

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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To: City Editor
Photo Editor
Society Editor

From: Elizabeth Shaw
Acting Publicity Director

A distinguished ^{inter national gathering} ~~group of guests~~ including ambassadors, museum directors, art collectors, writers and artists from Europe, Latin America and this country will attend a preview of the exhibition ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on Tuesday evening, January 26. The exhibition will open to the public on Wednesday, January 27 and remain on view through March 21.

A large percentage of the nine thousand Museum members in the metropolitan area are expected to attend the preview which will be held from 5 p.m. until 11 p. m. Among the well-known people attending dinner parties in honor of the opening are the following who are guests of the Honorable and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss and Mrs. W. Murray Crane;

Senor Don Fernando Berckmeyer, the Ambassador from Peru,

Sir Leigh Ashton, Director Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Sir Gladwyn Jebb, and Lady Jebb,

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Henry Taylor, Director Metropolitan Museum of Art,

Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden, President, Museum of Modern Art,

Dr. and Mrs. Grayson L. Kirk, President of Columbia University,

M. and Mme. Haguís Le Gallais, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Luxembourg,

Dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson A. Rockefeller include

Ambassador Carlos Holquin, Permanent Representative to the U.N. from Peru,

Sir Herbert Read, President Institute of Contemporary Art, London,

Mr. and Mrs. John Cabot, Department of State, Latin American Secretary,

Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester L. Weaver, President NBC,

Mr. Luis Valcarcel, Director Museum, Lima, Peru,

Mr. and Mrs. Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director Museum of Modern Art.

Note: Dinner guests will arrive at the Museum about 9:30.

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No. 9

Local General
Selected National

PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY,
January 26, 1954: 2-5 P.M.

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January 27, 1954

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO SHOW ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES

Pre-Historic treasures of gold and silver, intricately woven tapestries, delicately painted paper-thin ceramics, and monumental stone carvings will be on view from January 27 through March 21 at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, in the exhibition ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES, installed by Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, who is an outstanding authority on primitive art and its relation to the art of our time.

More than 400 priceless objects have been assembled from private and public collections in Latin America, Canada, and the United States for this exhibition which will present for the first time under one roof the finest examples of art produced by ancient civilizations which flourished in the Andean region from about 1200 B. C. until the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century. The exhibition will be shown later this year at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the San Francisco Palace of the Legion of Honor.

"Modern artists and people interested in modern art have so far paid little attention to Andean art despite their great concern with Negro Africa, Oceania and pre-Columbian Mexico," said Mr. d'Harnoncourt, who directed the last two of the Museum's primitive art shows. "This is undoubtedly due to the lack of knowledge about this area which is still little known even to the professional archaeologist. Only recently has the art work of the early civilizations been uncovered and since exportation is forbidden, very few fine examples of Andean culture have been seen outside their native countries until now. But these unknown artists and artisans working with primitive tools and living in a civilization that did not know the wheel a written language, or a calendar, did produce fine works of art. Some are unequalled anywhere in the world for their excellence of technique, imagination, workmanship and emotional power which still affects us," Mr. d'Harnoncourt said.

"In this exhibition, ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES, we are extremely fortunate in being able to show to the New York public a number of outstanding pieces that have never been on public exhibition before. These include unique embossed gold plaques of the earliest civilizations in South America, jewels with turquoise mosaics, and ceramic sculpture. It is our hope that this exhibition will, by its scope and quality, serve as an incentive to further studies in this vast area of the world which is still relatively unexplored," he said.

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The exhibition is arranged to give a coherent picture of the development of the pre-historic civilizations which rose, flourished, conquered and were conquered thousands of years before the Spanish arrived. The objects in the exhibition were found in tombs, excavated ancient village sites and ceremonial centers in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica.

The exhibition is divided into five sections: The Central Andes, the Southern Andes, the Northern Andes, the Amazon region and Southern Central America.

