

THE ANNUAL
RUBIN REPORT
MUSEUM
OF
ART



2023

MISSION STATEMENT

The Rubin Museum of Art in Chelsea, New York City, explores and celebrates Himalayan art, cultures, and ideas across history and into the present. With its globally renowned collection, centered largely around art from the Tibetan Plateau, the Rubin fosters understanding and appreciation of Himalayan art by interpreting and relating it to our shared human experience today. Inspired by the tenets of Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous religions, and aligned with ongoing research into learning, behavior, and the brain, the Rubin offers innovative exhibitions and programs that examine provocative ideas across the arts and explore the mind. Through this work, the Museum serves as a space for reflection and personal transformation, opening windows to inner worlds so visitors can better navigate outer ones.

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THE RUBIN MANDALA LAB
WHERE EMOTIONS CAN TURN TO WISDOM



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters and Friends,



I am pleased to share with you highlights from 2023, a year full of monumental projects and collaborations that expanded the Rubin's walls and encouraged new ways of thinking. We began the year with the launch of one of our largest initiatives in our institution's history, Project Himalayan Art, an interdisciplinary resource for learning about Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian art and cultures. It encompasses a digital platform, publication, and traveling exhibition, which was inaugurated at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and later traveled to Boston College in the fall.

In Europe we partnered with the London Design Festival to bring the Mandala Lab to London's Canary Wharf, and in Kathmandu, Nepal, we supported the Itumbaha monastery in their decades-long vision of creating a museum to display their historic collection. In New York City, we began to think about the next phase to come, centering our exhibitions and programs on the unifying theme of Life After. We explored death and the afterlife in the art of Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity in the special exhibition *Death Is Not the End*; how light deprivation can lead to healing in Dark Retreat Workshops with Justin von Bujdoss; and how moments of change can bring unexpected transformation with musician Amanda Palmer.

These conversations and more taught us how moments of transition can be catalysts for greater awareness as we step into the unknown, and that the powerful art in our collection can guide us on our journey. All

our endeavors in New York City and beyond would not have been possible without the many generous, dedicated, and creative individuals who collaborated, supported, and interacted with us to create the Rubin Museum community that we love.

The Rubin relies on supporters who share our vision. We invite you to deepen your participation by giving generously. We are grateful for your support and excited about what we can accomplish together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorrit Britschgi'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a vertical line on the left side.

Jorrit Britschgi
Executive Director

LIFE AFTER: A YEARLONG EXPLORATION

Since 2004 the Rubin has aimed to spark connections between Himalayan art and contemporary life. In 2023 our exhibitions and programs, in person and online, centered on a unifying theme: the concept of Life After.

Drawing on a diverse range of sources and perspectives—from artists, Buddhist practitioners, medical professionals, scientists, and more—we explored life's transitions, from birth to death and everything in between, and our capacity to approach them with openness and awareness. Using this theme as a guide, the Rubin aimed to spark conversations around grief, joy, fear, and excitement, to help us better understand how to move through change and emerge on the other side.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

NYC EXHIBITIONS

DEATH IS NOT THE END

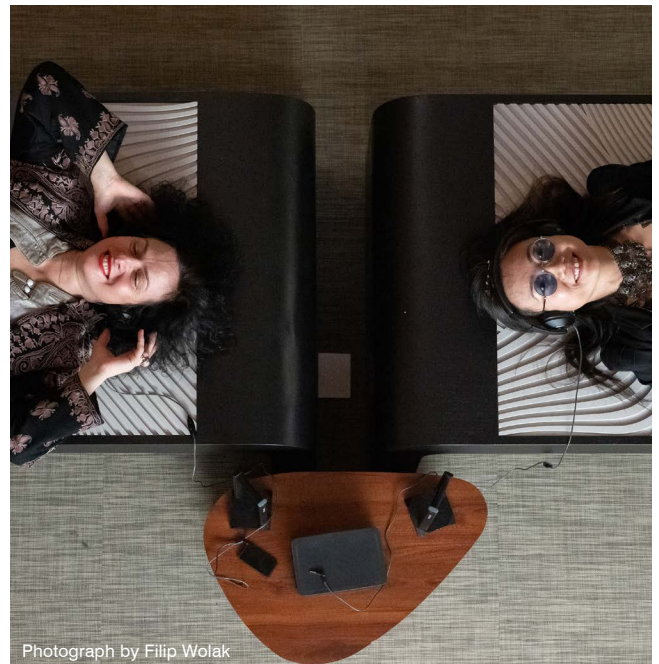
March 17, 2023–January 14, 2024

The cross-cultural exhibition *Death Is Not the End* explored notions of death and afterlife through the art of Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity. During a time of great global turmoil, loss, and uncertainty, the exhibition invited contemplation of the universal human condition of impermanence and the desire to continue to exist. The exhibition featured prints, oil paintings, bone ornaments, thangka paintings, sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, and ritual items, and brought together fifty-eight objects spanning twelve centuries. It was organized around three major themes: the Human Condition, or the shared understanding of our mortality in this world; States In-Between, or the concepts of limbo, purgatory, and bardo; and (After)life, focusing on resurrection, transformation, and heaven.

LIFE AFTER: THE BARDO

March 17, 2023–January 14, 2024

The installation *Life After: The Bardo* invited visitors to lie down and listen to excerpts from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, one of the most widely distributed forms of bardo-related ritual texts. Beliefs about death and the afterlife vary among Tibetan Buddhist lineages, but all the traditions share in the concept of the bardo, an intermediate state between death and rebirth. The texts read aloud during funerary rituals describe the deceased's journey through three bardos. They detail the colors, lights, sounds, and deities the deceased is said to encounter while guiding them toward a favorable rebirth. By recognizing these visions as projections of one's mind, it is possible to escape the cycle of rebirth and achieve liberation.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

NYC EXHIBITIONS, CONTINUED

SHRINE ROOM PROJECTS: ROHINI DEVASHER/PALDEN WEINREB

November 12, 2021–January 21, 2024

In dialogue with the *Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room* installation, *Shrine Room Projects* is an exhibition series that features contemporary artists who reinterpret traditional and religious iconography. In this iteration, Rohini Devasher presented a new two-channel video, *300 Km or the Apparent Movement of the Sun (2020)*, a powerful visual meditation on the observation of the sun moving across the sky. Palden Weinreb presented two mixed-media artworks in wax and illuminated by LED lights that are an invitation to look beyond the surface. Both artists invite contemplation on the boundaries of human perception and our place in this earthly realm.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

MANDALA LAB: WHERE EMOTIONS CAN TURN TO WISDOM

Inspired by powerful Buddhist principles, the Mandala Lab is an interactive space full of thought-provoking, playful experiences—including videos, scents, sculpture, and curated percussion instruments—that guide you along an inner journey focused on self-awareness and awareness of others. See, smell, touch, and breathe your way through the space, designed to inspire connection, empathy, and learning. The floor also functions as the home for School and Family Programs, connecting younger generations to the teachings expressed in Himalayan art and Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning®.

