

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

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Kathryn Kanjo

Exhibition of the 'Sacred Art of Tibet' Opens April 1 at the UCSB Art Museum

In conjunction with the fourth visit to UC Santa Barbara by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the University Art Museum will present an exclusive exhibition of historic art of the Himalayas.

"Toward Enlightenment: The Sacred Art of Tibet" features important Tibetan paintings from the 14th to 19th centuries.

The compositions reflect the purity and precision of visionary buddhas, bodhisattvas, archetypal deities, lama portraits, and protectors.

The exhibition will be on display Wednesday, April 1, through Sunday, June 14.

Visitors are invited to a celebratory reception at the museum on Friday, April 24, at 4:30 p.m.

Admission to the museum is free.

It is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon until 5 p.m.

The museum will also present "Universe of a Deity: A Tibetan Sand Mandala," from April 21 to 25.

Buddhist monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery will create a symbolic Tibetan sand painting, or mandala.

Created over time with precision and focus, the colorful and detailed mandala is a unique combination of imagery and ritual.

The monks will work in public on the intricate composition, which will be destroyed in a closing ceremony as a reminder of the transience of life.

Toward Enlightenment includes 23 powerful Tibetan thangkas, or paintings.

These colorful banners, which are used in Buddhist worship and celebration, describe the teachings of faith.

The selections highlight the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet and include fine historical depictions of the Dalai Lama, often identified by a white lotus flower held in the right hand and a yellow Pandita hat.

Considered a re-embodiment of a Buddhist teacher, the Dalai Lama has served as the spiritual and political leader of Tibet since the 16th century.

One notable painting represents the life cycle of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who reunified Tibet into a powerful empire.

In this work, colorful silk brocade frames a thangka depicting the Dalai Lama's complex life cycle, from his descent from the pure land to vignettes of his conflicts, travels, visions, and teachings.

Another stunning thangka is of the popular Sixth Dalai Lama framed by golden hand and footprints.

The Dalai Lama is considered an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the patron bodhisattva of Tibet.

An enlightened teacher, this bodhisattva of compassion is represented in many forms and colors.

Included in the exhibit are both meditational and wrathful forms.

Notably, wrathful incarnations do not convey anger, but rather the intensity required to quell negative impulses.

The UCSB exhibition is drawn from the holdings of the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City, which is devoted to the art forms of the Himalayas and surrounding Regions.

It was organized by Ariana Maki of the Rubin Museum and the University Art Museum.

Visitors are also invited to participate in creating a community sand painting designed by Joy Davis, a local artist and UCSB alumna who holds a B.A. in art studio from the College of Letters and Science.

Davis has studied traditional thangka painting techniques with master thangka painters in Nepal and in California.

Her current work is the culmination of travels, interviews, photography, and art surveys conducted in Asia over the last six years.

"Universe of a Deity: A Tibetan Sand Mandala" and "Toward Enlightenment: The Sacred Art of Tibet" were made possible by the generous support of Lillian and Jon Lovelace, with additional support from Wendy L. and Larry S. Barels.

Located in the heart of campus, the University Art Museum stimulates active learning about art and its role in society through a changing schedule of world-class exhibitions and unique educational partnerships.

For information about the exhibition, visit www.uam.ucsb.edu.

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draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.