EARLY CULTURES OF THE CENTRAL ANDES

The first sections of the exhibition contain objects from what are believed to be the earliest South American advanced cultures, the Chavin and the Cupisnique cultures which flourished from about 1200 B. C. to 400 B. C. The ceremonial center for this culture was at Chavin de Huantar in Peru. The main building there, called the Castillo, was 250 feet square and over 45 feet high. Inside this massive structure which had no windows, there was a honeycomb of three floors of galleries, rooms, and ventilation shafts connected by ramps and stairways.

A cast of "El Lanzon," the oldest pre-historic sculpture known, has been installed in this first section of the exhibition just as it was in Chavin at the junction of two underground passageways. This 13-foot high sculpture, carved from black rock, reveals the extensive use of the feline motif which dominates the culture of the Central Andes during this period and was undoubtedly a symbol of power. The feline motif is seen again in a drawing of mythical monsters taken from the carved design on a stone monolith at Chavin and in the cast of an ancient stela, 6 feet high, which is elaborately carved with the feline motif. The motif also appears on hammered gold and carved clay walls throughout the Central Andes during this period, although it is not known whether or not the area was united politically at this time.

Three gold pieces, including a crown of hammered gold which once adorned an ancient chieftain and an ancient silver mask are also in this gallery. These are believed to be the earliest examples of metal work known in South America and are closely related in style to the stone carvings at Chavin. Once again the feline motif appears in the gold crown which shows a feline deity flanked by two birds of prey and in a silver feline mask, as it also does in a black carved stone puma. Eight pieces of Cupisnique pottery, the oldest known ceramic style and also related to the Chavin stone carvings, are also shown in this section. Some of these pieces are from one of the world's finest private collections of this ancient art, owned by Don Rafael Larco Hoyle, in Peru, and are among those being shown publicly for the first time. Stirrup jars with engraved decorations, made in the forms of snakes or
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feline heads are included as well as a stirrup-spout jar in the shape of a seated woman which is the first known representation of a human being in Andean art.

Examples of the ceramic art from Paracas Cavernas made during the period extending from approximately 400 B.C. to 400 A.D. found in the caves of the Paracas peninsula, which are considered nearly as old as those of Cupisnique, are also shown here. These ceramics have a broad range of colors and are the first to stress geometric stylizations. One of the most unique pieces is a double-spout jar in the shape of a trophy head which is the most delicate ceramic known anywhere. The walls of this clay jar are less than 1/8 inch thick and its total weight, although it is 7 1/2 inches high, is only about 8 ounces.

Emerging from these dark passageways, the visitor to the exhibition enters a large light gallery divided into several sections where objects from the most important cultures of later periods are grouped.

In the center of this large gallery a gold paneled room of 3 walls has been erected which visitors may partially enter to see how gold was used by these ancient civilizations as wall coverings, much as the people of the Renaissance used velvet. One of the walls is lined with 47 plaques of hammered gold with repoussé designs which were sent from the great collection of the National Museum of Anthropology and Archeology in Peru. A huge gold crown with four gold plumes, two enormous gold ear plugs, a necklace of nine large gold beads and two epaulettes and a collar with thirty gold pendants has been placed on a head-form wearing a gold mask. These ceremonial adornments of an ancient Chimu king (1300 - 1438 A.D.) are surrounded by other gold headdresses hanging from the ceiling of the gold-paneled room. On the floor are laid Inca gold vessels, plates and bottles.

In the niches cut in the outer walls of the gold paneled room, silver and gold beakers and jewelry are displayed. A collection of Peruvian bronze objects, unique in the world, are shown in one case. They are from the famous Norbert Mayrock Collection in Chile and include knife heads decorated with hunting scenes, human sacrifices and various animal figures including a ring around a rosette of leopards holding hands. It is most interesting to compare these lively and splendid bronzes with their counterparts from Greece and Rome. One of the most precious objects in the exhibition, a pair of Mochica earrings (400-1000 A.D.) in gold inlaid with a tiny mosaic of turquoise depicting warriors wearing jewelry inlaid in gold and turquoise from the famous Don Rafael Larco Hoyle Collection, is also shown here.

