

Society for Asian Art

Newsletter for Members



March - April 2024

No. 2

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**

At this year's special four-day event, thousands of books — including many collector's items — will be available at bargain prices. This year's event includes both a Thursday night, when the museum remains open until 8:00 p.m., and a Free First Sunday. All sales benefit the museum's C. Laan Chun Library.

Selections include publications on Asian art, history, literature, religion, culture, cooking, novels, travel, textiles, jewelry, and more. This year's rarities include a large collection of books on Southeast Asian Buddhist art and culture, including rare books by Emma C. Bunker on Cambodia, as well as a collection of albums of Indian miniature paintings.

The SAA Book Sale has raised more than \$140,000 for the C. Laan Chun Library, one of the most comprehensive research libraries on Asian art and culture in the country.

Tell your friends!



Photo courtesy of Peter Sinton.



Photo courtesy of Ehler Spliedt.

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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Spring 2024 Literature Course - Aspects of Ottoman Culture with Douglas Brookes

Tuesday, Mar. 26

Member Event - Annual Spring Dinner at Fang Restaurant

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

Annual Book Sale

Wednesday, Apr. 10

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Saturday, Apr. 13

Study Group - Count Your Blessings: Prayer Beads in Asian Cultures with Annie Dorsey

Aug. 9 - Aug. 19, 2024

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



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

May 30, 2024

Member Event - Annual Meeting & Reception



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in December and January. 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!

Carla & Lee Chapman
Margaretta Darnall
Shilpi Jain & Rishabh Anand

Steve Koppich
John Miller
Susan Murdy

Society for Asian Art

March - April 2024, No. 2

Members' Newsletter
Edited by Janet Constantinou
and Susan Lai

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ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2024 LECTURE SERIES

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.
Late Fee: \$225 per person Society members; \$300 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 Ebtekar 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

The Medieval Ghost City of Ani: A UNESCO World Heritage 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

Reading the Future in Verse: The Art of Bibliomancy and the Book as Vessel to Move through Space and Time

Ala Ektekar, 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 *The speaker will present this lecture on Zoom.*

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

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.



Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection, UCLA Fowler Museum of Art



Lynna Dhanani

Annual Spring Dinner

When: **Tuesday, Mar. 26, 2024**

Time: **5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

Place: **Fang Restaurant, 660 Howard Street, San Francisco**

Fee: **\$65 per person Society members; \$75 per person non-members.**

Spring is here! It's time to join fellow Society members for our Annual Spring Dinner.

We will enjoy the cuisine of chef and co-owner Kathy Fang, who stars in the Food Network show, *Chef Dynasty: House of Fang*, with her father, legendary chef Peter Fang of House of Nanking fame. Kathy puts her unique spin on classic Chinese cuisine while honoring the longstanding family traditions she grew up with.

We will meet in the upstairs private banquet space reserved for our group and mingle over wine and nibbles. Wine will also be served with dinner.

Come join your friends as we celebrate the Year of the Dragon!



Dragon Fortune, 2014, by Hung Yi (Taiwanese, b. 1970). Baked enamel on steel plate. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Victor Ou, InSian Gallery, F2016.3. © 洪易先生藝術工作室 (Mr. Hung Yi Art Studio). Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Logo courtesy of Fang Restaurant.



MEMBER EVENTS

Tour of Japantown with Linda Mihara

When: **Wednesday, Apr. 10, 2024**

Time: **10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Place: **National Japanese American Historical Society Peace Gallery
1684 Post Street, San Francisco**

Fee: **\$25 per person Society members only. Limited to 20 participants.**

Put on your walking shoes for the second walking tour of San Francisco's Japantown with Linda Mihara. Linda will provide information on the history and culture of Japantown, while introducing us to a variety of neighborhood cultural landmarks and eclectic shops. We will also experience a brief lesson on origami and visit a tea room among other delights. After the tour, participants will have the opportunity to join a no-host lunch in one of the nearby restaurants.

Linda Tomoko Mihara is well known to SAA members for her very popular origami study group and the origami exhibit she curated at the Asian Art Museum. She is an award-winning designer of complex origami artworks, which she has donated to a variety of Japanese American cultural programs. She is also the owner and manager of Paper Tree in Japantown.



San Francisco Peace Pagoda with cherry blossom trees underneath. iStock photo ID: 948089276. Credit: David Tran.



Linda Mihara



UPPER CATEGORY MEMBER EVENTS

Society Conversation with Sarah Wenner

When: **Saturday, Mar. 9, 2024**

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

Place: **Private Residence in San Francisco**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society Upper Category members and guests.
Limited to 20 participants.**

Upper Category members are invited to join a Society Conversation with Sarah Wenner, a Curatorial Fellow in Ancient Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Art at the Cincinnati Museum of Art.

