

Curator: Valeria Piccoli

Department: Arts of the Americas

Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.1.1

Artist/Maker: Lockwood de Forest (American, 1850 - 1932)

Title/Object: Lone Felucca at Dusk near Roda along the Nile

Date: c. 1876

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 21 1/2 × 35 1/2 in. (54.6 × 90.2 cm) (sight)

22 × 36 in. (55.9 × 91.4 cm) (canvas)

30 1/8 × 44 1/8 × 2 1/2 in. (76.5 × 112.1 × 6.4 cm) (outer frame)

Signed, marked or inscribed: two labels on BC verso frame: SULLIVAN GOSS / AN AMERICAN GALLERY / SANTA BARBARA, CA; Antique Frames...LOPEZ / RESTORATIONS, INC.

Country of manufacture: United States

Vendor/Donor: Sullivan Goss Gallery, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Credit Line: Gift of funds from Siri and Bob Marshall

Proposed Funds:



2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

One of the key figures in bringing decorative arts from the Near and Far East to British and American markets, Lockwood de Forest was born into a prominent New York family, that greatly encouraged him and his siblings to develop interest in the arts. De Forest visited Rome when he was 19 years old and began taking painting lessons from an Italian landscape painter. In the same year, he met Frederic Church, with whom he traveled around Italy sketching. Mentored by Church, De Forest traveled through the Middle East and the North of Africa between 1875 and 1878, spending two years in India between 1879 and 1881. Those travels were instrumental to consolidate De Forest's expertise in the decorative arts of the Near and Far East, framing his professional activities in this field. He worked along Louis Comfort Tiffany for a period and opened his own design business in the mid-1880s. De Forest imported Indian goods and also designed furniture and wood carved architectural elements for private residencies such as Andrew Carnegie's, nowadays the Copper-Hewitt Museum in New York. After 1915, De Forest settles in Santa Barbara, California, and resumes his artistic practice as a painter.

3. Condition:

GOOD

Examiner: Erin Bouchard
2023-11-17

4. Additional Costs:

5. Provenance:

Acquired by Sullivan Goss Gallery from the artist's descendants

6. Related objects:

Works by Lockwood de Forest are present in many major institutions in the United States, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian, LACMA, Brooklyn Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, to name a few.

7. Complements the existing collection:

Mia's collection of American paintings has very few examples of works by American artists made abroad. The painting and the study are a priceless addition to the collection in the sense that it creates opportunities to connect the collection of American art with that of the other departments in the museum. They also enhance the small representation of painters of the Hudson River School at Mia.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

De Forest works can be immediately displayed together with other landscape paintings of the collection, such as William Bradford, Alfred Bricher, Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt, among others. They can also be important in an exhibition addressing the immediacy of sketches as opposed to studio paintings.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

"It was one of those sunsets where you have three or four distinct effects and can't tell which you wanted to sketch most. So, I painted the first and left the late twilight one till tomorrow, as well as another fine thing looking east after the sun went down – where the sky runs from pink at the horizon to blue and the mountains come in as a peculiar ashy color with a sort of warm glow that pervades everything all the way to the foreground."

Those are the words that De Forest added to his diary on January 7, 1876, when he sketched the scene of the banks of the Nile as seen from the boat he was traveling in. The painted sketch perfectly matches the description of the first-hand impression of the changing colors in the landscape that the artist was aiming to capture. The sky dominates most of the composition, all immersed in the warm pink tones spread across the cardboard using fast and unprecise brushstrokes. The sketch is accompanied by the second version of the painting made in the studio, which shows a more tamed composition. Only one vertical element, a sailboat on the left, brings a sense of scale to the scene otherwise marked by horizontal elements: a large sand dune and a strip of vegetation at the banks of the river. The colors of the sky are reflected in the calm waters of the river adding a nostalgic feeling to the composition.

The opportunity of having both the sketch and the studio painting at Mia's collection is unique. Apart from allowing curators to explore how landscape paintings were produced in the 19th century, the pair or paintings can also create connections between American paintings and other departments of the museum through artists that traveled abroad. These works can open possibilities to explore ideas around the Orientalist fashion in the Gilded Age, as well as the importance of travel in the building of artist's vocabularies.

11. Label text:

Lockwood de Forest was a key figure in the spreading of Orientalism in the decorative arts in the United States. Having traveled extensively through Italy, the Near East, North of Africa, and India, he began his career as a painter influenced by Frederic Church and other artists from the Hudson River School. This painting was made during a trip to Egypt in 1876, when the artist produced a series of sketches of the banks of the Nile River under different effects of light, some of which he would later use as basis for studio paintings.

12. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: A view of the banks of the Nile River is registered by an American painter traveling through Egypt. The warm pink tones of the sunset dominate the composition showing the artist's interest in the distinctive effects of light in the landscape.

ADA LongDesc: The banks of the Nile are seen from a boat that slowly descends the river and the horizontal format of the painting reinforces the idea of an observer in transit. Only one vertical element, a sailboat on the left marks the composition. The horizon line is occupied by a sand dune and sketchy brushstrokes suggesting the vegetation at the banks of the river. All the scene is tinted with warm pink tones that characterize the beginning of sunset time, showing the artist's interest in the distinctive effects of light in the landscape. The colors of the sky are reflected in the calm waters of the river adding a nostalgic feeling to the composition.

13. Tags:

American Art; Landscape Painting; Egypt; Traveler Artists; Orientalism

Curator: Andreas Marks

Department: Asian Art

Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.3.1

Artist/Maker: Myōchin Muneakira (Japanese, 1683 - 1751)

Title/Object: Hammered iron full-face armor mask

Date: 1737

Medium: Made in two connected sections; iron and the interior in red lacquer

Dimensions: 8 3/4 × 7 5/8 × 5 1/2 in. (22.2 × 19.4 × 14 cm)

Signed, marked or inscribed: Under the chin: 日本唯一甲冑良工 明珍式部紀察; side: 武州江戸 於權田原 造之; 元文二年二月吉祥日 (Made in Bushū, Ed Gondawara on a fortuitous day in the 2nd month of the 2nd year of Genbun (1737) by the greatest armor-smith in Japan, Myōchin Shikibu Ki no Muneakira.) | on back of collar, PR side, in red: 56.15

Country of manufacture: Japan

Vendor/Donor: Giuseppe Piva Japanese Art

Credit Line: The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation

Proposed Funds:



2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

Myōchin Muneakira (1683–1751) is considered one of the best skilled armor makers in Japan's history. At age 13, Muneakira began an apprenticeship under his uncle Munesuke (1642–1726), a specialist of repousse hammering (uchidashi) in which three-dimensional shapes are hammered into a single sheet of iron. Munesuke was the 24th head of the main line of the prestigious Myōchin family of smiths, located in Edo, today's Tokyo. After working with him for 17 years, Munesuke regarded Muneakira as his worthy follower and adopted him in 1713 as was customary at that time to secure a line of succession. However, Munesuke managed at the age of 72 to father a biological son and cancelled Muneakira's adoption around 1714. In 1722, Muneakira moved away from Munesuke's workshop and took on employment by the feudal lord (daimyō) Asano of the Hiroshima fief, 500 miles away in the south of Japan. Back in Edo, a dispute erupted in 1726 after Munesuke's death about the future of the Myōchin family and the education of his teenage son Munemasa. The shogunate, concerned for the continuation of the most important family of armor makers, ordered Muneakira to return to Edo and oversee the training of Munemasa. Muneakira complied with the order but maintained his employment under Lord Asano Yoshinaga (1681–1752). Asano, like all feudal lords, had to follow the shogunates rule to live one year in his domain and one in Edo and therefore spent significant time in the capital. When Muneakira's workshop caught fire

in 1728, Asano supported the reconstruction financially.

While Muneakira was not exclusively working for Asano, his other clients were also mainly wealthy lords or their family members. By 1730, he developed a level of refinement when creating smooth, curved surfaces that were unachieved by others before, and after.

Muneakira made armor masks and adorned breastplates, sleeves, and shoulder guards with designs hammered in high relief. Smiths did not always inscribe their works or even sign them. Especially rare is the inclusion of a date in the inscription. Until now, scholars know of three armor masks by Muneakira that he dated, all of them are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acquired between 1913 and 1919. Proposed here is a fourth, dated mask that has emerged from a private collection in Milan and has been unknown to scholars. The Met's three masks are the most celebrated of all Japanese armor masks ever made and the most coveted objects in their Japanese arms and armor collection. Two date from Muneakira's early period in Edo and are dated to 1713 and 1715 respectively. The third, the most special one, is from 1745 after Muneakira had returned to Edo and was in his mature period and 58 years old. It is included in *Illustrated Reference Book to Famous Armor (Meikō zukan)*, the most important book on medieval armor design written in the mid-18th century by the scholar of military science, Matsumiya Kanzan (1686–1780). A fourth mask, dated to 1737, is proposed here. Kanzan's book offers the drawing of another, undated mask which has not been found yet. Besides these four dated masks, there are four undated masks known (plus one more but its authenticity is questionable).

