

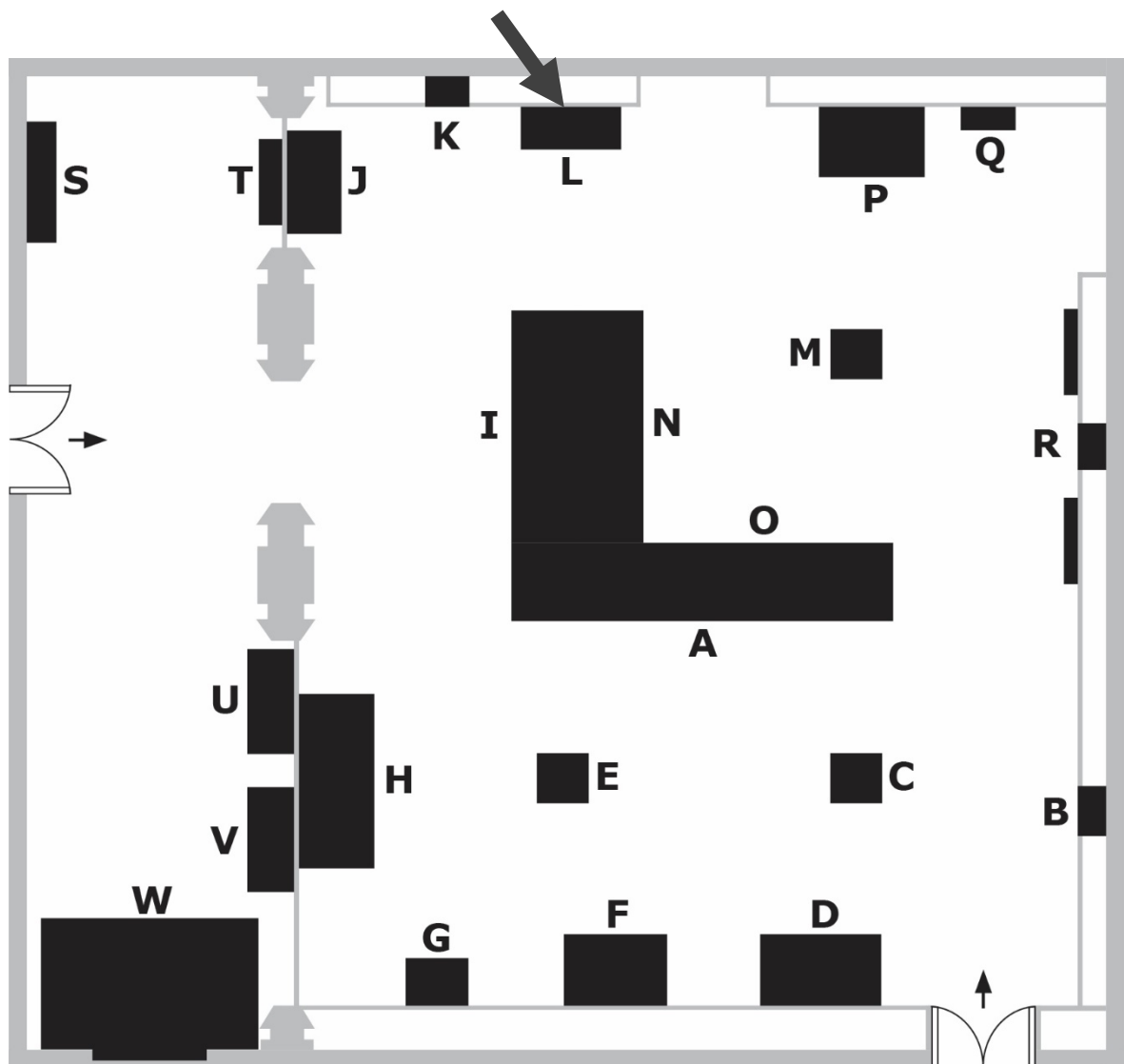
Large Print Guide  
Please return after use

A large, bold, white serif font spelling 'ACM' is centered on a solid black rectangular background. The letters are tall and have a classic, slightly ornate design.

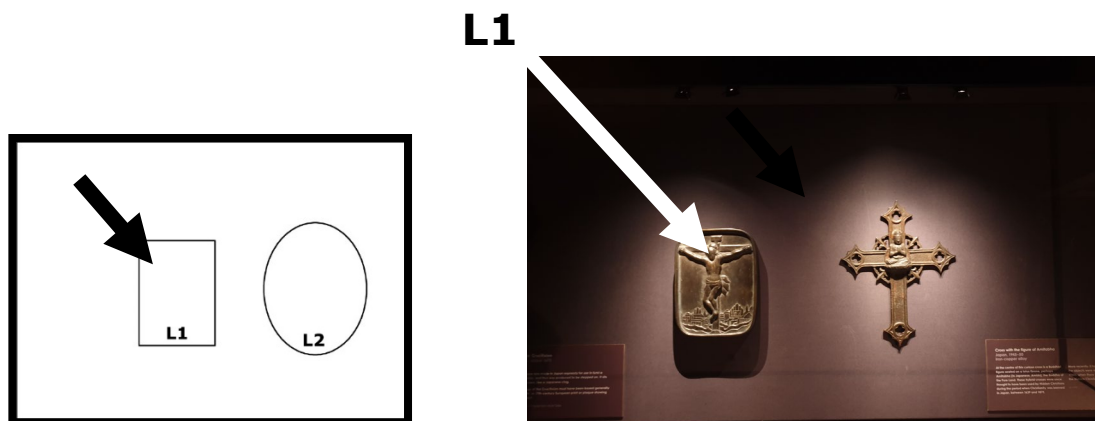
# Christian Art

Level 2  
Permanent Galleries  
Faith & Belief

## Floorplan of Gallery and User Guide



## How to read display case and floorplans



## How to read captions

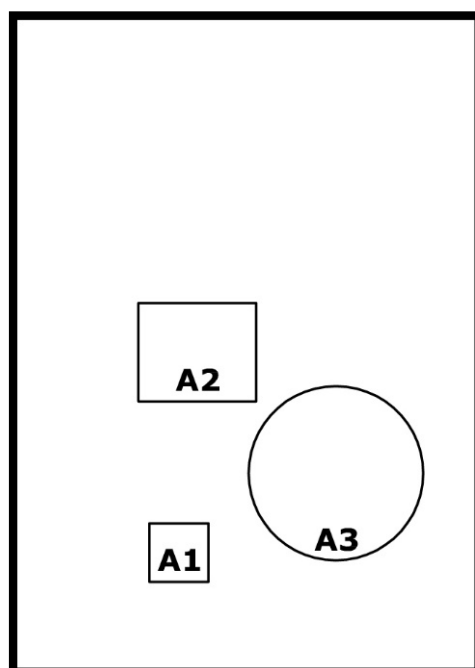
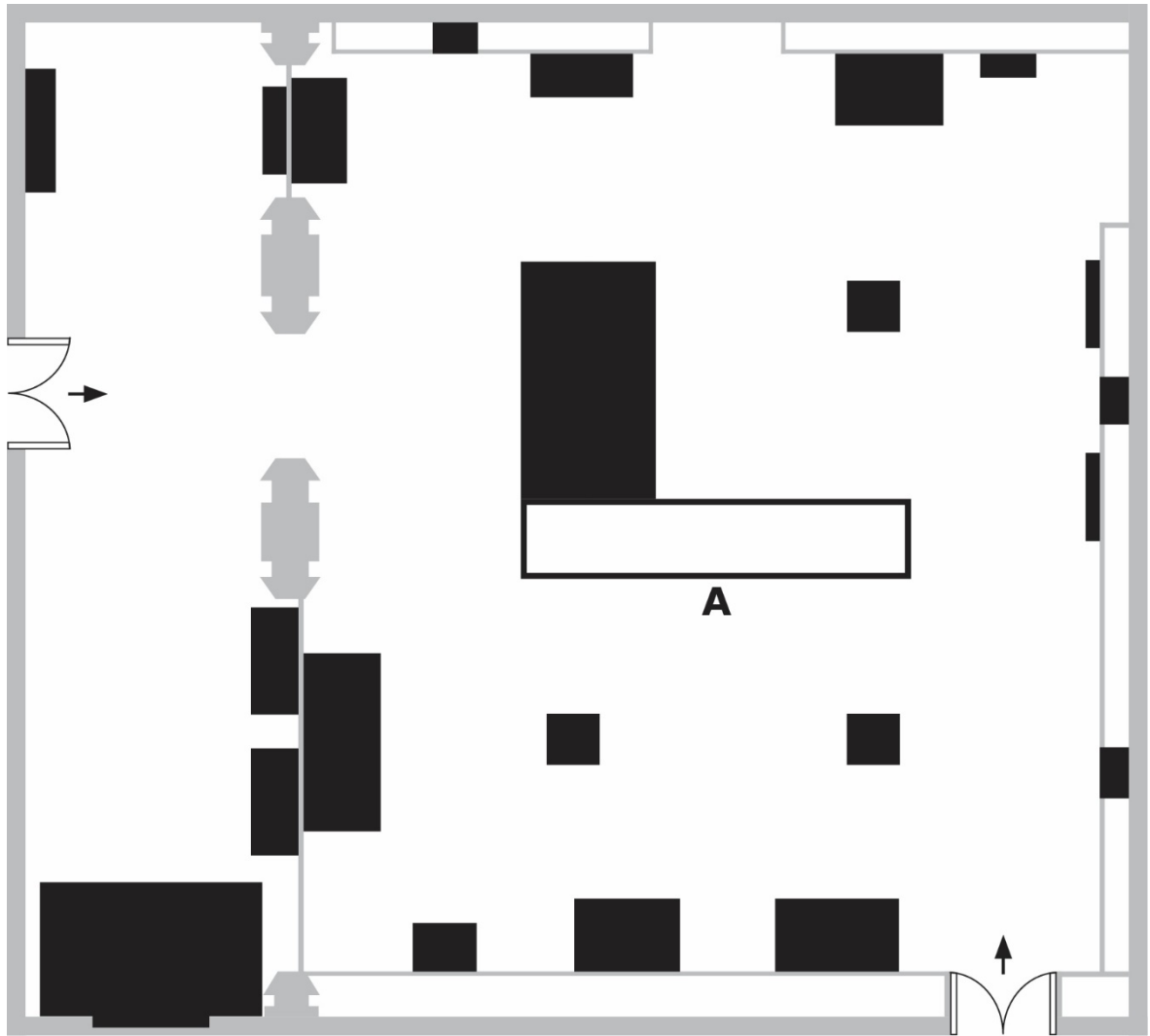
**L1**

**Fumi-e: Crucifixion**

Japan, dated 1670

Brass

2013-00900



## **A1**

### **New Testament in Armenian**

Middle East, early 18th century

Ink, colours, and gold on paper; leather binding

2013-00741, Gift of Paula, Lady Brown

Pages in this miniature book have decorated initial letters and borders, and there are several illustrations. Armenia had one of the earliest Christian communities. It adopted Christianity as its official religion in the 4th century.

Here in Singapore, the Armenian Church of Saint Gregory the Illuminator (built 1835–36) is the oldest Christian church.

## **A2**

### **Portable shrine: Virgin and Child**

Turkey, early 18th century (Ottoman Empire)

Oil on wood, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, and ivory

2015-00581

The painting shows the Christ Child standing on the Virgin's lap. They float in clouds surrounded by Saint Joseph and an angel.

The materials and patterns on this shrine are typical of Ottoman art of the 18th century.

Christian objects of similar design were produced for use in Armenian churches. But the painting here does not include Armenian Christian or Greek Orthodox imagery, so it was probably made for a Roman Catholic patron to use in the home.

## **A3**

### **Hanging ornaments**

Turkey, Kütahya, 18th century

Fritware

2013-00584

Decorated with angels, crosses, and flowers, these egg-shaped ornaments are made of glazed ceramic. They are hollow and pierced at the top and bottom, so that they can be hung from a ceiling, sometimes strung together.

It has been suggested that the egg shape symbolizes fertility, and that they were also suspended between church ceilings and hanging lamps to prevent mice from drinking the oil in the lamps. Hanging ornaments of this form are found in mosques as well as Orthodox and Armenian churches.

**A4**

**The Holy Spirit Descends on the Apostles  
and the Virgin at Pentecost**

Sanvala (active around 1580–1606)

Mughal India, around 1600–1605

Colour on paper

2012-00165

After the death of Christ, the apostles and the Virgin Mary received the Holy Spirit (seen here in the form of a dove). Tongues of fire appeared on their heads, and they began to speak in many different languages. This subject was an ideal symbol for missionary work because it emphasises that Christ's teachings should be accessible to all people in their own language.



**A5**

**Virgin and Child with John the Baptist**

Muhammad Zaman (active 1649–1700)

Iran, signed and dated 1682–83

Colour and gold on paper

2011-02267

This image of the Christian Virgin and Child was based on a European print, but the artist has imaginatively varied the scene. It was probably made for a Muslim patron because it was added to an Islamic album containing drawings and calligraphies soon after it was made (the colourful borders here are the album page). Christian subjects in Islamic art might be surprising, but the Virgin, Christ, and John the Baptist are respected figures in Islam.

The openness of Iran to the outside world in the 17th century brought Europeans to the capital Isfahan. The influence of European works of art

on Iranian artists can be seen in their use of perspective, blended shading, and attention to Western motifs.

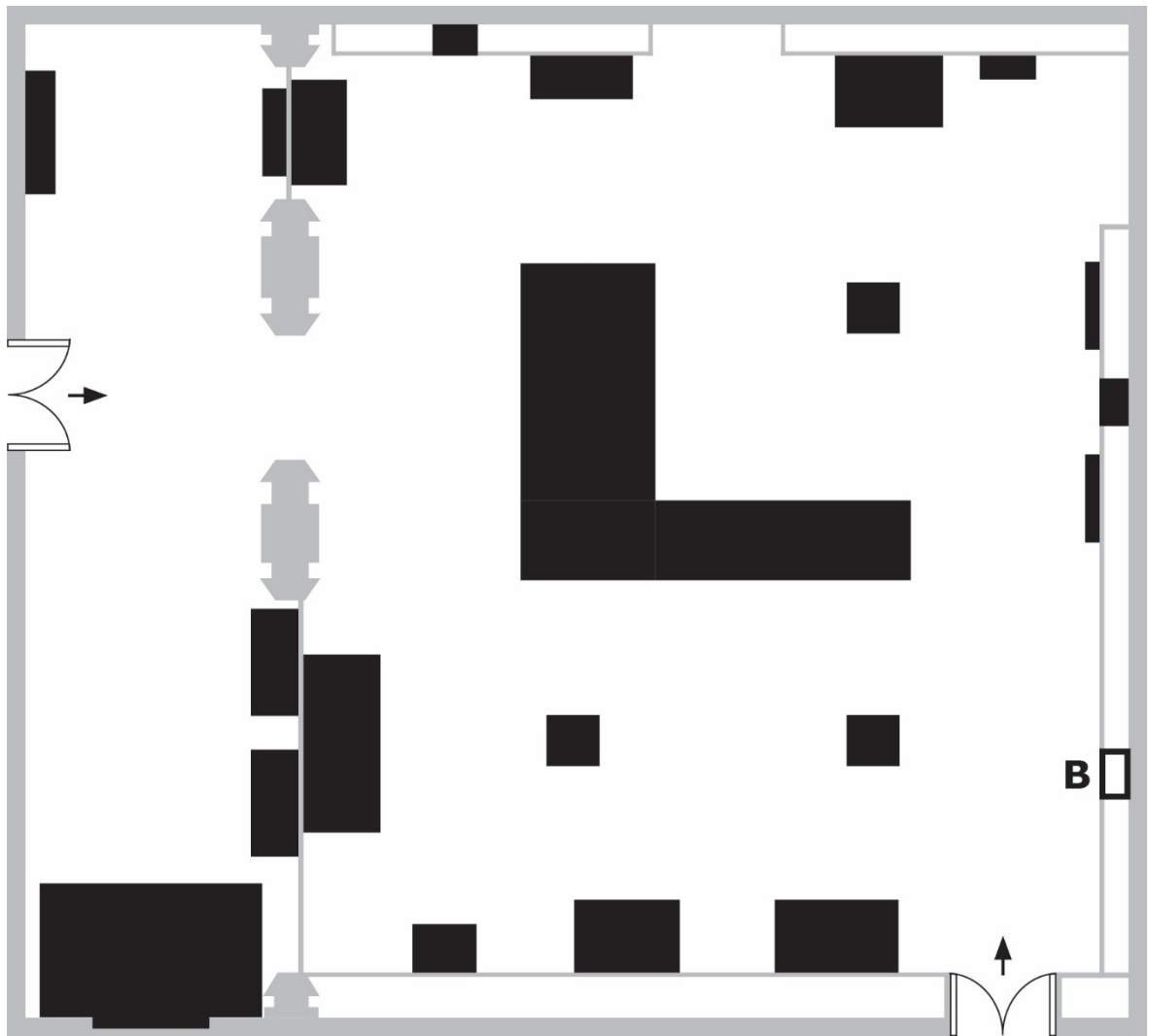
## **A6**

### **St Francis Xavier**

India, Goa, 19th century

Painted wood

2009-01457



## **B**

### **Saint Francis Xavier in Asia**

Born in the Basque region of Spain, Francis Xavier (1506–1552) was one of the principal Christian missionaries to Asia. He helped found the Society of Jesus, whose members are known as Jesuits. In 1542, he arrived in Goa, and visited Malacca, the Molucca Islands, and Japan, gaining many converts. In 1552 he passed through the Straits of Singapore on his way to China. But he was not allowed to preach in China itself, and he died on an island off the coast of southern China.

