

**Treasures of the Sons of Heaven  
The Imperial Collection from the National Palace Museum Taipei, Taiwan**

**Bonn, Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany  
21 November 2003 to 15 February 2004**

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### Exhibition Dates

Duration	18.07.2003 – 12.10.2003
Manager and Artistic Director	Wenzel Jacob
Managing Director	Wilfried Gatzweiler
Curator	Ursula Toyka-Fuong
Projectmanagement	Henriette Pleiger Suzan Zantopp
Press Officer	Maja Majer-Wallat
Catalogue	€26
Press Copy	€13
Opening hours	Closed on Mondays Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursdays to Sundays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Admission	
Standard / Reduces rate / Family ticket	€6,50 / €3,50 / €10,50
Public transport	Underground lines 16, 63, 66 to Heussallee, Bur route 852 to Ollenhauserstraße, Routes 610 and 630 to Heussallee
Press information	<a href="http://www.bundeskunsthalle.de">www.bundeskunsthalle.de</a> Press file (German / English)
Guided tours	Public, free of charge with entrance ticket, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 15.30 and 18.30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays 15.30 p.m. Saturdays 12.30 and 15.30 p.m. Sunday and Public Holidays 11.30 a.m. and 15.30 p.m.
Guided group tours	Information and registration: Telephone +49 (0)228-9171-247 Fax +49 (0)228-9171-244 e-mail:paedagogik@kah-bonn.de
General information	Telephone +49(0)228-9171-200 <a href="http://www.bundeskunsthalle.de">www.bundeskunsthalle.de</a> (German / English)

## Information on the Exhibition

### Treasures of the Sons of Heaven The Imperial Collection from the National Palace Museum Taipei, Taiwan

21 November 2003 to 15 February 2004

*An exhibition project of the Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in cooperation with the Berlin State Museums / Preußischer Kulturbesitz Foundation.*

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**The Palace Museum in Taipei, built in 1965**, houses the largest collection of Chinese art in the world. Many of the 650 000 objects have not been exhibited or made public to this day. **The Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany was granted the privilege of making for itself a selection of 400 exhibits to be shown in Berlin and Bonn. They will be on view for 3 months in each of the cities.** The exhibits include two separate lots of 80 master pieces each, consisting of painting, calligraphy, books, silk ribbon weaving and embroidery. The remaining exhibits are the same in both locations. Also on exhibition are early bronze ritual vessels, jade carvings from antiquity to modern times, select ceramics and porcelain, illuminated Buddhist writings, rare lacquer works, early cloisonné and carvings of bamboo, ivory and other precious materials. Precious objects from the studios of scholars and gifts "from far countries" given in tribute will also be on show.

This year, **the art collection of the Chinese imperial court** – held for the most part in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan – will be on show for the first time in Berlin and Bonn. The traditional standing of the collection as a legacy of imperial China and symbol of the national cultural heritage gives this exhibition its exceptional historical significance. The changeful fate of the imperial collection illustrates in a unique way the history of China from the perspective of preserving and passing on artistic achievements. Master pieces from all periods of Chinese art and cultural history – from the Neolithic age to the coming of the modern era are on show in this exhibition.

**The selection of the works** reflects the diversity, creativity and functions of Chinese art alongside key social, intellectual and political currents. A thematic focus is provided by human beings, their relationship to nature and position in society. The complex stylistic language of Chinese art is illustrated in its two main streams. The brilliant pictorial language from the tradition of scholarship is contrasted with the sensuous magnificence of the courtly aristocracy with its many symbols. Imperial patronage is examined in the tension between aesthetic values, moral ideals and political objectives. In this context particular attention is paid to the Qian Long reign (1736-1796) of the emperor and art connoisseur Gao Zong.

A catalogue, supporting programme and film will accompany the exhibition.

## Wall Texts

### **The Ruler's Song**

(„Book of Odes“ (*Shih-ching*), Ode 222)

When one gathers beans, gathers beans,  
One puts them in baskets square or round.  
The princes have come to Court;  
With what gift can I present them?  
Although this is nothing to give them,  
It shall be a great coach and four.  
What besides this shall I give them?  
Black robe and brodered skirt.

High spurts that fountain,  
Come, pluck the cress that grows by it.  
The princes have come to Court,  
Let us look at their banners.  
Their banners flutter, flutter,  
Their harness bells ring.  
Driving teams of three, teams of four,  
The princes arrive.

Red greaves on their legs,  
Cross-laced below.  
Not that they are wanton or loose,  
These are what the Son of Heaven gave.  
Oh, happy princes,  
To whom the Son of Heaven gave his charge!  
Oh, happy princes,  
Before whom all blessings were spread!

