

PRESS RELEASE

Minneapolis Institute of Art to unveil newly redesigned Himalayan and South and Southeast Asian Galleries

Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
artsmia.org



India, Somaskanda, *Holy Family of Shiva and Uma*, Tamil Nadu, Chola or Vijayanagar period, 13th-14th century, bronze, The John R. Van Derlip Fund 2009.12.2a-c

MINNEAPOLIS—September 30, 2020—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will unveil its redesigned Himalayan and South and Southeast Asian galleries on October 15, marking the first major refresh of these spaces in more than 20 years. “With New Light: Mia’s Reinstalled Himalayan, South, and Southeast Asian Art Galleries” will feature collection highlights—such as a recently conserved 1,000-year-old Indian sculpture of Shiva Nataraja—commingled with new acquisitions on view for the first time.

The reinstatement, which spans three galleries, was organized by Pujan Gandhi, Jane Emison Assistant Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art at Mia.

“Mia has been collecting in this area since 1917, just after the museum’s founding,” Gandhi said. “Our noteworthy and diverse holdings include superlative works across the region, from culturally significant pieces dating to the 8th century to contemporary artworks that address relevant topics of diaspora and identity. With this redesign, we sought to disentangle complicated concepts and histories, evoke reflection, and celebrate the artists who created, and continue to create, a bountiful variety of expressive forms. Audiences can expect a few surprises, too!”

The Jane and James Emison Gallery (G211) highlights more than 1,000 years of artistic production in South Asia, which includes present-day Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The earliest works on view date from the Medieval period (about 700–1200 CE), when Hindu (or Brahmanist), Buddhist, and Jain worldviews proliferated across the landscape through the widespread construction of temples. The timeline continues to when Islamic rulers introduced new traditions of architecture and the courtly arts, spurring innovations in painting, textiles, and metalwork, and follows these evolving traditions under British colonial rule (mid-1700s–1947) to the present day.

Mia

The Himalayan region, featured in Gallery 212, encompasses the Tibetan Plateau, Nepal, Kashmir, and Bhutan, as well as parts of Northern India, China, and Mongolia. Though geographically isolated, its high mountain passes historically allowed for continuous engagement across greater Asia. Hinduism and Buddhism entered from India, and the region's inhabitants were in frequent contact with China through trade and political alliances. From wrathful, multiarmed divinities to blissful Buddhas, much of Himalayan religious art is in fact unified in its aim—to offer a visualization, or meditative aid, that leads one toward heightened awareness.



Left: India. *Processional Image of a Large Swan (Velya Annam)*, Kerala, 19th century, Jackfruit wood, cloth, pigments, mirrors, beetle wings, paper. The Jane Emison Endowment for South Asian and Indian Art and the Suzanne S. Roberts Fund for Asian Art 2019.7a-f.

Center: China. *The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*, Yongle period, 1403–24, Gilt bronze. Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton, 98.77.2

Right: Black Hmong, Vietnam. *Woman's Bib*, 20th century, Cotton; resist dyed (batik) and embroidery. Gift of Richard L. Simmons in memory of Roberta Grodberg Simmons, 2004.169.51

Gallery 213 focuses on Southeast Asia, which includes Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Featuring works dating to 1000 BCE, the display demonstrates how a range of distinctive aesthetic identities emerged from a region long a center of maritime trade. This gallery presents connections among Mia's South Asian and Chinese art collections, as well as with the local community; Minnesota is home to the third-largest Southeast Asian American population in the United States.

"With New Light: Mia's Reinstalled Himalayan, South, and Southeast Asian Art Galleries" will be on view through October 17, 2021. Support for the gallery reinstallation is provided by the Jane and James Emison Endowment for South Asian and Indian Art. For more information on the exhibition and accompanying virtual content, please visit the [Mia website](#).

Press Contacts

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Michaela Baltasar-Feyen

+1 612 870 3280

mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org

About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have an admission fee.

Museum Hours

Thursday, Friday, Saturday Sunday 10am–5pm

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org

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