



January - February 2024

No. 1

President's Message



Left: Pendant in the shape of dragon, China. Warring States period (475–221 BCE). Nephrite. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60J675*. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: Jar with dragon design, approx. 1600–1675. Korea. Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). Porcelain with iron-oxide decoration under glaze. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Acquisition made possible by the Koret Foundation with additional funding from Korean Art and Culture Committee and the Connoisseurs' Council, 2003.9*. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

As 2023 comes to an end and we welcome 2024, I want to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday season and coming year. On February 10, we will welcome the Year of the Wood Dragon on the lunar calendar. The combination of a dragon with the nurturing element of wood is expected to bring about growth, progress, and abundance. It's seen as an ideal period for fresh starts and laying down the groundwork for lasting success. With the end of 2023 bringing the Society a large bequest from a member active in the 1980's to 1990's, Frances Y. Austin, we are fortunate to be able to focus on moving the Society forward in the coming years.

If you are still looking for that unusual gift for a friend or family member, you could consider gifting our Spring 2024 Arts of Asia Lecture series which can be enjoyed either in person in Samsung Hall or by webinar at your convenience. For that special someone, we are offering trips to Chicago in May, Copenhagen/Stockholm in August, or Seattle in September, where you will not only see the sights but enjoy visiting museums with knowledgeable scholars.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the coming year at our exciting events and lectures that you can view on our website

Marsha Vargas Handley
President

Society for Asian Art Board Nominations

The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to serve on the SAA Board of Directors for 2024 - 2025. The SAA Board is a working board with all Board members expected to serve on at least one committee.

The committees plan and manage various programs each year. The committees that plan events are: Arts of Asia, Member Events, Upper Category Member Events, Literature & Culture, Study Groups and Travel.

We are also looking for volunteers with expertise to serve on Finance, Investment, Social Media & Website as well as Membership Committees.

If you would like to be considered or wish to recommend a potential candidate, please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Nazneen Spliedt, at nazehler@aol.com before March 8, 2024



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Member Event - Visualizing Jainism through Shrine Hangings with Lynna Dhanani

Saturday, Feb. 24

Upper Category Member Event - Society Conversation with Akiko Walley

Thursday, Apr. 4, Friday, Apr. 5, Saturday, Apr. 6 and Sunday, Apr. 7, 2024

Annual Book Sale

Aug. 9 - Aug. 19, 2024

Travel - SAA's Scandinavian Summer Tour: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Mar. 9, 2024

Upper Category Member Event - Society Conversation with Sarah Wenner



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in October and 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!

Georgia Lee

Susan Torres



SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Facebook and Instagram accounts continue to attract followers, who enjoy photos of trips and local excursions, and images of Arts of Asia lectures. We look forward to featuring photos of the upcoming South India and Paris trips. The most important part of social media is photos, so thank you to all who have submitted them. We hope you will continue to do so.

Society for Asian Art

January - February 2024, No. 1

Members' Newsletter
Edited by Janet Constantinou
and Susan Lai

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Echoes of the Past, Visions of the Future



Left: *Past Continuous Tense* (detail), 2011, by Lam Tung Pang (Chinese, b. 1978, active Hong Kong and Vancouver). Charcoal, image transfer, and acrylic on plywood. Acquisition made possible by the Kao/Williams Foundation. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Right: Landscape in the style of Ni Zan and Huang Gongwang, dated 1708, by Wang Yuanqi (Chinese, 1642–1715). Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum, Museum purchase, B69D7. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

- When:** Fridays from Jan. 26 to May 17, 2024 (No lecture on Mar. 29, Apr. 12 & May 10)
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time
Place: Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum & Online Webinars
Please see schedule on the next page for any exceptions.
Fee: \$200 per person Society members; \$250 per person non-members for the series.
We will only accept drop-ins for individual lectures in Samsung Hall on a space available basis. Drop-in fee is \$20 per person per lecture.
All in-person fees are after Museum admission.
Instructor of Record: Sanjyot Mehendale

No culture exists in a vacuum, without a context or a past. During this lecture series, we will examine the ways historical ideas, forms, and techniques continue to shape the arts and cultures of today. We will start with archeological explorations, move on to artists who continue ancient traditions, and bring in contemporary artists referencing and exploring the past.

