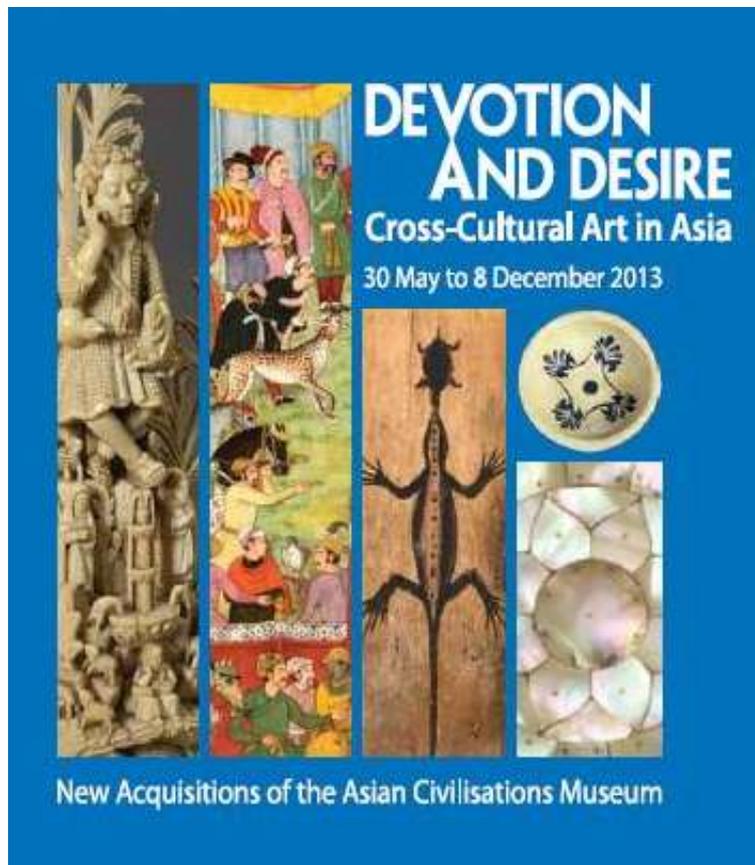


**Media Release**

*For immediate release*



**EXHIBITION SHOWCASING NEW ACQUISITIONS OF THE ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM REVEALS SURPRISING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ASIAN CULTURES**

*Devotion and Desire debuts over 170 never-seen-before objects*

**Singapore, 29 May 2013** - The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) will debut over 170 new acquisitions in an exhibition titled *Devotion and Desire: Cross-Cultural Art in Asia*. Objects acquired over the last five years will be on display, most for the first time, at the museum from this Thursday, 30 May 2013. They reveal the surprising connections between Asian cultures, and between Asia and the wider world. This exhibition also highlights a new direction for ACM, which has recently focused on building an understanding of historical interconnections between the diverse cultures of Asia, and their relations with the world.

Themes of the exhibition include the importance of trade, transmission of religions, courtly art, and colonial networks. For thousands of years, the cultures of Asia have traded,

interacted, and exchanged ideas. This exhibition focuses on the artistic results of these contacts. The objects show how religions moved from region to region, how special objects were eagerly sought in lands far away, and how new works of art were created by the blending of different traditions.

Acquired through various means, including gifts from individuals, donated funds, and government funds, the objects on display enrich the heritage of Singapore. Government funds provided amounted to under \$15 million. The exhibition was put together by the Asian Civilisations Museum's curatorial team lead by Mr Clement Onn, Curator for cross-cultural art.

Objects in the exhibition are excellent representations of the exchanges of culture and ideas within Asia. Highlights include a sculpture of the *Virgin and Child* that shows the superior skills of Sri Lankan ivory carvers, who, in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, worked for both Buddhist and Catholic patrons. Another key work is the *Cross with an image of the Buddha*, from Japan. This unusual cross, produced at a time when Christianity was banned in Japan, has an image of Buddha in the centre, where one would expect to find Christ. The blue and white porcelain *Brush rest*, in the form of a mountain, was commissioned at the imperial court of China and is decorated with Arabic inscriptions.

These objects are just some of the many new acquisitions on display that show the historical connection between trade, religions, and cultures in Asia. The exhibition is divided into five broad sections to showcase the story of Asia's heritage. Curator Clement Onn shared that "each object in *Devotion and Desire* has a combination of influences from the Asian region that make it a unique piece to have. The public will be surprised to learn about how much culture has been shared among the region and translated into everyday objects and art."

*Devotion and Desire* was made possible by the generous donations of individuals and organisations, working in partnership with the government, all dedicated towards enriching our national heritage. Director of ACM, Dr Alan Chong expressed his appreciation to these patrons, who play such a key role in making heritage accessible, informative, and inspiring to all. "Local collectors and donors have been exceptionally generous in supporting the collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum. Together with strong government support, we have been able to collect distinctive objects which show the historical connections between

Asian cultures. These contacts between religions and peoples, brought about by trade and migration, reflect Singapore's special position as a cross-roads and a melting pot."

*Devotion and Desire: Cross-Cultural Art in Asia* will run from 30 May 2013 to 8 December 2013 at the Special Exhibitions Gallery. In conjunction with the free entry to museums that started on 18 May 2013, all Singapore citizens and permanent residents will enjoy free admission to the exhibition.

### **Accompanying exhibition**

The ACM also presents *Lacquer in Asia: New Acquisitions of Asian Civilisations Museum*. This exhibition shows the many different techniques and styles created in response to different needs and tastes. It has long been a prized commodity that was traded and presented to dignitaries. In many cultures, lacquer was a precious material that signified wealth and social standing.

### **Programme highlights**

#### **Curator Tours**

Fridays, 7 June, 26 July, 6 September, 4 October, 6 December

7.30 to 8.30pm

\$15 (booking essential)

#### **Workshop**

Wednesdays, 12 and 26 June

10am, 1pm and 4pm

\$10 (booking is essential)

During the June holidays, children can explore cross-cultural art and investigate objects up close from the *Devotion and Desire* exhibition and create their own mini curio.

### **About the Asian Civilisations Museum**

The Asian Civilisations Museum is dedicated to exploring the rich artistic heritage of Asia, especially Singapore's ancestral cultures. Through a collection of works of art and a varied exhibition programme, we hope to deepen understanding of Southeast Asia, China, South Asia, West Asia, and the Peranakan world. Rare among museums in Asia, the ACM connects audiences with many cultures.

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**About the exhibition**

**Devotion and Desire: Cross-cultural Art in Asia**

**New Acquisitions of the Asian Civilisations Museum**

繁华交融: 亚洲跨文化瑰宝

亚洲文明博物馆新增文物

Exhibition dates: 30 May 2013 – 8 December 2013

Venue: Special Exhibition Gallery, Asian Civilisations Museum,  
1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555

Website: [www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg)

Enquiries: 6332 7798 / [nhb\\_acm\\_vs@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:nhb_acm_vs@nhb.gov.sg)

**Admission charges**

Free for all Singapore citizens and permanent residents

Individual: \$8

Friday evening, 7pm to 9pm: \$4

Foreign students and seniors: \$4

Friday evening: \$2

**Opening Hours**

Monday to Sunday: 10am to 7pm; Friday: 10am to 9pm

**Getting There**

By MRT - Raffles Place

By Bus - 75, 100, 107, 130, 131, 167

By Car - Parking is available at Parliament House, Connaught Drive, The Fullerton Hotel, One Fullerton, and Six Battery Road