

EDUCATOR GUIDE

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Discipline: Visual Art

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*Vestiges of a Process: Shanghai Garden, by Zhang Jianjun.
Still image from the SPARK story, 2010.*

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

SUBJECT

Shanghai exhibition at The Asian Art Museum

GRADE RANGES

6-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

- Understand the development of personal works of art and their relationship to broader social themes and ideas, abstract concepts, and the history of art.
- Develop visual, written, listening and speaking skills through looking at, creating and talking about visual artworks.
- Develop an expressive visual vocabulary with which to address personal and/or social themes and ideas.
- Develop observational and representational skills by looking at and reproducing images of people, places and things accurately and thoughtfully.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Shanghai at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum is the first large-scale exhibition to feature the cultural productions of the city of Shanghai. Using a wide range of visual artifacts, the exhibition traces the impact that globalization has had on molding the city's dynamic, international character. *Spark* gets a guided tour of this unprecedented exhibit.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing as a group
- Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

- Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently
- Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another
- Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to historical and contemporary artwork from Shanghai
- To provide context for the understanding of Shanghai cultural traditions
- To inspire students to explore Chinese art, culture, and history

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Spark story about the *Shanghai* exhibition at The Asian Art Museum on VHS or DVD, **or** a computer with Internet access, streaming capability, navigation software, video projector, and speakers.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Internet access
- Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
- Pencils, pens, and paper
- Art materials – markers, colored pencils, etc.

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at www.kqed.org/spark/education.

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Shanghai at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum is the first large-scale exhibition to feature the cultural productions of the city of Shanghai. Using a wide range of visual artifacts, the exhibition traces the impact that globalization has had on molding the city's dynamic, international character. *Spark* gets a guided tour of this unprecedented exhibit.

Using visual culture to reflect changes in Shanghai society, the exhibit covers more than 160 years of the city's history, beginning with its early stages as a small provincial center and working its way up to the vibrant, international metropolis of today. *Shanghai* comprises more than 130 works — including trade oil paintings, Art Deco furnishings, film clips, revolutionary ephemera, and contemporary art — pulled mainly from the collections of the Shanghai Museum, the Shanghai History Museum, the Shanghai Art Museum, the Lu Xun Memorial Hall, and the Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Centre.

Co-organized with the Shanghai Museum with assistance from the Shanghai International Culture Association, *Shanghai* is divided into four historical eras: *Beginnings* uses oil paintings and lithographs to represent the early days of Shanghai through to the 1842 British-Chinese Treaty of Nanjing, which designated the city as a Treaty Port; *High Times* features paintings, posters, fashion, film, and furniture to show Shanghai during its Golden Era of the 1920s and 1930s; *Revolution* spotlights a collection of propaganda posters in the early Communist days and traces the city's embrace of modernization and industrialization; and finally, *Shanghai Today* reveals, through a collection of contemporary works, a city that is reclaiming its role as a center of global trade and finance.

Whereas the first three sections of *Shanghai* look back at the city's past, the works in the last section

provocatively consider Shanghai's traditions while looking forward to the future. Several of the works employ installation techniques, expressing themselves in a distinctly contemporary visual language. Liu Jianhua's installation *Can You Tell Me?* features a series of stainless steel books suspended from one wall. Written in five international languages, each book asks questions about Shanghai's prospects. The work asks viewers to consider the possibilities of a city in constant flux as an international financial center. *Vestiges of a Process: Shanghai Garden*, by Zhang Jianjun, reflects on change and the passage of time, combining traditional forms with modern materials. Zhang's work brings together a rubber vase and silicone replicas of Taihu rocks -- traditionally prized for providing city dwellers with a symbolic access to nature -- assembled on a platform of antique bricks rescued from demolished Shanghai houses constructed in the 1920s.

Shanghai runs from February 12 through September 5, 2010, and is the cornerstone of the Bay Area-wide yearlong celebration of San Francisco's illustrious sister city. The celebration features concerts, performances, films, lectures, special events, programs, and exhibitions presented by local arts organizations in honor of the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, to be held May 1 through October 31. The theme of the World Expo is Better City -- Better Life, heralding Shanghai's 21st-century status as a major economic and cultural center. It is expected to generate the largest number of visitors in the history of World Expos.

