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OF
ART

PRESS RELEASE

THE RUBIN MUSEUM CELEBRATES THE GRAND OPENING OF THE “YEAR OF POWER” WITH “THE POWER OF INTENTION: REINVENTING THE (PRAYER) WHEEL”

Special Interactive Exhibition Featuring Contemporary Art Inspired by Buddhist Prayer Wheels

Media Preview: Thursday, February 28, 2019, 9:30–11:00 AM
Public Opening: Friday, March 1, 2019, 6:00–11:00 PM

Sharelines:



Spark your own empowerment. Get inspired by contemporary art and Tibetan prayer wheels at the @RubinMuseum. #OurPower



Power exists within and between us. Experience the power of intention in a new @RubinMuseum exhibition. #OurPower

New York, NY, January 31, 2019 — On March 1, 2019, **The Rubin Museum of Art** opens “**The Power of Intention: Reinventing the (Prayer) Wheel**,” an exhibition that brings together traditional and contemporary art to illuminate the relationship between our intentions, commitments, and actions. Inspired by concepts related to Buddhist prayer wheels — ritual objects containing thousands of written prayers and mantras — the show looks at how we can empower ourselves to create positive change within and between us. This marks the official opening of “**Power: Within and Between Us**” — the Rubin’s yearlong, institution-wide thematic exploration, incorporating exhibitions, talks, programs, and experiences designed to spark new ways of thinking about power, from intention to action.

Prayer Wheels can be small handheld devices turned by hand or large, building-size structures that can only be rotated with effort, often by several people working together. With each turn, the mantras are believed to be read and sent out into the world for the benefit of all.

“**The Power of Intention: Reinventing the (Prayer) Wheel**” expands on this idea, highlighting the potential of intention to kindle positive change. It explores the notions and concepts inherent in the construction, activation, and meaning of the prayer wheels,

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including the power of commitment, engagement, repetition, accumulation, and belief. The show features works by international artists including **Monika Bravo, Alexandra Dementieva, Youdhistir Maharjan, Charwei Tsai, and Scenocosme's Grégory Lasserre & Anaïs met den Ancxt.**

Highlighting the essential aspects of how prayer wheels work, the exhibition is organized in thematic sections that deconstruct the concepts of traditional prayer wheels: intention, commitment, repetition, engagement, accumulation, and belief.

Each section showcases contemporary works of art that let the visitor experience a particular aspect related to the power of intention.

- **Youdhistir Maharjan's "Committed to Becoming"** underscores dedication and commitment in action and practice.
- **Scenocosme's "Metamorphosis"** creates and activates a unique environment through the power of touch.
- **Charwei Tsai's "Spiral Incense"** uses repetition to set intentions into motion and release them into the world.
- **Alexandra Dementieva's "Breathless"** literally illuminates the power of the collective built on individual participation.
- **Monika Bravo's "Landscape of Belief"** shows that collective beliefs have the ability to shape the environments we experience.

"We may not think of our intentions as sources of power; however they are the driving force behind each of our actions. This exhibition invites us to change how we think about power and consider that we can use our own intentions to empower ourselves and create change for ourselves and others," said Elena Pakhoutova, curator of Himalayan Art and organizer of "Power of Intention." She added, "Commitment, considered an integral component of an intention, powers a person to carry the intention into action, however small it may be. Then, a conscious positive action replaces what might have been a habit or mindless act. Prayer wheels are a symbolic reference point for visitors' experiences of the contemporary works of art in the exhibition, where each work relates to a specific notion that helps reinforce our individual intentions and spark positive action."

Artwork Highlights:



Scenocosme: Gregory Lasserre (b. 1976, Annecy, France) & Anaïs met den Ancxt (b. 1981, Lyon, France); "Metamorphosis"; 2014, interactive installation; courtesy of the artists

Charwei Tsai (b. 1980, Taipei, Taiwan); "Spiral Incense Mantra"; 2014; installation view at "We Came Whirling from Nothingness," 2014, TKG+, Taipei, Taiwan; photograph by Steve Hung

Prayer Wheel; Mongolia/Tibet; 17th–18th century; silver, green jadeite, rubies (or spinels), turquoise, and semiprecious stones; 8 11/16 x 1 3/4 x 3 3/4 in. (22 x 4.5 x 9.5 cm); The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland; 57.2285

Offering an entry point for the exhibition is “**The Wheel of Intentions**,” an interactive installation now on view in the Museum’s lobby. Created by Potion and Ben Rubin, and based on a concept by the Rubin Museum, it invites visitors to formulate and contribute their intentions and then activate them by turning the wheel — an action that also reinforces the intentions of others. Visualized intentions then travel up the Museum’s spiral staircase and will become part of the “Collected Intentions” immersive experience located in “The Power of Intention” exhibition in the fifth-floor gallery.

Those who can’t make it to the Rubin may participate remotely by entering an intention online at RubinMuseum.org/Intention.

“The Power of Intention: Reinventing the (Prayer) Wheel” is supported by Lois and Bob Baylis, Barbara Bowman, the Ellen Bayard Weedon Foundation, the Ministry of Culture (Taiwan) and Taipei Cultural Center in New York, and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.



The exhibition is curated by Elena Pakhoutova.

An audio tour, as well as the print and online magazine *Spiral* will complement the exhibition.

Related Programs:

Artist at Work: Charwei Tsai

Inscribing the Spiral Incense Mantra

Friday, March 1; 3:00–5:00 PM

Free with Admission

When a person makes an offering or writes or recites a mantra, they usually have an intention in mind. As part of her work in the exhibition, Charwei Tsai will write the mantras of Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) on spiral incense custom-made in Taiwan.

Opening Night Celebration

Friday, March 1; 6:00–11:00 PM

Free

Opening celebration of “The Power of Intention” with free admission, happy hour, a DJ, dancing, and docent-led Museum tours.

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About Elena Pakhoutova

Elena Pakhoutova (PhD in Asian Art History from the University of Virginia) is Curator of Himalayan Art at the Rubin Museum of Art. Her background in Tibetan Buddhist studies informs her interdisciplinary approach to art history. She researches dialogues in the visual traditions of Inner Asia, art and ritual, art production and patronage, text and image, and narrative in Tibetan visual culture. Among her other interests are cross-cultural exchange, material culture, and contemporary Tibetan art. At the Rubin Museum, she has curated several exhibitions, including “Nepalese Seasons: Rain and Ritual,” “Collecting Paradise:

Buddhist Art of Kashmir and Its Legacies,” “The All-Knowing Buddha: A Secret Guide” (co-curved with Karl Debreczeny), and most recently “The Second Buddha: Master of Time.”

About the Rubin Museum of Art

The Rubin Museum of Art is an arts and cultural hub in New York City’s vibrant Chelsea neighborhood that inspires visitors to make connections between contemporary life and the art and ideas of the Himalayas and neighboring regions. With a diverse array of thought-provoking exhibitions and programs — including films, concerts, and onstage 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 ideas that extend across history and span human cultures.

www.RubinMuseum.org

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