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EDITORIAL • email: editorial@taasa.org.au
General editor, Josefa Green

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Josefa Green (convenor) • Tina Burge
Melanie Eastburn • Sandra Forbes
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DESIGN/LAYOUT
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Enquiries: admin@taasa.org.au
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Narrative and performance help maintain and convey a society’s history and culture as the National Gallery of Victoria’s new exhibition *Gods Heroes and Clowns: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art* demonstrates so successfully. The exhibition has prompted us to take up the theme for this issue of the *TAASA Review*, though we have broadened the geographical range to other parts of Asia.

Narrative in art has different forms in different media - in painting, performance, sculpture and film. In painting, there are many ways of conveying a narrative: a common form in western art is the single scene which epitomises a whole story - an approach also evident in Asian temple carving. In Asian art, we often find an expanded method of continuous narration that is conveyed in either a linear manner, such as a frieze, or through narrative networks which have little regard for temporal progression. Readers will recognize the last approach in Dao Midgley’s account of a Lao temple mural, where current events are juxtaposed with the historical.

Carol Cains shows us in her article that performance and narration are integral to the religious practice of Buddhism and Hinduism just as they are in folk art. All are part of ongoing traditions that have life and vitality. A similar point underlies Tuy Daniel and Martin Polkinghorne’s account of the *Vessantara Jataka*, the story of the penultimate life of the Buddha, and of changes in the way the story has been illustrated in Cambodia over time, beginning with Angkorian depictions from the 11th century and ending with Svy Sareth’s contemporary version. Similarly Melanie Eastburn directs us to the NGA’s exhibition on the great epic, the *Ramayana*, where what she describes as ‘the enduring narrative’ is illustrated in 101 miniature paintings drawn from different schools of painting in India.

Adrian Vickers’ article on *I Gusti Nyoman Lempad* expands our knowledge of this formidable Balinese artist and follows on from Siobhan Campbell’s book review, *Lempad of Bali*, in our March issue. Vickers reveals a network of narratives that allow insights into the complex world of Balinese stories and their major themes - gender, the attaining of wisdom and power, and the moving between the worlds of the senses and the world beyond.

Tony Twigg, a practising Sydney artist, shares his experiences witnessing the procession of a Christian icon through the streets of Manila, when the devout gather in their millions to view the Black Nazarene. He considers this annual performance in the light of the Philippine history of colonisation, as well as providing interesting links with the Australian artist, Ian Fairweather.

The NGV has a beautiful 19th century Japanese scroll painting of the *Parinirvana* of the Buddha, another long surviving narrative, which is discussed by curator, Wayne Crothers. The scroll is currently on view at the NGV. Canberra resident Dao Midgley gives us a unique insight into the patron’s role in commissioning the decoration of a recently constructed Buddhist temple in her home village near the ancient Lao capital of Luang Prabang.

Adrienne McKibbins reminds us of the role of performers in influencing narrative story lines in her contribution on Hindi cinema. She focuses on three Indian superstars, the way in which their private lives and film personas interact - and how in turn this affects the kinds of films produced and their audiences.

Sophie McIntyre, the curator of an upcoming exhibition *Ink Remix*, examines the innovative reactions of contemporary Chinese artists to the long narrative of Chinese ink painting. This travelling exhibition will initially be on view at the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) in July. Min-Jung Kim describes a ‘playful’ exhibition on the art of Japanese folding at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney, showing contemporary fashion items and decorative arts and the way they relate to folding traditions.

In our regular *In the Public Domain* feature, Jackie Menzies discusses a large Rajasthani scroll about the life of the hero-god Pabuji, used by traditional story tellers. She notes that the story line is not depicted through a series of events as they happen over time, instead episodes are grouped together according to the places where they happened.

In our concluding articles, Christina Sunner evokes an evening in the Thar Desert, immersed in a Sufi music festival, and Olivia Meehan reviews *Rethinking Visual Narratives from Asia*, taking us more deeply into the study of visual narrative in Asian art.

On a sadder note, we pay our respects to the memory of two long time TAASA members: Pamela Gutman, a great historian of Burmese art and culture, and Steven Zador, long term collector of Chinese ceramics.
**GODS, HEROES AND CLOWNS: PERFORMANCE AND NARRATIVE IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART – AN NGV EXHIBITION**

Carol Cains

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**GODS, HEROES AND CLOWNS: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art** draws on the National Gallery of Victoria’s (NGV) collection to explore works of art associated with the rich narrative traditions of South and Southeast Asia and their performance. Storytellers’ cloths, ceremonial hangings, puppets, sculpture, paintings and masks from Cambodia, Thailand, India, and Indonesia reveal strong continuities and shared heritages that link highly individual works of art. The works celebrate Buddhist and Hindu deities, folk heroes and mythical kings, and are used in rural villages, royal courts, temples and modern urban settings.

Most of the works exhibited are part of ceremonial and performative traditions which are still thriving and adapting to changing audiences and conditions. They reveal complex narratives that combine myth, history, magic, everyday life, pathos, bravery and humour. These narratives resonate across time and space to fascinate new audiences and recall historical and legendary events. Although the works in the exhibition are used in a range of performative environments, all of the performances associated with them are a form of worship and their presence and the performance renders a space sacred.

**Indonesian wayang**

Indonesian puppets and related works from the wayang tradition form one of the main groups in the exhibition. The Javanese term wayang means theatre, and is used to describe a variety of theatrical presentations including live dramas, masked dance-dramas, narratives accompanied by painted scrolls, and several types of puppet plays.

Today the term is also used to designate the puppets themselves. Wayang performances, particularly wayang puppet plays, remain a popular form of entertainment in Indonesia. Wayang kulit or shadow puppet theatre, and wayang golek, performed with three-dimensional puppets, are the main puppetry forms. Regional traditions include wayang golek cepak, from the north coast of Java and wayang golek purwa from west Java. Each performs a different lakon or group of stories. Purwa narratives are the Hindu epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana, with local additions and variations.

Wayang golek cepak performances depict a range of stories including histories of the Hindu kingdoms on Java. These include stories of the hero Prince Panji, local histories and the Menak cycle which were originally Persian stories and which reflect the advent of Islam in Indonesia. Puppets from these three wayang traditions are included in the exhibition and depict characters from the Mahabharata and the Panji cycle. They also include several puppets depicting the uniquely Indonesian clown-servant characters known as panakawan who function as narrators, commentators and critics. They inhabit a complex position, moving freely between the roles of respected and canny advisers to the gods and buffoons who represent the voice and concerns of all, without the usual customs and proscriptions.

The wayang style of figurative depiction, featuring figures in profile with squared shoulders and thin, elongated arms, appears in an illustrated manuscript dated 1886 of the legend of Dewa Ruci. The story is one of the many Southeast Asian embellishments of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Regional versions of the epics and additions to the core narratives, like the Dewa Ruci story, reflect local histories and settings from across the region. The legend describes how Bima, the brave and blustering Pandava brother, seeks the nectar of immortality and instead finds his true nature in the unlikely diminutive, wise form of Dewa Ruci.

Some forms of Indonesian wayang or theatre are performed by human dancers and actors and include wayang topeng, a masked dance drama and gambuh, a form of Balinese dance drama associated with the Hindu Balinese calendar of public religious festivals. The dramatic material (lakon) of gambuh dance-drama and topeng mask-dances is drawn from the Malat, a series of poetic stories about the mythical 11th century Javanese Prince Panji whose character is depicted in one of the masks on display. Topeng performers either
wear full face masks or half masks that enable them to speak. The full face masks like those on display are fixed to the face by means of a short leather strap which the dancers hold between their teeth.

In *gambuh* performances, refined courtly characters speak in old Javanese Kawi which is translated into contemporary Balinese for the audience by attendants and clowns. Performances are held on a temporary stage (*kalangan*) set up in the middle or second courtyard of a Balinese temple, a space which is neither sacred nor profane. The performance is accompanied by *gamelan* consisting of wind and percussive instruments and a two stringed fiddle, the *rebab*. The stylised movements of the *gambuh* performance are conveyed in a wooden sculpture depicting a dancer in the character of a king.

**Shadow puppets of Karnataka**

As well as *wayang kulit* puppets, shadow puppetry is represented by a group of Indian puppets depicting characters from the *Ramayana*. Shadow puppets are produced in the south of India, covering Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Goa. They have a different form in each state and performances are narrated in various languages including Kannada, Telegu, Tamil and Malayalam.

The puppets on display are from Karnataka on the western side of southern India, where they are known as *tongalu gombeata*. The earliest references to leather puppets in Karnataka are from the 10th – 11th century. The puppeteers come from the nomadic Killekyatha community from Maharashtra and are known as *bhagavatara*. They make the puppets and perform a repertoire largely drawn from the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, *puranas* and folk tales which are narrated in Kannada. The puppets are made from goat or deer skins decorated with dyes or inks and chiselled filigree cut outs. Performances are held on a stage erected outside a village or in a temple courtyard, and are preceded by ritual offering of light (*aarti*) to secure divine blessing. The puppets are manipulated from behind a back lit white cloth screen and the audience sees both colours and silhouettes. The performance may be accompanied by a singer, drums, cymbals and ankle bells.

**Buddhist narrative**

In Southeast Asia the tales of the Buddha’s previous lives and incarnations, known as *Jataka* Tales, form a rich literary tradition and along with stories from the life of the
historical Buddha are popular and pervasive narratives. The 547 Jataka Tales provide moral exemplars that guide Buddhist devotees in their daily lives. In each Jataka or birth-story, the Buddha appears as a bodhisattva or Buddha-to-be, changing from animal forms to human and then semi-divine manifestations, continually striving to gain sufficient spiritual merit and wisdom in order to achieve Buddhahood in his final life.

The last ten Jataka tales continue to inform works of art, especially in mainland Southeast Asia. Each illustrates a specific virtue and in the final tale, widely known as the Vessantara Jataka, Prince Vessantara, the penultimate incarnation of the Buddha, perfects the virtue of charity. Long cloth banners from northeast Thailand and Laos depicting the Vessantara narrative, like the 38 metre example on display, combine performative, textual and visual aspects of Buddhist worship. During the annual Bun Phra Wet festival they form a visual backdrop to the monks’ recitations of the Vessantara text in the temple hall where the banner is displayed after it is carried in a triumphant procession by the community which re-enacts Prince Vessantara’s return to his kingdom.

The same Jataka tale is explored in a contemporary sculpture by Svay Sareth who lives and works in Siem Reap, Cambodia. This work explores ideas of power, corruption and futility through the lens of the revered historical Buddha are popular and pervasive narratives. The 547 Jataka Tales provide moral exemplars that guide Buddhist devotees in their daily lives. In each Jataka or birth-story, the Buddha appears as a bodhisattva or Buddha-to-be, changing from animal forms to human and then semi-divine manifestations, continually striving to gain sufficient spiritual merit and wisdom in order to achieve Buddhahood in his final life.

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As well as the great Hindu epics and Buddhist narratives, the exhibition includes works that relate to Krishna, the eighth avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver of Cosmic Order, and one of the most popular of Hindu deities. The vivid narrative of his life, which developed in Hindu texts dating from c. 400 BCE, portrays a complex and very human personality and encourages the devotee to become emotionally engaged with the divine.

Accordingly, the Krishna narrative has inspired works of art in many forms and he is celebrated in a performative context through plays, puppet performances, festivals, song, narration and film. Narrative and performative works in the exhibition relating to Krishna include a contemporary painted story cloth hung during festivals in Orissa, 18th century Rajasthan court paintings depicting Radilla dance performances held at Udaipur palace in 1736, a Kashmiri manuscript of the Bhagavad Gita and Indonesian puppets depicting characters from the epic Mahabharata, in which Krishna appears as a hero.

The par is a vivid, complex work combining numerous small scenes and figures across a seven metre cloth. Unlike the linear, chronological composition of the Buddhist Vessantara banner, that of the Pabuji par is organized around the large, central figure of the hero.

The exhibition will be accompanied by multimedia presentations that illustrate the performative aspects of the works on display. Most of the works are exhibited for the first time and many have undergone extensive conservation. I am most grateful to specialists who have generously shared their expertise, including Professor Adrian Vickers, Dr Siobhan Campbell, Emeritus Professor Leedom Lefferts, Professor Matthew Cohen, Professor Kathy Foley and Sujarwo Joko Prehatin.

Pabuji phadipar
Folk heroes and legends also inform narrative and performative works of art across South and Southeast Asia. One of the most vivid and complex examples is a Rajasthan storyteller’s cloth, known as phad or par, dedicated to the legend of a folk hero named Pabuji. Par come from southeast Rajasthan, an area of cattle and camel herders, and local legends celebrate heroes like Pabuji who protected local communities and their herds.

Pabuji is worshipped with the guidance of non-Brahmin priests known as bhopes, who tend both permanent, constructed shrines and itinerant, temporary shrines such as painted cloths or scrolls. The bhopa’s night time recitation of the Pabuji epic with accompaniment by his wife, known as a bhopi, is regarded as a form of worship. James Todd in Annals and Antiquities of Rajast’han, written in 1829, mentions par paintings, hence the tradition is known to have been in existence since at least that time. However, as par paintings traditionally were destroyed (by ritual immersion in a body of water), when worn out from use in the bhopa’s recitations, and as they were part of an itinerant tradition, the lack of historical examples means it is difficult to trace the history of par. One of the oldest par surviving is dated 1867 CE.
The previous lives of the Buddha, also known as Jātaka, are depicted, recited and performed throughout mainland Southeast Asia and maintain an important didactic and legitimising role in the religious life of Theravāda communities. In them the Buddha appears as animals, humans, and gods to perform some form of appreciable moral virtue. While there are 547 known Jātaka in Cambodia, the final ten are the best known. Among them, the penultimate life of the Buddha, the Vessantara Jātaka, occupies a privileged position. The Vessantara Jātaka tells the story of the compassionate Prince Vessantara who gives away everything he owns as the model of perfect charity on the path to Buddhahood.

