



Press Release

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<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/pressroom>

Smart Museum of Art Awarded \$300,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities

NEH grant to support major traveling exhibition *Echoes of the Past*

The University of Chicago's Smart Museum of Art was awarded a \$300,000 implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of *Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan*, a major traveling exhibition that explores one of the most important groups of Buddhist devotional sites in early medieval China. The funds from the grant will be used to support the exhibition's national tour to museums in Washington DC, Dallas, and San Diego.

"We are pleased to have received such generous support from the NEH for this project," said Anthony Hirschel, the Dana Feitler Director of the Smart Museum of Art. "The story of Xiangtangshan is truly remarkable, and the grant will help to spread important new scholarship and engage people across the country with the magnificent sculptures and history of the temple caves."

On view at the Smart Museum from September 30, 2010 through January 16, 2011, *Echoes of the Past* mixes ancient sculpture with a set of innovative digital components in order to shed new light on the original beauty and meaning of the Buddhist cave temples of Xiangtangshan. Carved into the limestone cliffs in the mountains of northern China, the cave temples were the crowning cultural achievement of the sixth-century Northern Qi dynasty. The caves were despoiled in the first half of the twentieth century and have recently become the focus of an international research and reconstruction project based at the University of Chicago. Organized by the Smart Museum and the Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, *Echoes of the Past* showcases these efforts to digitally reconstruct and recontextualize the dispersed objects. After its Chicago debut, the exhibition will travel to the Sackler Gallery (February 26–July 31, 2011), the Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University (August–December 2011), and the San Diego Museum of Art (January–April 2012).

Additional information about the exhibition and research project can be found online at <http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/echoes-of-the-past>.

Credits

Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan is organized by the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago and by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Major funding is provided by the Leon Levy Foundation, the Smart Family Foundation, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Additional support for the Smart Museum's presentation is generously provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the University of Chicago Women's Board, and Helen Zell.

All views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

About the Smart Museum of Art

As the art museum of the University of Chicago, the Smart Museum of Art is home to acclaimed special exhibitions and a permanent collection that spans five thousand years of artistic creation. Working in close collaboration with scholars from the University of Chicago, the Smart has established itself as a leading academic art museum and an engine of adventurous thinking about the visual arts and their place in society.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov.

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Hours
Tues, Wed, Fri 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Thurs 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Sat and Sun 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Galleries closed Mondays and holidays
Café and Museum Shop open daily
Admission is always free

The Smart Museum's general operating funds have been provided in part by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Museum's exhibitions and related programs are generously supported by the Smart Family Foundation; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Tom and Janis McCormick; Nuveen Investments; the Eloise W. Martin Fund; the Office of the Provost, University of Chicago; and the members and friends of the Smart Museum. Education programs are supported by the Polk Bros. Foundation.