians in Asia and for export to Europe. The objects that resulted were often hybrid, marrying Christian images and symbols with those of local traditions. Conversely, Asians sometimes adopted aspects of Christian imagery even when they had little sympathy with the faith itself.

Personal Encounters

Personal relationships formed a crucial part of the encounter between Europeans and Asians. However, the degree of social and cultural interaction differed greatly from place to place.

In China and Japan relationships with Europeans were carefully controlled and the foreigners were confined almost entirely to port cities. In India and South-East Asia people were already more accustomed to the influx of foreigners. In these places Europeans mixed more freely with the inhabitants and often adopted local dress, symbols of rank and forms of entertainment. In a similar fashion, Asians who met and interacted with Europeans sometimes borrowed western customs and manners.

Visual Encounters

Early European travellers to Asia provided rich visual and written descriptions of the people they encountered and their customs. Similarly, the exotic visitors from the West aroused much curiosity in the East. Asian artists often used images of foreigners to decorate objects made for their own markets.

The fascination for the strange physical features and peculiar dress of Europeans manifested itself in different ways in South and East Asia. Perceptions and representations of Europeans also changed over time. India was more used to outsiders and images of westerners were quickly assimilated into the visual repertoire. In East Asia contact was more limited, but the appeal of the European is apparent in objects made for the ruling classes. In Japan, a

taste for things foreign also became part of popular culture.

EXCHANGES

During the period 1500-1800 Asian commodities flooded into the West. As well as spices and tea, they included silks, cottons, porcelains and other luxury goods. Since few European products could be successfully sold in bulk in Asian markets, these imports were paid for with silver. The resulting currency drain encouraged Europeans to imitate the goods they so admired. In Asia, there was no comparable mass importation of western goods. However, there was a great fascination with European scientific and artistic technologies. These influenced local lifestyles and inspired Asian scholars, artists and craftsmen.

The East occupied an important place in the western imagination. The reverse was also true. European objects and artefacts, sometimes reworked to suit Asian lifestyles, created a corresponding vision of a mysterious and exotic West.

Asia in Europe

When the Portuguese arrived in Asia they encountered a sophisticated trading network centred on cosmopolitan ports. Here they found luxury goods from throughout Asia, produced by specialist workshops specifically for different markets. These goods had immediate appeal for Europeans, who began commissioning pieces suited to western tastes.

Asian craftsmen were remarkably adept at interpreting western designs and applying traditional techniques to new forms. In the 18th century, European trading companies capitalised on these skills and developed a mass market for Asian commodities in Europe. The appeal of these objects was so strong that attempts were made to imitate them in the West. The vogue for Asian goods inspired the creation of a distinctive oriental style, Chinoiserie.

Europe in Asia

Asia was not a natural market for western luxury goods, which were often unsuited to the climate and lifestyle. However, western scientific technology did have a great impact. Asian rulers and scholars developed a keen interest in European medicine, astronomy and cartography. Glassware, mirrors and

precision instruments such as clocks were highly prized and transformed many aspects of Asian life. Such western goods were also copied locally, with modifications to suit Asian tastes and needs. The influence of western military technology was also particularly significant.

Different Asian cultures also developed an appreciation for western aesthetics. Artists found that western painting offered them a new way of representing the world, while patrons in India and China occasionally commissioned fantasy buildings in European styles.

Conclusion

In the late 18th century any uncertainty that existed about the position of Europeans in Asia evaporated. The British solved the trade imbalance with China by flooding the country with Indian opium, damaging both the economy and the health of the people. The tensions that this inevitably created led to the Opium Wars, which sealed western economic dominance of East Asia.

In India, the collapse of the Mughal empire created a power vacuum that was filled by the East India Company. Its administrative and military machine gradually reshaped the subcontinent to suit British priorities. After the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, British control of the subcontinent was assured. With this, the character of the European presence in Asia changed and rigid assumptions of 'East' and 'West' began to replace the more fluid boundaries between different cultures.

Exhibition images

1. SIX-PANEL SCREEN DEPICTING THE ARRIVAL OF A PORTUGUESE SHIP



2. TERRESTRIAL GLOBE



3. WILLIAM FULLERTON,
SEATED ON A TERRACE



4. SACK-BACK GOWN AND
PETTICOAT



5. THE YONGZHENG EMPEROR
IN EUROPEAN DRESS



6. TIPPOO'S TIGER



7. EUROPEANS BRING GIFTS TO SHAH JAHAN



8. CASKET



Information about the images

1. SCREEN DEPICTING THE ARRIVAL OF A PORTUGUESE SHIP

Japan

Edo period 1630s

This screen was painted in Japan in the early seventeenth century and portrays a Portuguese ship arriving at a Japanese port. Reading this story from left to right the narrative continues, showing Europeans unloading and trading exotic goods they have brought, while the captain-major greets Jesuit missionaries. Such screens were produced for wealthy merchants and shipping agents and reveal the Japanese fascination for the curious foreigners who had arrived on their shores.

