

# Lessons from Asian Art:

## *A Taste for the Three Perfections*

Middle School Lesson



# Eastern Asia: China, Korea, Japan



SOURCE: <https://www.mapsofworld.com/asia/regions/eastern-asia-map.html>





SOURCE: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/refmaps.html>

# Geography

	CHINA	KOREA	JAPAN	MICHIGAN
<b>SQUARE MILES</b>	3.705 million	38,691 (combined)	145,91	96,71
<b>POPULATION</b>	1.4 billion	North Korea: 25 million South Korea: 51 million	127 million	10 million
<b>MILES OF COASTLINE</b>	9,010	North Korea: 1,550 South Korea: 1,499	18,486	3,288
<b>CLIMATE</b>	Extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north	Temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters, especially in the North	Varies from tropical in south to cool temperate in north	Distinctive summers and winters with a fairly even distribution of precipitation throughout the year



# Geography

	CHINA	KOREA	JAPAN	MICHIGAN
<b>TERRAIN</b>	Mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east	North: mostly hills and mountains with deep, narrow valleys; wide coastal plains in west; South: mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south	Mostly rugged and mountainous	Hilly and rugged in the western parts of the upper peninsula, flatter in the east; hilly in the northern lower peninsula and flatter in the south
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	Iron ore, tin, aluminum, lead, world's largest hydropower potential, arable land	North: iron ore, limestone, graphite, copper, lead, precious metals, hydropower South: graphite, lead, hydropower potential	Fish, timber, and very few mineral resources	Metallic and nonmetallic minerals, fish, forests,
<b>LAND USE</b>	Agricultural land: 55% Forest: 22% Other: 23%	North Korea/South Korea Agricultural: 22%/18% Forest: 46%/64% Other: 32%/18%	Agricultural land: 13% Forest: 69% Other: 19%	Agricultural land: 23% Forest: 47% Other: 30%



# Cultural exchange has always been a vital part of the development of the arts in East Asia.

Diplomatic exchanges between various courts in China, Korea, and Japan have helped to facilitate the spread not only of material goods and technology but also religious beliefs, systems of writing, and artistic endeavors.

- How might cultural exchange impact art?
- Consider the subject matter . . .
- Materials needed . . .
- Techniques used to create art . . .



