

Explore, through science, the mysteries of ancient Angkor, long obscured by the encroaching forests of Southeast Asia.

The vast metropolis of Angkor, now shrouded by jungle in present-day Cambodia, was once the center of one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen. Enormous monuments to the gods such as Angkor Wat are among the most remarkable achievements in all of human history, and towered over sprawling cities made of wood which, over the centuries, have vanished almost without a trace.

The reasons for the precipitous decline of Angkor, and the cultural resilience of the Khmer people who built it, have fascinated scientists for one and a half centuries. Thanks to new advances in science and technology including ground excavations, aerial mapping, and modern remote sensing, we are finally coming to terms with the vast scope and accomplishments of this empire. In this exhibition, explore the art and artifacts of ancient Angkor through the lens of science. Experience how each period of exploration and discovery – equipped with the cutting-edge tools of the day – has expanded our knowledge about this civilization. Through the lens of Khmer culture, discover the meaning and significance of what science has revealed, and the foundation of Angkor’s enduring resilience.

In this unique collaboration between scientists, anthropologists and art historians, we present more than a hundred of the most outstanding works produced by the Angkorian civilization, many of which have never before travelled outside of Cambodia. We reunite masterpieces that have now been recovered after decades of war and looting, and present arrangements of statues in an immersive scenography revealing the size, the majesty and the significance of the monuments configuration, as they have not been seen for a thousand years.



VISHNU

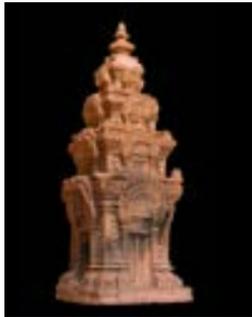
Prasat Damrei Krap, Phnom Kulen, 9th century CE

This imposing image of four-armed Vishnu is one of the earliest sculptures from the Angkorian era, initiated in 802 CE with the proclamation of Jayavarman II as chakravartin, or universal ruler. It was found in one of the three towers of Prasat Damrei Krap on the Kulen plateau, where sat Mahendraparvata, the first Angkorian capital. Its free-standing, without a support bow, is a characteristic of Angkorian sculptures in the round.

ANTEFIX IN PRASAT FORM

Banteay Srei, Siem Reap, 10th century CE

Antefixes, miniature forms of the temple tower itself, were often placed at the corners of the receding storeys of the tower surmounting the inner sanctuary of Khmer temples. Their scale diminished in proportion to the scale of the ascending levels of the tower. This example, with its highly detailed arcatures and colonettes and its own diminishing antefixes, echoes the style of the temple itself and illustrates the perfection of its carving.



DURGA MAHISHASURAMARDINI

Sambor Prei Kuk, Kampong Thom, 7th century CE

The goddess Durga, endowed with the powers of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, slew the invincible demon Mahishasura in his buffalo form. The triple-flexed posture, her garment swaying with the motion of her blow, suggests the deity’s moment of triumph over the evil spirit, which would have been represented beneath her feet before the damage to the work occurred. This peerless image, its dynamism reminiscent of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, epitomizes the grace and naturalism of the sculpture of Sambor Prei Kuk, the ancient city of Ishanapura. Established early in the 7th century by Ishanavarman I, the complex of more than 600 temples in three main groups comprises the largest and best preserved of pre-Angkorian cities.



DURYODHANA

Prasat Chen, Koh Ker, 10th century CE

This colossal statue is originally part of a gigantic representation of mythic warriors of the Indian epic the Mahabharata. It represents Duryodhana fighting Bhima, seven other heroes and divinities witnessing their duel. Pillaging during the war and political instability Cambodia endured in the end of the 20th century caused the loss of the entire group, scattered in private collections. Duryodhana has been located at the famous auction house Sotheby’s and repatriated to Cambodia in 2014.



SHRINE WITH HEVAJRA

Royal Palace-Prei Monti, Roluos, Siemreap, late 12th - early 13th century CE

This scene shows Hevajra, the Tantric god, dancing in a shrine surrounded by dancing yogini attendants. This bronze is of Bayon style, a period when Mahayana Buddhism is spread in Cambodia by the famous king Jayavarman VII. Despite this major religious change, the attitude of this dancing Hevajra recall the iconography of Shiva Nataraja, the dancing Shiva revered in Angkor for centuries.



ELEPHANT BELL

Wat sangke, Sangke District, Battambang Province, late 12th - early 13th century CE

Elephants are an attribute of royal power in legends of Cambodia. They were ridden into battles by kings and generals, as we see on the bas-reliefs of Angkor. This bronze shows the great ability of craftsmen through its delicate carving, as well as the richness of a society reaching the climax of its development at the end of the 12th c.



ARCHITECTURE & CONTENT

- **Size** 10,000–13,000 sq. ft.
- **Number of objects** Approx. 120 original objects. Venue to provide facility reports. Final loans dependent on approved facility reports.
- **Exhibition furniture**
- **Display cases**
- **Graphics** Photos, textiles, and graphic panels including all texts, which can be adapted for two languages.
- **Interactives**
- **Films**
- **All audio/visual material** is available in two languages.
- **Hands-on**
- **Lighting** All showcases are equipped with light.
- **Catalogue/Book** Yes.

LOGISTICS

- **Insurance and shipping.**
- **Installation and dismantling crew** from *MuseumsPartner* plus couriers from the lending museum, including travel and accommodation.

TOUR

- The exhibition is available for tour starting **September 2022**.

PUBLICATION

- A **catalogue** is available on consignment.

MARKETING MATERIAL

- **High resolution images** of the key images, objects and the exhibition are available to the venue at no cost. All final graphic representations by venue are to be approved by *MuseumsPartner* to ensure adherence to proper citing of partners and lenders.

ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR HOST VENUE

- Marketing and promotion
- Merchandise
- Maintenance during display period
- Gallery lighting, walls, wall painting
- Operational costs—ticketing, security, programming, etc.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

ABOUT THE TEAM



Located in the heart of Los Angeles, the California Science Center is a world-class educational resource and family destination for visitors of all ages to explore the wonders of science. The Science Center fulfills

its mission to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences through hands-on exhibits, live demonstrations, innovative programs and awe-inspiring films in state-of-the-art IMAX with Laser. General admission is FREE to extraordinary exhibits ranging from Endeavour – one of only three remaining flown space shuttles, to Ecosystems – with live animals in living habitats including a 188,000-gallon kelp forest tank.



In cooperation with international museums, *MuseumsPartner* has conceived a range of travelling exhibitions that are informative and engaging for a multitude of audiences and easy to adapt to different spaces. We offer these exhibitions

under a turnkey contract which ensures that our clients are guaranteed a secure investment customized for their own institution without any surprises. Drawing on our extensive experience in fine art transport, we provide full services to our partners and offer project management, logistics and financial management.

For bookings and further information contact:

elsaesser@museumspartner.com