The proposed mask is of hammered iron and is constructed of two sections, connected with pins on the interior side. The upper section that can be removed comprises of the forehead and the eyes. The entire interior is lacquered in red. As with Muneakira's other three dated masks, the signature is under the chin and further inscriptions are on each side. In the proposed mask the full inscription reads: "Made in Bushū Province, Edo at Gondawara on a fortuitous day in the 2nd month of the 2nd year of Genbun (1737) by the greatest armor-smith in Japan, Myōchin Shikibu Ki no Muneakira."

The importance of this mask cannot be overstated. The Met's mask from 1713 gives Kanda, on the east side of Edo Castle, as location of Muneakira's workshop. Where his workshop was located after he returned to Edo was unknown until now but through this mask, we learn that it was in Gondawara, on the west side of Edo Castle (today the site of the Imperial Palace). Gondawara was located in the Akasaka district, adjacent to the residence of the powerful Kii line of the ruling Tokugawa family (today the site of the imperial Akasaka Palace). On the opposite side of the Kii residence was the spare residence of Muneakira's supporter Lord Asano (nakayashiki). For a high-level smith of Muneakira's caliber, Gondawara was an ideal location and even less than one hour walking distance away was the main mansion of the Asano family near the southern gate to Edo Castle (today the area occupied by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism).

The proposed mask is closer in style and refinement to the Met's mask from 1745. Both express an exceptional level of smoothness and elegance, perfectly curved lines and balanced forms. Muneakira was 54 years old and at his peak when he made the proposed mask.

3. Condition:

GOOD

Examiner: Leslie Ory Lewellen

2024-03-04

4. Additional Costs:

5. Provenance:

Private collection, Milan (until 2023); [Giuseppe Piva, Milan (2023–24)].

6. Related objects:

The other three known dated armor masks by Muneakira are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. nos. 13.112.13, 14.100.45, 19.115.2). The four undated masks are in private collections, one of them is in the Barbier-Mueller collection in Dallas, Texas.

7. Complements the existing collection:

Mia owns only a few exquisite objects related to samurai, including an amazing suit of armor of the highest possible quality. We have been actively expanding the samurai section of our collection over the last years but still need to continue adding outstanding examples.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

This could be included in a special exhibition about samurai. It could also be exhibited in gallery 219 which is devoted to samurai-related objects and where we display our magnificent suit of armor. Given that there are no conservation risks or concerns and given its importance, this mask could also be on permanent display like the suit.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

Myōchin Muneakira is considered one of the best if not the best armor maker in Japan's history and there are only three masks known that he dated, all in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This is the fourth mask that has been hidden away in a private collection and been offered first to Mia. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to add such an extraordinarily refined object to our collection. Like our suit of armor, this mask would be another highlight in Mia's Japanese collection.

10. Label text:

The majority of armor masks were only half length, leaving the eyes and forehead uncovered. This is a full-face mask constructed in two segments by Myōchin Muneakira, who is considered one of the greatest armor makers in Japan's history. Including this one there are only four masks known that he inscribed with a date. He created this one in 1737 when he was 54 years old and, in his peak, attested by the exceptional level of smoothness and elegance and the perfectly curved lines and balanced forms.

11. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: Full face mask of polished metal

ADA LongDesc: Full face mask of polished metal, with eyebrows, ears, face lines

12. Tags:

Samurai; mask, somen; weapon; protection; armor

Curator: Andreas Marks**Department:** Asian Art**Date:** 2024-03-26**1. Description and Summary of Object(s)****Loan Number:** 2024.4.1**Artist/Maker:** Unknown
Japanese**Title/Object:** Chain mail coat**Date:** 19th century**Medium:** Iron, cloth, leather**Dimensions:** 27 1/2 × 48 1/4 × 1 1/2 in. (69.9 × 122.6 × 3.8 cm)**Signed, marked or inscribed:****Country of manufacture:** Japan**Vendor/Donor:** The Kura**Credit Line:** The Gary L. Gliem Endowment for Japanese Art**Proposed Funds:****2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:**

In the history of Japan, most samurai were in employment with a feudal lord and their appearance and the armor they would wear would reflect that. Sometimes such employments were terminated, and samurai became rōnin, masterless “wanderers” who were forced to make a living through other means, some as bodyguards for wealthy merchants, others became criminals. The change of status brought along a change of financial means and most rōnin were not affluent enough to afford a complete suit of armor. Some wore only parts, for example a helmet and a cuirass (breastplate), while others turned to chain mail as their means of protection. During the Edo period (1603–1868), chain mail (kusari) was also used by samurai police officials working in the large cities like Edo, today’s Tokyo. There were chain mail jackets (kusari katabira), gloves (kusari han kote), sleeves hoods, socks, etc. Jackets were sometimes worn hidden under ordinary clothing. With the end of the samurai era in the 19th century and the ban on wearing swords in public in 1876, the practical use for chain mail and other armor vanished. Proposed here is a matching set of chain mail jacket and gloves made for an adult. The linked chain is attached on layers of indigo dyed cloth, decorated with crests in gold, which looks like a stylized version of a Chinese character, probably 化, 什, or 仙. The hem is enforced with imprinted leather. The collar was once furnished with hexagon shaped iron plates (kikkō) that are now lost. The pale blue lining is original but much of it is worn away.

