Salaam!

Fall 2014 promises unique insights into the world of Islamic art as well as a plethora of historic objects from Saudi Arabia. Featured here are a variety of relevant items from the Museum’s own collection.
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Tuesday, October 28
Lecture: Maqamat al-Hariri – A 13th Century Arab Manuscript with Heather Elgood

UPCOMING EVENTS (subject to change)

Saturday, November 8
Lecture: Dilmun – A Bronze Age State Based in Bahrain and Eastern Saudi Arabia with Benjamin Porter and Alexis Boutin

Saturday, November 15
Study Group: Wellsprings of Indian Culture: Vedas, Upanisads and Vedanta, with Prasad Vepa

Tuesday, December 9
SAA Holiday Party at Tansu Design in the SF Design Center

Society for Asia Art
September - October No. 5
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Society Book Sale 2015
Donations for our Annual Book Sale are accepted throughout the year. If you have any Asian related books on art, culture, travel, cooking or novels, please call the SAA office. If you have a couple of boxes, we will pick them up from your home in the Bay Area!

Arts of the Islamic World

When: Fridays, August 22 - December 5
Time: 10:30 am - 12:30 pm
Place: Samsung Hall
Fee: $20 per lecture drop-in (after Museum admission, subject to availability)

Subscriptions Sold Out! – Limited Drop-In Tickets Available at the Door

Subscriptions for the Arts of Asia Fall lecture series (“Arts of the Islamic World”) are now sold out. A limited number of “drop-in” tickets will be made available at the door to Samsung Hall on the day of each lecture (dependent on estimated seat availability at 10:20 AM).

August 22
Introduction
Qamar Adamjee, AAM

August 29
An Introduction to the Art and Architecture of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia
David Stronach, UC Berkeley

September 5
Arts of Ancient Arabia
Massumeh Farhad, Freer & Sackler

September 12
Assimilation and Conquest: Byzantine Sources for Islamic Art
Helen Evans, Metropolitan Museum

September 19
Attitudes towards Images in Islam
Finbarr Barry Flood, NYU

September 26
Persian Painting: The First Golden Age (1300-1500)
Robert Hillenbrand, University of Edinburgh

October 3
Seeing and Being Seen in Isfahan: Expanding Gaze for an Early Modern Capital (1590-1720)
Renata Holod, University of Pennsylvania

October 10
Chinese Influence on Islamic Glazed Ceramics
Oliver Watson, University of Oxford

October 17
Building Types in Islamic Architecture
Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, San Francisco State University

October 24
The Visual Culture of Islam in India
Alka Patel, UC Irvine

October 31
Ex Oriente Lux: Luxury Textiles and Oriental Carpets
Carol Bier, Independent Scholar

November 7
The Art of Islamic Calligraphy: A Journey through Time
Maryam Ekhtiar, Metropolitan Museum

November 14
Seek Knowledge Even as Far as China: East-West Cultural Transmissions in Post Mongol Iran
Ladan Akbarnia, British Museum

November 21
Modernism and Islamic Art
Iftikhar Dadi, Cornell University

November 28
No Class, Thanksgiving break

December 5
Imagining Europe at the Persian Court in the Seventeenth Century
Amy Landau, Walters Art Museum
MEMBER EVENTS

Bedouin Weaving of Saudi Arabia & Its Neighbors
With Joy Totah Hilden

When: Saturday, September 13
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum admission)

Portable and practical, tough and colorful, Bedouin textiles played a vital and functional part in the life of the Arab nomads. Produced on the simplest ground looms, the textiles were long-wearing and beautiful. The Bedouin women – the true craftspeople of the desert – wove to provide the very fabric of day-to-day living. Joy will describe the weaving techniques of the Bedouin as they adapt from their ancient nomadic existence to a settled one. She will also talk about her research and travels in Saudi Arabia. Her work comes at a time when many tribal peoples are losing their cultural traditions.

Joy Hilden is an acknowledged authority on Bedouin textiles. Her work is based on first-hand knowledge gleaned over a 12 year residence in Eastern Saudi Arabia and extensive travels throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

Razmnama – A Mahabharata for a Mughal King
With Asok Kumar Das

When: Saturday, September 20
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum admission)

The Mughal Emperor Akbar was the first king to have the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, translated into Persian. He had a group of scholars of Persian and Sanskrit translate the text, which was called Razmnama - the Book of War. They produced a set of four large volumes illustrated by leading masters of the Mughal court for his personal library. These volumes are now in the museum in Jaipur and have never been published or put on public view. Akbar wanted his leading nobles to have copies of the Razmnama and several illustrated and unillustrated copies are in public and private collections. Dr. Das will show images of some of the best known episodes of the Great Epic and demonstrate the way the artists of the Mughal court visualized them and presented them for their patrons.