We will see how exchanges east and west led Chinese calligraphers to enliven an ancient art, and how Bay Area artist Ala Ebtakar explored the cosmos and the idea of time for a piece now on view on the museum's newly opened East West Bank Art Terrace. After we travel to Central Asia, South Asia, the Himalayas, China, Korea, and Japan, our concluding lecture will feature the Barbara Bass Bakar Director & CEO of the Asian Art Museum, Dr. Jay Xu, speaking on the unique contribution and relationship between archeology and art. This lecture will have special significance to the spring special exhibition, *Phoenix Kingdoms*, exploring new discoveries of an ancient Chinese 3,000-year-old Bronze Culture.

Art will help us illuminate what one of our speakers, Arnold Chang, describes as “The Past is Always Present”.

Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information about this lecture series.



ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2024 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

Jan. 26, 2024

Medieval Central Asia in Depth: Archaeological Explorations and Mapping of Newly Discovered High Elevation Cities of the 6th-12th Centuries

Michael Frachetti, Professor of Archaeology, Department of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis

Feb. 2, 2024

Ani: 10th Century Capital City of Armenia and UNESCO World Heritage Archeological Site

Heghnar Watenpaugh, Professor of Art & Architectural History, University of California, Davis

Feb. 9, 2024

Living Traditions: Architecture of Japan in a World Context

Ken Tadashi Oshima, Professor/Director of History Theory, Department of Architecture, University of Washington, Seattle

Feb. 16, 2024

Home is a Foreign Place: The Art of Zarina Hashmi

Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker, Professor Emerita, Department of Art and Art History, Mills College

Feb. 23, 2024

Japanese Aesthetics of Subversion: Basara, Wabi-Sabi and Kabuki Mono

Akiko Walley, Maude I. Kerns Associate Professor of Japanese Art, University of Oregon

Mar. 1, 2024

The Past is Always Present

Arnold Chang, Artist, Curator, and Art Historian

Mar. 8, 2024

Making the Desert Bloom: The Art, Architecture, and Archaeology of the Nabataeans Past and Present

Sarah Wenner, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Research Fellow, Cincinnati Art Museum

Mar. 15, 2024

Echoes in Luminous Ground

Ala Ebtekar, Artist and Lecturer, Department of Art & Art History, Stanford University

Mar. 22, 2024

New Buddhist Art and Architecture in India

Padma Dorje Maitland, Malavalli Family Foundation Associate Curator of the Art of the Indian Subcontinent, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Apr. 5, 2024

Wang Dongling and Calligraphic Practice in Contemporary Art

Julia Andrews, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, Department of History of Art, The Ohio State University

Apr. 19, 2024

Tsherin Sherpa: Art from the Himalayas Today

Tsherin Sherpa, Artist

Apr. 26, 2024

Monkey Paintings of the Joseon Dynasty

Yoon-Jee Choi, Assistant Curator for Korean Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

May 3, 2024

Tradition as an Echo in My Art

Shahzia Sikander, Artist, Studio SS Sikander

May 17, 2024

The Lost Kingdoms of Ancient China: The Relationship Between Archeology and Art History

Dr. Jay Xu, The Barbara Bass Bakar Director & CEO, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



MEMBER EVENTS

The Rise of South Korean Cinema with Jinsoo An

When: **Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members after museum admission**

South Korean cinema has emerged as one of the most dynamic and commercially successful national cinemas in the past twenty years. This rise is particularly impressive given that Korean cinema was nearly on the brink of collapse in the early 1990's due to its struggle against the encroachment of Hollywood films. What happened to South Korean cinema? How did it turn the situation around and regain domestic market and international recognition? This lecture will answer those questions and also reflect on South Korean cinema's new challenges in the changing media landscape – especially from the spread of streaming platforms and alternative viewing practices.

Dr. Jinsoo An is an associate professor at UC Berkeley, where he holds the Chancellor's Chair in Korean Language and Culture and also chairs the Center for Korean Studies. He has a special interest in Korean films and has published numerous articles and books relating to Korean film aesthetics and representation. He is currently working on a manuscript relating to the Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-young, known for his edgy, psychosexual films from the 1960's and 1970's.

Visualizing Jainism through Shrine Hangings with Lynna Dhanani

When: **Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members after museum admission**

This talk will highlight fundamental aspects of the Jain religious traditions as illustrated on a set of Jain devotional textiles (*chhoda*) exhibited at UCLA's Fowler Museum. These devotional textiles shine with references to Jain mythology, spiritual teachers, sacred sites, ritual traditions, and other religious themes. Historically significant in South Asian trade and local artistic production as well as religious patronage, they adorn homes, shrines, and temples of the Jain community world-wide.

