

**MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES**

**TERRACOTTA  
WARRIORS  
GUARDIANS OF IMMORTALITY**

**CAI GUO-QIANG  
THE TRANSIENT LANDSCAPE**

**ARTWORK LABELS**

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## ***Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality***

Epic accounts of China's ruling dynasties, philosophies, inventions and social customs during ancient times have been passed down through the centuries in the writings of philosophers, imperial scribes and military strategists. However, it was not until archaeologists in the twentieth century unearthed evidence – masterful bronzes, delicately crafted jades and boldly decorated ceramics – that the advanced levels of civilisation, artistry and refined aesthetics that existed in the past were more fully revealed. This provided a greater understanding of the rituals, social customs, preparation for the afterlife and quest for immortality that remained central to Chinese culture.

The greatest discovery of all was in 1974, when local farmers digging an irrigation well in Lintong district, Xi'an, unearthed fragments of the terracotta warriors. With this astounding discovery the legends of ancient China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, were confirmed. In their size and number, the terracotta warriors are unique in world history and signify Qin Shihuang's quest for immortality, his affiliation with China's mythical rulers, and his supreme imperial mandate as the son of heaven.

## ***Cai Guo-Qiang: The Transient Landscape***

Cai Guo-Qiang's multidisciplinary practice is grounded in contemporary social issues and a lifelong interest in Eastern philosophy as a means to investigate our relationship with the universe. His experimentation with the Chinese invention of gunpowder began at an early age in his hometown of Quanzhou, Fujian province. Moving to Japan in 1986 and based in New York since 1995, Cai has continued to push the boundaries of his practice and the limits of his materials, becoming one of today's most recognised contemporary artists.

Here, a new body of work – created by exposing traditional Chinese materials such as paper, silk and porcelain to gunpowder explosions during a series of live ignitions – references the history, places and culture that served as the backdrop to the reign of China's first emperor Qin Shihuang, and the creation of the terracotta warriors. Drawing on his understanding of ancient Chinese culture and his belief that a dialogue with tradition and history can invigorate contemporary art, Cai has created a breathtaking environment for the presentation of his work and the exhibition *Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality*.

‘The two exhibitions act as rivers of time separated by two millennia, each coursing at their individual speeds across the same spaces. The ancient and the contemporary – pulling, corresponding and complementing each other. *The Transient Landscape* explores the invisible world. I want to evoke the sombre tone of the mountains, cypress trees and peonies to allude to the tragedies of life, of a nation and an empire.’

**CAI GUO-QIANG**

“两个展览像是相隔2000多年的两条时间河流，在一个个空间同时各自展开；古代和当代，二股能量的张力交错牵拉，相吸相斥。我的作品更多讨论看不见的世界——山峦、柏树、花草的暗黑基调，映射生命、民族、帝国的悲剧色彩。”

**蔡国强**

## Ritual objects and ancestral treasures

Before the establishment of a nationally unified state by Emperor Qin Shihuang in 221 BCE, China had a long history of opposing kingdoms, self-governing territories and dynasties whose customs, beliefs and refined artisanship influenced the Qin dynasty and its creativity. Family prestige, social harmony and a belief in immortality and the afterlife were central to the creation of auspicious and ceremonial objects used for burial rituals, ancestor worship and encouraging good fortune. This gallery displays some of the most exquisitely crafted of these objects, produced from the beginning of the Zhou dynasty to the end of the Han dynasty (1046 BCE – 220 CE).

Jade was believed to possess magical powers that could maintain the human life force of air or breath after death, and beautifully carved jade objects would often accompany bodies in burial to help purify the deceased's soul for its journey to the afterlife. Bronze objects with decorative motifs and inscriptions were created to represent a symbolic connection to China's earliest dynasties and a 'mandate from heaven' to rule. Gold is thought to have been introduced to China from Central Asia and was mostly used for decoration on clasps, buckles and ceremonial objects.

# Door ring holder in the form of a mythological beast, *Pushou*

## 四神兽面纹玉铺首

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
jade

Maoling Museum, Xingping

0640

This impressive door ring holder (*pushou*) in the form of a *taotie* mythological beast mask would support a large ring from its lower section and be positioned in the centre of doors or gateways. Its size is evidence of the grandeur of the palace or mausoleum building it once adorned. Its fierce appearance, with bulging eyes, was believed to ward off evil spirits, and its curling motifs ingeniously incorporate the four protective spirits in each corner. The four holy creatures are (clockwise from top left) the white tiger, the azure dragon, the vermilion bird and the black tortoise.

# Sword with inlaid hilt

## 金柄铁剑

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
iron, gold, turquoise

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:1

This superbly decorated sword hilt is one of the best examples of ancient Chinese gold and turquoise craftsmanship in existence. It was excavated 180 kilometres west of Xi'an at Yimen village, in the heartland of the early Qin empire. Its intricate pattern is described by the Chinese word combining the mythical mountain demon or rain god (*kui*) with mythical horned dragons (*long*). Auspicious *kuilong* patterns are commonly found on bronzes and jades, establishing a link to ancient Chinese mythology, and have a symbolic connection to heaven and the natural elements. This highly decorative piece would have been produced for ceremonial use and not as a weapon.

# Tiger mother with cub

## 衔子铜虎

Western Zhou dynasty, 1046–771 BCE  
bronze

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

07648/IA11.584

*Tiger mother with cub* is one of the oldest pieces in this exhibition. Tigers were considered exotic animals with the power to protect and ensure good fortune. Their representation in three-dimensional form is extremely rare, and a piece like this was most likely produced for presentation to deities. The geometric design displays a refined level of bronze casting, but perhaps more significant is the expression of emotion – something that began to appear in Chinese art during this period. In this case, maternal love is sensitively conveyed through the representation of a mother tiger nurturing her cub.

## For kids

Tiger mothers sometimes carry their cubs (babies) in their mouths to transport them over long distances, or to keep them safe when danger might be approaching. Even though big cats like tigers and lions have very strong jaws and sharp teeth, they can hold their cubs very gently by the scruff of their neck without hurting them. Domestic cats often carry their kittens like this, too.

Can you think of any unusual ways native Australian animals carry their babies?



Left to right, top to bottom

## Pair of deer

### 铜鹿饰件

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Yan'an City Cultural Relics  
Research Institute, Yan'an

214-2; 214-3

## Lidded ritual vessel, *Ding*

### 三足带盖小鼎

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总1003

## Lidded ritual vessel with animals, *Ding*

### 八兽带盖小鼎

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总1002

# Lidded vessel with inscriptions, *Ding* 成山铜鼎

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0080

# Lidded vessel, *Ding* 带盖铜鼎

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总0710 D198

Legged vessels (*ding*) for containing meat, and flat-based tureens (*gui*) for grain were used to prepare food for ancestor worship rituals. First produced during the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 – 1046 BCE) and used through to the Han dynasty (207 BCE – 220 CE), such vessels often display inscriptions that established symbolic connections to China's earliest dynasties and a rightful imperial inheritance to rule through a mandate from heaven. In general, earlier pieces from the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) and Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE) display relief and openwork motifs, and later examples become simpler, with many made of earthenware ceramics with lacquer and painted decoration.

Top to bottom

## **Kettle with phoenix motif and bird decoration, *He*** **凤鸟纹铜盃**

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Longxian County Museum, Baoji

86LBM5:13 ((10L3347))

## **Pouring bowl, *Yi*** **铜匜**

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0321

## **Basin, *Pan*** **双耳铜盘**

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0030

This kettle and basin display magnificent geometric designs that were developed during the Shang (c. 1600 – 1046 BCE) and Zhou (1046–256 BCE) dynasties and continued to be produced throughout the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE). The kettle is adorned with a three-dimensional phoenix on top and a relief design of a stylised bird among foliage on its side. The basin displays an intricate *kuilong* dragon pattern, derived from the curling dragon motifs. These two pieces are not a set, but kettles and basins of this style were used for handwashing in preparation for rituals and offerings. Later, simple, undecorated pouring bowls were used for the same purpose.

Top to bottom

## Flask with hunting scene, *Hu* 狩猎纹铜壶

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0319

## Lidded tureen, *Gui* 错金银青铜簋

Warring States period 475–221 BCE  
bronze, gold and silver inlay

Mizhi County Museum, Yulin

0001

This lidded tureen is a pre-eminent example of a bronze ritual vessel decorated with inlay work. During the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) bold, geometric, stylised *kuilong* dragon patterns, which had featured on ritual vessels since the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 – 1046 BCE), were gradually replaced with delicately applied gold or silver inlay decoration. The technique involved engraving a fine line into the bronze surface and then inserting a gold or silver thread. This rare and exquisitely decorated example features four curling serpents on the lid and ring handles (*pushou*) in the form of *taotie* masks on either side.