Francis believed in incorporating local customs and beliefs into his preaching, an approach that was highly influential on later Jesuits. Francis Xavier was made a saint in 1622, leading to a cult of devotion around him. Images and objects relating to him were produced for his followers.

## **B1**

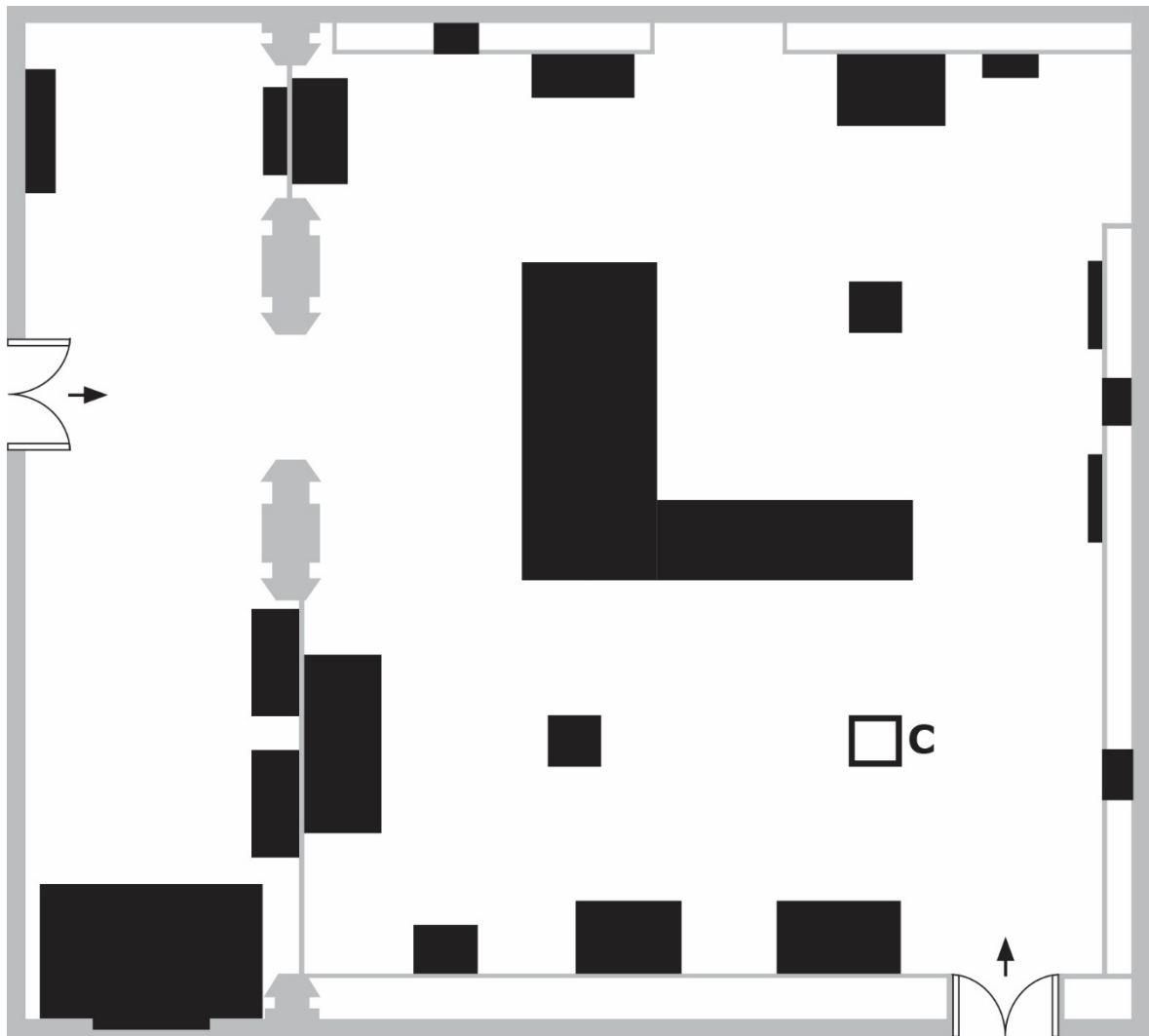
### **Panel depicting St Francis Xavier**

India, Goa, 17th century

Painted and gilded teakwood

2017-00256

This panel shows a most famous miracle related to the Catholic missionary Saint Francis Xavier. When Francis was travelling between the islands of Ambon and Seram on his evangelising mission, his ship encountered a storm. To try to calm the seas, he threw his crucifix into the rough waters. The ship managed to dock safely. And as it did, a crab appeared holding the crucifix in its claws, returning it to Francis Xavier. This is one of the most popular episodes from the life of the saint, and served as inspiration for many artworks after his death, including images of crabs. From the panel's size and high-quality of carving, it was likely commissioned for a church.



## C

### **Virgin and Child**

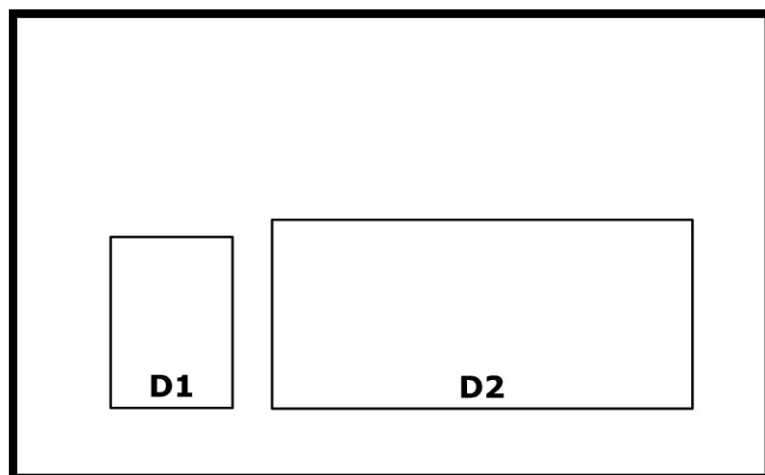
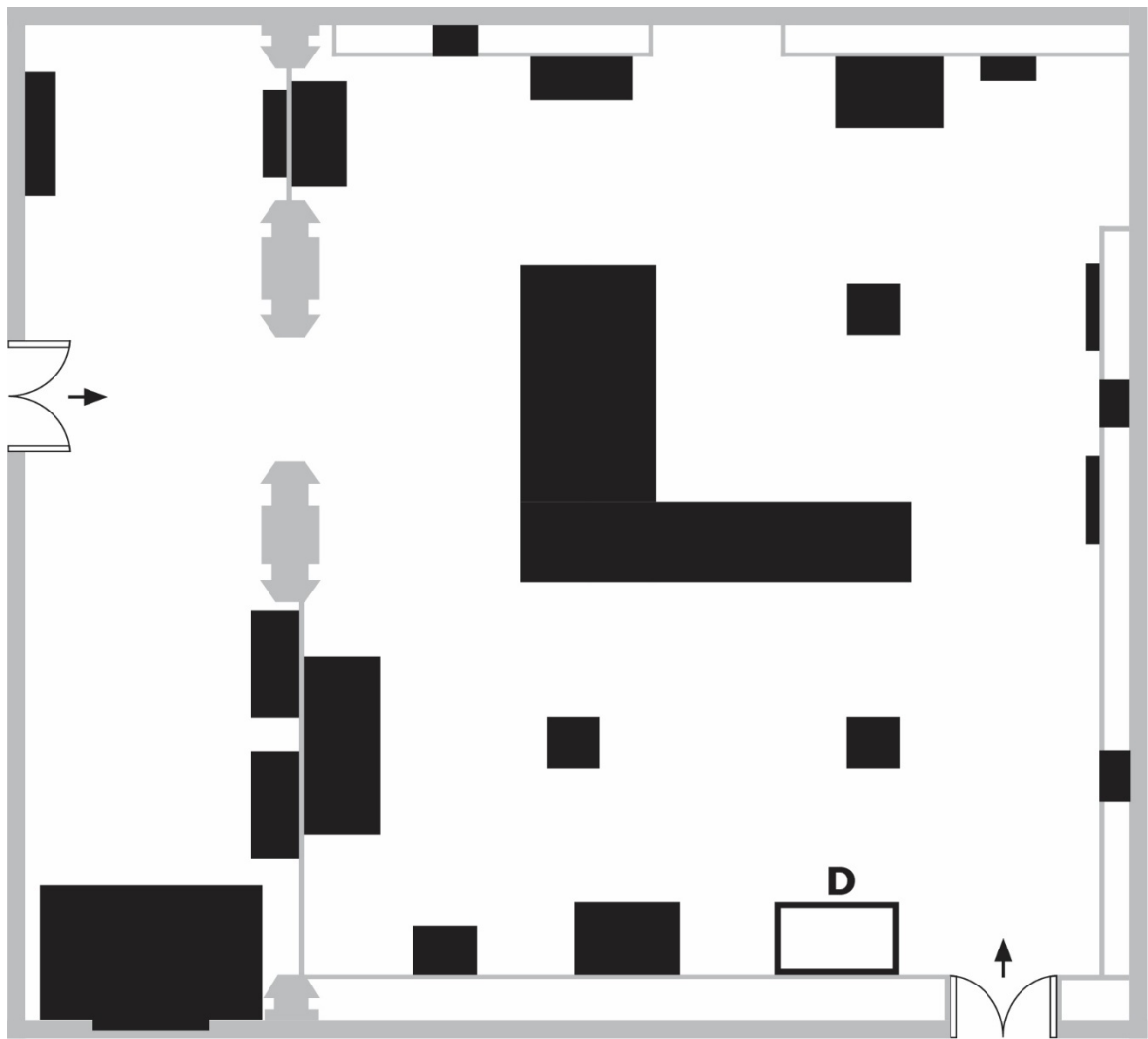
Sri Lanka, mid-16th century

Ivory

2011-01506

This Christian sculpture was carved in ivory, probably by a Buddhist artist in Sri Lanka, in the late 16th century. It is the largest known of this type, and also one of the most refined and elegant. Sri Lankan elements are seen in the jewellery and the robes, which resemble those worn by Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka.

Another Buddhist element added is the trivali on the necks of the Virgin and Jesus. These three incised lines are distinguishing marks of the Buddha. Adding them here reveals that the local artist knew that the Virgin and Child were important religious figures.





## **D1**

### **Plaque: Tree of Jesse**

Sri Lanka, around 1600

Ivory

2014-00919

This represents the family tree of Jesus Christ, beginning with Jesse of Bethlehem, father of King David. At the top is Christ as an infant held by the Virgin. This plaque is organised around a massive tree trunk, rather than an ornamental vine often seen in European art. It springs from Jesse's loins as a graphic indication that he is the early ancestor of Christ.

The gospels of Matthew and Luke in the Bible give the genealogy of Christ, while the Book of Isaiah describes his lineage as the branch of a tree. The subject had been popular in European art since the 12th century.

## **D2**

### **Cabinet with images of Adam and Eve**

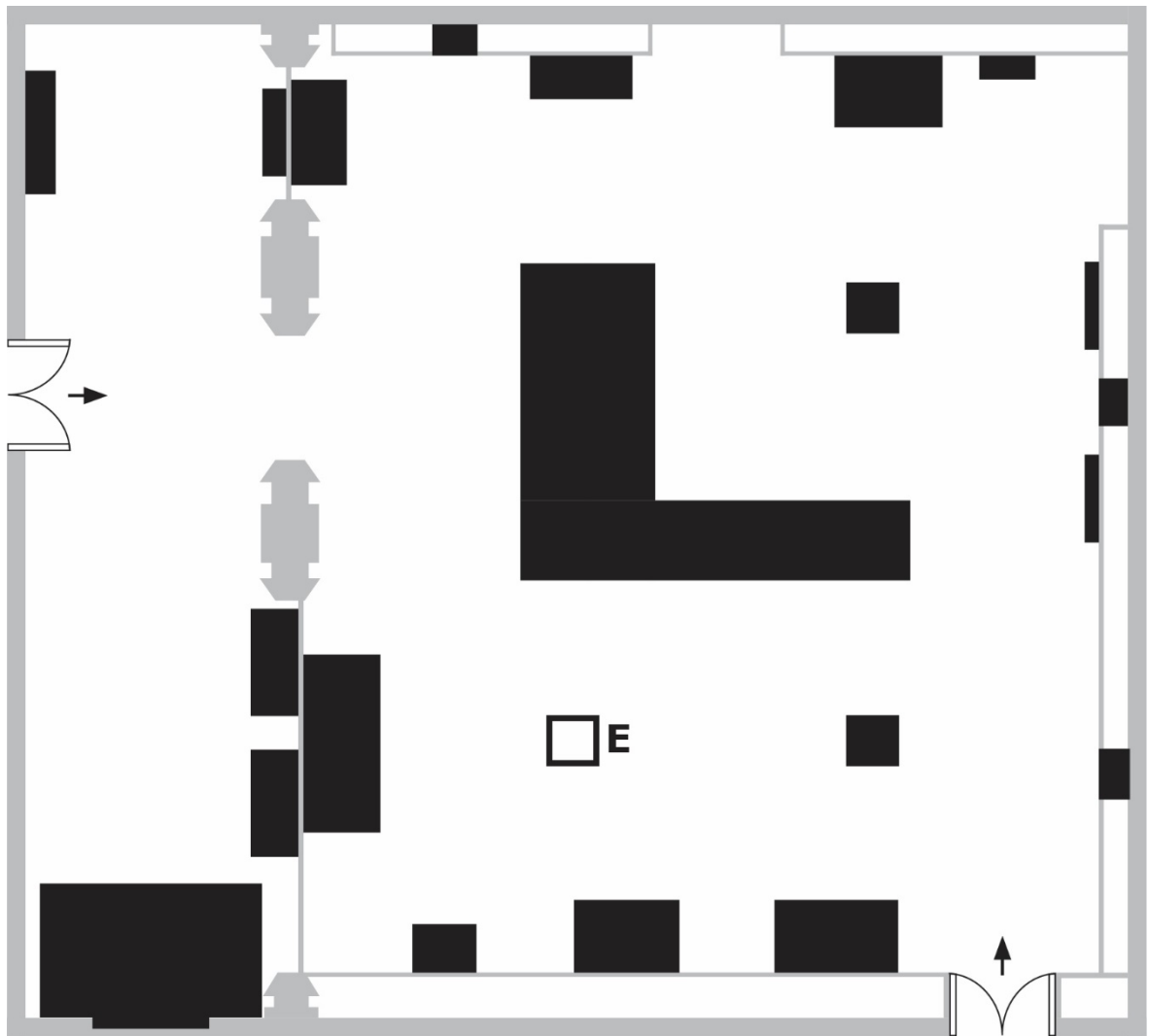
Sri Lanka, late 17th century

Ivory, teak, silver mounts

2015-00188

Cabinets depicting Adam and Eve were made by Sri Lankan ivory carvers for the Dutch, who took control of the island in 1656. This is the largest example of the known 15 cabinets.

