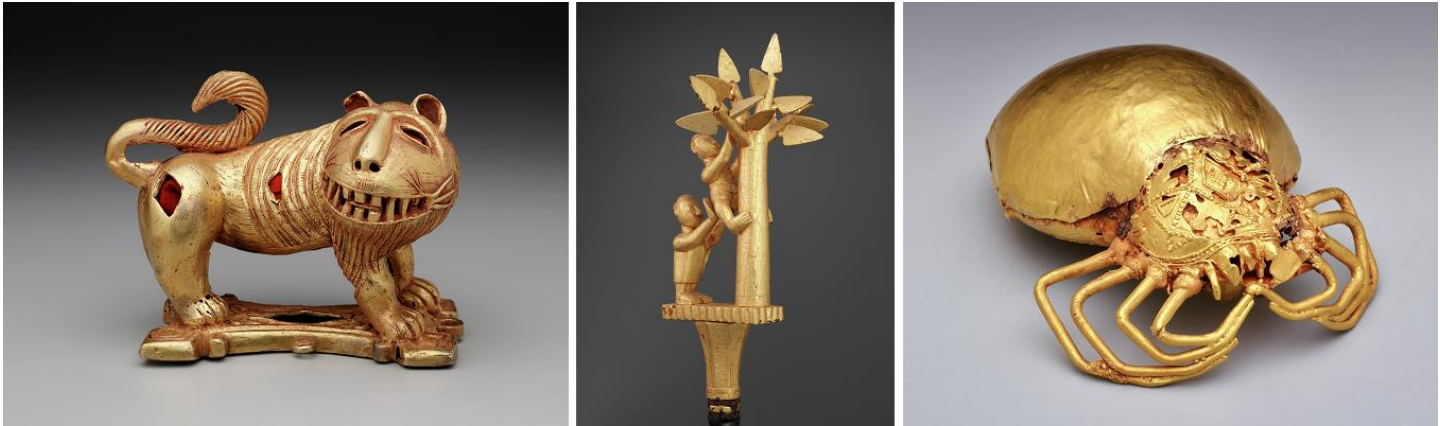


## Three Centuries of Gold Regalia from the Asante Kingdom to Be Presented by the Dallas Museum of Art in April 2018

First Museum Exhibition on the Asante Regalia in Over Three Decades Brings Together Over 250 Objects



Dallas, TX – November 15, 2017 – This April, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) presents an exhibition dedicated to the royal regalia of the Asante kingdom. Spanning three centuries, *The Power of Gold: Asante Royal Regalia from Ghana* brings together over 250 objects, including crowns, sword ornaments, ceremonial furniture, textiles, pectoral disks, weapons, a state umbrella, musical instruments, and jewelry made of wood, silk, brass, iron, and gold. Organized by the DMA and inspired by the Museum's collection, *The Power of Gold* is the first American museum exhibition dedicated to Asante regalia in over 30 years, and explores the unique role and impact of gold on the development of Asante society, economy, and arts. The exhibition is co-presented by Texas Instruments and PNC Bank.

"The DMA's African art collection has grown tremendously in the past decade, and we are thrilled to shed new light on these exquisite objects, and on the history and culture of the Asante people, some of whom reside in our local community," said the DMA's Eugene McDermott Director Agustín Arteaga. "We look forward to welcoming audiences to experience this fascinating culture through the range of skill, symbolism, and tradition infused in this incredible array of royal regalia."

On view from April 15 through August 12, 2018, the exhibition is curated by Dr. Roslyn A. Walker, the DMA's Senior Curator of the Arts of Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific, and The Margaret McDermott Curator of African Art. *The Power of Gold* provides insight on the Asante (also spelled Ashanti), the largest and most prominent group of related Akan (Twi-speaking) peoples in southern Ghana, and the capital at Kumasi, which is adjacent to the Ivory Coast. Founded around 1701 with wealth derived primarily from the gold trade with North Africa and Europe, the Asante kingdom expanded through military conquest to become a powerful and dazzling polity in West Africa.

The DMA's collection of Asante regalia, which is the inspiration for the exhibition, includes a cast gold state sword ornament in the form of a standing lion, an iron state sword with an elaborate handle, a

gold-leafed linguist's (or spokesman's) staff, an intricately cast gold T-shaped bead, and a large cast gold spider. The bead and the spider ornament were owned by Asantehene (King) Kwaku Dua II (who reigned briefly in 1884) and were acquired from a Texas private collection.

The odyssey of these castings will be revealed in the exhibition. The exhibition also includes objects from the Asante art holdings of the British Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the National Museum of African Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Whydah Pirate Museum, and private collections.

