

Society for Asian Art Newsletter



November - December 2026

No. 6

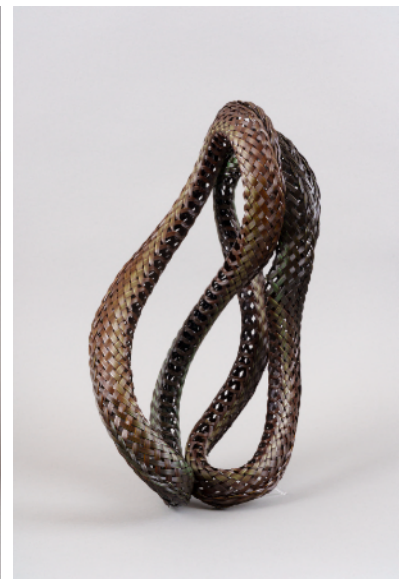
2026 Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes

Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Gallery in the Tateuchi Japanese Galleries

Oct. 1, 2026 — Jan. 4, 2027

Did you attend the Sept. 25 Arts of Asia lecture, *Cotsen Basket Collection: From Utility to Fine Art*, by Yuki Morishima, the Asian Art Museum's Associate Curator of Japanese Art? The museum is home to one of the largest collections of Japanese bamboo art in the world, thanks to generous donations from collector Lloyd Cotsen (1929–2017), who encouraged contemporary bamboo artists through his sponsorship of the Cotsen Bamboo Prize (2000–2004). Today, this legacy lives on through The Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes, organized by Robert T. Coffland and Margo Thoma. The Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes celebrate and support the future of Japanese bamboo art by providing monetary support for young and mid-career artists and fostering creativity and innovation across the Pacific. This year's winners were announced in Beppu, Japan, on May 15, 2026.

Come see the stunning bamboo artworks by the recipients of the 2026 Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes, which are currently on view, including the winner of this year's Coffland Grand Prize, Ōki Toshie (Japanese, b. 1976). In a historic turn for the competition, six of the seven finalists were women, and all three major awards were presented to female artists (Ōki Toshie, Aoyagi Keiko, and Hasegawa Kei), reflecting the growing presence and impact of women in contemporary bamboo art.



Top Left: Installation view of Japanese bamboo gallery, including prize winners. Photograph by Kevin Candland. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
Bottom Left Coffland Grand Prize: *Pure Spring*, 2025, Ōki Toshie (Japanese, b. 1976), Reiwa period (2019–present). Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer. Lent by the artist. © Ōki Toshie. Photograph by Kubo Takashi, courtesy of The Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes Committee.
Top Middle Excellence in Sculpture Prize: *Hidden Bloom*, 2026, by Hasegawa Kei (Japanese, b. 1986), Reiwa period (2019–present). Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer. Lent by the artist. © Hasegawa Kei. Photograph by Kubo Takashi, courtesy of The Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes Committee.
Top Right Excellence in Tradition Prize: *Ethereal Cherry Blossom*, 2024, by Aoyagi Keiko (Japanese, b. 1977), Reiwa period (2019–present). Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer. Lent by the artist. © Aoyagi Keiko. Photograph by Kubo Takashi, courtesy of The Next Generation Bamboo Art Prizes Committee.

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)

Mar. 11 - 16, 2027

Asian Art in New York

Registration will be announced via email in late November.

May 12 - 23, 2027

Himalayan Heritage: Journey to Nepal and Bhutan

Registration will be announced via email in late October.



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!

Vivian Carmichael

Sara Garbarini

Wilson Grabill

Gladys Kupper

Pooja & Aleksandr Oysgelt

Casey Ren & Andrew Kelly

Eric Stetzler

Boryeu Tsaur & Yichi Wang

Jill Weed



SOCIAL MEDIA

To submit photos or videos of SAA programs for use in our Social Media channels, please email them to Social Media Committee Chair, Grace Kim Kostal, at gracekostal@berkeley.edu.