# Bell of Duke Wu of Qin, *Qin gong bo* 秦公铸（带挂钩）

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

02756/IA5.5

Sets of bells of descending sizes created musical notes and were used to accompany rituals and ceremonies. Their beautiful resounding sounds were visually enhanced with intricate geometric designs and openwork. This example was produced by the tenth Qin ruler, Duke Wu (reigned 697–678 BCE), an ancestor of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang. The possession and ceremonial use of such ritual objects established a symbolic connection between dynastic generations and asserted a divine right to rule. On this bell, a 135-character inscription begins, 'The Duke of Qin states: my foremost ancestor has received the heavenly mandate, was rewarded with a residence and received his state'.

## For kids

This giant bell was used to make music during special ceremonies in Ancient China. Bells often came in big sets of different sizes. When hit with a wooden hammer, big bells like this one made deep notes that lasted a long time, and smaller bells made higher, shorter notes.

Can you make different notes on any musical instruments?

Top to bottom

## Lidded four-sided flask, *Fanghu*

### 四铺首衔环带盖方壶

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gtA131

## Winged spirit, escort of souls of the dead

### 铜羽人

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
bronze

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

G82

Feathered men were identified in China as immortals or transcendent beings who existed beyond space and time and were believed to live amid sacred mountains in a numinous realm removed from the world of humankind. The belief in immortals and their relation to longevity began in the Qin (221 – 207 BCE) dynasty and proliferated during the Han (207 BCE – 220 CE) dynasty. Incised lines on this spirit's wings and skirt suggest fine feathers and his outstretched arms and notch at the front indicate he may have served a functional purpose by holding a ritual implement, support or candle.

Top to bottom, left to right

## **Belt plaque**

### **金牌饰**

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
gold, jade, agate, turquoise

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

005421

In contrast to jade, which symbolised wealth and spiritual purity, and bronze, used to produce ritual objects, gold was used to a lesser extent and served a primarily decorative purpose. The tradition of using gold for personal adornment is believed to have come to China from Central Asia, and gold became a favoured material from the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE) onwards. Objects that represented personal status, such as belt hooks, belt plaques and personal adornments, were usually cast in solid gold and often featured stylised geometric dragon motifs and inlaid semiprecious stones like turquoise and agate.

## **Belt hook with dragons**

### **五龙金饰**

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
gold

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0373

...continued overleaf



# Snake-shaped belt hook

## 盘蛇形金带钩

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
gold

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:23

# Ornament with zoomorphic design

## 兽面金方泡

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
gold, inlaid stones

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:27

Left to right, top to bottom

## Male figure

### 玉人 (男)

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE

jade

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gY199

Jade was perceived as having the power to prevent the body from decaying, thus guaranteeing eternal life. Circular disks, pendants, figures and amulets were placed with the deceased body to ensure a safe passage to the afterlife. Toggles in the shape of pigs, symbolising prosperity, would be placed in the hands or under armpits, and jade cicadas symbolising rebirth would be placed in the mouth as a form of guard preventing the breath of life (*qi*) exiting the body. The two jade human figures are thought to be related to ancestor worship, where representations of the departed leading male and female of a family were honoured.

## Female figure

### 玉人 (女)

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE

jade

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gY201

...continued overleaf

# Cicada funerary amulet

玉蝉

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
jade

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gy254

# Pig funerary amulet

玉猪

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
jade

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gy230

# Owl-shaped pendant

鸱形玉佩

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
jade

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总1010

# Rectangular pendant

## 璋形玉饰

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
jade

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:124

# Arc-shaped pendant, *Huang*

## 玉璜

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
jade

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:145

# Pendant with panhui stylised serpent

## motif, *Xi*

## 蟠虺纹玉佩

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
jade

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:171

# Horn-shaped pendant, *Xi*

## 玉觿

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
jade

Baoji City Archaeological Team, Baoji

BYM2:143

Left to right, top to bottom

## Ritual disk, *Bi*

### 谷纹玉璧

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
jade

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

9641/IB1.106

## Ritual disk, *Bi*

### 谷纹玉璧

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
jade

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

9656/IB1.121

Ritual disks (*bi*) representing heaven originated during Neolithic times and remained some of the most common burial adornments through to the Qin (221–207 BCE) and Han (207 BCE – 220 CE) dynasties. Their ritual significance is born from their positioning on the chest, above the head, and encircling the bodies of the entombed. Placed alongside other carved jade objects, they are understood to have played an important role in purifying the soul of the deceased for its journey to the afterlife. Interestingly, even to this day, *bi* disks are considered to be auspicious objects associated with wealth, longevity and good health, and are still produced for home decoration.

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# Dragon-shaped pendant

## 玉龙佩

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
jade

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

9643/IB1.108

# Dragon and phoenix-shaped pendant

## 玉龙凤佩

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
jade

Baoji Bronze Museum, Baoji

IB1.109

These jade pendants in the form of curling dragons are decorated with tiny spirals, similar to those found on ritual *bi* disks, possibly representing natural elements like clouds and wind. The arch-shaped piece displays a dragon's head on the right, one claw in the centre and another claw and tail to the left. On the other piece, the dragon's head with a horn are to the left, spiralling tail in the centre, and the phoenix head with beak and head feather is on the right. The dragon and the phoenix were regarded as a duality representing the compatibility and power of yin and yang.

# Body adornment, *Pei*

## 组玉佩

Western Zhou dynasty, 1046–771 BCE

jade, agate

Zhouyuan Museum, Baoji

1587-1618

This elaborate body adornment set (*pei*) would have been worn around the neck or suspended from the waist. It comprises more than 200 intricately carved jade amulets featuring geometric designs and dragon motifs, which are separated by agate beads. It is thought that the rattling noise made during its movement had the power to dispel evil.

## ***Flow (Cypress)***

Cypress trees have been known to live for centuries, remaining evergreen throughout the cold and dark of winter. Since the time of Confucius, during the fifth and sixth centuries BCE, the cypress has symbolised longevity, resilience and moral integrity in Chinese art and literature, and is often likened to a person of stoic character who remains steadfast and unyielding in the face of difficulty. In traditional Chinese painting, the composition and spatial arrangement of cypress and pine trees is believed to provide insight into the artist's character.

According to legend, the cypress forest surrounding the mausoleum of the legendary Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) has endured since his death at the age of 113 during the middle of the third millennium BCE. Credited with aspiring to a centralised state and the advancement of innovations including traditional medicine, the lunar calendar and other important aspects of Chinese culture, the Yellow Emperor was idolised by later rulers. Qin Shihuang, China's first unifying emperor and the creator of the terracotta warriors, claimed to be his descendant, taking part of his name (*huang*; yellow) to establish the legitimacy to conquer and rule his vast new empire.



**CAI Guo-Qiang**

**蔡国强**

born Quanzhou 1957, lives in New York

**Flow (Cypress)**

**柏风**

2019

gunpowder on Japanese hemp paper

Realised in Melbourne, commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria

## Imperial and daily life of the Qin dynasty

The family of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, claimed to be descendants of Zhuanxu, a grandson of the legendary 'Yellow Emperor' Huangdi, who purportedly reigned during the third millennium BCE. In reality, the Qin traced its origins to the west of Shaanxi province, north-west China and a family of semi-nomadic horse breeders that gained power during the eleventh century BCE. During the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE) they consolidated their territories through diplomatic and military successes, then, during the turbulent Warring States period (475–221 BCE), one by one they conquered the six rival states of Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan and Qi. This led to the Qin establishing China's first unified kingdom in 221 BCE, stretching north to south from the Great Wall to the southern coast, and west to east from the grasslands of Gansu and Qinghai to the Pacific coast.

The first emperor's grand vision for a powerful and eternal empire with him as its founding patriarch is brought to life in this gallery through beautifully decorated architectural fittings from Qin Shihuang's opulent palaces; armour and weapons displaying military advancements; currency, weights and measures; and decorated ceramic and bronze items for ceremonial and everyday use.

# Large roof tile-end

## 夔纹大瓦当

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

003001

This huge roof tile-end gives us an indication of the monumental scale of the palaces constructed during the reign of the first emperor, Qin Shihuang. The roof tile-end displays two geometric *panhui* or *kuilong* dragon patterns in mirror image. Tiles with similar designs have been discovered at other Qin dynasty palaces and tomb sites and this motif is associated with the first emperor.

Top to bottom

## Architectural beam fitting with panhui stylised dragon motif

### 双面蟠虺纹单齿铜构件

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

九—1241

## Architectural beam fitting with panhui stylised dragon motif

### 双面蟠虺纹铜构件

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

九—947

Palaces were commonly built using wooden beams on rammed earth platforms. Although the wooden beams have not survived, bronze beam fittings through which two beams would be joined to form a straight extension, or corner, indicate the type of construction and decoration that was employed. The decoration on cladding joints – displaying geometric *panhui* or *kuilong* dragon patterns and sharp zig-zag ‘hanging blade’ designs – enforced the Qin dynasty’s claim to rightful imperial inheritance, drawing a line to the ancient emperors of China and the associated mandate of heaven.

