



EXHIBITION

Angkor Royal Bronzes: Art of the Divine

*Press preview
28 April 2025
4.30pm to 6.30pm*

While Khmer art is known around the world for its stone monuments, recent research has provided dramatic breakthroughs regarding our knowledge about its significant bronze statues. Guimet will be dedicating an exhibition to the precious alloy from 30 April to 8 September 2025: "Angkor Royal Bronzes: Art of the Divine".

The highlight of this exhibition will be the Reclining Vishnu from West Mebon, a statue originally measuring over five meters which was discovered in 1936 in an 11th century temple in Western Angkor. After having undergone scientific analyses and restoration in France in 2024, with the support of ALIPH, this national treasure of Cambodia will be exhibited for the very first time with restored fragments. Presented alongside more than other 200 pieces, including 126 exceptional loans from the National Museum of Cambodia, the exhibition takes visitors on a journey to major Khmer heritage sites to discover the evolution of bronze art in Cambodia, from protohistory to modern day.



Reclining Vishnu from Angkor West Mebon Temple, Khmer art, Angkorian era, second half of the 11th century, National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia © National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh / photo Thierry Ollivier / Guimet Museum

Angkor, the capital of the Khmer Empire which dominated mainland Southeast Asia for over five centuries, has kept the vestiges of its past glory: monuments of unparalleled beauty and scale. But while the architecture and stone statues of the Khmer Empire temples (9th to 14th centuries) are frequently celebrated, it is often forgotten that these Buddhist and Brahmanical shrines used to host a whole population of divinities and objects of worship made of precious metals: gold, silver and gilt bronze.

In Cambodia, bronze—a noble alloy of copper, tin and even lead—gave rise to masterpieces attesting to the Khmer rulers' loyalty to Hinduism and Buddhism. Metalwork was exclusively commissioned by the king and involved a sacred technique, carefully guarded within the confines of the workshops next to the royal palace, whether in Angkor (9th – 14th/15th centuries), Oudong (17th – 19th centuries) or Phnom Penh (19th – 20th centuries).

This exhibition explores, for the very first time, the role of the king, who commissioned major bronze castings from the Angkorian period to modern day, and reveals how art and power have remained consistently intertwined.

With exceptional loans from the the National Museum of Cambodia, granted by the Royal Government, as part of the collaboration between

President of Guimet Museum
Yannick Lintz

Curation
Pierre Baptiste, director of conservation and collections at Guimet Museum, curator of the Southeast Asia section

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David Bourgarit, research engineer, Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF)

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Brice Vincent, senior lecturer at Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)

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Thierry Zéphir, research engineer in charge of Himalayan collections at Guimet

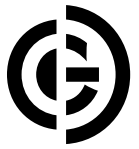
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**Entry for permanent collections
and temporary exhibitions:**
€13, €10 (concessions)
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the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the C2RMF (Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France), the EFEO (École française d'Extrême-Orient) and the Guimet, this unique exhibition brings together a collection of exceptional pieces, some exhibited for the very first time, including statues, objects and architectural elements as well as photographs, casts and graphic documents, placing them in their political, cultural and technical context as well as their archeological and historical importance.

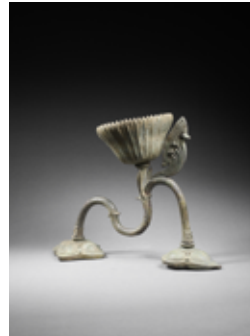
- 240 pieces, including 126 exceptional loans from the National Museum of Cambodia and 60 from the Guimet collections.

- Highlight of the exhibition: *Reclining Vishnu from West Mebon (11th century), the largest bronze sculpture ever found in Angkor, a masterpiece from the National Museum of Cambodia.*

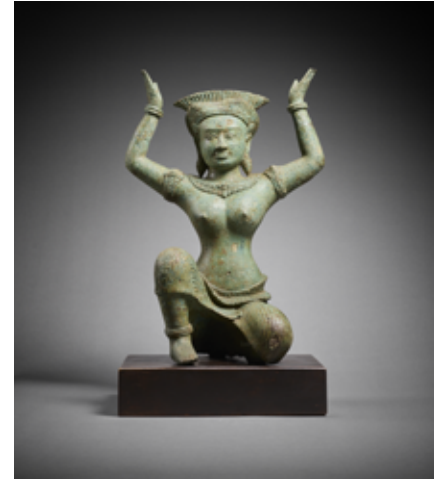
- 6 partner institutions for this international exhibition: Guimet Museum, the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the National Museum of Cambodia, the C2RMF and the EFEO; with the exceptional support of ALIPH.

- Touring exhibition: the complete exhibition will subsequently be presented at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA). Then, the *Mebon Reclining Vishnu* will be exhibited at the National Museum of Asian Art in Washington and the San Francisco Asian Art Museum.

- To mark the centenary of the death of Louis Delaporte—explorer and artist who introduced France to the Angkor site—the exhibition will be showing drawings and casts he made on the site. Guimet is also partnering the exhibition *From Loches to Angkor: Louis Delaporte, the adventure of a lifetime, at the Lansyer Museum and Logis Royal in Loches, France.*



Lamp or incense burner
Khmer art, Angkorian era,
12th century, Cambodia,
Dang Run Bronze ©
National Museum of
Cambodia, Phnom Penh /
photo Thierry Ollivier for
Guimet Museum



Kneeling female figure, mirror stand, Khmer art, Angkorian era, first half of the 12th century, Cambodia © National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh / photo Thierry Ollivier fro Guimet Museum



Door guardian (dvarapala), Khmer art, Angkorian era, late 12th – 13th century, Cambodia or neighbouring countries © National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh / photo Thierry Ollivier for Guimet Museum