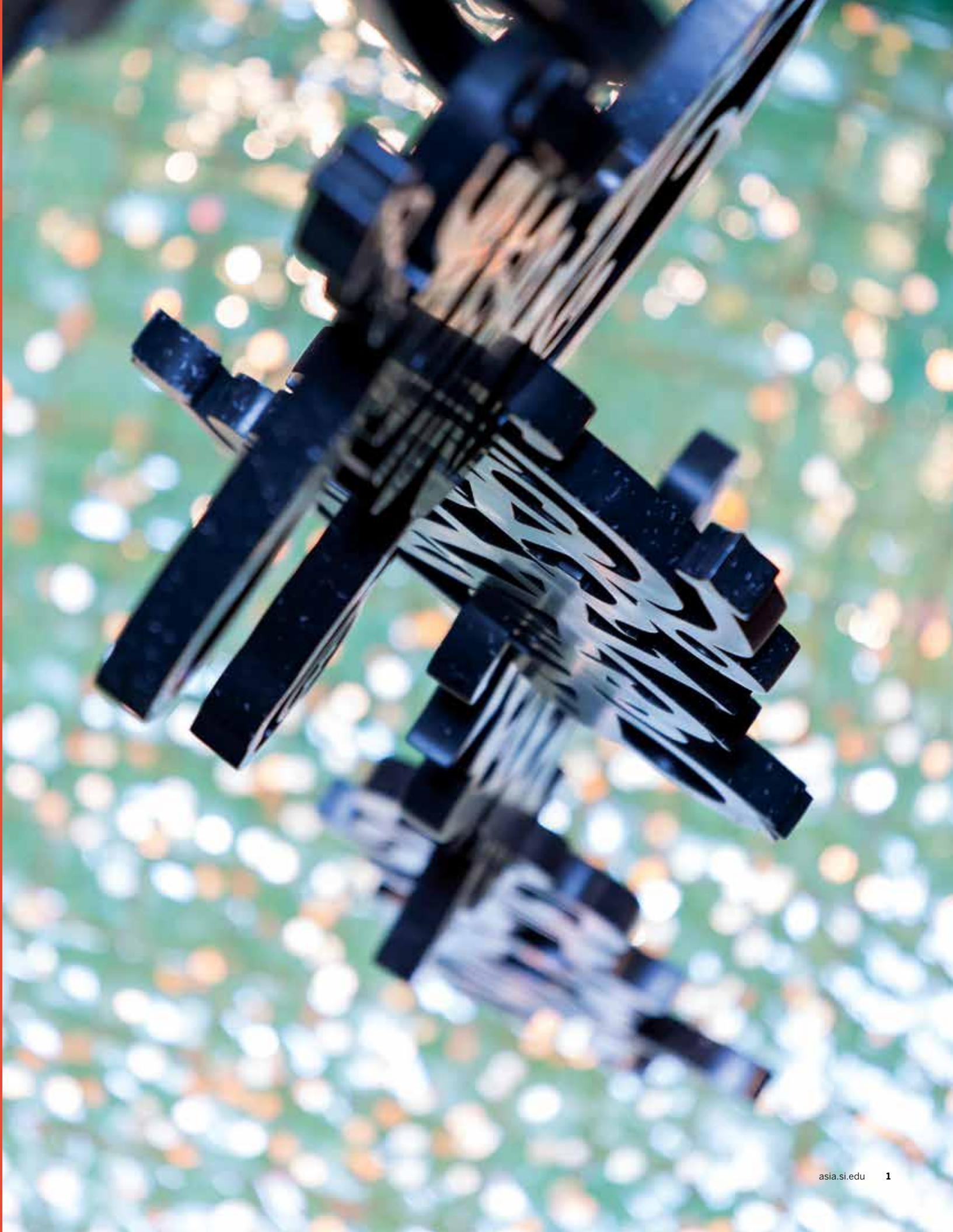


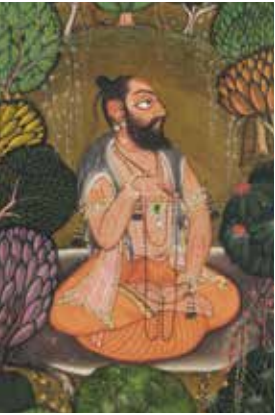
FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

