

**EXTRAORDINARY FRIEDE COLLECTION OF NEW GUINEA ART TO
ENTER HOLDINGS OF FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO
AS MAJOR GIFT OF MARCIA AND JOHN FRIEDE**

**Inaugural Showing of Over 350 Masterworks to reside in Gallery Named for
the Friedes at the new de Young in October**

Two-Volume Publication Commemorates Premier Exhibition

San Francisco, 1 March, 2005—Harry S. Parker III, Director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, has announced that Marcia and John Friede will give, over time, their extraordinary collection of New Guinea art to the new de Young museum. Marcia and John Friede are New York connoisseurs and collectors who, over 40 years, have assembled the largest and most important private collection of New Guinea art in the world; it is known as the Jolika Collection, in honor of their children, John, Lisa, and Karen.

“350 of these masterworks will be on view in a spacious gallery named for the Friedes at the new de Young, which opens on October 15, 2005,” Parker says. “These promised gifts are but a glimpse of a collection of almost 3,000 objects amassed by Marcia and John Friede over a lifetime of dedicated connoisseurship and passion for the art of New Guinea. We are indeed fortunate that they have chosen the de Young as the repository for the Jolika Collection, enabling us to share it with the world.

“The de Young is an especially fitting place for the collection,” adds Mr. Parker, “in view of the fact that the arts of Oceania are among the charter collections of the historic M.H. de Young Memorial Museum and that San Francisco is a gateway city to the Pacific Rim.”

“When I first saw New Guinea art, I was startled to discover a world truly beyond imagination,” comments John Friede. “The movement, the colors were wonderful. The combination of simple, earthly materials and strange, unearthly images engaged my love of natural objects, my fascination with ancient religious artifacts, and my preference for Surrealist images. The Jolika Collection itself, the upcoming book and others that will follow it, the opening exhibition, and the eventual home for the collection at the de Young are all manifestations of our dream.”

The 350 objects in the exhibition include 14 extraordinary pieces acquired by the Fine Arts Museums from Mr. and Mrs. Friede in 2001. Those came to the museum through a joint gift/purchase made possible by the generosity of the Friedes and by the Phyllis Wattis Purchase Fund for the acquisition of major, historically critical works of art in preparation for the opening of new de Young museum. They were presented in a preview exhibition at the Legion of Honor in 2002, while the new de Young museum was under construction.

The inaugural showing at the de Young will be accompanied by a lavish two-volume publication that showcases nearly 600 masterworks from the Marcia and John Friede Collection. This catalogue, co-published by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and 5 Continents Editions, Milan, celebrates the premier showing of the promised gifts on the occasion of the opening of the new de Young. It is also a precursor to future books that will feature additional aspects of the remarkable collection assembled by Mr. and Mrs. Friede.

The Marcia and John Friede Collection is ranked both in quality and quantity as the most outstanding private collection of Oceanic art in the world, and it rivals some of the most important museum holdings in the United States, Europe and Australia. The collection features an impressive chronology of artwork, from prehistoric stone artifacts to objects from the 20th century.

In preparation for the gift, an unprecedented radiocarbon dating project was conducted at the University of Arizona, involving nearly 200 Friede objects. This revealed that the actual age of some of the wooden carvings extended back to 700 A.D., rather than current scholars' usual estimate of late 19th to early 20th century. The assemblage provides an unprecedented look at human artistic expression as it developed in New Guinea, one of the largest, longest inhabited, and most isolated islands in the world.

While the islands of the Pacific have long held a fascination for Westerners, the arts of New Guinea were among the last of the so-called "primitive arts" to be discovered by the West. The Sepik region of New Guinea, in particular, has been well known—but only since the 20th century—for the richness and diversity of its artistic traditions. The subject matter of New Guinea art combines human beings, ancestors and nature spirits with bold design and natural materials. The resulting art is intensely creative, with great psychological and visual impact.