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On the right of this large central gallery as one enters is a section devoted to woven tapestries, mantles and wall hangings. Those from Paracas Necropolis are among the finest and most elaborate textiles in the world. They are famous for the intricacy of their technique and their carefully planned color and design. Many of these Paracas mantles were found on mummy bundles. The painted border of one Paracas mantle shows pre-historic men wearing the ear ornaments, ponchos, head, hair and nose ornaments shown in the exhibition, and carrying trophy heads of their enemies like those depicted in some of the sculptures in the show. Embroidered shoulder ponchos, a poncho of needle Reseau with the demon cat and serpents, a mantle with a fish design repeated in an incredibly intricate and precise way with planned variations on the theme are other examples of the fine woven articles found in graves and tombs in Peru in fantastically good state of preservation.

On the left side of the large central exhibition gallery are examples of the skilled modeling and delicate painting on the realistic sculptural jars of the Mochica culture which flourished in the Central Andes from about 400 to 1000 A. D. This is one of the best known pre-historic cultures partly because of the numerous surface remains and tombs but also because of the art style which faithfully depicted the local plants and animals, dress, diseases and their cure, ceremonies, methods of punishment and other details of daily life. These people, whose portraits can be seen in the sculptured jars in the exhibition, built large pyramids, of which the largest found contains over 130 million bricks and must have been constructed by a well-organized labor force of unskilled workers. The exhibition also includes examples of Mochica workmanship in gold and silver casting in which they particularly excelled.

In the Central Andes the Mochica culture was followed by the Tiahuanaco which developed around Lake Titicaca in the highlands of Peru and Bolivia and flourished from about 100 to 1300 A. D. During this period people of the Tiahuanaco culture extended their influence and perhaps their control over most of the Central Andes. Both the Bolivian and Peruvian manifestations of the Tiahuanaco culture are characterized by a distinctive design style, a ceramic type, a color scheme and a weaving pattern. Some pieces shown are three beautiful painted pottery beakers of great dignity and formality which illustrate classic Tiahuanaco. From the coast a large vessel, 29 inches high, shows a striking similarity in the figure of a god painted on its sides to the style and content of the famous "Sun Door," a great monolithic structure at what is believed to be a place of origin of this style in Bolivia. A section of a poncho in tapestry weave shown here illustrates the transformation of representational art into a decorative all-over pattern.

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The next successive culture was the Chimu in the Central Andes which flourished from about 1300 to 1438 A.D. on the north coast. Chimu control was extensive, and they built garrison towns at strategic defense points and ceremonial sites. The Chimu were excellent metallurgists and the exhibition contains fine examples of gold and silver goblets with relief designs, breast plates, plumed helmets and delicately incised ear plugs ending in ornamented discs.

Works of art from the great Inca Empire represent the final period of pre-historic cultures in the Central Andes (approximately 1439 to 1532 A.D.) The Inca Empire was the most thoroughly organized political state of the New World in pre-Columbian times and, until it was destroyed by Pizarro in 1532, this Empire covered some 350,000 square miles and contained about seven million people welded into a state by organized military conquest.

The Inca ceramics in the exhibition are typical of those of this culture which are characterized by highly standardized shapes such as the aryballos shape and the shallow dish with the single bird head handle. Most of the polychrome designs in ceramics and in weaving are geometric. The gold bottles and silver ornaments created by the Incas for their privileged class are also ornamented by geometric designs and human representation has almost vanished. A large urn in the exhibition resembles the Greek aryballos in its classic shape and restrained geometric decoration.

The famous stone constructions of the Inca in Peru are shown in a separate photographic section of the exhibition with photo-murals of spectacular architectural achievements. Walls of a temple in Machu Picchu, a stairway entrance to a ceremonial cave in Kenko and part of the great wall at Ollantaytambo are among those shown in these photographs. The beauty of Inca stone architecture rests on its basic form and exquisite stone work which was completely devoid of surface decorations. Enormous tasks were undertaken for the sake of ceremonial or aesthetic considerations as demonstrated by the choice of the pale pink granite blocks, over ten feet high and four to five feet wide, which were used at Ollantaytambo and had to be brought across a mountain and a river to reach the site.