Dutch Protestant art did not often show Christ or the Virgin Mary, but stories from the Old Testament were popular. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden provided artists with the perfect opportunity to depict exotic animals. Here we see elephants and other Asian animals and birds.



## **E**

### **Virgin of the Immaculate Conception**

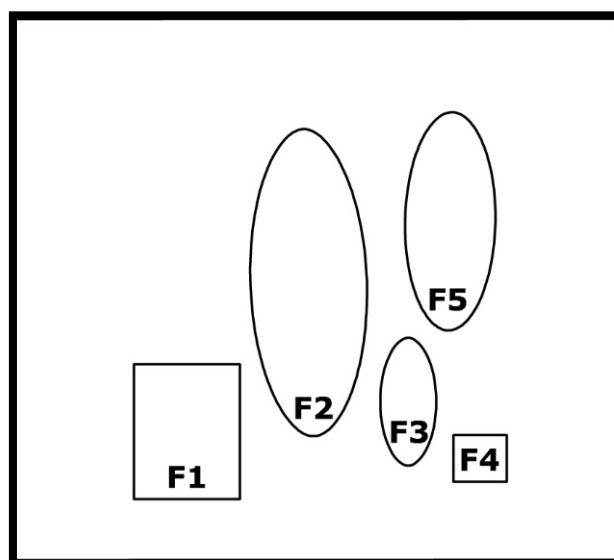
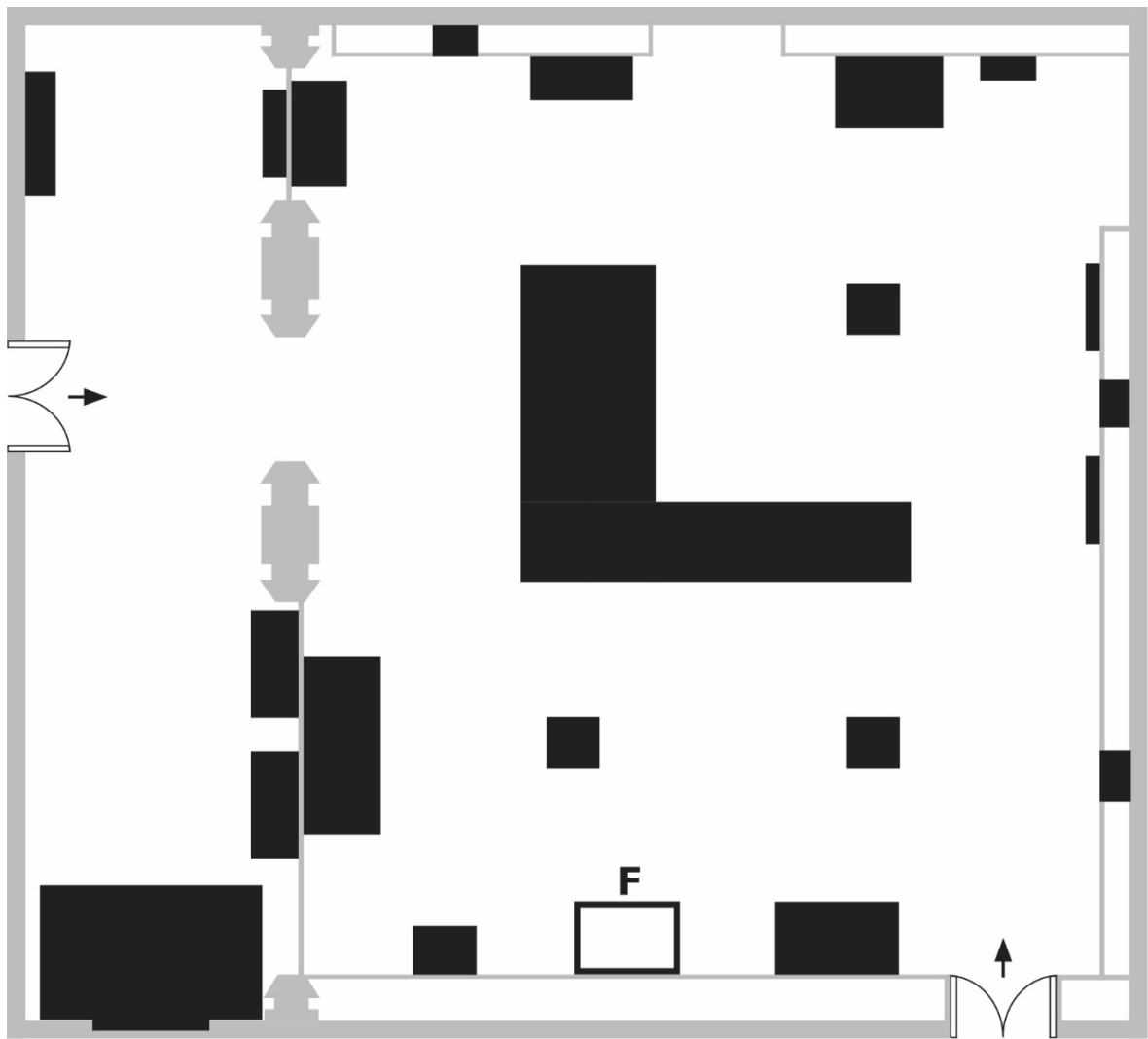
India, early 17th century

Ivory, rosewood

2015-00197

The Immaculate Conception is the principle that the Virgin Mary was freed from sin at the moment she was conceived (a concept different from the virgin birth of Christ). The belief arose early in the history of Christianity. The crescent moon and the defeat of the serpent (under the Virgin's feet) are standard elements of this scene.

The triangular wooden base is decorated with ivory plaques carved with symmetrical, stylised flowers typical of Mughal decoration.



## **F1**

### **Book stand with the Jesuit emblem**

Goa or southern India, late 17th century

Gilded and painted wood

This book stand is decorated with the Jesuit emblem, which suggests it was carved in South or Southeast Asia in a centre that was controlled by the Portuguese or traded extensively with them.

Objects of this type are thought to have been made in different locations, from Goa and Cochin (now Kochi) on the western coast of India, to Palembang on Sumatra. Because the Portuguese were pushed out of Malacca and Sri Lanka after the mid-17th century, it seems likely that this stand was made in Goa or southern India.

On loan from Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

## **F2**

### **Crucifix**

Figure of Christ: Painted and gilded ivory; India,  
Goa

Cross: painted and gilded wood, silver; Portugal  
18th century

2014-00940

## **F3**

### **Good Shepherd**

India, Goa, 17th century

Ivory

2011-01954

The Christ Child here is portrayed as the Good Shepherd. Christ keeping watch over the “flock” of believers is a popular Christian theme. Caves in the mountain contain figures including Mary Magdalene, Saint Jerome, and Christ’s parents Mary and Joseph. God the Father is in the clouds above.

The Good Shepherd was one of the most common themes made in ivory imagery in Goa. Individuals as well as churches bought these images. They were also exported to Asia and Europe.

#### **F4**

#### **Mourners at the Crucifixion of Christ**

Possibly Sri Lanka, 17th century

Ivory

1998-01403

Five figures are gathered at the base of a cross to mourn Christ's death. Originally, there was also a figure of Christ on an extension of the cross mounted above the wall.

Present are John the Evangelist (right); the Virgin Mary (left); Mary Magdalene kneeling to embrace the cross; and two other mourners.



Carved onto the wall are instruments of Christ's Passion – reminders of events in his last days.

## **F5**

### **Rosary**

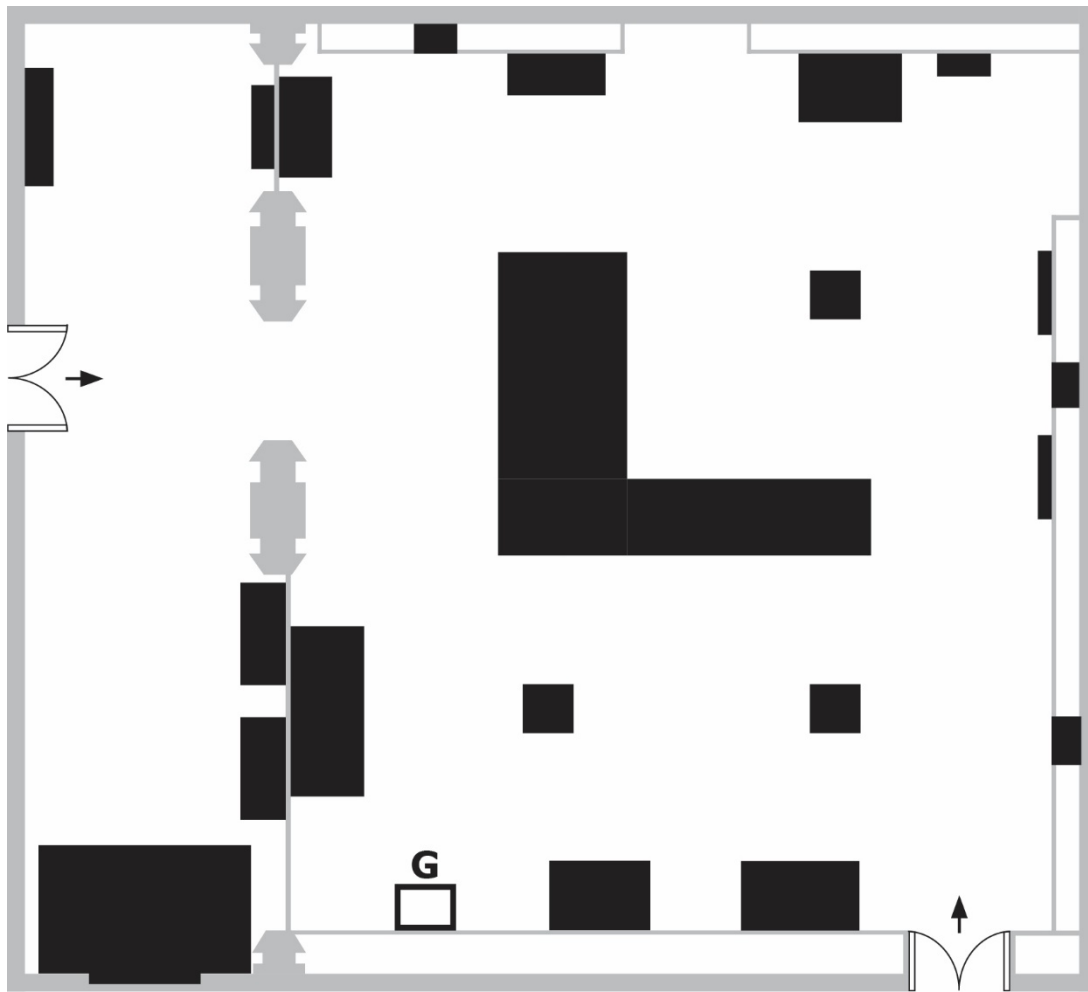
India, possibly Goa, 17th century

Amber, silver

2011-03165

Beads are used by believers of many faiths, including Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians, to help count prayers. The openwork silver pendants here feature Roman Catholic imagery. The largest shows the Holy House of Loreto, believed to be the birthplace of the Virgin Mary. The other pendants bear the symbol of the Jesuit order.

In 1615, several amber rosaries were given to the Mughal emperor Jahangir.



## **G**

### **Pietà (Mother of Sorrows)**

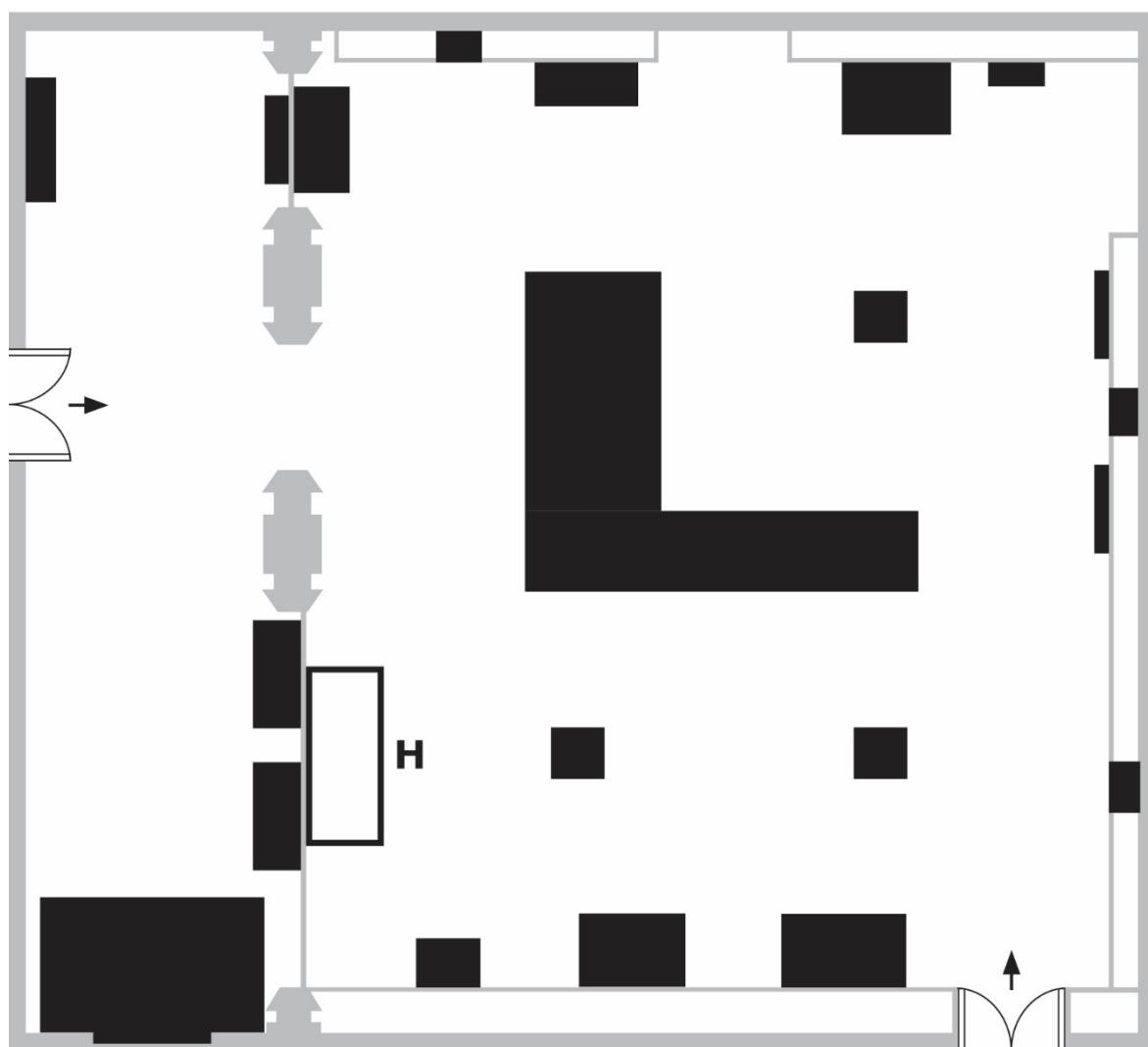
India, Kerala, 18th century

Painted wood

2014-00316

The Virgin mourns as she holds the dead Christ on her lap. Called the Pietà (Italian for “piety”), this subject developed in Germany and Italy in the 14th century, out of the scene where several figures mourn the dead Christ.

This sculpture was commissioned for a Saint Thomas Christian church in southern India. The large and active Christian community used Syriac as a liturgical language. The inscription on the base reads “mother of sorrows”.



