



January - February 2022

No. 1

Season's Greetings

The Society for Asian Art's board of directors wish our members and friends a happy holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous new year!

The Lunar New Year of the Tiger arrives on February 1, 2022. People born in the Year of the Tiger are considered to be brave, competitive, and confident.

The Asian Art Museum's collection includes this hanging scroll, *Tigers and magpies*, and the label reads: An important subject for Koreans since ancient times, the tiger has been featured not only in foundational myths but also in many Korean parables. As an object of awe and terror as well as worship, the tiger became a popular subject for painting during the Joseon dynasty. The magpie adds a humorous element to the tiger theme. Paintings of the pair were placed on the front gates of houses on New Year's Day to wish for good fortune and luck in the coming year. Tigers were believed to expel evil spirits, while magpies represented bearers of good news. In this painting, a yellow-eyed tiger snarls at the viewer while two magpies chatter away below a pine tree. The tiger's forehead is spotted like a puma's, and while the snarl is supposed to be fearsome, it also projects humor. Fine and wet brushstrokes were combined in the depiction of the tiger, birds, and pine tree.



The inscription on the upper left reads:

In the picture of a scenic mountain
a fierce tiger roars at the wind of the pines
as two magpies clatter above its head
The tiger turns its gaze to them, rolling its red tongue.
—Written by the hermit Sonam

Tiger and magpies, 1850–1900. Korea. Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). Ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Namkoong Ryun, 2000.29. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

See page six of this newsletter for details about our Annual Spring Dinner on Mar. 14, 2022. Sign up and celebrate with fellow members!



IN THIS ISSUE

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With Jay Xu

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Fridays, Jan. 28 – May 6

Spring 2022 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Gifts of Rivers and Resources: Art and Power in Ancient Asia

Wednesday, Feb. 23 Online Webinar

Member Event - Literature and Politics in Mongolia with Simon Wickhamsmith

Monday, Mar. 14

Annual Spring Dinner



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Wednesday, Apr. 6

Member Event - Inclusion: A Story of Hawaiian History and Diversity
With Tom Coffman



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society from October through November. We are thrilled that you have decided to join us, and hope you find our programs and events interesting and engaging. Please don't hesitate to ask questions and give us feedback. Welcome!

Joumana B. Al Naji
Barbara & Howard Bomze
John Copoulos
Ronald Jan

Janice Koyama
Geeta Pirouznia
Darla Wolgast Romano & Richard Romano



TRAVEL

Space is still available on the following trips:

- Asian Art and Heritage in NOLA, March 23 - 27, 2022
- Treasures of Asian Art in Detroit and Ann Arbor, May 16 - 21, 2022
- Mongolia Unveiled, July 2 - 15, 2022 with optional pre-trip Exploring the Mongolian Gobi, June 28 - July 2, 2022

See Trips/Travel on our website for details, <https://www.societyforasianart.org/programs/triptravel>.

Society for Asian Art

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Members' Newsletter
Edited by John Nelson
and Susan Lai

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ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2022 LECTURE SERIES

Gifts of Rivers and Resources: Art and Power in Ancient Asia



Left: Beak spouted jug with handle, approx. 900–700 BCE. Iran; Tepe Sialk, Kashan. Iron Age III (800–600 BCE). Painted earthenware. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60P2009. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
Right: Ritual vessel (he) with lid, China. Warring States period (approx. 475–221 BCE). Bronze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60B907. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

When: Fridays, Jan. 28 – May 6, 2022 (No lecture on Apr. 15.)

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time except as noted

Place: Samsung Hall & Online Webinars

Fee: \$200 per person Society members and \$250 per person non-members for the series. Advance registration must be received by the SAA office no later than Jan. 21, 2022. We will only accept drop ins for individual lectures in Samsung Hall on a space available basis. Drop in fee is \$25 per person per lecture.

Instructor of Record: Sanjyot Mehendale

The artistic productions of a society are a function of the society's geography, climate, environmental conditions, natural resources, technology, trade, and culture. This series examines the foundations of Asian artistic traditions with attention to how their natural environments shaped the cultures. It is no accident that complex cultures first arose on rivers, near fertile croplands, close to deposits of valuable minerals, or at nodes of trade routes. Join us for a journey across ancient Asia to see how the formative traditions arose from their natural settings. This series will explore the ancient societies that arose along the great river systems of the Indus, Tigris and Euphrates, Oxus, Yellow River, Yangtze, Ganges, and Mekong, and survey the earliest complex cultures of Mesopotamia, Iran, Central Asia, India, the Himalayas, China, Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan.

See the next page for the full schedule of speakers and topics and sign up today.



ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2022 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

January 28, 2022

The Indus Tradition of Ancient South Asia: New Perspectives on Crafts, Trade, Ideology and Power

J. Mark Kenoyer, George F. Dales Jr. and Barbara A. Dales Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

February 4, 2022

Climate, Environment, and the Development of Complex Societies in the Ancient Near East

Hervé Reculeau, Associate Professor of Assyriology, Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago

February 11, 2022

The Yellow River: A Natural and Unnatural History

Ruth Mostern, Professor and World History Center Director, University of Pittsburgh

February 18, 2022

Goddess, Serpent and River: The Ganges in South Asian Art and History

Robert D. DeCaroli, Professor and Director of the MA Program, Department of History and Art History, George Mason University

February 25, 2022

Southern Bronzes and the Creation of Ritual Landscape in Early China

Li Min, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles

March 4, 2022

The Ancestors of Angkor: Early Civilizations in Mainland Southeast Asia

Alison Carter, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon

March 11, 2022

China First Unifies: Art of the Qin and Han Periods

Jun Hu, Mr. and Mrs. Pai Ruchu Presidential Professor in the Arts and Humanities, University of California, Berkeley

March 18, 2022

Regimes of Mobilities: Culture, Economy and the Early Central Asian Powers

Bryan K. Miller, Lecturer, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

March 25, 2022

Motif and Material Culture: Trans-Himalayan Connections as Viewed from Upper Mustang, Nepal

Mark Aldenderfer, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of California, Merced

April 1, 2022

Ancient Empires and Art of South Asia Beyond the Ganges

Jinah Kim, George P. Bickford Professor of Indian and South Asian Art, Harvard University

April 8, 2022

The Role of Space and Geography in the Formation of Early Korean States

Mark E. Byington, Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

April 22, 2022

Japanese Material Culture, Ecology and Landscape Practice from the Prehistoric Jomon to the Early Historic Period

Junko Habu, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley

April 29, 2022

The Landscapes and Materiality of Power in Persia and the Ancient Iranian World

Matthew Canepa, Professor and Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran, University of California, Irvine

May 6, 2022

All Greek to Us: The Kushans and "Hellenism"

Sanjyot Mehendale, Chair, Tang Center for Silk Road Studies, University of California, Berkeley



STUDY GROUP

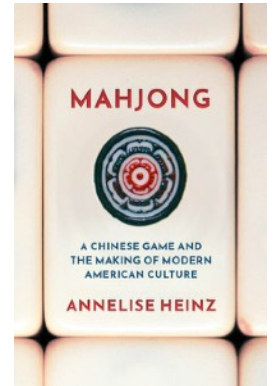
Mahjong in America With Annelise Heinz

When: **Friday, Jan. 21, 2021**
 Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time**
 Place: **Zoom Webinar**
 Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members.**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Jan. 14, 2022.

Popular around the world, mahjong, a game played with tiles, originated in China. In the twentieth century, it traveled across the Pacific to the United States and caught on with Hollywood starlets, high society, middle-class housewives, and immigrants alike, creating waves of popularity and becoming a quintessentially American game.

Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture by Annelise Heinz narrates the history of this game and how it has created a variety of meanings, among them American modernity, Chinese American heritage, and Jewish American women's culture. The spaces between tiles and the moments between games have fostered distinct social cultures in the United States.

Annelise Heinz, an Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon, is a historian of modern America. Her research focuses on the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality. Her work has been featured by National Public Radio, South China Morning Post, The Wall Street Journal, and international Chinese television, among others. She has lived and played mahjong in the United States and Southwestern China.



Cover of *Mahjong, A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture*.



Annelise Heinz



MEMBER EVENTS

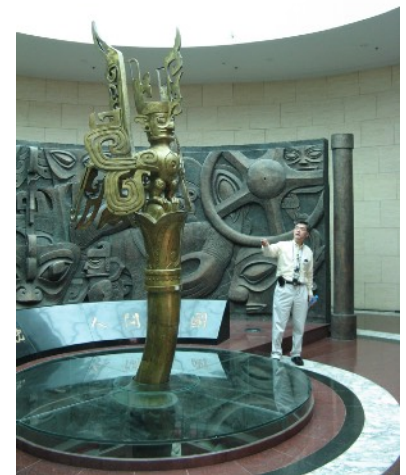
Deciphering Sanxingdui: Iconography of a Lost Civilization 2-Lecture Mini Series With Jay Xu

When: **Friday, Jan. 14 & Wednesday, Mar. 2, 2022**
 Time: **10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Pacific Time**
 Place: **Online Webinars**
 Fee: **\$25 per person Society members; \$35 per person non-members for the series.**
Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Jan. 7, 2022.

A Bronze Age civilization lost for more than three thousand years was found in China's Sichuan province in 1986. Remains of a large-scaled, walled settlement were discovered at the village of Sanxingdui, which included two underground pits filled with a staggering number of objects, familiar as well as extraordinary, such as three-dimensional sculptures, life-size standing figures, and masks of fantastic supernatural beings with protruding eyes and huge flaring ears. Nearly 35 years later, in March 2021, Sanxingdui shocked the world with news of the discovery of six more pits, filled with spectacular bronzes, whole elephant tusks, and other precious artifacts, which are now being excavated.

Jay Xu will expand on his previous presentation that provided a brief survey of the ongoing excavations at Sanxingdui and an introduction of its mysterious material culture. Expanding on that and utilizing both the 1986 finds and the latest ones from the field, Jay, in this lecture series, will explore in detail the images at Sanxingdui, as the iconography affords a way to decipher and understand this civilization and its spiritual outlook and practices that those images embodied.