Among the featherwork represented in the exhibition are feather mosaic hats, ear plugs and a series of feather panels each of which measures approximately 80

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inches by 37 inches, made of large yellow and turquoise rectangles. These latter panels were found originally in huge polychrome jars in Peru. Very few have come to this country. The five panels, which are from private and public collections, are shown as a wall covering for which it is believed they were originally intended.

The cultures of the Southern Andes are represented in the exhibition by a selection of objects found in northwest Argentina and northern Chile. These include small wooden sculptures, two large bronze discs made before the Inca Conquest and wooden snuff tablets, pottery bowls and a pipe.

THE NORTHERN ANDES

The exquisite gold work and the inventive ceramics from the Northern Andes are shown in the final gallery of the exhibition. This region includes the Republics of Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama and the Amazon region of Brazil. As few archaeological studies have been conducted in this area it is impossible to give specific dates to the various art styles represented in the exhibition.

The ceramic sculpture shown here from the Esmeraldas region of Ecuador shows great variety in style but uniformly skillful execution. The striking naturalism of a small figure of a hunchback, for example, is in sharp contrast to the stylized formality of a small head and a figurine shown with it. Other ceramics in this gallery include a variety of pieces from Colombia and an intricate clay vessel from Brazil which resembles a baroque candlestick. A stone carving of an anthropomorphic figure from Panama and a monumental sculptured stone seat from Ecuador are also in this gallery.

Nearly 100 gold objects are installed in a case 48 feet long on the end wall of this final gallery. "It is interesting to note the difference between the way gold was used in the northern section of the Andes and in Peru," Mr. d'Harnoncourt commented. "In the north, gold was always made into beautiful and precious objects - figures of deities, staff finials and mace heads, and pendants in which the gold was combined with ivory, emeralds or quartz. In Peru gold was often used to cover the surfaces of large objects such as chests and litters and even entire walls, somewhat like the use of velvet during the Renaissance."

The gold objects made by the Quimbaya civilization which was centered in what is now the state of Antioquia in Colombia, are from their graves. These people left no ruins of village sites, ceremonial centers or agricultural terraces. If it

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were not for their numerous graves richly stocked with offerings they would be a forgotten people. But their goldsmith work is among the finest ever produced in South America. They fabricated gold into ornaments and objects by hammering, repoussé, cutout, cast filigree, solid and hollow casting, and soldering. Variations were achieved by joining bands of metal of slightly different composition. The bottles are particularly noted for their exquisite form and simplicity of outline. In both technique and quality the Quimbaya gold work is unequalled in the Andean region.

In contrast to the three-dimensional figures of the Quimbaya region, Chibcha figurines from Bogata, Colombia, are based on a flat form overlaid with gold wire and often resemble line drawings. They are highly stylized and show great variety and imagination. Other outstanding gold pieces in this gallery include examples of goldwork from the Coclé culture in Panama, including a helmet and plaque representing the crocodile god, and pendants of ivory and gold, emeralds and gold, and quartz and gold. From northern Panama from the graves in the Chiriqui province has been found a pendant representing the most abstract form of gold work in the Americas. Only by comparison with other pieces is it possible to ascertain that the two small knobs resembling screw heads represent the eye of the figure and the spirals between them its nose.

Many of the objects in the exhibition were brought to this country through the cooperation of Pan American Grace Airways (Panagra) and W. R. Grace and Co., who provided special handling for the fragile and precious works of art.

NOTE: In connection with this exhibition, Rene d'Harnoncourt will present an illustrated lecture on ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES on Wednesday, February 10, at 8:40 p.m. Admission: \$1.00 for Museum members, \$1.25 for non-members.

The Museum publication accompanying this exhibition will be published in February. ANCIENT ARTS OF THE ANDES by Wendell Bennett with an introduction by Rene d'Harnoncourt. 188 pages; 202 plates in black and white, 6 in color. \$6.50.