Society for Asian Art

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and Susan Lai

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ARTS OF ASIA SPRING 2027 LECTURE SERIES

What is Beauty? Asian Art Across Cultures and Time



Left: *Tanabata Festival*, approx. 1796, by Eishosai Choi (Japanese, active approx. 1780–1810). Ink and colors on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of the Grabhorn Ukiyo-e Collection*, 2005.100.86. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.
Right: Wine cup in the shape of a turban gourd, 1625-1650, by Spink and Son Ltd. Nephrite. *Asian Art Museum, The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60J485. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

When: Fridays Feb. 5 to Apr. 23, 2027 (Subject to Change)

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time

Place: Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum & Zoom Webinars

Please see schedule on our website 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. 29, 2027.

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: Robert Mintz

“Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror. But you are eternity and you are the mirror.”

- Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

What is beauty? How do shared ideas of beauty emerge, and how do they change across cultures and through time? Our next Arts of Asia lecture series will explore these questions through art from different Asian cultures and historical periods. Our speakers will consider how beliefs, traditions, and exchanges between cultures shape concepts of beauty, and how artists reflect or challenge these ideas.

In China, how do the cosmopolitan tastes of Tang elites and the reflective ideals of Song scholar-artists express different ideas of beauty? In India, how did the meeting of Persian and Indian artistic traditions at the Mughal court shape new artistic expressions? In Japan, how did tea culture encourage an appreciation for simplicity and irregularity?

The series will also ask us to consider our own viewpoints: why we find certain things beautiful, and how looking at Asian art can change our ways of seeing.

The schedule of speakers and topics will be published on the program webpage as soon as it is finalized.

Please visit our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information about this lecture series.



MEMBER EVENTS

Chinese Eunuchs at the End of Empire with Melissa Dale



Eunuchs in the Grounds of the Forbidden City, ca. 1884 - 1924, Beijing, China. Gerow D. Brill papers, #1379. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. RMC2016_0068.jpg.



Eunuchs staged a protest in front of the Infantry Commander's office, 1924, Beijing, China. Wikimedia Commons. https://picryl.com/media/pd_china-19e4cc.



Melissa Dale. Photograph courtesy of the speaker.

When: **Saturday, Oct. 24, 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**

Eunuchs were firsthand witnesses to the decline and fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. As the emasculated servants of the emperor and his court, palace eunuchs provide an important lens for understanding the history of the imperial court and Chinese society as China transitioned from a monarchy to republic. During the reign of China's last emperor, Aisin Gioro Puyi, and on into the early years of the republic, emperor-eunuch relations deteriorated. As both sides struggled to find purpose and survive in a world in which they were now irrelevant, eunuchs were accused of stealing palace treasures and artwork, opening antique shops near the palace to sell them, and even plotting to kill the former emperor.

Melissa S. Dale is an Associate Professor of History and former Executive Director of the Center for Asia Pacific Studies at the University of San Francisco. She specializes in late imperial Chinese history, specifically eunuchs and Qing dynasty court life.

Jagalchi Korean Market Visit

When: **Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026**

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

Place: **Jagalchi Market, 63 Serramonte Center, Daly City**

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

Interest in Korean food is skyrocketing with numerous new Korean markets springing up in the Bay Area. The largest and most upscale of these markets is Jagalchi in the Serramonte Center in Daly City. Named after the famous Jagalchi Market in Busan, Daly City's Jagalchi opened to great acclaim last year and features an incredible array of fresh produce, seafood, prepared foods, Korean pantry staples, liquors, beauty products, a Korean bakery and more.

Join fellow SAA "foodies" as we explore the maze-like sections of this massive (75,000 square foot!) emporium and learn more about Korean specialties. Easy recipes featuring Korean ingredients like gochujang will be provided, and afterwards, you may want to have lunch at Jagalchi's upscale Pogu Restaurant led by Michelin-starred chef Tony Yoo, or get food from The Deli which offers a wide range of authentic Korean dishes, including kimbap, rice bowls, pancakes and tempura, and over 200 varieties of side dishes, or investigate some of the other Asian eateries in the Serramonte Center like Marufuku Ramen or the fast food Jollibee that specializes in Filipino fried chicken.



