

RUBIN

Museum of
Himalayan Art

Annual Report



2024

Mission statement

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.

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Core values

Boldness

We recognize that change is constant and therefore welcome innovation, taking risks, rethinking norms, and being adaptable in pursuit of our mission.

Collaboration

We foster mutually rewarding relationships among staff, partners, and the people in our communities in which collaborators are supported and empowered in their activities.

Insightfulness

We offer opportunities for people to learn and gain new insights and perspectives about Himalayan art and cultures, themselves, and the world.

Compassion

We put empathy in action by being open and accessible to all and cultivating awareness and the skills for compassion.

Integrity

We demonstrate accountability and a commitment to the objects in the collection and people who created them by acting in alignment with our values and mission.



Choying Dorje (Tenth Karmapa); Green Tara; Tibet; 17th century; brass with pigments; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; C2005.16.3a-b



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Letter from the director





Dear Supporters and Friends,

We are pleased to share highlights from 2024, a year of great importance, as we celebrated our twentieth anniversary and announced a major transformation of our operating model, boldly redefining what it means to be a museum in the twenty-first century. In October we said farewell to our galleries at 150 West 17th Street and ushered in a new era as a global museum without a central physical location, aspiring to share Himalayan art with more people in more places, through traveling exhibitions, partnerships, and collection sharing.

This new model will advance global initiatives like our Mandala Lab, which traveled to Milan in 2024 as part of a partnership with Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano, and our educational initiative Project Himalayan Art, which has proven to be an invaluable resource in the field. As part of Project Himalayan Art, the exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art* continued its national tour in 2024, stopping at the University of Florida and Otterbein University in Ohio. Expanding our global impact, we launched a grant program and the Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize with the aim of supporting the exciting work of artists and researchers inspired by Himalayan artistic and cultural practices.

During the final year in our New York City building, we unveiled the special exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, which presented the work of thirty-two contemporary artists from the Himalayas, Asia, and diaspora in dialogue with objects from the Rubin's collection. The exhibition later traveled to Wrightwood 659 in Chicago where it introduced even more people to new ways of understanding Himalayan art. Continuing our commitment

to supporting living artists from the region and expanding our collection, the Rubin also acquired artworks by three of the *Reimagine* artists in 2024.

Our in-person and online programs explored how releasing attachments can create space for new ways of seeing, thinking, and being. In *Spiral* magazine, the AWAKEN podcast, and onstage talks, we heard from a variety of people who have shifted their perspectives to imagine new possibilities.

On October 6, 2024, we welcomed the last visitors to our galleries on 17th Street and hosted a public ceremony that included a procession of hundreds of flags designed by five artists from *Reimagine* and inscribed with well wishes from Museum visitors. Later that month, we reintroduced ourselves as a global museum with an updated name—Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art—and a completely reconceived new website.

Thank you for your unwavering support throughout this year and belief in our mission to bring greater understanding and appreciation of Himalayan art to as large and diverse an audience as possible. In our new model, the Rubin continues to rely on donors 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 in the decades to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Jorrit Britschgi
Executive Director

The last year at 150 West 17th Street

THE
RUBIN

MUSEUM
OF
ART

IMAGII

Photograph by Liz Ligon

Reframe: a yearlong exploration

Since 2004 the Rubin has aimed to spark connections between Himalayan art and contemporary life. In 2024, a year of transition for the Rubin, our exhibitions and programs centered on the unifying theme of Reframe, inspired by the Buddhist concept of non-attachment.

Drawing on a diverse range of perspectives—from artists, Buddhist practitioners, scientists, writers, and more—we explored how releasing our attachments to stories, beliefs, and identities that no longer serve us creates space for new ways of seeing, thinking, and being, helping us to reframe our perspective.





Exhibitions

Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now

Special Exhibition
March 15–October 6, 2024

Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now presented the art of thirty-two contemporary artists from the Himalayas, Asia, and diaspora whose work was presented in dialogue with objects from the Rubin's collection, inviting new ways of encountering traditional Himalayan art.

The artists explored their personal and collective histories and called attention to themes such as the fluidity of identity, spiritual practices, sense of belonging, grief, memory, and reclamation. They also offered critical and thoughtful commentary on issues facing humanity across time.

Accompanying the exhibition were three durational performances developed under the mentorship of the Marina Abramović Institute, a pioneer in durational performance. The newly launched video series *Artists in Focus* highlighted four artists from *Reimagine* sharing their artistic practice and inspiration behind their work in the exhibition.

Monkey Mask; Bhutan;
ca. 19th century; wood
with pigments; Rubin
Museum of Himalayan
Art; gift of Bruce Miller
and Jane Casey; C2016.1



Mandala Lab

Permanent Installation
Through October 6, 2024

Inspired by powerful Buddhist principles, the Mandala Lab was an interactive space that featured five thought-provoking, playful experiences that guided people along an inner journey focused on self-awareness and awareness of others. Visitors would see, smell, touch, and breathe their way through the space, designed to inspire connection, empathy, and learning. The floor also functioned as the home for school and family programs, connecting younger generations to the teachings expressed in Himalayan art through Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning®.

Sarvavid Vairochana
Mandala; Tibet; 17th century;
ground mineral pigment
on cotton; Rubin Museum
of Himalayan Art; gift of
Shelley and Donald Rubin;
C2006.66.346 (HAR 773)



Photograph by Ed Reeve

Exhibitions, continued

Masterworks: A Journey Through Himalayan Art

Permanent Collection Exhibition
Through October 6, 2024

Masterworks: A Journey Through Himalayan Art explored major strands in the development of art from the Himalayan region covering a period of more than one thousand years. *Masterworks* was organized geographically and chronologically, showcasing diverse Tibetan regional traditions in relation to neighboring eastern Indian, Kashmiri, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Chinese, and Mongolian areas. Juxtaposing the art of Himalayan regions over time shed light on the geographic, historical, religious, and artistic interrelationships among these cultures.

Gateway to Himalayan Art

Permanent Collection Exhibition
Through October 6, 2024

Gateway to Himalayan Art introduced visitors to the main forms, concepts, meanings, and artistic practices of Himalayan art. A large map oriented visitors and highlighted Himalayan cultural regions represented in the Rubin Museum's collection, including Tibetan, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Indian, Chinese, and Mongolian areas. Visitors explored exemplary objects organized in thematic sections: Figures and Symbols, Materials and Techniques, and Purpose and Function. Extensive didactic graphics and in-gallery digital materials helped visitors engage with the fundamentals of Himalayan art.



