

**INAUGURAL EXHIBITION FROM THE GALLERY'S DEPARTMENT OF INDO-PACIFIC ART
HIGHLIGHTS ANCIENT JAVANESE GOLD ARTIFACTS**

Old Javanese Gold: The Hunter Thompson Collection

Yale University Art Gallery, March 25–August 14, 2011



Burial Mask, Javanese, ca. 500 B.C.E.–200 C.E. Gold. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Valerie and Hunter Thompson

In the early centuries of the Common Era, a civilization rose up in Indonesia that became a locus of trade, culture, and religion, the most impressive traces of which are found on the island of Java. *Old Javanese Gold: The Hunter Thompson Collection* features 200 objects – including jewelry, sculptures, coins, statues, containers, and accessories – from the Yale University Art Gallery's collection of over 500 Javanese gold objects originally amassed in the 1980s and early 1990s by Toronto residents Valerie and Hunter Thompson, who donated their collection to the Gallery in 2006 and 2008.

Ancient Javanese gold artifacts display exceptional skill and artistry and are a significant source of information on aspects of Javanese society, culture, religion, economy, and technology. The objects in the exhibition are organized into six groupings, exploring the artist's workshop, distribution, religious use, indications of prestige and luxury, aesthetics, and gold used in a funerary context. The works range in date from the first century B.C.E. to the 13th century C.E. and present diverse styles and cultural influences. Highlights of the exhibition include a spectacular full-face burial mask, which probably would have been attached to a corpse; a *repoussé* kris (dagger) handle, in the shape of a demon; a crown top or *usnisha* cover, which may have been worn by a person or affixed to a statue; and a tiger claw necklace, which would have been worn by a young man of the upper class in the hope that the ornament would confer on the wearer the strength and courage of the animal.

Old Javanese Gold is the inaugural exhibition of the Gallery's Department of Indo-Pacific Art, created in spring 2009 and headed since January 2010 by Ruth Barnes, the first Thomas Jaffe Curator of Indo-Pacific Art. In 2012 the Gallery will open a permanent-collection gallery for the department.

Exhibition Support

Old Javanese Gold: The Hunter Thompson Collection was made possible by Thomas Jaffe, B.A. 1971; James H. Slater, B.A. 1944; and an endowment created with a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



Crown Top or "Usnisha" Cover, Javanese, 650–1000. Gold. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Valerie and Hunter Thompson

Publication

Old Javanese Gold: The Hunter Thompson Collection at the Yale University Art Gallery, a catalogue of the Thompson Collection written by John Miksic, Associate Professor of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, is being released by the Gallery in May 2011. This revised edition of a classic publication, published by the Gallery and distributed by Yale University Press, features all new photography, as well as new research and reports on recent archaeological discoveries.

Related Programming

Wednesday, April 6, 12:20 PM

Gold in Java: Ritual Necessity and Courtly Indulgence

Ruth Barnes, the Thomas Jaffe Curator of Indo-Pacific Art

Thursday, May 12, 5:30 PM

Gadhon: An Evening of Javanese Chamber Music

Friday, May 13, 5:30 PM

Andrew Carnduff Ritchie Lecture

Javanese Gold Illuminated: Gold's Associations in Ancient Javanese Culture

John Miksic, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM

Symposium: Gold in Southeast Asia

An international symposium presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Old Javanese Gold*, and in celebration of the gift of the Hunter Thompson Collection to the Gallery. For more information, please visit <http://artgallery.yale.edu/javanese-gold>.

Thursdays, July 14, 21, and 28, 2:00 PM

Master Class

Gold in Southeast Asia: Making and Meaning

This series explores the technologies available to craftsmen in Southeast Asia from the early first millennium of the Common Era to the present day, and it places the techniques into the context of the exhibition *Old Javanese Gold: The Hunter Thompson Collection*. The series also provides a preview of the holdings of the new Department of Indo-Pacific Art with a look at additional ethnographic objects in gold and some spectacular textiles that incorporate gold.

Yale University Art Gallery

The Yale University Art Gallery, America's oldest and one of its most important university art museums was founded in 1832, when patriot-artist John Trumbull donated more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then, the Gallery's collections have grown to number more than 185,000 objects, spanning the globe and ranging in date from ancient times to the present day. In addition to its celebrated

collections of American paintings and decorative arts, the Gallery is noted for its important holdings of Greek and Roman art; early Italian paintings; later European art; Asian art; African art; art of the ancient Americas; and Impressionist, modern, and contemporary works. The Gallery's ongoing installation of works from these collections is complemented by a variety of special exhibitions and public programs. Moreover, in an effort to share its works with a broad public, the Gallery also organizes collections-based exhibitions that travel to museums nationwide.

Located at 1111 Chapel Street in New Haven, Connecticut, the Gallery is open to the public free of charge: Tuesday–Saturday 10:00 AM–5:00 PM, Thursday until 8:00 PM (September–June); Sunday 1:00–6:00 PM. For additional information, the public may visit <http://artgallery.yale.edu>, or call 203.432.0600.

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For additional press information or visual materials, please contact Adrienne Webb, Public Information Coordinator, at 203.432.2124 or adrienne.webb@yale.edu.