THE MANDALA LAB INCLUDES ARTIST CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Laurie Anderson	Sanford Biggers
Tenzin Tsetan Choklay	Billy Cobham
Amit Dutta	Sheila E.
Peter Gabriel	Dame Evelyn Glennie
Sarah Hennies	Huang Ruo
Shivamani	Wang Yahui
Palden Weinreb	Apichatpong Weerasethakul
Bora Yoon	

Scents created by Christophe Laudamiel

NYC EXHIBITIONS, CONTINUED

MASTERWORKS: A JOURNEY THROUGH HIMALAYAN ART

This exhibition explores major strands in the development of art from the greater Himalayan region covering a period of more than one thousand years. *Masterworks* is organized geographically and chronologically, showcasing the diverse regional traditions of Tibet in relation to the neighboring areas of Eastern India, Kashmir, Nepal, Bhutan, China, and Mongolia. Juxtaposing the art of Himalayan regions over time sheds light on the geographic, historical, religious, and artistic interrelationships among these cultures.

GATEWAY TO HIMALAYAN ART

This exhibition introduces visitors to the main forms, concepts, meanings, and artistic practices of Himalayan art. A large multimedia map orients visitors and highlights Himalayan cultural regions represented in the Rubin Museum's collection, including Nepal, Bhutan, and parts of present-day India, China, and Mongolia. Visitors explore exemplary objects organized in thematic sections: Figures and Symbols, Materials and Techniques, and Purpose and Function. Extensive didactic graphics and in-gallery digital materials help visitors engage with the fundamentals of Himalayan art.

TIBETAN BUDDHIST SHRINE ROOM

Since its opening, the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room has been a visitor favorite, providing an immersive art experience and an oasis of peace. This space represents an affluent Tibetan Buddhist household shrine and demonstrates how the Buddhist sculptures, paintings, and ritual items would be traditionally displayed. Each installation of the shrine room represents a different Tibetan Buddhist tradition and comprises objects from the Rubin Museum's collection and select long-term loans. Traditionally practitioners would use such places for contemplation and worship, performing daily rituals and offerings to deities.



Photograph by Dave de Armas

TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS

MANDALA LAB, LONDON

September 16–November 25, 2023

A traveling version of the New York City installation made a trip to London where it was free and open to the public in Union Square at Canary Wharf as part of the London Design Festival. This was the second stop of the traveling installation, bringing even more people to a fun, interactive space to explore challenging emotions and how to transform them into wisdoms.

The London installation opened with a free evening program that included a live gong-and-water improvisation by Dame Evelyn Glennie, followed by London's first-ever Breathe-In, a synchronized participatory breathing meditation to help invoke a baseline for well-being.

During its nine-week run, the Mandala Lab in London welcomed 18,500 visitors and 17 school groups.



Photograph by Ali Smith

GATEWAY TO HIMALAYAN ART, LEHIGH UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES AT LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

January 21–May 26, 2023

This traveling exhibition for colleges and universities made its first stop at Lehigh University Art Galleries in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Based on the Rubin's cornerstone exhibition of the same name, the traveling version introduces the main forms, concepts, meanings, and traditions of Himalayan art. It is part of the Rubin's multipart educational initiative Project Himalayan Art: a resource that aims to support the inclusion of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian art and cultures into undergraduate teaching on Asia.

GATEWAY TO HIMALAYAN ART, MCMULLEN MUSEUM OF ART AT BOSTON COLLEGE

September 5–December 10, 2023

This traveling exhibition made its second stop at the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, welcoming local students, professors, and the public to learn about the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region. It was used for teaching in classes for art history, Buddhism, and more.

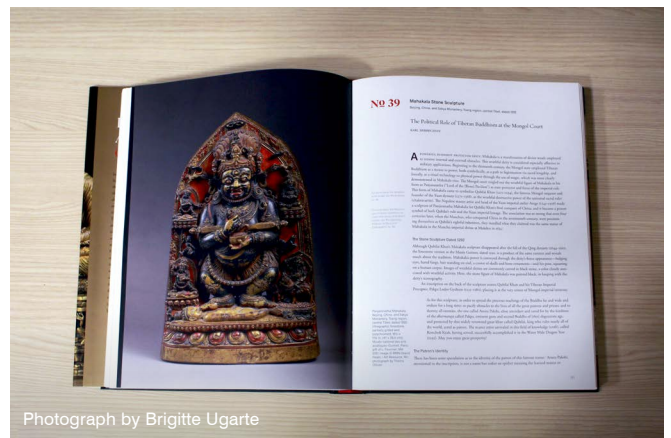
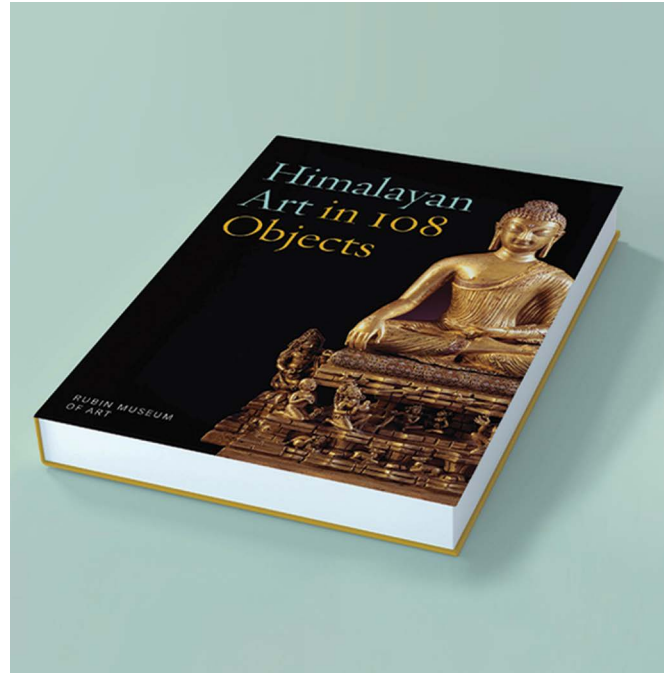


Photograph by Ryan Hulvat

PUBLICATIONS

HIMALAYAN ART IN 108 OBJECTS

Himalayan Art in 108 Objects is an object-centered introduction to Himalayan art and material culture from Neolithic to contemporary times, focusing on cross-cultural exchange with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread that connects these diverse cultural regions. Over seventy scholars from different fields and disciplines present a wide range of objects and sites from the greater Himalayan region. The book was published on June 17, 2023, by the Rubin Museum of Art and Scala Arts Publishers, Inc.

