



# ANNUAL REPORT

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of members of the Society for Asian Art (SAA) will be held online on May 20, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. for the following purposes:

- To elect 16 Directors to serve until the next Annual Meeting of members to be held in May 2022, and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.
- To transact such other business as properly may be brought before the meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

The Nominating Committee has submitted names of 4 members to be newly elected as Directors and 12 members for re-election. For additional information on each nominee, please refer to the Nominating Committee report.

The names of additional nominees may be submitted to the Board of Directors for review not less than twenty (20) days prior to the meeting (April 30, 2021). The petitions shall be signed by not less than twenty (20) members in good standing and shall contain the information required by Section 3 of Article IX of the Bylaws.

Each SAA member in good standing is entitled to one vote, conducted through online poll. No proxy voting is allowed.

By order of the Board of Directors,

Etsuko Kobata  
Secretary

### 2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION SLATE

The members of the Nominating Committee for the year 2020-2021 are **Marsha Vargas Handley**, Chair, **Nancy Jacobs**, and **Greg Potts**.

#### Nominations:

The following Members of the Society for Asian Art desire to serve as Directors and are nominated for election to serve their first two-year term of office: **Pamela George**, **Anne Adams Kahn**, **Sandra Pan**, and **Sharon Roe**.

The following Directors of the Society for Asian Art will complete their first or second two-year term and are nominated for election to serve another two-year term: **Ed Baer**, **Edith Benay**, **Lynne Brewer**, **Kalpana Desai**, **Gloria Garaventa**, **Kirk Gilson**, **Tom Ihrig**, **Etsuko Kobata**, **Peggy Mathers**, **Howard Moreland**, **Kathleen Slobin**, and **Nazneen Spliedt**.

Directors with one year remaining on their two-year terms are: **Margaret Booker**, **Margaret Edwards**, **Marsha Vargas Handley**, **Candance Zander Kahn**, **Anne Katz**, **Phyllis Kempner**, **Lawrence Mock**, **John Nelson**, **Debbie Wong Ottman**, **Pamela Royse**, and **Ehler Spliedt**.

The following previously elected Directors are retiring from the Board of Directors: **Trista Berkovitz**, **Nancy Jacobs**, and **Sylvia Wong**.

The following ex-officio Directors will continue to serve: **Deborah Clearwaters**, and **Forrest McGill**.

#### New Nominees:

The following members are nominated for a first two-year term to the Board of Directors of the Society for Asian Art:

**Pamela George** has served as a member of the Board of Directors for Junior Achievement Worldwide, Planned Parenthood, San Francisco Opera, Opera Parallele, and Merola Opera Program. She has forty years of business experience in administration, sales and marketing for various international organizations. She considers the Arts of Asia lectures a highlight during 2020 as her B.A. was in fine arts, focusing on Asian art.

**Anne Adams Kahn** is a Past President of the Society for Asian Art, previously was Co-Chair of Arts of Asia and Chair of Member Events, is an Asian Art Museum docent and Docent Council Board Member. She is a long-time member of the Society for Asian Art and has participated in many Society trips and programs.

**Sandra Pan** is currently on the Investment Committee and is an independent wealth management consultant. She has a BS in economics from UCLA and years of experience in the wealth management field working for various institutions before becoming an independent consultant. She has served on the Board and as Chair for the 1990 Institute and volunteered with the Peninsula Humane Society.

**Sharon Roe** has been an Asian Art Museum docent for twelve years, a docent trainee mentor and Community Speaker. She has a PhD in Asian Philosophy and Religion and has edited four books on Buddhist meditation. Previously she had twenty years of experience organizing educational programs and events for an international company. She currently serves on the Travel Committee.



## SOCIETY FOR ASIAN ART PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020-2021

The year 2020 is a year we may want to forget, but despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Society continued with most of its programming thanks to a dedicated group of people - your SAA Board.

Unfortunately, due to government-issued restrictions, in-person events had to be cancelled or rescheduled this year, including trips to Morocco, Japan, and New Orleans, seasonal dinners, gallery and museum visits, conversations in private homes and our popular Book Sale. We were, however, able to move our lectures, conversations, study groups and literature classes online. Reports on all these activities are listed below in further detail. SAA Board and committee meetings were also conducted online.

All this had a major effect on our revenue stream, but we managed to cover ongoing costs to maintain the office and all other related expenses. Our Office Manager has been working from home since March 2020.

