

MINUTES
ASIAN ART COMMISSION
or Special Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 12:00 – 1:30 pm
Koret Education Center and Zoom

Commissioners Present:	Salle Yoo, Chair Michele Alioto Denise Bradley-Tyson Vaishali Chadha Claudine Cheng Yogen Dalal Tiffany Deng Thao Dodson	Martha Sam Hertelendy Timothy F. Kahn Jennifer Kao Fred M. Levin Nanci Nishimura Merrill Randol France Viana
Commissioners Absent:	Mathew Bissinger William Mathews Brooks Virginia Foo Michael Hormel	Kiran (Kiki) Kapany (z) Chong-Moon Lee Anthony Sun (z) Kenneth P. Wilcox
Trustees in Attendance:	Paul Antebi (z) Eliza Cash Lillian Chun Dixon Doll (z) Gurmeet Gulati (z) Marsha Vargas Handley Maria Kahng Travis Kiyota (z) Gorretti Lo Lui Dipti Mathur	Mary Mead, ex Officio Amanda Minami (z) Anjali Pichai Varsha Rao (z) Vijay Shriram Nazneen Spliedt, ex Officio Ann Tanenbaum (z) Akiko Yamazaki Richard Yen (z)
Also Present:	Alexander D. Calhoun Natalie Calhoun Soyoung Lee Abby Chen Tim Hallman Eula Lee Sara Lee	Nicole Lugtu Kate McNulty Robert Mintz Daphne Tooke Emiko Usui Jae Yang Laura Hathhorn

Call to Order and Chair’s Comments

Chair Salle Yoo called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., a quorum being present. Ms. Yoo welcomed everyone in person and on Zoom. She thanked Abby Chen for leading – and board members for participating in – a walkthrough of *Everyday War* prior to the meeting.

Minutes from the January 14, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

On behalf of the Commissioners, Trustees and staff, Ms. Yoo gave a warm “museum family” welcome to Dr. Soyoung Lee, the Asian Art Museum’s fifth Director since its founding nearly 60 years prior. Ms. Yoo expressed the board’s commitment to supporting and being part of the journey forward under Dr. Lee’s leadership. Ms. Yoo noted a public welcome and introduction of Dr. Lee to the broader museum family of supporters would take place at the September 24 Annual Meeting Celebration, and she mentioned various events to be scheduled over the next several months to provide opportunities for board

members to get to know Soyoung better.

In recognition of Commissioner Alexander D. Calhoun's years of service since 1969, Ms. Yoo, the board and staff celebrated Mr. Calhoun for his loyalty, pioneering leadership, and exceptional vision and service to the Museum. Mr. Calhoun welcomed Dr. Lee and delighted everyone attending as he eloquently shared his reflections of his early involvement during the founding of the museum. Ms. Yoo presented Mr. Calhoun with a proclamation on behalf of Mayor Daniel Lurie from the City and County of San Francisco, and the board passed resolutions honoring Mr. Calhoun as Commissioner Emeritus of the Museum.

Dr. Soyoung Lee gave opening remarks about onboarding priorities including understanding institutional structure, priorities, vision and local and global impact, and she shared ideas she had been ruminating about resulting from recent travels and experiences.

Dr. Lee called on Chief Experience Officer Emiko Usui who reviewed the exhibition *Yuan Goang-Ming: Everyday War*, which opened April 3, a collaborative art and culture marathon event on April 5 entitled "Night of Ideas", and a program that opened April 17 in the Tateuchi Gallery – *Project Dastan: Stories about Pakistan*.