Jagalchi Market. Photograph courtesy of Ehler Spliend.



Jagalchi Market. Photograph courtesy of Susan Lai.



MEMBER EVENTS

The Lost Wax Method: Tour Artworks Foundry for the Weekly Bronze Pour



Left: Bronze pour at Artworks Foundry. By permission of Artworks Foundry, Berkeley, CA.

Right: Reclining Vishnu, Angkor. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/>

When: **Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2026**
Time: **10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**
Place: **Artworks Foundry, 729 Heinz Ave., Ste. 10, Berkeley**
Fee: **\$20 per person Society members; \$25 per person non-members**

Tour a Berkeley foundry during their weekly bronze pour and learn about the lost wax method which is essentially the same as that which was used to create the Cambodian Vishnu nearly a millennia ago, and learn what modern day techniques are available today.

Artworks Foundry is one of the nation's leading foundries for the production and restoration of bronze sculptures, reliefs and monuments. The lost wax bronze casting process has existed for over 6,000 years. Fundamentally the process has remained the same, while materials and technology have evolved. Our guide will explain the steps involved in the lost wax method accompanied by examples. We will also be introduced to digital fabrication whereby a model is digitally scanned, enlarged or reduced, 3D printed, and may continue on with the bronze casting process or be fabricated into metal.

This event is limited to 12 people.

Annual Holiday Party

When: **Sunday, Dec. 6, 2026**
Time: **2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**
Place: **Eastern Classics, 1330 10th St., Berkeley**
Fee: **\$40 per person Society members; \$50 per person non-members**

Our Annual Holiday Party will be held at a fascinating venue — Eastern Classics in Berkeley, the largest importer of authentic Japanese antiques and furniture in the country. The gallery space is chock full of interesting Japanese antiques and artifacts, and lots of wonderful tansus to tickle your fancy, as well as other large and small intriguing items on display and for sale.

Come explore the antique and reproduction Japanese tansu furniture, antique collectibles such as vintage décor and antique artwork, and authentic Japanese accessories including lanterns, meditation cushions, vintage carpenter tools, tansu hardware and more.

Come in your festive attire and mix and mingle with other Society members as you sip wine and nibble on hors d'oeuvres and finger foods.

Please note that there will be limited seating space. Street parking is available as well as in the common parking area adjacent to the shop.



Photograph of Eastern Classics courtesy of Mary Howell.



MEMBER EVENTS

Crocker Art Museum Tour with Amelia Kit-Yui Chau



Left: Ito Tozan I (Japanese, 1846–1920), Sweets Bowl with Maple Leaves and Cherry Blossoms, 1917–1920. Stoneware with clear glaze, iron, polychrome enamels, and gilding, 4 5/8 x 7 3/4 in. Crocker Art Museum, gift of Darrell Corti, 2026.1.85.a–b.
Right: *Nimaitachidō tosei gusoku* armor (detail), attributed: Myōchin Yoshimichi (helmet bowl); Myōchin Munenori (armor), Muromachi period, circa 1400 (helmet bowl); mid Edo period, 18th century (armor). Iron, *shakudō*, lacing, silver, wood, gold, brocade, fur, bronze, brass, leather. © The Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller Museum, Dallas. Photo: Brad Flowers. Photographs courtesy of the Crocker Art Museum.

When: **Saturday, Jan. 16, 2027**

Time: **11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Place: **Crocker Art Museum, 216 O Street, Sacramento**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society members; \$25 per person non-members**

Join us for tours of two special exhibitions at the Crocker Art Museum. Curator Amelia Kit-Yui Chau will give us a tour of the pieces she selected from the Corti Collection to create *A Fine Feast: The Japanese Art of Dining*. From the late Edo period to present day, she will discuss the elaborate care devoted to food selection, preparation, and presentation in Japanese cuisine exemplified in three different settings: in the temple or shrine, at imperial banquets, and in multi-course Japanese meals. In the afternoon we will tour *Samurai: Armor from the Collection of Ann & Gabriel Barbier-Mueller*, one of the world's largest and most important collections of samurai armor.

