



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING & 2022-2023 BOARD ELECTION SLATE

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of members of the Society for Asian Art (SAA) will be held in Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum (AAM), 200 Larkin Street, on June 2, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. for the following purposes:

- To elect 11 Directors to serve a two-year term.
- To transact such other business as properly may be brought before the meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

The Nominating Committee has submitted the names of 3 members to be newly elected as Directors and 8 members for re-election. For additional information on each nominee, please refer to the Nominating Committee report.

The names of additional nominees may be submitted to the Board of Directors for review not less than twenty (20) days prior to the meeting (May 13, 2022). The petitions shall be signed by not less than twenty (20) members in good standing and shall contain the information required by Section 3 of Article IX of the Bylaws.

Each member in good standing is entitled to one vote on each matter considered at the meeting. No proxy voting is permitted. All voting is conducted in person.

By order of the Board of Directors,

Etsuko Kobata
Secretary

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION SLATE

The members of the Nominating Committee for the year 2021-2022 are **Anne Kahn**, Chair, **Ed Baer**, **Gloria Garaventa**, **Greg Potts** and **Sylvia Wong**.

Nominations:

The following Members of the Society for Asian Art desire to serve as Directors and are nominated for election to serve their first two-year term of office: **Neaera Baer**, **John Kouletsis**, and **Charita Thakkar**.

The following Directors of the Society for Asian Art will complete their first or second two-year term and are nominated for election to serve another two-year term: **Margaret Booker**, **Marsha Vargas Handley**, **Candace Zander Kahn**, **Anne Katz**, **Phyllis Kempner**, **Lawrence Mock**, **John Nelson**, and **Debbie Wong Ottman**.

Directors with one year remaining on their two-year terms are: **Ed Baer**, **Edith Benay**, **Lynne Brewer**, **Kalpna Desai**, **Gloria Garaventa**, **Pamela George**, **Kirk Gibson**, **Tom Ihrig**, **Anne Adams Kahn**, **Peggy Mathers**, **Howard Moreland**, **Sandra Pan**, **Sharon Roe**, **Kathleen Slobin**, and **Nazneen Spliedt**.

The following previously elected Directors are retiring from the Board of Directors: **Margaret Edwards**, **Etsuko Kobata**, and **Pamela Royse**.

The following ex-officio Directors will continue to serve: **Deborah Clearwaters**, and **Forrest McGill**.

New Nominees:

The following members are nominated for a first two-year term to the Board of Directors of the Society for Asian Art:

Neaera Baer has been an AAM docent for 15+ years and has served as Docent Council Chair. She is currently a SACHI board member and has served as the Chair and Treasurer of an ikebana organization. She also worked for Bank of America for more than 15 years in Sri Lanka and the US.

John Kouletsis is a recent graduate of the AAM school tour docent program. He is also a licensed architect with over 40 years of planning, design and management experience including twenty-five years at Kaiser Foundation where he managed a staff of nurses, healthcare planners, architects, engineers, and facilities operations staff in his capacity as Vice President of Planning and Design. Having served as a research fellow early in his career in Kyoto National University's department of architecture, John uses his fluency in Japanese to help catalog Japanese language exhibition catalogs and books in the AAM library.

Charita Thakkar is also a recent graduate of the AAM school tour docent program. In addition to overseeing business operations for Gujarat Petrosynthesis Ltd. in Mumbai, Charita is on the SACHI board, is Chair Elect of the Volunteer Steering Committee at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, is a trustee of the Champa Suman Charitable Trust and serves on the SAA's Upper Category Member Events Committee.



SOCIETY FOR ASIAN ART PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021-2022

Another year of COVID-19 has gone by and all our programs continued to be held online with great enthusiasm from our members. I would like to thank you all not only for maintaining your membership in the SAA, but also for signing up for so many lectures and programs. While we missed seeing you in person, it was wonderful to see you all in front of your cameras in your homes.

Three of these programs truly broke the ice of pandemic protocols: the adventurous trip to Morocco in September 2021, the very successful Book Sale in November 2021, and the Holiday Party celebration at Orientations. With this said, the highlight for me this year happened on March 4, 2022 when we welcomed our first in-person audience in Samsung Hall, exactly two years to the week when we had to cancel everything in March 2020. It was so good to be back in our home and to be able to welcome everybody at the door as we checked their vaccination cards and masks.

The fiscal year 2021-2022 was an unusual year, but once you have read all the reports below, you will agree that we ended this year with flying colors, successful on all fronts and ready to catch up with all that we had to cancel or postpone.

