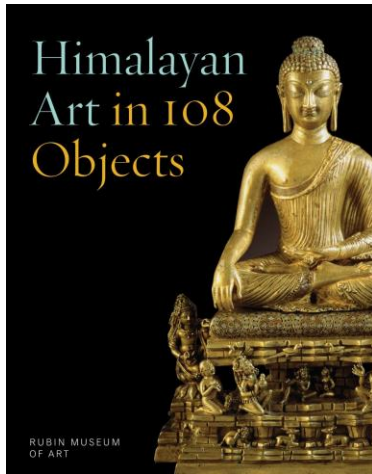


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NOW AVAILABLE: *HIMALAYAN ART IN 108 OBJECTS*, A NEW BOOK BY THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

72 AUTHORS ILLUMINATE THE STORY OF HIMALAYAN ART FROM NEOLITHIC ERA TO TODAY THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

NEW YORK, NY, August 22, 2023 — The Rubin Museum of Art is pleased to announce the release of its newest publication, *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*, the first introductory book about the story of Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian art and cultures from the Neolithic era to today. The publication is the third and final component of **Project Himalayan Art**, a first-of-its-kind resource that launched earlier this year for learning and teaching about Himalayan art. Its integrated components include a **digital platform**, the **traveling exhibition Gateway to Himalayan Art**, and the **publication**, which is now available to purchase. The project's focus is on cross-cultural exchange with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread that connects the diverse Himalayan, Tibetan, and Inner Asian cultures. The exhibition travels next to the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, where it opens September 5.

Himalayan Art in 108 Objects takes a cross-disciplinary, object-centered approach and features 108 essays from 72 international scholars who trace the art and material cultures of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Inner Asian regions. Edited by Rubin Museum Senior Curators Karl Debreczeny and Elena Pakhoutova and published in association with Scala Arts Publishers, *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects* explores sites and objects in-situ, paintings, sculptures, drawings, textiles, architectural monuments, and holdings from international institutions, as well as objects from the Rubin Museum's collection. The 108 essays are set alongside extensive photographs and serve as a guide to the historical traditions, rituals, social practices, and art forms of these rich and diverse regions.

“The number 108 is considered sacred in Hindu and Buddhist traditions; there are 108 prayer beads, 108 volumes of the Buddhist canon, and so forth. We aimed to continue in this tradition by presenting 108 objects as entry points to the world of Himalayan art,” says Debreczeny and Pakhoutova. “In this volume, we use a more expansive definition of ‘Himalayan art’ to highlight cultural connectivity and exchange between various regional cultures with Tibet at the center and Buddhism as the thread that connects them. We hope that the publication, along with the digital platform and traveling exhibition, will help expand

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access to this new and developing field, and become meaningful resources to students, educators, and art lovers.”

All 108 essays and accompanying visuals from the publication are available on the Project Himalayan Art [digital platform](#), which also features content from the accompanying [traveling exhibition](#), [thematic introductions](#) to key topics, an [interactive map](#), a [glossary](#) of hundreds of terms with audio pronunciations, over one thousand contextual images, and videos of rituals and art-making technologies. The ever-expanding digital platform also features [teaching resources](#) for faculty in different disciplines with suggested class units, along with a select [bibliography](#). Additional content will be added to the platform over the next several years.

The **traveling exhibition**, *Gateway to Himalayan Art*, is offered free to universities. It will open at McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College on September 5 and will be on view through December 10, 2023. This follows a successful first installment at Lehigh University Art Galleries (January 31 – May 26, 2023). The exhibition highlights a thematic approach for teaching and engaging with objects, and it is conceptually modeled after the Rubin Museum’s cornerstone exhibition of the same name. It introduces visitors to the main forms, concepts, meanings, and traditions of Himalayan art and cultures with objects from the Rubin Museum’s collection. *Gateway* acquaints visitors with the fundamental visual language and themes of Himalayan art, the materials and techniques used, and the purposes for the objects’ creation, often in the context of religious practices or secular aims. It also includes voices from Himalayan artists and contemporaries to highlight the importance and place of this material culture in living traditions, along with connections to related digital content to learn more.

Earlier this month the Rubin was awarded a \$250,000 Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) for the *Gateway to Himalayan Art* traveling exhibition. This year the Rubin was also awarded a \$400,000 implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for the traveling exhibition. The Rubin was one of 258 humanities projects awarded across the country. The award follows a \$75,000 planning grant in 2021 from the NEH for the exhibition. In 2021, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in part supported the publication.

Despite its historical significance and impact in shaping cultural and artistic achievements and cross-cultural exchange in Asia, art from Tibetan, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Mongolian, and surrounding regions is often presented in isolation as a limited regional form, disconnected from other parts of Asia. It has long been excluded from survey courses on the visual arts and cultures of Asia, due in large part to the lack of introductory resources for teaching.

Together, the digital platform, exhibition, and publication provide multiple entry points for students, educators, and the public to learn about art from the cultural regions centered around the Tibetan Plateau and gain a holistic understanding of Asia.

The project is led by **Elena Pakhoutova** and **Karl Debreczeny**, senior curators at the Rubin Museum, in collaboration with the Rubin Museum’s Humanities Advisory Group, comprising Kerry Lucinda Brown, Isabelle Charleux, Wen-shing Chou, Rob Linrothe, Christian Luczanits, Ariana Maki, Annabella Pitkin, Andrew Quintman, and Gray Tuttle. The exhibition was further developed with the help of the Exhibition Advisory Group, which included Benjamin Bogin, Sienna Craig, and Brenton Sullivan. Project Himalayan Art was informed by a survey sent to 250 Asian-studies faculty in 2019 and developed over the last four years.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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SCHEDULE FOR GATEWAY TO HIMALAYAN ART:

- Lehigh University Art Galleries, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, January 31–May 26, 2023
- McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston, MA, September 5–December 10, 2023
- Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, spring 2024
- The Frank Museum of Art, Otterbein University, Westerville, OH, fall 2024
- Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, spring 2025
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, spring 2026
- USC Pacific Asia Museum, University of Southern California, Pasadena, CA, fall 2026

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Dr. Bibhakar Sunder Shakya, to honor the memory and legacy of Professor Dina Bangdel, art historian, curator, cultural activist, and educator from Nepal.

Samphe and Tenzin Lhalungpa, to honor the memory and works of L.P. Lhalungpa, Tibetan scholar, broadcaster, and educator.



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ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

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 the 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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