3. Condition:

FRAGILE

Examiner: Erin Bouchard
2024-02-16

4. Provenance:

[Robert Mangold, The Kura, Kyoto (2024)].

5. Related objects:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has over 50 pieces of chain mail in their collection mostly of German or other European origin.

7. Complements the existing collection:

Mia owns a few exquisite objects related to samurai, including an outstanding suit of armor, and a helmet in the shape of a dragonfly. Given the enormous importance of samurai in Japanese culture, we have been expanding this area over the last years and have acquired a set of long bows, a gunpowder backpack, a warrior hat, a metal fighting pipe, an important sword etc. We need to continue adding examples of samurai life.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

This could be exhibited in gallery 219 which is devoted to samurai-related objects and where we display our magnificent suit of armor. It could also be included in a special exhibition about samurai or in displays of garments.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

Most surviving samurai objects are connected to lords and wealthy samurai. Much as the textiles in the Japanese collection of Thomas Murray that we acquired a few years ago, this set of chain mail jacket and gloves represents the less affluent side of society and is therefore an essential element to understand life in Japan in the Edo period (1603-1868). It is exceedingly rare to find a matching set that includes gloves and is in good condition. From a design point of view, the jacket is especially interesting because a pattern of crests in gold was applied under the mail and the collar was furnished with hexagonal plates.

10. Label text:

Not all samurai during the Edo period (1603-1868) wore suits of armor. Some, like rōnin who were not in the employment of a lord or samurai police officials in the large cities like Edo, today's Tokyo, wore chain mail (kusari) for protection. This is a matching set of chain mail jacket (kusari katabira) and gloves (kusari han kote). The linked chain is attached on layers of indigo dyed cloth, decorated with family crests in gold. The collar was once furnished with hexagon shaped iron plates (kikkō) that are now lost.

11. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: Jacket and gloves covered with connected metal rings.

ADA LongDesc: Jacket and gloves covered with connected metal rings.

12. Tags:

Samurai; ronin; chain mail; police; Edo; protection; clothing; armor

Curator: Andreas Marks

Department: Asian Art

Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.4.2a,b

Artist/Maker: Unknown
Japanese

Title/Object: Chain mail gloves

Date: 19th century

Medium: Iron, cloth, leather

Dimensions: 13 1/4 × 5 3/4 × 1/2 in. (33.7 × 14.6 × 1.3 cm) (object part, a-right glove)

13 1/4 × 5 3/4 × 1/2 in. (33.7 × 14.6 × 1.3 cm) (object part, b-left glove)

Signed, marked or inscribed:

Country of manufacture: Japan

Vendor/Donor: The Kura

Credit Line: The Gary L. Gliem Endowment for Japanese Art



2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

In the history of Japan, most samurai were in employment with a feudal lord and their appearance and the armor they would wear would reflect that. Sometimes such employments were terminated, and samurai became rōnin, masterless “wanderers” who were forced to make a living through other means, some as bodyguards for wealthy merchants, others became criminals. The change of status brought along a change of financial means and most rōnin were not affluent enough to afford a complete suit of armor. Some wore only parts, for example a helmet and a cuirass (breastplate), while others turned to chain mail as their means of protection. During the Edo period (1603–1868), chain mail (kusari) was also used by samurai police officials working in the large cities like Edo, today’s Tokyo. There were chain mail jackets (kusari katabira), gloves (kusari han kote), sleeves hoods, socks, etc. Jackets were sometimes worn hidden under ordinary clothing. With the end of the samurai era in the 19th century and the ban on wearing swords in public in 1876, the practical use for chain mail and other armor vanished. Proposed here is a matching set of chain mail jacket and gloves made for an adult. The linked chain is attached on layers of indigo dyed cloth, decorated with crests in gold, which looks like a stylized version of a Chinese character, probably 化, 什, or 仙. The hem is enforced with imprinted leather. The collar was once furnished with hexagon shaped iron plates (kikkō) that are now lost. The pale blue lining is original but much of it is worn away.