**H**

**Christ**

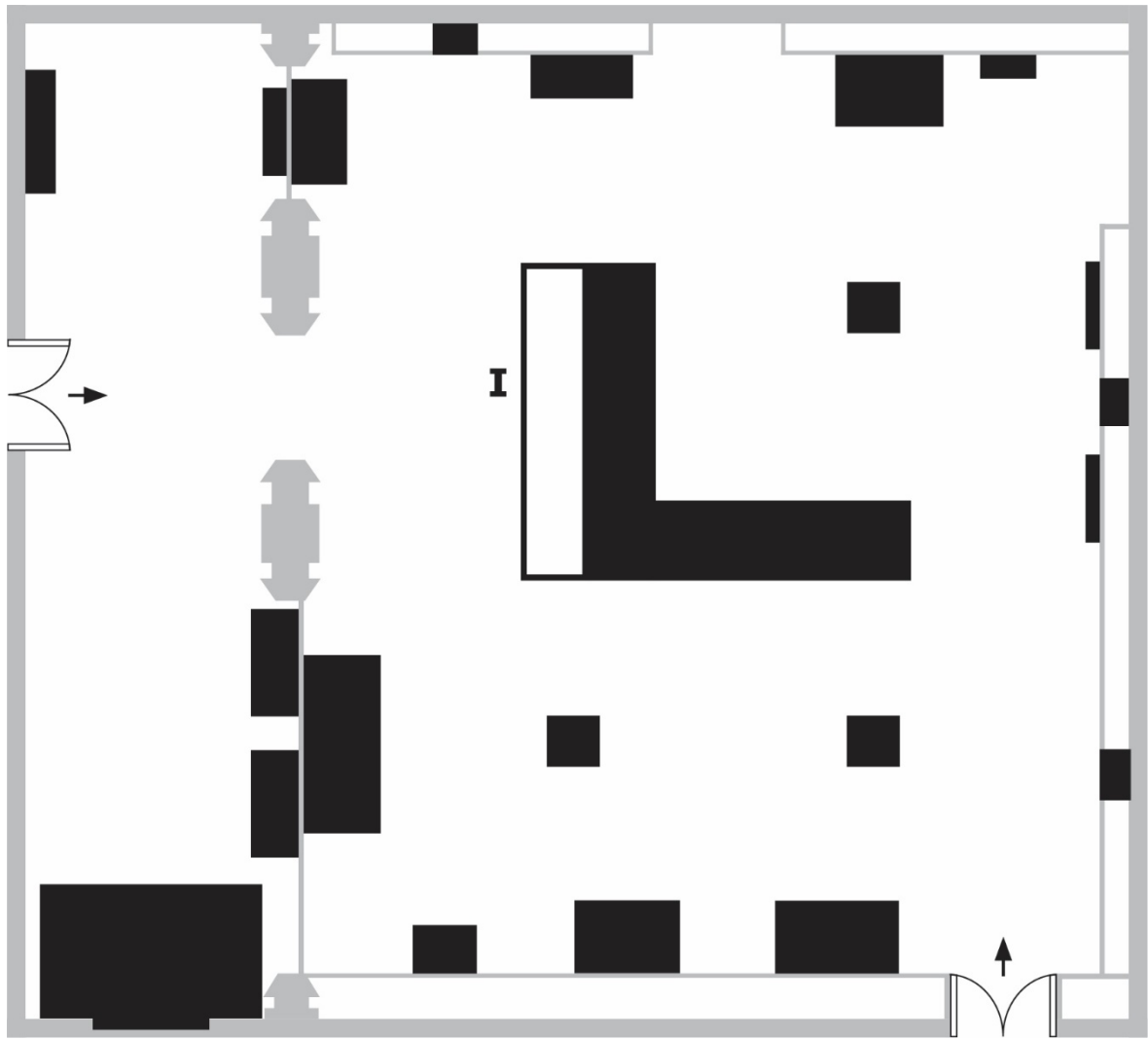
India, Goa, 19th century

Painted wood

2015-00399

Sculptures of the emaciated, suffering Christ were commonly made in Western Europe, and also in the Asian territories under Spanish and Portuguese influence. This over-life-sized example was made in Goa, India. An essential part of Christian faith is the idea that Christ's suffering absolves believers from their own sins.

Gift of Adele and Vinod Nair



## I2

### **Fumi-e: Pietà**

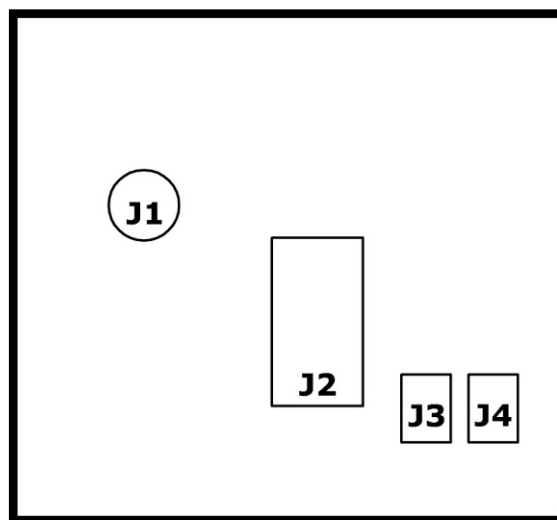
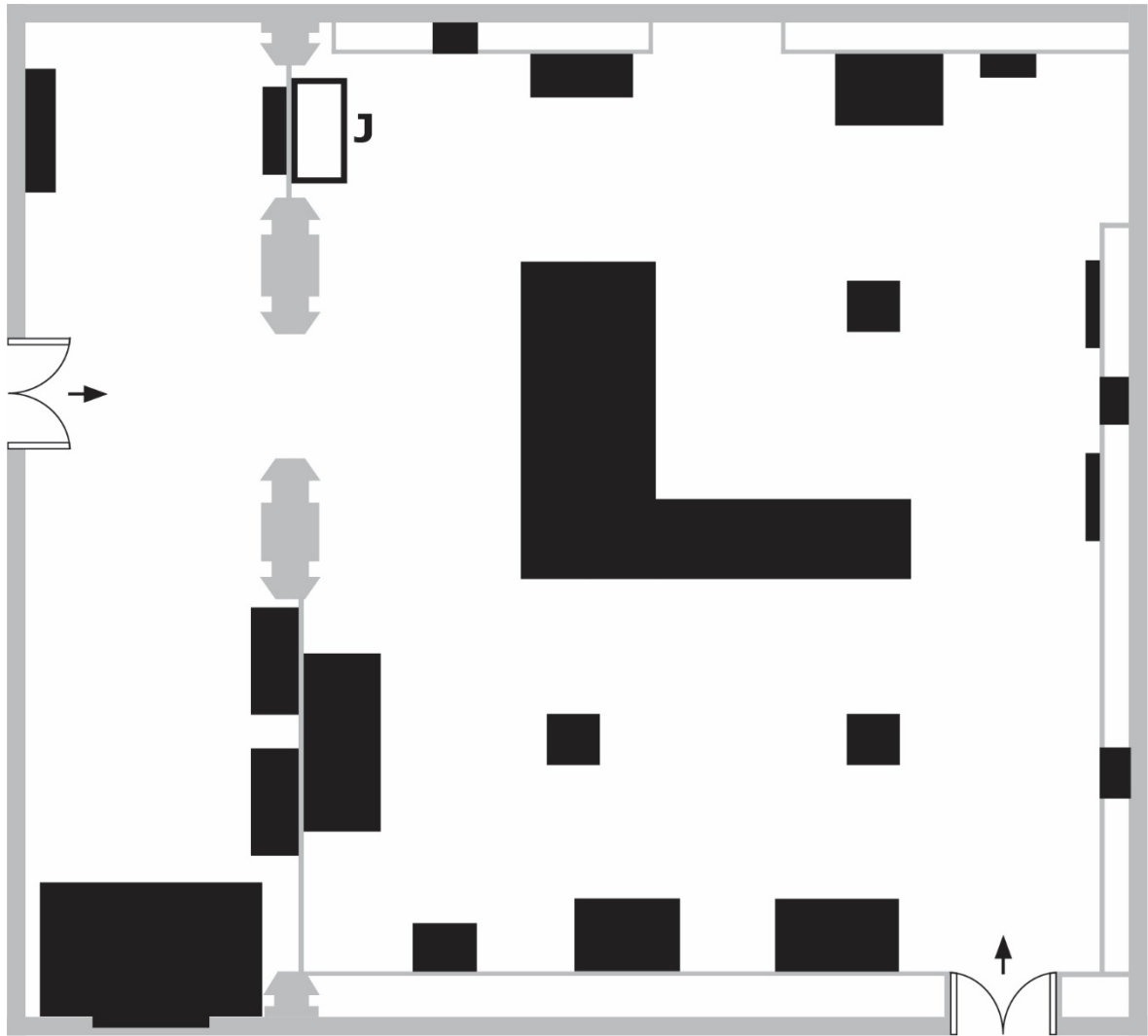
Japan, 17th century

Bronze plaque (Europe, 17th century), wood

2011-02284

In the era when Christianity was banned in Japan, confiscated Christian objects were used to identify converts. Called fumi-e ("pictures to trample"), suspected Christians were asked to step on them. If they refused, they were accused of being Christian. The practice began in Nagasaki as early as 1628.

The plaque depicts the Virgin Mary holding the body of the dead Christ, a subject known as the Pietà. It may have been brought to Japan as a devotional image, and later confiscated to be used as fumi-e.





## **J**

### **Shrine with painting of Holy Family and John the Baptist**

Japan, 17th century

Shrine: lacquer and gold on wood, mother-of-pearl, metal mounts

Painting: oil on copper

2016-00368

This small shrine was probably used for private devotion. Mary and her husband Joseph look down at the Christ Child, with the infant John the Baptist at right. The painting is in the style of Spanish and Flemish paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Japanese lacquer craftsmanship and European Christian subject matter combine here in an interaction of cultures. Lacquered furniture was one of the most prized Japanese products exported to Europe and Asia. Objects decorated

in this style came to be known as namban (literally, “foreigners from the south”). The term was used for many objects made for foreigners.

## **J1**

### **Reliquary Crucifix**

Japan, 17th century

Gilded copper alloy, lacquer (sawasa)

2017-00943

This crucifix pendant is actually a reliquary. The knob at the bottom of the cross unscrews and panels on both sides open to reveal small compartments. Relics and other valuable items could be stored within.

On one side, there is a figure of Christ Crucified. On the other side is a figure of the Virgin Mary. The blooms below her feet are unusual and quite interesting: they appear to be chrysanthemums, a flower popular in Japanese decorative arts. This

crucifix reliquary was made in Japan, perhaps for Western Christian missionaries working there.

The decoration was made with a technique called sawasa, which involves applying lacquer to a gilded metal surface, then both incising and adding raised relief decoration to create stunning contrasts in black and gold.

**J2**

### **Lectern with the Jesuit monogram**

Japan, or probably China or Southeast Asia

Late 16th or early 17th century

2017-01084

All surfaces of this wooden book stand are coated with lacquer, and enhanced with gold and mother-of-pearl designs. The front panel shows "IHS" (Iesus Hominum Salvator, Jesus Saviour of Mankind) and three nails, which make up the emblem of the Society of Jesus, whose members are called Jesuits. An elaborate lectern of this

type, emblazoned with the symbol of a religious order, was likely meant to support a missal, the book of texts and instructions used to celebrate the Catholic Mass.

### **J3**

#### **Netsuke: Saint Anthony of Padua**

Japan, 17th century

Ivory

2012-00631

This ivory netsuke depicts Saint Anthony of Padua, a Portuguese friar of the Franciscan Order. In art, he is typically depicted holding a cross and carrying the infant Jesus, as here.

