

Academic Schedule

Institute for Higher Education: Virtual Gateway to Himalayan Art and Cultures

Institution: Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art

Project Director: Elena Pakhoutova

Dates: June 16–July 2, 2025

Session Times: Morning: 11:00 AM–1:00 PM | Afternoon: 2:00–4:00 PM

Prior to the workshop, participants will read:

“[Himalayan Art and Cross-Cultural Exchange](#)” in *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*, ed. Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova (Scala, 2023, pages 21–27) **and browse** [Project Himalayan Art](#) digital platform. Participants will read assigned titles prior to each day’s thematic sessions. See also the institute’s select bibliography for additional background readings and resources.

Prior to the workshop participants will prepare brief introductions of themselves, objectives for attending the institute, and the academic project they plan to develop to share with the institute speakers and participants. Participants will confirm that they do not object to being recorded during the institute’s sessions.

Day 1, June 16: Himalayan art and religious imagination, storytelling in symbolic forms

Morning:

Introductions and Institute overview. Directors and presenters introduce the Institute. Review the day’s program. Introductions to participants. **Presentation** of Rubin Museum’s ongoing digital projects (Kimon Keramidias) and address questions on using the digital platform, plus a discussion. Small group discussions to facilitate acquaintance within the group and familiarity with the digital platform.

Afternoon:

Presentation on symbolic visual language and narrative aspects of Himalayan art (Elena Pakhoutova). **Small group discussions** utilizing examples from Project Himalayan Art essays on how to meaningfully interpret specific images for various class scenarios and further possibilities of cross-disciplinary connections. **Report back and a group discussion** about curriculum enhancement and future research presentations.

Assigned Materials:

Project Himalayan Art: Elena Pakhoutova. Teaching Resource: Art History • Introduction to Buddhist Culture • [Visual Symbols of Buddhist Art](#)

Project Himalayan Art: [Exhibition: Symbols and Meanings](#)

The [Looking Guide](#)

Project Himalayan Art: Kerry Lucinda Brown. [Teaching Resource: Utilizing Visual Materials](#).

Project Himalayan Art: [Themes Page: Storytelling](#)

Elena Pakhoutova: Exhibition *Once Upon Many Times: Legends and Myths in Himalayan Art* [Once Upon Many Times Brochure \(rma2.org\)](#)

Elena Pakhoutova and Agnieszka Helman-Wazny, "[Illuminated Pages of the Prajnaparamita Sutra Manuscript: Embodying the Words of the Buddha](#)," Project Himalayan Art, 2023.

Elena Pakhoutova and Jia Weiwei, "[Cave 3 at Yulin Cave Temples: Tangut Patrons' Embrace of Buddhist Sacred Sites and Cosmopolitan Teachings](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Sarah A. Richardson, "[Mural Painting at Zhalu Monastery: Mongol Patronage, Nepalese Artists, and Murals as a Public Marketing Strategy for Sacred Books](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Andrew Quintman and Kurtis R. Schaeffer, "[A Monumental Life of the Buddha Mural: Taranatha's Vision of Shakyamuni's Quest](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Day 2, June 18: Representations of the feminine in Himalayan art, ritual, literature, and popular culture

Morning:

Presentations on divine feminine, ideas and attributes of feminine power, wisdom, protection, fertility, prosperity, and well-being represented in images of female deities and goddesses, their relevance to, or challenge of contemporary ideas (Kerry Lucinda Brown, Jue Liang, Elena Pakhoutova). Q&A with participants.

Small group discussions of the materials using guiding/framing questions from presenters as the basis for broader conversation on gender in Himalayan art and its connections across Asia.

Afternoon:

A participant-facilitated **panel discussion** led by Sarah Jacoby with a focus on culturally relevant and culturally sensitive matters related to divine feminine or role of women in

Himalayan cultures, including literature and visual arts, to enhance curriculum. Return to the full group, report from each breakout room discussion, Q&A with participants and presenters.