We appealed to our members to sustain membership, while continuing to provide excellent programming using virtual formats. In January 2020, long before the pandemic and after many years, the SAA increased membership fees. We are happy to report that 90% of you obliged.

As this report is prepared prior to the end of our fiscal year, I am unable to let you know how all this has affected our bottom line. During the year, the Finance Committee and the Investment Committee proceeded to implement changes to our investment policies. By year-end, I expect that all these fiscal management changes will result in a positive financial situation for the SAA.

I would like to thank all Board and committee members, our Office Manager Susan Lai, Asian Art Museum curators and staff, SAA accountants, Brad Pence and Kendra Vara, for making this possible. Most of all, I would like to THANK YOU, our members, for your never-ending interest in Asian art and your continued support of the Society for Asian Art. It has been my pleasure to see you this year. As the pandemic comes under control, next year will be even better, and I look forward to welcoming you in person at my of our events.

Best regards,

Ehler Spliedt  
President

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

#### Arts of Asia

The Arts of Asia Committee runs the semi-annual lecture series presented by the SAA. One series is in the Fall and another is in the Spring. Each series has a theme and is designed with the assistance of an Instructor of Record. Speakers are scholars and curators selected because of their particular expertise.

The Fall 2020 Arts of Asia lecture series was devoted to Heroes and Villains in Asian Art and Culture. More than 220 people subscribed, even though all the lectures had to be presented via Zoom because of COVID-19. The Instructor of Record for the series was Stephen Roddy, PhD, of the University of San Francisco.

The Spring 2021 lecture series, also presented via Zoom, is focused on the Power of Images: Making the Invisible Visible. It is also well-subscribed. The Instructor of Record is Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker, PhD, Emerita Professor at Mills College.

Lectures in each series were recorded so that those who missed a lecture could watch it later. As a result, more people from outside the immediate Bay Area attended lectures. The committee is grateful to John O'Shea and Michael Mersereau of the Asian Art Museum and to the SAA Office Manager Susan Lai for their invaluable help in making the series work well on Zoom.

The committee co-chairs are **Margaret Edwards** and **Lawrence Mock**. Additional members are **Kirk Gibson**, **Peggy Mathers**, and **Kathleen Slobin**.

#### Literature and Culture of Asia

The Literature and Culture Committee presented two events this year. In the fall, we offered our first Zoom two-part discussion series on the novella, *Raise the Red Lantern* (originally titled *Wives and Concubines*) by Su Tong and the film *Raise the Red Lantern*, directed by Zhang Yimou. Wei Yang Menkus, PhD, Associate Professor of Chinese, Modern and Classical Languages at the University of San Francisco, led the discussions.

The spring offering was a four-part discussion series of a translation of volume 1 (of 5 volumes) of the 17<sup>th</sup> century *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, or *Chin P'ing Mei, Volume One: The Gathering*. The discussions were led by Stephen Roddy, PhD, Professor of Modern and



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Classical Languages at the University of San Francisco.

The committee is chaired by **Pamela Royse** with members **Judy Frascella, Sherlyn Leong, John Nelson, Jeanne Newman, Melanie Reamy, and Henny Tanudjaja.**

## Study Group

The Study Group Committee is chaired by **Sylvia Wong** with members **Margaret Edwards, Tom Ihrig, Barbara Mow, Debbie Wong Ottman, and Pamela Royse.**

Study Group events on the topic of conservation in the spring and Ming ceramic shards in the summer were postponed due to the pandemic. We look forward to rescheduling these programs when the museum has fully re-opened and we are able to meet in person.

In December 2020, Professor Karen Fraser of the University of San Francisco spoke online on the subject of mid-19th century Japanese photography, an event that was well received.

In March 2021, Kathy Foley, UC Santa Cruz Professor Emerita, presented an online study group on Indonesian puppets. This informative and fun event discussed the importance of puppets in Indonesian culture and introduced us to some basic puppet manipulation and vocal accompaniment.

The last study group for the fiscal year will be in late June. Linda Mihara of Paper Tree in San Francisco's Japantown, will provide an online hands-on workshop on the art of origami.

## Symposia

This committee supports the museum in arranging symposia. Functions can include contacting speakers, helping arrange travel and lodging, coordinating with the museum to reserve Samsung Hall and arranging for food, handling registration, and distributing flyers. Members of the committee are **Nancy Jacobs**, Chair, and **Ehler Spliedt**. No symposia were held this past fiscal year.

