

## Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art and its insights through exhibitions, participatory experiences, a dynamic digital platform, 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 well-being, and cultivate compassion.

### Key Facts About the Rubin Museum

**Opening of museum galleries in New York City:**

October 2, 2004

**Closure of galleries and transition to global model:**

October 6, 2024

**Office location:**

New York City

**Areas served:**

New York City, the United States, and worldwide

**Leadership**

Executive Director: Jorrit Britschgi

Board of Trustees President: Noah Dorsky

**Founders**

Shelley Rubin, active member of the Board of Trustees, and Donald Rubin, Co-founder and Co-chair Emeritus

**Permanent Collection**

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's preeminent collection of nearly 4,000 objects spans more than 1,500 years to the present day. Included are artworks of exceptional quality and historical significance from the Tibetan Plateau, with examples from Northern Indian, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Mongolian, and Chinese culturally related areas.

The collection consists primarily of scroll paintings (thangkas and paubhas) and sculptures, as well as masks, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, religious implements, and other objects from these regions.

## Key Initiatives

### Project Himalayan Art

Project Himalayan Art is the Rubin's flagship educational initiative that supports learning about Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian art and cultures. This three-part initiative launched in 2023 and encompasses an expansive digital platform with multimedia resources for learning; the publication *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*; and the traveling exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art*, which will travel to 16 university museums by 2030.

The project focuses on cross-cultural exchange with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread that connects the diverse cultural regions. The goal of Project Himalayan Art is greater inclusion of Himalayan art and cultures in undergraduate classrooms in the United States and beyond.

### Collection Sharing

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art shares its celebrated collection with museums and institutions across the globe to facilitate a broader understanding of the arts of Asia. Central to the collection sharing program are long-term object loans spanning three to five years. These expand access to the collection in a meaningful way, enabling more people in more places to learn about and experience the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region. The loans also help provide holistic representation of Himalayan art in the context of Asian art at larger museums.

One example is the multiyear partnership with the Brooklyn Museum, where the Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room installation will be on view for six years, starting in June 2025.

### Mandala Lab

The Mandala Lab is a traveling installation inspired by powerful Buddhist principles. It features five thought-provoking, playful experiences that guide visitors on an inner journey and supports connection, empathy, and emotional learning. As visitors move through the space, they examine feelings of pride, attachment, envy, anger, and ignorance—known as *kleshas* in Buddhism—that cloud our understanding of the world around us. First launched in New York in 2021, the Mandala Lab has since traveled to Bilbao, London, and Milan and expanded to include a collection of online resources for educators and students.

### Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize

The Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize (Rubin Art Prize) is an international award for artists who are inspired by traditional Himalayan art forms and techniques, as well as the meanings and insights they offer. Launched in 2024 and given annually, the prize honors individuals or collectives who have significantly contributed to the dialogue between Himalayan art and contemporary life. With a \$30,000 (USD) unrestricted award—the largest for contemporary artistic practices related to the Himalayan region—the Rubin Art Prize recognizes both past contributions and supports future work.

## Rubin Grants

The Rubin supports artists, creatives, and scholars in the field of Himalayan art with an annual grant program. In 2024 the Rubin supported 17 art project and research grants, with total funding at \$200,000

## Spiral

*Spiral* is the Rubin's multimedia publication at the intersection of art, science, and Himalayan cultures. Available online and as a print magazine, it features written articles, videos, podcasts, photography, animation, and more, helping people better understand Himalayan art, its cultural context, and the insights illuminated by it.

## In-Person Programs

The Rubin presents an array of in-person programs for adults and families that dive deeper into the art from the Himalayas, including weekly Mindfulness Meditation sessions hosted at New York Insight Meditation Center and family programs in partnership with venues across New York City.

## History

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art (formerly Rubin Museum of Art) was founded in 2004 as a haven for Himalayan art in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City by Shelley and Donald Rubin, who are philanthropists, cultural leaders, and collectors. Over the course of two decades the Rubin welcomed over 2.5 million visitors, presented over 145 exhibitions, hosted over 6,500 programs, and published 35 scholarly publications.

Beginning in 2022 the Rubin expanded its reach with projects beyond the Museum walls, with the inaugural Nepal Pavilion at the Venice Biennale; a traveling version of the interactive Mandala Lab installation in Europe; the support of the Itumbaha Museum, a new museum at a Newar Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal; and the launch of Project Himalayan Art, the organization's biggest institutional project serving students, educators, and scholars nationally and beyond. These initiatives piloted new ways of fulfilling the Museum's mission and connecting with audiences across the world.

Building on the successes of these projects and in the same spirit of innovation, after 20 years, on October 6, 2024, the Rubin closed its galleries on 17th Street to embark on its next chapter as a global museum.

Today the Rubin continues to be the leading presenter of Himalayan art, with exhibitions, participatory experiences, educational initiatives, and research, serving more people than before through collaborations and partnerships, digital resources, and collection sharing.

## Support

The Rubin is a not-for-profit organization that relies on financial support from individuals, foundations, government agencies, and businesses.

## Contact

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The Rubin also has active pages on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and Youtube (@rubinmuseum), sharing educational and engaging content with people across the world.

**For further information, please contact:**  
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