

WEST VALLEY



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: George Palovich
623/972-0635, ext 25 8:00am—noon
gpalovich@wvam.org

ART MUSEUM

From the Permanent Collection
Asia I: Wood, Wardrobe and Clay
January 12 to March 4, 2007

“Asia I: Wood, Wardrobe and Clay” represents the first of a three part series West Valley Art Museum is putting together from its collection of Asian Ethnic Dress, Art and Artifacts. This exhibition includes examples of dress, ceramics and block prints from Japan, Korea and China. Future parts of the series will feature India, Thailand, Tibet , Cambodia and Vietnam in addition to many island countries.

Drawing heavily on donations from the late Dorothy Knop for the ethnic dress, the exhibition is dedicated to her memory. Although Mrs. Knop collected mostly contemporary versions of traditional costumes, the kimonos on display relate to the styles and designs worn during the Edo period, (1603 - 1867); the same period from which many of the woodcut prints date. Kimonos were worn by the Japanese as far back as 300 AD when they were loose garments made from hemp and were the same style for both men and women. Through the centuries kimonos became a colorful expression of Japanese artistic beauty. Their styling changed only in subtle ways until the influence of Western cultures diminished the role of the kimono to one of ceremonial costume.

A woodblock print is made by carving on the face of a flat piece of wood and printing the raised design left after. The Edo period also saw the rise in popularity of block prints depicting aspects of city life and the Kabuki Theater. One of the prints in the exhibit is by Toyokuni III (Kunisada) depicting a scene from a famous drama about the life and

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exploits of Prince Genji. The prints were taken home as souvenirs or used as an advertising vehicle for popular plays or restaurants. As the prints eventually traveled to Europe they became popular collector's items. During the second World War American GI's brought them home by the box full.

Among the ceramic works shown is a funerary urn from China that is probably the oldest item in the collection. It dates from the 13th century and the Sung Dynasty. Also on display is a large charger plate from the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644) and an unusual Korean vase with "horns".

Before the exhibit closes, several related events will be taking place at the Museum including the large two day Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) show January 19 and 20 (Friday and Saturday). Other events are to be announced.

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Toyokuni III woodblock print Edo period



Funerary Urn Chinese 13th century



Asia I exhibition picture

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