Left to right, top to bottom

## Door ring in the form of a mythological beast, *Pushou*

铺首

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze, gilt

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总3149 D2606

## Door ring in the form of a mythological beast, *Pushou*

铺首

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze, gilt

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总3143 D2600

## Belt plaque with pair of dragons

双龙纹镂空铜牌饰

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

七四93

...continued overleaf

# Belt plaque with eagle and four-legged beast

## 鹰兽相博牌饰

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

交0224

# Dragon-shaped belt hook

## 龙首嵌银铜带钩

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze, gold and silver inlay

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总3922 D3100

# Belt hook

## 错金银铜带钩

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze, gold and silver inlay

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

007280

Belt plaques with scenes of real and mythological animals were worn by the nomadic tribes in the north and north-west of China and reached the regions of the Qin state during the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE). Decorative belt hooks became a popular part of Chinese attire during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) when loose-fitting robes replaced more formal military attire. Hooks similar to the two here can be seen supporting the belts on some of the terracotta warriors. Small door rings (*pushou*) in the form of mythological animal masks (*taotie*) were used for furniture handles and believed to ward off evil spirits.

Left to right, top to bottom

## Headstall ornament

### 鎏金铜饰

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze, gilt

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0702 (1)

## Headstall ornaments

### 鎏金铜饰

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze, gilt

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0702 (3; 2; 4–6)

## Ornaments for horses and chariots

### 鎏金铜马车饰

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
bronze, gilt

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang YG0978(10/13-13/13); YG1005; YG1006; YG0981(5/6-6/6); YG1001;  
YG1002

...continued overleaf



# Headstall ornament

## 银泡

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
silver

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

004507

# Headstall ornament

## 金泡

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
gold

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

004476

# Ornaments for horses and chariots

## 鎏金铜马车饰

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
bronze, gilt

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG0993; YG0994; YG0977(5/7-7/7)

Horses and chariots were used for both military and travel purposes, and their adornment with valuable fittings was interpreted as a status symbol. Small fittings were sometimes made of solid gold but in most cases, pieces were made from hammered gold leaf gilded to bronze fittings. Some of the examples here can be found on the half-size replica bronze horses and chariots excavated from a pit adjacent to Qin Shihuang's tomb, on display in the next section of the exhibition.

Left to right, top to bottom

# Measuring vessel inscribed with two edicts

## 两诏秦椭量

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
bronze

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

八七98

To enable efficient communication and commerce throughout the vast new Qin empire, the emperor made imperial decrees to standardise writing, currency, weights and measures. A single monetary system using minted, round bronze coins inscribed with the characters *banliang*, meaning half a *liang* (about 0.68 grams), featured a hole in the middle, allowing groups of coins to be joined together with string. To avoid confusion in the activities of trade and taxation, as well as for general convenience, weights and measures were also made to conform with edicts of standardisation engraved on bronze plaques and even on the measuring vessels themselves. This measuring vessel is inscribed with the edict,

*'In the twenty-sixth year (i.e., 221 B.C.), the Emperor completely unified the regional lords of the All-under-Heaven. The black-headed ones (i.e., the common people) were at great peace, and he established the title of "Emperor." Now he commands the Chief Ministers [Wei] Zhuang and [Wang] Wan. As for the standards, lengths, measures, and rules that are not unified and are doubtful, clarify and unify them all'.*

## **Pair of Wei state coins with Yuan inscription**

### **“垣”字钱**

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

钱146

## **Qin state coin with half tael inscription**

### **秦半两**

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

钱001

# Disc-shaped ingots

## 金饼

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
gold

Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an

ZT492; ZT495

## For kids

Before the first emperor came into power, people measured things in lots of different ways. This made buying and selling difficult and confusing – shop owners could trick customers into paying more for less! The emperor ordered everyone to use the same sets of weights and measuring containers. He was very strict and made sure everyone obeyed his new measurement laws. If shop owners were caught using their own sets of weights, they could be severely punished.

What tools do you use to measure things at home?

Top to bottom

## Lidded flask, *Hu*

### 彩绘陶壶

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ303

## Pouring bowl, *Yi*

### 彩绘陶匜

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1645

## Four-sided flask, *Fang*

### 彩绘陶方

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1582

Top to bottom

## Lidded stemmed bowl, *Dou*

### 彩绘陶豆

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
earthenware, pigments

Longxian County Museum, Baoji

86LBM32: 9(10L3224)

Throughout the first millennia BCE, bronze was the primary medium used to produce decorative vessels for ritual use and ancestor worship. Due to the high level of skill and long periods required for the production of bronze ware, a simpler form of ceramic ware became widely produced and was used for lesser ceremonies and burials. As is seen on this lidded stemmed bowl and the three-legged lacquered vessel, painted designs mimicked the relief work detail seen in earlier bronze ware vessels.

## Lacquered vessel, *Ding*

### 陶胎漆鼎

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
lacquer on earthenware

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总0701 C355

# Censer

## 灰陶熏炉

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

QM948



Top to bottom

## Flask, *Hu*

### 彩绘陶壶

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
earthenware, pigments

Longxian County Museum, Baoji

09L2523

## Flask, *Hu*

### 彩绘双耳陶壶

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
earthenware, pigments

Longxian County Museum, Baoji

86LBM32:4(10L3219)

Left to right, top to bottom

## Jar for storing grain

### 彩绘陶仓

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1758

## Jar for storing grain

### 彩绘陶仓

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1759

## Lidded container, *He*

### 彩绘陶盒

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1515

# Lidded container, *He* 彩绘陶盒

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1773

# Jar for storing grain 彩绘陶仓

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1456

# Jar for storing grain 彩绘陶仓

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ770

Ceramic ware with boldly painted decoration became widely used as substitutes for bronze vessels during the Qin (221–207 BCE) and Han (207 BCE – 220 CE) dynasties. The spontaneous and energetic decoration indicates they were produced in large numbers and therefore affordable to the general public. Vessels like these were used as utensils in daily life as well as modest tomb ware to contain provisions for the afterlife, like grain, wine and other foods. Ceramic ware like water pourers or incense burners also served as affordable utensils used in ceremonies and rituals.

Top to bottom

## Toy fish

陶鱼

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

2014.1258 [LK1258]

## Toy fish

陶鱼

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

2014.1271 [LK1271]

These model fish were created by pressing soft pieces of clay into corresponding moulds before joining them together and firing them in a kiln. Mass-produced as playful objects, they often contained a small hard ball inside that caused them to rattle when moved, leading historians to believe they were intended as toys for children.

Top to bottom, left to right

## Finial with bird of prey decoration

### 错银鸱形秘帽

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
silver, bronze

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gtD45

## Dagger-axe, *Ge*

### 青铜三穿戈

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总0298 D018

## Spear base, *Dun*

### 错银铜镞

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Xianyang Institute of Cultural Heritage  
& Archaeology, Xianyang

2735

# Dagger-axe with inscriptions, *Ge* 八字长胡三穿戈

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

2gt5

# Spear base with phoenix decoration, *Dun*

## 凤鸟纹铜镞

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总0284 D004

Battles during the Spring and Autumn period (771–475 BCE) were usually between armies of 30,000 men, and lasted less than a day. However, during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), up to 600,000 men at a time were sent into combat. The most common weapon was a lance consisting of a wooden pole with a bronze dagger-axe (*ge*) fitted to the end. Some lances used for ceremonies featured a decorative finial above the blade and an elaborate bronze base. This finial displays a bird of prey that indicates its connection to a high-ranking officer and the two lance bases display silver inlay decoration and a relief design in the shape of a phoenix, respectively.

# **Dagger, *Bi***

## **铜匕**

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

0055

# **Axe, *Fu***

## **铜斧**

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

0924

# **Chisel, *Zao***

## **铜凿**

Spring and Autumn period, 771–475 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

0987



These Han dynasty ceramic vessels maintain the elegant shapes and decorative features of Zhou dynasty bronze vessels produced 1000 years earlier. Free-flowing painted designs reference nature motifs and auspicious subjects like clouds and dragons. The *Four-sided flask* displays ringed handles in solid relief on either side in a direct reference to identically shaped bronze vessels from the Zhou dynasty.

Top to bottom

## Sword, *Jian*

### 青铜剑

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总0293 D013

## Arrowheads, *Jianzu*

### 青铜箭镞

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
bronze

Emperor Qin Shihuang's  
Mausoleum Site Museum, Xi'an

001464

More than 40,000 arrowheads have been excavated from alongside the terracotta army. Arrowheads consist of a pyramid-shaped point and a long support that fits into a bamboo or wooden shaft. They were typically gathered in bundles of seventy, 100 or 114, with the number of arrowheads in each bundle thought to represent the contents of a bowman's quiver (arrow case). To create the ultimate bronze arrowhead, metalsmiths produced triangular tips with a higher component of tin and shafts with a greater component of copper. This ingenious combination created an arrowhead with a sharper and more effective tip and a flexible shaft with less likelihood of cracking.