Divided into 13 chapters, the tale begins with one of Indra’s consorts before her earthly incarnation as the mother of the Bodhisattva Prince Vessantara. The Prince’s early life is characterised by numerous acts of charity culminating in the gift of his magical white elephant. The inhabitants of the kingdom are so distressed by losing the elephant they demand Vessantara be exiled to the forest accompanied by his family. Not deterred, the prince becomes an ascetic and continues to practise charity. The objective of ‘perfect generosity’ is achieved by giving away his own children, Jali and Kanhājinā to the hateful brahmin Jūjaka, and his wife, Maddī to Indra. Impressed by these uncommon deeds, the gods intervene and reunite the family. Vessantara, as the King, continues to perform charitable deeds until the end of his life.

Known as Mahavesantarajātaka in Pali, Mahavesantajietok in Khmer, or simply as the Maha Jātaka, the story has particular importance in Cambodia where the mere act of listening to a recitation is considered meritorious. The endurance and proliferation of the Vessantara Jātaka is testament to the flexibility of a narrative that engages with Cambodian cultures across time and at all levels of social hierarchy. Carried by oral, written, and visual traditions, the penultimate Jātaka binds present-day communities of Cambodia with those of the Angkorian past who have continuously revered and questioned the idea of charity with its changing meanings and manifestations.

Jātaka in the Angkorian period

Buddhism is attested in southern Cambodia by epigraphy and sculpture as early as the 5th and 6th centuries CE, yet it remains secondary to Brahmanism even when the first known monuments are dedicated to Siddhārtha Guatama from the 10th century CE. It is only from the 11th century CE that Buddhist iconography is observed on Angkorian temples in significant quantities consistent with large-scale patronage. Among the most distinctive narrative images of a new iconographic repertoire are the Jātaka that appear alongside representations of the life of the historical Buddha at the temples of Thomannon, Chau Say Tevoda, Banteay Samré and Beng Mealea. The tales attain a new importance under the reign of Jayavarman VII (r. 1182/1183 CE – ca. 1220 CE) when Mahāyāna Buddhism was adopted as the state religion. At the very centre of the Angkorian metropolis the Sana Jātaka, Temiya Jātaka (or Mūgapakkha Jātaka) and Vessantara Jātaka adorn pediments of the Bayon temple.

One of the most illustrated Vessantara episodes depicts the Prince giving away his white elephant, which had brought rain to his kingdom, to a neighboring country facing a drought. This representation is seen at Ta Prohm and Tonle Bati temples. The popularity of this particular episode likely parallels the Angkorian preoccupation with water and suggests a Buddhist contribution to maintaining agricultural prosperity - so important to the production of surplus rice and the successful operation of the dispersed low-density city. The presence of a seemingly Theravāda story on esoteric Mahāyāna monuments, in addition to abundant Brahmanical iconography, attests to the religious tolerance characterised by the Angkorian period. Perhaps the early appearance of the Vessantara Jātaka indicates a bourgeoning Theravāda community in Angkor, or a synthesis of the Maha Jātaka into Jayavarman VII’s brand of Mahāyāna.

Vessantara after Angkor

Sometime in the 14th century the once great population of Angkor began to disperse due to a complex array of factors including intense monsoons and mega-droughts, the unsustainability of modes of habitation and subsistence, and an over commitment to massive infrastructure. Corresponding cultural developments include the rise of Theravāda Buddhism which had already begun to receive elite patronage in the 13th century.

In the few centuries after Angkor, extant visual representations of the last ten Jātaka are unknown, but inscriptions between the 16th and 18th centuries, known today as the Modern Inscriptions of Angkor (IMA), testify to its importance amongst the Cambodian community. A 16th century inscription recounts the meritorious deeds of a dignitary and his wife who copied the texts of the Abhidhamma and Maha Jātaka (the Vessantara Jātaka) (IMA 4 in Lewitz 1971: 108 - 109).

Another inscription records an actor of good deeds, also known as an uk-hloun Abhayaratī, PRINCE VESSANTARA GIFTS HIS WHITE ELEPHANT, STONE LINTEL, TA PROHM OF TONELE BATI, LATE 12TH – EARLY 13TH CENTURY. PHOTOGRAPH: SUY POW.
who declared: “Shall my grandchildren [...] religious or secular, not hinder these works, but rather they help to accomplish these charitable gifts in the same way as of Krishnā and Jālī [the two children of Vessantara] until entrance into Nirvāna.” (IMA 5 in Lewitz 1971: 110). These inscriptions suggest that knowledge of the Jātaka was continuous from the Angkorian period and the act of charity was important for the accumulation of Buddhist merit and the implication of status.

One may also acquire a measure of virtue by simply being present for the entire recitation of the Vessantara Jātaka. The performative recitation of the sacred text is known in every Theravāda Buddhist country of mainland Southeast Asia including Thailand, Laos and Burma but especially in Cambodia where it goes under the name Tesna Malātcheat. This religious rite is an essential foundation of Cambodian religious education and is held on the occasion of various Theravāda ceremonies including the festival of the dead or Boun Pchum Ben that coincides with the end of the rainy season (Visākhāpātī). The Tesna Malātcheat brings the entire village together within the monastic precinct.

According to the 16th century inscription of Vat Bati in Ta Keo province, a dignitary offered various objects to a monastery, provided remuneration for emancipation of slaves, and commissioned three readings of the Maha Jātaka (K. 39 in Pou 1981: 121 – 125). Although the epigraphic record demonstrates continuity of the Vessantara, there are no remaining artistic representations. Wooden sculptures from the region of Babor in Kampong Chhnang province dated between the 17th and the 18th century illustrate scenes from the Vessantara Jātaka, the Vidhurapandita Jātaka and the Candakumāra Jātaka (Citeau 1975: 207-214) and are indicative of the rich religious or secular, not hinder these works, but rather they help to accomplish these charitable gifts in the same way as of Krishnā and Jālī [the two children of Vessantara] until entrance into Nirvāna.” (IMA 5 in Lewitz 1971: 110). These inscriptions suggest that knowledge of the Jātaka was continuous from the Angkorian period and the act of charity was important for the accumulation of Buddhist merit and the implication of status.

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of rapid economic growth, rising inequality, fragile institutions, and unlettered urban redevelopment and expansion, contemporary Cambodian artist, Svay Sareth, seeks to interrogate the legitimacy of Prince Vessantara as the paradigm for charity.

Svay’s ‘soft sculpture’, commissioned for the National Gallery of Victoria Exhibition Gods, Heroes and Clowns: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art illustrates the chapter when Prince Vessantara announces to his family they must leave the palace and renounce their power and worldly possessions. The themes of Svay’s interpretation are influenced by his personal encounters with authority and morality in post-conflict Cambodia.

Like the didactic panels of the contemporary vihara, one iconographic ensemble represents one episode and, in this case, the entire tale. For the versed observer, the most striking aspect of Svay’s Vessantara is his use of camouflage fabric. Typically associated with the military, the army fatigues are a synonym for power and an expression that contemporary Prince Vessantara hides his true intentions. This Vessantara is not trusted but acknowledged as a Boddhisattva only because of his status, probably acquired through corrupt and violent means. His charity is disingenuous and is practised only to maintain a customary moral authority. The depiction of Vessantara with his family embodies the most emblematic act of the tale: the gift of his children and wife. Yet Svay asks the viewer to question the connection between relinquishing family and the idea of charity. The estrangement of families and societal fragmentation caused during years of social upheaval in Cambodia underscores the point that women and children are not property to be given away and this androcentric act should not be celebrated as perfect charity.

Across Cambodia and mainland Southeast Asia the Vessantara Jātaka endures as a subject of everyday discussion, providing archetypes for generosity (Vessantara), devotion (Maddī), and wickedness (Jūjaka). The Jātaka is recognised in the high school curriculum and people from all social positions seek comparisons with the model of perfect charity. Continuity of the Maha Jātaka from the Angkorian period until the present day demonstrates the applicability of the tale to changing values of morality, and will see Prince Vessantara transform yet again as a new Cambodian civil society realigns itself to contemporary models of altruism.

Tuy Danel is a Doctoral Candidate at the Université Sorbonne Paris IV. He studies the mural paintings of colonial and independence period Cambodia. Martin Polkinghorne is a Research Fellow in the Department of Archaeology, Flinders University of South Australia and holds an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award.

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THE STORY OF RAMA: AN EXHIBITION AT THE NGA

Melanie Eastburn

The story of Rama: Indian miniatures from the National Museum, New Delhi brings together 101 paintings depicting scenes from the great Indian Ramayana epic. Rich in plot, moral allegory and supernatural occurrences, the story centres on the adventures that ensue after Sita, virtuous wife of the hero Rama, is abducted by Ravana, the learned ten-headed demon king of Lanka. Rama, his brother Lakshmana and Hanuman, the dedicated general of the monkey army, search for Sita through kingdoms, forests, magical caves and across the ocean. An avatar of the benevolent Hindu god Vishnu, Rama was incarnated to rid the world of Ravana after the gods were unable to conquer him.

The exhibition was curated by Dr Vijay Mathur, who selected the images from the National Museum’s collection of over 17,000 paintings. It tells the entire Ramayana in sequence based on the poet Valmiki’s version of this story, beginning with the sage Narada asking Valmiki to write the story and ending with the last earthly days of Sita and Rama. It includes images in a broad range of styles, from the miniatures of early 17th century provincial Mughal courts to the paintings of late 19th century Kolkata (Calcutta), and is particularly strong in Pahari pictures. Created in various locations in the Punjab Hills at the base of the Himalayas, Pahari (from pahar meaning ‘hill’ or ‘mountain’) is a broad term incorporating paintings from princely kingdoms including Guler, Basohli, Kangra, Chamba and Mandi.

Valmiki’s renowned 50,000-line telling of the Ramayana was recorded around the 4th century BCE, probably with later additions, and is the best-known version of the story. As well as those illustrating Valmiki’s poem, images relating to some of the many variants of the story, such as the Adhyatma Ramayana, or Spiritual Ramayana, are included in the exhibition.

The Adhyatma Ramayana is said to have been compiled by Vyasa, who also dictated the Mahabharata, another extraordinary Indian epic. The Adhyatma Ramayana has much in common with Valmiki’s Ramayana but presents the tale as a philosophical dialogue on devotion, loss and redemption between the god Shiva and his consort Parvati. The four 18th century Adhyatma Ramayana pictures in the exhibition focus on loyalty and were painted by one of only two named artists in the show, Guman from Jaipur. They represent the story of Srvana Kumar, a loving son of aged parents who was accidentally killed by Rama’s father, King Dasaratha of Ayodhya, and three images of events involving Bharata, a brother so devoted to Rama that he refused the chance to be king.

Bharata’s mother Kaikeyi, one of Dasaratha’s wives, manipulated the king into exiling Rama to the forest for 14 years and making Bharata rather than Rama his heir. After Dasaratha died, devastated by his own actions, Bharata then attempted to bring Rama home to rule but, committed to fulfilling his father’s promise, Rama stayed in the forest with Sita and Lakshmana. In his stead, Bharata returned with Rama’s sandals, padukas, and placed them on the throne. He chose to live a life of austerity and acted as regent until the restitution of his brother. Guman’s painting Bharata returning to Ayodhya with Rama’s padukas shows a procession in which the sandals rest on the back of an elaborately-decorated elephant and are fanned by an attendant. Bharata and another of Dasaratha’s sons, Shatrughna, travel in an open carriage behind.

Among the many treasures in the exhibition are 13 miniatures from the famed Shangri Ramayana, an unfinished illustrated manuscript rediscovered in Shangri, Kullu (in present day Himachal Pradesh) in 1956, where it belonged to Raja Raghurib Singh of the Kullu royal family. The vibrant colours, bold imagery, lively action scenes and clarity of the Shangri Ramayana miniatures are absolutely distinctive but it is not known exactly where they were produced. Bahu, Mandi and Kullu are all considered possible origins for the manuscript which was painted by a series of artists during the late 17th century and first half of the 18th century. The Shangri Ramayana’s 270 pages were dispersed in 1961 and are now all over the world, with the majority held by the National Museum in New Delhi. A page in the exhibition shows a hunter killing a pair of kraunch birds, an act that inspired Valmiki to express his outrage in the form of poetry, after which he was asked to write the Ramayana.

The NGAs own collection includes an image attributed to the Shangri Ramayana. Out of sequence and without textual reference, it is difficult to identify the scene with certainty but it seems to depict Sita consulting three holy men prior to leaving for exile. One of the Shangri Ramayana illustrations from the National Museum is a representation of Rama chasing the golden deer Sita desires as a companion. Against a background of pure bright yellow, blue-skinned Rama stands ready to set an arrow into his bow and the bejewelled deer leaps away. The deer is Maricha, Ravana’s demon uncle in disguise, sent to distract Rama so Ravana can kidnap Sita.
The quest to rescue Sita is arduous and often comical, particularly when it involves Hanuman and the monkey army. Searching for the abducted princess, the monkeys head off in four directions. Those headed north, east and west return with nothing to report, but Hanuman’s group, carrying Rama’s ring to show Sita and gain her trust, head south. Inadvertently they enter an enchanted cave and are trapped for an age. Humiliated by their failure, they decide to starve to death in penance until the vulture Sampati appears and reveals that Sita is across the sea in Lanka. The monkeys are dismayed by the expanse of ocean before them but mighty Hanuman, son of the wind god, magically makes himself huge and resolves to leap to Lanka and rescue Sita declaring:

In no more time than it takes to wink an eye,
I shall rush swiftly across the self-supporting sky,
like lightning streaking from a cloud.