Photograph by KJ Bowen

Exhibitions, continued

Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room

Permanent Collection Exhibition
Through October 6, 2024

The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room provided an immersive experience inspired by a traditional shrine. Art and ritual objects were displayed as they would in an elaborate private household shrine, a space used for offerings, devotional prayer, rituals, and contemplation. The design of the Shrine Room showcased these objects while incorporating elements of traditional Tibetan architecture and the color schemes of Tibetan homes.

Butter Lamp; Tibet;
18th century; metal, silver;
Rubin Museum of Himalayan
Art; gift of Ralph Redford;
C2008.27 (HAR 57010)



Photograph by Filip Wolak





Programs

School and family programs

The Rubin and SEE Learning®

The Rubin's school and family programs incorporate Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning® methodology, a program developed by Emory University's Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics that includes attention training, the cultivation of compassion for the self and others, and resiliency skills. Through SEE Learning® students develop a deeper understanding of their emotional needs for compassion, safety, and trust, and the needs of others. The SEE Learning® curriculum includes mindfulness exercises such as mindful looking and mindful breathing.

Professional Development Workshops

This year we offered two daylong Professional Development Workshops for Teachers. The workshops included a tour of the Mandala Lab, an art workshop integrating SEE Learning®, and a SEE Learning® presentation. We also partnered with GROOVE NYC, an organization dedicated to integrating social and emotional learning with movement and dance, to deliver a mindful movement component each day.

Camp at the Rubin

In July we hosted a weeklong camp in partnership with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Matters, a New York City Department of Education affiliated organization that provides free educational enrichment for students. The camp welcomed twenty fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students for a week of fun-filled discovery at the Rubin, integrating the study of art and mathematics. Campers learned about the mandala through the lens of mathematics, explored the galleries, and participated in mindful movement with our partners at GROOVE NYC.

Math & Mandalas

The Math & Mandalas residency program took place in a hybrid format and had 225 participants. Participants studied the patterns and learned about the symbolism in mandalas in the Rubin's collection, and created their own mandala-derived images using basic printmaking techniques. This interdisciplinary program served Title I students from across New York City. Additionally, through our Mandala Lab tours and art-making workshops for students, we welcomed another 625 students to the Museum during the year.

Family Sundays

The Rubin welcomed over three thousand children three and older and their parents for free weekly art-making workshops, including free access to the Museum galleries. Each month families explored a new theme with an art-making activity centered around that theme. Each quarter the Rubin partnered with The Culture Tree, a nonprofit organization dedicated to South Asian cultural enrichment, to provide story time, dance, and yoga for the families, enhancing their knowledge of significant holidays from the greater Himalayan region such as Holi and Raksha Bandhan.

Losar Family Day

In February we welcomed over eight hundred attendees to our Losar Family Day celebration. The festivities included a Himalayan butter sculpture (*torma*) demonstration and live music. The Rubin partnered with YindaYin, a Tibetan American educational enrichment organization, whose students performed traditional songs, dances, and music in the theater.

Programs, continued

Adult programs

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation is a forty-five-minute weekly program inspired by works of art from the Rubin's collection and led by expert teachers. Each session is framed around a theme and also released as a weekly podcast.

Teachers explored themes such as Rebirth, Interconnectedness, and Transformation. The culminating program at 150 West 17th Street was led by three longstanding Mindfulness Meditation teachers and celebrated women's leadership in American Buddhism.

On October 10, we reopened the Mindfulness Meditation series at New York Insight Meditation Center, just twelve blocks from the Museum building, where the Rubin continues to offer programs by expert teachers weekly.

Teachers

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

K2 Friday Nights

On Friday nights the Rubin's Café Serai transformed into the K2 Lounge and Museum patrons enjoyed free gallery entry and tours accompanied by music, cocktails, and entertainment. Our roster of DJs brought a festive, international ambiance to each program.

DJs

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

Dark Retreats

Dark retreat practitioner and dharma teacher Justin von Bujdoss led three experiential workshops in the Rubin's theater focused on the esoteric practice of dark retreats. During the workshops participants were immersed in total darkness for up to forty minutes. After light stimuli were gradually reintroduced, attendees reflected and made drawings about their experiences. This practice is a simulation of the bardo, the transitional period between death and rebirth.



Photograph by Filip Wolak

Programs, continued

Himalayan Heritage

The Rubin offered three Himalayan Heritage programs, a series that immerses visitors in the art, culture, history, and sacred traditions of the greater Himalayan region. The first event was an experiential program in partnership with Nyingma Palyul Dharma Center in Queens that delved into the Tibetan Buddhist concept of the bardo. For the second program, the Rubin partnered with the Buddhist Council of New York to mark Saga Dawa, the holiest month in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar. The final program was conducted in partnership with the Buddhist Digital Resource Center and featured a talk by scholar Donald S. Lopez, a dramatic Buddhist reading by actor and writer Michael Imperioli, and a new musical interpretation of a Tibetan Buddhist poem by artist, writer, and vocalist Laurie Anderson.

Guests

- Donald S. Lopez
- Khenpo Tenzin Norgay Rinpoche
- Lama Pasang Gurung
- Lama Ugen Rongdrol Palden
- Laurie Anderson
- Michael Imperioli

Artists on Art

Artists featured in the exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* led a series of talks on K2 Friday Nights. These talks were free and open to the public and provided an opportunity for visitors to engage with the artists in an intimate setting.

Participating Artists

- Bidhata KC
- Chimi Zangmo
- Kabi Raj Lama
- Shushank Shrestha
- IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha)
- Tenzin Mingyur Paldron

Laurie Anderson: About Time

In a series of four onstage conversations, artist, writer, and vocalist Laurie Anderson was joined by a group of her favorite thinkers. These thought-provoking conversations were designed to help us reframe our concept of time and perspectives on life.

Guests

- Benjamin Labatut
- Jane Hirshfield
- Tom McCarthy
- Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi





Programs, continued

Access programs

Senior Thursday

On the first Thursday of the month through September, the Rubin welcomed adults 65 and older for free admission to the galleries.

Memory Connections

Memory Connections was a free program for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Trained teaching artists and special performers facilitated an online experience designed to promote engagement between participants and the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region. Experienced teaching artists presented objects from the Museum's collection and encouraged conversation among participants. Special performers guided an activity to support physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

The Rubin held eight Memory Connections programs and co-presented seven programs with other organizations based in New York City such as 92Y, NYU Langone, and the Dublin-based organization Engaging Dementia.

