



**American Federation of Arts**

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: 212.988.7700

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY PRESENT  
A SYMPOSIUM IN CONJUNCTION WITH *THE SENSUOUS AND THE SACRED:  
CHOLA BRONZES FROM SOUTH INDIA* AT THE SACKLER GALLERY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
MARCH 8, 2003**

(December 12, 2002) New York, NY—The American Federation of Arts (AFA), a leading arts organization and originator of acclaimed traveling art exhibitions, in collaboration with Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, is hosting a symposium in conjunction with *The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India*. This groundbreaking exhibition—the first in the West devoted to the art of Chola bronzes—features ninth- to thirteenth-century temple bronzes from south India. The symposium will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at 1050 Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. For reservations, please contact 202.357.4880 ext. 367 or [symposium@asia.si.edu](mailto:symposium@asia.si.edu).

Moderated by curator Dr. Vidya Dehejia—former Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, and currently the Barbara Stoler Miller Chair in Indian Art at Columbia University—the symposium will examine the context of the bronzes in ancient temple ritual, as well as in the contemporary festival cycle. The speakers include Dr. Padma Kaimal, Dr. Leslie C. Orr, Dr. Indira Viswanathan Peterson, and Dr. Joanne Punzo Waghorne, all accomplished scholars in the fields of Indian studies, religion and art history.

Dr. Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at the department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, will concentrate on the hymns of the early Tamil poet-saints. Vividly describing images of the deity enshrined in the temple, as well as the temple's natural landscape setting, these poems suggest the bronzes in early Indian devotional religion. Associate Professor and Chair of the department of Religion at Concordia University, Dr. Leslie C. Orr will discuss what Chola period inscriptions reveal about patterns of patronage of divine images as well as the uses of these images in the temple context, bringing to life the ancient milieu of the Chola bronzes. Dr. Padma Kaimal, Associate Professor at the department of Art and Art History at Colgate University, will look at the Nataraja image, focusing on its first appearances in stone and bronze, as well as changes in the meanings the image has taken on. Dr. Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Professor of Religion at the department of Religion at Syracuse University, will explore the festival cycle of the contemporary temple, the adornment of bronze images, and the ritual use of temple bronzes.

*The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India* includes fifty-nine bronzes—among the most spectacular works of art ever created in south Asia—exemplifying the graceful forms, delicate modeling, and remarkable technical sophistication of these sculptures. The exhibition premiered at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in November 2002 and will be on view there until March 9, 2003, before traveling to the Dallas Museum of Art, April 4–June 15, 2003 and the Cleveland Museum of Art, July 6–September 14, 2003. The exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. The exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and The Rockefeller Foundation. Additional exhibition support is provided by Gilbert and Ann Kinney, and the Benefactors Circle of the AFA. The symposium is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Gilbert and Ann Kinney. The catalogue is supported by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

Presentation of this exhibition at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery is made possible by grants from Mary and Farhad Ebrahimi/The Ebrahimi Family Foundation, Margaret and George Haldeman, Nunda Ambegaonkar/Gauri Ambegaonkar Foundation, Gilbert and Ann Kinney, and Sigrid and Vinton Cerf.

Additional funding is provided by the Else Sackler Public Affairs Endowment.

For nearly a hundred years, the **American Federations of Arts** (AFA) has originated and developed traveling art exhibitions in partnership with member museums both here and abroad. Under the leadership of Director Julia Brown, the AFA serves the museum community via its exhibition, education, and professional development programs. Current and upcoming AFA exhibitions include *Degas and the Dance*; *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum*; *American Modern, 1925–1940: Design for a New Age*; and *Millet to Matisse: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century French Painting from Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow*. For additional information visit the AFA's Web site at [www.afaweb.org](http://www.afaweb.org).

The Freer and Sackler galleries together form the national museum of Asian art for the United States. **The Freer Gallery of Art** also houses a major collection of late 19th and early 20th-century American art. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except Christmas Day, Dec. 25, and admission is free. Public tours are offered daily. The galleries are located near the Smithsonian Metrorail station on the Blue and Orange lines. For more information, the public may call (202) 357-2700 or TTY (202) 357-1729, or visit the galleries' Web site at [www.asia.si.edu](http://www.asia.si.edu).