



July - August 2024

No. 4

Incoming President's Message

I find it difficult to express my gratitude to have been chosen by the Board to be the next President of the Society for Asian Art. Since Asian art has played a major part of my life since my undergraduate days, I was extremely honored to have been selected to be part of the board in 2019. In this new position, I hope to be able to provide the support necessary to carry on the aims of the Society – the further understanding, preservation and enjoyment of Asian art and culture.

I encourage all our members to participate in the various programs that we sponsor throughout the year. Our fall Arts of Asia lecture series, both in person and online, will be featuring in-depth talks by curators of the Asian Art Museum. Throughout the year there will be numerous interesting Member Events and Upper Category Events, as well as short literature courses highlighting various aspects of Asian culture. Of course, SAA-sponsored domestic and international trips will also be quite exciting – the information to be posted periodically in the newsletter.

I welcome our new members to the Board and I want to thank the retiring board members for their hard work and support. In closing, I want to thank the outgoing President, Marsha Vargas Handley, for her inspiring leadership and for continuing to serve on the Board for the coming year.

Sincerely,
Gloria Garaventa
President



Gloria Garaventa

Save the Date

Phoenix Kingdoms International Symposium
Sunday, July 21, 2024 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Asian Art Museum

Join us at the Asian Art Museum for an international one-day symposium accompanying the special exhibition *Phoenix Kingdoms: The Last Splendor of China's Bronze Age*. Discover the unique artistic and cultural contributions of the middle Yangzi River region before China's unification. Nine expert scholars share insights into topics related to the exhibition, drawing from recent archeological discoveries to enrich our understanding of this fascinating and influential era.

RSVP by emailing pk-symposium@asianart.org. This symposium is free and open to the public.

Visit the symposium webpage, asianart.org/pk-symposium, for more information.

Asian Art Museum 北京艺术基金会
Beijing Art Foundation

SAVE THE DATE

**PHOENIX KINGDOMS
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

New perspectives and discoveries on Bronze Age archaeology of the middle Yangzi River region

Sunday, July 21, 2024
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
RSVP: pk-symposium@asianart.org

**Keynote Speaker: Robert Bagley,
Professor Emeritus in the Department
of Art and Archaeology at
Princeton University**

Join us at the Asian Art Museum for an international one-day symposium accompanying our special exhibition *Phoenix Kingdoms: The Last Splendor of China's Bronze Age*. Discover the unique artistic and cultural contributions of the middle Yangzi River region before China's unification. Nine expert scholars share insights into topics related to the exhibition, drawing from recent archeological discoveries to enrich our understanding of this fascinating and influential era.

Symposium made possible with the generous support of the Bao Shun Tang Foundation. Images: Labeled per credit. ©2024 The Trustees of the Asian Art Museum, 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. Website: asianart.org. Museum Photography © Sotheby's Institute of Art.

ASIAN ART MUSEUM
Chong-Moon Lee Center
for Asian Art and Culture

200 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
asianart.org/pk-symposium

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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Aug. 9 - Aug. 19, 2024

Travel - SAA's Scandinavian Summer Tour: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen

Fridays, Aug. 30 - Dec. 13

Fall 2024 Arts of Asia - Beyond the Familiar: A Deeper Look into the Asian Art Museum Collection

Saturday, Aug. 31

Member Event - Visit to Farrow Fine Art Gallery & Studio

Sundays, Sept. 8, 15 & 22

Fall 2024 Literature Course - In Pursuit of Qu Yuan (343-277 BCE)



UPCOMING EVENTS (Subject to Change)

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024

Member Event - Talk by celebrated author Viet Thanh Nguyen on his latest work, *Simone*, with the illustrator of the book, Minnie Phan. Author of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize winning book and HBO series, *The Sympathizer*, Viet will collaborate with Minnie to make a joint presentation. Minnie will entertain the children in the audience with a hands-on session. We encourage you to attend and bring your children or grandchildren.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members, who joined the Society in April and May. 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!

