

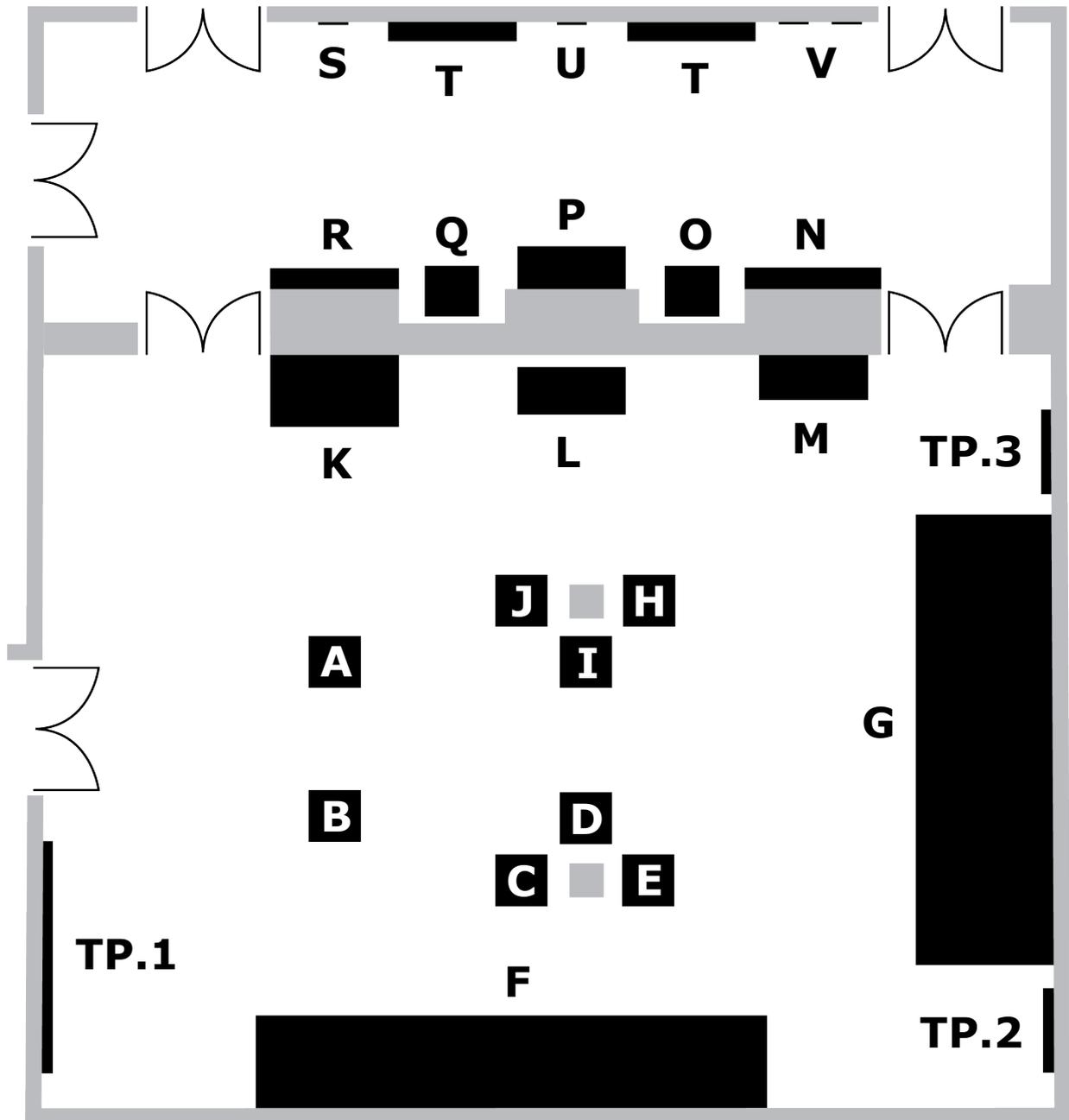
Large Print Guide

A large, bold, white serif font spelling 'ACM' is centered on a solid black rectangular background. The letters are widely spaced and occupy most of the width of the black area.

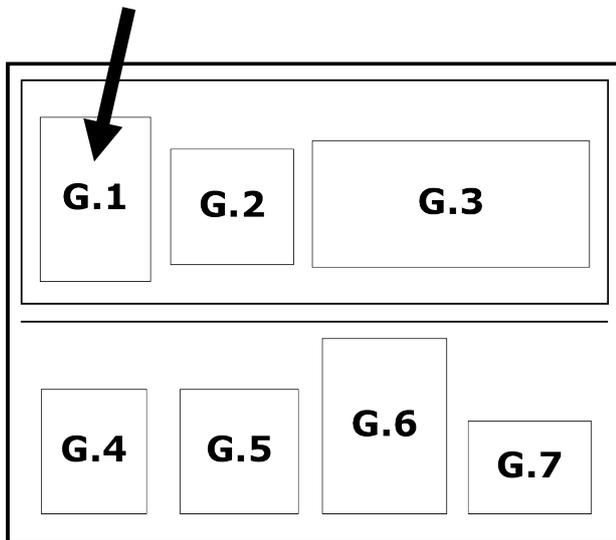
# Court & Company

Level 1  
Permanent Galleries  
Court & Company

# Floorplan of Gallery



## How to read display case and floorplans



**To find object label text, match G.1 to G.1,  
then G.2 to G.2 and so on.**

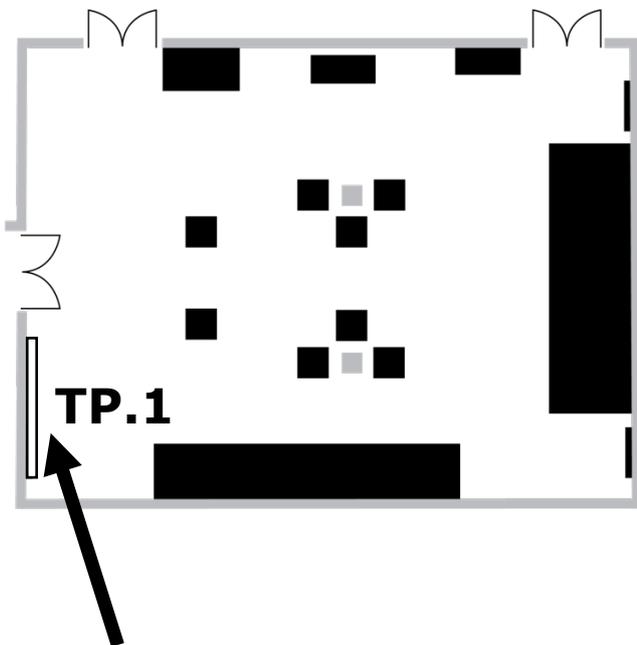
### **G.1**

#### **Palampore with Tree of Life motif**

India, Coromandel Coast, 17th or  
18th century

Cotton (drawn and painted, mordant-  
dyed)

## How to read text panels & floorplans



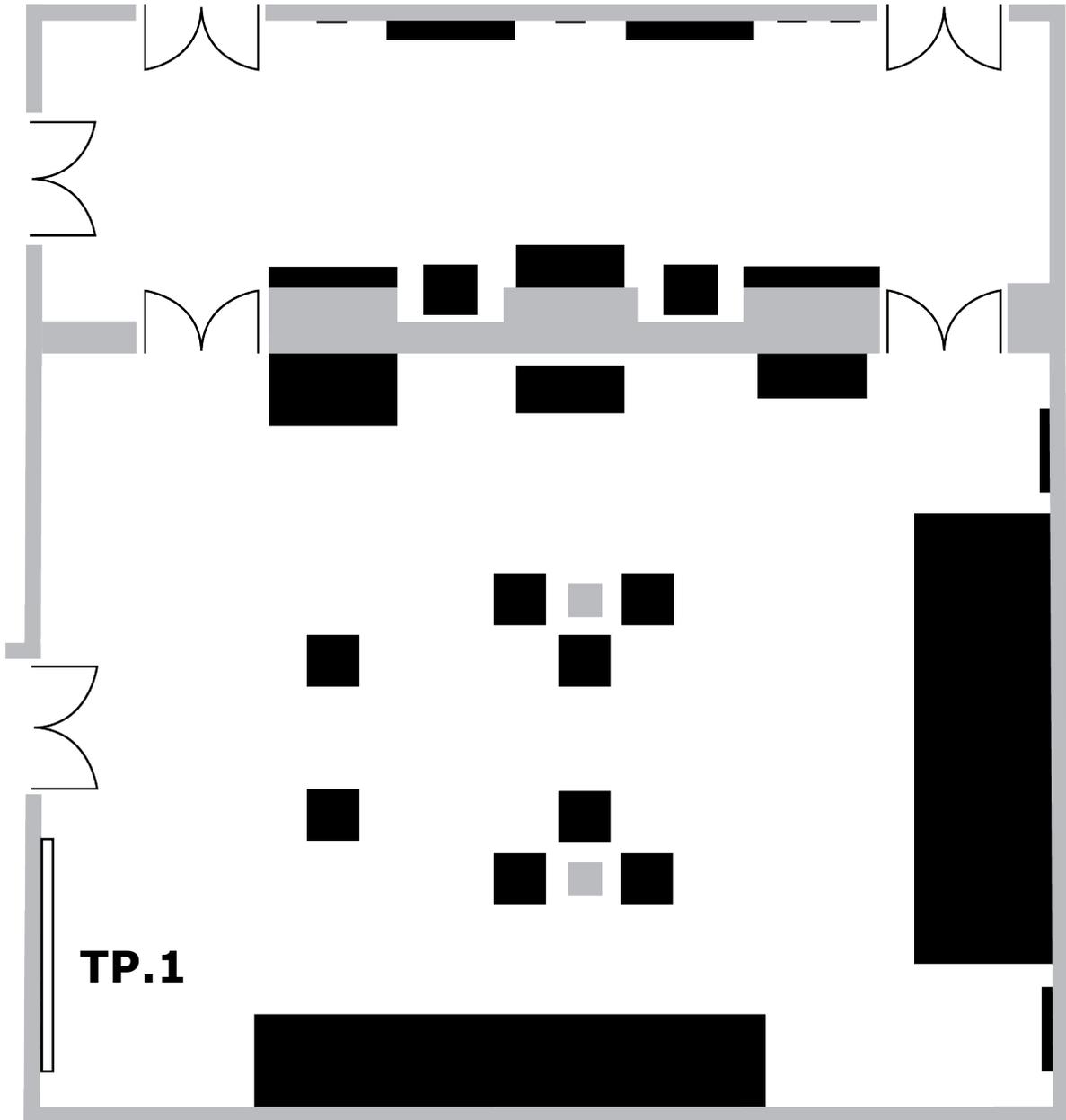
**TP.1**

**To find text panel, match TP.1 to TP.1, then  
TP.2 to TP.2 and so on.**

**TP.1**

### **Court & Company Gallery**

People have long desired special objects from distant lands. Possessing beautiful artworks has been a sign of sophistication and power.



## **TP.1**

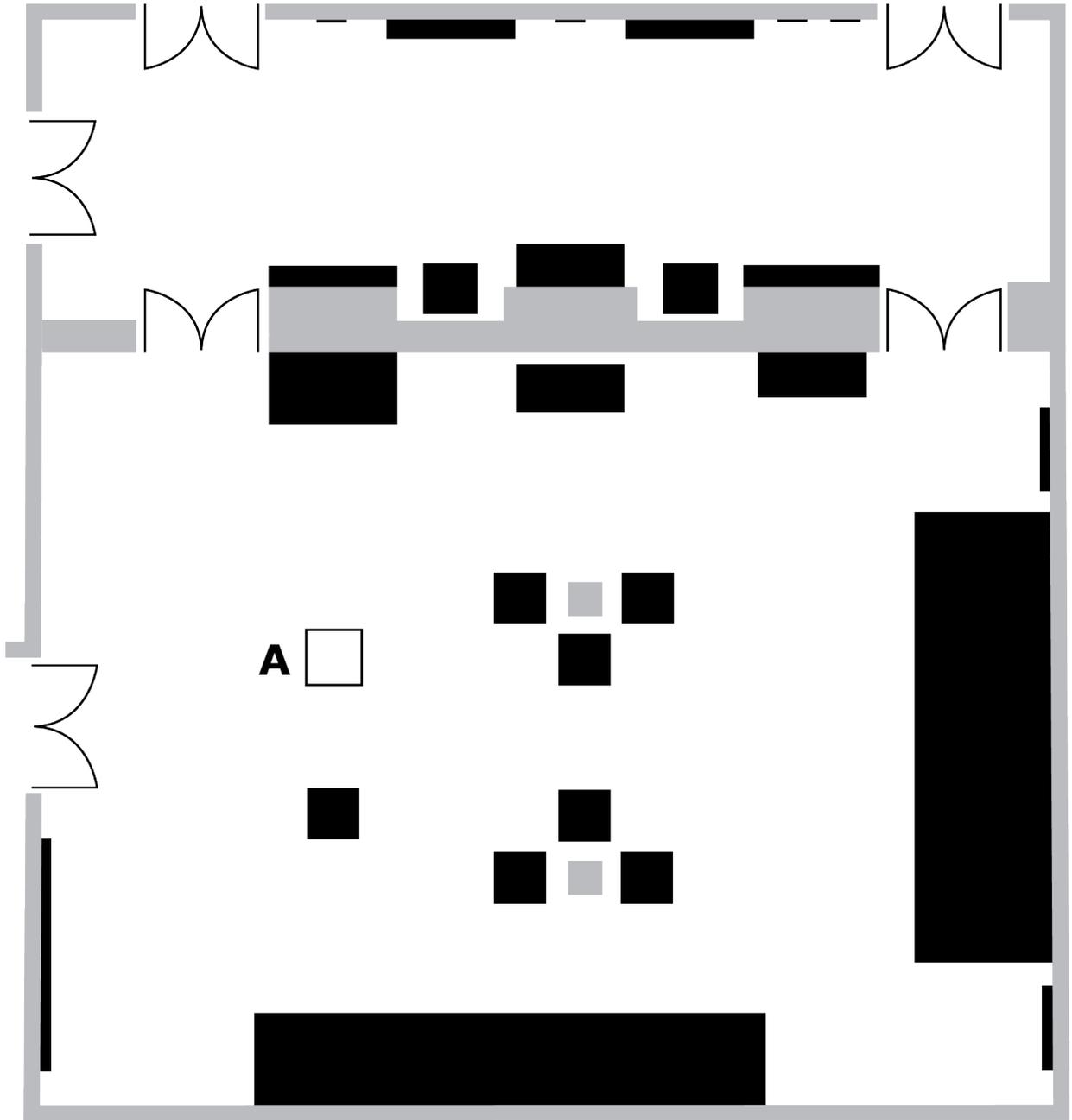
### **Court & Company Gallery**

People have long desired special objects from distant lands. Possessing beautiful artworks has been a sign of sophistication and power. This gallery looks at artistic exchanges between South Asia, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Vigorous global trade moved objects and styles around the world, prompting the invention of new artistic forms at multiple production centres along trading networks.