Dr. Das was the Director of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, and a senior visiting fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, among other museums and institutions around the world. He was also a visiting scholar at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha. The main areas of his research and publications are Mughal and Rajasthani art and culture. His latest publications are Razmnama: The Book of War, and Wonders of Nature: Ustad Mansur at the Mughal Court.

Renewing Tradition & Form: Swayambhu – An Iconic Buddhist Monument
With Padma Maitland

When: Friday, September 26
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum admission)

The Swayambhu Stupa is one of the great Buddhist monuments of the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Monument in the Kathmandu Valley. Its form embodies the rich cultural heritage of the area and the diverse ways they come together in the art and architecture of Nepal. Focusing on the 15th renovation of this stupa from 2008 to 2010, this talk will consider the ways in which the project engaged the continuing religious and artistic traditions of the area.

Padma Maitland is a PhD student in Architecture and South & Southeast Asian studies at UC Berkeley and has a Masters in Architecture from Princeton University. From 2008-2010 he was the Assistant Art Director for the Swayambhu Renovation Project in Kathmandu and has co-edited a commemorative volume about this project.
MEMBER EVENTS

Importance of Pottery in the Islamic World
With Oliver Watson

When: Saturday, October 11
Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 noon
Place: Educations Studios
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum Admission)

This talk will focus on the key technological inventions of the Islamic world which had global implications. Dr. Watson will discuss the importance of lustre-ware, tin-glazes, painting in cobalt blue, and underglaze painting on pottery, as well as why pottery has such a high profile in our view of Islamic art. Issues of survival of this art form and the economic impact on the world outside the Islamic lands will also be discussed.

Dr. Oliver Watson is the I.M. Pei Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture at the Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East at the University of Oxford. Oxford is the largest and most active university for the study of the Islamic World. Arabic has been taught there for 400 years. Dr. Watson’s research interests are the art of the object and the history of ceramics. He is a leading expert on Islamic ceramics, metal ware, and glass wares. He is one of the Arts of Asia speakers this semester.

Scroll Down – The Asian Hanging Scroll
With Liza Dalby

When: Friday, October 17
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum admission)

Although Western framing and East Asian mounting are similar in function – protect and preserve artwork – the aesthetic principles behind these two modes of art presentation are quite different. The mounting is what enables paintings to become objects of appreciation. While this art originated in China, other principles were developed in Japan. This presentation will explore the variations of this overlooked but essential complement to artistic expression.

Lisa Dalby, an anthropologist and novelist specializing in Japanese culture, has been researching the cultural and aesthetic aspects of scrolls. She has studied the traditional craft of mounting in Kyoto, where she has spent considerable time. She creates modern, non-traditional mountings in her studio in Berkeley. She is the author of Geisha, based on her early research for her PhD dissertation, among other books on Japanese culture and life in the Heian period.

Maqamat al-Hariri – A 13th Century Arab Manuscript
With Heather Elgood

When: Tuesday, October 28
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Place: Samsung Hall
Fee: $15 Society members, $20 non-members (after Museum admission)

Al-Maqamat, a book written by the author al-Hariri, comprises fifty short stories (maquamat = settings or sessions) told by a merchant named al-Harith. The book recounts the adventures of Abu Zayd, a roguish hero who lived by his wits in a town in northern Syria. The tales use humor to exhibit subtle and indirect criticism of the existing social order. These tales are valued not only for their humor, but also for their linguistic ingenuity and complex grammar, which revealed the sophisticated wealth of the Arabic language. The illustrations in the Maqamat are an incomparable mirror of medieval Arab society.