Monjula & Ravi Chidambaram
Guillermina LaFever

Sandra Sardjono & Christopher Buckley



SOCIAL MEDIA

The Social Media Committee is reaching out to all members who will be participating in our trips and programs this year. Our Facebook page and Instagram feed will attract more attention if we add reels or short video clips. Please email your photos and short videos to candacezks@gmail.com.

Society for Asian Art

July - August 2024, No. 4

Members' Newsletter
Edited by Janet Constantinou
and Susan Lai

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*ex officio



ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2024 LECTURE SERIES

Beyond the Familiar: A Deeper Look into the Asian Art Museum Collection



Left: Seated Buddha in meditation, approx. 1300–1400. Cambodia. Leaded bronze. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, B71S4. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Right: *The Melt*, 2017, by Ang Tsherin Sherpa (Nepalese, b. 1968). Acrylic, ink, and gold on canvas. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Museum purchase, Mortimer-Harvey Fund, 2017.44. © Tsherin Sherpa. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

When: Fridays from Aug. 30 to Dec. 13, 2024 (No lecture on Oct. 4 & Nov. 29)

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 Aug. 23, 2024.

We will 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

Much has changed in the last few years at the Asian Art Museum. New curators and scholars have fresh ideas about objects in our collection. Others are re-examining common assumptions and ideas about the history, provenance, and context of even our well-known artifacts and will also introduce new acquisitions to our audience.

The Instructor of Record is none other than Chief Curator Robert Mintz. He has been working with our curatorial staff to present a significantly different approach to talking about art.

Just when you thought you knew our collection, join us in 14 lectures to take a new and deeper dive into our favorites, new and undiscovered treasures at the Asian Art Museum. The Arts of Asia committee welcomes comments about our lecture series. Please direct comments to info@societyforasianart.org.

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



ARTS OF ASIA FALL 2024 LECTURE SERIES

Speakers & Topics (Subject to Change)

Aug. 30, 2024

Beyond the Familiar: AAM Collections Old and New
Robert Mintz, Chief Curator, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Sept. 6, 2024

Immersive Sacred Environments
Jeffrey Durham, Curator of Himalayan Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Sept. 13, 2024

Bridging the Indian Ocean: Comparisons and Contrasts
Forrest McGill, Former Curator, South and Southeast Asian Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Sept. 20, 2024

TBD
Hyonjeong Kim Han, Joseph de Heer Curator of Asian Art, Denver Art Museum

Sept. 27, 2024

Weak in the Knees: When Does Art Move, Inspire, or Bring us to Tears?
Padma Dorje Maitland, Malavalli Family Foundation Associate Curator of the Art of the Indian Subcontinent, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Oct. 11, 2024

Women Artists in the AAM Contemporary Collection
Abby Chen, Head of Contemporary Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Oct. 18, 2024

Who Was I Made For?: Provenance Research at the Asian Art Museum
Natasha Reichle, Associate Curator of Southeast Asian Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Oct. 25, 2024

Japanese Modern Prints
Yuki Morishima, Associate Curator of Japanese Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Nov. 1, 2024

Is that Art? Game and Tech as a Medium
Cheng Xu, Curator for Games and Technology, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Nov. 8, 2024

New Acquisitions/New Voices
Naz Cuguoglu, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art & Programs, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Nov. 15, 2024

Korean Popular Culture
Yoon-Jee Choi, Assistant Curator for Korean Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Nov. 22, 2024

Persuasion, Instruction, and Entertainment: Storytelling in Chinese Pictures
Fan Jeremy Zhang, Barbara and Gerson Bakar Curator of Chinese Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Dec. 6, 2024

Sumiyoshi Festival Screens
Laura W. Allen, Former Curator, Japanese Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Dec. 13, 2024

Melancholia: Nagahiro Toshio and the Japanese Wartime Survey of the Yungang Caves
Jun Hu, Mr. & Mrs. Pai Ruchu Presidential Professor in Arts & Humanities, University of California, Berkeley



MEMBER EVENTS

Adornments Across the Atlas: The Jewelry and Costumes of North Africa with Courtney Stewart

When: **Thursday, July 11, 2024**

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

Place: **Zoom Webinar**

Fee: **\$15 per person Society members; \$20 per person non-members**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by July 4, 2024.