(Goldman ed. & Lefeber trans., 1994: 4.66.21)

In Lanka’s lavish fortress-city of demons, Hanuman eventually locates Sita, presents her with Rama’s ring and offers to take her home. She refuses, unwilling to be touched by a man other than her husband and adamant that Rama must rescue her himself. Determined to destabilise the demons, Hanuman wreaks death and destruction across Lanka, finally allowing himself to be captured and handed over to Ravana. As punishment Ravana orders Hanuman to be paraded through the city with his tail alight, a scene dramatically captured in a mid-17th century Malwa style painting from central India. Divided into a series of scenes, it shows Ravana in the centre, while above, an escaped Hanuman uses his blazing tail to set fire to Lanka. Dipping his tail in the ocean to quench the flames, Hanuman returns to give Rama the news, but not before engaging in a celebratory drunken frenzy.

When the allies reach Lanka, a fierce battle rages. Twenty-armed Ravana fights Sugriva, king of the monkeys, as well as Hanuman and Lakshmana before facing Rama. The hero cuts off Ravana’s heads but they continually grow back. An arrow to the chest finally vanquishes him. Rama is victorious and Sita is freed but Rama rejects her because she has lived in the house of another man. To prove her chastity, Sita undergoes a trial by fire. Pure in thought and true to Rama, she emerges from the flames unscathed and the victors return to their kingdom of Ayodhya in a flying palace. It is here that the story often ends but the last book in Valmiki’s tale, often considered a later addition, continues the narrative.

What should be a happy ending is soured when, despite her trial, the people of Ayodhya question Sita’s faithfulness. Although Rama knows she has been true he banishes Sita, pregnant with their twin sons, to the forest. There she finds refuge with Valmiki. Years later, realising the tragedy of his decision, Rama calls her back. Sita refuses. She calls instead for her mother, Mother Earth, to take her back into her womb, and disappears into the ground. In a Kangra style Pahari painting in the exhibition, this remarkable scene is watched by a host of characters including Rama, the monkeys and celestial beings floating on clouds above. His heart broken, Rama abandons himself to the river and returns to the heavens as Vishnu.

The story of Rama will be displayed at the NGA in Canberra until 23 August 2015. It has previously been shown at the National Museum, New Delhi and at the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels. Melanie Eastburn is curator of Asian art at the National Gallery of Australia.

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THE STORY OF
RAMA
Indian Miniatures from the National Museum, New Delhi

22 MAY – 23 AUG 2015

I GUSTI NYOMAN LEMPAD’S NARRATIVE WORKS

Adrian Vickers

Working on the recent collaboration Lempad of Bali: The Illuminating Line (EDM Singapore, 2014) - reviewed in the March 2015 TAASA Review - meant identifying Lempad’s complex use of iconography and narrative in his work, which revealed the brilliance of his vision. Lempad’s extensive body of work gives an insight into the wealth of Balinese stories and their visual deployment.

I Gusti Nyoman Lempad was legendary not only as a radically different artist from the 1930s, but also as the architect who created Ubud. His remarkable longevity added to his aura. I was asked by the instigators of the book and accompanying exhibition, Soemantri Widagdo and Bruce W. Carpenter, to assist with the catalogue raisonné that makes up the majority of the book. Identifying the narratives that Lempad depicted proved to be a lot more difficult than I had originally imagined, and in the process I gained a profound set of insights into Balinese perspectives on life.

While a lot of people are familiar with the fine line and elegant simplicity of Lempad’s work, I only know of one unpublished engagement with his narratives and the philosophy behind them. This was a 1988 Honours thesis in the Indonesian Department at the University of Sydney by Putu Barbara Davies, who had met with Lempad and worked closely with his son, Gusti Made Sumung. Davies’ study provided a complete explanation of the Japatan story as depicted by Lempad. The Japatan is the tale of two brothers who venture into the underworld to bring back the soul of the first brother’s wife. This was one of four of Lempad’s favourite narratives from Balinese legends, along with the Dukuh Saladri, the story of a mountain hermit (Maskuri 1979-80); the Brayut, a tale of a fecund commoner family (Grader 1950), and the Jayapran, the story of a loyal courtier unjustly murdered by a despotic king (Hloopykaas 1958).

These narratives are rarely depicted nowadays in Balinese art, and it is only thanks to editions and translations of written versions of the Brayut and Jayapran that the paintings can be interpreted. The works which depict the classic narratives of the Ramayana and other stories of Indian origin have been more extensively documented, and there are editions and translations of the literary poetic versions of these stories that show that Lempad knew the literary tradition intimately. P. J. Zoetmulder’s definitive study of classical Javanese-Balinese literature (1974) provides summaries and guides to many of these texts.

After going through hundreds of Lempad’s works, I could see the common threads in what Davies shows to be his treatment of the Japatan, and in his other visual storytelling. Lempad was concerned with gender, with attaining wisdom and power, and with moving between the world of the senses and the world beyond. In his art, the three themes are combined.

An important aspect of the book and exhibition is that they show how much research is yet to be done on Balinese art. Soemantri and the others associated with the project have tracked down approximately 1,000 works by Lempad, mostly drawings on paper. Few of them are dated. The best documented are those collected by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead between 1937 and 1939, along with the Rolf de Maré commissions, carried out through Bateson and Mead’s friend Claire Holt. Holt also left documentation of a number of works she collected for herself, now in the Neka Museum. Even for these works, it is rare to have descriptions of the narrative content, and at best the collectors have left us single titles, probably taken from conversation with Lempad.

The Rolf de Maré commissions are intriguing because he deliberately commissioned representations of Balinese theatre. These works were initially exhibited in his dance archive in Paris, before being moved to Stockholm after World War Two. They now form part of the core collection of the Dance Museum.

Of the many sketches by Lempad now in Ubud’s Museum Puri Lukisan, only a small portion are dated, mostly to the 1950s and 1960s. From these pieces of evidence we can group works together chronologically, for example the finer works of the 1930s, when use of colour was strongest (vermillion and gold-leaf, combined with black ink). The sketches of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when he resumed working after the hiatus of war and revolution, seem more monumental, more reflective of his sculptural and architectural interests. But these are working hypotheses, and we have to do a lot more in terms of accurately dating his works.

Along with this documentation problem is the multiplicity of Lempad-like works.
Many of Lempad’s works were unsigned, and the family only added signatures later. Not everything that bears his signature was by him, and while some wrong attributions may be obvious, the higher market value of Lempad’s works means that caution is required. In addition, there are clearly a number of lost works that we know only through bad photographs or old photocopies.

Working with Bruce Carpenter, I classified Lempad’s work into several groupings of narratives: the Ramayana and other Hindu tales; the connected Buddhist tales of the Sutasoma and the Branyut story; stories such as Dukuh Siladri (or Suladri), Japatan and Jayapratesa that Balinese see as belonging to more recent history, and other folk-stories such as the Tantri and animal fables. Besides scenes of dance-drama, Lempad also depicted daily life, erotic scenes, and images of the afterlife. These categories are hardly exclusive, especially in the case of theatre, which has narrative content closely tied to the literature.

Some of the scenes of daily life may in fact be taken from episodes of the story of the commoner Brayut. Erotic scenes may be self-evident, or of scenes where people assume the shape of the witch queen, notably Dayu Datu in Dukuh Siladri and Gede Basur in the Basur.

All of Lempad’s work can be viewed as a theatrical realisation of narrative, in that the basis of his representation is the wayang, the shadow puppet theatre. As well as drawing on the iconographic conventions of the shadow theatre that are the basis of older forms of traditional painting, Lempad’s paintings and drawings make explicit the connection through using the form of the kayon or world tree puppet that marks the opening and key moments in a performance. In a Sutasoma scene now in the Rudana Museum, Ubud, the revelation that prince Sutasoma is an incarnation of Buddha is marked by the prince’s depiction with an aureole in the shape of a finely-carved kayon.

Sometimes it is difficult to tell from which narrative stories scenes come. Is the handsome hero depicted as being seduced from his meditation Arjuna of the Mahabharata, or the Buddhist prince Sutasoma? Lempad appears to have depicted both scenes, and the iconography of Arjuna and Sutasoma is identical. A sketch of one version of the scene exists in the Museum Puri Lukisan, Ubud, and it has a number ‘10’, indicating that it is part of a set. Others scenes from the same sequence exist in this collection, and one, numbered ‘9’, is clearly a Sutasoma scene, as it shows the prince receiving obeisance from a tiger, naga and elephant-headed creature, the three followers of Sutasoma. The sequencing of scenes confirms the temptation scene as from the Sutasoma narrative, and therefore differentiates it from the other version of the scene (Ensink 1967).

Ambiguity of scenes occurs within narratives. In the Ramayana, Lempad provided images of scenes not usually depicted, for example one showing Rama and Sita with a female with subtle demonic characteristics (small fangs). This could be Trijata, Wibhisana’s daughter and the niece of the demon king Rawana, who befriended Sita during her imprisonment in Langka. If this comes at the end of the story of the Ramayana, it would show Trijata protesting Sita’s innocence after Rama and Sita are reunited. However late in the preparation of the book, we were sent a caption supplied by the archive of Claire Holt, the original owner of the work, which identified the scene as Rama and Sita talking to Supranaka. Supranaka is Rahwana’s sister, who desire for Rama’s brother Laksmana is rebuffed, leading to a cycle of revenge that sets the Ramayana narrative in motion. In other Balinese art, Supranaka is not usually shown as meeting with Rama and Sita, but there is one line in the Kakawin or poetic version of the story that describes such an encounter in the forest (Soewito 1980: vol I, 95). It appears that this caption, presumably given to Holt by Lempad himself, is the correct one.

One of the many mysterious scenes shows two monkeys, a demon and a woman. A pair of monkeys usually indicates the brothers Sugriwa and Bali, known as Subali in Balinese tradition. A scene matching this is not described in the Ramayana, but a prose prelude in the literary Kawi language called the Kanjiparwa, The Book of the Monkeys, does have such a scene (Vickers 2011). The two brothers, who are sons of the priest Gotta, rescue Dewi Tara, the daughter of the god Indra, from a demon called Lembusa (Cow Demon), who had kidnapped her on behalf of his father, Mahisasura (Buffalo Demon). The horns on the demon indicate that he is indeed Lembusa, and the brothers are in process of rescuing her. The later fight between the brothers that leads to Sugriwa’s alliance with
Lempad dealt with his key themes in a range of ways. Differences in gender he connected with forms of power. His two known complete versions of the Dukuh Siladri show this well. A gender contrast is established in these stories between the wise hermit, Siladri and the evil witch, Dayu Datu. Positive female power is represented by Siladri’s adopted daughter Kesumasari, whose husband, Siladri’s son, is shown as ignorant and fearful where she is staunch and bold. Wayan Buyar is the opposite, a greedy rich son of a powerful man who desires Kesumasari. Siladri’s and Kesumasari’s power come from their distance from the world, leaving the village for life in the mountain forest, which puts them in touch with the animals who save them from Dayu Datu and her forces.

Matters of scholarship and connoisseurship underpin a more important aspect of the project. We need to know the what and when of Lempad’s works (and whether they were his), in order to understand their strangeness. There is something alienating and distant to modern Western audiences in his works. The strangeness comes from its violence, sometimes hinted, sometimes graphic. This includes sexual violence, not just in the variety of Lempad’s couplings, but equally in the demonic Lembusura groping Tara, or by the monkeys attacking the genitals of demons in the great battle of the Ramayana. Male-female relations or relations between same-sex couples are uneasy points on journeys to knowledge and power. Sometimes these journeys end badly, as in the tragic tale of Jayaprana, sometimes in attainment of a stage in life that allows the Brayut story’s protagonists, Father (Pan) and Mother (Men) Brayut for example, to be ready for the next stage of reincarnation.

Adrian Vickers is Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Sydney, where he is also Director of the Asian Studies Program. He books include Balinese Art: Paintings and Drawings of Bali 1800–2010 (Tuttle, Singapore, 2012).

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In the Philippines, Christian faith is palpable. Its proffered salvation laces people’s lives together with a benign and guiding presence that elsewhere would be understood as a metaphor. The power of Christianity as an instrument of colonisation lay in its translation from Spanish Catholicism into the Filipino vernacular. The latter holds that Christianity preceded Spanish colonisation through the miraculous appearance of two sacred images, the Santo Niño (Child Christ) and the Virgin Mother. As faith, this melds historic fact, mythology and the anthropologic record into a tale that, while varying in detail from telling to telling, offers as fact that God came to the Philippines to deliver salvation. Among the images that followed in their wake was the Black Nazarene, which is also credited with miraculous powers and commands a vast outpouring of devotion when paraded annually each January in Manila.

The Santo Niño, the image of Christ as a childlike caped conquistador, travelled with the Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521) when he landed on Cebu Island in March 1521. Magellan baptised the local ruler, Raja Humabon, and his wife, to whom he gave the Christian names of Carlos and Juana, before presenting them with the Santo Niño. Forty four years later, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi (c.1502-1572) sailed from Mexico to colonise the islands for Spain and chanced upon the image of the child Christ, which was then reclaimed as the Santo Niño de Cebu.