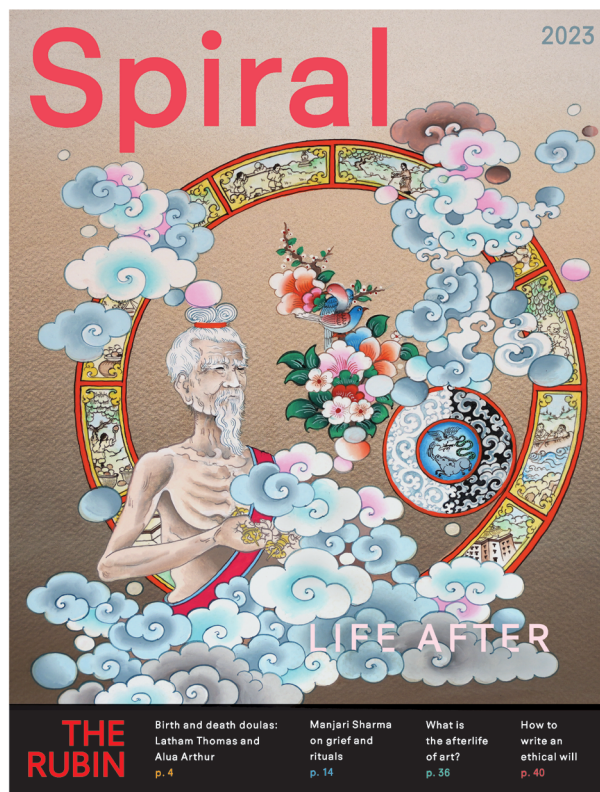


Photograph by Brigitte Ugarte

PUBLICATIONS, CONTINUED

SPIRAL MAGAZINE: THE LIFE AFTER ISSUE

The seventh issue of *Spiral*, a free annual magazine available in print and online, focused on the theme of Life After. Authors and contributors explored moments of change that propel us into the unknown and compel us to imagine what comes next. Highlights from the issue include interviews with a birth doula and a death doula, photographs documenting Hindu mourning rites, a deep dive into the Wheel of Existence, and stories from professionals who help people navigate different moments of change. Artist Rabkar Wangchuk created the original cover art.



COLLECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP



Photograph by Liz Ligon

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

The Rubin is a collecting institution of nearly 4,000 objects spanning 1,500 years from the Himalayan areas of India, Nepal, Bhutan, the Tibetan Plateau, and related Mongolian and Chinese cultural regions. Our collection research places traditional Himalayan art at the center of global scholarship and societal conversations. New additions to the collection help us present meaningful exhibitions for visitors, provide further learning and research opportunities for scholars, and help us represent the rich and varied traditions of Himalayan art.

In 2023 there were seven objects on loan to five institutions, including Cincinnati Art Museum, Asian Art Museum San Francisco, Peabody Essex Museum, Asia Society Texas Center, and Asia Society. There were eighty-five objects accessioned to the collection.



Chitipati; Tibet; 19th century;
pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum
of Art; gift of the Shelley & Donald
Foundation; F1997.40.9 (HAR 590)

COLLECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP, CONTINUED

PROVENANCE RESEARCH AND OWNERSHIP RESOLUTIONS

As custodians of the objects that we collect and display, we have a duty to carefully research and understand their history. We devote considerable resources to investigating the provenance of all objects in our collection. If the Rubin learns that objects are claimed to have been stolen, looted, or illegally excavated, the Museum immediately addresses these claims and works collaboratively with the relevant authorities.

On March 16, 2023, the Rubin deaccessioned a circa 16th-century mask of the deity Bhairava, voluntarily transferring the object to the Manhattan District Attorney's office to facilitate the return to its lawful owner in Nepal.

In immediate response to claims about the object, the Rubin placed the work under review with its Collections team as well as independent researchers. Additionally, the Rubin reached out to the Consulate General of Nepal in New York to request support in locating further information. Following its own investigation, the District Attorney's office shared with the Rubin corroborating evidence that the mask was stolen from a site in Dolakha in March 1994. Upon review of this documentation, the Rubin turned the work over to the District Attorney's office for its return.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

COLLECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP, CONTINUED

ITUMBAHA MUSEUM

On July 29 the Itumbaha monastery inaugurated the Itumbaha Museum in Kathmandu, Nepal: the first museum in a vihara (Newar Buddhist monastery) in Nepal with three galleries displaying one hundred and fifty objects spanning over six centuries from the monastery's extensive collection of over five hundred objects.

The monumental project was a collaboration between Keshchandra Mahavihara Conservation Society, Itumbaha; curator and lecturer Swosti Rajbhandari Kayastha; and the Rubin Museum, which provided advisory and financial support for the documentation, presentation, display, and interpretation of Itumbaha's historic collection.

This partnership was established following the Rubin's 2022 return of a wooden Garland Bearing Apsara (14th century) from the Museum's permanent collection that had been originally situated at Itumbaha and unlawfully removed years prior to joining the Rubin's collection.

With the completion of this project, the Rubin's proactive efforts to systematically conduct provenance research continues and we remain committed to strengthening our relationships in Nepal and the Himalayan region with the meaningful exchange of knowledge, experience, and perspectives.



Photograph by Pranab Joshi



Photograph by Pranab Joshi

COLLECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP, CONTINUED

STAFF PANELS AND CONFERENCES

Presented on “Himalayan Visual Culture: Living Experiences” at Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, January 22, 2023—Elena Pakhoutova

Presented “How to Improve CX and EX through Proactive Strategy Design” at CCW Executive Exchange, Atlanta, GA, March 12, 2023—Jamie Lawyer, Rubin Museum, and Valerie Gay, Barnes Foundation

Presented on the Mandala Lab and emotional engagement in museums at International Council of Museums (ICOM), Singapore, May 2023—Tim McHenry

Presented on “Project Himalayan Art” at Conversations in Art, Nepal Art Council, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 23, 2023—Elena Pakhoutova

Presented on “Giving Nepali Art an International Platform” together with artist Tsherin Sherpa, Takpa Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal, July 28, 2023—Jorrit Britschgi

Panelist for “Border-crossing in the Ming” at International Conference, Columbia University, August 19, 2023—Karl Debreczeny

Presented on emotional well-being through the lens of the Mandala Lab at Wellbeing Summit, Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, NY, September 2023—Tim McHenry

Presented on Project Himalayan Art for Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art and other museum professionals in Mongolia, with Uranchimeg Tsultem, September 14, 2023—Elena Pakhoutova and Karl Debreczeny

Presented “Mandala Lab: Creating a Transformative Museum Experience” at the Greater Hudson Heritage Network Conference, Well-Being and the Museum Worker, October 2023—Tim McHenry

Presented “What Is Himalayan Art and How Does It Fit within Asia?” as part of What is Asia? roundtable at American Curators of Asian Art Conference, Harvard University and MFA Boston, October 11, 2023—Elena Pakhoutova and Karl Debreczeny

Presented “Case Study: Developing the Mandala Lab,” at Association of Art Museum Interpretation (AAMI), San Francisco, CA, October 13, 2023—Jamie Lawyer

Presented on “The Rubin, a Global Museum for Himalayan Art” at the Mongolian and Tibetan Cultural Center, Taipei, Taiwan, October 22, 2023—Jorrit Britschgi

Presented on “Repositioning Museum Work in Light of Shifts in the Cultural Sector and Societal Needs”, National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, October 25, 2023—Jorrit Britschgi

Presented on “The Rubin: From a Privately Established Museum to a Globally Operating Organization,” Asia Society, Hong Kong, October 25, 2023—Jorrit Britschgi

Presented “Designing the Mandala Lab” at Designing for Empathy Summit, NY, October 25, 2023—Jamie Lawyer and Tim McHenry