Top to bottom

## **Pestle and mortar**

### **铜臼杵**

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
bronze

Maoling Museum, Xingping

2414

## **Base for a hand warmer**

### **温手炉承盘**

Western Han dynasty 207 BCE – 9 CE  
bronze

Maoling Museum, Xingping

2412

## **Flask with garlic-shaped mouth, *Hu***

### **铜蒜头壶**

Han dynasty 207 BCE – 220 CE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0558

In contrast to the bronze ritual objects of earlier dynasties, bronze ware of the Han dynasty (207 BCE – 220 CE) adopted simpler forms with less decoration and were used as functional items. The bronze hand warmer tray with legs would have supported a bronze brazier or water container that served as a handwarmer when heated. The simple form of the flask curves elegantly upwards to the shape of a garlic bulb at its mouth and the mortar and pestle take a simple functional form.

Top to bottom

## Mirror

### 同心弧铜镜

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Yulin Institute of Cultural Heritage Conservation, Yulin

0103

## Kettle with handle, *He*

### 铜提梁盃

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0323

## Goose-foot lamp

### 雁足形铜灯

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
bronze

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

001050

Bronze ware from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) often adopted zoomorphic shapes and motifs from nature. The mirror in this case displays a simple circular or floral design around a loop through which a cord would be attached to serve as a handle. The other side is flat and would be polished to create a reflective surface. The kettle, probably used to serve wine, features a handle and spout in the form of mythological creatures and a surface with geometric serpent designs. The goose-foot lamp supports a circular tray that would contain oil and wicks or support candles. Goose-foot lamps became popular during the Qin (221–207 BCE) and Han (207 BCE – 220 CE) dynasties.

Left to right

## Roof tile with phoenix

### 朱雀纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002965

## Roof tile with deer

### 鹿纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0426

## Roof tile with deer, goose, dog and toad

### 鹿雁狗蟾纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总0517

# Roof tile with deer

## 鹿纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002966

# Roof tile with tiger and goose

## 虎雁纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Fengxiang County Museum, Baoji

总1335

# Roof tile-end with cloud and floral motif

## 卷云纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

004471



# Roof tile with cloud and floral motif

## 葵纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002959

# Roof tile-end with sun motif

## 太阳纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

004438

# Roof tile-end with floral motif

## 叶纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

004658

# Roof tile-end with cloud and floral motif

## 葵纹瓦当

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

004504

# Roof tile-end with cloud motif

## 卷云纹瓦当

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

003452

# Roof tile-end with cloud motif

## 卷云纹瓦当

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002560

# Roof tile-end with cloud motif

## 云纹瓦当

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

004473

Mass-produced by pressing soft clay into carved moulds, these roof tiles represent styles of decoration that adorned official buildings from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) through to the Han dynasty (207 BCE – 220 CE). Fitted along roof eaves, auspicious animals and stylised natural elements were thought to bring residents good fortune and protection from evil spirits. The phoenix represents peace and serenity, the deer wealth and longevity, and swirling clouds and the sun symbolise the movement of the heavens. Other auspicious designs include tigers, deer, dogs, frogs, geese, and cloud or floral motifs.

Left to right, top to bottom

## **Hollow brick with rhombus and floral motifs**

### **菱形四蒂花纹空心砖**

Han Dynasty 207 BCE – 220 CE  
earthenware

Shangluo City Museum, Shangluo

总3464 C477

## **Hollow brick with tiger 虎纹空心砖**

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Maoling Museum, Xingping

0643

## **Hollow brick with dragon 龙纹空心砖**

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Maoling Museum, Xingping

0107

# Hollow brick with vermilion bird

## 朱雀纹空心砖

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Maoling Museum, Xingping

0432

# Hollow brick with snake and tortoise

## 玄武纹空心砖

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Maoling Museum, Xingping

0644

The Qin state capital city changed location on numerous occasions before establishing its grandest city and ultimate capital at Xianyang in 350 BCE. Vast palaces were constructed with wooden structures and clay-tiled roofs. Palaces were decorated with magnificent murals that featured geometric and floral designs as well as figures and animals. At the fall of the Qin empire in 207 BCE, the palaces were destroyed, with the grandest of them, Epang Palace, so large it reportedly burned for more than three months. Today, nothing but foundations remain; however, an idea of their grandeur and decoration can be gained from bricks and roof tiles. Four of the bricks display the four protective spirits representing each of the cardinal directions: the turtle (north), dragon (east), vermilion bird (south) and tiger (west).

# Goose

## 青铜雁

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE

bronze

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology

K007T3:49

This bronze goose represents one of the most appealing groups of artefacts discovered at the tomb complex of the first emperor Qin Shihuang. Approximately one kilometre to the north-east of the main tomb mound, archaeologists discovered a large pleasure garden with an artificial lake. Along a sixty-metre stretch of adjoining riverbank where water would previously have flowed, forty-six realistically crafted and originally coloured life-size bronze birds, including swans, cranes and geese, were discovered. Ongoing investigation reveals that production techniques and the consistency of the bronze display a similarity to those used in Mediterranean civilisations between the fifth and sixth centuries BCE.

## For kids

Near to where the terracotta warriors were found, archaeologists also discovered the remains of buried palaces and gardens. There was even an underground riverbank surrounded by bronze geese, swans, cranes and other birds, all in different poses.

...continued overleaf

Some were swimming, while others, like this little goose, were drinking water, or resting. These birds were buried to provide the emperor with entertainment in the afterlife, but experts wonder if real birds were trained to dance for his enjoyment while he was alive.

What sort of relaxing activities do you like to do when you have free time? Have you ever tried birdwatching?

Top to bottom

## Model helmet

石胄

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
stone

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

007089

## Model armour

石铠甲

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
stone

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

ds

Since the discovery of the terracotta warriors in 1974, numerous other astounding discoveries have been made in the vicinity of the first emperor's tomb. Eighty-seven sets of body armour, forty-three helmets and one set of horse armour were discovered in 1996 and excavated two years later. Each body armour consists of approximately 600 pieces of crafted stone and weighs approximately eighteen to twenty-five kilograms. Found arranged on wooden stands, the armour was believed not to have been produced for practical use but positioned in readiness for the afterlife.

...continued overleaf



To date, only four per cent of the entire site has been excavated and it is believed that the total number of body armour yet to be excavated may exceed 6000, equivalent in number to the terracotta army.

## **For kids**

This armour is made from stone and weighs over eighteen kilograms – that's about the same weight as eighteen one-litre cartons of milk! Can you imagine how difficult it would be to run and jump in something so heavy? Luckily, this armour would never have been worn in real life. A much lighter version made from leather would have been used instead, allowing warriors to move freely during battle while helping to protect them from getting hurt.

Do you play or watch any sports or games that require special safety equipment?

## Terracotta warriors

The discovery of the terracotta warriors, one of the most significant archaeological finds of the twentieth century, was made by chance. In March 1974, seeking water during a period of drought, local farmers began digging an irrigation well in Lintong district, Xi'an. Little more than a metre below ground, they unearthed fragments of the terracotta army, including a warrior's head and a group of bronze arrowheads. Had the farmers commenced their digging a metre to the east, the warriors may have remained undetected.

The enormous tomb mound of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, is located 1.5 kilometres from the terracotta warriors. While this has been the Qin emperor's recognised tomb site over the centuries, astoundingly the creation of the warriors who guarded it was never recorded and knowledge of their existence was lost over time. It was recorded that the emperor employed and conscripted up to 700,000 workers to construct his mausoleum, the terracotta army and other buried items, making it the largest and most ambitious mausoleum construction in China's history. To date, approximately 2000 of an estimated 8000 warriors have been excavated, and the pieces on display here represent the variety of individuals created, their positions within the army and their styles of apparel.

## The first emperor's mausoleum, according to the grand historian

Han dynasty historian and scribe Sima Qian (145–86 BCE) wrote a detailed account of the construction and interior of Qin Shihuang's mausoleum in his text *Records of the Grand Historian – Basic Annals of Qin*:

'In the ninth month, the First Emperor was interred at Mount Li. When he first came to the throne, the digging and preparation work began. Later, when he had unified China, 700,000 men were sent there from all over the empire. They dug through three layers of groundwater, and poured in bronze for the outer coffin. Palaces and scenic towers for a hundred officials were constructed, and the tomb was filled with rare artefacts and wonderful treasure. Craftsmen were ordered to make crossbows and arrows primed to shoot at anyone who entered the tomb. Mercury was used to simulate the hundred rivers, the Yangtze and Yellow River, and the great sea, and set to flow mechanically. Above were representations of the heavenly constellations, below were the features of the land. Candles were made from fat of "man-fish", calculated to burn and not extinguish for a long time. The Second Emperor said: "It would be inappropriate for the concubines of the late emperor who have no sons to be out free", [and] ordered that they should accompany the dead, and a great many died. After the burial, it was suggested that it would be a serious breach if the craftsmen who constructed the mechanical devices and knew of its treasures were to divulge those secrets.