Empowering Caregivers

The Rubin hosted six Empowering Caregivers programs, a free monthly program designed specifically for caregivers, during which Rubin docents and staff led close-looking exercises and discussion in the galleries. The program began with a tour and conversation, which explored how contemporary and traditional Buddhist artworks can inspire new perspectives and pathways to empowerment. It was followed by a gathering in Café Serai, where participants enjoyed complimentary refreshments and lively conversation.



Photograph by
C Butler



Engaging our donors

Asia Week Reimagine Preview Reception

On March 14, the Rubin celebrated Asia Week New York with a preview event of *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*. Nearly three hundred guests attended, including trustees, donors, colleagues, artists, friends, and members of Himalayan communities, for an evening filled with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and conversation.

Before opening the galleries to preview the exhibition, guests enjoyed a special performance as part of artist Sonam Dolma Brauen's *Field of Wishes* installation. A procession of forty participants led by Brauen and Geshe Lobsang Dorje culminated on the Museum's sixth floor with participants adding the finishing touches to Brauen's remarkable work. 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.

We raised nearly \$500,000 for *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, which was on view at the Museum through October 6 and then traveled to Wrightwood 659 in Chicago, where it opened November 8.

Member Reception

Our Member Appreciation Night on June 21 was a fun-filled community celebration. Members gathered in the Art Lounge where they enjoyed complimentary refreshments and received a special tote bag as a token of our gratitude.

Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now artist Shushank Shrestha joined the event as part of the Artists on Art talk series, offering a captivating glimpse into his creative process. After an engaging discussion in the galleries, he shared insights and conversed with guests.

Beyond the Spiral: A Gala Celebrating the Next 20 Years and Inaugural Himalayan Art Prize

On September 27, the Rubin hosted a gala to celebrate our twentieth anniversary and transformation into a global museum. The gala began with guests writing their good wishes on prayer flags designed by five artists in *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*.

Performers made the night distinctive: singer and songwriter Falu sang while descending the iconic spiral staircase, followed by a ceremonial conch performance by Lama Pema Kunsang. Multimedia artist and vocalist Laurie Anderson gave a moving tribute to founders Shelley and Donald Rubin's extraordinary legacy, and Nepalese artist Raju Lama sang an original song with musicians Prajwal Bajracharya, Shyam Nepali, and Bikash Rai while Rubin staff and volunteers carried a processional of prayer flags and ribbons of light.

The Rubin announced artist Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee as the recipient of the first Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize, and unveiled the remarkable bronze award statue created by artist and trustee Tsherin Sherpa and fabricated by artisans in Nepal. Following a report just hours earlier in the *New York Times*, gala guests were the first to hear publicly that the Rubin's beloved Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will find a home in the Brooklyn Museum in 2025.

With our supporters' astounding philanthropy and collective generosity, we raised \$310,783 for the Rubin's multiyear initiatives and programs.



Farewell weekend

From Thursday, October 3, through Sunday, October 6, ten thousand visitors said farewell to the Rubin galleries at 150 West 17th Street, which had been the Museum's home in Chelsea, New York City, for twenty years. This important moment ushered the Rubin into a new era as a global museum with a mission to share Himalayan art with more people in more places through traveling exhibitions, participatory experiences, partnerships, support for artists and researchers, and a dynamic digital platform. To mark the transition, the Rubin offered free admission all weekend, as well as a celebration event on Friday and a public ceremony on Sunday.

Flag Project 2024

In the final weeks leading up to the closing of the Rubin's 150 West 17th Street location, Museum visitors were invited to co-create flags bearing good wishes for the future. The flag templates were designed by five artists featured in the exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, including Asha Kama Wangdi, Kabi Raj Lama, Losel Yauch, Shushank Shrestha, and Yangdzom Lama.

This collaboration between Himalayan and diaspora artists and the general public drew upon the prayer-flag tradition of Himalayan regions. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, prayer flags are hung to generate merit and increase one's life force.

This initiative echoed how the Rubin opened the building twenty years prior on October 2, 2004. Led by contemporary artists Arlene Shechet and Kiki Smith, several artists created individual flags to salute this new home for art. These flags are now part of the Rubin's collection and were featured in the exhibition *Written on the Wind*.

Farewell ceremony

On Sunday, October 6, the Rubin held a public ceremony at 5:00 PM. It included a beautiful procession of hundreds of prayer flags inscribed with good wishes from visitors. As the front doors of the Museum closed, the flags were strung across the facade and out onto 17th Street, echoing the way the Rubin opened on October 2, 2004.



Photograph by
Filip Wolak

Global projects



Traveling exhibitions

Mandala Lab, Milan

March 24–April 21, 2024

A traveling version of the New York City installation made its third stop in Milan where it was free and open to the public at the cultural park BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano. With crowds lined up around the installation every weekend, over forty thousand visitors came to explore challenging emotions and their accompanying wisdoms. Weekly events produced by BAM invited the public to delve deeper into self-exploration through guided tours, workshops, and performances.

Gateway to Himalayan Art, Harn Museum of Art at University of Florida

February 13–July 28, 2024

This traveling exhibition made its third stop at the Harn Museum of Art in Gainesville, Florida. 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 intended to support the inclusion of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian art and cultures into undergraduate teaching on Asia.

Gateway to Himalayan Art, Frank Museum of Art at Otterbein University, Ohio

August 28–December 12, 2024

This traveling exhibition made its fourth stop at the Frank Museum of Art in Westerville, Ohio, welcoming local students, professors, and the public to learn about the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region.

Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now, Wrightwood 659, Chicago

November 8, 2024–February 15, 2025

After debuting in New York City, the second iteration of this exhibition opened at Wrightwood 659 and featured eighteen commissions as well as recent works across mediums—including painting, sculpture, sound, video, and installation—that reimagine the forms, symbols, and narratives found within the living cultural heritage of Tibetan, Nepalese, Bhutanese, and other Himalayan regions.

