

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Winter/Spring Schedule 2018



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Image credit: *Woman's robe (munisak)*; Central Asia, 1850–99; wool, cotton, and silk; Gift of Guido Goldman, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S2005.16

To Dye For: Ikats from Central Asia

March 24–July 29, 2018

With their brilliant designs, ikats are among the most distinct fabrics produced in Central Asia. The name, derived from the Malaysian word for “to tie,” refers to the distinct technique of making these textiles: bundles of threads are painstakingly patterned by repeated binding and dyeing before being woven. In present-day Uzbekistan and the Fergana Valley, the fabric is known as *abri* (cloud) and the technique as *abrbandi* (tying clouds), referring to the fluid yet bold motifs in bright colors.

Not surprisingly, ikats caught the attention of contemporary designers, most notably Oscar de la Renta (died 2014). In 2005, de la Renta included ikat designs in his collections, an innovation that was soon followed by other designers in the United States and elsewhere. Since then, ikat motifs have become ubiquitous—from couture gowns to jeans and T-shirts, and from carpets and sofa coverings to stationery and wallpaper.

To Dye For: Ikats from Central Asia brings together about thirty of the finest historical Central Asian ikat hangings and coats from the Freer | Sackler collections, donated by Guido Goldman, as well as seven of Oscar de la Renta’s iconic creations. The aim is to explore the original use and function of these dazzling fabrics and the enduring appeal of their extraordinary designs.

FREER | SACKLER



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The Prince and the Shah: Royal Portraits from Qajar Iran

February 24–August 5, 2018

Resources: [exhibition website](#)

In our age of social media and selfies, it may be difficult to grasp the importance of painted portraits and studio photographs in nineteenth-century Iran. During this time, known as the Qajar era, rulers such as Fath-Ali Shah (reigned 1797–1834), a contemporary of Napoleon, and Nasir al-Din Shah (reigned 1848–96), a contemporary of Queen Victoria, used portraiture to convey monarchical power and dynastic grandeur. Through a selection of about thirty works from the Freer and Sackler collections, which include recent major gifts and acquisitions, this exhibition explores how Persian artists transformed modes of representing royalty and nobility. Paintings on canvas, lacquerwares, and photographs also highlight Iran's complex artistic and cultural interactions with the West as European conventions and new technologies were being introduced.

Portrait of Jalal al-Din Mirza (ca. 1827–1872), son of Fath-Ali Shah; attributed to Abu'l-Hasan Ghaffari, Sani' al-Mulk (ca. 1814–1866); Iran, probably Tehran, dated Shawwal AH 1275 (May 1859); oil on canvas; Purchase—Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S2016.9a–b

ONGOING EXHIBITIONS IN THE SACKLER



Secrets of the Lacquer Buddha

Through June 10, 2018

Resources: [press release](#); [images](#)

Secrets of the Lacquer Buddha unites the only sixth- and seventh-century, life-size Chinese lacquer buddha sculptures known: one from the Walters Art Museum, one from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and one from the Freer Gallery of Art. They have never been exhibited together before.

The exhibition explores how the sculptures were made, giving new insights into these deceptively simple objects. It also highlights how science can contribute to understanding art. The Freer | Sackler Department of Conservation and Scientific Research's experts used specialized equipment and new methods to analyze the sculptures, exposing microscopic details. Find out what tree species the lacquer came from, what type of burnt bone was mixed in, and other unexpected discoveries.

Buddha; China, Tang dynasty (618–907), early 7th century; hollow-core lacquer with pigment and gilding; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1944.46



Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice across Asia

Through November 29, 2020

Resources: [press release](#); [images](#)

Visitors can step into a Tibetan Buddhist shrine, linger at a Sri Lankan stupa, travel with an eighth-century Korean monk, and discover remarkable objects in *Encountering the Buddha*. The exhibition draws upon the museums' collections of Buddhist art from Afghanistan, India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan. By exploring new narratives and technologies, *Encountering the Buddha* invites visitors to reconsider Buddhist practices and concepts of beauty.

