
Department of Arms and Armor Newsletter

Fall 2022



**THE
MET**

Foreword



It is a great pleasure to share in this issue of our Newsletter some of our department's most recent activities and accomplishments, and to provide a glimpse of projects that will bear fruit in the near future. In this issue, you will find updates on acquisitions, conservation, exhibitions, cataloguing projects, and much more. I hope you will enjoy reading the Newsletter as much as we enjoyed writing it. The different sections are indeed contributions from the department's staff, who are excited to provide insights into what we have been doing since the release of the previous Newsletter issue.

In 2020 Distinguished Research Curator Stuart W. Pyhrr and Curator Donald J. La Rocca decided to retire after decades of service to the Museum and our field. In recognition of their dedication and immense contributions, the Board of Trustees elected them as Curators Emeriti. I am pleased to report that both Stuart and Don are still actively involved in departmental projects on a contractual basis. Stuart is the co-author and scientific editor of a catalogue of armors made in the royal workshop at Greenwich, which are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection or promised gifts to the Museum. The manuscript is being reviewed with the publisher. Don is contributing several essays to a publication project directed by Nikos D. Kontogiannis, Director of Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks and a former Fellow in our department. The resulting book will focus on a hoard of European armor from the fortress of Chalcis, a great portion of which is in our department's collection.

Over the last years, there have been other important staff changes. I am pleased to share the news that following the promotion of Assistant Curator John Byck to Associate Curator two years ago, Assistant Conservator Sean Belair was made Associate Conservator last year, and Visiting Researcher Markus Sesko was hired as the department's first Associate Curator of Asian Arms and Armor. In addition, Associate Administrator Catherine Chesney and Collections Manager Steven J. Bluto were promoted to full Administrator and Senior Collections Manager, respectively. These staff changes acknowledge outstanding performance and the ever-growing scope of my dear colleagues' contributions.

All of us deeply appreciate the support that we have received, which makes our work possible. The Negrolì Society and Friends of Arms and Armor offer great opportunities to get involved. Thank you for your ongoing interest in what we do!

Pierre Terjanian
Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Curator in Charge

Exhibitions



Our recent special exhibition *Emperors, Artists & Inventors: Transformative Gifts of Fine Arms and Armor*, closed in February after a successful and well-attended one-year run. Featuring forty-six exquisite pieces of armor, ornate swords, and luxurious firearms, all recently donated to The Met in celebration of the Museum's 150th anniversary, the exhibition celebrated the unflinching generosity and support of the following individuals and foundations:

- Anne Brockinton Lee and The Robert M. Lee Foundation
- Irene Roosevelt Aitken, the Russell B. Aitken and Irene R. Aitken Collection
- Laird Landmann and Kathleen Kinney
- Ronald S. Lauder
- Steven Kossak and The Kronos Collections
- Dr. Kenneth Lam and Dr. Vivian Chui
- Edward V. LaPuma

Cover:
Mounting for a Short Sword (Wakizashi). Japanese, 19th century. H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1378a-c)

Left:
Exhibition title wall with Half-Shaffron for an Armor of King Philip IV of Spain (1605–1665) or his Brother Don Carlos (1607–1632). Attributed to Pierre du Coudroy (French, 1560–ca. 1626) and François Le Gras (Flemish, active ca. 1600–40). Flemish, Brussels, 1624–26. Promised Gift of Ronald S. Lauder, in celebration of the Museum's 150th Anniversary

Right:
Exhibition view

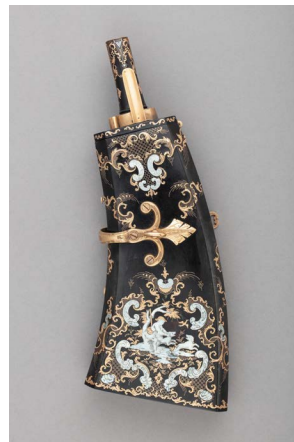
Exhibitions



Clockwise from upper left:
Close Helmet. German,
possibly lower Saxony, ca.
1530. Promised Gift of Dr.
Kenneth Lam and Dr. Vivian
Chui, in celebration of the
Museum's 150th Anniversary

Gold-inlaid Colt Model 1849
Pocket Revolver (serial no.
63306). American, Hartford,
ca. 1853. Gift of The Robert
M. Lee Foundation, in
celebration of the Museum's
150th Anniversary, 2018
(2018.856.1)

Presentation Smallsword.
Martin-Guillaume Biennais
(French, 1764–1843, active
ca. 1796–1819). French, Paris,
ca. 1814. Russell Barnett
Aitken and Irene Roosevelt
Aitken Collection, Promised
Gift of Irene Roosevelt
Aitken, in celebration of the
Museum's 150th Anniversary