Dr. Heather Elgood is the Course Director for the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Her expertise is Persian and Indian manuscript paintings, early Hindu sculptures, and the ritual arts. She was one of the professors for our very own Deputy Director, Pedro Moura Carvalho, when he was studying at SOAS.
FIRST THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES

Oriental Carpets in Early Renaissance Paintings
With Lauren Arnold

When: Thursday, September 4
Time: 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: $10 (after Museum admission)

This presentation will take us beyond the traditional notion that all carpets in European paintings were status symbols and luxury items of Muslim manufacture. Instead Arnold’s research indicates that the earliest carpets were brought to Italy and Flanders by Eastern Christians during periods of militant incursions into their ancestral lands in Asia Minor. These early carpets were objects of veneration in their homelands with deep religious significance. In their new surroundings, the humble flat-weave carpets were treasured as sacred reminders of the past, copied by painters in paintings over centuries, and finally preserved in local church treasuries as relics.

Lauren Arnold is an independent scholar with degrees in history and art history from the University of Michigan. Periodically she serves as an adjunct professor in world art history at the University of San Francisco, where she is also a research associate with the Ricci Institute. She lectures widely on East-West artistic contact. She has posted her work online — The Carpet Index on the photo-sharing site Flickr.

Journey along the Roads of Arabia
With Dany Chan

When: Friday, October 3 (special day, time and venue)
Time: 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
Place: Samsung Hall
Fee: $10 (after Museum admission)

Over the last forty years, archaeologists working in Saudi Arabia have unearthed astonishing artifacts from the peninsula’s ancient past. These discoveries have radically transformed our understanding of the region. These new findings are the foundations of Roads of Arabia, an exhibition that traces ancient incense trade routes and early Islamic pilgrimage roads that once traversed the peninsula. They connected Arabia to Iraq, Syria, Egypt, the Mediterranean, and beyond. Roads of Arabia features more than 200 objects, ranging from excavated stone tools, some more than a million years old, to a 17th century set of gilded doors that once graced the entrance to the Ka’ba, as well as monumental human statues, haunting gold masks, and imported blown glass. As archaeologists continue to unearth important ancient finds beneath the desert sands, Roads of Arabia offers a timely glimpse into the Arabian Peninsula’s fascinating past.


LITERATURE AND CULTURE OF ASIA

The Mughal World
With Munis D. Faruqui

When: Sundays, September 7, 14, 21, 28, and October 12
Time: 10:15 am - 12:15 pm
Place: Education Studios
Fee: Sold out. Registrations are at capacity.

This course will cover aspects of the Mughal World, with each session focusing on one of the following: the politics of the empire, religion, art, architecture, women, and literary cultures. We are fortunate to have Professor Faruqui, an authority on the Mughal Empire and a 2014 recipient of UC Berkeley’s Distinguished Teaching Award, teaching this course.
MISSING: SAA Black Tablecloths!

Do you have a black tablecloth from SAA that you laundered after use and forgot to return? Did you manage an SAA event and put the tablecloth with your supplies at home? Might you be storing one of our missing tablecloths? We are hoping this appeal will cause a few of the "strays" to return home to our closet in the SAA office. If you find one, please bring into the Museum and leave in the SAA office. We would be so grateful!

SOUK Update

Four drop-off dates have been scheduled beginning Friday, August 29th. All drop-off dates will be held at the Hetzels, 65 Shore View Avenue, San Francisco CA 94121 from 2-4 in the afternoon. Other dates are Friday, September 12, Friday, September 26, and Sunday, October 12. Please call Greg Potts (510) 337-9854 or Maureen Hetzel (415) 519-4373 if you have any questions. Over 1,000 items have been collected to date and we will be regularly updating the photos of items on our website to entice you. Do plan to attend on October 25 and 26 at Fort Mason.

We are also looking for volunteers to transport the donations to Fort Mason on the 25th. Anyone with a large van or truck who is available will be welcomed! There are also set up volunteers to unpack and arrange displays of donations, sales volunteers to staff the event, and cashier volunteers to tally up all our sales. Please contact Maureen at moraihetzel@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer. It is a fun team-building experience working with so many Society members.

Society SOUK
October 25–26
Keep your donations coming

Over 1,000 items have been collected to date and we will be regularly updating the photos of items on our website to entice you. Do plan to attend on October 25 and 26 at Fort Mason.
How to Register
To Register you may:

1. Go to our website, sign up and pay on-line: www.societyforasianart.org

   OR

2. Print this registration form and send it with a check to: SAA, 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

   OR

3. Print this registration form and fax it with your credit card information to: 415-861-2358

Registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted. If a program becomes fully enrolled, your payment will be returned. Refunds are granted for cancellations up to one business week before the event and take one or two weeks to process. SAA does not issue tickets or confirmations. You will be contacted ONLY if your registration cannot be completed.

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