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Traveling Exhibition of Native American Masterpieces to be Presented at the Indianapolis Museum of Art

More than 100 works from the renowned Thaw Collection showcase artistry of native cultures throughout North America

The exhibition will be on view during the 2012 Super Bowl held in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, July 19, 2011 — The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced it will present *Art of the American Indians: The Thaw Collection*, opening December 2. The major traveling exhibition developed by the Fenimore Art Museum explores Native North American art from the Eastern Woodlands to the Northwest through more than 100 masterpieces spanning 2,000 years. The exhibition provides visitors with a broad understanding and appreciation of the aesthetic accomplishments and cultural heritage of North America's first inhabitants. *Art of the American Indians* will be on view in the Allen Whitehill Clowes Gallery through February 12, 2012.

The objects in the exhibition are drawn from The Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection of Native North American Art, which was assembled over the past two decades by Eugene V. Thaw, one of the art world's most distinguished connoisseurs and collectors of art.

The exhibition highlights the beauty and virtuosity of each piece, presenting it as a milestone of creativity and individual artistic expression. The exhibition also reveals the extraordinary range of art produced by Native American cultures. While the works of art are enormously diversified in type, style, and use of materials, they demonstrate a consistent appreciation of the power of the natural world in human affairs and the universal appeal of beautifully realized works of art.

"This collection includes many of the finest Native American objects in existence," said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. "*Art of the American Indians* will illuminate the origins of our city's name while Indianapolis hosts the 2012 Super Bowl."

"This is the IMA's first Native American art exhibition in almost 30 years," said Niloo Paydar, IMA curator of textile and fashion arts and exhibition curator. "We are excited to present these outstanding works of art to our museum audience."

The exhibition celebrates the extraordinary range of native North American works of art and is organized by geographic culture areas. The Arctic and sub-Arctic regions are represented by ancient ivories and ingenious modern masks. The astonishingly beautiful and dramatic arts of the Pacific Northwest form another pillar of the Thaw Collection.

The abstract art of the culturally complex Southwest will be shown in both its ancient and modern manifestations. From the Plains come outstanding examples of the colorful beaded, feathered, and painted works for which the region is most famous. Finally, the Eastern Woodlands, including the Great Lakes, is another great strength of the collection with their visually quieter and more contemplative arts. The majority of the pieces in the collection date to the 19th century, but archaeological and contemporary works also are included to demonstrate the continued vitality of Native North American cultures.

Exhibition Organization, Credits and Venues

Art of the American Indians: The Thaw Collection is organized by the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y. The exhibition was presented at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Dallas Museum of Art before coming to Indianapolis.

Exhibition Programming

A series of talks will further explore art and objects of indigenous American cultures:

- Lois Sherr Dubin, author of *The History of Beads: From 100,000 B.C. to the Present*, explores the power and purpose of these symbolic objects in indigenous American cultures on Thursday, December 8, at 7 p.m. Beads have been used throughout history and around the world as charms, status symbols, religious objects, and a medium of barter.
- White Wolf James (Pomo/Cherokee), assistant curator of Native American art, history and culture at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, talks about the meanings of natural and man-made objects in traditional Native American cultures on Thursday, January 12, at 7 p.m. For millennia, humans have used objects in creative ways to gain wisdom, heal sickness, avert suffering and navigate life. Indigenous American traditions include relationships with the material world strikingly different from the one most of us experience in contemporary Western culture.

Indianapolis Museum of Art

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 oldest and 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Additionally, art, design, and nature are featured at 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate and National Historic Landmark on the IMA grounds. Beyond the Indianapolis campus, in May 2011 the IMA opened to the public the recently acquired landmark Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Indiana. One of the country's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist residences, the Miller House was designed by Eero Saarinen, with interiors by Alexander Girard, and landscape design by Dan Kiley.

Recognizing the IMA's positive impact on its community, the Museum was named a recipient of the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Services – the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. The IMA's commitment to free general admission, programming for schools and teachers, environmental leadership and online initiatives were among cited community contributions in the Museum's selection for the award.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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