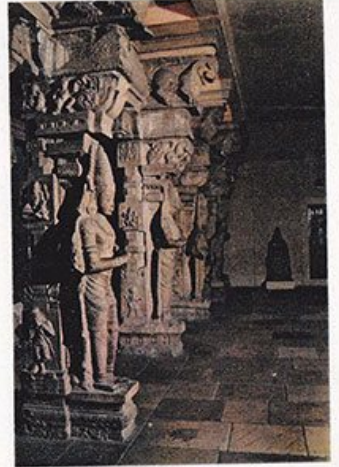
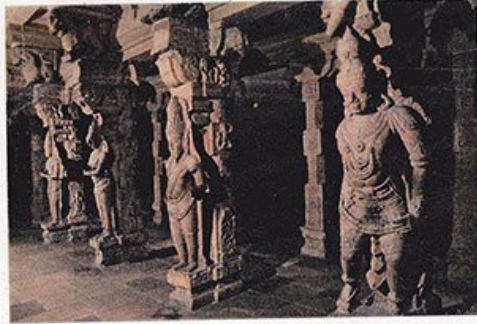
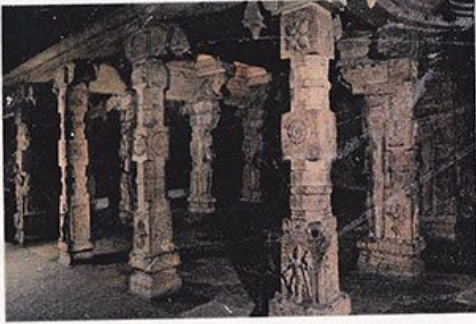




Pillared Vishnu Temple Entry Hall from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India  
at the Philadelphia Museum of Art



**Pillared Vishnu Temple Entry Hall  
From Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India  
Elements made about 1550-1600  
Granitic stone**

This evocative space, which now exists at the heart of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's rich collections of South Asian art, is made up of granite elements carved in the 16th century that once formed parts of several temple halls in the south Indian city of Madurai. The temples from which the pieces came are devoted to the worship of the god Vishnu. The majority were once part of a hall dedicated to the goddess Lakshmi in the Kudal Alagar Perumal Temple, Madurai. That hall was renovated in the 19th century and some of the discarded pieces, along with others, were sold in 1912 at an auction held at the nearby Madanagopalaswamy Temple. There they were purchased by Mrs. Adeline Pepper Gibson, a Philadelphia woman then traveling in India. When Adeline died in 1919, the pieces were donated to the Philadelphia Museum of Art by her family. In 1935-40, they were installed in the present configuration to resemble a temple's entry hall (*ardhamandapa*). The granite carved elements that comprise the hall consist of twelve monolithic composite pillars, each with a large sculpted figure emerging from the side; sixteen square-based pillars carved in various ways; ten lion brackets; ten drop brackets; two non-figural cluster pillars; and eight slabs carved with scenes from the great Hindu religious story, the *Ramayana* (placed above and between the figural pillars). This is the only example of Indian stone architecture to be found in an American museum. It is also the only place outside of South Asia where visitors can experience, from original pre-modern elements, the monumental synthesis of sculpture, structure, symbolism and story that make Hindu temple architecture one of the world's greatest artistic legacies.

*Gift of Susan Pepper Gibson, Mary Gibson Henry, and Henry C. Gibson in memory of Adeline Pepper Gibson, 1919*