*The Power of Gold* explores the aesthetics and cultural significance of Asante royal regalia, much of which is made of or adorned with gold. The exhibition progresses through the following themes:

- **Development of the Asante Kingdom and Importance of the Gold Trade:** Through “gold weights,” scales, and containers for gold dust, this section traces the Asante’s lucrative participation in the gold trade with North Africa and Europe. In addition to the exchange of goods, cultural exchange was an important and inevitable part of the trade. The exhibition includes 14th-century Egyptian brass vessels inscribed with Arabic calligraphy, which Asante artists incorporated into the surface designs on *kuduo*, special storage containers for gold and other valuables. It also includes the oldest extant gold jewelry that sank with the *Whydah* pirate ship off the coast of Cape Cod in 1717.
- **State Regalia:** Includes both the insignia and symbols of royalty and all the personal items of adornment worn or carried by the Asantehene (king) and his attendants and officials. This section includes gold-decorated headwear and elaborate gold sword ornaments that distinguish the king’s sword bearers; carved wood staffs with gold-leafed finials that visualize Asante proverbs and were carried by the king’s linguists (his spokesmen-cum-royal advisors); and cast gold pectoral disks made by lost-wax casting, hammering, or gilding that were worn by certain officials who “washed” the royal’s soul. This section also includes ceremonial stools and chairs carved from wood and decorated with metals and designs expressive of Asante values, and a state umbrella with a finial representing a piece of bamboo, a symbol of strength and resilience, like the king.
  - **Royal Dress and Personal Adornment** is a part of this section and includes crowns from the 19th and 20th centuries, a variety of necklaces composed of gold and other beads, elbow and wrist ornaments, amazing cast gold finger rings, and tooled leather sandals adorned with gold-leafed ornaments. There is a selection of colorful and intricately woven *kente* cloths, which have recently influenced Western contemporary fashion and home furnishings.
  - **Woman: Her Role in Asante Society** closes the State Regalia section. Asante society was matrilineal; inheritance came through the female line. Sculpted wood figures and a

recently commissioned double-pectoral ornament as well as a woman's *kente* cloth are displayed in this section.

- **Ghanaian Royals and African American Honorary Royals in Dallas–Fort Worth.** Asante live all over the world, including in the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex, where they have created local societies. Photographs will portray them in regalia that, while honoring the past, is very much of the present. This section will also feature artifacts and portraits of a group of African Americans who were “enstooled” in 1991 in appreciation for extraordinary hospitality rendered to a visiting Ghanaian king during his visit to Dallas.

“While gold was a key driver of the Asante economy, it also became an incredibly important part of Asante culture,” said Walker. “Using sophisticated techniques, the Asante incorporated gold across many different areas of their lives, but most significantly in royal regalia and ceremonial objects. Through this exhibition, we hope to bring renewed attention to the Asante and deepen public appreciation and understanding of their history, culture, and aesthetics.”

*The Power of Gold: Asante Royal Regalia from Ghana* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue edited by Dr. Roslyn Walker and published by Yale University Press for the DMA. Contributors include Martha J. Ehrlich, Christraud M. Geary, Malcolm D. McLeod, Doran H. Ross, and Dr. Walker.

“Texas Instruments is honored to be a presenting sponsor of *The Power of Gold*, continuing a more than 50-year partnership our organization has had with the DMA,” said Andy Smith, Executive Director of the TI Foundation and Director of Corporate Philanthropy. “TI supports the arts to help improve the quality of life in our North Texas community and to contribute to the thriving arts and culture scene.”

“PNC has a 160-year tradition of enriching our communities through philanthropic support of the arts,” said Brendan McGuire, Regional President & Head of Corporate Banking for PNC. “This work is critical to ensure Dallas remains a vibrant city in which to live, work, and play given the economic benefits of an active arts community. We look forward to supporting the Dallas Museum of Art as they continue to attract globally significant exhibitions like *The Power of Gold* to our city.”

The Museum will celebrate *The Power of Gold* during the April Late Night on Friday, April 20, from 6:00 p.m. until midnight with an evening of programs inspired by the exhibition, including a talk led by Dr. Walker on the craftsmanship and context of Asante royal regalia at 7:00 p.m. Additional programs, including gallery talks, lectures, films, and programming for families, teens, and teachers will be scheduled throughout the run of the exhibition. For dates, prices, and details, visit [DMA.org](http://DMA.org).

*The Power of Gold: Asante Royal Regalia from Ghana* is organized by the Dallas Museum of Art. The exhibition is co-presented by Texas Instruments and PNC Bank. The Dallas Museum of Art is supported, in part, by the generosity of DMA Members and donors, the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Texas Commission on the Arts. *The Power of Gold: Asante Royal Regalia from Ghana* requires a special exhibition ticket of \$16 for adults, with discounts for students, military personnel, and seniors; DMA Members and children 11 and under are free.

[images: Sword ornament in the form of a lion, Ghana, Nsuta, Asante peoples, c. mid–20th century, cast gold and felt, Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc., 2010.2.McD; Linguist staff (*okyeame poma*), Ghana, Asante peoples, first half of the 20th century, wood and gold leaf, Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc., 2010.1.McD; Sword ornament in the form of a spider, Ghana, Asante peoples, late 19th century, gold-copper-silver alloy, Dallas Museum of Art, McDermott African Art Acquisition Fund, 2014.26.1]

### **About the Dallas Museum of Art**

Established in 1903, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is among the 10 largest art museums in the country and is distinguished by its commitment to research, innovation, and public engagement. At the heart of the Museum and its programs is its global collection, which encompasses more than 24,000 works and spans 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Located in the nation's largest arts district, the Museum acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary events, and dramatic and dance presentations. Since the Museum's return to free general admission in 2013, the DMA has welcomed more than 3.2 million visitors. For more information, visit [DMA.org](http://DMA.org).

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