Many of the finest and most expensive objects were collected by rulers at royal courts in India, the Middle East, and Europe. Around 1500, Europeans came in search of spices and Christian converts. European trading companies soon followed, attracted by the many wonders of Asia. They used force to establish lucrative colonies, and often coerced one-sided treaties to acquire goods and property.

Asian commodities became luxuries, through novelty of materials used, and the artistry involved in making them. Porcelain was recognised around the world as something only China and Japan could produce. Lacquer was equally precious, only made in East Asia, the Coromandel Coast of India, and Myanmar. Mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell objects were made around Gujarat (western India). Ivory carving was a specialty of Sri Lanka and Goa. Ebony furniture – valued for its dense black structure – was carved in Sri Lanka and southern India. Chinese silk and Indian textiles were produced in great quantities to be sold within Southeast Asian and to European markets.



## **A**

### **Casket**

Sri Lanka, early 16th century

Ivory, silver, gold leaf

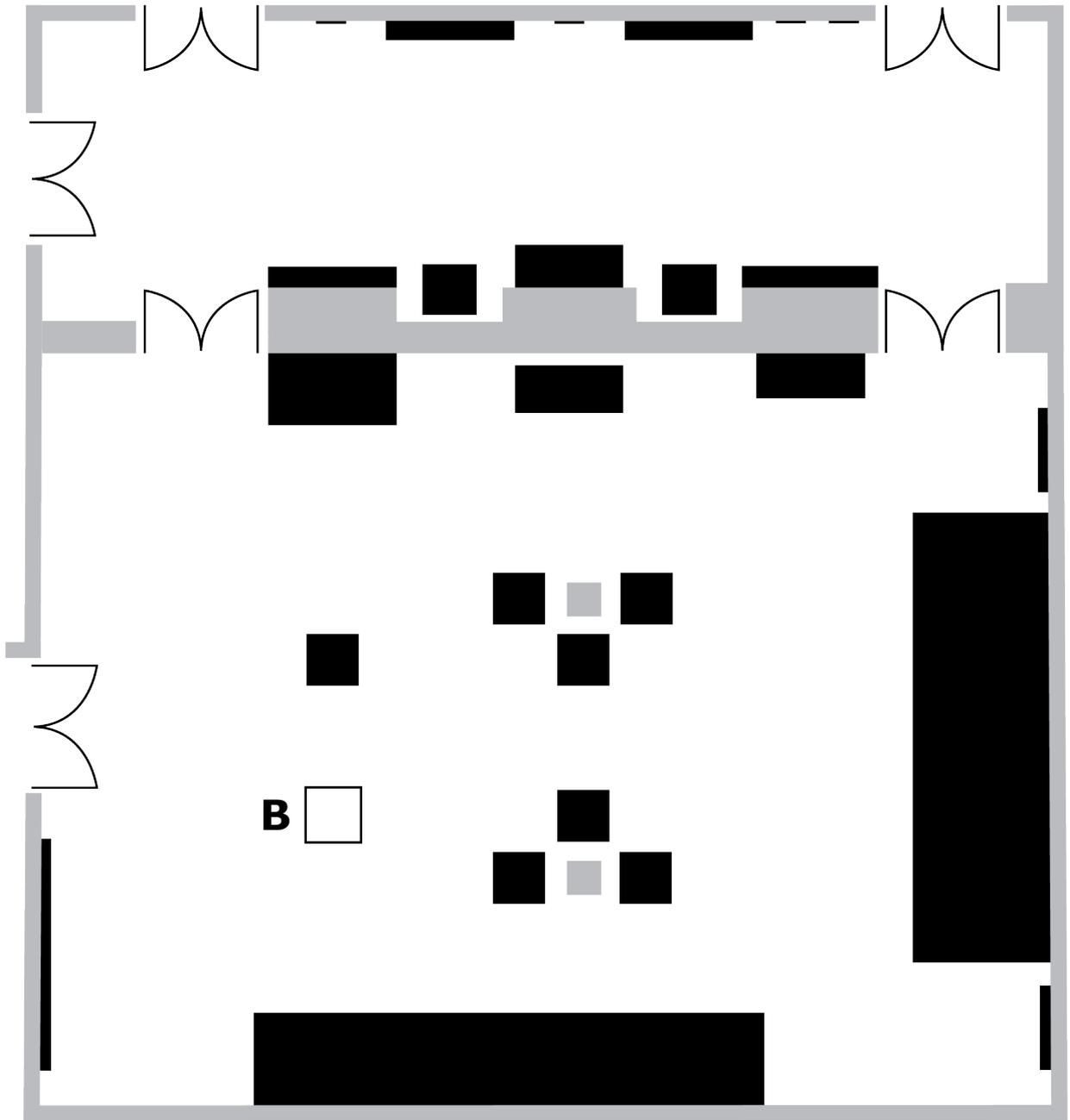
2015-00055

The ivory panels of this casket are carved with elegant spirals that enclosed animals like geese, lions, and makaras (mythical sea creatures).

A cobra and mongoose decorate the silver latch.

The handles and the form of the keyhole cover are European in style.

The Portuguese established a trading colony in Sri Lanka in 1505, and appointed a governing captain beginning in 1518. This object is an early example of Sri Lankan ivories made for Portugal, and formerly belonged to King Fernando II (1816–1885).



## **B**

### **Mother-of-pearl**

Mother-of-pearl is the iridescent material from the inside of a mollusc shell. Because the shell is so brittle, great skill is required to select, cut, and polish it. The technique was a speciality of Gujarat in western India. The best objects carefully balance subtle blue, green, and pink tones of the shell.

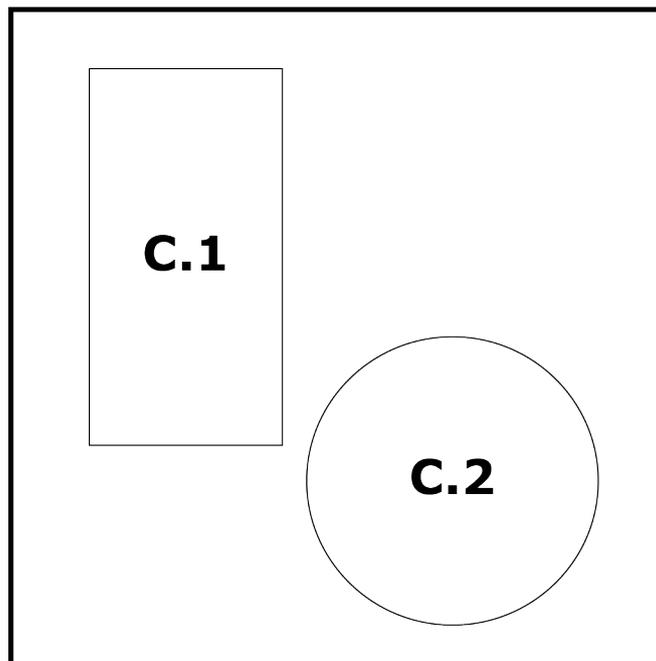
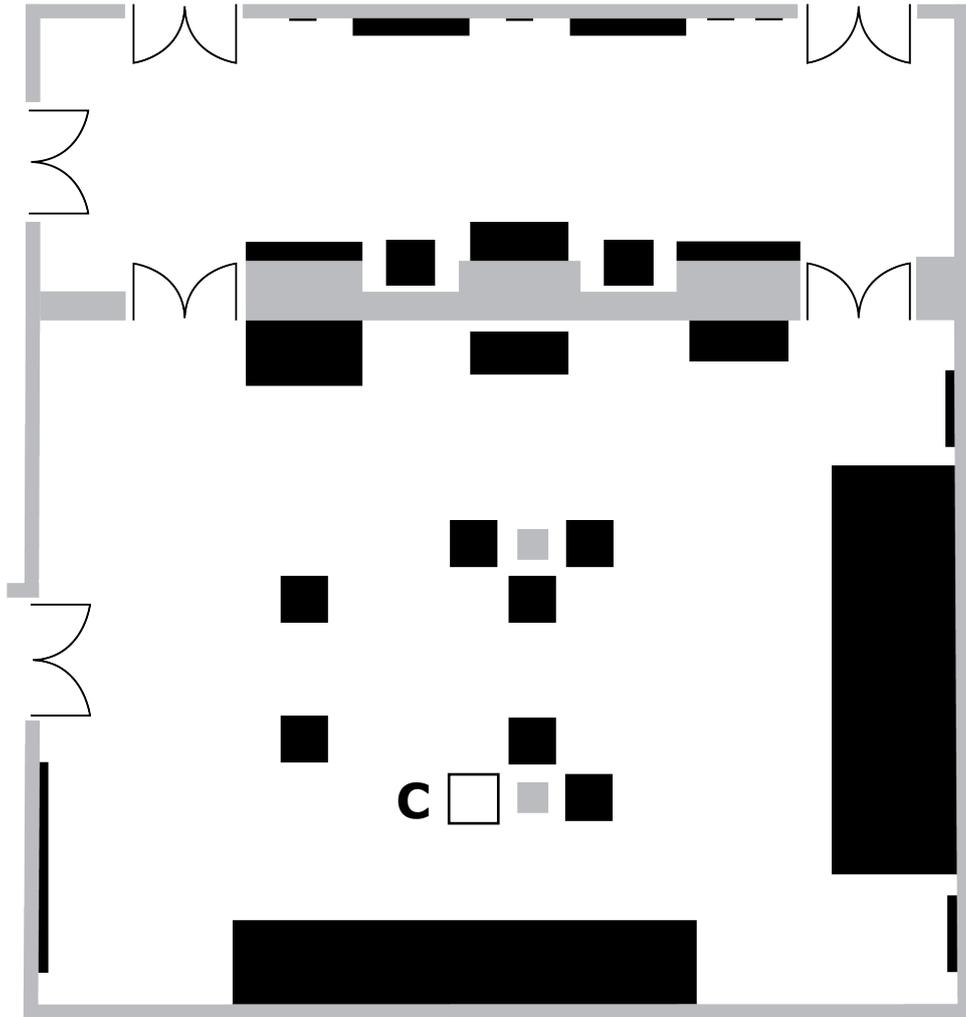
### **Casket**

India, Gujarat, 16th century

Mother-of-pearl, wood, gilded silver

2012-00389

The mother-of-pearl plaques have been cut into nearly identical shapes, and are held in place with silver nails to completely cover this box.



## **C.1**

### **Pitcher**

India, Gujarat, early 17th century

Mother-of-pearl, iron, copper alloy

2014-00918

This elegant pitcher is constructed almost entirely of delicate mother-of-pearl plates. A series of interior metal bands reinforce the inner and outer walls.

This construction required great skill, as specialised techniques were needed to cut and polish the mother-of-pearl in order to retain the iridescent sheen.

## **C.2**

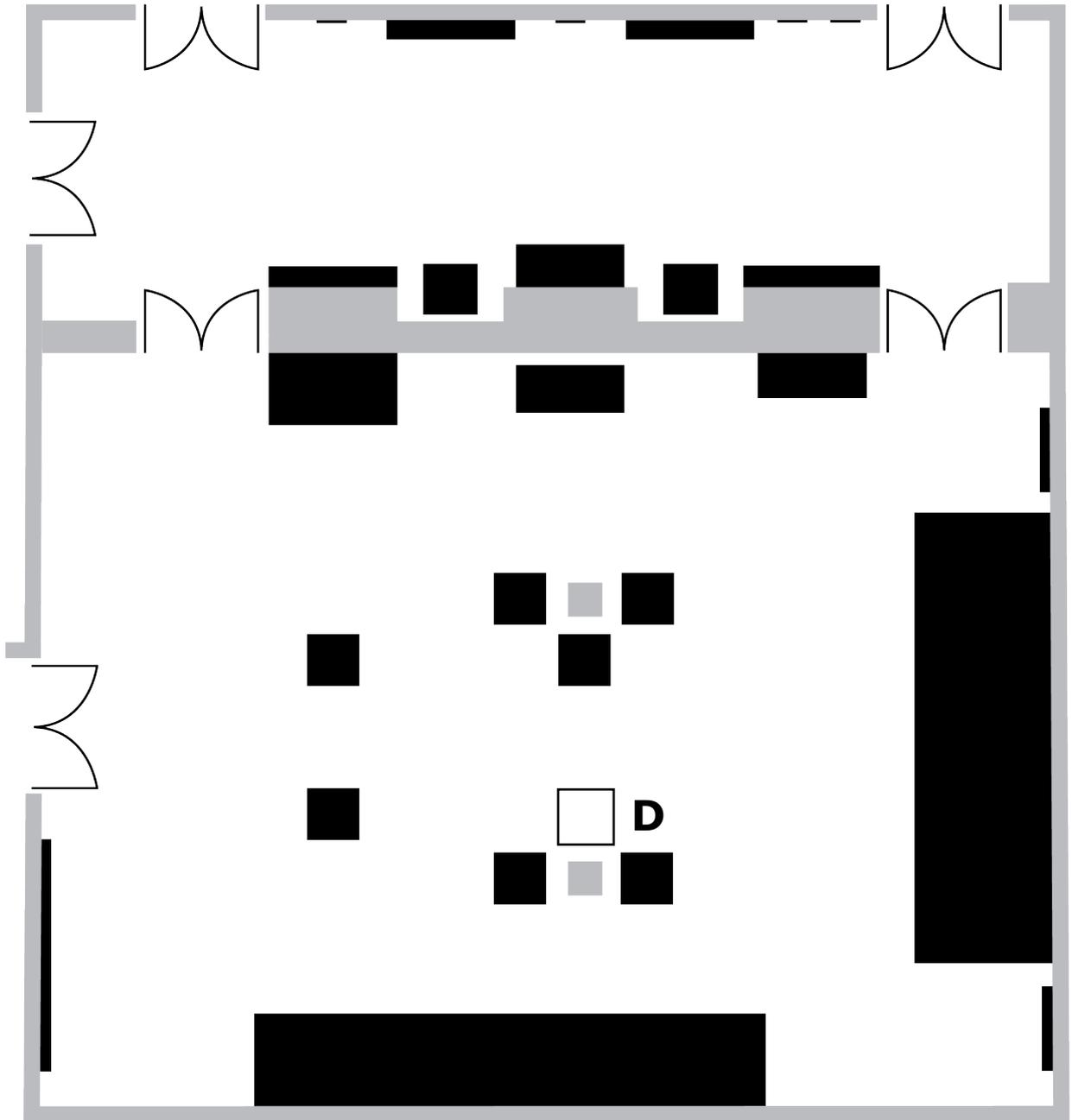
### **Dish**

India, Gujarat, 16th century

Mother-of-pearl, silver

2011-03166

The dish is composed of mother-of-pearl plaques mounted by silver pins. The interior structure is metal. The central medallion appears to be an open lotus flower. The entire border is made of openwork plaques that form a crown of petals. The dish is an early example of a precious object made in India specifically for European customers.



