



May - June 2021

No. 3

Stop Anti-Asian Violence & Hate

The Society for Asian Art stands in solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander communities that have been targeted with hate and violence. We condemn racism, xenophobia and violence in all its forms. Educating the public about the art and culture of the rich and diverse Asian communities has been at the heart of the Society for Asian Art's mission since we were founded in 1958. Through our programs, we help promote intercultural understanding, diversity and inclusion. We will continue to do this important work, and we encourage you to find ways to support the Asian American Pacific Islander communities.

President's Message

It was over a year ago that the pandemic brought about much uncertainty in all our lives. Looking back, I am amazed how you, our members, adapted to these circumstances and we, your SAA Board of Directors, found ways and means to continue our mission of providing programs on Asian art and culture. Of course, we really miss the social interaction between our scholars and our members, the social get-togethers with our fellow members and most of all, to have a unique museum piece in front of us, even in a display case. It produces vibrations in us, which no Zoom image can replicate.

Having said this, I would like to assure you, as in the past year, we will continue to organize programs under whatever circumstances, in person or on Zoom, so that you will be intrigued enough to continue to register for the Arts of Asia series, the multifaceted Member Events, the Literature Classes, the Study Groups or for those who qualify, the Upper Category Member Events, and of course, come travel with us.

I would like to mention something that is unique to the SAA. We have some of the most diverse programs of any organization of this genre; we have the most cosmopolitan lecturers to instruct us; and we have you, the audience, with such a good reputation that the scholars want to come to San Francisco, the Asian Art Museum and the Society for Asian Art, to share and discuss their knowledge with you. This uniqueness is something you should tell your friends about and suggest they join the Society for Asian Art- they will not regret it.

We have been here for 63 years and getting stronger and stronger. The 64th year is ahead of us, and without doubt, it will be better than the last. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Ehler Spliedt
President

Annual Meeting and Lecture

The Annual Meeting of the Society for Asian Art will be held on Zoom on Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time. Invitations were emailed to all SAA members in good standing as of April 1, 2021. This event is free to all SAA members. Please follow the instructions in the invitation to register no later than May 13, 2021.

Following the Annual Meeting, we are pleased to present a lecture, *From Fez with Love: The Making of the Moroccan Court at The Met*, with Navina Najat Haidar. The Moroccan Court at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is an intimate and opulent space, created by contemporary craftsmen from Fez, installed in the heart of The Met's galleries for Islamic art. Built in 2011, the court and the adjoining gallery for the art of al-Andalus present legacies of Islamic art through historical works and living craft traditions.

Navina Najat Haidar is the Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah Curator in Charge of the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



The Moroccan Court at The Met.
Photograph © Metropolitan
Museum of Art.

The Society for Asian Art is an independent nonprofit organization that provides programs on Asian art and culture and supports the Asian Art Museum.



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With Linda Tomoko Mihara

Fridays, August 27 – December 3 Online Webinars

Fall 2021 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Crossing Boundaries: Understanding Contemporary Asian Art



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Save the Dates!

Wednesdays, July 14, 21 & 28 Online Webinars

Member Event Mini Series - Burma: The Land of Golden Stupas
Join us on a virtual tour of Burma to explore its art, history and culture with historian Julian Brown, who presented the popular mini series on Indochina earlier this year.



TRAVEL

ARTful Korea: Contemporary Art Tour

October 23 - November 2, 2021

Only 3 spaces remain open on this trip! See [trip flyer/reservation form](#) for details.
Asian Art Museum's Department Head and Associate Curator of Korean Art, Hyonjeong (HJ) Kim Han, will lead this special trip.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in February and March. 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!

