

PRESS RELEASE

NEW IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION AT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART TO EXPLORE DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN AWE-INSPIRING PLACES

“Sacred Spaces,” opening October 23, 2015, will feature an expanded Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room and related installations

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-  This Oct: Expanded Tibetan Shrine Room will open at @RubinMuseum as part of #SacredSpaces exhibition <http://rma.cm/br>
-  #SacredSpaces exhibition to be supported by first @RubinMuseum crowdfunding campaign <http://rma.cm/br>

New York, NY, July 7, 2015 —The Rubin Museum of Art will immerse visitors in the sacred art of the Himalayas as part of the forthcoming exhibition, “Sacred Spaces,” opening October 23. The exhibition presents three distinct but related environments shaped by acts of veneration and will include an expanded installation of the Museum’s beloved Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room. “Sacred Spaces” will also be supported by the Rubin’s first major crowdfunding campaign.

“Sacred Spaces” highlights a variety of devotional practices, allowing visitors to view art objects within an evoked cultural context while contemplating their own ideas about what sacred spaces mean to them. The three spaces on view shed light on various devotional activities that are practiced in the Himalayan region.

“The creation of sacred space is a practice that extends across time, culture, and geography,” said Dominique Townsend, Head of Interpretation and Innovation at the Rubin Museum. “By displaying art within the context of its associated devotional rituals, visitors can connect to the Himalayas and relate these acts of transcendence and contemplation to their own lives. We all face day-to-day distraction and stress, which makes it easy to understand the desire to find a place to step outside the routine and contemplate what we find meaningful.”

Flickering butter lamps, the scent of incense, and the sounds of monks chanting will envelop visitors as they enter the expanded Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room, which is inspired by a traditional shrine that would be used for offering, devotion, prayer, and contemplation. Art and ritual objects are presented as they would be in an elaborate private household shrine, with paintings, sculptures of deities, musical instruments and other devotional objects displayed among Tibetan furniture. The new fourth-floor installation of the Shrine Room will more than double the visitor capacity of its current location to better accommodate the high demand for educational group visits and programs. The Shrine Room will also, for the first time, include seating to allow

visitors to relax, contemplate, and fully immerse themselves in the art and the ideas of “Sacred Spaces”.

Beginning later this summer, the Rubin will begin its first crowdfunding campaign, using the online donation tool Razoo to raise funds for the installation of the new Shrine Room. Supporters will be able to learn more at rubinmuseum.org.

In addition to the Shrine Room, which serves as a focal point for the exhibition, “Sacred Spaces” will include a panoramic photograph taken in the province of Mustang in northern Nepal, by Jaroslav Poncar, and a video installation of an Indian ritual created by Deidi von Schaewen, providing atmospheric context and further opportunity for contemplation in the gallery.

The video will showcase a Jain communal ritual in which devotees pour offerings such as milk and turmeric powder over a massive stone sculpture. This figure is anointed every twelve years in Shravanabelgola, Karnataka, India over the course of four days, and the video installation of this sacred rite will present a mesmerizing display of devotional acts such as ablutions, blessings, and prayers.

According to Himalayan cultures, the high mountainous landscape of Tibet is animated and full of life and power, and the forces of the ground, water, rocks, mountains, and trees all require acts of devotion to fend off dangers and invite blessings. The panoramic photograph evokes this landscape, offering an impressive vista of the land in which Tibetan Buddhism developed and still flourishes.

About the Rubin Museum of Art

The Rubin Museum of Art is an arts oasis and cultural hub in New York City’s vibrant Chelsea neighborhood that inspires visitors to make powerful connections between contemporary life and the art and ideas of the Himalayas, India, and neighboring regions. With a diverse array of thought-provoking exhibitions and programs—including films, concerts, and on-stage conversations—the Rubin provides immersive experiences that encourage personal discoveries and spark new ways of seeing the world. Emphasizing cross-cultural connections, the Rubin is a space to contemplate the big questions that extend across history and span human cultures.

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