Additional details will be supplied to registrants prior to the event.

Please note that lunch is not included in the registration fee. There is a café in the museum, where you can purchase food and beverages.

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 info@societyforasianart.org or 415-581-3701.

All proceeds from our annual Book Sale support the Asian Art Museum's C. Laan Chun Library, one of the more comprehensive research libraries on Asian art and culture in the country.



Across Eurasia with the Sogdians: Trade, Religion, and Cultural Exchange with Sanjyot Mehendale



Tomb of Sogdian Merchant Leader Shi Jun (Wirkak), Xian City Museum [Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain] <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=+Shi+Jun+tomb&title=Special%3AMediaSearch&type=image>



Banquetier Holding a Rhyton. Panjikent, Ancient Sogdiana, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg [Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain] [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panjikent_mural_\(6th-7th_century_CE\)_3.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panjikent_mural_(6th-7th_century_CE)_3.jpg) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=+Shi+Jun+tomb&title=Special%3AMediaSearch&type=image>



Sanjyot Mehendale. Photograph courtesy of the speaker.

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

Time: **10:30 a.m. to 3:00 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. 6, 2026.**

The Sogdians were an Iranian-speaking people from the great Central Asian cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. Between the fourth and eighth centuries CE, they became the most influential merchants of the Silk Roads, establishing trading communities that stretched from Central Asia to China and beyond. More than traders, they served as cultural brokers, carrying not only goods but also artistic traditions, technologies, and religious ideas across Eurasia. Through their far-reaching networks, they helped shape the spread of Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, leaving a lasting imprint on the art, architecture, and urban life of the Silk Roads.

Dr. Sanjyot Mehendale is an archaeologist specializing in the trade, mobility, and cultural exchange networks of Eurasia, with a particular focus on the so-called Silk Roads. She teaches Central Asian and Silk Road art and archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley. Her current research examines medieval highland urbanism in Central Asia through the excavation of the site of Tugunbulak in eastern Uzbekistan, a collaborative project with Michael Frachetti (Washington University in St. Louis) and Farhad Maksudov (Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences).

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.

This program is filling up fast! If you are interest in attending, please [register online](#) now!



The Tradition of Mongol Zurag in the Past and Present with Uranchimeg Tsultem



Lightning, 2021, by Baartazorig Batjargal. Acrylic paint on canvas. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Randall Wilk and Kalim Winata, F2025.22. © Baartazorig Batjargal. Photograph courtesy of the artist.



Uranchimeg Tsultem. Photograph courtesy of the speaker.

When: **Saturday, Jan. 9, 2027**

Time: **10:30 a.m. to 3:00 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 Dec. 31, 2026.

This workshop explores Mongol Zurag, a distinctive painting tradition that emerged in twentieth-century Mongolia as the invention of a new artistic tradition within the era of Socialist Realism. Developed during a period of profound social and political transformation, Mongol Zurag adapted elements of Buddhist painting, traditional imagery, and historic references into a pictorial language that became central to Mongolia's artistic identity. Since its institutionalization in Mongolia's art academies, generations of artists have continued to receive formal training in Mongol Zurag at the state-run art college, and many have become leading figures in the country's contemporary art scene.

Drawing on several key works by modern and contemporary Mongolian artists from the collections of the Asian Art Museum and private collections in San Francisco, this seminar introduces participants to the history, aesthetics, and continuing relevance of Mongol Zurag. Through close visual analysis, attendees will examine the characteristic features of the tradition, including flattened spatial organization, intricate line work, narrative composition, and the creative integration of historical motifs with contemporary subjects.