Detail, The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection; photograph: 2010; objects: Tibet, China, and Mongolia, 13th–20th century; mixed media; gifts and promised gifts from the Alice S. Kandell Collection



Resound: Ancient Bells of China

Through mid-2020

Resources: [press release](#); [images](#)

The Sackler Gallery holds an unrivaled collection of ancient Chinese bells, including six bells of different sizes from the same set. In *Resound*, modern technology allows visitors to “play” these bells cast in the Bronze Age, explore music and sound theory, and listen to contemporary compositions that were written for the ancient set and were specially commissioned for this exhibition.

Bell (*bo*) with birds and dragons, from a set of four, China, Shanxi province, State of Jin, Houma foundry, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 500–450 BCE, Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1941.9; Two bells (*bo*) with felines and dragons, possibly from a set of four, North China, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 550–500 BCE, Gift of Arthur M. Sackler, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1987.274, 307; Bell (*bo*) with felines and dragons, China, Shanxi province, State of Jin, Houma foundry, Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, ca. 550–500 BCE, Gift of Arthur M. Sackler, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1987.282



Subodh Gupta: Terminal

Through 2018

Resources: [press release](#); [images](#)

Internationally acclaimed artist Subodh Gupta transforms familiar household objects, such as stainless steel and brass vessels often found in India, into wondrous structures. The Freer | Sackler features the artist's monumental installation *Terminal*. Composed of towers of brass containers connected by an intricate web of thread, *Terminal* converts the readymade into a glimmering landscape. Ranging from one to fifteen feet tall, the spires recall architectural features found on religious structures such as churches, temples, and mosques.

Image courtesy Hauser & Wirth Gallery

ONGOING EXHIBITIONS IN THE FREER



A Perfect Harmony

Ongoing

Juxtaposing American and Asian art is a legacy of the founder of our museum, Detroit industrialist Charles Lang Freer. He believed in a universal language of beauty that resonated across time, space, and cultural diversity.

Freer's taste in American art was formed in the Gilded Age, but he favored refinement over ostentation. In the 1890s, works by Dewing, Tryon, Thayer, and especially Whistler were admired—and sometimes criticized—as highly refined works intended for connoisseurs. By focusing on a small group of stylistically similar artists, Freer ensured the paintings in his collection “speak” to one another and reward repeated viewing by revealing “new beauties.” Look, and look again, to appreciate shared aesthetic harmonies and subtle differences.

Freer disdained the avant garde abstraction that transformed American art after World War I. He forbade additions to his American collection after his death in 1919, and it remains a time capsule of Gilded Age aestheticism. Nevertheless, it was through American art of his own time that Freer developed the habits of quiet contemplation and intelligent comparison that he hoped to share with future generations of museum visitors.

Breakfast in the Loggia; John Singer Sargent (1856–1925); 1910; oil on canvas; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art. F1917.182



The Peacock Room Comes to America

Ongoing

Before the Peacock Room became a work of art by James McNeill Whistler, it was the dining room in the London mansion of Frederick Leyland. Its shelves were designed to showcase the British shipping magnate's collection of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain. Whistler completely redecorated the room in 1876 and 1877 as a “harmony in blue and gold.” Leyland was far from pleased with the transformation and the artist's fee. He quarrelled with Whistler, but he kept the room intact.

Charles Lang Freer purchased the room in 1904. He had it taken apart, shipped across the Atlantic, and reassembled in his home in Detroit, Michigan. There, he gradually filled its shelves with ceramics collected from Syria, Iran, Japan, China, and Korea. For Freer, the Peacock Room embodied his belief that “all works of art go together, whatever their period.”

Whistler's extravagant interior has been on permanent display since the Freer Gallery of Art opened in 1923. Located between galleries of Chinese and American art, the Peacock Room remains a place where Asia meets America.

Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room; James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903); 1876–77; oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, leather, mosaic tile, and wood; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1904.61



Engaging the Senses

Ongoing

As our experiences become increasingly mediated by digital technologies, direct sensory perception and appreciation of the world have become all the more important. The sound of a voice, the glimpse of a painting, the taste of food, the touch of fabric, the scent of a flower—all stimulate the senses. According to classical and Arab philosophy, the five outer senses—sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell—are directly connected to the inner senses that define us as human beings: understanding, imagination, and memory.