*Set of Miniature Painting Albums*  
no. 2013.72

# Several formats of art incorporate both writing and pictures.

**HANGING  
SCROLLS**



**SCREENS**



**FANS**



**HANDSCROLLS**



**ALBUM PAGES**



**Japanese  
Hanging Scroll**  
Tosa Mitsuoki's  
*Portrait of Hojo  
Ujinaga*



1

### Chinese Album Pages

Shen Shichong's *Landscapes After Old Masters* series



2



3



[Plum Blossoms](#)  
no. 2000.89

## The Four Treasures of a scholar's desk or artist's studio:

brush, ink stick, ink stone, paper



## The Three Perfections:

calligraphy, poetry, and painting



*Fishing in Summer Shade*  
no. 21.181

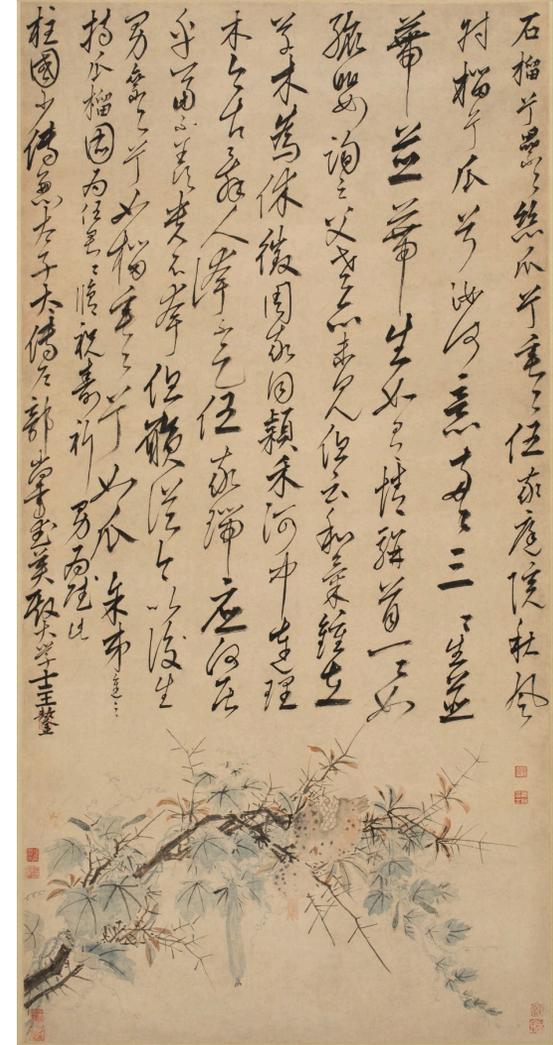
# How would you “read” these works of art?



Dong Qichang's  
*Copy of Zhang Xu's Record of Government Officials on a Stone Wall (detail)*

1

Practice reading a scroll  
using the following interactive resource:  
[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/songdynasty-  
module/index.html](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/songdynasty-module/index.html)



Shen Zhou and Wang Ao's  
*Ode to the Pomegranate and Melon Vine*

2



1

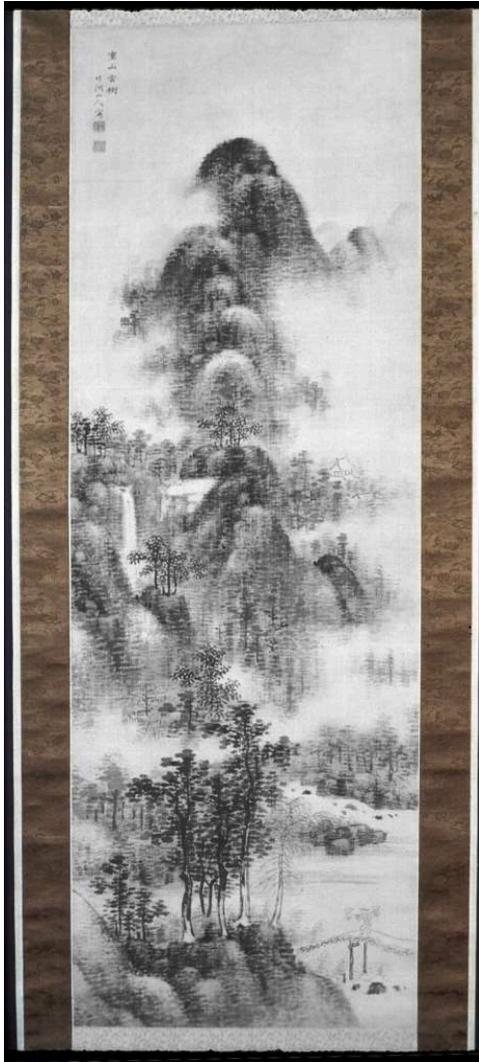
How would you  
“read” these two  
Chinese  
hanging scrolls?



2

12

**How would you “read”  
these two works  
by Japanese artist  
Nakabayashi Chikuto  
who painted  
in the Chinese  
tradition?**