The branches of oak,  
Their leaves cluster close.  
Oh, happy princes  
That guard the Son of Heaven's land!  
Oh, happy princes,  
In whom all blessings unite!  
On this side and that, to left and right,  
We join in your procession.

It was adrift, that willow boat,  
Now to our tow-line we have tied it.  
Oh, happy princes,  
Whom the Son of Heaven measures.  
Oh, happy princes,  
May all blessings shelter them!  
Let us play, let us sport,  
For the princes have come.

Translation: Viktor von Strauß

### **The Imperial Collection: Han to Sung Dynasties (206 v.Chr.—1279 n.Chr.)**

Whether the first emperor of China, Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, owned an art collection is not known. Emperor Wu-ti (ruled 140–87 B.C.), on whose order Ssu-ma Ch'ien (ca. 145–86 B.C.) wrote the first comprehensive historical work (*Shih-chi*), collected calligraphy, painting and ancient bronzes, had their authenticity verified and an exhibition hall (Pi-ko) built. Emperor Yüan-ti (ruled 49–33 B.C.) was one of those rulers who is said to have neglected state affairs over his enthusiasm for collecting. Artists in their own right were Emperor Ming-huang (ruled 705–756) and the second ruler of the Sung dynasty (960–1279), Emperor T'ai-tsung (ruled 976–997). The latter had the entire empire searched for paintings and calligraphies of famous masters. Under Emperor Jen-tsung (ruled 1023–1063) the collection comprised only ten antique bronzes. Emperor Hui-tsung (ruled 1101–1125) had these searched for country-wide. He was a poet, painter and calligrapher as well as a collector of calligraphy and painting. The inventory of paintings, calligraphies and antique bronzes commissioned by him are the oldest systematic records of the Imperial Collection preserved; they are partly annotated with measurements and inscriptions. According to this inventory the collection contained over 7,000 paintings and calligraphies of which less than 100 pieces are extant. With the establishment of the Imperial Painting Academy he promoted contemporary painting and patronized the ceramic production of Ju ware made to his specifications. The Chin Tatars, who overran K'ai-feng in 1127 and carried the emperor off, captured the north of the empire and brought his collection to Peking, where, regardless of this rich tradition, it was temporarily dispersed on the art market or into private hands.

### **The Imperial Collection: Southern Sung to the Ming Dynasties (1127 – 1644)**

Emperor Kao-tsung (ruled 1127–1162) of the Southern Sung ordered a search for the lost collection and acquired the recovered masterpieces; some were returned as gifts. The re-establishment of the Imperial Painting Academy and the Imperial Porcelain Factory promoted the contemporary art scene. Emperor Ning-tsung and his son Li-tsung also entered into history as patrons of the arts. When the Southern Sung surrendered to the Mongols in 1279, the collection was transferred to the Yüan court unimpaired by Emperor Shih-tsu (Kublai Khan, ruled 1260–94) where, not much later, an inventory of (among other artworks) over 200 paintings was registered. Emperor Wen-tsung (ruled 1328–29 and 1330–32), himself a painter and calligrapher, acquired additional works and built the exhibition hall K'uei-chang-ko in 1329. He and his mother-in-law, Princess Sen-ge (ca. 1283–1331), had their scrolls appraised by scholars before they stamped them with their collector's mark.

After the Mongols had been ousted, the Imperial Collection came into the possession of the Ming (1368–1644) whose first ruler, Chu Yüan-chang, had the scrolls documented with a half-seal. His successors appointed painters and craftsmen to the court and had paintings, porcelains, lacquers, cloisonné works and religious art produced in large number and of exquisite quality. The Emperors Hsüan-tsung (ruled 1426–35) and Hsien-tsung (ruled 1465–87) added their paintings. Ambassadors and citizens donated works of art to the throne as a token of gratitude, the throne, in turn, bestowed them as a sign of appreciation. Emperor Hsiao-tsung (ruled 1488–1505) had the collection examined and sometime later in the financial crisis it was reduced by melting bronzes into coins and by emergency sales. The reconstruction and extension of the collection took place under the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911).

### **The Imperial Collection in the Ch'ing Dynasty**

Three great rulers of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911), themselves highly sophisticated artists active as painters and calligraphers, further expanded the Imperial Collection. While Emperor Shun-chih (ruled 1644–61) had acquired predominantly paintings by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, the ruler of the K'ang-hsi period (1662–1722) patronized mostly antique and contemporary art. Between 1680–96 the imperial factories produced traditionally precious objects and innovative novelties made of enamel and glass. Emissaries, especially from France, informed the emperor who developed an appreciation for Western painting, graphic art and clocks. In 1681 the re-opened kilns of Ching-te-chen produced exquisite masterpieces of porcelain art, especially under the rule of his son, Emperor Shih-tsung (ruled 1723–35).