2. TERRESTRIAL GLOBE

By Yang Ma-nao (Manuel Dias) and Long Hua-min (Nicolo Longobardi)

China (Qing court); Tianqi period; 1623

This, the earliest known globe in China, was the work of Jesuit missionaries serving at the Imperial court. Traditional Chinese maps of the period represented China at the middle of a flat world, with little geographic information about other countries. The European cartographic view of the world was, however, received with interest at the Chinese court. The text on the globe explains western concepts including longitude and latitude.

3. WILLIAM FULLERTON, SEATED ON A TERRACE

By Dip Chand

India (Murshidabad), 1760 – 63

William Fullerton happily adopted aspects of Indian court life during his career in Bengal, even to the extent of being portrayed sitting on the ground in the Indian manner.

4. SACK-BACK GOWN AND PETTICOAT

England, 17-60-70.

The cloth made in China about 1760

Asian textiles were highly prized in Europe. This fashionable gown was made from Chinese silk.

5. THE YONGZHENG EMPEROR IN EUROPEAN DRESS

China (Qing Court)

Yongzheng period, 1723-35

It is unlikely the Chinese emperor ever wore Western-style clothes: he was simply projecting the image of himself as the Son of Heaven, a ruler subsuming the entire world beneath the mantle of his authority.

6. TIPPOO'S TIGER, AUTOMATON WITH MECHANICAL ORGAN

India (Mysore),

About 1795

This extraordinary model of a tiger devouring a European belonged to the Indian ruler Tipu Sultan. Tipu was known as the 'Tiger of Mysore' and the automaton was a symbol of his authority and a reflection of his opposition to the British. The tiger houses an organ, possibly the work of a Frenchman in Tipu's service, which simulates its roar and the shrieks of the victim.

After the fall of Seringapatam and the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the model was brought to London and was displayed in the museum of the East India Company.

7. EUROPEANS BRING GIFTS TO SHAH JAHAN

Mogul India

About 1650

The page comes from an album documenting the life of the Mogul emperor, Shah Jahan. Significantly, the foreigners offering him diplomatic gifts are shown in an inferior position, outside the inner railings of the court. They are also portrayed in the less prestigious three-quarter view rather than in profile. The album was itself a present – given by the Nawab of Oudh, in north-east India to George III in 1797

8. CASKET

India (Gujarat)

1500-30

Mounted in France (Paris) by Pierre Mangot 1532-3

Gujarat in western India was a centre for the production of mother-of pearl objects for local and export markets. The iridescent, lustrous surface of such pieces gave them immense appeal in Europe. This casket was owned by François I of France, who had it embellished with rich Renaissance mounts by his court goldsmith.

See more at: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/encounters/exhibition/related/index.php>

Suggested starting points

A visit to Encounters will support learning across the curriculum for key stages 1-5 (see the curriculum maps pages 20-24, for further information) and the following starting points could be differentiated to support cross-curricular work or used to support work in single subject areas.

1. Discoveries

i) Before visiting look at a map or globe of the world with your students. Where are the countries that they will be learning about at the *Encounters* exhibition? What do the students already know about these countries? What would the journey have been like for these explorers? Can they map the sea route that was taken? Put students in the role of time-travel explorers when visiting the exhibition. What can they learn about new ideas, goods and styles that were exchanged between Asia and Europe between 1500-1800? Students could be asked to keep a travelogue or diary documenting their discoveries through sketches and notes as they travel through the exhibition.

ii) See the descriptions on pages 16 & 17 for the six different panels of the screen depicting the arrival of a Portuguese ship. Before or after visiting, students could draw their own interpretations to match the descriptions and even animate their drawings on the computer. The text could also be used for English and Drama work, with small groups concentrating on different sections.

2. Encounters

After visiting, students could analyse objects in school either brought in by themselves or by teachers, to explore different faiths (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism). What connections can be made between different objects? Some objects might have a cultural or religious significance, which would give students an opportunity to learn from each other about a diverse range of cultural and religious beliefs. What do objects have in common (shape, texture, colour or pattern, function)? Can they see any associations between the objects they look at in school and those in the exhibition? Work

on different religious faiths could be extended by visiting the Asian and British galleries at the V&A.