THE BIG PICTURE

The history of Shanghai reveals a city that for centuries has been an important point of engagement between China and the rest of the world. Situated at the mouth of the Yangtze River, Shanghai came to be

China's foremost center of trade, tourism, and immigration, and has grown to become one of the largest cities in the world.

Shanghai first became a city during the Yuan Dynasty, in 1297. It gained further prominence during the Ming Dynasty, when, in 1554, a city wall was built around it, protecting it from Japanese pirates. In 1602, the Shanghai gained a City God Temple — an honor usually bestowed on cities with much greater political power than Shanghai had at the time — in recognition of its rising economic status. Thanks in part to a 1684 lift of a ban on ocean-going vessels that had been instituted during the Ming Dynasty, Shanghai became the most important seaport in the region during the Qing Dynasty. In 1732, the customs office for Jiangsu province was moved to Shanghai, giving the city exclusive control over the collection of customs for the entire province. Despite still being at the lowest administrative level in the political hierarchy, Shanghai had become the most important port of trade for the entire lower Yangtze.

The 19th century saw radical transformations in Shanghai's international profile as a center for trade and culture. Because of its geographical location, the city was perfectly poised as trade opened with the West. The end of the first Opium War and the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 paved the way for the Treaty of the Bogue (1843) and the Treaty of Wangsia (1844), which allowed foreign nations to establish commerce on Chinese soil. In 1854 the Shanghai Municipal Council was created to handle all the foreign trade settlements.

This era marked the beginnings of Shanghai as a cosmopolitan center, with people from all over the world coming to the city to live and work, many staying for generations. These immigrants called themselves Shanghailanders — creating ex-patriot communities within the city. In the 1920s and 30s there was a wave of immigration of Post-Revolutionary Russia, composed mostly of Russian Jews and “White Russians,” who opposed the Bolsheviks. During the 30s, thanks in part to an influx of Jewish refugees from Europe, Shanghai had become home to over 100,000 foreigners. This era came to be known as the “Golden Age” of Shanghai, its first incarnation as an international, multi-cultural center.

During Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution of the 50s and 60s Shanghai became an industrial center, and maintained a high level of economic productivity, though the impact of the era was crippling to its capital development and infrastructure. The city was only permitted economic reforms in 1991, which led to its current vital role on the international financial stage.

In recent years Shanghai has also become an international art center, with a thriving contemporary art scene. Since the early 90s, an artistic practice that combines traditional Chinese forms with contemporary Western art forms like installation, video, and photo-based work has arisen, completely unprecedented in Chinese history. As Shanghai has re-opened to international influence, artists have embraced contemporary practices in order to express the character of Shanghai culture. Since the late 90s a host of galleries and museums have come into being, showing work by local practitioners that at one point only existed as part of an underground network of practitioners, exhibition spaces and collectors.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination, *2010 Shanghai EXPO Introduction Manual*. Shanghai, 2010.

Clunas, Craig. *Art in China*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Dong, Stella. *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City 1842-1949*. Harper Perennial, 2001.

Knight, Michael. *Shanghai: Art of the City*. Asian Art Museum, 2010.

Pridmore, Jay. *Shanghai: The Architecture of China's Great Urban Center*. Abrams, 2008.

Sullivan, Michael. *The Arts of China*. University of California Press, 2009.

Wasserman, Jeffrey N. *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010*. Routledge, 2009.

Yeh, Wen-hsin. *Shanghai Splendor: A Cultural History, 1843-1949*. University of California Press, 2008.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Asian Art Museum website:

<http://www.asianart.org/>

Art Scene Warehouse, Shanghai:

<http://www.artscenewarehouse.com/>

Contemporary Art, Shanghai - a blog chronicling the contemporary art scene in Shanghai:

<http://contemporaryartshanghai.wordpress.com/>

Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai:

<http://www.mocashanghai.org/index.php>

Official site of the Bay Area's Shanghai celebration:

<http://www.shanghaicelebration.com/>

Official site of World Expo 2010:

<http://en.expo2010.cn/>

Virtual Shanghai: a research and resource platform on the history of Shanghai from the mid-nineteenth century to the present: <http://virtualshanghai.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/>