Powder Flask. Italian, Naples,
ca. 1740–50. Russell Barnett
Aitken and Irene Roosevelt
Aitken Collection, Promised
Gift of Irene Roosevelt
Aitken, in celebration of the
Museum's 150th Anniversary

Winchester Model 1886
Takedown Rifle decorated
by Tiffany & Co. (serial
no. 120528). American,
New Haven and New York,
1899–1900. Gift of The
Robert M. Lee Foundation, in
celebration of the Museum's
150th Anniversary, 2018
(2018.856.3)



Lamellar Shoulder Defenses.
Tibetan, 14th–16th century.
Promised Gift of Laird
Landmann and Kathleen
Kinney, in celebration
of the Museum's 150th
Anniversary, 2020



Our current special exhibition *Samurai Splendor: Sword Fittings from Edo Japan*, on view in Gallery 380 (Sulzberger) until Spring 2024, explores the luxurious aspects of Edo-period (1615–1868) sword fashion, a fascinating form of arms and armor rarely featured in exhibitions outside Japan. For the Samurai, then the ruling class, swords were an indispensable symbol of power and authority. Sword mountings and fittings thus became a critical means of self-expression and a focal point of artistic creation.

The installation presents a selection of exquisite sword mountings, fittings, and related objects, including maker's sketchbooks, all drawn from The Met collection and many rarely or never exhibited before.

The exhibition was made possible by the Vilcek Foundation.



Clockwise from upper left:
Exhibition title wall with Blade and Mounting for a Short Sword (Wakizashi), blade and mounting, 19th century; sword guard, 16th century. H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1378a–c)

Exhibition view

Blade and Mounting for a Dagger (Tantō), mid–late 19th century, fittings and blade by Miyata Nobukiyo (1817–1884). Gift of Brayton Ives and W. T. Walters, 1891 (91.2.75)

Blade and Mounting for a Short Sword (Wakizashi), 19th century. Gift of Brayton Ives and W. T. Walters, 1891 (91.2.52)

Exhibitions



From top:
Sword Guard (Tsuba), 19th century. H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1011)

Blade and Mounting for a Sword (Katana), 19th century. Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1728a, b)

Opening event

New Acquisitions



Percussion Longrifle

Wood (maple), iron, steel, brass, silver
Benjamin J. Kough (American, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 1824–1850 Ebensburgh, Pennsylvania)
American, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, ca. 1845–50
Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Chilton, Jr. Gift, 2020 (2020.262)

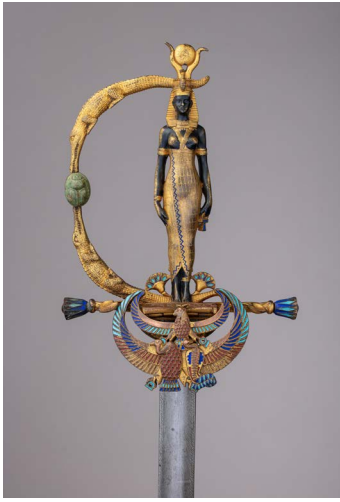
Longrifles, also known as Kentucky rifles, flourished as a uniquely American art form from about 1770 through the 1830s, after which they were steadily superseded by factory-made arms, ceasing to exist as a distinct genre by about 1850. One of the finest late examples, from the very end of this tradition, was recently added to the collection thanks to the continued generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Chilton. Made by the tragically short-lived gunsmith and silversmith Benjamin J. Kough (1824–1850) in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania about 1845–50, this percussion longrifle is lavishly decorated with 82 silver inlays and enhanced with beautifully engraved brass mounts. It is a true masterpiece and a fitting capstone to the Museum's longrifle collection.



Smith & Wesson Model 1 ½ Second Issue Revolver (serial no. 30451) with Case

Steel, silver, gold, mother of pearl, brass, wood, velvet
Manufacturer: Smith & Wesson (American, established 1852)
Decorator: Gustave Young (American, born Prussia), 1827–1895 Springfield, Massachusetts)
American, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1869
Purchase, Ronald S. Lauder, Steven V. Maksin, Alejandro Santo Domingo and Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Gifts, 2021 (2021.397a, b)

Thanks to the generosity of Ronald S. Lauder, Steven V. Maksin, and Alejandro Santo Domingo, and to the Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Gifts, the Department was recently able to acquire one of the most beautiful and well-preserved Smith and Wesson revolvers to survive from the second half of the nineteenth century. The pistol belongs to an exclusive group of Smith and Wesson revolvers with extensive engraved and gold inlaid decoration, produced for display at international exhibitions and as gifts to heads of state, celebrities, and important company officials in the late 1860s and 1870s. Smith and Wesson presented one to President Ulysses S. Grant in 1870 and it is likely that The Met's revolver, decorated in a nearly identical fashion by the same engraver one year earlier, inspired its design. The engraver, Gustave Young, trained at the prestigious Industrial School in Zella, immigrating to the U.S. from Germany in 1853. Now on view in the Robert M. Lee Gallery of American Arms, the revolver is the first classically decorated Smith and Wesson revolver to enter the collection, filling a critical gap.