## **D**

Cabinet

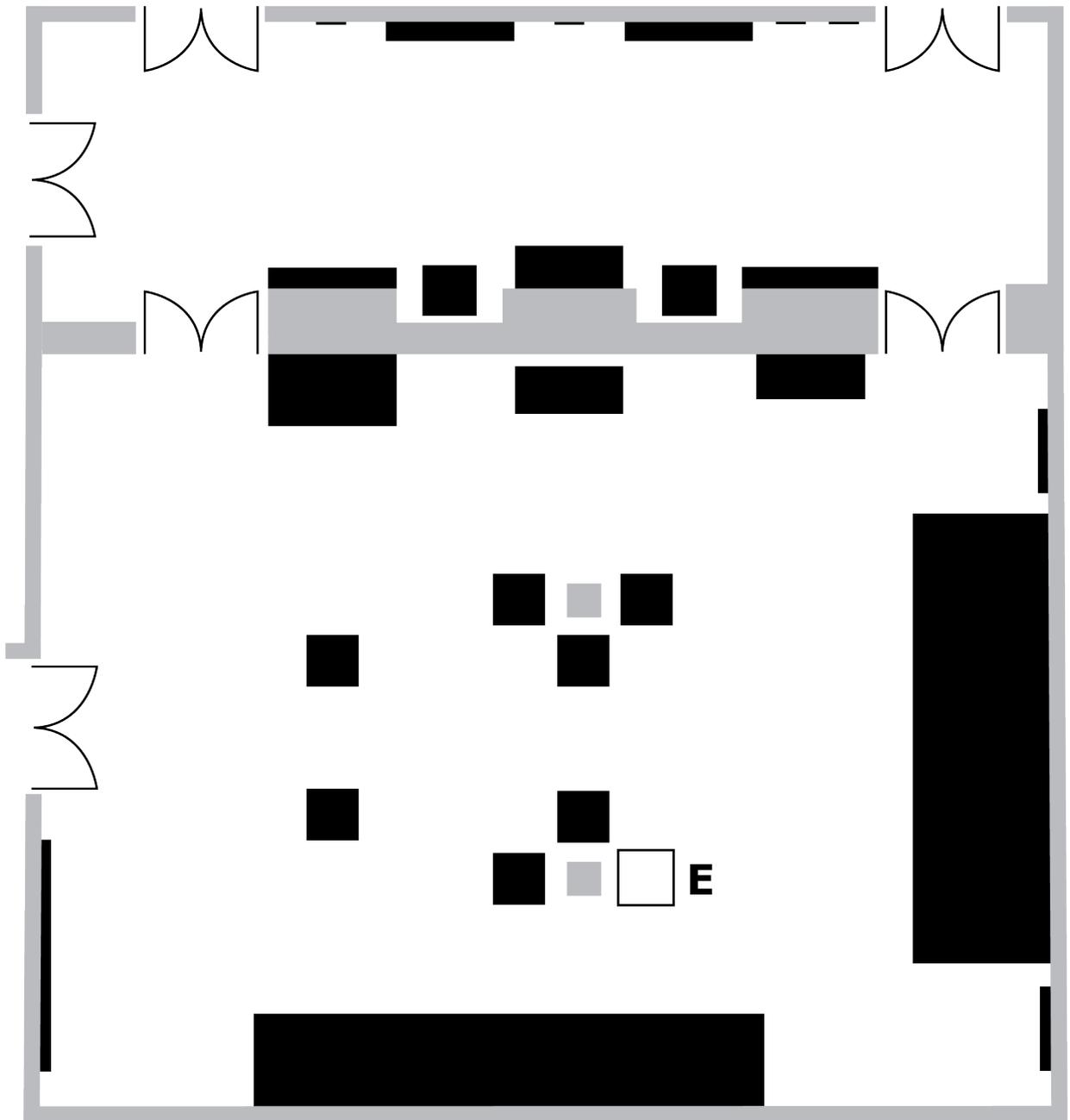
India, Gujarat, 17th century

Tortoiseshell, wood, ivory, ebony

2011-01508

The tortoiseshell panels on this cabinet are backed with gold leaf to enhance their colour. Objects like this attracted great admiration when they were first imported to Europe from India. The use of tortoiseshell as a decorative element in furniture can be traced to ancient Rome.

The hard, mottled outer layer of the carapace of the sea turtle is transformed into thin, translucent plaques through a heating process, and then moulded into desired shapes and used as veneers. High polish further enhances the colour and translucency of the tortoiseshell.



## E

### **Writing box**

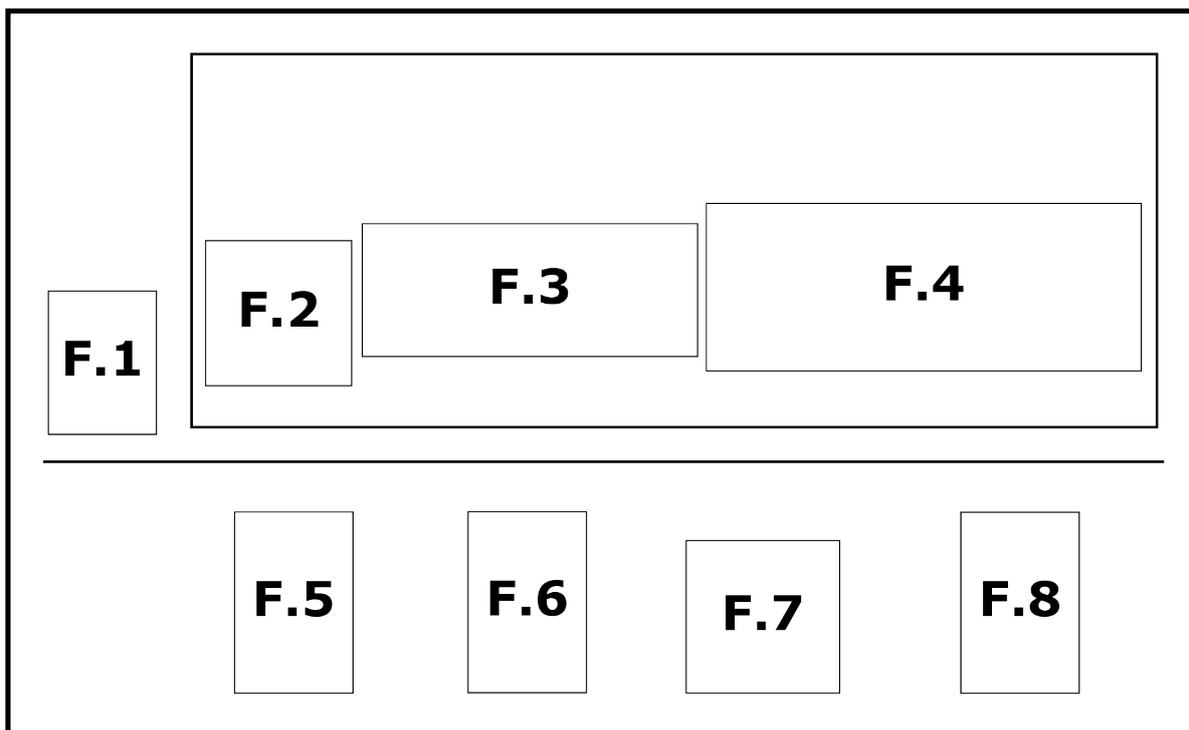
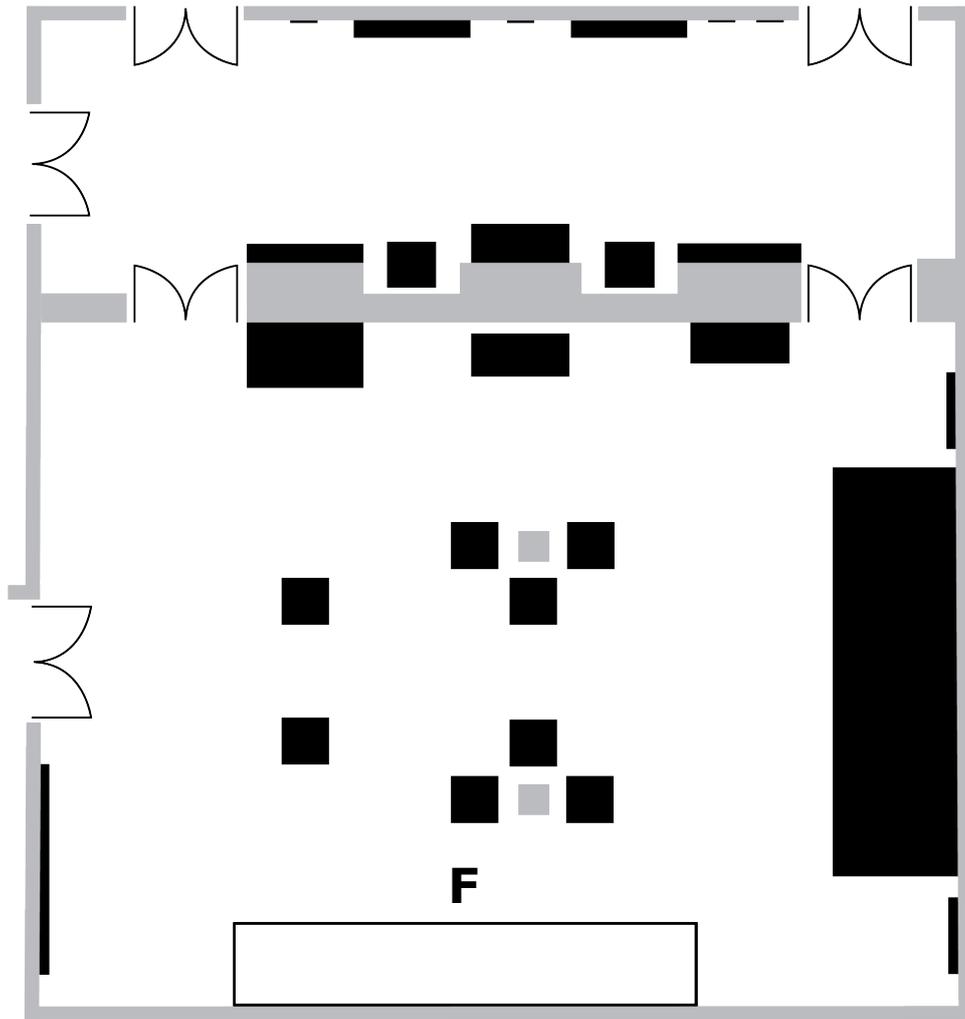
India, Bay of Bengal or Kochi, 16th century

Lacquered and gilded wood, iron

2011-01517

This writing box is one of the oldest types of decorative arts made in India for the Portuguese market. The designs include figures, foliage, mythical creatures, and coats of arms. The top shows the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. Opening the lid reveals a double-headed eagle set against twisting vines and abstract flowers.

Works like this, combining Western imagery and local lacquer techniques, catered to European buyers.



## **F.1**

### **Sailor, with Goa in the distance**

India, Goa, late 18th century

Oil on canvas

2014-00452

The region of Goa on the western coast of India was captured by the Portuguese in 1510, and became a major trading port.

Under the figure is the Portuguese word *marinheiro*, which means sailor. He gestures towards the mouth of the Mandovi River. On the opposite shore, at the base of the hill, is the Reis Magos Church. At the top of the hill is the Aguada Fortress.

## **F.2**

### **Jacket (baju panjang)**

Southern Sumatra, late 19th century

Cotton (mordant- and resist-dyed), India,

Coromandel Coast, late 18th or

early 19th century;

gold paint, late 19th century

Ex. Hollander Collection

2009-01860

This European-style jacket was tailored in southern Sumatra. The Indian textile used to make it has a design favoured in the Lampung, southern Sumatra, market. The gold was painted on, a technique called perada.

### **F.3**

#### **Imitation patolu: Interlocking square pattern**

India, Gujarat, 18th or 19th century

Cotton (block printed and hand painted, mordant- and resist-dyed)

T-0047

This Indian textile was traded to Borneo.

Purchased by the Raffles Library and Museum, Singapore, from Sandakan, Sabah, Borneo, in 1898 for \$10.75, with the help of Dr N. B.

Dennys, who had been a curator for the museum and was serving in British North Borneo at the time.

## **F.4**

### **Imitation patolu: Flower basket pattern**

India, Gujarat, 19th century

Cotton (block printed and painted, mordant-dyed)

Ex. Hollander Collection

2009-02059

With a design typically made for the Indonesian market, this Indian textile features a block-printed pattern that imitates patolu (double ikat) woven cloths. Patolu are woven with threads pre-dyed in various colours; during the weaving they are carefully aligned to form decorative patterns.

## **F.5**

### **Side chair**

India, Coromandel Coast, late 17th century

Ebony

2011-00716

The ebony wood on this chair has been pierced and carved in intricate designs, which gives it a sense of lightness and delicacy. The chair mixes European and Indian motifs. The winged heads are inspired by European designs. A profusion of scrolling vines emerges from a vase; patterns like this resemble those on trade textiles that were also produced on the Coromandel Coast.

Ebony furniture was made in the 17th and early 18th centuries on the Coromandel Coast, as well as in Sri Lanka and Java. Such pieces could be commonly found in aristocratic houses in Britain and in Dutch-controlled Jakarta, which imported

ebony and craftsmen from India and China to make furniture.

## **F.6**

### **Chair**

Sri Lanka, Galle, early 18th century

Satinwood

2015-00480

This chair was made in Sri Lanka for the Dutch, who governed the island from 1656 to 1796.

The form of the chair is based on European examples, but the carved decoration is Sri Lankan. For example, the large shells on the crest and seat rails can be found in European chairs, but the bird-lion hybrid creatures are a Sri Lankan element.

This chair was made for one of the Dutch ports, such as Jakarta, Malacca, Cape Town,

or Nagasaki. Chairs like this influenced the development of furniture in Southeast Asia, especially ornate Peranakan furniture.

## **F.7**

### **Table**

India, Vizagapatam, first half of the 18th century

Ivory, ebony, rosewood

2013-00603

The surfaces are intricately inlaid with ivory to create scrolling vines and flowers. The table top features a European crest, possibly that of the Grieben family of Germany. Tables made in Vizagapatam are relatively rare, compared with other types of furniture.

