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John Company Set, 1830. India. Ivory. Photo: Tim Nighswander/ Imaging4Art

Encore! Ivory Chess Treasures from the Jon Crumiller Collection

May 14 – October 18, 2015

April 8, 2015 (Saint Louis, MO) – The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) is pleased to present antique ivory masterpieces from across the globe in the new exhibition *Encore! Ivory Chess Treasures from the Jon Crumiller Collection*.

“The title of this show reflects two things: this is our encore presentation of incredible items from one of the world’s top collectors, and it is also an encore bow for rare sets that haven’t been widely viewed for many years – in some cases, for centuries,” said Shannon Bailey, WCHOF chief curator.

Mr. Crumiller is an avid chess player who lives in Princeton, New Jersey. The WCHOF first presented highlights of his collection in the 2013 exhibition entitled *Prized and Played*.

The *Encore!* exhibition centers around Mr. Crumiller’s spectacular collection of antique ivory chess sets, boards, and tables. Over 2,500 individual items will be displayed, each representing a unique story and stunning level of artistry.

Ivory has become a controversial medium following tightened regulations by the U.S. government in 2014, which impacts the import, export, transfer, and sale of African elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn. The new limitations could extend to items that are more than 100 years old and have many institutions and collectors wondering at the fate of their antique objects.

“The beautiful, intricate work of these pieces goes against the common expectation of a chess set. It elevates our perception of both the medium of ivory and the subject of chess,” Bailey said.

Viewing the *Encore!* exhibition provides an interesting perspective of history through chess.

“These sets tell the stories of cultures influencing one another as trade routes are established, territories are colonized, and governments clash. It is a history and an art lesson in one beautiful presentation,” said Bailey.

[ENCORE! CONTINUED—PAGE 2]

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- Four ivory chess sets made by the Indian craftsmen of the East India Company (also known as the John Company) in the early-to-mid 19th century. A framed article from the *Illustrated London News* of April 1851 shows the artisans sculpting these exquisite ivory pieces, using only simple carving tools.
- A circa-1840 French ivory and polychrome figural chess set that brings the Battle of Waterloo to life on the chessboard. Napoleon and his Empress Marie Louise are matched against King George III and his wife Queen Charlotte, with other major pieces depicting the actual historical characters from the battle.
- A delicate mid-19th century German ivory chess set, likely made by designer and master carver/turner Michael Edel of Munich. Each piece is adorned with turquoise cabochons around the top and base.
- An early 20th-century Italian figural chess set of carved ivory mounted on wooden bases that pits the ancient Greeks against the Persians. The figures are engaged in activities that often epitomize those ancient cultures: music-making, philosophy, hunting, and waging battle.
- English ivory playing sets by the top Georgian and Victorian chess set manufacturers, including Dorothy & John Calvert, William Lund, George Merrifield, James Leuchars, and Charles Hastilow.

***Encore! Ivory Chess Treasures from the Jon Crumiller Collection* opens on May 14 and runs through October 18, 2015. Admission to the second floor gallery is free with a \$5 per person recommended donation. Visit worldchesshof.org for details.**

About the World Chess Hall of Fame

4652 Maryland Avenue, Saint Louis MO, 63108 (314) 367-WCHF www.worldchesshof.org

The World Chess Hall of Fame is a nonprofit organization committed to building awareness for the cultural and artistic significance of chess. It opened on September 9, 2011, in the Central West End after moving from previous locations in New York and Miami.

The WCHOF is housed in an historic 15,900 square-foot residence-turned-business and features the U.S. and World Chess Halls of Fame, displays of artifacts from the permanent collection, and exhibitions highlighting the great players, historic games, and rich cultural history of chess.

The WCHOF partners with the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis to provide innovative programming and outreach to local, national, and international audiences.

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