Committee Reports

- Ms. Yoo called on CFO Sara Lee for the Budget & Finance Committee Report. Ms Lee presented an update on financial performance for the eight months ending February 28, noting a \$4.9 million operating loss primarily due to lagging contributed revenues. Ms. Lee reviewed additional gifts for FY 2025 including a \$1 million Mellon Foundation grant, bequests, and endowment and art acquisition. She noted two Federal grants (NEH and NEA totaling approximately \$300,000) which were at high risk of not materializing. Regarding the City Budget, Ms. Lee noted positive indications that the museum would be spared from additional budget cuts.
- Foundation President Anjali Pichai introduced a Fundraising Report presented by (i) Fred Levin, who reminded all to make their annual gifts in a timely fashion and gave a report on the Jay Xu Asian American and Asian Diaspora Fund (\$600,000 raised to date toward a \$1 million goal), (ii) Salle Yoo, who announced Trustee Lillian Chun would serve as Co-Chair of the annual Gala, noting the date change from September 24 to a soon to be announced date in October and explaining the reasons for the change, and (iii) Michele Alioto and Martha Hertelendy, who gave a report on Nexus, including the February 27 dinner in Palo Alto as well as an upcoming Nexus trip to Turkey (October 31 through November 9) and an optional extension trip to Cairo (November 9 through 13).
- Acquisitions Committee Report – Chair Marsha Vargas Handley introduced Chief Curatorial Director Robert Mintz who presented the second step toward deaccession of four objects from Thailand as well as additional items brought forth from the Acquisitions Committee to be acted on later in the meeting.
- Committee on Trustees – Co-Chairs Anjali Pichai and Vijay Shriram thanked their fellow committee members and gave an overview of the work the committee does, including recruitment of new trustees, mentoring and orientation. They also reviewed their recently completed project of surveying board members to determine areas of interest and committee assignments.
- Commission Nominating Committee – Chair Martha Hertelendy thanked her fellow committee members and reviewed the Committee's process of recruitment.

Consideration and Possible Action Items

a. Appreciation to Alexander D. Calhoun and Appointment as Commissioner Emeritus

WHEREAS, January 27, 2025, marked the resignation of Alexander D. Calhoun from the Asian Art Commission, after 56 years of continual leadership and public service; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Calhoun was appointed by Mayor Joseph Alioto to the first Asian Art Commission on July 30, 1969 (established by Section 28.10 of the Administrative Code, Ordinance 193-69, on June 20, 1969), preceded by his appointment to the Asian Art Museum Foundation, which filed its original Articles of Incorporation on May 26, 1969 and held their initial meeting on June 6, 1969; and

WHEREAS, From 1975 to 1979, Mr. Calhoun served as Chair of the Commission, and continually over the decades served in leadership roles, including service on the Executive Committees and chair of several committees that included Audit, Budget & Finance, Ethics, and Nominating; Mr. Calhoun served in a dual capacity of Commissioner and Trustee until his resignation from the Foundation in September 1999; and

WHEREAS, Since inception in 1969, Mr. Calhoun supported the Museum's mission to promote Asian art and has worked tirelessly to secure the financial future of the Museum through contacts, persuasion, and visionary recognition of the fiscal needs and responsibilities of the Museum and the City County of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Calhoun served as an Infantry Lieutenant in the Army of the United States in World War II as a Japanese language specialist, and during the Korean War as a Chinese language specialist. The Japanese government honored Mr. Calhoun in 1994 by presenting him with the Order of the Sacred Treasure Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon at the official residence of the Japanese Consul General. Mr. Calhoun retired as Senior Counsel from the law firm of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey on June 30, 2013, and served Of Counsel in the law firm of Taylor & Company until 2019. He served as an adjunct professor at Boalt Hall Law School and at the University of San Francisco Law School. He is Founding Chairman Emeritus at Give2Asia and Trustee Emeritus at The Asia Foundation. He is a past President of the Japan Society of Northern California and Chairman Emeritus of the San Francisco Osaka Sister City Committee. A loving husband, father and benevolent human being, the Museum hereby recognizes and commends Mr. Calhoun for his 56 years of outstanding service to the Asian Art Museum; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the members of the Asian Art Commission wish to express their deepest gratitude and respect for Alexander D. Calhoun's immeasurable service and example on behalf of the Commission, Foundation, Museum and the City and County of San Francisco, and for the generosity and friendship he has so freely shared with the Museum for so many years; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That in grateful acknowledgement of his loyalty, pioneering leadership, exceptional vision and service to the Museum, Mr. Alexander D. Calhoun is hereby named Commissioner Emeritus of the Asian Art Museum.