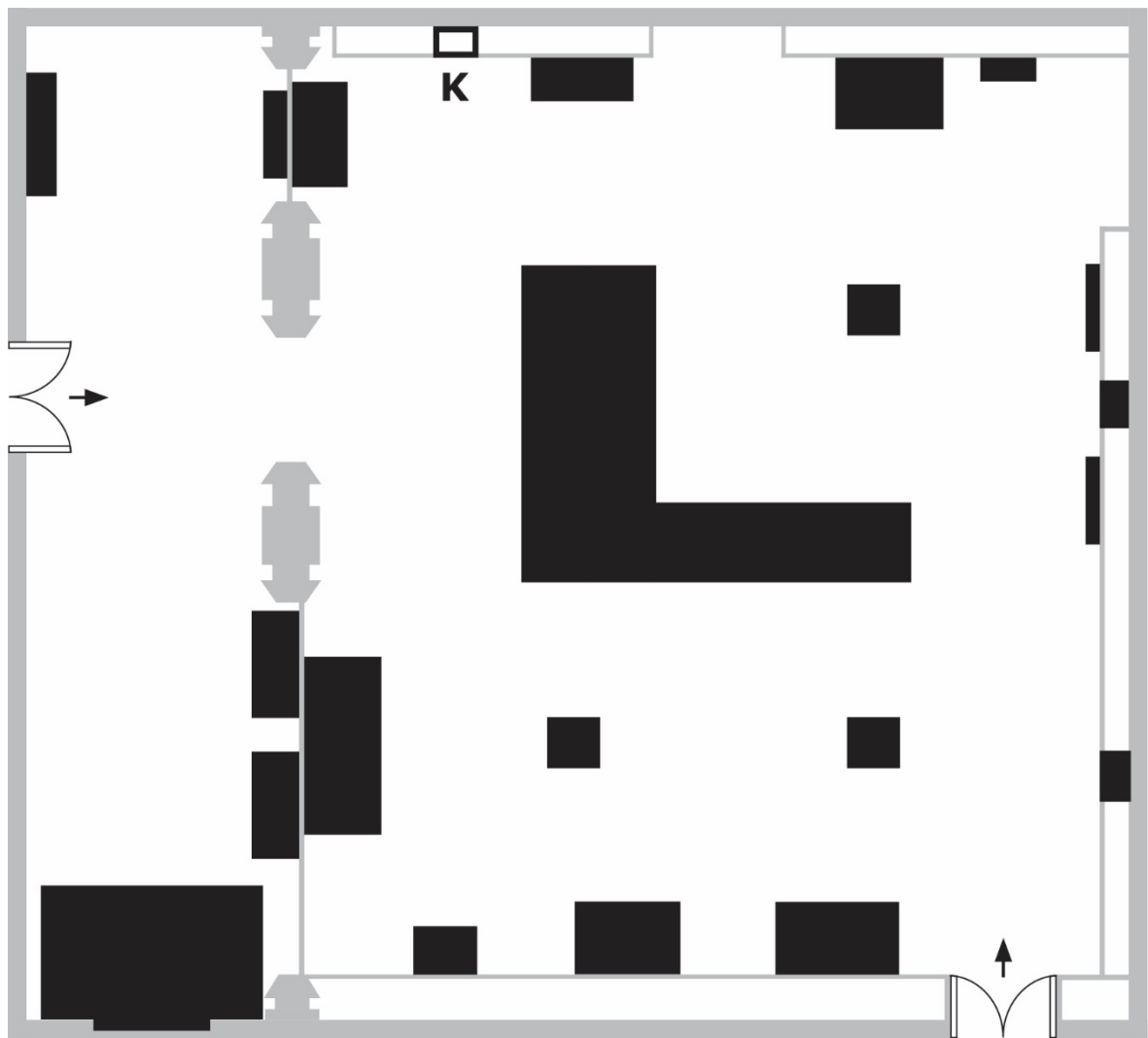
### **J4**

#### **Sword guard: Crucifix**

Japan, late 16th or early 17th century

Iron with silver and gold inlay

2015-00033



**K**

**Signboard**

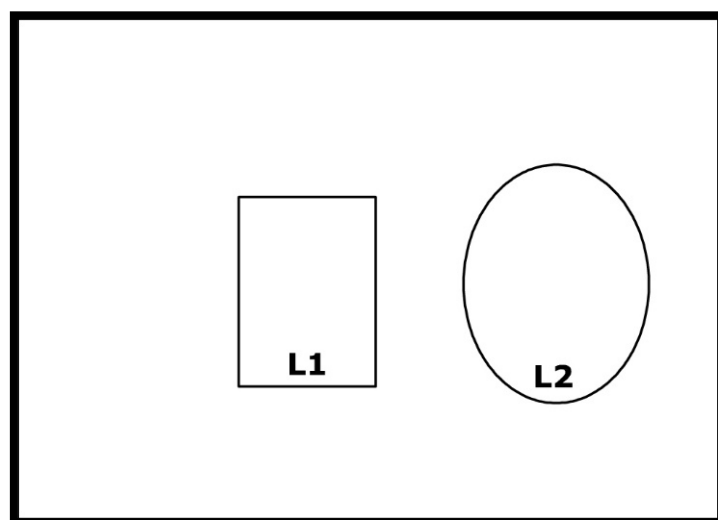
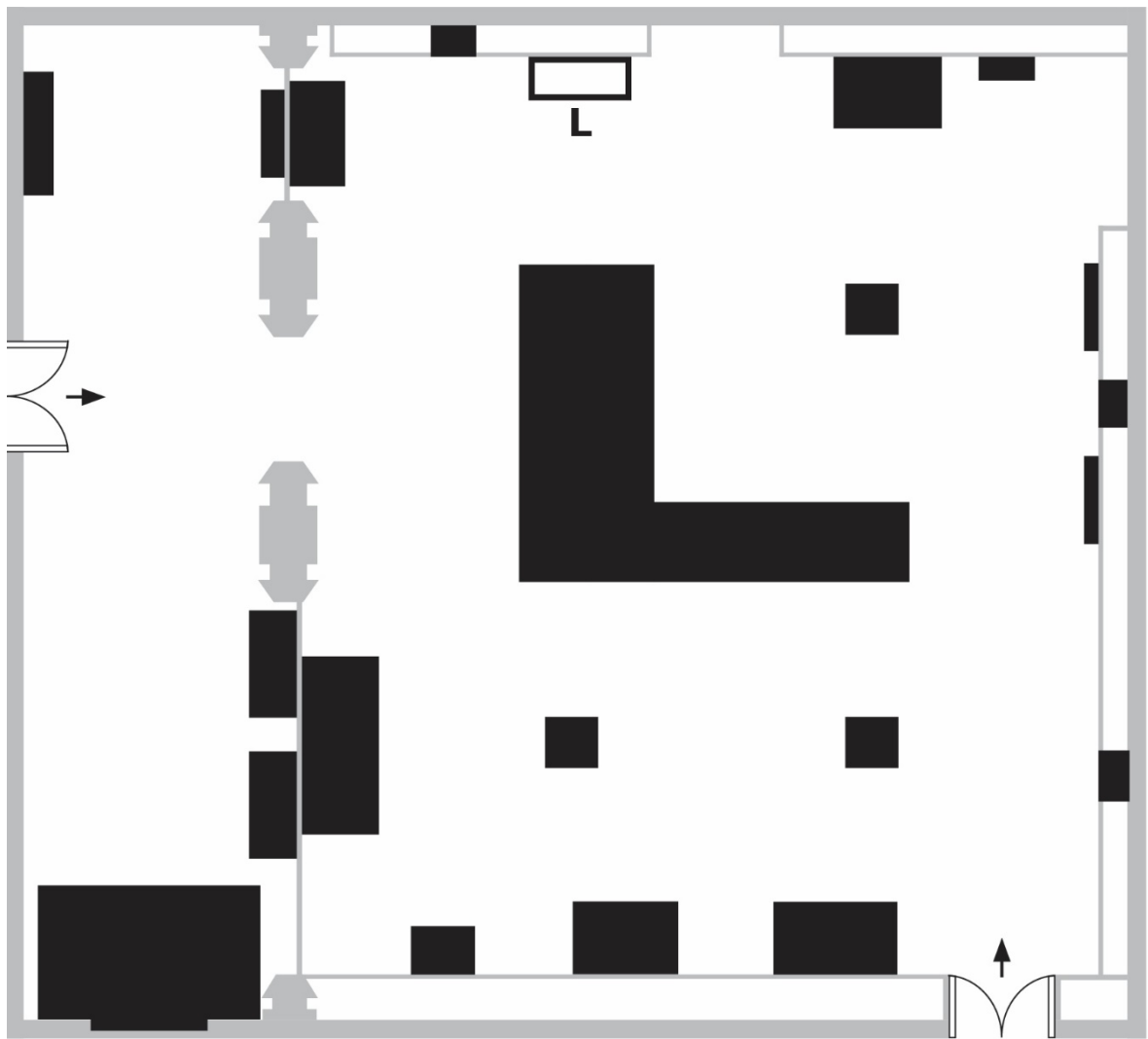
Japan, 1868

Wood and ink

2013-00901

This signboard displays a proclamation banning Christianity. Beginning in 1597, public notices like this were posted in provinces throughout Japan. This one was issued in 1868, just a few years before the ban on Christianity was lifted in 1873. It comes from Hyuga province in Kyushu, one of the main centres of Christian missions.

Acquired with funds from ACM Gala



**L1**

**Fumi-e: Crucifixion**

Japan, dated 1670

Brass

2013-00900

This plaque was made in Japan expressly for use in fumi-e ceremonies, and thus was produced to be stepped on. It sits on four risers, like a Japanese clog.

The image of the Crucifixion must have been based generally on a 16th- or 17th-century European print or plaque showing the subject.

Acquired with funds from ACM Gala



## **L2**

### **Cross with the figure of Amitabha**

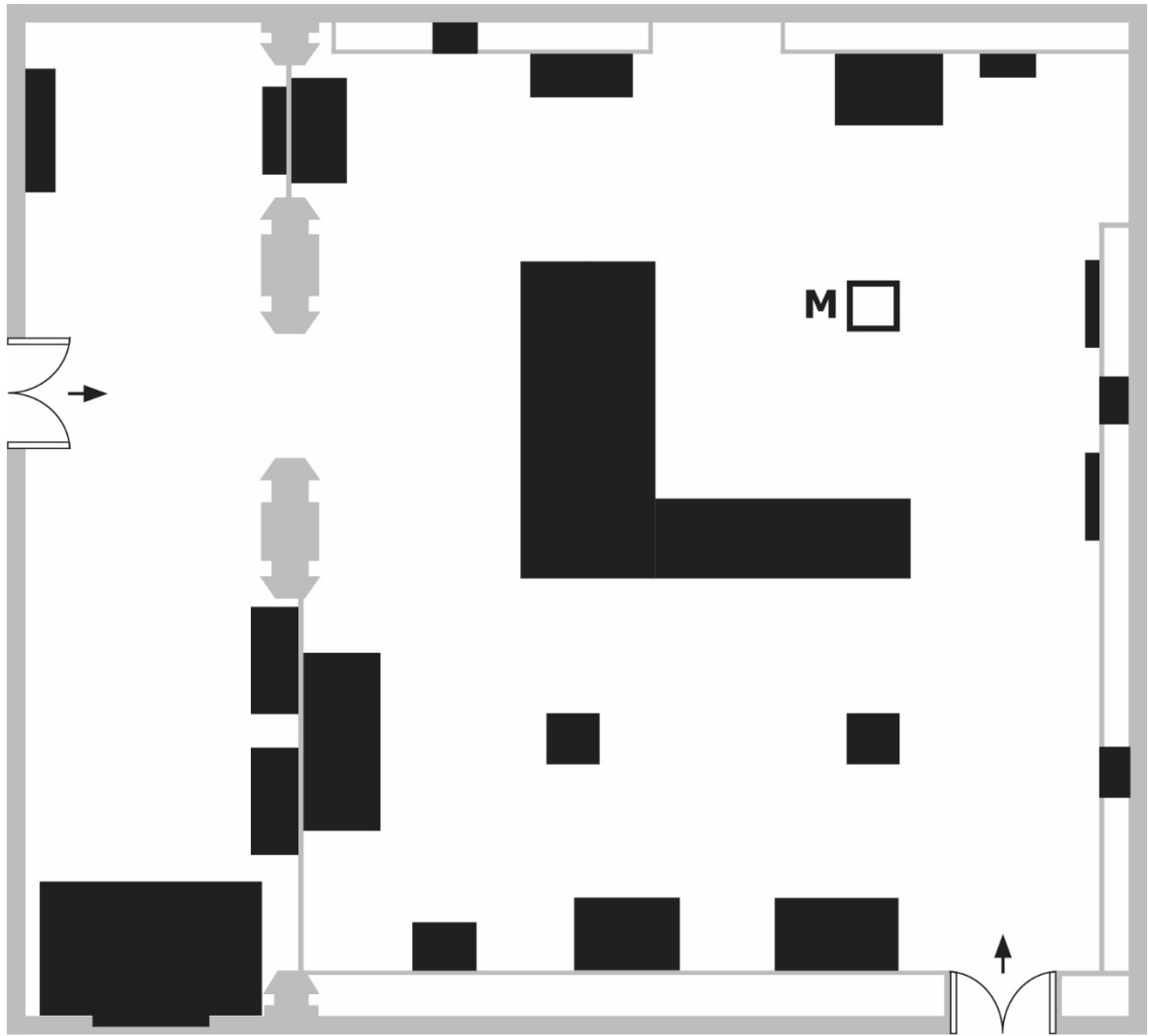
Japan, 1945–50

Iron-copper alloy

2011-02283

At the centre of this curious cross is a Buddhist figure seated on a lotus throne, perhaps Amitabha (in Japanese, Amida), the Buddha of the Pure Land. These hybrid crosses were once thought to have been used by Hidden Christians during the period when Christianity was banned in Japan, between 1639 and 1873.

More recently, it has been discovered that the objects were made in Nagoya as souvenirs in the late 1940s, when there was a surge in interest in the Hidden Christian communities.



## **M**

### **Christ Child, Saviour of the World**

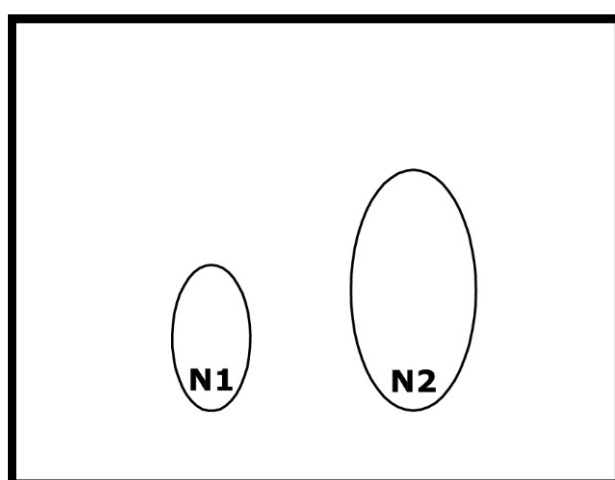
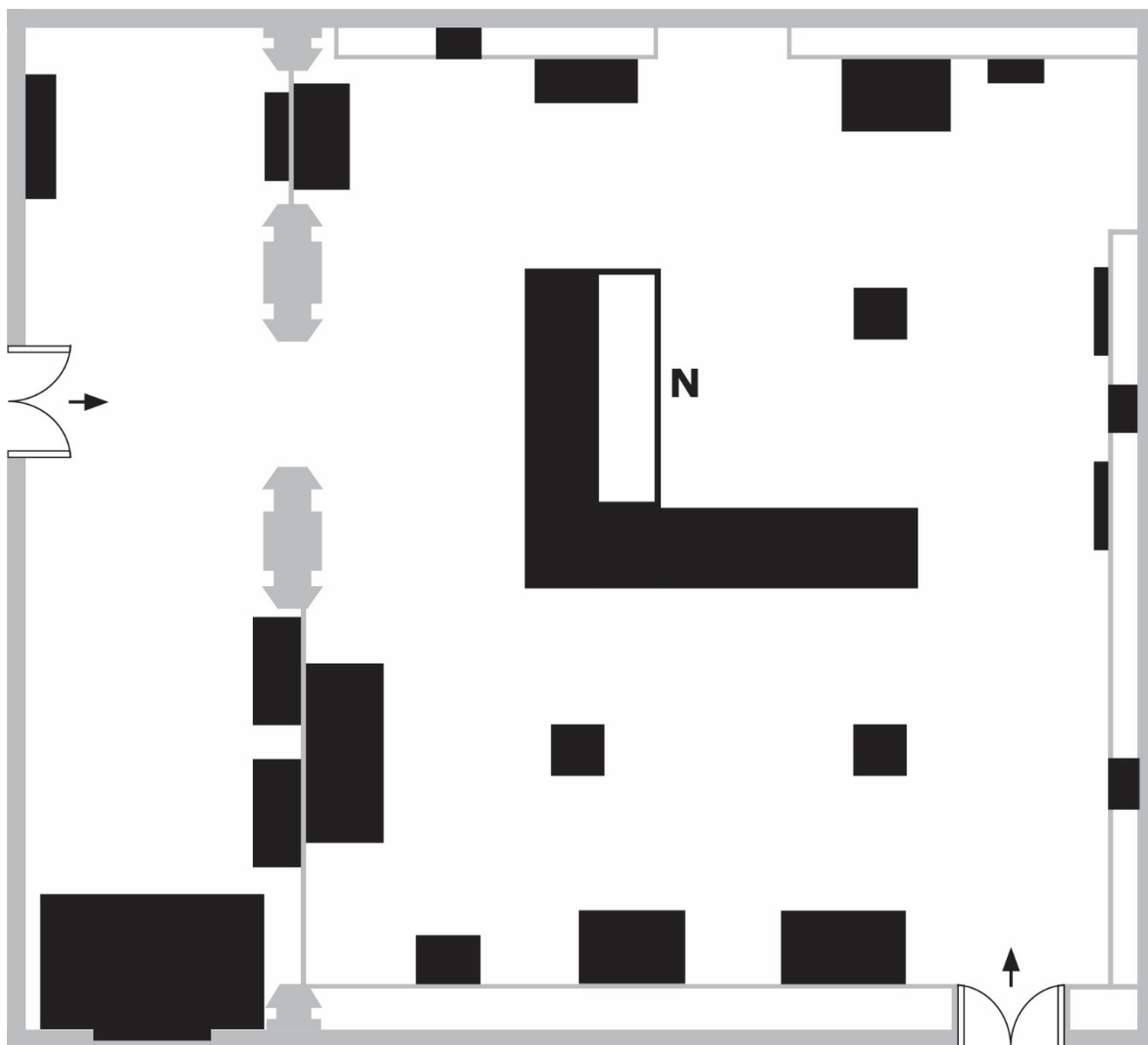
Philippines, Manila, mid-17th century

Ivory

2015-00515

Christ is depicted here as “Saviour of the World”. He makes the gesture of blessing with his right hand. There is close attention to anatomical details like the folds of flesh associated with babies, and the deeply carved curls of hair.

This sculpture was probably made by one of the Chinese ivory artists from Fujian who settled in Manila. Their work was highly prized, and much of it was sent via the Spanish galleon trade to Mexico, and to the rest of Latin America and Spain.



**N1**

**Saint Francis of Assisi**

Philippines, Manila, mid-17th century

Ivory, with gilded decoration

2014-00450

Francis of Assisi (1181/82–1226) was founder of the Franciscan Order. He holds a crucifix, and on his hand is the stigmata, marks of Christ's wounds from being crucified.