The seminar also considers how Mongolian artists have expanded, challenged, and transformed painting traditions over the past century. By tracing connections between early modern masters and contemporary artists, participants will gain insight into the ways artists have developed distinct visual languages that engage questions of identity, memory, social change, and globalization. Rather than viewing Mongol Zurag as a static style, the workshop presents it as a dynamic and evolving tradition that continues to inspire new artistic experimentation and contribute to the broader discourse of contemporary art.

Uranchimeg (Orna) Tsultem is a scholar of Mongolian art. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. She taught at UC Berkeley, and universities in Mongolia, South Korea and Iceland. She is currently Edgar and Dorothy Fehnel Chair in International Studies and Associate Professor at Indiana University's Herron School of Art and Design. Her award-winning publications include eight books, many peer-reviewed articles and exhibition catalogs. Her recent monograph, *A Monastery on the Move: Art and Politics in Later Buddhist Mongolia* (University of Hawaii Press) received the Art Book Accolade in the Humanities for the 2023 International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS). An active curator of Mongolian art since 1997, Orna has organized major international exhibitions, including the first Mongolia Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015, the Mongol Zurag exhibition in Venice in 2024, and projects at the Shanghai Biennale and Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong, among others. Her current project is the Mongolia Pavilion for the 61st Venice Biennale, presented in Italy from May to November 2026. She was awarded the Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers' Grant for her research project in 2025.

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.

Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2027 - *Canceled*
Saudi Arabian Odyssey: From the Desert to the Sea

Due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, we have canceled this trip. If and when the situation changes, we will review and decide whether to reschedule at a future time. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience that this may cause. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Save the Date
Mar. 11 - 16, 2027
Asian Art in New York

Join us on a trip to view the great collections and auctions of Asian art in New York City. This trip is timed to coincide with Asia Week New York 2027, and will offer privileged access to an extraordinary lineup of events and experiences. Asia Week New York is a collaboration of top-tier Asian art specialists, major auction houses, and world-renowned museums and Asian cultural institutions in the metropolitan New York area. With a mission to celebrate and promote Asian art in New York City, this event-filled week draws collectors, curators, and Asian art enthusiasts from every corner of the United States and across the world.

This trip will open for registration in late November and will be announced via email.

Save the Date
May 12 - 23, 2027
Himalayan Heritage: Journey to Nepal and Bhutan



Left: Baudhanath Stupa, Kathmandu, Nepal.
 Photograph courtesy of Signature Escapades.
 Right: Buddha Dordenma, Thimphu, Bhutan.
 Photograph courtesy of Jojo's Adventures.

Join the SAA for an unforgettable trip to the "Roof of the World." Mantled with the high Himalayas to the north, Nepal is a land of scenic splendor, age-old temples, diverse cultures, exotic wildlife and some of the friendliest people on the planet. We'll start in Kathmandu where we will be immersed in Buddhist culture, religion and art with our scholar, Swosti Kayastha, who was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Asian Art Museum in 2024-2025. We will also visit Chitwan National Park, where we will see many of the Nepali fauna in their natural habitat. What would a trip to Nepal be without going to Lumbini, birthplace of the Buddha.

A short plane ride will take us to "The Land of the Thunder Dragon" - Bhutan where we will be joined by art historian, Ariana Maki, whose research focuses on the material and visual cultures that constitute South Asia and its borderlands, with particular expertise in Bhutan and the broader Himalayan region. She is a two-time Fulbright scholar to Bhutan. Ariana will introduce us to the arts and textiles of Bhutan and we'll visit museums, craftspeople engaging in their arts, and workshops. Buddhism is as important in Bhutan as it is in Nepal, so we will also see one of the largest seated Buddha statues in the world as well as either the iconic Tiger's Nest Monastery or Kyichu Lhakhang, one of Bhutan's oldest and most sacred temples (your choice). We will stay in 4 or 5 star hotels, which are walkable to sites. These two countries are not to be missed!

This trip will open for registration in late October and will be announced via email.