Artist: Relief of Akhenaten Offering Incense to the Aten
Title: Relief of Akhenaten Offering Incense to the Aten
Geography: Egypt
Period: New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, Reign of Akhenaten
Date: 1353-1336 BC
Culture: Egyptian
Medium: Limestone
Credit Line: Gift of the Morgens West Foundation in honor of Peter Lacovara
Dimensions: 8 5/16 x 8 7/8 in. (21.2 x 22.5 cm)
Object number: 2015.033.001
Label Text: This relief of Akhenaten is one of a handful of fragments that came from a building at Tell el-Amarna named "Strong of the Living Aten". Carved in sunk relief, Akhenaten offers incense in a censer with a falcon-headed terminal. He wears the Blue Crown with ribbons that flutter outwards from the back. Rays from the solar god Aten pass behind his crown, and one holds an ankh sign, the hieroglyphic sign for life. Akhenaten's pendulous chin, thick lips, slanted eyes, and spindly neck probably do not reflect reality. Instead, his features symbolize his uniqueness as the son and chief priest of the Aten. The style of relief indicates the block was carved late in the Akhenaten's reign. Above the king are the remains of hieroglyphs which refer to a recently discovered solar shrine complex named the "Strong of the [Living] Aten" at the site of Kom el-Nana, south of the main city of Tell el-Amarna. Evidence points to the shrine's function as a place where Akhenaten provided incense and libation offerings for the spirits of the dead. The Sunshade Temple of Re (dedicated to Nefertiti) was also part of this complex, which associated the queen's rebirth with the continuity of the cosmos.

Exhibition History: MCCM Permanent Collection Galleries, April 11, 2016 - Present