In the Ch'ien-lung period (1736–95) the collection of antique and contemporary works had reached the stock, which is representative of the collection today. Emperor Kao-tsung composed art-critical inscriptions and had antiques reproduced or decorated with his poems. Through acquisitions, gifts, tributes, and commissioned works an enormous inventory, also including books, manuscripts and documents, had accumulated. Among the inventories of the collection prepared in 1744–93, the *Shih-ch'ü pao-chi*, named after his library "Stone Canal Treasure House", is the most complete of its kind extant. The ascetic ruler of the Chia-ch'ing period (1796–1820) had it completed in 1817. After that, the collection grew only through confiscations in connection with punitive measures. Following years of political turbulence, British and French invading troops deported art works into European museums in 1860. By 1900 a large number of works had been destroyed through fire or war activities. After the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1912 the collection was made accessible to the general public in the Palace Museum of the Forbidden City.

### **Cultural-Historical Outline: Neolithic Period to Ch'in Dynasty (ca. 4000—206 v. Chr.)**

The ceramic, ivory, jade and bronze artefacts originating in diverse Neolithic cultures (ca. 4000–ca. 2000 B.C.) are evidence of an early civilization in China; from it evolved the Bronze culture with the archeologically documented Shang dynasty (ca. 1600 – ca. 1100 B.C.). Oracle inscriptions on animal bones testify to a complex social structure based on administrative officials, craftsmen and slaves under the rule of a king and document central political events as well. Polished jade, highly developed bronze castings and glazed earthenware were used for other purposes, including ancestor-worship and funeral rituals. The succeeding Chou dynasty (ca.1100–256 B.C.) adopted the culture and traditions of the Shang. Until they were eventually forced to the east by nomadic tribes, they ruled from the northwestern capital Ch'ang-an (Western Chou, ca. 1100–771 B.C.), where they established a new capital in Lo-yang. Inscriptions, historical records and rich archeological findings bear witness to warfare employing horses and chariots in large army formations, extensive trade relations, a monetary system and political organization. During the Spring and Autumn period (770–481 B.C.) and the Warring States period (481–221 B.C.) different centers competed for political power. The design of bronze vessels, lacquers and textiles expresses a diversity of regional styles. Fundamental written records evolved, such as the “Book of Changes” (*Yi-ching*) and the “Book of Songs” (*Shih-ching*, ca. 600 B.C.). The term “Heavenly Son” represents the king’s claim to universal power (*wang*). Confucius and his students laid down a canon of social morals. Lao-tzu and his successors established the natural philosophy of Taoism. Ch'in Shih-huang-ti (“First Emperor”) tried to solve the problem of central government in the unified Ch'in Empire. Since that time, the title “emperor” (*ti*) was reserved for Chinese rulers.

### **Cultural-Historical Outline: Han to T'ang Dynasties (206 v.Chr.—907 n.Chr.)**

A unified imperial state was consolidated under the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) with the claim of a “Divine Mandate” (*tien-ming*). Extending from Ch'ang-an, the Western Han (206 B.C.–9 A.D.) structured their territorial government down to the provincial level and established a bureaucratic system. On the basis of ancient texts recorded in original seal script (*ku-wen*) that was difficult to read, so-called “reformers” among the intellectuals demanded control over the possession of land and rejected expansion. The “modernists” on the other hand propagated the unlimited possession of land and the expansion of the empire on the basis of copies of ancient records in contemporary script (*chin-wen*). China developed into a great economic power, generated sophisticated art in the interior and produced luxury goods for export. Under the Eastern Han (25–220 A.D.) military defeat, economic decline, court intrigues and rebellion led to the disintegration of power. The empire split up into six Northern and Southern dynasties (220–581), a process which strengthened regional aristocracies as well as artistic communities. The Sui dynasty (581–618) recaptured the central power. The T'ang dynasty (618–907) consolidated the empire through a new system of government and jurisdiction, the extension of trade routes and the institutionalization of the sciences. In 621 the “School for the Preservation of Literature” (*Hung-wen tien*) was established, followed by the “School of the Congregation of the Wise” (*Chi-hsien yüan*) in 725, and the Han-lin Academy in 738. The ruling aristocracy was replaced by professional officials, who became increasingly important for the emperor’s political power. Under Emperor Hsüan-tsung (ruled 712–756) the arts came into full flower again and the cultural sophistication of the capital radiated into the neighboring states. Internal and external warfare, economic mismanagement, pogroms and rebellion caused the collapse of the empire as well as the rule of the Five Dynasties (907–960).

