

Large Print Guide

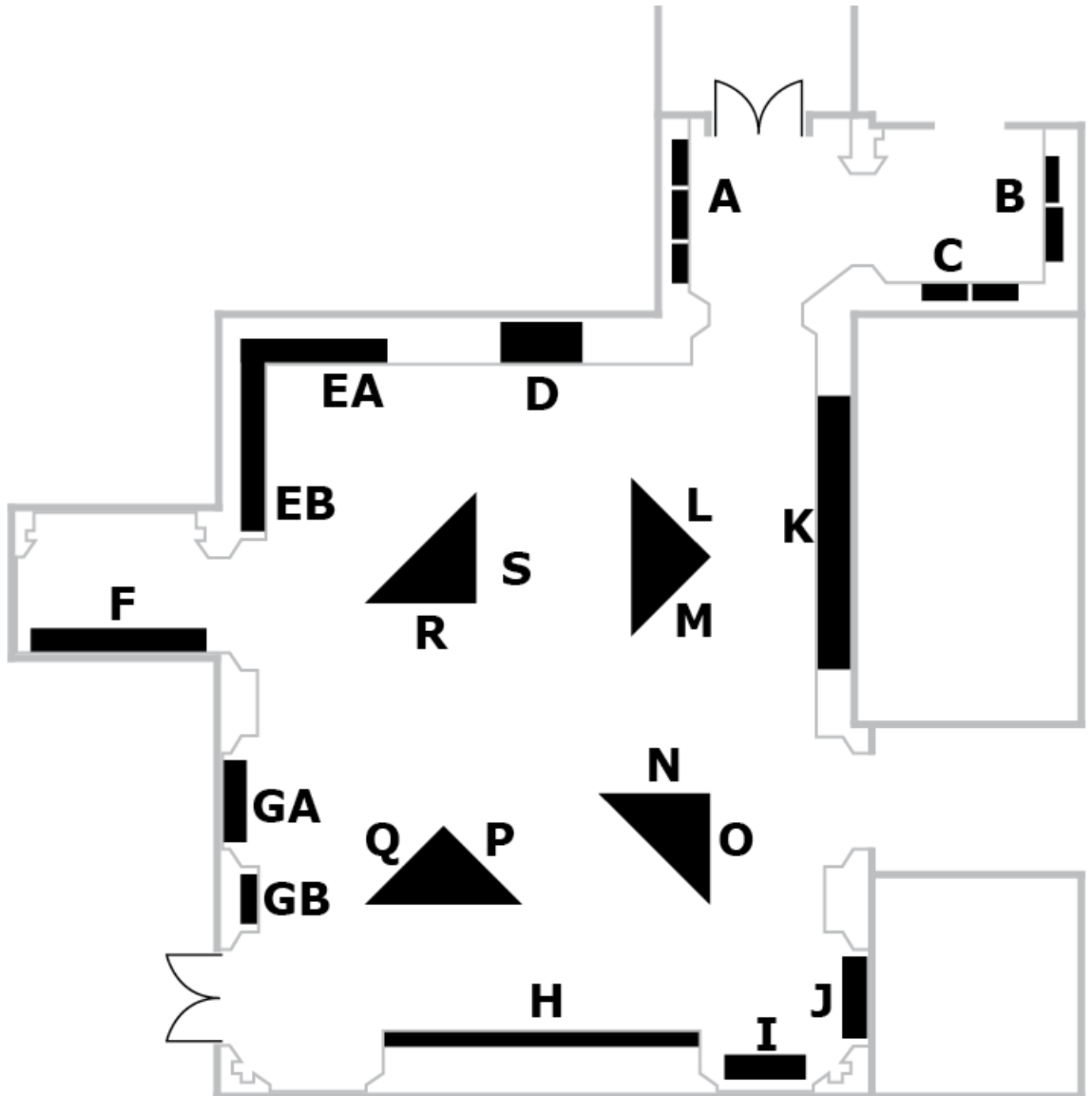
Please return after use

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.

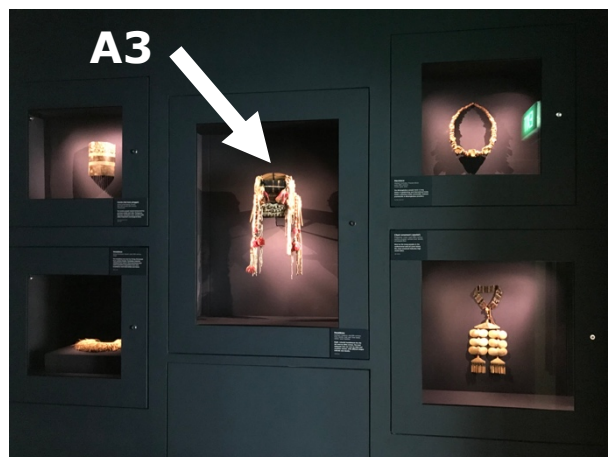
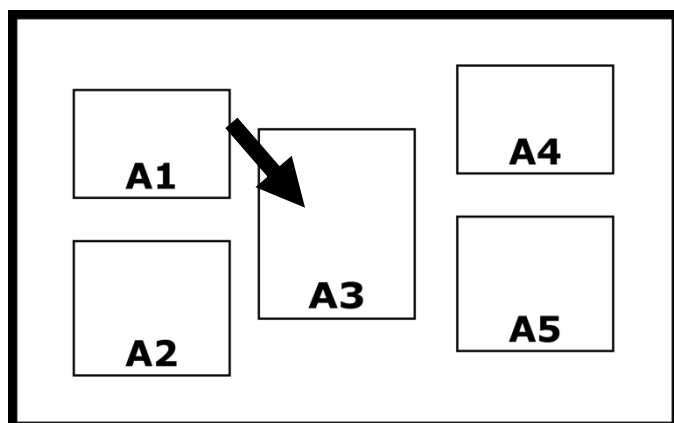
Jewellery

Level 3
Permanent Galleries
Materials & Design

Floorplan of Gallery and User Guide



How to read display case and floorplans

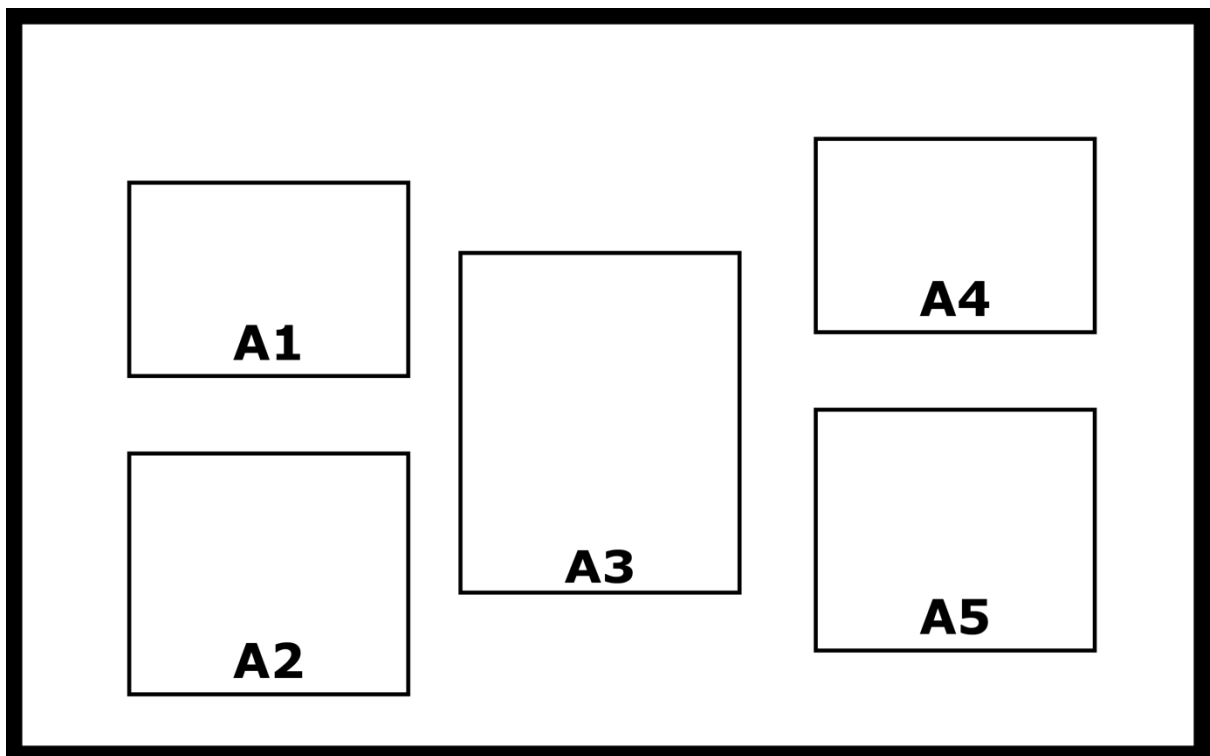
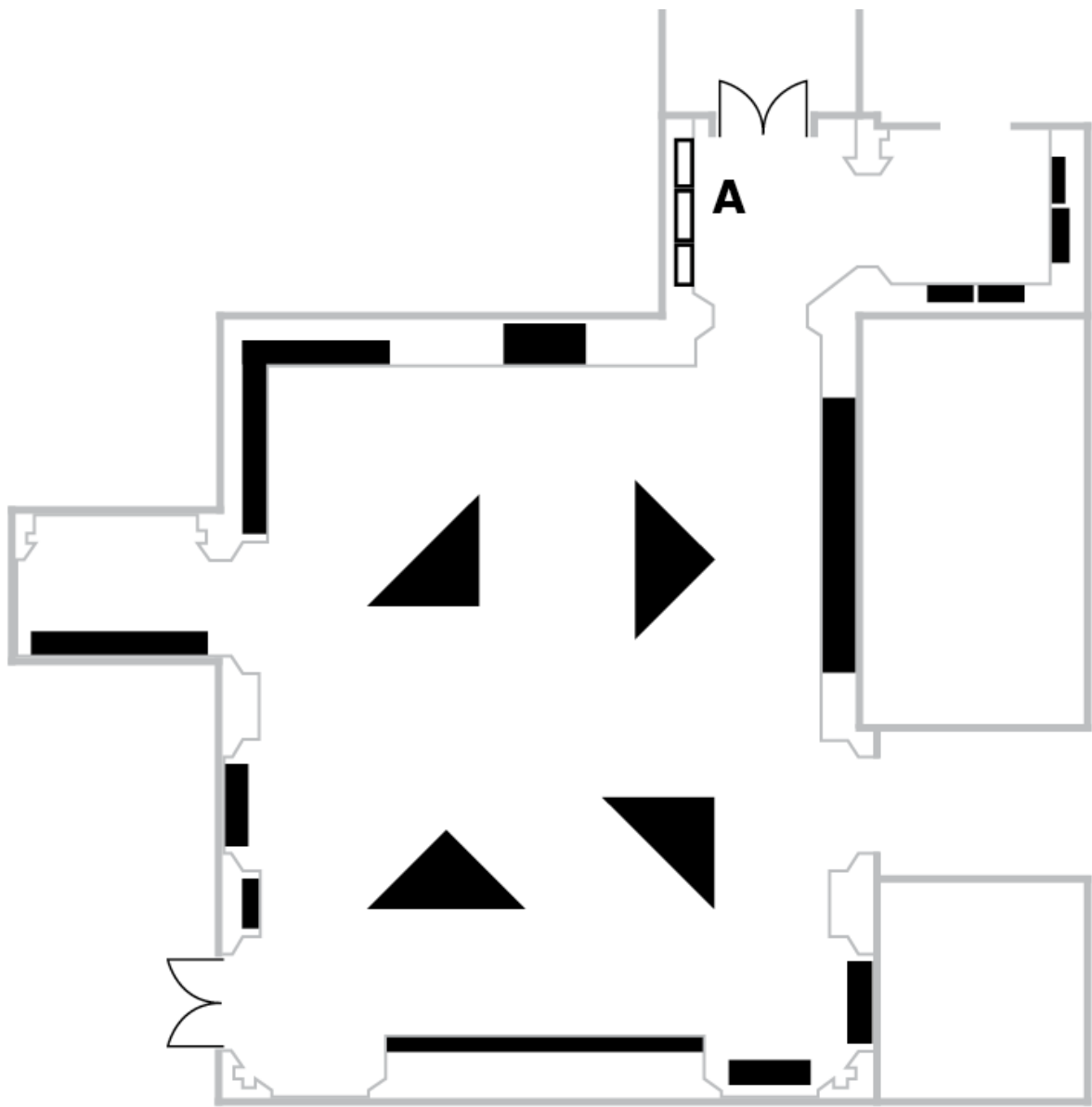


**To find object label text, match A3 to A3,
then A4 to A4, and so on.**

A3

Headdress

Northern Thailand, mid-20th century
Ivory, beads, shell, job's tear seeds,
rattan, wool, feathers
1993-01317



A1

Comb (hai kara jangga)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Sumba, late 19th or early 20th century

Tortoiseshell

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00561

The Sumba people traded tortoiseshell for precious metals and, later, Portuguese, Mexican, and Dutch coins. Animal motifs reflect important cosmological ideas.

A2

Headdress

Malay Peninsula, Kedah, early 20th century

Grass

XXXX-11945

This headdress was worn by Orang Asli people from southern Kedah. Perishable materials

obtained from nature's flora and fauna were used in jewellery long before tools were invented to work hard metals and stones.

A3

Headdress

Northern Thailand, mid-20th century

Ivory, beads, shell, job's tear seeds, rattan, wool, feathers

1993-01317

Bright, colourful headdresses like this are worn by Akha women. The most elaborate ones are worn by older and wealthier women, while different shapes indicate clan identity.

A4

Necklace

Western Sumatra, Payakumbuh, early 20th century

Coral, gold, silver

The Bak Collection

The Minangkabau people have a long history in goldmining and international trade. Coral, a precious trade commodity, features prominently in Minangkabau jewellery.

A5

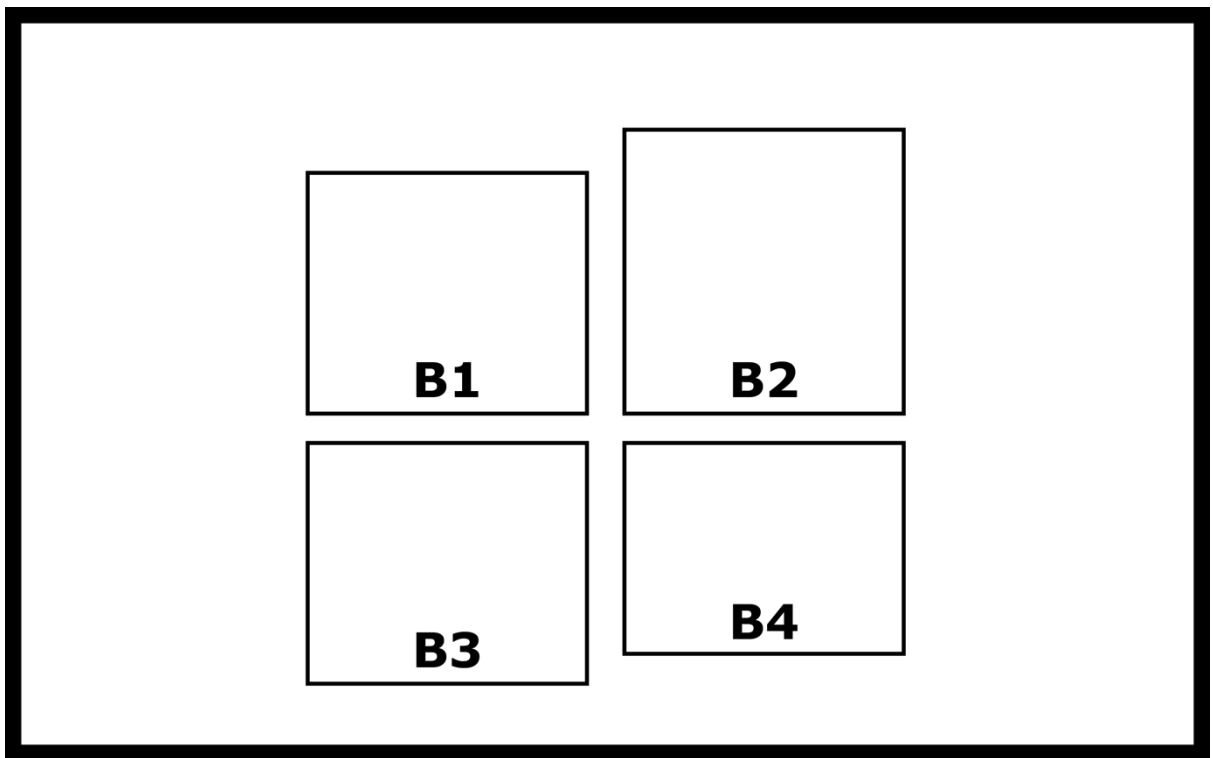
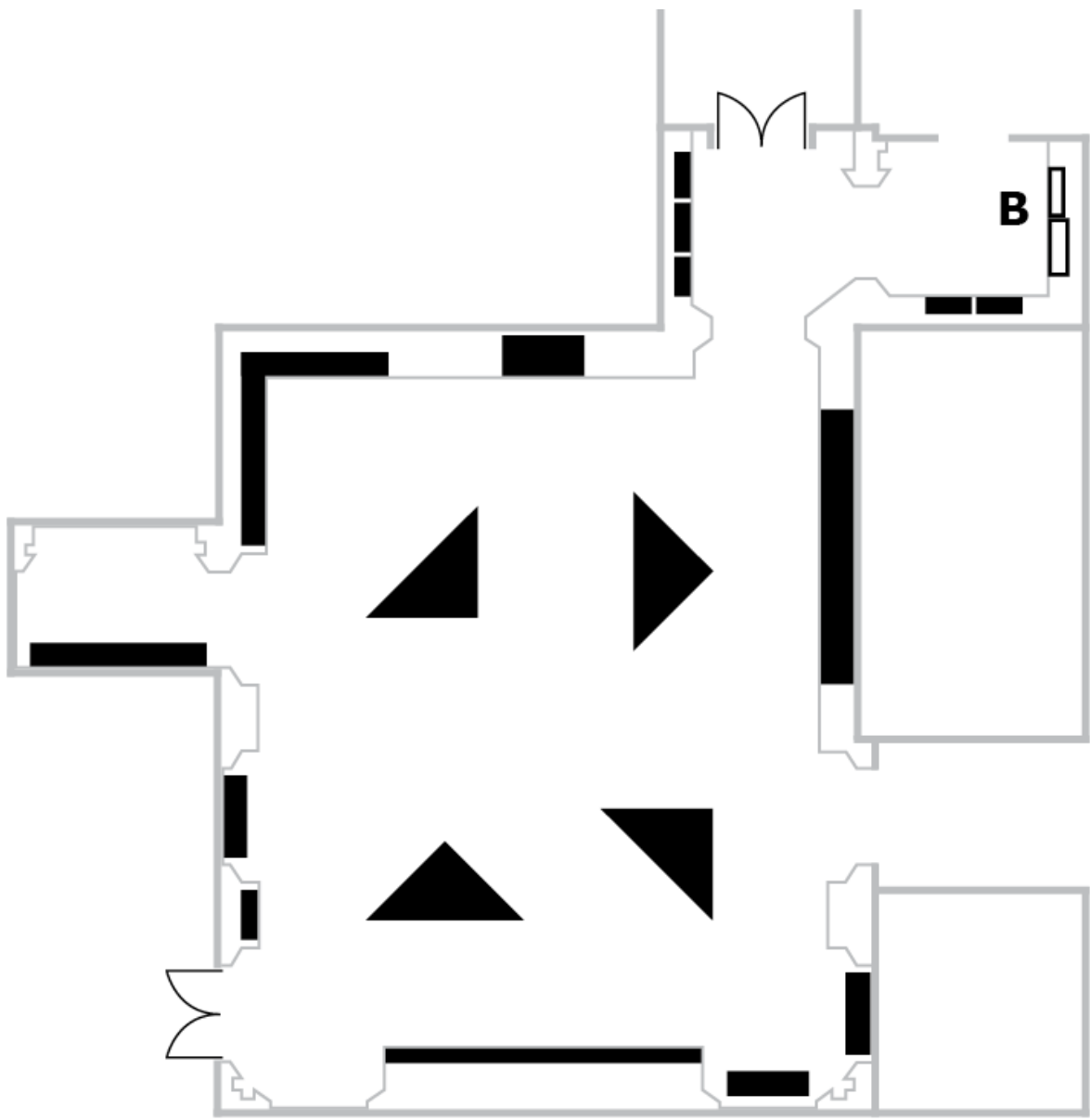
Chest ornament (sipatal)

Philippines, Luzon, early 20th century

Mother-of-pearl, tortoise shell, beads, pineapple
fibre

2001-00376

Worn by the Isneg peoples in the northernmost
area of Luzon Island, this chest ornament
indicates high social status.



B1

Bridal headdress

Penang, late 19th or early 20th century

Gilded silver, kingfisher feathers, faux pearls,
glass beads, jewels

1994-04946

This headdress for a Chinese Peranakan bride is decorated with bright blue kingfisher feathers, a highly prized luxury good in China. The gilded ornaments with auspicious and protective meanings include phoenixes, the Daoist Eight Immortals, and the Three Star Gods – Fu, Lu, and Shou.

The Peranakan Chinese are descendants of Chinese travellers who came to Southeast Asia and married local women. They adapted elements of Chinese and indigenous cultures, creating a hybrid culture.

B2

Wedding necklace

India, Tamil Nadu, Chettinad, 19th century

Gold, lac, cotton thread

1994-05001

During weddings, the groom would tie this necklace around the bride's neck. The central pendant depicts the god Subrahmanya standing above his parents, Shiva and Pravati, who ride Nandi the bull.

The Chettiar community has been trading beyond their homeland of Chettinad, Tamil Nadu, for centuries. Many Tamil-speaking Chettiars migrated to Southeast Asia in the late 18th and 19th century.

B3

Neck ring

Northern Thailand, early 20th century

Silver

1993-00560

Large neck rings like this were worn mainly by Akha and Hmong women. Silver was highly valued in these communities, and used as a way of investing a family's wealth. Passed down as heirlooms, pieces like this are believed to have protective properties.

B4

Buckle (pending) with belt

Singapore or Straits Settlements, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (brilliant-cut)

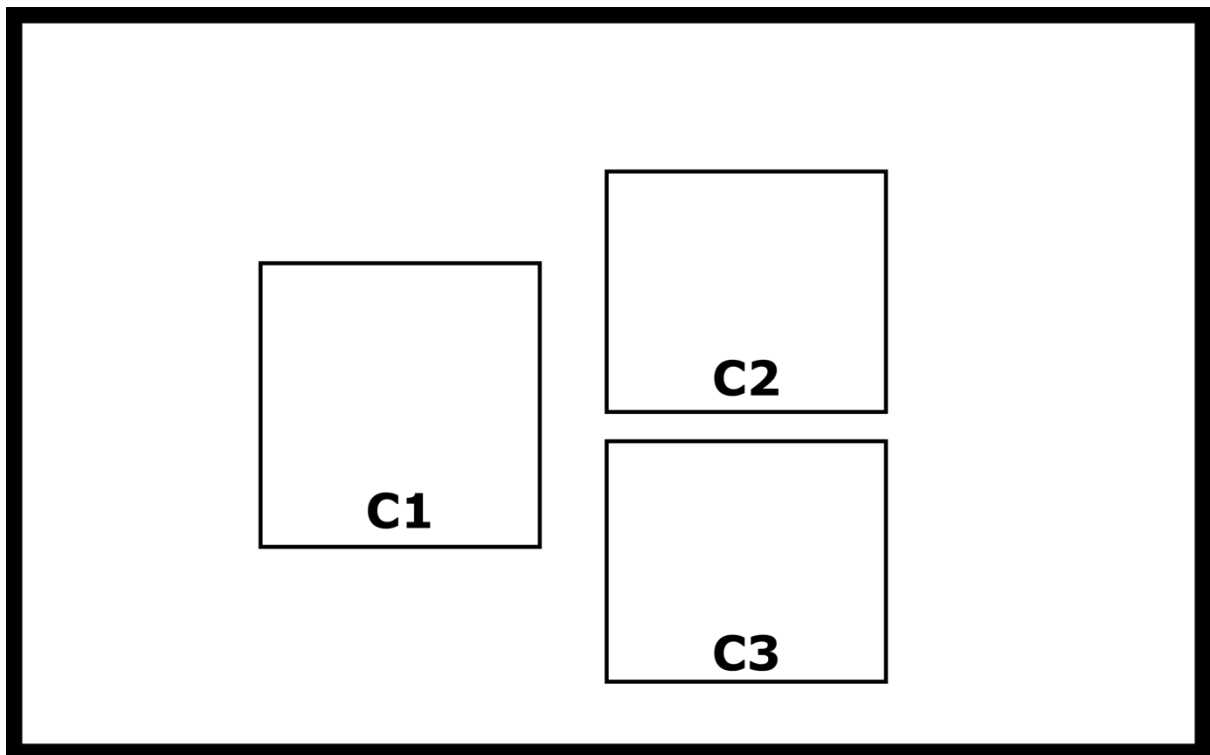
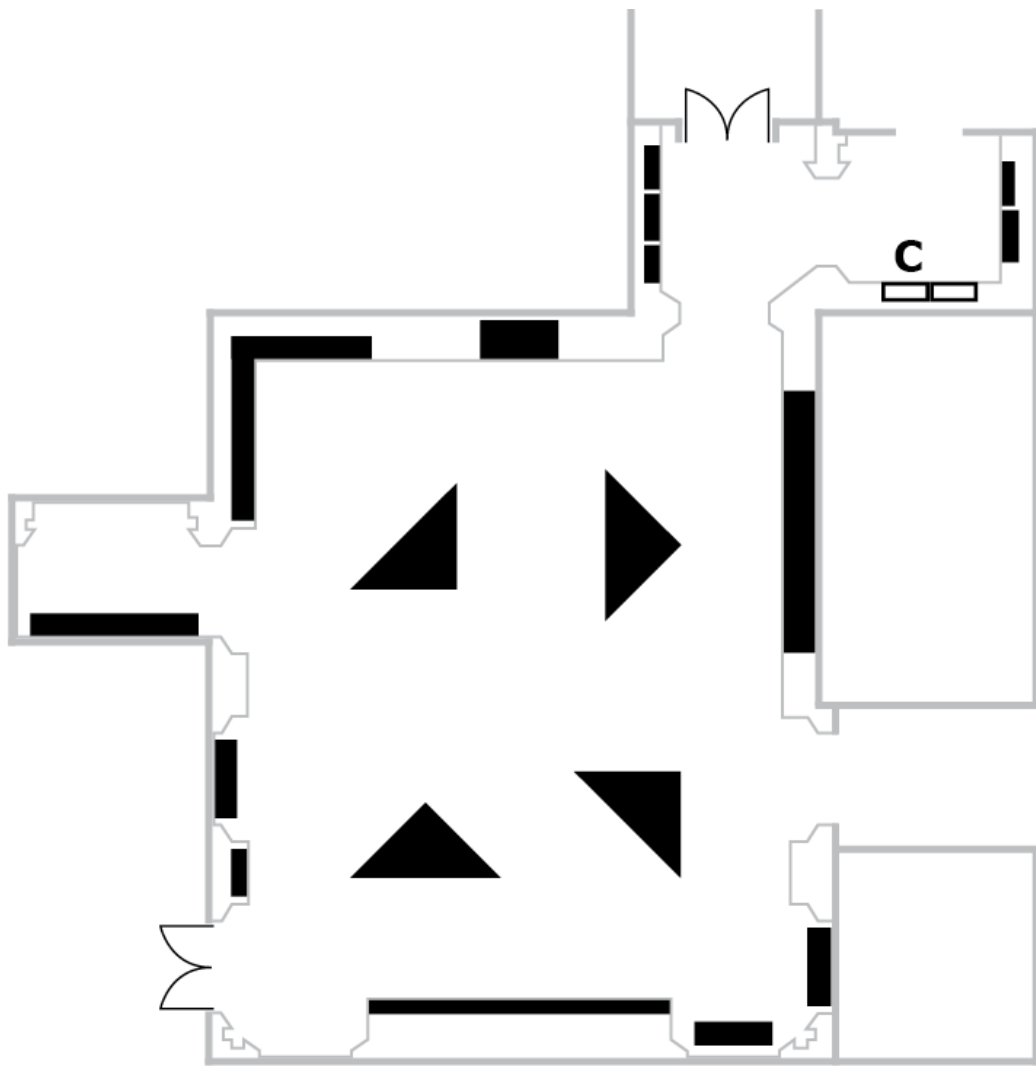
Original maker's mark: N&Z

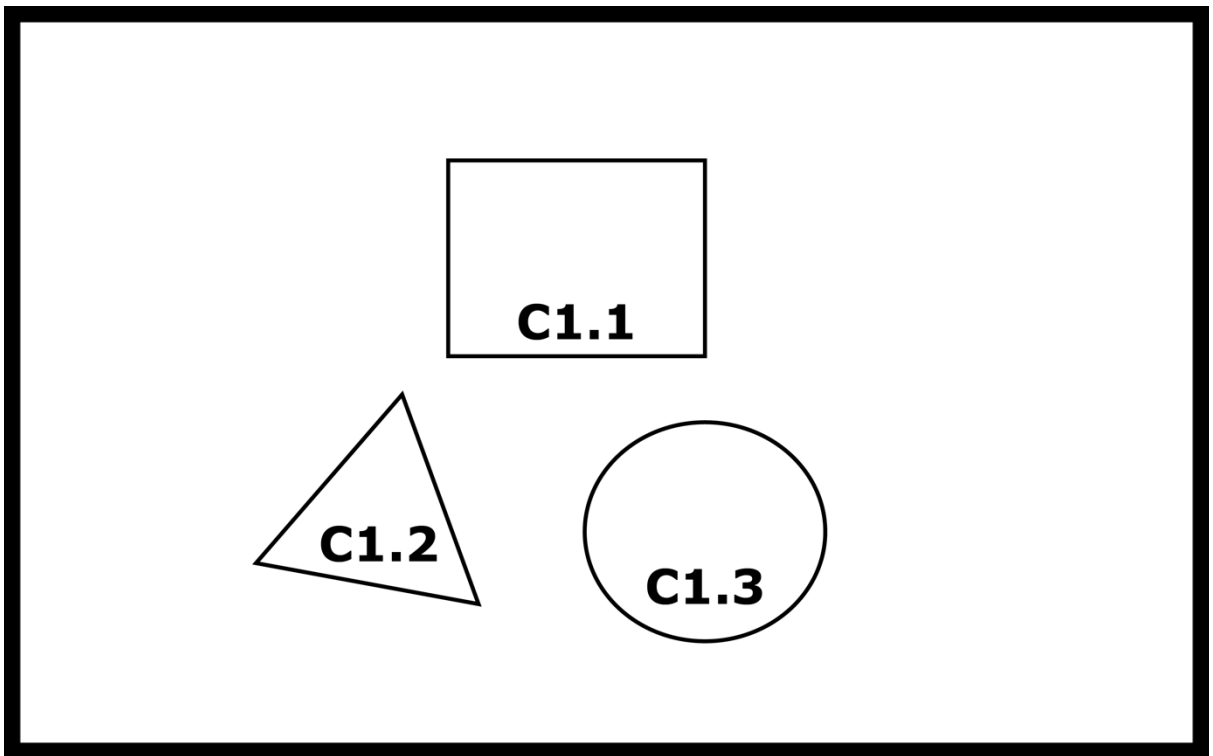
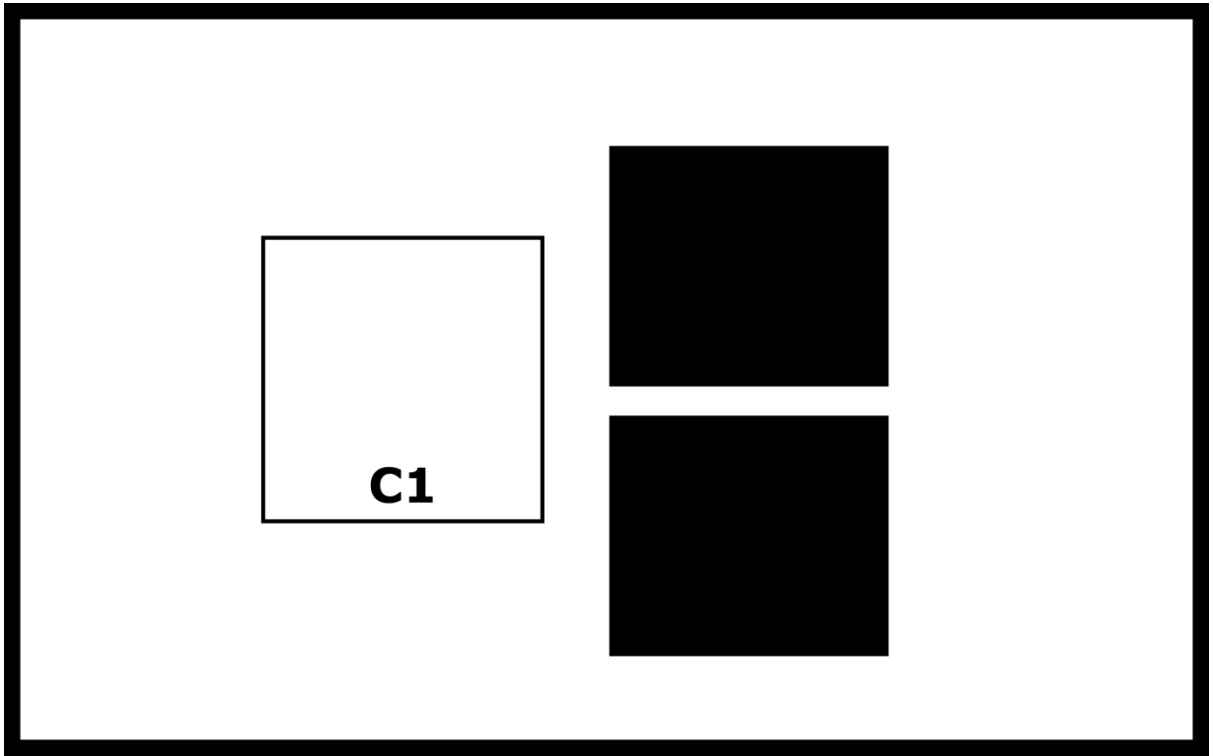
Peranakan Museum, Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2015-01994

This belt has 18 linked panels with 75 carats of diamonds. The buckle is detachable and can be worn as a brooch.

