

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

MEDIA CONTACT:

Margaree Bigler, Communications Manager
602.257.2105 | margaree.bigler@phxart.org

Phoenix Art Museum explores history, artistry of samurai culture in upcoming exhibition *Traveling exhibition of largest collection of samurai regalia outside of Japan sheds light on samurai culture*

PHOENIX (January 18, 2017) – Beginning March 1, 2017, Phoenix Art Museum will present *Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*, a traveling exhibition taking visitors on a journey back in time to discover the history, culture, and pageantry of the revered and feared Japanese samurai warriors. The exhibition, organized by the Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum in Dallas, features more than 140 objects of warrior regalia, with full suits of armor, helmets and face guards, weapons, horse trappings, and other battle gear. It is the largest and most comprehensive collection of its kind outside of Japan.

“We are excited to present to our community this remarkable collection of samurai regalia and ephemera from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum in Texas,” said Amada Cruz, Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view objects of such exquisite craftsmanship and historical importance from samurai culture, enabling us to bring a taste of the wider world to our diverse communities.”

The exhibition traces the evolution of the distinctive appearance and equipment of the samurai through the centuries and examines the warriors’ history through works of consummate craftsmanship and exquisite design. During the centuries covered by the exhibition, warfare evolved from combat between small bands of equestrian archers to the clash of vast armies of infantry and cavalry equipped with swords, spears, and even matchlock guns. Arms and armor were needed in unprecedented quantities, and craftsmen responded with an astonishingly varied array of armor that was both functional and visually spectacular, a celebration of the warrior’s prowess.

Dr. Janet Baker, the Museum’s curator of Asian art, emphasized the exhibition’s wide-ranging appeal. “Visitors with a variety of interests, from military history to Japanese culture, will find something compelling in these objects.” She cited the unique opportunity for Museum visitors to deepen their understanding of a historical culture whose presence lives on in the popular imagination. Samurai regalia and culture is known to have influenced many elements of modern popular culture, from anime to Star Wars. “This exhibition allows us to explore the lives of historical figures who still fascinate us but whom we may not fully understand, whose way of life and approach to the world encompassed far more than responsibilities on the battlefield. To experience these objects in person is to broaden not only our knowledge of history, but of our cultural present and its perspective on the past.”

Samurai will be on view in the Museum’s Steele Gallery beginning March 1 through July 16, 2017. The exhibition is organized by the Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum. Its Phoenix premiere is made possible through the generous support of (GET THE FULL LIST OF SPONSORS FROM THE EVENT INVITATION). The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalog, *Art of Armor: Samurai Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*, with essays by leading Japanese samurai armor experts. *Art of Armor* can be purchased onsite at [The Museum Store](#) during operating hours or can be purchased online while supplies last: <http://bit.ly/PhxArtSamuraiCatalog>

About the Exhibition

Samurai: Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection is free for Museum Members; past and present members of the Military; Maricopa Community College students, staff, and faculty (with ID); and youth aged 5 and under. This special engagement exhibition is offered to the general public at \$5 for all ages, plus general admission (required). For a full breakdown of general admission prices, see http://www.phxart.org/visit/hours_admission_location.

This special engagement exhibition is offered to the general public for \$5 during voluntary-donation, free-access times, when general admission is free of charge: every Wednesday evening from 3pm-9pm, the First Fridays of every month from 6-10pm, and the second weekends of each month (Saturdays from 10am – 5pm and Sundays from noon – 5pm). To request interviews and high-resolution photography, contact Phoenix Art Museum’s Marketing and Communications Office, at 602.257.2105 or email margree.bigler@phxart.org.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum’s permanent collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum’s landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit PhxArt.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

###