

ART IN THE AGE OF COLONIALISM

**FINAL
PROJECT
PROPOSAL**

GROUP 2 - AYESHA, LYDIA, NAOMI, VINCENT

SUMMARY

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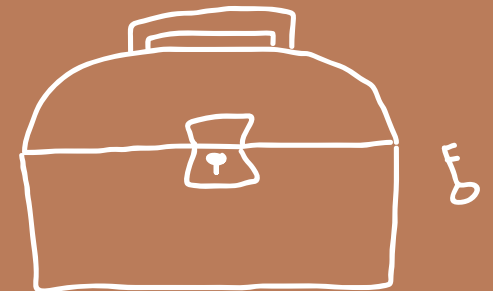
SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM GOALS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TOPIC

Our group has decided to focus on the the significance and history of the different materials that is used to make various storage wares to re-introduce and re-educate rich patrons.

There is profound and highly meticulous work that goes into the making of such cabinets and caskets, not to mention the great importance and rich history from the country that each material brings as well. While they are usually meant to be used a mere storage unit for the wealthy to put their jewelry and precious items, the materials and motifs of which the container is made with could tell a whole story.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audience would be rich patrons, aged 35-60, those with spending power.

Tai tai (太太) is a Chinese colloquial term for an elected leader-wife or head-wife of a multi-wife family; or a wealthy married woman who does not work. It is the same as the Cantonese title for a married woman. It has the same euphemistic value as “lady” in English: sometimes flattery, sometimes subtle insult. (Wikipedia)

The definition of a tai-tai is “A lady of privileged means, with lots of leisure time and money to spend. In Singapore, this usually means the spouses of men whose wives are often seen shopping at luxury boutiques and spend time at expensive cafes and restaurants.



TARGET AUDIENCE

WHY TAI TAIS?

Being of widely disparate backgrounds, often there is little else other than their sartorial splendor to immediately distinguish them as a class. So it is very understandable that they seek to mould their identities on their consumption.

Their choice in furniture henceforth is sometimes based on the value, price and beauty of the product but not necessarily the rich history of the item and the significance of the material used - which is something we deem as important to re-educate.

CHOSEN OBJECTS



Ayesha:

Ivory Casket

Materials:

Ivory,
Silver, Gold Leaf

Sri Lanka,
Early 16th Century



Lydia:

Mother-of-Pearl
casket

Materials:

Mother-of-pearl,
wood, gilded silver
pins and mounts

Gujarat, India
16th Century



Naomi:

Lacquer Cabinet

Materials:

Wood, lacquer

Embellished with
gold, copper and
mother-of-pearl

Japan, late 16th or
early 17th century



Vincent:

Lacquer box with
mother-of-pearl
inlay and basketry
panels

Materials:

Lacquer, mother-
of-pearl inlay

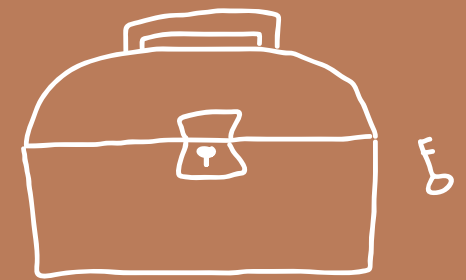
China,
Late Ming dynasty,
late 16th or early
17th century

AIM OF GUIDE

Therefore, our aim is to pique the interests of Tai Tais at the museum and draw a connection between them and the objects, and allow for them to better understand and identify what exactly they are purchasing when they purchase expensive furniture items.

For this, we have decided to select a similar home decor – which is a cabinet or casket – of different materials to pique their interests as it corresponds very well into the past where the wives of rich wealthy men or queens of the royal families use these boxes to store various precious items as well.

We aim to allow for them to learn more about the rich history and significance that goes into these boxes.

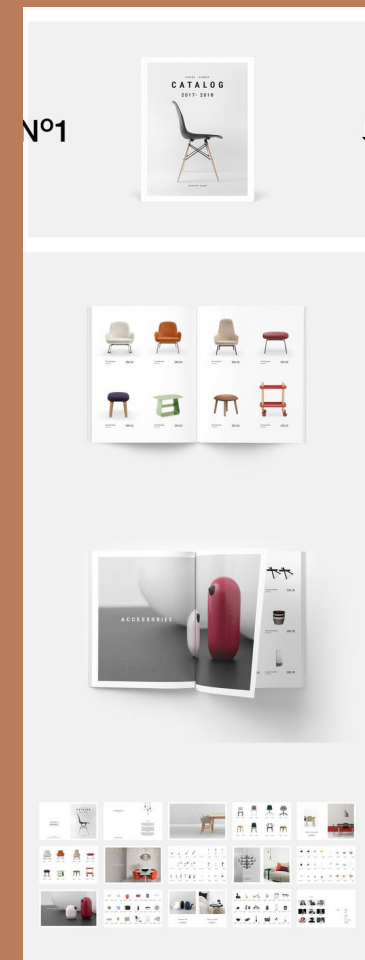


FORMAT

The format chosen is a physical printed booklet guide.