## **F.8**

### **Armchair**

Java, around 1810s

Rosewood, brass

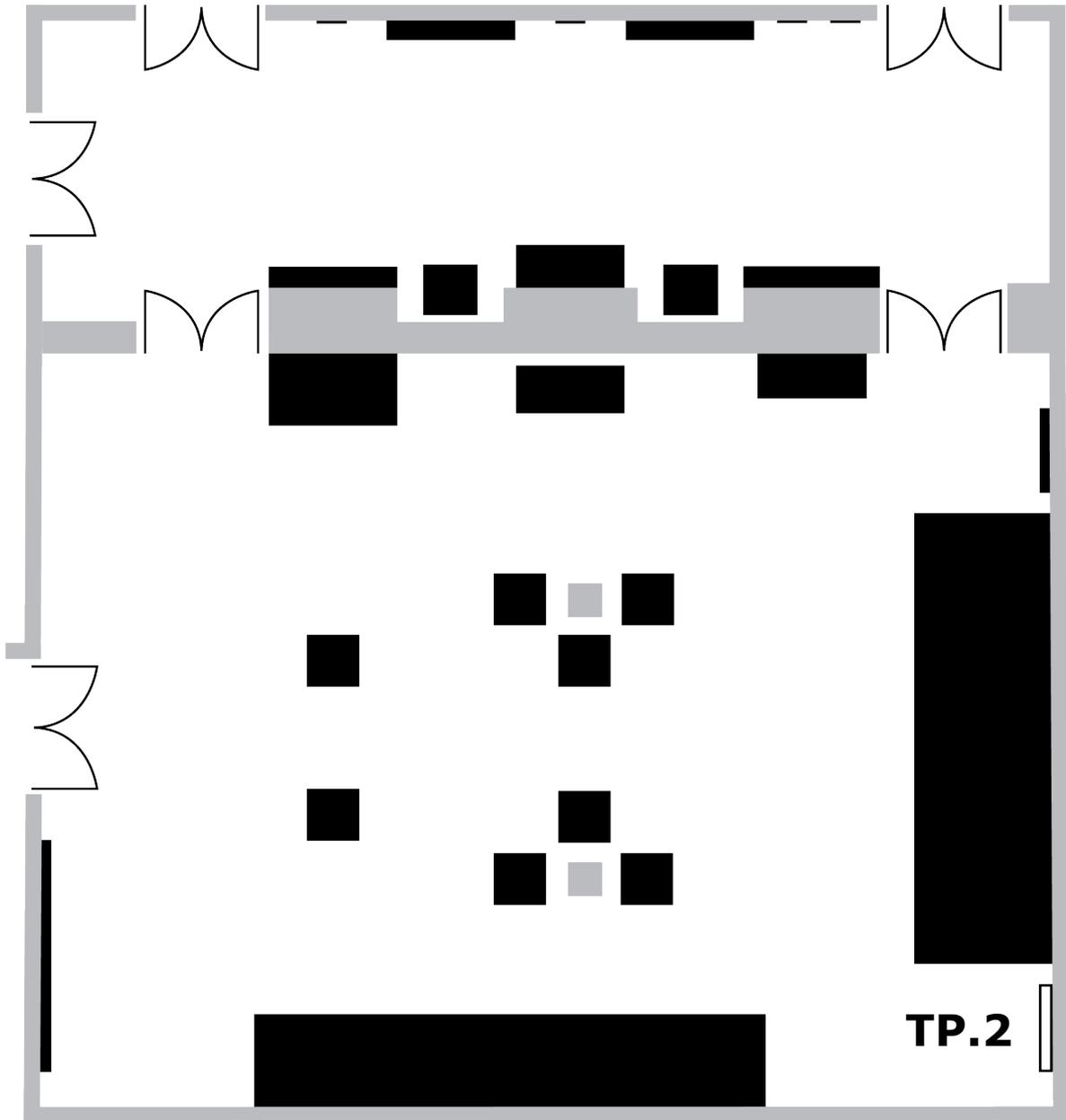
Engraved on the brass plate: H.B.

2014-00472

This armchair was made around the time Singapore was established as a British colony. The type is closely associated with Stamford Raffles, who brought such chairs when he arrived in Singapore in 1819.

The simple chair has elegantly curved arms that end in small vases, along with a gently curved back and rear legs that angle backwards. The neoclassical design originated in England, but by about 1800 was also being produced in Kolkata, capital of British India. The light and open design was suited to the tropics.

Sometimes called a Raffles Chair, the form was popularised by Raffles when he was governor of Java from 1811 to 1815. Java continued to make the chairs after the Dutch regained control of the island. This example is made of rosewood, which is found in India and Southeast Asia.



## **TP.2**

### **Indian textiles for the world**

The ancient Romans praised Indian cloth and bought massive quantities. Indian cotton was traded for Chinese silk and given as tribute to the Chinese emperor. Fragments of 10th-century Indian textile fragments have been excavated in Egypt.

### **For Western markets**

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Indian cottons were used for clothing, upholstery, and wall and bed hangings in Europe and America. Their popularity revolutionised European fashion and interiors, creating great demand for the bright floral prints and geometric designs.

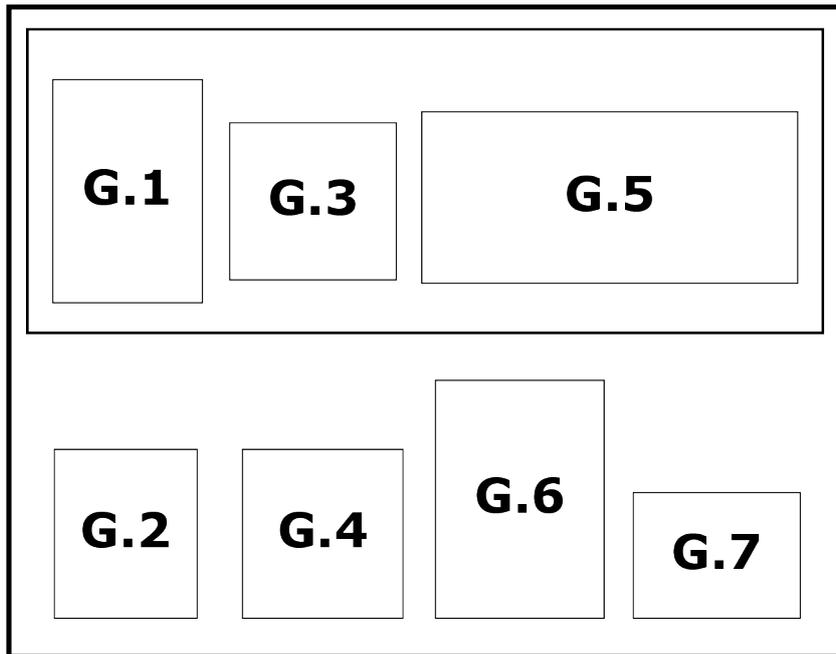
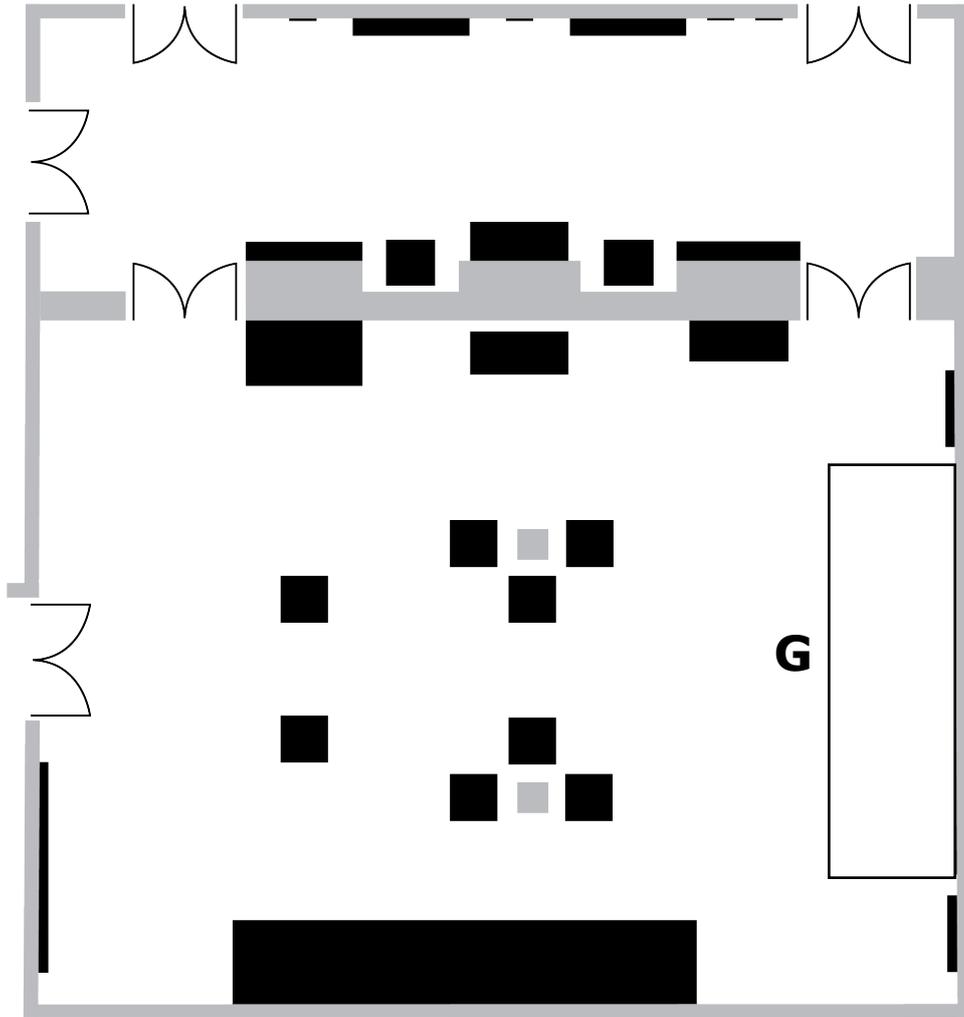
### **For Asian markets**

In Japan, the Portuguese and Dutch established a highly profitable trade that included Indian cottons. Most textiles exported to Southeast Asia

and Japan were made in Gujarat (western India) or the Coromandel Coast (south-eastern India).

### **In Southeast Asia**

Indian cotton was carried along maritime trade routes to Southeast Asia. These cloths were used as garments and ceremonial decorations. Some survived for hundreds of years as treasured heirlooms. By the mid-19th century, Indonesian artisans were producing large quantities of batik cloth, which competed with imported Indian cloths in the market.



## **G.1**

### **Palampore with Tree of Life motif**

India, Coromandel Coast, 17th or 18th century

Cotton (drawn and painted, mordant-dyed)

Ex. Hollander Collection

2009-02127

Palampore is a term for large cloths used as bedcovers; but some were displayed in other ways, such as hung on a wall. Tree of Life is a symbolic motif used in cultures around the world.

## G.2

### Long coat (baju panjang)

Sumatra, Lampung, 18th or early 19th century

Textile: India, Coromandel Coast, 18th century

Cotton batik (mordant- and resist-dyed)

Gift of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

2011-00094

This long jacket, called "baju panjang" in Malay, was fashioned from hand-painted Indian mordant- and resist-dyed cotton, with floral motif in red, blue, purple and white against a red ground.

The baju panjang is a long, loose coat once popular with both men and women. It relates to the Indo-Arabic banyan worn by Gujarati merchants, which came to be popular with Europeans. Malay popular tradition holds that the baju panjang was introduced with the arrival of Islam, which required more modest clothing.

### **G.3**

#### **Linked circles (kawung) motif in diamond centrefield**

India, Coromandel Coast, 17th or 18th century

Cotton (drawn and painted, resist- and mordant-dyed)

Ex. Hollander Collection

2009-01846

This textile was probably made for the Indonesian market.

### **G.4**

#### **Cabinet**

India, Coromandel Coast, 16th century

Lacquer, wood, iron

2014-00463

This chest mixes designs from many sources.

The exterior is carved in low relief with scrolling vines and animals, showing the influence of both

Iranian and Chinese art. The interior is brilliantly painted in gold on red lacquer, a typical Chinese technique.

The cabinet could store documents and valuables, while also serving as a portable writing desk. The Portuguese commissioned cabinets like this one from Indian furniture makers.

## **G.5**

### **Table**

India, Goa, 17th century

Teak, ebony, rosewood, ivory

2014-00317

The table is inlaid with ebony and ivory, creating a rich pattern of black and white. The geometric elements on the tabletop show the influence of Islamic art. On the other hand, the twisting legs and crosspieces are typical of European furniture.

## **G.6**

### **Cabinet and stand**

Cabinet: India, Gujarat, around 1700

Stand: probably England, around 1720

Tortoiseshell, silver, ivory, wood, gold

2014-00315

This cabinet is veneered with polished tortoiseshell panels backed with gold leaf to give the material extra luminosity. The carved and gilded stand was made specifically to support the cabinet.

## **G.7**

### **Chest with stand**

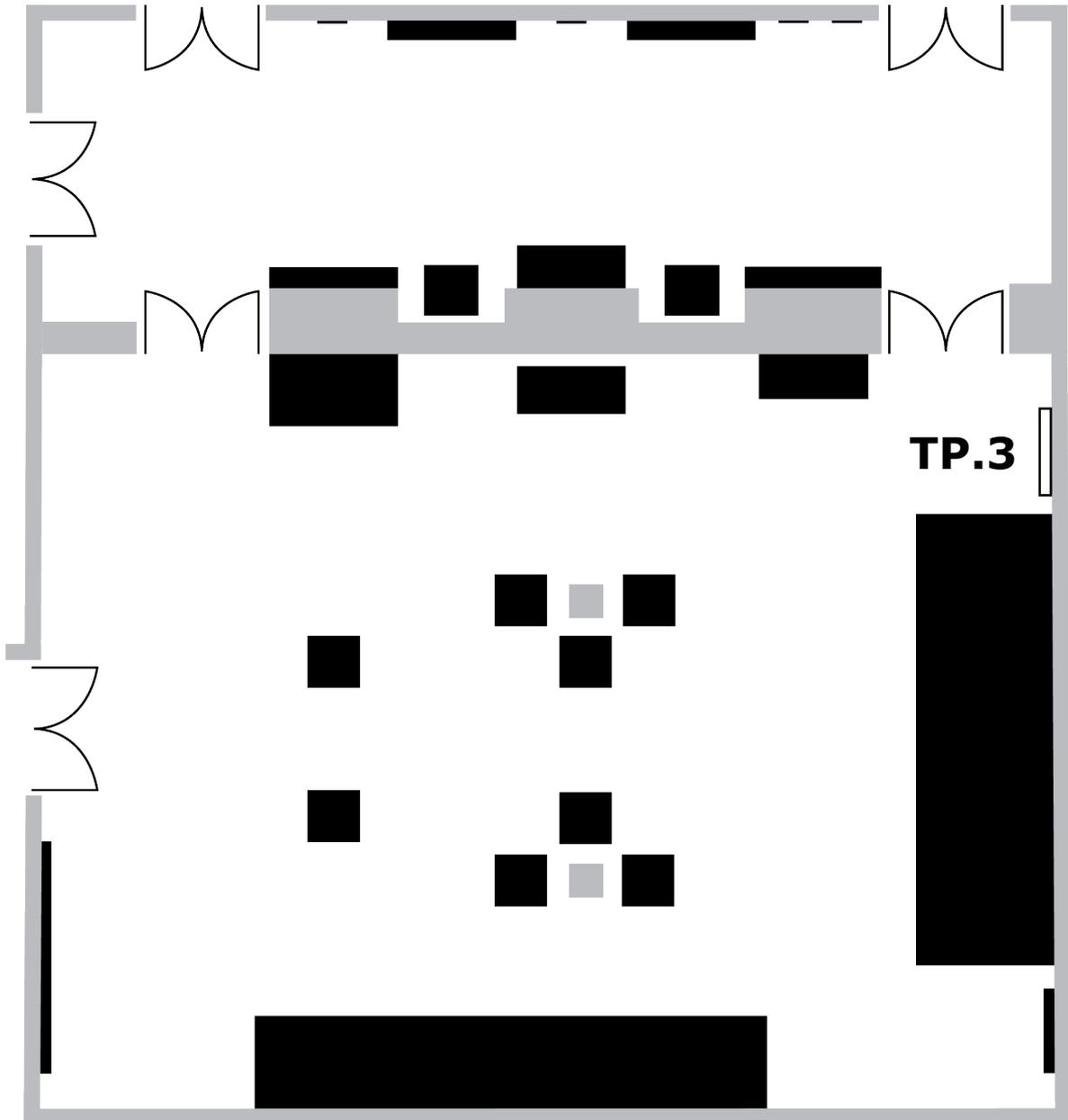
India, Bareilly, mid-19th century

Gilded and varnished wood

2011-03158

Gilded and varnished furniture of this type is thought to have been made in Bareilly in Uttar

Pradesh, India. The decoration shows pagodas set amidst lakes and mountains. Both the landscapes and the technique are derived directly from objects made in Guangzhou, China.