Presented “Project Himalayan Art: Resources for Integrating Tibetan and Himalayan Art into Teaching on Asia” at International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology & Arts, 8th Seminar, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China, November 11, 2023—Karl Debreczeny, Rubin Museum, and Professor Wen-shing Chou, Hunter College

COLLECTION AND SCHOLARSHIP, CONTINUED

Presented on engagement in the Rubin as a template for interactivity in Asian art museums at Musée Guimet, Paris, November 2023—Tim McHenry and Jorrit Britschgi

Presented on crisis communication in the context of cultural property repatriation at ICOM International Council of Museums, International Committee for Marketing and Public Relations (ICOM MPR), Hernandarias, Paraguay, November 17, 2023—Elke Dehner



Yellow Jambhala; Tibet; 17th century; clay with pigments; sculpture; Rubin Museum of Art; C2006.64.1

IMLS NATIONAL MEDAL FINALIST

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) designated the Rubin Museum of Art as one of thirty finalists for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Rubin was the only institution in New York State to be selected as a finalist for this award. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries that demonstrate significant impact in their communities. For more than twenty-five years, the award has honored institutions that demonstrate excellence in service to their communities.



PROJECT HIMALAYAN ART

Project Himalayan Art officially launched in 2023 as an interdisciplinary resource for learning about Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian art and cultures. This three-part-initiative—encompassing a digital platform, publication, and traveling exhibition—is designed to support the inclusion of these cultures into undergraduate teaching on Asia. The project focuses on cross-cultural exchange with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread that connects the diverse cultural regions.

The publication, *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*, takes an object-centered approach and features essays from seventy-two international scholars who explore objects from international holdings and the Rubin Museum's collection, along with sites, architectural monuments, and works in situ. These essays illuminate the complex web of connections and movement of things, people, traditions, ideas, and styles in the greater Himalayan region through paintings, sculptures, sites, ritual objects, and more dating from Neolithic to contemporary times.

The traveling exhibition, *Gateway to Himalayan Art*, introduces the main forms, concepts, meanings, and religious traditions of Himalayan art with objects from the collection of the Rubin Museum. *Gateway* invites exploration of the fundamentals of Himalayan art through exemplary objects presented in three thematic sections: Symbols and Meanings, Materials and Technologies, and Living Practices.

The digital platform, Project Himalayan Art, features 108 object-focused essays, introductions to key themes, content from the traveling exhibition, and an interactive map. A wealth of supporting multimedia resources—including audio, video, and over one thousand images—provide context to the living ritual, cultural, and art-making practices and traditions of the Himalayas. A glossary with pronunciations, a bibliography, and teaching resources offer practical tools for the classroom.



PROGRAMS



Photograph by Filip Wolak

ADULT PROGRAMMING

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION IN PERSON AND PODCAST

At the beginning of the year we welcomed our Mindfulness Meditation audience back in person at the Museum. This forty-five-minute weekly program led by expert teachers offers meditation sessions inspired by a work of art from the Rubin Museum's collection. Sessions explored themes such as compassion, acceptance, and realization. Mindfulness Meditation is recorded weekly and available as a podcast for free online.

TEACHERS

Elaine Retholtz	Lavina Shamdasani
Jon Aaron	Michel Pascal
Kaira Jewel Lingo	Rebecca Li
Kimberly Brown	Sharon Salzberg
Lama Aria Drolma	Tracy Cochran

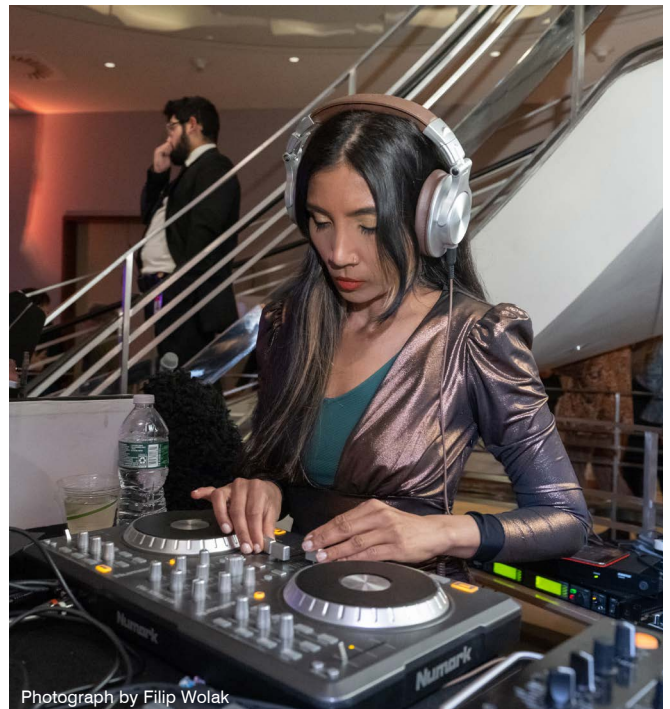


K2 FRIDAY NIGHTS

K2 Friday Nights bring the galleries to life. Café Serai is transformed into the K2 Lounge, and Museum patrons enjoy free admission and docent-led tours accompanied by music, specialty cocktails, and entertainment. An ongoing K2 tradition is our roster of DJs who bring a festive, international ambiance to each K2 Friday Night program.

DJS

DJ Bengali	Gigi Gray
DJ FRITZo	Joey Greiner
DJ Kind B	Roshni Samlal
DJ Loga	Snkr Joe
DJ Navarro	Ushka
DJ R Dubbs	



Photograph by Filip Wolak

ADULT PROGRAMMING, CONTINUED

HIMALAYAN HERITAGE

The Himalayan Heritage program series immerses visitors in the art, cultures, history, and sacred traditions of the Himalayan region. To celebrate the closing weekend of the *Healing Practices: Stories from Himalayan Americans* exhibition in January, Himalayan community advisory group members Geshe Tashi and Chime Dolma conducted an onstage conversation with the photographer Ginger Chih on the power of photography as a vehicle for compassionate storytelling.

In June to mark Saga Dawa, the holiest month in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar, the Venerable Tulku Namgyal Dawa Rinpoche, a senior Tibetan Buddhist teacher and meditation master, provided deep insight into the significance of this festival, which celebrates the life cycle and enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha.

In September, to highlight the themes of the *Death Is Not the End* exhibition, scholar and poet Dominique Townsend led a discussion entitled Bardo: How Do We Write About the In-Between? The conversation featured two vital contributors to the Tibetan literary landscape, Ann Tashi Slater and Tenzin Dickie. A book signing of Tenzin Dickie's newly released *The Penguin Book of Modern Tibetan Essays* followed the program.

DARK RETREATS

A highlight of 2023 was our focus on the esoteric practice of dark retreats. This practice is a simulation of the bardo, the transitional period between life and death. Dark retreats consist of forty-nine days of meditation in complete darkness. On April 14 we welcomed Tibetan medical practitioner Dr. Nida Chenagtsang and Professor Robert A. F. Thurman to discuss the phenomenon. This was followed by five experiential workshops on April 22, May 6, July 7, October 27, and November 18 with dark retreat practitioner and dharma teacher Justin von Bujdoss. During the workshops participants were immersed in total darkness for fifteen to forty minutes. After light was gradually reintroduced, attendees reflected and drew about their experiences.

