

National Gallery of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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**"THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHINESE ARCHAEOLOGY:
CELEBRATED DISCOVERIES FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA"**
OPENS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, SEPTEMBER 19, 1999

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from The People's Republic of China, a landmark exhibition of the most important archeological discoveries of the region from the last forty years, will be on view at the National Gallery of Art, East Building, September 19, 1999, through January 2, 2000. This survey will provide a unique opportunity to see masterpieces dating from 5000 B.C. to the tenth century A.D. (the Neolithic through the Early Imperial periods). More than 175 works presented in the show were excavated from archaeological sites since 1955, including almost 100 objects discovered in the 1980s and 1990s alone. Many were found in tombs and were probably created for use during the lifetime of the deceased as well as for the afterlife. Representing the earliest and best for each medium or type, many have never before been shown in the United States or outside of China.

The exhibition is sponsored by Eastman Kodak Company.

After its showing at the National Gallery, the exhibition will be on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, February 13 through May 7, 2000, and The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, June 17 through September 11, 2000.

"The works exhibited here represent great achievements in Chinese archaeology. The study of these works has made possible the reconstruction in far greater detail than ever before the cultural meaning of ancient works of art in their own time," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are extremely grateful to Eastman Kodak Company for its generous support of the exhibition."

"All great exhibitions open windows on the past," said Kodak Chairman George Fisher, "though in Western eyes, two or three hundred years seems a long time. But here we discover themes and motifs that thread themselves through 60 centuries of unbroken visual culture. Through their remarkable works, we encounter people as committed to their craft as anyone alive today. Kodak is pleased and honored to sponsor this exhilarating record of a golden age."

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The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology is a sequel to the exhibition of archaeological finds from China shown at the National Gallery of Art in 1974. The current exhibition, which encompasses a great range of ancient Chinese cultures, shows that Chinese civilization and art did not originate at a specific time or place, as previously believed, but developed from the interaction and assimilation among various cultures that flourished concurrently all over China.

Recent archaeological discoveries in the exhibition include sculpture, ritual objects, furniture, coffins, textiles, and decorative objects made of clay, jade, stone, bamboo, ivory, lacquer, gold, silver, bronze, glass, and silk. "Late Prehistoric China" (c. 5000-2000 B.C.) shows works from several cultures including painted pottery and jade ritual objects and ornaments. Among works in "Bronze Age China" (c. 2000-771 B.C.) are stylized human figures, which were buried for reasons unknown, and oracle bones inscribed with divinations for the ruler. "Chu and Other Cultures" (c. 770 - 221 B.C.) includes hand-embroidered textiles, with their colors remarkably vivid even after more than 2,000 years; mysterious lacquer monsters decorated with antlers; and a chime of twenty-six ritual bells, with a range of almost five octaves. Along with other works of art, "Early Imperial China" (221 B.C. - 924 A.D.) features terra-cotta soldiers from the First Emperor's tomb; two jade burial suits for royalty; Buddhist sculpture with much of its original paint and gilding; and an elegant pair of painted marble reliefs of an orchestra and attendants.

The guest curator for the exhibition is Dr. Xiaoneng Yang, curator of Chinese art at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, who has worked closely with scholars and archaeologists in China to select the works of art included in the exhibition.

A fully illustrated catalogue written by leading scholars of early Chinese art and archaeology will be published by the National Gallery of Art. Yale University Press will distribute the hardcover version. An introductory essay traces the development of Chinese archaeology. Essays about the excavation sites and cultures are followed by brief descriptions of each work's historical and artistic significance. The catalogue will be available in mid-September in hard and softcover at the National Gallery of Art Shops. To order by phone using a credit card, call (301) 322-5900 or (800) 687-9350, or visit the Gallery's Web site at <http://www.nga.gov>.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, in cooperation with the State Administration of Cultural Heritage and Art Exhibitions China, The People's Republic of China.

Additional support has been provided by The Henry Luce Foundation. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The catalogue is supported by a grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

The National Gallery of Art, located on the National Mall at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. Admission is free. For general information, call (202) 737-4215, or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the National Gallery of Art's Web site at <http://www.nga.gov>. To receive the Gallery's free bimonthly Calendar of Events, call (202) 842-6662.

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The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from The People's Republic of China opens today at the National Gallery of Art, revealing to visitors more than 6,000 years of Chinese art and archaeology. This Eastman Kodak Company-sponsored exhibition provides a forum for visitors to view and contemplate extraordinary works, opening a new world to those previously unfamiliar with China's rich cultural heritage. Kodak's sponsorship of this important exhibition is symbolic of the company's long-standing, unique relationship with China.

In 1927, Kodak opened its first China office in Shanghai after decades of successful business practice. More than seventy years later, in 1998, Kodak recognized China as one of the fastest growing markets for photography—on track to surpass Japan and perhaps the United States, as the number one photography market in the 21st Century.

In 1994, China was Kodak's 17th largest market; only four years later, it became Kodak's third largest market. Kodak is now the Chinese market share leader in consumer film and paper with a retail presence that includes nearly 5,000 locally owned Kodak Express stores in 50 cities offering cameras, film and photo processing. New stores are being added at the rate of three per day. In the manufacturing arena, Kodak has two equipment manufacturing facilities, a software development center and a partnership in a joint venture company that manufactures glass optics.

Kodak currently has 16 liaison offices in China with more than 6,000 employees. The company is the market leader in consumer photo film and paper in China. Kodak businesses in China cover all areas of silver halide and digital imaging including Consumer Imaging; Kodak Professional; Business Imaging Systems, Digital and Applied Imaging; Entertainment Imaging and Health Imaging.