Therefore after the funeral ceremonies had completed and the treasures [had been] hidden away, the inner passageway was blocked, and the outer gate lowered, immediately trapping all the workers and craftsmen inside. None could escape. Trees and vegetation were then planted on the tomb mound such that it resembles a hill.'

# Armoured general

## 铠甲将军俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002524

This general, the largest of the terracotta warriors in the exhibition, has a distinguished beard and moustache and displays a stance of importance. His position of authority is indicated by his headdress, which is the same style as that of the adjacent unarmoured general, and is further enforced by decorative tassels on his chest and back that act as insignias of rank. Generals and other high-ranking officers wore long armoured tunics that tapered from the waist to a triangular shape at the front, protecting their vital organs.

## For kids

A terracotta warrior's pose or hairstyle and outfit tells us about its role in the army. When they were first made, these life-size warriors were very colourful, but after thousands of years underground their paint has fallen off. Today, experts use special techniques to preserve some of the original colours. Colours like purple and red were used to represent different levels of importance in the army.

Can you think of any special uniforms people wear today that help you to recognise what their job is?

# Unarmoured general

## 战袍将军俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

000852

Generals in the terracotta army are differentiated by their larger size in both height and imposing stature. They wear distinctive caps supported with a tie around the chin and a flat rectangular front piece that splits into two elegantly folded peaks. The shape is thought to reference a pheasant tail and, militarily, the combative nature of pheasants. This general's loose-fitting clothing is indicated with carefully crafted rolling undulations across his stomach and arms. His robe is gathered with a belt, secured with a belt hook similar to the example in the previous section of the exhibition.

# Armoured military officer

## 中级铠甲军吏俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE

earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002526

Standing warriors weigh between 150 and 300 kilograms and usually consist of seven different parts: a plinth, feet, legs, torso, arms, hands and head. Clay was kneaded by foot, and the torso section was built up with a coil layering technique. Other parts were created by pressing soft clay into moulds, in a process similar to making roof tiles or drainage pipes. To give each warrior a unique appearance, different moulds were used and the position of fingers and arms was manipulated while the clay was soft. Folds of clothing or armour plates were added to the torso, and head features were developed with additional small pieces of clay to define the cheekbones, chin, ears, nose and hair.

# Armoured military officer

## 中级铠甲军吏俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002758

Military officers wear a style of headdress typical of that of a palace guard, indicating their role as protectors of the emperor. Their armour covers chest, back and shoulders and finishes at the waist with under-robcs splaying out elegantly below. Their raised right arm and closed hand suggest they were holding a lance with dagger-axe fitted to the top, like those on display in the previous section of the exhibition. Approximately ten centimetres shorter than generals, military officers typically have a facial expression that is usually less authoritative, and a hesitant posture, as if waiting to receive an order.



# Standing archer

## 立射俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002816

The release of energy and sense of movement at the moment of firing an arrow results in archers displaying the most elegant and dramatic stances of all the terracotta warriors. The standing archer's feet are slightly parted for balance, and he stares intently into the distance as if following the flight of an arrow just released from his bow. Displaying the topknot and braiding of a warrior, he wears a simple gown that allows freedom of movement. When created, the warriors were painted in bright colours and coated with lacquer, but this colouring had mostly been lost by the time of their excavation. New techniques of colour preservation are currently being developed at the terracotta warriors site.

## For kids

The emperor wanted to be protected after he died. After the terracotta army had been made, he ordered the warriors to be lined up, ready for battle. He wanted them to look as convincing as possible, and experts have discovered that he even equipped them with real weapons! The archer's wooden bows have rotted away, but thousands of bronze arrowheads remain. During battle, the standing and kneeling archers work together as a team, taking turns to shoot arrows. Standing archers would stand in front of the kneeling archers, making it harder for the enemy to spot them.

# Kneeling archer

## 跪射俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002812

This warrior is part of a battle formation of kneeling archers surrounded by standing archers that was discovered at the second-largest of the three terracotta army excavation pits. Kneeling with his hands at his waist, his posture suggests he held a crossbow. Crossbows were considered one of the most important battlefield innovations of the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), with some contemporary scholars asserting one soldier with a crossbow and sharp sword was equal to 100 men. Due to their compact posture and solid positioning of legs, kneeling archers have remained in better condition and are less broken than the taller standing warrior figures.

# Unarmoured infantryman

## 战袍武士俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002759

Unarmoured or light infantrymen are distinguished by their hair gathered in a top knot and their absence of armour. Their simple robes and low-slung belts give them a less military appearance; however, their half-closed right hand would have originally held a sword. We can clearly see that this figure has been reconstructed from many small broken parts. Of more than 2000 warriors unearthed to date, none have been discovered intact. It is speculated that shortly after their completion at the fall of the Qin dynasty, the victorious Han entered the terracotta warriors' underground passages, smashed the contents and set the wooden passages on fire.

# Civil official

## 文官俑

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

006488

In preparation for the afterlife, Emperor Qin Shihuang not only produced a terracotta army for his protection, but also ceramic administrators to look after government and civil affairs. This terracotta figure was discovered at a site adjacent to the emperor's tomb, more than a kilometre from the terracotta army. Twelve civil officials were discovered, as well as the bones of twenty actual horses, one chariot and one charioteer. The officials all feature moustaches and a small tuft of chin hair and wear small hats believed to symbolise their status as officials or public conveyances. The attire of some civil officials includes baggy robes and a belt from which a pouch (presumably carrying a sharpening stone) and knife (to inscribe bamboo slats used for recordkeeping) hang.

# Chariot horse

车马

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002548

Horses were fundamental to the strength of Chinese rulers and sacrificial horse burials had been practised since the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 – 1046 BCE). This is particularly notable at the tomb of Duke Jing of Qi (reigned 547–490 BCE), which contained a pit with the remains of over 600 horses. At several separate excavation sites in the vicinity of Emperor Qin Shihuang's tomb, the remains of real horses and chariots have been discovered. However, the first emperor is significantly noted as the first to create life-sized horse replicas as an integral part of the terracotta army's military formation. While the adjacent horse features a hole on each side to prevent cracking during firing, this example was ventilated through its detachable tail.

# Chariot horse

## 车马

Qin dynasty, 221–207 BCE  
earthenware

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum  
Site Museum, Xi'an

002767

The first emperor's family traces its ancestors to north-west China and a family of semi-nomadic horse breeders. The large number of cavalry and chariot horses that established a formidable presence on the Qin battlefield and became a fundamental part of their military successes is indicative of these origins.

In the three main terracotta warrior pits still under excavation today, it is speculated that 150 cavalry horses and 140 battle chariots drawn by 520 chariot horses exist. The chariots made from wood have disintegrated and all that remain are terracotta horses and each chariot's three terracotta occupants. The horses display alert pointed ears, well-trimmed manes and knotted tails. On their side is a round hole to prevent their hollow bodies from cracking during firing.

# Chariot #1 (Qin dynasty replica)

## 1号铜车马（复制品）

bronze

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum

Site Museum, Xi'an

MMYL007

Six years after the discovery of the terracotta warriors in 1974, the potential splendour of the first emperor's inner tomb was further confirmed by the discovery of two magnificent bronze chariots. They were originally in large wooden boxes. When they collapsed over time, the chariots were squashed flat by the earth placed on top of them. The chariots have subsequently been reconstructed from thousands of broken pieces. This light, open battlefield chariot would have been used for battle or for the emperor to inspect his troops. Adorned with a large parasol-like canopy, it is drawn by four horses and driven by a charioteer with a crossbow at his side. As there have been only two chariots discovered, the originals do not leave China and these faithful replicas have been created for exhibitions.



# Chariot #2 (Qin dynasty replica)

## 2号铜车马（复制品）

bronze

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum

Site Museum, Xi'an

MMYL008

In 1980, two half-scale bronze chariots were discovered twenty metres west of the first emperor's mausoleum mound. Scholars speculate that life-sized chariots were not required as they were destined to be used by the emperor's spirit rather than humans. Decorated with four kilograms of gold, three kilograms of silver and painted dragon and cloud motifs, this style of chariot was used to tour the empire in comfort. They were discovered facing to the west and are thought to be in waiting for the emperor's spirit to journey to his homeland. Due to only two being in existence, the chariots on display here are exact replicas of the originals.