LIFE AFTER . . . WITH AMANDA PALMER

In November songwriter and author Amanda Palmer returned to the Rubin to curate and host three sold-out talks with special guests about what happens when significant and sometimes unexpected life events lead to opportunities for personal transformation.

Life after COVID, diagnosis, and controversy constituted some of the topics explored with her guests, including artist Gonkar Gyatso, eco-writer Sophie Strand, and activist Noor Tagouri. Before each conversation, there was a docent-led tour of the exhibition *Death Is Not the End*.

ADULT PROGRAMMING, CONTINUED



AWAKEN PODCAST, SEASON 3

Hosted by Grammy Award-winning vocalist, composer, and educator FALU, season 3 of the Rubin’s AWAKEN podcast delves into the notion of Life After and explores how we navigate the key events and qualities of human life—birth, learning, emotion, aspiration, morality, conflict, and death—as well as grapple with the ultimate mystery: the afterlife. With art from the Rubin Museum’s collection as a jumping off point, guests share insights on how to move through change and emerge on the other side.

GUESTS INCLUDE

Allyson Grey	Kiese Laymon
Alex Grey	Marie Howe
Chella Man	Michelle Tea
Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor	Nigel Poor
Dr. Kay Tye	Sebene Selassie
Dr. Lisa Miller	Spring Washam
Haley Nahman	Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

HEALING THROUGH ART

In our second year collaborating with NYU’s Steinhardt Graduate School of Art Therapy, faculty and students guided visitors in creative art-making exercises designed to encourage self-reflection and discovery. Presented in conjunction with the 2023 exhibitions and the theme of Life After, visitors had the opportunity to reflect on ideas of transition, impermanence, and the unknown.

“I felt more relaxed, centered, and hopeful after the experience. It was also nice to meet new people and learn about them through their art making.”

“Connection with other people was inspiring. The openness to discuss difficult aspects of life is liberating.”

“Accessing and describing internal realities in a new setting with new people that I could trust was affirmative.”

“Even in this short session, I feel it really helped me to process emotions I didn’t even know I was having.”

ACCESS PROGRAMS

SENIOR THURSDAY

On the first Thursday of every month, the Rubin Museum of Art welcomes older adults (65 and older) to receive free admission to the galleries.

MEMORY CONNECTIONS

Memory Connections (previously named Mindful Connections) is a free program for people living with dementia and their caregivers. On the second Thursday of every month, trained teaching artists and special performers facilitate an online experience designed to promote engagement between participants and the art and cultures of the Himalayan region. Experienced teaching artists present objects from the Museum's collection in a way that is stimulating and interactive, encouraging conversation among participants and cultivating community, and the special performers guide participants through an activity that supports their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

In 2023 the Rubin held twelve virtual Memory Connections programs. Featured guests included Drukmo Gyal, a Tibetan medicine practitioner and mantra singer; Magda Kaczmarek, a dance artist and creative-aging thought leader; and Lavina Shamdasani, a certified Compassion Cultivation Training® (CCT™) instructor.

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS

Empowering Caregivers is a free in-person program that takes place on a bimonthly basis. At this program designed specifically for caregivers, Rubin docents and staff lead close looking, creative exercises, and engaging discussion in the galleries. The program begins with a tour and conversation, which explore how contemporary and traditional Buddhist artworks can inspire new perspectives and pathways to empowerment. Participants are invited to consider the power dynamics in their own lives and open their minds to a different understanding of their own agency. The program is followed by a gathering in Café Serai, where participants can enjoy complimentary refreshments and lively conversation to build connections and strengthen the caregiver community. In 2023 the Rubin hosted six Empowering Caregivers programs.

FAMILY AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS

FAMILY SUNDAYS

In 2023 we held a total of forty-eight Family Sunday programs at the Museum. This free art-making workshop takes place almost every Sunday of the year from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. The program is free for the entire family and includes free access to the Museum galleries.

Every month we explore a new theme with an art-making activity centered around that theme. The program is intended for an intergenerational audience. The art activities are accessible to children as young as three years old yet dynamic enough for children up to twelve years old to enjoy.

LOSAR FAMILY DAY

February marked our first in-person Losar Family Day celebration since 2020. We welcomed about six hundred visitors. The festivities included an exquisite Himalayan butter sculpture (*torma*) demonstration and a student performance by YindaYin, a Tibetan American educational enrichment organization.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In 2023 there were fourteen Math & Mandalas residencies, which took place in a hybrid format with an increased number of students visiting the Museum in person for guided tours. This interdisciplinary program serves Title I students from across New York City. It deepens students' understanding of the geometry and symmetry that underlie the mandala art form. Participants study the patterns in mandalas in the Rubin's collection and learn about the many symbolic layers of meaning. Then they create their own mandala-derived images, using basic printmaking techniques.

In the 3D Mandalas art workshop, students draw inspiration from the mandalas in the Rubin's collection to form three-dimensional architectural sculptures. As students create their own mandalas, they reflect on the inner treasures of joy, peace, and fulfillment that fill each room.

In the Journey Maps art workshop, students use scrolls, block prints, and maps from the Museum's collection as points of inspiration. Instead of making literal maps, students reflect on how practicing self-compassion and interpersonal awareness can help us cross the desert of our challenge or scale the mountain of adversity. Both Math & Mandalas and the Museum's art workshops integrate Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning® principles.

FAMILY AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS, CONTINUED

CURRICULUM AND SEE LEARNING®

The Museum's school and family programs, including the Mandala Lab curriculum, integrate Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning® principles. SEE Learning® is a social and emotional learning program that includes attention training, the cultivation of compassion for the self and others, and resiliency skills. SEE Learning® is the result of a decades-long partnership between Emory University and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Rubin is the first museum to incorporate SEE Learning methodology into educational programming. The recurrent themes of mindfulness, compassion, and interdependence in the Rubin's art collection dovetail powerfully with the SEE Learning® program's emphasis on educating both the heart and mind to create a more harmonious classroom community and wider world.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

EDUCATOR EVENTS

In 2023 the Rubin welcomed teachers to an Educator Open House and three Professional Development Workshops. The Open House featured an immersive sound bath experience in the Mandala Lab, guided tours of the Museum, and a 3D Mandalas art workshop to give teachers a glimpse of what their students would experience at the Rubin firsthand. The Professional Development Workshops served as an introduction to SEE Learning® with tours of the Mandala Lab and art workshops. The Rubin's Manager of School and Family Programs Jacqueline Smith completed her certification as a SEE Learning® facilitator in 2023 and delivered SEE Learning® presentations to participating teachers.