Presentation Sword Honoring Commandant Jean-Baptiste Marchand (1863–1934) for His Conduct at Fashoda

Copper alloy, gold, enamel, jade, and steel, L. 39 1/2 in. (100.3 cm), W. 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm), D. 1 5/8 in. (4.1 cm), Wt. 1 lb. 13.4 oz. (833 g)

Hilt designed by Jean-Joseph-Marie-Anatole Marquet de Vasselot (French, 1840–1904), probably cast by Siot-Decauville, and decorated by Louis Alphonse Auger (French, 1834–1904)

French, 1881–1926

Paris, 1889

Purchase, Friends of Arms and Armor Gifts, 2020 (2020.90)

A celebration of French colonialism and patriotic pride, this sword also served an anti-Semitic agenda. It was commissioned by the conservative French daily newspaper *La Patrie* to honor Jean-Baptiste Marchand, a French military officer who had crossed Africa at the head of a small expeditionary force. While opposing calls to rehabilitate Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer that the army's high command had convicted of treason without cause or due process, the newspaper considered Marchand an inspiring figure. In its pages it advertised the process of selecting the hilt's design and the solemn circumstances of the sword's presentation. The iconography and polychromatic decoration of the hilt reflect the vogue for Orientalism and burgeoning antiquarian preoccupations that had been fueled by recent archaeological expeditions in Egypt.

Three examples of this sword are known. It appears that the caster and the jeweler each kept one and that the third, now in the Musée de l'Armée, Paris, is that which was presented to Marchand.



Powder Horn of John Mahard

Engraved by John Bush (American, ca. 1725–ca. 1758)
Cowhorn, wood, and iron, L. 12 3/8 in. (31.5 cm), Diam. 2 3/4 in. (7 cm), Wt. 7 5/8 oz. (216 g)

American, dated 1756

Purchase, Friends of Arms and Armor, 2021 (2021.429)

This powder horn was used in the French and Indian War (1754–63), a conflict between the British and French over territories in North America. The distinctive carved ornamentation is by John Bush, a free African American Massachusetts militiaman who was deeply influential in his use of decorative motifs and copperplate calligraphy, and who is generally regarded as the founder of the Lake George School of horn carving. Captured during the war, Bush died when he was only about 31 years old while a prisoner of the French. His works are understandably scarce, and this is one of the most profusely decorated among them.

Engaging with the Asian Arms and Armor Collection

With great change comes great opportunity.

After being with the Department for three years as a Visiting Researcher, Markus Sesko joined our ranks in a permanent capacity in September of 2021. As Associate Curator of Asian Arms and Armor, Markus is now overseeing a large part of our collection that spans a wide range of cultures. Among other things, he has been collaborating with other departments, e.g., Asian Art on their installation *Shell and Resin: Korean Mother-of-Pearl and Lacquer* that featured one of our Korean saddles (Fig. 1). He has also been overseeing loans to other institutions that will display some of our prized Asian objects in upcoming international exhibitions.

Markus is working on featuring our Asian holdings in a more prominent and engaging way in the future, and he is looking forward to contributing to scholarship in this field as well.



Clockwise from left:
Ceremonial Armor for a High Ranking Official. Chinese, 18th century. Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.5a-t)

Saber (Shamshir) with Scabbard. Probably Indian; hilt and scabbard, Indian, probably Lucknow. Hilt and scabbard, dated 1819; blade, 18th century. Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1302a, b)

Saddle. Korean, 15th century. Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.163.5)

Sword Guard. Tibetan or Chinese, 14th–15th century. Gift of Steven Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 2014 (2014.533)

Markus Sesko

Conservation



They say variety is the spice of life, and we have seen a great deal of variety in the lab this year.

Our work has included the oldest object, not just in our collection, but in the entire museum, an over 400,000-year-old hand axe, as well as our most contemporary acquisition, an engraved American long rifle made in 2018 by Alaska-based riflesmith Judson Brennan.