b. Appreciation of Commissioners Gorretti Lo Lui and Farah Makras

WHEREAS, Commissioners Gorretti Lo Lui and Farah Makras have recently resigned from the Asian Art Commission, having served from September 28, 2010, and January 20, 2021, respectively; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1998 Ms. Lui served as a Foundation Trustee, stepping down in 2010 to begin service on the Commission; she then returned to the Foundation in 2012 and from that time has continued her leadership and dedication serving in a dual capacity as Commissioner and Trustee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the members of the Asian Art Commission wish to express their sincere appreciation to Ms. Lui and Ms. Makras for their service to the museum and the City and County of San Francisco, and to thank Ms. Lui for her generosity of spirit to the museum as she continues her leadership role as a Trustee on the Foundation.

c. Objects Recommended for Deaccession from City Collection: Four objects in the collection of the City and County of San Francisco, namely,

- (i) The bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, approx. 675-725; Thailand, Plai Bat Hill, Buriram province; Bronze with silver inlay, H. 27 1/2 in x W. 11 1/2 in x D. 5 3/4 in, H. 69.9 cm x W. 29.2 cm x D. 14.6 cm; *The Avery Brundage Collection*; B65B57;
- (ii) Standing Buddha, approx. 750-850; Thailand, Plai Bat Hill, Buriram province; Bronze; H. 8 1/2 in x W. 3 1/8 in x D. 1 3/4 in, H. 21.6 cm x W. 7.9 cm x D. 4.4 cm; *The Avery Brundage Collection*; B65B70;
- (iii) The bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, approx. 750-850; Thailand, Plai Bat Hill, Buriram province; Bronze, H. 37 in x W. 13 in x D. 10 in, H. 94 cm x W. 33 cm x D. 25.4 cm; *The Avery Brundage Collection*; B66B14;
- (iv) Bodhisattva, approx. 600-700; Thailand, Plai Bat Hill, Buriram province; Bronze; H. 10 in x W. 2 3/4 in x D. 1 1/2 in, H. 25.4 cm x W. 7 cm x D. 3.8 cm; *Museum purchase*; B68S9;

WHEREAS, The Collections Management Policy of the Asian Art Museum, as amended on November 26, 2001, permits objects to be considered for deaccessioning if they are not suitable for reasons including relevance, redundancy, physical integrity, authenticity, destructive analysis, fragments, legality, and inconsistency with the purposes and priorities of the Museum; and

WHEREAS, On August 26, 2002 the Asian Art Commission passed Resolution C02-029 which authorized the City Attorney, in consultation with the Director, to finalize and submit to the court a Petition for Instructions Approving Discretionary Acts of Trustees and a Petition for Order to modify the Brundage Trust Agreement; and

WHEREAS, The Director and the Chief Curatorial Director recommend that the objects be deaccessioned from the City Collection; and

WHEREAS, The Acquisitions Committee presented its recommendation to the Asian Art Commission at their September 26, 2024 meeting that the objects listed be deaccessioned, with the understanding that the matter would be considered again by the Acquisitions Committee at least six months after its August 15, 2024 meeting; and another resolution would be submitted to the Asian Art Commission where it will become effective only after it has been agreed to by a two-thirds vote of the quorum of the Commission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Asian Art Commission approves Phase 2 of the deaccessioning process with regard to the objects listed.

d. Objects Purchased for the City Collection, using Discretionary Spending Authority

WHEREAS, The following objects, fully researched by the Curators and the Conservators and recommended by the Director and Chief Curatorial Director, were purchased using the discretionary spending authority of the Director (up to \$25,000) or Chief Curatorial Director (up to \$10,000); and

WHEREAS, The Acquisitions Committee recommends to the Commission that the objects be considered for accession into the City Collection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Asian Art Commission approves accession of the objects into the City Collection, with thanks to the Donors of Funds.