Assigned Materials:

REQUIRED

Kerry Lucinda Brown, "[Goddess of Prosperity, Vasudhara: Material and Spiritual Abundance in the Kathmandu Valley](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Kerry Lucinda Brown, "[Siddhi Lakshmi \(Purnachandi\): The Goddess of Miraculous Power](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Kim, Jinah and Todd Lewis. "[Understanding South Asia's Religious Art](#)." *Education About Asia* 25, no. 3 (2020): 24–31. (Access through shared folder).

Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Collection: [The Demoness of Tibet](#).

Gyatso, Janet. "Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet." *The Tibet Journal* 12, no. 4 (1987): 38–53. (Access through shared folder or <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43300266>).

"[Yeshe Tsogyel](#)," *The Treasury of Lives*.

Excerpt from the *Mani Kabum*. (Access through shared folder).

Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Collection: [The Life Story of Nangsa Wobum](#).

Elena Pakhoutova. 2021. "[The Returned: When Death is Not the End](#)."

"[Machik Labdron](#)," *The Treasury of Lives*.

Michelle J. Sorensen. 2013. "Philosophical Foundations of Chöd," "Cutting through the Body," chapters 3, 4 of Dissertation *Making the Old New Again and Again: Legitimation and Innovation in the Tibetan Buddhist Chöd Tradition*. (Access through shared folder).

RECOMMENDED

Dr. Elena Pakhoutova, Dr. Beth Harris and the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art: "[Himalayan Art Up Close: Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon](#)."

Robin, Françoise, "[Caring for Women's Words and Women's Bodies. A Field Note on Palmo and her 'Demoness Welfare Association for Women'](#)," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 34, Décembre 2015, pp. 153–169.

Brown, Kerry Lucinda. "[Adorning the Buddhas: The Ceremonial Regalia of the Daśa Sthavira Ājus from Kwā Bahā, Nepal](#)." *Ars Orientalis* 47 (2017): 266–302.

Drime Kunga and Yeshe Tsogyel. 2017. *The Life and Visions of Yeshe Tsogyal: The Autobiography of the Great Wisdom Queen*. Chonyi Drolma, translator. Boulder: Snow Lion. (Access through shared folder).

Mocko, Anne. 2017. "Tolerance in Nepal Mandala: Communal Relations and Royal Religious Patronage in Malla-Era Kathmandu." In *Tolerance in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Vicki A. Spencer, 121–39. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. (Access through shared folder).

Taksham Nuden Dorje. 1999. *Lady of the Lotus Born*. Wulstan Fletcher and Helena Blankleder, translators. Boston: Shambhala. (Access through shared folder).

Bryan J. Cuevas. 2007. "The Death and Return of Lady Wangzin. Visions of the Afterlife in Tibetan Buddhist Popular Literature." In Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone, eds. *The Buddhist Dead. Practices, Discourses, Representations*, 297–325. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. (Access through shared folder).

Day 3, June 23: Living practices: cultural and technological connections through art media

Morning:

Presentations on material and technological aspects of art production, or technology and its cross-cultural nature and human agency (Elena Pakhoutova, Karl Debreczeny). Presentation on woodblock printing in Tibet in historical and social context (Yewong Tenzin Dongchung). Q&A with participants.

Afternoon:

A participant-facilitated **panel discussion** led by James Gentry on technology of mass production in Himalayan cultural and religious spheres and its relevance to the present day, including in ritual, social, and everyday aspects of life. **Small group discussions** on technology serving as a means for the expansion of ideas, ideologies, as well as artforms, styles, and methods of cultural production, based on the presented materials and framing questions from presenters. Discussions on curriculum development and potential collaborations. Return to the full group, report from each breakout room discussion, Q&A with participants and presenters.

Assigned Materials:

REQUIRED

Project Himalayan Art: [Themes Page: Art Making](#)

Project Himalayan Art: [Themes Page: Artists & Patrons](#)

Ian Alsop and Elena Pakhoutova, "[Jivarama's Sketchbook: The Earliest Dated Newar Artist's Sketchbook](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

David Jackson and Janice A. Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*, 1988. (Access through shared folder).

Alex Furger. *The Gilded Buddha: The Traditional Art of the Newar Metal Casters in Nepal*. Basel: Librum Publishers & Editors, 2017. (Access through shared folder).

Yewong Tenzin Dongchung, "Smooth like the skin, sprouted like the seeds: Recovering Tibetan Artisanal Knowledge of Wood's Materiality." Chapter from the dissertation. (Access through shared folder).