KQED Forum interview with Asian Art Museum

Director Jay Xu and curator Michael Knight

<http://www.kqed.org/epArchive/R201002181000>

VIDEO RESOURCES

China Downtown: KQED Gallery Crawl video featuring Ming Ren

<http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/gallerycrawl/episode.jsp?essid=24257>

KQED Spark Video featuring painter Li Huayi

<http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=5025>

KQED Spark Video featuring painter Hung Liu

<http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4455>

KQED Spark Video about the Asian Art Museum's Shanghai Exhibit in 2010

<http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4187>

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Asian Art Museum

200 Larkin between Fulton and McAllister
San Francisco

Shanghai runs from February 12th through September 21st, 2010.

<http://www.asianart.org/schooltours.htm>

LIMN Art Gallery

292 Townsend Street, San Francisco

<http://limnartgallery.com/home.html>

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND WORDS AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Chromolithography

A process for making multi-color prints using chemicals.

Classical

Of or relating to art of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which is characterized by an emphasis on balance, clarity, and moderation

Cosmopolitan

Free from local, provincial, or national ideas, assumptions or prejudices; international, multinational, sophisticated.

Cultural Revolution

The period in Chinese history from roughly 1965-1976 when the ruling Communist Party under Mao Tse Tung sought to establish a new social and cultural order. The Communist Party had come to power in 1949, achieving the immediate political goal of the revolution. The entire economy was reorganized under the People's Commune system and all industrial and commercial concerns were nationalized, thus fulfilling the revolution's economic goal. From Mao's point of view, the final step in carrying out the revolution was to transform the Chinese people themselves through a cultural purification process. This would create the semi-mythical 'New Socialist Man' whose whole purpose in life was to work for the collective good and serve the Chinese people rather than pursue individual concerns.

Deco (Art Deco)

A style of architecture, interior design, furniture and jewelry that was popular in the 1930s and characterized by geometric shapes and bold outlines and colors.

Foreground

To position at the forefront, in full view, make of central importance.

Globalization

To become adopted on a world wide scale - international in scope.

Ink wash

Black ink is powerful and unpredictable and can produce delicate gray washes that are very unique. Ink is applied first. The resulting grays are pushed and pulled into smoothness by additional water and brush control.

Installation

The combining of elements into a singular artwork that is only located specifically in one place; an artwork that only exists in the place in which it was/is installed, and is not able to be relocated like a painting or a print.

Landscape

A genre of art dealing with the depiction of natural scenery

Lithograph

(From Greek meaning "to write") This method for printing uses stone (lithographic limestone) or a metal plate with a completely smooth surface. The image is made using chemical process of polymer applied to anodized aluminum plates.

Propaganda

Biased information, ideas, or doctrines propagated for a particular purpose that is often politically motivated

Taihu Rock

One type of "Chinese Scholars' Rocks," which are naturally occurring and found near the Taihu River. Many believe they convey a spiritual nature.

Technique

Method of achieving a purpose or manner of execution, through skill or craft, in painting

Urban

Of the city or town

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Locating Shanghai

Begin by asking students to locate China geographically -- look for Shanghai on the east coast of China at the mouth of the Yangzi River. Project the image below onto a wall in the classroom and point out China's global position as the second-largest economy in the world.



Image from *Frontline/World*

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china401/map.html>

Ask students what they know about Shanghai or what they think they know. Encourage them to think about where their ideas come from. If there are students from Shanghai in the class, invite their responses.

Ensure students appreciate the power of Shanghai, a cosmopolitan city in the world today. Direct them to <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china/facts.html#04> and ask them to read the Facts and Statistics on China and on Shanghai in particular.

For more information on the history of Shanghai, the following website might be useful:

http://web.mit.edu/lipoff/www/hapr/spring02_wto/shanghai.pdf

Suggest that students focus on key themes such as:

- the impact of the West on Shanghai's growth
- the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the status of Shanghai as a model socialist city in the 1950s
- the rapid modernization and transformation of the city today

"No one can deny the dynamism of Shanghai. It is a blend of old and new, East and West, cutting-edge technology and traditional values," says Michael Knight, senior curator of Chinese art at The Asian Art Museum.

