



September - October 2020

No. 5

### Message from SAA President

Dear SAA Members and Friends,

The wait is finally over! After five months of staying at home, distancing and washing hands, it is BACK TO CLASS. The Fall 2020 Arts of Asia lecture series, Heroes and Villains in Asian Art and Culture, starts on August 21 via Zoom webinars. Thank you to all who have signed up already. For those who are still thinking of joining us, please realize how easy it is to join. You can attend the class from the comfort of your home without having to wait for BART or getting stuck on a bridge. All you need is a computer or device that lets you join the world of Zoom. And should you miss a lecture, you can view a video a few days later at your convenience.

If you have friends who do not live in the Bay Area and are lovers of Asian art and culture, please ask them to sign up as well. Wherever they live, just remind them that all programs are on Pacific Time. Please note there is NO drop in option; you must sign up for the entire series. As you can imagine, the registration process has a certain protocol, and that is the reason why we close registration at least one week before any event. Sorry about that!



And we are not stopping there. Please find additional Member Events scheduled for September and October as well as a Literature and Culture course in November. Keep in mind, with your attendance at our events and your continued membership in the SAA, we will be able to support the Asian Art Museum. Even though the museum is still closed, it needs our help now more than ever. Also, even though our office in the Museum is closed, our Office Manager, Susan Lai, is working from home and answering your inquiries via email or phone.

Thank you and stay safe!  
Ehler Spliedt  
President



## LITERATURE & CULTURE COURSE FALL 2020

### Raise the Red Lantern: Nation, Spectacle and Concubines With Wei Yang Menkus

When: **Sundays, November 8 & 15**  
Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pacific Time**  
Place: **Online Meetings**  
Fee: **\$46 per person Society members; \$56 per person non-members**  
**Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Oct. 30, 2020.**

Discussion of the 1991 film by director Zhang Yimou and the novella on which it is based will be led by Wei Yang Menkus of the University of San Francisco, where she is Program Director for Asian Studies. The two classes will be discussion based and limited to the first 20 people who register.

*Wei Yang Menkus received her PhD in East Asian Languages and Literature from Yale University. She teaches and researches on Chinese cinema in a global context. Her teaching interests include literary adaptation in Chinese cinema.*



*Woman leaning against the railing, by Hu Yongkai (Chinese, b. 1945). Ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum, Gift of the Yiqingzhai Collection, 2001.34. Photograph © Asian 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.



## IN THIS ISSUE

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Fall 2020 Arts of Asia Lecture Series

Heroes and Villains in Asian Art and Culture

Instructor of Record: Stephen Roddy

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Member Event - Drums and Rhythms of North and South Indian Music with Jim Santi Owen

### **Tuesday, September 22 Online Webinar**

Member Event - The Pre-History of Illustrating the Bhagavata Purana and Its Continuation in Later Times with Daniel Ehnbohm

### **Tuesday, October 13 Online Webinar**

Member Event - Healing Visions of the Heart Sutra: The Buddhist Art of Iwasaki Tsuneo with Paula Arai

### **Thursday, October 22 Online Webinar**

Member Event - Bowers of Love: Krishna Worship, Garden Design and Climate Change in 18th Century Braj with Sugata Ray

### **Sundays, November 8 & November 15**

Fall 2020 Literature Course **Online Meetings**

Raise the Red Lantern: Nation, Spectacle and Concubines

With Wei Yang Menkus



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members, who joined the Society from February through July. 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!

Fran Beach  
Gloria Kaje-Weng & Alan Early  
Dave Kwinter  
Bill Kwong  
Yuan Liu

Ronnie Oliver  
Ravinder Reddy  
Charita Thakkar  
Gretchen Welch

### *Society for Asian Art*

September - October 2020, No. 5

Members' Newsletter  
Edited by John Nelson  
and Susan Lai

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\*ex officio



### Heroes and Villains in Asian Art and Culture



Left: The Boy Krishna holding a stolen butterball and dancing, perhaps 1600–1700. Southern India. Bronze. *Asian Art Museum, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60B192*. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: The hero Rustam slaying a dragon, from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), 1600–1650. Northern India or Pakistan. Opaque watercolors on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Hopper Fitch, B74D20*. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

**When: Fridays, August 21 – December 4, 2020 (No lecture on November 6 and November 27.)**  
**Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time**  
**Place: Online Webinar**  
**Fee: \$175 per person Society members; \$200 per person non-members for the series**  
**Advance registration must be received by the SAA by August 14, 2020.**  
**We will not be accepting drop ins for individual lectures.**  
**Instructor of Record: Stephen Roddy, University of San Francisco**

