For Immediate Release

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's Traveling Exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art* Now Open at USC Pacific Asia Museum

Part of the Rubin's flagship educational initiative, Project Himalayan Art, the exhibition supports the inclusion of Himalayan art and cultures in undergraduate teaching

Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas announced as the ninth venue, opening March 2, 2027



Photo by Joshua White/JW Pictures, courtesy of the USC Pacific Asia Museum

New York, NY, October 19, 2026 — The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art is pleased to announce that *Gateway to Himalayan Art* is now open at the USC Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California, through January 10, 2027. The exhibition will next travel to the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, where it will be on view March 2–December 5, 2027.

Curated by **Elena Pakhoutova**, the Rubin's senior curator of Himalayan art, *Gateway to Himalayan Art* introduces the main forms, concepts, meanings, and living traditions of Himalayan art. Since 2023 the exhibition has traveled to university museums across the United States, introducing students, faculty, and local audiences to artistic traditions of the greater Himalayan region.

The exhibition is part of Project Himalayan Art, the Rubin's flagship educational initiative supporting the inclusion of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian art and cultures in undergraduate teaching on Asia. Together with the publication *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects* and a digital platform, the exhibition provides introductory resources for learning about and teaching Himalayan art. The initiative focuses on cross-cultural exchange, with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread connecting these diverse cultures.

"It is great that the exhibition really serves its educational purpose," says Pakhoutova. "For instance, at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon, students taking classes in 16 different university departments and two neighboring universities visited and engaged with the exhibition. It was also visited by various other university groups and faculty. This tells us that the exhibition has meaningfully contributed to the diversity of educational and cultural offerings at the University of Oregon."

At the USC Pacific Asia Museum, the exhibition highlights 66 objects dating from the 13th century to 2025, including sculptures, Tibetan scroll paintings (thangkas), ritual implements, medical instruments, instructional paintings, a stupa, and a prayer wheel. Three thematic sections—Symbols and Meanings, Materials and Technologies, and Living Practices—invite visitors to explore the diverse cultural spheres of the greater Himalayan region.

In-depth displays explain the process of Nepalese lost-wax metal casting and the stages of Tibetan thangka painting. Videos of art making and religious and cultural practices, alongside audio recordings of voices from Himalayan communities, connect the objects with living traditions. Related digital content offers opportunities for further exploration in the galleries, classrooms, and beyond.

At the USC Pacific Asia Museum, *Gateway to Himalayan Art* is presented alongside *We Are Connected: Highlights from the USC Pacific Asia Museum Himalayan Collection*. Curated by **Sonya Lee**, the companion exhibition explores how Himalayan communities understand their relationships with one another, the natural world, and the spiritual realm through centuries of artistic expression.

"*Gateway to Himalayan Art* offers an invaluable opportunity for me and my students to learn about a less familiar part of the world where art making is so central to how people connect with each other and make sense of the world," says Lee, professor of art history, East Asian languages and cultures, and religion at USC. "In my two courses this fall, students will study objects from the greater Himalayan region within their cultural, historical, and physical contexts. As many of the objects were made for religious rituals and devotional worship, students will also investigate how and why museums as secular institutions exhibit religions—complex issues that often involve difficult conversations about values, politics, and identity. My goal is to challenge students to think through these issues critically and historically, so that they also get to know more about themselves through the learning process."

The upcoming presentation at the Spencer Museum of Art continues the exhibition's national tour and its engagement with university communities. The exhibition has previously been presented at:

- Lehigh University Art Galleries, Lehigh University; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
- McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College; Boston, Massachusetts
- Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida; Gainesville, Florida
- Frank Museum of Art, Otterbein University; Westerville, Ohio
- Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah; Salt Lake City, Utah
- Flaten Art Museum, St. Olaf College; Northfield, Minnesota
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon; Eugene, Oregon

Support

Project Himalayan Art has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services MA-253379-OMS-23.

The publication *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects* was supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this initiative do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Leadership support is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.

Lead support is provided by the Ellen Bayard Weedon Foundation, Bob and Lois Baylis, Barbara Bowman, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Noah P. Dorsky, Fred Eychaner, Christopher J. Fussner, the Estate of Lisina M. Hoch, Matt and Ann Nimetz, The Randleigh Foundation Trust, Shelley and Donald Rubin, and Jesse Smith and Annice Kenan.

Major support is provided by Anne and Albert Chao, Daphne Hoch Cunningham and John Cunningham, Stephen and Sharon Davies, the Edward & Elizabeth Gardner Foundation, Janet Gardner, Mimi Gardner Gates, Hongwei Li, Max Meehan, the Monimos Foundation, Edward O'Neill, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Sarah and Craig Richardson, Rossi & Rossi, the Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, Namita and Arun Saraf, Eric and Alexandra Schoenberg, Eileen Caulfield Schwab, UOVO, Sandy Song Yan, and the Zhiguan Museum of Art.

About the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art and its insights. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people internationally 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. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, collection sharing, 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 across the globe. rubinmuseum.org

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