*Misty Landscape*

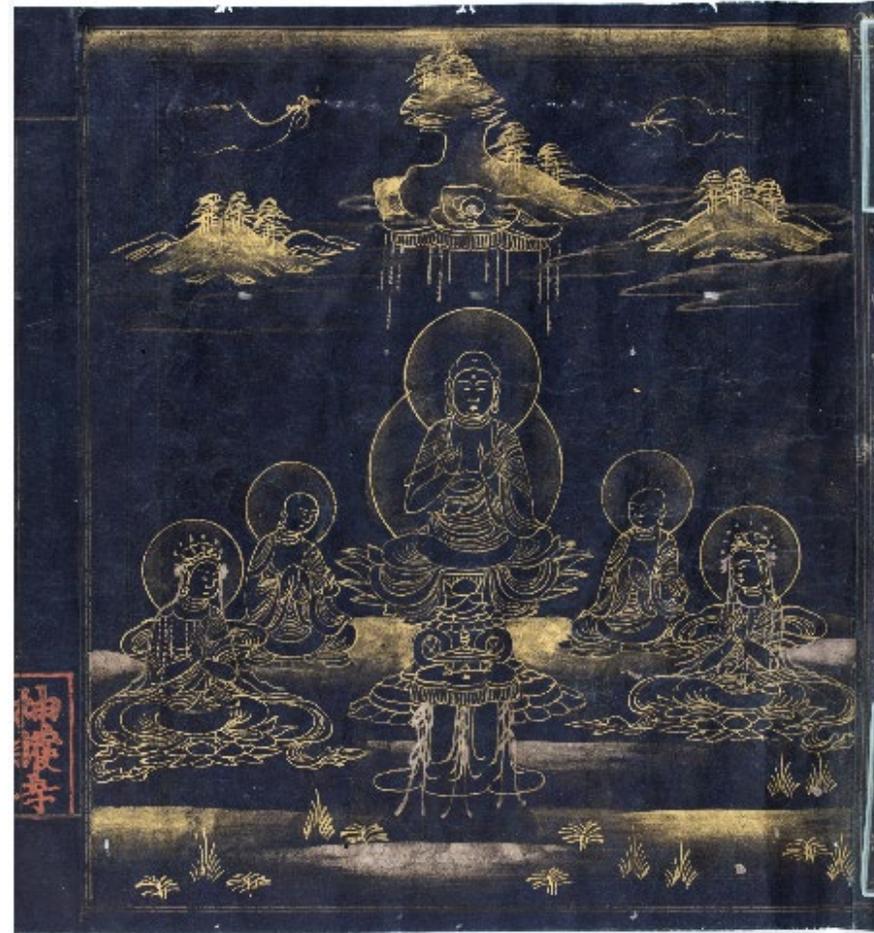
1



2

*Summer Mountains After Rain*

How might Daoist,  
Confucian, or  
Buddhist  
beliefs influence  
art?



*Sutra Scroll (Jingoji Sutra)* (detail)  
no. 61.5

# How do painting and calligraphy provide a record of ongoing exchanges between generations of artists and viewers?

- Role of court painters, academies, royal bureaus
- Talents of master artists
- Importance of education and tradition