This lecture takes you on a captivating exploration of the rich cultural heritage of Maghrebi (North African) jewels and adornments, uncovering the traditions, symbolism and craftsmanship that have shaped the region's aesthetic identity. Through tracing the evolution of adornment practices from ancient times to the present and examining the influences of Berber, Roman, Arab and Ottoman cultures, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the symbolic significance of these symbols of adornment, which serve as expressions of identity, status and cultural pride. This talk seeks to foster appreciation for the region's cultural diversity and honor the artisans whose creativity and skill continue to shape its vibrant landscape.

Courtney Stewart is a gemologist and researcher in the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She has contributed to a number of exhibitions and research projects with a particular focus on jewelry and gemstones. She holds a Masters from the University of Toronto and a PhD from the Bard Graduate Center and is presently working on a publication of the Met's Maghrebi jewelry. She was the scholar who accompanied the SAA's trip to Morocco in 2023.

Visit to Farrow Fine Art Gallery & Studios

When: **Saturday, Aug. 31, 2024**

Time: **2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Place: **19 Lovell Avenue, San Rafael**

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

Join us for a visit to the work and exhibition spaces of father and son team, Al and Erik Farrow.

Come see Al's celebrated series of sculptures, *Reliquaries*, using deconstructed military ordnance to produce spectacular pieces representing the architecture of churches, mosques and synagogues. The sculptures are beautiful, shocking and profound. He has exhibited at museums and galleries around the world.

Erik's gallery, Farrow Fine Art Gallery, exhibits antique tribal art from Indonesia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas. Ritual and primitive power as well as beauty, abound in the objects in his gallery.

After the visit, there will be a no-host supper at Lotus Cuisine of India at 812 4th Street in downtown San Rafael.

Please note that the gallery is on multiple levels and some stairs are involved.



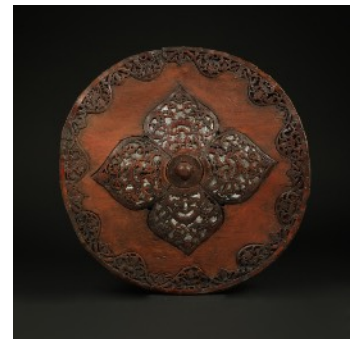
Idaw Nadif woman, Anti-Atlas Region, Morocco 1934-39, Photograph by Jean Besancenot (French, 1902-1992)



Courtney Stewart



Sculpture by Al Farrow



Shield, Bali



UPPER CATEGORY MEMBER EVENT

Society Conversation with Suzanne Lecht

When: **Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024**

Time: **2:00 p.m.**

Place: **Private residence in Mill Valley**

Fee: **\$20 per person Society Upper Category members and guests**
Advance registration must be received by SAA by Aug. 3, 2024.



Suzanne Lecht

Upper Category members will be invited to join a Society Conversation with Suzanne Lecht, a favorite SAA speaker, who is the founder and owner of the famous Art Vietnam Gallery in Hanoi. Suzanne will talk about favorite works in her collection and also about upcoming shows she'll be curating in both Hanoi and the U.S.

Participants in the SAA's 2023 Indochina trip will have a special interest in meeting Suzanne since they visited the stunning ethnic minority White Thai traditional house (formerly on stilts) that she brought down from Mai Chau, a White Thai village in the mountains of Vietnam with the help of her artist friend, Pham Quang Vinh. Vinh is one of the Gang of Five artists whose works compelled Suzanne to move to Hanoi in 1994. Suzanne currently lives in this house which has been adapted to showcase the contemporary Vietnamese art she collects while also functioning as a cultural salon for art-related events.

An email invitation with a registration link will be sent to Upper Category members in mid July. The exact address will be provided to registered attendees approximately one week before the event. Light refreshments will be served.



LITERATURE & CULTURE

Fall 2024 Literature Course In Pursuit of Qu Yuan (343-277 BCE) with Paula Varsano

When: **Sundays, Sept. 8, 15, and 22, 2024**

Time: **10:30 a.m. - 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 Sept. 1, 2024.