3. Condition:

FRAGILE

Examiner: Erin Bouchard

2024-02-16

4. Provenance:

[Robert Mangold, The Kura, Kyoto (2024)].

5. Related objects:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has over 50 pieces of chain mail in their collection mostly of German or other European origin.

7. Complements the existing collection:

Mia owns a few exquisite objects related to samurai, including an outstanding suit of armor, and a helmet in the shape of a dragonfly. Given the enormous importance of samurai in Japanese culture, we have been expanding this area over the last years and have acquired a set of long bows, a gunpowder backpack, a warrior hat, a metal fighting pipe, an important sword etc. We need to continue adding examples of samurai life.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

This could be exhibited in gallery 219 which is devoted to samurai-related objects and where we display our magnificent suit of armor. It could also be included in a special exhibition about samurai or in displays of garments.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

Most surviving samurai objects are connected to lords and wealthy samurai. Much as the textiles in the Japanese collection of Thomas Murray that we acquired a few years ago, this set of chain mail jacket and gloves represents the less affluent side of society and is therefore an essential element to understand life in Japan in the Edo period (1603-1868). It is exceedingly rare to find a matching set that includes gloves and is in good condition. From a design point of view, the jacket is especially interesting because a pattern of crests in gold was applied under the mail and the collar was furnished with hexagonal plates.

10. Label text:

Not all samurai during the Edo period (1603-1868) wore suits of armor. Some, like rōnin who were not in the employment of a lord or samurai police officials in the large cities like Edo, today's Tokyo, wore chain mail (kusari) for protection. This is a matching set of chain mail jacket (kusari katabira) and gloves (kusari han kote). The linked chain is attached on layers of indigo dyed cloth, decorated with family crests in gold. The collar was once furnished with hexagon shaped iron plates (kikkō) that are now lost.

11. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: Jacket and gloves covered with connected metal rings.

ADA LongDesc: Jacket and gloves covered with connected metal rings.

13. Tags:

Samurai; ronin; chain mail; police; Edo; protection; clothing; armor

Curator: Pujan Gandhi
Department: Asian Art
Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.6.5

Artist/Maker:

Title/Object: Votive Stupa

Date: c. 9th century

Medium: Bronze with copper and silver alloy

Dimensions: 7 15/16 × 4 15/16 × 5 1/8 in. (20.2 × 12.5 × 13 cm)

Signed, marked or inscribed:

Country of manufacture: India



Credit Line: The Kenneth and Elayne Hengler Endowment for Art Acquisition, the William Hood Dunwoody Fund, and anonymous gift

2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

3. Condition:

GOOD

Examiner: Leslie Ory Lewellen

2024-03-04

4. Additional Costs:

5. Provenance:

Anthony d'Offay

(Private Collection), 1994

6. Related objects:

7. Complements the existing collection:

8. Plans for exhibiting:

9. Why do you recommend the object:

10. Label text:

Here, we see three types of votive stupas, bronzes respectively from India, Tibet, and Nepal, from the 9th-16th centuries. The structure of these works derive from the hemispherical burial mounds initially erected over the relics of the Buddha in India, and now sprinkle the landscape of the Himalayas as representations of the Buddha, his teachings, and a microcosm of the universe. The scale of the works indicate they were portable, commissioned for donation, worship, and meditative aid on one's journey to accrue merit and achieve liberation. Austere yet crisp, the Indian example features a square base, inset with a niche with a Buddha image, with the bell-like domes (further representing the Buddha body) terminating in a conical mast with parasols, representing protection and the stages of enlightenment. It was cast with a hollow interior to contain sacred materials such as texts, here still inside yet hidden from view. Such works were frequently taken by pilgrims to Nepal, where the structure would be infused with a more elaborate aesthetic sensibilities, including a four-stepped "Lion Throne" base (alluding to the four stages of consciousness) would literally feature rampant lions, and the overall effect—with the four Buddhas preceding over cardinal directions—appearing as if in a palace. While stupas are most frequently associated with Buddhism, we see here a unique example of one consecrated in service of the Bon religion—a tradition that has its roots in the indigenous folk practices of Tibet, and slowly incorporated aspects of Buddhism beginning in the 8th century. The horned crown atop references the mythical bullhead of a pre-Buddhist sun-eagle god, while the base is inscribed with a the counterclockwise swastika—a deep rooted Eurasian symbol of purity.