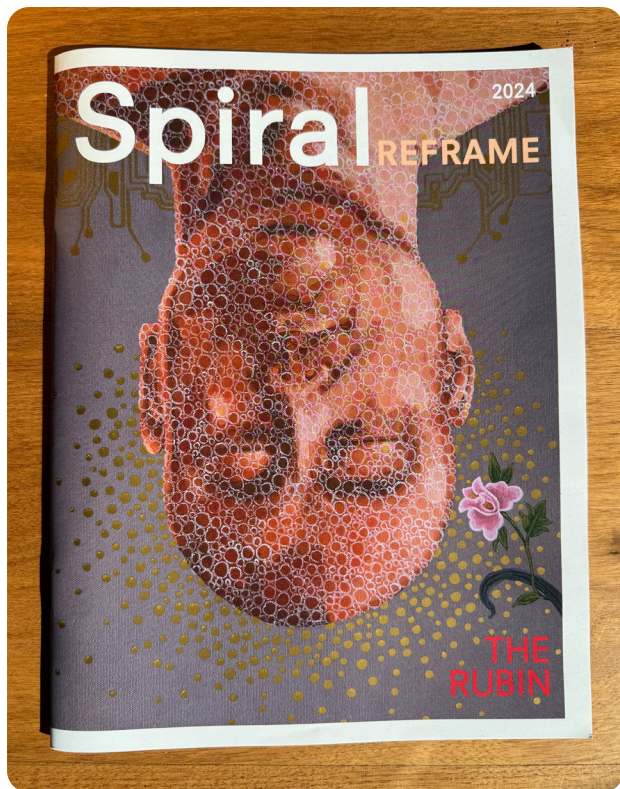




Multimedia projects

Spiral Magazine: Reframe Issue

The eighth issue of *Spiral*, a free annual magazine available in print and online, focused on the theme of Reframe. Authors and contributors examined the Buddhist concept of non-attachment and explored how releasing what no longer serves us creates space for new ways of seeing, thinking, and being. Highlights from the issue include an interview with Khandro-la about the true nature of mind, a look at attachment theory through the lens of psychology and social neuroscience from Dr. Pascal Vrtička, reflections from artist Yangdzom Lama on autistic meltdowns and her artistic process, and a series of personal stories about people who have experienced radical shifts in perspective. The cover art is a detail from artist Prithvi Shrestha's painting *Attachment*.



Mindfulness Meditation Podcast

Every week the Rubin presents a live Mindfulness Meditation session inspired by a different work of art from the Rubin's collection and led by a prominent meditation teacher. The Mindfulness Meditation podcast is a recording of the weekly practice, which includes an opening talk and a twenty-minute meditation session. Listeners learn to quiet the mind, open the heart, and engage with the world more consciously.

AWAKEN Podcast Season 4

Hosted by actress and filmmaker Isabella Rossellini, AWAKEN season 4 highlights Himalayan art from the Rubin to illuminate how attachment relates to the ego, love, interdependence, and freedom, as well as describe the path to practicing non-attachment and what it looks like to realize, moment to moment. Insights from artists, writers, psychologists, poets, Buddhist teachers, and others reveal how releasing what no longer serves us creates space for new ways of seeing, thinking, and being.

Guests

- Annabella Pitkin
- Asha Kama Wangdi
- Eve Ekman
- Fatimah Asghar
- Jenny Odell
- Ocean Vuong
- Prithvi Shrestha
- Reem Assil
- Richie Davidson
- Ross Gay
- Sonya Renee Taylor
- Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



New initiatives



Nurturing a new generation of artists and scholars

Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize

The Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize supports and celebrates the dynamic dialogue between Himalayan art and contemporary life, ensuring the rich cultural heritage of the greater Himalayan region continues to inspire and resonate globally.

On September 27, 2024, artist Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee received the inaugural Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Prize, an unrestricted \$30,000 cash prize and the largest award in support of contemporary art related to the greater Himalayan region. Based in Himachal Pradesh, India, Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee explores the paradoxes present in the seemingly ordinary things in life. As a second-generation Tibetan refugee, the artist uses different mediums to explore themes of displacement, belonging, and cultural heritage. Two of Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee's works were featured in the Rubin's 2024 exhibition *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*, and one of these works was acquired by the Rubin in 2024.

Art project and research grants

The Rubin launched an annual grant program, aiming to expand awareness and understanding of Himalayan art globally by supporting artists, creatives, and scholars in the field of Himalayan art. As part of the first award cycle, seventeen projects were selected from close to 150 applications from thirty countries. The grant sizes ranged from \$3,000 to \$25,000, depending on the scale and needs of each project, with total funding of nearly \$200,000. Selected projects will advance and generate further knowledge of this developing field through new exhibitions and research, documentation of historic art and architecture, digital resources and multimedia projects, and more.



Research grant winner Yubika Bhandari's submission, *Okubahal's Legacy: A Study of Tangible and Intangible Heritage*, aims to create a detailed photographic and descriptive record of Okubahal's rich artifacts, located in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

Explore Artwork

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འཇམ་མེད་ལྷ་མ་གྲིང་། . 大紅司命

Protector Begtse Chen

Mongolia
late 18th - early 19th century

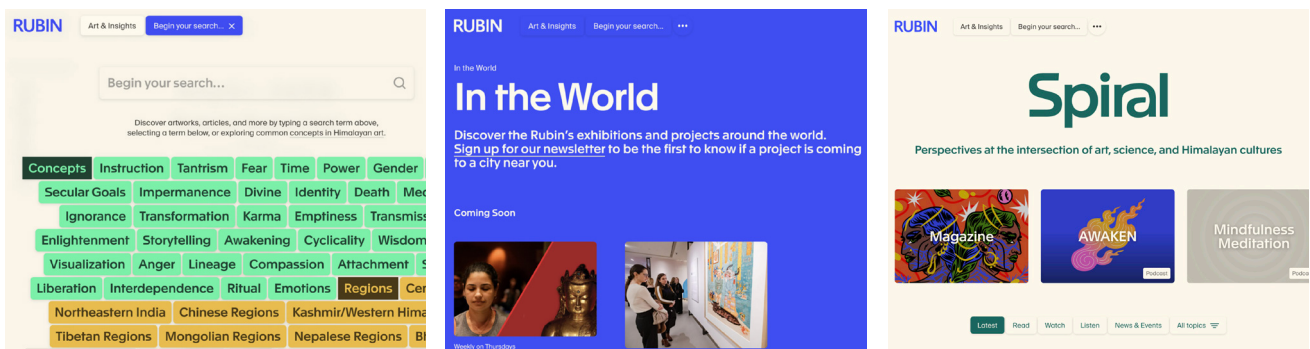


Refreshed visual identity, new website, and new name

On October 8, 2024, the Rubin reintroduced itself as a global museum with a refreshed brand identity and an updated name—Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art—that highlights our central focus.