Kirill Solonin and Elena Pakhoutova, "[A Pancharaksha Print from Khara-Khoto: Woodblock Printing and State Protection in the Inclusive Buddhist Culture of the Tanguts](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Kunsang Namgyal-Lama, "[Molded Clay Image \(Tsatsa\) of Amoghapasha: Mass Production of Images as a Ritual Practice](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Nancy G. Lin, "[Nartang Woodblock Prints and Their Painted Copies: Previous Lives of the Panchen Lamas: Abounding Visions of Eminent Lives](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

RECOMMENDED

Francesca Bray. 1997. *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Later Imperial China*. Introduction, pp 7–47. (Access through shared folder).

Pamela Smith, et al. *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, c. 1250–1750*. Introduction, pp. 1–17. (Access through shared folder).

Day 4, June 25: Himalayan art and rituals for sustaining the environment and communities

Morning:

Presentations on communal Newar festivals of the Kathmandu Valley and religious festivals in Tibetan, Bhutanese, and Mongolian areas that mark important events in the calendar year and are believed to maintain the local communities' prosperity and well-being (Todd Lewis, Charles Ramble).

Afternoon:

A participant-facilitated **panel discussion** led by Huatse Gyal will focus on economy-driven patronage and support for such festivals, including tourism. **Small group discussions** based on presentations and guiding/framing questions with focus on community and environment and integrating of the materials into contemporary discussions about environmental awareness for developing cross-disciplinary syllabi. Return to the main group, report on each group discussion. Q&A with participants and collective thoughts on potential curriculum enhancements and research papers or panels.

Assigned Materials:

REQUIRED

Gautama V. Vajracharya, "[Golden Fountain of Bhaktapur: Architectural Expression of Monsoonal Phenomena](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Ian Alsop, "[Bunga Dya \(Bunga Lokeshvara, Karunamaya, Rato Macchendranath\): Seasonal Travels of the Valley God](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Kerry Lucinda Brown, "[Goddess of Prosperity, Vasudhara: Material and Spiritual Abundance in the Kathmandu Valley](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Charles Ramble, "[Mountain God Kula Kari: The Mountain Palace of a Worldly Divinity](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Charles Ramble, "[Thread Crosses: Sky Symbols of Divine and Cosmic Forces](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia and Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, "[The Mega-Sized Guru that Presides over the Hidden Land](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Todd Lewis. 2010. "Getting the Foundations Right When Teaching Asian Religions." *Education About Asia* 15 (2): 5-13.

Todd Lewis. 2015. "*Puṇya and Pāp* in Public Health: Everyday Religion, Materials Culture, and Avenues of Buddhist Activism in Urban Kathmandu." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (22): 158-188.

Project Himalayan Art: [Themes Page: Art & Religious Practices](#)

Todd Lewis, Video: [8 Rituals at Svayambhu Stupa](#).

RECOMMENDED

David G. Mandelbaum. 1966. "Transcendental and Pragmatic Aspects of Religion." *American Anthropologist* 66 (5): 1174-1191.

Yangla Gesang, Yuyuan (Victoria) Liu, Elena Pakhoutova, "[Ice Buddha: Tibetan Artists' Contemporary Practices](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

"[The Sacred Polyester of Tibetan Khata](#)." *Tricycle*, Interview with Dr. Huatse Gyal by Karen Jensen, February 22, 2024

Day 5, June 30: The interdependence of all things: the art of medicine and healing

Morning:

Presentations on holistic understanding of health and healing that is beyond but inclusive of Buddhist approaches to a path for greater well-being in Tibetan and Himalayan medical traditions (Sienna R. Craig and William McGrath). Q&A with participants.

Afternoon:

A participant-facilitated **panel discussion** led by Elena Pakhoutova will focus on these topics. **Small group discussions** based on the presentations and guiding/framing questions relevant to developing potential curriculum enhancements and planning future research papers or panels. Return to the main group, report on each group discussion. Q&A with participants and presenters.