A Passion for Excellence

What makes the objects from the Marcia and John Friede Collection so exceptional is their aesthetic excellence, rarity, presence, age and pedigree. Kathleen Berrin, Curator in Charge of the Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas for the de Young, notes, “The Jolika Collection abounds with masterworks that illustrate the Friedes’ rigorous standards for collecting. This excellence, combined with the richness of the collection in terms of its depth and breadth, makes it truly outstanding and a wellspring for many creative endeavors. After the inaugural display, we will embark on a series of select thematic shows drawn from the collection that will showcase its many fascinating aspects. We also will be developing exciting educational projects and further publications that address the beauty, majesty, and mystery of these objects. Ultimately, we hope to have a unique study center for New Guinea art that includes a research library and study storage for the entire collection.”

Highlights of the Inaugural Exhibition

Among the many outstanding works of art that will be on view in the premier installation are breathtaking large-scale objects, including a monumental male figure that possibly represents a mythical giant. The figure has been radiocarbon-dated to as early as the 11th century. Also on view will be a slit-drum that is nearly nine feet long. Its resonant tones were used to impersonate the spirit world, pound out ritual sounds and broadcast vital community messages. In addition, there will be large-scale house posts, architectural elements that once supported towering ceremonial houses for men and proclaimed the primacy of their ancestors.

Other aspects of the ritual and spirit world are portrayed in lavishly carved and painted figures with elaborate hooks that teem with mythological images and were used in sacred ceremonies. Striking composite masks that were either worn or carried represent dancing nature spirits. These objects are made out of fragile materials, such as bark-cloth, tortoiseshell, fiber, bone or feathers. Astonishingly bold spirit boards and shields, which display dazzling designs and symbols and were meant to protect their owners, join powerful figures with human and bird attributes. These works are depicted with a soaring majesty and primal energy and have immense psychological impact.

On a smaller scale, a variety of intriguing personal objects such as amulets, spatulas, daggers, headrests, hair-combs and dance ornaments constitute miniature

masterpieces and miracles of preservation. These objects provide an intimate view of what was considered to be necessary in people's daily lives.

Marcia and John Friede: Consummate Collectors

Intrigued by the ethereal aesthetic of New Guinea art and driven by the quest to acquire works of the highest rarity, antiquity and quality, Marcia and John Friede entered a realm of art that was mostly ignored or under-appreciated by collectors. In assembling this spectacular collection, they have preserved for the world a piece of fragile humanity that might have otherwise been lost.

In 2003 Mr. and Mrs. Friede further expanded their holdings by acquiring the Douglas Newton Collection, which comprises more than 500 objects. Many of the pieces were acquired by Mr. Newton during a series of extended field studies in New Guinea some 50 years ago, when he was the curator of New York's Museum of Primitive Art, the predecessor of the Michael C. Rockefeller Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Marcia and John Friede enjoyed a long professional relationship and friendship with Mr. Newton. Mr. Friede observes, "Douglas was a great scholar, and he documented his material accordingly. In addition to contributing many beautiful pieces to the public display, his careful collecting methods will give the de Young the opportunity to build a study collection unique to the world."

New Guinea Art: Masterpieces of the Jolika Collection from Marcia and John Friede

The art of New Guinea can be seen in its fullest and richest depiction in this elegantly presented two-volume publication. Nearly 600 masterworks from the collection of Marcia and John Friede are reproduced in Volume I in a lavish display of magnificent full-color plates, along with a foreword by Harry S. Parker III and an introduction by Mr. Friede. Volume II contains essays by noted world scholars Philippe Peltier, Dirk Smidt and Robert Welsch. In addition, there is an extensive illustrated catalogue section, also by Mr. Friede. Co-published by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and 5 Continents Editions, Milan. Clothbound in slipcase; 9 x 12 inches; 1250 illustrations, 650 in color; \$125.

For media information or visuals, please contact:

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Barbara Traisman / Wendy Norris
T. (415) 750-3620 / (415) 750-3554
btraisman/wnorris@famsf.org

Resnicow Schroeder Associates
Glory Jones / Casey L. Barber
T. (212) 671-5171 / (212) 671-5179
gjones/cbarber@resnicowschroeder.com