The belt was likely made by South Indian craftsmen, who are known for their expertise in setting diamonds using the "a jour" technique (diamonds set in hollow frames). This technique reduces the amount of gold needed and allows more light to pass through the stones.





C1

C1.1.1

Ear ornament: lingling-o type

Vietnam, 6th to 1st century BC (Sa Huynh period)

Glass

1997-02685

C1.1.2

Ear ornament: double animal-headed

Vietnam, 5th to 1st century BC (Sa Huynh period)

Stone

2007-56434

The Sa Huynh culture of south-central Vietnam had strong links to cultures from Taiwan to the Philippines and Borneo. The fact that similar ornaments have been found in the Philippines suggests prehistoric maritime trade in the region

C1.2

Ear ornaments in rock crystal, jade, and glass

Mainland Southeast Asia, 6th century BC to AD 2nd century (Neolithic period)

2012-00563, 2012-00565, 2012-00567

Stone and glass jewellery has been found at Neolithic sites all across mainland Southeast Asia. The wide distribution suggests continuous movement of people and goods in this region.

C1.3

Ear ornaments

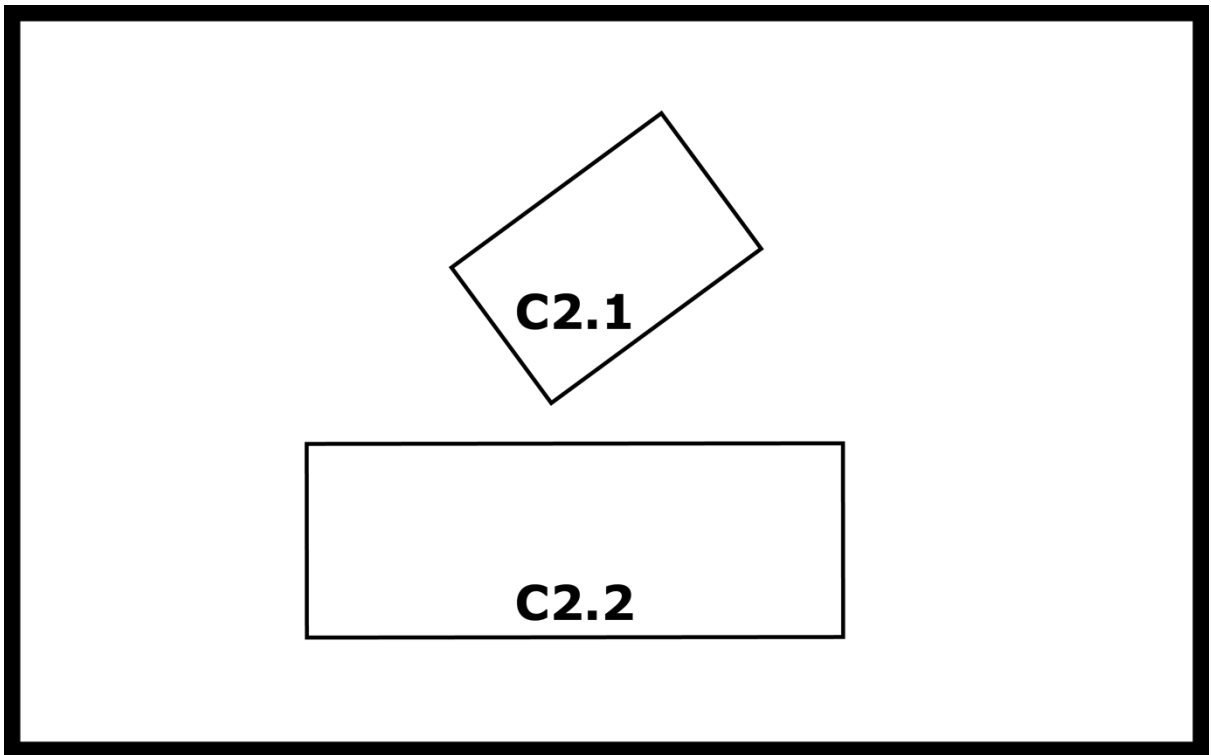
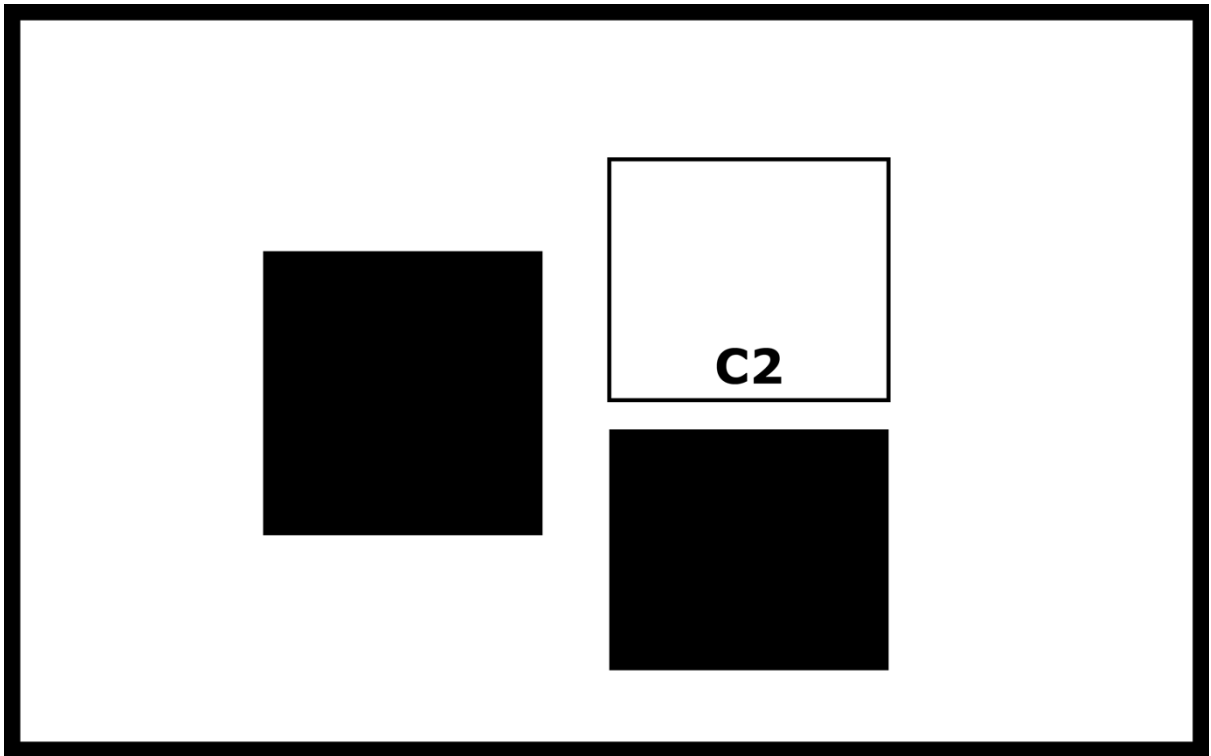
Northern India, 1st to 3rd century
(Kushana period)

Ivory

1995-00616, 1995-00617

Commonly found at Indic civilisation archaeological sites, ear ornaments like these

were also made in terracotta, metal, stone, glass, and quartz. This hints at the importance of ear ornaments in Ancient India.



C2

C2.1

Pair of bangles

Northeast Thailand, 5th century BC to

AD 1st century

Bronze

1998-01365

C2.2

Pair of bangles

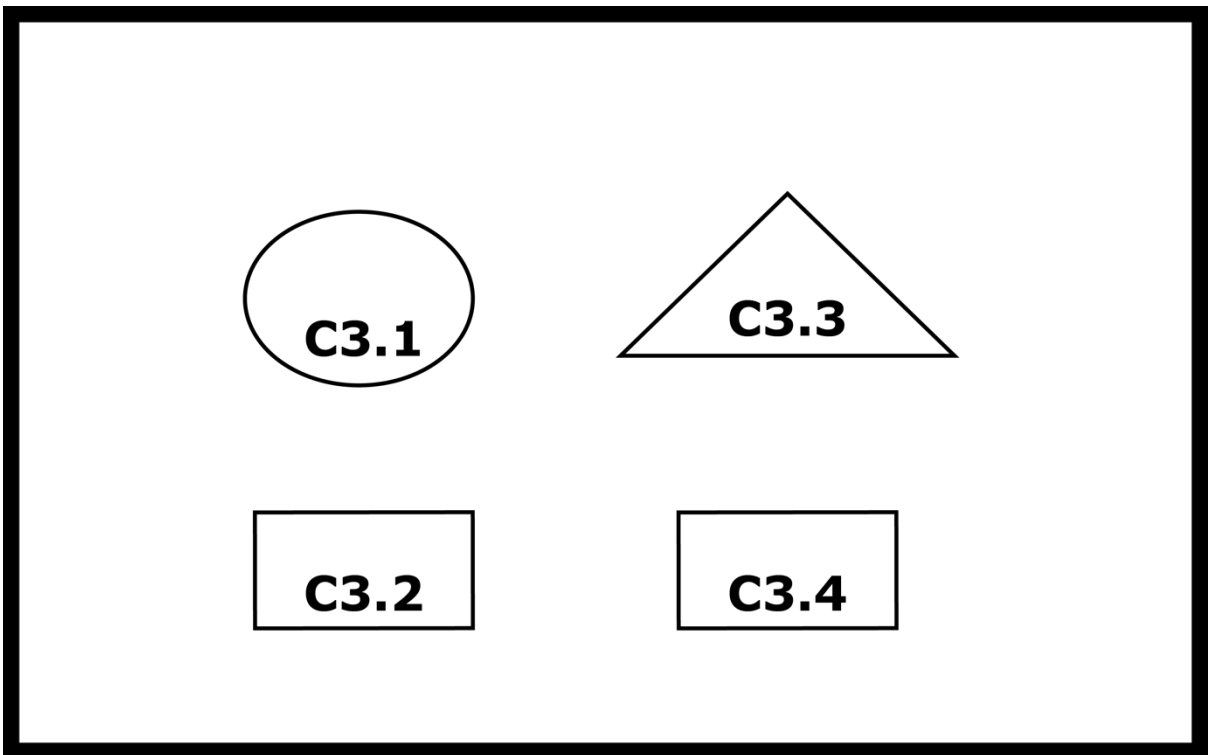
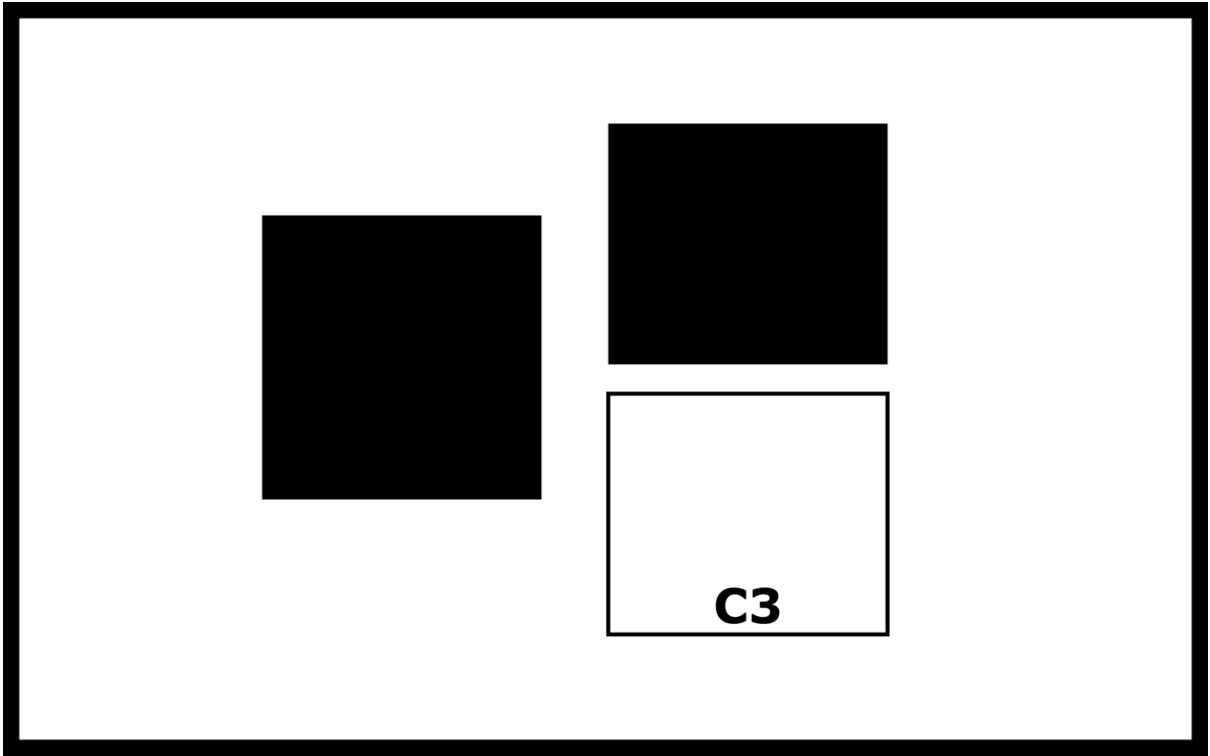
Northeast Thailand, 3rd century BC to

AD 2nd century

Bronze

1998-01364

The Bronze Age cultures of Southeast Asia produced a variety of objects, including large drums, oil lamps, and jewellery. Bronze bangles like these were found at grave sites. The varying amounts of bronze objects found in graves provides evidence for different social classes in these early communities.



C3

C3.1

Pair of ear ornaments

North-western India, 1st to 3rd century

(Kushan period)

Gold

2001-00350

These are rare, surviving gold ornaments from the Kushan period in India. The use of precious materials in jewellery shows that it had important social, religious, and economic significance.

C3.2

Ear ornaments

Java, 3rd to 8th century

Gold

Gifts of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03692, 1997-03697, 1997-03691, 1997-03689; Gift of Mrs Annie Wee, 1997-04761

C3.3

Ornament with spiral ends

Philippine Archipelago, 5th to 9th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04784

This double spiral motif has ancient roots in Island Southeast Asia. It continues to appear widely in jewellery made across the Malay Archipelago, particularly amongst the Batak and Nias peoples.

C3.4

Pair of ear ornaments

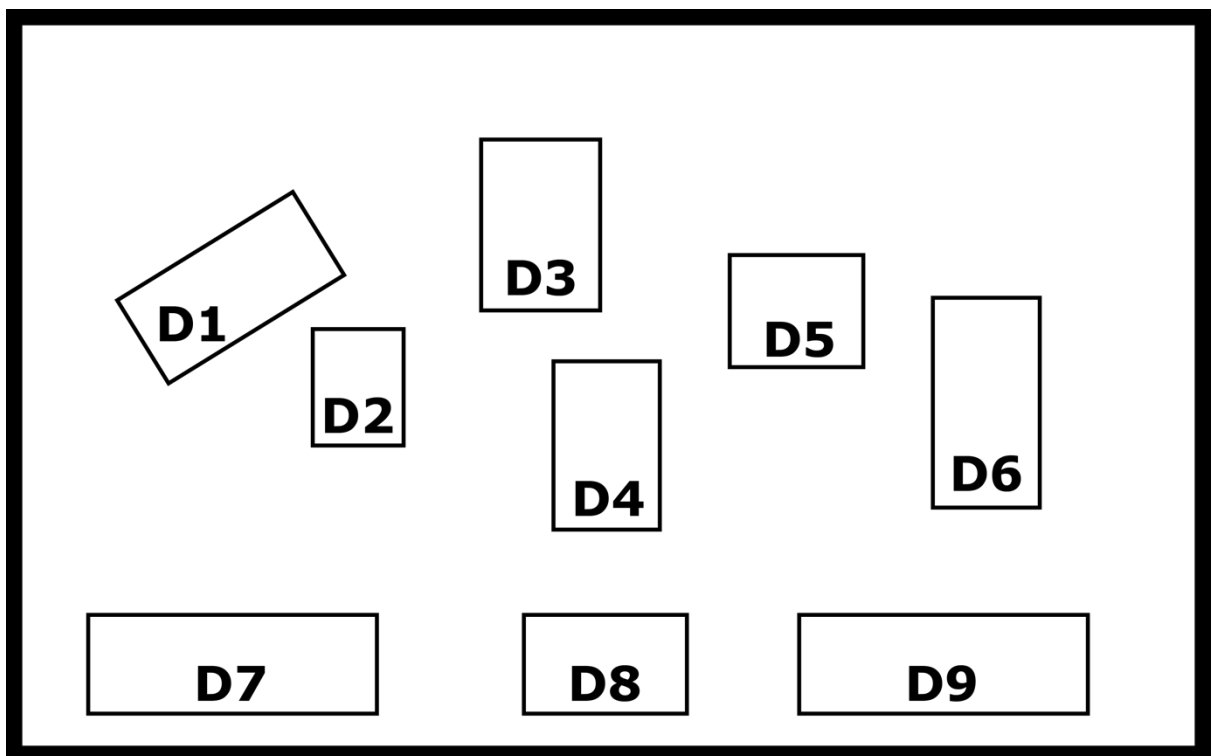
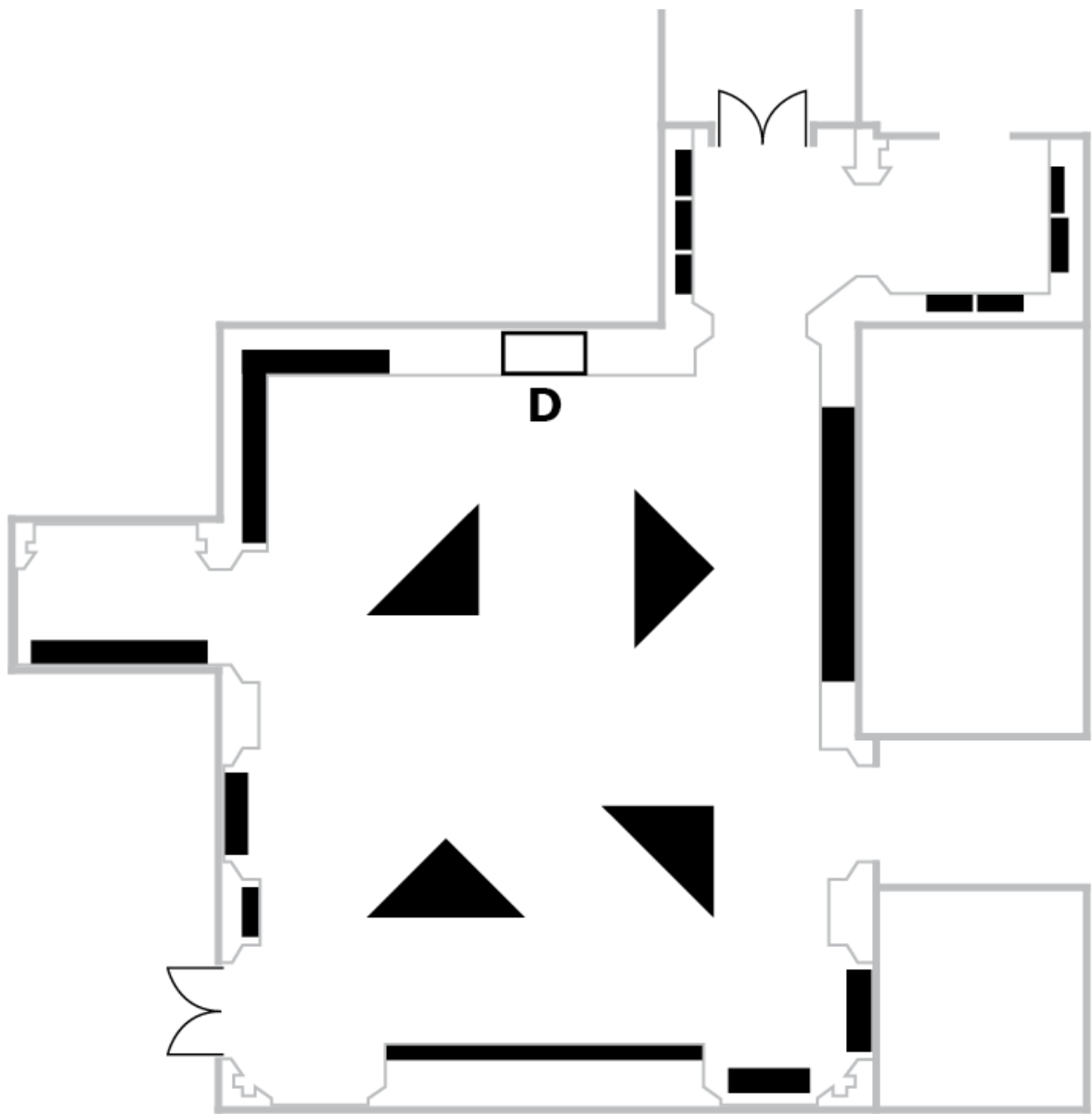
Champa (Mekong Delta), 9th century

Gold

2007-56442

This form continues a much earlier jewellery tradition that originated in the Sa Huynh culture

(500 BC–AD 100). Later, ear ornaments with spiral projections and applied granules were made in the Philippines (6th–14th century).



Betel chewing: An all Asian custom

The practice of chewing betel (makan sirih in Malay) has a long history in Southeast Asia among both urban and island communities.

Chewing betel remained popular among all ethnic groups until the mid-20th century. It was an important part of social interaction and ritual, vital in every important life stage – from birth to death.

The chew, known as a quid, is prepared by smearing lime paste (calcium hydroxide) onto a betel leaf, then sprinkling on some slivers of areca nut and bits of gambier.

For those who could afford them, finely made betel sets, with small containers for storage and presentation of each ingredient, displayed the status of their owners. Many of these sets became family heirlooms, passed down usually through the female line.

Betel chewing was so common that portable boxes were made to hold ingredients for use when travelling. The boxes were generally attached to a smaller lime box or set of grooming tools.

D1

Betel box with lime box (celepa)

Riau-Lingga Archipelago, 19th century

Gold

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

D2

Key holder with charms (sangkut kunci)

Java, 19th century

Gold, diamonds

Collection of Dr Roger and Betty Mariette

D3

Betel box with lime box (celepa)

Sumatra, Riau, 19th century

Silver

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

D4

Betel box (celepa)

Probably Sulawesi, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

2006-00211

D5

Betel box with lime box (celepa)

Sumatra, Padang, around 1900

Silver

XXXX-06835

D6

Betel box with lime box (celepa)

Probably Sumatra or northern Borneo,
late 19th century

Silver

1994-04945

D7

Betel box with lime box (celepa)

Sumatra, Riau, 19th century

Silver, gold, ruby

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

D8

Betel box

Sumatra, Aceh, early 20th century

Gold

200-05603

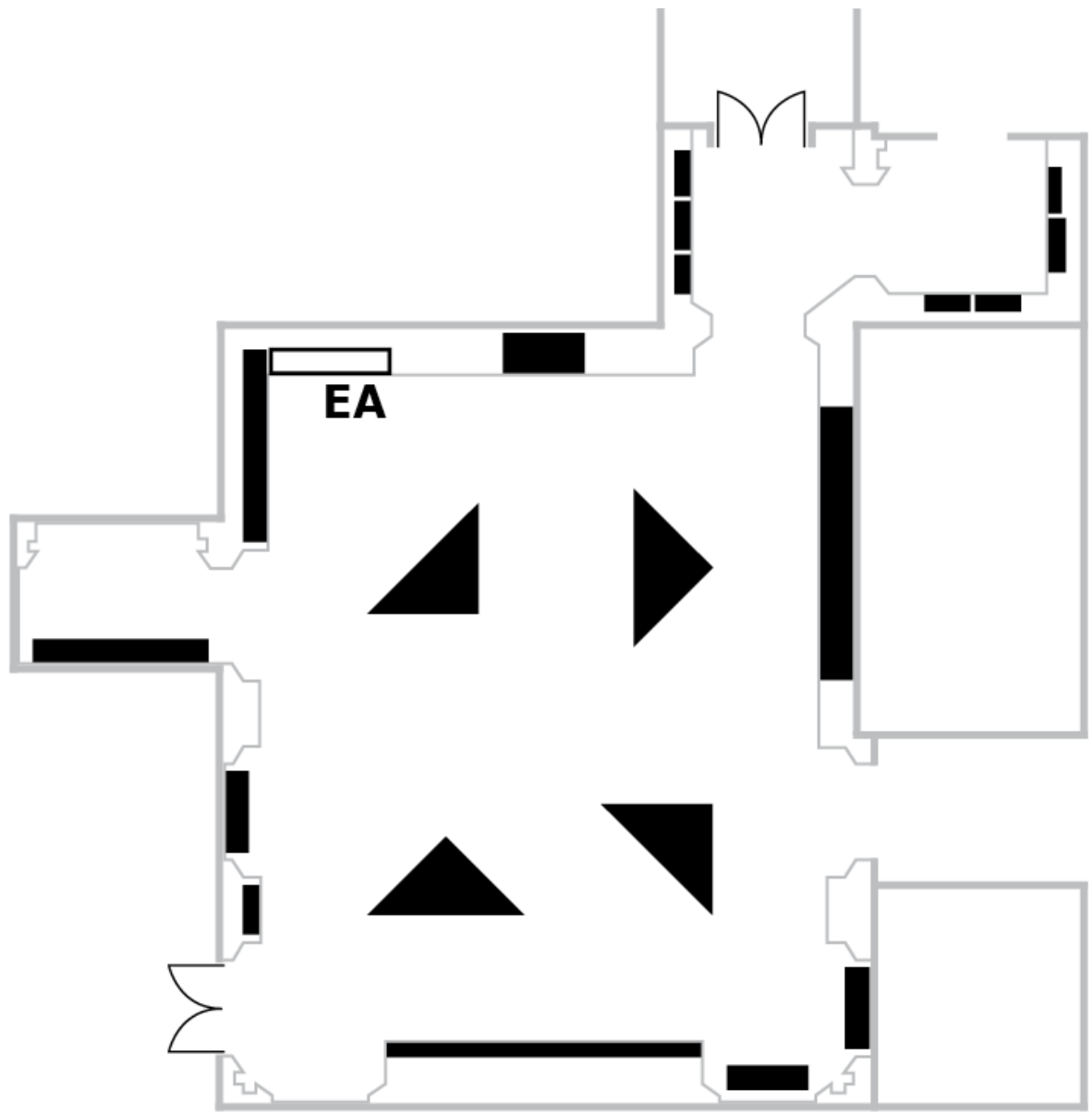
D9

Box with chain

Flores Island, 19th century or earlier

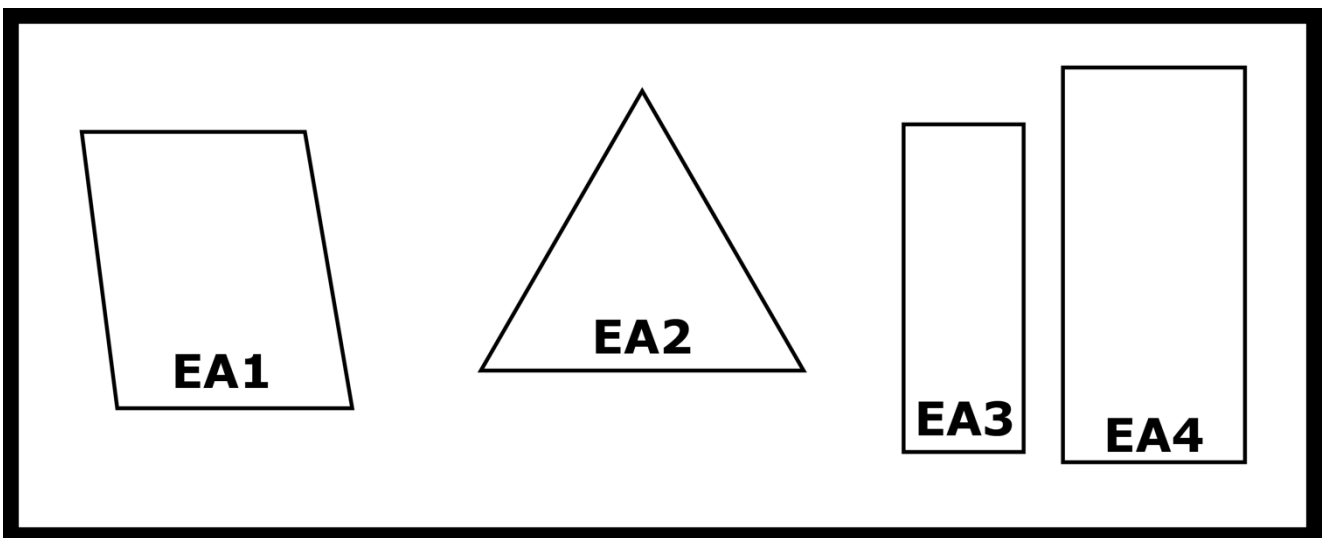
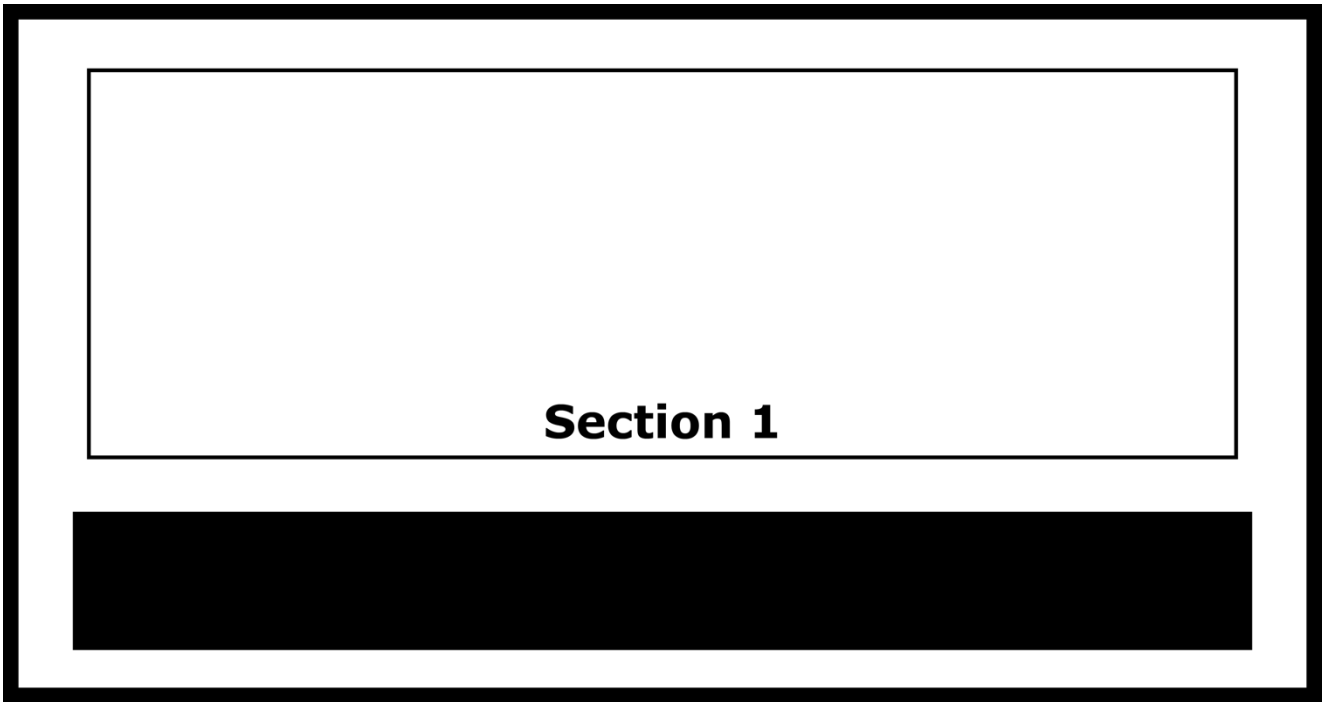
Gold

2009-03742



Section 1

Section 2



Section 1

EA1.1

Pair of anklets

Malay Peninsula, late 19th or early 20th century

Gilded silver

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

EA1.2

Pair of bamboo-form anklets

Malay Peninsula, late 19th or early 20th century

Gilded silver

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

The designs on these large, hollow anklets were made via repoussé and chasing. A small hinge in between them allows the anklet to be separated and worn.

EA2.1

Necklace

Singapore, 19th century

Gold

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

EA2.2

Pair of necklaces

Singapore, early 20th century

Gold

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

These wide neck adornments (kalung) were worn in many communities in island Southeast Asia, especially by the bride and groom during weddings. Kalung are made from layers of fine chains joined together by rectangular plates.

EA3.1

Group of hairpins

Penang, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00477-001, 002, 003, 004, 006

EA3.2

Hairpin

Probably Sri Lanka or Straits Settlements, 20th century

Gilded silver, rubies

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

Popular in communities around the Indian Ocean, hairpins with arrowhead points were documented in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the 18th century. In Penang, sets of between five and seven hairpins were worn. By the 1930s, these hairpins were no longer commonly used as long locks were cut to suit the latest hairstyles.