## **TP.3**

### **Indian textiles – Production and techniques**

#### **Colours**

Indian artisans used natural substances to dye cloth in bright, colourfast colours. The leaves of the indigo plant produced blue. Red dye was made from the roots of three species of Rubia. Yellow was made from myrobalam tree seeds, jackfruit tree root, turmeric, and pomegranate rinds. An extract of the acacia tree made brown, and a mineral form of iron acetate known as kaseem produced black. Over-dyeing yellow on indigo blue was used for green.

#### **Mordant-dyeing**

Outlines are drawn using a kalam (pen). Areas to be coloured red are then painted with alum – a “mordant” that binds dye to cloth. When the cloth is immersed in dye, only areas treated with alum become red. Fine white lines could be

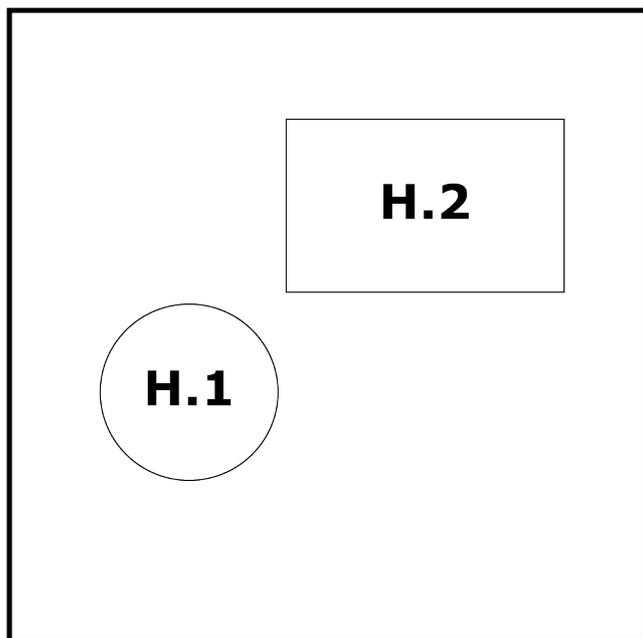
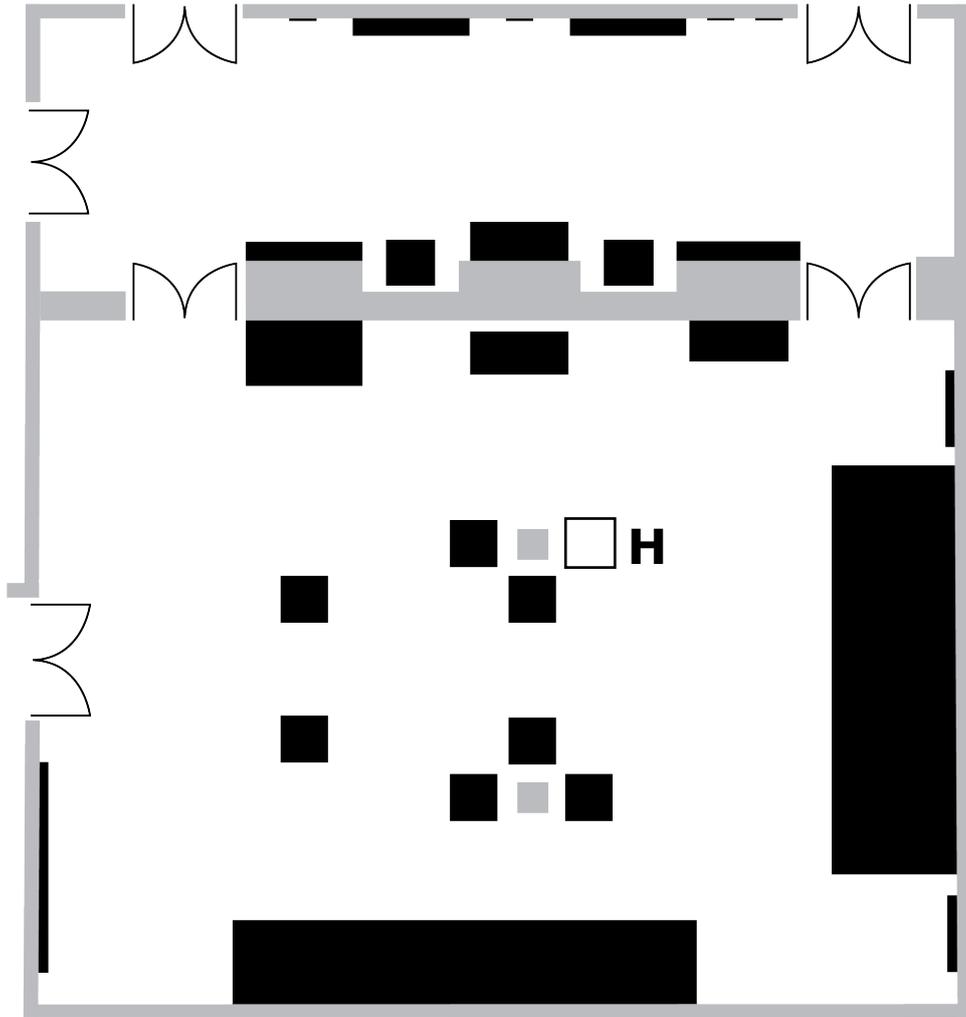
added by drawing a solution of lime juice onto alum-treated areas.

### **Resist-dyeing**

Other colours were painted or “resist-dyed” onto the cloth. With resist-dyeing, molten wax or another thick paste is painted in areas not to be dyed. This method is commonly used for indigo dyeing, which requires multiple immersions to attain the classic deep blue of indigo.

### **Block printing**

Block printing is a labour-saving way to decorate cloth. The same designs can be repeated using carved wooden blocks. A series of blocks for different colours can create sophisticated designs. Sometimes parts of block-printed cloth would also be embellished with painting or resist-dyeing.



## **H.1**

### **Bezoar stone and holder**

India, 17th century

Silver, bezoar stone

2011-03169

Bezoars are stones found in the stomachs of certain animals, for example, cattle and horses. Bezoars were believed to be powerful antidotes against poison and were thought to have healing properties. This bezoar is encased in a decorative silver case.

## **H.2**

### **Box**

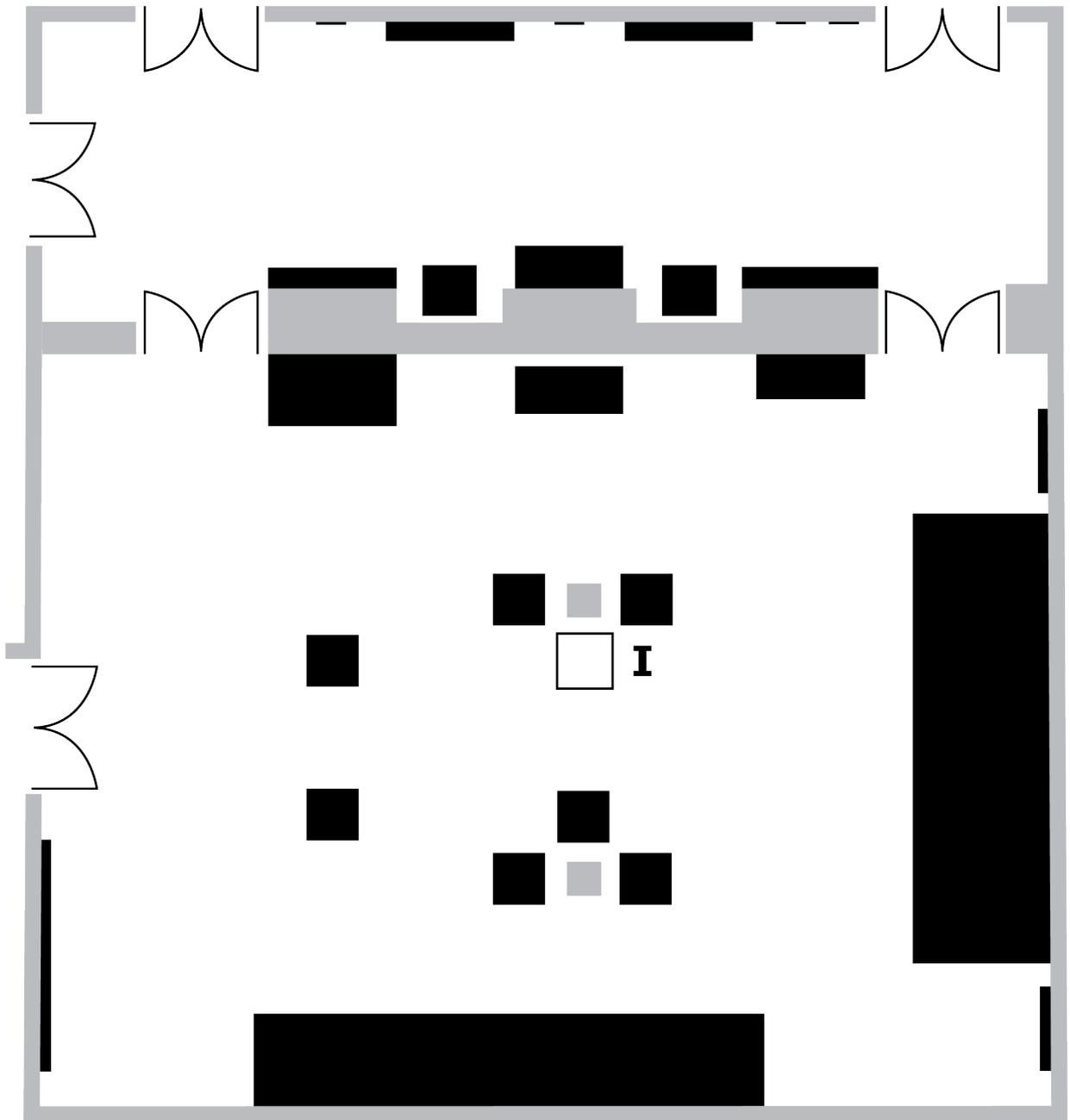
India, Goa, late 17th century

Silver

2011-02266

Filigree work, as seen on this box, is done by bending and soldering silver wires to create an

intricate mesh. Various leafy and floral vines swirl in the panels of this box.



# **I**

## **Casket**

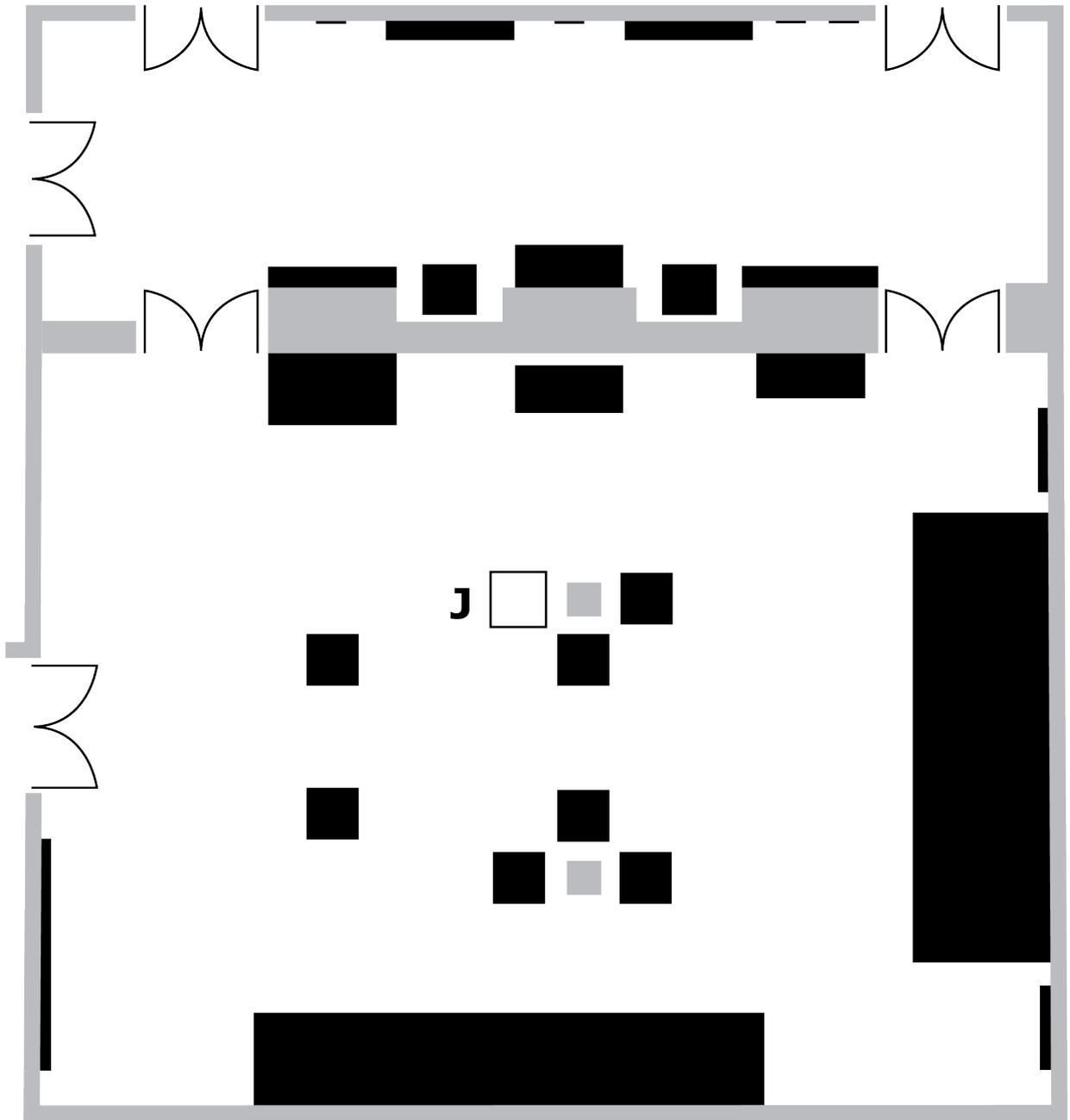
India, Gujarat, 16th century

Tortoiseshell, silver

2013-00941

The body of the casket is made of tortoiseshell, a highly prized exotic material. The silver lock has a latch in the form of a lizard with a curled tail.

