Lessons Plan for *Perfect Imbalance: Exploring Chinese Aesthetics*

INTRODUCTION

It has never been more important for Americans to learn about China. Now one of our nation's leading trading partners, a rising political power on the world stage, and a rising area of study in multicultural education, it is essential that American teachers and students become knowledgeable about China's influence on our world. Art museums with Chinese collections, such as the Peabody Essex Museum, can play a significant role in engaging students with Chinese culture. PEM supports teachers in their efforts by providing access to primary source materials, rich curricular resources, and knowledgeable staff.

In addition to the Yin Yu Tang house and the Chinese export art collection, PEM has organized an exhibition exploring the distinctive aesthetics of Chinese art from the Neolithic to the contemporary. In its examination of three characteristics of Chinese art—images of the cosmos, a reverence for antiquity, and the aesthetics of the brush— this exhibition yields important insights into Chinese artistic, historical, and philosophical traditions. PEM educators and the exhibition curator created the following lesson plans to support your efforts to learn and teach about China, using research-based strategies and multiple learning modes.

These three lessons address different grade levels: in response to the exhibition: elementary, middle, and high school. However, the curriculum is designed to be as flexible as possible by including many components in each lesson plan, enabling you to use presentation and sequence that fits the needs of your students. All three lessons can be adapted or modified for any grade level. All lesson components are aligned with learning standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Visual Arts.

Each lesson includes a brief introduction, suggestions on how to use the *Perfect Imbalance* website, ideas for engaging your students with Chinese art, a brief glossary of terms, and recommended resources, including literature connections.

Here is an example of how two teachers might use the same lesson plan.

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Three days before the museum visit	Reviews basic geometrical concepts by making tangrams with students.	Presents the concept of symmetry to students using *Perfect Imbalance* website and featured objects to demonstrate concept on art objects.
Two days before the visit	Students play with online tangram applet at computer lab.	Students find examples of symmetry in Eyewitness *Ancient China* book.
Day before visit	Students learn about line of symmetry and sketch objects using dilation worksheet.	Students create mobiles that have geometric and compositional symmetry.
Day of visit	Students review expectations at museum in class. Students complete dilation worksheet in pairs.	Students review expectations at museum in class. Students complete symmetry worksheet in pairs.
Day after visit	Students visit *Perfect Imbalance* website.	Students finish mobiles.