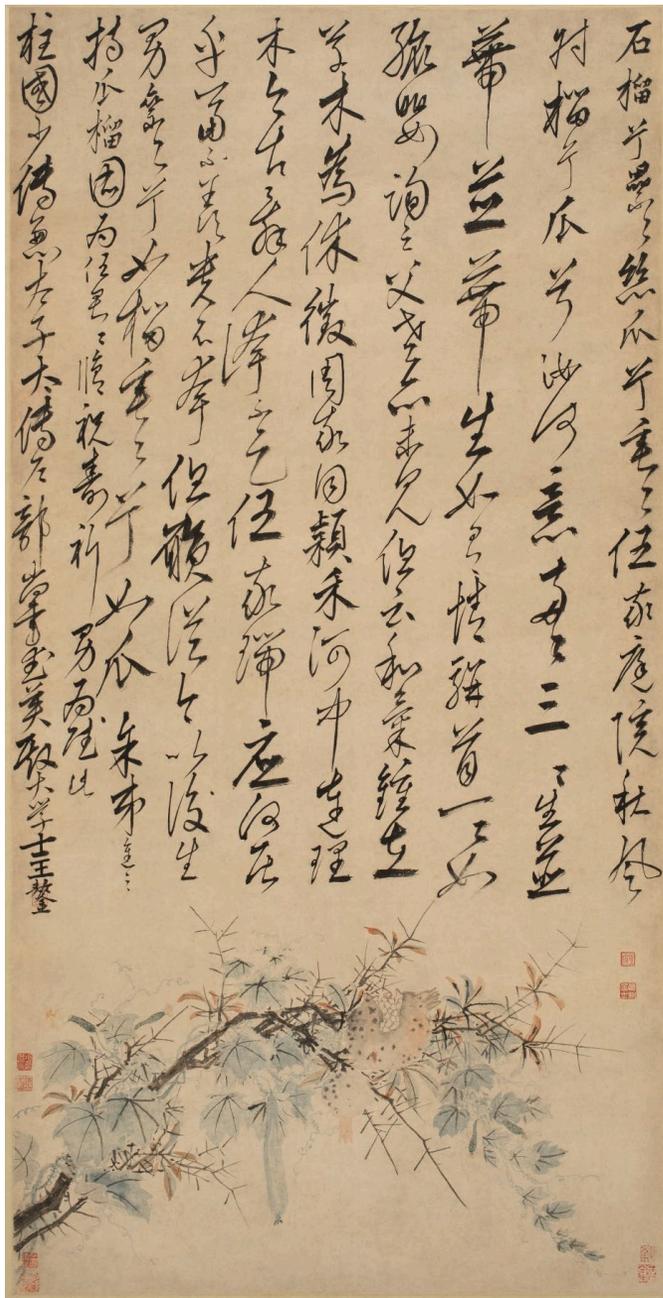


[Dragon Boat Regatta](#)

no. 64.75

# How do painting and calligraphy provide a record of ongoing exchanges between generations of artists and viewers?

*Ode to Pomegranate and Melon Vine* is a work that the painter and calligrapher dedicated to a friend



*Ode to the Pomegranate and Melon Vine*  
no. 40.161

# Do these seals add or distract from the visual qualities of the paintings themselves?

**Script:** sometimes different types are seen on the same scroll

**Colophons:** can be written by the artist, those who admired the work, or those who owned the work. Sometimes they include poems or praise for the work.