EA4.1

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Straits Settlements, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Maker's mark: 祥益 (Xiang Yi)

National Museum of Singapore

GL-0022

EA4.2

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Sumatra, Riau, late 20th century

Gold, diamonds

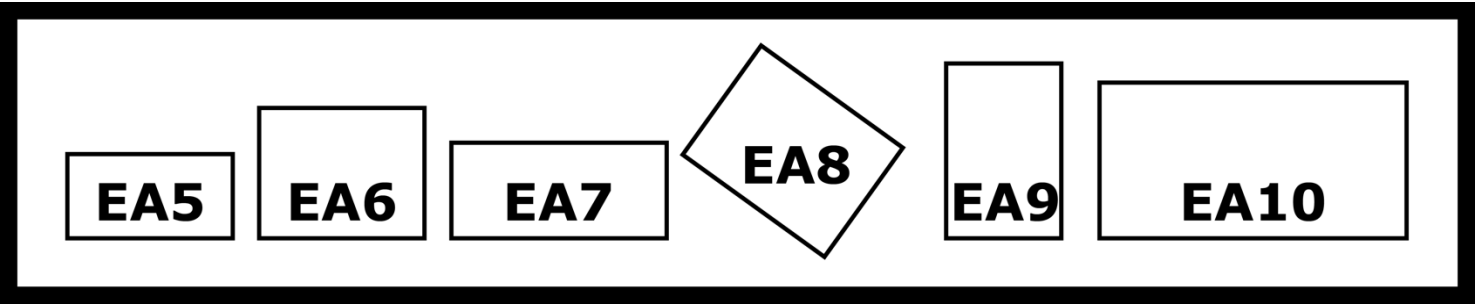
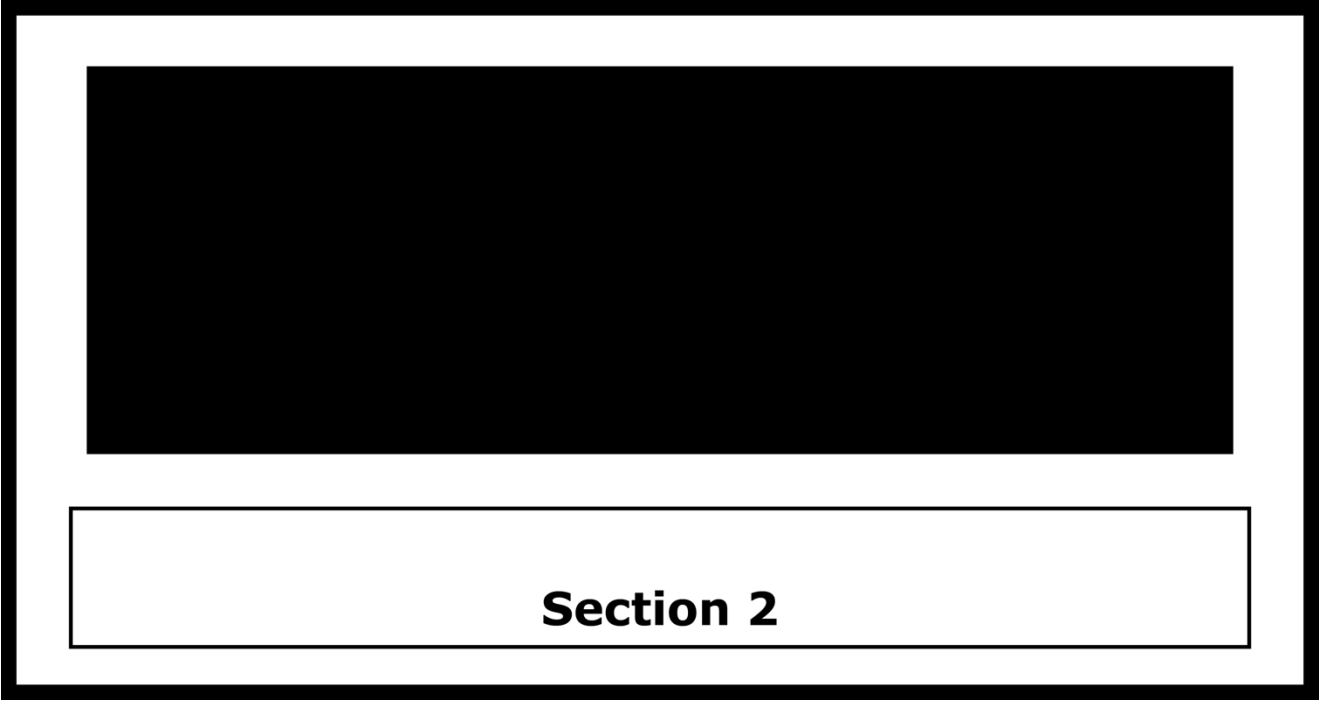
Collection of Mr Khir Johari

Sets of fasteners used to close the front of a blouse are called kerongsang in Malay. For centuries, kerongsang have been worn by women of indigenous and mixed heritage groups in Southeast Asia.

The earliest known examples are simple circlets. Later, another style evolved, with a larger, heart-shaped fastener known as the kerongsang ibu ("mother") and two smaller "child" brooches (kerongsang anak).

Flowers, birds, and crustaceans form part of their lively design.

These kerongsang ibu were sometimes immense, measuring more than 20cm long and almost as wide. By the 1930s, these massive fasteners became less popular because they sometimes tore the thin fabric of the kebaya, which had come into fashion.



Section 2

EA5

Insect brooch

Singapore, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (rose-cut), metal foil

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

EA6

Group of hairpins

Penang or Straits Settlements,

early 20th century

Gold, pink ruby, jade, diamond, paint

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

EA7

Set of dragonfly blouse fasteners

(kerongsang)

Singapore, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (rose-cut)

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

EA8

Set of spider blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Java, Surakarta, mid- or late 19th century

Rose gold, diamonds, rubies

The Bak Collection

The 19th-century Western interest in the natural world spurred a desire for the adoption of animal, and especially insect, imagery in jewellery. The trend became popular in Southeast Asian colonial communities as well.

EA9.1

Diamond, old mine cut

South Africa, 2000s

Diamond

Collection of Mr Reuben Khafi

EA9.2

Diamond, rose cut

Russia, 2000s

Diamond

Collection of Mr Reuben Khafi

EA9.3

Diamond, brilliant cut

Unknown origin, late 19th or early 20th century

Diamond

Collection of Mr Reuben Khafi

Diamonds (intan in Malay) were abundant on Borneo in Landak and Sango, now in West Kalimantan, and Banjarmasin, in South Kalimantan. Through the centuries, other countries have increased the world's supply. Technical innovations in diamond cutting greatly altered jewellery design and the way stones are set.

Older cuts (old mine-cut, rose-cut) have larger facets. Since the 1920s, the brilliant-cut (berlian in Malay) – with more facets and sparkle, has become the standard.

EA10.1

Brooch (bintang)

Straits Settlements, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (brilliant-cut)

2002-00314

EA10.2

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Straits Settlements, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (rose-cut), seed pearls

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

2002-00416

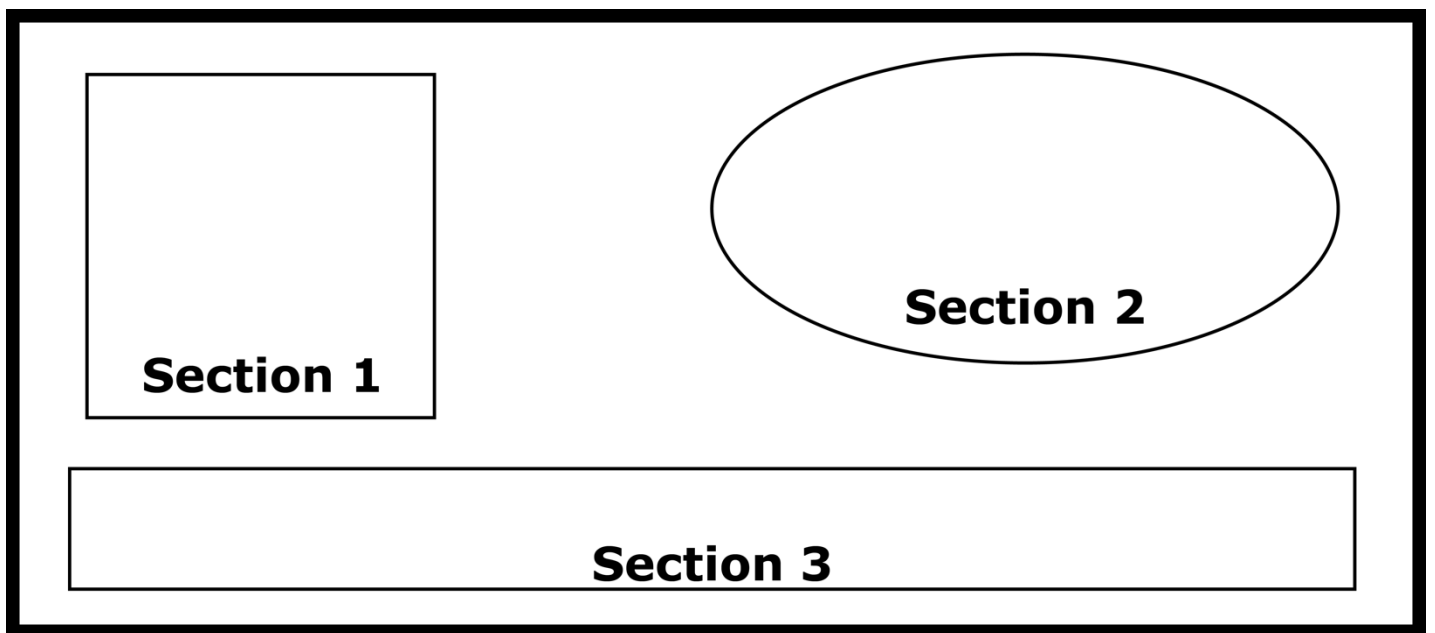
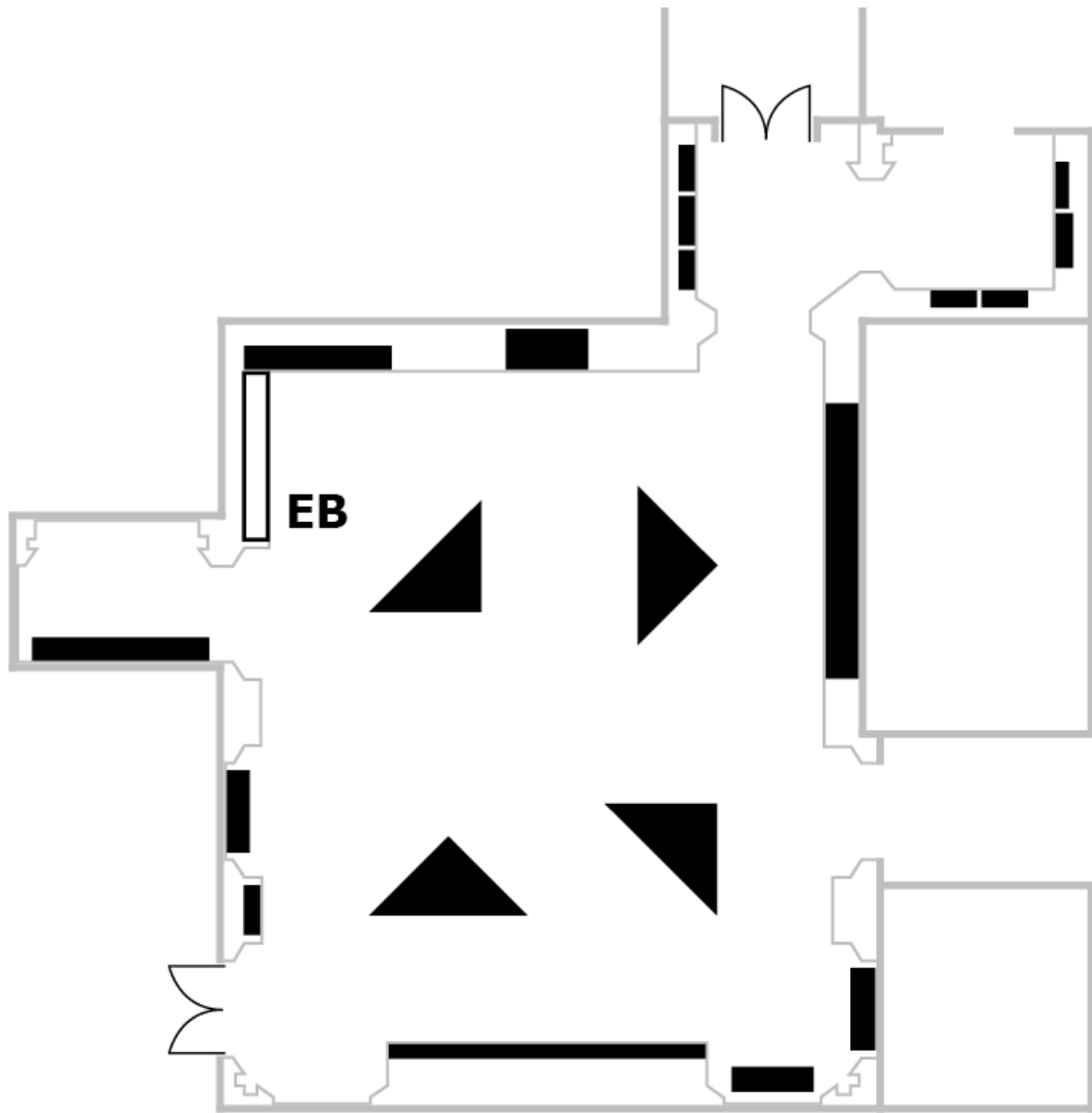
EA10.3

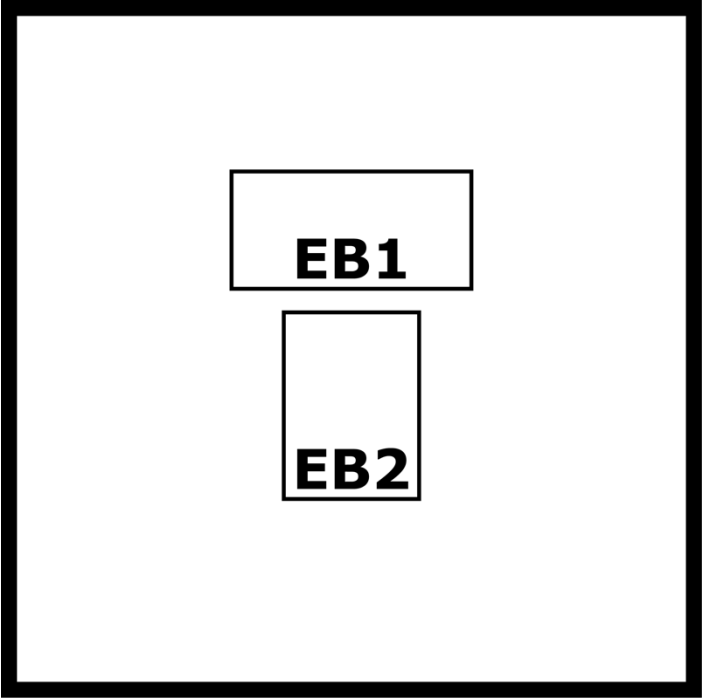
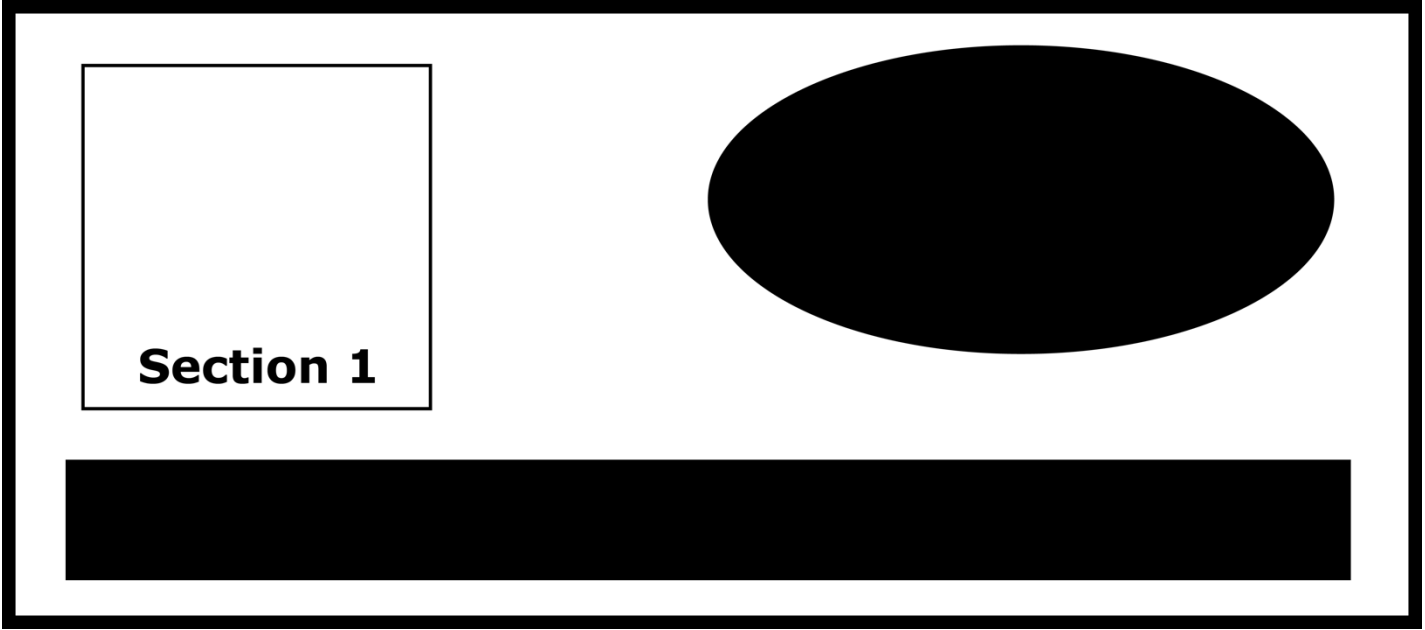
Pendant

Java, Surakarta, late 19th century

Gold, diamonds (old mine-cut)

2000-05601





Section 1

EB1.1

Hair ornament

Java, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, semi-precious stones

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00537

EB1.2

Pair of earplugs

Central Java, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

EB2

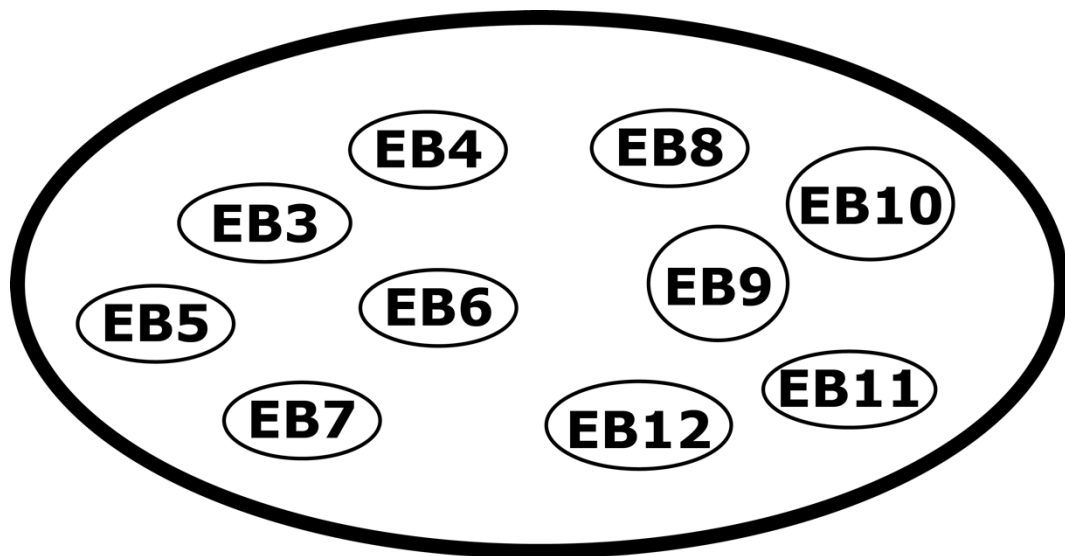
Necklace (kalung)

Java, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

2019-00458



Section 2

EB3

Belt buckle (pending)

Western Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Silver

XXXX-06766

EB4

Belt and buckle (pending)

Malay Peninsula, Kedah, late 19th or
early 20th century

Silver

XXXX-06692

EB5

Belt and buckle (pending)

Malay Peninsula, Negeri Sembilan, late 19th or
early 20th century

Brass

XXXX-03386

EB6

Belt buckle (pending)

Malay Peninsula, Kedah Sultanate, early 20th century

Mother-of-pearl, gold, diamonds

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

EB7

Belt buckle (pending)

Western Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Silver, niello

XXXX-06738

EB8

Belt buckle (pending)

Sumatra, Riau, early 20th century

Gold, semi-precious stones

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

EB9

Belt buckle (pending)

Riau-Lingga Archipelago, 19th century

Gold, red garnet, diamonds

Purchased with funds from the Lee Foundation

2001-03805

EB10

Belt buckle (pending)

Singapore, 19th century

Gold

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

EB11

Belt buckle (pending)

Sumatra, Minangkabau, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold, semi-precious stone

2001-01190-002

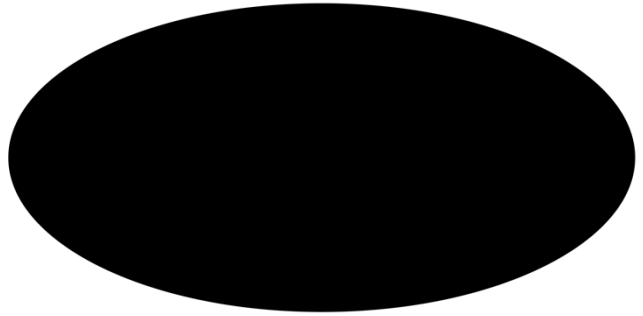
EB12

Belt and buckle (pending)

Western Sumatra, 19th century

Wood, cotton, gold thread

Collection of Mr Khir Johari



Section 3

EB13

EB14

EB15

EB16

EB17

EB18

EB19

EB20

Section 3

EB13.1

Ring

Java, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

2019-00459

EB13.2

Fingernail guard

Java, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

2019-00460

EB14

Brooch (peniti tak)

Java, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (rose-cut)

Gift of Dr Roger and Betty Mariette

2019-00461

EB15

Brooch

Java, Surakarta, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds, emeralds

2001-03807

Traditions, customs, and faiths converged in island Southeast Asia. This diversity resulted not only in mixed communities, but also in hybrid objects. Indigenous and international influences were adapted and re-imagined.

Aspirational attitudes towards foreign imperial and courtly traditions are seen in the fingernail guard, a popular accessory among women of the Chinese Qing court in the late 19th and early 20th century. The use of fingernail guards embodies ideas of genteel upbringing, and indicates one's noble status.

Made in Java, this one (no. 23), is cast in solid gold rather than the light filigree work of Chinese examples (which gave fingers a high degree of dexterity). This much heavier example was likely commissioned at the whim of a wealthy individual.

EB16.1

Pendant

Malay Peninsula, Terengganu, around 1920s

Gold

National Museum of Singapore

1991-00931

Inscribed, front:

Yang Maha Mulia/al-Sultan Sulaiman Badr-al-
'alam Shah/Yang pertama [His Royal Highness;
Sultan Sulaiman; Badrul Alam Shah; the First]

Inscribed, back:

menyelamat [?] tabal/dan

kemahkotaan/Kerajaan Terengganu/ 23.6.39

[Safely installed (?); and the coronation (of) the
kingdom of Terengganu; 23 Jumadilakhir 1339
(4 March 1921)]

EB16.2

Pendant

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, around 1920s

Gold

National Museum of Singapore

1991-00932

Inscribed, front:

al-Marhum/Muhammad yang keempat/Sultan

Kelantan/Yang ketujuh [The late Muhammad IV;
the Seventh Sultan of Kelantan]

Inscribed, back:

diperanakkan 12 Safar sanat 1287/Naik kerajaan
Syawal sanat 1317/Mangkat/Malam 12 Rabi' ul-
akhir/sanat 1339 [Born 12th Safar the year 1287
(ca 14 March 1870); rose to the throne; Syawal
the year 1317 (9 February 1900); passed away
on the night of 12thh Rabi' ul akhir the year
1339 (24 December 1920)]

European coins were adopted into jewellery design as a show of allegiance to the ruling colonial power of the day. Overtime, these foreign coins became status symbols and, by the 1950s, copies were made specially for use in jewellery.

EB17

Hat finial

Straits Settlements, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00514

EB18.1

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang) and pendant

Straits Settlements or Indonesia,
mid-20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00486

EB18.2

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Straits Settlements, early 20th century

Gold

2002-00421

EB19.1

Brooch

Java, Yogyakarta, mid-19th century

Gold, diamonds

The Bak Collection

EB19.2

Brooch

Van Arcken & Company

Batavia (Jakarta), late 19th century

Gold, diamonds (brilliant-cut)

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

EB19.3

Brooch

Indonesia, early 20th century

Gold, diamonds (rose-cut)

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee

By the 1850s, jewellers offered European-style jewellery to wealthy locals in the region. Van Arcken and Company, based in Batavia (Jakarta), was one of the most renowned firms. Floral spray brooches with en tremblant (trembling) and en pampille (fringed) parts were popular European jewellery of the period. They became fashionable among women throughout the archipelago. In order to meet this demand, local jewellers would copy and imitate these styles.

EB20.1

Belt buckle (pending)

Java, 19th century

Gold, diamonds

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

EB20.2

Belt and buckle (pending)

Borneo, Sarawak, late 19th or early 20th century

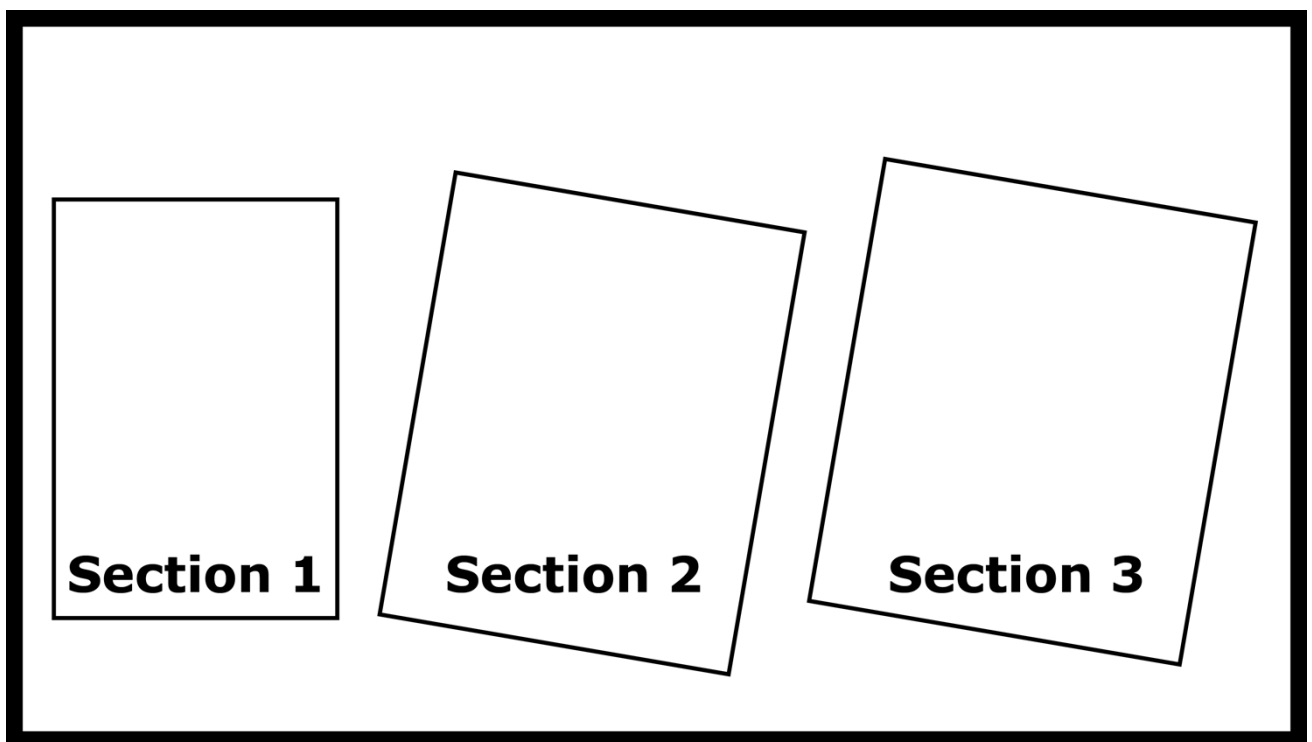
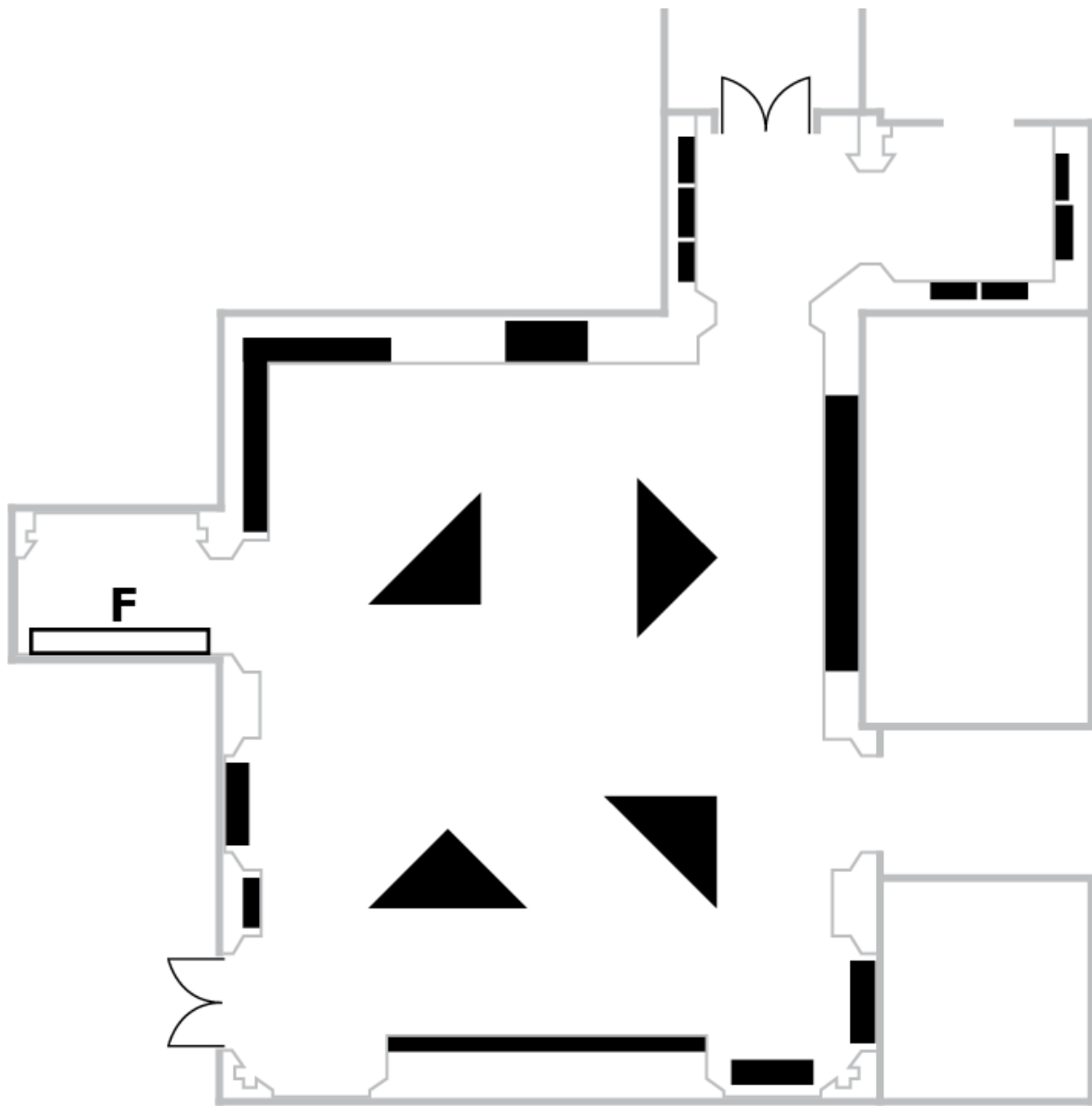
Silver

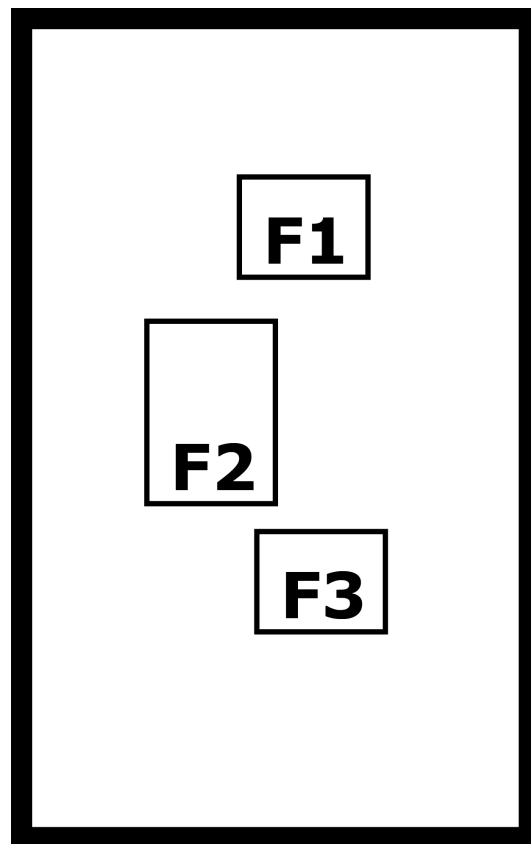
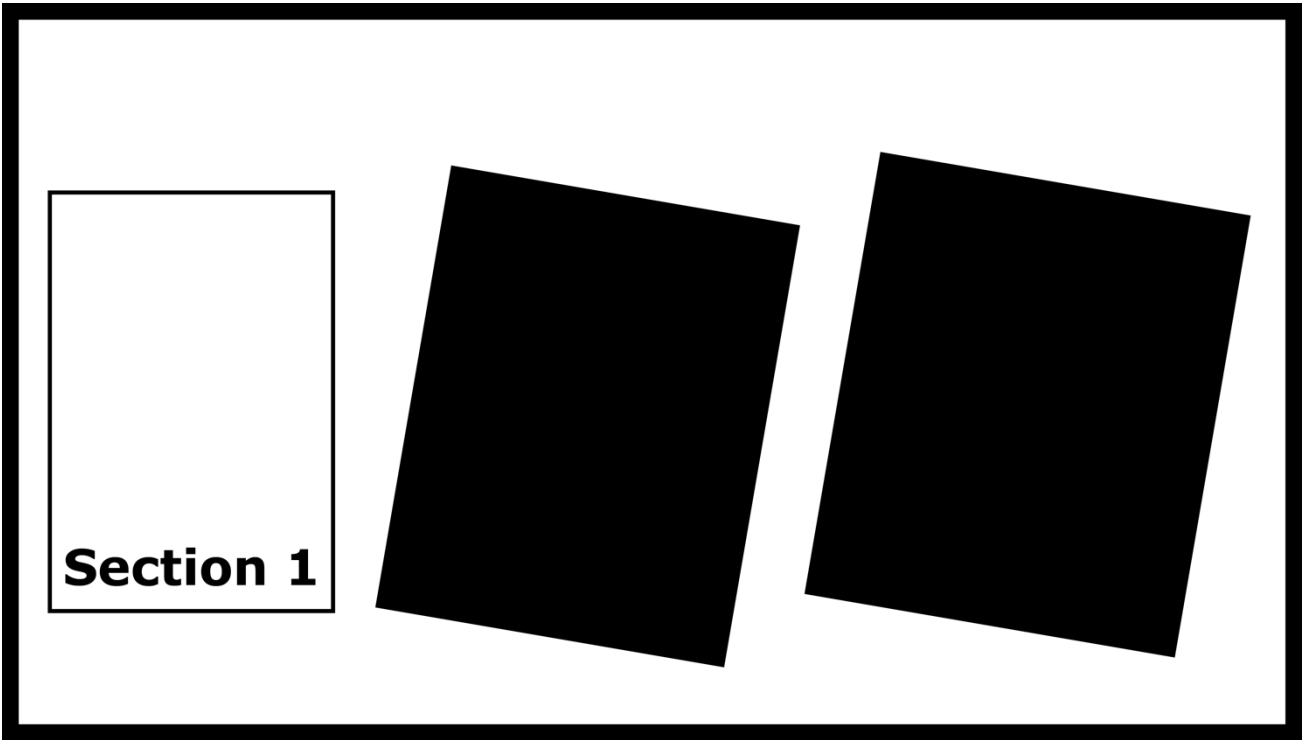
Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

These belt buckles (pending in Malay) show variations of the popular oval-shaped form.

