RUBIN
Museum of Himalayan Art

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Kathleen Hanna Hosts Season Six of the Rubin Museum's AWAKEN Podcast, Exploring the Transformative Power of Wrath

The pioneering feminist punk singer and frontwoman of the bands Bikini Kill and Le Tigre leads eight episodes examining wrath through Himalayan art, Buddhism, social science, and personal stories

Launches October 27; trailer out now



New York, NY, September 29, 2026 — Kathleen Hanna, punk icon, writer, artist, feminist activist, and frontwoman of the bands Bikini Kill and Le Tigre, hosts the sixth season of the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's AWAKEN podcast, launching October 27. Across eight episodes, Hanna and guests explore **wrath**—not as an emotion like anger or rage, but as a fierce, protective force capable of driving transformation and meaningful action. Paintings and sculptures of wrathful Buddhist and Hindu deities from the Rubin's collection serve as inspiration for conversations spanning art, Buddhism, psychology, activism, and more.

“When I get onstage and I’m able to embody anger physically and through my voice, I let it go,” says Hanna. “What I learned from making this season is that anger can be a teacher and a guide, and that investigating it with curiosity can turn it into something proactive and helpful.”

Hanna is joined by a wide-ranging group of writers, artists, activists, Buddhist teachers, scholars, and psychologists, including novelist and playwright **Ayad Akhtar**; author and emergent strategist **adrienne maree brown**; author, professor, and philosopher **Myisha Cherry**; visual artist **Lujan Rai Dongol**; psychologists and researchers **Julie and John Gottman**; author, activist, educator, and life coach **Julia Butterfly Hill**; activist, documentary filmmaker, lawyer, educator, and faith leader **Valarie Kaur**; Black Buddhist Southern Queen **Lama Rod Owens**; professor of Buddhism and East Asian religions **Annabella Pitkin**; Buddhist scholar and teacher **Khenpo Yeshi Rinpoche**; and author **Sharon Salzberg**.

AWAKEN explores big ideas expressed in Himalayan art in an accessible way, offering listeners tools and takeaways they can apply to their own lives. Each season is centered on a theme inspired by the art in the Rubin Museum’s collection, and episodes feature insights and personal stories from guests related to that theme. Since launching in 2021, the podcast has reached a global audience in 219 countries and territories, with more than 568,000 downloads.

New episodes drop weekly on Tuesdays from October 27 through December 15. AWAKEN is available for streaming on major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts and Spotify, as well as at **rubinmuseum.org/awaken**. **The trailer is out now**.

About Kathleen Hanna

Kathleen Hanna is a punk singer, writer, artist, and frontwoman of the influential bands Bikini Kill and Le Tigre. Her memoir *Rebel Girl* was an instant *New York Times* and *Sunday Times* bestseller. She is a leading voice in the feminist movement and has been named one of the best live performers of our time.

AWAKEN season 6 episode dates and descriptions:

Episode 1: Introducing Wrath (October 27)

Wrath is often perceived as interchangeable with anger or rage. But in the Buddhist tradition, wrath has a very particular meaning as a liberatory, fierce, and protective force of transformation. Wrathful deities embody this energy to aid all beings on the path to enlightenment. What can they teach us about the nature of wrath and its relationship to awakening?

Episode 2: Understanding the Difference Between Anger and Wrath (November 3)

In the English language, anger and wrath are often grouped together, but in Buddhism they are quite different. Anger is considered a poison, a fire that consumes and destroys everything it touches. Wrath is a liberating energy that is free of ignorance, delusion, and attachment. A painting of the wrathful deity Krodhakali illuminates how the powerful potential of anger can be transformed into enlightened action.

Episode 3: Connecting Wrath with Fierce Compassion (November 10)

Beneath the ferocity of wrath is a deep sense of compassion. What is the relationship between anger and love? And how can we access empathy for others in difficult situations? A sculpture of Hayagriva, the wrathful emanation of the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteshvara, exemplifies the tireless dedication of such deities to the well-being of all.

