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MEDIA CONTACTS: Shadia Lemus, 720-913-0096
slemus@denverartmuseum.org
Elle Welch, 720-913-0079
ewelch@denverartmuseum.org

Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection will Illuminate Japan’s Legendary Warriors
2016 exhibition illustrates the artistic evolution of the samurai

DENVER – July 30, 2015 -- The Denver Art Museum (DAM) will present Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection March 6, 2016 through June 5, 2016. The Samurai Collection of Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller is one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of Japanese samurai armor and accoutrements in the world, exploring the life, culture and pageantry of the samurai from the 12th through the 19th centuries. The exhibition tells the iconic story of the samurai through 140 objects, showcasing items of folklore, religion, nature and foreign influences.

Samurai demonstrates the duality of peace and war, as well as the beauty and artistic inspiration behind the elaborate suits of armor. Samurai war regalia, including 20 full suits of armor, helmets (kabuto), face guards (mengu), weapons, horse trappings, and additional battle gear were heavily used in the Kamakura (1185–1333), Nanbokuchō (1333—1392), Muromachi (1392–1573), Momoyama (1573–1615) and Edo (1615–1868) periods, and will be on display at the DAM.

“At the Denver Art Museum, we are fortunate to be able to offer the experience of exploring many different cultures under one roof,” said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director at the DAM. “The historic culture of the Japanese samurai offers visitors a rich experience to gain a deeper understanding of a history that includes emperors, warlords, shoguns and the art of the samurai.”
Masterful craftsmanship will be highlighted through exquisitely decorated suits of armor such as the Mogamidō tōsei gusoku (armor), Hōrai Kunichiha (helmet), and Myōchin Muneaki (mask) made of iron, lacquer, shakudō, gold, silver, copper, bronze, silk and leather. These detailed, functional and ornate suits often required many months of careful craftsmanship to complete. Samurai regalia from the late Muromachi and Momoyama period, including the skillfully crafted Eboshi kabuto (helmet) and menpō (half mask), made of iron, lacquer, gold, bronze, horn and horsehair, represent armor used for warfare purposes.

Samurai will incorporate captivating large-scale murals, lighting and spirited sounds to create an immersive exhibition experience. The exhibition begins with an epic battle scene featuring full-scale samurai on horseback, elements that encourage slow-looking at the details of war regalia, a special area highlighting the armorers’ workshop and remarkable craftsmanship, and a final section dedicated to the identity, power and inspiration behind samurai armor.

“Standing face-to-face with one of these incredible suits gives you the feeling of pure awe and wonder, knowing a real samurai once wore the armor,” said Danielle St. Peter, experience and interpretation specialist at the DAM. “Interactive opportunities in the exhibition will add to the marvel of the legendary samurai.”

The exhibition is curated in collaboration with the DAM and The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection. The Barbier-Muellers have collected samurai armor for more than two decades and their admiration for these objects led to the creation of the Museum in Dallas.

Samurai is a traveling exhibition that has previously been on view at the Los Angeles County of Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, the Portland Art Museum, the Musée de la civilisation in Québec and the musée du quai Branly in Paris.

The exhibition will be on view in the Anschutz Gallery on level two of the Hamilton Building. Samurai will be a ticketed exhibition. DAM members receive the best ticket prices; tickets for Samurai will go on sale in early 2016.

Exhibition Catalog
Samurai is accompanied by a richly illustrated 360-page catalog, Art of Armor, Samurai Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection, which will be available in The Shop at the DAM. The catalog offers a look into the world of the samurai and highlights thought-provoking topics such as the phenomenon of the warrior in Japan, women in samurai culture, the development of the helmet and Japanese horse armor. The final section consists of an extensive review of objects, concentrating on 120 significant works in the collection, which include full suits of armor, helmets, masks, horse armor and weaponry masterpieces.
Exhibition Sponsors
Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection is organized by The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum, Dallas. Local support is provided by the generous donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. Promotional support is provided by 5280 Magazine, CBS4 Comcast Spotlight and The Denver Post.

Exhibition Programming
An array of programs will be offered to deepen the visitors’ knowledge of the samurai, including programming for school tours, lectures and more. For more information on the exhibition or special programming, visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

Media Resources
Online Newsroom: www.denverartmuseum.org/press
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About The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection
The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection has been selectively amassed by Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller and their children over the past twenty five years. The museum is located in Dallas’ district of Harwood at the historic St. Ann’s School. Centuries of craftsmanship are represented in the collection, with objects dating from the 7th to 19th centuries. Samurai masterpieces, including suits of armor, helmets, masks, horse armor and weaponry, are on display in the museum, traveling exhibition and the lobbies of Harwood International developments. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, please visit www.samuraicollection.org.

About The Denver Art Museum
The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

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