Divide the class into four groups and ask students to research the history of the four periods covered in the exhibition; "Beginnings" (1850–1911), "High Times" (1912–1949), "Revolution" (1920–1976), and "Shanghai Today" (1980–present).

Working in their groups, encourage students to construct a timeline highlighting key historical moments during the period they are studying. Invite each group to present their timeline to the whole class and talk about the period they researched as they do so. Amalgamate each group timeline into one timeline that spans the whole period.

Beginnings

The Shanghai school of painting became prominent in the second half of the 19th century and was characterized by a shift from traditional, classical Chinese painting to portraiture and paintings of flowers, trees, fruit, and animals. More colorful and bold themes replaced the traditional landscape. The artwork celebrated the commercial success of the city as a trading center with an international atmosphere which attracted artists worldwide.

Project images of traditional Chinese paintings onto

the wall in the classroom such as these selections from Google images:

<http://www.google.com/images?sa=3&q=traditional+chinese+painting&btnG=Search+images>



Landscape painting by Fang Zhaoling, 1964
Courtesy Asian Art Museum

<http://67.52.109.59/code/emuseum.asp?style=browse¤trecord=9&page=search&profile=objects&searchdesc=chinese%20landscape&quicksearch=chinese%20landscape&newvalues=1&newstyle=single&newcurrentrecord=16>

Discuss these images in terms of defining conventions and compare them to the artwork on display in the first section of the exhibition. The following questions will help to frame the discussion.

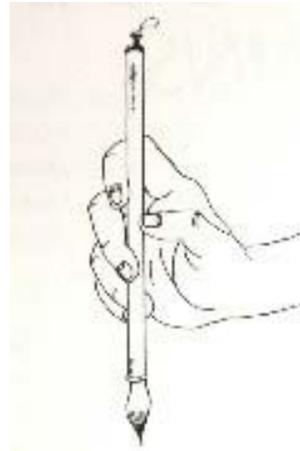
- Describe the historic tradition of Chinese landscape painting in terms of subject matter, compositional structure, medium, brushwork, and style.
- Contrast the paintings exhibited using the same criteria: subject matter, compositional structure, medium, brushwork, and style.
- In what way is the world depicted in these paintings more Westernized? How would they appeal to Western patrons?
- Identify examples of the intermingling of cultures in these paintings.

***SPARKLER** (more activities to extend learning)

For students who are interested in Chinese brushstroke techniques and vocabulary, direct them to the Museum's Web site:

<http://www.asianart.org/pdf/education/Brushstrokes-vocabulary.pdf> and encourage them to experiment themselves with these brush strokes which are distinctive of traditional Chinese painting.

This is not necessarily an activity for the whole class, but may be of interest to a self-selected group. Encourage students to visit The Asian Art Museum in San Francisco to view some of the examples shown on this site which are drawn from the museum's permanent collection, and represent some of the more common techniques.



Art and the Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution 1965-1976, the Peoples Republic of China criticized and banned traditional, Chinese painting because the Communist Party sought to eradicate all vestiges of tradition and re-educate people to make way for the new society and its ideology. Following the lead of the Soviet Union, realist painting was considered the most suitable for the new social order. Worker artists were directed to make images in the manner of Soviet Socialist Realism - an ideology enforced by the Soviet State as the official standard for art and literature that was based on the principle that the arts should glorify the political and social ideals of communism. The paintings had to be idealizations of political leaders and communist ideas.

Visit the Asian Art Museum's Shanghai Gallery online:

<http://www.asianart.org/shanghaigallery/shanghaigallery.html> for an example of a Chinese propaganda poster. Project this image onto a wall in the classroom and ask students to look carefully at the posters and think about the image. Alternatively they can visit the Web site on their own.



Parade for the Founding of the People's Republic of China, Shanghai, 1950. By Hangzhou National Art School, published by Mass Fine Art Publishing House. Chromolithograph on paper. Collection of the Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Centre. From the exhibit website at <http://www.asianart.org/shanghaigallery/shanghaigallery.html>

Discuss these posters in the context of propaganda and the way propaganda in art played a major role in mobilizing support for the Revolution. Ask students to respond to the following questions.

