

For Immediate Release

From Brooklyn to Bhutan: The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Announces Robust Initial Slate of Exhibitions and Initiatives in Its First Year as a Global Museum

The traveling exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art* continues its tour to universities across the United States, opening at the University of Utah and St. Olaf College in Minnesota.

A new, temporary public art sculpture by contemporary artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) will open in Jackson Heights, Queens in the spring.

The Rubin's beloved Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will open at the Brooklyn Museum in June.

The Rubin is partnering with the Bhutan Foundation to support the newly restored Wangduechholing Palace's opening as a public museum and cultural center.

New York, NY, January 9, 2025 — The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art is pleased to announce a suite of anchor exhibitions and strategic initiatives for 2025, which usher in a new era for the institution as a decentralized museum.

As part of the Rubin's flagship initiative Project Himalayan Art, the traveling exhibition *Gateway to Himalayan Art* will open in Utah and Minnesota. In New York, a new, temporary public art installation by Nepalese artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) will open in Jackson Heights, Queens, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Transportation Art Program (DOT Art), and the Rubin's renowned Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will be unveiled at the Brooklyn Museum in June as part of a six-year partnership.

In its efforts to expand access and appreciation for Himalayan art broadly across the globe, the Rubin will also embark on a new partnership with the Bhutan Foundation to promote cultural preservation and education in Bhutan and support the Wangduechholing Palace as a public museum. Additionally, the Rubin will expand its multimedia content offerings with a new edition of *Spiral* magazine and a fifth season of the AWAKEN podcast, both centered on the theme of interdependence, as well as more videos created in partnership with Smarthistory that dive deep into eight objects from the Rubin's collection. In the spring, the Museum will also open submissions for the second cycle of its artist and research grants.

"2024 was a transformative year for the Rubin. As we look ahead to the partnerships, traveling exhibitions, contemporary commissions, resources, and original content we have in store for the coming year, we are excited about the ways we will connect with new audiences in new places," says **Jorrit Britschgi, Executive Director of the Rubin Museum of Himalayan**

Art. “Last year, facets of our new model enabled us to reach over 100,000 people through in-person experiences in places from Milan to Florida, as well as a community of more than half a million through our online content offerings. In addition, we cemented our commitment to creating meaningful connections and fostering cultural understanding by presenting Himalayan art in new ways. Our plans for 2025 will expand our horizons with innovative partnerships from Brooklyn to Bhutan.”

Additional information about the Rubin’s exhibitions, projects, and public programs will be announced in the coming months.

Gateway to Himalayan Art

February 15–July 27, 2025

Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah

September–December 2025

Flaten Art Museum, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

This traveling exhibition for colleges, universities, and museums introduces the main forms, concepts, meanings, and traditions in Himalayan art with objects from the Rubin’s collection. It is part of the Rubin’s flagship educational initiative Project Himalayan Art, a resource that supports the inclusion of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian art and cultures into undergraduate teaching on Asia as well as presents Himalayan art to the general public.

The exhibition’s three areas of focus are *Symbols and Meanings*, *Materials and Technologies*, and *Living Practices*. Traditional scroll paintings (thangkas), sculptures in various media, and ritual items comprise the diverse range of objects on view. Among the featured installations are in-depth displays that explain the process of Nepalese lost-wax metal casting and the stages of Tibetan thangka painting. Multimedia features include videos of art making and religious and cultural practices; audio recordings of voices from Himalayan communities that highlight living traditions; and much more on the integrated digital platform that offers rich contextual material to dive deeper.

The exhibition is curated by Elena Pakhoutova, Senior Curator of Himalayan Art at the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art.

Spiral Magazine 2025

Interdependence Issue

Print and online

Available February 2025

Spiral is the Rubin’s multimedia publication that sits at the intersection of art, science, and Himalayan cultures. It asks big questions about our shared human experience through interviews, essays, fiction, art, and more. The ninth issue of the print magazine focuses on interdependence and features contributions from Buddhist teachers, scientists, sociologists, activists, and more, who illustrate how our interconnectedness permeates every aspect of the world. In addition to the publication of the print magazine in February, new content will be released online throughout the year.

Himalayan Art Up Close

A video series in collaboration with Smarthistory

Launching February 2025

[Himalayan Art Up Close](#) is a video series made in collaboration with Smarthistory, an award-winning digital platform and the most-visited art history resource in the world, with a

database of public art history information for all audiences. Each video highlights an object from the Rubin's preeminent collection of Himalayan art and features Rubin curators Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova in dialogue with Smarthistory art historians Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. In 2025, the Rubin and Smarthistory will release eight new videos, providing an accessible and engaging online introduction to the art and culture of the Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian regions for students, art enthusiasts, and learners across the globe.

About a Living Culture (working title)

Community Commission with artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha)

In partnership with New York City Department of Transportation Art Program (DOT Art)

Opening spring 2025

Diversity Plaza, Jackson Heights, Queens

Nepalese artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) presents a new, temporary public art installation that celebrates and take inspiration from the diverse Himalayan cultures of the Jackson Heights, Queens, neighborhood. Originally from Kathmandu, Nepal, and working between Boston and Kathmandu, IMAGINE has created public murals around the world and often incorporates her native language into her work while meshing the aesthetics of Sanskrit scriptures with a graffiti art style. She has shown her meditative artworks in several museums including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Rubin Museum, where her work was featured as part of *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*.