## ***Murmuration (Landscape)***

In this installation, an enormous flock of 10,000 porcelain starlings swarm overhead, teeming with might and momentum. The starlings are creating a murmuration, a mesmerising phenomenon beyond full scientific comprehension where communication between individual birds allows huge flocks to move in a fluid state of synchronicity. Regardless of the number of birds, starlings in murmuration are equally agile and responsive, together appearing to be one giant single organism during the advancement of a threat, or while seeking a roost.

The form of the flock resembles a three-dimensional *shanshui* landscape brush and ink painting, echoing the undulations of Mount Li. According to ancient Chinese philosophy and feng shui, Mount Li is an important meridian in the region, leading Qin Shihuang to select it as the auspicious location for his tomb and his vast terracotta army.

As do the warriors, this installation inspires awe, yet is intended as a place of quiet contemplation. The works were crafted in Dehua, adjacent to Cai's hometown of Quanzhou, which has a centuries-old tradition of producing white porcelain. The colouration of the installation was achieved by exposing the birds to a gunpowder ignition.

Cai adds, 'The ever-changing formation of 10,000 porcelain birds seems to embody the lingering spirits of the underground army, or perhaps the haunting shadow of China's imperial past. But in this age of globalisation, aren't they also forming a mirage, an exoticised imagination of the cultural other?'

# CAI Guo-Qiang

蔡国强

born Quanzhou 1957, lives in New York

## Murmuration (Landscape)

乌云

2019

gunpowder on porcelain

Realised in Dehua, Fujian Province and Melbourne, commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria

## For kids

In this room is a giant flock of 10,000 birds. In Chinese culture, the word for '10,000' is sometimes used to mean 'everything' or to describe the biggest possible number of something. For example, when people wished the emperor a long life, they used a special saying in Chinese that meant 'live for ten thousand years'. That's a long time!

What is the biggest number you know?

## ***Transience (Peony)***

Peonies in full bloom have been an important motif in Chinese art for centuries, frequently appearing in brush and ink paintings and works of porcelain. Captured at the peak of their beauty and perfection, they symbolise royalty, virtue, honour and wealth. The peony's beauty is fleeting, however – the flower blossoms for little over a week before it begins to wilt.

This gallery features two works by Cai Guo-Qiang. The magnificent 360-degree gunpowder drawing, rendered on silk, captures the peony flower across the four stages of its life cycle: emergence of the bud, blooming, wilting and decay. Upon completing the work, the artist said, 'I never thought I would be so moved by the decline of flowers; their withering is no less than the soul departing the body! Sometimes I wonder if life is merely an illusion, a dream, and that the soul actually manifests upon dying, which is the origin and the eternal state of things ... Yet death is more elusive, more complex than that'.

The installation of a peony garden was crafted in Dehua in Fujian province, known for its centuries-old tradition of handcrafted white porcelain. Each petal and leaf is unique, and the installation has been exposed to an ignition of coloured gunpowder, resulting in a three-dimensional painting. The form echoes the undulations of Mount Li, the mountain adjacent to the site of Qin Shihuang's tomb. The fragility of the porcelain conveys the ephemerality of the peony blossom, representing the fragility and transience of life, and alluding to the short-lived fourteen-year Qin empire.

'If the peony is considered "the colour of the nation with a heavenly fragrance", supreme beauty, *Transience I (Peony)* can be reckoned as a tomb for such beauty', says Cai.

'The porcelain went through extreme transformation, from the immaculately white to the sombrely black; the craft that made the white porcelain sculpture, through destruction and devastation, sublimates into art.'

# CAI Guo-Qiang

蔡国强

born Quanzhou 1957, lives in New York

## Transience II (Peony)

花瞬II

2019

coloured gunpowder on silk

Realised in Melbourne, commissioned by the  
National Gallery of Victoria

## Transience I (Peony)

花瞬I

2019

coloured gunpowder on porcelain

Realised in Dehua, Fujian Province and Melbourne,  
commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria

## For kids

This sculpture in the shape of a mountain covered in peony flowers is made from porcelain, and the huge colourful artwork on the wall is on silk. All the colours you can see are from gunpowder. Paper, gunpowder, silk and porcelain are all important Chinese inventions that have changed the world.

What important inventions can you think of that make a difference to your daily life?

## **Journey to the afterlife: a Han dynasty tomb**

After the death of the first emperor, Qin Shihuang, the Qin dynasty rapidly declined and was defeated within three years by rebel leader Xiang Yu and former Qin officer Liu Bang, who became the first Han emperor, Gaozu. Recognising both the successes and failures of the Qin, the first Han emperors adopted similar burial practices and systems of centralised authority and civil standardisation as the Qin. Understanding that their success relied on positive public sentiment, the Han reduced taxes and assigned labour, moderated their scale of tomb construction and reduced the physical demands placed on civilians. These considerations led to the Han dynasty ruling for more than 400 years, from 207 BCE – 220 CE (with a brief interruption from 9–25 CE when the capital city was moved from Chang'an to Luoyang and the Eastern Han dynasty was renamed the Western Han dynasty).

Similar to the Qin, Han emperors created tombs consisting of a subterranean palace under a burial mound, adjoining model armies and attendants, and provisions for the afterlife. The two most important discoveries to date that remain as evidence of this practice were made at a site near the tomb of the first Han emperor Gaozu, at Yangjiawan, and at excavations adjacent to the tomb of the fourth Han emperor Jing, at Yangling. These two tombs' very different styles of terracotta armies, animals and tomb figures date to approximately seventy years after the creation of Qin Shihuang's original life-size terracotta army.

# Mythical creature

## 石兽

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
stone

Xi'an Beilin Museum, Xi'an

六〇— 60-169

Large stone beasts lined 'spirit paths' leading to the tombs of emperors, royals and aristocrats to protect them in the afterlife. These two magnificent Han dynasty examples stride forward with teeth displayed and powerful tails gracefully balanced behind. The female rests her front paw on a playful infant beast, representing natural harmony, and the male beast places his paw on a ball, representing his supremacy.



# Mythical creature

## 石兽

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
stone

Xi'an Beilin Museum, Xi'an

六〇— 60-170

# Tomb gate

## 画像石

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
stone, pigments

Suide County Museum

270; 271; 272; 274; 275

This graphically decorated tomb gate depicts animated events and scenes of daily life typical of the Qin (221 – 207 BCE) and Han (207 BCE – 220 CE) dynasties. The lintel displays a hunting scene with men on horseback galloping at full speed – some with lances and others shooting arrows – in pursuit of wild animals. The inner left and right supports feature images of people wrestling, playing instruments, nursing children, performing acrobatics, walking with a horse, carrying goods or climbing stairs. Mythical birds, creatures and people are pictured on the rooftops and on the curling vines of the outer supports.

# Tomb gate (part) depicting Fuxi

## 画像石--伏羲

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
stone, pigments

Suide County Museum, Yulin

16

These two tomb-gate parts depict Fuxi and Nüwa. According to ancient Chinese mythology, they are the creators of humanity and the first of the legendary Three Sovereigns, a group of deities who ruled Ancient China before dynastic rule commenced during the third millennium BCE. Together they are responsible for the establishment of natural order and harmony. Fuxi and Nüwa are usually depicted as a pair, and artistic representations of them often feature human faces and serpentine bodies. Nüwa is frequently represented in female form, and is associated with procreation and the protection of human life. Her brother Fuxi is credited with teaching humans essential skills including hunting and cooking.

# Tomb gate (part) depicting Nüwa

## 画像石--女娲

Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 CE  
stone, pigments

Suide County Museum, Yulin

17

Nüwa is the subject of many ancient Chinese legends and is presented in various forms and roles, most commonly as the mother and all-powerful protector of humanity. In the Chinese creation myth, Nüwa modelled the first humans from the yellow clay of the earth. She is also credited with protecting the earth from a deluge by melting down colourful stones to repair a hole in the heavens, resulting in the multicoloured sunsets we see today.

# Female attendant

## 粉彩女俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

M193:25

Excavated from the Yangling tomb of the fourth Han emperor, Jing, this female attendant displays the rounded shoulders typical of a Han dynasty beauty. She wears multi-layered robes with wide sleeves and the splayed lower section fashionable among women of the time. The position of her hands, concealed in her sleeves, elegant stance and gentle expression suggest that she is waiting to attend the imperial household members.