11. Accessibility text:

12. Tags:

Curator: Pujan Gandhi
Department: Asian Art
Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.6.6

Artist/Maker:

Title/Object: Votive Stupa

Date: c. 15th-16th century

Medium: Copper alloy

Dimensions: 7 5/8 × 6 1/8 × 6 1/8 in. (19.4 × 15.6 × 15.6 cm)

Signed, marked or inscribed:

Country of manufacture: Nepal



Credit Line: The Kenneth and Elayne Hengler Endowment for Art Acquisition, the William Hood Dunwoody Fund, and anonymous gift

2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

3. Condition:

GOOD

Examiner: Leslie Ory Lewellen

2024-03-04

4. Additional Costs:

5. Provenance:

Anthony d'Offay
(Sotheby's), New York, 2002

6. Related objects:

7. Complements the existing collection:

8. Plans for exhibiting:

9. Why do you recommend the object:

10. Label text:

Here, we see three types of votive stupas, bronzes respectively from India, Tibet, and Nepal, from the 9th-16th centuries. The structure of these works derive from the hemispherical burial mounds initially erected over the relics of the Buddha in India, and now sprinkle the landscape of the Himalayas as representations of the Buddha, his teachings, and a microcosm of the universe. The scale of the works indicate they were portable, commissioned for donation, worship, and meditative aid on one's journey to accrue merit and achieve liberation. Austere yet crisp, the Indian example features a square base, inset with a niche with a Buddha image, with the bell-like domes (further representing the Buddha body) terminating in a conical mast with parasols, representing protection and the stages of enlightenment. It was cast with a hollow interior to contain sacred materials such as texts, here still inside yet hidden from view. Such works were frequently taken by pilgrims to Nepal, where the structure would be infused with a more elaborate aesthetic sensibilities, including a four-stepped "Lion Throne" base (alluding to the four stages of consciousness) would literally feature rampant lions, and the overall effect—with the four Buddhas preceding over cardinal directions—appearing as if in a palace. While stupas are most frequently associated with Buddhism, we see here a unique example of one consecrated in service of the Bon religion—a tradition that has its roots in the indigenous folk practices of Tibet, and slowly incorporated aspects of Buddhism beginning in the 8th century. The horned crown atop references the mythical bullhead of a pre-Buddhist sun-eagle god, while the base is inscribed with a the counterclockwise swastika—a deep rooted Eurasian symbol of purity.

11. Accessibility text:

12. Tags:

Curator: Rachel McGarry

Department: European Art

Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.11.1

Artist/Maker: Artist Unknown
Spain

Title/Object: Dish

Date: c. 1430-70

Medium: Tin-glazed earthenware

Dimensions: 3 1/4 × 18 3/4 × 18 3/4 in. (8.3 × 47.6 × 47.6 cm)

Signed, marked or inscribed: on bottom: five stickers and sticker fragments, including two Christie's stickers

Country of manufacture: Spain

Vendor/Donor: Sam Fogg

Credit Line: The Walter C. and Mary C. Briggs Trust Fund



2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

Spanish ceramic production was the most sophisticated in Europe in the 15th century. Islamic potters developed a special technique using copper lustre decoration to create shimmering, iridescent glazes, and fusing Islamic and Gothic styles and motifs in elaborate decorative schemes. The production of Hispano-Moresque lustreware flourished in Valencia, particularly in Manises. The luxury wares of this ceramic center were prized by the Spanish elite and also sought after by the courts and wealthiest merchant families of Europe in the 15th century.

This exemplary dish was commissioned by the Morelli family of Florence (Italy), whose coat of arms appears at the center of the plate. Four works from the elaborate Morelli table service survive today. The distinguished Florentine family collected Valencian pottery already in 1431, when it is recorded in a family member's inventory, and they also had direct ties to Valencia. One family member, Morello Morelli, lived in Valencia in 1443, serving as a representative of Niccolò Strozzi, of the powerful Strozzi family of Florence. The proposed dish combines copper lustre glazes with cobalt blue, in a stunning decorative scheme of bryony flowers and looping copper stems and flowers. Not only is it an exceptional example of Hispano-Moresque ceramics of Valencia, but it also has a long, illustrious provenance. After passing from the Morelli family, it entered the significant collection of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild in Paris. Its seizure by the Nazis and restitution of the Rothschild family after the war is meticulously documented, along with its fine condition and safe transport from Paris to Altaussee, Austria, to Munich, and back to Paris. It then remained in the Rothschild collection until the 2023 auction at Christie's.