Through miracles, many that protected the local people from pirates, veneration of the Santo Niño spread among neighbouring islands and became associated with an earlier colonisation. In 1212, Datu Puti had led a group of nine other Datus, their wives and slaves in fleeing a tyrannical ruler of pre Islamic Borneo, to a site near the present city of Iloilo on Panay Island. The refugees negotiated their occupation with the local chief, through an arrangement that saw the aboriginal Atis people vanish into the mountains, where their descendants still live.

In later celebrations, the newcomers masqueraded as Atis to re-enact their departure in a pageant that has since become the annual Ati-Atihan Festival of Aklan Provence. During the 14th and 15th centuries, when Muslim pirates threatened the coastal villages, the call went up to ‘be Ati’ (mag ati-ati), an invocation of the pre-Hispanic gods. Following Spanish colonisation the pirate raids ceased and the Santo Niño was credited. This intervention placed him at the centre of Ati-Atihan celebrations where he remains, overtly embracing multiple belief systems in a quasi-bacchanalian spectacle that has been welded onto the Christian tradition of parading an image of a saint on feast days.

In June 1570, Legazpi sent an advance expedition to Manila, the region’s principal trading port colonised by the Sultan of Borneo in about 1500. Raja Sulayman unsuccessfully defended his Muslim domain on the southern bank of the Pasig River, which subsequently burnt to the ground. However, two other areas survived the Spanish onslaught: Namayan, an inland settlement, and Tondo on the northern bank of the Pasig River, a rich trading port ruled by Bunao Lakan Dula, a Tagalog who maintained his native animist beliefs.

Legazpi himself arrived at the port the following year to negotiate the Spanish occupation of Manila with Lakan Dula. At that time, according to one version of the event, an anonymous soldier found a statue of the Virgin Mary on top of a pandan bush, surrounded by natives who adored it in a pagan fashion. The Spanish proclaimed her as the Patroness of the Galleons of Castille, the trading ships that harvested the colony’s wealth for Mexico and Spain between 1565-1815.

This particular statue, Nuestra Senora de Guia (Our Lady of Guidance) is now housed in the Ermita Church, Manila. Although it is carved from Molave, a native Filipino timber, some accounts claim that it was brought to the Philippines by Magellan. Beneath her Spanish robes, the figure reputedly wears a manto (veil).
and tapis (sarong), the traditional costume of pre-Hispanic women. Coincidentally, it is the same native costume that Galo B. Ocampo (1913-1985) chose for the Filipina in his painting the *Brown Madonna*, (University of Santo Tomas Museum Collection). The painting, an icon of Filipino modernism, is considered the first representation of a Filipina in the role of the Madonna and was painted in 1938 during the brief Filipino Commonwealth that was the formal end of Filipino colonization. It recasts the image of the colonial progenitor as the mother of nationalist aspiration.

The galleon trade from Manila to Acapulco, blessed by the Virgin Mother, delivered a pantheon of images to the Philippines. The Black Nazarene was among them. ‘Black’ because a fire en route discoloured his white ivory face, although other stories claim it is because the image is carved from a very dark timber. The figure represents a life sized genuflecting Christ, barefooted and wearing a maroon robe richly embroidered with gold thread.

The sculpture was carved in Mexico and brought to Manila by the first group of Augustinian Recollect Friars in May 1606. It was housed in a number of different Manila churches before being moved to the Quiapo Church in 1787. Since its location in Quiapo on the northern, former animist side of the Pasig River, the sculpture has survived major fires in 1791 and 1929, earthquakes in 1645 and 1863 as well as the 1945 bombing of Manila. All these incidents have enhanced a belief that the statue has miraculous powers that are given voice in a vast procession each 9 January to celebrate the image’s *Traslación* or its arrival in Quiapo in 1787.

Nowadays Quiapo streets are given over to market stalls: first fruit then lingerie, counterfeit consumerism, bookbinders and cobblers next to tailors crafting jeans. Beside the Quiapo Church, along Evangelista Street, are Anting Anting (amulet) sellers, a market ministering to the needs of the devotees who visit the Nazarene. It is a colourful scene. Stall holders offer Christian or animist objects - some without qualification offer both. On one side are folk remedies and herbal medicine while on the other, various saints of Christianity are wrapped in cellophane and arranged in rows like prizes along sideshow alley.

The pervasiveness of Christianity in Filipino life reaches across this divide. Here the sign of the Cross can be found in nature, assembled in recycled rum bottles, as magic potions or recast as an amulet. Amulets offer an answer to the conundrum – how did a revolutionary nationalist struggle accommodate mass adherence to the religion of the colonial oppressor? Indeed, after the USA purchased the Philippines from Spain for 20 million dollars at the conclusion of the Filipino Revolution in 1898, they spent another $7,293,000 purchasing the ‘Friar Lands’ from the Vatican in 1903. In the Philippines, Catholicism was not only the religion of the coloniser it was a partner in the enterprise. Mystical amulets inscribed with Latin texts and Masonic symbols link the ancient Tagalog supreme being, Bathala, to Jose Rizal (1861-1896), the national hero whose martyrdom by the Spanish triggered the Filipino Revolution. Along the way, animism was
inculcated with the garbled language of the Spanish Friars. They spoke in one language to God, Latin, delivered sermons in another, Spanish, and with incomprehensible Tagalog, offered instruction in a third to a bemused rural peasantry. They, in turn, constructed a mysticism that reflected their own requirements that found form as amulets. Later, these amulets offered protection from the Spanish bullets to the heroes of the revolution who have since become saints in the Rizalist cults. They worship Rizal as the son of Bathala (God), the reincarnation of Christ, an avatar, a prophet, even a reincarnation of Rosa Mística, the virgin herself.

Each January millions of devotees line the six to seven kilometre route to see the miraculous Black Nazarene enthroned on his carroza, a golden red carriage, pulled by male devotees who are barefoot and wear the maroon colour of the Black Nazarene’s robes. The procession, which can last up to 20 hours, pauses beside the talismans of the Rizalist. There are in fact two Nazarenes, each composed of fragments taken from the original. One remains in the church while the other is destined to lead a procession that annually sees several people crushed to death in an outpouring of frantic devotion.

Australia has a connection to the Nazarene procession through the Ian Fairweather (1891-1974) painting Anak Bayan, in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Although painted in 1952, the picture recalls Manila during the Philippine Commonwealth in the late 1930’s, when Ocampo painted the Brown Madonna. In the picture we see a man prostrate on the ground while people at windows gaze down on the passage of bare pacing feet. Among them is a child carrying a candle with a towel tucked into his shirt collar, cape like. It’s a common Filipino costume that inadvertently dresses each Filipino child as a Santo Niño. Here, seemingly caught in an endless procession of life and death, is miraculous salvation or at least hope.

We will never know if Fairweather was observing the Filipino ethos or simply offering a clear memory of a remarkable street scene. His title is, perhaps inadvertently, particularly observant, Anak Bayan, literally, anak / children, bayan / nation. As an expression it roughly means ‘the people from here’, natives, as opposed to the Ilustrado, the Filipino bookkeepers of the Spanish regime who grew wealthy enough to educate their sons at Spanish Universities. Worldly wise, the latter became the leaders of a revolution that cruelly maintained the rule of the land owning oligarchs. In contrast, these Nazerinos are the impoverished bare-foot soldiers of Filipino identity, the Anak Bayan, the distant, peasant descendants of Lakan Dula, a Tagalog who maintained his native animist beliefs on the Tondo side of the Pasig River.

As I stood with them in Plaza Miranda in front of Quiapo Church, the Mercury Drug store on the opposite corner displayed the ever rising temperature – 34, 36, 37, 38. There was a crush -tight and it got tighter - hands waved towels, the sound of feet and, in the distance – it’s the Nazarene, hauled on a cart by men harnessed into a team. On the cart, attendants grabbed at towels thrown up and wiped them on the gleaming Nazarene; thrown back they are talismans, the take home message. Filipino folk belief melds with Christian custom that the miraculous properties of the icon can be transferred to cloth. Then more towels and more towels and a second and third Nazarene – and another and another. It’s patiently explained to me that it is not the object that is sacred, it’s the image. And through some kind of poetic magic that might be truth, it’s the Anak Bayan who are on their way to salvation and their mood, that might be faith, isn’t too hard to share.

Tony Twigg is a visual artist who has worked, exhibited and periodically lived in the Philippines since the 1990’s.

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**Japanese Folds** is a playful exhibition showing contemporary fashion items and decorative arts from the Museum’s collection centred on the Japanese practice of folding. The exhibition provides an insight into the folding design concept with a focus on the way contemporary Japanese designers have adapted and incorporated traditional folding practices into their work.

The art of folding may have its origins in the Japanese way of living. Traditionally, living environments were small and therefore it was important to try and maximise the use of space. For example, the ‘living area’ (not rooms in the western sense) can be used as a bedroom when a futon is spread on the floor at night, but also used as a dining room in the day time once the futon is folded and stored away. Even the architectural structure can be explained by ‘spatial’ folding. The ‘living space or room’ comprises a clever modular system of sliding doors and walls which can be opened or even removed, thereby creating a flexible division of space, whether for seclusion or to accommodate social functions.

**Japanese folds** consists of a small cross-section of the Museum’s collection including a folded kimono wrapped in tato-shi (a type of paper used for storing the kimono), folding fans, a wood block print book which opens up to four rectangular shape, wrapped in a two-dimensional flat forms.

The exhibition provides an insight into the folding design concept with a focus on the way contemporary Japanese designers have adapted and incorporated traditional folding practices into their work.

The kimono is a good example. It is kept folded for storage, rather than on a western style hanger. It is folded into a perfect rectangular shape, wrapped in a tato-shi and stored flat in a wardrobe. The Japanese have developed a specific and clever way of folding the kimono, which allows them to be opened up and worn without ironing, as the creases from the folds lie in such a way that they look smart. When a kimono is worn, layers of two dimensional fabric turn into a three dimensional sculptural form around the body. The length of the kimono can be adjusted at the waist by folding extra fabric into an obi (sash).

The process of designing a kimono is also interesting. Whilst Western fashion design works with the human body, attempting to resolve its challenging contour lines, Japanese designers tend to focus on the two-dimensional fabric instead, designing garments within the construction of geometric folds. In fact, a kimono is made from a bolt of cloth of a standard width of approximately 35 cm. Kimono wearers have always chosen their kimono in bolt form, which they then order sewn up to their measurements. A bolt contains approximately 11.5 meters, enough to make one adult-size garment. The tailoring pattern for a kimono is standardised and there is no wastage of fabric. It is cut into a geometrical pattern using the loomed width of the cloth making up the kimono body (mihaba), overlap or front opening (okumi), sleeves (sode) and neckband (eri).

Perhaps, we can assume that deep in the mind of every Japanese person lies the culture of making, wearing and folding the kimono. When contemporary Japanese fashion designers Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto introduced their works on the international scene in the 1980s, it shocked western fashions; challenging established notions around clothing. For centuries, Western fashion has persistently adhered to a structured and tailored fit which expresses sexuality, glamour and status. However, Japanese designers tended to conceal the natural proportion of the human body shape, instead focusing on the two-dimensional nature of the fabric.

Because of their strong focus on the fabric, Japanese fashion designers work closely with textile specialists. One of the most popular and innovative designers to do this is Issey Miyake with his pleats collection. His innovative technique was created with textile designer, Mikoko Minagawa. It is the reverse of the conventional method where the fabric is pleated before cutting it to the design. What Miyake does instead is cut and assemble a garment two-and-a half to eight times bigger than its intended size. The fabric, a lightweight stretch polyester, is folded, ironed and oversewn so that the straight lines stay together and then placed in a press from where it emerges with permanent pleats.

One of the most stunning variations of Miyake’s pleated garments is the *Minaret* dress featured in his Spring/Summer 1995 collection. Like a folding paper lantern, the dress folds down into a flat circular form. It can be appreciated in its unworn folded state, as well as when it dramatically encases the body and sways with movement. The dress is an ingenious transformation which encapsulates the whole meaning and significance of the Japanese folding practice.

**Japanese folds** is now showing on Level 4 of the Powerhouse Museum until 21 June 2015.
Buddha's parinirvana or the death of Buddha is one of the most popular narrative subjects in Buddhist art. Throughout the Buddhist world the scene of the enlightened Gautama Buddha's passing from this world to the next can be found in monumental sculptures and large scale paintings. As Buddhism traversed eastward across China, preeminent examples of sculptures and painted murals of the parinirvana can be found at historical places of worship like the Magao cave temples near Dunhuang and sculptured cliff faces of Dazu near Chongqing.

After Buddhism's arrival in Japan in the 6th century CE, the parinirvana's most favoured form of production was in the format of monumental hanging scroll paintings. Examples of these can still be seen displayed on 15 February each year at ceremonies and rituals commemorating the Gautama Buddha's passing. The three great events of the Buddha's life: his birth, enlightenment and parinirvana are celebrated together as Vesak in many Buddhist societies, however in East Asia as in Japan these three occasions are celebrated separately. Buddha's birth is celebrated on the 8th day of the 4th month, his Enlightenment on the 8th day of the 12th month. Since the late 19th century the months have followed the Gregorian calendar.

In Japan, Parinirvana paintings are known as Nehan-zu with the oldest in existence dating to 1086, currently kept at the head temple of the Shingon sect at Kongobu-ji on Mt Koya. It was at the time of this painting's creation during the late Heian period (11th century), that distinct Japanese styles were being established in Buddhist art and although the NGV's Nehan-zu painting was produced in more recent times (mid-19th century) it remains faithful to the graphic conventions used to depict parinirvana scenes throughout the history of their production in Japan.