# Strategic Plan 2020–2025



NATIONAL  
MUSEUM of  
**ASIAN ART**  
Smithsonian





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## Director's Letter

In a world of intensifying global connections, kaleidoscopic perspectives, and virtual realities, where does one go to make sense of things? Museums are places where one can find ways—through seeing, comparing, and appreciating—to understand varieties of human experiences. Like maps, museums tell us both where to look and how to look.

And just as maps are redrawn or are even re-oriented by new thinking and new technologies, so, too, museums. All art museums face the challenges posed by emergent forms of culture, changing expectations on the part of the public, and increasing financial pressures. But for a museum devoted to the arts and cultures of Asia, particularly in what is fast becoming the Asian century, there are special opportunities.

### Two Galleries

On May 9, 1923, the Freer Gallery of Art quietly opened its doors to the public, the fulfillment of Charles Lang Freer's commitment to make his collection of nearly 10,000 Asian and American works of art available to the nation. In addition to being the first fine arts museum on the National Mall, the Freer Gallery reflected its founder's passion for the arts of Asia, the works of James McNeill Whistler, and contemporary American art, as well as the newfound international ambitions of the United States.

Almost sixty-five years later, on September 28, 1987, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery opened, adding another thousand works of Asian art and over 40,000 square feet of public space. The addition was genuinely transformative. Not only did it expand capacity for educational and research activities, but for the first time it also enabled the Smithsonian to mount an active program of international loan exhibitions in the arts of Asia.

Together the Freer and Sackler now house one of the world's finest collections of Asian art. Some 42,000 objects range from the Middle East, through South and Southeast Asia, to East Asia, from the Neolithic period to the twenty-first century. Many of these works are renowned and iconic. Conjoined physically and unified

administratively, the Galleries are dedicated to increasing our understanding of the arts and cultures of Asia through a broad portfolio of exhibitions, publications, conservation, research, and education. Free and open to the public 364 days a year, the Freer and Sackler constitute the Smithsonian's national museum of Asian art.

### One National Museum

Charles Lang Freer's success as an industrialist and a connoisseur of Asian art derived in no small part from the interconnected world in which he lived. Now, in an unprecedented moment of global interdependence, when the economic and cultural hegemony of North America and Europe has given way, and when Asian societies are increasingly powerful hubs in a polycentric and networked global system, there is a new urgency—not just for preserving art and culture in a time of extraordinary change, or for fostering an understanding of the historical, cultural, and artistic diversity of Asian cultures and societies, but for revising and refocusing some of our core assumptions and operations as a museum.

This strategic plan is the fruit of that creative process of revision and refocusing. Based on broad and wide consultation, and fully aligned with the Smithsonian Institution's strategy, it charts a path for the museum's second century that is as faithful to our past as it is ambitious for the future. The vision, values, and goals that it sets out promise a more creative, engaged, and efficient museum, one that celebrates art and addresses essential questions about culture. Above all, it aims to do full justice to the extraordinary art it houses and the public trust it holds.

### Chase F. Robinson

Dame Jillian Sackler Director  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art

## Our Values

**The public trust given to us**—to safeguard and exhibit the nation's collection of Asian art and American art of the Aesthetic movement

