

# China's Terracotta Warriors arrive at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

*October 28, 2012, through January 20, 2013*



China, *Armored Kneeling Archer, Light Infantryman, Armored General (details)*, Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), terracotta, excavated from Qin Shihuang tomb complex, Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum

## **MINNEAPOLIS, MN, JULY 24, 2012**

An exhibition of rare works of art from one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of our time arrives at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) this fall. “China’s Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor’s Legacy” features more than 120 astonishing objects excavated from the magnificent tomb complex of Qin Shihuang (259–210 BCE) and other sites, now housed in more than 13 Chinese museums. Chief among these works are ten examples of the “Ghost Warriors,” terracotta sculptures meant to protect the Emperor in the afterlife.

In 1974, Chinese farmers were drilling a well in a location almost one mile from the First Emperor’s tomb mound in the present-day Shaanxi. They were astonished to discover fragments of terracotta figures. Shortly thereafter, Chinese archaeologists excavated three pits containing more than 7,000 terracotta warriors of different ranks, together with horses and chariots. The works of art have been subsequently shown in Chinese museums, and several touring exhibitions, but the excavation continues and new finds are emerging every day. Unlike previous exhibitions, which focused primarily on the terracotta army, “China’s Terracotta Warriors” emphasizes the importance of the most recent archaeological discoveries from the tomb complex and other sites. Artifacts in the exhibition, excavated in 2005, include a group of four bronze water birds—a crane, a swan, and two geese—all life size.

Driven by his eagerness for immortality, the First Emperor began to plan his burial from the moment he ascended the throne at the tender age of 13. Building the tomb took almost 38 years. The complex plan and symbolic content of the mausoleum, as gradually revealed by the ongoing archaeological excavations, are far beyond anyone's imagination.

The ten life-size terracotta warriors in the exhibition, some of which have never traveled to the West, represent an extraordinary feat of artistic production. Each figure is imbued with an individual personality; particularly striking is a kneeling archer with well-preserved pigments on his armor and face.

Also featured are carefully selected objects including bronze ritual vessels, jade artifacts, gold and silver ornaments, and palatial architectural components that illustrate the artistic development of the period of Chinese history preceding Qin dynasty, called the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), and the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE). Qin Shihuang's ultimate victory was uniting the once-divided empire.

*"China's Terracotta Warriors" includes objects from the Museum of Terracotta Warriors and Horses, the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, and the Shaanxi History Museum. On view in Minneapolis through January 20, 2013, the exhibition is presented by JPMorgan Chase. Lead sponsor is Fredrickson & Byron P.A., with additional support provided by Christie's and Delta Air Lines.*

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## **ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS**

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), home to one of the finest encyclopedic art collections in the country, houses more than 80,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history. Highlights of the permanent collection include European masterworks by Rembrandt, Poussin, and van Gogh; modern and contemporary painting and sculpture by Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, Stella, and Close; as well as internationally significant collections of prints and drawings, decorative arts, Modernist design, photographs, textiles, and Asian, African, and Native American art. General admission is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee. Museum hours: Sunday, 11 A.M.–5 P.M.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 10 A.M.–5 P.M.; Thursday, 10 A.M.–9 P.M.; Monday closed. For more information, call (612) 870-3000 or visit [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org).