Tortoiseshell caskets were so valuable that they were used to store jewellery, or as reliquaries for the remains of saints in Portuguese and Spanish churches.



## **J**

### **Pipe case**

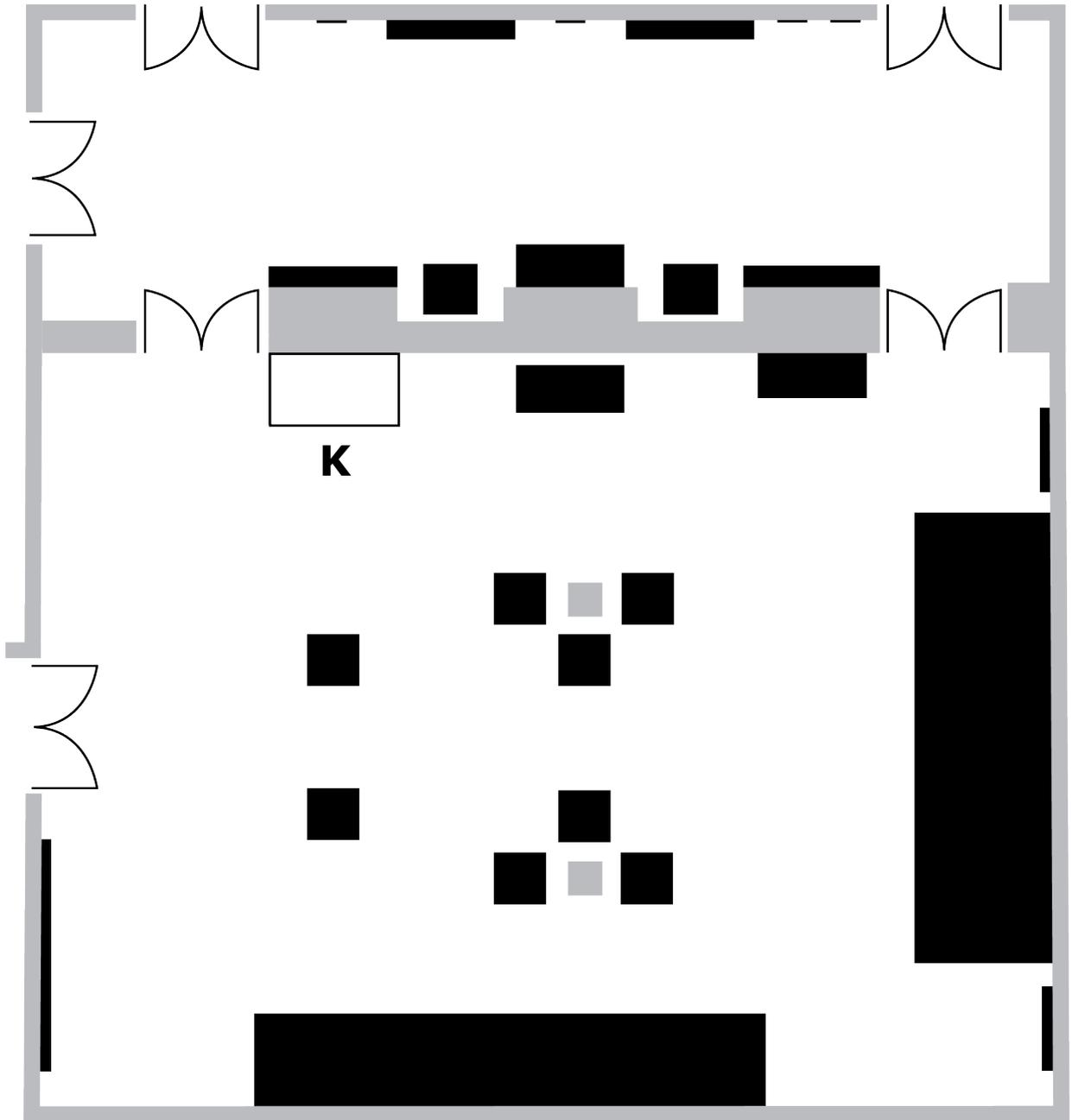
Sri Lanka, late 17th century

Ivory, mica, metal, wood

2011-01494

This long box is a case for tobacco pipes. A small door with a knob carved as a lion unlatches to reveal two tubes that would have held long thin pipes made of clay. Such pipes were a special product of the town of Gouda in Holland, and can be seen in many 17th-century Netherlandish paintings.

This case is a highly refined, Asian version of a European object more commonly made of wood or leather.



## **K**

### **Cabinet**

Mughal India, probably Agra, around 1640

Rosewood, ebony, ivory, iron

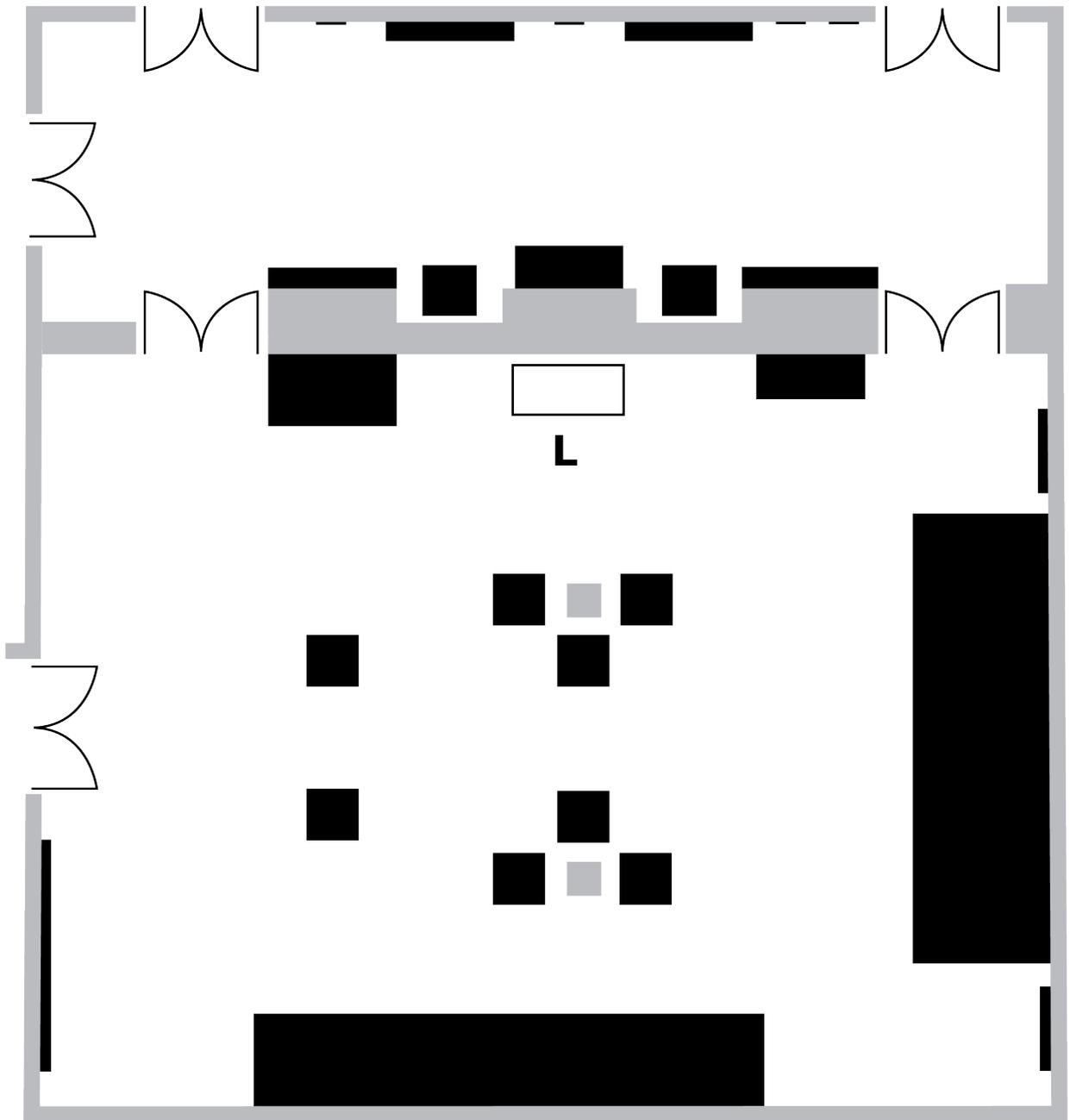
Purchased with funds from Dr Reshma and

Mr Aziz Merchant

2013-00164

The decoration of this cabinet shows the prevailing taste at the court of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (reigned 1627–58). The external surface is rather discreet, but when the doors are opened, a lush world of flowers is revealed.

This object was likely made at the Mughal court. The ivory inlays are of high quality, and the rows of flowers commonly appear in objects made at the Mughal capital, Agra. Similar motifs can be found in drawings, textiles, and buildings such as the Agra Fort and Taj Mahal.



## L

### **Bureau cabinet**

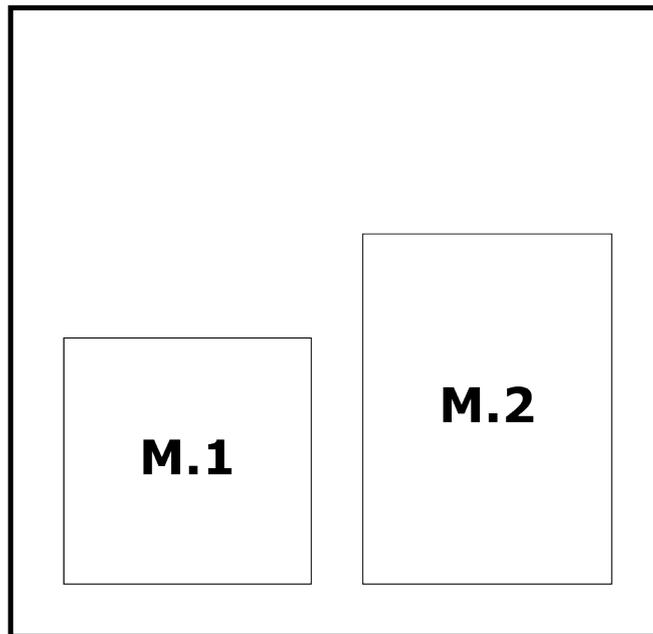
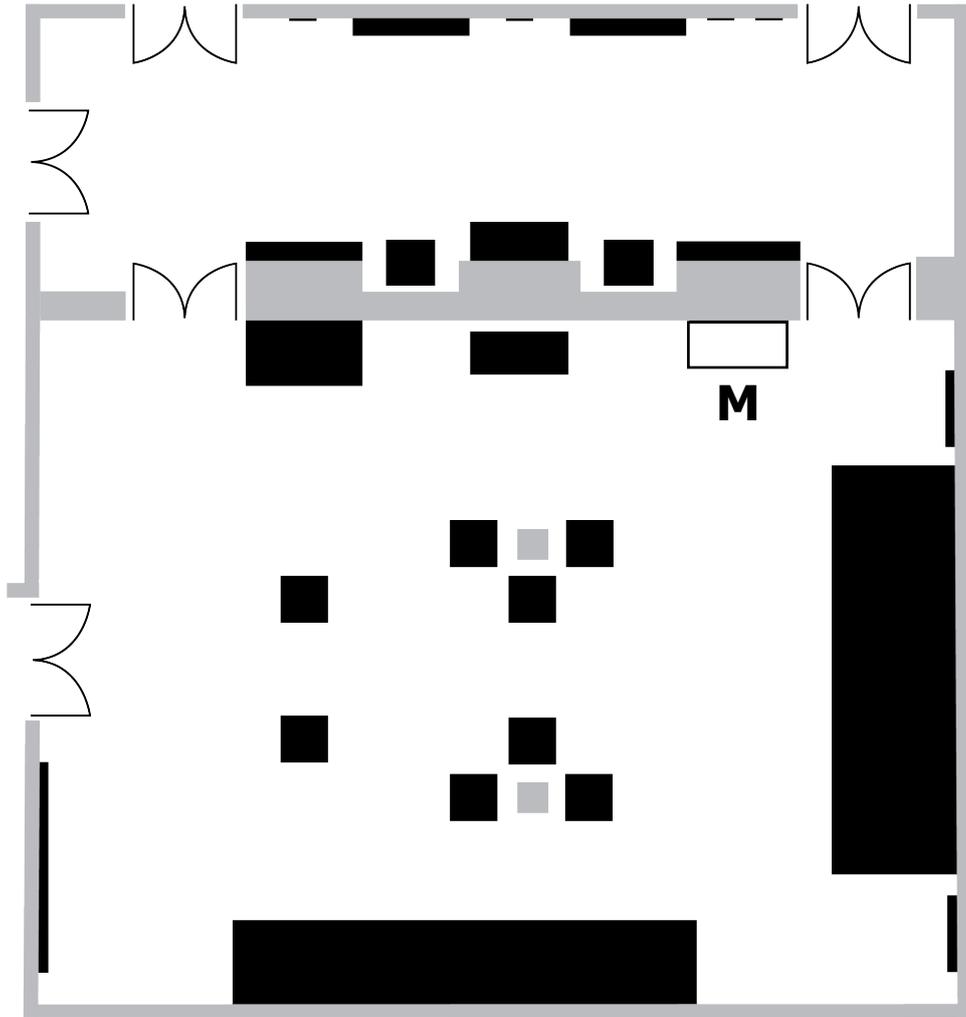
India, Vizagapatam, late 18th century

Ivory veneered rosewood, lacquer, metal

2014-00704

The ivory plaques on this cabinet are decorated with pavilions and houses set in landscapes.

Vizagapatam, a port on the Bay of Bengal, was known for producing fine ivory furniture.



## **M.1**

### **Game board**

South Asia, Gujarat or Sindh, 16th century

Ivory, wood, metal

2011-00611

One side of the board was used for chess, the other side for pachisi. Brackets along the borders kept the game pieces in order.

The board is decorated with complex mosaic patterns made up of various types of ivory, wood, and metal.