We have conserved and mounted objects from four continents including Japanese sword mountings and fittings for *Samurai Splendor: Sword Fittings from Edo Japan*; European armor going on loan to Vienna for the Kunsthistorisches Museum's *Iron Men: Fashion in Steel*; engraved American firearms; and a silver-hilted Sudanese sword conserved by our Summer Conservation Intern, Isabelle Lobley.

Currently, we are conserving and mounting over twenty incoming loans to enhance our galleries, including Russian and American firearms, a garnet hilted medieval sword, Eurasian sabers, crusader pommels, European helmets, and an Italian seventeenth-century siege armor, as well as preparing for changes to our displays of ancient arms and armor in Gallery 370.

We look forward to another exciting year helping our galleries reflect the global and pan-historic (even prehistoric) nature of our collection.

Conservation



Opposite Page:
Biface, ca. 400,000–150,000
B.C. (2019.422)

Clockwise from above:
Ted Hunter installing
a Ceremonial Sword
(Udamalore), Nigerian, 17th–
19th century (1991.17.122)

Using poulticing to remove
staining from an American
longrifle by Judson J.
Brennen (2022.31)

Isabelle Lobley buffing
a Sudanese Kaskara
(1977.102.3)



The Negroli Society and Friends of Arms and Armor

Friends of Arms and Armor have been getting together regularly to meet virtually with speakers and ask questions following their presentations. The virtual events series has been especially attractive to our Department's Friends who reside in other parts of the United States and abroad, as participation does not require any travel. In parallel, events have resumed onsite.



Our Friends gathered last March for the opening of *Samurai Splendor: Sword Fittings from Edo Japan*, in November for an exclusive display of and special presentation on carved powder flasks from the French Renaissance, and more recently in May for a presentation by sculptor David Hayes on his career and a project that he is currently working on to enhance the Department's permanent galleries. Going forward we will continue to provide a mix of onsite and virtual events, taking advantage of the benefits that each format has to offer. Look for the program of activities for the new season, which is forthcoming!



In April, Friends of Arms and Armor met in Vienna, Austria to visit *Iron Men: Fashion in Steel*, an arms and armor exhibition held at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, which included important loans from the collection of Ronald S. Lauder and from our Department.



In addition to the special tour of the exhibition, which was led by Dr. Stefan Krause, Ronald S. Lauder Director of the Imperial Army, our group visited public collections of arms and armor, and learned about the work of the conservation workshops of the Federal Monuments Authority Austria. Among many highlights, we were able to view up close what is probably the largest group of late medieval painted pavises (shields) known to survive, in a state-of-the-art offsite storage facility of the Wien Museum. We also had the privilege of examining a large-scale panel painting after it was specially conserved in relation to *The Last Knight* exhibition and its catalogue. We are grateful to our hosts for their hospitality and for the access that they so generously provided to their treasures and expertise.

As the Vienna trip was a success and enjoyed by all, we look forward to organizing more trips in the near future.

Dispatches from the Field

Published every two weeks, the Dispatches from the Field are one of the signature outreach platforms for the Arms and Armor Department. At the time of writing, we have reached 78 issues, covering topics in every area of the Department's activities. The Dispatches have presented conservation treatments, recent acquisitions, the activities of interns, and original research on various parts of the collection.

At the Department's Visiting Committee meeting in November of 2021, the Committee was unanimous in their support of the project and expressed a clear desire to see the publication process continue. Staff from within the Museum and from our sister institutions have expressed a similar sentiment. This type of short publication on arms and armor specific topics is unavailable otherwise. Plans are presently in the works to provide access to back issues on the Museum's website.

Dispatches from the Field Conservation

Japanese Metalwork in the Arms and Armor Collection: Alloys and Mixed Metals

Dispatches from the Field

Gift to The Met: Arms and Armor

Lighter: from a Pair of Blued Barrels

Zischägge

Preserved in New York: Louis D. Nimschke

American Rifle at the Met

Most metals, even gold, are rarely used in their pure form. By combining metals as alloys, the properties of metals can be adjusted and improved depending on the application or desired appearance. Silver, for example, is commonly alloyed with copper to provide strength and durability. Iron must be combined with small amounts of carbon to make steel, and the addition of elements like chromium turns steel into stainless steel. Precious metals may also be alloyed with lesser metals to reduce cost without visibly changing the appearance of the metal, a key detail behind the story of Archimedes and King Hiero's debased crown.* Just as the techniques of artists vary around the world, so does the use of alloys, with different regions developing recipes often not seen elsewhere.

