



July - August 2025

No. 4

### Incoming President's Message

Dear Members,

I am truly honored to have been chosen by the Board as the incoming President of the Society for Asian Art, a vibrant and amazing organization. Each spring and fall, the SAA presents a world-class lecture series on the Arts of Asia, featuring more than a dozen scholarly presentations on a single overarching theme developed by the Arts of Asia Committee. During the Pandemic, SAA moved the lecture series online, where it remains available for remote viewing. You also are encouraged to attend in person in Samsung Hall where you can mingle with your SAA fellow members.

Travel is another exciting way to develop friendships with other SAA members who have similar interests. These small-group trips are meticulously planned to explore Asian art and artifacts, not just in Asian countries but also in unexpected locations. SAA aims to sponsor at least two foreign and two domestic trips a year.



Julia Molander

As your president, I look forward to working with the new Director of the Asian Art Museum, Dr. Soyoung Lee, to strengthen SAA's good relationship with the Museum. The SAA was instrumental in the founding of the Museum 67 years ago, and we are deeply committed to its success. Every year the SAA makes financial and in-kind contributions to the Museum, and we collaborate on various programs throughout the year.

The SAA also has study groups, literature courses, local excursions, and informal gatherings. My hope and plan is to increase the ways you can connect as a member. So please encourage your friends and family to join the SAA, if they haven't already. I look forward to seeing you this year!

Sincerely,  
Julia Molander  
President

### Gift in Honor of Dr. Jay Xu

At the Annual Meeting on May 29, 2025, SAA President Nazneen Spliedt announced that the Society for Asian Art will make a gift to the Asian Art Museum of \$50,000 to support future exhibits in honor of Dr. Jay Xu's service as Director from 2008 to 2025.

The new Museum Director, Dr. Soyoung Lee, shared a message of thanks with the Society: "It was a pleasure to meet so many of the dedicated members. And I appreciated the chance to share my vision and hopes with the group. What an added honor it was to receive the generous \$50,000 gift from SAA in honor of my predecessor Jay Xu, for use toward a future exhibition. I am truly grateful."



Dr. Soyoung Lee with SAA Presidents who served during Dr. Jay Xu's tenure. From left: Linda Lei, Dr. Soyoung Lee, Nazneen Spliedt, Marsha Vargas Handley, Trista Berkovitz, Anne Kahn and Ehler Spliedt. Not in attendance: Gloria Garaventa, Phyllis Kempner, and Susan McCabe..



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### Sunday, Jul. 20

Member Event - Tour of *Nostalgic Expressions*: Exhibition of Diaspora Nepali Artists with Swosti Kayastha

### Saturday, Aug. 2

Member Event - Obon Celebration at the Buddhist Church of Oakland

### Friday, Aug. 22

Member Event - *New Japanese Clay* with Robert Mintz

### Fridays, Sept. 5 - Dec. 12, 2025

Fall 2025 Arts of Asia - It's Magic: Art and the Power of Transformation

### Sunday, Oct. 26

Fall 2025 Literature Course - *Journey to the West: The Monkey King* with Ling Hon Lam



## UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

### Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025

Member Event - The Monkey King with Kip Cranna



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member, who joined the Society in April and May. 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!

Grace Kim Kostal  
Jongmin Paek

Stephen Roy Smith  
Cristina Widjaja



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Publicity/Social Media Committee wants to thank all of you who visit our Instagram and Facebook pages regularly to "like" our posts. We are maintaining our "follows" at 1000 people for the two pages combined, with the majority following us on Instagram.

Please send photos to [candacezks@gmail.com](mailto:candacezks@gmail.com).

## Society for Asian Art

July - August 2025, No. 4

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and Susan Lai

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## ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2025 LECTURE SERIES

### It's Magic: Art and the Power of Transformation



Left: *Towering to Cloudy Sky*, 1776, by Luo Pin (Chinese, 1733–1799), Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Ink on paper. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *Museum purchase*, B74D18. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: Theatrical headdress for the magical deer in the Ramayana (Epic of Rama) dance-drama, approx. 1950–1960. Central Thailand. Papier-mâché, glass, and mixed media. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *Gift from Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's Southeast Asian Art Collection*, 2006.27.10.9. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

**When: Fridays Sept. 5 to Dec. 12, 2025 (No lecture on Nov. 28.)**

**Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time**

**Place: Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum & Zoom 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.**

**Advance registration must be received by SAA by Aug. 22, 2025.**

**We 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: Jeff Durham**

From the beginnings of human existence, art has had the power to transform our understanding of the world; sometimes that power is called magic.

