

Society for Asian Art

Newsletter



March - April 2026

No. 2

One Hundred Plays of the Noh Theater by Tsukioka Kogyo (1869–1927) Tateuchi Japanese Galleries



Left and Center: Shakkyo, Stone Bridge, 1922–1926, by Tsukioka Kogyo (Japanese, 1869–1927). Woodblock print; ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum, Gift of the Lt. Col. A.T. Snell and Genevieve A. Snell Family Trust, 2023.142ab. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: Kasuga Ryujin, The Dragon God of Kasuga, 1922–1926, by Tsukioka Kogyo (Japanese, 1869–1927). Woodblock print; ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum, Gift of the Lt. Col. A.T. Snell and Genevieve A. Snell Family Trust, 2023.162. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Don't miss this exhibition of colorful woodblock prints featuring famed characters from the world's longest-running theatrical art form. The prints are selected from Tsukioka Kogyo's *One Hundred Plays of the Noh Theater* series, published between 1922 and 1926 as a limited edition set of 100 images and luxuriously embellished with gold, silver, and mica. Each print captures a key onstage moment from a major Noh play. Kogyo's highly detailed portraits could double as a master class in costuming. Elaborately layered garments combine with wigs, headdresses, masks, fans, and other props to symbolically convey each character's identity while radiating visual appeal. All prints on view were donated by Mr. Philip Snell of San Francisco. The Asian Art Museum's permanent collection includes a complete set of this series, 96 of which were generously provided by Mr. Snell.

Society for Asian Art Board Nominations

The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to serve on the Society's Board of Directors for 2026 - 2028. The SAA Board is a working board with all board members expected to serve on at least one committee. The committees plan and manage various programs each year. The committees that plan events are: Arts of Asia, Member Events, Upper Category Member Events, Literature & Culture, Study Groups and Travel. We are also looking for volunteers with expertise to serve on Finance, Investment, Social Media as well as Membership Committees.

If you would like to be considered or wish to recommend a potential candidate, please contact the Nominating Committee Chair, Jim Brown, by emailing jimmarinabay@gmail.com as soon as possible but no later than Mar. 1.

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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Study Group - Textiles of Southwest China and Southeast Asia with Chris Buckley & Serena Lee



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Member Event - Between Worlds and Wardrobes: China's Last Empress Wanrong, the Qipao, and Material Culture with Sally Yu Leung

Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2027 Saudi Arabian Odyssey from the Desert to the Sea

Registration will be announced via email the last week of March.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in December and January. 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!

Munkhbaatar Begzjav
William Bonds & Mark Farmer
Brian Cheu & Padric McCaig

Jennifer Faulkner-Ongerth &
Richard Ongerth
Chizuko Johnson



SOCIAL MEDIA

The Social Media and Membership committees are working together to use materials suitable for posting on our Instagram feed. We are particularly grateful to Society members who photographed and video recorded many activities and artworks during the recent Kingdom and Treasures of Thailand trip.

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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 Feb. 6 to May 15, 2026 (No lecture on Mar. 6, 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: **Late registration fees are \$225 per person Society members; \$300 per person non-members for the series.**

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)

Feb. 6, 2026 - Koret Education Center

Rhythms of the West Asian Diaspora: Contemporary Art in Motion
Naz Cuguoglu, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art & Programs, Asian Art Museum

Feb. 13, 2026

Cultural Rediscoveries and Hybrid Forms: Modern and Contemporary Tibetan Artists
Rosaline Kyo, Assistant Professor, History of Art/Visual Culture, University of California, Santa Cruz

Feb. 20, 2026 - New

Chapters in San Francisco's Asian American Art History: the May's Photo Studio
Mark Dean Johnson, Professor Emeritus of Art, San Francisco State University

Feb. 27, 2026

Egyptians and Persians: The Art and Archaeology of a Colonial Encounter (ca. 526-333 BCE)
Henry Preater Colburn, Visiting Assistant Professor of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College

