

Society for Asian Art

Newsletter for Members



November - December 2025

No. 6

New Japanese Clay

On View through Feb. 2, 2026 in the Hambrecht Contemporary Gallery

Don't miss the opportunity to see contemporary Japanese ceramics from the recently donated collection of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein.

This exhibition illuminates the diverse forms, textures, and techniques of contemporary ceramics from Japan. These works push the boundaries of a centuries-old tradition, offering a striking redefinition of the medium's expressive potential. The exhibition also introduces the makers behind the works on view. "This new generation of potters from Japan are building on the legacy of the *mingei* (folk art) movement while charting their own boldly experimental courses," says Chief Curator and exhibition curator Dr. Robert Mintz, who notes that many of the featured artists maintain social media accounts offering behind-the-scenes looks at their studio process.



Top Left: *Rei (Dawn)*, 2016, by Matsutani Fumio (Japanese, b. 1975). Stoneware with glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2020.38.3. © Matsutani Fumio. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Top Right: *Yoyo: Far Distant*, 2012, by Miyashita Zenji (Japanese, 1939–2012). Stoneware with colored-clay overlays, *saidei*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.33. © Miyashita Zenji. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Bottom Left: *Vessel 15-A*, 2015, by Kitamura Junko (Japanese, b. 1956). Stoneware with slip glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.17. © Kitamura Junko. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Bottom Right: *Moment in White C (Shiroi toki C)*, 2012, by Fujino Sachiko (Japanese, b. 1950). Stoneware with grayish-white matte glaze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Phyllis A. Kempner and Dr. David D. Stein, F2022.2.5. © Fujino Sachiko. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

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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UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Save the Date

June 22 - 28, 2026 Honolulu Trip

Registration will open the first week of February and will be announced via email.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in August and September. 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!

Tamara Haddad

John Kirkpatrick

Vivian Lui & Kimiko Kogure

Rashmi Sinha

Nina Sugaya



SOCIAL MEDIA

To submit photos of our programs and trips to be featured on our social media pages, please email to Social Media Committee Chair, Candace Zander Kahn at candacezks@gmail.com or Co-Chair, Grace Kim Kostal at gracekostal@berkeley.edu.

Besides our website, you can also follow our social media accounts for some last minute announcements about our programs.

Society for Asian Art

November - December 2025, No. 6

Members' Newsletter
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and Susan Lai

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ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2026 LECTURE SERIES

Asia Reimagined: Mapping Cultures Beyond Borders



Left: Incense burner with Arabic inscription, approx. 1700–1800. China. Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Bronze with gold inlay. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Avery Brundage Collection, B62B32. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.*

Right: Dish with wave-and-rock motif, approx. 1575–1600. Turkey. Ottoman period (1281–1924). Stonepaste; polychrome painted under transparent glaze. *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of the Menke family in memory of their parents and grandparents Betty and John Menke, 2015.26. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.*

When: Fridays Jan. 30 to May 1, 2026

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 Jan. 23, 2026.

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: Natasha Reichle

In an age when cultural identities are increasingly fluid, Asia Reimagined invites you to explore how artists, ideas, and aesthetics have long transcended national boundaries and how the artistic soul, be it nomad or explorer, has responded with curiosity and vision. This 14-lecture series examines the ways that creative exchange has influenced both the makers and the patrons of Asian art. Join us this spring, along with Instructor of Record Natasha Reichle, AAM curator of Southeast Asian art, as we cross physical and metaphysical borders to discover new definitions of art.

Whether you're a devoted museum member or a curious newcomer, this series offers a compelling lens into the vibrant complexity of Asia as it has been imagined, reimagined, and continually reshaped

The Arts of Asia committee welcomes comments about our lecture series. Please email comments to info@societyforasianart.org.

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



ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2026 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

Jan. 30, 2026

TBD

Feb. 6, 2026

New Voices from the West Asian Diaspora: Dance Floor as Contemporary Art
Naz Cuguoglu, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art & Programs, Asian Art Museum

Feb. 13, 2026

TBD

Feb. 20, 2026

Asian American Artists in the Mid 20th Century
ShiPu Wang, Professor of Art History/Visual Studies, University of California, Merced

Feb. 27, 2026

Persian Invasion of Egypt
Henry Colburn, Visiting Assistant Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College

Mar. 6, 2026

Calligraphy in East Asian Cinema
Markus Nornes, Professor of Asian Cinema, University of Michigan

Mar. 13, 2026

TBD

Mar. 20, 2026

Central Asian Influences on Ancient Chinese Bronzes
Liu Yang, Chair of Asian Art and Curator of Chinese Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art

Mar. 27, 2026

Cross-Cultural Aspects of Japanese Photography
Karen M. Fraser, Professor & Program Director, Art History & Museum Studies, University of San Francisco

Apr. 3, 2026

Magic in Thai Buddhism
Justin McDaniel, Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Professor of Humanities, Department of Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania

Apr. 10, 2026

Southeast Asian Textiles
Sandra Sardjono, Independent Researcher and President, Tracing Patterns Foundation

Apr. 17, 2026

Hindu Religions Across South and Southeast Asia
Elizabeth A. Cecil, Timothy Gannon Associate Professor of Religion, Florida State University

Apr. 24, 2026

TBD

May 1, 2026

Dutch Maritime Excursions to Asia
Tonio Andrade, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, Emory University



MEMBER EVENTS

Tour of *Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior* with Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander



Left: Shahzia Sikander (Pakistani and American, b. 1969), *Fixed, Fluid*, 2022, glass mosaic with patinated brass frame, Dr. Fatima Zuberi, © Shahzia Sikander.
Center: Shahzia Sikander (Pakistani and American, b. 1969), *Her-Vimana*, 2024, mixed media collage, Collection of the Artist, Courtesy of Shahzia Sikander and Sean Kelly, New York/Los Angeles, © Shahzia Sikander.
Right: Shahzia Sikander (Pakistani and American, b. 1969), *Segments of Desire Go Wandering Off*, 1998, collage with vegetable color, dry pigment, watercolor, graphite, and tea on wasli paper; Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, New York, © Shahzia Sikander.

When: **Thursday, December 4, 2025**

Time: **11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Place: **Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society members only (Limited to 20 participants)**

Join exhibition curator Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, who will lead us through this career spanning exhibition of the internationally renowned New York-based artist Shazia Sikander. Born in Pakistan, Sikander has been reframing visual histories through a contemporary feminist perspective for 3 decades, through diverse media and traditions – such as South Asian miniature paintings to digital animation, revealing a vibrant visual universe that re-imagines the past for our present moment.

This exhibition is part of Cantor's Asian American Art Initiative and was premiered in 2024 at the 60th Venice Biennale.

Dr. Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander is Robert M. and Ruth L. Halperin Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and Co-Director of the Asian American Art Initiative at the Cantor Arts Center.

During November, the Cantor has planned many events in conjunction with this exhibition including a symposium with the artist in attendance. Go to the [Cantor's website](#) for information.

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.



STUDY GROUPS

Modern and Contemporary Movements in Japanese Art with Robert Mintz

When: **Saturday, November 22, 2025**
Time: **10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (One hour lunch break)**
Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**
Fee: **\$30 per person Society members; \$35 per person non-members after museum admission**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Nov. 14, 2025.

"Like Christianity, Modernism and the concept of avant-garde art are Western ideas that Japan received from abroad."

This study group will explore some of the major movements and trends in Japanese Modern and Contemporary art. Dividing the lecture into three sections, we will first explore prewar, 20th century movements that gave shape to what we now can see as Japanese Modernism. The second section will look at the post-war period and the movements that emerged in reaction to the cultural and social challenges of the 1950s-1980s. In the final section we will explore some of the major artists forming and leading the Contemporary art movement today.

Robert Mintz is the Chief Curatorial Director / Chief Curator at the Asian Art Museum. In his position, he oversees the curatorial research and exhibitions programs, and he guides the growth, preservation, and presentation of the museum's art collections. Rob is a specialist in Edo period Japanese art history with a keen interest in literati paintings and the decorative arts. With degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of Washington, he has spent his career working in public art museums previously serving as a researcher at the Seattle Art Museum, and later as curator of Asian Art and Chief Curator at the Walters Art Museum.

This study group consists of a morning session and an afternoon session. **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.

Zoroaster: The Most Influential Philosopher and Prophet in History with Mitra Ara

When: **Saturday, January 31, 2026**
Time: **10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (One hour lunch break)**
Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**
Fee: **\$30 per person Society members; \$35 per person non-members after museum admission**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Jan. 23, 2026.

This study group examines Zoroaster, an Indo-Iranian prophet whose philosophical teachings significantly influenced the development of Zoroastrianism, a tradition that began in the mid-second millennium BCE. The analysis presents Zoroaster as a prominent prophet who has shaped later Abrahamic religions and Western philosophy, positioning him as an early supporter of revealed religion. Zoroaster's core beliefs, including dualistic cosmology, eschatology, and the ongoing battle between good and evil, continue to impact modern ethical, moral, and philosophical discussions. The lecture highlights Zoroaster's substantial historical influence and the continuing importance of his ideas in debates about ethics, free will, and human purpose.

Dr. Mitra Ara is a cultural historian and professor at San Francisco State University, where she teaches classes in multiple departments. She earned her B.A. in Religious Studies, her M.A. in South and Southeast Asian Studies with a focus on Sanskrit and Avestan religious traditions, and her Ph.D. in Asian Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She has written several books, numerous articles, and has spoken at conferences and colloquia.

This study group consists of a morning session and an afternoon session. **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.



Towering Rage, 1953, by Katsura Yuki (Japanese, 1913 – 1991). Showa period (1926–1989). Oil on canvas. Asian Art Museum, Museum purchase, Tomoye Takahashi Acquisition Fund, F2022.1. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Miho couch central panel.
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