The patched and flecked robe is evidence of Francis's poverty. The three knots on the hanging part of his sash symbolise vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

**N2**

## **The Virgin Mary**

Philippines, Manila; decorated in Mexico, mid-17th century

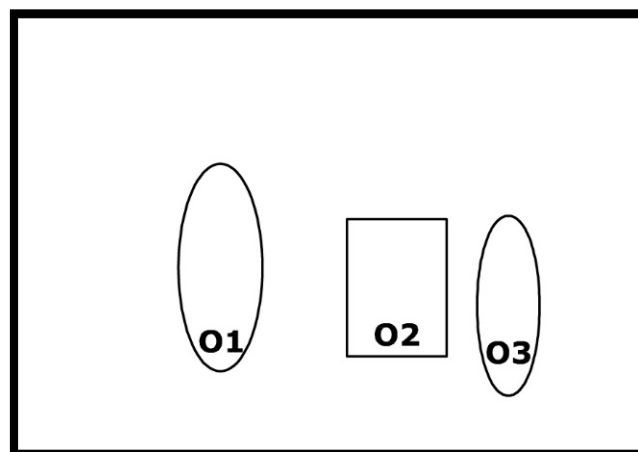
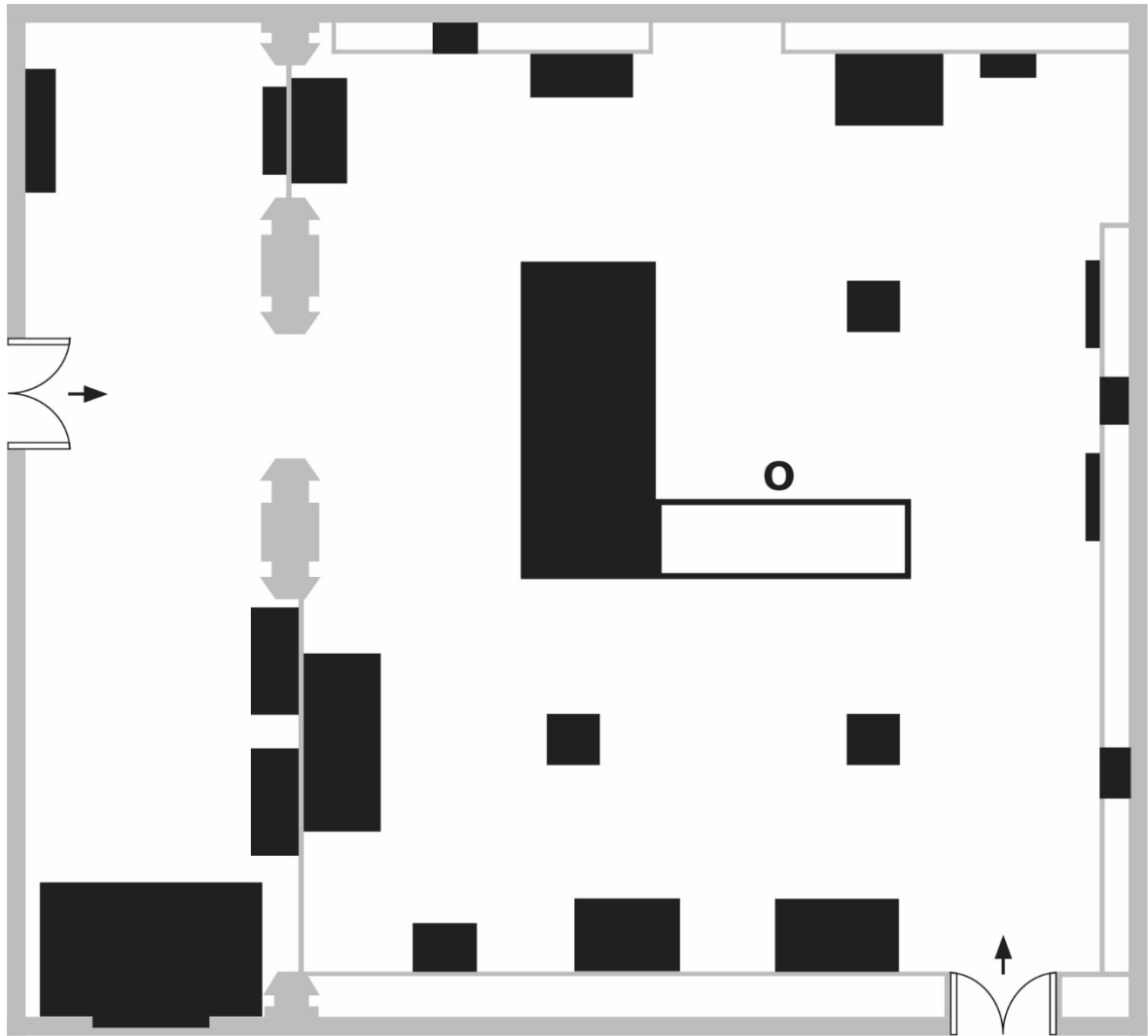
Ivory, painted and gilded

2013-00750

The Asian features of the face of the Virgin hint that it might have been carved by a Chinese artist. While such a work may have been carved in Macau or elsewhere in China, the tucked-in robe at the back, called a suksok, is a sign that it was made in the Philippines in the 17th century.

This impressive sculpture was shipped from Manila to Mexico. The painting and gilding on the robes is typical of 17th-century Mexican decoration found in sculptures, for example, in Mexico Cathedral in Mexico City.

This is one of the largest solid ivory figures known from the Philippines, which would seem to indicate a prestigious commission.





## **01**

### **Virgin and Child**

Timor-Leste, 19th century

Wood

2009-01529

This sculpture is an example of how a Southeast Asian artist interpreted a Western source. The composition was probably copied from a Western print or book illustration of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child on her lap – a favourite Christian subject.

But the two-dimensional image of Christ on the lap of the Virgin might have confused the carver. His solution was to place Christ, standing, on a small mound or stone in front of Mary.

## **02**

### **Basket**

Indonesia, Lombok, mid-20th century

Rattan, wood, cotton twine

2011-03149

Christians make up a tiny minority of Lombok's predominantly Muslim population. And yet this basket from the island is decorated with three crosses. The larger one in the centre sits on a rounded arch, probably meant to be Calvary, the hill where Christ was crucified along with two thieves. The vertical designs at the sides might suggest city walls.

### **03**

#### **Christian figure**

Flores Island, Larantuka (Indonesia), early 20th century

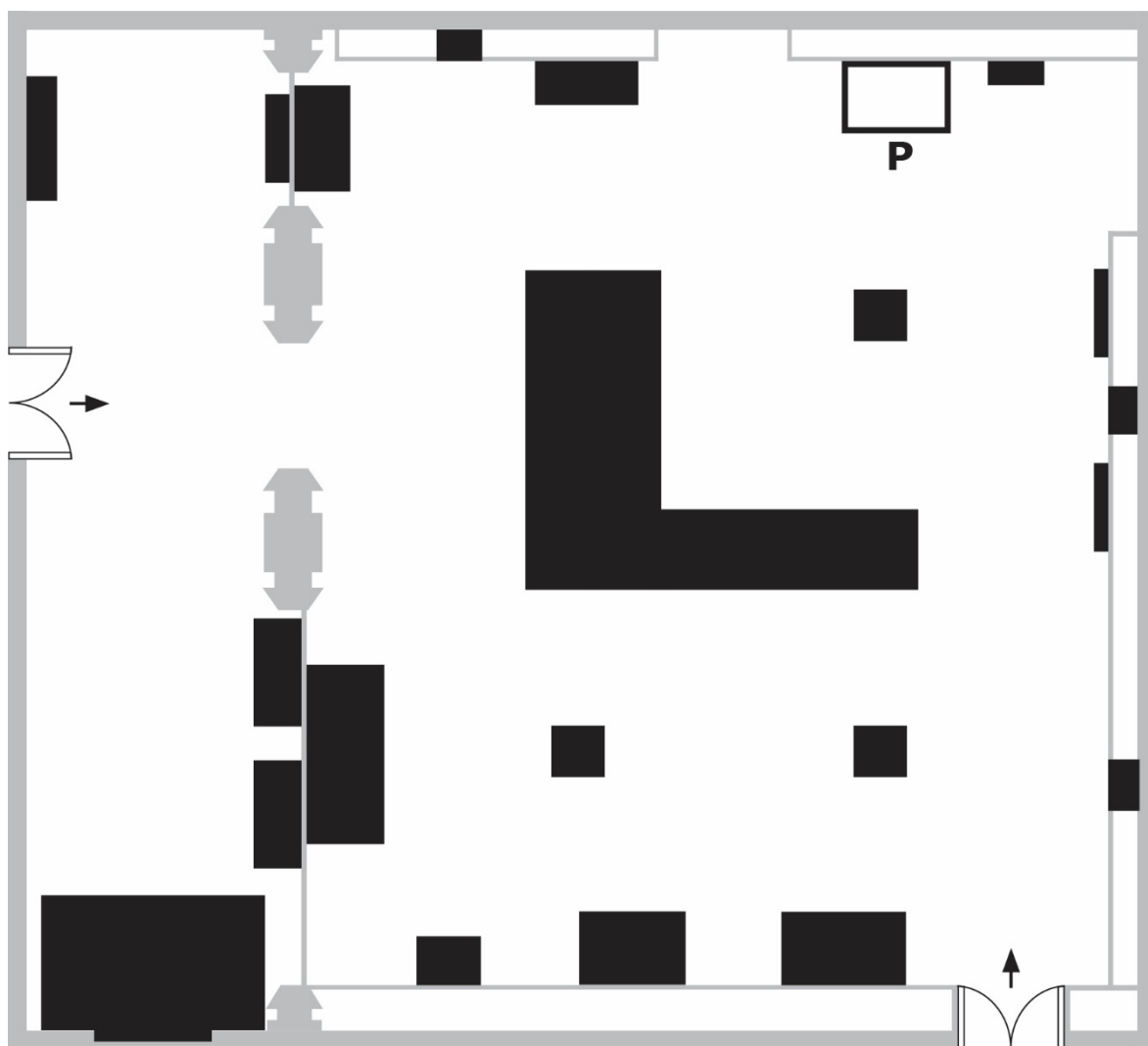
Wood

2013-00747

The cross around the neck and the hands clasped in prayer hint that this is a Christian figure,

despite its resemblance, in form and simplicity of design, to traditional ancestor figures of the region. It might have been created in the local tradition of making such figures, in this case, representing a Christian ancestor posed in pious supplication.

In the 16th century, Portuguese missionaries began converting people on the island of Flores to Christianity.



## **P**

### **Archangel Michael vanquishing Satan**

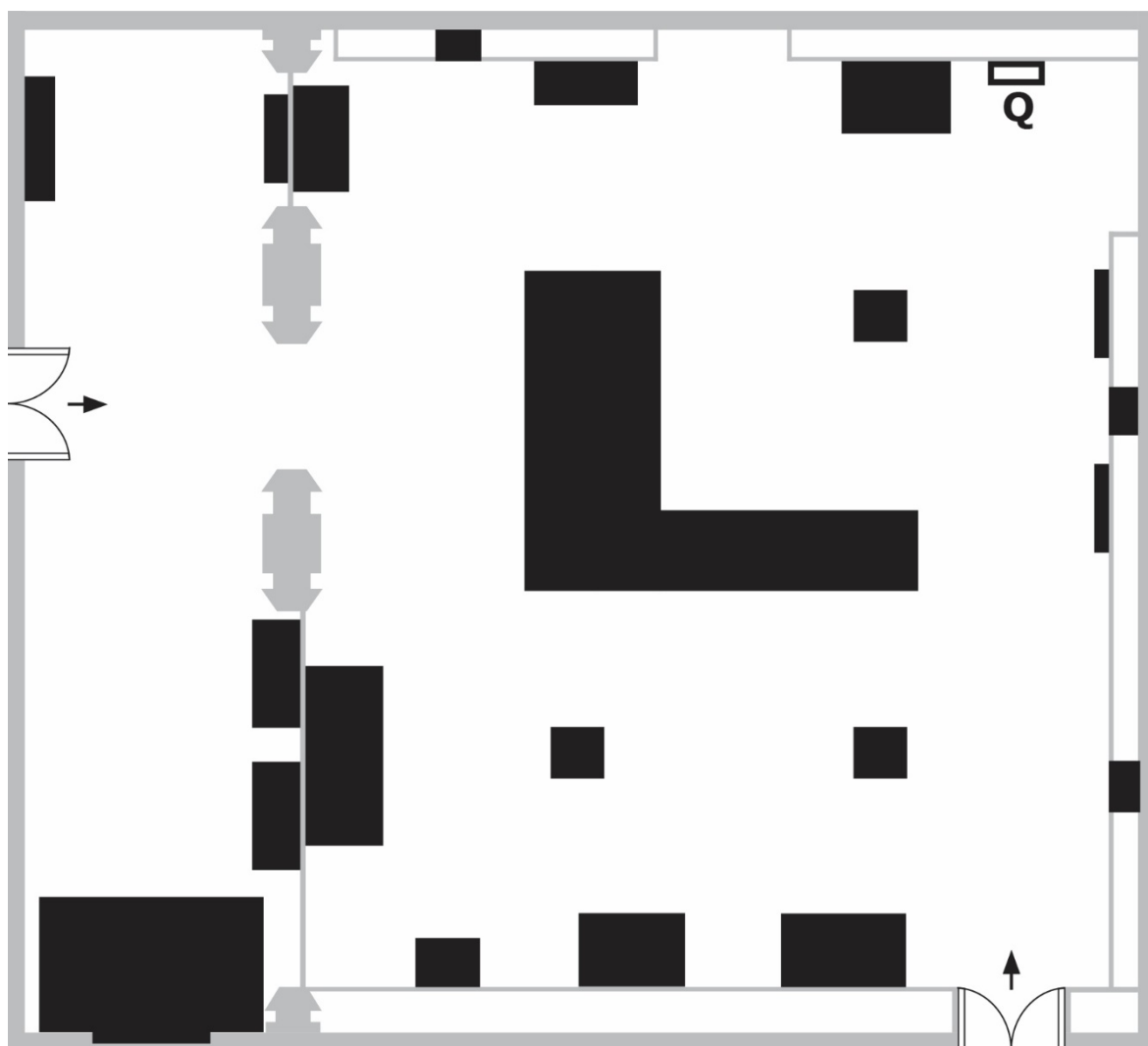
Northern Vietnam, 19th century

Painted wood, iron, glass

2011-01483

The archangel Michael, clothed as an ancient Roman warrior, stands in victory over Satan, who is described in the book of Revelations in the Bible as a dragon. Michael probably once held a spear and a balance, to weigh souls at the Last Judgement.

Christian missionaries arrived in Vietnam as early as the 17th century, but large-scale conversion didn't peak until the French colonial period (1887–1940). Painted wooden figures of Christ, the Virgin, and various saints decorated churches. Some were imported from France but many, like this figure, were made by local artists.