These changes were reflected on a new website, which launched on the same day. The website now serves as a hub to discover the Rubin’s global projects and exhibitions and learn about Himalayan art and its insights. Dynamic new features include a “Begin Your Search” tool that unlocks different pathways of discovery across the website, expanded detail on over eight hundred collection object pages, and an “In the World” page to quickly identify current and upcoming initiatives around the globe.

A core component of the new website is the multimedia publication *Spiral*, which expands on the Rubin’s annual print magazine. In *Spiral*, visitors are invited to engage with rich digital content, including podcasts, articles, video series, and more. With the launch of the new website, the Rubin also debuted a collection of resources for educators to activate the concepts in the Mandala Lab in their classrooms.



Impact



Reaching more people in more places

32

contemporary artists featured in the exhibition
Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now



Photograph by Liz Ligon

23

commissioned artworks for
the exhibition *Reimagine:
Himalayan Art Now*



Photograph by Liz Ligon

376,500

downloads of Mindfulness
Meditation and AWAKEN
podcasts

40,000

visitors and school groups to
the Mandala Lab, Milan



Photograph by Dimitar Harizanov

60,230

visitors to *Gateway to Himalayan
Art* in Florida and Ohio



Photograph by Filip Wolak

\$229K

awarded to artists and scholars
through grants and the Rubin
Art Prize



Collection and scholarship



Photograph by KJ Bowen

About the collection

The Rubin'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.



The Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (1617-1682) with Previous Incarnations; Central Tibet; 18th century; pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, gift of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation; F1996.29.3

Gifts and purchases of objects

In 2024 there were a total of eleven objects accessioned, including four gifts and seven purchases. This expansion of the Rubin's collection included the acquisition of contemporary artworks by Himalayan artists Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee, Shraddha Shrestha, and Shushank Shrestha.



Shraddha Shrestha
(b. 1988, Lalitpur,
Nepal; lives in Lalitpur,
Nepal; works in
Kathmandu, Nepal);
Dus Mahavidyas
(Great Goddesses of
Wisdom); Tara, 2023;
acrylic on canvas;
Rubin Museum
of Himalayan Art;
C2024.3.3

Collection sharing

The Rubin shares its collection with museums and institutions around the world to facilitate a broader understanding of the arts of Asia. Central to our 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 Rubin also shares objects from the collection for short-term special exhibitions at other museums, as well as through traveling exhibitions curated by the Rubin, such as *Gateway to Himalayan Art*.

In 2024 there were ten exhibition loans and collection sharing long-term loans from the Rubin to five institutions, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Worcester Art Museum, and McMullen Museum of Art.

On loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Rahula; Tibet; 15th century; gilt copper alloy; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; C2003.7.2 (HAR 65206)





Scholarship

Project Himalayan Art

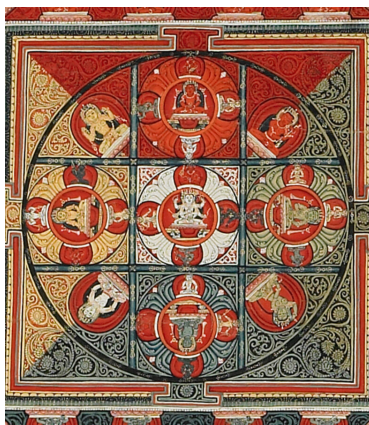
The Rubin's flagship educational initiative, Project Himalayan Art, continued to expand in 2024. Project Himalayan Art is an interdisciplinary resource for learning about Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian art and cultures. The three-part initiative—encompassing a digital platform, publication, and 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.

As part of Project Himalayan Art, the Rubin launched Himalayan Art Up Close, an educational video series that provides an accessible introduction to the art and material culture of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian regions. The series was developed in partnership with Smarthistory—the award-winning digital platform of public art history for students, professors, and learners—and features Rubin curators in dialogue with Smarthistory's art historians about objects from the Museum's collection. The series launched in 2024 with a set of eight videos.

Rubin Museum Distinguished Lecture in Himalayan Art

This new lecture series launched in 2024 and features recognized experts offering insights into the art, culture, and history of the greater Himalayan region, fostering deeper connections with these rich traditions. The series is supported by the Rubin and hosted at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The inaugural lecture took place on December 10, 2024. Inspired by The Met's exhibition *Mandalas: Mapping the Buddhist Art of Tibet*, scholar Robert Linrothe explored the connection between “outer” and “inner” mandalas.



Four Mandalas of
the Vajravali Cycle

Staff panels and conferences

Presented “Case Studies in International Partnerships” at Cultural Heritage Now Convening Series at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, January 10, 2024 — Jorrit Britschgi and Swosti Rajbhandari Kayastha

Presented on Project Himalayan Art at New York University, February 7, 2024 — Karl Debreczeny, Elena Pakhoutova, and Wen-shing Chou

Presented on the Rubin’s transformation into a global museum and the Mandala Lab to The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Global Board of Directors and Staff, February 20, 2024 — Tim McHenry and Jorrit Britschgi

Presented “Storytelling in Himalayan Cultural Sphere” at Harn Museum, Gainesville, FL, February 29, 2024 — Elena Pakhoutova

Presented “Reading Paintings: Recognizing Stories in Thought-Forms, Symbols, and Emotional States—Recent Works by Mongolian Artist Uuriintuya Dagvasambuu” at Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, March 7, 2024 — Elena Pakhoutova

Presented on Project Himalayan Art as part of the roundtable “New Digital Humanities Directions in East Asian Studies” at the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) Annual National Conference, Seattle, WA, March 14, 2024 — Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova

Museum Sponsor and Advisor for Graduate Level Museum Experience Design Course, New York, NY, April 2024 — Jamie Lawyer and Brenda Cowan

Presented on Museum Work Today at University of North Texas-Denton Lecture, April 2024 — Jamie Lawyer

Presented “Roundtable: Project Himalayan Art, Developing and Implementing Resources for Inclusion of Himalayan Art in Teaching on Asia” at the ASIANetwork Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 13, 2024 — Karl Debreczeny, Elena Pakhoutova, and Kerry Lucinda Brown

Presented on Rubin Museum of Art Repatriation to the Cultural Heritage Provenance Committee within the office of the Provost at Yale University, June 11, 2024 — Jorrit Britschgi