**Excellence**—in our collections and our work

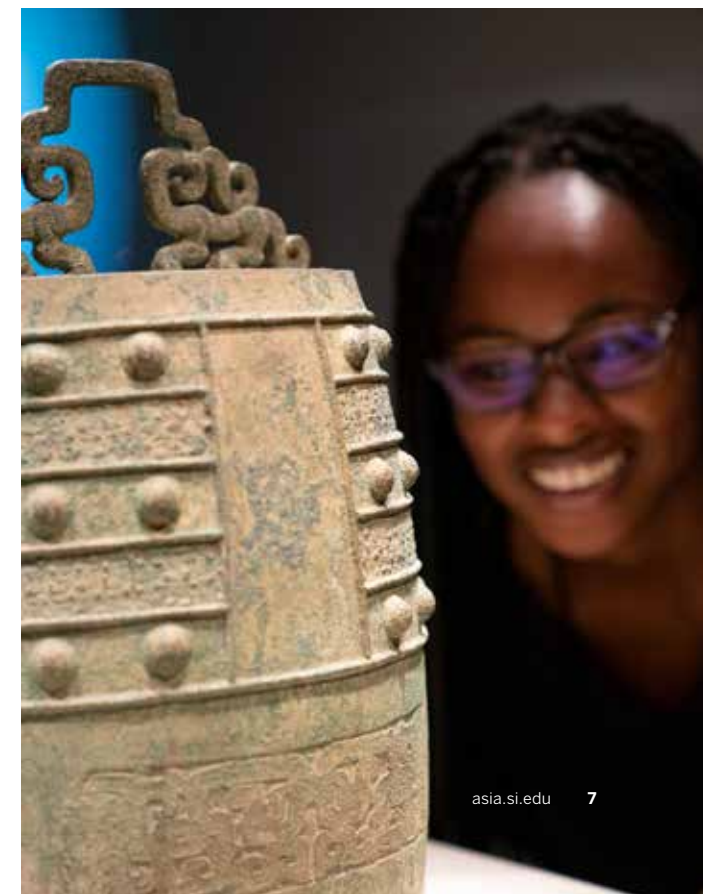
**Respect**—towards each other and the cultures whose art we exhibit—and diversity of individual experience, perspective, and viewpoint

**Creativity and engagement**—by visitors, scholars, and colleagues

**Specialized research and broad understanding of the world's cultures**—their distinct and entangled histories and their dynamic present

## Our Vision

As we enter our second century, we shall build upon the strengths of our two complementary museums, the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, to serve as a national museum that preserves, exhibits, and interprets Asian art in ways that deepen our understanding of Asia, America, and the world. We shall celebrate great art and pose essential questions about culture and society, employing innovative approaches and technology to expand and engage both local and global audiences.







## GOAL 1

# To expand, preserve, and celebrate our collections

**Our collections, assembled over more than a century of inspired research and scholarship, are our greatest strength.**

Guided by a revised acquisition strategy, we will continue to collect works of exceptional quality and significance. To showcase that strength, deepen the visitor experience, bring more art into public view, and enliven our galleries and spaces, we will experiment with how we show art and build a digital and online presence that is animated by our objects, their contexts, and their significance. Mindful of our responsibilities as stewards of the nation's collections, we will improve our infrastructure to safeguard our collections for future generations.

## Strategies

1. Develop and implement a historically sensitive but future-oriented collections plan that reflects our role and responsibility as a national museum of Asian art in the twenty-first century.
2. Ensure the integrity of our collection by enhancing the museum's excellence in conservation and scientific research.
3. Revise our exhibition philosophy and establish practices that ensure more of our permanent collection is brought into public view and our exhibitions are enriched by diverse perspectives, emerging technologies, innovative models, and thematic ambition, both historical and contemporary.
4. Develop and implement a digital plan that extends the reach and impact of our collections and exhibitions to national and international audiences.
5. Conduct a risk-assessment study, applying the results so as to improve our collections' infrastructure, including the Library and Archives.







## GOAL 2

To identify, attract, and serve new and diverse audiences through both our physical and digital spaces

**As the Smithsonian's museum of Asian art located on the National Mall, free and open to the public 364 days a year, we have long regarded access as integral to our identity.**

In response to the growing diversity of our audiences and to transformations in how audiences experience and acquire knowledge, we will build strategies of outreach, promotion, and collaboration that deepen our relationships with current visitors and bring new visitors into the galleries. We will build digital platforms and strategies that will deliver our programming beyond our walls and across the globe.

