

## INTRODUCING ART

### CHINESE ART

#### Guardian Lion

1. This piece comes from the T'ang Dynasty, 618-906 A.D. the culmination of the great Golden Age of Buddhist art.
2. The Buddhist religion was founded in India in the late sixth century B.C. and spread across Asia as monks, merchants and pilgrims established a series of trade and travel routes which crossed Central Asia and India into China and Japan. Ideas about art and religion were carried from culture to culture along these routes as ancient travelers visited the homeland of the Buddha and as disciples of the Buddha established monasteries across the continent.
3. Many of these monasteries were decorated with many artworks in painting and sculpture. The arts not only flourished in the religious realm but also in the secular societies.
4. Because of the subsequent, long periods of warfare and religious intolerance, there are few remaining examples of T'ang dynasty Buddhist monasteries or of T'ang dynasty Buddhist stone sculpture.
5. The lion is a symbol in the Buddhist religion because the historical Buddha was said to be a lion among men and spoke with the voice of a lion. His throne is guarded by two lions and thus the lion is a favorite subject of Chinese. Buddhist art. It represents militant power of the faith.
6. Iconography is the development of symbols and their use in a particular culture. Iconography helps scholars understand how each culture expresses its ideas in images.
7. There are many ways in which artists can depict the world around them. One method is to represent objects realistically the way the eye sees it in nature. Another method of depicting an object is through stylization, by representing the general idea of the object, but reducing many areas of the object to decorative surface designs. This Guardian Lion is a blending of both styles. This blending is characteristic of the T'ang dynasty art.
8. The mane is an excellent example of stylization in art. It is depicted in a decorative, repetitive pattern of swirls and does not attempt to reproduce the specific look of a real lion.
9. This piece of sculpture has been carved in the round, meaning that it is capable of being observed from all sides. Chinese sculpture in the round was first successfully produced during the T'ang dynasty. Earlier works were meant to be seen frontally, and never viewed from the back or sides.
10. This piece was carved in white marble and painted in a bright yellow paint, however, much of the paint has been worn away over time.

#### Guardian Lion

What do you see in this print?

If you were to be in a museum and saw this work would it be hung on the wall or placed on a table? How do you know that?

What do you call artwork that is three dimensional (has height, width and depth)?

Does this piece look like it has come from our country?

What country do you think this is from? Give the answer China after discussion.

When do you think this was sculpted? Give dates 018-906 after discussion.

Can you tell what material was used to sculpt this piece? (White marble)

Is there evidence that it may have been another color long ago?

What do you think the purpose for this piece of sculpture was?

Does this piece look real or do you think it looks stylized?

What type of impression does this lion give you?

Why might he look so ferocious?

Do we have animals in our culture which guard things? Art Institute, libraries,

MGM movies lion, Harris Bank lion.