Pending were used by both men and women to secure a metal or textile belt around the waist.

The use of gold, semi-precious stones, and rare materials like mother-of-pearl indicates rank and status.





Section 1

F1

Kala mask for a kris scabbard

Possibly eastern Java, 13th century or earlier

Gold

Collection of Mrs Annie Wee

F2

Amulet kris (keris sajen)

Java, 19th century or earlier

Iron

XXXX-04649

In animist, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic beliefs, the kris is regarded as a powerful object that provides its bearer with supernatural protection. This type of kris, forged from a single piece of iron, with a kneeling figure for the handle, is called "keris sajen" ("offering kris", in Bahasa Indonesia). It was used as a ritual object during ceremonies.

F3

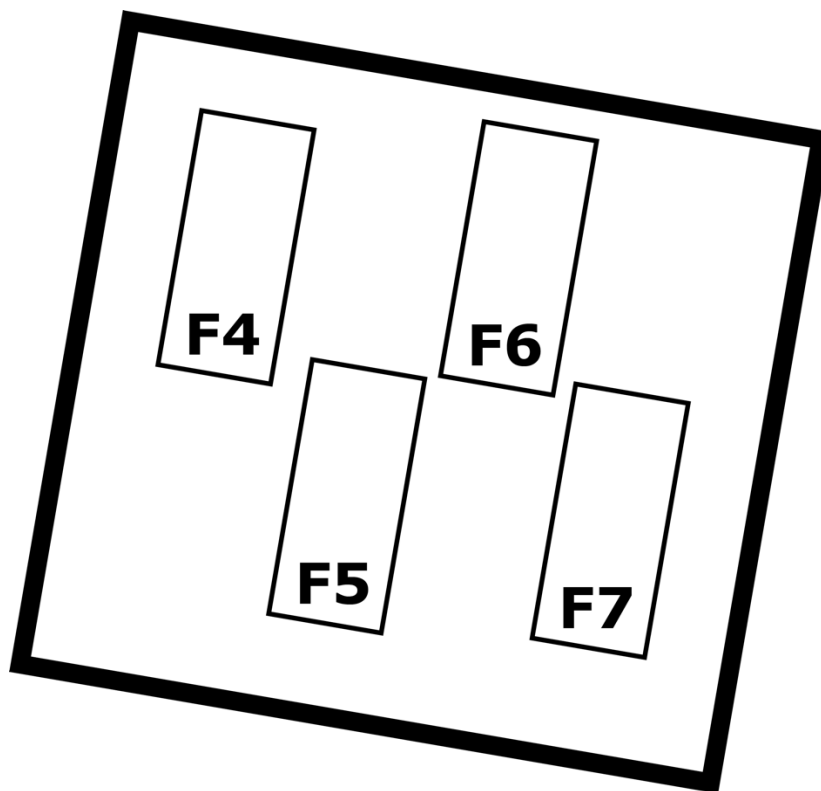
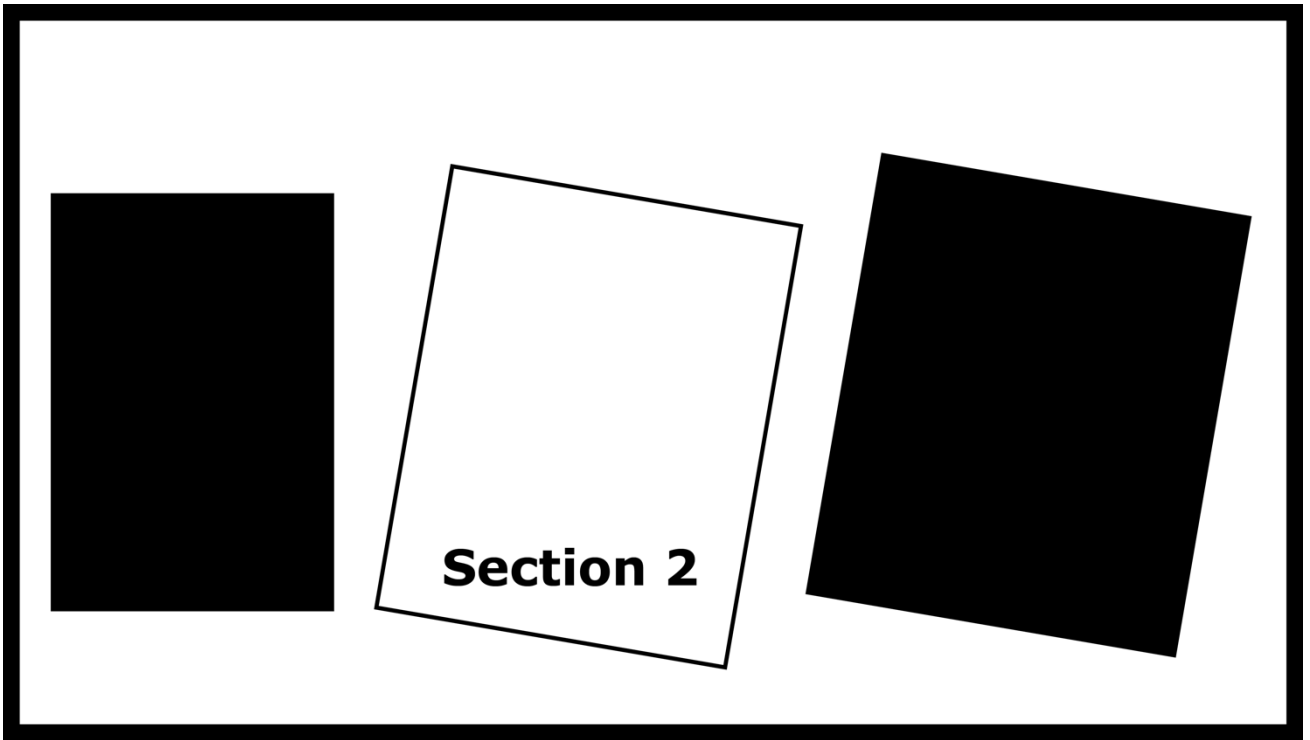
Dagger

Malay Peninsula, Kedah, 9th to 11th century

Iron, bronze

National Museum of Singapore

A-0107



Section 2

F4

Kris and scabbard

Java, Yogyakarta, mid- or late 19th century

Wood, gold, steel, diamonds

2016-00029

F5

Kris and scabbard

Bali, 19th century

Iron, horn, ivory, wood, gilded silver,

semi-precious stones

2008-07673

F6

Kris and scabbard

Sumatra, Palembang, late 19th century

Steel, gilded silver, Kemuning wood, marine

ivory

2014-00580

Krises from Palembang and other Muslim communities in the region often have hilts decorated with highly abstracted forms of Hindu-Buddhist figures popular on earlier hilts. The anthropomorphic figure on this hilt likely relates to Garuda.

F7

Bugis-style kris and scabbard

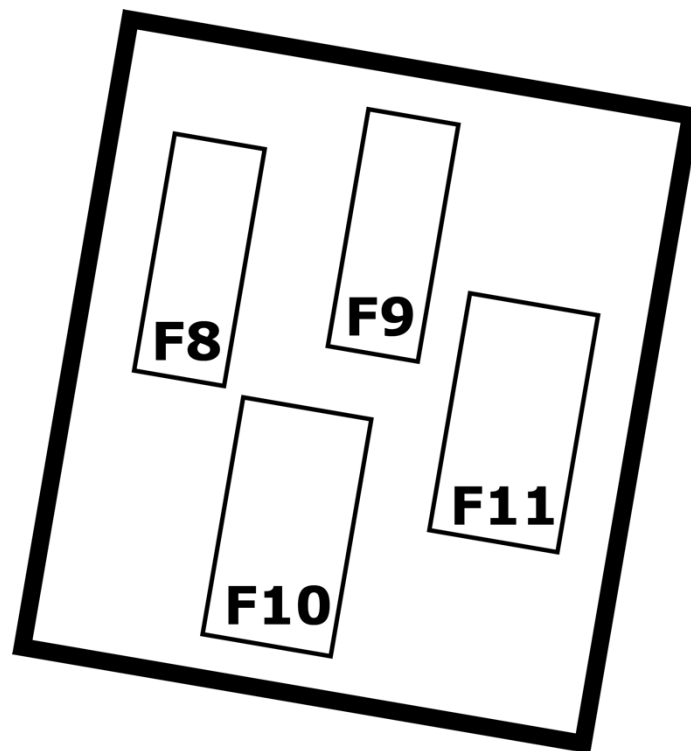
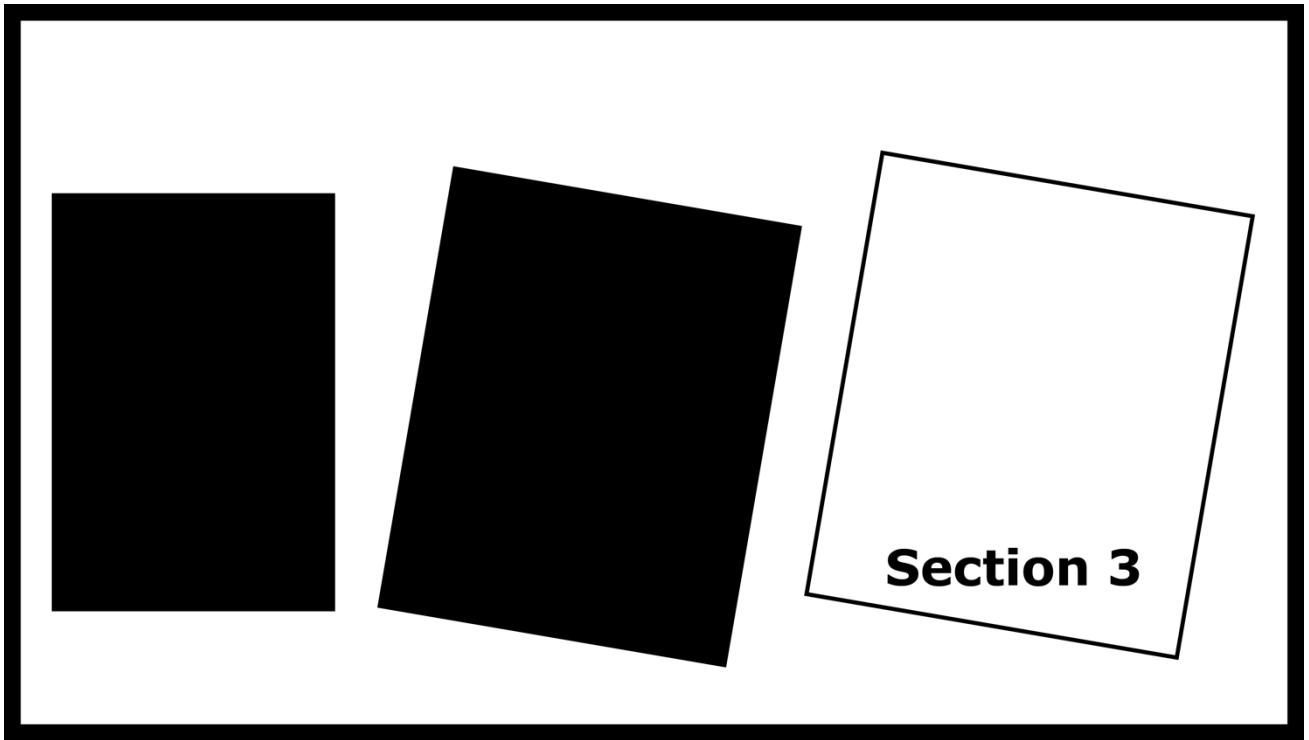
Probably Sumatra (found in Negeri Sembilan),

late 19th century

Iron, wood, brass

XXXX-04623

The Bugis were influential in the development of the kris. Similar crises are found in their native Sulawesi, and also in parts of Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra. The spread of Islam from the 16th century probably contributed to the widespread adoption of the more abstract, Bugis-style kris hilt. This kris is sheathed in a scabbard made from jati gembol, a greatly prized wood that comes from the burl of a teak tree.



Section 3

F8

Kris and scabbard

Northern Sumatra, early or mid-20th century

Steel, buffalo horn, ivory, mother-of-pearl, gilded silver, gold wire, ruby

2015-00505

This kris is notable for its unusual decoration of mother-of-pearl inlays in buffalo horn, likely inspired by imported decorative objects of the day.

F9

Kris and scabbard

Borneo, Banjarmasin, late 19th century

Iron, silver, wood, brass, glass gems

XXXX-04483

F10

Kris and scabbard

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 20th century

Kemuning and Angsana wood, iron, gold

2006-00204

F11

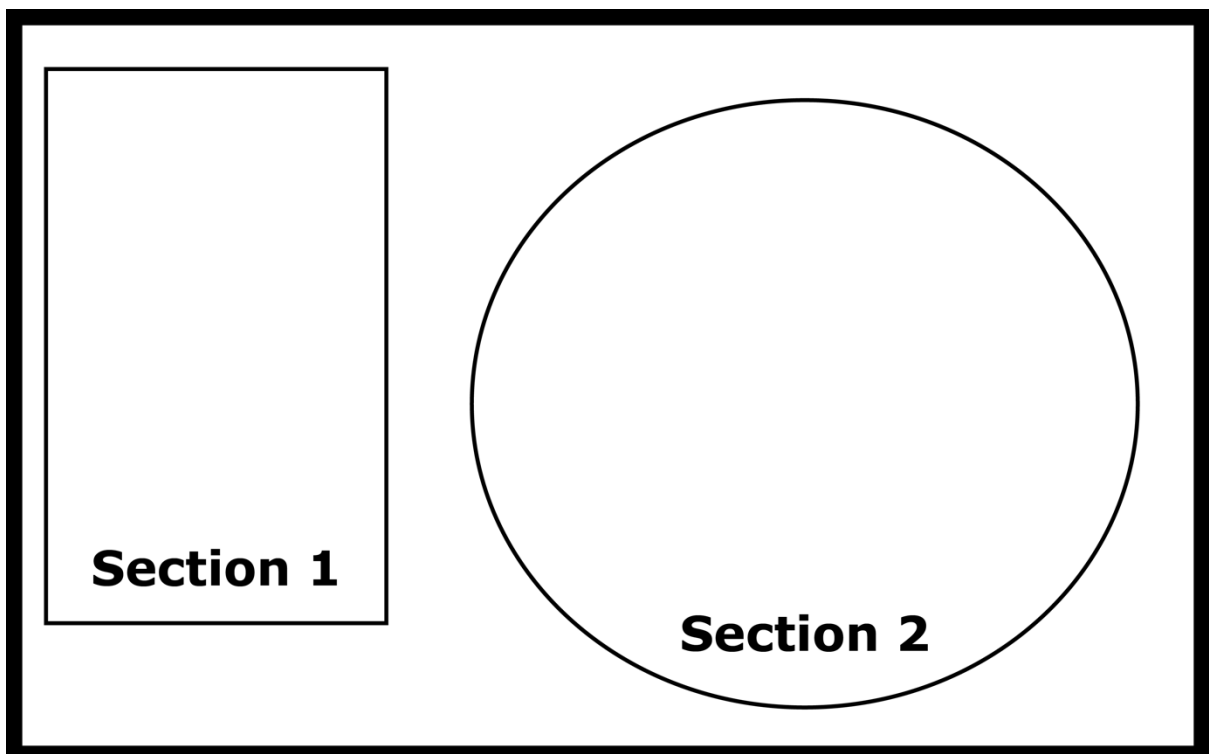
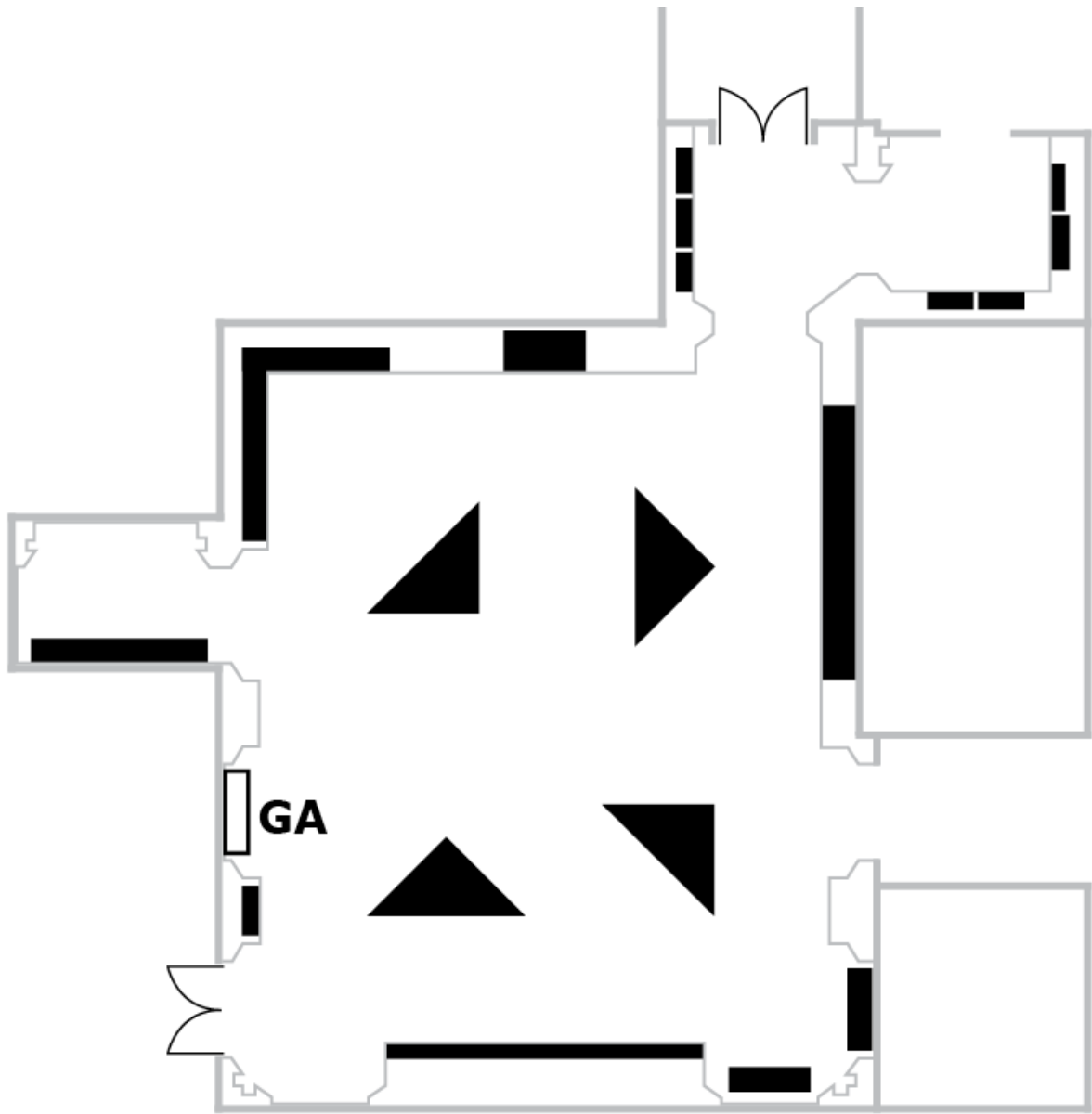
Sword and scabbard

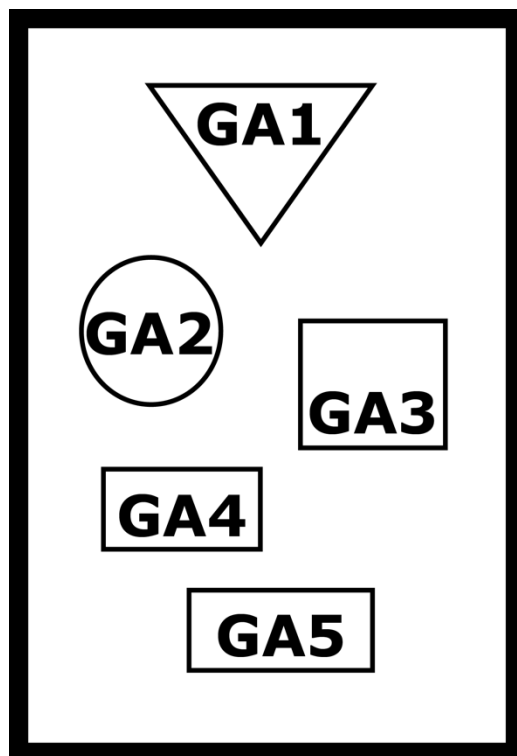
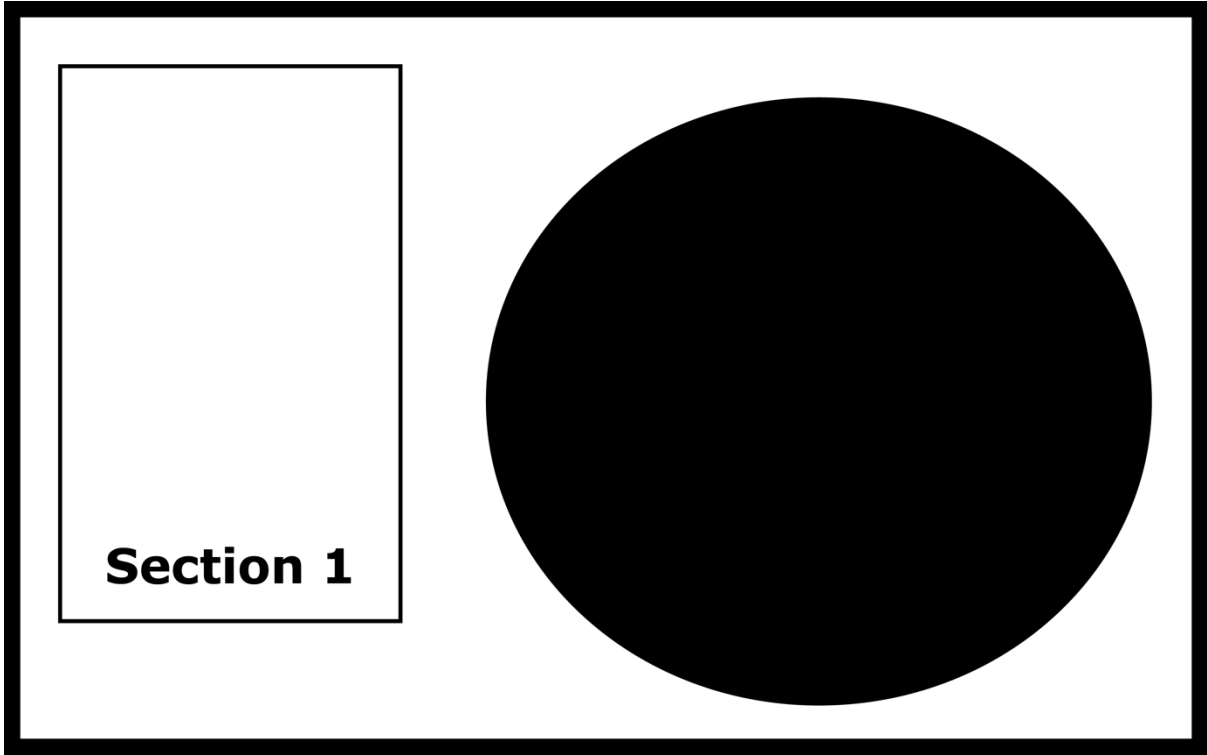
Philippines, Sulu Archipelago, 19th or
early 20th century

Iron, wood, ivory, silver, rattan

XXXX-05019

The Moro people are Muslims who have inhabited the southern Philippines for centuries. Moro weapons are typically quite large. While most krises are designed for thrusting, the more robust Moro sword was used to hack and slash. Also found on the northern coast of Borneo, Riau, and the eastern side of the Malay Peninsula, these swords are sometimes called "sundang".





Section 1

GA1

Amulet

Sumatra, Aceh, probably early 20th century

Silver, semi-precious stone

2001-01146

GA2

Amulet disc (kawari)

Java, Banten, early 20th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00741

GA3

Amulet

Singapore, late 19th or early 20th century

Tiger tooth, silver

Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

GA4

Amulet box with protective inscription

保佑平安 (**Bao you ping an**)

Singapore, early 20th century

Silver

National Museum of Singapore

XXXX-07501

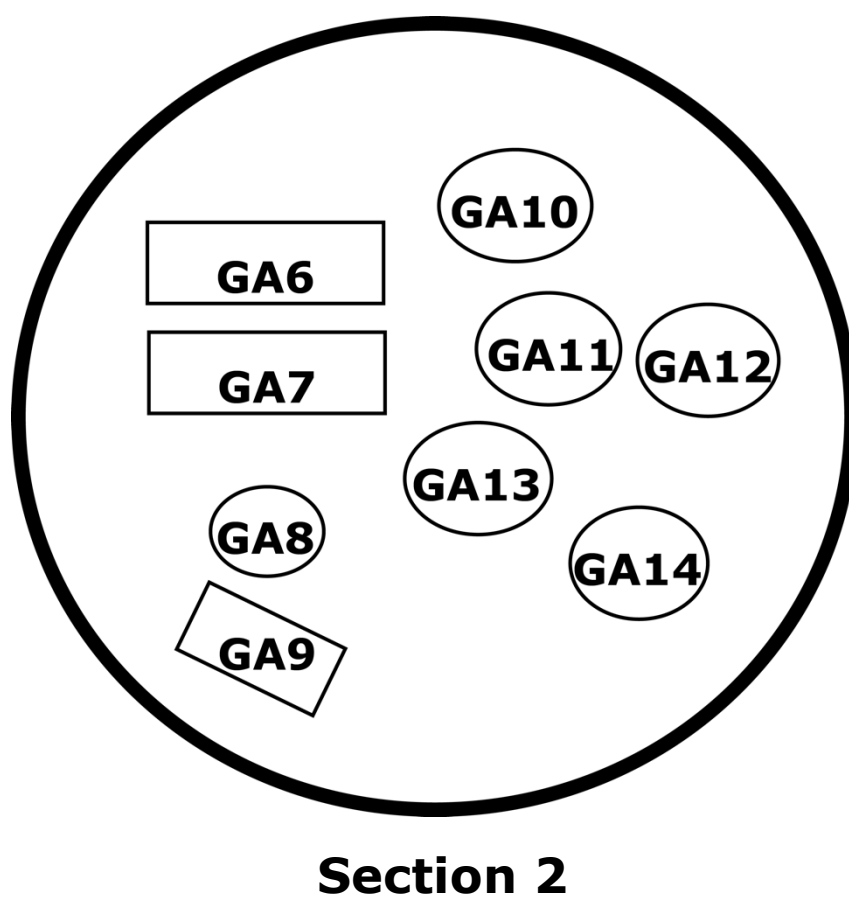
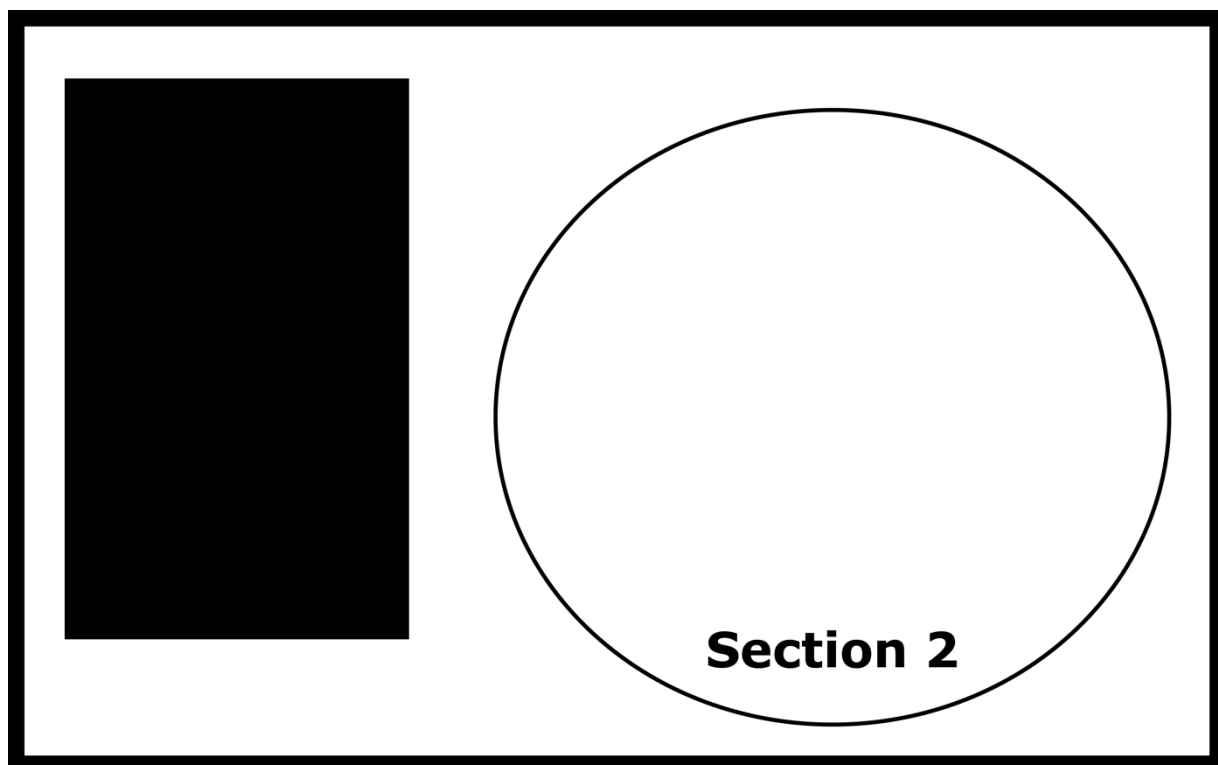
GA5

Amulet box

Malay Peninsula, Pahang, Kuantan, early 20th century

Silver

XXXX-06345



GA6

Pair of amulet discs (kawari)

Southern Sulawesi, late 19th or early 20th century

2001-00349

GA7

Pair of amulets with numerical charts

Turkey, late 19th century

Silver

1996-02176-001, -002

GA8

Amulet with inscription to Allah

Sumatra, Riau, 20th century

Gold, silver

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

GA9

Amulet with inscriptions to Allah and Muhammad

Sulawesi, Gowa, 20th century

Gold

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

GA10

Modesty plate (caping)

Malay Peninsula, late 19th or early 20th century

Silver

XXXX-06710

GA11

Modesty plate (caping)

Malay Peninsula, late 19th or early 20th century

Silver

XXXX-06708

GA12

Modesty plate (caping)

Malay Peninsula, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00740

GA13

Modesty plate (caping)