Our distinguished scholars explore some of the greatest stories in history, stories that still speak to us today, and the art they have inspired. Come look at historical figures, religious leaders, and characters in epics and great works of fiction. We will see how history is transformed in the Romances of Alexander the Great in Asia and the Japanese war epic, *The Tale of Heike*. Come witness the fights against demons by Tibet's first Lama, Milarepa, and Rostam, the great hero of the *Shahnameh*. Who are the heroines behind the heroes: the woman who created *Tale of Genji*, and the real hero of the *1001 Nights*, Shahrazad? We will contrast the roles of moving religious performances, including Krishna's dance as divine play, and the powerful Shia passion play, the Ta'ziyeh of Hussein. We will explore how two powerful political leaders, King Sejong of Korea and Mao Zedong of China are depicted. Examine the challenges posed by heroes and villains in three epic novels of Chinese literature, *The Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin* (*Lords of the Marsh*), and *Jin Ping Mei* (*The Golden Lotus*). Join us to learn about the different kinds of heroism in the *Ramayana*, and how Bali's Rangda and Barong restore cosmic balance.

There is an optional reading list for those who would like to read the stories or about the heroes and villains featured in this course.

See the next page for the full schedule of speakers and topics and sign up today.



# ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2020 LECTURE SERIES

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## Speakers & Topics

### August 21

It's Right to Rebel! (zào fǎn yǒu lǐ): Heroes, Justice and Anarchy in *The Water Margin*, *Jin Ping Mei* and Beyond  
Stephen Roddy, University of San Francisco

### August 28

The Hero Dances: Representing Krishna's Play  
Forrest McGill, Asian Art Museum

### September 4

Alexander Dhulqarnayn: Mariner, Mountaineer, Sage, and Islamic Holy Figure  
David Zuwiyya, Auburn University

### September 11

Dīvs and Dragons as Adversaries: Rostam Faces his Zoroastrian Demons  
Touraj Daryaei, UC Irvine

### September 18

Decoding Milarepa: Tibet's First Lama  
Jeff Durham, Asian Art Museum

### September 25

What Kind of Heroism Appears in the *Ramayana* of India?  
Paula Richman, Professor Emerita, Oberlin College

### October 2

Defanging the Demonic and Dancing the Divine: Bali's Rangda and Barong in Cosmic Balance  
Kathy Foley, UC Santa Cruz

### October 9

The Changing Faces of Heroism and Villainy in *The Three Kingdoms* Story Cycle 220-2020  
Kimberly Besio, Colby College

### October 16

King Sejong the Great Korean Scholar King  
Michael Robinson, Professor Emeritus, Indiana University Bloomington

### October 23

Arrogance, Bravery, and Betrayal – Visualizations of Some Towering Figures in Japan's Medieval War Epic *The Tale of Heike*  
John Wallace, UC Berkeley

### October 30

The "Woman's Hand" in *Tale of Genji*: Illuminated Manuscripts through the Ages  
John Carpenter, Metropolitan Museum of Art

### November 13

Ta'ziyeh: The Shia Passion Play  
Negar Mottahedeh, Duke University

### November 20

Shahrazad, Superhero of the *1001 Nights*  
Suzanne Gauch, Temple University

### December 4

Red Media: Tempering Hearts with Mao Zedong  
Jennifer Dorothy Lee, University of Chicago





## MEMBER EVENTS

### Drums and Rhythms of North and South Indian Music With Jim Santi Owen

When: **Tuesday, September 8**  
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 Sept. 1, 2020.**

Join percussionist Jim Santi Owen, a senior faculty member of the Ali Akbar College of Music, in an online class exploring the drums and rhythms of North and South Indian classical music. With 30 years of experience as an educator and student/performer of North and South Indian classical music, Jim Santi Owen specializes in the North Indian Tabla and South Indian Kanjira, Thavil, Ghatam, Morsing, and Mridangam. Attendees will experience live demonstrations of each of these percussion instruments, curated videos of master Indian artists, and participatory lessons in the rhythms of North and South India through the onomatopoeic rhythmic syllables used in the teaching and performing traditions of Indian percussion. No prior musical experience necessary.

*Jim Santi Owen is an American percussionist, educator, performer, composer, and producer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Drumming since the age of eight, he has devoted over 30 years to the study of the classical percussion traditions of North and South India with tabla maestro Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri and South Indian master percussionists, T.H. Subash Chandran and K. Sekar. Owen studied Jazz with Charlie Haden, James Newton, and Tootie Heath and African drumming and dance from the Ladzekpo Brothers and Dr. Kofi Gbolonyo. A dedicated teacher, Owen is on faculty at the Ali Akbar College of Music, Dominican University, the California Jazz Conservatory, and LINES Ballet and travels around the world teaching master classes for adults and youth. His work as a composer and producer can be found in Facebook's Sound Collection.*



Photos courtesy of Jeff Stott.

