

ASIAN ART MUSEUM
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News



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PERSPECTIVES ON PERSIAN ART LECTURE SERIES

Delve into Persian art and culture with new, free lecture series

SAN FRANCISCO, August 14, 2014—Explore the extraordinary traditions and worldwide influences of Persian art and culture through the Asian Art Museum's new *Perspectives on Persian Art* lecture series. Distinguished scholars will speak on topics ranging from ancient Persian gardens to European luxury goods in 17th-century Persia. Upcoming lectures feature talks by: Dr.

David Stronach, University of California, Berkeley (Aug. 23); Dr. Robert Hillenbrand, University of Edinburgh (Sept. 27); Dr. Ladan Akbarnia, British Museum (Nov. 15); and Dr. Amy Landau, Walters Art Museum (Dec. 6).

In addition to the lectures, museum visitors are encouraged to visit the Persian World and West Asia gallery on the third floor, containing ceramics, manuscripts, jewelry, metalwork and architectural decoration. Highlights in these galleries include ceramics from the Neolithic period to the 19th century; Luristan and Islamic bronzes; and illuminated manuscripts.

Look out for more Persian art in the museum's upcoming special exhibition. In March 2015 the Asian Art Museum will open *Woven Luxuries: Indian, Persian, and Turkish Textiles from the Indictor Collection*. Eleven textiles from a private New York collection offer a glimpse into the richness and diversity of Iranian, Indian and Turkish silk velvets. Spanning three distinct cultural areas with their own design sensibilities and tastes, this group of textiles showcases different techniques of velvet production and suggests their varied uses.

Perspectives on Persian Art Lecture Series

Saturdays, Aug. 23, Sept. 27, Nov. 15, Dec. 6, 1–2:30 PM

Free with museum admission (\$10–\$15)

The *Perspectives on Persian Art* series is made possible by the generous support of Tina and Hamid Moghadam.

Conical bowl with "panel style" decoration, approx. 1200–1250. Iran; perhaps Kashan. Fritware, underglaze. *Courtesy of Asian Art Museum, The Avery Brundage Collection, B60P1893.*

MORE

Ancient Persian Gardens: Evolution and Legacy, with Dr. David Stronach

Saturday, Aug. 23, 1–2:30 PM

Samsung Hall, free with museum admission

Dr. David Stronach, University of California, Berkeley, professor emeritus of Near Eastern art and archaeology, kicks off the museum's new *Perspectives on Persian Art* lecture series with a lively talk about the influence of traditional Persian gardens in Asia and Europe.

From 1961 to 1963 Stronach directed excavations of the royal garden of Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE) at Pasargadae, in Southwest Iran. Since that time he has studied connections between the royal gardens of Mesopotamia—the gardens associated with Nineveh and Babylon—and the gardens at Pasargadae. It was at Pasargadae that Cyrus appears to have introduced the first example of a fourfold garden layout (a type known in Persian as *chaharbagh*). Such gardens remain in use not only in present-day Iran but also in India and Spain.

Dr. Stronach will present an additional lecture on Aug. 29 as part of the Society for Asian Art's Arts of Asia lecture series *Arts of the Islamic World*.

Visit www.societyforasianart.org/programs for details.

The Old and New Testaments in Islamic Painting, with Dr. Robert Hillenbrand

Saturday, Sept. 27, 1–2:30 PM

Samsung Hall, free with museum admission

Stories of the prophets from the Old and New Testaments have had a long history of illustration in Islamic painting traditions. Drawing from accounts in the Qur'an and other sources in Islamic literature, scholars, poets, historians and storytellers developed new texts on the lives of the prophets. These texts were often accompanied by paintings. Dr. Robert Hillenbrand will explore the richness of some of these literary and artistic traditions.

Dr. Hillenbrand will present an additional lecture on Sept. 26 as part of the Society for Asian Art's Arts of Asia lecture series *Arts of the Islamic World*.

Visit www.societyforasianart.org/programs for details.

Carried between Cathay and Khita'i: A Case Study of the Chinoiserie Aesthetic in Iran and Central Asia, with Dr. Ladan Akbarnia

Saturday, Nov. 15, 1–2:30 PM

Samsung Hall, free with museum admission

A Chinese inscription on an ornately decorated travelling box for valuables at the Brooklyn Museum claims it was produced in China's Zhejiang province. Not bearing a date, the object has been attributed on stylistic grounds to Yuan China between the mid-

13th and mid-14th centuries, though some features suggest an association with Chinese artistic techniques practiced after that period. To complicate matters, the object's composition implies a connection to Persian-style book arts and their incorporation of Chinese-inspired elements. Most such elements were introduced during the Mongol period. They evolved into a standardized Persian-style visual repertoire during the 15th century. In this illustrated lecture, the Brooklyn coffer will be examined and compared to other objects produced in medieval China, Iran, and Central Asia. Dr. Akbarnia will examine the possibility that the coffer might have been produced either later or over a longer period of time than previously thought.

Dr. Akbarnia will present an additional lecture on Nov. 14 as part of the Society for Asian Art's Arts of Asia lecture series *Arts of the Islamic World*.

Visit www.societyforasianart.org/programs for details.

The Traveler's Gift: Italian Red Velvet and Other European Luxuries in Seventeenth-Century Persia, with Dr. Amy Landau

Saturday, Dec. 6, 1–2:30 PM

Education Studios, free with museum admission

If one had the money, one could acquire an ever-increasing quantity and variety of European goods and luxury wares in 17th-century Isfahan, including Italian velvet, London cloth and handbags, faux pearls and gold clocks. How were these European imports worn and displayed? What did they signify in the increasingly cosmopolitan city of Isfahan, a city referred to as “half the world” by its inhabitants? Dr. Landau will delve into these questions about the social context of European luxury objects in 17th-century Persia.

Dr. Landau will present an additional lecture on Dec. 5 as part of the Society for Asian Art's Arts of Asia lecture series *Arts of the Islamic World*.

Visit www.societyforasianart.org/programs for details.

ABOUT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco's premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Information: 415.581.3500 or www.asianart.org

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 AM to 5 PM. From Feb. 6 through Sept. 11, 2014, hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

General Admission: FREE for museum members, \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors (65+), college students with ID, and youths (13–17). FREE for children under 12 and SFUSD students with ID. General admission on Thursdays after 5 PM is \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and museum members, who are always admitted FREE). General admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month). A surcharge may apply for admission to special exhibitions.

Access: The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access: 415.581.3598; TDD: 415.861.2035.

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