

# ACM WONDERS

Suitable for ages 13 and up

# ACM

## HARE

Handmade in China using clay, more than 2,000 years ago

### Background Information

Han dynasty tombs were created as miniature worlds to accompany the deceased into the afterlife. This ranged from making detailed models of architectural elements and houses, to providing sculptures of servants and soldiers for the deceased. Domesticated animals such as cattle, horses, pigs, chickens, and dogs were also included. The wealthier the person, the more abundant their tomb.

Hares tend to be larger than rabbits, with longer hind legs and ears. On this hare, the detailing of the eyes, nose, and feet are characteristic of other miniature animals excavated from Han dynasty tombs. This hare is probably from a tomb, but there is no direct evidence.

Daoist legends tell us about the immortality of the hare (or rabbit), and the story of how it lives with the Goddess of the Moon, Chang E, is especially popular. But not all hares found in Chinese art are linked to Daoist legends or the moon.

Earthenware, the material of this sculpture, was made from clay mined from places like river beds. After firing the clay in a kiln, earthenware objects are relatively soft and porous. The firing temperature is around 800 to 1100°C.



**Hare**  
Earthenware  
Asian Civilisations Museum  
2013-00567

# LET'S DISCOVER

Learn about the use of animals as symbols in China and across other cultures.

## FUN FACT

A popular Chinese legend features a rabbit that lives on the moon and uses a pestle and mortar to pound and mix the elixir of immortality. Different versions of the story appear in other cultures, in India, for example.

## GLOSSARY

**Daoism** – A Chinese philosophy based on the writings of Laozi.

**Mingqi** (冥器 or 明器) – “spirit objects”, are Chinese burial goods. They include daily utensils and figurines, such as horses, and people.

Produced by the Asian Civilisations Museum  
1 Empress Place Singapore 179555  
[www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg)  
© 2021 Asian Civilisations Museum

## LET'S LOOK CLOSELY

Use these guidelines to discover details about this object.

1. **LOOK** closely at the hare's position. How would you describe it? Why do you think this hare might have been included in a tomb?
2. In various cultures, the rabbit represents fertility and longevity. The rabbit is also one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. **SEARCH** online for other folktales on hares and rabbits. Which one is your favourite story and why?
3. **FIND** another object in the gallery that features the same animal, or search for “hare” on Roots.sg. How do you think the processes of making these two objects differ?

## CREATE AT HOME

Continue the experience at home by doing these activities. If you have a public account, don't forget to tag us @ACM\_SG.

4. What is the difference between a hare and a rabbit? **SKETCH** the two animals using basic shapes, then **LABEL** the differences and similarities between them.

**READ** up on their behaviours, diets, and habitats. Which one would you like to keep as a pet and why?