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PRESS RELEASE

THE RUBIN POINTS TO ITS FUTURE WITH INAUGURAL RUBIN MUSEUM HIMALAYAN ART PRIZE AND FIRST CYCLE OF ART AND RESEARCH GRANTS

Artist Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee has been selected as the winner of the new annual Rubin Art Prize.



Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee; courtesy of the artist

Inaugural art and research grants promote the rich cultural legacy and living traditions of the Himalayan regions.

New York, NY, September 20, 2024 — The Rubin announced Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee as the winner of the inaugural Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize, alongside the funding of 17 art and research projects in its first round of annual Rubin Grants. These prizes and grants are part of the Rubin's transition into a decentralized museum model. Together, the **Rubin Art Prize and Rubin Grants will provide \$230K of direct support** to artists and researchers working in the Himalayan region and internationally. These initiatives demonstrate the Rubin's enhanced commitment to nurturing the next generation of artists and scholars dedicated to expanding awareness and understanding of Himalayan art.

The Rubin Art Prize and Grants further the Museum's 20-year history of engagement with traditional arts and living artists, most recently through the group exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, which is on view at the Museum's building in New York City until October 6,

2024. The exhibition will then travel to Wrightwood 659 in Chicago, opening to the public on November 8, 2024. Support for artists in or from the greater Himalayan region, as well as artists whose practices intersect with Himalayan art, will be a core tenet of the Rubin's mission as a global museum, as well as the Rubin's commitment to research and stewardship of its collection through its global traveling exhibition program, institutional partnerships, collection sharing, and digital resources.

"The inaugural Rubin Art Prize and grants come at an important time for our institution, as we move to a decentralized museum model this fall," said Rubin Museum Executive Director **Jorrit Britschgi**. "The recipient of our prize was chosen from the many talented artists whose work is exhibited in *Reimagine*, offering us a moment to recognize the artists who have transformed our space and inspired visitors this past year with their meaningful work in dialogue with works in our collection. Likewise, our grants, which were met with overwhelming local and global interest, fund both research and art projects that promote Himalayan art and its accessibility around the world."

THE RUBIN MUSEUM HIMALAYAN ART PRIZE

The Rubin will award the inaugural Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize to artist **Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee** (b. 1987) at the Rubin Museum Gala on September 27, 2024. Based in Himachal Pradesh, India, Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee explores the paradoxes present in the seemingly ordinary things in his life. As a second-generation Tibetan refugee, the artist uses different mediums to explore themes of displacement, belonging, and cultural heritage. One of his works on view in the Rubin's exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* is *chants of a monkey mind* (2023).

The Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize was established to support living artists and recognize the work of innovative individuals, like Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee, who have made a mark in creative and critically relevant dialogues between Himalayan art and contemporary life. The **unrestricted \$30,000 prize** is the largest international award in support of contemporary art related to the Himalayan regions, and the winner was selected by a jury of Rubin staff members and experts in the field.

"I'm deeply honored and humbled to be the inaugural recipient of the Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize," said Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee. "This award means a lot to me, not just because of its significance, but what it enables me to do, supporting me in expressing my artistic vision and giving me the ability to pursue my passion."

Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee, who was born in Kamrao Village in Himachal Pradesh, India, was introduced to traditional Tibetan-style thangka painting at the age of six by his father. He attended the College of Arts, Delhi, and has been pursuing art professionally since 2013. He works with various mediums and seemingly mundane objects to question how culture, politics, climate, and science can impact local surroundings and one's identity. Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee often uses tarp sacks, or *drochak-bureh* ("barley sacks"), as his canvas. This material reflects how the Tibetan diaspora has planted themselves in a new culture and experienced changes in their own culture. Through these works, he examines and celebrates the space Tibetans have created for themselves in India.

RUBIN GRANTS

The annual Rubin Grants support art and research initiatives that aim to promote the rich cultural legacy and living traditions of the Himalayan regions. As part of the first award cycle, 17 projects were selected from close to 150 applications from 30 countries. The grant sizes range from \$3,000 to \$25,000, dependent on the scale and needs of each project.

The selected grantees are from seven countries, and 13 are from the Himalayan region and diaspora. Notable research grant awardees include Shangrila Joshi and Rishi Amatya, whose projects examine different aspects of the *Machchhindranath Jatra*, a famous chariot festival in Patan, Nepal; Tsuklakhang Trust, a non-profit organization that is undertaking the documentation and research of exceptional murals at a Royal Monastery in Gangtok, Sikkim; and Tenzin Nyandank and Karl Ryavec, whose research will shed light on monastic structures in Tibet before they were destroyed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Artist grants have been awarded to artists and creatives including filmmaker Avi Kabir, whose work *Entangled Lives* documents the effects of climate change in the eastern Himalayas; California-based artist Pema Namdol Thaye, who is creating a three-dimensional mandala of Vajrayogini, a revered female tantric deity; and artists Jasmine Rajbhandari and Sushila Singh, who are documenting festivals in Nepal, capturing the area's rich living cultural heritage.

REIMAGINE: HIMALAYAN ART NOW IN CHICAGO

Furthering the Rubin's work to support artists from the greater Himalayan region and the diaspora working today, the exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* will travel to Chicago, Illinois, and open on November 8, 2024, at Wrightwood 659. The exhibition, which features works by 28 contemporary artists working across mediums—including painting, sculpture, sound, video, and installation—reimagines the forms, symbols, and narratives found within the living cultural heritage of the Himalayan regions. *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* will be on view through February 15, 2025, at Wrightwood 659, granting Chicagoans the unique opportunity to engage with a global cross-section of contemporary Himalayan art.

ABOUT THE RUBIN'S TRANSFORMATION

The Rubin is evolving into a decentralized museum model that redefines what it means to be a museum in the 21st century. In its next chapter, the Rubin will continue to foster awareness and understanding of Himalayan art with audiences around the world with the goal to reach more people where they are. The Museum's innovative approach will include partnerships and collection sharing with museums and cultural institutions, traveling exhibitions and experiences, expanded resources for artists and scholars, and multimedia content accessible online.

As part of this evolution, the Museum will close its physical galleries on 17th Street in New York City. The final day to visit the galleries will be October 6, 2024. To celebrate the transformation, the Rubin will offer free events and participatory programs at the Museum, including free admission October 3 to 6, a farewell party on October 4, and a closing ceremony outside the building on October 6.

SUPPORT CREDITS

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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 participatory experiences, exhibitions, partnerships, and a dynamic digital platform. 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.

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