## Strategies

1. Raise our local, national, and international profile, clarify our brand, and advance our vision through a coordinated campaign of communications, partnerships, and programming.
2. Identify and attract audiences interested in understanding and celebrating Asian art and culture by aligning programming and communications, and by working to metrics and targets for local, national, and international visitors.
3. Encourage visitor curiosity and engagement in our galleries and public spaces by responding to visitor input and addressing visitor needs.
4. Develop and implement a digital plan that attracts, engages, educates, and enthuses the online visitor.



## GOAL 3

To foster an object-inspired understanding of the arts, communities, cultures, and societies of Asia

For nearly a century, we have been a museum that is devoted mainly to preserving, researching, illuminating, and exhibiting exemplary Asian art objects and works of American art that reflect Charles Lang Freer's aesthetic vision.

We will respond to the cultural and ethical challenges of the twenty-first century, increasingly driven as it is by forces that are global and Asian, by complementing our long-standing commitment to research with a broad portfolio of scholarship, programming, and education that speaks to issues in Asian arts, cultures, and societies. In our galleries and education spaces, we will employ approaches and tools that empower our objects to reveal histories, tell stories, and pose questions that are perennial and urgent, that interrogate the traditional, the local, the modern, and the global. We will also design ways to bring our own operations—the creative workings of the museum, as it were—into more public view.

## Strategies

1. Develop a suite of collections- and exhibitions-inspired programming and educational activities that speak to essential issues in Asian arts, cultures, and societies, on site and online.
2. Build substantive and funded collaborations with SI, selected museums, universities, and other non-profit partners to broaden our expertise and impact in fostering the understanding of Asian arts, cultures, and societies.
3. Build relationships with Asian and Asian American communities, including organizations that represent them, by enhancing our outreach and programming through formal partnerships and informal synergies.
4. Develop and implement a digital plan that facilitates and enhances research and scholarship, both print and digital.



## GOAL 4

To build a museum culture that is creative, collaborative, transparent, and resourceful

**We house objects and present exhibitions, but we are also a community of creative individuals—not just staff but Friends, docents, volunteers, trustees, donors, Smithsonian colleagues, and many more—all brought together by a shared mission and pride in our accomplishments.**

To maximize our creativity and to make good on the trust we earn through public and private support, we shall build a community that is respectful towards its members and the cultures and communities whose art we display, and we will be collaborative and creative in our work. To ensure that trust extends to future generations, we will be increasingly efficient and entrepreneurial in our operations and finances, and we will pursue strategies that broaden partnerships and increase philanthropy.

## Strategies

1. Develop an organizational culture of motivation, professional growth, respect, transparency, and experimentation.
2. Build a multi-year budget process and establish long- and middle-term planning, tying budgeting to planning and aligning resources with priorities.
3. Develop and implement a sustainable fundraising strategy, with annual metrics and goals (both financial and non-financial) that are ambitious and aligned with museum priorities.
4. Identify, fund, and build collaborations and partnerships that are aligned with our mission, monitoring by metrics.
5. Develop and implement a master plan.



## Implementation and Assessment

An implementation team consisting of the Director, Deputy Directors, Chief Advancement Officer, and Chief of Staff will be responsible for monitoring progress. Operationalized into annual goals, the plan will be assessed against appropriate metrics, with regular updates shared with our internal and external stakeholders. In the first instance, task forces—on exhibition philosophy, brand strategy, fundraising, and resilience and museum culture, respectively—will be established.

## Planning Process

The process was designed to be consultative, collaborative, and expeditious. Internal discussions took place in December 2018 and January 2019. A charging meeting was held on February 8, 2019, when a statement of vision and values was introduced and discussed, and the planning structure, consisting of a Steering Committee and four task forces, was announced. To ensure broad representation and fresh thinking, staff at multiple levels of responsibility and seniority served on the Steering Committee and task forces.

Discussions and drafts were iterative in nature. As the task forces tackled their work through May, usually in biweekly meetings, the Steering Committee met weekly to discuss submissions and to provide guidance and feedback. Updates on progress were given at all-staff meetings. With goals and provisional strategies settled, staff members of the Freer and Sackler were invited to participate in a prioritization exercise.

