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Denver Art Museum returns Khmer sculpture *Torso of Rama* to Cambodia

DENVER and PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Feb. 26, 2016 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) and the Kingdom of Cambodia announced today that DAM has returned a 10th century Khmer sandstone sculpture to the Kingdom of Cambodia. The piece, *Torso of Rama*, had been in the museum’s collection for nearly 30 years. During the course of research into works in the museum’s collection and following conversations with colleagues in Cambodia, the DAM became aware of new facts related to the piece about its provenance that were not available to the museum when the object was acquired in 1986.

The *Torso of Rama* is a monumental sandstone sculpture of Rama with a quiver behind his right shoulder. The piece dates to the early 10th century, and stands 62 inches high and is missing its head, arms and feet. The Rama was acquired by the Denver Art Museum in 1986 from the Doris Weiner Gallery in New York, NY. The Rama sculpture was on display in the Asian Art gallery at the museum.



Torso of Rama. Sandstone, early 10th Century. Cambodia, Prasat Chen.

“As part of our own collections research, the Denver Art Museum contacted our museum colleagues in Cambodia to gather more facts on the *Torso of Rama* piece in the museum’s collection,” said Christoph Heinrich, director of the Denver Art Museum. “We were recently provided with verifiable evidence that was not available to us at the time of acquisition, and immediately began taking all appropriate steps to deaccession the object and prepare it for its return home. In addition to our return of this piece, during this process we have crafted a collaborative relationship with our Cambodian colleagues, and are looking forward to developing cooperative projects and programs that will benefit museum goers and collections in Denver and Phnom Penh.”

His Excellency Chan Tani, Secretary of State of the Kingdom of Cambodia, expressed his government’s appreciation for the return of the *Torso of Rama* from the Denver Art Museum and the opportunity that it will reunite with other statues once located in Prasat Chen of the Koh Ker archaeological site. He added that “The voluntary return of the statue demonstrates the museum’s sensitivity to the importance of Koh Ker era to the Cambodian culture. The return also highlights the serious looting in the past that had occurred in our country and the government’s efforts to repatriate those artifacts that left the country illegally which are parts of our soul as a nation.”

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