in word, and with it what we call to hunt animals, to defend their these implements conferred such on alone, not to mention their before symbols as much as tools and wealth valued beyond their

longlife pictured here is the first Department's collection (Figs. 1-4) by the Alaska-based riflemith in his sons Seth and Jesse, the gun ed and current evolution of the d almost three hundred years ago

ublished Issue 29 of *Dispatches* is D. Nimschke's Workbook and introduced two objects preserved German-American engraver Louis M. Lee Foundation: [Nimschke's](#) course of his career as a record of at inspired him—and [his personal](#) present *Dispatch* offers a brief another more recent gift from the fodel Musket made by the Evans raved by Nimschke (Figs. 1–4). irticle on this piece, we wish to a great example of this important that links up and illuminates

ols in the Russell Barnett Aitken Gift of Irene Roosevelt Aitken iversary. The pair came to the exhibition [Emperors, Artists & us and Armor](#), along with twelve sly promised to the collection by in the design of European cavalry n (heavy cavalry) predominantly the wearer's head, the hussars and ent cavalry units increasingly wore Zischägge, a distinctive type of ce helmet. Already favored by the Ottomans and Mamluks in the 15 century (Figs. 2, 3), the type likely became a familiar sight in Europe following Ottoman military campaigns and the eventual t of sizeable territories in the Balkans and Hungary.

Interns and Volunteers

Adrienne Arsht Interns

Since the last issue of the newsletter, Arms and Armor has hosted four interns with the help of our colleagues in Education and the generosity of Adrienne Arsht.



Asante Crews

In the Spring of 2020, the Department hosted a collections management intern, Asante Crews, a recent graduate of Brown University, with a degree in Archaeology and the Ancient World. Unfortunately, as the Museum closed due to the pandemic, internships were suspended so we were very pleased to be able to welcome Asante back to the Department once internships resumed. Remote access to shared servers and digital records enabled Asante to resume her project focused on deaccessioned object files—records essential to the history of the collection. As staff gradually returned on-site, we were also able to offer a chance for Asante to gain hands-on experience in collections care. Since the end of her internship, Asante has worked on archaeological digs in Boncuklu Höyük, Turkey and in Jordan.



José Carlos

In the Fall of 2021, the Department hosted José Carlos as a collections management intern. José continued the work of incorporating deaccessioned records into the collections database. He is pursuing his B.A. in History at Columbia University, with expected graduation in May 2023. José is a first-generation college student from Texas seeking a museum career. We were pleased to be able to offer José insights into the history of the collection, as well as hand-on experience with American objects relating to his area of interest.



Ritika Talwar

In Spring 2022, Ritika Talwar was the collections management intern, working on a pilot project to digitize archival material. At the time of her internship, Ritika was a civil engineering

undergraduate student at LaGuardia Community College, where she graduated soon after completing her internship. She is currently continuing her studies at the City College of New York. Ritika plans to work in engineering and construction, a career path that informs her interest in art and design, including arms and armor. Ritika assisted in digitizing documents relating to accessioning of artwork through purchase or gift, laying the foundation for future digitization of these important departmental records.



Isabelle Lobley

Our Summer 2022 conservation intern, Isabelle Lobley is a fourth-year student at the Conservation Center at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts with a particular interest in arms and armor. Her prior internships include time at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, working with the Cody Firearms Museum on small arms. Her projects as an Adrienne Arsht Intern have included cleaning the silver pommel of a Sudanese Sword (Kaskara) and performing treatments on a pair of Indian arm guards. Isabelle will be doing a fourth-year internship with the Royal Armouries.

Volunteers

As the Museum has gradually returned to normal operations, we were thrilled to be able to welcome back our dedicated cohort of volunteers this Spring. Because of density requirements, we were not able to invite them back at the same time staff returned onsite, and they had been greatly missed.

Our department has hosted a robust volunteer program for nearly ten years, with dozens of volunteers supporting vital projects. These include large-scale department priorities such as digitizing gallery labels and archival material and recording information in the collections database. Additionally, volunteers with specialized skills such as fluency in foreign languages, advanced degrees in art history and archaeology, or imaging standards and technology, have worked on more focused projects aligned with their expertise. Many former volunteers have pursued advanced degrees or secured employment at various arts institutions. Other long-serving volunteers have been retirees looking to support arts and culture, and to stay engaged with the Museum they care for deeply. We thank all our dedicated volunteers for their service and friendship,

To learn more about volunteering at The Met, visit metmuseum.org/join-and-give/volunteer, or contact armsandarmor@metmuseum.org.

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The Arms and Armor Department is on Instagram—
please join our growing audience!
<https://www.instagram.com/metarmsandarmor/>

Dispatches from the Field

If you would like to be on our mailing list,
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The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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