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## News



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## ASIAN ART MUSEUM Fall Exhibition Inspires Limited-Edition Original Comic: *DRAWING RAMA*

### San Francisco Bay Area illustrators combine forces to introduce ancient adventure story to new, contemporary audiences

San Francisco, August 10, 2016 — *The Rama Epic: Hero, Heroine, Ally, Foe* is an exhibition opening this fall at the Asian Art Museum, **exploring the characters behind the beloved South Asian tale** of Rama, the legendary Prince, Sita, his long-suffering love, Hanuman, their faithful monkey lieutenant, and Ravana, the ten-headed lord of the demons. Also known as the Ramayana, the story has been interpreted in every artistic medium high and low, and for decades has **sparked the imagination of countless devotees** through classic, cliff-hanger comics.

In keeping with this tradition, the Asian Art Museum has invited five local illustrators to re-imagine the main characters in their own visual storytelling styles. This “*Drawing Rama*” project is an opportunity for the museum to make **a unique addition to the Rama epic’s cartoon canon**, one that highlights the story’s enduring ability to excite kids, kids-at-heart, as well as working artists of every stripe.

Four of the illustrators will draw a key episode, ultimately creating a limited edition offset printed booklet, while a fifth will design a lush poster to wrap-up the entirety of the seven volume epic. Illustrators include **Jon Adams**, tackling Rama’s defeat of Ravana; **Wesley Allsbrook**, setting the drama in motion with Sita’s abduction by Ravana; **Sophia Foster-Dimino**, confronting Sita’s trial by fire; **Andrea Nguyen**, giving us Hanuman’s show-stopping leap to the Himalayas; and **Sanaa Khan**, summarizing the story in a keepsake fold-out poster that will also function as a jacket to house the drawings.

“When we spoke with audiences, we found out that, while many people had heard of the Ramayana, they weren’t familiar with the details,” explains museum director Jay Xu. “With millions of fans around the world, we felt like it was critical to demonstrate how this is **a universal story that is relevant to artists and art-lovers today** and can inspire anyone who lives in the Bay Area, no matter their heritage.”

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Through their distinctive visual storytelling styles, these illustrators are already making waves here in California, nationally and internationally with work appearing in publications as well-known as *The New Yorker* and as richly niche as *Lucky Peach*. As members of the Bay Area design scene, they have roles in innovative corporations like Google as daily “doodlers,” as in-house talent for Airbnb, and as proprietors of local artist-owned presses like Khan’s Tiny Splendor.

**1,000 editions of the final *Drawing Rama* booklet of illustrations will be printed.** These will be available at events for select members of the press and public leading up to the opening of the exhibition (and beyond) and coinciding with the 2016 San Francisco Zine Fest that kicks off the first week of September. Opportunities to meet the designers and hear about their work include:

- **Saturday, Sept. 3, Mission: Comics & Art, San Francisco**

Limited capacity, pre-release event at local hub for the Bay Area illustrator community, featuring sketches, process videos, and how the *Drawing Rama* participants engage with San Francisco cultural organizations large and small when seeking out inspiration for their work. Stay for a Zine Fest party! **5PM-7PM.**

- **Thursday, Oct.6, Spoke Art Gallery, San Francisco**

Launch of the complete booklet at downtown art gallery dedicated to affordable and accessible art. Come over and meet the illustrators for a casual Q&A, a signing, and a glass of wine at an event open to the public. **6PM-8PM.**

- **Wednesday, Oct. 19, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco**

Invitation-only media preview for *The Rama Epic* exhibition, with curator-led tours, unique story-telling opportunities with museum-trained specialists, and a meet-up with the illustrators to learn more about *Drawing Rama*. **11AM-1PM.**

- **Saturday, Nov. 5, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco**

Public panel at the museum, with the illustrators discussing the final booklet, their creative process, and conversations about developing contemporary designs while respecting the sensitivities of a sacred text. **12PM-1PM.**

“With all these opportunities to share the illustrators’ work with the community, *Drawing Rama* is really an invitation to relate,” says Xu. “Just like the museum will be the only chance to experience this exhibition, **San Francisco is the only place where amazing local illustrators as diverse as this group can come together** to help connect the passion, drama and finesse of art from the past with today’s audiences.”

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*The Rama Epic: Hero, Heroine, Ally, Foe* will be on view Oct. 21, 2016 - Jan. 15, 2017 exclusively at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

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