Arts of China exhibit opens here this week

As the exhibit "The Great Bronze Age of China" at Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum draws to a close, a UTD display will offer the opportunity to view a wide range of the Chinese art and craftsmanship which followed the Bronze Age.

"Arts of China," which will be on display Feb. 10 through March 3 at UTD, will include more than 40 items from Dallas private art collections representing a wide cross-section of period styles, with emphasis on the late imperial period.

The display is expected to include 20 monochrome and painted porcelains, a dozen jade pieces (such as art objects, bowls and vases), about 10 paintings from the traditional to the modern and even contemporary periods, craftworks including embroidered shoes and garment materials, and works in bronze and rock crystal. It is funded by a grant from the Texas China Council.

(see EXHIBIT on p. 4)
Exhibit features porcelains, jades

Judith Whitbeck, UTD professor of art history who organized the exhibit, emphasized its breadth, noting that the display will include items "from throughout Chinese history during the 2,000 years following China's Great Bronze Age, but with concentration on those from more recent centuries.

"If you have seen the display at the Kimbell and want to enrich your understanding of Chinese arts, you will find this an opportunity to see a continuation of those bronze forms in other media as well as a whole range of other types of Chinese artwork," said Whitbeck. "Even if you don't see the Kimbell exhibit," she added, "you might find this show an opportunity to increase your understanding of Chinese culture through some of its arts."

The exhibit at UT-Dallas will feature paintings, porcelains and jades. "Such art objects have been at the center of China's artistic tradition for the past two millenia," Whitbeck noted.

While discussing the particular features of each category of items in the exhibit, she pointed out, "In the range of colors available in monochrome wares, those produced during the 17th century, such as some of those we'll have, represented perhaps the height of that art form.

Chinese fascination with the art of their ancient bronze vessels also is vividly illustrated in the exhibit. Many of the jades, of which we'll have some fine examples, are modeled on the earlier bronzes or are decorated with motifs and shapes commonly found on bronzes.

"Several of the paintings are landscapes from the late Imperial period, a time when the 'gentleman-scholar' dictated aesthetic taste. These paintings are significant because they illustrate both continuities with earlier traditions and the new emphasis on artistic individuality. Landscape painting, in fact, was already a well-established art form in China centuries before it developed in Europe."

"Our exhibit also will include paintings of birds and flowers and figure paintings."

The exhibit will be open to the public at no charge Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Sundays from 2-5 p.m. in the Special Collections area on the third floor of UTD's Eugene McDermott Library.