## **M.2**

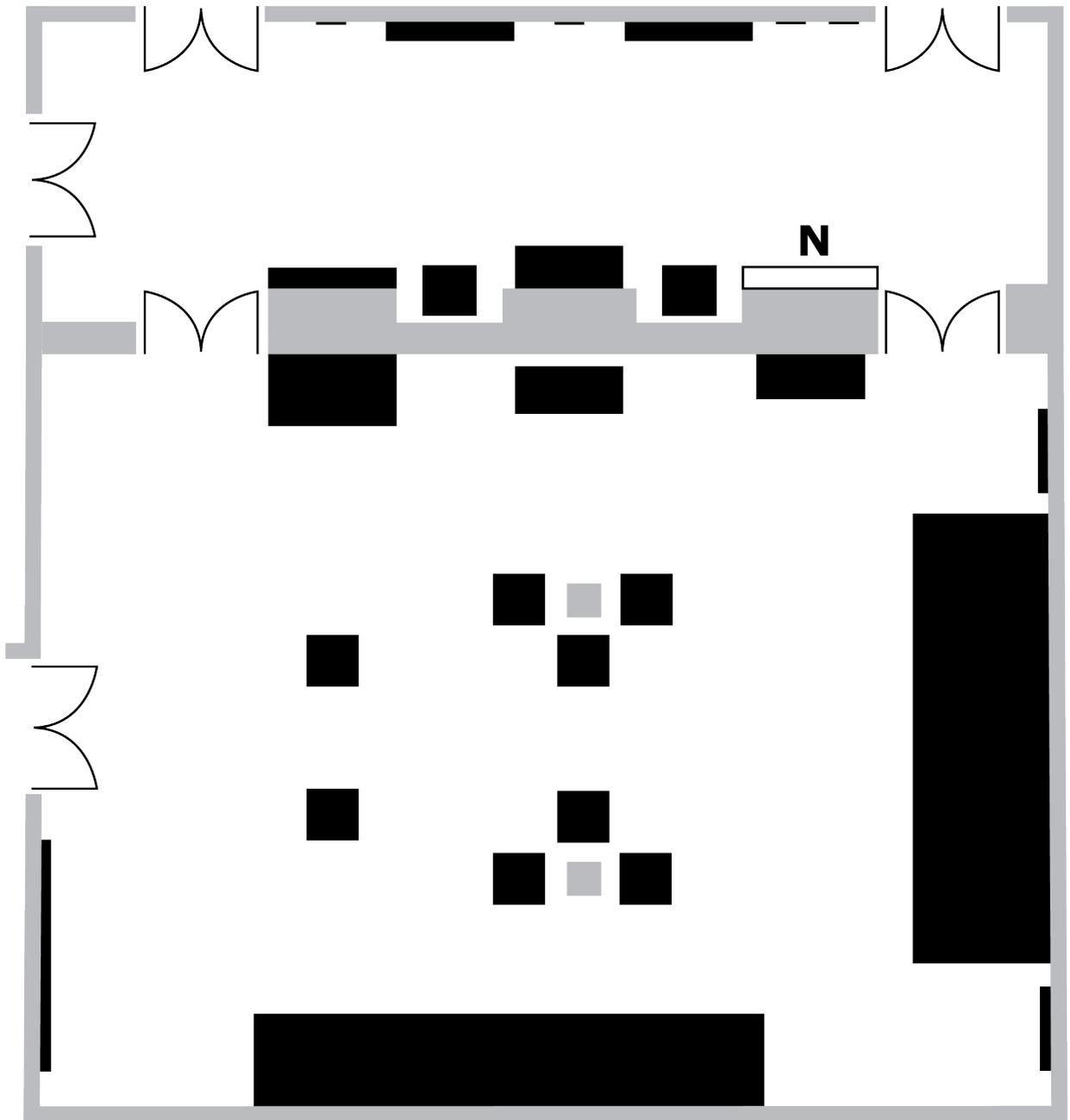
### **Cabinet**

South Asia, Gujarat or Sindh, 17th century

Sissoo wood, ebony, ivory, brass, gilded copper

2015-00516

The inlays of exotic woods, ivory, and metal are derived from Mughal Indian art. This unusually shaped cabinet may have been ordered for the Portuguese market. Cabinets of this shape are called contador de capela, Portuguese for “chapel cabinet”. But there is no evidence they were used for a religious purpose. This is one of the few such cabinets known.



## **N**

### **Panel with parrots and flowering plants**

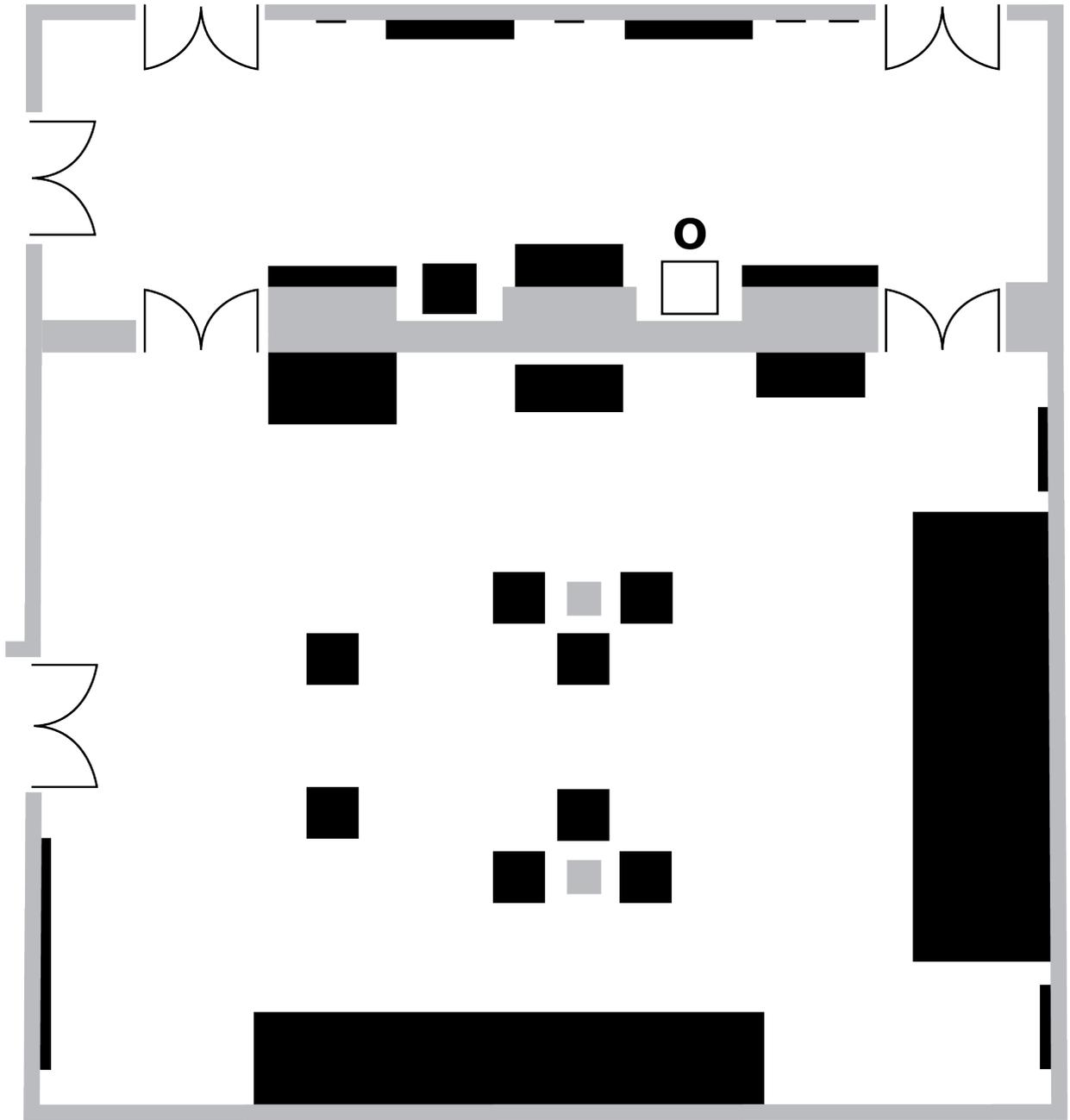
Mughal India, Agra, late 17th century

Sandstone

Purchased with funds from the Indian Bank,

Singapore

1993-01751



## O

### **Pachisi set**

Game pieces: India, 18th or 19th century

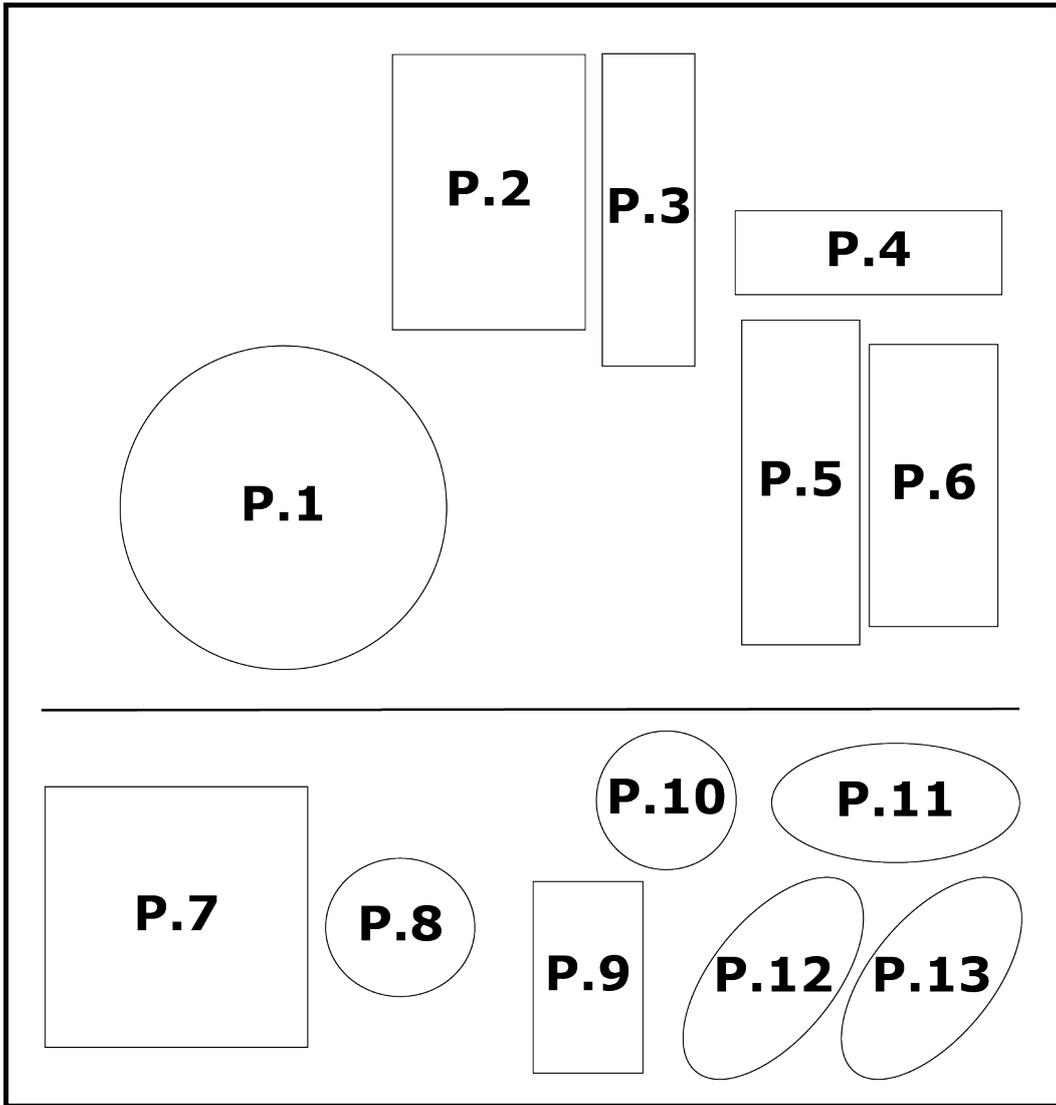
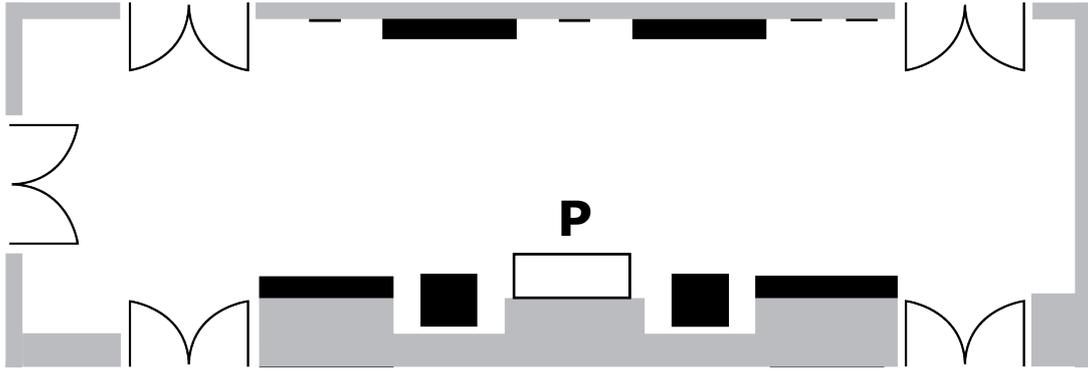
Board: 20th century

Rock crystal, gemstones, ivory, satin silk

2015-00643, 2016-00031

Pachisi is one of the oldest games that originated in South Asia. It is often called the national game of India, and was played by all groups of society. A set comprises of a board, sixteen gaming pieces (called ghotis), and three dice.

In this set, the gaming pieces are carved from rock crystal. One ivory die is missing. The cloth board is embroidered with yellow threads to distinguish squares and crosses necessary for the game play.



## **P.1**

### **Shield**

India, Udaipur, 18th century

Animal hide, gilded metal, ivory

Gift of Maniza and Iqbal Jumabhoy

2012-00578

The painted scenes show a royal hunt, beginning with bidding farewell to the bathing women. A boar and deer are killed, and, after a struggle, also a tiger.

## **P.2**

### **Two daggers**

Mughal India,

17th or 18th century

Jade, gemstones, gold, steel

1998-01397, 1997-04829

Daggers like these are weapons, but also ceremonial ornaments, frequently exchanged as court gifts.

## **P.3**

### **Elephant goad (ankush)**

Southern India,

17th or 18th century

Steel, gold

1998-01399

Ornately decorated elephant goads like this one were used in Hindu and Muslim court ceremonies.

## **P.4**

### **Powder horn**

Mughal India, 18th century

Ivory

1998-01398

Hunting was a popular theme in Mughal art. This gunpowder horn is carved with animals associated with hunting. The mouth of the horn is in the shape of a gazelle's head.

## **P.5**

### **Dagger with scabbard**

India, early 19th century

Mother-of-pearl, gold inlay on Damascus steel,  
iron

2011-03163

## **P.6**

### **Dagger (katar) with scabbard**

India, early 18th century

Iron, steel, gold; scabbard: wood, velvet

2011-01511

The distinctive "katar" originated in southern India by the 13th century. The blade is attached to parallel bars, which are joined by one or two grips.

The guard of the hilt is inscribed in gold with several languages, evidence of the multicultural nature of the Indian courts.

## **P.7**

### **Four carpet weights**

India, Bidar, 18th century

Zinc, silver, copper, tin

2011-03160

Weights like these were placed on the corners of a carpet to keep it in place.

## **P.8**

### **Bowl**

India, Bidar, 18th century

Zinc, silver, copper, tin

2012-00539

The inside of the bowl is inscribed with verses from the Quran in Arabic script.

