

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

MEDIA CONTACT:

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

Phoenix Art Museum showcases rare Sikh objects from Arizona collection for the first time *Virtue and Valor: Sikh Art and Heritage explores aesthetics, history, and culture through loans from local lender*

PHOENIX (March 22, 2017) – Beginning April 15, Phoenix Art Museum will showcase a broad range of objects related to Sikh religion and history in an exhibition entitled *Virtue and Valor: Sikh Art and Heritage*. From portraiture and photographs to implements of war, the exhibition draws exclusively on featured items from the Khanuja Family Collection, a local Arizona family. This is the first time the Khanuja Collection has loaned works to the Museum.

“We are grateful to the Khanuja family for sharing these treasures with us,” said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. “It is a privilege to broaden the scope of our Art of Asia Gallery with rare objects, an opportunity made possible through the generosity and community-mindedness of collectors like the Khanuja family. We look forward to sharing this unique experience with our visitors.”

Organized thematically, the items in *Virtue and Valor: Sikh Art and Heritage* traverse a visual journey of Sikh religion and history. Portraits of the gurus, the founders of Sikhism, that reflect the meticulous style of traditional Indian painting will be exhibited alongside religious texts with images painted by both Indian and European artists. Photographs recording the Sikh military presence in British India, as well as the more recent Sikh diaspora in North America, will also be on view, as well as various implements of war including swords, medals, and a helmet and shield.

“*Virtue and Valor* expands the depth and breadth of our understanding not only of Sikh art, but also of Sikh religion and culture,” said Janet Baker, the Museum’s curator of Asian art. “The items on view from the Khanuja Family Collection function simultaneously as aesthetic objects and pieces of historical value, which is crucial for an important world religion that is not widely understood in the West. The intent behind this exhibition is to showcase the multi-faceted significance of these rare objects.”

With more than 23 million followers, Sikhism is now the fifth-largest religion in the world. Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder who lived in the Punjab region of India (which includes today’s north India and Pakistan, set out the devotional path that God is One and all creation is equal, without distinction by caste, creed, race, gender or station in life. Guru Nanak was succeeded by nine gurus; the Tenth Guru decreed that no individual would succeed him but spiritual guidance would be drawn from the Holy Book (Guru Granth Sahib). Since its founding, Sikhism has grown to include followers on all inhabited continents. Sikhs have played important roles throughout world history, notably as *Khalsa*, the pure and saintly soldiers of righteousness who were an integral part of the British Empire in India. In the late 19th century, many Sikhs emigrated to the US and Canada and have since integrated into many Western countries.

Virtue and Valor will be on view in the Art of Asia Gallery from April 15 through September 10. Admission is free for Museum Members and included with general admission. For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/VirtueAndValor>.

About the Exhibition

Virtue and Valor: Sikh Art and Heritage will be on view beginning April 15 in the Harnett Gallery. This exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and features works from the Khanuja Family Collection. It is made possible through the generosity of donors to the Museum’s annual fund.

Admission 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. Entrance to the exhibition is included in general admission for the general public. During voluntary-donation, free-access times, the exhibition is offered free to the general public. Free-access times include Wednesdays from 3 –

9 pm, the First Fridays of every month from 6 – 10 pm, and the second weekend of each month (Second Saturdays from 10am – 5pm and Second Sundays from Noon – 5pm). For a full breakdown of general admission prices and hours, see <http://bit.ly/VisitPhxArt>.

To request interviews and high-resolution photography, contact Phoenix Art Museum's Marketing and Communications Office, at 602.257.2105 or email margaree.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.

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