In addition to the excellent work by the board and committee members, we must also thank our Office Manager, Susan Lai, who diligently led us through the year from her own home and became a master in teaching all of us the finer art of Zoom and its pitfalls. We thank Asian Art Museum curators and staff who supported us from both in and out of the museum. Special thanks go to John O'Shea and his team at the AAM's Audio/Video department, and to Michael Mersereau, who helped us navigate Zoom and chose all the wonderful music to start off our online programs.

Thanks also goes to our accountants Brad Pence and Kendra Vara who kept our numbers up to date, and to our financial advisor John Frole and his team at First Republic Private Wealth Management for managing our funds.

Best regards,

Ehler Spliedt
President

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Arts of Asia

The Arts of Asia Committee runs the semi-annual lecture series presented by the SAA. Each series is designed with a theme and the assistance of an Instructor of Record. Speakers are scholars and curators selected for their particular expertise.

The fall 2021 series was titled *Crossing Boundaries: Understanding Contemporary Asian Art*. Our Instructor of Record was the AAM's Head of Contemporary Art, Abby Chen. More than 150 people subscribed, and the lecturers included several contemporary artists who introduced their work and described the concerns that inspired it. All lectures were presented via Zoom, which allowed presentations from various locations in Asia. The spring 2022 series, *Gifts of Rivers and Resources: Art and Power in Ancient Asia*, was presented in a hybrid form. Some lectures were by Zoom only; others were presented live with a Zoom simulcast. 200 people subscribed to the series. The Instructor of Record was Sanjot Mehendale of UC Berkeley and Director of the Tang Center for Silk Road Studies. This was the first of three series with a theme that will move forward in time across Asia, continuing through fall 2022 and spring 2023.

The committee is grateful to John O'Shea and Michael Mersereau of the Asian Art Museum and to the SAA Office Manager Susan Lai for their invaluable help in making the series work well on Zoom. The committee co-chairs are **Margaret Edwards** and **Lawrence Mock**. Additional members are **Edith Benay**, **Kirk Gibson**, **Peggy Mathers**, and **Kathleen Slobin**.

Literature and Culture of Asia

The Literature and Culture of Asia Committee presented a four-meeting series in Fall 2021 to continue our discussion on the epic Chinese novel, *Chin Ping Mei*, vol. 2 chapters 21-40. Led by Prof. Stephen Roddy, participants explored the material richness of fin-de-siècle Ming society portrayed in the magnificent David Roy translation of this novel. A planned Spring 2022 series was postponed to a later time to allow more people to participate. This series will cover the momentous events of the four "decades" of chapters 41-80, which see the Ximen household through various family and societal dynamics – infidelity, jealousy, financial entanglements, political corruption – ending in the destruction of the household and the fall of the Northern Song Dynasty at the hands of the Jin invaders in volume five.

The committee is chaired by **Pamela Royse** with members **Sherlyn Leong**, **John Nelson**, **Jeanne Newman**, **Melanie Reamy**, and **Henny Tanudjaja**.



Study Group

The Study Group Committee aims to organize events and workshops that delve deep into various topics of interest to our members. In December 2020, Professor Karen Fraser of the University of San Francisco spoke online on the subject of mid-19th century Japanese photography, an event that was well received.

On January 21, 2022, just in time for the Chinese New Year, Professor Annelise Heinz, University of Oregon, led us through an enlightening webinar discussion of the history of mahjong and its surprising connection to modern American culture. The event was lively and well attended, receiving much positive feedback.

In April, Professor Kendall Brown of California State University, Long Beach led a webinar on the history of Japanese gardens in North America, and in June, artist Youngmin Lee will discuss Korean textile art, including her own works currently on view in the Korean gallery of the Asian Art Museum.

The Study Group Committee is chaired by **Debbie Wong Ottman**, with members **Margaret Edwards, Tom Ihrig, Barbara Mow, and Pamela Royse**.

EVENTS FOR MEMBERS

Member Events

The Member Events Committee is chaired by **Nazneen Spliedt**. Members of the committee include **Margaret Booker, Annie Dorsey, Nancy Jacobs, Anne Adams Kahn, Phyllis Kempner, Debbie Wong Ottman, Greg Potts, Ehler Spliedt, Graeme Vanderstoel, Barbara Wirth, and Sylvia Wong**. Member **Anne Katz** recently stepped down.

During the past year, we continued to offer programs online, attracting a sizable audience beyond the Bay Area from all over the country. These webinars, 13 in total, covered a variety of topics ranging from ancient to contemporary times. Among them, a new initiative inviting authors to discuss their publications further increased our appreciation of their works.