SOUTH ASIAN ART

R2025.1

Painting

Gurjeet Singh (Indian, b. 1994)

Pricky Words

2024

Gouache on wasli paper

Overall: H. 35 in. x W. 59 in. (H. 88.9 cm x W. 149.9 cm)

Seller: Chemould Prescott Road

Price: \$2,600

JAPANESE ART

R2025.5.1

Sculpture

Nakatomi Hajime (Japanese, b. 1974)

Frill: Surging Waves III

2023

Japan

Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer

Overall: H. 20 11/16 in x W. 25 13/16 in x D. 14 3/4 in (H. 52.5 cm x W. 65.5 cm x D. 37.5 cm)

Seller: TAI Modern

Price: \$21,600

R2025.5.2

Sculpture

Watanabe Chiaki (Japanese, b. 1969)

Enbashira (Pillar of Flame)

2023

Japan

Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer

Overall: H. 37 in x W. 14 15/16 in x D. 14 15/16 in (94 cm x 38 cm x 38 cm)

Seller: TAI Modern

Price: \$9,600

R2025.5.3

Decorative Arts

Kondo Masayo (Japanese, b. 1977)

Tou tou (Overflowing)

2024

Japan

Bamboo, rattan, and lacquer

Overall: H. 15 3/4 in x W. 7 7/8 in x D. 8 11/16 in (40 cm x 20 cm x 22 cm)

Seller: TAI Modern

Price: \$6,080

e. Gifts Recommended to be Accessioned into the City Collection

WHEREAS, The following objects, offered as gifts to the Asian Art Museum, were fully researched by the Curators and the Conservators and recommended to the Acquisitions Committee by the Director and the Chief Curatorial Director for acquisition into the City Collection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Asian Art Commission approves the recommendation of the Acquisitions Committee to accession the objects into the City Collection, with thanks to the Donors.

CONTEMPORARY ART

R2025.6.1

Donor: Binh Danh

Prints And Drawings

Binh Danh

*Chris Ronald Martinez, 21, Army, Cpl.,
Alameda, Calif.*

2006

Chlorophyll print on grass, resin

Framed: H. 41 3/8 in. x W. 31 1/4 in. x D. 2 1/2

in. (H. 105.1 cm x W. 79.4 cm x D. 6.4 cm)

R2025.6.2

Donor: Binh Danh

Prints And Drawings

Binh Danh

*Clarence Taylor, 25, Army, Pfc., Greensville,
Ala.*

2006

Chlorophyll print on grass, resin

Framed: H. 41 3/8 in. x W. 31 1/2 in. x D. 2 5/8

in. (H. 105.1 cm x W. 80 cm x D. 6.7 cm)

R2025.6.3

Donor: Binh Danh

Prints And Drawings

Binh Danh

*William Walter Smith, 21, Army, Pfc., King City,
Mo.*

2006

Chlorophyll print on grass, resin

Framed: H. 41 1/2 in. x W. 31 1/2 in. x D. 2 1/4

in. (H. 105.4 cm x W. 80 cm x D. 5.7 cm)

SOUTH ASIAN ART

R2025.4.3

Donor: Society for Art & Cultural
Heritage of India (SACHI)

Sculpture

Ashwini Bhat

Self Portrait, Yakshi

2023

Glazed ceramic

Overall: H. 24 1/2 in. x W. 6 in. x D. 6 in.

(H. 62.2 cm x W. 15.2 cm x D. 15.2 cm)

f. Objects currently in the Foundation Collection recommended for the City Collection

WHEREAS, The following objects in the Foundation Collection were fully researched by the Curators and the Conservators, and the Director and the Chief Curatorial Director recommended to the Acquisitions Committee that the objects be accessioned into the City Collection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Asian art Commission approves the Acquisitions Committee's recommendation to accession the objects into the City Collection, with thanks to the Donors.

SOUTH ASIAN ART

F2024.16.1

Seller: Anant Design Private Limited

Painting

Vikrant Bhise (b. 1984)

Archival Historicity/Dalit Panthers 1

2023

Mixed media

Overall: H. 8 1/4 in. x W. 6 in. (H. 21 cm x W.

15.2 cm)

F2024.16.2

Seller: Anant Design Private Limited

Painting

Vikrant Bhise (b. 1984)

Archival Historicity/Dalit Panthers 7

2023

Mixed media

Overall: H. 8 1/4 in. x W. 6 in. (H. 21 cm x W.

15.2 cm)

F2024.16.3

Seller: Anant Design Private Limited

Painting

Vikrant Bhise (b. 1984)

Archival Historicity/Dalit Panthers 8

2023

Mixed media

Overall: H. 8 1/4 in. x W. 6 in. (H. 21 cm x W.

15.2 cm)

Adjournment. There being no public comment or other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm p.m.