

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

Rachel Parikh Appointed Asian Art Curator at Worcester Art Museum

Worcester, MA—March 2, 2020—The Worcester Art Museum (WAM) today announced the appointment of Rachel Parikh as its new Assistant Curator of Asian Art. Parikh comes to WAM from the Harvard Art Museums where she served as the Calderwood Curatorial Fellow in South Asian art from 2016 until 2019. She has also held curatorial positions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Department of Arms and Armor and the Art Institute of Chicago in the Department of Asian Art. As Assistant Curator of Asian Art at WAM, Parikh’s responsibilities include developing a vibrant exhibition program, building on the Museum’s holdings with new acquisitions, and rethinking the narrative of WAM’s permanent collection galleries. Parikh’s appointment was effective February 18, 2020.

Parikh holds a PhD in art history from the University of Cambridge with an expertise in South Asian and Islamic painting, as well as arms and armor, and has published widely on Asian art, including the 2020 book, *The Khalili Falnama: The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* (London: The Nour Foundation). While at the Harvard Art Museums, Parikh researched and catalogued its comprehensive collection of nearly one thousand works on paper. She also created a dynamic installation program based on the collection. Prior to that, as Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial and Special Collections Fellow in the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she researched and catalogued the South and Southeast Asian collection of arms and armor, which had remained relatively understudied since its acquisition in 1936. While at the Met, she co-curated the exhibition, *Power and Piety: Islamic Talismans on the Battlefield*. Parikh has also worked with the Wallace Collection in London as a research and catalogue specialist for their collection of Indian and Islamic arms and armor.

“It was evident throughout the search that Rachel has not only developed herself as a respected scholar of South Asian art, but she has also given serious thought to how art museums can best present their Asian collections to twenty-first century audiences. I am eager to see how she brings her expertise and thoughtfulness to bear on our galleries,” said Claire Whitner, Director of Curatorial Affairs and James A. Welu Curator of European Art.

Launched in 1901 with a large bequest of Japanese prints from John Chandler Bancroft, WAM’s Asian Art department contains holdings spanning the entire continent with areas of particular depth in Japanese painting and Japanese prints, including extensive holdings from the Edo, Meiji, and postwar eras. Other areas of strength include Chinese painting, ceramics, and jades; modern Japanese ceramics; and Indian and Persian painting.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3,000 BC to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative

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initiatives—including pioneering collaborative programs with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists.

Since its founding in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum has assembled a collection of 38,000 objects: from the ancient Near East and Asia, to European and American paintings and sculptures, and continuing with works by contemporary artists from around the world. WAM has a history of making large scale acquisitions, such as its Medieval Chapter House, the Worcester Hunt Mosaic, its 15th-century Spanish ceiling, and the Flemish *Last Judgment* tapestry. In 2013, the Museum acquired the John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection, comprising two thousand arms and armor objects. It continues to commission and present new works, such as 2017's installation of the immersive [Reusable Universes](#) sculptural series and *Organic Concept* environment by Shih Chieh Huang.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and the third Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$8 for children 4-17, \$14 for seniors 65+ and for college students with ID. Admission is free for Museum Members and children under age four. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free. For more information, visit worcesterart.org.

For more information, please contact:

Julieane Frost

Senior Marketing Manager

julieanefrost@worcesterart.org

508-793-4373