### **Cultural-Historical Outline: The Sung Dynasty (960-1279)**

With the founding of the Sung dynasty (960–1279), General Chao Kuan-yin, posthumously known as Emperor T'ai-tsu, heralded an age of economic prosperity and new spiritual orientation. Court officials were given more power; and the chancellor now became the most powerful man in the empire, next to the emperor. The abolishment of the civil-examination system of the T'ang dynasty allowed new social groups access to political power. The reforms exerted a positive influence on trade and commerce. Developments, such as the use of waterpower for threshing and milling of grain, promoted the agricultural sector; whereas the introduction of the compass furthered exports of porcelain, silk and ivory overseas. The invention of moveable type (1041) facilitated a broad dissemination of scripts and boosted intellectual creation. Scholars developed new approaches to religion and philosophy and drew new and enlightened inspiration from the reception of the traditional Confucian writings. The central topics of the intellectual debate focused on the proper education of the human being and its consequences for the cultivation of personality and the improvement of society as a whole. The teachings of Neo-Confucianism exerted a formative influence on the following centuries. This orientation towards the achievements of antiquity is also reflected in the scientific preoccupation with archeological finds, the collection of antiques and their systematic archiving. The intrusion of bellicose tribes in the north and the threat of the Mongol armies put the court to flight. The Southern Sung dynasty (1127–1279) established its capital in Hang-chou, where an economically and culturally flourishing center thrived until the final subjugation under Mongol rule.

**Cultural-Historical Outline: The Yüan Dynasty (1272—1368) and Buddhism**

In 1206 Genghis Khan united the rivaling Mongol tribes under his rule and began his invasion of China in 1211, fighting against the intruding Jurchen and their Chin dynasty (1115–1234). Stubborn Chinese resistance, campaigns on the Central Asian front and internal struggles for power delayed the conquest until Kublai Khan proclaimed the founding of his Yüan dynasty in 1272. After the Southern Sung dynasty had been conquered, he ascended the Dragon Throne in the new capital of Beijing in 1279. In the Mongol Empire urbanization, waterways and trade routes developed, and with it trade with West Asia and Europe. The growing interest of the West in the Far East, of which Marco Polo had spoken, supported a culturally extroverted climate. New ideas entered the country – for example the Tibetan School of Buddhism to which Kublai Khan had been converted by the Tibetan priest 'Phags-pa as well as scholars, artists, and craftsmen from Central Asia, including Tibetans, Tanguts, Indians and Nepalese. The Mongolian culture exerted little influence. The Mongols rather adopted the Chinese Han culture and summoned renowned scholars and artists to their court. Some of the chosen accepted the call of the foreign rulers; others remained in the region “south of the Yangtse River“ in and around Hang-chou where an active cultural center of the empire had developed since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The art of some of the great, pioneering landscape painters came into flower, as well as the brushwork of the scholars in the context of their individual visions. Pious patrons engaged peripatetic artists and established a new dimension of private endowments in the arts. In the arts and crafts independent concepts and innovative techniques were realized.

**Cultural-Historical Outline: The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)**

Since the collapse of the Mongol rule, rebels and regional rulers competed for political power. Chu Yüan-chang, of poor peasant descent, had conquered South China before he drove the Mongols out of Beijing. He established the Ming dynasty (1368–1424) from his capital Nanking and ruled the new unified empire with autocratic rigidity. Among his successors, only the Emperors Ch'eng-tsu (ruled 1403–1424) and Hsüan-tsung (ruled 1426–1435) showed a particular sense of sophistication and artistry. Since its move into the new capital Peking in 1421, the court began to gain significance as a cultural center. In contrast to the initial attempts to expand international contacts and Admiral Cheng's sea journeys, China's link to world trade was reduced to the export of porcelain and silk into the coastal regions of the West. Beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the court tolerated only a few, isolated foreign emissaries. The cultural achievements of China's own past moved back into the center, resulting in an increasingly isolationist political position. The return to the views of the Sung period saw the unfolding of art, religion and philosophy. Among the intellectuals and academic painters evolved individualistic tendencies. The emergence of an open art market beyond the court greatly encouraged private collecting and connoisseurship, especially in painting, calligraphy and poetry. Due to incompetent economic policy and a series of weak rulers, the influence of intriguing courtiers and eunuchs grew. A catastrophic famine worsened the situation, until in 1644 insurgent rebels captured the capital.