Join us for a 14-lecture series that delves into the mystical qualities of art across cultures and time. From ancient talismans to contemporary illusions, discover how artists harness symbolism, ritual, and innovation to alter perceptions, bridge worlds, and inspire change. Instructor of Record Jeff Durham, Associate Curator of Himalayan Art at the Asian Art Museum, has invited speakers who provide enlightening new perspectives on art.

The Arts of Asia committee welcomes comments about our lecture series. Please email comments to [info@societyforasianart.org](mailto:info@societyforasianart.org).

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



# ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2025 LECTURE SERIES

## Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

### Sept. 5, 2025

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

### Sept. 12, 2025

The Magic of the Floating World: How A.A.Murakami Make Fantasy Reality and Reality Fantasy

Bradley Bailey, Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Curator of Asian Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

### Sept. 19, 2025

Magic in Thai Buddhism

Justin McDaniel, Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Professor of the Humanities, Department of Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania

### Sept. 26, 2025

Creating the Self, Creating the Other: Representations of Tibetan Ethnic People in the Early Decades of the People's Republic of China

Rosaline Kyo, Assistant Professor, Department of History of Art and Visual Culture, University of California, Santa Cruz

### Oct. 3, 2025

The Animated Image In Asia: Image Consecration and Desecration

James Robeson, James C. Kralik and Yunli Lou Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

### Oct. 10, 2025

TBD

Richard Vinograd, Christensen Fund Professor in Asian Art, Department of Art & Art History, Stanford University

### Oct. 17, 2025

TBD

Eugene Wang, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of Asian Art, Department of History of Art + Architecture, Harvard University

### Oct. 24, 2025

Transformation in Okinawan Rituals

Tze M. Loo, Associate Professor of History and Global Studies, Department of History, University of Richmond

### Oct. 31, 2025

Falnama: The Book of Omens

Massumeh Farhad, Senior Associate Director for Research and The Ebrahimi Family Curator of Persian, Arab, and Turkish Art, Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art

### Nov. 7, 2025

Ghosts in Japanese Art and in Kabuki Theatre

Kirk Kanesaka, Assistant Professor of Japanese and Asian Studies, California State University, San Bernardino

### Nov. 14, 2025

The Art of Terrestrial Diagrams in Early China

Michelle H. Wang, Associate Professor of Art History and Humanities, Reed College

### Nov. 21, 2025

Woven Silk and the Transformation of Imperial Bodies at the Mongol Court

Yong Cho, Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art, University of California, Riverside

### Dec. 5, 2025

Transformation: From Magic Mirrors to Tea Bowls to Dancing Cats and Other Magical Creatures

Laura Allen, Independent Scholar and Emeritus Senior Curator for Japanese Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

### Dec. 12, 2025

The Buddha's Miracles and Magical Appearances

Forrest McGill, Emeritus Senior Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco





## MEMBER EVENTS

### *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa with Marilyn Chase*

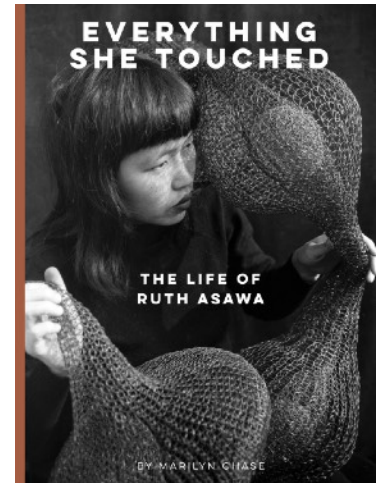
When: **Friday, July 18, 2025**

Time: **1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

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

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

Marilyn Chase, the biographer of San Francisco artist Ruth Asawa (1926 – 2013), will share highlights of her research into the life of the beloved sculptor and advocate for art education. Chase, a former reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* and journalism teacher, spent five years plumbing Asawa's archives at Stanford University and interviewing more than 80 of her family, friends and colleagues. Her book, *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, recounts Asawa's childhood on her parents' farm in Norwalk, which was interrupted by World War II and the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Transcending trauma, Asawa emerged as a creative force building her studio practice in San Francisco. Her nonstop creative production continued throughout her years in San Francisco, where we savor her rich legacy of fountains, wire sculptures, paintings, prints and work spanning many media. SFMOMA's *Ruth Asawa: Retrospective* is on view through Sept. 2, 2025.