Ebtisam Abbasi
Montserrat Armitano
Sachin Chawla & Surita Manhas
Michael & Shelley Dee

Susan Kreidler
Sylvia Lichtenger
Richard Myers
Chi-Kwan Yen

Society for Asian Art

March - April 2021, No. 2

Members' Newsletter
Edited by John Nelson
and Susan Lai

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Crossing Boundaries: Understanding Contemporary Asian Art



Left: *Ended Season* (detail), 2011, by Zheng Chongbin (American, b. China, 1961). Ink and acrylic on paper. Asian Art Museum, Museum purchase with exchange funds from the estate of K. Hart Smith with additional funds from the Clarence Shangraw Memorial, 2012.5.
Right: *Large Bowl with Celadon Glaze*, 2011, by Kawase Shinobu (Japanese, b. 1950). Celadon bowl with undulating rim. Asian Art Museum, Gift in honor of Dr. Laura W. Allen, 2013.48. © Kawase Shinobu. Photographs © Asian Art Museum.

When: Fridays, August 27 – December 3, 2021 (No lecture on November 26.)
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time
Place: Online Webinar
Fee: \$200 per person Society members and \$250 per person non-members.
Advance registration must be received by the SAA office no later than August 20, 2021.
We will not be accepting drop ins for individual lectures.
Instructor of Record: Abby Chen

What is going on with contemporary Asian art? What are its messages? Who is the audience? What are the concerns of the artists? How are they using new and traditional media? What are the ideas about art in these works? How might we understand new works?

Contemporary art is all around us. It may attract or repel us. Its messages and means may be new, but the imperative to communicate successfully is more urgent than ever in a global market of ideas. Contemporary art is often deliberately transgressive — it crosses boundaries between media, genres, geographic regions, traditions, gender identities, national identities, politics, ideals of beauty, and ideas of permanence. Many of the artists are émigrés, who must cross boundaries to make their art.

Join us for an adventurous journey into the realms of contemporary Asian art. Led by Abby Chen, Asian Art Museum's Head of Contemporary Art and Senior Associate Curator, this lecture series features 14 scholars, curators and artists from around the world, who will address contemporary art practices and concerns across Asia and the Asian diaspora.

See the next page for the full schedule of speakers and topics and [sign up today](#).



ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2021 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

August 27, 2021

Finding Your Way in the Wide World of Contemporary Asian Art

Abby Chen, Head of Contemporary Art and Senior Associate Curator, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

September 3, 2021

The Mercurial Moments in Contemporary Asian Video Art

Laura U. Marks, Grant Strate Professor, School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University

September 10, 2021

Pursuing Justice Through Cinema

Ohm Phanphiro, Artist and Visiting Professor, University of Idaho

September 17, 2021

My Body is a Canvas for My Art

Chaw Ei Thein, Conceptual and Performance Artist

September 24, 2021

Off the Wheel and Breaking the Mold: Japan's Ceramic Art Today

Laura Allen, Chief Curator, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

October 1, 2021

Voyage/Safar: Contemporary Works by Arab, Iranian, and Turkish Artists

Fereshteh Daftari, Independent Scholar and Curator

October 8, 2021

Ala Ebtekar Artist Talk

Ala Ebtekar, Artist

October 15, 2021 (*Note: Lecture will be from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time.*)

Building a New Tradition: Contemporary Architecture in China

Li Xiangning, Professor and Assistant Dean, Tongji University College of Architecture and Urban Planning

October 22, 2021

Summoning Ghosts

Hung Liu, Artist and Professor Emerita, Mills College

October 29, 2021

Messages, Materials and Meaning in My Art

Jean Shin, Artist and Adjunct Professor, Pratt Institute

November 5, 2021

On the Art of Timelessness in Contemporary Japanese Cinema

Akira Mizuta Lippit, Professor and Vice Dean of Faculty, Division of Cinema and Media Studies, University of Southern California

November 12, 2021

Transformations of Tradition in Mongolian Contemporary Art

Uranchimeg Tsultem, Assistant Professor and Edgar and Dorothy Fehnel Chair in International Studies, Herron School of Art + Design, Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis

November 19, 2021

Re-Telling Tales: Five Contemporary Women Artists from India (1997-2021)

Arshiya Mansoor Lokhandwala, Art Historian, Curator and Founder of Lakeeren - The Contemporary Art Gallery

December 3, 2021

Boundaries Crossed: Asian American Artists at Work

Marci Kwon, Assistant Professor, Department of Art History, Stanford University



MEMBER EVENTS

An Exploration of Japanese Aesthetics with Steve Beimel

When: **Wednesday, May 12, 2021**
 Time: **4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Pacific Time**
 Place: **Online Webinar**
 Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members**
Advance registration must be received by the SAA by May 5, 2021.