- Describe the images in these posters – what are they trying to say?
- How do they say it? How do they communicate -through color, imagery, text? Are there aesthetic conventions common to all of the posters?
- How are the workers represented?
- What vision of the future do these posters offer?
- How is this imagery propaganda?
- Does all art reflect the values of its time? Give examples of other visual artwork from different time periods, cultures, and artists that functions in a similar way.

Compare the posters of the Cultural Revolution with the art of Classical Chinese landscape painters in terms of intention. Are social values expressed in Classical Chinese landscapes? If so, what are they?

Challenge students to create their own propaganda poster. Brainstorm possible propaganda themes or topics that resonate with students, such as issues related to school or social issues that concern them, such as the environment. Discuss the kind of images, text or slogans that would communicate their concerns.

Assemble materials including 8.5" x 11" sketch paper, pencils, erasers, markers, color pencils, oil crayons, pastels, or paint and have students work in

groups to design their poster. Display the posters on the wall round the classroom and invite the class to critique the work. How well does each poster communicate the message? Is the message clear, persuasive, convincing?

*SPARKLER

The "Revolution" (1920–1976) period covered in the exhibition represents more than the Chinese Cultural Revolution. As an extension activity, challenge students to research the Tai Ping Rebellion (1860's) or the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895).

Exploring Gender Roles in Chinese Art



A Prosperous City That Never Sleeps, 1930s. By Yuan Xiutang (dates unknown). Chromolithograph on paper. Collection of the Shanghai History Museum.

Direct students to the thumbnail panels at <http://www.asianart.org/shanghaigallery/shanghaigallery.html> and project the two images of young women created by artist Yuan Xiutang onto a wall in the classroom.

Ask students to consider these two images from the 1930s and describe carefully what they see. What words come to mind when looking at the prints? Explore with them the initial impact, the composition and color, and then talk about the representation of femininity in these prints. How should we analyze these images? What questions should we ask to gain some insight into gender roles in the 1930s?

Invite students to frame questions that interest them, such as:

- What do these images suggest about the role of women in this period?
- What is the artist showing/saying to us?
- How does the image illustrate the title of the piece?

- Are these images constructed through Western eyes – do they reflect Western notions of Chinese women?
- Were the idealized and even possibly fictitious images of women created by the advertising or film industry?
- What were the real lives like for most women living in Shanghai in the 1930s?

Work together with the class to brainstorm ways in which they can answer these questions. Where should they look?

Next, play the Spark *Shanghai* video and freeze the frame on other images of women from the “High Times” and “Shanghai Today” sections of the exhibition, which appear approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds into the video. How are they different from Yuan Xiutang’s images of women?

Ask students to write 500 words about one of the artworks using the questions above as a framework. As an extension activity, return to this theme and consider how, if at all, this changed post 1949 and again in contemporary Shanghai?

***SPARKLER:**

If students are able to visit the Shanghai exhibit at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, suggest they view the furniture from the deco period between the world wars and compare it to Western deco furniture. How is it different and how is it the same?

The following website will help students to find examples of European deco furniture. Click on Bauhaus and Art Deco & Streamline Moderne. http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Famous-industrial-designers#Art_Deco_.26_Streamline_Moderne_.281925-1950.29

SELECTED RELATED STANDARDS - VISUAL ARTS

Grade 8

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

- 1.1 Use artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art.
- 4.2 Develop a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.
- 4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work.
- 4.4 Develop and apply a set of criteria as individuals or in groups to assess and critique works of art.
- 4.5 Present a reasoned argument about the artistic value of a work of art and respond to the arguments put forward by others within a classroom setting.

Grades 9-12, Proficient

- 1.0 Artistic Perception Impact of Media Choice
- 1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

1.0 Artistic Perception

- 1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.
- 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing
- 4.1 Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art.

Grades 9-12, Advanced

- 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing
- 4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.
- 5.2 Compare and contrast works of art, probing beyond the obvious and identifying psychological content found in the symbols and images.
- 1.0 Artistic Perception
- 6 Describe the use of the elements of art to express mood in one or more of their works of art.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/vpa>.