Dr. Wenner will be speaking about how tourism in Petra skyrocketed after it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985 and later featured in one of the Indiana Jones films. This tourism not only utterly transformed the ancient city but also increased Jordan's international prestige. Now Saudi Arabia, inspired by Petra's success, similarly seeks to activate its own Nabataean sites. How might this Saudi interest transform tourism in the Middle East, and what are the cultural, political and economic repercussions of such investment in a long forgotten ancient history?

Dr. Wenner's talk will address these questions and should be especially interesting for Upper Category members who have visited Petra, are considering visiting Petra, or might consider visiting newly opened Nabataean sites in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to being a Curatorial Fellow at the Cincinnati Museum of Art, Dr. Wenner has taught at the University of Cincinnati. In 2023, she received a post-doctoral fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and an ACOR fellowship from the American Center of Research in Amman, Jordan.



Photo courtesy of Sarah Wenner.



Sarah Wenner



STUDY GROUPS

Count Your Blessings: Prayer Beads in Asian Cultures with Annie Dorsey

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

Time: **11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

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

Fee: **\$30 per person Society members; \$40 per person non-members after museum admission**

Please join us for a deep dive into the history and spiritual significance of prayer beads in Asian cultures. Annie Dorsey, a member of SAA since 1986, began studying and collecting prayer beads from all over Asia in the early 1990s. Her focus was originally Buddhism, but it quickly expanded to include Hinduism, Islam, lesser-known religions such as Jainism, Sikhism and Bahá'í, and later, also Christianity. She built the first ever comprehensive collection of Buddhist prayer beads, donated to the Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) in New York City in 2013. RMA showcased the collection in a 10-month exhibition called *Count Your Blessings: The Art of Prayer Beads in Asia*.

Annie will share with us a selection of beads still in her collection; insights about early religious history gleaned from her research; and vivid examples of the ways different cultures developed unique and consciousness-altering forms of practice around prayer beads. She will also discuss with us about the collecting bug and how it bit her, always an interesting subject!

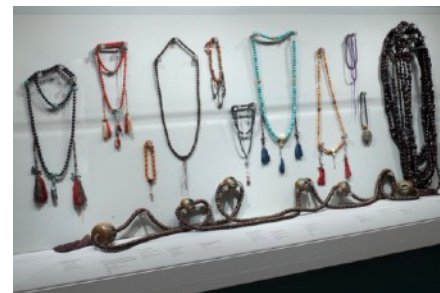


Photo courtesy of Annie Dorsey.



Annie Dorsey



TRAVEL

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 was sent on February 5 to all SAA members and newsletter subscribers. If you are not yet a member, please [join online](#).



LITERATURE & CULTURE SPRING 2024 LITERATURE COURSE

Aspects of Ottoman Culture with Douglas Brookes

When: **Sundays, Mar. 10, Mar. 17, & Mar. 24, 2024**

Time: **2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

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

Fee: **\$100 per person Society members; \$125 per person non-members for the course after museum admission**

Advance registration must be received by SAA by Mar. 3, 2024.

This course begins with an overview of the history of the Ottoman Empire. Then we will explore aspects of Ottoman culture: the Ottoman Turkish language and its expression in the art of calligraphy; the Imperial Harem system with its use of concubines and eunuchs; and Ottoman music and architecture.

March 10

- What was the Ottoman Empire? Introduction to its history and peoples.
- The Ottoman language and the art of calligraphy: tombstones and chronograms.

March 17

- Life in the Ottoman palace: Slavery and the Imperial Harem.

March 24

- Ottoman music and architecture.

Recommended readings for an overview of Ottoman history:

Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (Longman, 1997)
or

Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge, 2000)

For further reading (all by the instructor):

- *Death and Life in the Ottoman Palace: Revelations of the Sultan Abdülhamid I Tomb.* Edinburgh University Press, 2023.
- *On the Sultan's Service: Halid Ziya Uşakgil's Memoir of the Ottoman Palace, 1909-1912.* Indiana University Press, 2019.
- *The Concubine, the Princess, and the Schoolteacher: Voices from the Ottoman Harem.* University of Texas Press, 2008.

Douglas Brookes teaches Ottoman Turkish language at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of five books on Ottoman culture and has led numerous educational tours through Turkey.



Rustem Pasha Mosque tiles 1560.
Photo courtesy of Douglas Brookes.



Arabesque pattern.
Photo courtesy of Douglas Brookes.



Douglas Brookes