Assigned Materials:

REQUIRED

Theresia Hofer, "[Desi Sanggye Gyatso's Medical Paintings: Medicine, Science, and the Everyday in Tibetan Art](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, "[The White Beryl Illuminated Manuscript: Tibetan Divination](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Project Himalayan Art: Sienna R. Craig. [Teaching Resource: Anthropology • Medicine and Culture / Buddhism and Medicine • Health, Healing, and Illness in the Himalayas](#)

Project Himalayan Art: [Themes Page: Medical & Astrological Sciences](#)

Sienna R. Craig. 2023. "Buddhist Healing Practices." In K. Trainor and P. Arai, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Practice*, 235-250. (Access through shared folder).

William A. McGrath. 2019. "Reconciling Scripture and Surgery in Tibet: Khyenrap Norbu, *Arranging the Tree Trunks of Healing* (1952)." In *Buddhism and Medicine: An Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Sources*, edited by C. Pierce Salguero, 94-99. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. (Access through shared folder).

RECOMMENDED

Sienna R. Craig. "Without the Plants, We Have No Medicine": *Sowa Rigpa, Ethnobotany, and Conservation of Threatened Species in Nepal*. S.K. Ghimire, Amchi Gyatso Bista, N.S. Lama, and S.R. Craig, eds. 2021. (Access through shared folder).

William A. McGrath. 2019. "Tantric Divination and Empirical Diagnosis: A Genealogy of Channel *Prasenā*." In *Knowledge and Context in Tibetan Medicine*, edited By William A. McGrath, 261-302. Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, vol. 43. Leiden: Brill, 2019. (Access through shared folder).

Day 6, July 2: Himalayan art and society: Tibetan Buddhism and empires, religions, and nationalism

Morning:

A **presentation** focusing on images as representing specific beliefs employed by rulers of Inner Asian empires, from the Tibetan and Mongol empires, to the Chinese Ming and Manchu Qing empires (Karl Debreczeny).

A presentation touching upon religious nationalism and modernity in Himalayan regions, including Tibetan areas, Nepal, Bhutan, and cross-regional currents (Riga Shakya). Q&A with participants.

Afternoon:

A participant-facilitated panel discussion led by Gray Tuttle will focus on cross-cultural connections that highlight common approaches to religious ideologies as a means for consolidation of power. Q&A with participants.

Open discussion:

The presenters and participants summarize the previous days' dialogues into actionable future plans as outcomes in **six smaller groups** formed by the themes of the institute (attend any or more than one group), conclusions presented to the full forum as next steps in curriculum development and research, such as creating specific thematic units for classes, new courses, and preparing research papers or organizing panels for professional conferences.

Assigned Materials:

Karl Debreczeny. "Faith and Empire: An Overview." In: Debreczeny, ed. *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism*. NY: Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2019: 19–52.

https://issuu.com/rmanyc/docs/faith_and_empire

Also available on: [http:// asianart.com/articles/faith-empire/index.html](http://asianart.com/articles/faith-empire/index.html)

Kerry Lucinda Brown, "[Vishnu Riding on Garuda: Divine Kingship in Nepal Mandala](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Christopher P. Atwood, "[Mongol Messenger's Badge \(Paiza or Gerege\) in Pakpa Script: Signs of Authority in the Mongol Empire](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Karl Debreczeny, "[Mahakala Stone Sculpture: The Political Role of Tibetan Buddhism at the Mongol Court](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Karl Debreczeny, "[Juyong Guan Stupa Gate: Stabilizing Empire through Buddhist Architectural Monument, Text, and Image](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Wen-shing Chou, "[The Qianlong Emperor as Manjushri-Chakravartin: Tibetan Buddhism at the Qing Court](#)," Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Riga Shakya, “[Photograph of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama: Lenses of Modernity: Photography in Tibet and the Himalayas](#),” Project Himalayan Art, Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, 2023.

Riga Shakya. “[Entangled Objects: Gift, Reciprocity and the Making of the Imperial Subject in 18th Century Tibet](#)”, *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, CNRS, 2021, Avril (n°58), pp. 139–164. (Access also through shared folder).

Project Himalayan Art: Karl Debreczeny. [Teaching Resource: East Asian Studies • Buddhism and the State: Mongol Empire \(ca. 1206–1368\)](#)