As well as displaying up to 1000 years of stylistic continuity in Japanese Buddhist art, the NGV's Nehan-zu painting is of great interest from an Australian perspective as it was one of the earliest Japanese paintings to arrive in this country. They exported wool and wheat to Japan and, as newspaper clippings and NGV acquisitions attest, they imported and sold Japanese artworks in Australia. In the NGV collection there are seven Japanese items purchased from Numashima in 1887 that include two paintings, a reliquary pagoda and several lacquered musical instruments; and from Fusajiro Kanematsu one ornately lacquered horse saddle and stirrups.

In a one-dimensional sense, nirvana paintings faithfully depict details of Gautama Buddha's release from this world. As narrated in the Dai Hatsu nehân Kyo (Mahaparinirvana Sutra), after more than 40 years of travelling and offering spiritual guidance, the Gautama Buddha fell seriously ill and passed away in a forest along the bank of the Ajiravati River in Kushinagar, Northern India. Under the light of a full moon he lay down in a forest clearing with two sal trees standing at each of the four cardinal directions. From his face beamed rays of golden light that, when seen by his followers, caused them to immediately rush to his side to witness the last moment of his life on this earth.

Consistent with the convention of parinirvana paintings, Buddha reclines on his right side on a large dais with his right arm bent to...
support his head. Gathering around him are Bosatsu (Bodhisattvas), myōō (wisdom kings), rakan (arhats), niō (fierce guardians), monks, lay followers and a wide array of animals and mythical beasts. Buddha’s staff (shakujō) rests at his side against a tree trunk and his alms bowl wrapped in red cloth hangs from a branch. Behind the group are the waters of the Ajiravati River and above, cloud formations in light green, blue, pink and yellow drift by a silvery moon.

At the moment of his passing we can see the foliage of surrounding trees change from a lush green (left side) withering to a light brown (right side) and in the upper right corner, clouds carry Buddha’s mother Māyā and her attendants, who descend to greet the dying Buddha and lead him back to their paradise. This group is led by one of Buddha’s disciples, the monk Anritsu (Aniruddha), who holds his robes to his face in sorrow while Māyā follows weeping into her sleeve.

Mourning at the feet of the Buddha is another of the ten disciples Dai Kayō (Mahakashyapa), who was far away on missionary work at the time of Buddha’s passing and has arrived several days late. It is recorded that the funeral pyre would not catch fire until his arrival. The painting depicts Kayō reaching the Buddha’s deathbed and touching his feet, after which time the Buddha’s body is recorded as spontaneously igniting. The expressions on the faces of the gathered wisdom kings, arhats, guardians, monks, and lay followers display deep emotions of sorrow and loss. In contrast the Bodhisattvas, depicted as golden figures, are shown with calm facial expressions as they understand that his death actually represents release from the cycle of rebirth.

Individuals within the gathering are depicted in conformity with the convention of parinirvana painting, however in this late Edo example we can find some interesting Japanese inclusions. A long-nosed tengu (mythical mountain priest or ascetic) is painted in green with golden wings to the upper right of the lying Buddha and to the lower left Daruma (Bodhidharma) is distinguishable, dressed in red robes from head to toe. Born in Gujarat, India, Daruma was the 28th patriarch of Buddhism and the transmitter of Zen Buddhism to China from where it continued eastward to become a dominant cultural influence and central aspect of Japanese spirituality. Daruma is a popular subject in Japanese Buddhist art and although living during the 5th and 6th century, approximately 1000 years after the Gautama Buddha, his importance in Japan has led to his inclusion in numerous parinirvana paintings.

At the base of the lying Buddha’s dais, a large array of animals have gathered to mourn the Buddha’s passing. A giant mythical white elephant and a lion dog, the vehicles of the bodhisattvas Monju and Fugen, contrast with a tiny centipede, a dragonfly, earthworms and many other animals adding a charming and universally inclusive aspect to the scene.

The Nehan-zu painting is currently exhibited beside the 2011-acquired 12th century Amida Buddha sculpture and displays an interesting comparison of the conventions used to represent the Buddha in Japanese art.

Wayne Crothers is Curator Asian Art, National Gallery of Victoria.

REFERENCES

DEATH OF BUDDHA (BUDDHA’S PARINIRVANA) (DETAIL), NEHAN-ZU, JAPAN, 19TH CENTURY, MINE AND GOLD PAINT ON SILK, 255.8 X 233.0 CM (OVERALL). NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE PURCHASED, 1887
This story of temple murals is based on events in the small village of Ban Kok Ngiew, 15 kilometres from the northern Lao city of Luang Prabang. It began with the construction of a new shrine at the village temple and revolves around two brushes - two paint brushes owned by an artist, a former monk with a great talent and passion for religious art, who went home to marry his childhood sweetheart.

Over a four year period from 2007-2011, members of the Canberra Lao community raised over A$28,000 and worked with the village community in Ban Kok Ngiew to build a new shrine in the village’s temple compound. The design follows the northern Lao style with three, multi-layered, curved, clay-tiled roofs topped by a spire of 9 elements (nyot shor faa), corner hooks and with protective nagas for the access stairways. These are all elements found in Lao temple architecture and are imbued with spiritual meaning. I took pleasure in designing the main entrance doors, single hardwood slabs carved by local artists depicting images of a village environment where pineapples and planted teak play important roles in agricultural livelihoods. The four windows were carved from the same local hardwood, by a well-known Luang Prabang artist, Thid Pid and depict the more traditional religious motifs of Indra and other deities which are found in mainstream Luang Prabang temples.

The shrine was consecrated with great ceremony in 2011. Apart from the Buddha images, the interior decorations were sparse and a new project to create some distinctive temple murals in the shrine was born. However, these were not to be mere copies of the murals found in Luang Prabang temples; we wanted something distinctive which would reflect the joy and the triumph felt by the patrons and the community in completing the construction of a major shrine.

As part of the ongoing cultural exchange between the Lao Buddhist community in Canberra and Laos, we had also raised funds at that time to purchase a refrigerator to donate to the Abbot of a temple in the village of Ban Sob Khan, near the popular northern tourist resort of Nong Khiao, 150 km to the north of our village. When delivering the refrigerator in late 2012, we noticed some of the murals in the temple were different from the standard murals in temples in northern Laos. We were told the artist came from the village of Ban Nakhone, about 8 km to the west of Nong Khiao. I left my phone number with the temple committee and asked them if the artist could give me a call. It took a couple of months before we managed to meet Chan Hai. We spoke by phone and he travelled 140 km by motor bike to our village to inspect the new shrine, assess what might be done and discuss the possibility of a commission. He met the local abbot and members of our village community and we discussed the concepts behind the proposed murals and the need for a respectful but distinctive style.

At the age of 15, Chan Hai had gone to Vientiane as a monk at Wat Prakhao, training there from 2002-2011. During that time he had also studied for two years at the National University. This was not long after the reintroduction of Buddhist art in Laos 1998, when, with UNESCO support, art school
On more mundane matters, we agreed to and history of Buddhist belief in a Lao village. We agreed upon scenes which would be consistent with the enlightenment pose of Buddha's enlightenment. The illustrated celebrations of the heavenly deities for would express the happiness and spontaneous the primary Buddha image in the shrine: they would reflect the traditions and supporting the enlightenment. Above these images are the main heavenly deities, Pha Inh (Indra), Pha Vishnu (Vishnu), Pha Brahma (Brahma) and their consorts, leading the celebrations of the enlightenment and at the very top is a heavenly orchestra playing Lao musical instruments, with dancers and singers providing the happy atmosphere for the celebrations - the style and content reflecting Lao cultural traditions underpinning the Buddhist story.

Since his marriage, he had been attempting unsuccessfully to make a living through his art; but commissions were few and the pay was poor. He felt that his brushes and his passion for art were a curse which prevented him from making a good living and looking after his new wife and family. The paint brushes represented his frustrations and unproductive endeavours and he was about to symbolically consign them to the fire and seek other, more rewarding, livelihoods. We spoke at length; he shared my vision for a style of art which was a little different. Being a former abbot, he knew and understood the Buddhist stories and their links with Hinduism. Having lived and worked in Nepal and visited Lumbini several times, I was able to share some new and alternative artistic concepts with Chan Hai and we soon came to an understanding and alternative artistic concepts with Chan Hai and we soon came to an understanding of the type of murals which would suit our village temple.

We agreed upon scenes which would be consistent with the enlightenment pose of the primary Buddha image in the shrine: they would express the happiness and spontaneous celebrations of the heavenly deities for Buddha’s enlightenment. The illustrated narrative would help educate members of the congregation and would reflect the traditions and history of Buddhist belief in a Lao village. On more mundane matters, we agreed to limit this initial commission to murals on the wall behind the Buddha sculptures and to use acrylic paint with a natural lacquer finish as the medium. Chan Hai agreed to start almost immediately - on 7 February, 2013. The community and the resident monks assisted in assembling the bamboo scaffolding where Chan Hai would spend some 12 hours a day for the next two and a half months. He took only two days’ holiday over this period, the full-moon days when no work is conducted in the village.

Following religious ceremonies to protect the Buddha images during the painting stages, the painting of the murals began in the centre of the wall and worked steadily downwards and upwards. The demons (njāk) who were defeated in their attempts to distract Siddhatha from his path to enlightenment are featured to the right of the Buddha images. They are shown paying homage and conceding defeat in their evil mission. To the left of the Buddha images are deities as musicians playing the three-stringed lute (pin sam sai), encouraging and supporting the enlightenment. The side bay panels to the right of the Buddha images feature the five yogi or disciples who came to learn from the Buddha. In the left bay is a group of four noblemen who came to pay homage to the enlightened Buddha and who provide their bowls as offerings to replace the only bowl the Buddha owned.

After taking some well-earned rest with his wife and new-born child, Chan Hai then took a further month to complete some panels and make adjustments, one of which was the inclusion of the beloved dogs of a number of the main Australian sponsors amongst the peacocks, deer and other animals depicted in the murals on the side panels.

The final cost of the murals (to date) was 40 million Lao Kip (approximately A$6,300) entirely paid for by our primary sponsors (me and my family), close friends and supporters from Australia and the local community. Senior Buddhist authorities from Luang Prabang have inspected, admired and praised the murals and Chan Hai has gained several new commissions as a result of the high quality of his work and his creativity at the Ban Kok Ngiew shrine. Subsequently he accepted an additional commission from a member of the village community to complete an additional mural above the outside door at the entrance to the shrine.

Chan Hai eventually presented me with the brushes which he had wanted to burn: brushes he had used since he began painting as a novice priest many years ago. The last time these brushes were used was for our temple. “Thank you” he said, “for sharing my passion and keeping faith in my capacity as an artist”. There has been a strong demand for his talents and his work is now admired and respected in the region. He has had attractive commissions in several parts of Lao PDR. His future as an artist seems assured and his two brushes remain one of my treasured possessions.

Dao Midgley is the Director of the SengDaoSSS social program of Salwood Asia Pacific, a forestry consulting company which she and her husband operate.
Most national cinemas operate on a star system, with Hollywood’s being the most familiar worldwide, as are its stars. Other national cinemas, such as France, Korea, Hong Kong, China or even Japan, have similar star systems. But the star system in India (here we are looking at Hindi cinema) has major differences. Unlike Hollywood, which has become dominated by blockbusters laden with technology and special effects, Indian cinema is still all about the stars – and in India they are not just movie stars, but to their audiences they are something very special. Godlike, worshipped, and revered.

Actors in Hindi cinema do not just tell stories on screen, they themselves become the story: heroes in real life as well as on screen. They hold sway with the audience not just through their roles in movies, but in who they are. And who are they? Mere mortals? Actors? Clowns to entertain or Gods to millions?

Three contemporary stars illustrate this perfectly. Hindi cinema is currently dominated by three actors named Khan. They are not related. They are all in their late 40s, and they are all Muslim, and yet, since the early nineties, they have been Hindi cinema’s biggest heroes. Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Salman Khan have each become their own personal industry. As Anupama Chopra describes in her book *Freeze Frame*: “...they essentially function as one-man studios. Each one has a production company and a planetary system of favoured directors, producers, writers, publicists and stylists that revolve around him. These actors can raise funds, make a film and release it on their own accord.” (2014: 293-4).

While Aamir and Salman made their debuts in the late eighties in cinema, Shah Rukh found fame and popularity on TV before coming to Bombay in the early nineties. By now, everyone in India knows their life stories and has seen many of their films, but their personal and film personas are very different.

Hindi films are often such a mix of genre and style that categorisation can be difficult, but each Khan has become associated with a certain type of film. Since *Lagaan* (2001) Aamir has made films which, while entertaining, also have an underlying social conscience. He is seen as making the thinking person’s cinema. Salman played the romantic lead early in his career, but his current fame rests squarely on films which deliver strong doses of action, song and dance numbers, often nonsensical stories, with Salman as the unstoppable hero. Shah Rukh is famed as ‘The King of Romance’, however he has made films ranging from comedy to drama, stories of modern, contemporary India, and has probably experimented more with roles and genres. The consistent factor in his films is that he portrays the modern, globalised Indian. His aim with his production house is to push Indian cinema onto a global platform.

A new film by any of the Khans is more than a release, it becomes an event. Aamir and Shah Rukh each tend to make only one film a year. Salman, however, can have up to three releases in a year, and while he seems less discerning about the material he chooses, the audience response shows that his fans will watch him in anything. Perhaps that’s because his characters are all variations of Salman’s own persona; he will inevitably
Can you imagine George Clooney or Johnny Depp hosting a game show on US television? The three Khans earn considerable money on Indian television, often more than from a film; working on TV is not seen as less prestigious if you are a big star, and TV in India now has a bigger audience than cinema. But they work on very different types of TV programs. Aamir continues his socially conscious work in Satyamev Jayate (Truth Alone Prevails), which deals with sensitive and often controversial issues, Salman hosts straight entertainment, such as India’s version of Big Brother, and Shah Rukh Khan has hosted the Indian versions of Who Wants to Be Millionaire and Are you Smarter than a Sixth Grader?. He sees these shows as educational but entertaining.