## **P.9**

### **Dagger hilt**

India, 19th century

Jade set with semi-precious stones in gold wires

Purchased with funds from the Indian Bank,

Singapore

1993-01750

## **P.10**

### **Cup with cover**

Northern India, early 19th century

Rock crystal, set with semi-precious stones and  
gold wire

2016-00314

In the Mughal period, there was a great revival in the art of carving rock crystal (clear, colourless quartz), especially during the reign of Shah Jahan (1628–58), builder of the Taj Mahal. The decoration on the cup alludes to enclosed,

symmetrical “paradise gardens”, popular in Mughal India.

### **P.11**

#### **Two dishes**

Mughal India, 18th century

Jade

1994-00311, 1994-00312

### **P.12**

#### **Makara head bangles**

India, Jaipur, 19th century

Gold with semi-precious gemstones and enamels

2016-00313

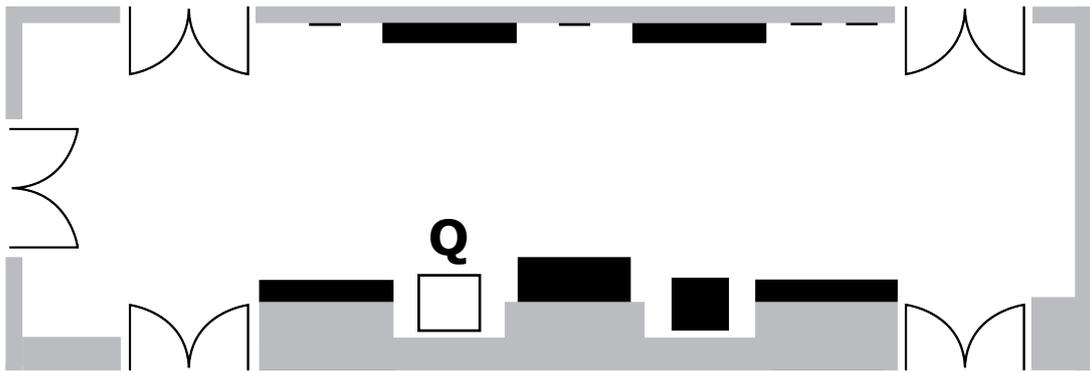
### **P.13**

#### **Elephant head bangles**

India, Benares, 19th century

Gold with semi-precious gemstones and enamels

2016-00312



## Q

### **Portable game box**

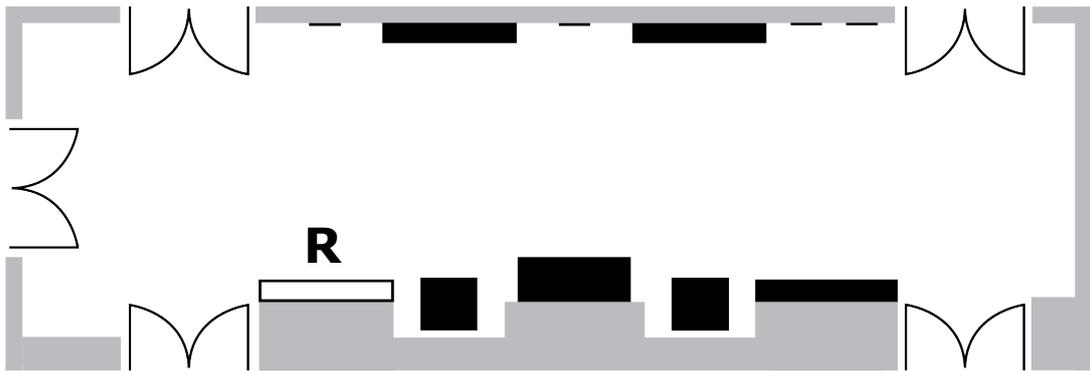
India, Vizagapatam, late 18th century

Wood, ivory, metal

2015-00644

This game box is made to look like stacked, leather-bound books when closed. The exterior is used to play chess, the interior backgammon. Chessboards like this, with scrolling foliage borders, were produced in Vizagapatam, a port on the east coast of India. Part of British India, it was well known for producing textiles and furniture.

The colonial rule of South and Southeast Asia by the Europeans spurred the production of elaborate, intricately carved chess sets for foreign residents and for export. These sets were often made for display rather than actual use.



## **R**

### **Doors**

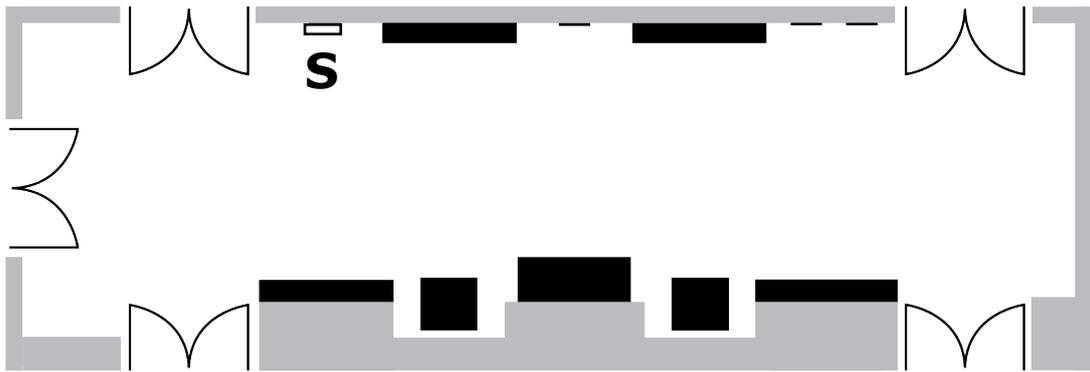
India, Gujarat, late 18th century

Mother-of-pearl, wood, metal fittings

2015-00064

This pair of doors are decorated with small plaques of mother-of-pearl (from seashells). Metal pins hold the plaques in place.

The original setting of the doors is not known, but it must have been an important building. The doors were produced in Gujarat, a region that, since the early 16th century, specialised in high-quality furniture decorated with mother-of-pearl.



## **S**

### **Street in Bombay**

William Simpson, Scottish

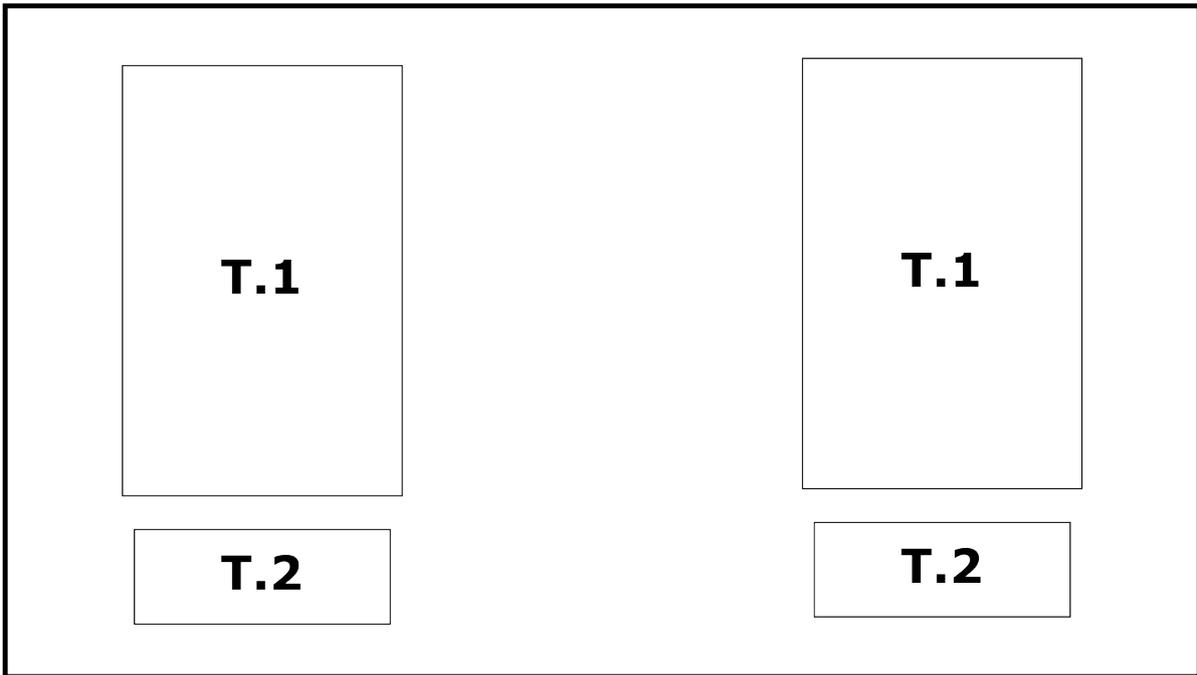
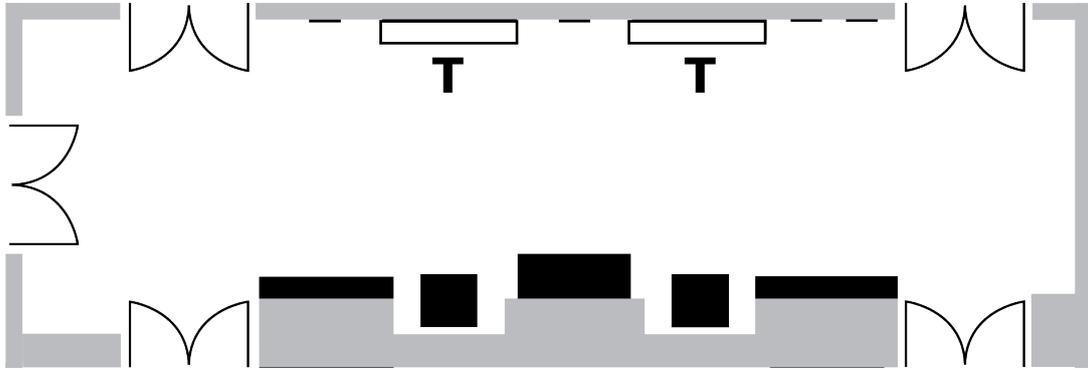
India, Mumbai (Bombay), signed and dated 1862

Pencil and watercolour on paper

2017-00259

This watercolour of a bustling street in Bombay shows the cosmopolitan nature of port cities of the time, with everyone jostling for space on the busy streets.

William Simpson (1823–1899) earned his reputation with a series of acclaimed images of the Crimean War (1853–56). The London publisher Day and Son sent Simpson to India in 1859 to produce images for a book. Several years after he returned, *India Ancient and Modern* (1867) was published. This original watercolour was used as the basis for one of the chromolithograph illustrations in that book.



## **T.1**

### **Screens (jali)**

Mughal India, Agra, late 17th century

Sandstone

1997-02974, -02975

This pair of lattice screens shows a delicate geometry. Besides allowing light and air into a room, the screens also divided architectural spaces.

## **T.2**

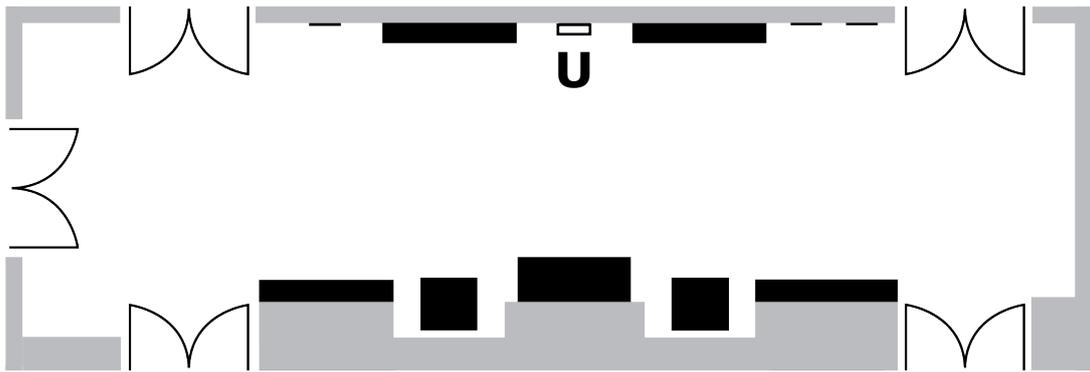
### **Railings**

India, Rajasthan, mid-17th century

Marble

1997-02973

These marble panels served as railings for a balcony or terrace. Similar decoration appears on the borders of Mughal paintings and carpets from the 16th and 17th centuries.



## U

### **The Taj Mahal from across the river**

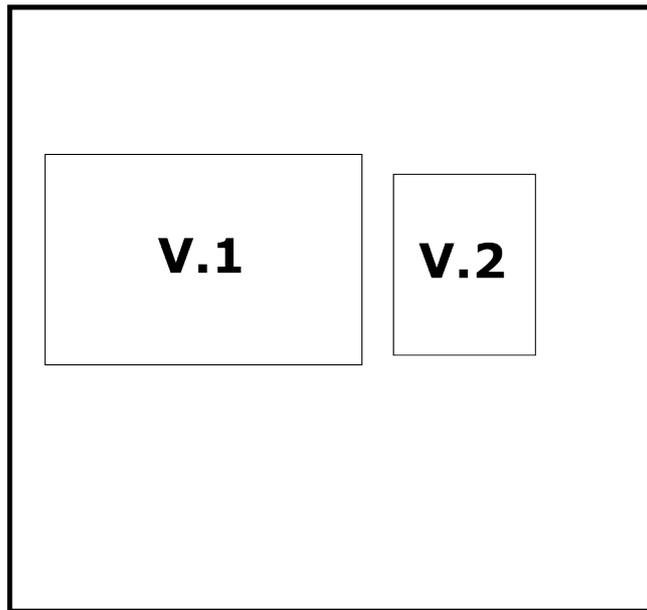
India, Murshidabad, 1795–1810

Watercolour on paper

2017-00941

This painting comes under the category of “Company paintings”, made for people who worked for the various European East India trading companies. They were bought or commissioned as souvenirs of a stay in Asia.

This view from across the Yamuna River was not, as you might think, painted on the spot. Instead it was made in Murshidabad, about 1,200 km to the southeast, where many of the trading companies were located. The artist is unknown but from the style, it was probably a local Indian artist working from a sketch or painting by a European artist.



## **V.1**

### **East India Company factory at Cossimbazar**

India, Murshidabad, 1795–1810

Watercolour on paper

2017-00940

In the late 18th century, many traditional Mughal artists working around the city of Murshidabad, in Bengal, adapted their style to suit Western patrons. The British, Dutch, French, and Danish East India companies all maintained factories along the Hooghly River at Cossimbazar (Kasim Bazar) or nearby Murshidabad.

Because of the Union Jack flying prominently in the scene, this painting was most likely commissioned by a British patron.

## **V.2**

### **Rao Bakhat Singh with four British officials**

India, Udaipur, 19th century

Opaque watercolour on paper

2016-00240

This painting shows a maharana (a ruler in Udaipur) entertaining four British officials. The notations in Devanagari script identify the men: at left is Rao Bakhat Singh of Bedla (born 1816, reigned 1835–80) in conversation with Major William Borthwick. Major Thomas Robinson faces Colonel Alexander Spiers, and in the foreground is a man named Parker.

Rao Bakhat Singh took a keen interest in foreign visitors and became the chief go-between for British and other European visitors to the court. Bedla, north of Udaipur, was one of the major vassal territories of Mewar state.