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EMPERORS' TREASURES: CHINESE ART FROM THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM, TAIPEI

Rare imperial masterpieces, including celebrated "Meat-shaped stone," make their U.S. debut at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 29, 2015— Serving as the centerpiece of the Asian Art Museum's 50th anniversary year is *Emperors' Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*. The

museum is partnering with the renowned Taiwan-based museum, to arrange for the rare presentation of more than 150 imperial artworks, many of which are making their U.S. debut.

On view June 17 through Sept. 18, 2016, *Emperors' Treasures* presents examples of the finest craftsmanship and imperial taste, including 30 extremely rare masterpieces, some created by the emperors themselves. Highlights include a vase from the official *Ru* ware of the Northern Song dynasty; one of only two surviving blue-and-white Ming vases depicting West Asian entertainers; the "holy grail" of Chinese porcelains, a cup with a chicken design; the *White Falcon* painting by Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione; and a calligraphy piece by Emperor Huizong, recognized for his "Slender Gold" style. In addition, the celebrated "Meat-shaped stone," a jasper stone intricately carved into the mouth-watering shape of a braised pork belly, will travel to the U.S. for the first time.

The exhibition is co-curated by Jay Xu, director of the Asian Art Museum, and Li He, associate curator of Chinese art. "By providing visitors with an unprecedented opportunity to experience this remarkable collection of masterpieces from imperial China, the Asian Art Museum is renewing and deepening its 50-year commitment to illuminating the artistic traditions of Asian cultures for our local and global audiences," said Xu.

Meat-shaped stone, approx. 1800–1900. China, Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Jasper, golden stand. *Courtesy of The National Palace Museum, Taipei*, Guza 178. Photograph © The National Palace Museum, Taipei.

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This exhibition will explore the identities of nine rulers—eight emperors and one empress—who reigned from the early 12th through early 20th centuries. They will be portrayed in a story line that highlights artworks of their eras, from the dignified Song to the coarse yet subtle Yuan, and from the brilliant Ming until the final, dazzling Qing dynasty. The exhibition will dissect each ruler’s distinct contribution to the arts and examine how each developed his or her aesthetic and connoisseurship. By exploring the richness of each subject, style and type of craftsmanship, the exhibition outlines how Chinese art came to develop and flourish under Han Chinese, Mongol and Manchu rulers. The exhibition will feature paintings, calligraphy, bronze vessels, ceramics, lacquerware, jades, textiles, enamelware and documents.

Emperors’ Treasures is made possible by a generous grant from Presenting Sponsor The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. “This important support from The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation enables the Asian Art Museum to curate and present *Emperors’ Treasures*, which will expose a global audience to the beauty and depth of Chinese art and culture,” said Xu.

Ted Lipman, CEO of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, noted: “This exhibition marks the third collaboration between the Asian Art Museum and The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. A key mission of the Foundation is to promote Chinese culture and the arts to Western audiences to increase understanding and appreciation of this ancient legacy. Nowhere does the 5,000 years of Chinese history manifest itself more beautifully and comprehensively than the exquisite imperial collection, which has been lovingly conserved and displayed at the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Through support for this significant exhibition, the Foundation seeks to provide visitors with an unprecedented opportunity to witness China’s vibrant cultural heritage at first-hand.”

Following the Asian Art Museum’s presentation, the exhibition will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Oct. 23, 2016–Jan. 22, 2017).

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

Emperors’ Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei was co-organized by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Presentation is made possible with the generous support of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, East West Bank, Robert and Vivian Tsao, Diane B. Wilsey, BizLink Technology, Inc., Lee Chen, Douglas A. Tilden, The Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang Fund for Excellence in Exhibitions and Presentations, Julia K. Cheng, Winnie and Michael Feng, Mary M. Tanenbaum Fund, and Rita Wong. For more information, go to www.asianart.org.