

Exhibition: *Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*

Dates: October 19, 2014–February 1, 2015

Location: Resnick Pavilion

Exhibition: *Art of the Samurai: Swords, Paintings, Prints, and Textiles*

Dates: November 1, 2014–March 1, 2015

Location: Pavilion for Japanese Art



(Image captions on page 6)

(Los Angeles—October 8, 2014) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) will exhibit two shows exploring the subject of samurai art this fall. In October, LACMA presents the Southern California premiere of *Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*, a major presentation of battle gear worn by samurai from the 12th through the 19th centuries. Examining the evolution of samurai accoutrements through the centuries, this exhibition features more than 140 objects of warrior regalia, including eighteen full suits of armor, elaborate helmets and face guards, and life-size horse-clad armors. Objects in *Samurai* come from The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection, one of the most comprehensive private holdings of samurai armor in the world encompassing several hundred pieces and spanning ten centuries.

"When we think about the figure of the warrior throughout history, there are few more iconic representations than the samurai of Japan," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "The Samurai Collection assembled by Ann and Gabriel

Barbier-Mueller is truly exceptional, and we are so glad to be able to share these incredible objects with Los Angeles."

Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection is a ticketed exhibition and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, *Art of Armor*, edited by J. Gabriel Barbier-Mueller.

A complementary exhibition to the samurai armor show will be on view at the Pavilion for Japanese Art starting in November. *Art of the Samurai: Swords, Paintings, Prints, and Textiles* showcases samurai swords and examines the warrior lifestyle. In the Helen and Felix Juda Gallery a presentation of swords, sword fittings, and other weaponry from local collections will be on display. From the LACMA collection, an array of color woodblock prints depicting warriors in battle will be on view as well as a selection of garments worn by samurai and their wives. Battle screens and paintings made for the samurai will also be on view. *Art of the Samurai* is co-curated by Robert T. Singer, Curator and Department Head of Japanese Art, LACMA; Japanese samurai art specialists Mike Yamasaki, Darin S. Furukawa, and Gary Yoshino; and Sharon S. Takeda, Senior Curator and Department Head of Costume and Textiles, LACMA.

"The occasion of *Samurai* presented an opportunity to put the armor in the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection in broader context," said Robert T. Singer. "Through the display of swords, garments, prints, paintings, and other historical objects from local private collections as well as LACMA's holdings, *Art of the Samurai*, in the Pavilion for Japanese Art, is intended to enhance and amplify the spectacular samurai armor on view in the Resnick Pavilion."

About the Samurai

Japan ended its policy of mandatory military service in 792 and provincial landowners had to rely on their own private forces for defense, giving rise to the samurai class. For nearly 700 years, beginning in 1185, Japan was governed by a military government, led by the shogun, ruling in the name of the emperor. Samurai warriors were loyal to individual daimyō—provincial lords with large hereditary land holdings. In 1600, after periods of clashes between rival clans, the Battle of Sekigahara paved the way for Tokugawa Ieyasu to unify Japan and establish a new shogunate. Fifteen shogun from the Tokugawa family ruled over a period of peace lasting some 250 years. During the subsequent Meiji Restoration in 1868, the emperor reasserted his authority as supreme ruler, and the samurai as an official elite class was dissolved.

The term “samurai” comes from the verb *saburafu*, which means “to serve by one’s side.” Initially, samurai were armed servants; later, they became experts in warfare. Samurai armor consists of a helmet (*kabuto*), mask (*menpō*), and chest armor (*dō*) combined with shoulder guards, sleeves, a skirt, thigh protection, and shin guards. Additional articles, including a sleeveless surcoat (*jinbaori*), complete the set, which might weigh between 20 and 45 pounds in total. Many materials were required to produce a suit of Japanese armor that was as beautiful as it was functional. Iron, leather, brocade, and precious and semiprecious metals were often used. Several artisans worked for many months to create a single samurai suit of armor.

Exhibition Background

During the periods covered in both exhibitions, arms and armor were needed in unprecedented quantities as warfare evolved from small-scale combats between equestrian archers to vast armies of infantry using swords, spears, and guns. Craftsmen responded to this need with armor that was both functional and aesthetically detailed, a celebration of the warrior’s prowess. Even after 1615, when the Tokugawa military dictatorship brought an end to battle, samurai families continued to commission splendid arms and armor for ceremonial purposes. Because the social rank, income, and prestige of a samurai family were determined by the battlefield valor of their ancestors, armor embodied an elite warrior family’s heritage.

Exhibition Highlights

Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection features both practical armor used from the Kamakura (1185–1333) through the Momoyama (1573–1615) periods as well as the largely ceremonial objects of the Edo period (1615–1868). Highlights include:

The Armor of the Tatehagidō Type, shown with horse armor (*bagai*), a horse mask (*bamen*), and horse tack (*bagu*). Before the 17th century, samurai horses did not wear armor. However, horse armor symbolized the prestige and power of their owners during ceremonies that paid tribute to high-ranking leaders or marked special occasions.