## Steering Committee

**Chair:** Chase Robinson, Dame Jillian Sackler Director

**Board Liaisons:** Peter Kimmelman and Antoine van Agtmael

### Members:

Marjan Adib, Chief of Staff

Danielle Bennett, Head, Collections Management

Lori Duggan Gold, Deputy Director, Operations and External Affairs

Massumeh Farhad, interim Deputy Director, Collections and Research, Chief Curator, and Curator of Islamic Art

Johnny Gibbons, Director of Marketing and Communications

Elisa Glazer, Chief Advancement Officer

Jody Pettibone, Associate Director, Finance and Administration

Brooke Rosenblatt, Visitor Experience Manager

Dave Opkins, Deputy Associate Director for Finance and Administration (until March 26, 2019)

## Task Forces

### Preserving and building our collection, interpreting Asian arts and culture

**Steering Committee Liaison:** Danielle Bennett

**Chairs:** Massumeh Farhad and Brian Abrams, Collections Manager

**Board Advisory Members:** Vijay Anand and Jeff Cunard

### Members:

Lindsey Carson, Human Resources Coordinator

Antonietta Catanzariti, Robert and Arlene Kogod Secretarial Scholar and Assistant Curator for the Ancient Near East

Nancy Eickel, Editor

Emily Jacobson, Paper Conservator

Ryan King, Digital Experience Designer

Matthew Lasnoski, Manager, Interpretive Programs

Amber Meade, Exhibition Lighting Specialist

Kathryn Phillips, Librarian

Jeff Smith, Assistant Registrar for Collections Information

### Deepening and broadening our impact

**Steering Committee Liaison:** Johnny Gibbons

**Chairs:** Lori Duggan Gold and Karel Tiefel, Department Coordinator, Public and Scholarly Engagement

**Board Advisory Member:** Shirley Johnson

### Members:

Elizabeth Brown, Development Operations Manager (beginning March 26, 2019)

Carol Huh, Associate Curator of Contemporary Asian Art

Whitney Kellaher, Membership Coordinator (until March 26, 2019)

Teak Lynner, Production Manager/Exhibits Specialist

Nancy Micklewright, Head, Department of Public and Scholarly Engagement

Sana Mirza, Education Specialist

Sai Muddasani, Social Media Specialist

Simon Rettig, Assistant Curator of Islamic Art

Richard Skinner, Museum Project Manager

Hutomo Wicaksono, Audio Visual and Media Specialist

## Exhibitions—Mission and practice

**Steering Committee Liaison:** Brooke Rosenblatt

**Chairs:** Sonja Potter, Project Coordinator, Exhibitions, and Nancy Hacskaylo, Senior Graphic Designer

**Board Advisory Member:** Antoine van Agtmael

### Members:

Ellen Chase, Objects Conservator

Debra Diamond, Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art

Amelia Meyer, Curatorial Assistant

John Piper, Exhibit Specialist

Nikki Rosato, Advancement Assistant

Jennifer Reifsteck, Education Specialist, K–12 Learning

Zeynep Simavi, Program Specialist, Public and Scholarly Engagement

Keith Wilson, Curator of Ancient Chinese Art

## Financial resiliency

**Steering Committee Liaison:** Elisa Glazer

**Chairs:** Elisa Glazer and Dave Opkins (until March 26, 2019), Cheryl Sobas, Head, Department of Exhibitions (beginning March 26, 2019)

**Board Advisory Members:** Jim Lintott and Peter Kimmelman

### Members:

Jennifer Berry, Rights and Reproductions Coordinator

Meredith Henry, Special Events Manager

Frank Feltens, Japan Foundation Assistant Curator of Japanese Art

Alan Francisco, Registrar

Courtney Mason, Financial Management Specialist

Karen Sasaki, Head, Department of Design, Production, and Publications

Tom Vick, Curator of Film

## Image Credits

### Cover

Japanese screens on view in Freer gallery 5

### Page 1

Detail: *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*; Xu Bing (b. 1955); 2004; lacquer on Baltic birchwood; purchase—the family of Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Chiang Soong Mayling, 1898–2003); S2004.2.1–211

