

Body of Devotion: The Cosmic Buddha in 3D

On view January 30- December 2016, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

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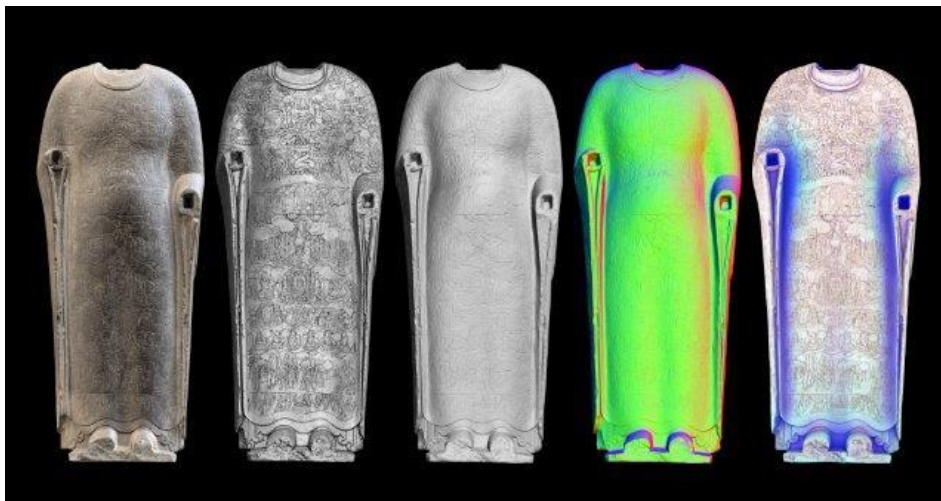
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Like all Buddhas (fully enlightened beings), the *Cosmic Buddha*, a life-size limestone figure of Vairochana, is wrapped in the simple robe of a monk. What makes this sixth-century Chinese object exceptional are the detailed narrative scenes that cover its surface, representing moments in the life of the Historical Buddha as well as the Realms of Existence, a symbolic map of the Buddhist world. With help from the [Smithsonian's Digitization Program Office](#), the Cosmic Buddha also exists as a 3D model, enabling scholars to study the work as never before and providing worldwide access to this masterpiece of Buddhist sculpture. *Body of Devotion* is an interactive installation that explores not only the work itself, but also the evolving means and methods of studying sculpture, from rubbings and photographs to the technological possibilities of today.

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A laser passing over the surface of an object produces a digital scan made of millions of measurements points. These data can be manipulated in a variety of ways to reveal new information and advance research.
Image courtesy Smithsonian's Digitalization Program Office

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THE SMITHSONIAN'S MUSEUMS OF ASIAN ART



Cosmic Buddha
 China, Northern Qi dynasty, 550-577
 Limestone
 151.3 x 62.9 x 31.3 cm
 Freer Gallery of Art, F1923.15



Rubbing from Stone Statue of Buddha
 20th century
 Ink on paper
 144.3 x 77.7 cm
 Gift of Peking University, Freer Gallery of Art, F1980.86.1b



3D scan of *Cosmic Buddha* with digital surface occlusion.
 Image courtesy Smithsonian's Digitalization Program Office



3D scan of *Cosmic Buddha* highlighting hot spots and zones.
 Image courtesy Smithsonian's Digitalization Program Office