Nine Songs - album, after Zhao Mengfu (MET, 1973.121.15a-p)

The name Qu Yuan (alternately written, Ch'ü Yuan) can provoke a range of responses, from admiration and compassion to exasperation and even disdain. Was he a wise and upright minister in the court of King Huai of Chu, who ended his life upon realizing that he was unable to save the kingdom from being overcome by the neighboring state of Qin? Or was he a man obsessed with the need to make known—and preserve—his own moral purity in the face of the corrupt and violent world of the Warring States? A supremely disciplined truth-teller or an unhinged madman? A statesman or a shaman? Patriot or narcissist? Or, as certain scholars have been wondering of late: did such a man ever exist? This short course on the great statesman and poet of the fourth century BCE will offer a window onto the history, legend, poetry, and cultural responses that comprise his complicated legacy, well beyond the festivals and traditional dishes that endure in popular culture. Unless otherwise indicated, all readings will be drawn from *Ch'u Tz'ü: The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology*. David Hawkes, editor and translator. Penguin Classics, 1985.

Prof. Paula Varsano of UC Berkeley earned her B.A. in East Asian Studies at Yale University and her PhD in Chinese Literature at Princeton University. She specializes in classical Chinese poetry and thought from the 3rd through the 11th centuries, with particular interest in the intersections between Chinese literary practice and philosophical notions of the self. She is currently completing work on the book, *Knowing and Being Known: The Lyric Subject in Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics*.

SAA's Scandinavian Summer Tour: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen Preceded by a 'Medieval Weekend' on the island of Gotland Aug. 9 - 19, 2024

Scandinavia – often associated with Viking legends and modern design – seems an improbable destination for great collections of Asian art. Yet countless Swedish and Danish archaeologists, missionaries, diplomats, and private individuals have donated objects to collections in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Copenhagen. Expect an eye-opening, edifying, and entertaining experience! Highlights include visits to Stockholm's Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities and the Museum of Ethnography, Gothenburg's Röhsskamuseet, and Copenhagen's The David Collection and the National Museum of Denmark. This trip kicks off with an entertaining weekend in Visby, on the island of Gotland, where we will partake in the largest medieval festival in Europe.

Space is still available on this trip. Please see the [flyer](#) with trip details and online registration instructions. Reservations are accepted **ONLY BY USING THE ONLINE LINK** to complete the registration form, submit payment via credit card, and sign the participant tour agreement, which includes the release from liability, assumption of risk, and binding arbitration clause for the tour operator, Travel Muse Inc. If you have any questions regarding this trip or the online registration and payment platform, please contact Meg MacDonald of Travel Muse Inc. at [\(617\) 480-0250](tel:6174800250) or meg@travelmuse.net.

Save the Date Island of Serenity: Exploring Sri Lanka Jan. 18 – Feb. 3, 2025

Join the SAA and Asian Art Museum's Malavalli Family Foundation Associate Curator of the Art of the Indian Subcontinent, Dr. Padma Dorje Maitland. Travel through this paradise of glistening white pagodas and see some of the most refined Buddhist art and architecture. Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka in the 3rd Century BCE along with other rich Indian traditions and Sri Lanka's unique style spread well beyond the island's borders.

See mosques, churches and fortresses, which reflect the local traditions as well as influences from trading partners, who came from all corners of the world. Museums, private collections and art and architecture compliment the world heritage sites in the cultural triangle. Visit artist workshops and lush gardens. Travel by train into the mountains to learn about the famous Ceylon tea. Relax in 4-star and 5-star hotels set out in splendid traditional settings and architecture.

We will offer this trip in June via email. This trip is limited to a maximum of 20 SAA members and is expected to fill immediately. If you are not yet a member, you can [join online](#).



Chinese Pavilion at Drottningholm Palace



Buduruwagala "Rock of Buddhist Sculpture"



Ruwanwelisaya,
Anuradhapura 140 BCE

Donations for Book Sale

We accept books throughout the year for our annual Book Sale. If you move, downsize or are tired of all the books collecting dust in your home, please donate them to our Book Sale. We accept books with Asian subjects only, be it art, culture, novels, history, travel, cooking, exhibition catalogs or others. Please email the SAA office at info@societyforasianart.org to arrange drop off or pick up.