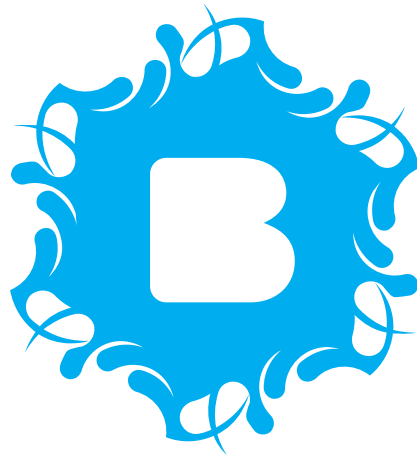


# Press Release



November 2009

## **Selections from Brooklyn Museum's Ancient Near Eastern Holdings Reinstalled in Kevorkian Gallery, Now Renovated to Be More Wheelchair Accessible**

Selections from the Brooklyn Museum's holdings of Ancient Near Eastern art have been reinstalled in the third-floor Kevorkian Gallery, renovated with a sloped floor to improve wheelchair access. The centerpiece of the installation continues to be twelve massive carved alabaster reliefs completed in 859 B.C. that once adorned the vast palace in Nimrud of the Assyrian King Ashur-nasir-pal II. The reliefs are now complemented by some fifty objects reflecting the diverse cultures of the region that is present-day Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey.

Several of the works on view date to 5000 B.C. and were created during a time when there were no national or political boundaries, but geographic barriers that led to the development of separate cultures—the Sumerian, Assyrian, Achaemenid Persian, and Sabeian—each with its own distinctive artistic tradition.

Included is a female figure from the Halaf culture that flourished in Iraq and Syria during the fifth millennium B.C. as well as female statuettes made several millennia later. Like the majority of Ancient Near Eastern female figures, they emphasize fertility.

The Sumerian civilization of the third millennium B.C., one of the world's earliest, is represented by several pieces of superbly crafted jewelry, including two finger rings and two pairs of gold earrings, along with beads fashioned in gold and semiprecious stones. Objects such as a lifelike figure of a monkey from the Susa area in Iran demonstrate the skills of other early Near Eastern cultures. A relief depicting a palace guard and a fragment of a colossal lion head that once decorated a palace in Persepolis in what is now Iran represent the large and powerful empire of the Achaemenid Persian dynasty of the sixth and fifth centuries, along with elements of gold jewelry depicting animal figures.

The newly sloped floors of the Kevorkian Gallery were installed to facilitate wheelchair access to the gallery, the Beaux-Arts Court, and the East Wing galleries. The original room design, with stairs on both the east and west ends, was previously modified with mechanized lifts that did not meet the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which seeks to empower people with disabilities to unassisted access to public spaces.

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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With funding from the State of New York given to improve access to the third floor, particularly the Beaux-Arts Court, the Museum created two sloped floors, both less than 8 percent, that are less than the required minimum slope for wheelchair accessible ramps. The floors are constructed of concrete and covered with terrazzo, a material original to the 1904 construction of this wing and other sections of the Museum. The project necessitated the moving of only two of the Assyrian reliefs at the west end of the gallery, raising them to the levels of the others. The Kevorkian Gallery now also features new railings, signage, and lighting.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Admission:

Contribution \$10; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$6. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.