Photograph by Filip Wolak



Photograph by Filip Wolak

IMPACT



A GROWING GLOBAL COMMUNITY

4,220

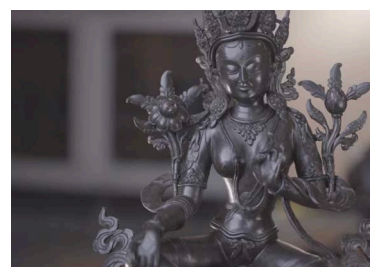
visitors to the free opening weekend of *Death Is Not the End*



Photograph by Filip Wolak

18,500

visitors and 17 school groups to the Mandala Lab in London



25,000+

users explored the Project Himalayan Art digital platform

8,570

children and adults served through School and Family Programs



Photograph by Filip Wolak

15,230

visitors to *Gateway to Himalayan Art* in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts



Photograph by Ryan Hulvat

745,300

downloads of Rubin podcasts



ENGAGING OUR GENEROUS DONORS

ASIA WEEK CELEBRATION

The Rubin Museum celebrated Asia Week New York with a reception to launch the Rubin's ambitious multiyear initiative Project Himalayan Art. The event gathered trustees, donors, colleagues, Project Himalayan Art contributors, friends, and members of Himalayan communities for an evening filled with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, conversation, and a presentation from Rubin Museum Executive Director Jorrit Britschgi and curators Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova. The reception also offered guests a preview of the newly updated *Gateway to Himalayan Art* exhibition on the Museum's second floor, the inspiration for Project Himalayan Art's traveling exhibition of the same name.

Asia Week New York brings together top-tier Asian art specialists, auction house leaders, curators, collectors, global travelers, and more in the New York metropolitan area to celebrate Asian art and culture.

In 2023 we nearly reached our ambitious \$3.2 million multiyear goal. We thank our generous Project Himalayan Art donors and funders for their visionary support, and look forward to launching the next phase of this major initiative.

MANDALA LAB, LONDON OPENING

On September 16 the Rubin celebrated the opening of the traveling Mandala Lab at Canary Wharf as part of the London Design Festival. Attendees of the special opening event enjoyed an exclusive gong-and-water improvisation by renowned percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie and London's first-ever community Breath-In, a synchronized breathing practice to help invoke a baseline for well-being. There was also a private reception at the TRIBE Hotel.

The Rubin's traveling Mandala Lab offers a free and accessible contemplative experience in public spaces in cities around the world. It invites visitors to participate in five thought-provoking experiences that guide an inner journey focused on self-awareness and awareness of others.

As of December 2023, the Rubin has raised \$3.2 million towards the Mandala Lab multiyear initiative, exceeding the initial goal. Fundraising continues as the Mandala Lab's experiences expand both digitally and to venues around the world, fulfilling a timely societal need for emotional literacy.



Photograph by Ali Smith

ENGAGING OUR GENEROUS DONORS, CONTINUED

REIMAGINE: HIMALAYAN ART NOW EVENTS

REIMAGINE INSIDER'S CALL

In preparation for our twentieth-anniversary exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, the Rubin hosted a virtual Insider's Call for trustees, donors, and key stakeholders during the project's planning and development phase. Moderated by Jorrit Britschgi, co-curators Michelle Bennett Simorella, Tsewang Lhamo, and Roshan Mishra provided a sneak peek into the exciting process of convening over thirty contemporary artists for the large-scale exhibition.

CELEBRATE OUR UPCOMING TWENTIETH-ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION—REIMAGINE: HIMALAYAN ART NOW

On December 6, trustees, donors, curators, artists, and friends of the Rubin were invited to join an inspiring celebration of *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* prior to the exhibition's debut in March 2024 for the Rubin's twentieth anniversary. The evening began with a warm welcome from Commissioner Manuel Castro of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and featured an exciting preview of the exhibition as it neared its opening day.

Reimagine artists Yeshe and IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) provided fascinating insights into their work and how it is influenced by their experiences and cultures. Yeshe also gave a moving musical performance, featuring a song to be performed as part of *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* in fall 2024. The evening's program concluded with a short video showcasing an array of the diverse works featured in the exhibition.

Fundraising for *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* began in 2023 and remains ongoing as the exhibition will travel to the Wrightwood 659 gallery in Chicago in November 2024.





Photograph by Liz Ligon

MEMBERS MATTER

Our members are the life of the Rubin. Your support is what makes the Rubin such a warm, special place. You help us grow and evolve. You bring your insights and love of learning. We are so grateful!

In 2023 we had 1,550 members join us. Members enjoyed a special film screening and the New York City debut of the film *Above and Below*, an exclusive members' tea and tour of *Death Is Not the End*, and a tour of the exhibition *We Tried to Warn You!* at a neighboring museum, Poster House.



Photograph by Ali Smith

“The Rubin Museum’s exhibitions provide a space to explore the profound depths of human experience and go beyond cultural borders.” —Rubin member



Photograph by Liz Ligon

**“Attending events at the Rubin has been eye-opening! The discussions/ tours here push the boundaries of conventional thought and inspire new ways of seeing the world.”
—Rubin member**



Photograph by Ali Smith

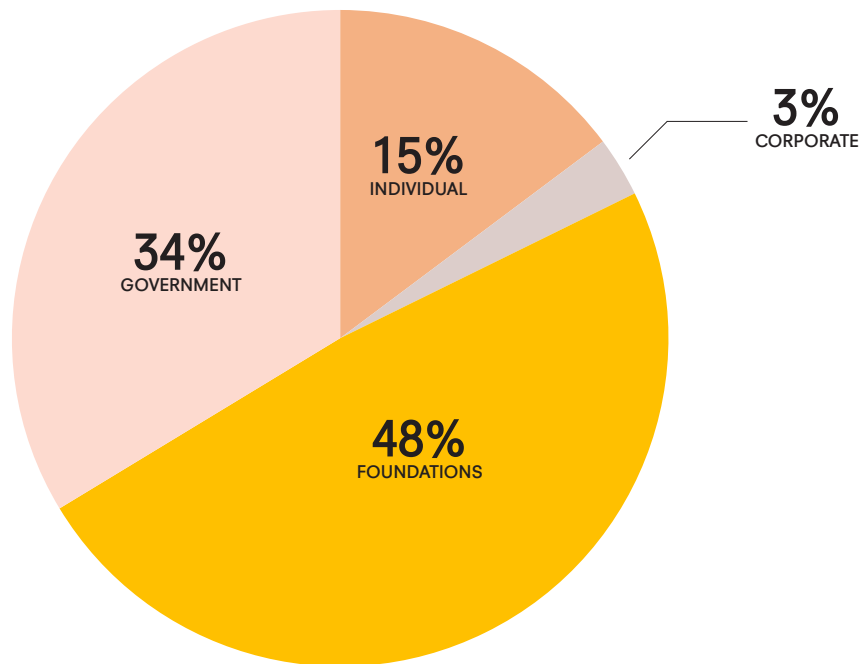
“The meditation sessions at the Rubin are a sanctuary of peace.”—Rubin member



Photograph by Liz Ligon

INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

We celebrate all the supporters who made gifts of cash and pledges in 2023. Because of your generosity, the Rubin Museum can continue to illuminate the art and ideas from the Himalayan region and foster the kind of world we all want to live in—one that is compassionate, inspired, and meaningful.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 DONORS



Photograph by Liz Ligon

DONORS (INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT)

\$100,000+

Barbara Bowman
Fred Eychaner
Henry Luce Foundation
The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation
Mellon Foundation
The Randleigh Foundation Trust
The Robert H. N. Ho Family
Foundation Global
Shelley and Donald Rubin

\$50,000 – \$99,000

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Jesse Smith and Annice Kenan
Taipei Cultural Center in New York

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UOVO
Tong-Tong Zhu and Jianing Liu

The Rubin Museum's programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

The Rubin Museum's programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

The Mandala Lab multiyear initiative and *Death Is Not the End* are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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

Project Himalayan Art was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services MA-253379—MS-23.



