Exquisite Asian art shows need two viewings

By Diane Weddington

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY and Korean ceramics, though each the artistic best of the countries’ traditions, are jarring companions. It requires more than one trip to fully appreciate the two different exhibitions at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

Each deserves its own extensive visit, particularly in light of the outstanding explanatory labels richly informing viewers of the historical aesthetic traditions of each country and the significance of each piece in those traditions.

There is one common link, however. The entire collection of Chinese calligraphy in “The Elegant Gathering” has been given in trust to the museum by the Yeh family. Selected ceramic pieces of “From the Fire” will be donated by the artists to the museum once the exhibit has made its tour. These acquisitions continue to assure the Asian Art Museum will house one of the nation’s foremost collections.

Please see ASIAN, Living 5

REFLECTIONS: “The Ancient — Review of Nature” (2002) by Choi Nam Gil is a contemporary piece that follows Korea’s 5,000-year-old ceramics tradition.
Calligraphy, ceramics combine for breathtaking exhibit

If you go

"From the Fire" is a show we can't miss this fall. If you love pottery, this is the exhibit for you. The gallery is divided into three areas: the "History of Chinese Ceramics," and an "Ages of Contemporary Ceramics." The ceramics are all displayed in small panels, and in the catalogue available in the museum bookstore.

Religious use of nature

The first group includes 21 artists who worked with the traditions of the Chinese potters, white porcelain, and colorful glazes. These pieces reflect the themes and techniques of the traditional potters, who use earth, water, and fire to create their works. The second group includes 21 artists who use porcelain as a medium, white porcelain, and colorful glazes. These pieces reflect the themes and techniques of the traditional potters, who use earth, water, and fire to create their works.

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