### Pages 2–3, clockwise from upper left

Detail: *The Goddess worshipped by the sage Chyavana* from a Tantric Devi series, India, ca. 1660–1670, opaque watercolor on paper, gold, silver, and beetle wing. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1997.8

Detail: *Gautama Buddha*, Tibet, 14th century, gilded copper with pigment. Purchase—funds provided by the Friends of Asian Arts in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1997.28

Detail: *Sheep and Goat*, Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), China, Yuan dynasty, ca. 1300, ink on paper. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1931.4

Ancient Chinese jades on view in Freer gallery 19

Detail: *Four Evangelists*, Egypt, 1175–1200, opaque watercolor and gold on parchment. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1955.11

Detail: Fragment of a *Qur'an*, sura 2:191–233, Near East, Abbasid period, 9th–10th century, ink, color and gold on parchment. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1937.6

Detail: *Waves at Matsushima*, Tawaraya Sōtatsu (fl. ca. 1600–1643), Japan, Edo period, 17th century, ink, color, gold, and silver on paper. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1906.231

Detail: Untitled (*Grandfather*) from the series *Updating a Family Album*, Malekeh Nayiny (Iran, born 1955), Iran, 1997, computer generated photograph. Purchase—Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, S2000.122

Vietnamese ceramics, 14th–16th century, S2005.209, .223, .257, .265, .267, .272, .273, .275, .277, .278, .279, .305, .306, and 20th century, S2005.423. Khmer ceramics, 11th–13th century, S1996.136ab, S1996.138ab, and S1996.178. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, and Victor and Takako Hauge.

### Page 4

Freer Gallery of Art courtyard at night

### Pages 6–7

*Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room*, James McNeill Whistler, 1876–77, oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, leather, and wood. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1904.61

ImaginAsia participant constructs miniature Iranian garden after touring the Sackler exhibition *East of Eden: Gardens in Asian Art*, February 24–May 13, 2007.

*Resound: Ancient Bells of China*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, October 14, 2017–fall 2021

### Pages 8–9

*Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice Across Asia*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, October 14, 2017–November 29, 2020

*Inventing Utamaro: A Japanese Master-piece Revealed*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, April 8–July 9, 2017

### Page 10

With the aid of a microscope, a conservator carefully removes pigment samples from a painting for identification and testing.

### Pages 12–13

Detail: Folio from a *Falnama* (Book of omens); verso: Expulsion of Adam and Eve, Iran, Qazvin, Safavid period, mid 1550s, opaque watercolor, ink and gold on paper. Purchase—Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S1986.251

### Page 14

Dancers perform at a family day event at the Sackler

### Pages 16–17

Detail: *Three Peris at Shiva Shrine in Garden*, Mewar, Rajasthan state, India, ca. 1720, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Purchase and partial gift from the Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection—funds provided by the Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, S2018.1.75

Image from Freer and Sackler Archives, MBS Algeria 3.5

### Page 18

Friend's opening event, October 2017

### Pages 20–21

Detail: *The Thatched Hut of Dreaming of an Immortal*, Tang Yin (1470–1524), China, Ming dynasty, early 16th century, ink and color on paper. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1939.60

### Page 22

*Subodh Gupta: Terminal*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, October 14, 2017–February 3, 2019

### Pages 24–25

Detail: *Water-Moon Avalokitesvara* (Suwol Gwaneum bosal), Korea, Goryeo period, mid-14th century, ink, color and gold on silk. Gift of Charles Lang Freer, F1904.13

Detail: *Who Am We?*, Do-Ho Suh (Korea, born 1962; active United States), South Korea, Seoul, 2000, Four-color offset prints on coated paper. Purchase—funds provided by the Friends of the Freer and Sackler Galleries S2006.34.3.1-25

### Back cover

Detail: Bowl, Iran, Samanid period, 10th century; earthenware painted under glaze. Purchase, F1957.24.



*“It is said that he who is content with his own opinion runs into danger.”* —Arabic saying