Presented “Contemporary Art and Contemplative Action” (using the Mandala Lab as an example) at the International Society for Contemplative Research Conference, Padua, Italy, June 19, 2024 — Tim McHenry and Dr. Tracy Dennis-Tiwary

Presented at the American Curators of Asian Art (ACAA) Forum, Baltimore, MD, July 18–19, 2024 — Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova

Presented “Visitors at the Center: Considerations for Museum Workers Today” at Long Island Museum Association, September 9, 2024 — Jamie Lawyer

Mountain God Kula Kari;
Tibet; 19th century;
painted terracotta;
Rubin Museum of
Himalayan Art;
C2002.7.3



Staff panels and conferences, continued

Presented on the Rubin Museum's transformation into a global museum to Museum of Art & Photography (MAP-India) Leadership and Board, September 20, 2024 — Jorrit Britschgi

Presented "A Practical Guide to Positive Museology" at Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, Philadelphia, PA, October 8, 2024 — Abigail Honor, Brenda Cowan, Jamie Lawyer, and Dr. Kiersten F. Latham Presented "Centering Joy: The Heart of Museum Transformation" at Ignite at Museum Computer Network (MCN), Lawrence, KS, October 22, 2024 — Jamie Lawyer

Presented "An Empathy-Building MAP: Meaning, Awareness, Potential" at Designing For Empathy Summit, Philadelphia, PA, October 25, 2024 — Elif Gokcigdem, Amy Glenn, and Jamie Lawyer

Presented "Teaching with Buddhist Art and Material Culture" at the American Academy of Religion (AAR), Buddhism and Pedagogy Seminar, San Diego, CA, November 24, 2024 — Karl Debreczeny, Elena Pakhoutova, Annabella Pitkin, Xiaotian Yin, and Nicole Willock

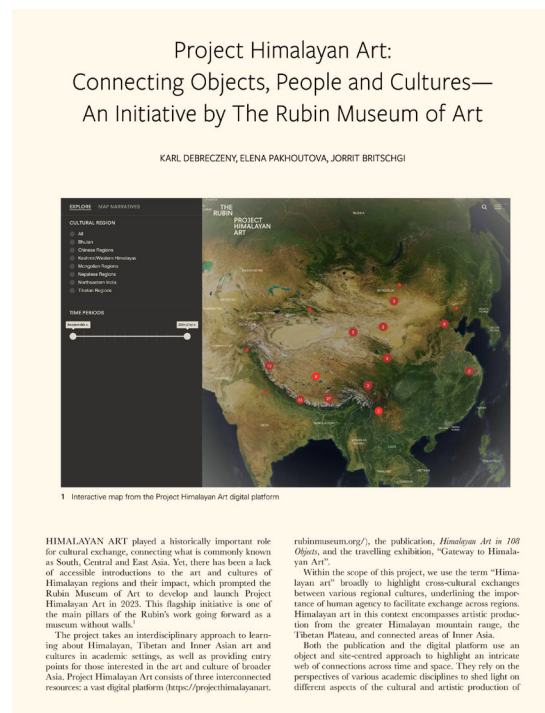
Publications

Interview "#AsiaNow Speaks with Elena Pakhoutova and Karl Debreczeny" in *Asia Now*, August 13, 2024, following Honorable Mention for 2024 Association of Asian Studies (AAS) Buchanan Prize for Curricular Materials for Project Himalayan Art — Elena Pakhoutova and Karl Debreczeny

Authored "*Gateway to Himalayan Art: The Rubin Museum's Exhibition at the Harn Museum at University of Florida*," in *Art & Collections*, no. 6, 2024 — Elena Pakhoutova

Co-authored "Project Himalayan Art: Connecting Objects, People and Cultures—An Initiative by the Rubin Museum of Art," in *Arts of Asia*, Fall 2024, p. 70–81 — Karl Debreczeny, Elena Pakhoutova, and Jorrit Britschgi

Authored "Museums Must Take Risks—or Risk Obsolescence," in *The Art Newspaper*, September 2024 — Jorrit Britschgi



Inspiring support for our programs



20th Anniversary Challenge

In celebration of the Rubin's twentieth anniversary and to bolster the Rubin's pioneering plans to bring Himalayan art to more people in more places, one of our generous donors offered a one-to-one match, up to \$250,000, with a deadline of July 31, 2024.

The donor shared, "The Rubin Museum's move to a global museum-without-walls demonstrates a fearlessness and forward-thinking vision that inspired me to make a transformative gift at this time. I hope it inspires you to do the same." This challenge was especially impactful at such a pivotal time in the Rubin's young but rich history and helped underwrite our ambitious plans during this key transition period. It also demonstrated to our communities that our new strategy for expanding access to the Rubin's collection is bold and visionary.

We exceeded our goal with the help of this challenge offer, raising a total of \$629,879 to support multiyear initiatives, general operations, and annual programs.

Project Himalayan Art Multiyear Initiative (2020–2024)

Thanks to our generous donors and funders, we completed Project Himalayan Art's initial phase I goal of \$3.2 million in 2024. These funds have allowed us to produce the 504-page publication, *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*; provide the traveling exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art* free of charge to eight university and college museums across the United States through 2026; develop and expand a robust digital platform with theme pages, videos, teaching resources, and glossary terms; digitize and make accessible objects from the Rubin's collection; and launch the video series *Himalayan Art Up Close* in partnership with Smarthistory, the world's most visited art history platform. *Gateway to Himalayan Art* welcomed over 76,500 visitors at the first five venues, and the project's digital platform has seen over 110,000 unique visitors since its launch.

Mandala Lab Multiyear Initiative (2020–2024)

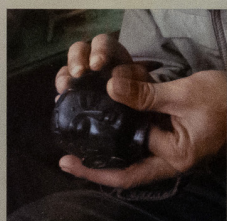
With generous gifts and multiyear investments from donors and funders, we successfully raised \$3 million to support phase I of our multiyear Mandala Lab initiative. Launching our campaign in 2020 with the online fundraiser *Inside the Mandala: A Virtual Gala*, we raised essential funding through 2024. This funding went toward the design and construction of the Mandala Lab installation on the third floor; the development of a Mandala Lab curriculum incorporating Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning®; the creation of new educational resources for all ages, as well as K–12 school group workshops, art making, tours, and Family Sunday programming; and the production of the traveling Mandala Lab in Europe.

