**Yixing Teapots from the Howard Kuo Collection**

September 9 – October 13, 2016

This exhibition is in conjunction with the Quincy Public Library’s NEA Big Read community events reflecting Chinese culture. This year’s book is "The Joy Luck Club" by Amy Tan.

This exhibition of Yixing teapots is generously on loan from the collection of Howard Kuo. Kuo has been collecting Yixing teapots since his youth while living in China and on his many trips back to China.

Yixing teapots are traditional Chinese wares, dating back to the 15th century, made from clay produced near [Yixing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yixing" \o "Yixing) in the eastern Chinese province of [Jiangsu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangsu). Yixing clay is if fact a mixture of the purple clay (from around Lake Tai), the green clay (from the mountains of Yixing) and red clay. The mixture is still a safely guarded secret.

Yixing teapots are small and tea is often brewed for only a few seconds before it is served to guests. The porous clay allows a bit of tea to be absorbed by the teapot. Over time, a blackish sheen develops on the inside of the teapot from the oils in the tea. This patina improves the overall taste of the tea. Only a rinse with hot water used to clean. If soap is used, all subsequent brews will taste of soap. This unique characteristic is also the reason why one Yixing teapot is used for only one type of tea. Otherwise, the flavors will overlap, creating an unpleasant taste. Chinese people traditionally drink from cups that hold less than 3 table spoons of liquid and are repeatedly filled so that they may cool rapidly but can be ingested before the tea becomes cold.

Yixing teapots can be made in very imaginative shapes; they are frequently found in the form of familiar objects such as bamboo, sections of tree trunks with applied foliage, nuts, fruits, and squash. Most wares are made by hand and not on a potter’s wheel. The clay is granular which makes it less suitable for forming on a potter’s wheel. Instead, the potter will flatten the clay by hand and press the clay into a mold. After removal from the mold, the potter will further sculpt the teapot into an individual shape.

All Yixing teapots are marked on the base with the potter’s name. This mark will sometimes show the name of the factory and include a Chinese poem.

Valenstein, S. G. (1989). *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art : Distributed by H.N. Abrams.