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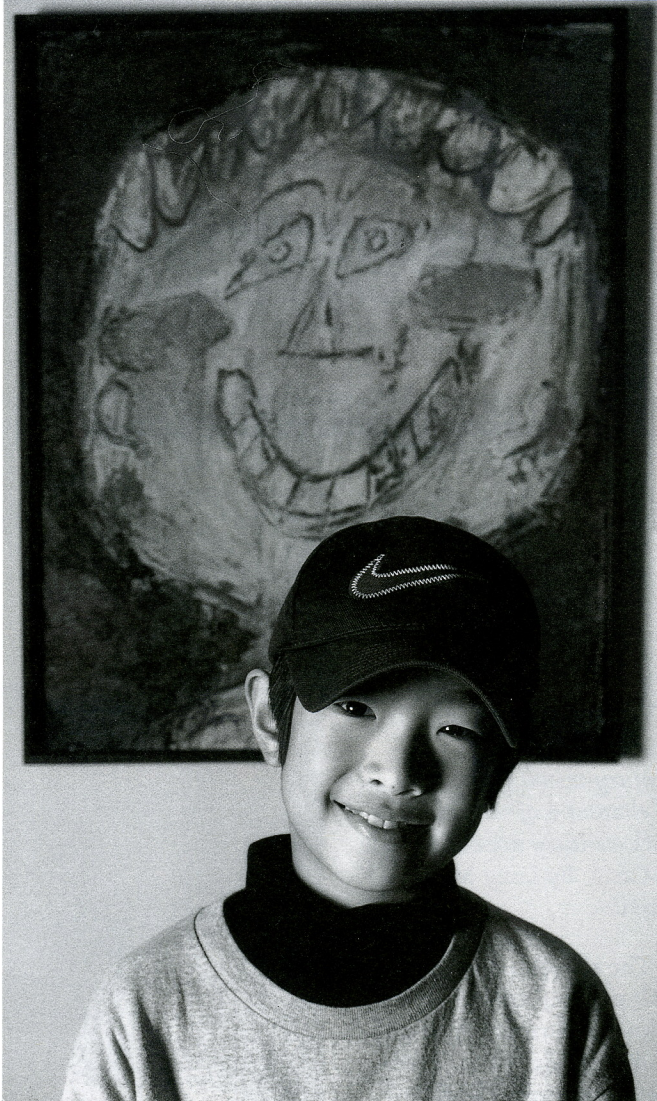
GEORGE ZHAO is ten years old and in the fifth grade at Cayuga Heights Elementary School. He likes math, reading, and playing the violin. He also enjoys designing his own Web pages.

La Bouche en croissant is an interesting piece of art done by Dubuffet. It is a very unrealistic piece of art of a man smiling. *La Bouche en croissant's* red background makes him look like he's popping right out of the canvas.

The reason I chose *La Bouche en croissant* is because I am a very big fan of abstract art, because abstract art resembles realistic things, but is more creative.

La Bouche en croissant is a very comical painting. When I think about the way it looks, it reminds me of the way my younger cousin draws. But with the bright colors and the creative design, it stands out from all the other paintings in that room.

When I first came to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, it caught my eyes immediately. It is the piece of art that I think is the most creative.



Jean Dubuffet
French, 1901–1985
La Bouche en croissant, 1948
Oil and sand on canvas
Gift of David M. Solinger,
Class of 1926

A MEMBER of the Cornell chemistry faculty for 32 years, ROALD HOFFMANN is the Frank H. T. Rhodes Professor of Humane Letters, a published poet, and a Nobel Prize-winning chemist. In the spring of 1993, he and Vivian Torrence presented their exhibition, *Chemistry Imagined*, at the Johnson Museum.

No better place to affirm old connections and make new ones than the Johnson

Museum. The beautiful Miyashita Zenji vase in the Asian Art collection is for me a rich nexus of such ties.

The story begins with a course by Donald Keene in Japanese literature in my Columbia College days. My interest in Japanese things was strengthened by visits to Japan and collaborations with several Japanese scientists. In 1981, on the occasion of our sharing the Nobel Prize in chemistry, Kenichi Fukui – my Kyoto colleague and friend – and his wife gave to me and my wife Eva a lovely bowl by Miyashita Zenju, a distinguished porcelain master and Zenji's father.

It was our first Japanese ceramic. Meanwhile, I had been getting to know Martie Young through our sons, who for a time were inseparable. Martie, the curator of Asian art at the Johnson, is of course responsible for the strength of our collections in this area. And he introduced us to Fred and Joan Baekeland, dealers in modern Japanese ceramics, and great friends of Cornell. Fred Baekeland is the grandson of the inventor of Bakelite, and himself was a scientist before turning to Asian and American art.

In time we met not only the senior Miyashita, but also his son Miyashita Zenji. Inspired by just this axe-head-shaped vase, we visited Zenji's workshop and kiln on the outskirts of Kyoto (and introduced him to a coworker of mine, who lived just a few houses away).



Miyashita Zenji
 Japanese, born 1939
 Vase, 1987
 Clay
 George and Mary Rockwell
 Collection

The Cornell vase is one of Miyashita Zenji's strongest pieces, combining his powerful sculptural sense with a unique colored clay technique. The pigments – cobalt and chromium compounds (much chemistry there!) – are mixed directly into the clay and applied in thin overlaying pieces. In the Johnson Museum vase I see a suggestion of a sun lost in the mists, above receding ranges of blue and green hills. I see the mountains around Kyoto, look out the window to our own hills, and am happy that the connection – so natural – is made at Cornell.

KUMI KORE, an artist who lives in Ithaca, is shown here with an 18th-century visual interpretation of chapter 6 of the classic 11th-century novel The Tale of Genji, by Lady Murasaki Shikibu.

The album leaves of the *Tale of Genji* owned by the Johnson Museum are dated to the middle of the seventeenth century. The fifty-four paired pages – a painted illustration of a scene from a chapter with an accompanying inscription, which is a short excerpt from that chapter – were exhibited as part of *The Tale of Genji: Splendor and Innovation in Edo Culture*. The scenes are painted with flat colors and the gold leafing adds interminable brightness. In contrast to these illustrations, the inscription pages are subtle, even though saturated with colors: reds, blues, various earth tones. When gold and silver are present, they

are used very discreetly – lines, speckles, washes.

When I first encountered these pages at the exhibition, I could only focus on the inscription pages. I was astonished to find *tableaux* so closely similar to my own choice of esthetics. (When they were new, they might have been less subtle, perhaps a bit closer to the brightness of the illustrations.) The presence I felt from these pages included 350 years of passing time, wear, fading, damage by moisture, and repairs. For me, these elements of passing time create additional interest.

The calligraphy of poetry and inscriptions of tales were often executed on embellished sheets of paper – painted, collaged, dyed, and sprinkled with gold and silver. Visually the calligraphy is woven into the fabric of colors, illustrative drawings of motifs, collages, and whatever the



Japanese, Edo Period
 (1615–1868)
Tale of Genji, Chapter 6:
Suestsumuhana (The Safflower)
 Album leaf; ink and colors with
 gold leaf on paper
 Gift of Dr. William E. Leistner