

ASIAN ART MUSEUM  
Chong-Moon Lee Center  
For Asian Art & Culture  
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## News



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## Beyond beauty: FLOWER POWER at the Asian Art Museum

**Discover the potent symbolism of delicate flowers, from the courts of China and the gardens of Persia, to the budding Buddhists of 1960s San Francisco.**



San Francisco, December 8, 2016 — The 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love in San Francisco conjures images of hippies frolicking in the park and rallying with daisies in their hair. But the power of flowers to inspire peace and love goes back far more than fifty years and far beyond our city shores. From June 24-Oct. 1, 2017 the Asian Art Museum will present *Flower Power*, an original exhibition of pan-Asian artworks that reveal the hidden histories and multi-layered meanings of florals across cultures.

The exhibition will feature gloriously gilded folding screens, unusually-modern lacquers, rare porcelains, religious sculptures, and contemporary installations of living plants and **sensory-igniting multimedia**. Visitors to *Flower Power* will discover that — more than mere decor — botanical imagery has for centuries helped **communicate ideals from the refined to the revolutionary**.

“The anti-materialist and pacifist spirit of the Summer of Love was really a starting point for developing the exhibition,” says exhibition curator Dany Chan. “*Flower Power* is **arranged thematically to allow audiences to explore** the enduring appeal and surprising stories of six flowers as distinctive as their blooms.” These themes range from the mystical to the worldly, tracing subjects that continue to inspire us:

- The transcendence of the luminous, though swamp-dwelling **LOTUS**;
- The transience of the ephemeral **PLUM** and **CHERRY BLOSSOMS**;
- The pause for reflection demanded by the temperamental **CHRYSANTHEMUM**;
- The sophistication of the highly cultivated, globe-trotting **TULIP** and **ROSE**.

Vase with “hundred flowers” decoration, 1736–1795. China; Jiangxi province. Porcelain. Asian Art Museum, The Avery Brundage Collection, B65P13. Photograph © Asian Art Museum.

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“Ultimately, we were guided as much by the richness of the artworks as by the philosophy behind a Chinese proverb,” explains Chan. “If you have two pennies, spend one on a loaf and one on a flower. The bread will give you life and the flower a reason for living.”

### **Exhibition Publication and Organization**

*Flower Power* will be accompanied by a new, fully illustrated catalogue of Asian Art Museum masterworks (112 pages, \$19.95). The exhibition is organized by the Asian Art Museum. Presentation is made possible with the generous support of The Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang Fund for Excellence in Exhibitions and Presentations.

### **About the Asian Art Museum**

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco's premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures from throughout Asia spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

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