Through a series of images, we will examine visual aesthetic concepts which define what the Japanese have consistently considered beautiful and tasteful. The discussion begins with the historic importance of cleanliness and purity and their expression through Shintoism as well as of miyabi refinement, courtliness and simplicity. The influence of Zen and its emphasis on clean lines and elimination of the superfluous from the 1200's gradually manifested in the late 1500's in the tea movement, commonly described by the terms wabi and sabi as well as datsuzoku (unbounded by convention, free and spontaneous). Particular attention will be given to the use of color and presentation as seen in a variety of forms.

The talk on aesthetics will be followed by a brief description of JapanCraft21, an organization supporting the revitalization of Japanese crafts in the 21st century.

Steve Beimel, a native Californian who has been involved with Japanese culture since the early 1970s, is the founder of JapanCraft21, an organization which helps identify viable but vulnerable traditional Japanese crafts and assist in their revitalization.

Steve recently retired from Esprit Travel and Tours, a U.S.-based Japanese culture-focused tour company that he founded in 1992. In that role, he helped travelers from around the world connect with talented and gracious Japanese people as they encountered the richness and beauty of Japanese culture. Steve holds an M.A. in Applied Counseling Psychology, and he currently lives in the Kyoto foothills with his wife of 39 years, Ritsuko, an ikebana instructor.

Queen Zenobia and the Oasis City of Palmyra With Richard Beleson

When: **Wednesday, June 9, 2021**
 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 June 2, 2021.

This presentation will focus on the geography and history of the Syrian oasis city of Palmyra, from biblical days to present times with a focus on Zenobia, the city's third century AD warrior queen, who challenged the might of the Roman Empire. Richard will also talk about the history of coins which tell a fascinating story of the times.

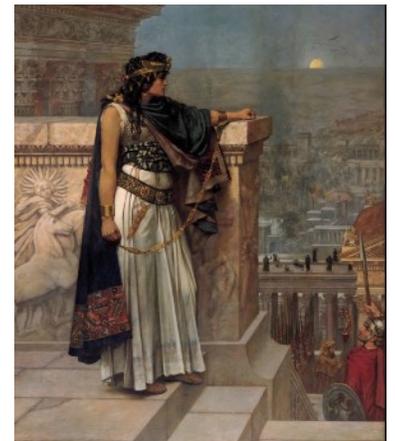
Richard Beleson is a long-time member of the Society for Asian Art and a former trustee of the Asian Art Museum. He was recently elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (London), in addition to being a Fellow of the American Numismatics Society. He is retired as a Senior Vice President of the Capital Group Companies, where he focused on investing in the biopharmaceutical industry.



Tokonoma. Photo courtesy of Steve Beimel.



Steve Beimel. Photo courtesy of Esprit Travel and Tours.



Zenobia's last look on Palmyra, 1888, by Herbert Gustave Schmalz (1856-1935). Oil on canvas. Art Gallery of South Australia.



Richard Beleson



STUDY GROUP

The Art of Origami With Linda Tomoko Mihara

When: **Friday, June 25, 2021**
 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 the SAA by Jun. 18, 2021.

Origami, the Japanese tradition of paper folding, derives from “ori,” to fold, and “kami,” paper. One sheet of paper can be folded into a myriad of shapes and figures.

Linda Tomoko Mihara will examine the history of paper folding, whose roots can be traced to Chinese and Moorish cultures. Next, she will focus on how Japan was able to elevate this into a major art form. Contemporary artists are pushing the traditional art form of origami to a new level. Linda will showcase several of these sculptural forms, which are on display at her family’s store, Paper Tree in San Francisco’s Japantown. She will also demonstrate the folding of her own original designs. Participants will then have a chance to fold origami objects from plain white paper.