Some works, such as manuscripts of the Qur'an, were made in the service of the faith and were frequently recited and viewed in public. Other creations were intended for personal enjoyment and contemplation. As artists, objects, and ideas moved across the Islamic world—a vast geographic span from Morocco and Spain to the islands of Southeast Asia—certain formal and sensory features spread across borders. Still, every region, province, and even city developed its own artistic language with rich sensory resonances, many of which are explored in these galleries.

Bowl; eastern Iran, Samanid period, 10th century; earthenware painted under glaze; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1957.24



Looking Out, Looking In

Ongoing

Many of the powerful emperors of China's last dynasties—the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912)—were patrons, collectors, and casual practitioners of the arts. They used art to legitimize and glorify their rule. It served many functions: for state rituals, for expressing piety, to dazzle palace visitors, to build diplomatic relations, and for personal pleasure.

The emperors' officials oversaw the palace painting academy, imperial porcelain factory, and numerous other workshops. Their artists creatively reworked earlier traditions, which bolstered the emperors' legitimacy by showing their command of China's long history.

Many emperors supported international trade with Japan and Korea, Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, and the Indian subcontinent as well as the Islamic world and Europe. These exchanges helped shape the development of Chinese art, especially in the early fifteenth-century and eighteenth-century courts emphasized in this gallery.

While the Ming and Qing courts followed many of the same practices in government and art, the Ming emperors were native Chinese, and the Qing rulers were not. Heirs of Manchu chieftains who swept into China on horseback from the north, the Qing emperors embraced all things Chinese, but also steadfastly maintained their own traditions.

Dish with copper-red glaze; China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen, Ming dynasty, Xuande mark and period (1426–35); porcelain with copper-red glaze; on the base, a six-character cobalt-oxide (blue) reign mark under colorless glaze; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment and Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Freer Gallery of Art, F2015.2



Setting the Bar

Ongoing

China's Song dynasty established many prototypes in government, society, and the arts. A system of schools and examinations for entering public office led to an efficient, centralized government headed by the emperor but staffed by well-educated commoners. Emerging as a class of scholar-officials, who were both artists themselves and consumers of art, these men looked to ancient tradition as a source for moral principle and creative inspiration.

At the same time, a spirit of inquiry and close examination of nature led to advances in art and science. Widespread gains in literacy and disposable income also stimulated growth in the arts.

Elegance and refinement in form, line, and color characterize the visual arts of China during the Song dynasty. As new technology enhanced ceramic production and the number of kilns rose, fresh approaches to decoration developed. The rise of ink painting paralleled a taste for monochrome ceramic glazes. A multitude of other painting styles and techniques emerged as well, with a strong preference for realistic detail, modulated colors, and individualized faces and postures.

Sixteen Luohan; Fanlong (act. mid-12th century); China, Southern Song dynasty, mid-12th century; handscroll, ink on paper; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1960.1



Center of the World

Ongoing

Located in northwest China, Chang'an (modern Xi'an) served as the gateway to the so-called Silk Road, overland trade routes that linked the prosperous Tang empire with Central, West, and South Asia. Foreign merchants joined Buddhist missionaries, diplomatic envoys, translators, craftsmen, entertainers, and other skilled immigrants to transform Chang'an into a cosmopolitan city. This wealthy, worldly hub offered a ready market for exotic imports, including silver and gold objects, delicate glassware, and even grape wine. To meet accelerating demand for stylish goods, local artisans translated foreign designs into a Chinese style.

Of all the travelers to Chang'an, the most successful group came from the distant kingdom of Sogdiana, located far to the west in modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. These Persian speakers seamlessly connected the cultural realms of China and Iran. While some traders and artisans traveled back and forth across Asia, others settled in China, where they helped fuel a fashion for Central Asian culture. One Sogdian community leader who died in China chose to be buried in a Sino-Sogdian manner and commissioned the funerary couch on view in this exhibition. Over time, the Sogdian population was gradually absorbed into Chinese society. Today, the Sogdians are regarded as a lost people.

Wine cup with elephant heads on ring handle; Central Asia, Sogdiana, probably Uzbekistan, early 7th century; hammered silver with mercury gilding; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F2012.1



Promise of Paradise

Ongoing

Siddhartha Gautama, a prince born some twenty-five hundred years ago, is recognized as the Historical Buddha, or “Awakened One.” His enlightenment freed him from the cycle of rebirth, and his teachings became Buddhism’s foundation.