**Red seal stamps:** those who owned or contributed to the work leave personal marks



[Dragon Boat Regatta](#) (detail of colophons and seal stamps)  
no. 64.75



1

**Do the  
colophons and  
seals add or  
distract  
from the visual  
qualities of these  
paintings?**



2



# How did technology impact these traditions?

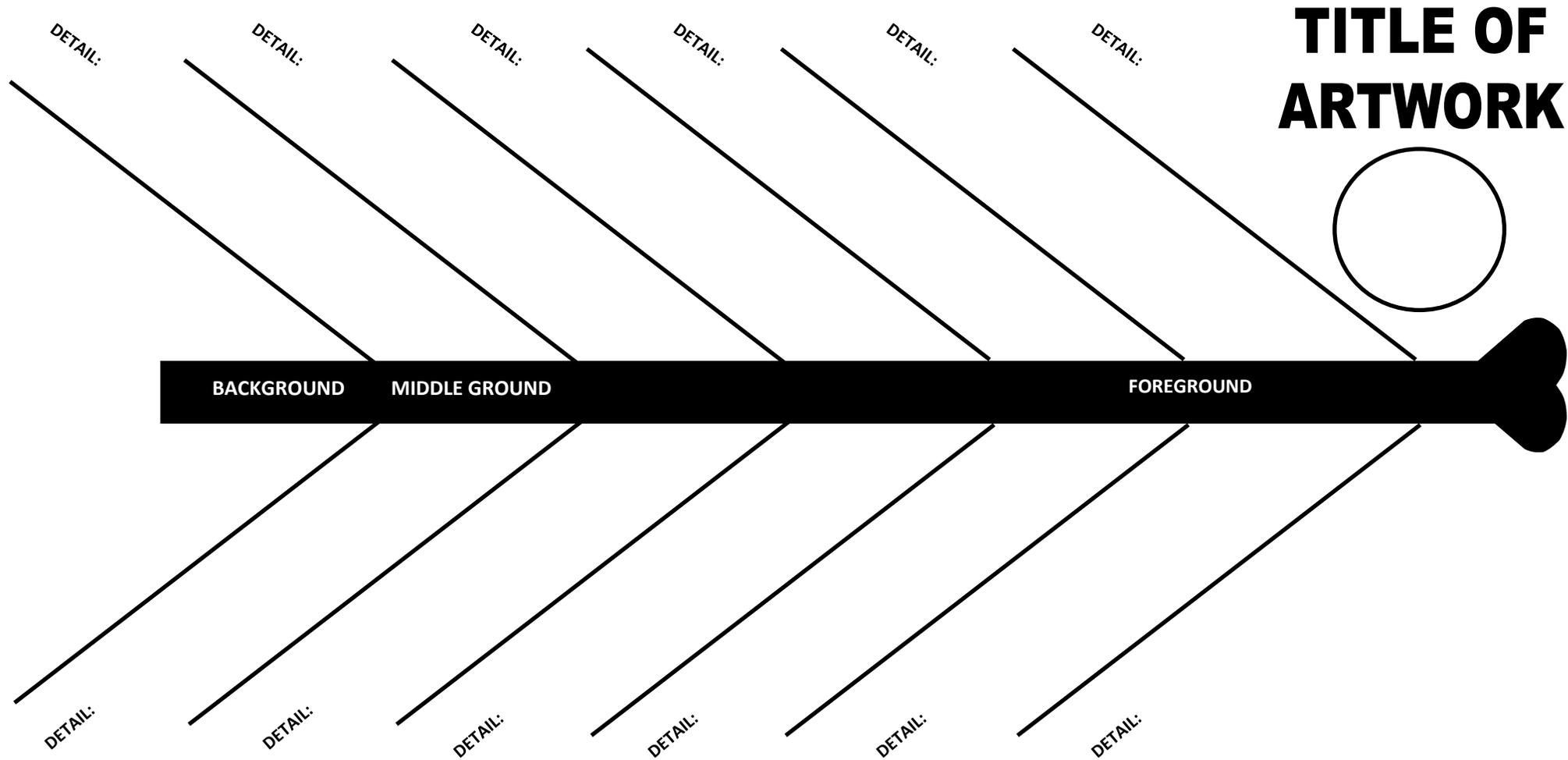
Inventions of Writing  
Silk  
Paper  
Movable Type  
Painting Manuals  
Multi-Woodblock System for  
Printing in Multiple Colors



*Bird on Flowering Plum Branch, from the Album of Calligraphy and Painting from the Ten Bamboo Studio*

no. 37.84

# What can you find in the example you selected?



# Share your fishbone diagrams, identifying examples from the works you observed.

- How do the various formats of paintings differ?
- What are some of the key ingredients you observed in a successful work of art?
- What subject matter did you see in the works you investigated?
- Where in the compositions did you find evidence of imagery, calligraphy, and seals?
- How do these works reflect the people who made them, the people who inspired them, and the people who came after them?
- Is there any specific evidence of key “ingredients” or specific techniques being passed down over time?
- How might this work of art be different if it were to be recreated today?
- What subject matter did you see the most frequently in the works you investigated?
- What ingredients do you feel are most effective in creating a work that will speak to future generations?



How can we compare the sizes of the works of art we examined?

How are the media and possible methods of production for these works similar? In what ways are they different?

What are some of the themes or subject matter in these works?

What are some of the specific items found in these works?



[Ten-Panel Screen with Plants and Verses](#)  
no. 2019.45

***Think about the figures, architecture, geographical features, and weather conditions that you observed***

# How are the styles of these albums and scrolls similar to and different from the paintings you see being created where you live today?

Consider the following . . .