3. Condition:

GOOD

Examiner: Leslie Ory Lewellen
2024-03-25

4. Provenance:

Commissioned by the Morelli family, Florence, possibly Giovanni di Bartolomeo Morelli or Morello Morelli, 15th

century [1]. Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, Paris (until d. 1905); his son, Baron Édouard de Rothschild, Paris (1905–d. 1949; seized by the Nazi Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg in 1940 [ERR no. R 4001]; transferred to Altaussee salt mines, Austria; recovered by the Monuments Fine Arts and Archives Section and transferred to the Munich Central Collecting Point on June 23, 1945 [MCCP no. 388/2]; returned to France January 9, 1946; restituted); by descent through Rothschild family (until 2023; Rothschild sale, Christie's, New York, October 12, 2023, no. 218; to Fogg); [Sam Fogg, London, 2023-24]

[1] Giovanni di Bartolomeo Morelli's 1431 inventory lists Valencian maiolica; Morello Morelli was active in Valencia in 1443, as a representative of Niccolo Strozzi; see Spallanzani 2006.

6. Related objects:

Documents in Manises record the production of a great number of Hispano-Moresque luxury table services, made both for the local market and export. The Morelli family's service must have been large, as four plates with the Morelli arms survive, the Rothschild plate and three that are already in museum collections: The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 56.171.136; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, inv. 1760-1855; and Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid. The extant Morelli dishes are contemporary and range in the style of decoration and size, indicating a rich, extensive service.

7. Complements the existing collection:

This complements the other Hispano-Moresque dish in Mia's collection (62.11, The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund), a basin of similar dimensions and contemporary in date. This work is representative of the other dominant style that flourished in mid-15th century Manises (Valencia). In contrast to the decorative scheme of the Rothschild plate which combines copper lustre vegetal motifs with cobalt blue briony flowers, Mia's plate is decorated entirely in copper lustre--a dense design of looping lines, foliage, and knots and embellished with raised ribbing that is modeled after metalwork. Together, the two exemplary works reflect the sophistication, variation, and fusion of traditions found in luxury Valencian lustreware of this period.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

In the reinstallation, we plan to devote more gallery space to Spanish art, including Spanish decorative arts, displaying for instance, an important Spanish 15th-century choir stall which has long been in storage (c. 1480, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 18.6). The Spanish Islamic plates and Catholic church furniture are contemporary and decorated with similar motifs. We are interested in featuring more European art made by Islamic artists in the galleries as well as art influenced by Islamic art forms and styles. More immediately this charger could be installed in the display of Islamic ceramics in G243, or, given its exceptional wall presence, it would also complement the installations of Spanish art in G310, G343, or G341.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

The acquisition of this impressive Hispano-Moresque charger achieves many goals for Mia. It strengthens are

holdings of both Spanish and Islamic art, areas in the collection we hope to strategically build in the coming five years. The work helps us make important connections in the collection across cultures and religions and show how Islamic and European art are joined on the Iberian peninsula in this period. In our reinstallation we wish to broaden the history of Europe and feature more European art made by Islamic artists as well as art influenced by Islamic art forms and styles. With its illustrious provenance, the charger demonstrates the appreciation of great Islamic art in Europe--from the 15th century with the Morelli family in Renaissance Florence to the Rothschilds in 19th and 20th-century Paris. Also, it is a simply an exemplary, beautiful example of 15th-century lustreware, executed in lustre and cobalt blue glazes in a style not yet represented in Mia's collection.

10. Comparable market prices:

The Rothschild sale (Christie's, New York, October 12, 2023) brought to market a significant group of Hispano-Moresque lustreware, with illustrious, secure provenances, ranging in price from \$50,000 to \$350,000, with one rarity achieving \$1,000,000. At this sale, the proposed plate, lot 218, sold for \$94,500, arguably a discounted price given its quality and provenance. But the market was flooded at that moment with many high-quality works. It was purchased by Sam Fogg, who subsequently conserved the dish, repairing an old break that had become discolored, disturbing the harmony of the surface.

11. Label text:

Spanish ceramic production was the most sophisticated in Europe in the 15th century. This lusterware dish was produced by Islamic potters in Manises, Valencia--an important center of production for the luxury wares. It was commissioned by the distinguished Morelli family of Florence and exported to Renaissance Italy. The Morelli arms appear at the center of the dish, surrounded by a fusion of Islamic and Gothic decorative motifs rendered in glazes of shimmering copper and cobalt blue.

12. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: A large round plate decorated with cobalt blue and copper-colored flowers, leaves, and looping lines on a white ground. In the center of the plate is a coat of arms: two lions paws below a chess rook.

ADA LongDesc: A large round plate decorated with cobalt blue and copper-colored flowers, leaves, and looping lines on a white ground large round plate. At the center of the dish is a coat of arms: against a dark ground are two red crossed lions paws beneath a chess rook, painted like a downturned chalice within an inverted teardrop. Surrounding the arms are seven copper-colored flowers.