### The Pre-History of Illustrating the Bhagavata Purana and Its Continuation in Later Times With Daniel Ehnbohm

When: **Tuesday, September 22**  
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 Sept. 15, 2020.**

It seems obvious that a text cannot be illustrated before it is composed, but as it so often does India provides exceptions. Notable among these is the Bhagavata Purana, composed (in South India?) around the end of the 1st millennium of the Common Era. When illustrated versions of the text finally merge in the 16th century, they draw on and elaborate a rich visual tradition preserved in stone that well predates the composition of the text itself and continues into the modern period.

*Daniel Ehnbohm received his PhD From the University of Chicago. In the last few years, he was Adjunct Curator of Asian Art at the University of Virginia Art Museum and was formerly Director of the UVA Center for South Asian Studies. He is the author of numerous books and articles including Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection and The Realms of Earth and Sky: Indian Painting from the 15th to the 19th Century. He retired from the McIntire Department of Art in May 2020.*



Exchange of Babes, ca. 450 CE. Devgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. Photo by Daniel Ehnbohm.



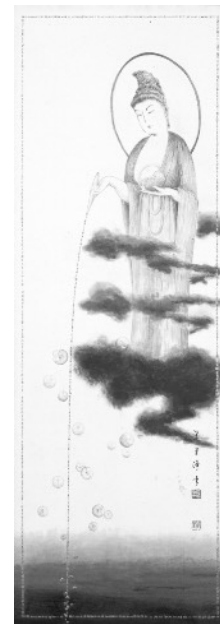
## MEMBER EVENTS

### Healing Visions of the Heart Sutra: The Buddhist Art of Iwasaki Tsuneo With Paula Arai

When: **Tuesday, October 13**  
 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 Oct. 6, 2020.**

Japanese biologist and visionary artist Iwasaki Tsuneo (1917-2002) created a scientifically informed visual commentary of core Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings on form and emptiness. Resonances he observed between scientific and Buddhist views of reality—interdependence, impermanence, and the fluid nature of phenomena—inspired him to painstakingly shape images with miniature calligraphy of the Chinese characters of the Heart Sutra. This enigmatic, concise, and profound scripture is treasured for its expression of wisdom and compassion. The subjects of his paintings range from classical Buddhist iconography to ephemeral beauties of nature and microscopic and telescopic wonders. This immersive slide presentation of exquisite art will be animated by stories about the artist's life and motivations and laced with poetic interpretations of insights embedded in the paintings.

*Paula Arai received her Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Harvard University, specializing in Japanese Sōtō Zen. She is author of *Painting Enlightenment: Healing Visions of the Heart Sutra—The Buddhist Art of Iwasaki Tsuneo* (Shambhala Publications), *Women Living Zen: Japanese Buddhist Nuns* (Oxford University Press), and *Bringing Zen Home: The Healing Heart of Japanese Buddhist Women's Rituals* (University of Hawai'i Press). She currently holds the Urmila Gopal Singhal Professorship in Religions of India at Louisiana State University.*



Mizuko: Water Child 1997.  
Iwasaki Family Collection.  
Photo by Kenichi Arakawa.

### Bowers of Love: Krishna Worship, Garden Design and Climate Change in 18th Century Braj With Sugata Ray

When: **Thursday, October 22**  
 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 Oct. 15, 2020.**

In the 18th century, vast tracts of forested lands were reclaimed for human habitation in Braj, the pilgrimage center in north India where the divine Krishna is believed to have spent his youth. How did the theology of Krishna worship—one that visualized Braj as a *kunja* or the primeval bower where Krishna and Radha dally eternally—contend with such a sweeping alteration of the pilgrimage center's precarious ecology? By way of addressing this question, this talk focuses on the emergence of enclosed gardens in Braj in a time of drastic deforestation. This new garden form, as Dr. Ray will show, allowed devotees to simulate Radha's journey through the dense jasmine groves of liturgical poetry while creating an appearance of deep wilderness within an urban milieu. Represented in paintings and simulated in architecture, the gardens or *kunjas* of Braj then brings to the fore a vegetal aesthetics that performatively entangled philosophical, symbolic, and aesthetic perceptions of an imagined natural environment.

*Sugata Ray is Associate Professor of South and Southeast Asian art and architecture in the History of Art Department and the Department of South & Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. His research and writing focus on climate change and the visual arts from the 1500s onwards. Ray is the author of *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Geoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550–1850* (2019); *Water Histories of South Asia: The Materiality of Liquescence* (2019, co-edited with Venugopal Maddipati); and *Ecologies, Aesthetics, and Histories of Art* (forthcoming, co-edited with Gerhard Wolf and Hannah Baader).*



3.17. The Gopis seek Krishna in the Forest. Palam Bhagavata Purana, ca. 1520–1540. Ink and watercolor on paper. Repository: Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Katherine Kittredge McMillan Memorial Fund, 95.4.1.