Jay Xu has been the Director of the Asian Art Museum since 2008. He received his PhD from Princeton University in early Chinese art and archaeology. He has held curatorial positions at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Seattle Art Museum and has had hands-on experience at the Shanghai Art Museum. He is the first Asian American to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Jay Xu at Sanxingdui Museum.
Photo by Ehler Spliedt.



MEMBER EVENTS

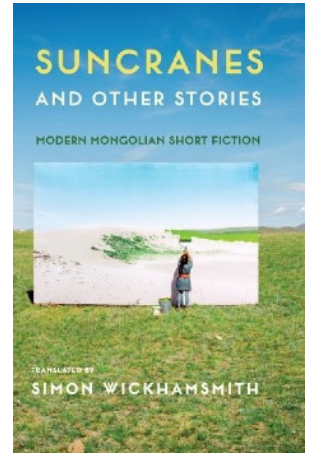
Literature and Politics in Mongolia With Simon Wickhamsmith

When: **Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022**
 Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific Time**
 Place: **Online Webinar**
 Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members.**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Feb. 16, 2022.

In the years immediately following the 1921 Soviet-led revolution, Mongolian writers played a pivotal role in defining the new socialist society and in communicating and implementing the practical and ideological developments. This talk will explore the ways in which writers negotiated their art under the increasingly restrictive political system, and how Mongolian letters and literature changed at this time.

The talk will also focus on modern Mongolia, based on his translation of the book “Suncranes and Other Stories,” which showcases a range of powerful voices and their vivid portraits of nomads, the revolution, and the endless Steppe. The writers featured in this book show how Mongolian culture has bridged links between the traditional and the modern, with a mix of stories, Mongolia’s majestic landscapes & the people’s deep connection to it come through vividly.

Simon Wickhamsmith has been studying and translating Mongolian literature since the late 1990s and is currently working on Mongolian literature since the 1921 revolution. Previously, he was involved, both as a monk and as a scholar, in Tibetan Buddhism, and has researched extensively into the dramatic and confusing life story of the Sixth Dalai Lama, which resulted in his book, “The Hidden Life of the Sixth Dalai Lama”. Simon has worked at Rutgers University since 2014, and while principally connected to the Writing Program, he is also affiliated with the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and the South Asian Studies Program. He has a PhD in Mongolian Studies from the University of Washington and is an outstanding translator of Mongolian fiction.



Suncranes and Other Stories,
Modern Mongolian Short Fiction,
Translated by Simon Wickhamsmith.



Simon Wickhamsmith by M. Amarhy

Annual Spring Dinner

When: **Monday, Mar. 14, 2022**
 Time: **5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**
 Place: **Far East Café, 631 Grant Avenue, San Francisco**
Proof of vaccination and mask required for entry.
 Fee: **\$68 per person Society members; \$78 per person non-members.**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Mar. 7, 2022.

Join the Society for our Annual Spring Dinner at the iconic Far East Café in Chinatown. We will welcome the Year of the Tiger with a sumptuous 8-course menu with wine and good cheer.



Far East Café

An enchanting and long-established restaurant, Far East Café is located in the heart of Chinatown and decorated with painted murals, carved screens and nostalgic artwork from China.

Parking is available on the street or in St. Mary’s Square Parking Garage at 433 Kearny Street.

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LOTUS LEAVES

Fall 2021 Issue Now Online

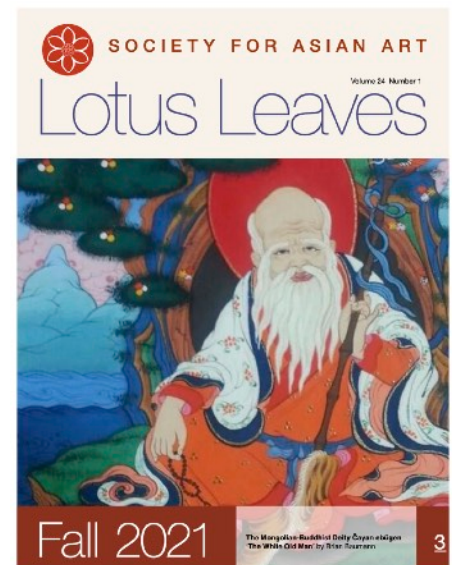
The Fall 2021 *Lotus Leaves* is devoted to exploring the marvelous figure in Mongolian folklore and Geluk-Mongolian Buddhism of The White Old Man. The article is written by scholar of Mongolian Buddhism, Brian Baumann, PhD, of the University of California, Berkeley.

To access online issues of *Lotus Leaves*:

- Go to the SAA website, www.societyforasianart.org.
- Click on the “Lotus Leaves” tab on the banner along the top of the homepage. This will open the *Lotus Leaves* webpage.
- Click on “View PDF” of the issue you would like to read.

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Cover of Fall 2021 Issue of *Lotus Leaves*.
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