MOST GENEROUS SUPPORTERS: GIVING \$100,000+ DURING THE LIFE OF THE RUBIN

Enormous thanks to the generous individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies that have given gifts of \$100,000 or more during the life of the Rubin Museum.



Photograph by Liz Ligon

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Institute of Museum and Library Services
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New York Life
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The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation
The Prospect Hill Foundation
Beatrice and David Pritzker
The Randleigh Foundation Trust
Rasika and Girish Reddy
The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Global
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
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Shelley and Donald Rubin
Linda Schejola
Eric and Alexandra Schoenberg
Eileen Caulfield Schwab
Science Sandbox, an initiative of the Simons Foundation
The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation
The Sikh Art and Film Foundation
Manoj and Rita Singh
Jesse Smith and Annice Kenan
Christopher Stamos
John J. Studzinski
Tiger Baron Foundation
U.S. Trust
Jeffrey and Suzanne Walker

LENDING PARTNERS AND IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to the many individuals and companies that lent artworks and gave gifts-in-kind, including gifts of technology, works of art, and wise counsel. We are grateful to you!



Dr. Tanpa Thondup and Family
Eugene and Leonid Lantsman
Pritzker Collection
SDR Himalayan and Indian
Collection LLC
Sylvie Sauveniere
The Jacques Marchais Museum
of Tibetan Art
The Newark Museum
Chaofu Collection
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
Free Library of Philadelphia
Museum aan de Stroom
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
The Museum of Fine
Arts, Boston
The Morgan Library & Museum
The Nelson-Atkins
Museum of Art
The New York Public Library,
Astor, Lenox, and Tilden
Foundations
Philadelphia Museum of Art
San Antonio Museum of Art
Seattle Art Museum
Steven Kossak, The Kronos
Collection
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art
Center, Vassar College
Wellcome Collection, London
Shushank Shrestha
Uma Bista
Monsal Pekar
Kabi Raj Lama
Eugene "Luke" Pollock
Collection
Jaroslov Poncar
Project 88
Palden Weinreb

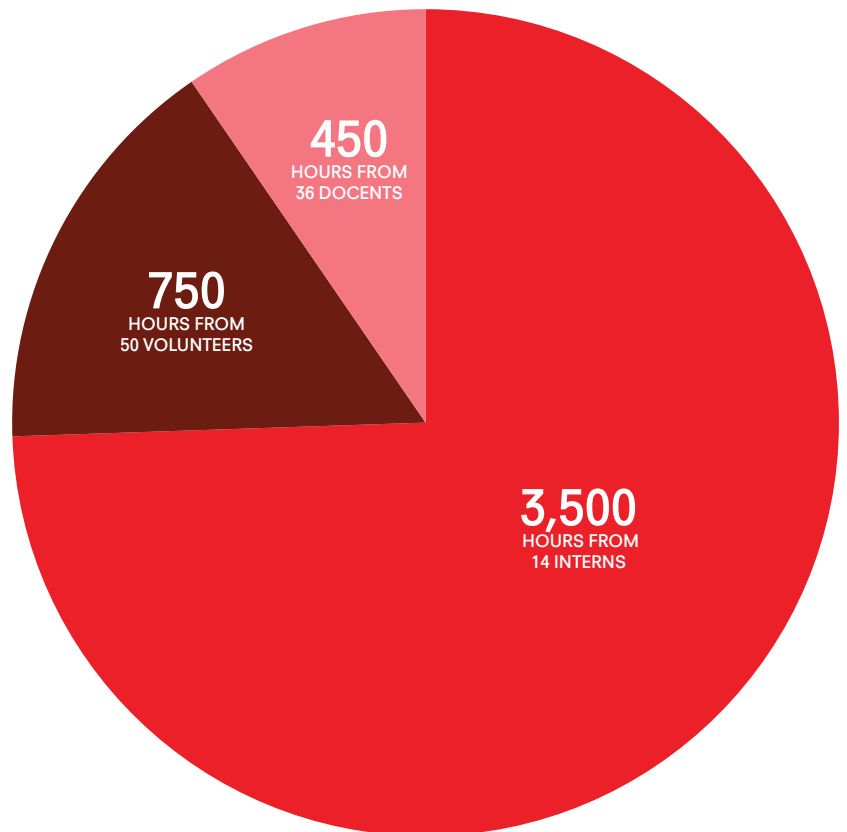
Meredith Wong
Olivia Cohen
Marygrace Berberian
Rohita Kilachand
Ikuko Acosta

VOLUNTEER AND DOCENT SUPPORT

Volunteers contribute to many areas of the Museum, providing docent tours, assisting with education programs and big events, and helping with other important services. Thank you to the volunteers who gave their time and expertise in 2023!

INTERNS AND DOCENTS SUPPORT MANY AREAS OF THE MUSEUM:

- School and Family Programs
- Marketing and Communications
- Curatorial
- Tibetan Language Support
- The Shop
- Programming
- Himalayan Heritage Programs
- Development
- Collections Management
- Evaluation
- Community Outreach
- And More



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

at December 31, 2023

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$846,283
Unconditional promises to give	569,325
Restricted for future periods and programs	782,000
Accounts receivable	59,066
Museum publication, shop, and café inventory	789,568
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	456,531
Investments in marketable securities	160,890,326
Total Current Assets	\$164,393,099

Property and Equipment	\$ 28,580,606
Contributions Receivable	\$ 783,049
Accrued Rental Income	\$ 205,564
Operating Leasing Right-of-Use-Asset	\$ 249,764

Total Assets	\$194,212,082
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$1,629,430
Tenant security deposits	200,458
Deferred membership and other income	74,950
Operating lease liability	257,008
Total Current Liabilities	\$2,161,846

Net Assets

Unrestricted	
Board-designated funds	\$126,476,086
Other unrestricted	29,199,395
Temporarily restricted	11,374,753
Permanent restricted	25,000,002
Total Net Assets	\$192,050,236

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$194,212,082
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STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

for the year ending December 31, 2023

REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT

Public Support

Contributions and donations	\$310,879
Grants and sponsorships	2,439,187
Membership dues	247,980
Total Public Support	\$2,998,046

Revenues from Programs and Activities

Museum admission fees	\$391,558
Program fees	191,444
Facility rental income	213,923
Merchandise and catalog sales	419,174
Other revenue	31,310
Total Revenue from Programs and Activities	\$1,247,409

Rental Income	\$1,661,007
Net Investment Income	\$26,278,145

Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support **\$32,184,607**

EXPENSES

Program Services

Collections and exhibitions	\$4,961,232
Publications	496,771
Programs & Engagement	1,955,562
Shop	722,362
Public relations and marketing	1,542,206
Total Program Services	\$9,678,133

Supporting Services

Management and general	\$4,369,659
Development	1,055,776
Total Supporting Services	\$5,425,435

Rental Real Estate Activities **\$906,188**

Total Expenses **\$16,009,756**

Change in Net Assets **\$16,174,851**

WAYS TO SUPPORT

The Rubin Museum is only as strong as our supporters. You help us create a space for learning, contemplation, inspiration, community, and art. Join us!