The religion spread at a phenomenal pace. By 100 CE, missionaries had taken the Buddha’s teachings from his birthplace in South Asia to China. Within a few hundred years, Chinese Buddhist thinkers and translators were expanding the canon, also making it available to believers in Korea and Japan.

Buddhism’s rapid evolution transformed China’s artistic landscape. To modern eyes, Chinese Buddhist sculpture from the sixth through the eighth century is among the most appealing in the history of art. As explored in this gallery, the period produced massive cave sites, grand temples, and monumental stone figures, as well as smaller images for domestic altars.

The buddhas, bodhisattvas, and disciples in this exhibition were made to inspire and guide believers on their spiritual path. Their beauty imparted the promise of paradise.

Buddha, probably Pilushena (Vairochana), with the Realms of Existence and other Buddhist scenes; China, probably Henan Province, Northern Qi dynasty, 550–77; limestone; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1923.15



Art and Industry: China’s Ancient Houma Foundry

Ongoing

The largest bronze foundry complex from antiquity was excavated at Houma in northern China in the mid-twentieth century. At the two-acre site, archaeologists discovered evidence of extremely sophisticated manufacturing techniques. Fragments of reused clay models, master pattern blocks, and decorated clay molds indicate the adoption of ceramic pattern transfers to cast ornamented bronze objects. Using pattern blocks to increase the speed and volume of production without sacrificing quality was an astonishing innovation. Their presence proves foundries at Houma operated with a specialized workforce and a division of labor.

The facility was established around 585 BCE by the rulers of the State of Jin, who remained its chief patrons for about 150 years. Houma produced ornamented objects with complex, abstract designs, inlay, and what is now considered to be the earliest pictorial narratives in China. More than half of the objects featured in this exhibition were made at Houma. Other pieces illustrate the factory’s long-lasting influence and legacy that extended into the Western Han period (206 BCE–9 CE).

Wine container in the form of a bird with dragon interlace; China, Middle Eastern Zhou dynasty, ca. 500–450 BCE; state of Jin, Houma foundry; bronze with gold inlay; Gift of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1961.30



Afterlife: Ancient Chinese Jades

Ongoing

A construction boom in China more than a century ago resulted in new railways and factories—and the accidental discovery of scores of rich ancient cemeteries. Buried in these tombs for thousands of years were jewelry and ritual objects, all laboriously crafted from jade. When Charles Lang Freer acquired many of them, their precise age was unknown. The modern science of archaeology was not practiced in China until 1928, when the Smithsonian sponsored its introduction. With the advent of archaeology came a better appreciation of the evolution of ancient Chinese mortuary culture and China's art history.

Today we know these jades represent the earliest epochs of Chinese civilization, the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Many came from the prehistoric burials of the Liangzhu culture (circa 3300–2250 BCE). These Stone Age people flourished in a large, fertile region between the modern cities of Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Nanjing. The graves they left behind now function like time capsules, providing insight into the dynamic character of ancient Chinese civilization during life and after death.

Halberd; China, Liangzhu culture, late Neolithic period (ca. 3300–2250 BCE), Erlitou culture, ca. 1800–1600 BCE; jade (nephrite); Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1919.13



Ancient and Alive: Japan's Native Gods

Ongoing

In Japan, native religious beliefs and practices, commonly called Shinto, flourished and evolved even after the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. The beliefs trace back to ancient times, and shrines dedicated to the gods called kami remain an important part of communal life.

Ancient accounts say the kami created the Japanese islands, and they reside in natural features of the land. Important kami, although unseen, live in shrines. Believers pray to kami to protect households, celebrate births and marriages, and ask for prosperous harvests. Like Buddhist deities, kami help in times of illness or disaster, though Buddhist ceremonies are usually held for the deceased.

Kami enjoy music, processions, and entertainments, and many festivals are still held annually today. The screens in this gallery depict such celebrations during the Edo period (1615–1868), when their festivals included horse races, boating parties, and picnics, enjoyed by a broad sector of Japanese society.