## EVENTS FOR MEMBERS

### Member Events

The Member Events Committee is chaired by **Nazneen Spliedt**. Members of the committee include **Margaret Booker, Annie Dorsey, Nancy Jacobs, Anne Adams Kahn, Anne Katz, Phyllis Kempner, Debbie Wong Ottman, Greg Potts, Ehler Spliedt, Graeme Vanderstoel, Barbara Wirth, and Sylvia Wong.**

Due to COVID-19, no gallery, museum nor outside social events could be held this past year. However, swiftly transitioning all events to an online format, the committee continued to offer an average of two events a month. As online events allowed for a larger capacity, we were able to increase our audience for most of our presentations, attracting viewers from all over the country.

From July 2020 through June 2021, the committee organized twenty talks and presentations on Asian art and culture, covering a variety of themes from a wide range of regions and historical periods. Speakers included scholars, professionals and curators from around the Bay Area and beyond, including some from overseas.

### Upper Category Member Events

The Upper Category Member Events Committee provides programs for members supporting the SAA at the Contributor, Donor and Sponsor membership levels. The committee is chaired by **Phyllis Kempner**. Members include **Kalpna Desai, Sheila Dowell, Gloria Garaventa, Etsuko Kobata, Myoung-ja Lee Kwon, Ehler Spliedt, and Kasey Yang.** We too held all our programs online this year.

During our fall season, we took a virtual visit to Ren Brown's gallery in Bodega Bay and enjoyed a timely discussion with Dessa Goddard of Bonhams on the topic of Asian Art in the Age of COVID-19. Our Donor and Sponsor members enjoyed an insightful webinar by Asian Art

Museum Curator H.J. Kim Han on the topic of moon jars and its connection to contemporary Korean art.

In the Spring, webinars were offered by Dr. Philip Lutgendorf on the history of Bollywood and Dr. Uranchimeg Tsultem on contemporary Mongolian art. In April, Sponsor level members were invited to a special informal conversation with Asian Art Museum Director and CEO, Dr. Jay Xu, who will share his thoughts and visions for the museum as we step out of COVID-19 into the future.

The committee thanks all members who have joined or maintained their membership at these higher levels. Your commitment is essential to the Society's mission and activities. We hope more members will consider joining us in the coming year.

## Travel

The Travel Committee is chaired by **Marsha Vargas Handley**, with members **Margaret Booker, Lynne Brewer, Sheila Dowell, Kalena Gregory, Mary Hunt, Anne Adams Kahn, Phyllis Kempner, Bianca Larson, Greg Potts, Sharon Roe, and Gail Uilkema.**



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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no SAA trips have been possible during the last fiscal year. At this time, our trip to Japan which had been rescheduled from May 2020 to May 2021 is again being rescheduled to Spring 2022. In January 2021, we offered a trip to New Orleans for mid-April but due to the slow rollout of the vaccine, we were unable to get enough people to make the trip possible. On February 1, we offered a trip to Korea (October 12 - November 2, 2021) which received good response. Our trip to Morocco which was rescheduled to September 2021 is expected to go as scheduled and has a waitlist.

The committee is currently planning trips to Mongolia from June 30 to July 14, 2022, Oman from October 24 to November 8, 2022, Egypt and Armenia/Georgia as well as domestic trips to San Diego, Seattle and Detroit.

## PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### Library/Book Sale

The Library Committee was chaired by **Ehler Spliedt**, assisted by **Kirk Gibson**.

The SAA continued its support of the Asian Art Museum Library with a monthly donation of \$1,500, a total of \$18,000 for the year. This money helps purchase new books and subscriptions to a wide variety of periodicals.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Book Sale was postponed and will take place, if possible, in the second half of 2021. Some books leftover from the 2019 sale were sold in 2020 to a book dealer and the amount of \$3,200 was donated to the museum Library.

### Lotus Leaves

Lotus Leaves is published twice per year online.

The Fall 2020 Lotus Leaves appeared in November 2020 and featured an article by Professors Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman of University of California, Berkeley, "The Amazing Tale of Kumbhakarna," and an article by independent scholar Robert J. Del Bontà, "Roman Catholic Ivories from Asia."

The Spring 2021 Lotus Leaves is due to appear in May 2021. It features an article by Professor Mitra Ara of San Francisco State University, "Who Are the Yezidis?" and an article by Laura W. Allen, Chief Curator of Japanese Art, Asian Art Museum, "Miraculous Cures in the *Legend of the Crying Fudō*."