With your support, we can cultivate learning, promote understanding, and inspire personal connections to the art and cultures of the Himalayan region for our public—locally, nationally, and internationally. Visit rubinmuseum.org/support to learn more.

BECOME A MEMBER OR GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

Member support is vital. In thanks for joining our community, you gain behind-the-scenes access, invitations to exclusive events, free admission to Mindfulness Meditation, unlimited entry to the galleries, *Spiral* magazine mailed to your home, and more.

MAKE A DONATION

Your support helps make art and timeless wisdom come alive. Consider making a fully tax-deductible donation to our Annual Fund, participating in your employer's matching gift program, and supporting future generations with a Legacy Gift.

GIVE A MAJOR GIFT

By making a gift of \$5,000 and above, you will be recognized widely while learning how your investment is making a major impact here and around the world.

SUPPORT WITH FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE GIVING

We invite connections to your philanthropic organizations. Foundation giving is essential for major initiatives, traveling exhibitions, digital and in-person programs, and K-12 school learning and teacher resources. Corporate sponsorship, starting at \$10,000, offers your company branding recognition. Corporate membership, beginning at \$5,000, fosters a deeper connection between your company and the Rubin, and includes special perks.

A NOTE ON FUNDRAISING

With the launch of two multiyear campaigns in 2021—Project Himalayan Art and the Mandala Lab—the Rubin Museum raised more support from major donors, foundations, and government public funding than ever before. In 2023 we exceeded our overall fundraising goal by 151%. Piloting new ways of reaching audiences of all ages with innovative programs while increasing the Museum's unprecedented worldwide reach will continue to open doors for the Rubin—attracting multiyear funding opportunities from generous donors and institutional supporters.



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AMBHAVA
IES

...that presides over the
of the Buddhas of the Five
...is associated with a
...ing is from a list of five
...buddhas. Ratnasambhava
...associated with wealth,
...deity Jambhala are shown
...ring.

...strictly organized with each
...way that reflects his or her
...ance. Ratnasambhava is
...so he is the largest figure
...is a richly bejeweled,
...and gilded, as is typical
...subject and period. The
...padding, and abundance
...te this work from earlier

...ve over this art

Photograph by Filip Wolak

2023 STAFF DIRECTORY

at December 31, 2023

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Michelle Bennett Simorella, *Director of Curatorial Administration and Collections*

Jorrit Britschgi, *Executive Director*

Marilena Christodoulou, *Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial and Operating Officer*

Elke Dehner, *Director of Marketing and Communications*

Jamie Lawyer, *Director of Visitor Experience and Interpretation/Chief Experience Officer*

Dona Lee Kelly, *Director of Development*

Tim McHenry, *Deputy Executive Director/Chief Programmatic Officer*

William Umana, *Executive Assistant, Director's Office*

COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS MANAGEMENT

Danielle Butterfly, *Assistant Collections Manager/Registrar*

Linda Colet, *Head of Collections Management and Provenance Research*

Kirstin Clouser, *Exhibitions Manager*

Stephanie Fischer, *Coordinator, Curatorial Administration and Collections*

Christina Johnson, *Registrar*

CURATORIAL

Karl Debreczeny, *Senior Curator, Collections and Research*

Elena Pakhoutova, *Senior Curator, Himalayan Art*

DEVELOPMENT

Dana Boll, *Senior Manager, Institutional Philanthropy*

Gillian Mendez, *Manager, Membership and Development Operations*

Francesca Paldino, *Coordinator, Major Gifts and Institutional Philanthropy*

Madeleine Schulz, *Coordinator, Membership and Development Operations*

EXHIBITION DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Brianne Muscente-Solga, *Senior Manager, Exhibition Design*

FACILITIES OPERATIONS

Sierra Bailey, *Operations Coordinator*

Michael Bricker, *Chief of Engineering*

Sharif Hassan, *Senior Manager, Audio Visual*

Atul Khedekar, *Manager of Security*

Kevin Ryan, *Manager of Operations*

Albert Siebenaler, *Head of Facilities Operations*

2023 STAFF DIRECTORY, CONTINUED

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Hazel King, *Head of Human Resources*

Kyle Jiang, *Assistant Manager, Budgets and
Accounts Payable*

Audrey Shea, *Manager of Volunteers and Interns, PT*

Ahnaf Sheik, *Accountant*

Lauren Smith, *Coordinator, Administrations and Sales*

Joni Todd, *Senior Manager, Finance*

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Devon Charles, *Senior Manager, Information Technology*

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Vincent Baker, *Manager of Web Engineering*

KJ Bowen, *Senior Creative Manager*

Bryce Goyer, *Assistant Social Media Manager*

Sandrine Milet, *Senior Manager, Marketing and
Communications*

Brigitte Ugarte, *Assistant Graphic and Digital Designer*

Olivia Wise, *Marketing Manager*

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Lillian Beeson, *Coordinator, Programs and
Partnerships, PT*

Tashi Chödrön, *Himalayan Programs and
Communities Ambassador*

Jacqueline D. Smith, *Manager, School and
Family Programs*

VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION

Rebecca Archer, *Manager, Visitor Experience
and Interpretation*

Maria Clara Rios Cacua, *Visitor Experience Associate, PT*

Mary-Benning Cannon, *Coordinator, Visitor Experience
and Interpretation*

Hanna Choi, *Visitor Experience Associate, PT*

Bennett Ferguson, *Visitor Experience Associate, PT*

Tenzin Gelek, *Senior Specialist, Himalayan Arts and Culture*

Melissa Lino, *Visitor Experience Associate, PT*

Shelby Street, *Coordinator, Box Office and Group Visits*

Stephanie Tarras, *Assistant Manager of Docent and
Access Programs*

PUBLICATIONS AND EDITORIAL

Kimon Keramidas, *Head of Digital Content and Strategy*

Gracie Marotta, *Coordinator, Editorial and Digital Content*

Christina Watson, *Writer and Editor, Digital Content*

Sarah Zabrodski, *Senior Manager, Editorial
and Publications*

SHOP

Maria Mawo, *Operations Coordinator*

Erika Mieles, *Senior Sales Associate*

Prisane Suwanwatana, *Senior Manager, the Shop*

SPECIAL EVENTS AND GROUP VISITS

Leah Frederick, *Senior Manager of Special Events*

Pam Wangchuk, *Café Associate, PT*

