



מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים  
the israel museum, jerusalem  
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

## Israel Museum Announces 2015 Acquisition Highlights

### *Major Gifts in Tribute to Museum's 50th Anniversary Deepen Holdings Across Curatorial Wings*

**Jerusalem, Israel** – January 25, 2016 – The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, today announced a series of important collections and singular works of art acquired on the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. From transformative gifts that elevate the Museum's holdings in archaeology to contemporary works that bolster its representation of leading practitioners in Israel and internationally today, these acquisitions extend the Museum's commitment to reflect universal and local narratives throughout its collections. Totalling more than 400 individual works and 21 complete collections of ancient glass, Greco-Roman sculpture, Judaica, French painting, and more—these 2015 acquisitions are part of a multiyear initiative culminating with the Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015-2016, highlighting the breadth of support worldwide that has contributed to the ongoing growth of the Museum's encyclopedic holdings.

“As we look to our next half-century, we are grateful to the many patrons and collectors whose generosity has been foundational for our standing as one of the most comprehensive encyclopedic collections in the world, strengthening our unique ability to draw meaningful connections between cultures that transcend time and place,” said James S. Snyder, the Anne and Jerome Fisher Director of the Israel Museum. “Throughout our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, we have placed a special focus on expanding the depth and breadth of our holdings, amplifying our narrative of the broad history of human civilization alongside our specific history of visual culture here in Israel. This special year's acquisitions expand on that tradition, furthering our position as a global resource of world cultural heritage.”

Highlights among the Museum's acquisitions in 2015 include:

### **Contemporary Art**

**Cyprien Gaillard**, born Paris 1980, lives in Berlin and New York

*Artefacts*, 2011

35 mm film 12 min. loop, HD video transferred to 35 mm

Ed. 1 AP (5/5)

The Barbara and Eugene Schwartz Contemporary Art Acquisition Endowment Fund



The French artist Cyprien Gaillard traveled to Babylon to film *Artefacts*, reflecting on this ancient civilization's mythical status through a series of documentary recordings of today's post-conflict Iraq. Interspersed with images of the city's ancient heritage, the refrain of David Gray's song *Babylon* hauntingly accompanies Gaillard's romantic, and yet washed-out and dystopian images. The biblical narrative of the destruction of ancient Babel forms an underlying script for the film, which goes on to reference the further damage inflicted

over time by Alexander the Great, by the German archaeologists who transferred Nebuchadnezzar's Ishtar gate to Berlin, by Saddam Hussein, and by the ongoing conflict affecting the region.



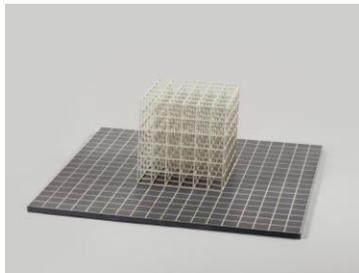
**Ellsworth Kelly**, American, 1923–2015

*White Relief Over Black* (EK905), 2002

Oil on canvas, two joined panels

Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

*White Relief Over Black* is a continuation of Kelly's studies in form and color, representing an important example of his late-career work. The artist's trademark saturation of hues is reduced to two rectangular canvases—one painted a deep shade of black and the other pure white, placed on top of the first panel to create a new three-dimensional form.



**Sol LeWitt**, American, 1928–2007

*Modular Cube/Base*, 1967

Painted wood

Promised gift of Agnes and Edward Lee, London

Sol LeWitt's *Modular Cube/Base* is a prime example of the minimalist principles that underpinned the artist's ongoing interest in geometry and space. Consisting of a stacked, three-dimensional gridded structure placed precisely atop a flat, two-dimensional grid, this work embraces the purity of the square—a form LeWitt revisited throughout his career, beginning with his earliest works from the mid-1960s.



**Doris Salcedo**, Colombian, born 1958

*Atrabiliarios*, 1996

Wall installation with drywall, shoes, cow bladder, and surgical thread, 120 x 198 cm

Gift of Ninah and Michael Lynne, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

Doris Salcedo's *Atrabiliarios* is a large-scale, process-driven wall installation that evokes the feelings of absence and loss inspired by the sudden disappearances that commonly occur in her home country of Colombia. In this work, Salcedo carves niches into a plaster wall and fills those niches with worn shoes donated by families of loved ones who have vanished. Carrying the imprint of the owner's body, these shoes are then entombed within the wall and encased with cow membrane, symbolizing the process of internalizing memory. Barely visible through the membrane, the shoes become a haunting evocation of their absent owners.