The men themselves are very different. Aamir is known as ‘Mr Perfectionist’ (a new book is titled Aamir Khan... Actor, Activist, Achiever), while Salman, often called Salman bhai (brother), seems the most contradictory: he has had brushes with the law, and he works tirelessly for his own NGO charity Being Human. He’s changed the most: when he started he was a slim young man with floppy hair, now he’s the highly muscled he-man who has become the guru of body building in the industry, training and advising many younger stars.

Shah Rukh Khan is probably the most media savvy of the three; he’s referred to in the media as Baadshah of Bollywood (King of Bollywood or King Khan), and his huge fan base extends outside India, even outside the Indian Diaspora. He just reached 13 million followers on Twitter. He is Hindi cinema’s global star, hence the often heard description, “the most famous actor you’ve never heard of!”

Shah Rukh Khan revels in his stardom. Everyone is his audience. He hosts award shows, dances at weddings, appears at many brand endorsements (he’s known as Brand SRK) and other events. On his birthday the media is invited into the grounds of his home where he talks and cuts birthday cakes. From a platform in the fence around his house he often waves and blows kisses to the many hundreds who stand outside waiting. He co-owns a cricket team, the Kolkata Knight Riders, appearing regularly at matches, even somersaulting on the field when they win. He still does world tours (coming to Australia in 2013). Aamir did a couple of tours in the nineties, but has not appeared live for over 15 years. Salman rarely does live shows; with more films in production he has less time, and dancing, which features strongly in these shows, is not his strong point.

Neither Aamir nor Salman are media shy, but are less available. Aamir will promote his current film, but never goes to award shows (though he did go to the Oscars when Lagaan was nominated). He does endorsements, but on a more restricted basis. Salman has the ‘bad boy’ image, and is rumoured not always to be co-operative. Lately he’s giving more interviews, but rarely takes them too seriously. He is the only one of the three not married, having had a series of relationships with high profile actresses.

Having three superstars named Khan gives the Indian media a constant flow of stories; hardly a day goes by without one of ‘the Khans’ making news, or being pitted against each other. The Indian public seems never to tire of debates about “who is the number 1 Khan?”. How long will the three Khans’ stories (both on and off the screen) continue to dominate the Hindi film industry? They don’t appear to be slowing down, and filmmakers still knock on their door with projects. These three leading men look like staying just that... leading men and the kings of the industry with a multitude of stories to tell.

Adrienne Mc Kibbins is a Film Researcher, writer and program consultant, specialising in Asian cinema, particularly Hindi. Adrienne is a consultant for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA) and the Executive Officer of the Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA).

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Contemporary ink art has emerged as one of the most significant and ubiquitous artistic trends in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong during the past decade, and it is attracting increasing international attention. Described as ‘the new Chinese art’, major exhibitions focusing on Chinese contemporary ink art have been presented by some of the world’s leading museums in recent years; and it is being sold at record prices in the global art market. What are the cultural, political and socio-economic forces driving this popular upsurge of interest in ink art? What defines ink art today? And why are growing numbers of contemporary artists, and particularly younger artists across the region, seeking to revitalise and re-invent this artistic genre which is widely associated with Chinese cultural tradition?

This exhibition, *Ink Remix: Contemporary art from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong* responds to recent developments in ink art from this region, and it critically engages with some of these complex questions. It also explores broader issues relating to the meaning and significance of history and tradition in societies that have embraced globalization and that are highly urbanised and technologically-driven. Organised by the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG), this touring exhibition features more than 35 works in a range of media by 14 contemporary artists living in mainland China, as well as in Taiwan and Hong Kong - locations that are often overlooked but that continue to play important roles in the development of ink art.

Rather than focusing on the medium, practice or history of ink art, this exhibition explores the idea of ink as a mutable and fertile field of artistic enquiry, and its contemporary relevance in this region. It questions and challenges preconceived ideas that prevail, particularly in the West, in which ink art is defined by and limited to Chinese traditional forms of calligraphy and painting which characteristically employ ink and brush on paper. It is important to point out that the majority of art works in this exhibition are not produced in ink and incorporate a diverse range of media including Coca-Cola, tea, biro, ink jet prints, as well as photography, video and animation. Although most of the artists in this exhibition have been trained in Chinese calligraphy and ink painting, many ignore or reject the principles, techniques and tools associated with the Chinese ink tradition. The multifaceted and experimental nature of these artists’ works reflect the ways this discourse has developed and expanded over the last decade, attracting artists from different generations and with diverse backgrounds and interests.

Artists in this exhibition include mid-career and internationally-acclaimed artists, as well as younger, emerging artists all born between the 1960s and 1980s. They are: Chen Shaoxiong, Feng Mengbo, He Xiangyu, Hung Keung, Cindy Ng Siu Ieng, Ni Youyu, Pan Hsin-hua, Peng Hung-chih, Peng Wei, Qiu Zhijie, Wilson Shieh, Charwei Tsai, Yang Yongliang, and Yao Jui-chung. The works are stylistically diverse, but they share a common interest in the idea of ink as a mode of visual representation. The artists embrace and re-interpret this artistic genre using it as a medium of expression to engage with contemporary issues. They are searching for a new language that is simultaneously local and global, and that connects the past with the present and future. Their works explore themes relating to history, and the effects of modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation on the environment and their respective societies and cultures, as well as on conceptions of identity, gender and place in the world.

*Ink Remix* emphasises the new and innovative aspects of contemporary ink art and it offers new ways of thinking about ink art as a dynamic and diverse form of visual expression. The exhibition demonstrates the ways artists are freely experimenting with a range of media and are re-interpreting, subverting and transforming the definition and perceptions of ink art as part of an evolving tradition. The majority of works have been produced over the past decade, and several artists have created new works for the exhibition.

Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG): 3 July – 18 October, 2015
UNSW Galleries: 26 February -21 May 2016
Museum of Brisbane: dates TBC

Dr Sophie McIntyre is a curator, lecturer and art writer and a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University. She has worked in art museums for more than 20 years, in Australia, New Zealand and Asia, and has curated over 30 exhibitions, including *Ink Remix*. 

Sophie McIntyre

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*INK REMIX: CONTEMPORARY ART FROM MAINLAND CHINA, TAIWAN AND HONG KONG*

Sophie McIntyre

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*JOURNEY TO AUSTRALIA, 2015, YAO JUI-CHUNG, BIRO, OIL PEN AND GOLD LEAF ON INDIAN HAND-MADE PAPER, 208X546CM. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST*
IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN: AN EPIC PAINTING OF THE LIFE AND MIRACLES OF PABUJI

Jackie Menzies

The colourful image illustrated is a portrait of the Rajasthani hero-god Pabuji. It is one section of an exceptionally wide and beguiling painting that comprises numerous lively vignettes relating to the life and miracles of Pabuji. The painting belongs to a distinctive type of popular narrative painting called variously phad or par, or in English ‘story cloth’. Such cloths serve as a backdrop to night performances in which a performer-priest (bhopa), accompanied by musicians and dancers, recites and sings the story, while an assistant illuminates the relevant scenes on the cloth.

There are numerous examples of Pabuji par extant, many in museums (the one belonging to the National Gallery of Victoria is on display in its exhibition Gods, Heroes and Clowns: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art). The earliest extant examples date to the first half of the 19th century, with antecedents amongst wall paintings. Most show signs of wear from constant handling, such as a worn right end due to the rolling up of the painting from left to right.

In Rajasthan, the life of the hero-god Pabuji is one of the principal stories on par. Pabuji was the early 14th century princely ruler over Kolu, a tiny village between Jodhpur and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. He was a member of the Rajput Rathor clan who became rulers of Jodhpur and he attained divine status as an incarnation of Vishnu.

Traditionally most of his devotees were semi-nomadic Rabari pastoralists for Pabuji is associated with the rescuing of cattle. The bhopa who serve Pabuji are from the low-caste Nayak community. The painters of par are members of the Joshi family lineage of the Chhipa (textile block printers) caste who still adhere to traditional methods of painting: the pictorial scheme being first traced out with the aid of a cartoon, the colours applied from lightest to darkest, the black outlines being added last. There are prescribed rituals in making a painting. For example, for the painting to be considered completed: “...the artist must ceremoniously paint in the pupil of the eye of the hero-god (an act that invokes the deity to dwell in the story cloth), and he must also ritually sign the par and write the name of the bhopa who commissioned it.” (Rossi, 1998: 139)

The compositions of all Pabuji par are remarkably similar, complying with an established formula for depicting a complicated story of weddings, death, intrigue, battles and other incidents associated with the life of a princely hero. When the bhopa performs in front of the par, he selects specific episodes to highlight during his night performance because reciting the whole story requires many hours.

The focus of the whole scroll is a portrait of Pabuji on his throne (as illustrated). He is shown in profile, moustached and turbaned, within an architectural setting - a portrait style introduced into the Indian pictorial repertoire through Mughal prototypes. He carries a lotus in one hand, a weapon in the other: he is both poet and warrior. Behind him are attendants, one holding a long fan that arches above Pabuji’s head, the other holding a chowrie (a fly-whisk formed from a yak-tail – a symbol of royalty). Above him are sun and moon, and two peacocks (Smith, 2005: 61). His long spear separates him from the four figures to his right who are his companions in the court at Kolu.

All figures are unmodelled, and attendant figures are not as large as Pabuji, in compliance with an established tradition of denoting importance by scale. Conventions relating to scale apply too to the birds and animals – horses, elephants, tigers, and camels – perceptively depicted with naïve charm across the whole surface. Architectural features, trees and tight groupings of figures serve to lead the eye from one event to another. Events are not arranged sequentially through time as in many narrative traditions but by location. Thus incidents widely separated in narrative time may be depicted close to one another because they take place in the same location: ‘This primacy of place over time is the most fundamental principle underlying the disposition of scenes on the par’ (Smith 2005:30).

In this illustration, auxiliary details draw on the main narrative of Pabuji’s life, as well as on sayls, or miracles, stories in which Pabuji comes to the aid of his earthly devotees after his ascent to heaven (Smith, 2005: 172). For example, the lower left group of figures depicts a scene from the main narrative: the wedding procession of Pabuji with courtiers, leading on his black mare. The blue rectangular pool containing a crocodile illustrates a sayl relating to Pabuji. In this story, Pabuji’s two sisters went to bathe in a nearby tank. Before entering the water, one removed her necklace which was swallowed by a crocodile. She invoked Pabuji who sent assistance, with the necklace being retrieved by a crocodile.

Sadly par and the associated recitations of the story of Pabuji are disappearing because people are no longer interested in hearing the epic performed, and the bhopas have been turning to the tourist trade and singing Hindi film songs to make a living (Smith 2005: 174).

Jackie Menzies was Head of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales 1980-2012. During that period, she organised many exhibitions on Asian art, including Indian ones with Jim Masselos, donor of this cloth to the Gallery.

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A soft breeze from the surrounding Thar Desert stirred the early evening air as we walked through the great doorway of Jodhpur’s magnificent Mehrangarh Fort for the second time that day. Part way through our Threads of Rajasthan tour, with Jaipur and Udaipur still to come, we had so far touched down in Mumbai, explored the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Ajanta and Ellora and travelled to golden Jaisalmer in the far west of Rajasthan. Now in blue-washed Jodhpur, we had already visited Mehrangarh on that St Valentine’s Day morning. And we were there again, queuing like old hands for the lift that takes visitors up into the heart of the Fort, whose foundations were laid in 1459 by Rao Jodha, the 15th Rathore ruler. Over the next 500 years Mehrangarh, which towers 400 metres above the city, was built and rebuilt in a range of architectural styles.

We had tickets to attend an evening session of the World Sacred Spirit Festival (in previous years the World Sufi Spirit Festival) an extraordinary musical event shared between Ahichhatragarh Fort in Nagaur, three hours away to the south-west, and Mehrangarh in Jodhpur. We found seats in a small courtyard belonging to the three-storey Daulat Khana Chowk, meaning ‘wealth store’, which was built in the early 1700s and has arched openings on all levels. In front of us, in a long open gallery through which the lights of Jodhpur glimmered below, was a raised stage. On it, two gloriously moustached and turbaned Rajasthani musicians were tuning their traditional bowed stringed instruments, the box-like sarangi with short wide neck that is said to most closely resemble the human voice, and the round-bodied, deep-toned kamaicha, played only by the Manganiyar community of western Rajasthan.

These traditional Rajasthani musicians were followed by the Mandingo Ensemble from Mali, with kora player Ballaké Sissoko. The kora, which was new to me, is an African bass harp. Built from half a large calabash which is covered in cow skin and forms the resonator, the kora has a long hardwood neck and 21 strings in two rows, making it a double harp. The sound of the kora resembles that of a harp, but is deeper, more metallic and resonant. Finally, creating a happy musical fusion of bowed and plucked strings from India and Mali, several Rajasthani players joined the Mandingo Ensemble on stage to round up the early evening session.

