

SIX PANELS FROM THE TEMPLE OF BOROBUDUR IN INDONESIA

Material: Concrete, iron

Date: 1920

Dimensions: 80 x 220 x 276 cm

Inventory Number: 10014-10019

Total Cost: € 57.520,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The panels are extensively damaged. There are large fissures and cracks caused by oxidation of the internal metallic structure. The surface is stained and the exterior metallic structure is oxidized. This project will also provide the panels with a roofed structure in order to protect them from weather conditions.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Scientific and chemical analysis
- Micro-dust suction of each panel
- Treatment of the metallic structure and replacement where necessary
- Removal of the crystallized glue
- Cleaning of the stains
- Repair of the fissures and cracks
- Reintegration of the missing parts where needed
- Reinforcement of the edges
- Pencil rubbings
- Photographic documentation



Present location of the Borobudur panels in the courtyard of the Missionary Ethnological Museum.

The Ethnological Museum is proud to present its collection of the only existing plaster copies of the original friezes of the Temple of Borobudur in Indonesia. Borobudur is a 9th century Mahayana Buddhist Monument in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia.

This is the largest and most popular religious temple among the Indonesian islands. The monument is comprised of six square platforms topped by three circular platforms and is decorated with 2,672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues. The main dome, located at the center of the top platform, is surrounded by 72 Buddha statues. Evidence suggests the Borobudur was abandoned following the 14th century decline of the Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms in Java and the Javanese conversion to Islam. This holy site was lost to the world until 1814 when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the then British ruler of Java, rediscovered its location thanks to the help of the native Indonesians. In 1920, a German company made plaster copies of the wall reliefs.

The panels, currently in the possession of the Vatican, document the temple as it was found, having been unearthed only a short time before. Due to exposure to the elements, pollution and climate change, the freshly excavated temple has been damaged and worn away in the last hundred years. The panels in our collection show the complete frieze of the walls of the temple as they were shortly after they were unearthed, therefore preserving their details. This project was carried on in order to save the images which were slowly and irreversibly deteriorating due to humidity and rain erosion. The Borobudur was finally restored through more modern techniques in 1975 and 1982 by the Indonesian government and UNESCO. Successively, the temple was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 24 plaster copies entered the Vatican for the Universal World Exposition in 1925 during the Papacy of Pope Pius XI. The restoration proposed this year will focus on six more of the twenty-four panels. The first group of six has already been sponsored thanks to the generosity of the Illinois Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums.