Cover of *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa* by Marilyn Chase (Chronicle Books, 2020). Photograph by Imogen Cunningham. Photo courtesy of Marilyn Chase.

### *Tour of Nostalgic Expressions: Exhibition of Diaspora Nepali Artists with Swosti Kayastha*

When: **Sunday, July 20, 2025 3:00 p.m.**

Place: **Piedmont Center for the Arts, 801 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont**

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

Join us for a special event featuring a curatorial tour and viewing of *Nostalgic Expressions*, an exhibition showcasing works by first-generation Nepali American artists. The exhibition explores the complexities of diasporic life — navigating between cultures, preserving heritage and shaping new identities. The artists reflect on themes of belonging, memory and resilience. This event offers a unique opportunity to engage with the artworks and gain deeper insights through the curatorial perspective.

Participating artists include Paramesh Adhikari, Sunila Bajracharya, Dinesh Charan Shrestha, Palija Shrestha, Rojjan Sinkhwal, Kabi Raj Lama, Youdhisthir Maharjan, Rabi Prajapati, and Yuvak Tuladhar.

Swosti Kayastha is a Fulbright Visiting Scholar currently associated with the Asian Art Museum. She specializes in Nepali art and culture and has worked as a curator for the Nepal Art Council in addition to having been a lecturer at the Lumbini Buddhist University in Nepal.



*The Memories of Nepal*, by Yuvak Tuladhar, 2025. Acrylic and engraving on wood. Photograph © Yuvak Tuladhar, Photo courtesy of the artist.



*Into the Harmony*, by Kabi Raj Lama, 2017. Lithograph. Photograph © Kabi Raj Lama. Photo courtesy of the artist.



## MEMBER EVENTS

### Obon Celebration at the Buddhist Church of Oakland

When: **Saturday, August 2, 2025 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Place: **Buddhist Church of Oakland, 825 Jackson Street, Oakland**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members**  
**Limited to 20 participants.**

Enjoy a fun-filled afternoon experiencing Japanese food, culture, music and the Obon Odori dance, a centuries old ritual performed during the Obon festival, a Buddhist holiday honoring the spirits of the ancestors.

The festival opens at 1:00 p.m. with a food bazaar, an ikebana floral exhibit and a Japanese tea ceremony. There will be various music performances, including traditional and modern Japanese music. We will meet at 3.00 p.m. in front of the church for a tour by Rev. Harry Bridge, during which he will explain the history of Jodo Shinshu - Pure Land Buddhism. After the talk, we will be escorted to a special seating area to enjoy the performances of the Bon Odori dancers and learn more about the Obon Festival culture they represent. You are welcome to come early to enjoy the various activities on your own. Since parking is very limited, we encourage you to take BART, ride share services, or carpool.



Photos courtesy of the Buddhist Church of Oakland.

### New Japanese Clay with Robert Mintz

When: **Friday, August 22, 2025 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center & Hambrecht Contemporary Gallery, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members only**

This exhibition of ceramics reimagined through a dazzling diversity of forms, textures and techniques showcases recent gifts from the collection of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David Stein. The world of contemporary Japanese ceramics is brimming with dynamic approaches to the medium of clay. The unconventional techniques in this exhibit expands the possibilities of this art form with a new generation of potters building on the legacy of the *mingei* folk art movement.

AAM Chief Curator Dr. Robert Mintz will give a short presentation on the pieces on view, and then lead us on a tour of the exhibition, giving us insights into modern Japanese clay.