After dinner, efficiently served on paper plates from silver tureens, we moved to the larger Zenana Deodi courtyard. The zenana, with its exquisitely carved sandstone screens, was once the inner sanctum where the wives of the maharaja lived. What followed was an electrifying performance by Dr Madan Gopal Singh and Chaar Yaar (Four Friends). Dr Singh is an academic and lyricist as well as a superb singer of Sufi texts both ancient and modern; his companions were the accomplished guitarist and banjo player Deepak Castelino, classical sarod player Pritam Ghosal and percussionist Munna Khan. Chaar Yaar have been playing sacred music together, in India and abroad, for the past 18 years, and on stage with them was Anwar Khan Manganiyarat, a Rajasthani kamaicha musician billed as the Desert Singing Legend. And so he was, deep-throated and magnificent.

Sufi music is intensely alive as well as deeply spiritual and seeks to express the mystical inner dimensions of Islam. Finding inspiration in the works of Sufi poets like Rumi and Hafiz, as well as more recent writers, Sufi music reflects a more liberal and accessible aspect of Islam and can form a bridge of understanding that connects people of different creeds. Sufism itself is sometimes defined quite broadly as the perennial philosophy of a transcendent existence that is not essentially linked to any formal religion.

The World Sacred Spirit Festival, which is sponsored by HH the Maharaja Gaj Singh II of Marwar-Jodhpur with musician and songwriter Sting as patron, is now in its sixth year at Nagaur and its second in Jodhpur. The Festival has become a mecca for practitioners of sacred as well as specifically Sufi music from around the world: in addition to the musicians we heard, it featured performers from Egypt, Turkey, France, Pakistan, Afghanistan, West Africa and Mongolia as well as India. Emphasis is placed on musical heritage and traditions that have all but disappeared and a conscious effort made to promote non-mainstream artists.

We were fortunate to experience in one evening such passionate and varied musical exuberance.

Christina Sumner OAM was formerly Principal Curator Design & Society at Sydney’s Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and is a foundation member of TAASA. Threads of Rajasthan is the third textile-focused special interest tour she has led to India.
BOOK REVIEW: RETHINKING VISUAL NARRATIVES FROM ASIA

Olivia Meehan

Rethinking Visual Narratives from Asia: Intercultural and Comparative Perspectives
Alexandra Green (ed.)
Hong Kong University Press, 2013
RPP USD35, paperback, 268 pages, colour and b/w illustrations

This volume of essays is a welcome contribution to the study of visual narrative in Asian art. It is the publication of research presented at the 2009 conference, Rethinking Visual Narratives from Asia: Intercultural and Comparative Perspectives, hosted by the Department of Fine Arts, The University of Hong Kong. The cohort of scholars is impressive, offering readers the opportunity to appreciate a wide range of expertise and insight into visual narrative from late 7th century Chinese cave painting to the Ramayana murals of Pattanceri Palace in Kerala.

The task of approaching visual narrative, within the context of Asian art, is captivatingly outlined by editor and contributor Alexandra Green (Henry Ginsburg Curator for Southeast Asia, British Museum) in her introductory text, which sets the tone for this diverse collection of papers. It also includes a fascinating keynote address in a chapter by the formidable Julia K. Murray on Narrative and Visual Narrative across Disciplines and Cultures, and thoughtful concluding remarks by Greg M. Thomas.

The pleasure in reading through these papers is derived not only from the detailed scholarship and referencing but the quality and number of colour plates throughout.

This is a significant feature of the publication, as it serves not only the general reader but also students and scholars alike in their discovery of the nuanced role of narrative in the various arts of Asia. Most importantly, each investigation into the central theme is convincingly argued and presented.

There is also a reasonable balance in terms of regional focus: we find some of the more familiar areas of Chinese, Japanese and Indian art, but also the welcome addition of other, often underplayed, Southeast Asian territories including Burma, Thailand and Laos. The regional and temporal range opens the discourse to further inquiry into visual narrative. Given this variety, there will be some essays that appeal more than others, depending on interest and taste. The general index is a handy tool for overall navigation and each essay provides a decent list of references and notes.

The only notable inconsistency is that not all chapters include the use of original language, text and notes on translation. Yeewan Koon’s paper The Art of Tales: Qing Novels and Paintings by Su Renshan (1814 – c.1850), Alexandra Green’s Creating Scared Space: Thai and Burmese Wall Paintings of the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries, Charlotte Galloway’s Buddhist Narrative Imagery during the Eleventh Century at Pagan, Burma: Reviewing Origins and Purpose and Julia K Murray’s keynote address, are excellent examples of how the inclusion of original language enriches an art historical paper. This should be a key aspect of the way we examine non-Western material, and in my view there needs to be more of it.

Some highlights include Dore J. Levy’s exploration of the poetics of Chinese narrative painting through the development of her own theory of vignettism. Levy describes vignettism as ‘the underlying structural principle of representing temporal sequence, including narrative sequence, in Chinese Art.’p(27). Within this theoretical framework Levy demonstrates the possibility of lyric transcendence through visual narrative. Each vignette details one episode which may not form part of a narrative sequence in the larger story but rather may privilege moments of insight and awareness over action, drawing the viewer into the artist’s imaginative world through a focus on the instant as representing the whole.

Sarah E. Thompson’s paper Poetry, Incense, Card Games, and Pictorial Narrative Coding in Early Modern Genji Pictures, explains the manner of codified narrative that relies on prior knowledge of a classic text. In order to decipher the poetic references hidden within Hokusai’s set of Genji playing cards (110 in total), players would have been well versed in the Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji) and popular card games that played with waka poems. Thompson considers the development of the cards and their reception in the Edo period. This essay is accompanied by striking full colour plates of woodblock prints from the Katsushita Hokusai Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, a real delight for lovers of Ukiyo-e.

Other noteworthy essays include Charlotte Galloway’s examination of the iconographic programs in Pagan’s early temples and their relationship to the introduction of Buddhist texts to Burma in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. This paper provides a rare insight into the way these religious texts were edited by Burmese kings as a means of political, and ultimately spiritual, manipulation of society. By methodically tracing the development of elaborate decorative schemes in the Pagan temples, Galloway illuminates the unique role of visual narrative in state and religious affairs.

Dominik Bonatz also considers the influence of ancient political regimes on visual narrative in his paper The Performance of Visual Narratives in Imperial Art: Two Case Studies from Assyria and the Khmer State. Bonatz takes an anthropological and art historical approach to the material and provides a fascinating comparison of two political systems.

The volume belongs in the library of any Asian art specialist or enthusiast. It presents new writing and research into visual narratives in Asian art and stimulates further exploration of the central theme.

Olivia Meehan is currently a Visiting Fellow at ANU’s Centre for European Studies and Visiting Researcher at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris.
PAMELA GUTMAN (1944 – 2015)

Milton Osborne

At a time when there is increasing interest in Australia's developing ties with Burma (Myanmar), the death on 31 March of Pamela Gutman brings to an end the life of the first Australian scholar to complete a doctorate in Asian art and to do so in relation to Burma.

The fruits of this research were eventually contained in her highly praised book, *Burma's Lost Kingdoms: Splendours of Arakan*, published in 2001. To record these blunt facts tells little of the effort involved in her carrying out research in Burma in the 1970s, when the government was resistant to foreign scholarship, and travel in Arakan could only take place with the assistance of a military escort.

Yet Pamela overcame the difficulties research in Burma posed, which involved translating Sanskrit inscriptions and becoming highly knowledgeable about obscure numismatics. She also played an early part in government-to-government relations.

She was invited to dine with the then Burmese president, Ne Win, to advance the cause of an Australia-Burma cultural agreement, an event, as she was able to recount, that involved being admitted to Ne Win's residence only after she had been examined through a periscope at the residence's guard post.

At a time when opportunities for full-time employment in universities were limited, Pamela worked in the Department of Immigration and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, which included working in association with Professor Ross Garnaut on *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy*.

Her involvement in Australia's growing links with Asia ranged from being Deputy Director of the Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific at the University of Sydney, to being the founding Director (International) of Asialink. She also worked with the Commission for the Future in establishing cultural exchange programs. Between 2001 and 2010 she was a member of the Refugee Review Tribunal, where she worked in relation to Asian issues.

Throughout her life in public and university service she never neglected her passionate interest in Burma's history, and after leaving the Refugee Review Tribunal she became an Honorary Associate in the Department of Art History and Theory at the University of Sydney. The regard in which she was held as an authority on Burmese art and Southeast Asian art more generally led to her being consulted by major galleries in Australia and overseas, including recently by The Hermitage in St Petersburg and the Asia Society in New York.

Sadly, she had not completed her planned second edition of *Burma's Lost Kingdoms*, though there is hope that this may be completed by one of her PhD students, Martin Polkinghorne. She also left the incomplete text of a biography of the great English scholar of Burma, Gordon Luce. She had studied with Luce in Jersey and she was fascinated both by his renown as a scholar and by his membership of the Bloomsbury Group, which included his close association with Maynard Keynes.

Only a few months ago her major study of an inscription from Sriksetra in western Burma, written in conjunction with Dr Bob Hudson, was published in the Bulletin of the École française d'Extrême-Orient. This article is set to revise judgments on just when Buddhist influences became important in early Burmese history.

Above all she was a warm and extraordinarily generous person, qualities that extended to her being instrumental in ensuring that cosmetics, particularly Red Earth lipstick, could be taken into Burma for Aung San Suu Kyi while she was under house arrest. Her door was always open to those who wanted to know more about Burma or who wanted to share their knowledge with her. So a visitor to her home might find that he or she was meeting an Arakanese Buddhist monk or an exiled princely Sawbwa from the Shan states. This generosity of spirit will be as much a memory of her as her admirable academic achievements.

She is survived by her daughter, three grandchildren, and her two sisters.

*This obituary was first published in the Lowy Institute’s ‘The Interpreter’ on 2 April 2015.*

A TRIBUTE FROM CHARLOTTE GALLOWAY

It was with great shock I heard about Pam’s death. I had just been intending to ask her advice about a presentation I was preparing for a seminar in Sydney— but it was not to be. Instead, my presentation became something of a personal tribute: without Pam’s keen interest in my work, I would never have completed my PhD and embarked on a research career in Burmese art history.

Anyone who studies Burmese culture will know about Pam, such is the reach and significance of her academic research and publications and the personal connections she developed during her long career. Her book, *Burma’s Lost Kingdoms: Splendours of Arakan* will stand as the foundational reference work for art historical studies in this field.

Pam’s academic expertise extended well beyond Burma’s boundaries. She was well known for her extensive knowledge of South and Southeast Asian art and their complex interactions. Pamela was a Sanskrit scholar, translating many inscriptions herself, and always generously responding to requests for advice from scholars around the globe. Even today, I was reviewing notes Pam sent me in January this year on the early modern Burmese artist U Ba Nyan, much of which come from obscure sources. She had compiled the information as part of her research on another great historian of Burma, Polkinghorne. She also left the incomplete text of a biography of the great English scholar of Burma, Gordon Luce. She had studied with Luce in Jersey and she was fascinated both by his renown as a scholar and by his membership of the Bloomsbury Group, which included his close association with Maynard Keynes.

Pam’s wake was appropriately sad and celebratory. On a grey Sydney day we heard wonderful tributes from people who had shared in the many facets of her full and engaging life. Through her lifetime’s work in Myanmar and beyond and her personal endeavours, Pam has left an enduring legacy.
RECENT TAASA ACTIVITIES

TAASA AGM
Monday 11 May 2015
TAASA’s AGM this year preceded the 3rd lecture in our Archaeology in Asia lecture series (detailed report in the September issue). Two members of the TAASA Committee whose terms had expired, Ann Proctor, Vice President, and James MacKean, Convenor of TAASA Queensland, had their terms renewed unopposed for three years.

Both the President and Treasurer’s report was circulated before the meeting, eliciting one question from the floor relating to the expected finalising of TAASA’s new website. In response, Todd Sunderman, Treasurer, reported that the development work was almost complete, and, following a testing period, it was hoped to launch the new site in June. The new website will offer considerable functionality, including ability to join and renew membership online; viewing, booking and paying for all current events, and access to a soft copy of the TAASA Review for members via password.

Gill thanked Todd and Josefa Green for their work to date on the development of the website. Gill also thanked TAASA members Bev Dunbar and Jillian Kennedy for their work in promoting and organising TAASA events.

TAASA IN SYDNEY

ARCHAEOLOGY IN ASIA

The relics and monuments of Buddhist Kashgar
Monday 2 March 2015
In her talk to well over 50 TAASA members and guests, Marika Vicziany, Emeritus Professor at Monash Institute in Melbourne made a passionate case for the importance of continuing the archaeological work of the Monash Institute and others in the Kashgaria region. Material objects found in the region and preliminary investigation suggest that Kashgar was one of the main entry points of Buddhism into China and Professor Vicziany described a number of sites where she hopes full excavation work will soon be possible.

Everybody hates the archaeology department
Monday 13 April 2015
In this 2nd talk in TAASA’s lecture series, we benefited from archaeologist Bob Hudson’s personal involvement in the successful campaign for heritage listing of the walled cities of Pyu (1st – 3rd centuries BCE) and the current campaign to achieve UNESCO status for Bagan. Dr Hudson gave us a brief but thorough background to the significance of these sights and amusing insights into the politics and complexity of the UNESCO heritage listing process.

Member Talk & Auction Preview at Bonhams
Wednesday 18 March 2015
TAASA members enjoyed a preview at Bonhams’ premises in Paddington, Sydney of both its forthcoming general Asian Art auction and an auction of a 19th/20th century Chinese snuff bottle collection of some 360 pieces. In her presentation, Yvett Klein, Bonham’s Asian Art Specialist, brought out for closer inspection a selection of bottles which demonstrated either particular rarity, beauty or historical interest – including an unusual group of bottles produced in the Cultural Revolution period.