Exquisitely decorated helmets, such as the *Flame Helmet Representing the Flaming Jewel*, were created in fanciful shapes and adorned with embellishments, including horns, family crests, feathers, and Buddhist symbols.

The Armor of the Okegawadō Type is one of three suits of armor in the exhibition that illustrate how armor became increasingly decorative during the 250 years of peace that marked the end of samurai dominance. This armor features three six-foot-tall gilt

accessories that served as battle standards, capturing the high drama of the fully outfitted samurai warrior in all of his glory.

In *Art of the Samurai: Swords, Paintings, Prints, and Textiles*, highlights include *Battle of Ichinotani* and *Battles of Dan-no-ura and Yashima*, a 17th-century six-panel screen depicting historic battles through an immense array of warriors, samurai, garb, and weaponry; as well as *Snow, Moon, Flower Calligraphy*, a set of three hanging scrolls made by a leading member of the ruling Tokugawa Shogun family of Japan, one of the finest examples of masculine samurai calligraphy.

Catalogue – *Art of Armor: Samurai Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection*

Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection is accompanied by a richly illustrated 360-page catalogue edited by J. Gabriel Barbier-Mueller with essays by Morihiro Ogawa, John Stevenson, Sachiko Hori, Stephen Turnbull, John Anderson, Ian Bottomley, Thom Richardson, Gregory Irvine, and Eric Meulien and text by Bernard Fournier-Bourdier. This publication presents the samurai armor collection of The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection in Dallas, assembled over the past twenty-five years and one of the largest and most important collections of its kind. The book offers a look into the world of the samurai and highlights topics such as the phenomenon of the warrior in Japan, the development of the samurai helmet, castle architecture, women in samurai culture, and Japanese horse armor. The book's final section consists of an extensive catalogue of objects, concentrating on 120 significant works in the collection. The publication will be available in hardcover (\$65) and softcover (\$45) at the LACMA Store or lacmastore.org.

Collectors Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller

Fascinated by samurai armor since adolescence, Gabriel Barbier-Mueller acquired his first samurai piece in the early 1990s. He and his wife Ann have continued to expand their collection, admiring the sculptural quality of the objects and the compelling imagination required to create them. This has led them to create The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum: The Samurai Collection in Dallas. The exhibition represents a fraction of their total collection, which comprises of several hundred pieces. "It is the combination of art and armor, the boundless creativity of the objects' forms and the aesthetics used by these fierce, cultivated warriors that drew us in," said Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller when describing the works that they have collected over the course of two decades. For more information about The Samurai Collection, please contact Jessica Young at jyoung@samuraicollection.org.

Related Programming

Lecture: Samurai Life During the Edo Period

Sunday, November 9 | 2 pm

LACMA, Brown Auditorium | Free and open to the public

The Edo period (1615–1868) in Japan was governed by samurai who were hereditary warriors. Samurai were expected to cultivate "the dual way of letters and war." Yet it was an era of no war and much commercial growth. Sustaining one's military character was a challenge in an age of peace, but the opportunities for cultural activities were many. In this talk, Luke Roberts, Professor of Japanese History at the University of California at Santa Barbara, introduces the lives of some average samurai of the Edo period with a particular focus on the place of military skills and cultural activities in their lives.

Public Tours

Volunteer docent led tours of the exhibition starting October 25, 2014 through January 31, 2015 on Tuesdays at 11:30 am and Saturdays at 10:30 am.

Evening for Educators: Art of the Samurai

October 21 | 4:30–8:30 pm

Tickets: \$15 per event and \$55 for a season pass. Tickets may be purchased in advance online or purchase tickets at the museum Ticket Office on the night of the event.

Andell Family Sundays

January 11, 18, 25 | 12:30–3:30 pm | Free for NexGen members

Credit

Samurai: Japanese Armor from the Ann and Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Collection is organized by The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum, Dallas.

Art of the Samurai: Swords, Paintings, Prints, and Textiles is organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes over 120,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art, Latin American art, ranging from pre-Columbian masterpieces to works by leading modern and

contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over a million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives, such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement at lacma.org. Situated in Hancock Park on over 20 acres in the heart of Los Angeles, LACMA is located between the ocean and downtown.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

Image captions:

(left): *Flame Helmet Representing the Flaming Jewel*, early Edo period, c. 1630, Iron, lacquer, lacing, gold, and bronze. Photograph by Brad Flowers, © The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum, Dallas

(center): *Armor with the Features of a Tengu*, late Edo period, 1854, Iron lacquer, vegetable fiber, fear fur, leather, feathers, and fabric. Photograph by Brad Flowers © The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum, Dallas

(right): Kano School, *Battle of Ichinotani; Battles of Yashima and Dan-no-ura* (detail), mid-17th century, pair of six-panel screens; ink and colors on paper, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lidow, photo © 2014 Museum Associates/LACMA

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