A Festival at Sumiyoshi Grand Shrine (Sumiyoshi Taisha); Japan, Edo period, early 17th century; two-panel folding screen; ink, color, and gold on paper; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1900.26



The Power of Words in an Age of Crisis

Ongoing

In an age when we can delete digital words with the press of a button, it can be hard to appreciate the sanctity, mystery, and power that written texts held for historic cultures. In Buddhism, the most powerful of all texts were the canonical scriptures known as sutras. These sutras were not only key vehicles for transmitting the teachings of the Buddha, known as the dharma, but they were also objects of numinous beauty, solace, and protection.

Sutras took on particular importance in times of crisis. Buddhists in eleventh-century Japan believed they had entered the third and final age, during which a darkness of ten thousand years would obscure the dharma. Against this backdrop, sutras reached a peak of sumptuousness and artistry through aristocratic patronage. Protected in temples or ceremonially buried in tomblike mounds, these sutras would preserve the dharma until the Future Buddha descended to usher in a new golden age.

The Future Buddha's distant appearance ultimately gave way in Japan to the allure of immediate salvation through faith in Amitabha, the buddha of the Western Pure Land.

Lotus Sutra, Chapters 20–23; Japan, Heian period, 1180; handscroll; ink, color, gold, and silver on indigo-dyed paper; rock crystal roller knobs; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1980.199



Imperfectly Beautiful: Inventing Japanese Ceramic Style

Ongoing

Holding a bowl to drink freshly whisked green tea—this is the central experience of the Japanese tea ceremony (chanoyu). Until the late sixteenth century, Japanese tea drinkers viewed Chinese ceramics as the ideal: standardized, symmetrical, and impeccably glazed. But as the innovators of chanoyu began to emphasize individuality, they turned to local potters for fresh interpretations of tea ceramics. New traditions were born.

As taste and opportunity converged, chanoyu participants and potters collaborated on creating a new kind of tea ceramic. Turning away from the impersonal, wheel-thrown form, they favored bowls that looked handmade. They sought vessels that communicated the feel of the potter's hands on the soft clay and the fire's kiss on the flowing glaze. Such bowls conveyed a message from the maker to the user through sight and, especially, touch. These early experiments sparked an approach to clay that still inspires many potters and tea drinkers today.

Vase; Japan, Iga kilns, Momoyama period, 1590–1615; stoneware with wood-ash and iron glazes; gold lacquer repairs; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1898.451



In the Shadow of an Apocalypse

Ongoing

Japan was a nation under siege in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, living out an apocalypse foretold in Buddhist teachings. The Mongols swept across Asia and, by the late 1200s, attempted to invade Japan. Natural calamities and plagues underscored the sense of end times.

In this tumultuous period, Japanese Buddhists turned to their faith for protection, compassion, and order. An explosion of iconography responded to those needs. Whether painted or sculpted, Buddhist works reassured believers with visions of compassionate protectors and fierce guardians. New production techniques offered such images an intensely heightened realism.

Mandalas, diagrams that depict an invisible yet foundational spiritual order, offered a sense of structure amid chaos. The most familiar examples are two-dimensional compositions of concentric squares, circles, or other patterns. Sculptures were arranged in similar patterns to create three-dimensional mandalas of almost theme park-like proportions. Several works in this exhibition were once part of such ensembles.

Aizen Myoo; Japan, Kamakura period, 1293; wood with color and gold; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, Freer Gallery of Art, F1974.21.1a–b



The Beginnings of Buddhism in Japan

Ongoing

The two objects in this exhibition exemplify the birth of Buddhism in Japan. In 552, the Korean kingdom of Baekje sent the Japanese court sacred texts (sutras) and a gilt bronze sculpture, thought to be similar to the one on view.

The Japanese, whose native gods did not have visible forms, were impressed by images of Buddhist deities and stories of their powers, as related in the sutras. Early adopters of Buddhism at court built temples and sponsored ceremonies, lectures, and the copying of sutras. In the mid-eighth century, Emperor Shōmu mandated a nationwide system of official temples. He also commissioned a more than fifty-foot-tall gilt bronze sculpture of the cosmic buddha for the Tōdaiji temple in Nara, the imperial capital. The sutra segment in this exhibition is traditionally called Ōjōmu (Great Shōmu) in the emperor's honor.