Kodak continues to set a precedent for domestic companies to follow by consistently recognizing the importance of Chinese contributions to the world: both financial and cultural. Kodak has long supported strong U.S. relations with China in the economic and trade fields. It is now our pleasure to work with the National Gallery of Art to introduce an exhibition that showcases the cultural heritage of a civilization that began thousands of years ago and still thrives today.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'George Fisher'.

George Fisher
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Eastman Kodak Company



Washington, D.C.

RELATED ACTIVITIES
for
THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHINESE ARCHAEOLOGY:
CELEBRATED DISCOVERIES FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
at
THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
September 19, 1999 - January 2, 2000

**MUSICAL PERFORMANCES OF THE BRONZE BELLS
OF THE MARQUIS YI OF ZENG**

Friday, September 17

11:00 – 11:30 a.m.

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 18

11:00 – 11:30 a.m.

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 19: opening of the exhibition at 11:00 a.m.

noon – 12:30 p.m.

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

East Building Mezzanine

Twelve Chinese musicians will play traditional music on a set of 65 bells, which are handcrafted replicas of bells created in the fifth century B.C., and range in size from eight inches high (5 lbs) to five feet high (448 lbs). Performances will also feature other instruments of the kind found in the royal tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng – a lord of a small state south of the Yellow River -- including a bamboo flute (*chi*), a reed-pipe (*sheng*), a 25-stringed lute (*se*), a zither with moveable bridges (*guzheng*), and a drum.

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FILM PROGRAM

A brief film narrated by Amy Tan, including footage of current excavations, rare archival material, and interviews with archaeologists, will recount the extraordinary discovery of some of the works of art in the exhibition and show how recent finds have changed our understanding of Ancient China. The program, which will be shown in a theatre adjacent to the exhibition, was shot on Kodak Super 16mm film, courtesy of Eastman Kodak Company. The film is made possible in part by the Joseph E. and Mary E. Keller Foundation, and by The Melton Arts Foundation.

AUDIO TOUR

An audio tour, narrated by director Earl A. Powell III and scholars of Chinese art, is available at the entrance to the exhibition for \$5.00 (\$4.00 for senior citizens, students, and groups of ten or more). Amplified headsets and scripts are available to visitors with hearing impairments. To reserve audio tours for a group, call (202) 842-6592.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Traditional Tales from China

(For children ages six through ten accompanied by an adult)

Saturdays, September 25 and October 16

1:30 - 2:15 p.m.

Storyteller Linda Fang tells traditional Chinese stories.

East Building Small Auditorium

Open to the public, but space is limited.

2:15 - 3:00 p.m.

Children create their own stories in a workshop led by Linda Fang.

Advance registration is required. Call (202) 789-3030.

Families may visit the exhibition on their own before or after the programs.

Focus on Archaeology

(For children ages eight through twelve accompanied by an adult)

Sundays, November 7, 14, and 21

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

A tour of the exhibition is followed by an activity, led by Alexandria Archaeology, involving local archaeological discoveries. Advance registration is required and begins October 17. Call (202) 789-3030.

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HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

Wednesday, November 17 and Thursday, November 18

The program includes a tour of the exhibition, a demonstration of performing arts, and an activity led by Alexandria Archaeology. Each school may register up to 25 students. Call (202) 842-6880.

EVENING WITH EDUCATORS

Wednesday, November 3

4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

This after-hours program for educators, held in conjunction with the Kennedy Center, includes a slide lecture, a viewing of the exhibition, and an opportunity for discussion with colleagues. Open to teachers of all subjects K-12. Advance registration and a fee of \$20 are required. For information of registering, call (202) 842-6796.

RECENT FILMS FROM CHINA

East Building Large Auditorium

During October, six programs of recent cinema from China will culminate in discussions with two directors, Zhou Xiaowen and Zhang Yuan, on Sundays, October 10 and 24, respectively. For complete program information and show times, consult the Web site at www.nga.gov or the fall film calendar at the art information desk, or call (202) 842-6799.

PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, November 20

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

East Building Large Auditorium

Exhibition catalogue authors and other scholars will discuss the development of Chinese archaeology. Several lectures will be given in Chinese with simultaneous interpretation in English.

GALLERY TALKS

For dates and times of gallery talks on the exhibition, please consult the Calendar of Events at the art information desks or call (202) 842-6706. No reservations are required.

Gallery Talks by Special Appointment may be arranged for adult groups of twenty or more by calling (202) 842-6247, and for school groups by calling (202) 842-6249.

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TEACHING PROGRAMS

The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology (program #067, with slides) surveys Chinese culture and archaeology from the late prehistoric period to the Later Liang dynasty.

The Chinese Past: 6,000 Years of Chinese Art and Culture (program #043, with slides) illustrates developments in Chinese art and history from the late prehistoric period through the Yuan dynasty.

Programs may be ordered from the department of education resources, extension programs section, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 20565.

CATALOGUE

The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from The People's Republic of China, with an introduction by Xiaoneng Yang, curator of the exhibition, is published by the National Gallery of Art, 576 pages, 372 color and 48 black and white illustrations. The catalogue is available from the Gallery Shops for \$75.00 (hardcover) and \$39.95 (softcover). To order by phone using a credit card, call (800) 697-9350 or (301) 322-5900, or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov.

SPONSOR/ORGANIZATION

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Additional support has been provided by The Henry Luce Foundation

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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