## Modern Art



**Max Ernst**, American and French, born Germany, 1891-1976

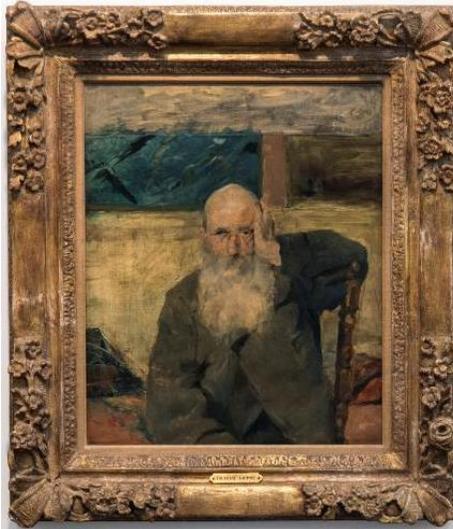
*Loplop Presents*, 1929

Oil on board, wooden cage, painted plaster

Gift to American Friends of the Israel Museum in memory of Edwin A. Bergman and Betty L. Bergman, Chicago

Surrealist artist Max Ernst identified with birds from the age of 14, when “one of his best friends, a most intelligent and affectionate pink cockatoo,” died on the same day his youngest sister was born. Over two decades later, in 1928, Ernst created his alter-ego *Loplop*, the “Bird Superior,” referencing his own bird-like features with smooth fair hair, piercing eyes, and sharp

nose. *Loplop* is typically shown presenting something or someone in the role of a narrator or commentator. Here, *Loplop* gestures toward a cage-like structure attached to the dense plaster surface of the painting, containing red and yellow geometric shapes representing three abstracted imprisoned birds.



**Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**, French, 1864–1901

*Old Man at Celeyran*, 1882

Oil on canvas, 54 x 46 cm

Promised gift of Marty Peretz, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

This early work by Lautrec was painted the same year the artist moved from Albi to Paris. Studying under academic painter Fernand Cormon (1845–1924)—who encouraged his pupils to find subjects on the streets of Paris—Lautrec developed a personal, humanistic approach that prefigured the legendary posters he became associated with during his brief, yet prolific career. *Old Man at Celeyran* demonstrates the psychological insight Lautrec captured in his sitters and augments the Museum’s Post-Impressionist holdings with an important example of the artist’s rhythmic compositions.

## European Art



### 25 French Paintings from the Collection of Alexis Gregory

François Boucher, French, 1703-1770

*Allegory of Autumn: Putti Playing with a Goat*, early 1730s

Oil on canvas, 72 x 72 cm

Promised gift of Alexis Gregory, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

The collection of Alexis Gregory, New York, focuses on French paintings from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, including several of the most significant French painters working in this period, among them François Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Charles Le Brun, and Simon Vouet. Although each of the artists represented were affiliated with the Royal Academy—including four painters serving as *Premier peintre du roi* under Louis XIV, Louis XV, or

Louis XVI—the subjects of their works are extremely varied, ranging from biblical stories to portraits, landscapes, historical narratives, and allegorical scenes.

Among the paintings gifted in honor of the Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, François Boucher's *Allegory of Autumn: Putti Playing with a Goat* (early 1730s) showcases the graceful and sensuous aesthetic of the artist, who played a fundamental role in developing the style made popular during the reign of Louis XV. This example was likely created shortly after Boucher's return to Paris from Rome and references his experience touring the remains of the classical world.

## Photography

### A collection of 55 works of contemporary Israeli photography and video art

Purchased through the gift of Michael G. Jesselson, New York; Nathalie and Jean-Daniel Maman-Cohen, Paris; Marion and Guy Naggar, London; Lauren and Mitchell Presser, New York; and Roselyne C. Swig, San Francisco



Adding depth to an important chapter in the Museum's extensive photographic holdings, this collection includes 55 works by contemporary Israeli photographers Ilit Azoulay, Micha Bar-Am, Deganit Berest, Yossi Breger, Dor Guez, Michal Heiman, Yehudit Sasportas, Assaf Shacham, and Rona Yefman, among others. This acquisition extends the Museum's longstanding tradition of collecting the photographic work of new and established Israeli

practitioners, further distinguishing it as one of the world's leading holdings with more than 75,000 works spanning the history of the medium from the time of its invention to the present and reflecting developments in the medium both in Israel and worldwide. These newly acquired works will be on view beginning in May 2016 in the Museum's annual *New in Photography* display.

## Design



**Shiro Kuramata**, Japanese, 1934–1961

*Glass Chair*, 1976

Glass and adhesive, limited edition 37/40

Gift of Richard Schlagman, Locarno

Manufactured by Mihoya Glass Co. Ltd., Tokyo

One of the most prominent designers in post-WWII Japan, Shiro Kuramata forged an aesthetic that combines Japanese minimalism with European Post-Modernism. An important example of his design approach, *Glass Chair* plays with viewers' perceptions of functionality. The fragility of the chair's glass material is offset by its durable physical properties, and its capacity to bear the weight of a seated person creates an element of surprise that transforms the automatic act of sitting into a conscious, cautious, and mindful experience.