For her first public art sculpture, IMAGINE is creating an eight-foot-tall installation in the shape of an arch made of repeating rows of *Ka*, the first letter of the Nepali alphabet. In Nepal, religious and sacred environments feature variations in the form of archways, which encourage passersby to look through and get blessings from the divine. IMAGINE'S sculpture will invite the public to interact and experience a meditation and "send" it out to the universe as they embark upon their pathways through Diversity Plaza.

About a Living Culture (working title) is a [NYC DOT Art Community Commission](#) in partnership with the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art and will be unveiled in spring 2025. Community Commissions is a signature NYC DOT Art initiative in which the agency collaborates with community-based organizations to commission artists to design and install temporary public art on NYC DOT infrastructure citywide.

Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room

Opening June 2025

Brooklyn Museum

In June 2025, the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's beloved Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will open in a custom space in the Brooklyn Museum's Arts of Asia galleries as part of a six-year partnership between the two institutions. The Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room evokes the aesthetics and atmosphere of a traditional Tibetan sacred space and offers visitors the opportunity to experience Tibetan religious art in its cultural context. More than 100 works of art and ritual objects from the Rubin's collection are presented as they would be in an elaborate private household shrine, where devotees make offerings, pray, contemplate, and perform rituals. The design of the Shrine Room showcases these objects in an immersive environment that incorporates elements of traditional Tibetan architecture and the color schemes of Tibetan homes.

The display of the Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room will enhance the Brooklyn Museum's important collections of Asian art, which were fully reimagined in a major gallery renovation that was unveiled from 2017 to 2023.

The installation is curated by Elena Pakhoutova, Senior Curator of Himalayan Art at the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art.

Rubin Research and Art Projects Grants

Spring 2025

The annual Rubin Grants support art and research initiatives that promote the rich cultural legacy and living traditions of Himalayan regions. As part of the first award cycle in 2024, 17 projects were selected from nearly 150 applications from 30 countries totaling nearly \$200K in support. In 2025, artists, scholars, and researchers are invited to submit letters of inquiry between February 15 and March 15, 2025, for consideration.

AWAKEN podcast season 5

Launching summer 2025

AWAKEN is a Webby Honoree podcast about the dynamic path to enlightenment and what it means to “wake up.” The series features the personal stories of guests who share how they’ve experienced a shift in their awareness, and as a result, their perspective on life. The fifth season focuses on the theme of interdependence and illustrates how our interconnectedness permeates every aspect of the world, with insights from artists, writers, psychologists, and Buddhist teachers.

Cultural Preservation and Education in Bhutan

A Partnership with the Bhutan Foundation

Fall 2025

The Rubin Museum and the Bhutan Foundation, a nonprofit based in Washington, DC, are launching a partnership to promote cultural preservation and education in Bhutan, working closely with the Wangduechhoeling Palace, the birthplace of Bhutan's monarchy. After a decade-long restoration project led by the Bhutan Foundation, and a ceremonial launch by Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck in October 2024, the Palace will fully open as a museum and cultural center in 2025, focused on Bhutan's history, culture, religion, and craftsmanship. In this next phase, the Rubin will support expertise in the areas of content development, visitor experience, and collection management, collaborating with Palace staff and museum professionals in the wider region. The Rubin will co-create in-person workshops and ideation sessions, uniting participants from Bhutan and the Rubin Museum for mutual learning and professional exchange.

Ongoing: *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now*

Closes February 15, 2025

Wrightwood 659

Chicago, IL

Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now presents the art of 28 contemporary artists from the Himalayas, Asia, and diaspora whose work is presented in dialogue with objects from the Rubin's permanent collection, inviting new ways of encountering traditional Himalayan art.

The exhibition debuted at the Rubin's former New York City building and ran from March 15 to October 6, 2024. This second iteration of the exhibition features 18 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.

Participating artists include Asha Kama Wangdi, VAST Bhutan; Bharat Rai; Charwei TSAI; Chitra Ganesh; Jasmine Rajbhandari; John Tsung; Jupiter Pradhan; Kabi Raj Lama; Kunsang Gyasto; Kunsang Kyirong; Losel Yauch; LuYang; Manish Lal Shrestha; Meena Kayastha; Monsal Pekar; Pema (“Tintin”) Tshering; Prithvi Shrestha; Roshan Pradhan; Salil Subedi; Shraddha Shrestha; Shushank Shrestha; IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha); Sonam Dolma Brauen; Tenzin Gyurmey Dorjee; Tenzin Mingyur Paldron; Tsherin Sherpa; Uma Bista; and Yangdzom Lama.

The exhibition is curated by Michelle Bennett Simorella, Director of Curatorial Administration and Collections at Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art.

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

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[About the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art](#)

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art and its insights. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people internationally through exhibitions, participatory experiences, a dynamic digital platform, and partnerships. Inspired and informed by Himalayan art, the Rubin invites people to contemplate the human experience and deepen connections with the world around them in order to expand awareness, enhance well-being, and cultivate compassion. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, collection sharing, and the stewardship of a collection of nearly 4,000 Himalayan art objects spanning 1,500 years of history—providing unprecedented access and resources to scholars, artists, and students across the globe. rubinmuseum.org

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