3.Exchanges

How have the exchanges described in the exhibition, affected contemporary Europe and Asia? Find examples such as religion, food, music, film, fashion and architecture. What examples of Asian-European design can they find in the exhibition? How and where were these objects made? This investigation could be further supported by a visit to the British galleries (118a, 120, 122, 123, 52, 52a, 52b, 53a) to look at the influence of Asia in British Design. Give students a design brief to bring two contrasting traditional styles together. Students could explore this idea further at the V&A by visiting *Different by Design* (Fashion Gallery Room 40) where there are some examples of Asian design.

Some starting points for students to investigate in the exhibition

- What does the exhibition tell us about what Europeans and Asian people thought of each other?
- What different religious faiths did people encounter and learn about?
- What new materials and techniques did explorers discover?
- What new languages did they discover and how would people have communicated with each other?
- In the exhibition, find objects that were exchanged as gifts. What is interesting/significant about these objects?
- How did these voyages and discoveries affect people's knowledge of the world?
- What conflicts in Europe and Asia were caused by trading?
- Find examples of where pattern has been used to enhance a feature, to be symbolic or where it is integral to the function or purpose of the object. Record 3 symbols, patterns, textures and motifs you find in the exhibition, in a sketchbook. In which works are you more struck by the pattern and design than by the object itself.
- Find examples of images and Indian dress. Record information about the fabrics, colours, motifs and shapes of the clothes. (Students can try on a Kimono in the textiles galleries Room 101)

Information to support activity 1(ii)

SCREEN DEPICTING THE ARRIVAL OF A PORTUGUESE SHIP

Japan

Edo period; 1630s

This screen depicts the arrival of a Portuguese ship at a Japanese port. It was probably painted for a wealthy merchant and reveals the Japanese fascination with the curious foreigners who had arrived on their shores. The subject-matter also relates to the traditional Japanese symbol of a treasure ship ('takara-bune') bringing wealth and happiness from over the seas.

1. On board the Portuguese ship is the captain-major, seated on a throne-like chair beneath a canopy. With him are richly dressed merchants and a group of missionaries, whose Christian emblems flutter in the breeze. In the pop deck crew members play backgammon, while overhead small figures dismantle the rigging with acrobatic flair.

2&3. Small boats ferry passengers and their cargoes ashore. Here groups of Japanese eagerly examine the goods that the Portuguese have brought, which include Chinese ceramics and bolts of cloth.

4. The captain-major has disembarked and walks beneath a parasol that signifies his status. He is greeted by Portuguese officials, Jesuit missionaries and two Spanish priests. Above, a group of Portuguese pay court to the local feudal lord in his castle.

5. Two Portuguese lead a horse laden with goods. A third carries a load on his shoulders while leading two goats behind him. Below, a barber shaves the tonsure of a Jesuit priest and a Portuguese buys rice balls from a stall. At the back of the street is a shop selling turtle shells, rhinoceros horn, coral and goldfish.

In the neighbouring shop a Portuguese sits on a Chinese carpet. He is negotiating the exchange of gold, visible in his money bag, for taels of silver, which a cat curled up asleep beside him. In the street two Portuguese carry a pair of peacocks in a cage. Below, Japanese examine imported Chinese books and Portuguese and local merchants weigh goods with a scale.

6. Two further shops are selling cloth, ceramics and bronze vessels. In front of one a mother nurses her baby as an old woman hobbles by. A merchant peers from his doorway curtain to watch a group of samurai greet a traveller on horseback. Below them Portuguese merchants display a tiger skin.

Planning Tips

Whether your students are carrying out personal research or working in groups, ensure that they are set clear tasks in the exhibition and that accompanying adults know what you expect them to do. Planning guidelines can be requested from the Bookings Office on 020 7942 2211 or email bookings.office@vam.ac.uk

You could also extend your visit by going to see:

1.The British Galleries

Rooms (118a, 120, 122, 123, 52, 52a, 52b, 53a)

2.Different by design: Clothes Across Continents

A display of inspirational clothes from Asia, Africa and Europe highlighting creativity, craftsmanship and beauty.

Fashion, Room 40

Until 9 January 2005

3.Asian galleries

The V&A has one of the greatest collections of Asian art in the world, spanning the wealth and diversity of artistic creativity across the continent from 5,000 years ago to the present day.

South Asia, Room 41

China, Room 44, 47f

Japan, Room 45

Korea, 47g

Further information

Books

The catalogue of *Encounters: the meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, edited by co-curators of the exhibition, Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, in hardback, is available from 20 September 2004, priced £40.

