

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO APPOINTS DANIEL WALKER

CHAIR OF TWO CURATORIAL DEPARTMENTS

**Walker to Become Pritzker Chair and Curator of Asian Art and the
Chair and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Curator of Textiles**

Following an international search, the Art Institute of Chicago is pleased to announce the appointment of **Daniel Walker** as the head of two curatorial departments at the museum.

Effective October 18, 2010, Walker will become the **Pritzker Chair and Curator of Asian Art** and the **Chair and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Curator of Textiles** at the Art Institute. A distinguished scholar, writer, and curator of textiles as well as Islamic art, Walker has held previous positions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Textile



Museum in Washington, DC. With the recent opening of the Alsdorf Galleries devoted to Indian, Southeast Asian, and Islamic art and the upcoming openings of both the renovated galleries for textiles and the Weston Wing for Japanese art, Walker joins the Art Institute at a critical moment of expansion and re-presentation of the historical and contemporary cultural production of Asia.

“Daniel Walker’s experience at major museums in this country and abroad, as well as his record of distinguished scholarship in both textiles and Islamic art, make him the ideal leader of two curatorial departments at the museum,” said James Cuno, President and Eloise W. Martin Director of the Art Institute of Chicago. “The museum’s holdings in textiles are rich in Islamic and Indian carpets; Indonesian textiles; and Chinese and Japanese textiles, and this collection intersects

beautifully with the Asian painting, sculpture, and artifacts we have been reinstalling in new galleries. Dan offers expertise in both areas during this pivotal time for us, as we dedicate more and better space to these collections as part of our sustained effort to best fulfill our mission as an encyclopedic museum. We are excited to welcome Dan's knowledge and energy to the Art Institute."

Walker is currently collaborating with Senior Curator Maria Fernanda Passos Leite on a major catalogue of Oriental carpets in the collection of Lisbon's Gulbenkian Museum. He served as the director of the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, from 2005 to 2009. As the head of the Islamic Department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1988 to 2005, he was the first occupant of the endowed chair named for donor Patti Cadby Birch in 1997. From 1975 to 1988, he was Associate Curator and then Curator of Ancient, Near Eastern, and Far Eastern Art at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Walker has published and lectured extensively on diverse topics related to Islamic art, particularly carpets and textiles. He is a contributing editor to the journal *Hali* and is working with other authors on the landmark catalogue *Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, to be published next year. He has made notable acquisitions for his institutions, including the early Turkish animal rug purchased by the Metropolitan in 1990. Over the course of Walker's museum career he has curated more than 20 exhibitions, ranging from a small exhibition of etchings and drawings by Charles Meryon (the first exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art ever to be organized by an undergraduate) to the Metropolitan's *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*, cited by both *The Art Newspaper* and the *New York Times* as one of the top exhibitions of 1998, and *Textiles of Klimt's Vienna* in 2007–08 for the Textile Museum. In addition, Walker performed military service that included intensive language training in Persian and a long tour of duty in Iran. He holds degrees from Bowdoin College (A.B.) and Harvard University (A.M.).

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MUSEUM HOURS

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday, Friday

10:30 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm

FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 28

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

ADMISSION

Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions

Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions

Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency

Children under 14 always free

Members always free

Free Evenings are free to all. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.