

PRESS RELEASE

**THE RUBIN MUSEUM'S CELEBRATED TIBETAN
BUDDHIST SHRINE ROOM TO FIND A NEW HOME
AT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM IN A LONG-TERM,
DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP**

The experiential installation of 100+ objects will open in a custom space in the Brooklyn Museum's Arts of Asia galleries in June 2025, as part of a six-year collaboration that includes collection sharing and curatorial exchange between the two institutions.



The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room at the Rubin Museum of Art
Photo by Dave De Armas

New York, NY, September 27, 2024 – The Rubin Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum today announce a long-term partnership to display the Rubin's beloved Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room in the Brooklyn Museum's acclaimed Arts of Asia galleries, making the installation accessible to a wide public.

Since it first opened in 2015, the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room has been one of the most popular exhibitions at the Rubin Museum's 17th Street building in New York City, experienced by more than 1 million visitors. More than 100 works of art and ritual objects from the Rubin's collection are presented as they would be in an elaborate private household shrine, where devotees would make offerings, pray, contemplate, and perform rituals. The design of the Shrine Room showcases these objects in an immersive environment that incorporates elements of traditional Tibetan architecture and the color schemes of Tibetan homes.

The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will open in a custom space in the Brooklyn Museum's Arts of Asia galleries in June 2025 as the start of a six-year collaboration. The Shrine Room is currently on view at the Rubin Museum's 17th Street building in New York, which will close on October 6, 2024, as the museum pursues a new global museum model built on an innovative program of partnerships, grants, loans, traveling exhibitions, scholarship, and digital offerings.

A central component of the Rubin's transformation into a decentralized museum is the formation of strategic partnerships to share its collection and curatorial expertise globally, exponentially increasing the number of visitors who can access and experience Himalayan art. This commitment includes ensuring that New York City communities and visitors continue to have access to the collection, with the Shrine Room at the Brooklyn Museum as the cornerstone of that access and an early example of the broader program.

The Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room evokes the aesthetics and atmosphere of a traditional Tibetan sacred space and offers visitors the opportunity to experience Tibetan religious art in its cultural context. It will enhance the Brooklyn Museum's important collections of Asian art, which were fully reimagined in a major gallery renovation that was unveiled gradually from 2017 to 2023. The addition of the Shrine Room will offer a very different approach to display of historic works of art and will encourage visitors to imagine the original religious and architectural contexts for other objects on view.

At the Rubin, the installation highlighted one of the four major Tibetan religious traditions—Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Gelug—every two years. As an important part of this active and ongoing partnership, Rubin curators will continue to vary the objects in the installation at the new presentation at the Brooklyn Museum to feature specific traditions and provide cultural context and scholarship regarding the works on view.

Jorrit Britschgi, Executive Director of the Rubin Museum of Art, said: “The guiding principle of our borderless future is: more art, accessible to more people, in more places. We are so thrilled that the beating heart of our 17th Street building, the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room, will continue to have an exceptional home in New York City at the Brooklyn Museum, accessible by their hundreds of thousands of annual visitors from local communities and around the world.”

Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director of the Brooklyn Museum, said: “The Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room has been a renowned and beloved cultural experience for people around the world, and we couldn't be more excited to host it at the Brooklyn Museum. This is another thrilling example of New York City museum collaboration.”

Elena Pakhoutova, Curator of Himalayan Art of the Rubin Museum of Art, said: “From the very start, the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room has been the most loved space at the Rubin Museum for providing a glimpse into how Tibetan religious art would be displayed and used as a part of the living cultural tradition and practice. I know it will be enjoyed and appreciated at the Brooklyn Museum, where it will be presented in a wider context of other Asian artistic traditions, Buddhist culture, global and local contemporary art, making it accessible to more visitors and diverse communities. We are so excited about its new home in New York and our institutions' collaboration going forward.”

Joan Cummins, Lisa and Bernard Selz Senior Curator of Asian Art at the Brooklyn Museum, said: “I have long admired the Rubin Shrine Room for its melding of transporting experience and careful scholarship. No other museum collection can offer such an extensive display of great works of art while remaining true to Buddhist teachings. It’s an installation that appeals to both the novice and the expert and I am very excited to share it with our Brooklyn audiences.”

The Shrine Room features paintings known as thangkas, sculptures, ritual items, and musical instruments arranged on traditional Tibetan furniture according to the hierarchy they assume in Tibetan Buddhist practices. The objects, such as vajras and bells, offering bowls, pitchers, and ritual mandalas are used in daily rituals and offerings along with handheld drums, conch trumpets, horns, and reeds. Ornamental textile decorations of brocade silk, made by traditional masters of appliqué craft, hung from the ceiling and on pillars, are also an integral part of a traditional shrine room’s adornment. The Rubin’s Shrine Room is complete with simulated flickering butter lamps, recordings of Tibetan monks and nuns chanting prayers, and the subtle smell of incense, which is used during religious practices.

ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art with the world. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people across the globe through a dynamic digital platform and participatory experiences, exhibitions, and partnerships. Inspired and informed by Himalayan art, the Rubin invites people to contemplate the human experience and deepen connections with the world around them in order to expand awareness, enhance wellbeing, and create a more compassionate world. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, long-term loans, and the stewardship of a collection of nearly 4,000 Himalayan art objects spanning 1,500 years of history – providing unprecedented access and resources to scholars, artists, and students around the world.

ABOUT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

For 200 years, the Brooklyn Museum has been recognized as a trailblazer. Through a vast array of exhibitions, public programs, and community-centered initiatives, it continues to broaden the narratives of art, uplift a multitude of voices, and center creative expression within important dialogues of the day. Housed in a landmark building in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum is home to an astounding encyclopedic collection of more than 140,000 objects representing cultures worldwide and over 6,000 years of history—from ancient Egyptian masterpieces to significant American works, to groundbreaking installations presented in the only feminist art center of its kind. As one of the oldest and largest art museums in the country, the Brooklyn Museum remains committed to innovation, creating compelling experiences for its communities and celebrating the power of art to inspire awe, conversation, and joy.

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