Left: *Leaf-shaped vessel*, 2020, by Inaba Chikako (Japanese, b. 1974). Stoneware with glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.15. © Inaba Chikako. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Center: *Hatched*, 2008, by Tanoue Shinya (Japanese, b. 1976). Stoneware with glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.44. © Tanoue Shinya. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: *Blue celadon wave-inspired platter*, 2020, by Wakao Kei (Japanese, b. 1967). Stoneware with glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.49. © Wakao Kei. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



### *Journey to the West: The Monkey King* with Ling Hong Lam

When: **Sunday, October 26, 2025**

Time: **10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (One-hour lunch break from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.)**

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

Fee: **\$75 per person Society members; \$100 per person non-members after museum admission**

**Advance registration must be received by SAA by Oct. 19, 2025.**

Join us as Ling Hon Lam, Associate Professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at UC Berkeley, gives a presentation entitled *Journey to the West: The Monkey King*, on the 16th century Chinese novel that is the basis for the upcoming San Francisco Opera world premiere of *The Monkey King*.

The novel is a fictional account of the pilgrimage of the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang, who traveled to India in the 7th century to find and collect Buddhist scriptures. The story focuses on the exploits of Sun Wukong, a monkey born on Flower Fruit Mountain from a stone egg that forms from an ancient rock created by the coupling of Heaven and Earth. Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, was tasked by Bodhisattva Guanyin and the Buddha to become Xuanzang's first disciple. Along with 3 other disciples, Zhu Bajie, Sha Wujing and White Dragon Horse, Sanzang and his disciples journeyed to a mythical version of India and find enlightenment.

*Journey to the West* has strong roots in Chinese folk religion, mythology, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoist and Buddhist folklore. The novel is a comic adventure story, a humorous satire of Chinese bureaucracy, and a source of spiritual insight. The Monkey King and his quest for immortality have influenced pop culture for generations with countless modern manhua, manga and anime series as well as numerous movies and television series.

This presentation will consist of two two-hour sessions with a one-hour lunch break. Please note that lunch is not included in the registration fee. Attendees can purchase lunch in the museum café, and are welcome to bring food into the Koret Education Center.

#### 1st Lecture Syllabus:

- 1) *Journey to the West*, revised edition, trans. Anthony C. Yu (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), Introduction, Chapters 27-31, 56-58.
- 2) Ling Hon Lam, "Allegory and 'World' Formation in *The Journey to the West*," in *A Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Literature*, vol. 2, ed. Christine Chism. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), pp. 1013-25.

#### 2nd Lecture Syllabus:

- 1) *Journey to the West*, revised edition, trans. Anthony C. Yu (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), Chapters 1-7, 14, 32-35, 64-66.
- 2) *The Dhammapada: Verses and Stories*, trans. Daw Mya Tin (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990), pp. 146-47, 438.
- 3) *Dhammapada with Accompanying Narratives*, trans. Samuel Beal (Varansi: Indological Book House, 1971), pp. 20-21.
- 4) Zachary Horton, *The Cosmic Zoom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), pp. 1-12.

Reading materials will be provided to registered attendees.



*The Monkey King*, 1977, by Guan Liang (Chinese, 1900 – 1986). Ink and colors on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of the Jack Anderson Collection, 1994.116.* Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.





### Coral Reiff 1951 - 2025



Coral Reiff. Photo courtesy of Susan McCabe.

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of our long-standing member, Coral Reiff. Coral joined the 1997 docent training class and quickly became a valued member of the Society and the Museum. Her dedication was evident in her service on the Society's board of directors from 2008 to 2014 and her vital role on the Member Events Committee, where she curated diverse and engaging programs for over 16 years.

As an active docent and videographer for the Arts of Asia lectures, Coral's work has left a lasting impact. Her videos now enrich the Museum's Education archives, continuing her legacy of knowledge and preservation. Her contributions as a volunteer greatly benefitted both the Society and the Museum, and she will be fondly remembered for her generosity, passion, and commitment.

Following is a remembrance of Coral by John O'Shea, the Museum's AV Manager.

*There are folks who come to you like a rush of fresh air and are instant family. Coral was one of those people.*

*I met her almost 19 years ago at a Friday Arts of Asia lecture. She came up to me to inquire about my wellness. I was on my knees fixing our audio mixer and I was frankly in a lot of pain. She got me standing up and asked whether I needed any other help. From our first encounter I was impressed with her compassion and we began to talk; sharing stories about the museum, ourselves, art, the world, our country and more...I could go on.*

*Our discussions are in my heart and mind forever, and I am thankful she is my friend. We may not get to be with her physically, but her spirit lives on in our shared experiences.*

*Thank you, Coral.*

#### 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](mailto:info@societyforasianart.org) for details.