On the Web

Visit the micro-site <http://www.vam.ac.uk/encounters> for further information about the exhibition and events programme and <http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/asia/index.html> for more information about the Asian Department at the V&A, which includes information about teaching and learning resources.

Free teachers' Packs

- Image and Identity
- China
- The Nehru gallery of Indian Art 1550-1900 (also available online)

To request your free copy, contact the Bookings Office on 020 7942 2211 or email bookings.office@vam.ac.uk

Teachers Publications for sale

- Japanese art
- Textiles

Price: £5.95 from the shop or order copies by contacting V&A enterprises on 020 7942 2689.

Curriculum Map

This map highlights programme of study units in the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1&2, which could be supported by a visit to Encounters.

Primary		
Art and Design	Key stage 1	1 a; b / 2a; b, c / 3a; b / 4a; b, c / 5a; b, c, d 5a: exploring a range of starting points for practical work [for example, themselves, their experiences, stories...]
	Key stage 2	1a; b, c / 2a; b, 2c / 3a; b / 4a; b, c 4c: the roles and purposes of artists, craftspeople and designers working in different times and cultures.
History	Key stage 1	1a; b / 2a; b / 3 / 4a; b / 5 / 6a; b, c, d 2a: recognise why people did things, why events happened and what happened as a result. 4a; how to find out about the past from a range of sources of information [for example, stories, eye-witness accounts, pictures and photographs, artefacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites, the use of ICT-based sources] 6a: changes in their own lives and the way of life of their family or others around them.

	Key stage 2	1a; b / 2a; b, c, d / 3 / 4a; b / 5a; b, c / 6 / 7 / 8a; b 2b: about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, in Britain and the wider world.
Music	Key stage 1	4d / d 5d: a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures.
	Key stage 2	4d / e
PHSE & citizenship	Key stage 2	2c, i, k / 4d; e / 5g 2i: to appreciate the range of national, regional religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom.
Design and technology	Key stage 1	1a; b, c, d, e / 2a; b, c, d, e / 3a; b / 4a / 5a; c 1a: generate ideas by drawing on their own and other people's experiences
	Key stage 2	1a; b, c, d / 2a; b, c, d, e, f / 3a; b, c / 4a; b, c, 4d / 5a; b, c
English	Key stage 2	En1: 11a; b, c / 9a; b, c / En3: 10 / 12

Curriculum Map

This map highlights programme of study units in the National Curriculum for Key Stages 3&4, which could be supported by a visit to Encounters. The exhibition also supports AQA, OCR and EDEXCEL schemes.

Secondary		
Art & design	Key stage 3	1a; b, c / 2a; b, c / 3a; b / 4a; b, c / 5a; b, c, d 4b: codes and conventions and how these are used to represent ideas, beliefs and values in works of art, craft and design. 4d; investigating art, craft and design in the locality, in a variety of genres, styles and traditions, and from a range of historical, social and cultural contexts.
History	Key stage 3	1 / 2a; b; c; d; e / 3a; b / 4a; b / 5a; b, c / 6 / 7a; b, c, d, e / 9/10/12 / 13 2b: about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studies, both in Britain and the wider world. 9: Britain 1500-1750: ...the foundation and fortunes of the East India company 10: Britain 1750-1900: Expansion of trade and colonisation: ...the development of Empire and colonial rule in India, South –East Asia... 12: a world study before 1900: Societies in the past: Islamic civilisations; the Qin Dynasty in China; Imperial China; the Manchu invasion and the fall of the Min g Dynasty; India from the Mughal Empire to the coming of the British

Music	Key stage 3	5a: a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures...
Design & technology	Key stage 3	1a; b, c, d, e, f, g, h / 2a; b, c, d, e / 3a; b, c
	Key stage 4	1a; b, c, g / 3c; d
Citizenship	Key stage 3	1a; b, h / 2a, b, c / 3a; b, c 1b: the diversity of national , regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding
	Key stage 4	1a; b, d, f, g, h, l / 2a;, b, c / 3a; b, c 2a: research a topical political, spiritual, social or cultural issue, problem or event by analysing information from different sources, including ICT based sources, showing an awareness of the use and abuse of statistics.
English	Key stages 3 & 4	En1: 9a; b, c En2: 4a; b, c, d / 5a; b, c, d En 3: 9a; b, c, d 3d: to analyse, review and comment, focussing on considered and evaluative views of ideas, texts and issues. The forms for such writing should be drawn from reviews, commentaries, articles, essays, reports.