The chosen objects would be formatted in the way that would allow for the introduction of materials that the different countries specialise in, and also it would allow for the guide to play up the strengths of the materials. Each object linked to a specific country's material - culture/heritage/motifs

We would address why the material should be appealing to the user? - Talk about impact, significance, strengths and durability.



AYESHA'S GOALS

Short Term Goals:

Visual and Contextual Analysis of Ivory Casket; Refining the textual content and subject matter for the Museum booklet guide

Long Term Goals:

Drawing Tai-Tai's to appreciate the material of Ivory, Silver, Gold Leaf, the intricate carvings and textures of the casket, the symbolism of foliage and animal motifs like geese, makaras, lions, mongoose, cobras, etc and finally the role or purpose of the casket in storing reliquary/jewelry. I would also assist in the streamlining of textual matter that would go into the booklet guide.

Side goals:

Understanding the History and Significance of Ivory as a material in Sri Lanka and in the West. Gaining clarity on the history of the trading colony in Sri Lanka in 1505, the mentality of the Portuguese, the method of production and thought process of Local artists, the rationale behind producing caskets in particular, and the culmination of western and asian art

LYDIA'S GOALS

Short Term Goals:

Understanding the history and cultural symbolism behind the use of mother-of-pearl as a main material for the making of the casket, the origins and the appeal of the use of mother-of-pearl in such objects. Insight to be gained upon researching the techniques used with mother-of-pearl, and how objects similar to the casket are made with it. Emphasis will be placed with regards to analysis on the functions of the casket.

Long Term Goals:

Further analysis on the use of mother-of-pearl in the context of noble/royal families, and research on what type of items were stored in the casket and similar objects (valuables, jewelry, reliquaries for religious items). Exploring the possible thought processes behind the use of mother-of-pearl by artisans and craftsmen, or the influences and motivations behind the commissioner who requested for mother-of-pearl objects to be made. With the information gained, connections will be made between the functions of the casket and similar objects of the modern era. Drawing such connections will in return, allow the targeted audience to understand and have a feel for the casket.

I would illustrate all the materials and cartoons needed for the booklet guide.

NAOMI'S GOALS

Short Term Goals:

Identify the material make-up of lacquer – what exactly it is, when was it discovered, where it was commonly found and used, who discovered the method of use and brought it to fame, and finally how it is being used in the past and also presently. Compare it to other countries that made and produced lacquer, and identify the differences and also highlight the other materials commonly used together with lacquer such as wood, gold and mother-of-pearl.

Long Term Goals:

Uncover the significance and history of Japan's prized material of lacquer. Delve into the different techniques, time periods and also regions that made lacquer in Japan and compare them altogether. Explore the relationships between the material and the hidden meanings of using it. Understand the importance of lacquer in the Japanese trade back in the day and also the diplomatic relations with the countries that traded with them such as Portugal and the Dutch.

I would also help in the Visual and Layout Design of the booklet guide.

VINCENT'S GOALS

Short Term Goals:

Understand the formal elements including the material, pattern, shape, composition and so on. Analyze the decoration on the lacquer, any significance/meaning it carried at that period. Emphasis the material and the purpose as well as the function of the basket. Discover the location that the artefact was made, and where did it give/contribute/sell to. go to the detail like the color of the motif, the decoration the rims of the bottom, and the pattern on the rectangular field on the lid. Analyze these motifs and its significance in that period. Analyze if there is anything that our target audience can relate to it.

Long Term Goals:

Analyse the pattern, color and material chosen, how the motif was inscripted/ painted on, what technique was that. By that may derive the period of time and the location for both artefact. Analyse the motif, is that traditional chinese pattern? What did it represent? Discover the significance of the time that the artefact was made, and would it reflect the culture of that time or the location. Who were the target audience at that time, or who was it contributed to? the royalty, common people, local people or the foreigner? Could it reflect the cultural context of that location in that period? In what sense? Politically, economically or socially?

Assistance in the compiling and printing of the booklet guide.