# Medium-sized cavalrymen

## 彩绘骑马俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Xianyang Museum, Xianyang

Y LX0005; Y LX0004; Y LX0008; Y LX0006

# Large cavalrymen

## 彩绘骑马俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Xianyang Museum, Xianyang

YQD013; YQD005; YQD014

Left to right

## Medium-sized cavalryman

### 彩绘骑马俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Xianyang Museum, Xianyang

YLX0007

## Cavalrymen

### 彩绘骑马俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1297; YG1294; YG1293



# Standing soldiers

## 彩绘步兵俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Xianyang Museum, Xianyang

杨-0008; 杨-1901; 杨-1897; 杨-0010; 杨-1898

# Group of ten soldiers

## 男武士俑--十人组

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang YG2074; YG2075; YG2141; YG2142; YG2145; YG2144; YG2138;  
YG2081; YG2085; YG2100

More than 40,000 small-scale terracotta warriors were discovered and excavated during the 1990s from pits adjacent to the Han Yangling tomb of Emperor Jing. Created seventy years after Qin Shihuang's life-sized terracotta warriors, they served the same purpose as tomb guardians but were of a scale that could be more practically produced. The torsos, legs and heads were moulded separately then joined with moist clay before firing. Arms, made from wood, clothing, made from cloth, and armour, made from leather, have all perished during their 2000 years underground. The variety of faces produced from different moulds suggest a multicultural nation and the many regions and ethnicities present in the Han dynasty army.

## For kids

These terracotta warriors are much smaller than the ones you saw earlier in the exhibition. Unlike the first emperor's army, these soldiers don't seem to have any armour – or clothes – on! After many thousands of years buried underground in the mud, their leather armour, fabric clothes and wooden arms have rotted away.

If you could design new armour for an army, what style would you choose, and what materials would you use?

## For kids

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# Wild male dog

## 陶狼犬（公）

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1616

# Domestic female dog

## 陶家犬（母）

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1491

# Sow

## 陶母猪

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

YG0916

# Sow

## 陶母猪

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

K21:017



# Goat

## 陶山羊

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1930

## For kids

Look at these miniature farm animals made from clay. Although they are much smaller than life-size, they look a lot like real animals, don't they? In ancient China, these statues were sometimes buried underground with people when they died so that they would have food and company in the afterlife. People also buried things like tiny wells for water, and stoves for cooking.

What things do you think are most important for a comfortable life?

# Goat

## 陶山羊

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1866

# Cow

## 陶牛

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1973

# Cow

## 陶牛

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG1972

Left to right

## Walking soldier

### 行走男武士俑

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware

Han Yangling Museum, Xianyang

YG2229

In contrast to the stiff, upright figures of the Qin dynasty's terracotta warriors, this naked walking figure indicates that its creator had an understanding of anatomy and body movement. Bent at the knees and leaning slightly forward, we can sense the heavy load he is carrying on his back.

## Miniature stove

### 黄釉陶灶

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
glazed earthenware

Ganquan County Museum, Yan'an

GQ1500

# Hen

## 陶母鸡

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

K19:12

# Miniature granary

## 彩绘陶仓

Warring States period, 475–221 BCE  
earthenware, pigments

Longxian County Museum, Baoji

陇店M252:1

# Cock

## 陶公鸡

Western Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 9 CE  
earthenware, pigments

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Xi'an

K19:13

# Wellhead

## 绿釉陶井

Han dynasty, 207 BCE – 220 CE  
glazed earthenware

Xi'an Museum, Xi'an

3gwC115

## ***Pulse (Mountain)***

The seemingly boundless landscape of this gunpowder drawing represents the vast mountains and horizons of China's Central Plains. Located at the lower reaches of the Yellow River, the Central Plains are considered by many to be the cradle of ancient Chinese civilisation and culture, and the centre of the world. The events and developments that took place in this region include the reign and philosophies of the legendary Yellow Emperor, the burgeoning of the theory of yin and yang, Laozi's philosophy of Taoism, the unification of China under the first emperor Qin Shihuang, and the 400-year reign of the Han dynasty, which was instrumental in consolidating China's unification.

From the centre of this monumental gunpowder drawing ignitions burst to the left and right, creating an energy that reflects the work's Chinese title, *Dimai*, or 'veins of the earth'. In feng shui, the ancient Chinese study of energy forces, geographical contours like ridges, valleys and rivers denote the Earth's veins and the flow of *qi*, or life force. For millennia, this theory has influenced the selection of auspicious sites by those seeking to harness energy from the earth. Many significant locations, including Qin Shihuang's tomb, the terracotta army and the Han dynasty emperor's tombs, were strategically positioned along these meridians.

**CAI Guo-Qiang**

**蔡国强**

born Quanzhou 1957, lives in New York

**Pulse (Mountain)**

**地脉**

2019

gunpowder on Japanese hemp paper

Realised in Melbourne, commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria



## **Making *Cai Guo-Qiang: The Transient Landscape***

In March of 2019, Cai Guo-Qiang travelled with his team to Melbourne for the production of five new artworks, commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria for the exhibition *Cai Guo-Qiang: The Transient Landscape*. Over the course of ten days, three gunpowder paintings – *Flow (Cypress)*, *Transience II (Peony)* and *Pulse (Mountain)* – were produced during a series of gunpowder explosions in an old shipbuilding warehouse in Williamstown, with the technical support of leading pyrotechnicians. The two porcelain installations, *Murmuration (Landscape)* and *Transience I (Peony)*, which had been sculpted and fired in Dehua, Fujian province, were covered with gunpowder and ignited to achieve the unique colouration effect.

‘I’ve used gunpowder in my art for the last thirty years. What I like most about it is its spontaneity and unpredictability. Every situation is different. There’s a sense of destiny. “What will happen when you ignite it?” It is an unknown which you will accomplish with the help of an invisible force. I’d often say a silent prayer. That’s what draws me to gunpowder.’

**CAI GUO-QIANG**

## 秦始皇兵马俑: 永恒的守卫

正是因为众多大哲学家、皇家史官和军事战略家著书立说，中国古代王朝的史诗、哲学、发明和社会习俗才得以流传百世。事实上，商朝（公元前1600年至公元前1046年）至汉朝（公元前207至公元220年）年间的文明、艺术和工艺都到达了很先进的水平。然而，直到二十世纪，考古学家才开始发掘相关的文物证据。随着越来越多制作精湛的青铜器、精美玉器和风格大胆的陶器被发掘出来，世人对仪式、社会习俗、为后世所做的准备和对永生的追求有了更好的理解，要知道这些东西直到20世纪都还是中国文化的核心。

所有文物发掘工作中最大的发现是在1974年，当时西安临潼区的农民在挖灌溉井时，意外发现并出土了兵马俑的碎片。这一惊人的发现证实了关于中国古代第一位皇帝秦始皇的记载。兵马俑的规模和数量在世界历史上是独一无二的，象征着秦始皇对永生的追求。同时，兵马俑也象征着秦始皇与中国古代神话中的统治者和神明间的源流关系，使得他能够作为天子，拥有上天所赋予的神圣权力去统驭全国。

## 蔡国强：瞬间的山水

蔡国强的跨学科创作手法立足于当代社会问题和他对东方哲学的毕生兴趣，并以之作为探讨人与宇宙关系的一种手段。早年他在家乡福建泉州就开始尝试使用火药这一中国发明，其使用这一创作媒介的作品受到了国际认可。自1986年移居日本和1995年以来移居纽约以后，蔡国强一直在积极地拓展和延伸这种艺术形式自身的边界及其材料所带来的限制，并成为了最具代表性的当代艺术家之一。

《蔡国强：瞬间的山水》是一个全新的作品。艺术家将纸、瓷器、丝绸等中国传统材料在现场进行一系列的点火爆破，作品灵感来自于中国第一位皇帝秦始皇和兵马俑的创作，是融合了历史、地理、文化等各方面因素的古代背景。基于对中国古代文化的理解和认为与传统和历史的对话可以振兴当代艺术的这一信念，蔡国强以其独有的艺术方式为其作品和《秦始皇兵马俑：永恒的守卫》展创造了绝佳的、令人身临其境的氛围。

## 祭祀用品和祖传珍宝

在公元前221年秦始皇建立统一中国之前，中国有很长一段时间处于众多王国相互对立、自治领土和王朝并存的状态，当时各个王朝的习俗、信仰以及精致的手工艺都影响了秦朝及其创造力。创作象征吉祥的仪式用品的核心意义在于彰显家族声望、传扬社会和谐以及对永生和来世的信仰，这些东西通常用于葬礼、祭祖和带来好运。本馆展示了其中一些最精巧的艺术品，它们诞生于周初至汉末（公元前1046年至公元220年）之间。

古人相信玉石具有神奇的力量，可以保存人死后的生命精气。因此，精雕细琢的玉器往往随着遗体一同下葬，以在死者前往来世之前净化其灵魂。而带有装饰图案和铭文的青铜器象征着与中国早期王朝的联系，也代表着“天命”的统治。黄金被认为是从中亚引进中国的，其主要用于装饰链带、扣带和仪式用品。

## 柏风

柏树的寿命通常长达数百年，在寒冬腊月里也能保持常青。自儒家时代以来，柏树象征着中国艺术和文学的经久不衰、坚韧不拔和刚正不屈，如同一个坚韧淡泊的人，在困难面前依然稳健不屈。在中国传统绘画中，通过观察松柏在画中的布局便可以看出艺术家性格上的一些端倪。