Malay Peninsula, early 20th century

Gold

The Bak Collection

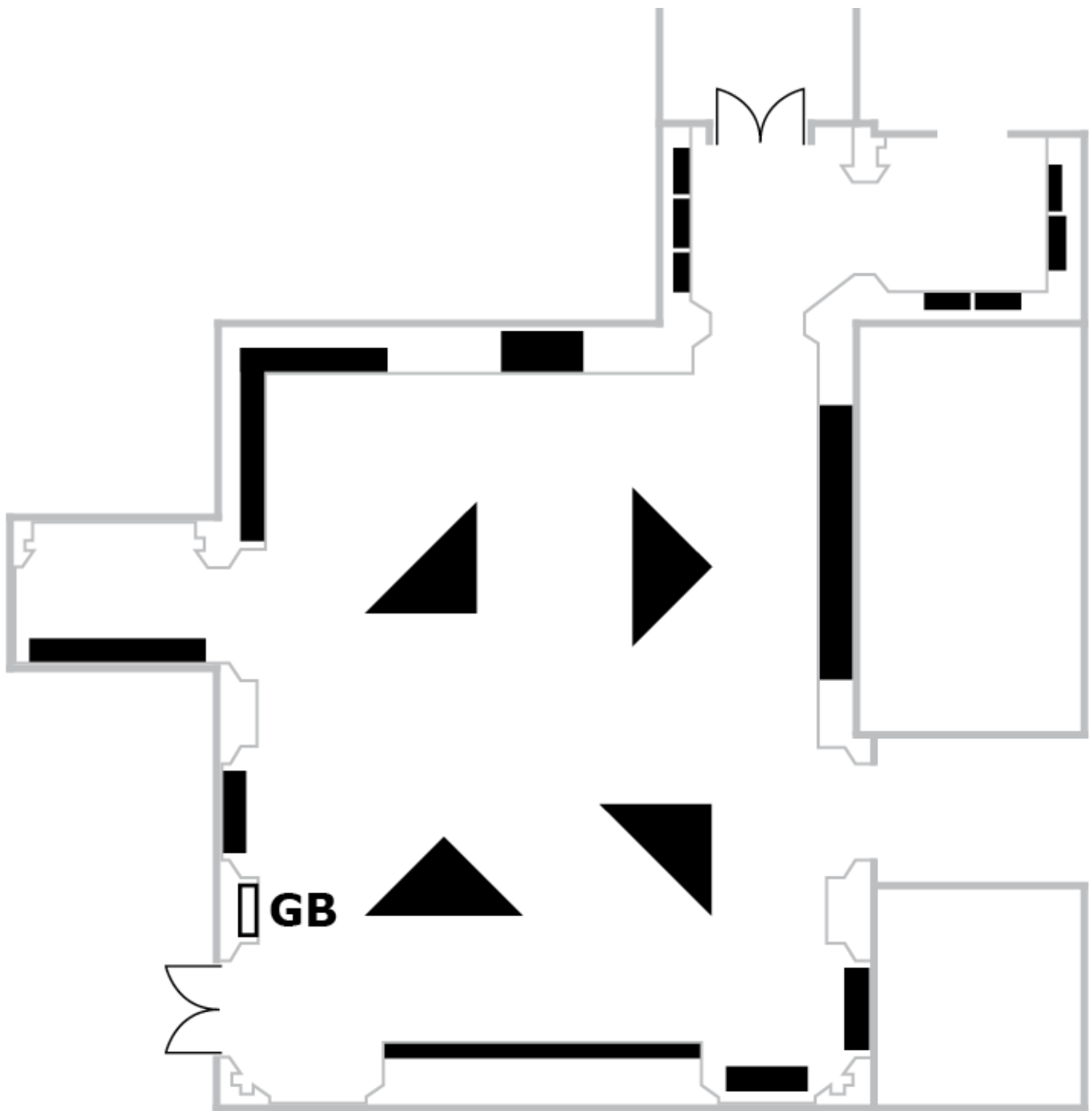
GA14

Modesty plate (caping)

Sulawesi, possibly Makassar or Gowa, late 19th century

Gold, silver

Collection of Mr Khir Johari



GB

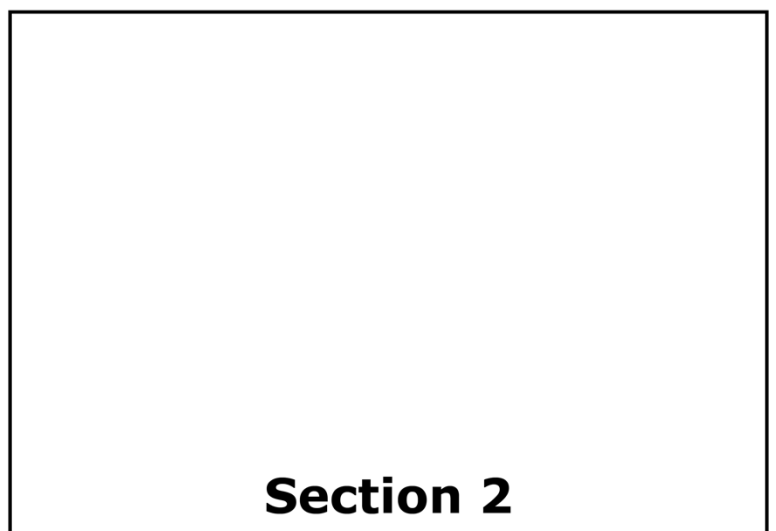
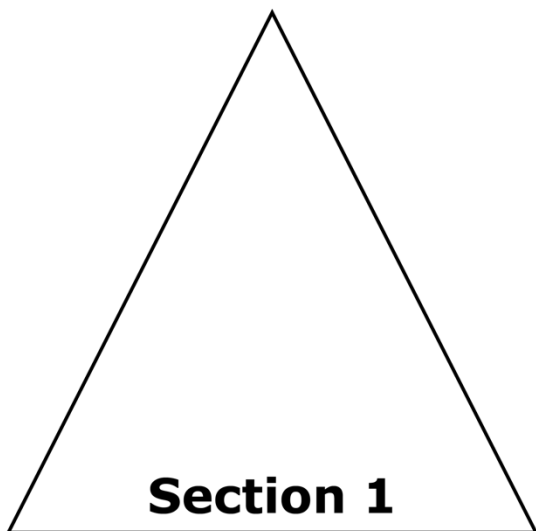
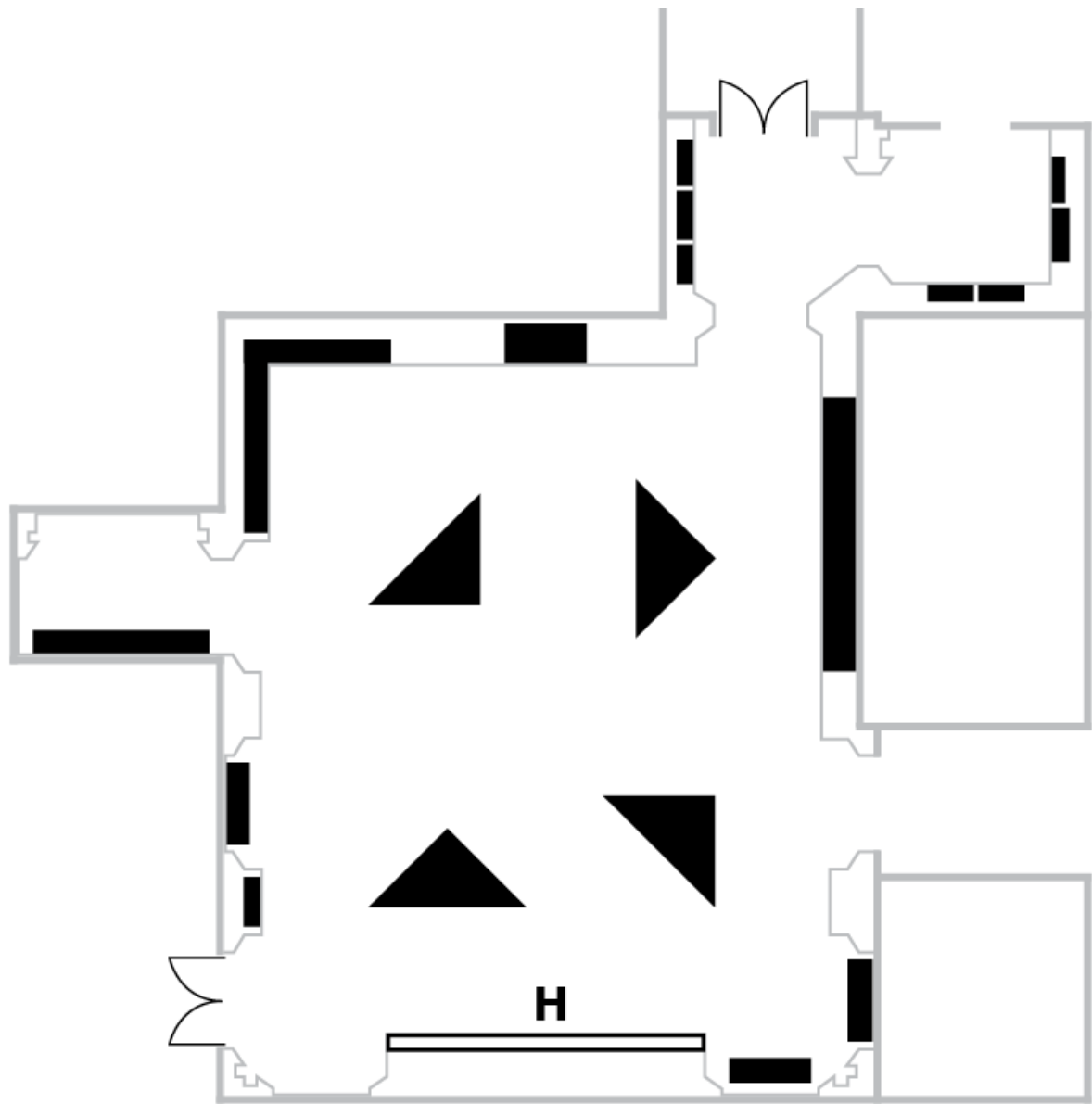
Amulet necklace

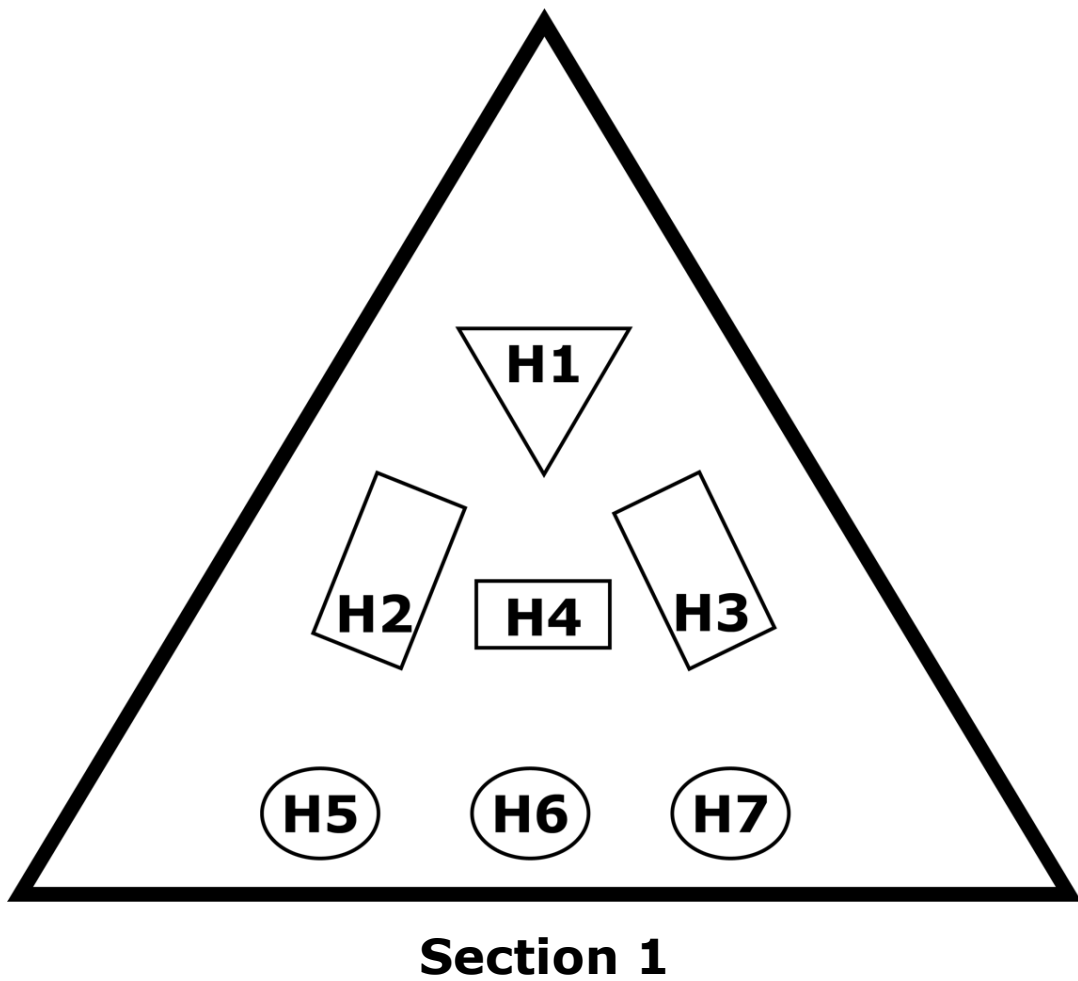
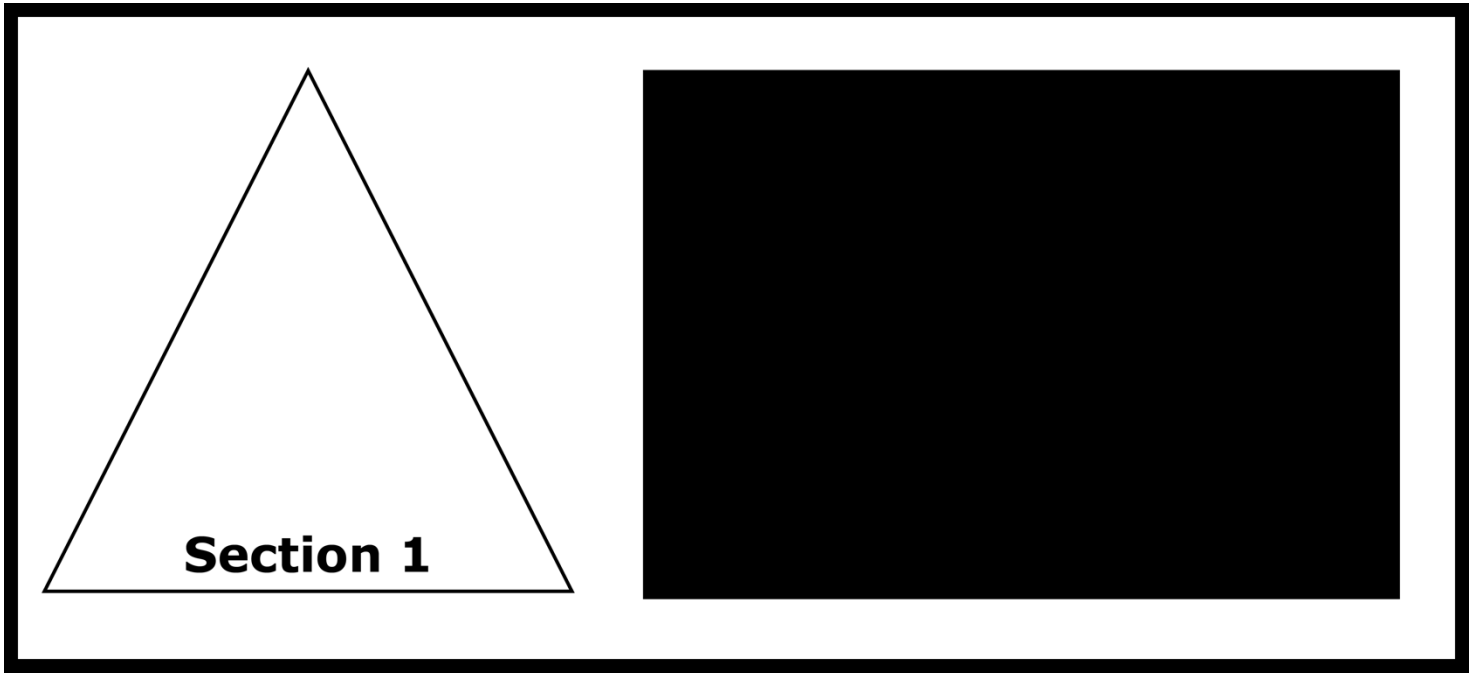
Uzbekistan, Bukhara, 19th century

Gilded silver, turquoise, coral, agate

2011-01949

The large amulet box on this necklace is decorated with filigree, granulation, gem stones, and crested bird-head forms. A hinge opens the box, where Quranic verses or other protective items would be kept. This impressive piece might have been placed around the neck of a horse during special processions.





H1

Necklace (seurapi)

Sumatra, Aceh, late 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04791

H2

Pair of earplugs (subang)

Sumatra, Aceh, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

The Bak Collection

H3

Pair of earplugs (subang)

Sumatra, Aceh, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

1992-00394

H4

Pair of bracelets

Sumatra, Aceh, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04789

H5

Pendant

Sumatra, Aceh, around 1912

Gold

1996-00531

This pendant was made using a Turkish medallion dated AH 1327 (1912) bearing the calligraphic emblem of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V (reigned 1909–18). The phoenix fittings around the medallion were added in Aceh, possibly after a pilgrim's return from the Hajj.

When Turkey conquered Egypt in 1517, the two holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina, came under control of the Ottoman Empire till the early 20th century. The annual Hajj pilgrimage became one of the main conduits for contact between the larger Islamic world and Muslim communities in Southeast Asia. Many pilgrims and scholars gathered in Aceh before departing for the Holy Land. Aceh was also an important centre of religious study.

H6

Mesh bracelet

Sumatra, Aceh, 19th century

Gold, enamel, diamonds

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00593

H7

Hat finial

Sumatra, Aceh, 19th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

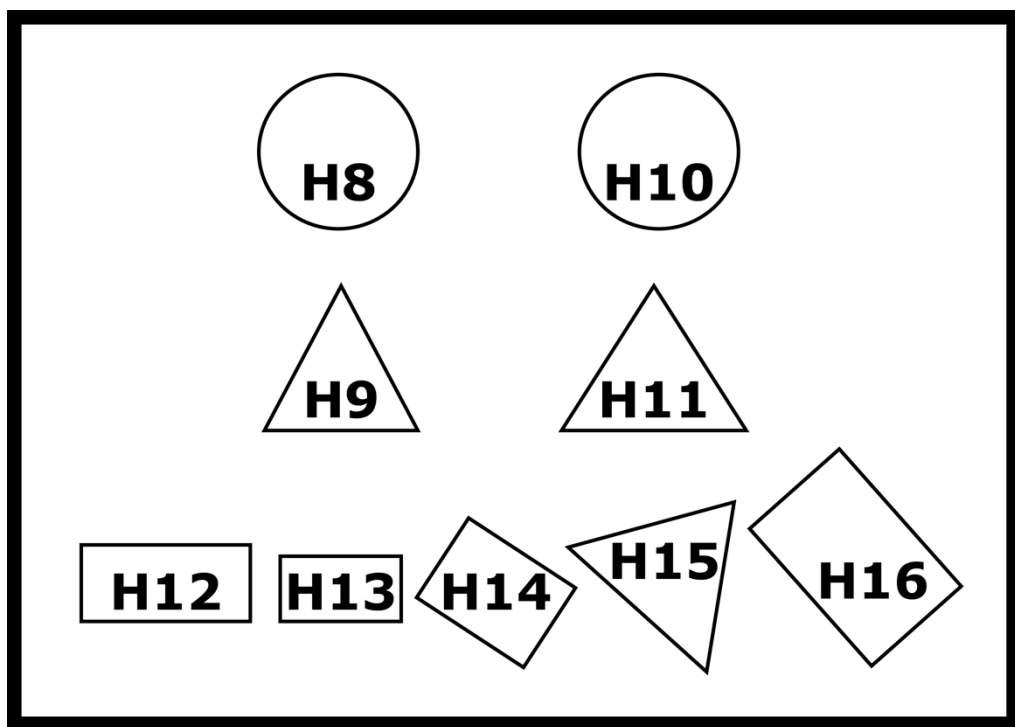
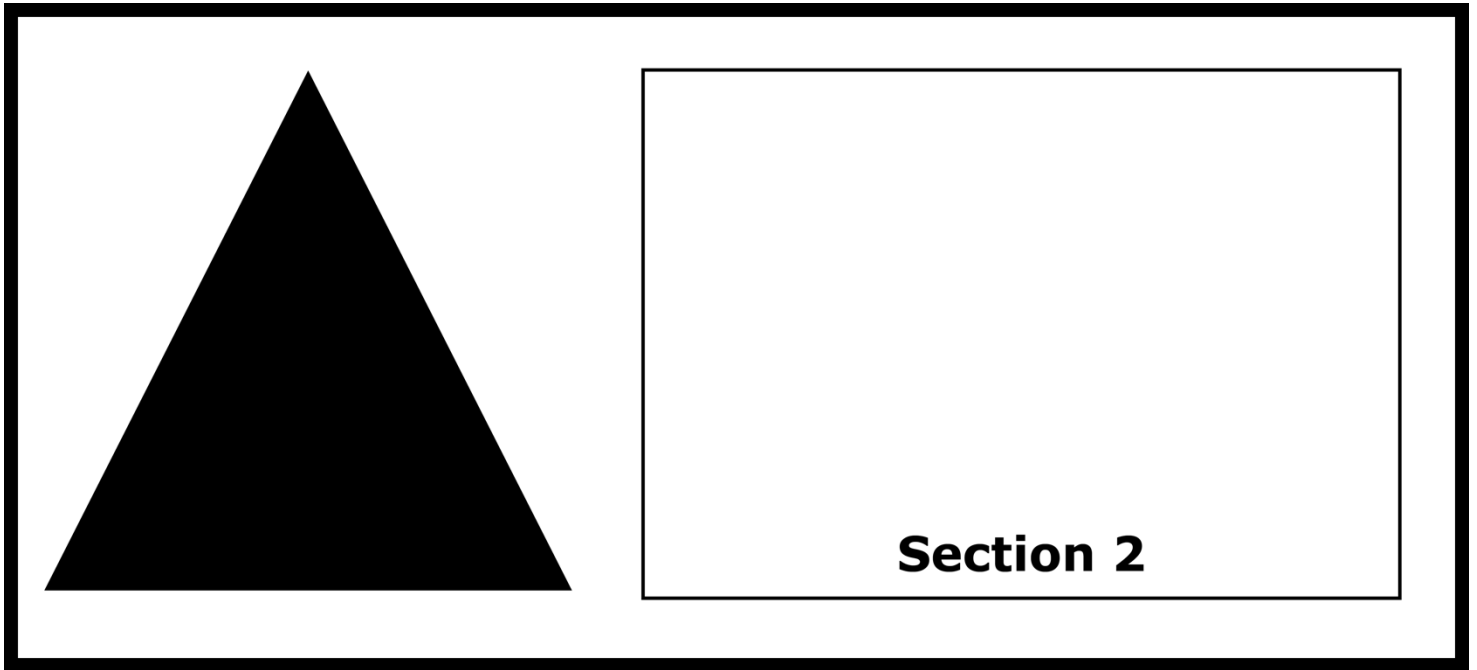
2002-00675

Goldsmithing in Aceh is centuries old.

Historically, gold was mined in the hills between Pidie and Meulaboh, west of Aceh. During Aceh's golden age in the 16th and 17th centuries, royal patronage of the arts flourished, and 300 smiths were employed to make jewellery and other valuables. The goldsmithing tradition continues today. Fine filigree, granulation, enamelling, and red staining of gold are exceptional hallmarks of Acehnese jewellery.

Acehnese sultans drew inspiration from other Islamic empires of the day and earned it the reputation of being the most affluent city in the

region. Indian Mughal architecture and court dress were adopted, and the Turkish Ottomans were considered close military allies up till the mid-19th century.



Section 2

H8

Necklace (dokoh)

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan,
late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

GL-0001

The central pendant of this necklace is in the form of a breadfruit leaf (daun sukun). The smaller pendants function as charms or amulets to protect the wearer. The reddish colour on the gold was achieved by soaking in a solution containing sulphur, salt, lime juice, or other ingredients.

H9

Set of brooches (kerongsang)

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Edmond Chin

2002-00747

H10

Necklace (dokoh)

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 19th century

Gold

GL-0020

H11

Set of brooches (kerongsang)

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Edmond Chin

2002-00743

H12

Belt (pending)

Borneo, Kalimantan, 19th century

Gold, semi-precious stone, cotton, gold thread

2007-00889

H13

Pair of earplugs

Malay Peninsula, Pattani, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Edmond Chin

2009-01382

H14

Group of buttons

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Edmond Chin

2002-00754

H15

Group of collar studs

Malay Peninsula, early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00744

H16

Hairpin tops

Malay Peninsula, Kelantan, 19th century

Gold

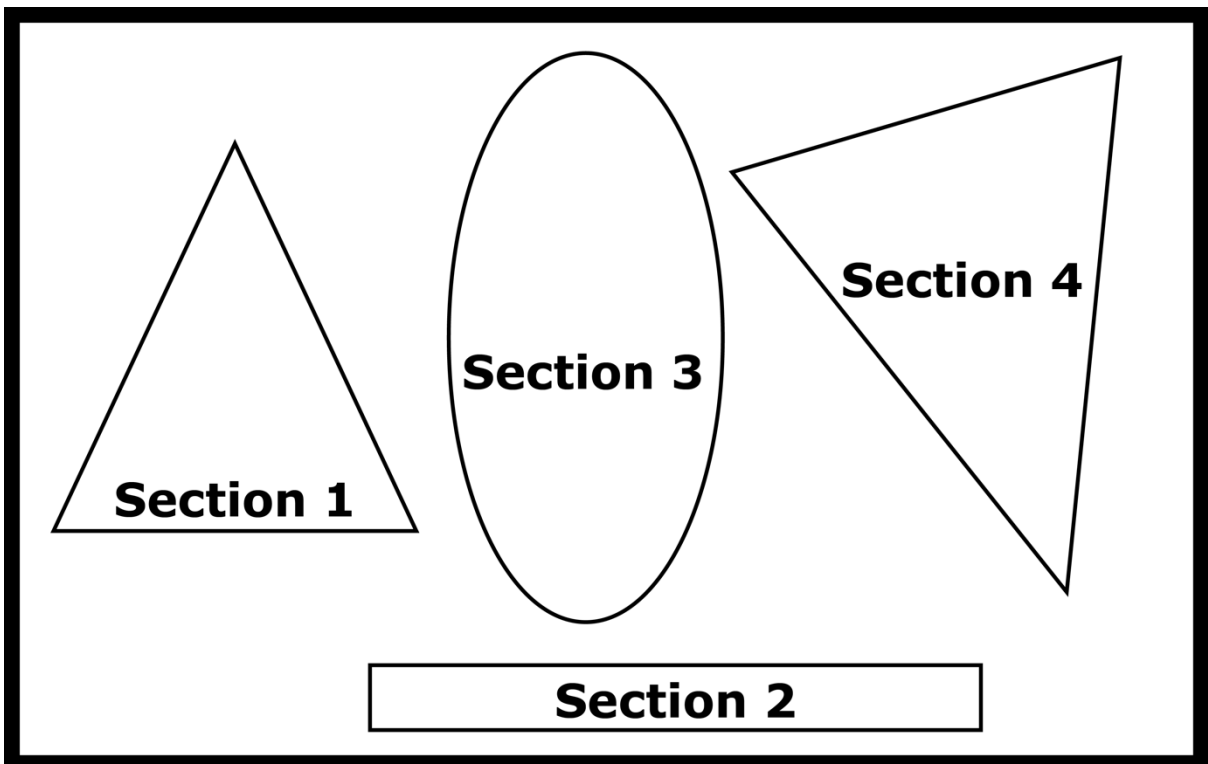
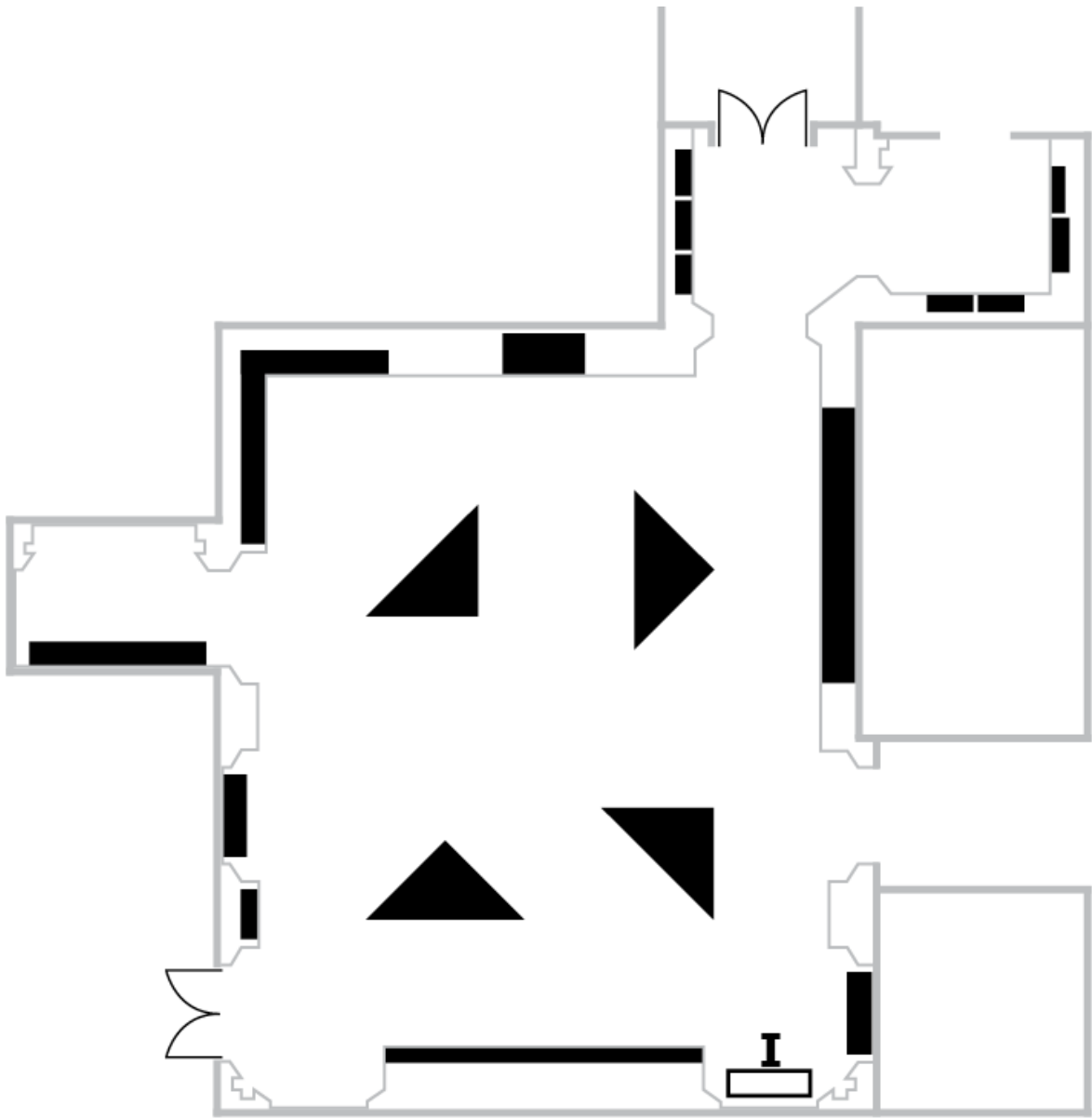
Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

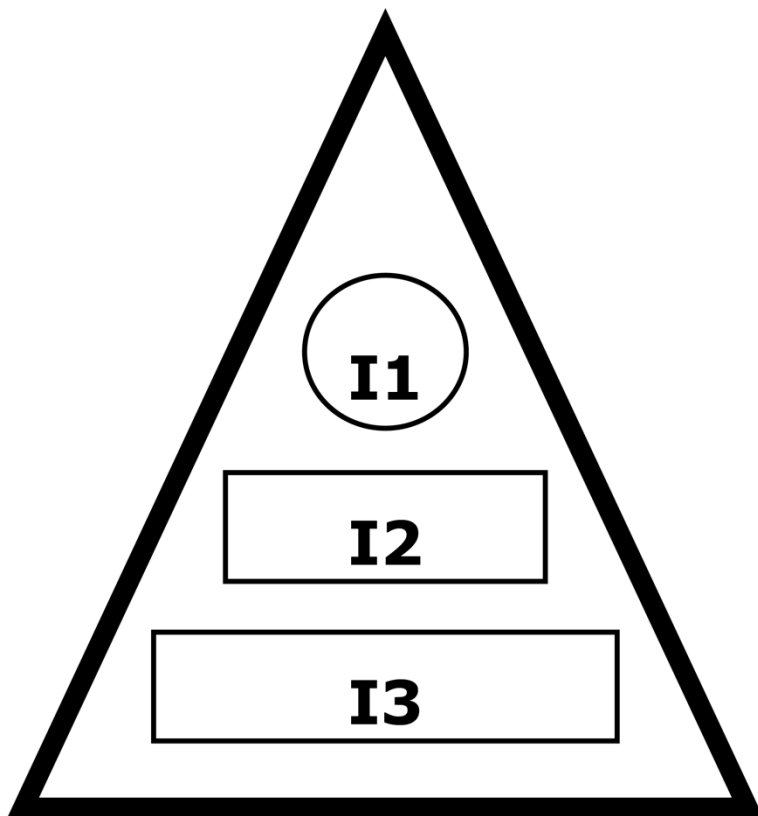
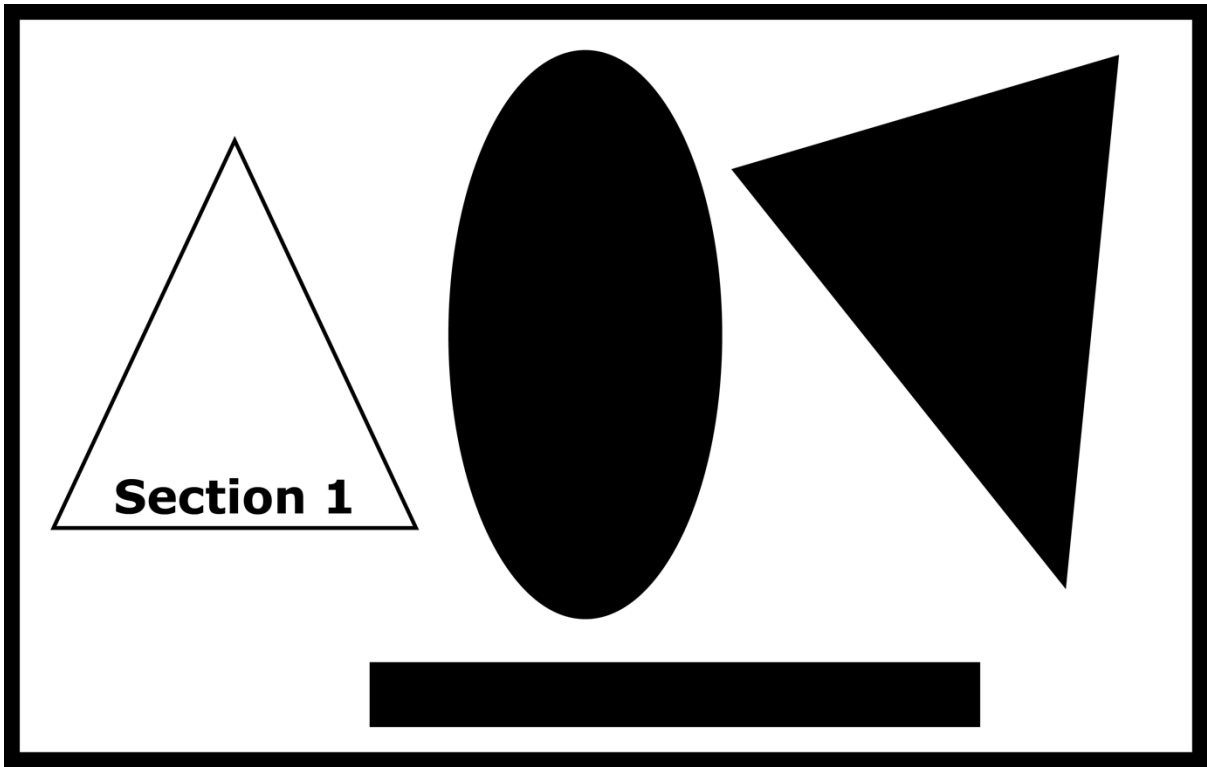
2002-00745

In the Malay Peninsula, gold was historically mined in Pahang, Terengganu, Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan, and Pattani. After the loss of the key trading emporium of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511, local trading networks shifted, and goldsmiths moved to work in

important maritime sultanates at Aceh, Kelantan, Banten, Pattani, and other places.

