

# DENVER ART MUSEUM

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NEWS FROM THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

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## The Denver Art Museum Collections

Since its founding in 1893, the Denver Art Museum (DAM) has amassed more than 70,000 works of art, one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of world art between Chicago and the West Coast. Internationally known for its holdings of American Indian art, the museum has also assembled an extensive group of pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial art objects now considered one of the finest collections in the world. Other areas of concentration are European and American painting and sculpture, architecture, design and graphics, modern and contemporary, Asian, African, Oceanic, photography, western American and textile art and fashion.

### Architecture, Design and Graphics

The architecture, design and graphics collection features modern and contemporary architecture, furniture, industrial and graphic design, and showcases designers and movements from this period. Also in the collection are works from the Middle Ages to the 1900s that represent major developments in style, form, material and technique in European and North American furniture and decorative arts.

The collection also includes the [AIGA Design Archives](#) at the DAM, comprising approximately 12,000 examples of communication design created from about 1980 to 2012. This collection includes work from all disciplines of communication design—packaging, corporate communications, brand and identity systems, editorial design and illustration and experience design, among others. The materials reflect major design trends as well as many of the leading design firms and individual designers practicing during this period.

### Asian Art

The DAM's Asian art collection originated in 1915 with a donation of Chinese and Japanese art objects from a single passionate collector and has broadened to include works from the entire Asian continent. Spanning a period from the fourth millennium B.C. to the present, these objects illustrate the wide-ranging achievements of Asian artists and artisans. Reflecting the rich diversity and wide-ranging artistic expression of a complex and expansive area of the world, Asian art in the museum's collection includes outstanding ceramics, furniture, metalwork, painting and sculpture from the Near and Middle East, India, Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan and Korea, as well as exemplary items of material culture, such as samurai armor, Indonesian puppets and Chinese court robes.

### Modern and Contemporary Art

Renowned for its impressive collection of modern masterworks and outstanding contemporary objects, the modern and contemporary collection represents more than a century of artistic innovation. Encompassing over 12,500 works made since 1900, the museum's collection includes works by such artistic luminaries as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Henri Matisse and Georgia O'Keeffe, as well as 33 paintings, drawings and collages by the acclaimed

abstract-expressionist Robert Motherwell. The collection also holds representative works from the major post-war art movements, including abstract expressionism, minimalism, pop art, conceptual art, and contemporary realism. It is also home to the Herbert Bayer Collection and Archive, a repository that counts over 8,000 objects in its collection.

## **Native Arts Department**

The Native Arts Department is composed of the arts of the indigenous peoples of North America, Africa and Oceania.

### *African Art*

The African art collection consists of approximately 1,000 objects—older works and new ones by contemporary artists. Focused on the diverse artistic traditions of Africa, it includes rare and exquisite works in sculpture, textiles, jewelry, painting, printmaking and drawings. Although the strength of the collection is west African art, with emphasis on Yoruba works, there are important masterpieces from all regions and mediums of expression including wood, metals, fibers, terra cotta and mixed media compositions.

### *American Indian Art*

The American Indian art collection represents the artistic works of nearly every tribe across the United States and Canada and all artistic traditions created within these cultures from prehistoric times to the present. It offers visitors the opportunity to experience the artistic vision of generations of American Indian artists from across North America. From ancient puebloan ceramics, to 19th century Arapaho beaded garments, to contemporary glasswork, the collection offers a rich diversity of art forms, histories and artistic styles coming from American Indian artists and communities. The collection helps illustrate that American Indian art is a vibrant and continuing tradition advanced by individual artists and craftspersons.

### *Oceanic Art*

The Oceanic art collection includes an array of art forms from the South Pacific region and is especially strong in art from the geographic regions of Melanesia and Polynesia. A gift of art from New Guinea established the DAM as one of the most important repositories of Melanesian art in the country. This collection of more than 1,000 pieces includes important historic monumental sculpture, delicate bark cloth, intricate wood carvings and the work of contemporary artists such as Mathias Kauage and Laben Sakale.

## **New World Department**

From South America to the American Southwest, the museum's New World collection encompasses the ancient Latin American world and Spain's historical "New World" empire.

### *Pre-Columbian Art*

The DAM's pre-Columbian collection represents nearly every major culture in Mesoamerica, Central America and South America. Included are masterworks in ceramic, stone, gold, jade and textiles.

### *Spanish Colonial Art*

Notable for its cultural and temporal range and artistic quality, the Spanish Colonial collection of the DAM is the most comprehensive collection in the United States and one of the best in the world. Spanning three and a half centuries (c. 1492-1850), the collection of more than 3,000 objects represents the diverse cultures and geographic areas of Latin America including Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentine, Chile and the southwestern United States.

## **Painting and Sculpture**

The department of painting and sculpture oversees the European art collection before 1900 and the American art collection before 1945. Together they include more than 3,000 artworks and are composed of painting, sculpture, and prints, with notable concentrations in early Italian Renaissance and 19th century French painting. Highlights of European art include distinguished works by Carlo Crivelli, Paolo Veronese, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The American art holdings include works by Winslow Homer and Robert Henri, and significant sculptures by Thomas Crawford, Hiram Powers and Herbert Haseltine.

The department also curates the internationally renowned [Berger Collection](#) of mostly British paintings, drawings and medieval works of art, as well as a significant collection of predominantly French 18th and 19th century drawings on long-term loan to the museum by a private collector.

## **Petrie Institute of Western American Art**

The Petrie Institute of Western American Art (PIWAA) governs the western American art collection, which encompasses both historical Western art as well as modern and contemporary works capturing the spirit of the American West. Additionally, PIWAA promotes scholarship in the field through exhibitions, annual symposia and publications.

## **Photography**

This collection is noted for its extensive holdings of 19th century work, particularly of the American West, including the Wolf Collection of 19th century American landscape photography and Native American portraits by Edward Curtis, Alexander Gardner and David Francis Barry. Collectively, the museum's works of early photography reflect both the achievements of the medium's outstanding practitioners and the shifting environmental attitudes of 19th century Americans. The collection also includes European and American modernist photography. The department seeks to develop holdings of work by emerging talents as well as established photographers and artists who live and work in the western United States.

## **Textile Art and Fashion**

The department of textile art and fashion encompasses over 5,000 objects from Asia, Europe, North and South America, and range from Coptic and pre-Columbian textiles to contemporary works of art in fiber. It includes the Charlotte Hill Grant Collection of Chinese Court Costumes, the Julia Wolf Glasser collection of samplers and a nationally recognized collection of American quilts and coverlets. Since bringing on a new curator in fall 2015, the museum has been developing a strategic approach aimed at expanding the current holdings to include costume and fashion of the 20th and 21st centuries.

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