## Asian Art



**Hotai Gosei**, Japanese, active 1804–1844

*Tea Harvesting in Uji near Kyoto*, mid-1820s

Ink and natural pigment on paper; six-panel pair of screens

Gift of the Gitter-Yelen Collection, New Orleans and New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

This screen depicts the harvesting of the first tea leaves in early spring. By the early nineteenth century, Japan's exclusive tea culture of the Imperial court became widespread, with Uji tea leaves being highly prized among city dwellers. In this panoramic view of endless tea fields, a group of fashionable women tour the protective tea sheds, where stylish workers seem to carry out with ease the arduous labor of picking tea leaves. An inscription reveals that the screen was commissioned by Senshuken, who was most likely a tea or sake merchant, as indicated by the family crest painted on the flags in the background. This work was gifted in honor of the Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, along with Zen Buddhist Japanese scroll paintings from the early 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> century by Lu Ji, Bian Jingzhao, Wu Jishan, and Wang Zhao, also from the Gitter-Yelen Collection.

## Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas



Edo people, Court of Benin, Nigeria

*Benin Royal Bracelet*, 16<sup>th</sup> century

Bronze

Gift of the Faith-dorian and Martin Wright family, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum in memory of their son, Jordan M. Wright

This rare bronze bracelet from the Court of Benin in Nigeria features a relief and incised casting depicting a human face, assumed to be that of an Edo king. The abstract curvilinear forms radiating from this central design may represent the tails of mudfish, an important motif in Benin culture symbolizing eternal life. The Royal Bracelet adds to the Museum's holdings in African art, whose earliest works date from the sixth century BCE to the third century CE with the latest dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Five Precolumbian textiles, including textile panels, and textile strip**

Paracas, Wari, and Lambayeque, Peru

*Textile Panel with Fishing Scene, 900–1350 CE*

Camelid, cotton, pigment

Gift of Charles and Valerie Diker, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

Among five Precolumbian textiles gifted to the Museum in 2015, this narrative panel underscores the llama's centrality to Lambayeque culture and ritual as an Andean symbol of fertility and abundance. Flanking the god are four attendants shown in profile with llama motifs on their headresses. Their formation recalls the natural occurrence of female llamas herding or gathering around another female in labor in order to protect her from potential predators. This gift further enriches the Museum's significant collection of Andean textiles, which includes examples ranging from 200 BCE to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

## Jewish Art and Life



**26 objects of European Jewish Ritual Art from the Collection of Charles Michael**

16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century

Gift of Charles Michael, San Francisco, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

This donation covers a wide range of silver ritual objects from Eastern Europe, Germany, Holland, Italy, and the United Kingdom, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The collection consists of ceremonial artifacts typically used in the synagogue, including a Torah crown, finials, shield and pointers; private ritual objects such as spice containers and Kiddush cups; together with objects which relate to the philanthropic realm of Jewish life, including a monumental decorative German beaker with a burial society inscription dated 1590, the earliest cup of its kind in the collection. Other highlights include a rare pair of

eighteenth century Torah finials manufactured by the "Queen of English Silversmith," Hester Bateman of London, in the neo-classical style and a late 18<sup>th</sup> century Torah shield from Lemberg, Austrian Empire, engraved with a depiction of the Binding of Isaac and a detailed plan of the Second Temple of Jerusalem.

Continuing the legacy of his parents, Charles Michael's gift is a major addition to the Museum's holdings, further enhancing its position as the world's most comprehensive collection of Jewish Art and Life.

## Archaeology



### **Belfer Collection**

Ancient Greco-Roman art and Roman and Near-Eastern glass vessels  
Promised gift of Renée and Robert Belfer, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

Considered among the most significant private holdings of antiquities in the world, the collection of Renée and Robert Belfer, New York, features hundreds of ancient Greco-Roman and Near-Eastern glass vessels—recognized as some of the most impressive specimens of their kind—as well as important examples of Greco-Roman sculpture in bronze and marble. The Belfer Collection enables the Museum to strengthen its archaeological representation of the important history of ancient Israel's neighboring cultures and the foundational role that Greco-Roman civilization played in the history of the region.

The collection is particularly notable for its exceptional holdings of ancient glass from the earliest stages of glass production in the Late Bronze Age through the Islamic period, including extremely rare and exquisitely preserved pieces, which are a significant addition to the Museum's holdings, given the role of ancient Israel in the history of early glass production. Other key works in the collection include Greek, Southern Italian, and Etruscan pottery; Greek and Roman sculpture and relief work; and frescoes and mosaics.



### **Demirjian Family European Bronze Age Collection**

Europe, Late Bronze Age (1800-1200 BCE)

Gift of Torkom, Paul, James, and Gregory Demirjian, New York and Connecticut, to American Friends of the Israel Museum

The Demirjian Family Bronze Age collection provides a rare glimpse of over 600 of the finest hand-crafted objects from Bronze Age Europe, including examples of the earliest evidence of civilized European history, together with elaborate ritual items reflecting the last pre-Roman cultures in Western Europe. Objects in the Demirjian Collection reflect exemplary artistic execution and together offer a comprehensive display rarely seen in a single institutional setting. Both as ancient art objects and as early experiments in abstract form, the Demirjian Collection appeals to the most timeless and the most contemporary of artistic sensibilities.