**Cultural-Historical Outline: The Ch'ing Dynasty (1644–1911)**

Taking advantage of the inner turmoil, the Manchus invaded the empire. They wrested the north with the capital Beijing from the native rebels and established their Ch'ing dynasty there. The south collapsed twenty years later after obstinate resistance from the “secret societies” and loyal warlords like Tseng Cheng-ho, who took refuge on the Island of Taiwan. The new rulers followed the example of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The Manchurian elite systematically adopted the Chinese Han culture, seeing themselves as its rightful successors. Many artist and intellectuals reacted by retreating from their social responsibility and cultivating individualism in concepts and expressions. Under the active promotion of the great emperors of the K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung periods (1662–1795) an inspired creativity in all fields of the arts and a prolific activity in scholarly publications developed at court. During a long phase of economic prosperity the empire, which included Mongolia and Tibet, reached its greatest expansion since the Han dynasty (206 B.C.– 220 A.D.). The rural population profited from lowered taxes as well as irrigation and flood control measures. Nevertheless, China closed itself off from the technological and scientific progress of Europe. Foreign ambassadors from all over the world appeared at the court, and emissaries, such as the astrologer Adam Schall von Bell and the painter Giuseppe Castiglione were highly respected. Nonetheless, the empire was weakened through introverted concepts of government under weak rulers and moved towards isolation. The inability to reform, internal revolts and military defeats against intruding foreign powers irrevocably shattered the empire.

### **Prehistoric Jade**

The diversity and quality of the jade finds stemming from prehistoric and ancient China has bequeathed these periods the name “Jade Age”. The traditional generic term “jade” also includes nephrite, of which, strictly speaking, most of the exhibits have been made. The more than 4,000 pieces in the Imperial Collection reflect the prominent place jade has always held in Chinese culture. Most of the pieces date from the late Neolithic to the early Bronze Age (ca. 3000–1600 B.C.) and evolved in the context of the T’ao-ssu and Erh-li-t’ou cultures in the middle region, and the Ch’i-chia culture in the upper region, of the Yellow River. The river basin has rich deposits of all the jade varieties that were considered especially valuable. Pieces deriving from this culture stand out for the quality of the stone, their size and simple beauty.

In the mid-Neolithic period (ca. 4000–3000 B.C.) jade was predominantly used for decorative objects, for which a substantial variety of shapes and carving techniques were developed. Ritual weapons and tools carved from jade appear more frequently in the late Neolithic period (ca. 3000–2000 B.C.). With the emergence of burial cults, jade objects played a role in a complex system of ritual functions whose significance has still not been completely deciphered. Evidence reaching back into the Bronze Age however testifies to the significance of these objects as a central element in burial cults. The richness of colors and decorative shapes bears witness to the high standard of social organization of the societies in which they were made.

Most of the ancient jade carvings were incorporated into the Imperial Collection during the Ch’ing dynasty (1644—1911). A remarkably large number of objects are made of light green, pure white or brownish-white stone, possibly a preference of the imperial collectors.

### **Ritual Bronzes of the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600 – ca. 1100 B.C.)**

Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, is particularly well suited for the production of weapons and vessels because of its high material density and low melting temperature. The technique and formal variety of the bronze castings are testimony to the high level of development of the prehistoric civilizations in northern central China.

The art of cast bronze culminated in the Shang (ca. 1600 – ca. 1100 B.C.) and Chou (ca. 1100–221 B.C.) dynasties. The oldest pieces in the Imperial Collection consist of funerary gifts dating from the early Shang dynasty. Associated with ancestor-worship ceremonies, the objects frequently bear inscriptions revealing the commissioner and the “recipient” of the casting. Believing that the spirits of the departed could intervene in earthly life, the living tried to appease the dead through oblations. Sacrificial offerings of food and drink were presented along with wine containers, bowls for food, cooking vessels, water pitchers, as well as instruments for scooping and pouring, ritual weapons and musical instruments. The objects are richly decorated with zoomorphic motifs, which are integrated into the form of the vessel, seeming to imbue it with magical powers. In the center is a mysterious mask (*t’ao-t’ieh*) combining features of various animal types and bearing a ferocious expression meant to banish evil. The expressive modeling of the relief unites with the extraordinary artistry of the dynamic line engraving.

For some of the many different vessel types there existed ceramic prototypes, such as the vessel with moveable handle *kuei* or the tripod container *ting*, whose significance as a symbol of political rule is reflected in legends stemming from prehistoric myths. The Imperial Collection includes examples of this vessel type dating from the early beginnings to 19<sup>th</sup> century reproductions made of bronze or other materials such as ceramic, wood and jade.