Additionally, we were able to engage the Garibay Group to evaluate our current educational offerings for the Mandala Lab over a three-year period, informing the future of the program and the launch of the Resources for Educators section of the new website with downloadable PDF lesson plans.



Photograph by
Christine Butler

Individual and institutional support

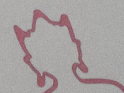


THE STAGES OF NEPALESE HOLLOW METAL CASTING

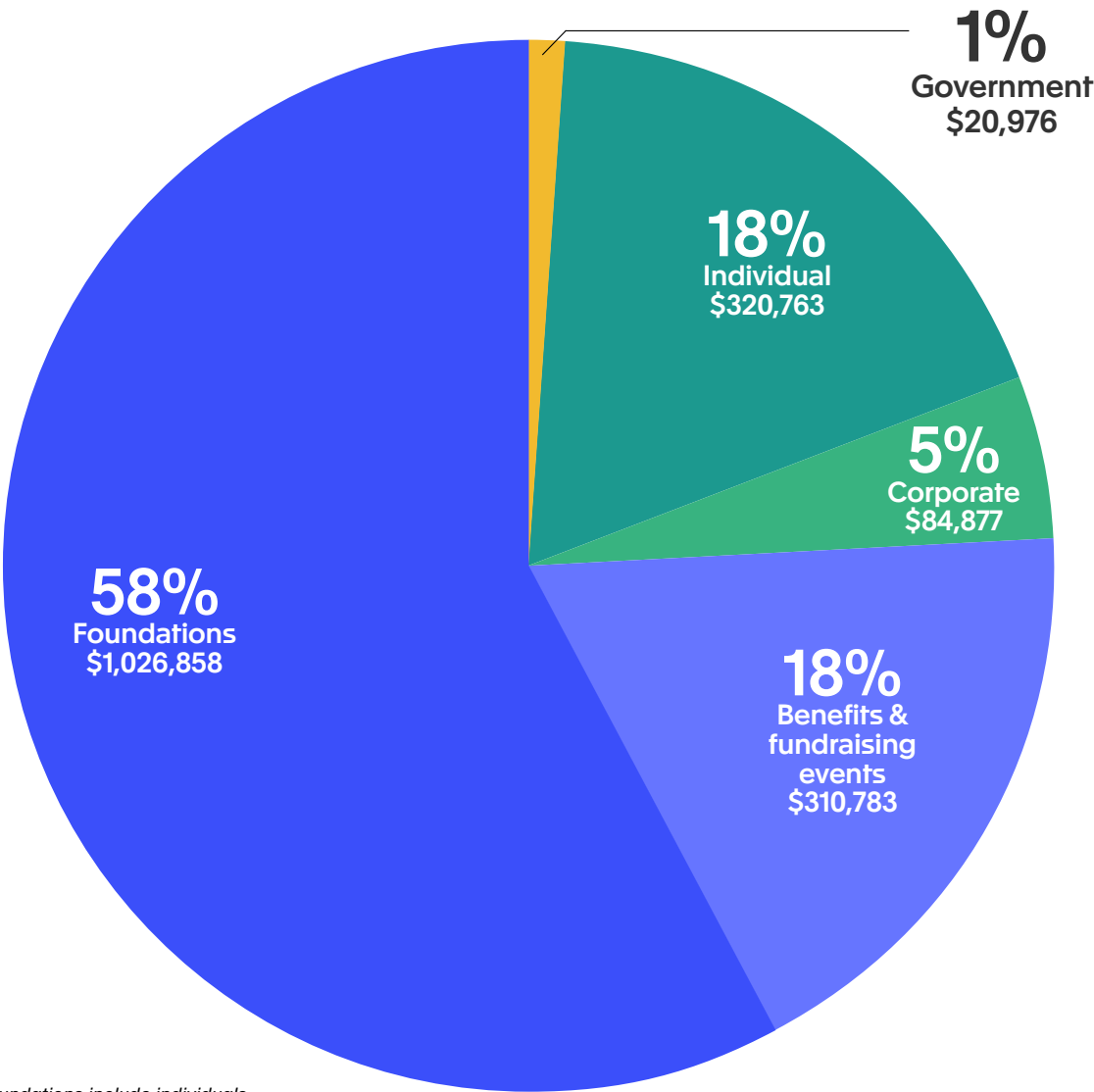
For over a thousand years the process of hollow metal casting has been used in Nepal.

Forming the Wax Model

The process begins by melting a mixture of beeswax, vegetable oil, and tree resin into sheets. These sheets are then molded by hand and with various tools to form the sculpture's components. These pieces are



Thank you to our 2024 donors



Foundations include individuals giving through family foundations and donor advised funds.

Donors (individual and institutional support)

\$100,000+

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Mellon Foundation
The Randleigh Foundation Trust
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Shelley and Donald Rubin

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Andrew Sabin Family Foundation
Sandy Song Yan
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 are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

The Mandala Lab multiyear initiative, Project Himalayan Art, and *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* 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-OMS-23.



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**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.**

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The Prospect Hill Foundation
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The Randleigh Foundation Trust
Rasika and Girish Reddy
The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation
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Basha Frost Rubin and Scott Grinsell
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

Vajra Scepter; metalwork; Tibet; 16th century;
Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art;
C2004.31.3



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 for you!

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
Jaroslav Poncar
Sylvie Sauveniere
The Newark Museum of Art
David Pritzker
Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection
Charwei Tsai
Live-Forever Foundation
Jane Lombard Gallery
LuYang
Shushank Shrestha
Uma Bista
Kunsang Kyirong
Kabi Raj Lama
Ngawang Tenzin
Manish Lal Shrestha
Meena Kayastha
Pema "Tintin" Tshering
Roshan Pradhan

Sangeeta Thapa
Dolma Chonzom Bhutia
Moncel Pekar
Prithvi Shrestha
Yangdzom Lama
Jasmine Rajbhandari
Jupiter Pradhan
Bharat Rai
Bidhata KC
Kunsang Gyatso
Losel Yauch
IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha)
Tenzin Mingyur Paldron
Asha Kama Wangdi, VAST Bhutan
Sonam Dolma Brauen
Tanpa Thondup
Leonid Lantsman



Photograph by Filip Wolak



Statement of financial position

at December 31, 2024

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$730,606
Unconditional promises to give	403,103
Restricted for future periods and programs	605,324
Accounts receivable	129,376
Museum publication, shop, and café inventory	430,763
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	338,489
Investments in marketable securities	171,213,624
Total Current Assets	\$173,851,285