Lynna Dhanani obtained her doctorate from Yale University and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Davis. She co-curated the exhibition *Visualizing Devotion: Jain Embroidered Shrine Hangings* at the Fowler Museum and is co-author of its exhibition catalogue. Having dedicated herself to the study of multiple Indian religions for more than two decades, Dr. Dhanani has a wide range of interests including the study of ancient and modern Indian languages and South Asian religious art.



Theatrical poster of *The Housemaid* (1960), produced, written and directed by Kim Ki-young. Kuk Dong, Seki Trading Co., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Jinsoo An



Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection, UCLA Fowler Museum of Art



Lynna Dhanani



UPPER CATEGORY MEMBER EVENTS

The Art of Inro with Steve Koppich

When: **Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024**

Time: **2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Place: **Private Residence in Piedmont**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society Upper Category Sponsor & Donor members only.**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Dec. 20, 2023.

Given that SAA members have a special interest in Asian art, many of you will have noticed (and admired) the beautiful small lacquer boxes that were attached to Japanese obi on display at the Asian Art Museum. Why were they made, who wore them, who made them and when were they popular? All these questions and why he became a collector will be addressed by Steve Koppich, a well-known inro and lacquer collector in the Bay Area, who will also feature examples from his personal collection in this very special presentation.

Please note:

- Refreshments will be served.
- An exact address will be provided to registered attendees prior to the event.
- Participation is limited to 20 SAA Upper Category Sponsor and Donor members.

In addition to being an inro collector, Steve Koppich was a retail and supply chain executive at Williams Sonoma and Target. He is currently the chairman of the Northern California Chapter of the International Netsuke Society.

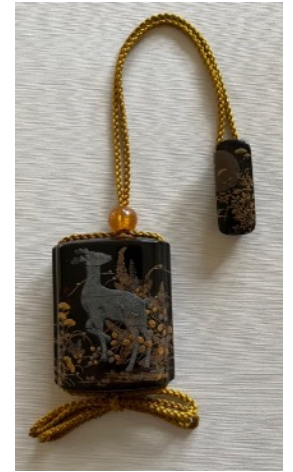


Photo courtesy of Steve Koppich.



Steve Koppich

An invitation was emailed to all Sponsor and Donor members on Nov. 16, 2023.

Society Conversation with Akiko Walley

When: **Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024**

Time: **2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Place: **Private Residence in Oakland**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society Upper Category members and guests.**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Feb. 14, 2024.

Upper Category members are invited to join a Society Conversation with Akiko Walley, the Maude I. Kerns Associate Professor of Japanese Art, at the University of Oregon.

Dr. Walley will be speaking about the legendary Katsura Villa in Kyoto. She will explain how this magnificent villa was decorated with an exquisite blend of Heian-period courtly elegance and the rusticity characterizing the wabi aspect of the medieval Japanese tea ceremony. Her interpretation is that these and other aspects like the villa's reserved color palette and impeccable detailing were intended to obliquely (but powerfully) criticize the ostentatiousness of the Tokugawa shogunate's warrior class aesthetic.



Katsura Villa. Photo courtesy of Akiko Walley.



Akiko Walley

This promises to be a "not to be missed" presentation for any Upper Category member who has visited Katsura Villa (such as participants on the recent SAA trip to Japan) or who has considered visiting in the future.

The event is limited to a maximum of 20 people, so please sign up as soon as possible when invitations are emailed in early January. The exact address will be provided to registered attendees approximately one week before the event. Light refreshments will be served.



How Many Hindu Gods Are There? with Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman

When: **Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$40 per person Society members; \$50 per person non-members after museum admission**

Advance registration must be received by SAA by Jan. 13, 2024.

How Many Hindu Gods Are There? (Be Careful Before You Answer!)

The pot is a god. The winnowing fan is a god.
The stone in the street is a god.
The comb is a god. The bowstring is also a god.
The bushel is a god and the spouted cup is a god.
Gods, gods, there are so many
there's no place left for a foot.
There is only one god.

He is our Lord of the Meeting Rivers. (Shiva)

Basavanna (12th century CE)

(Translated by A.K Ramanujan)

This study group will explore the fascinating history of the representation of divinity in Hindu India from prehistoric times through the religion of the Vedas and the efflorescence of devotional sectarian Hinduism in the Sanskrit epics and puranas. We will also discuss the medieval and early modern vernacular devotional poets and the lived beliefs and practices of Hindus in the modern world. Lectures and discussions will focus on both polytheistic and monotheistic developments in Hindu theology and mythology and will explore the principal male and female deities of the three major strands in the grand fabric of the Hindu faith, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism (worship of goddesses) along with their incarnations, manifestations, and associated divinities.