### **Bronzes: Chou to Han Dynasties (ca. 1100 B.C. — 220 A.D.)**

The dynasty of the Western Chou (ca. 1100–771 B.C.) ruled out of Ch’ang-an until nomadic tribes drove them toward Lo-yang where the Eastern Chou (770–256 B.C.) had established their capital. During the Spring and Autumn period (770–481 B.C.) and the Warring States period (481–221 B.C.), the power of the Chou kings, whose highly developed civilization has been documented in many archeological sites, continued to decline. Initially, bronze art showed a continued change of style since the late Shang dynasty, but new vessel forms and elements of style also began to be re-interpreted. The motifs on the surfaces become more varied; frequently birds replaced the former *t’ao-t’ieh*-mask. In the Western Chou dynasty bronze vessels more frequently bear long inscriptions about historical and important social events. Bronze vessels were considered precious possessions, designated to be bequeathed to successive generations. Towards the end of the Chou dynasty abstract surface decorations and techniques of hammering of turquoise, gold and silver began to evolve, indicating a sensitive feeling for dynamic ruling. New and diverse styles in lacquer and textile art developed with the establishment of regional cultural centers. Among the funerary objects are, besides new vessel forms, also mirrors to which an evil-banishing function was attributed. In the Han dynasty inscriptions were added to the mirror decorations, while in the T’ang dynasty motifs of West Asian provenance, such as lions and grapes, were added via the silk route. During the Han dynasty bronze vessels became increasingly profane, achieving a more stylized manner and using a variety of new materials. The artistic language became more unified and corresponded to the function of the object in everyday life.

### Masterpieces of Ceramics

With more than 18.000 pieces, the Imperial Collection represents the largest collection of Chinese ceramics in the world. Ceramic, traditionally known in China as “porcelain” (*tz'u*), has always been counted among the fine arts. Neolithic Chinese cultures were already producing beautifully formed earthenware with expressive painted decoration. Ceramics with white glazes, known as proto-porcelain, appeared in the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600– ca. 1100 B.C.).

Some of the most beautiful pieces in the Imperial Collection date from the Sung dynasty (960–1279) and consist of an earthenware shard fired at high temperature. At the time, the court favored earthenware with monochrome glazes in blue-green hues, especially ware from the Ju kilns, of which only a few original pieces are extant. The Ting kilns produced an elegant, thin-walled ware with a white glaze on shards decorated with engraving or relief. In the south, various wares, including Kuan, Lung-ch'üan and Chien-yang ware, were manufactured, each with its own characteristic qualities. The tactile and structural properties of the glazes – produced by crazing or crystallization during firing, for example – radiate an unsurpassed aesthetic power. During the Yüan dynasty (1279–1398) decorative aesthetics and larger vessel forms began to disseminate. Chün ware with variegated polychrome glazes became especially famous – along with the so-called celadons. With the further development of porcelain and the introduction of cobalt-blue and iron-red, the imperial porcelain factories of Ching-te-chen, already engaged in ceramic production, now began to focus on the production of porcelain. In later times, glazed earthenware acquired a more-or-less popular character.

### An Ingenious Invention: The Art of Chinese Porcelain

Porcelain constitutes the major part of the Imperial Ceramics Collection. The most important innovation of the Yüan dynasty (1272–1368) was the introduction of cobalt blue from west Asia. By applying cobalt blue under the glaze experienced Chinese potters succeeded in producing blue underglaze decorations during firing. Blue-and-white porcelain became one of the great achievements in the history of art in China. Since the early Ming period (1368–1644), the imperial factories in Chien-te-chen supplied the court with porcelain. At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, an unprecedented development of innovative porcelain art unfolded. Beside blue-and-white porcelain, this period is also famed for porcelain with underglaze iron-red and overglaze copper-red decoration, as well as monochrome glazes in red, blue, yellow and brown. Beginning in the Hsüan-te period (1426-1435), polychrome overglaze enamel decoration appears alongside seemingly modern floral décor in geometric designs. Variety and formal perfection develop continuously, whereas the difference in quality between export ware and the production for courtly use is evident.

The collection contains over 10.000 porcelain pieces from the K'ang-hsi- (1662–1722) to the Hsüan-t'ung periods (1909–1911). The most exquisite pieces were produced between 1662 and 1795, for example with *ox-blood red* and *famille verte* glazes in the K'ang-hsi period, imitations of Ju and *kuan* ware from the Sung dynasty in the Yung-cheng period (1723–1735), or pieces decorated with polychrome molten glaze in pastel hues and imitations of lacquer and other materials in the Ch'ien-lung period (1736–1795). Through the transfer of artistic imagery and calligraphic scripts to porcelain, the mutual exchange between the media of artistic expression reaches a new dimension.

### Meaning and Form: Calligraphy in China

From the originally figurative style of the characters, calligraphy evolved as one of the earliest figurative art forms in China. From the earliest oracle inscriptions incised on animal bones to ceremonial inscriptions on ritual bronzes, from early records on bamboo tablets and silk scrolls to texts on paper, calligraphy had evolved into a unique form of artistic expression at the beginning of the first millennium. Over the centuries five calligraphic scripts developed: seal script, clerical script, regular script, cursive script and draft script. They all are closely related to specific techniques of controlled breathing and motor movement of the arm and wrist.