The Buddha at Birth (Tanjōbutsu); Japan, Asuka period, 7th century; gilt bronze; Gift of Sylvan Barnet and William Burto in honor of Yanagi Takashi, Freer Gallery of Art, F2005.9a–b



Rediscovering Korea's Past

Ongoing

Today we admire the translucent gray-green celadon glaze on Korean ceramics of the Goryeo period as one of the great achievements of world potters. It is startling to realize that once this ware was all but forgotten. In Korea a millennium ago tastes changed. Other styles of ceramics replaced celadon in temples, palaces, and homes of the elite.

In the late nineteenth century, long-respected tombs of royal figures and nobility from the Goryeo period (935–1392) became vulnerable to looting. Celadon and other cherished possessions of the deceased, preserved as burial offerings, were plundered and sold in the antiquities market. American doctor and diplomat Horace Newton Allen witnessed this rediscovery while he lived in Seoul from 1884 to 1905, and he formed his own sizeable collection of celadon, it seems, from objects on the open market.

Charles Lang Freer purchased Allen's collection in 1907. This large acquisition sparked Freer's deep interest in this distinguished Korean ware. In turn, Allen, Freer, and other early collectors inspired generations of scholars to clarify the styles and dating of Goryeo celadon. Archaeologists have now identified and excavated the kiln complexes at Gangjin and Buan, which produced the finest celadon wares during the Goryeo dynasty.

Ewer; Korea, Gangjin or Buan kilns, Goryeo period, mid-13th century; stoneware with copper-red pigment and white slip under celadon glaze; Gift of Charles Lang Freer, Freer Gallery of Art, F1915.50



Body Image

Ongoing

The human body, particularly the beautiful body, is central to artistic expression on the Indian subcontinent. Through the body, artists express fundamental beliefs about the nature of being, social ideals, gender roles, and hierarchies of power, both earthly and divine.

The subcontinent, which extends from Pakistan eastward to Bangladesh and from Nepal southward to Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, has long been culturally and religiously diverse. By grouping and juxtaposing masterpieces from the museum's collection, this exhibition explores concepts and aesthetics of the body. The first room considers the perfect bodies of the Hindu gods before turning to the Indian courtly body as site of both pleasure and power. The rear gallery introduces the enlightened bodies of Buddhist and Jain traditions, as well as divine conceptions that transcend physical form.

If the artworks themselves invite the sheer joy of looking, the theme of the body provides a portal for appreciating how India's extraordinary culture is woven from distinctive but interrelated traditions. On a personal level, these works compel us to reconsider how our own ideals of beauty and gender, including the ways we hold, adorn, or modify our bodies, are shaped by our cultures.

Shiva, Lord of Dance (Nataraja); India, state of Tamil Nadu, Chola dynasty, ca. 990; bronze; Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment and funds provided by Margaret and George Haldeman, Freer Gallery of Art, F2003.2

ADDITIONAL ONGOING EXHIBITIONS

[Feast Your Eyes: A Taste for Luxury in Ancient Iran](#)
[The Glazed Elephant: Ceramic Traditions in Cambodia](#)
[Gods, Companions, and Devotees](#)
[The Power to See Beauty](#)
[Power in Southeast Asia](#)
[Xu Bing: Monkeys Grasp for the Moon](#)

CLOSING EXHIBITIONS



Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt

Closing January 15, 2018

Resources: [press release](#); [images](#)

Cats' personalities have made them Internet stars today. In ancient Egypt, cats were associated with divinities, as revealed in *Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt*. Cat coffins and representations of the cat-headed goddess Bastet are among the extraordinary objects that reveal felines' critical role in ancient Egyptian religious, social, and political life. Dating from the Middle Kingdom to the Byzantine period, the more than eighty works include statues, amulets, and other luxury items decorated with feline features, which enjoyed special status among Egyptians. The exhibition, organized by the Brooklyn Museum, also dedicates a small section to cats' canine counterparts.

Coffin for a Cat; 664–332 BCE, or later; wood, gesso, paint, animal remains; Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 37.1944Ea–b