

**GALLERY CREATES NEW DEPARTMENT OF INDO-PACIFIC ART;
LEADING SCHOLAR APPOINTED INAUGURAL CURATOR**

Ruth Barnes, currently textile curator at Ashmolean Museum, is to be first Thomas Jaffe Curator of Indo-Pacific Art, overseeing initial collection of more than 1,500 objects



Ancestor Statue, Leti, Indonesia. 19th century. Wood and shell, 2 3/4 x 5 in. Collection of Thomas Jaffe. Photograph: Johan Vipper.

Jock Reynolds, Henry J. Heinz II Director, Yale University Art Gallery, today announced the creation of a new curatorial department devoted to Indo-Pacific art, enabled by the generosity of Yale alumnus Thomas Jaffe, Class of '71. Mr. Jaffe has provided not only his extraordinary collection of more than 500 examples of tribal sculpture from Southeast Asia, augmented by a same-sized collection of Indonesian textiles, but also the funds to fully endow a curatorial position and to create a gallery of Indo-Pacific art. This commitment firmly establishes the Yale University Art Gallery as one of the country's leaders in the field.

The new curatorial position will be filled by internationally recognized scholar Ruth Barnes, currently textile curator in the Department of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford, England. Dr. Barnes will begin planning the Department's direction on a consulting basis in April 2009 and will commence her post full-time in January 2010.

The gallery is to be named in honor of Professor Robert Farris Thompson and the late Professor George Kubler, pioneering Yale art historians. Mr. Jaffe comments, "Kubler's lectures on Mesoamerica and Thompson's on Africa have opened the eyes of generations of Yale students to the beauty and meaning of art from beyond the traditional seats of culture in the West and Asia. This new department would not exist without them."

The Jaffe collection consists of exceptional sculpture primarily from maritime Southeast Asia, augmented by Indonesian textiles mainly gathered by Jeff Holmgren and Anita Spertus, renowned experts and collectors in that field.

In addition, Hunter and Valerie Thompson have donated their own outstanding and comprehensive collection of ancient Javanese gold jewelry and sculpture, which makes a welcome complement to the Department's founding collection.

Mr. Reynolds states, "Time and again since its founding more than 175 years ago, the Gallery has been the recipient of transformative gifts of art and funds. Indeed, it is such gifts that have given our collection the depth and richness for which it is justly celebrated. Today, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Tom Jaffe, we are able to announce the creation of a new Department of Indo-Pacific Art, furthering the



Standing Gold Buddha, Javanese. Early Classic Period (700-1000 AD). 4 3/16 in. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Valerie and Hunter Thompson.

Gallery's efforts to expand the reach of its collection and research to represent more accurately the diversity and scope of world culture. Moreover, Tom has enabled us to create a new gallery and, importantly, to hire Ruth Barnes, one of the leading scholars of art from the Indo-Pacific region. We are thrilled that Dr. Barnes will be joining our team, adding her invaluable experience and knowledge to the Gallery's curatorial efforts."

Planning has already begun for a series of exhibitions and publications on aspects of the collections. These will place the new objects in the context of both the Gallery's other collections and Yale's already robust program of teaching and research devoted to Southeast Asia. They will additionally introduce the collection to scholars and the public beyond Yale, both in the United States and abroad.

Ruth Barnes notes, "The post is an honor, as is the chance to join the curatorial staff of the Yale University Art Gallery. The Gallery's collections already are remarkable for their cultural diversity, and the

new Department will strive to enhance this diversity and quality. I am excited about the prospect of working with such outstanding collections to create a new gallery and research opportunities, as well as providing enhanced opportunities for cooperation in teaching Southeast Asian studies.

Ruth Barnes

An art historian of international stature in the field of South and Southeast Asian textiles, Ruth Barnes has a particular interest in the social history of material culture and its anthropological interpretation, and has studied textiles from South and Southeast Asia, as well as from the Islamic world, from this perspective. Dr. Barnes has many years of field experience in Indonesia, primarily in the eastern part of the archipelago. Her current research interest is Indian Ocean trade, with a focus on the pre-European and early European periods.

Dr. Barnes has organized numerous important exhibitions and published widely on the art and culture of Southeast Asia. Her exhibitions and publications include *Pilgrimage: The Sacred Journey* (exhibition and catalogue, with C. Branfoot, 2006); *Ostindonesien im 20. Jahrhundert* (a comprehensive catalogue of the Ernst Vatter Collection in Frankfurt, Germany, 2004); *Ikat Textiles of Asia* (exhibition, 2000); *Textiles and the Indian Ocean Trade* (exhibition, 1997, coinciding with her publication of *Indian Block-printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1997*).

Dr. Barnes has worked at the Ashmolean Museum since 1990 and has taught for many years at Oxford University and elsewhere in the U.K.



Ceremonial Cloth (Paparitonoling), Galumpang Toraja, Sulawesi. 42.5 x 24 in. On loan, Yale University Art Gallery; formerly in the collection of Robert J. Holmgren and Anita Spertus. Photograph Robert Holmgren.

She currently is the lead curator for three new galleries to be completed at the Ashmolean in 2009 – Asian Crossroads (400 AD to 1500 AD), West Meets East (1500 AD onward), and Textiles.

As head of the Yale University Art Gallery's new Department of Indo-Pacific Art, Dr. Barnes will organize rotating installations of the Department's holdings in the Gallery's landmark Louis I. Kahn Building. She will also direct research, publications, special exhibitions, and teaching based on both Yale's new holdings and artworks to be borrowed from other public and private collections.

Ruth Barnes was an undergraduate at Edinburgh University and received her doctorate from the University of Oxford. She is a member of St. Cross College, Oxford, and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain.

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.

In 2006, as part of a ten-year renovation and expansion project, the Gallery completed the restoration of its iconic Louis I. Kahn Building. It is presently preparing for the final phase of the project, which includes the renovation of its Swartwout building and of Street Hall, the two historic structures adjacent to the Kahn building.

Located at the corner of Chapel and York Streets 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. Closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, the public may visit <http://artgallery.yale.edu>, or call 203.432.0600.

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For additional information or images, contact Adrienne Webb, Public Information Coordinator, 203.432.2124, or adrienne.webb@yale.edu

