Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands

# Abstract

The Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (KVVAK) is a collectors society that has established a large collection of Asian art over time. Since 1952, KVVAK's collection is displayed at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

## History

The Royal Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (KVVAK) was founded on 29 June 1918 and has held the designation "Royal" since 2018. The association was founded by the engineer H.F.E. Visser (1890-1965) and the collector and art dealer G.J. Verburgt (1871-1926), with the aim of raising awareness of and interest in Asian art and promoting scholarship in the field. The association's first president was H.K. Westendorp (1868-1941), who would later bequeath his own collection to the KVVAK. The association's collection currently comprises around 1,850 objects, consisting of various art forms such as sculptures, Japanese prints and ceramics.

After several temporary exhibitions it was decided in 1928, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the KVVAK, to establish a fund which the association could use to acquire its own collection and establish a museum. In 1932 the so-called Museum of Asian Art was opened in the Tuinzaal of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. In 1952 the collection was moved to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, where it is still on display. The KVVAK collection was initially exhibited in the Druckeruitbouw, which later became part of the current Philips Wing. After the major renovation of the Rijksmuseum in 2013 the KVVAK collection was housed in the Asian Pavilion (http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q37769044). In addition to maintaining its own collection the KVVAK organises activities including lectures and trips. It also produces the magazine Aziatische Kunst, which is published by De Gruyter Brill.

## Provenance research

The archive of the KVVAK is in the custody of the Rijksmuseum. To consult the archive, you need to contact the Rijksmuseum's collections department. In addition the Rijksmuseum research library has a collection of publications, including catalogues of past exhibitions, which are of interest for provenance research into the KVVAK collection.

Not all of the Asian art collection in the Rijksmuseum is on loan from the KVVAK; the museum also has Asian artefacts of its own. Most of the KVVAK objects are labelled ‘AK-MAK’ although a few prints are labelled ‘RP’. For the best overview of the KVVAK collection, please visit the association's website.

# Related Aids

* The trade in objects from a colonial context
* Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

# Primary sources

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 NL-HaNA 2.27.19 2934  
 \_Records concerning the approval of loan agreements of objects between the Rijksmuseum and the Asian Art Society in the Netherlands, 1970 - 1971.\_   
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Archive:  
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 \_This article examines the history and provenance of a group of twelve stone statues from Java. All twelve are Hindu-Buddhist images from the Central Java period from the eighth to the tenth century AD. The statues were purchased by the Royal Asian Art Society in 1932.\_  
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 \_A catalogue containing objects acquired in the first 60 years of the KVVAK.\_  
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# Relevant Data

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