Mar. 13, 2026 - New

Lala Rukh: Life and Work
Padma Dorje Maitland, Malavalli Family Foundation Associate Curator of the Art of the Indian Subcontinent, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Mar. 20, 2026

A Brief History of Japanese-Style Gardens in North America: The View from San Francisco
Kendall Brown, Professor of Asian Art History, California State University Long Beach

Mar. 27, 2026

Photography and Art/Photography as Art in Japan
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

Wax and Wonder: Batik as a World Art
Sandra Sardjono, Independent Scholar and Founder & President, Tracing Patterns Foundation

Apr. 17, 2026

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

Apr. 24, 2026

The Transcultural Evolution of Islamic Architecture
Nasser Rabbat, Aga Khan Professor and Director of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

May 1, 2026

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

May 8, 2026

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

May 15, 2026

The Influence of the Eurasian Animal Style on Chinese Bronze and Gold Ornaments from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty
Liu Yang, Chair of Asian Art and Curator of Chinese Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art



MEMBER EVENTS

Tour of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings with Tausif Noor

When: **Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026**

Time: **11:00 a.m.**

Place: **Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA)**
2155 Center Street, Berkeley

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members only, includes museum admission & tour. Space is limited.**

Join the Society for a private tour led by co-curator Tausif Noor of the special exhibition *Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Multiple Offerings*. This rare retrospective includes over one hundred artworks and archival materials from the gift to BAMPFA from the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation, as well as select loans of works by Cha and other artists. In her short but prolific life, Cha produced an expansive range of works across text-based media, video, and performance, including her posthumously published book, *Dictée* (1982). Her interdisciplinary practice gave shape to the experimental art scenes in San Francisco, New York City, and beyond.



Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard (Ailleurs)*, 1978. Documentation of performance at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Photograph by James H. Cha. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Gift of the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha Memorial Foundation.

The Asian Art Museum has one of Cha's works in its [collection](#), which was featured in the 2024 special exhibition, *Into View: New Voices, New Stories*.

BAMPFA has organized many events around this exhibition, which you can find on the [museum's website](#).

Tausif Noor is Curatorial Associate at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. He previously worked as the Spiegel-Wilks Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Whitney Museum of American Art. He holds degrees from Dartmouth College and Goldsmiths, University of London and is a PhD candidate in History of Art at the University of California, Berkeley.

Haruko and Chiura Obata: Teaching an Appreciation for Nature with Kimi Hill

When: **Saturday, Mar. 14, 2026**

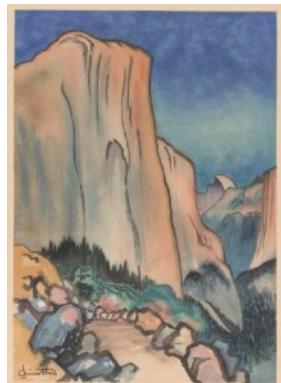
Time: **10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Place: **Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members after museum admission**

Kimi Hill will speak about her grandparents, Chiura and Haruko Obata. Chiura Obata is considered by many today as one of the foremost California landscape painters of the 20th century. His seminal work depicting the High Sierra was created nearly 100 years ago in 1927. Ikebana artist Haruko, one of the first teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area, taught the classic art of Japanese flower arrangement to hundreds of Americans throughout her long career. Both artists and teachers, their art and shared philosophies of natural beauty and reverence for it continues to resonate with admirers today.

Kimi Hill is the granddaughter of Haruko and Chiura Obata, and the Obata family historian. A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and the California College of Arts and Crafts, she has served as a consultant for numerous Obata projects and exhibits, including the 2020 retrospective *Chiura Obata: An American Modern* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



El Capitan: Yosemite National Park, California, 1930, by Chiura Obata (American, 1885-1975). Ink and colors on paper. Asian Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Stephen A. Sherwin and Merrill Randol Sherwin, 2010.13. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



Haruko Obata. Photo by Phyllis Valois.