Property and Equipment	\$ 26,752,931
Contributions Receivable	\$26,955
Accrued Rental Income	\$225,230
Operating Leasing Right-of-Use-Asset	\$2,229,230

Total Assets **\$203,085,631**

Liabilities and net assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$1,924,661
Tenant security deposits	199,801
Deferred membership and other income	14,575
Operating lease liability	2,339,476
Total Current Liabilities	\$4,478,513

Net Assets

Unrestricted	
Board-designated funds	\$133,964,131
Other unrestricted	27,141,754
Temporarily restricted	12,501,231
Permanent restricted	25,000,002
Total Net Assets	\$198,607,118

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$203,085,631**

Statement of activities

for the year ending December 31, 2024

Revenues and other support

Public Support

Contributions and donations	\$311,360
Cancellation of prior year federal grant	(165,500)
Grants and sponsorships	1,231,149
Special event revenue	310,783
Less: Direct expenses	(71,106)
Membership dues	76,464
Total Public Support	\$1,693,150

Revenues from Programs and Activities

Museum admission fees	\$380,830
Program fees	300,313
Facility rental income	248,865
Merchandise and catalog sales	500,408
Other revenue	142,893
Total Revenue from Programs and Activities	\$1,573,309

Rental Income	\$1,863,701
Net Investment Income	\$20,205,184

Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support **\$25,335,344**

Expenses

Program Services

Collections and exhibitions	\$6,525,037
Publications	530,667
Programs & Engagement	2,270,292
Shop	1,046,271
Public relations and marketing	1,745,083
Total Program Services	\$12,117,350

Supporting Services

Management and general	\$4,398,776
Development	1,158,996
Total Supporting Services	\$5,557,772

Rental Real Estate Activities	\$1,008,179
Collections Items Purchased and Related Costs	\$95,161

Total Expenses **\$18,778,462**

Change in Net Assets **\$6,556,882**

Ways to support

The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art is making more of an impact than ever before, as we bring our work to communities across the United States and around the world. We rely on our generous and thoughtful supporters, and need your help to promote understanding and appreciation of Himalayan art and cultures through inspiring and meaningful experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds. Visit rubinmuseum.org/support to learn more.

Become a Friend

Friends of the Rubin fuel the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's mission to celebrate and present the rich art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region with audiences of all ages locally, nationally, and internationally. This critical funding is essential to our work.

Join us today! Become a Friend by making a one-time donation, or choose to provide continuous support through a recurring monthly donation at the level that works best for you.

Support with foundation and corporate giving

We invite connections to your philanthropic organizations. Foundation and corporate giving are essential for major initiatives, traveling exhibitions, digital and in-person programs, and K-12 school learning and teacher resources. We are also interested in pursuing collaborative partnerships with other arts organizations in the United States and abroad.

Give a major gift

By making a generous annual gift or multiyear pledge of \$5,000 and above, you will be recognized widely while celebrating how your investment is making a major impact. Our major donors are listed on our website, donor walls at venues of our traveling exhibitions, Annual Report (digital), annual *Spiral* magazine (print), and other print and digital publications. We would be profoundly grateful if you joined our growing list of donors promoting the understanding and appreciation of Himalayan art worldwide.



2024 staff directory

at December 31, 2024

Executive Staff

Jorrit Britschgi, Executive Director
Marilena Christodoulou, Deputy Executive Director/
Chief Financial & Operating Officer
Tim McHenry, Deputy Executive Director/
Chief Programmatic Officer
William (Billy) Umana, Executive Assistant,
Director's Office

Finance, Administration, and Operations

Sierra Bailey, Operations Coordinator
Michael Bricker, Chief of Engineering
Devon Charles, Senior Manager, IT
Leah Frederick, Senior Manager of Special Events
Sharif Hassan, Senior Manager, Audio Visual
Guiaco (Kyle) Jiang, Assistant Manager, Budgets &
Accounts Payable
Hazel King, Head of Human Resources
Atul Khedekar, Manager of Security
Maria Mawo, Operations Coordinator, Shop
Erika Mieles, Senior Sales Associate, Shop
Kevin Ryan, Senior Manager of Operations
Albert Siebenaler, Head of Facilities Operations
Lauren Smith, Coordinator, Administration & Sales
Prisane Suwanwatana, Senior Manager, Shop
Joni Todd, Senior Manager of Finance

Marketing & Communications

Vincent Baker, Manager of Web Engineering
KJ Bowen, Head of Graphics & Branding
Elke Dehner, Director of Marketing & Communications
Sandrine Milet, Head, Communications & Marketing
Brigitte Ugarte, Assistant Graphic & Digital Designer
Olivia Wise, Marketing Manager

Development

Dana Boll, Head of Major Gifts & Institutional
Philanthropy
Mary-Benning Cannon, Assistant Manager,
Membership & Development Operations
Natalie Cimino, Coordinator, Major Gifts & Institutional
Philanthropy
Dona Lee Kelly, Director of Development
Gillian Mendez, Senior Manager, Annual Fund &
Development Operations
Francesca (Frankie) Paldino, Assistant Manager,
Institutional Philanthropy & Funder Relations



Photograph by Filip Wolak

Curatorial Administration & Collections

Danielle Butterly, Assistant Collections Manager/
Registrar
Kirstin Clouser, Exhibitions Manager
Karl Debreczeny, Senior Curator, Collections
and Research
Stephanie Fischer, Coordinator, Curatorial
Administration & Collections
Christina Johnson, Registrar
Brienne Muscente-Solga, Senior Manager of
Exhibition Design
Elena Pakhoutova, Senior Curator, Himalayan Art
Michelle Bennett Simorella, Director of Curatorial
Administration & Collections

Programs & Partnerships

Tashi Chödrön, Assistant Manager, Himalayan Cultural
Programs & Partnerships
Jacqueline Smith, Manager, Programs & Education

Visitor Experience & Interpretation

Maria Cacia Rios, Coordinator, Visitor Experience &
Interpretation
Tenzin Gelek, Senior Specialist, Himalayan Arts &
Culture
Kimon Keramidas, Head of Digital Content & Strategy
Jamie Lawyer, Director of Visitor Experience &
Interpretation/Chief Experience Officer
Grace Marotta, Coordinator, Editorial & Digital Content
Christina Watson, Writer & Editor, Digital Content
Sarah Zabrodski, Senior Manager, Editorial &
Publications