## Q

### **Gable panel (pandilati)**

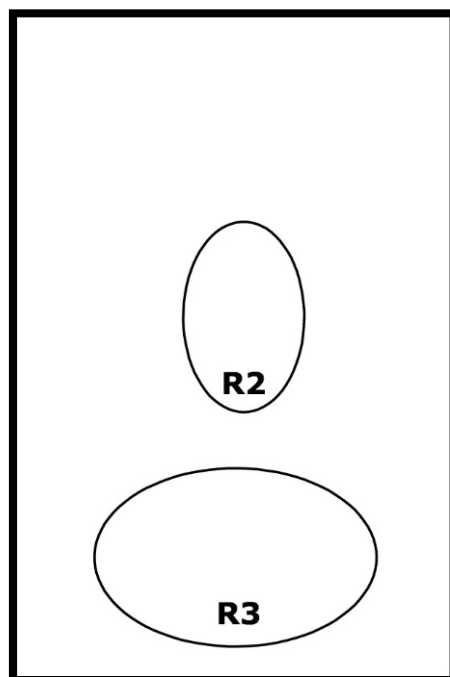
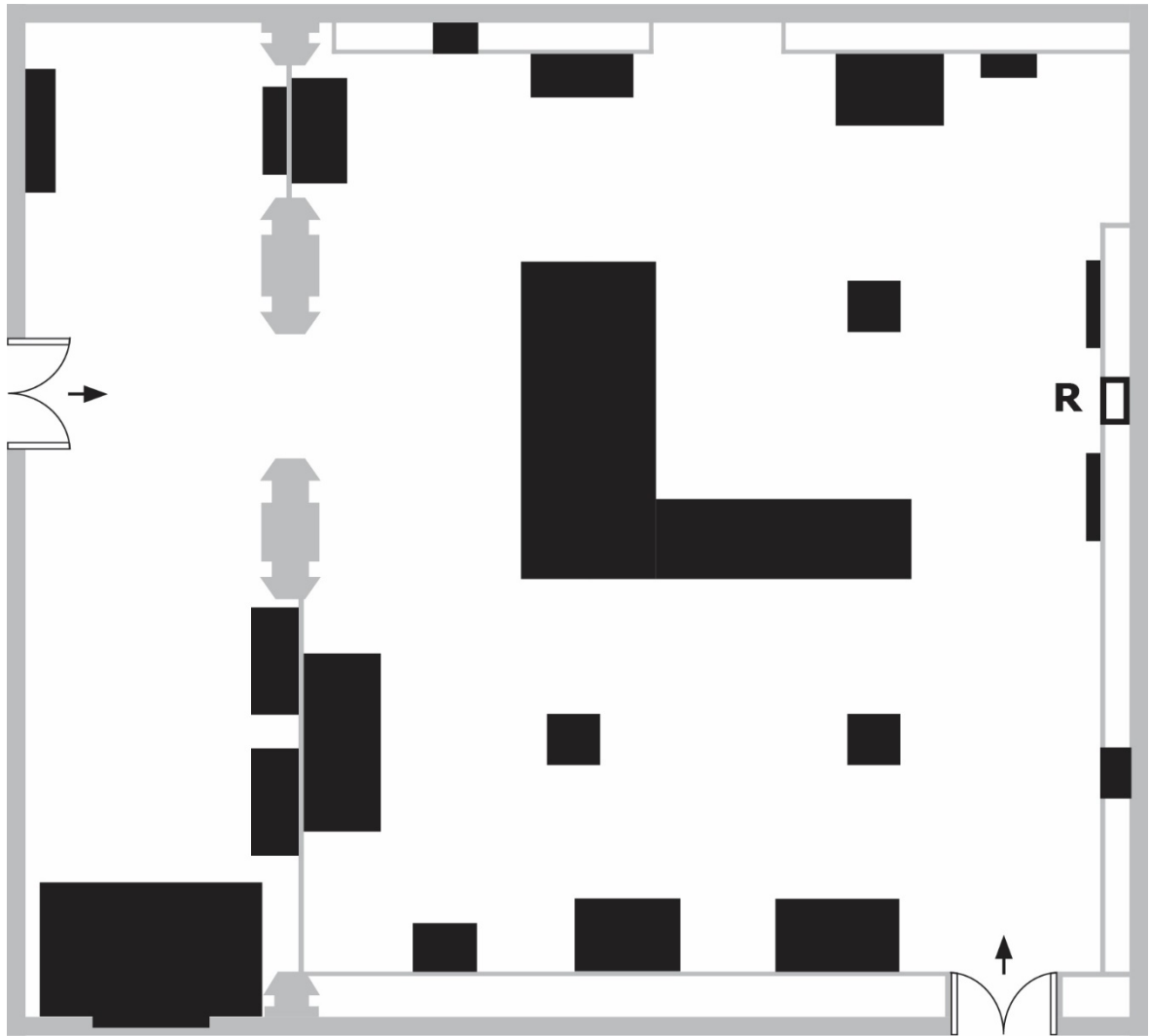
Sumatra, Lake Toba (Indonesia), around 1930s

Wood, natural pigments

W-0697

In the late 19th century, Lutherans of the Rhenish Missionary Society from Germany began to attract converts among the Toba Batak people. After Indonesia became independent in 1945, Catholic missionaries also arrived in the area. Today a majority are Christian.

This panel would have decorated the gable of an ancestral house. The top features a traditional protective mask in the shape of a lion's head. The cross with two kneeling winged angels would have been a clear statement of the religious affinity, as well as overt piety, of the family of the house.





## **R1**

### **Christ on the Cross**

Philippines, 17th century

Wood and ivory, figure

2016-00121

This representation of the still living Christ looking heavenward retains its original cross, which is decorated with lozenges and outlines of ivory.

## **R2**

### **Cross**

Vietnam, 19th century

Rosewood, mother-of-pearl

Gift of Pedro Aguiar Branco

2013-00999

### **R3**

#### **Tray: Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome**

Vietnam, 19th century

Rosewood, mother-of-pearl

2012-00522

Vietnam produced a variety of wooden objects delicately inlaid with mother-of-pearl. These products included furniture for Southeast Asia as well as Christian objects like these.

### **R4**

#### **Baby carrier with image of a mother and child and Marie Biscuit tin logo**

Java, Pekalongan (Indonesia), around 1910

Cotton (batik)

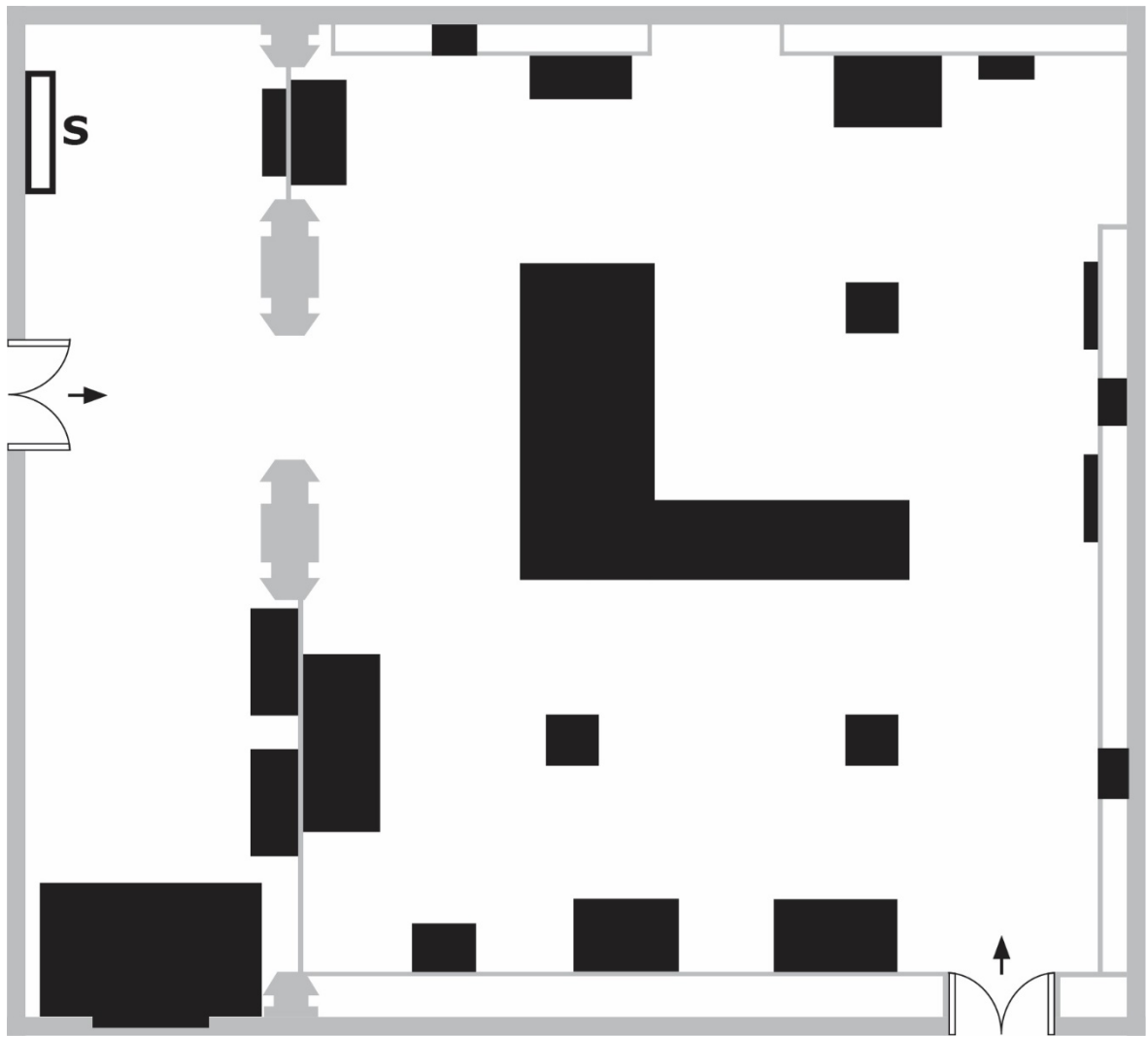
2013-00400

The mother and child on this batik cloth evokes thoughts of mother goddess images in many

cultures. It relates to the Christian Virgin and Child and the Chinese “child-giving” Guanyin.

Probably produced by mixed Chinese Indonesian artisans who would have been familiar with both images, the cloth might have been made to appeal to both Buddhists and Christians. The amusingly misspelled biscuit logo references an imported European treat.

Gift of Lim and Tan Securities Pte Ltd in memory of Johnny and Nancy Lim



## S

### **Rubbing of the stele commemorating Christianity in China**

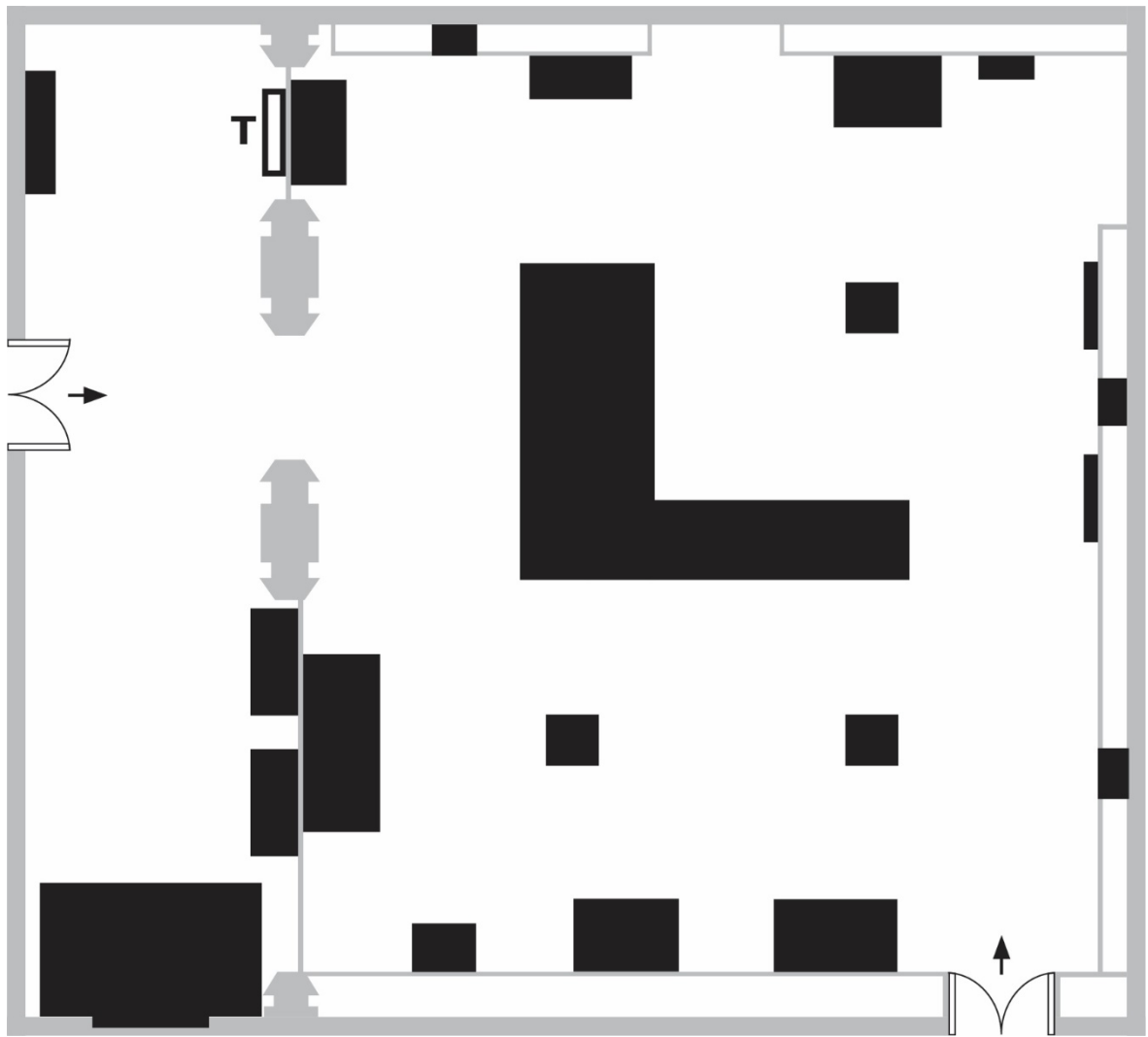
Stele: China, Xi'an, 781 (Tang dynasty); stone,  
height 279 cm; Beilin Museum, Xi'an  
2017-00670, Gift of Ethel Kum Lin Chong

This rubbing reproduces the text on a stone stele erected in Xi'an in 781. At the very top is a cross set into a lotus blossom. The title reads:

“Monument commemorating the propagation in China of the luminous religion from Da Qin” 大秦景教流行中國碑.

The text in Chinese and Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) describes the arrival of the Christian Church of the East in China in the 7th century. In 635, the Taizong Emperor issued an edict of tolerance for the religion. The Church of the East claimed to have Roman (Da Qin) origins to avoid association with Persia and Zoroastrianism.

The stele was buried in 845 because of the persecution of foreign religions, and only rediscovered in 1625. It soon came to the attention of Jesuit missionaries, who were excited to find evidence of early Christianity in China.



## T

### **Crosses of the Church of the East**

China, Yuan dynasty (1272–1368)

Bronze

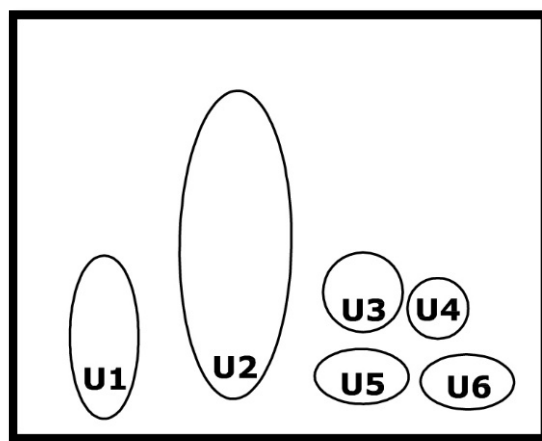
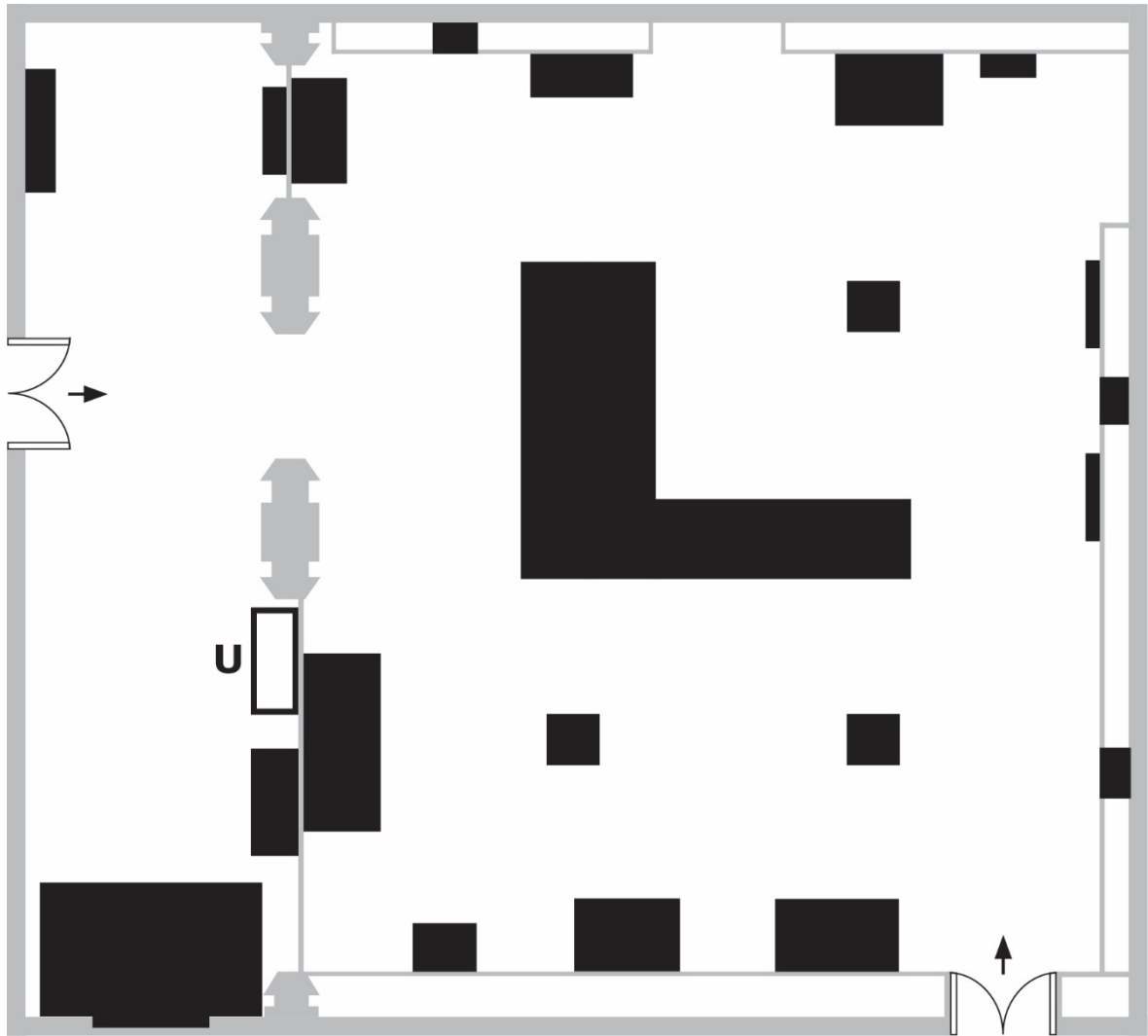
On loan from University Museum and Art Gallery,  
The University of Hong Kong

These bronze crosses were cast in the Ordos region in northwest China (Inner Mongolia) during the Yuan dynasty. Each one has a loop on the back, which suggests they were worn on the body. The motifs are Christian and Buddhist symbols, and traces of red ink suggest that they were used as seals, to print the designs onto other materials.