Robert P. Goldman, PhD and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, PhD are the primary translators of the multi-volume annotated Valmiki Ramayana published by Princeton University Press, and long-time members of the faculty in the Department of South & Southeast Asian Studies at University of California, Berkeley. Robert Goldman is Professor of the Graduate School and Catherine and William L. Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Sanskrit Emeritus, and Sally Sutherland Goldman is Senior Lecturer Emerita of Sanskrit. The Goldmans have been beloved speakers to SAA audiences on many occasions, and are widely recognized as leading experts on Sanskrit literature and Indian epics.

Participants will have time to have a quick lunch in the museum's cafe, Asian Box. (Lunch cost is not included in the registration fee.) Refreshments (coffee, tea, water, and cookies) will be provided.

Recommended Books:

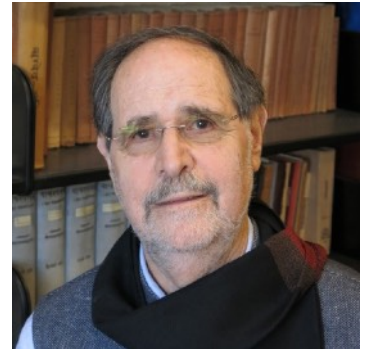
1. [The Rig Veda: An Anthology, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Penguin Classic Books](#)

2. [Classical Hindu Mythology: A Reader in the Sanskrit Puritans, Cornelia Dimmitt and J.A.B van Buitenen](#)

Suggested readings from these two books will be posted shortly. Both books are available for purchase on Amazon.



The Hindu deity Vishnu in the form of a boar, approx. 1000. India; probably Northern Rajasthan state. Stone (schist). Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B62S15+. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Robert Goldman



Sally Sutherland Goldman

SAA's Scandinavian Summer Tour: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen
August 9 - 19, 2024



Left: Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen. Right: Stockholm waterfront

Scandinavia – often associated with Viking legends and modern design – seems an improbable destination for great collections of Asian art. Yet countless Swedish and Danish archaeologists, missionaries, diplomats, and private individuals have donated objects to collections in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Copenhagen. Expect an eye-opening, edifying, and entertaining experience! Highlights include visits to Stockholm’s Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities and the Museum of Ethnography, Gothenburg’s Röhsskamuseet, and Copenhagen’s The David Collection and the National Museum of Denmark. This trip kicks off with an entertaining weekend in Visby, on the island of Gotland, where we will partake in the largest medieval festival in Europe. We hope you will join us!

An email announcement with trip details and online registration instructions will be sent in early February to all SAA members and newsletter subscribers. If you are not yet a member, please [join online](#).

 ANNUAL BOOK SALE

2024 Annual Book Sale

When: **Thursday, Apr. 4, 2024 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
Friday, Apr. 5, 2024 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, Apr. 6, 2024 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, Apr. 7, 2024 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Place: **Asian Art Museum Loggia**

Book lovers, mark your calendars: thousands of books — including rare collector's items — will be available at bargain prices at the Society for Asian Art's annual Book Sale in the Asian Art Museum loggia. This year's special four-day event includes both a Thursday night, when the museum remains open until 8 PM, and a Free First Sunday. Tell your friends!

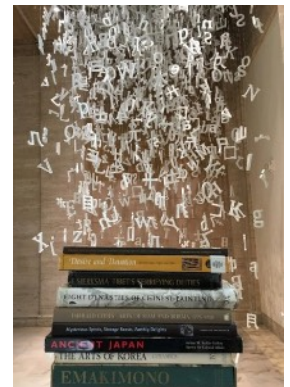


Photo courtesy of Peter Sinton.

Donations for Book Sale

We now accept books throughout the year for our annual Book Sale. So if you move, downsize or are tired of all the books collecting dust in your home, please donate them to our Book Sale. We are accepting books with Asian subjects only, be it art, culture, novels, history, travel, cooking, exhibition catalogs or others.

Due to space constraints, we are unable to accept book donations at the SAA office. You can drop off books on Fridays when the Arts of Asia lectures are in session. If you have a lot of books, we are happy to pick them up from your home within the Bay Area. Please contact the SAA office at 415-581-3701 or info@societyforasianart.org for details.