In the Ch'in dynasty (221–206 B.C.) and the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.), the so-called “small seal script” was introduced as the standardized script. The increasing simplification of the written characters evolved into the cursive and draft scripts. By the T'ang dynasty (618–907), stable writing-styles for individual characters had established themselves. The standardized script was adopted as the generally accepted script type throughout the empire. In the Sung dynasty (960–1279) it became fashionable to copy, in the original style, model books with text excerpts of the old masters printed on wood, partly in order to preserve the texts for future generations. Based on the conventional codex of strict formal rules, calligraphy developed increasingly into a medium for individual creative expression. In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) the aspect of artistic freedom gained in significance. Since the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911) and in the course of the general receptiveness to antiquity, scholars began to focus their interest again on the writing styles of the old masters as well as on classical examples of the seal and clerical scripts.

### **Internal and External Nature Reflected in Painting**

Since its very beginning, Chinese painting has focused on the human form. The representation of nature continued its development into the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and the standards for polychrome painting were codified in tracts. Emperor Ming-huang (ruled 704–752) established the principle of “three-fold mastery” for artists who were equally in command of painting, poetry and calligraphy. This period also saw the flowering of Buddhist painting. Since the Sung period (960–1279) delicate small-format nature studies with suggestively empty backgrounds developed alongside monumental landscape paintings in monochrome ink into the dominant genre. Su Shih (1101–1182) established the concept that painting should not be judged by formal criteria, but rather express intellectual content – a direction of “academic painting” that would be dominant for quite some time. The works of the great landscape painters of the Yüan dynasty (1272–1368) became the standard for generations to come. A new range of topics and styles, regional schools and individual concepts developed during the Ming period. Painters in the courtly tradition followed the example of masters of the Sung dynasty, while the school of the “new academic painting” took inspiration from the masters of the Yüan dynasty. With the coming of the Ch’ing dynasty (1644–1911), there emerged at court a spirit of receptiveness chiefly of imitating the old masters and centered on the antique derived from traditional elements of style. Contact with western works of art introduced new media and techniques to the Chinese painters. In the context of a tremendously rich heritage of concepts, topics, styles and techniques, in which even eccentric forms of expressive painting had found a place, Chinese painting paved its way into Modernism.

### **Materials and Plastic Design in the Art of Carving**

In China carving is one of the oldest crafts. Archeological finds indicate that jade and ivory were already being carved in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The oldest carved lacquer objects in the Imperial Collection were produced in the Yüan dynasty (1272–1368). By the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, carving techniques had become very elaborate: by imperial order, lacquer objects with up to 36 layers were being manufactured. The outstanding beauty of the lacquer works of the Ming dynasty, which frequently bear dated inscriptions, rests upon the warm red color, which changes into bright red during the Ch’ing dynasty (1644–1911). It is from this dynasty that most of the lacquer pieces of the Imperial Collection derive.

The art of miniature carving using various materials culminated during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Decorative objects were carved from bamboo, hardwood, ivory and stone, rhinoceros horn, kernels, nutshells and the beaks of rare birds. Among the wealthy bourgeoisie there arose a great demand for all kinds of carved objects, which remained popular throughout the Ch’ing dynasty. Imaginative carvings of exquisite craftsmanship were also treasured by court collectors, and even became the special preference of the ruler. In the Ch’ien-lung period (1736–1795) the art of carving reached its pinnacle due to the support of the court. Parallel to this development, openwork became increasingly popular in porcelain manufacture. Ivory could now be carved as thin as exquisitely delicate lace. In some regions local traditions dating back into the Ming and Ch’ing dynasties developed. The workshops in the region around Nanking and Chia-ting were famous for their exquisite carvings in bamboo, which as a natural material, was especially treasured by scholars.

### **Miniatures and Treasure Boxes**

During the Ming dynasty it became a court fashion to collect rare miniatures, which had always been greatly respected in China, as well as curiosities. Their storage and presentation in inventively designed boxes became an art form in itself. The Imperial Collection contains the largest number of such “treasure boxes” (*tuo-pao ko*). They reached the court as presents of grateful subjects or as tribute from foreign emissaries. Many boxes in the collection were produced in the imperial workshops or by well known independent manufacturers.

