



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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NEW CLEVELAND INDIAN ARRIVES AT THE CMA

New Painting by Kitaj, Greek Antiquities, Chinese Calligraphy, and Goya Print Among Works Acquired for the Museum's Permanent Collection

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Museum of Art has acquired *The Cleveland Indian*, a near-life-size oil painting on canvas by acclaimed contemporary artist and Cleveland native R.B. Kitaj (pronounced KEE-TIE). This painting is joined by eleven additional works including a masterwork by John Singer Sargent (see separate release on Sargent painting), two ancient Greek statuettes, a fourteen-foot high Chinese calligraphy, a vivid Japanese painting, four rare photographs, and a lithograph by Goya. The group of newly acquired works goes on view this Friday in the museum's recent acquisitions gallery, where the works will remain for about three months. Admission to the museum is free.

In announcing these acquisitions, Director Robert P. Bergman said: "This is an exceptionally strong group of acquisitions for our museum's permanent collection, offering a wide variety of periods, media and subject matter. The Kitaj painting is not only one of the newest works in our collection, created by one of the most important contemporary artists of our time, its subject of the Cleveland baseball player is one that is near and dear to our community. The 7th-century B.C. Greek *Kriophoros*, a figurine of a man bearing a ram, is one the earliest of its kind. And we are delighted to be adding two very important Asian objects to the collection: the fourteen-foot high Chinese calligraphy scroll, and a fabulous 19th-century Japanese painting of a classical Chinese romance."

The Cleveland Indian was begun in 1995 and completed this year by important contemporary artist, R.B. Kitaj (1932-) — a Clevelander, who began his artistic training in children's classes at the Cleveland Museum of Art. An avid baseball fan, Kitaj began this work when the Indians won the American League pennant in 1995. "Although the

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painting depicts a solitary figure, it is not meant to be a portrait of specific player, but to refer to the team and its players in a general way," said Tom Hinson, curator of contemporary art and photography. The posture of *The Cleveland Indian* is inspired by the batter in the small 1875 watercolor by Thomas Eakins, *Baseball Players, Practising* (Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence). *The Cleveland Indian* was a gift of Agnes Gund. It will join Kitaj's canvas, *The Garden* (1981), enabling the museum to represent a second major aspect of his work, the human figure.

Poem on Imperial Gift of an Embroidered Silk: Calligraphy in Running Style (about 1535) is an impressive hanging scroll by Wen Zhengming, a lowly official, but an acclaimed master of calligraphy and painting during the Ming dynasty, 1368-1644. The scroll was an expression of gratitude to Emperor Jiazhong (1522-1566) for a gift, presumably given in appreciation for Wen Zhengming's meritorious work. The calligraphy is undated, though circumstantial evidence indicates that 1522 is the likely year for its execution. The style is based on the "running" script, which is noted for its tendency to simplify the characters and to fuse the strokes. "It is unquestionable that inspired by his stay in the capital, Wen Zhengming for a time was indulging himself in grand gesture. Neither before nor after could we find works of similar monumentality and magnitude," according to Ju-hsi Chou, CMA's curator of Chinese art. There are only two other surviving works by Wen Zhengming, which share the same scale and courtly circumstances. One is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei and the other in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Acquisition of Wen Zhengming's monumental calligraphy scroll will bring the museum its first major work expressly devoted to the calligrapher's art and will enhance the Chinese collection in an essential way," said Dr. Chou.

During the Greek Geometric period (ca. 900-700 B.C.), several regional workshops produced quantities of cast bronze horse statuettes. They were one of the most popular dedications at Greek sanctuaries. The cast bronze *Statuette of a Horse* was created in a Corinthian workshop in the 8th century B.C. Approximately 60 examples are known to have survived from this particular workshop. "Among this group, the statuette is one of the most outstanding in quality, size, and state of preservation," said Michael Bennett, associate curator for Greek and Roman art. At 11.5 cm, it is among the largest Corinthian horses and is also completely intact. The newly acquired *Kriophoros* is a painted terracotta statuette, depicting a warrior carrying a ram across his shoulders. The statuette was probably made on the island of Crete during the second half of the 7th century B.C. In Greek art, a *kriophoros* (trans. "ram bearer") is usually a shepherd, making this terracotta unique because of its presentation of a warrior. It is one of the earliest sculptural representations of this type, according to

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Dr. Bennett. "The terracotta *Kriophoros* is significant both as a powerful work of art, and as a rare anthropological document of the society of early Greece. It is perhaps the finest and most important terracotta sculpture to have survived from 7th century B.C. Crete, opening new avenues for research and study," said Dr. Bennett.

Operating on Guanyu's Arm is a large (55 1/4 x 26 7/8 inches) hanging scroll from Japan's Edo period (1615-1868). It was created by Katsushika Oi, daughter of Katsushika Hokusai (the best-known Japanese artist in the Western world). In vivid detail, it portrays a legendary Chinese military leader undergoing a bloodletting to remove poisons from an arrow wound while engaged in a board game of *go* (akin to chess). According to Michael R. Cunningham, curator of Japanese and Korean Art, "It is regarded not only as Oi's signature work, but as one of the landmarks of 19th-century *ukiyo-e* painting."

Also added to the collection is a rare lithograph by legendary Spanish artist Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828). *Woman Reading to Two Children* (about 1824) is an unusual subject for Goya. According to Jane Glaubinger, CMA curator of prints, "Goya exploited every technical means at his disposal, and for this print he worked directly on the lithographic stone, using a scraper to obtain highlights and model the dark area. The charming, intimate domestic scene is different from the subjects of Goya's other prints which depict bullfights, or the horror of war and famine, or satirized Spanish life." This is one of only eight known impressions of the print.

Other objects acquired for the museum include:

— A large, Nara period (8th century) storage jar whose shape and decor prompt comparison with similarly detailed Korean stoneware. Its excellent condition, impressive size, and surface decoration make it a significant addition to CMA's collection of early Japanese ceramics.

— Four photographs including *Duchess of Windsor*, a 1948 gelatin silver print by Irving Penn, one of the major portraitists of the postwar era. It is CMA's first vintage print by Penn, joining his image of Colette from 1951. Three early French photographs were also added: *Artist (or Assistant) with Pips* (1853-57) by Frank Chauvassaignes; *Battery, Malakoff* (1855), by Leon-Eugene Mehedin and Col. Jean-Charles Langlois; and *Courtyard with Painters* (late 1860s) by an unidentified photographer.

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