Jewellery techniques such as faceted granulation, filigree, and red staining were shared throughout the Malay world along trade and religious networks.





Section 1

I1

Necklace with leaf-shaped pendants

Java, 11th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03801

I2

Pair of bracelets

Central Java, 10th century

Gold

1997-03645

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03645

These bracelets were made from sheet gold. The relief decoration was pounded from the back, a technique called "repoussé".

I3

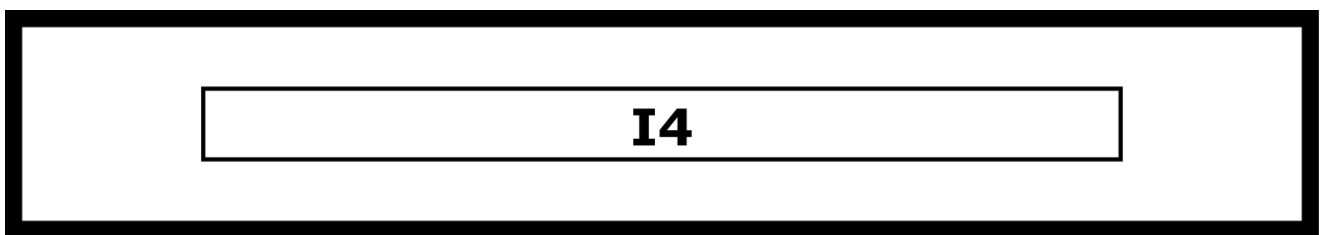
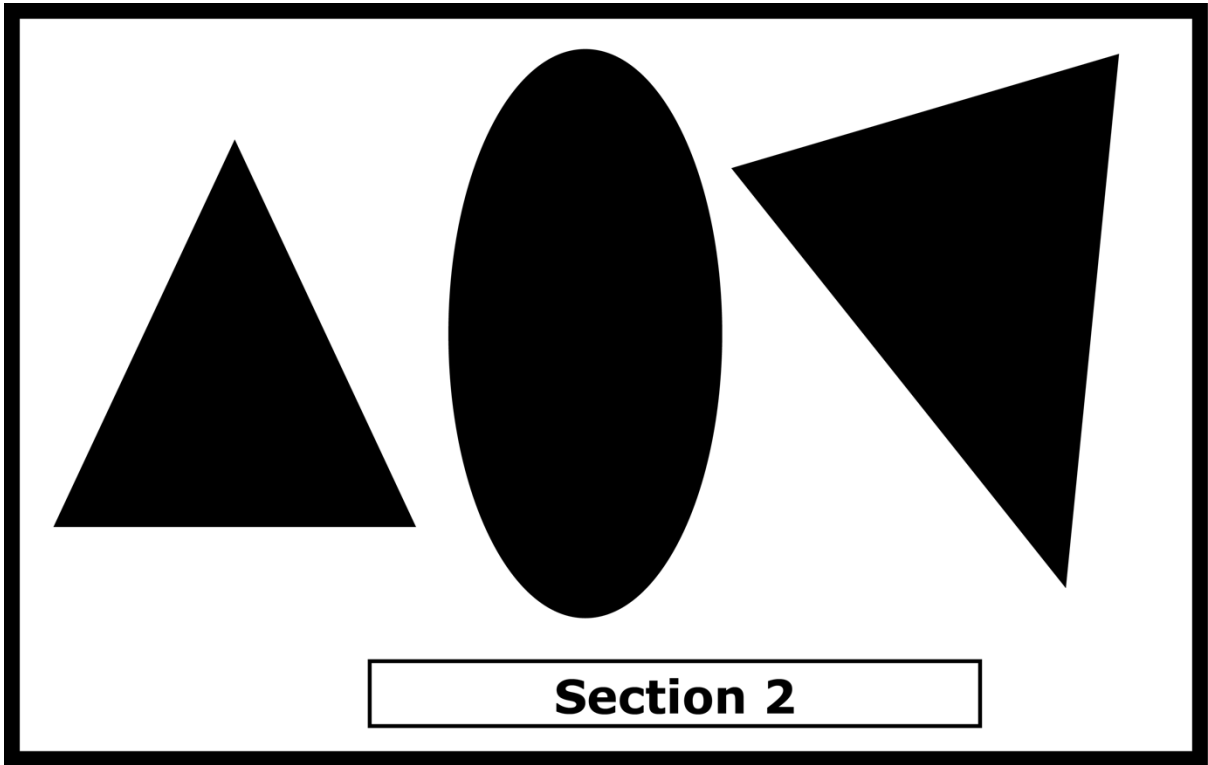
Pair of anklets

Java, 11th to 15th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00736



Section 2

I4

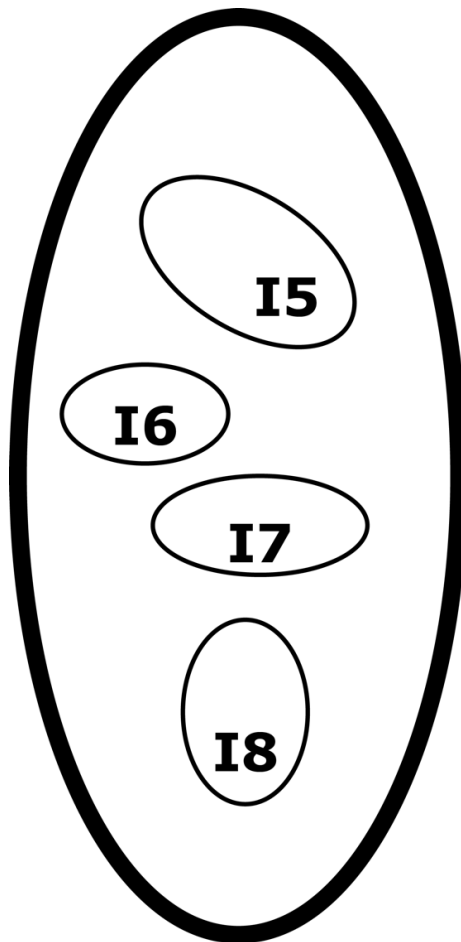
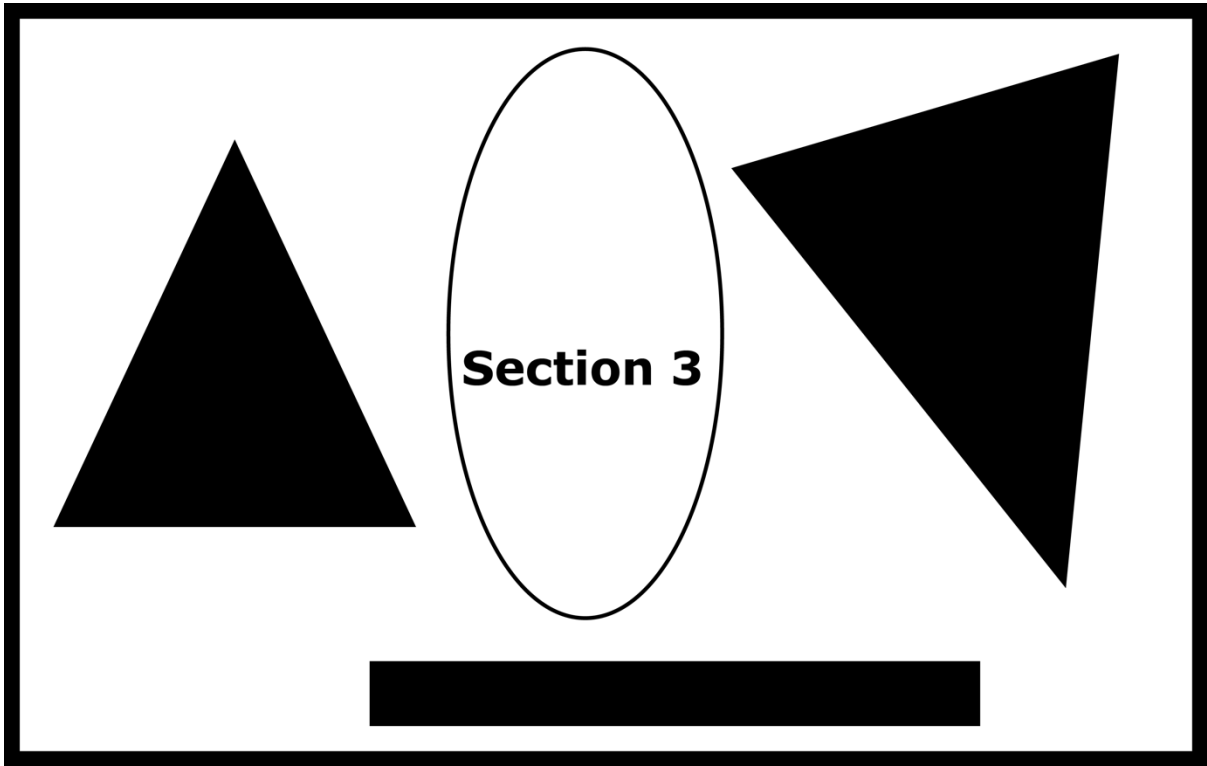
Chain

Java, 11th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00713



Section 3

I5.1

Ring

Central Java, 7th to 10th century

Gold, amethyst

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04777

I5.2

Rings

Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold, gemstone

Gifts of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03641, 1997-03643, 1997-03734

I6

Ring with bird motif

Central Java, 7th to 10th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04787

I7.1

Ring with Sri inscription

Eastern Java, 7th to 10th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04773

I7.2

Saddle ring with Sri motif

Central Java, 10th or 11th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03733

Devi Sri is a consort of the god Vishnu. In Java, the goddess is venerated separately from Hindu gods. She is the goddess of rice, fertility, and good fortune.

The Sri motif was originally the three Javanese letters of her name. Over time it became highly abstracted. A lotus motif is also associated with Sri.

I8.1

Ring with kawi inscription

Java, 12th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00712

This cast gold ring features an old Javanese inscription in a script known as kawi.

I8.2

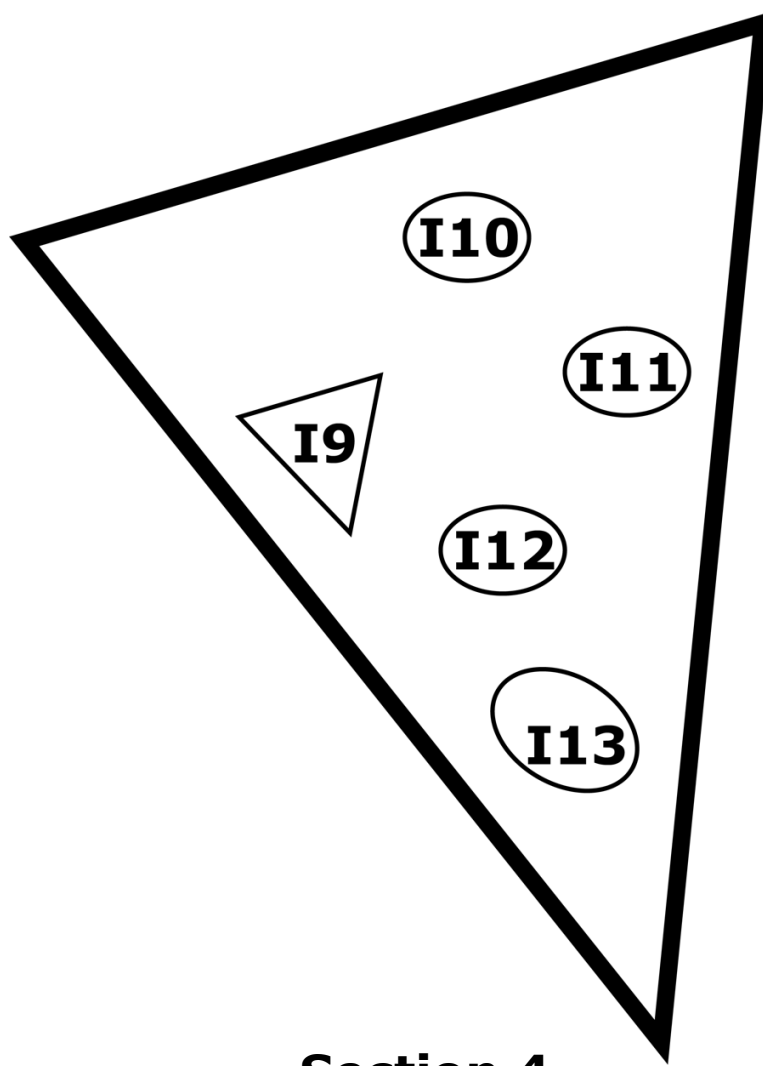
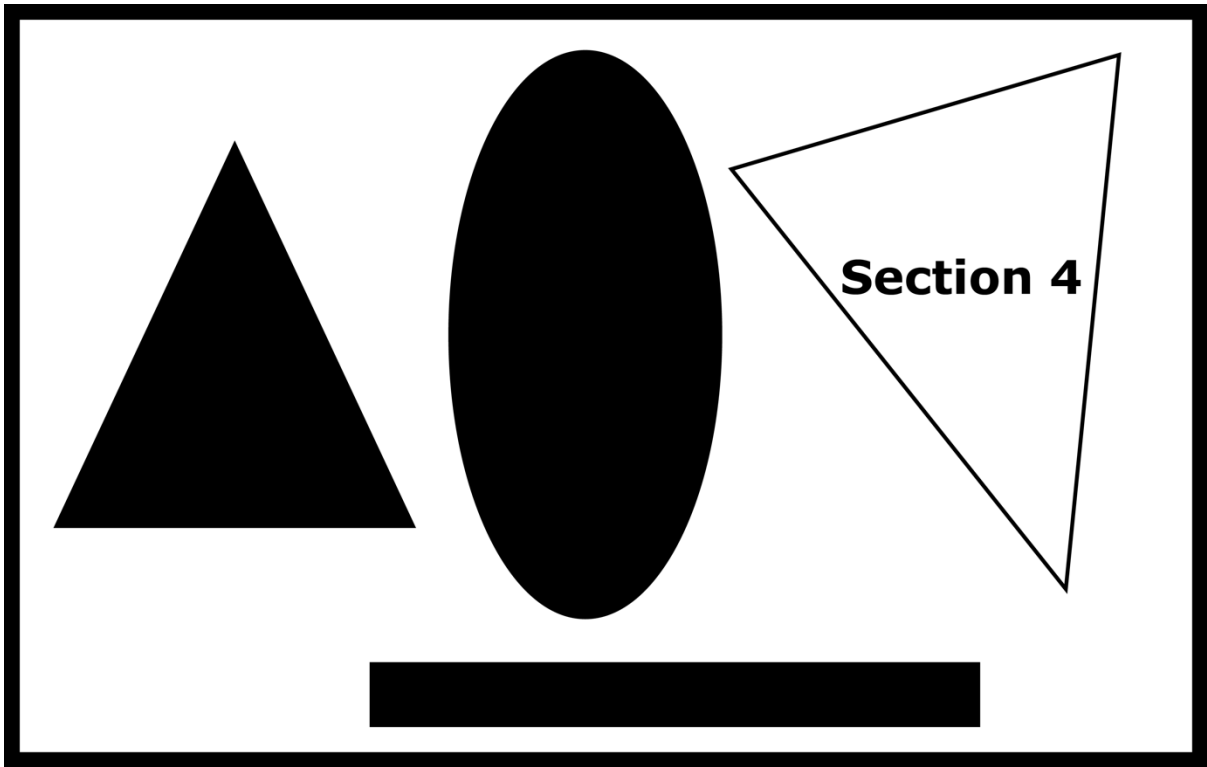
Ring with inscription

Central Java, 10th to 15th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04772



Section 4

I9.1

Earring with Vishnu on Garuda

Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03663

I9.2

Ear ornament with Hamsa motif

Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03684

Hamsa, the swan, is the vehicle of Brahma, the creator of the Hindu universe.

I9.3

Ear ornament with head of Ganesha

Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold, ruby

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03766

Ganesha, with a human body and an elephant head, is worshipped as the god of wisdom.

I10

Pair of ear ornaments with conch motif

Java, 11th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00735

The conch, or trumpet shell, motif, is associated with the Hindu god Vishnu.

I11

Pair of ear ornaments with flame-like motifs

Java, 11th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03711, 1997-03712

I12

V-shaped ear ornament

Eastern Java, 11th or 12th century

Gold

Gift of Mrs Annie Wee

1997-04788

I13

Pair of ear ornaments with Hanuman head motifs

Java, 11th to 14th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03770

Hanuman is the monkey god in Hinduism, and a central character in the Ramayana, one of the oldest Sanskrit epics from India.

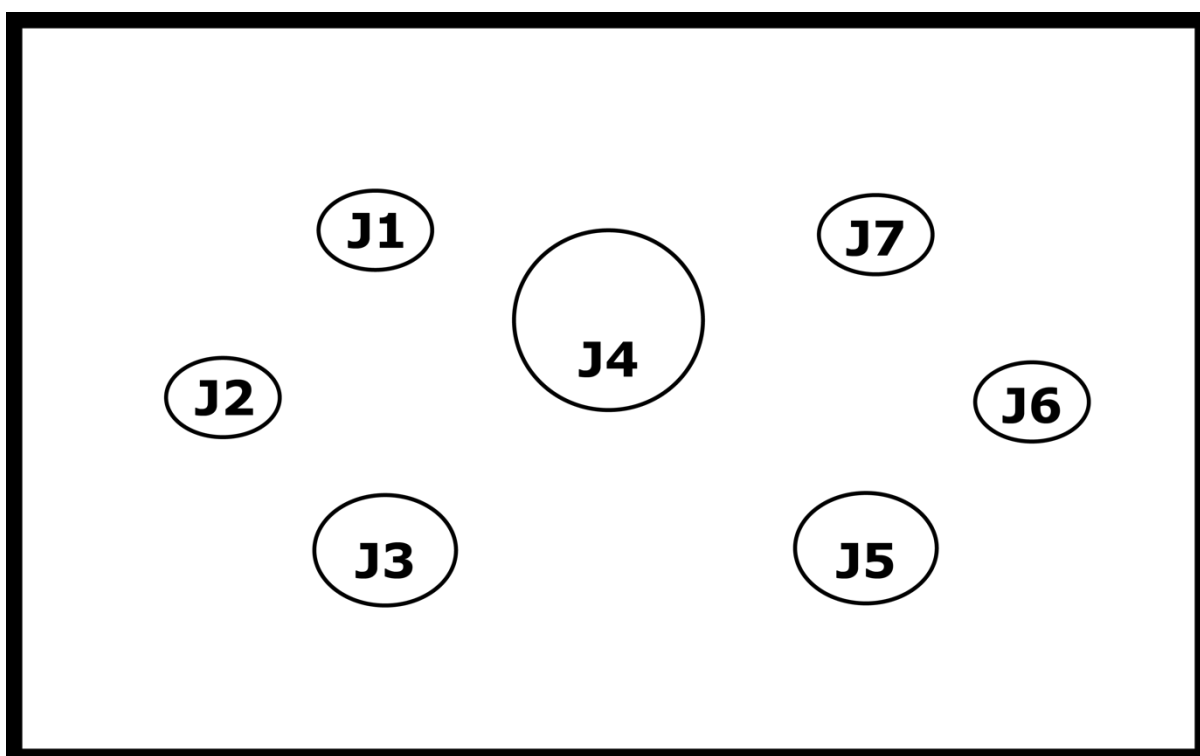
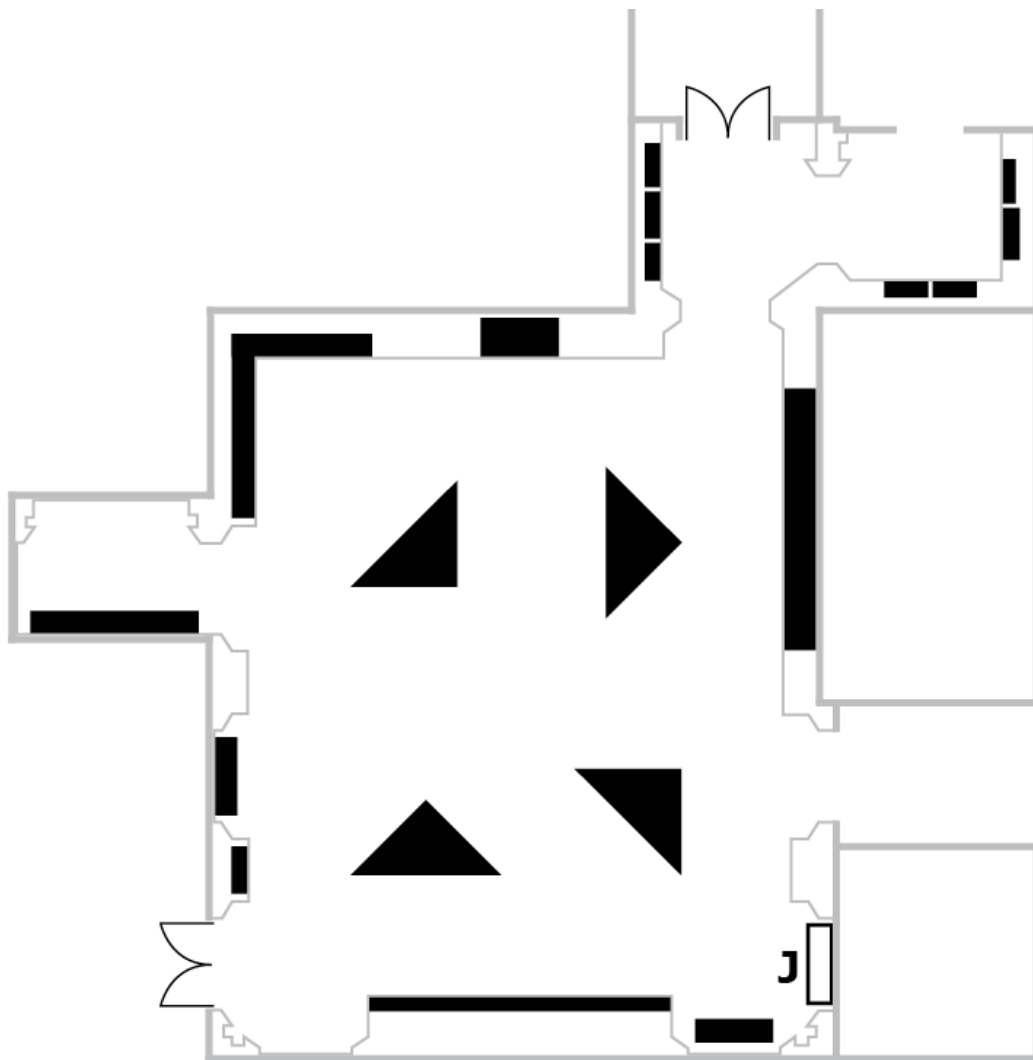
Hybrid gold on Java

From the 7th century, Indian art and religious ideas were adapted to suit local contexts, giving rise to unique Javanese responses.

Between the 7th and 10th century, the most powerful kingdoms were in central Java – where Borobudur and Prambanan temples were built.

From the 13th to 16th century, Singosari (1222–92) and Majapahit (1293–1527) empires arose in eastern Java.

Many pieces were made through the lost-wax casting technique, whereby a model is created from wax and encased in clay. When fired, the wax melts and leaves a hollow mould, which is used to cast the object.



J1

Bracelet

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-001

J2

Bracelet

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-004

J3

Bracelet

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-006

J4

Torque necklace

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-007

J5

Anklet

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-003

J6

Bracelet

Java, 15th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04016-002

J7

Bracelet

Java, 15th century

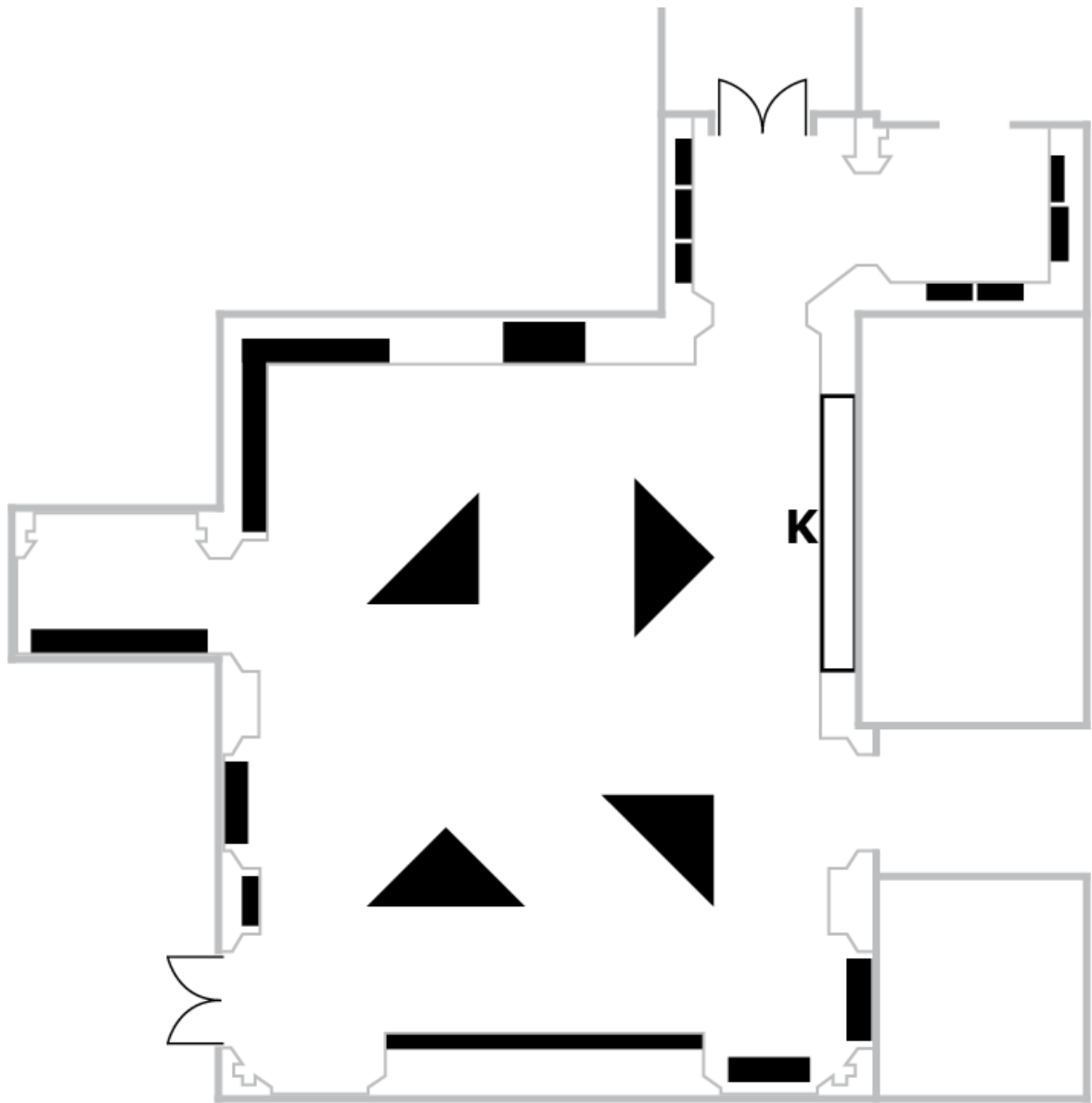
Gilded silver

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

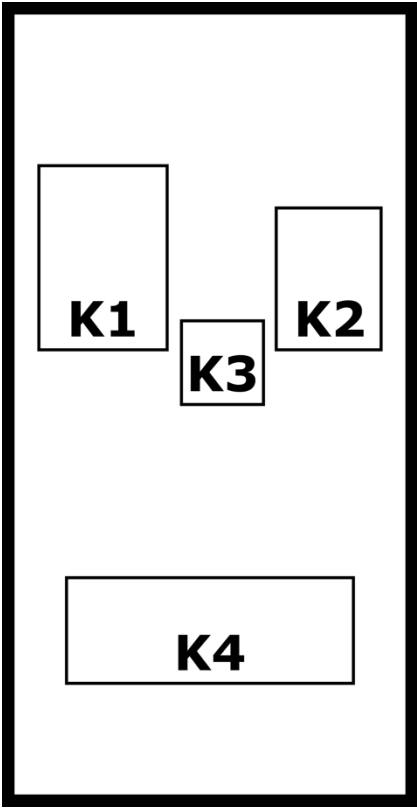
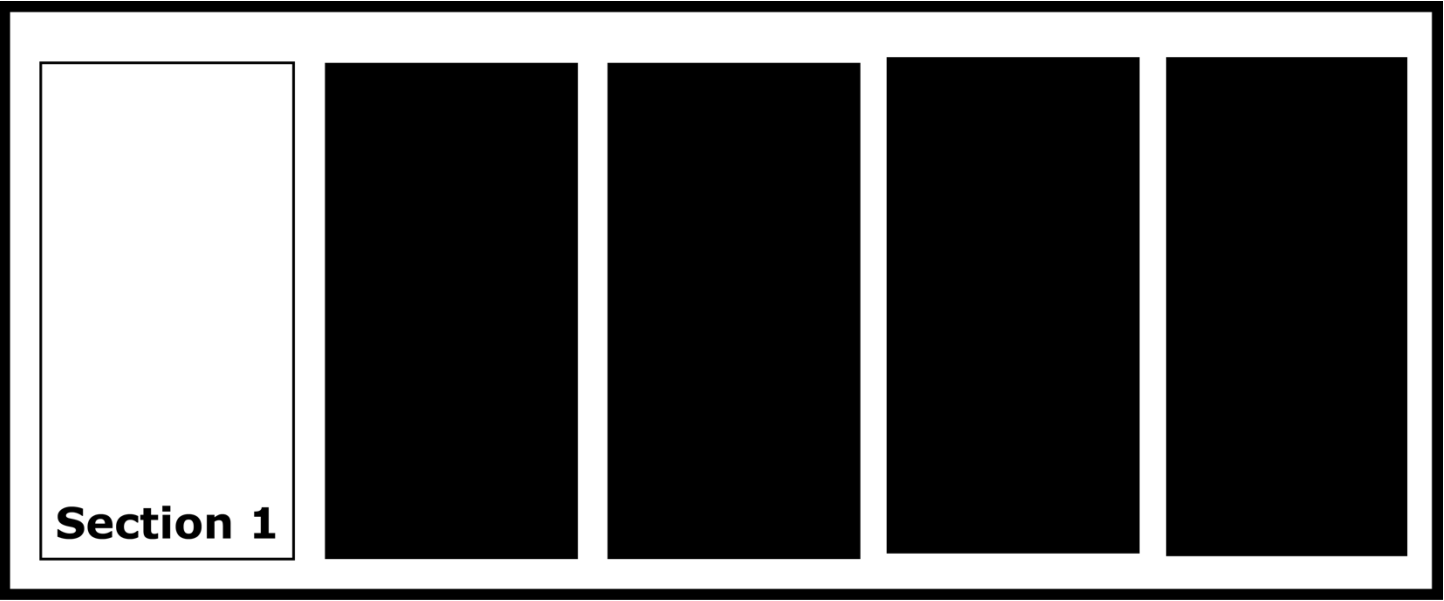
1997-04016-005

The simple design of these pieces sets them apart from more highly detailed Indo-Javanese examples.

The convex spirals on the hollow, circular torque necklace were achieved through repoussé and careful chasing.



Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5



Section 1

K1

Central element of a headdress

North or Central Nias, 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00679

The long vertical point likely references the palm leaf, symbolic of the Cosmic Tree. In Nias, the tree motif represents an all-encompassing cosmology – from the Upper to Lower World. A headdress with this element would have been worn by a wealthy nobleman.

K2

Necklace (bura layang-layang)

Northern Sumatra, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00565

The pointed ends on the pendants may represent buffalo horns or the roofs of traditional Karo Batak houses. Both indicate high social rank and prestige.

K3

Bracelet

Lesser Sunda Islands, Timor, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00554

Ancestors are powerful spiritual authorities who protect and help the living. The house reflects one's family and clan, emphasising the important place of ancestors.

