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CROW COLLECTION OF ASIAN ART TO OPEN GOLD ON BLACK; JAPANESE LACQUER FROM THE JACQUELINE AVANT COLLECTION

DALLAS (February 25, 2013) – The Crow Collection of Asian Art opens Gold on Black: Japanese Lacquer from the Jacqueline Avant Collection this Saturday, March 2, 2013 and will remain on view through Sunday, September 15, 2013.

Showcasing the delicate beauty of Japanese lacquer dating from the early-17th to the early-20th century, Gold on Black: Japanese Lacquer from the Jacqueline Avant Collection features over 40 Japanese lacquer items that would have been used primarily for arts and entertainment purposes.

Californian Japanese Art Collector Jacqueline Avant's interest in collecting exquisite lacquer works used for poetry writing, poetry matching games, enjoyment of food or smoking, ceremonial display, wear, or personal care, such as boxes for combs, mirrors, tooth blackening powder, or incense, comprise the majority of the pieces selected for this exhibition. Also on view are boxes to hold objects of religious devotion, such as Buddhist holy texts (sutras), and even weapons for self-defense, including a decorated baton or knife.

"The Japanese have long been attributed with bringing the art of lacquer to its highest technical and aesthetic development," says Crow Collection of Asian Art Executive Director Amy Lewis Hofland. "However, Japanese lacquer remains a subject rarely presented in American museums. When we learned of these works we knew our audiences would love the beauty and history of this painstakingly refined art form. It is a natural fit for the Crow Collection."

Many works featured in Gold on Black originated from the dowries of feudal lord families, with family crests recording marriages of power and influence. Others were collected to delight wealthy merchants and reflect their personal tastes in dress and activities, from tea to smoking or composing poetry.

Recent finds suggest that lacquer has been employed in Japan as a protective film for at least 11,000 years. The lacquer is painstakingly harvested from twenty-year-old cultivated urushi trees; each tree is bled for its sap, producing less than a cup of liquid and giving up its life in the

process of harvest. The lacquer is then filtered and applied in about thirty thin layers to a paulownia wood or lacquered hemp core. After each layer is polymerized in a humidor and then sanded, the upper layers are sprinkled with gold or silver powders and flecks to create designs. The final coat of clear lacquer is then ground down to reveal the metallic design. The care and skill required for application of both ground lacquer layers and design, and the rarity and expense of materials, meant that lacquer work was the most revered of family treasures in Japan, just as silver would have been in Europe or the Americas.

Hollis Goodall, curator of Japanese art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, selected the works featured in *Gold on Black: Japanese Lacquer* from the Jacqueline Avant Collection. *China Through the Lens of John Thomson*, which opened last week during the Crow Collection of Asian Art's Chinese New Year Festival on Friday, February 15, 2013, remains on view along with the acclaimed collection of Tantric sculpture from Trammell S. Crow's private collection *Noble Change*, among others.

Admission is free. The Crow Collection of Asian Art is open Tuesdays – Thursdays (10 a.m. – 9 p.m.), Fridays – Saturdays (10 a.m. – 6 p.m.), Sundays (12 p.m. – 6 p.m.) and closed on Mondays. For more information, please go to crowcollection.org or call 214-979-6430.

About The Crow Collection

The Trammell & Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art features a variety of spaces and galleries with changing exhibitions of the arts of China, Japan, India and Southeast Asia drawn from cultures ancient and contemporary. Just 13 years in operation, this lovingly curated free museum offers a serene setting for quiet reflection in the heart of the Dallas Arts District. The Crow Collection continues to grow in art and service to the Dallas-Fort Worth community with an emphasis on shared learning and fun. New initiatives include the development of an Asian physical and mental wellness center endorsed by Dr. Andrew Weil as well as an Asian Sculpture Garden slated to open in the fall of 2013. For more information, please go to crowcollection.org.

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