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**The Crow Collection of Asian Art Presents *Protecting Wisdom: Tibetan Book Covers from the MacLean Collection*
April 2–August 14, 2016**

DALLAS (February 29, 2016) – The Crow Collection of Asian Art presents *Protecting Wisdom: Tibetan Book Covers from the MacLean Collection* on view from April 2–August 16, 2016. Works of handheld relief sculpture, Tibetan book covers are lavish productions that reflect the intense devotion with which Tibetans regard books. The exhibition includes 35 book covers dating from the 11th to the 18th century that were chosen to explore the array of decoration typical of these sacred items.

For Tibetan Buddhists, books are a divine presence in which the Buddha lives and reveals himself, and they are venerated and handled with the utmost respect. To honor the Buddha, as well as to accrue good merit towards a future rebirth, elaborate book covers were frequently commissioned, most commonly from carved, painted, and often gilded wood. They were decorated on the covers' outside and inside faces as well as on the thick ends, an area that functions like a spine and is visible when the books are housed.

Tibetan book cover design has over a thousand-year history in which stylistic influences from Kashmir, India, Nepal, Central Asia, and later, China, were amalgamated into a uniquely Tibetan creation. In turn, Tibetan innovations such as the covers' large size (they are often more than two feet long and a foot wide) and amount of embellishment later influenced the covers of Mongolian and Chinese books, illustrated in the exhibition by an exceptional pair of covers produced for the Ming Chinese emperor Yongle in 1411. The book covers in *Protecting Wisdom* are Tibetan Buddhist, with the exception of two covers from a religion native to the Himalayas, Bon, including an unusual 12th-13th century example.

The carving on the book covers ranges from light incisions to deep hollows in which the figures are virtually detached from the background and the surface dances with the play of light and shadow: Painting, sometimes the main form of decoration, often accompany the carving in large areas. Borders for example, or in brightly painted details that highlight the design, such as a deity's red lips or the green-and-black scaled tail of a snake deity. Subjects depicted on the book covers include deities, important teachers, mantras, and sacred symbols.

A highlight of the exhibition is a superbly carved and painted book cover from the early 1290s. One of two known examples that can be dated by inscription, it is a benchmark in a field with a paucity of dated material. Rare inscriptions adorn four additional book covers and their contents introduce social and religious dimensions such as female patrons and expressions of gratitude to the cook who prepared the meals for the books' workers. The exhibition's interpretive materials present these multiple facets and were written by Kathryn Selig Brown, Ph.D., a specialist in Tibetan art who also wrote the accompanying catalogue.

The decoration on countless covers exhibits the supreme skill and consummate artistic expression of the finest artisans. Yet Tibetan book covers have been art hidden in plain sight -- *Protecting Wisdom* is the first exhibition in the United States devoted to this subject. It illuminates a virtually unknown type of art, one that will charm and intrigue both those familiar and unfamiliar with Tibetan art.

Kathryn Selig Brown, Ph.D., is an independent curator and Asian art consultant and is the Curator of *Protecting Wisdom: Tibetan Book Covers from the MacLean Collection*. A former Curator at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, she has curated more than a dozen exhibitions, written numerous articles and exhibition catalogues, and lectured widely including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Art Institute of Chicago. Dr. Brown will present a lecture at the museum June 9, 2016 in support of *Protecting Wisdom: Tibetan Book Covers from the MacLean Collection* and lead a panel discussion at the Members' Preview on March 31, 2016.

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. Admission is free. For more information, please go to crowcollection.org or call 214-979-6430.

About the Crow Collection of Asian Art

The Crow Collection of Asian Art features a variety of spaces and galleries with changing exhibitions of the arts of China, Japan, India, Korea and Southeast Asia drawn from cultures

ancient and contemporary. Seventeen years in operation, this lovingly curated free museum offers a serene setting for quiet reflection in the heart of the Dallas Arts District. Dedicated to providing art and service to the Dallas-Fort Worth community with an emphasis on shared learning and fun, the Crow Collection has recently expanded its offerings with a lushly landscaped outdoor Sculpture Garden, a pedestrian-friendly lobby and entrance, and a Samurai Gallery to showcase the museum's spectacular acquisition of a complete set of armor, considered one of the finest of its kind in the world. Learn more at crowcollection.org.

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