- The physical structure of the pieces
- Organization of text
- Types and details of illustrations
- The materials used in the production of the pieces
- Identification of artists (painters, calligraphers)



*The First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff*  
no. 76.3



[View from the Keyin Pavilion on Baojie Mountain](#)

no. 1993.51

**How does the format of the work (hanging scroll, handscroll, or album) affect your ability to find examples for this activity?**

**How does the size of the work change the way in which you, as the viewer, interacted with the piece?**

**How does the variety of subject matter alter your impression of the composition?**

# Recipe for Success

Using the metaphor of writing a recipe that provides the ingredients and directions for creating a work of art, develop a plan for designing a unique album page or scroll painting.

Title of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Format for the Work (circle one):      Hanging Scroll

Handscroll

Album Page

Ingredients:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Serving Size: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

**DIRECTIONS:** Your goal is to develop a unique recipe for a successful work of art that includes both calligraphy and painting. Consider the subject matter and themes you have seen in the works at the museum, and decide what objects you would like to include in your piece.

Title of Work:

Format for the Work : album page, hanging scroll, or handscroll

Ingredients: list elements/objects/features that would be seen in this piece,  
with specific numbers and sizes

Serving Size: finished size of the artwork

Develop a list of three to five steps explaining how and where to arrange the ingredients in your work. Make sure to describe the objects you are including, providing not only general locations such as foreground, middle ground, background for the placement of each object but also specific details like left/right, in front/behind. Finally, classify your work as either an appetizer, main course, dessert, or just a snack and explain why. Be prepared to defend your recipe as the best tasting in class!



## EXAMPLE:

Title of Work: On a Stroll Home

Format for the Work : Hanging Scroll

Ingredients:

3 large coniferous trees	1 small house
6 smaller deciduous trees	5 boulders
1 mountain peak	3 small shrubs
1 growing stream	3 small stepping stones
1 small person	Calligraphy and seal stamp

Serving Size: 10 cm wide x 30 cm high

1. Begin by placing the mountain peak in the upper left hand corner of the background and start the stream coming out from the base of the mountain, working its way diagonally across the paper to the foreground in the lower right hand corner.
2. Add the three large coniferous trees, one on the right-hand side in the background, another just in front of that tree in the middle ground, and the third in the lower left hand corner in the foreground. Fill background and middle ground areas on both sides of the stream with the six smaller deciduous trees, three on each side of the stream. Add the three small shrubs to fill in negative spaces.
3. Finish the painting by setting off the stream with three dark boulders on the right side and two on the left side, starting in the middle ground with the smallest boulders and placing the largest in the foreground near the end of the stream. Put three small stepping stones mid-way up the stream, and place the small person jumping from one stone to the next, from left to right across the page. Finally, nestle a small house in the background to the right of the stream where the person is heading.
4. Finally, in the sky on the right side, add a few lines about traveling home : "In just a few steps I will be where I am meant to be, at home among the mountains and trees." Finish with a red seal stamp.

Classification: This is a delicious main course because . . .



# Thinking metaphorically, would you classify your work as an appetizer, main course, dessert, or just a snack? Why?



*Fisherman with Poem*  
no. 42.51

**Explain why your work “tastes” the best by writing an argumentative essay and have at least two peers comment on your thoughts.**

# Credit Lines

## Page 6

Japanese. [\*Set of Miniature Painting Albums\*](#), ca.18th–19th century. Albums: ink and watercolor on paper Box: Wood, ink. Each album closed 3 3/16 × 1 3/4 × 11/16 inches, Box 5 11/16 × 3 5/8 × 5 11/6 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, Ancient Art Deaccession Fund, City of Detroit by exchange. 2013.72