In-person events included a very successful guided tour of Chinatown and our Annual Holiday Party at Orientations Gallery, San Francisco. In the spring, we toured an exhibition at the Berkeley Art Museum with the curator, and enjoyed our Annual Spring Dinner at the Far East Café in San Francisco's Chinatown.

It has been exciting to hear from scholars and experts not only from the San Francisco Bay Area but from around the world. We thank all our speakers and participants for the success of our programs.

Upper Category Member Events

The Upper Category Member Events Committee provides programs for members supporting the SAA at the Contributing, Donor and Sponsor membership levels. The committee is chaired by **Kalpna Desai**. Members include **Sheila Dowell, Gloria Garaventa, Pamela George, Phyllis Kempner, Etsuko Kobata, Ehler Spliedt, Charita Thakkar, and Kasey Yang**. We held all our programs online this year, except one in-person Conversation event.

We kicked off the fall season with a dynamic presentation on visionary artist Nam June Paik with SFMOMA curator Rudolf Frieling. Iranian-American artist, Shiva Ahmadi's video animation *Marooned* probed contemporary issues in a style informed by classical Persian/Indian miniature paintings. Sponsor and Donor members were treated to an exclusive webinar on contemporary ceramicists in Japan by AAM Associate Director, Robert Mintz. In a spring webinar Royal Fashions, scholar Pat Chirapavati reflected on modernizing the image of Siamese Queens in the late 19th century. An enthusiastic return to in-person events after a two-year hiatus was marked by Harvard scholar Jinah Kim introducing her book, *Garland of Visions*, at a private home on the Peninsula. The season will end with a virtual visit to artist Ala Ebtekar's studio and a behind-the-scenes discussion with AAM head exhibition designer, Marco Centin.

The committee thanks all members who joined or maintained their membership at these higher levels. Your commitment is essential to the Society's mission and activities. We invite more members to consider joining us in the coming year.

Travel

The Travel Committee is chaired by **Marsha Vargas Handley**, with members **Neaera Baer, Margaret Booker, Lynne Brewer, Sheila Dowell, Kalena Gregory, Mary Hunt, Anne Adams Kahn, Phyllis Kempner, Bianca Larson, Greg Potts, Sharon Roe, and Gail Uilkema**.

Due to the pandemic, SAA travel was put on hold until September 2021, when we made a trip to Morocco (rescheduled from October 2020). We then traveled to San Diego in November 2021 and New Orleans in March 2022. These trips were all successful despite a relatively smaller number of participants than usual. Our trip to Japan, originally scheduled in May 2020, is now being rescheduled to May 2023 as Japan has not yet reopened to tourism. An excellent trip to Detroit and Ann Arbor is planned for May 2022 and we will be traveling



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to Mongolia in July. The Korea trip, re-offered for late October, had to be canceled due to lack of registrants during pandemic uncertainties. The coming year promises many exciting destinations: Oman (October - November, 2022), Indochina (January 2023), and another trip to Morocco (October 2023). The committee is also working on both domestic and international trips to be offered in 2023 and 2024, hoping that we will be returning to normal times.

PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Library/Book Sale

The Library Committee is chaired by **Ehler Spliedt**, with member **Kirk Gibson**. The C. Laan Chun Library of the Asian Art Museum was open to museum staff only during much of the pandemic, but the SAA continued its support with its monthly donation of \$1,500.00, a total of \$18,000 for the year. The money helps the library purchase new books and to pay for subscriptions.

After being canceled in 2020, SAA's Annual Book Sale finally took place in November 2021 and followed the City of San Francisco's COVID-19 protocols. The sale netted \$6,887.00, and the amount was included in SAA's Annual Museum Contribution. This year's Annual Book Sale took place on April 7 and 8, 2022 and netted approximately \$6,400.

Lotus Leaves

Lotus Leaves has been published twice per year online. The fall 2021 Lotus Leaves appeared in November 2021 and was devoted to an article by Professor Brian Baumann, titled The Mongolian-Buddhist Deity Čayan ebügen "The White Old Man."

A survey of SAA members determined that only a minority of members read Lotus Leaves online. As the expense of publishing Lotus Leaves in hard copy was earlier determined to be too great, the Board decided to suspend further publication of Lotus Leaves.

The Editor of Lotus Leaves has been **Margaret Edwards**.