据传黄帝陵墓周围的古柏树林，自公元前三千年左右黄帝逝于113岁高龄以来就一直存在。黄帝的功绩包括建立了一个部落联盟的国家，并推动包括中医、农历历法和中国文化其它许多重要方面的创新，因此也受到后世统治者的尊崇。兵马俑的创造者秦始皇就自称是黄帝的后代，并以他的名字（皇，黄）来名正言顺地征服和控制庞大的新帝国。

## 秦代的宫廷与日常生活

中国第一位皇帝秦始皇的家族据称是上古传奇黄帝之孙颛顼的后裔，而传说颛顼早在公元前3000年就已称帝。实际上，在中国西北的陕西省西部，有一个公元前11世纪就已获得权力的半游牧性质的牧马家族，秦朝便起源于此。春秋时期（公元前771年至公元前475年），他们通过外交和军事上的成功巩固了自己的领土，然后在动荡的战国时期（公元前475至公元前221年），又接连征服了韩国、赵国、魏国、楚国、燕国和齐国。自此，秦国于公元前221年建立了中国第一个统一的王朝，其疆土从长城向南延伸至南海，自西向东从甘肃和青海的草原一直延伸到太平洋海岸。

始皇帝建立强大、永恒帝国的宏伟愿景，在这个展厅中呼之欲出。无论是秦始皇华丽宫殿中装饰精美的建筑配件，还是彰显着先进军事实力的盔甲、武器、货币、度量衡，以及用于仪式和日常使用的装饰性陶器和青铜器皿，处处均体现着中国第一位皇帝的伟大抱负。

## 兵马俑

兵马俑的发现出于偶然，但这是二十世纪最重要的考古发现之一。1974年3月，为了在干旱时期取水，当地农民在西安临潼区挖灌溉井。在地下一米多一点的地方，他们发现了兵马俑的碎片，包括一个战士的头部和一组青铜箭头。如果农民当时挖井的地方多往东一米，可能就不会发现这些兵马俑。

中国第一位皇帝秦始皇的巨大陵墓距离兵马俑1.5公里。千百年来，这里一直是公认的秦始皇陵遗址。但令人吃惊的是，关于这些守卫陵墓的兵马俑生于何时却没有记录，而且随着时间的推移，也没人知道它们的存在了。据估计，始皇帝雇用并征召了多达70万名民夫和刑徒来建造他的陵墓。兵马俑和其它陪葬物品，使之成为中国历史上规模最大、最具雄心的陵墓建筑群。到目前为止，大约有2000个兵马俑被发掘出来，但据估计一共可能有8000个。这里展出的文物代表着不同风格的个体，他们在军队中所处的不同地位，而且他们的服装风格也不尽一样。

## 关于秦始皇陵的记载

汉朝史学家和作家司马迁（公元前145年 - 公元前86年）在其著作《史记·秦本纪》中对秦始皇陵的建造和内部进行了详细的描述：

九月，葬始皇郿山。始皇初即位，穿治郿山，及并天下，天下徒送詣七十餘萬人，穿三泉，下銅而致槨，宮觀百官奇器珍怪徙臧滿之。令匠作機弩矢，有所穿近者輒射之。以水銀為百川江河大海，機相灌輸，上具天文，下具地理。以人魚膏為燭，度不滅者久之。二世曰：「先帝后宮非有子者，出焉不宜。」皆令從死，死者甚眾。葬既已下，或言工匠為機，臧皆知之，臧重即泄。大事畢，已臧，閉中羨，下外羨門，盡閉工匠臧者，無復出者。樹草木以象山。



## 乌云

在这个作品装置中，有一万只瓷制棕鸟蜂拥在头顶，充满了力量和冲劲。这些棕鸟间的窃窃私语，是一种科学无法理解的迷人现象，单个小鸟间的互通有无就让整个鸟群得以同一步调畅快地滑翔。无论规模多么庞大，窃窃私语的棕鸟群都拥有同样迅捷的反应。在遭遇威胁或寻找栖息之所时，它们似乎是作为一个巨大的单一有机体而存在着的。

鸟群的形态就像一幅三维的山水笔墨画，呼应着骊山的起伏。根据中国古代哲学和风水学的观点，骊山是该地区的重要制高点，所以秦始皇选择它作为建造陵墓和一万兵马俑的风水宝地。

如果说前一个房间里的兵马俑所带来的是惊奇赞叹，那这个房间的目的就是供您安静沉思。这些艺术品都是在蔡国强的家乡泉州附近的德化县通过手工制作而成，那儿有着数百年的白瓷生产传统。这个作品中鸟群的着色是通过火药爆炸来实现的。

蔡说，“一万只瓷鸟演绎变幻莫测的乌云，像地下浩荡兵马俑军阵的魂魄追来，也似中华帝国不散的阴影漂浮。又何尝不是全球化时代对异文化幻觉的海市蜃楼？”

## 花瞬

几个世纪以来，盛开的牡丹一直是中国艺术的一个重要主题，经常出现在各种笔墨画和瓷器作品中。牡丹在盛开之巅的雍容华贵常常被画笔所记录，象征着皇室、美德和荣誉。然而，牡丹之美又是稍纵即逝的，整个花期只有一周多一点，之后便开始枯萎。

本馆展出了蔡国强的两幅作品。在室内覆盖墙面的作品宏伟大气，是用火药在丝绸上制作的画，记载了牡丹花生命周期的四个阶段：萌芽、盛开、枯萎和腐烂。在完成作品之后，艺术家说道：“我没想到画到花的衰就很动心，萎更是灵魂出窍般！第一次想起也许活着只是幻想和梦；死亡才有灵魂，才是本源和永在……更摸不着，更复杂。”

牡丹盛开的花园这一瓷器装置是在中国福建省的德化手工制作而成，而德化县正是以其手工制作白瓷的传统而闻名于世。这个装置经过了彩色火药的淬炼，一花一叶都是独一无二的，形成了一幅三维立体绘画。土丘的形状与秦始皇陵遗址附近骊山的起伏交相呼应。瓷器的脆弱喻意牡丹的花瞬易逝，代表着生命的脆弱和无常，同时也暗喻了秦帝国的短命。

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蔡国强说道：“如果把牡丹花当成‘国色天香’、至高无上的美，这件作品也算一座美的坟墓。白瓷从洁白到暗黑，一个极端到另一个极端。白瓷花的工艺性经过破坏蹂躏，升华为艺术。”

## 来世之旅：汉代墓葬

在第一位皇帝秦始皇去世后，秦朝迅速衰落，并在三年内被农民起义领袖项羽和亭长刘邦所推翻，刘邦后来成为了汉朝第一位皇帝——汉高祖。汉朝的第一位皇帝既认识到了秦国的成功之处，也认识到了其失败之因，他们采用了类似于秦的葬法以及相似的中央集权制度及标准化制度。汉朝统治者知道其成功离不开百姓的支持，于是采取措施减轻税赋和徭役，并且缩减陵墓的规模，减少百姓的负担。这些做法使得汉代得以统治四百多年，从公元前207年一直到公元220年(除了公元9年至25年期间有过短暂中断，从长安迁都洛阳，改西汉为东汉)。

类似于秦朝，汉朝皇帝建造了地上为封土堆，地下为宫殿的陵墓，紧邻的便是军队和随葬之俑，以及为来世所备的一些陪葬品。至今为止，已有两座出土的墓葬可为此说法佐证，一座是汉朝首位皇帝汉高祖在咸阳附近杨家湾的长岭，另一座是汉朝第四位皇帝汉景帝的汉阳陵。这两座陵墓的建造时其它以追溯到秦始皇真人大小的兵马俑建造后的70年左右，而两座陵墓中的兵马俑、动物俑和陶俑与秦始皇兵马俑的风格迥异。

## 地脉

这幅火药画看上去无边无际，代表着中国中原地区广阔的山川江河。中原位于黄河下游，被广泛认为是中国古代文化和文明的摇篮，也是世界的中心。在这一地区发生的重大事件包括黄帝的统治及其哲学思想的发展、阴阳学说的出现和发展、老子道教哲学的诞生、秦始皇统治下的中国大一统，以及400年的汉朝统治，这为巩固中华民族统一起到了关键作用。

这幅宏伟的火药画上从中央点火，燃烧蔓延至左右，创造出的能量流点出了中文标题——《地脉》，意为“大地之脉”。在研究能量的中国古代风水学中，像山脊、山谷与河流这样的山川轮廓，象征着大地的血脉和“气”（也就是生命力）的流动。这个理论影响了几千年来所有试图利用地之能量的人，他们在这种理论的指引下选择风水宝地。许多重要遗址，包括秦始皇陵、兵马俑和汉代皇陵，都是沿着这些风水脉络而建。