## Page 7

1. Nakabayashi Chikuto (Japanese, 1776–1853). [\*Summer Mountains After Rain\*](#), 1776–1853. Ink and paint on paper, Overall (scroll): 92 1/4 × 27 1/4 inches, Painting: 53 3/4 × 18 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, K. T. Keller Fund. 75.57
2. Choe Wu-seok (Korean, 1899–1964). [\*Ten Panel Still Life Painting Screen, early–mid-20th century\*](#). Ink and watercolor on paper, Overall (flat): 71 × 225 inches Installed (31 1/2" angle): 71 × 161 × 11 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, funds from the Charles M. Endicott Memorial Fund. 2016.103
3. Jeong Taekyu (Korean, 19th Century). [\*Plum Blossoms\*](#), 19th century. Ink on paper, 16 1/2 × 30 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence P. Fisher, by exchange. 2000.89
4. Guo Xu, (Chinese, 1456–1532). [\*Fisherman with Poem\*](#), 1456–1532. Overall (scroll): 10 5/16 inches × 17 feet 1 inch × 2 inches, Painting 2 (Fisherman with Poem): 9 × 59 1/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Sarah Bacon Hill Fund. 42.51

5. Chinese. [\*Dragonfly and Plants, from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting\*](#), 18th century. Woodblock print, Ink and color ink on paper, 10 1/2 × 12 7/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Mary R. Coyle Fund. 37.81

## Page 8

1. Tosa Mitsuoki (Japanese, 1617–91; painter) and Takugen Sosho (Japanese, active 1600s; calligrapher). [\*Portrait of Hojo Ujinaga\*](#), 17th century. Ink and color paint on paper, Overall (scroll): 85 3/4 × 28 7/8 inches, Painting: 50 1/16 × 22 3/16 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, Ancient Art Deaccession Fund, gift from Mrs. Byron C. Foy in memory of her father Walter P. Crysler by exchange. 2013.71
2. Shen Shichong, (Chinese, active ca. 1607–40). [\*Painting from an Album of Landscapes After Old Masters\*](#), 1619. Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 × 8 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, New Endowment Fund and Henry Ford II Fund. 78.46.8
3. Shen Shichong, (Chinese, active ca. 1607–40). [\*Painting from an Album of Landscapes After Old Masters\*](#), 1619. Ink and watercolor on paper, 12 × 8 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from the Women's Committee, Friends of Asian Art, Stanley R. and Lynn W. Day; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence P. Fisher by exchange. 1994.42.1

# Credit Lines

## Page 9

Jeong Taekyu (Korean, 19th Century). [Plum Blossoms](#), 19th century. 16 1/2 × 30 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence P. Fisher, by exchange. 2000.89

## Page 10

Wu Wei (attrib.) (Chinese, 1459–1508). [Fishing in Summer Shade](#), 1483. Ink and watercolor on silk, Overall (scroll): 91 1/2 × 51 1/8 in, Painting: 73 1/2 × 40 1/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase. 21.181

## Page 11

1. Dong Qichang (Chinese, 1555–1636). [Copy of Zhang Xu's Record of Government Officials on a Stone Wall \(Langguan bishiji\)](#) (detail), ca. 1608–09. Ink on silk, Overall (scroll): 10 5/8 in × 23 feet 5 7/8 inches × 2 inches, Image (main calligraphy): 10 1/2 × 129 1/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Henry Ford II Fund. 77.63
2. Shen Zhou (Chinese, 1427–1509; painter) and Wang Ao (Chinese, 1450–1524; calligrapher). [Ode to the Pomegranate and Melon Vine](#), ca. 1506–09. Ink and watercolor on paper, Overall (scroll): 110 × 37 inches, Painting with calligraphy: 59 × 29 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb. 40.161

## Page 12

1. Chen Gua (Chinese, active 1547–54). [Bright Lake and Beautiful Mountains](#), 1549. Ink on paper, Overall (scroll): 96 × 21 5/8 inches, Painting: 73 3/4 × 15 inches.

Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Stoddard Fund for Asian Art. 80.2

2. Wang Yuanqi (Chinese, 1642–1715). [Mountain and River Landscape](#), 1711. Ink and watercolor on paper, Painting: 45 5/8 × 22 3/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Benson and Edith Ford Fund. 78.19

## Page 13

1. Nakabayashi Chikuto (Japanese, 1776–1853). [Misty Landscape](#), 1776–1853. Ink and watercolor on silk, Overall (scroll): 76 3/4 × 21 7/8 inches, Painting: 44 1/4 × 14 7/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, K. T. Keller Fund. 75.56
2. Nakabayashi Chikuto (Japanese, 1776–1853). [Summer Mountains After Rain](#), 1776–1853. Ink and watercolor on paper, Overall (scroll): 92 1/4 × 27 1/4 inches, Painting: 53 3/4 × 18 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, K. T. Keller Fund. 75.57



# Credit Lines

## Page 15

Wang Zhenpeng (Chinese, active ca. 1280–1329). [Dragon Boat Regatta](#), 1310–25. Ink on silk, Overall (scroll): 14 1/4 inches × 24 feet 8 3/8 inches, Painting: 14 1/4 × 88 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Walter B. Ford II Fund. 64.75

## Page 16

Shen Zhou (Chinese, 1427–1509; painter) and Wang Ao (Chinese, 1450–1524; calligrapher). [Ode to the Pomegranate and Melon Vine](#), ca. 1506–09. Ink and watercolor on paper, Overall (scroll): 110 × 37 inches, Painting with calligraphy: 59 × 29 3/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb. 40.161

## Page 17

Wang Zhenpeng (Chinese, active ca. 1280–1329). [Dragon Boat Regatta](#) (detail), 1310–25. Ink on silk, Overall (scroll): 14 1/4 inches × 24 feet 8 3/8 inches, Painting: 14 1/4 × 88 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Walter B. Ford II Fund. 64.75

## Page 18

1. Chen Gua (Chinese, active 1547–54). [Bright Lake and Beautiful Mountains](#), 1549. Ink on paper, Overall (scroll): 96 × 21 5/8 inches, Painting: 73 3/4 × 15 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Stoddard Fund for Asian Art. 80.2
2. Wang Yuanqi (Chinese, 1642–1715). [Mountain and River Landscape](#), 1711. Ink and watercolor on paper, Painting: 45 5/8 × 22 3/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Benson and Edith Ford Fund. 78.19

## Page 19

Gao You (Chinese, active ca. 1625; designer). [Bird on Flowering Plum Branch, from the Album of Calligraphy and Painting from the Ten Bamboo Studio](#), ca. 1775–1879. Ink on paper, 9 5/8 × 11 1/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Mary R. Coyle Fund. 37.84



# Credit Lines

## Page 22

Kim Gyujin (Korean, 1868–1933). [\*Ten Panel Screen with Plants and Verses\*](#), 1896. Ink on toned paper, Overall (flat): 73 1/2 × 164 1/2 inches, Installed: 73 1/2 × 134 1/4 × 12 1/4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, DeRoy General Acquisition Fund. 2019.45

## Page 23

Wen Zhengming (Chinese, 1470–1559). [\*The First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff\*](#), 1558. Ink on paper, Painting with calligraphy: 56 5/16 × 13 3/16 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund. 76.3

## Page 24

Wang Wen (Chinese, 1497–1576). [\*View from the Keyin Pavilion on Baojie Mountain\*](#), 1562. Ink on silk; Overall (scroll): 16 inches × 31 feet 6 3/4 inches, Painting: 15 1/2 inches × 19 feet 4 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Fisher by exchange. 1993.51

## Page 28

Guo Xu, (Chinese, 1456–1532). [\*Fisherman with Poem\*](#), 1456–1532. Overall (scroll): 10 5/16 inches × 17 feet 1 inch × 2 inches, Painting 2 (Fisherman with Poem): 9 × 59 1/8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Sarah Bacon Hill Fund. 42.51

## Page 14

Japanese. [\*Sutra Scroll \(Jingoji Sutra\)\*](#) (detail), 1183–85. Gold and silver ink on indigo paper; gilded copper or silver roller, 10 P 123 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, L. A. Young Fund. 61.5



# Thank you

This educational resource was developed by Art teacher Angie Stokes in collaboration with the DIA Education Programs and Curatorial teams.

*Lessons From Asian Art* learning resources are supported by The Freeman Foundation Asian Arts & Culture Educational Funding Initiative.

