

Dr. Louise Virgin Departs after 12 Years as Curator of Asian Art

Worcester, MA – July 17, 2014 – The Worcester Art Museum (WAM) today announced the departure of Dr. Louise Virgin, the Museum’s Curator of Asian Art. During her 12-year tenure, Dr. Virgin was responsible for the renovation of the Japanese gallery and established the Chinese Decorative Arts Gallery. Her dissertation research focused on the intersection of Japanese art and poetry, which has informed her refined approach to text and images during her time at WAM. Her pioneering studies in the art of the Edo and Meiji period in Japan mark a major contribution to the field. Her departure is effective July 16, 2014.

Among her many accomplishments at WAM, Dr. Virgin curated numerous exhibitions of Japanese, Indian, Korean, and Chinese art, ranging from the major exhibition *Samurai Spirit* (2003) to projects exploring the permanent collection, including loans and gifts from many Museum supporters, too numerous to list here. They include the two beautiful and thoughtful exhibitions currently on view: *Abstractions in Blue: Works from the Wise Collection* and *Stencil-dyed Japanese Folk Art Calendars*. In addition, Dr. Virgin also served as coordinator for the current *Knights!* exhibition.

“Louise made major contributions to the Museum,” said WAM Director Matthias Waschek. “Her dedicated efforts transformed our Asian art holdings through creative exhibitions and a number of high-level acquisitions. She will be much missed by her colleagues here at WAM, and we look forward to seeing her future endeavors.”

Dr. Virgin’s acquisitions for the Worcester Art Museum include contemporary Japanese ceramics, 255 prints by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, as well as the artist's masterpiece, the scroll painting *Fujiwara no Yasumasa Playing the Flute by Moonlight*, a major collection of *haiga* (haiku) paintings, and the Kano School *Screen for the New Year*. In addition, she shepherded many significant gifts into the Museum, including works from the collections of Claude Lee, Barbara Milliken, John and Maria Dirlam, Joanne and Douglas Wise, Birgit Faber-Morse, Robert and Nancy Charles, Judith and Paul Falcigno, and John Rossetti.

ABOUT THE WORCESTER ART MUSEUM:

Founded in 1898, the Worcester Art Museum serves Worcester and the broader region. The Museum houses an encyclopedic collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings, and new media. WAM’s collection has historically been strongest in European Renaissance paintings, but with recent acquisitions and donations, like Veronese’s *Venus Disarming Cupid* and the integration of the collection from the Higgins Armory Museum, it continues to diversify and expand its curatorial and programmatic offerings. Symbolized by the opening of the Salisbury Street doors in 2012, the Museum continues toward its goal of accessibility for all visitors.

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