Elevate your understanding of origami and improve your technical expertise by allowing this accomplished artist to educate you.

A San Francisco native and sansei or third-generation Japanese American, Linda Tomoko Mihara began her lifelong origami journey at age five. Her grandfather, Tokinobu Mihara, authored two early books in English on origami in the 1950s. Linda has won awards for her designs of complex origami art. They include the Peace Sphere, a three dimensional sphere of 18 cranes folded from a single sheet of paper. Her inspiration comes from origami techniques dating from the 18th century. Her designs and paper sculpting works have been featured in commercials for Mitsubishi motors, Visa, Chanel, and Hermès. Her origami enterprise, the Paper Tree, now in its 53rd year, has been designated a San Francisco Legacy Business.



Peace Sphere 1994, by Linda Tomoko Mihara. 18 cranes, one sheet of paper, no glue. Photo courtesy of Linda Tomoko Mihara.



Linda Tomoko Mihara



SOCIAL MEDIA

Spread the Word about SAA

Over the years, SAA has built a track record of sponsoring a wide range of quality programming focused on Asian arts and cultures. We invite you to help us reach more potential audience members by spreading the word about the many events we sponsor. A simple way to do this is to invite your Facebook friends to “like” the [SAA Facebook page](#).

Here are a few steps you can take to do this:

1. Open the browser on your computer and go to www.facebook.com.
2. On Facebook, go to the Society for Asian Art page. If you already follow this page, just click on the name—it should be under Your Shortcuts. If you don’t follow the page yet, go to the Search Facebook section in the top left-hand corner and type in Society for Asian Art.
3. On the Society for Asian Art Facebook page, locate the menu bar below our name and the blue Following button. Then look for three dots [...] toward the right on the menu bar and near the Message button. Click on the three dots.
4. A menu of options will drop down. Click on “Invite Friends.” A list of all of your personal Facebook Friends will appear. You can invite all of them by clicking on “Select All” or you can click on the names of friends you choose to invite.

Through this process, your friends who “like” us will receive up-to-date information about SAA’s activities throughout the year.

In addition, our new [Instagram feed](#) is up and running! We have posted several photos there from our April 2019 trip. We would love to have photos from other SAA trips that may be in your photo files. You would, of course, get copyright credit for any of your photos that we post on our feed. Please [email Social Media Committee Chair, Candace Zander Kahn](#), any photos that you would like to see on our Instagram feed. Your photos can help grow our audience!

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LOTUS LEAVES

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Read the Fall 2020 Issue Online Now.

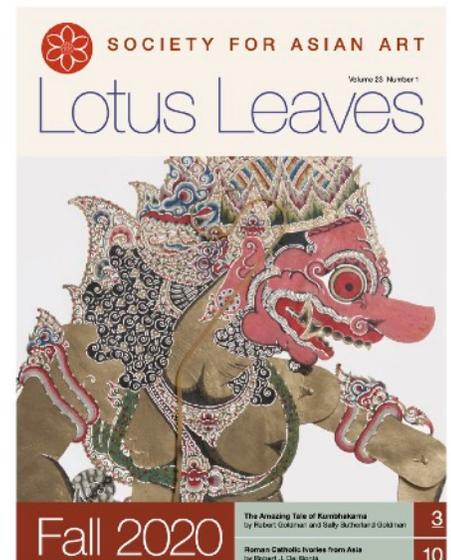
The Fall 2020 *Lotus Leaves* explores two very different facets of Asian culture. Robert Goldman and Sally Sutherland Goldman tell "The Amazing Tale of Kumbhakarna," the giant who was Ravana's brother in the Ramayana. Robert J. Del Bontà explores collections of early Christian art from India and Sri Lanka in "Roman Catholic Ivories from Asia."

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.

To print a copy of *Lotus Leaves*:

- Open the PDF file of the issue that you want to print.
- Press at the same time "Ctrl" and "P" on pc's or "Command" and "P" on Mac's.
- Follow the commands on your computer to print a copy.



Cover of Fall 2020 Issue of *Lotus Leaves*.
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