# REGISTRATION FORM

## How to Register

1. Go to our website, [www.societyforasianart.org](http://www.societyforasianart.org), sign up and pay online; OR
2. Print and fill out this registration form, and send it with a check or the credit card information to:  
Society for Asian Art, 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

SAA does not issue tickets or confirmations. You will be contacted ONLY if your registration cannot be completed. A valid email address for each registrant must be provided for online programs.

The Society for Asian Art's cancellation policy requires at least one week's advance written notice in order to receive a refund of registration fees. Requests must be received by the SAA office no later than one week before the start of the event, lecture series, or literature course. This excludes our travel programs, which have separate cancellation policies, as well as any programs where a specific refund policy is stated on the event page or description.

Paid Programs	Fee Per Person	Quantity	Subtotal
<input type="checkbox"/> August 21 - December 4 Fall 2020 Arts of Asia Lecture Series - Heroes and Villains in Asian Art and Culture <i>Online Webinar (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Aug. 14, 2020.)</i>	\$175 Members \$200 Non-Members		
<input type="checkbox"/> September 8 Member Event - Drums and Rhythms of North and South Indian Music <i>Online Webinar (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Sept. 1, 2020.)</i>	\$15 Members \$20 Non-Members		
<input type="checkbox"/> September 22 Member Event - The Pre-History of Illustrating the Bhagavata Purana and Its Continuation in Later Times <i>Online Webinar (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Sept. 15, 2020.)</i>	\$15 Members \$20 Non-Members		
<input type="checkbox"/> October 13 Member Event - Healing Visions of the Heart Sutra: The Buddhist Art of Iwasaki Tsuneo <i>Online Webinar (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Oct. 6, 2020.)</i>	\$15 Members \$20 Non-Members		
<input type="checkbox"/> October 22 Member Event - Bowers of Love: Krishna Worship, Garden Design and Climate Change in 18th Century Braj <i>Online Webinar (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Oct. 15, 2020.)</i>	\$15 Members \$20 Non-Members		
<input type="checkbox"/> November 8 & 15 Fall 2020 Literature Course - Raise the Red Lantern: Nation, Spectacle and Concubines <i>Online Meetings (Advance registration must be received by the SAA by Oct. 30, 2020.)</i>	\$46 Members \$56 Non-Members		

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Donations for Book Sale

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our annual Book Sale was postponed. We ask that you hold onto your book donations until the museum reopens later this year. If you are moving or downsizing and have a lot of books, we are happy to pick them up from your home within the San Francisco Bay Area. We accept books with Asian subjects only, be it art, culture, novels, history, travel, cooking, exhibition catalogues or others. If you have any questions, please contact the SAA office at (415) 581-3701 or [info@societyforasianart.org](mailto:info@societyforasianart.org). Thank you.

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## LOTUS LEAVES

### Read the Spring 2020 Issue Online

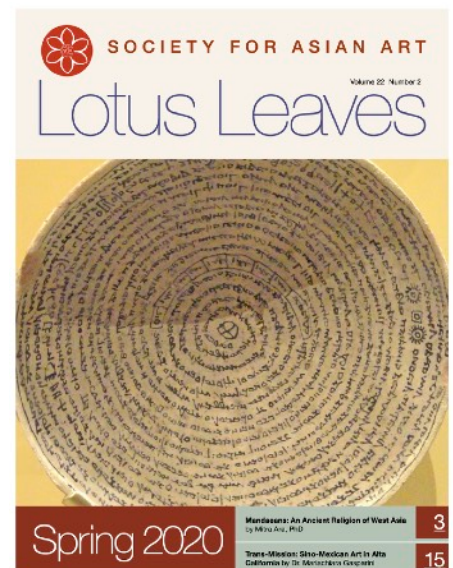
This issue features two articles on topics that may be new to many SAA readers. The first article, by Dr. Mitra Ara of San Francisco State University, surveys the Mandaeans, an ancient religion of the Near East that has survived to this day. Did you know that John the Baptist was a Mandaean? The second article is by Dr. Mariachiara Gasparini (soon to be teaching at the University of Oregon), who follows her fall 2019 article about textiles on the Silk Road, with an examination of Chinese textiles and trade goods that came to the missions of Alta California through the Spanish maritime trade routes via Manila and Mexico.

#### To access online issues of *Lotus Leaves*:

- Go to the SAA website, [www.societyforasianart.org](http://www.societyforasianart.org).
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