

ASIAN ART MUSEUM
Chong-Moon Lee Center
for Asian Art & Culture

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Asian
Art
Museum

Asian Art Museums Partners with Bay Area Asian Deaf Community, Silicon Valley, and Linda Bove, Beloved "Sesame Street" Librarian, on First ASL Digital Masterpieces Tour



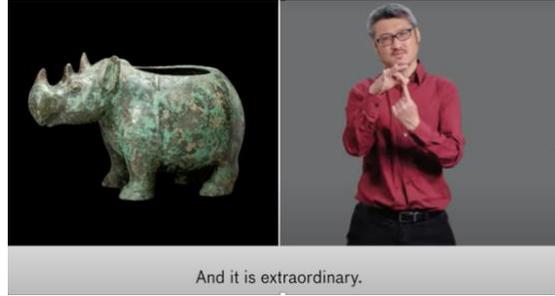
San Francisco, April 15, 2022 — The Asian Art Museum is excited to deepen its ongoing accessibility initiatives with an original American Sign Language (ASL) digital tour of its celebrated masterpieces, available on Apr. 15 for free via the [Asian Art Museum app](#), as well as on [YouTube](#). The tour was produced in close consultation with Sam Sepah, who works as a lead accessibility research product manager in Silicon Valley and provided leadership and expertise in accessibility best practices as they intersect with digital technology. Members of the Bay Area Asian Deaf Association (BAADA) and Linda Bove, who played the beloved deaf librarian from 1971 to 2002 on "Sesame Street," were also key participants in developing the new tour, which showcases some of the rarest and most intriguing artworks on view at the museum.

Each of the 17 stops on the tour function as an introduction to certain collection galleries, museum masterpieces, or contemporary works. By creating videos featuring a filmed signer discussing artworks in ASL—rather than simply providing closed captions for visitors who are deaf—those who are native to and/or favor ASL will be able to experience the museum in their preferred language.

"From a lustrous jade cup enjoyed by Mughal emperors, to a glittering gilded Buddha, to a glorious Burmese Buddha throne, to my personal favorite, an ancient Chinese bronze rhinoceros fit for a king or queen, our masterpieces structure every visit as one of discovery, helping connect the dots between past and present," says Dr. Jay Xu, The Barbara Bass Bakar Director and CEO of the Asian Art Museum. "Equal participation is a fundamental value of our museum, and this tour is wonderful way for us to ensure we are accessible to everyone who comes through our doors or who visits us online."

The Asian Art Museum's American Sign Language (ASL) Tour production team with Wonha Park, President of BAADA.
Front row, from left to right: Lorraine Goodwin, Churyl Zeviar, Wonha Park, Linda Bove, Sam Sepah.
Back row, from left to right: Dwight Burks, Adam Kennedy, Joshua Guerci

“Launching the ASL tour with the museum’s designated masterpieces made sense, since they light a pathway through a large, extremely diverse collection, meaning deaf adults and children can enjoy the museum in an equitable way,” says Sepah, who also coordinated casting and input from the deaf community. “This tour underscores for everyone the fundamental pleasures of visiting a community hub like the Asian Art Museum, but does so on visitors’ own terms and in a style that matches their needs, opening up new opportunities for lifelong learning for all.”



The production of the tour was led by Asian Art Museum Senior Interpretive Planner Lorraine Goodwin, who also spearheaded the current suite of in-gallery digital interpretive tools, including videos and tablets. “Research began in July of 2021, and the extensive community input from members of BAADA, Sam Sepah, and Linda Bove was essential to ensure the tour we developed is as inclusive, accessible, and, best of all, enjoyable as possible,” says Goodwin. “ASL interpreter Churyl Zeviar and video producers Adam Kennedy and Dwight Burks were also instrumental in creating this tour—they worked closely with our deaf experts and integrated their perspectives with openness and respect that was critical to the project’s success.”

The new tour builds on previous accessibility initiatives developed by the museum in partnership with community and advocacy groups. These initiatives include “tactile translations” that allow for visually impaired visitors to feel the outlines of artworks, and special access days with additional guides, interpreters, touch materials, seating, and reduced capacity to enhance the tranquility and intimacy of the museum experience. The most recent access day was Monday, Mar. 28.

About the Asian Art Museum

Located in the heart of San Francisco, the museum is home to one of the world’s finest collections of Asian art, with more than 18,000 awe-inspiring artworks ranging from ancient jades and ceramics to contemporary video installations. Dynamic special exhibitions, cultural celebrations and public programs for all ages provide rich art experiences that unlock the past and spark questions about the future.

Information: 415.581.3500 or www.asianart.org

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: Thursdays: 1 p.m.–8 p.m.; Fridays–Mondays: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays, as well as New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Museum Admission: Free for members, essential workers, SFUSD students, children 12 and under, and active-duty military. \$15 for adults and \$10 for ages 65 & over, ages 13 to 17), and college students (with ID). Thursday nights (after 5 p.m.) \$10 for adults and \$8 for ages 65 & over, ages 13 to 17), and college students (with ID).

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

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