Newsletter

The Newsletter Committee edits and publishes the bi-monthly SAA Newsletter, which informs members of ongoing SAA activities and ways to register for them. The latest issue can be found on the SAA website. The committee thanks all members who have agreed to subscribe to digital issues of the Newsletter which helps the Society conserve costs and manpower.

The Newsletter Committee is chaired by **John Nelson** and joined by co-editor **Susan Lai**.

Social Media

The Social Media Committee is now in its second year managing the SAA Facebook page and Instagram feed. The purpose of the Facebook page is to reach people in the general public. The page announces events that have already appeared in the Newsletter, and updates any changes to the original Newsletter postings in a timely manner. The Instagram feed posts eye catching photos that raise the public profile of the SAA. We now have over 100 followers composed of our own members and members of the public that like our photos. Photos contributed by other committee chairs and members of SAA tours have been particularly well received. As our opportunities grow for future SAA trips, we look forward to receiving more pictures from our members.

The committee is chaired by **Candace Zander Kahn**, with member **Anne Katz**.

DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

Advisors

The Advisors Committee coordinates and interfaces with our Advisory Board, which during the year 2021-2022 comprised of 22 active Advisors and 3 Advisors Emeriti. Two new Advisors have been invited to join our panel of Advisors, and we hope they will take up our invitation.

Not being able to host an in-person lunch last year, the committee is excited to have our usual annual get-together/lunch with our Advisors this year. We were fortunate to have had some of our Advisors involved with our educational programs, by giving talks and presentations for our Literature series as well as the Arts of Asia plus a few Member events.

The committee is chaired by **Nazneen Spliedt**, with members **Jeanne Dorward**, **Kirk Gibson**, and **Pamela Royse**.



Membership

Our membership increased over 11% during the 2021 calendar year, significantly recovering from 2020. Return of access to the Asian Art Museum likely helped. Most of the increase occurred in the three months since the fall Arts of Asia series began, and is holding steady this calendar year. We appreciate those of you who continued to support us during this trying time. In particular, we thank those of you who have renewed or joined us at the Upper Category level, who cumulatively account for 67% of our membership income.

We continue to recruit new members and have welcomed 35 new households through February of this fiscal year. Implementation of SAA's Outreach Committee's recommendations will also help to increase membership. We hope that you will help spread the word and invite your friends and family to join us.

The Membership Committee is chaired by **Howard Moreland**, with member **Edith Benay**. We wish to acknowledge with appreciation, SAA Office Manager Susan Lai, who took on much extra work on our behalf during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Outreach

This ad hoc committee was set up in March 2021 to develop ideas for strengthening SAA membership. Formal recommendations and implementation ideas were presented at the January 2022 Board of Director's meeting.

The committee was chaired by **Anne Katz**. Full-time committee members were **Kirk Gibson**, **Tom Ihrig**, **Candace Zander Kahn**, **Debbie Wong Ottman**, **Ehler Spliedt**, and **Nazneen Spliedt**. Part-time members were **Ed Baer**, **Lynne Brewer**, and **Marsha Vargas Handley**.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Bylaws and Operating Procedures

The committee periodically updates the SAA Operating Procedures, Bylaws and Policies to keep them current and accurate. The committee is chaired by Secretary **Etsuko Kobata**, with members **Trista Berkovitz** and **Margaret Edwards**.

Finance

The Finance Committee is chaired by Treasurer **Ed Baer**, with members **Melonie Brophy**, Investment Committee Chair **Sandra Pan**, **Ehler Spliedt**, and **Nazneen Spliedt**. The committee also thanks **Steve Pegors**, who recently had to step down, for his many years of contribution.

The committee meets monthly to review SAA's financial status and to ensure that sufficient liquid assets are available for ongoing and future expenses. The committee develops and proposes an annual budget with input from the various committee chairs, while fulfilling a variety of accounting and reporting needs. The Chair/Treasurer is also a member of the Investment Committee, facilitating communication as cash flow is reviewed and an annual spending policy is established.

Investment

The Investment Committee oversees the SAA's investments and works with a fiduciary portfolio manager to ensure the SAA Investment Policy is followed. Our goal is to create perpetual portfolios that will weather through the volatility of the market and generate returns over inflation that will help us support the SAA and the Asian Art Museum. The committee meets quarterly to review market conditions and portfolio performance. We maintain an objective Philanthropy Investment model against the backdrop of the economy and investment framework, making adjustments to maintain our long-term investing goal.

The committee is chaired by **Sandra Pan**, with members Finance Committee Chair **Ed Baer**, **Trista Berkovitz**, **Gary Chou**, and **Howard Moreland**.