13. Tags:

Hispano-moresque lustreware, lustred pottery, dish, plate, charger, Islamic, Spanish, Morisco

Curator: Leslie Ureña

Department: Global Contemporary Art

Date: 2024-03-26

1. Description and Summary of Object(s)

Loan Number: 2024.31

Artist/Maker: Ethan Aaro Jones (American, born 1985)

Title/Object: Battery Park City Esplanade, From the series An Unsearchable Distance

Date: 2017 (printed 2024)

Medium: Inkjet print mounted to dibond

Dimensions: 30 × 24 in. (76.2 × 61 cm) (image)

33 × 27 in. (83.8 × 68.6 cm) (sheet)

34 × 28 × 1 7/8 in. (86.4 × 71.1 × 4.8 cm) (outer frame)

Signed, marked or inscribed: paper label BL verso dibond, black ink: Ethan Jones | printed paper label BL verso dibond: Battery Park City Esplanade, 2017 / Edition 2/7 2024 / Ethan Aaro Jones

Country of manufacture: United States

Vendor/Donor: Ethan Aaro Jones

Credit Line: The Mr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Granum Fund



2. Artist, Style and explanation of the proposed object:

From Soo Visual Arts Center (SooVAC) website: "Ethan Aaro Jones's practice is informed by history, exploration, cartography, walking, and observation. Inherent to making his work, the camera records a single-point perspective that is closely situated to where he is moved through the impact of the landscape. The exacting nature of photography deeply intrigues him as each photograph suggests a certainty that belies the reality of any scene. This certainty is alluring and incomprehensible; thus, Jones often seeks out places that invoke questions or curiosities. [...] Ethan Aaro Jones is a photographer and artist living and working in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His work involves photographing the landscape to understand a place and human intention within our environment. He also brings his photographs together in books and zines with short texts. His work has been published and exhibited internationally, including at the University of Notre Dame (2014), Minnesota Museum of American Art (2021), and Galeria da Estação in Braga, Portugal (2023). He has received several awards, including an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. Ethan recently completed an artist residency at Bær Art Center in Hofsós, Iceland."

3. Condition:

EXCELLENT

Examiner: Erin Bouchard

2024-03-05

4. Provenance:

The artist.

5. Related objects:

Jones is an early career artist, who has exhibited internationally and nationally. His artworks have been collected

by Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL and Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY. His most recent solo exhibition was at the Soo Visual Arts Center (Minneapolis), focusing on the series "An Unsearchable Distance," of which this artwork is a part.

7. Complements the existing collection:

This would be the first work by Ethan Aaro Jones to enter Mia's collection. Jones has worked as Alec Soth's studio assistant and managed the photographic printing studio Big Al's. At the latter, he has printed works by artists in Mia's collection, including Soth's, JoAnn Verburg, and Stuart Klipper. The affinities between Soth's and Jones's work, especially, are notable with their keen sensibility towards spaces and populations that might go unnoticed.

8. Plans for exhibiting:

"Battery Park City Esplanade" could be included in a rotation in the Harrison, Perlman, or Global Contemporary galleries.

9. Why do you recommend the object:

"Battery Park City Esplanade" is a poetic example of Ethan Aaro Jones's approach to photographing the landscape. The artist's research-based practice has led him to the series "An Unsearchable Distance," based on his interest in the search for the Northwest Passage. Throughout the series Jones explores the reciprocity between humans and the environment (both built and natural), and how they respond to one another. In "Battery Park City Esplanade" he offers the view from the southern Manhattan side of the Hudson River, with Jersey City, New Jersey, in the distance. A commercial-grade diving helmet, hoses, and a ladder allude to a pause of a potential exploration, inviting more questions in this open-ended composition.

10. Label text:

Ethan Aaro Jones invites viewers to consider the world around us, and moments that may be easily missed. Taken along the banks of the Hudson River, Jones photographs the natural border between the states of New York and New Jersey, as well as the human-made additions to the environment. Here, the ladder, hoses, and diving helmet imply the interruption or a pause in a moment of exploration, akin to the search for the Northwest Passage that inspired the artist's series "An Unsearchable Distance," of which this work is a part of.

11. Accessibility text:

ADA AltText: An outdoor scene with tall and medium sized modern buildings in the background. A body of water is in the middle ground, and in the foreground there is a yellow ladder attached to a railing. Hoses and a diving helmet are on the ground on the sidewalk.

ADA LongDesc: An outdoor scene with tall and medium sized modern buildings in the background. A body of water is in the middle ground, and in the foreground there is a yellow ladder attached to a railing. Hoses and a diving helmet are on the ground on the boardwalk.

13. Tags:

buildings, river, ladder, diving helmet, hoses, boardwalk