K4

Combs

Sumatra, Lampung, late 19th or
early 20th century

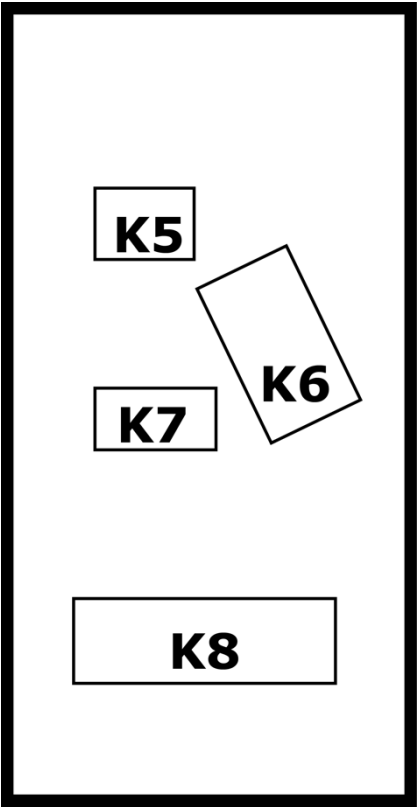
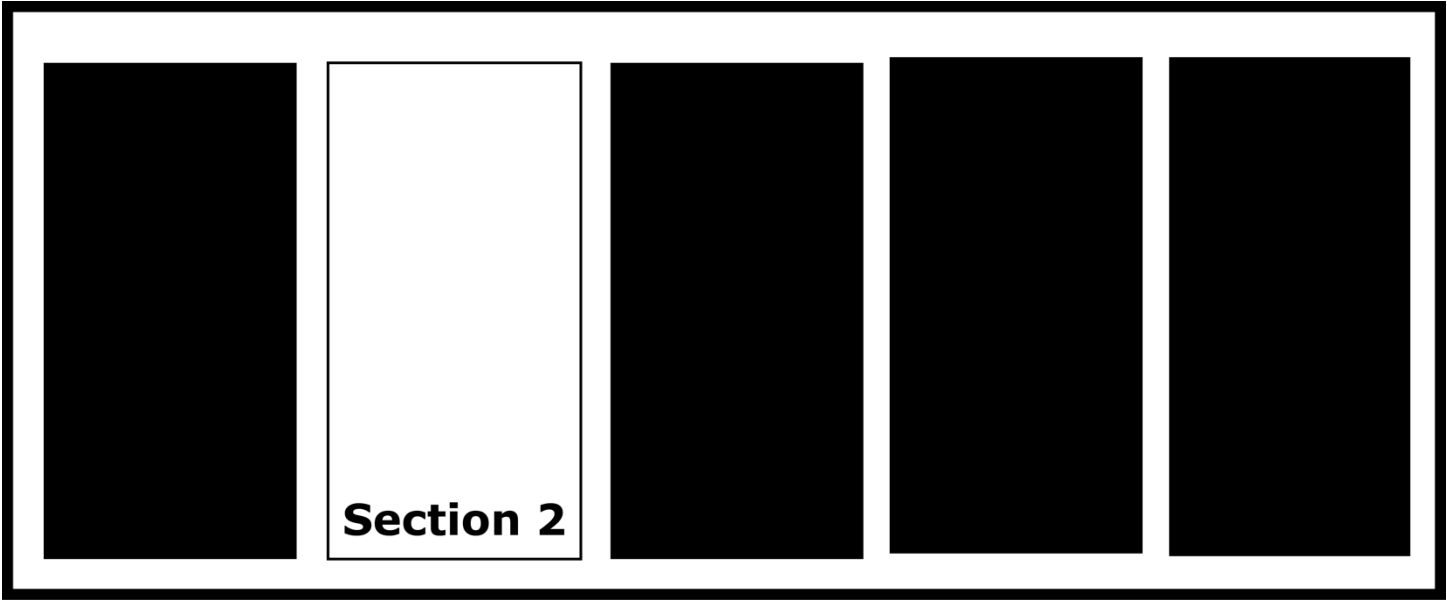
Gilded silver, tortoiseshell

Gifts of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00592, 2002-00590

In Lampung, stylised boats (at times resembling water buffalo horns) appear often in ornamental design. Lampung, meaning “floating on water”, shows this seafaring community’s view of their place in the cosmos.

Boat symbolism relates to all life cycle rituals. As a model of society, the boat supports the world of the living on its deck, floating between the Upper and Lower Worlds.



Section 2

K5

Frontal ornament

Maluku Islands, Tanimbar Islands, around 1900

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00704

K6

Frontal ornaments

Lesser Sunda Islands, eastern Sumba,

late 18th or early 19th century

Gold

Gifts of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00685, 2002-00686

K7

Frontal ornament

Lesser Sunda Islands, Timor, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold, silver

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00654

The crescent form occurs in jewellery from Sumba, Nias, and Sumatra in the west, and from the Atoni and Tetum peoples of Timor Island in the east. Its shape is believed to represent buffalo horns or the prows of ships. On Sumba, these ornaments are heirlooms, believed to have special powers.

K8.1

Pair of earplugs

Sumatra, Lampung, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold, diamonds

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-01152

K8.2

Pair of earplugs

Western Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00529

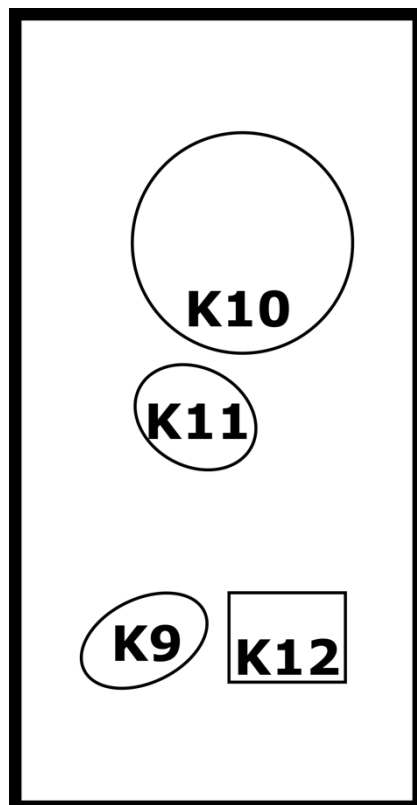
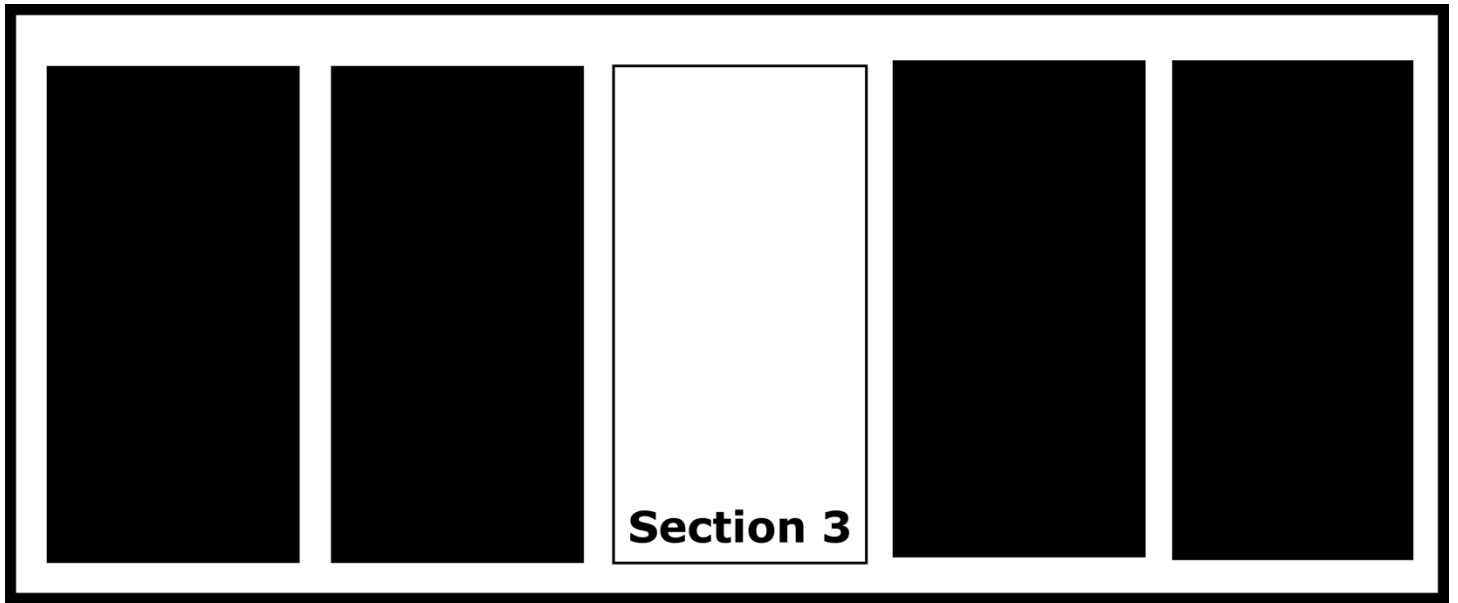
K8.3

Pair of earplugs

Borneo, early 20th century

Copper, silver

XXXX-11889



Section 3

K9

Pair of earplugs

Western Sumatra, early 20th century

Gold

1999-00237

K10.1

Dish (mas piring)

Maluku Islands, Babar, 19th century or earlier

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00705

K10.2

Disc with Ana Deo deity motif (mas bulan)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Flores, Ngada, Jerebu'u,
19th century or earlier

Silver

2007-00888

K10.3

Dish (mas piring)

Maluku Islands (found on Timor), 19th century

Gold

2002-00803

K11.1

Disc with shark motifs (mas bulan)

South-eastern Maluku Islands, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00703

K11.2

Disc with rooster motifs (mas bulan)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Timor, early or
mid-20th century

Gold, silver

1999-00232

Mas bulan ("golden moon") are smaller, flatter, and more simply decorated than mas piring. The circular shape is significant. The full moon and sun are associated with great warriors. Likely associated with hunting trophies, the display of these pieces gave status and prestige to a warrior and his community.

Forging mas piring was an important tradition for centuries. Two main decorative patterns exist – dishes with a star shape in the centre and others with stylised animals. These reflect beliefs in nature spirits and ancestor worship.

[photo]

Two Luang women wearing gold jewellery.

Maluku Islands, Babar Islands, before 1952.

Photograph. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-10005987].

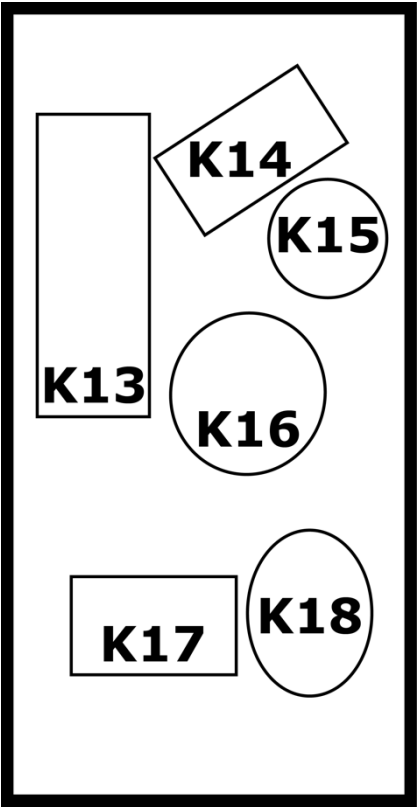
K12

Un viaggio a Nias (A Journey to Nias)

Elio Modigliani, Italian (1860–1932)

Published by Fratelli Treves, Milan, 1890

This page of Modigliani's travel account shows Faosi Aro, the village chief of Bawo Lowalani, in South Nias. Of interest is the large gold earring, which is worn by Nias chiefs only on the right ear.



Section 4

K13

**Open-mouthed naga earrings with chain
(kemene)**

Maluku Islands, Tanimbar, early or
mid-20th century

Gold

1999-00224

This ornament would have been worn by a
woman of high status.

K14

Pair of head ornaments (padung-padung)

Northern Sumatra, 19th century

Silver, gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00575

Padung-padung are characteristically worn by Karo Batak women. Due to their weight, one end is secured to a cloth headdress for extra support. The other end is inserted through the ear.

K15

Ear ornaments

Java, 3rd to 8th century

Gold

Gifts of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

K16.1

Pair of headdress ornaments

Northern Thailand, early 20th century

Silver

1993-00535

K16.2

Ear ornament

Central or eastern Java, 3rd to 8th century

Gold

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03686

K16.3

Ear ornament

Nias Island, probably early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00544

K16.4

Ear ornament

Nias Island, late 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00543-002

K16.5

Pair of ear ornaments

Nias Island, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00680

K17.1

Pair of earrings

Maluku Islands, Tanimbar, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00676

K17.2

Pair of earrings

Maluku Islands, Leti, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00673

K17.3

Pair of ear ornaments

Lesser Sunda Islands, Flores, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Edmond Chin

2002-00677

K17.4

Set of earrings

Northern Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00570

The double spiral motif is found very early in island Southeast Asia, appearing in jewellery dating back to before the Common Era. The form continues to appear widely across the

archipelago, particularly in Batak and Nias communities.

The Javanese ornaments here show another variation of this form from the distant past.

[photo]

A Karo Batak woman with ear ornaments.

Tassilo Adam, German, 1878–1955. Sumatra, Karo Regency, 1914–18. Photograph. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-10005401].

K18.1

Pair of three and four-tiered ornaments

Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold

Gifts of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-03671, 1997-03670

K18.2

Pair of three-tiered ornaments

Probably Java, 8th to 11th century

Gold

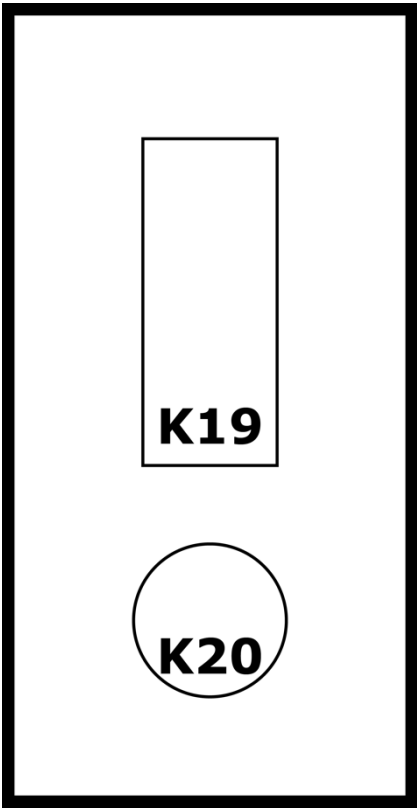
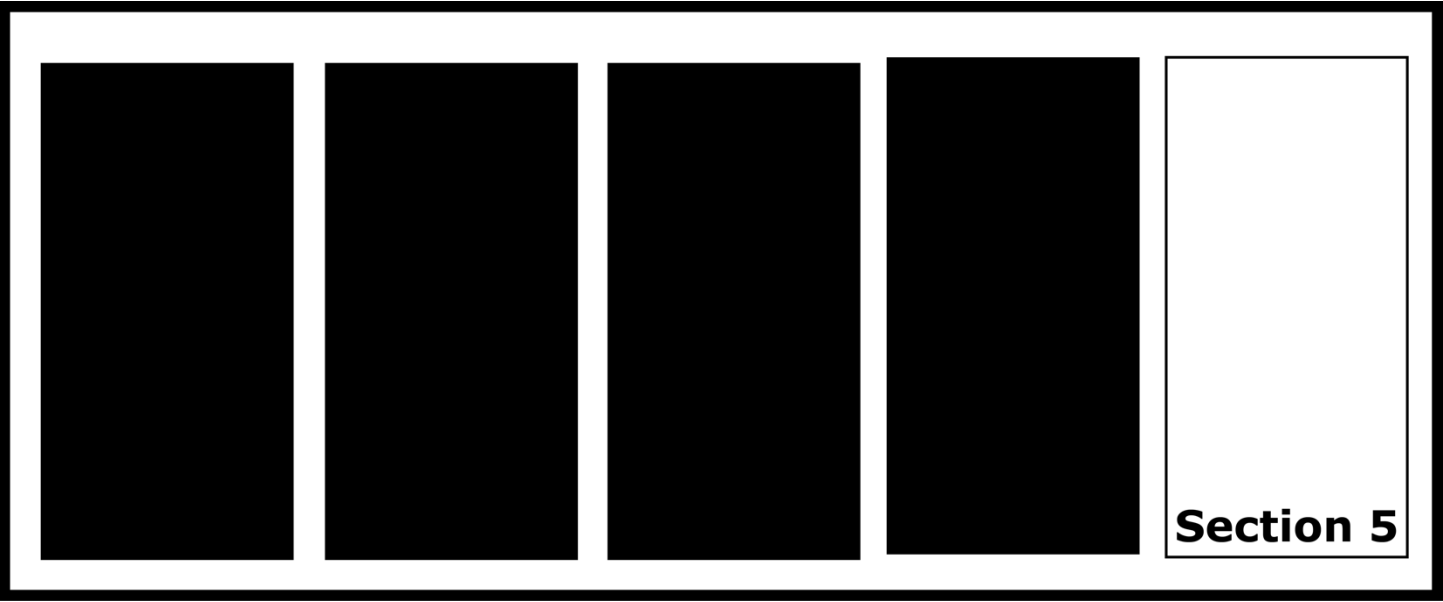
Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00737

Common designs in jewellery often extend beyond a geographical area. Trade routes that connected islands also facilitated the flow of people and ideas.

In Eastern Indonesia, smiths from the tiny island of Ndao would travel to Timor to make jewellery for the locals. This seasonal migration accounts for the similarity in the open oval form.

The Javanese ornaments here show another variation of this form from the ancient past.



Section 5

K19.1

Frontal ornament (marangga)

Lesser Sunda Islands, western Sumba,
19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00702

K19.2

Pendant (marangga)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Sumba, early or
mid-20th century

Gold alloy

1999-00218

K19.3

Pendant (taka)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Flores,
early or mid-20th century

Gold

1999-00227

These double axes are typical of jewellery from the islands of Eastern Indonesia. They were worn as a chest ornament ("pectoral"). Their similarity indicates the widespread contact among these islands. Often, craftsmen from Ndao serviced other communities that did not have their own goldsmiths.

K20.1

Pendant (mamuli)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Sumba, late 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00546

K20.2

Pendant (mamuli)

Lesser Sunda Islands, Sumba, early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00545

K20.3

Pendant (taiganja)

Central Sulawesi, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00595

K20.4

Pendant (mamuli)

Lesser Sunda Islands, eastern Sumba, late 19th
or early 20th century

Gold alloy

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

1999-00220

K20.5

Pair of earrings

Maluku Islands, Babar, late 19th or early 20th century

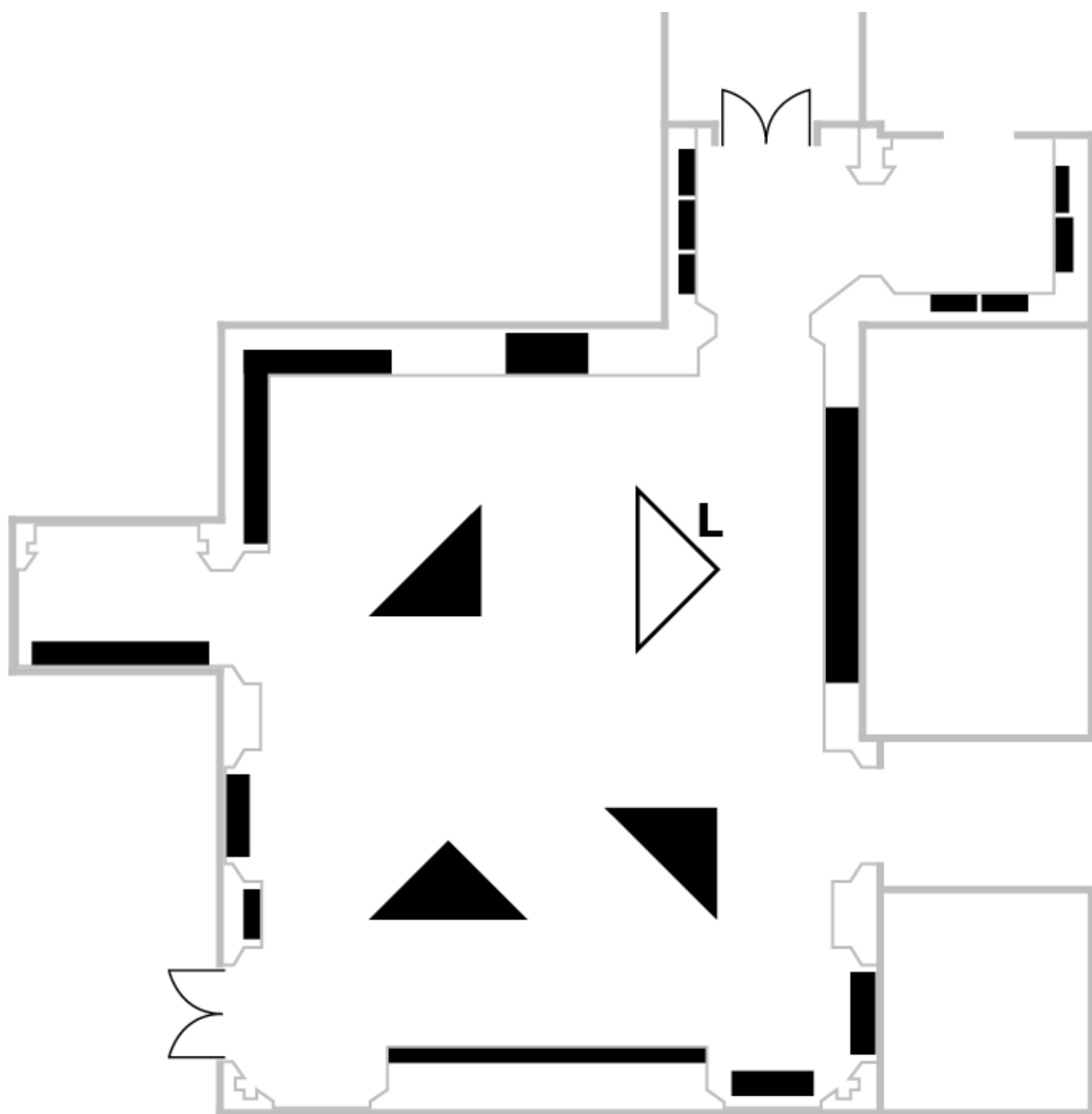
Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00678

Mamuli from Sumba are prominent jewellery forms. Ancient examples in metal and stone have been found in Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan.

It is believed that the shape resembles the female vulva, symbolising fertility. Both men and women wear these during important ceremonies.



L

Minangkabau Bride

Bridal headdress

Western Sumatra, early 20th century

Gold, gold foil, copper

2000-00805

Ceremonial headdresses like this one are seen on Minangkabau brides from the village of Sungai Puar. The ornate, detailed repoussé work (relief patterns hammered into the back surface of a metal sheet) is a distinguishing feature of Minangkabau jewellery.

Necklace

Western Sumatra, Solok, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00531

The seahorse pendant is heavily ornamented with granulation (minute spherical grains soldered to a background) and filigree (thin metal wires combined to form intricate patterns). The seahorse pendant is said to reference the makara, the sea creature from Hindu-Buddhist tradition. In a region with strong Islamic influence, stylisation of motifs may have arisen due to caution against depicting living beings.

Pair of bracelets (galang gadang)

Western Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold, gemstones, copper

2000-06701, 2000-06702

These large hollow bracelets are made from copper plates covered with richly decorated sheets of gold. The gold is stained a reddish colour, a common practice throughout the Malay Archipelago. Once popular in the village of Sungai Puar, bracelets of this size are now rarely found in the region.

Minangkabau bride. C. B. Nieuwenhuis

(1863–1922). Western Sumatra, Sungai Puar, late 19th or early 20th century. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [RV-A78-239].

A magnificent ensemble like this was typically worn by a Minangkabau woman during weddings or festivals. The Minangkabau, who hail from the

highlands of western Sumatra, belong to a matrilineal society. Property, including jewellery, is handed down from mother to daughter, and descent is traced on the mother's side. As Muslims, they still abide by traditional customary law (adat). A Minangkabau wedding embodies their complex identity. It involves an Islamic ceremony at the local mosque as well as a series of traditional rituals.

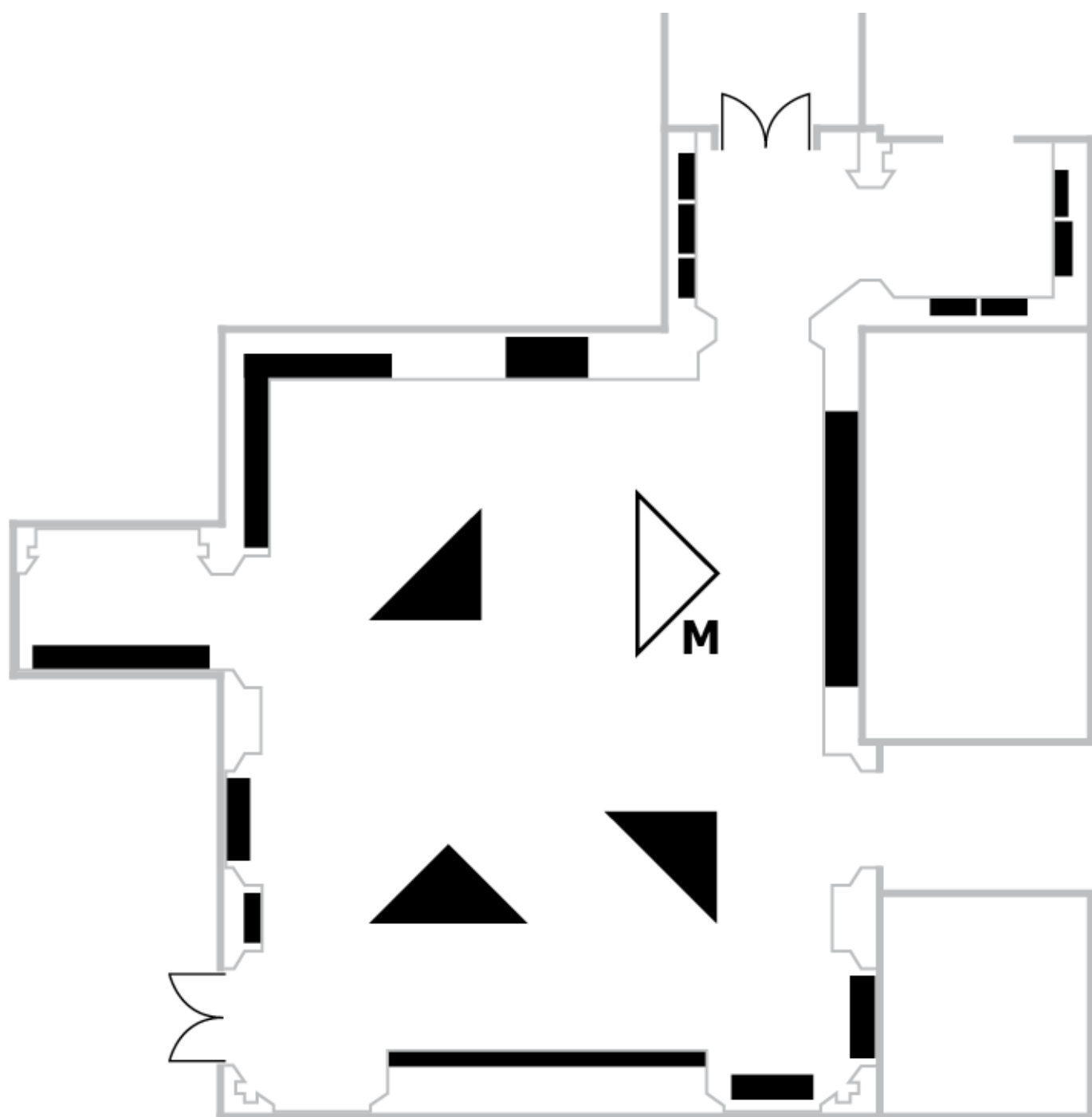
The full range of ceremonies may last over a week.

Minangkabau. C. B. Nieuwenhuis (1863–1922). Western Sumatra, Sungai Puar, late 19th or early 20th century. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [RV-A78-239, RV-A78-240].

These photographs are part of the same set, and together they probably show a bridal couple.

Group of Minangkabau women. Western Sumatra, early or mid-20th century. National Museum of Singapore [XXXX-00661].

The woman at the centre of this group wears a headdress and necklace similar to the ones in the ensemble.



M

Young Minangkabau Woman

Headdress

Western Sumatra, Solok, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold-silver alloy, copper, cotton, copper-wrapped threads, coconut oil, resin

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00700

This impressive headdress is unique to the village of Solok and is worn by women during weddings and other important ceremonies. The front panel is covered with a profusion of gold-foiled flower sprigs, and when worn rests on top of the wearer's head.

The hinged back panel with a fringe of chains, falls to the back of the neck. The metal sheet is decorated with an intertwining fern tendril

(kaluak paku) motif, symbolic of kinship. Each side is decorated with an upward facing bamboo shoot motif, which represents growth. They mirror the striking horn-like roofs (gonjong) of Minangkabau houses.

Conservation Science (on the headdress)

by Heritage Conservation Centre, Singapore

Hidden textiles

Though not visible when worn, the reverse of the headdress is lined with precious Indian and European trade textiles. The Minangkabau prospered because of their favourable location on Sumatra, at the crossroads of international trade between India and China.

The top part is lined with a European chintz, a cotton fabric printed with floral patterns. The cloth is plain-woven. The warp and weft threads cross at right angles (see diagram on next page).

The lower half is lined with an Indian brocade, which involves a "supplementary weft" technique. Extra weft threads are inserted within the weave to create elaborate, raised patterns. Purple, green, and metal-wrapped cotton threads were used here.

Damaged areas of a textile can help us learn about its structure. The images on the next pages show the intricacy of the brocade weave.

In this close-up look at the metal-wrapped threads, we can see thin strips of metal foil wrapped around cotton threads. Analysis of this metal confirmed that it is copper.

Flowers and leaves

The metal foil used for the flowers and leaves is gold alloyed with silver. Making an alloy improves the strength of a metal. The amounts

of gold and silver in the alloy vary with each part. Notice that the wires coiled around the flowers appear much darker. This is because they contain more silver. Silver, unlike gold, easily tarnishes and darkens in air.

Several techniques were used to shape and decorate the metal pieces. The leaves were made by bending the edges of a metal sheet around a wire skeleton or the copper support. The relief patterns on the leaves were made by imprinting with a stamp.

Metal base

The metal support of the headdress is made of copper, which was cheaper than silver and gold, and also prone to tarnishing in air. A sheet of gold foil covers the copper. Designs were shaped onto the gold foil through repoussé – pounding from the back. This pounding also seems to have helped attach the foil onto the copper plate.

An adhesive substance was used to attach the gold foil to the metal base. Through analysis, we identified the dark substance as a mixture of coconut oil and dammar, a natural resin tapped from the bark of trees (genus Shorea, Balanocarpus, or Hopea) grown in Southeast Asia. This substance was traditionally used as a base for repoussé work.

The many repairs on this headdress indicate that it was worn on multiple occasions, and likely handed down through generations.

Treatment before display

The treatment included cleaning and readjustment of bent parts. Cleaning was done carefully to avoid damaging the delicate gold leaves.

This flower stem was loose. It had been re-attached sometime in the past using an adhesive. But the repair was not stable. A conservator removed the old adhesive and used a wire to re-attach the flower to the base, mimicking the original method.

Pair of bracelets

Western Sumatra, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

The Bak Collection

These spherical bracelets were made by folding sheets of beaten metal over a wood or resin mould. They were then lavishly decorated with applied granulation (minute spherical grains soldered to a background) and filigree (thin metal wires combined to form intricate patterns).

[photo]

Minangkabau family. Western Sumatra, Solok. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-10005034].

The elaborate gold-foiled flowers of the Solok headdress are shown off well in this photograph.

[photo]

Minangkabau extended family. Western Sumatra, Solok. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-10005042].

In the background is a spectacularly decorated longhouse (rumah gadang), for which the Minangkabau are well-known. The house is the gathering point of the matrilineal clan, where councils and rituals are held.

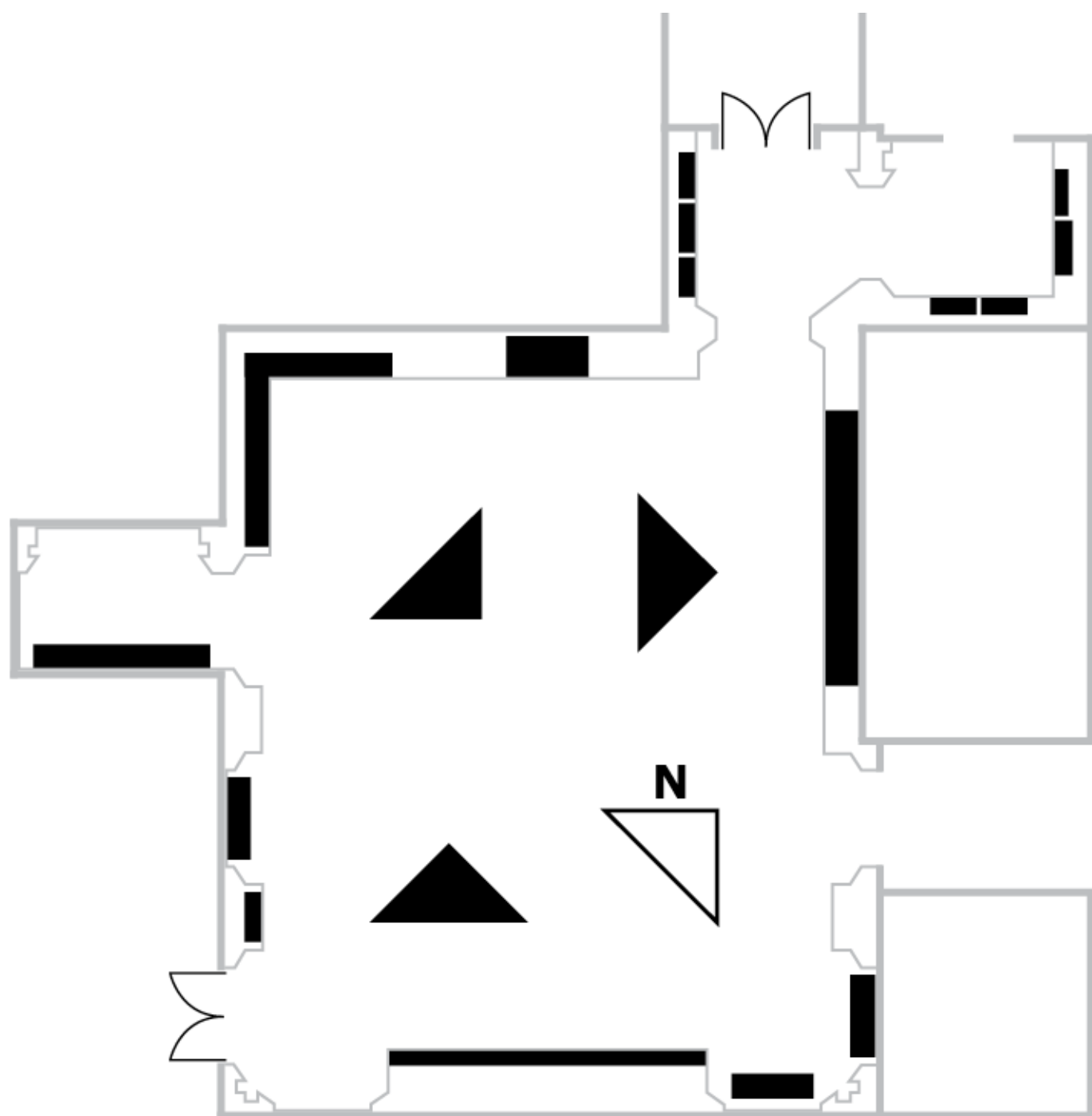
[photo]

Young Minangkabau women, from behind.