It is possible that this courtly fashion evolved from a prototype of miniature cabinet that emerged centuries earlier in a function-related profane context. Sources from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) recount that scholars who traveled through the empire carried small boxes in which they stored various small-sized utensils. In later periods, this function merged with the playful affection for collecting miniatures. Zealous collectors filled these treasure boxes with curiosities, among them rare artefacts or unusual finds from nature. The treasure boxes were made in various shapes from the most diverse materials. Secret drawers and compartments were integrated with great refinement. Sophisticated double functions were invented in order to organize storage and provide an aesthetically pleasing presentation. During the Ch’ing dynasty (1644–1911) these treasure boxes were stored in the residences of the emperors and empresses in the Forbidden City where they became part of the artistic pleasures in the everyday life of the rulers’ families.

**Preview 2003 / 2004**  
*subject to alteration*

**Aztecs** **26.09.2003 – 11.01.2004**

**Little Princes. Portraits of Children from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> collection  
from the Yannick and Ben Jakober Collection** **03.10.2003 – 04.01.2004**

**Children of Migration** **14.11.2003 – 01.02.2004**

**The Kremlin. Divine Glory and Luxury of the Czars  
The Great Collections** **13.02.2004 – 09.05.2004**

The heart of Russia beats in the Kremlin. This modest Moscow fortress from the 12th century has in its varied history not only developed into a magnificent architectural ensemble but has also become a synonym for the Russian state, for orthodox faith and Russian culture. More than 300 highly-prized objects - icon and portrait painting, books, historical maps, liturgical instruments, jewelry and textiles, armor and weapons, as well as valuable gifts presented to the Czars by foreign representatives - will illustrate the historical milestones of this unprecedented ascent. The Kremlin's important building-phases from the early Middle Ages to the 19th century may be virtually experienced by means of a computer-aided-design (CAD) construction: The visitor may accompany a foreign representative on his ceremonial way to an audience with the Czar or may follow a coronation procession through the palaces and churches of the Kremlin.

**Georg Baselitz: Pictures That Turn Your Head**

**A retrospective. Paintings and sculptures from 1959 to 2004** **02.04.2004 – 11.06.2004**

This comprehensive overview presents a representative selection of approximately 130 works of art from all areas of Baselitz' creative production from 1959 to date.

The presentation traces this artist's early, and rarely seen, art work up through his popular hero paintings from the mid-60s, his stripe and early 'upside-down' paintings to his finger paintings dating from the 1970s. These are followed by the orange eaters from the 1980s, his motif paintings, including the large 'Painter Picture', and the large-formatted 'Work One' paintings as well as his consecutive paintings. Included are also his poetical works based on the artist Caspar David Friedrich, which have created a furor ever since they were installed in the Reichstag Berlin in 1999. Recent and never shown works of art dating from 2002 until 2004 round off the retrospective character of the exhibition.

Augmented by sculptures, this exhibition presents Georg Baselitz as an artist whose creative work is not only rich in diversity but also in complexity. His work is also characterized by continuity and consistency in treating a particular motif over a long period of time. As a result, the exhibition emphasizes Georg Baselitz' importance with respect to his deliberate approach to painting and in to his impact on a younger generation of artists. The show is being staged in close cooperation with the artists, ensuring the highest degree of authenticity.

**The Thracians. The Golden Empire of Orpheus** **18.06.2004 – 24.10.2004**

This exhibition sets out to present the genesis of the Thracian people – one of the most ancient Indo-European people in Europe. The exceptional gold and argent treasures of the Thracians, ritually given to Gods or following Kings and Aristocrats onto their road to death, are situated in a large Euro-Asian cultural context ranging from the Neolithic age (6th millennium B. C.) until the Late Roman Empire (2nd century A. D). C. 400 of the most spectacular objects from Bulgarian museums will be presented. The concept is worked out by an international scientific committee headed by Prof. Alexander Fol, the founding director of the Institute of Thracology, Sofia.

### **The Baroque in the Vatican**

#### **Art and Culture in Papal Rome II (1550 - 1630)**

**December 2005**

Since the first successful exhibition 'High Renaissance in the Vatican', staged in 1999, was dedicated to the Vatican palaces, this second exhibition will focus on the Cathedral of St. Peter. Bernini and his most important projects for the Cathedral - such as the Cathedral square grounds, papal tombs and baldachin - will be introduced. Other exceptional artists of the era were commissioned to work on impressive altar paintings for Christianity's mother church. Later mosaic copies, which replaced the originals, were given little notice and may now be 'rediscovered' in Bonn. Around 1600 a new wave of theological and spiritual reflection took place, leading to a revolution in all areas of culture, art and religious life. This exhibition therefore takes a look at the entire cultural diversity existing in Papal Rome during the Baroque. It will present Rome, which at that time was the major city of art, not only by means of its great buildings and pictorial masterpieces, which to a great extent served to glorify the popes and cardinals, but it will also present unique examples from the human sciences, liturgy, music and literature. The incredible developments taking place in the modern sciences will also be focused upon.

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