Episode 4: Awakening to Collective Action (November 17)

Wrath doesn't just help fuel social movements—it's a prerequisite for transformation. Anger is the spark that wakes people out of complacency and inspires them to take action to safeguard the vulnerable and push for change. A painting of the fierce guardian deity Mahakala reflects the relational, interdependent nature of our world and our capacity to shape it.

Episode 5: Acting with Heroism (November 24)

Wrath can be a force for change. But it often takes acts of courage, as well as strength and resilience, to take that potential for change and turn it into action. It also requires a degree of selflessness embodied in the energy of wrath. A sculpture of the wrathful Hindu goddess Durga reminds us that although heroism often involves hardship, even minor acts of courage can have cosmic consequences.

Episode 6: Facing the Truth (December 1)

Anger is about the truth. It points us toward not only the injustices of our world but also the reality of our own ignorance, complicity, and pain. How can facing ourselves and each other with greater honesty help chart a path toward meaningful change? A painting of Vajrayogini demonstrates how she represents unobstructed clarity and truth by cutting through delusion.

Episode 7: Moving with Skillfulness (December 8)

For Buddhists, wrath is fundamentally about the union of innate wisdom and skillful method. What does it mean to bring honesty and skillfulness to wrathful expression? How do we tap into insight and awareness? A Tibetan painting of Guru Drakpo illuminates the role of the ferociously compassionate teacher who courageously guides seekers toward the truth.

Episode 8: Harnessing the Power of Wrath (December 15)

In the final episode, we explore how to integrate what we've learned about wrath over the course of this season. How can we implement some of the teachings from wrathful deities? What tools does wrath offer for daily life? A painting of the Mandala of Chakrasamvara illustrates the union of wisdom and method, reflecting an integrated vision of fierce compassion.

Past seasons of the AWAKEN podcast

Season 1 premiered June 2021 with 10 episodes hosted by acclaimed musician and performance artist Laurie Anderson. Using artworks as a jumping off point, it featured stories of personal transformation from comedian Aparna Nancherla, writer Alok Vaid-Menon,

meditation teacher Tara Brach, and more. The season was a 2022 Webby Honoree in the Arts & Culture category.

Season 2 premiered October 2022 with seven episodes about the transformative power of emotions using a mandala as a guide. The season was hosted by singer and songwriter Raveena Aurora and featured insights from writer adrienne maree brown, Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard, and more.

Season 3 premiered October 2023 with eight episodes about the notion of "Life After" and explored 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. The season was hosted by Grammy Award–winning vocalist, composer, and educator FALU and featured insights from author and poet Michelle Tea, neuroscientist and author Jill Bolte Taylor, and more.

Season 4 premiered November 2024 with eight episodes about the complex Buddhist concept of attachment and explored how the practice of letting go of preconceived ideas, beliefs, and identities can transform our experience of the world. The season was hosted by Golden Globe and Emmy Award–nominated actress, filmmaker, and model Isabella Rossellini and featured stories from writer Ocean Vuong, artist Asha Kama Wangdi, poet and essayist Ross Gay, and more.

Season 5 premiered August 2025 with eight episodes about the Buddhist concept of interdependence using a painting of the Wheel of Life (also known as Wheel of Existence) from the Rubin Museum's collection as a guide. The season was hosted by singer, songwriter, and artist Devendra Banhart and featured insights from author and futurist Mia Birdsong, Tibetan Buddhist teacher and author Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche, interdisciplinary artist and visual storyteller Osheen Siva, and more.

Production credits

AWAKEN is produced by the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art with Westin Harris, Kimon Keramidas, Christina Watson, Sovah Woydak, and Sarah Zabrodski in collaboration with SOUND MADE PUBLIC including Tania Ketenjian, Philip Wood, Kristin Mueller, Christine Driscoll, and Aaron Siegel.

Original music has been produced by Hannis Brown with additional music from Blue Dot Sessions.

Support

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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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