Many of the designs seem to symbolise radiating sunbeams, which may refer to the Chinese term for the sect – 景教 jingjiao (“luminous religion”). The geometrically designed birds and animals



might be an influence from Persian art  
introduced to China by Silk Road travellers.



## **U1**

### **Virgin and Child**

China, Dehua, 1690–1710

Porcelain

2007-00872

Although made for Christian markets in Asia and the West, Virgin and Child sculptures like this were inspired by figures of Guanyin, the Chinese deity. When depicted with a child, she was known as the “giver of children”. So it was natural for the potters of Dehua, Fujian province, to use them as models for Christian figures.

The scrolling clouds on the base are a typical Chinese design. But the Virgin wears a cross on her chest, a clear sign this was made for a Christian audience. The Christ Child makes a sign of blessing, and holds an unidentified object.

## **U2**

### **Porcelain base with the emblem of the Order of Saint Francis**

China, Jingdezhen, around 1740

Porcelain

[Crucifix: Portugal, 18th century, gilded bronze  
and wood]

2011-02070

The base of this crucifix has the emblem of the Order of Saint Francis, disciples of Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82–1226), one of the most venerated saints in Catholicism. The emblem consists of two crossed arms nailed to a cross, one representing the crucified Christ and one Saint Francis. According to tradition, in 1224, Francis received the stigmata – wounds on his hands corresponding to Christ's wounds – the first person recorded in the church to have received this sign.

The tripod base originally supported a candlestick, probably from a set of six altar candlesticks. The bronze crucifix seen here was added later.

### **U3**

#### **Dish with the Crucifixion**

Netherlands, Delft, early 18th century

Earthenware

Gift of Mr and Mrs Toshio Egawa

### **U4**

#### **Dish with the Crucifixion**

China, around 1700

Porcelain

2005-01480, 2007-55820

These dishes both show Christ on the Cross – the small one is Chinese, the large is Dutch.

Christian images began appearing on Chinese

porcelain in the 16th century, and were commissioned for export around the world.

The two mourners on the Chinese plate, by tradition, should be the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist. But here, with the heavy robes and flowing hair, you could almost mistake them for Daoist immortals. "INRI" is the Latin abbreviation for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

## **U5**

### **Tea bowl and saucer with Saint Ignatius of Loyola**

China, Jingdezhen, around 1750

Porcelain

2017-00281

Iñigo López de Loyola (1491–1556) was born in Loyola, in the Basque country of Spain. Originally a knight, after being wounded he underwent a

spiritual conversion and thereafter devoted his life to the Church. He was one of the founders of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), and was canonised in 1622.

There are so few examples of this pattern known that they might all come from a single table service. The portrait of the saint, repeated on each piece, is derived from an engraving after a painting by the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens.

## **U6**

### **Tea bowl and saucer with Martin Luther**

China, Jingdezhen, around 1746

Porcelain

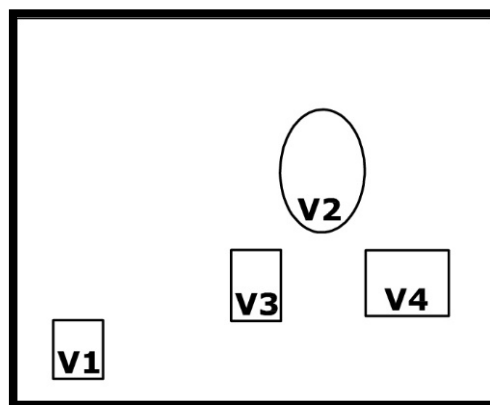
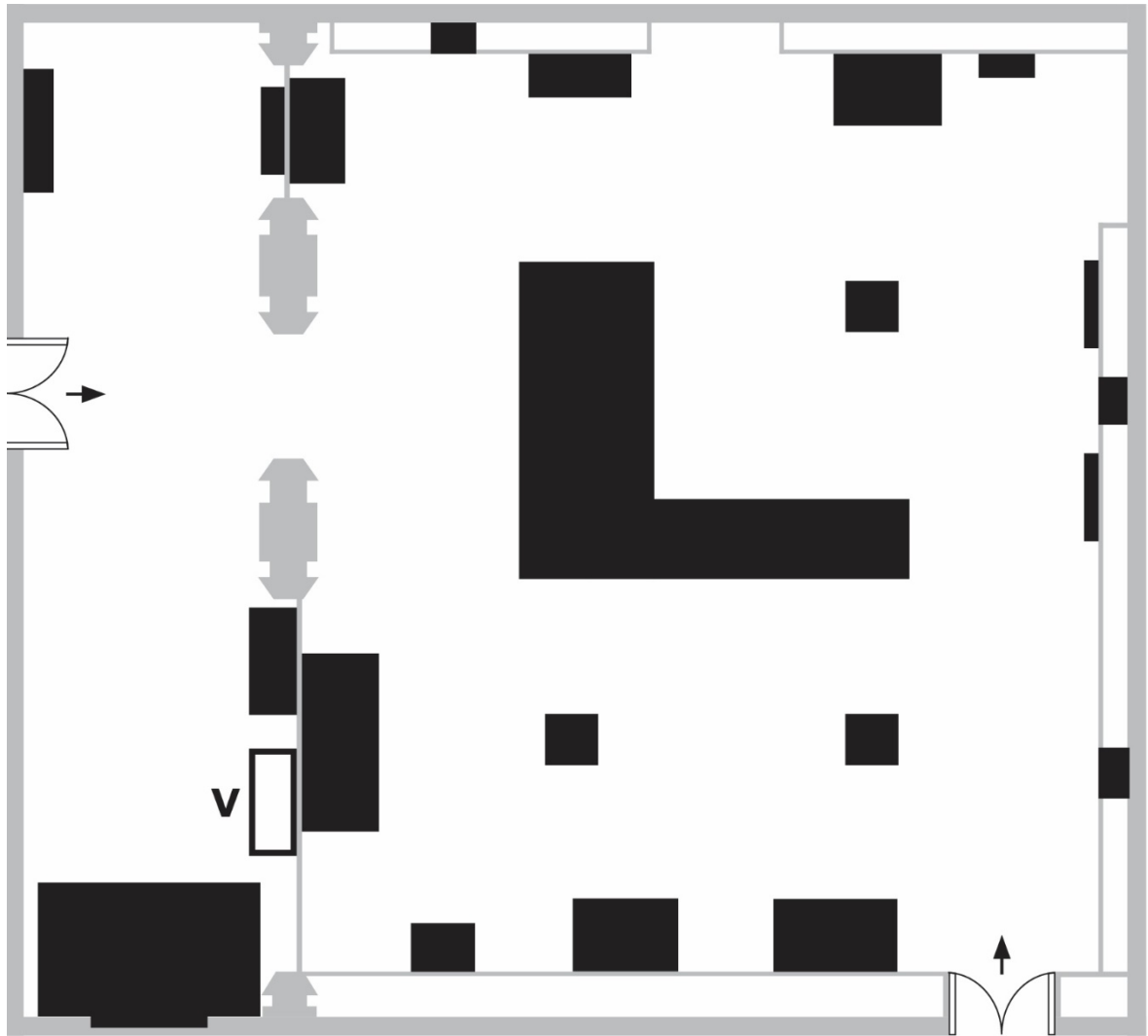
2012-00773

Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German theologian, is best known for leading the Protestant Reformation of the Christian Church in

1517. His revolutionary actions resulted in the division of western Christianity between Roman Catholicism and the new Protestant traditions.

This tea bowl and saucer comes from a set that stylistically dates to the middle of the 18th century, and so may have been commissioned for the bicentenary of Luther's death in 1746.





## **V**

### **Asian Christian ivories**

Prized around the world, delicate and refined ivory sculptures were carved in Goa, Sri Lanka, Macau, Guangzhou, Manila, and perhaps also Ayutthaya, Nagasaki, and other places. While the Christian subjects are rooted in European art of the 5th through 15th century, these Asian ivories of the late 16th and 17th century were made in distinctive and highly imaginative forms.

## **V1**

### **Plaque: The Christ Child as navigator**

China, Macau; or Philippines, Manila, early 17th century

Ivory

2015-00220

Here the Christ Child is shown as a sailor, steering the ship representing the church. The mast of the ship is formed as a cross. He holds a

globe with a cross, symbolic of his role as Saviour of the World. Many details relate to the Crucifixion, foreshadowing his fate. Across the deck are disks, each of which contains an emblem representing the agonies of Christ's trials, including the flagellation, crown of thorns, and nails used in crucifixion.

### **Chinese workshops in Manila, Macau, and Guangzhou**

The demand for ivory sculptures encouraged workshops to open in several regions. These shops all produced very similar, high-quality artworks, so it is hard to pin down where each piece was made. Certain characteristics and details are used to assign them to a particular place – but we can seldom be completely sure where these objects were made. They truly are a cross-cultural art form.

## **V2**

### **Crucified Christ**

Probably Japan, early 17th century

Ivory, traces of paint

2012-00383

Religious figures were carved in ivory throughout the Asian world, so deciphering their point of origin is difficult, but certain characteristics here suggest Japan. The long wavy hair is typical of Japanese depictions of foreigners, and the folds of the loincloth are distinct from carvings made elsewhere. The personality of the face strongly suggests a Japanese sculptor.

## **V3**

### **Plaque: Saint Jerome in penitence**

China, Macau; or Philippines, Manila, 17th century

Painted ivory

## **V4**

### **Triptych: Crucifixion with Saints**

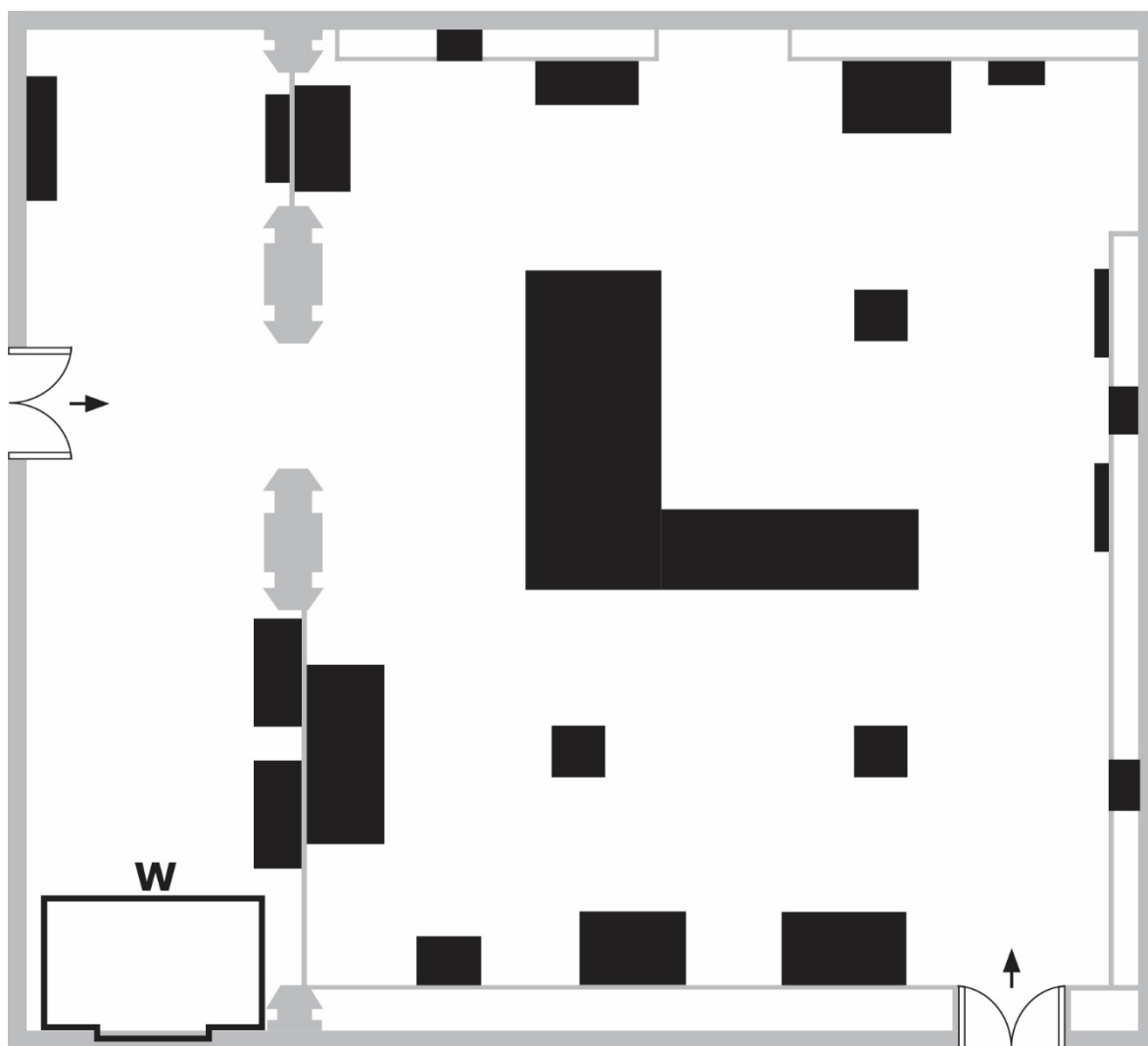
China or Philippines, Manila, 17th century

Ivory

2011-01507, 2012-00384

Small ivory plaques like these were used alone or in combination with others for private devotion, and also as book covers or on reliquary boxes. They were produced throughout Asia, wherever missionaries were found, including Goa, Macao, Japan, Manila, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Malacca, and Ayutthaya, among other locations.

The original colours on the Saint Jerome plaque show what could have been the full effect on some other plaques, which might have lost their paint over time.



## **W**

### **Bureau shrine**

China, probably Guangzhou, 1730s

Wood, gold, lacquer, silver, brass

[Ivory sculpture of Christ on the Cross: India, Goa, late 17th or early 18th century]

2016-00032

Artists in Guangzhou produced beautifully decorated lacquer furniture for export in the 18th and 19th centuries. But this is the only known Chinese lacquer bureau made as a Christian shrine.

This piece is derived from an early 18th-century English form called a "secretary" or a "bureau bookcase". The interior is enhanced with red and gold lacquer on the serpentine columns and framing elements.

The Crucified Christ was carved in Goa around 1700; and figures of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony flanking him are replacements. The cross at the top and the crowned double-headed eagle (emblem of the Augustinian Order) signal the special function of the piece.