The Editor of Lotus Leaves is **Margaret Edwards**.

### Newsletter

The Newsletter Committee edits and publishes the bi-monthly SAA Newsletter. The Newsletter informs members of ongoing SAA activities and ways to register for them. The latest issue can be found on the SAA website. The Committee thanks all members who have agreed to subscribe to digital issues of the Newsletter which helps the Society conserve costs and manpower. Due to the pandemic, volunteers were unable to process the printed versions, so production and distribution needed to be contracted out. The Newsletter Committee is chaired by **John Nelson** and joined by co-editor **Susan Lai**.

### Social Media

The Social Media Committee was formed this year by new board members **Candace Zander Kahn**, Chair, and **Anne Katz**. The goal of the committee is to broaden the reach of the SAA to people outside our membership, who might be interested in our programs and be potential new members. Towards that end, we have established and monitor an SAA Facebook page. We are reaching out to SAA members who already have their own Facebook pages to invite their personal Facebook friends to like and follow our new page.

### Website

The SAA website is now 10 years old and is in need of a redesign to provide a better user experience for all. With SAA Board input, the committee will review priorities, cost and the latest customer relationship management (CRM) applications available for non-profits in order to determine upgrade recommendations. The committee is chaired by **Susan McCabe**, with members **Trista Berkovitz**, **Susan Lai**, and **Ehler Spliedt**.

## DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

### Advisors

The committee is chaired by **Nazneen Spliedt** with members **Jeanne Dorward**, **Judy Frascella**, **Kirk Gibson**, and **Pamela Royse**.

The current SAA Advisory Board consists of 23 advisors and 3 advisors emeriti. No new advisors were added this year and one stepped down due to relocation.



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Unable to host our annual Advisor Lunch this year due to COVID-19, an online social gathering with the SAA Board is planned for April 18. We thank our advisors for their continuous generous support in the Society's missions, in particular, those who have directly been involved in our programs this past year.

## Membership

Our membership decreased about 15% during the 2020 calendar year. COVID-19 restrictions and temporary closure of the Asian Art Museum may have had some impact. The Society had raised its membership dues last January for the first time in many years. This helped us increase our membership revenue by 7.8%, despite the drop in membership numbers. We appreciate those of you who continued to support us during this trying time. In particular, we thank those of you who have renewed or joined us at the Upper Category level, who cumulatively account for 68% of our membership income.

We continue to recruit new members and we have welcomed 31 new households through February of this fiscal year. In the coming months, SAA will launch an Outreach Committee to increase this effort. We hope that you will help spread the word and invite your friends and family to join us.

The Membership Committee members are **Howard Moreland**, Chair, and **Edith Benay**. We also wish to acknowledge with appreciation, SAA Office Manager **Susan Lai**, who took on much extra work on our behalf during the COVID-19 lockdown.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

### Bylaws and Operating Procedures

The committee periodically updates the SAA Operating Procedures, Bylaws and Policies to keep them current and accurate. The committee is chaired by Secretary **Etsuko Kobata**, with members **Trista Berkovitz** and **Margaret Edwards**.

### Finance

The Finance Committee is chaired by Treasurer **Ed Baer**, with members **Trista Berkovitz**, **Steve Pegors**, **Ehler Spliedt**, and **Nazneen Spliedt**.

The committee met monthly to review SAA's financial status and to ensure that sufficient liquid assets were available for all ongoing expenses. The committee's function also includes developing and proposing an annual budget with the input of various committee chairs, fulfilling a variety of accounting and reporting needs. The Treasurer is also a member of the Investment Committee, facilitating communication as the committee works with the Investment Committee to review cash flow and to establish an annual spending policy.

### Investment

The Investment Committee oversees the SAA's investments and works with the fiduciary portfolio manager to ensure the SAA Investment Policy is followed.

In the 2020/21 fiscal year, the committee developed and obtained Board approval of a new fiscal management policy, which provides guidelines for annual budgeting, spending, and contributions to the Asian Art Museum. The committee also established portfolio performance measures, met with the portfolio manager quarterly to review investment performance, and reported quarterly to the Board on the portfolio's performance.

The committee is chaired by **Trista Berkovitz**. Other members include **Ed Baer**, **Gary Chou**, **Howard Moreland**, and **Sandra Pan**.