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The Elegant Image
**100 Figural Bronzes from the Indian Subcontinent,
Spanning 25 Centuries**
From the Collection of Siddharth K. Bhansali

On view at NOMA Aug 5 - Oct 23

Tweet release: Rare Indian bronzes spanning 25 centuries on display @NOMA1910 from Aug 5 to Oct 23, from the collection of Dr. Sid Bhansali. www.noma.org/elegant

New Orleans, LA - *The Elegant Image: Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Bronzes from the Indian Subcontinent in the Siddharth K. Bhansali Collection*, presented by the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) from August 5 through October 23, 2011, showcases 100 bronze sculptures of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain deities, underscoring the richness of the three major religions of ancient India. The exhibition, drawn primarily from the collection of Dr. Siddharth K. Bhansali, includes examples of the earliest known metal representations of a deity, among a number of other rare and noteworthy bronzes.

The Elegant Image, curated by eminent Indian art historian Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, furthers NOMA's exploration of Indian works as part of NOMA's centennial celebration and focus on the museum's extensive and diverse areas of collection.

"Dr. Bhansali has not only contributed the majority of the works of art for this exhibition, but has also been a tireless advocate for the growth of NOMA's Indian collection," said Director Susan Taylor. "*The Elegant Image* must be seen first hand to truly appreciate the power of these unique bronzes."

A native of Bombay (Mumbai) India, Dr. Bhansali first began collecting Indian bronzes about 35 years ago. Few private or public collections anywhere can claim so many metal figures of this period and with such variety.

"My eureka moment came at an auction in London where I encountered an early Jain bronze," said Dr. Bhansali. "Being a Jain myself, it hit me in the pit of my stomach. I remember calling my mother in Mumbai, half nervous and half excited, certain she would disapprove. Upon receiving her unexpected approval, I was unstoppable, spending the next three decades collecting these important Jain bronzes."

Highlights include:

- Dr. Bhansali's collection represents the most important Jain bronzes in the U.S. (arguably the world)
- Exhibition and accompanying book are the first survey of most major schools of Indian bronzes for almost half a century
- Extraordinary group of Gupta bronzes including 3rd and 4th century examples of Jain deities
- Earliest metal icon of Ganesha to date from Tamil Nadu (6th century)
- Earliest examples of goddess Ambika from Eastern India
- Diverse bronzes from Kerala represent largest collection outside of region
- Exhibition also features a work from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's South and Southeast Art Asian collection

"While studying the objects to make my initial selection, I was impressed by both the stylistic diversity of the collection and the idiosyncratic taste of the collector, Dr. Bhansali," Pal said.

The accompanying catalogue serves as an introduction to the history of religious bronzes created on the Indian subcontinent over 15 centuries of the Common Era.

Exhibition events:

Friday, August 5

5:30 - 9 pm: Public opening featuring dancers, Rangoli design demonstration, henna 7 pm: Walk-through of exhibition by Curator of Asian Art, Lisa Rotondo-McCord

Saturday, August 6

1 - 5 pm: Guest curator Pratapaditya Pal and collector Dr. Sid Bhansali will discuss *The Elegant Image* // Dr. Pal and Graham Howe will discuss *British Photographer E.O. Hoppé in the Poet Rabindranath Tagore's Calcutta and Santiniketan*

Friday, August 26

6 pm: Lecture by Dr. John Cort, Denison University, *Jainism as a Religion of Sacred Icons*

Friday, September 2

6 pm: Classical Indian Dance demonstration and discussion in exhibition with Shanti Ramesh and Rita Winters

Friday, September 30

5 - 7pm: Program of Bengali art, poetry and dance

7 pm: Dr. Guy Beck from Tulane University, Classical Indian Voice Performance

Friday, October 14

6 pm: Lecture by author and scholar Dr. Don Statdner, *Two Paths to Purification: Mahavira and Gautama Buddha*

7 pm: Classical Iyengar Yoga Demonstration by Sharon Conroy and Becky Lloyd

Friday, October 21

5:30 - 9 pm: Closing events for exhibition, DiWali celebration

About Siddhardth "Sid" K. Bhansali, M.D. & NOMA's Indian Art Collection

A dedicated space devoted to the arts of India was established with NOMA's expansion in the early 1990s, largely due to the efforts and donations of Dr. Siddharth Bhansali. Early Hindu, Buddhist and Jain bronzes and sculpture are the core of his collections, and paintings, miniatures and photographs augment his collection. Through a focused plan of giving and an advocacy for the museum's newest collection area in Indian Art, Dr. Bhansali has transformed NOMA's Asian permanent collection.

About Pratapaditya Pal

Dr. Pal is a distinguished scholar and eminent art historian with an academic career spanning over four decades. As Indian and Southeast Asian art curator at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) for over 25 years, Pal has organized numerous path-breaking exhibitions, including the critically acclaimed *The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art From India*. A prolific writer, he has published over 60 books and catalogues.

Also on curated by Pal and Graham Howe, a photography exhibition on view in NOMA's Ella West Freeman Galleries // August 5 - October 23

British Photographer E.O. Hoppé in the Poet Rabindranath Tagore's Calcutta and Santiniketan

When German-born British photographer E.O. Hoppé (1878-1972) sailed for India in the fall of 1929, he was arguably one of the most famous photographers in the world.

Hoppé had photographed the Nobel Prize winning Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in

his London studio in 1920 and was eager to visit him in India at his university in Santiniketan, where he made these poetic photographs of Tagore's experimental institution.

Using small hand held cameras, Hoppé captured remarkable images of a country in transformation as India was undergoing a change from an agrarian society to an industrialized country. The result is an exceptional photographic portrayal of a unique country in a truly transitional period.

This exhibition marks the 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. It was in 1911 that E.O. Hoppé first opened his London photography studio. It is fitting that NOMA, the only U.S. venue, hosts this exhibition during the museum's centennial year.

NOMA ADMISSION

Wednesdays are FREE for all museum visitors. Adults, \$10; Seniors (65 and up) and Students, \$8; Children 7-17, \$6; Children 6 and under, free. Free Wednesdays are made possible through the generosity of The Helis Foundation.

ABOUT NOMA AND THE BESTHOFF SCULPTURE GARDEN

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 30,000 art objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing temporary exhibitions, are on view in the museum's 46 galleries Fridays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Tuesdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by 61 artists, including several of the 20th century's great master sculptors. The Sculpture Garden is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. except for Fridays when it's open until 8:45 p.m. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. For more information about NOMA, call (504) 658-4100 or visit www.noma.org.