MEMBER EVENTS

Annual Spring Dinner at Saffron Kitchen

When: **Tuesday, Mar. 17, 2026**

Time: **5:30 p.m.**

Place: **Saffron Kitchen, 5940 College Avenue, Oakland**

Fee: **\$77 per person Society members and guests**

Celebrate the coming of spring with fellow Society members at our Annual Spring Dinner at Saffron Kitchen, which serves Afghan and Mediterranean cuisine. Wine will be served before and during dinner.

As we celebrate the coming of spring – Nowruz, and the Year of the Horse, we will dine on a unique cuisine and have a chance to mix and mingle with other Society members in an informal atmosphere. We urge you to bring a friend to celebrate with you at the special cost for members and guests.

The restaurant is an easy walk from the Rockridge BART Station and parking is free in the BART parking lot after 3:00 p.m.



Logo & photo courtesy of Saffron Kitchen.



Photo courtesy of Peter Sinton.

2026 Annual Book Sale

When: **Thursday, Apr. 2, 2026 1 p.m. - 8 p.m. Thursday night hours**

Friday, Apr. 3, 2026 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday, Apr. 4, 2026 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Apr. 5, 2026 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free First Sunday

Place: **Loggia, Asian Art Museum**

At this year's four-day event, thousands of books, including collector's items, will be available at bargain prices. This year's event includes both a Thursday night, when the museum remains open until 8 p.m., and a Free First Sunday.

Selections include books on Asian art, history, literature, religion, culture, cooking, novels, travel, textiles, jewelry, and more. This year's rarities include a large collection of books on Korean and Japanese art and culture, all in English. All books were donated by members and friends of the Society for Asian Art.

The Society for Asian Art Book Sale has raised more than \$160,000 for the Asian Art Museum's C. Laan Chun Library, one of the most comprehensive research libraries on Asian art and culture in the country.



Photo courtesy of Ehler Spliedt.

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



SPRING 2026 LITERATURE COURSE

The “Floating World Fiction” of Ihara Saikaku with David Gundry

When: Sundays, April 12, April 19 & April 26, 2026
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Place: Koret Education Center, Asian Art Museum
Fee: \$100 per person Society members; \$125 per person non-members for the course after museum admission
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Mar. 27, 2026.

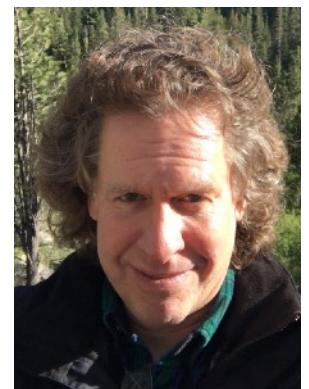
This course will introduce three key works by Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), widely acclaimed as early-Tokugawa Japan's greatest writer of fiction. The first lecture will outline the historical and cultural context of Saikaku's stories and novels: the status-group system imposed by the Tokugawa regime; the rapid growth of cities in 17th-century Japan, the expansion of a literate bourgeoisie and the concomitant emergence of a publishing industry; the licensed prostitution quarter as cultural hub; the Buddhism-derived aesthetics of evanescence; age-structured male homosexuality and normative male bisexuality; consumerism and sumptuary laws. In our first session we will also examine Saikaku's first published work of fiction, *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (The Life of an Amorous Man, 1682), a sophisticated parody of and homage to the aristocratic courtly romances *Tales of Ise* (900s) and *The Tale of Genji* (early 1000s) whose hypersexual bourgeois protagonist devotes his life to the pursuit of erotic adventure with female and male prostitutes and some “amateurs” as well. The second lecture will focus on Saikaku's *Kōshoku gonin onna* (Five Women Who Loved Love, 1686), whose bourgeois heroines arrogate to themselves the male prerogative of sexual pursuit, with, in four out of the five stories, disastrous results. The third and final meeting will focus on Ihara Saikaku's collection of samurai vendetta tales *Budō denraiki* (Exemplary Tales of the Way of the Warrior, 1687), which portray, variously, samurai bravery, cowardice, heroism and abuse of power. Reflective of the fact that in Tokugawa Japan age-structured male homosexuality was considered an erotic specialty of the samurai, this collection includes stories in which samurai youths avenge the deaths of their male lovers.