Western Sumatra, Solok. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-10002799].

Sumatra, with its fabled gold mines, has had rich jewellery traditions. Among the Minangkabau, jewellery is not only a display of wealth but also an important part of ceremonial dress.

Pieces of jewellery are considered family heirlooms and passed down through the female line. Forms and designs vary greatly from village to village.



N

Nias Princess

Headdress (rai ni wöli wöli)

South Nias, Bawömataluo, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2000-00805

This headdress was worn only by the female aristocracy of South Nias. It consists of several tree-like branches (rai salawa), a vertical comb (sukhu ana'a), and a horizontal rod with small discs (doroho), all attached to a gold headband. The tree form evokes the Tree of Life, which, in Nias ideology and worldview, gives rise to the entire universe.

Pair of earrings

South Nias, 19th century

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00696

The globular structures on these earrings may represent seed pods, fruits, or flower buds.

Necklace (nifatali)

Nias, early or mid-20th century

Gold alloy

1999-00221

This necklace, whose name is derived from the word for “rope”, is fashioned from thick twisted gold wire. The woven gold threads symbolise unity. They are found in varying weights and made with different alloys (mixtures of metals): the heavier the necklace, and the higher the gold content – the higher the status of its owner.

Armband (töla jaga)

Nias, late 19th or early 20th century

Wood, gold, cotton

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00683

Gold foil was wrapped around a wooden core to make this armband. The shape recalls an older form (töla gasa) fashioned from clamshell. Such armbands were worn by women on both arms and by men on the right arm only.

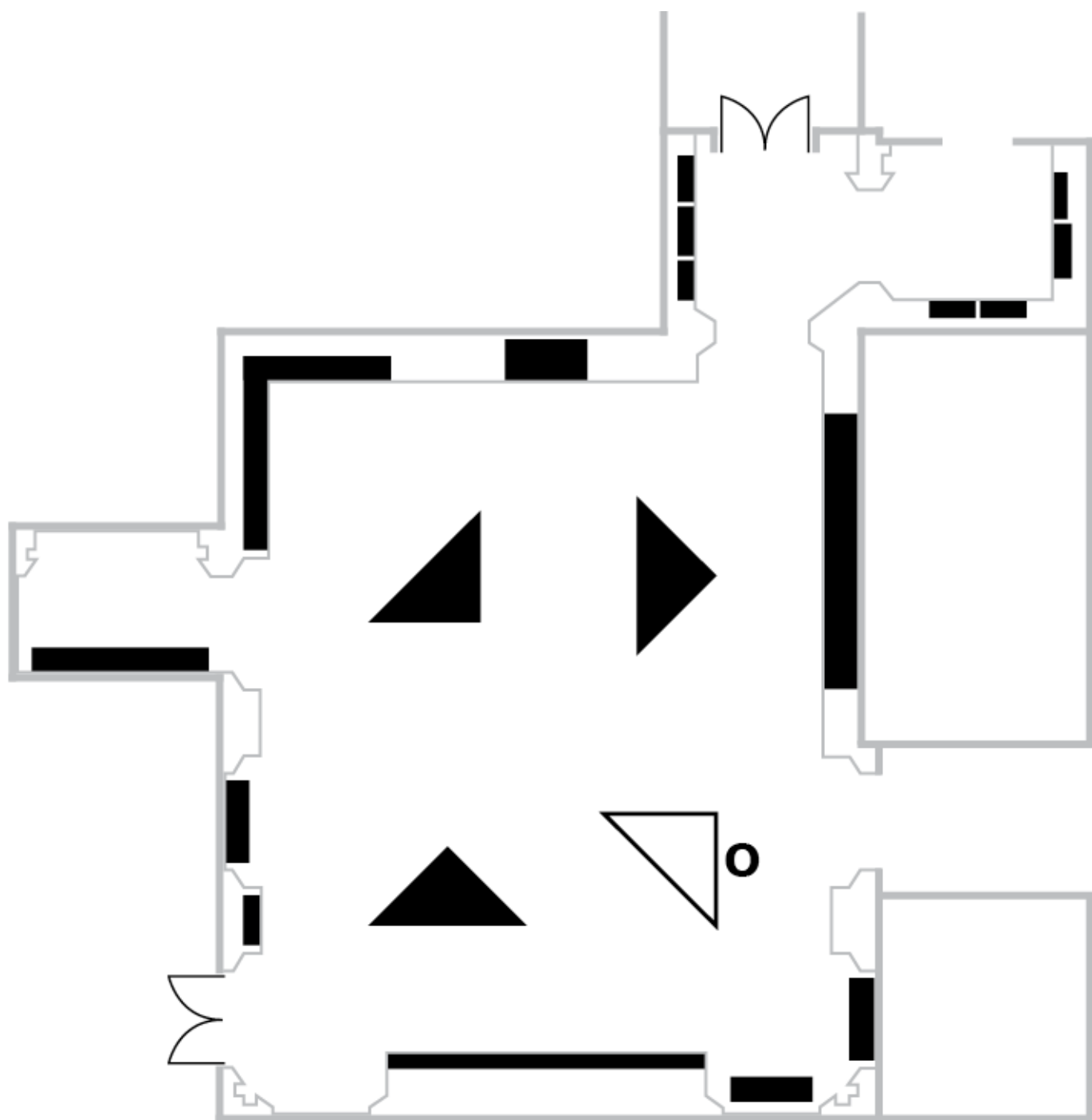
[photo]

Nias Priestess. South Nias, Bawömataluo
National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands
[TM-10001060].

This stunning gold ensemble was worn by the priestesses of South Nias. Priestesses (ere) were highly esteemed: they were in contact with a spirit named Silewe Nazarata, through which

they were able to deliver blessings or cure diseases. What they wore became the basis for the clothing and jewellery worn during important rituals and ceremonies by other aristocratic women.

The people of Nias maintained a highly stratified society where gold was an ultimate sign of nobility. There was no known source of gold on the island, so it was obtained through trade (primarily for slaves and coconut oil), first from Sumatra and later from the Dutch. The number, type, and weight of ornaments each rank was permitted to wear was strictly defined by local custom.



O

Young Karo Batak Woman

Brooch (kancing baju)

Northern Sumatra, late 19th or
early 20th century

Gilded silver

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00569

This brooch was fastened to a jacket with a pin attached to the uppermost roundel. It would sway with the wearer's movements. There is a buffalo horn motif (tanduk kerbau payung) at the top, and five-pointed stars (tupak salah silima-lima) inside each of the roundels. The horns symbolise authority, while the stars are believed to bring good luck. Worn by unmarried girls, jewellery like this was a display of wealth and increased the chances of finding a suitable husband.

Necklace (sertali layang-layang kitik)

Northern Sumatra, 20th century

Gilded silver, cotton

Collection of Mr Khir Johari

The word "layang-layang" means kite, and refers to the bird-like shape of the central pendant of this necklace. According to the Batak creation story, birds serve as mediators between heaven and earth. Six smaller pendants (rumah-rumah) recall the rooftops of traditional houses.

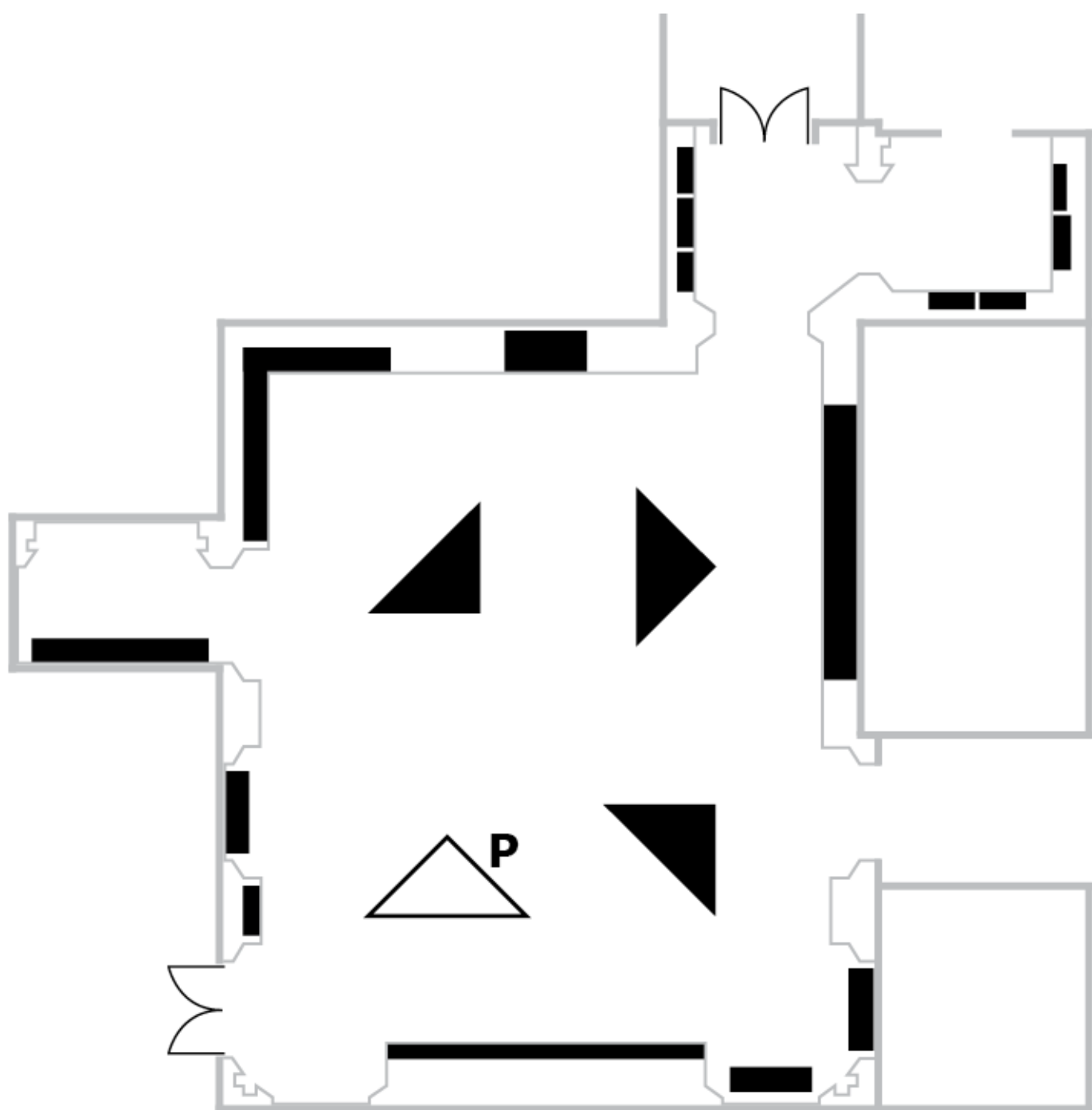
The expert use of granulation (minute spherical grains soldered to a background) and filigree (thin metal wires combined to form intricate patterns) is also seen in Acehnese, Malay, and Minangkabau jewellery, reflecting lively contact between the Karo Batak and their neighbours.

[photo]

Young Karo Batak woman. Y. Asada,
Japanese, active 1920s. Northern Sumatra, early
20th century. Leiden University Library
[KITLV 124684].

This ensemble was worn by unmarried girls during festive village dances to attract potential suitors. It comprises a brooch (kancing baju) and a necklace (sertali layang-layang kitik), and is paired with a wrapped headcloth and a buttoned jacket.

The Batak people are six closely related groups who inhabit the interior of northern Sumatra. They are rice-farmers, and the various stages of the farming cycle are marked with joyous festivities. Unmarried men and women wear their best clothing and dance at the village square. Jewellery signalled wealth and increased a girl's marriageability.



P

Peranakan Bride

Headband

Sumatra, Palembang, late 19th or
early 20th century

Velvet, gilded silver, seed pearls

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00435

This headband features a veil of gold beads and pearls, as well as a row of gilded figure ornaments. The figures probably derive from popular depictions of the Daoist Eight Immortals, meant to offer protection for the bride.

Hairpins

Indonesia, late 19th or early 20th century

Gilded silver, diamonds, beads

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin, 2002-00447, 2002-00503, 2002-00504; National Museum of Singapore, XXXX-06837

An impressive array of hairpins was inserted into a Peranakan bride's hair. Larger hairpins are set on springs, and are similar to the trembling head ornaments worn by brides throughout Sumatra and Java. Motifs on these hairpins convey auspicious meanings: bats for fortune, insects for fertility, and crabs for harmony.

Group of collar ornaments

Indonesia, late 19th or early 20th century

Gilded silver, diamonds

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin, 2002-00505-002 to 007; Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng, 1997-04055-62, 1997-04088-98, 1997-04102-4, 1997-

04107; National Museum of Singapore, 1993-01771-73, 1993-01775, 1994-04984-85, 1994-04987-88

The holes on these ornaments allow them to be sewn onto a bridal collar. Designs include jewelled birds, the Eight Immortals, pairs of dragons and unicorns, flowers of the four seasons, pomegranates, and peaches. The various motifs symbolise auspiciousness, prosperity, fertility, and marital harmony.

[photo]

Peranakan bride. Woodbury & Page, British. Java, Batavia (Jakarta), late 19th century. National Museum of Singapore [XXXX-12504].

The Peranakan Chinese communities in the coastal cities of Malacca, Penang, Singapore, Palembang, and on the north coast of Java are

descendants of Chinese travellers who came to Southeast Asia and married local women.

From their long residence in the region, they have adopted many aspects of local culture (including Malay or Javanese practices). Their hybrid jewellery fuses elements of Chinese and indigenous cultures. The floral hairpins and headband in this ensemble can also be found in the bridal ensembles of many communities in Sumatra and Java. The gilded figure ornaments on the headband and collar are traditional Chinese symbols representing the Eight Immortals.

[photo]

Peranakan bride. Woodbury & Page, British.
Java, Batavia (Jakarta), late 19th century.
Peranakan Museum, Gift of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip
Lee [2018-00132].

[photo]

Peranakan couple. Woodbury & Page, British.
Java, Semarang, 1875. National Museum of
World Cultures, Netherlands [RV-A440-aa-301a,
RV-A440-aa-301b].

These photographs of the same bride and her
groom came from an old Dutch collection.

[photo]

**Plate XLIV: Goude Armringen voorhoof-
oor-en hair-cieraden der Amboinesen enz**

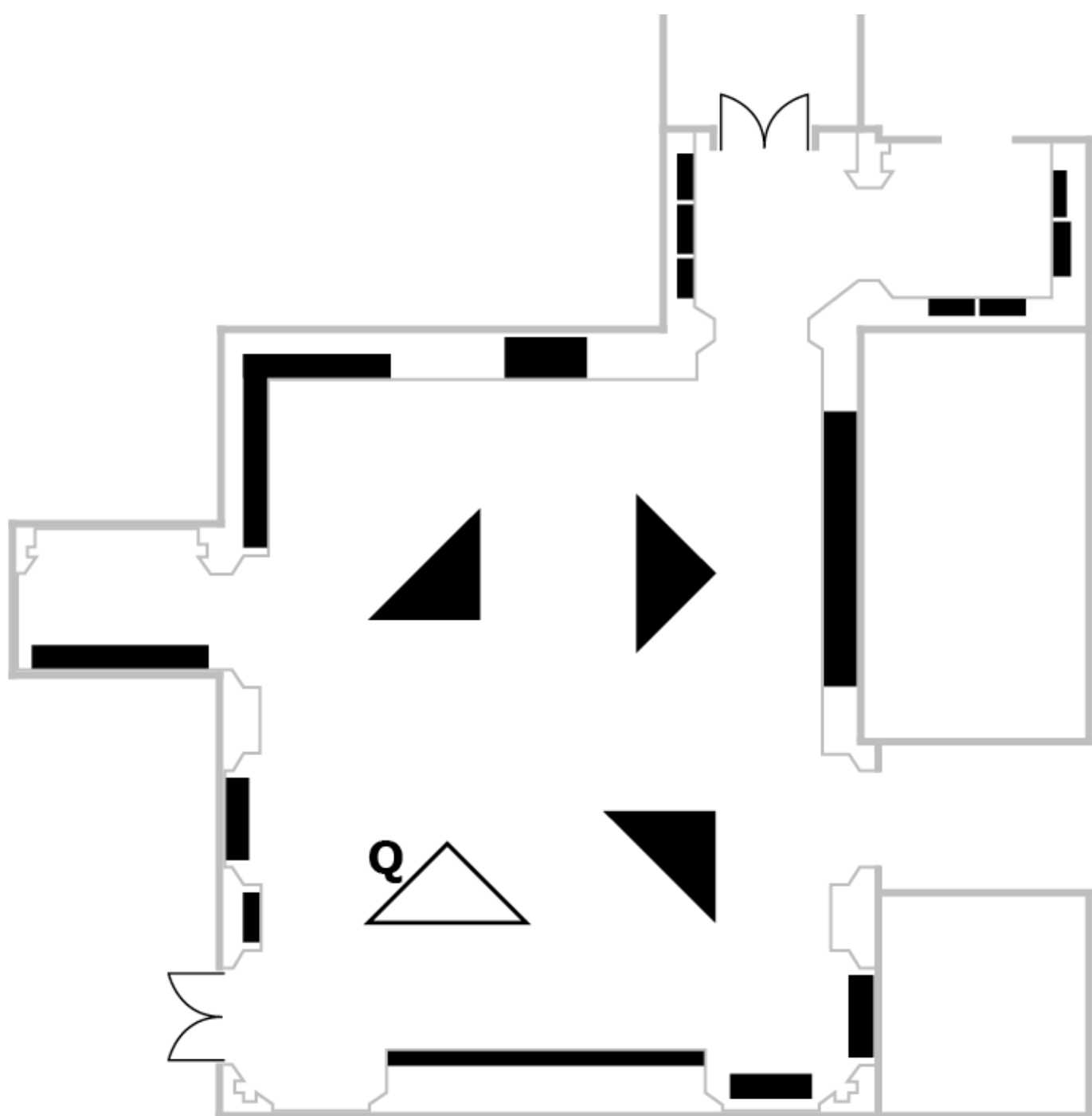
(Gold armbands, earrings, and hair

ornaments of the Ambonese, etc.). From Oud
en Nieuw Oost-Indiën, vol. 4, between pp. 170–
71, by François Valentijn (Dutch, 1666–1727).

Published Dordrecht and Amsterdam, 1724.

Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee.

This print shows the types of jewellery observed in Ambon, in the Maluku Islands, east of Sulawesi, by Dutch East India company employee François Valentijn. A headband similar to the one on display, but made nearly 200 years earlier, can be seen at the top of this print.



Q

Perak Royalty

[photo]

Postcard: "A Malay Lady of Noble Birth".

Singapore, early 20th century. National Museum of Singapore [1991-00407].

This noblewoman from the Perak Sultanate wears a necklace made from multiple layers of fine chains (kalung), a granulated (minute spherical grains soldered to a background) bead necklace, and a set of fasteners (kerongsang). She wears a long, loose-fitting blouse (baju panjang) and a headscarf (selendang).

The Perak Sultanate was founded in the 16th century by a prince from the Malacca Sultanate. Together with other Malay sultanates, it shared closed links with Aceh, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries. By the late 19th century, sizable

Bugis, Batak, and Minangkabau populations had taken up residence in Perak. Traces of these connections are evident in shared jewellery techniques, including granulation and filigree.

The original photograph was probably taken by Leonard Wray (1852–1942), curator of the Perak State Museum, who made a series of photographs of Perak royalty in the 1890s.

Necklace

Probably Sumatra, Aceh, late 19th or early 20th century

Gold

The Bak Collection

These ornate openwork beads display an exceptional level of workmanship. Similar types of beads, decorated in granulation (minute spherical grains soldered to a background) and filigree (thin metal wires combined to form

intricate patterns), were also common to Bugis, Minangkabau, and Peranakan communities.

Set of blouse fasteners (kerongsang)

Malay Peninsula, Penang, late 19th century

Gold, pink rubies, diamonds

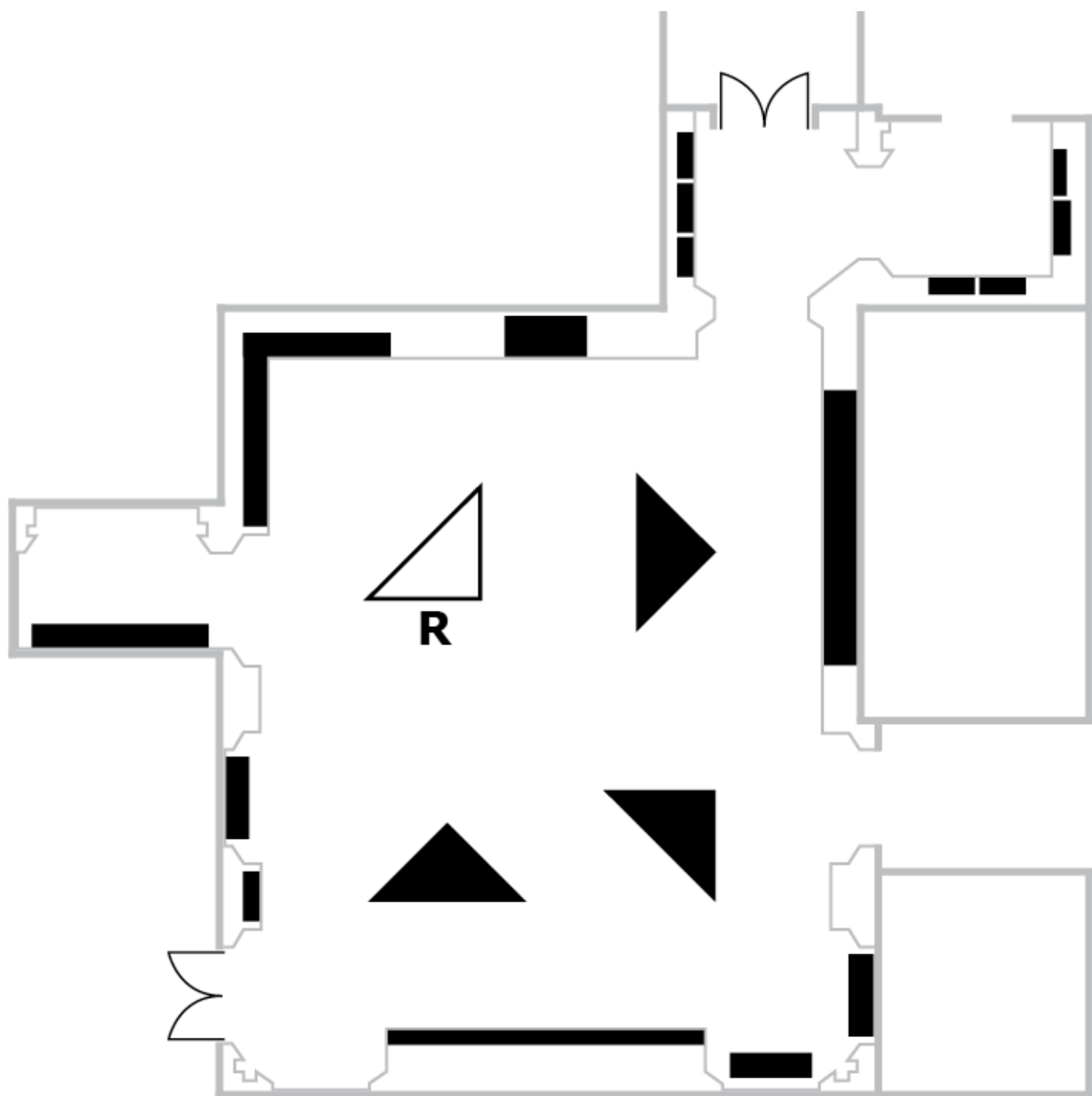
Collection of Dr Roger and Mrs Betty Mariette

These extraordinary blouse fasteners are worn by women all across island Southeast Asia to fasten the open front of their blouse. This set comprises a larger, heart-shaped brooch (kerongsang ibu, “mother”) and two smaller circlets (kerongsang anak, “child”). They are worn with the largest brooch at the top and the smaller ones below.

[photo]

“Three Ladies of the Royal Family of Perak, Malay Peninsula”. The Living Races of Mankind, vol. 1, p. 107. Photo by Leonard Wray (1852–1942). Perak, late 19th century. Smithsonian Institution Libraries [GN31 .H976 1902b].

This photograph was taken by Leonard Wray, curator of the Perak Museum, in Taiping, Malaysia. The three women wear similar types of jewellery, showing the shared taste and fashion of their social class during this period. One of them is identified as Raja Nuteh Aishah, daughter of the 27th and wife of the 28th Sultan of Perak.



R

Sumba Man

[photo]

Sumba man. Sumba Island, 1945–50. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands
[TM-33007260].

This ceremonial ensemble includes a head ornament (lamba), a pair of pendants (mamuli), and a sacred chain (kanatar). In Sumba, gold ornaments are considered masculine objects and often used to pay bride price. The most treasured objects become sacred heirlooms, and are believed to mediate between the living and the spirits of deceased ancestors. They are stored in the clan house and are rarely brought out, except on ceremonial occasions.

Heirloom ornaments are highly potent objects: if approached inappropriately, they are believed to

bring disaster or death. For fear of infringing a taboo, the nobles of East Sumba transfer the burden of wearing the jewellery to specially appointed slaves, such as the one in this image. By bearing the danger on their masters' behalf, these slaves become their substitutes in ritual.

Head ornament (lamba)

Sumba Island, early 20th century

Gold

1999-00216

The central sun-like motif is flanked by two panels, each depicting a human figure, a stylised horse or deer, a lobster, a fish, and a rooster. Crescent-shaped ornaments are found in many communities in the eastern islands of Indonesia. It is possible that they were introduced to Sumba by itinerant goldsmiths from Savu.

Pendants (mamuli)

Sumba Island, 19th century

Gold

GL-0050-B; Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng, 1997-04019

Each pendant features a pair of fighting cocks, symbolic of courage and nobility. Such pendants can be worn as an earring, on a necklace, or suspended from a head ornament. They are passed down as heirloom treasures and used for bride price payments.

Chain (kanatar)

Sumba Island, early or mid-20th century

Gold

1999-00215

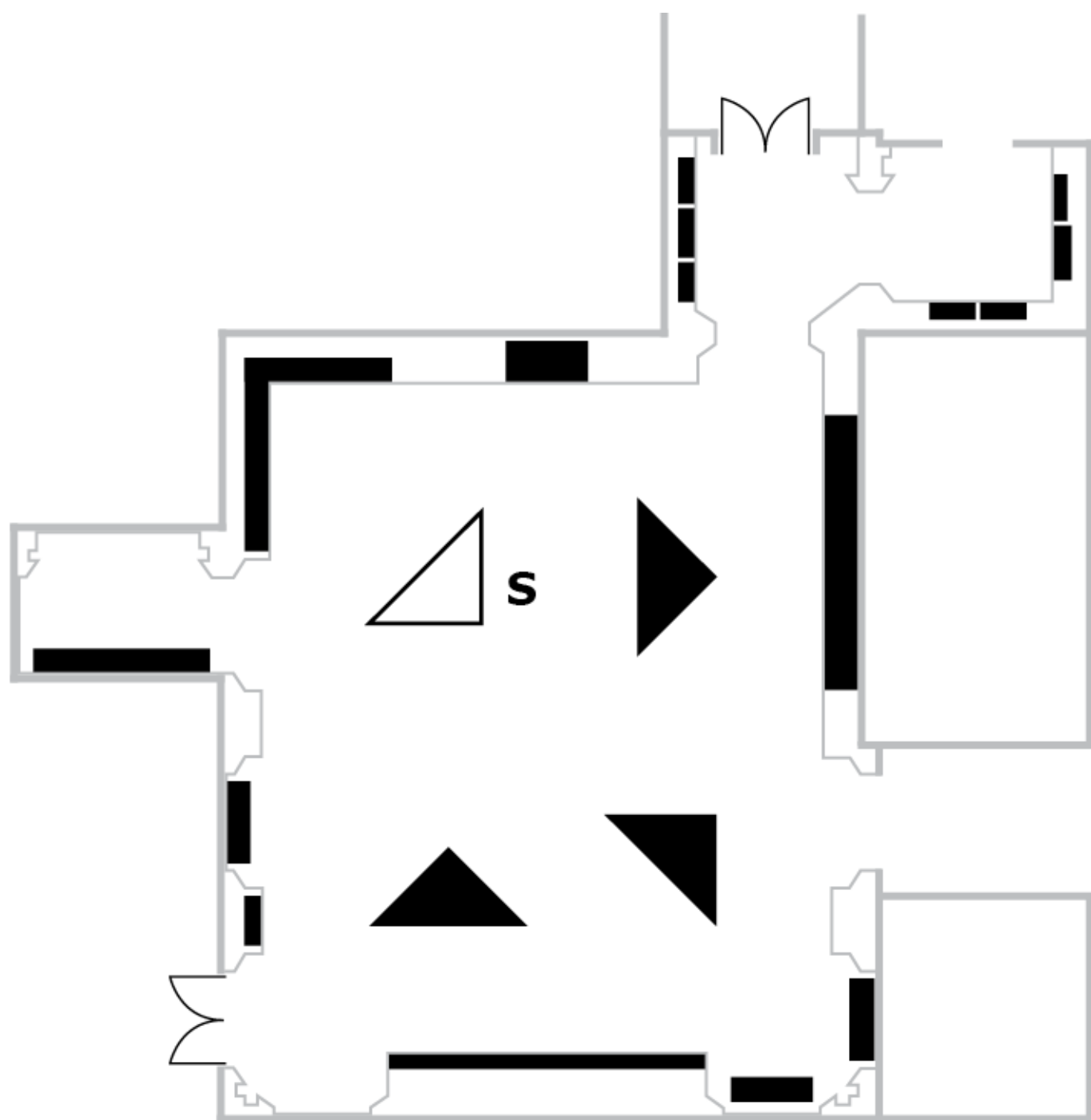
The flared ends of this chain represent the open mouths of mythical naga serpents. Each of them is further decorated with rooster heads and hanging fish-shaped tassels. As prestigious symbols of authority, these chains were owned only by members of the noble class.

[photo]

Sumba noble and attendants at a public ceremony. Sumba Island, 1945–50. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-33007260].

The man in the centre of the photograph is said to be Umbu Hapu Hambandina, who ruled over the domain of Rindi, East Sumba, from 1932 to

1960. He was also known as Umbu Kandunu ("The One Who Wears the Star"), for the Dutch decoration he often wore on his chest. He was the last fully ruling raja of Rindi: after his death, royal authority became symbolic, as the island transitioned to a republic of Indonesia. His slaves on each side wear heirloom jewellery, taking on the danger of wearing potent gold on their master's behalf.



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Toraja Woman

[photo]

Toraja Woman. Sulawesi, Messawa, around 1930. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-60028650].

This Toraja woman's ceremonial attire combines impressive gold ornaments with intricate beaded accessories.

The name "Toraja" applies to a number of ethnic groups in the highlands of southern and western Sulawesi. They long maintained a rich indigenous tradition known as "the way of the ancestors" (aluk to dolo). Jewellery was reserved for the higher ranks and worn on ceremonial occasions. Since the 20th century, the majority of the population has converted to Christianity, and only some traditional rituals persist today.

Headband

Sulawesi, late 19th or early 20th century

Glass beads, cotton

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04706

Colourful seed beads were used to form the geometric pattern on this headband. The Toraja did not participate in maritime trade, but they obtained large amounts of glass beads from the lowland Bugis and Makassar traders. Imported beads feature prominently in Toraja ritual life. They were worn by priests and dancers, attached to mourning capes, and hung at ceremonial sites.

Necklace

Sulawesi, early or mid-20th century

Gold, silver, wood, resin

1999-00228

These hollow, tubular beads are covered with granulation. They are found in varying sizes and are unique to the Toraja. They were worn by aristocratic women during rituals, and also placed on sacrificial animals at ceremonial feasts.

Bracelet (komba lola')

Sulawesi, late 19th or early 20th century

gold, silver, resin, glass beads

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00681

This magnificent bracelet has a heavy resin core, which is covered with gold and silver alloy sheets. Red glass beads are set in the vertical spikes along the rim. The name lola' applies to

two variants of the same ornament: the smaller komba ("bracelet") lola', worn by aristocratic women; and a larger one used to decorate sacrificial palanquins. These bracelets were signs of nobility and a source of pride for those who owned them.

Apron

Sulawesi, Tanah Toraja, early 20th century

Glass beads, cotton

Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng

1997-04708

Aprons like this were worn by noble women over their skirt. The long beaded fringe would sway with their steps. The motif of squared, interlocking scrolls (sekong) is popular in Toraja textiles and beadwork. It is an abstracted human figure that represents union with deceased ancestors.

[photo]

Group of Toraja women. Sulawesi, Messawa, around 1930. National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-60028650].

These women are probably dressed for an important ceremony. Each is wearing a necklace of tubular beads similar to the one in the ensemble.

[photo]

Group of Toraja men with a sacrificial boar.

Ir. H. Wolvekamp. Sulawesi, 1910–16.

National Museum of World Cultures, Netherlands [TM-60040828].

This photograph shows the use of similar ornaments for ritual purposes. The palanquin for a sacrificial boar is adorned with a pair of circular ornaments (lola') and a string of tubular beads, similar to those in the ensemble.

Headdress

Borneo, Kutai, 1920s

Gold

Gift of Mr Edmond Chin

2002-00563

This headdress was most likely worn by a woman of aristocratic status from the Islamic court of Kutai. The Garuda feature is an important Hindu-Buddhist symbol of royal authority.

From the Majapahit period onwards, Javanese ideas were absorbed into the coastal regions of Borneo and other neighbouring islands. Even after the conversion to Islam by the 16th century, Hindu-Buddhist ideas continued to influence the arts and cultures of these communities.