David J. Gundry is Associate Professor of Japanese and Undergraduate Faculty Advisor for Japanese at the University of California, Davis, where he teaches classes on Japanese literature from the early period to the present. He earned his Ph.D. from Stanford University. He has written several books and contributed numerous articles and book chapters. Tuttle Publishing just released Ihara Saikaku's *This Scheming World: Classic Tales of Desire, Deception and Greed in Old Japan*, which was revised and with a new introduction by Prof. Gundry. He is currently working on an article regarding depictions of sexuality in Ihara Saikaku's fiction, as well as translations of Saikaku's *Budō denraiki* (Exemplary Tales of the Way of the Warrior, 1687) and *Honchō nijū fukō* (Twenty Cases of Filial Impiety in Japan, 1686). His research interests are medieval and early-modern Japanese literature, comparative history of the novel, and Edo period popular culture.

Reading materials will be shared with registered attendees.



Illustration from Ihara Saikaku's *The Life of an Amorous Man*



David J. Gundry



STUDY GROUPS

Textiles of Southwest China and Southeast Asia with Chris Buckley & Serena Lee

When: **Saturday, Apr. 25, 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 Apr. 17, 2026.**

Southwest China and Southeast Asia is one of the world's most diverse regions, with peoples from four major language families. The weaving traditions of this region are equally diverse and colorful and subsequently spread to other parts of Asia. Textile experts Chris Buckley and Serena Lee will introduce the region, using field photographs and outstanding examples of textiles. They will talk about the variety of techniques, styles, and looms. The talk is aimed at anyone with a general interest in the craft traditions of Asia as well as textile collectors.

Chris Buckley is an expert in Asian textiles who lived in China and Hong Kong for twenty years and now lives in the Bay Area. He is the author of several books, including *Roots of Asian Weaving* (Oxbow Books, 2015). His particular interest is how culture in general, and crafts in particular, are transmitted from generation to generation.

Serena Lee is a textile artist, founder of [Textile Odyssey Tours](#), and leader of the Ethnic Textiles Study Group of the [Textile Arts Council](#), a support group of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. She has presented her research internationally and nationwide at numerous conferences. Her particular interest is in the role clan dress and textiles play in maintaining ancestral identity, social structure, and history of these communities that remain a mystery to outsiders.

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.



Maonan bedcover. Photo courtesy of Chris Buckley.



Young Miao (Hmong) woman in Guizhou Province, China, with a young child wearing a protective silver crown. Photo courtesy of Chris Buckley.



TRAVEL

Save the Date

Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2027

Saudi Arabian Odyssey: From the Desert to the Sea

Take the road less traveled and join the SAA for a fascinating journey through the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country untouched by tourism until relatively recently. The trip combines history, culture, archaeology, architectural wonders, and natural beauty. Led by distinguished Middle East archaeologist and art historian, Dr. Barbara Porter, we will explore a variety of venues, including UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as the Nabatean ruins of Hegra (Mada'in Salih) and historically strategic sites along the incense trade route, such as AlUla. We will also visit the holy city of Madinah, the JAX district of contemporary art in Riyadh, and significant castles and forts. Throughout the trip, we will be inspired by Saudi Arabia's stunning geographical diversity, including sandstone cliffs, dramatic rock formations, an ancient natural canyon, historic oases, and the crystal clear waters of the Red Sea. The trip will begin in the capital city of Riyadh in the historical heartland of Najd, and conclude in the port city and commercial hub of Jeddah, along the shores of the Red Sea, the historic gateway to Mecca. This trip will open for registration the last week of March and will be announced via email.