Viewing of the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences’ Asian Jewellery Exhibition & Collection
Thursday 19 March 2015
A repeat event due to popular demand, Min-Jung Kim, Curator of Asian Arts and Design, walked the group through the exhibition A Fine Possession: Jewellery and Identity.

We were then taken to the basement storage area to view a selection of items of adornment including Japanese hair combs, Chinese toggles, and kingfisher hair pins.

Bhutan- Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon
30 April 2015
Visiting British based art consultant and curator, Zara Fleming, provided an illustrated overview of the history, art and culture of the kingdom of Bhutan. Offering a complex picture of Bhutanese society, she particularly focused on its Buddhist foundations, its striving for an independent identity and current attempts to balance traditional life and modern development.

TAASA TEXTILE STUDY GROUP, SYDNEY

Mnēnonikos Oikogéneias
(A family remembered)
10 March 2015
Marianne Hulsbosch offered a deeply personal exploration of family and memory supported by a number of her mnemonic textile sculptures, each one representing a family member. In the creation of these intriguing box-like structures, Marianne used textiles from the family scrap basket, embellished with embroidery, beads, appliqué etc. to “reveal memories that facilitate exploration of ancestral patterns of life”.

Sadly, these works are all that remain of a much larger installation previously exhibited in Sydney, the Netherlands and the US (1995). Many pieces went missing en route from the US to Sydney and thousands of hours of painstaking work were lost and so it was a privilege to be invited to touch, hold and even reconstruct the remaining works to invoke our own personal memories of family.

Threads from Meriam Mer
14 April 2015
An exuberant Di Stevens, owner and curator of the multi-award winning Tali Gallery
introduced the bright and beautiful textiles from Erub Ewer Meta Artists working from the Art Centre on Darnley Island in the Torres Straits, who revitalise their Meriam Mer culture through their arts and crafts. The five Island Groups of TSI Territory lie directly in the path of the Australia-Asia trading routes as demonstrated by the Australian, Papuan and Austronesian elements featuring in their artefacts. Fabrics presented were screen printed with designs inspired by traditional Indigenous stories, songlines and ancestral practices, featuring shells, fish and other sea creatures. Particularly exciting was DV’s showcasing of Erub’s artistic recycling of fishing nets abandoned at sea.

TAASA IN SYDNEY

The Greenware Ceramic Tradition
Tuesday 3 March 2015

In a packed room at COFA, Sydney, Merran Essan, Head of Ceramics at the National Art School, Sydney and Bronwyn Kemp, potter and lecturer at NAS joined us to give a technical and potter’s perspective on the materials and processes involved in creating different kinds of greenwares. We were able to examine closely a large range of greenware ceramics from southeast and east Asia, brought in by members, with many pieces eliciting lively discussion.

TAASA IN QUEENSLAND

Visit to the Islamic Museum of Australia
Saturday 21 March 2015

Nearly 30 TAASA members and friends from Victoria and NSW participated in a tour of the Islamic Museum of Australia, the first museum of its kind in Australia, which opened in March 2014 at Thornbury in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

While largely an educational rather than a collecting institution, the museum showcases a diverse range of Islamic arts including architecture, calligraphy, paintings, glass, ceramics and textiles. It also promotes Islamic artists, local and international. Several galleries showcase Australian Moslem history, starting with the visits by Indonesian fisherman in the early 18th century, followed in the 19th century by men from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan known collectively as the Afghans or Gians, who as expert camel handlers were important in the building of a new nation.

Nur Shkembi, the Museum’s Arts Director and Exhibitions Manager, who led the tour, was knowledgeable and engaging. Prior to the tour we had a delicious Middle Eastern banquet at Samira’s café at the museum’s premises. The café is operated by Samira El Khafir, a former finalist in Masterchef.

Walk through of A Golden Age of China - Qianlong Emperor (1736–1795)
Thursday 9 April 2015

TAASA members and friends were privileged to take part in a tour of this exhibition, led by Dr Mae Anna Pang, Senior Curator of Asian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. The exhibition provides an opportunity to explore a rich variety of more than 120 works from Palace Museum, Beijing’s collection, built on the imperial collection of the Ming and Qing dynasties. If you go to only one exhibition this year, go to this one. It runs until 21 June. Please refer to the March issue of TAASA Review for an in-depth article about the exhibition by Mae Anna Pang.

STEVEn Zadar (1925 – 2015)

Josefa Green

TAASA would like to honour the memory of Steven Zador, long time member, collector & generous donor, who died in March this year. Active to the end, Steven was a very regular attendee of TAASA events, and indeed took every opportunity to increase his already considerable knowledge of the Asian Arts, in particular of Chinese ceramics, his main collecting focus.

His professional work in the pharmaceutical industry took him to Southeast Asia in the 1980’s, where he lived for a number of years in both Singapore and the Philippines. It was during this period that he probably amassed the bulk of his collection of Tang to Yuan ceramics, generally Chinese export ware to Southeast Asia. He made a particular speciality of Tang Changsha ware and of iron spotted Qingbai and Longquan ware of the Yuan period, a number of which he donated to the Art Gallery of NSW.

Steven continued to collect after his retirement in 1990 while on various professional and other visits to Southeast Asia and Hong Kong, where he knew several of the older dealers. His generous support of the Art Gallery of NSW, both during his lifetime and as part of his bequest, led to his appointment as a Governor of the Art Gallery of NSW’s Foundation.

With unfailing enthusiasm, Steven was committed to adding to and sharing his knowledge with others, making his collection available for viewing to anyone who expressed an interest. He travelled widely, including undertaking a number of study trips to China, such as ceramic appreciation courses at the Shanghai Museum. His departure is a sad loss to Sydney’s collecting community.
China and Japan were discussed and a number of pieces examined.

Qld Textiles Interest Group
12 May 2015
Members attended an informal dinner in May to launch the first Queensland Textiles Interest Group. A variety of textiles from individual collections were displayed and discussed including Chinese silks, batik and ikat, embroidery from Uzbekistan, and woven pieces from Bhutan, Laos and Japan.

TAASA MEMBERS’ DIARY
JUNE – AUGUST 2015

TAASA IN NSW

TAASA Archaeology in Asia Lecture Series
Casting for the King – The Royal Palace
Bronze Workshop of Angkor
Monday 1 June 2015, 6 – 8pm
Sydney Mechanics School of Arts
280 Pitt St Sydney
(between Bathurst & Park Sts)
Martin Polkinghorne, Research Fellow in the Department of Archaeology, Flinders University of South Australia will share his experiences working with a multi-disciplinary team to unearth, for the first time in Southeast Asia, a historic bronze workshop near the Royal Palace in Angkor.

Monday 6 July 2015, 6 – 8pm
Sydney Mechanics School of Arts
Urbanising the Inner Asian Steppe: Tang architectural influence on the Eastern Uighur Khaganate
In this final presentation in our lecture series, Dr Lyndsay Arden-Wong, a specialist in Eastern Uighur history and archaeology at Macquarie University, will provide new archaeological evidence to support his contention that close political ties between the Eastern Uighur Khaganate and Tang China resulted in a predominately Tang influence on Uighur architecture of this period.

Cost: $20 members, $25 non-members.
Refreshments provided. RSVP to Jillian Kennedy at: taasabookings@gmail.com.
Booking & payment in advance essential by EFT or credit card.

TAASA Member excursion to Adelaide
Saturday 11 July – Sunday 12 July 2015
A trip to Adelaide is being planned which will offer a curator led walk through of the Art Gallery of SA’s major exhibition Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices (see March 2015 TAASA Review). The viewing of a private collection and a dinner is also being planned. Travel and accommodation would be by own arrangement.
To register your interest, please contact Jillian Kennedy at: taasabookings@gmail.com.

TAASA Asian Jewellery Symposium
Saturday 5 September 2015, 9am - 1pm
COFA (now UNSW Art & Design), Paddington, Sydney

Visit to private collection of manuscripts
Thursday 6 August 2015 6.00-8.00pm
View Russell Howard’s collection of palm-leaf and paper illustrated manuscripts from Thailand and Burma. The address in south-east Melbourne will be provided on registration.
Cost $20 members, $25 non-members. Maximum of 20, priority will be given to members.
RSVP: vic.taasa@gmail.com by 29 July 2015.

TAASA IN QUEENSLAND

ENCOUNTER
Saturday 27 June 2015 2.30pm
An exhibition by 10 contemporary Japanese Printmakers, at Impress Printmakers Studio and Gallery, 134 Kedron Park Road, Wooloowin.
Join TAASA members for an informal walk through of the exhibition with the curator, Kay Watanabe. Light refreshments provided, Members $5 Non-members $10.
RSVP Mandy Ridley for details at taasa.qld@gmail.com

Full Moon viewing and Haiku poem composition
Saturday 1 August 2015 from 6.30pm
Join TAASA supporters as we gather for a Chinese meal and watch the full moon rising above the Brisbane River, in a member’s home.
Cost $15 members and $20 non-members.
RSVP to James MacKean at taasa.qld@gmail.com for details of exact location.

TAASA QLD CERAMICS INTEREST GROUP

Mystery Objects Evening
Wednesday 22 July 2015 at 7pm
Members are invited to bring pieces for examination and discussion.
RSVP to James MacKean at taasa.qld@gmail.com for details of the evening.
WHAT'S ON: JUNE – AUGUST 2015
A SELECTIVE ROUNDUP OF EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Compiled by Tina Burge

ACT

The story of Rama: Indian Miniatures from the National Museum, New Delhi
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
22 May – 23 August 2015

This exhibition tells the Ramayana, through 101 paintings which draw on a wide range of styles and periods. See pp10-11 in this issue.

Associated events include:

• 4 June at 12.45pm Melanie Eastburn, Curator, Asian Art and Dr Chaitanya Sambrani, Senior Lecturer, School of Art, ANU, introduces the exhibition.

• 14 June at 2pm the screening of Sita sings the blues, a shadow puppet comedy.

• 2 June at 12.45pm a talk on the Ramayana by Dr Richard Barz, retired lecturer from the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific.

• 9 July at 12.45pm a talk by Claudia Hyles on the role of the Monkey God.

For further information go to: www.nga.gov.au.

A BOWL OF TAIPEI NO. 4, YANG YONGLIANG AT THE CMAG

Ink Remix: Contemporary Art from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong
Canberra Museum and Gallery
3 July – 18 October 2015

A touring exhibition of more than 35 works showcasing the complex responses by contemporary artists to the long tradition of printmaking such as etching, lithography, screen printing, relief printing with many artists extending their work to create unconventional pieces with an emphasis on innovation.

For further information go to: www.mosmanartgallery.org.au/exhibitions/interchange-contemporary-printmaking-from-australia-and-thailand

Go East - Gene and Brian Sherman
Contemporary Asian Art Collection
Art Gallery of NSW & SCAF
14 May – 26 July 2015

Showcases Australian philanthropists Gene and Brian Sherman’s collection of contemporary Asian art, including artists from the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Tibet, Thailand, Vietnam and China. In the Gallery’s entrance court is a monumental installation by Indian artist Jitish Kallat. In Public notice 2 2007, he renders Mahatma Gandhi’s historic speech in 1930 after the ‘salt march’ in its entirety, each letter appearing to be made from bone, as though Kallat has exhumed these words from their historical resting place.

As part of this exhibition, a monumental installation Chinese Bible by Yang Zhichao will be on show at SCAF in Paddington.


Japanese Folds
Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney
Now showing to 21 June 2015

Presents contemporary fashion items and decorative arts centred on the Japanese practice of folding. See p19 in this issue.

Go to: https://maas.museum/

The spread of Buddhist art lecture series
Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
From 1 July to 5 August at 12pm

This series of six lectures will examine selected aspects of the enormous and artistically rich heritage of Buddhist art.

• 1 July – Jackie Menzies on The Life of the Buddha and the evolution of the Buddha image

• 8 July – Jackie Menzies on Buddhas and Bodhisattvas go east

• 15 July – Dr David Templeman on Avalokitesvara: from India to Tibet

• 22 July – Dr Mark Allon on Gandhara to Central Asia

• 29 July – Dr Ann Proctor on Buddhist art of 9th century Champa

• 5 August – Dr Charlotte Galloway on From India to Myanmar

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Barrie and Judith Heaven Collection of Indian Gond Paintings
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Now showing until 8 November 2015

The paintings of the Gond people of central India, the largest tribal group in the world, are exhibited for the first time at the AGSA. Over a millennium, Gond’s agrarian society evolved a distinctive aesthetic and religious identity in which ancient indigenous spirituality merged with more recent Hindu traditions. Gond villagers traditionally painted the walls of houses with talismanic symbols, including forest deities, sacred animals and plants, using natural pigments, adopting the use of synthetic colours on canvas in the early 1980s.

For further information go to: www.artgallery.sa.gov.au.

Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
13 June - 30 August 2015

Treasure Ships is the first exhibition in Australia to present the complex artistic and cultural interactions between Europe and Asia through international trade from the 16th to the 19th centuries. It includes 300 works of ceramics, decorative arts, furniture, metalware, paintings, prints and textiles from public and private collections in Australia, India, Portugal, Singapore and the United States. Presented in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Western Australia. See pp4 -8 in the March 2015 issue of the TAASA Review.

For further information go to: www.artgallery.sa.gov.au.
More Ink than Ocean: The art of writing in Islam
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
7 August 2015 – 27 March 2016

Presents 1000 years of Islamic calligraphy from Iran, India and Indonesia. Among the highlights is the magnificent illuminated manuscript Mathnavi of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (1641), and the work of the famous calligrapher, Muhammad Hussein Kashmiri (d.1620), on whom the Indian emperor, Akbar the Great, bestowed the title ‘The Golden Pen’. For further information go to: www.artgallery.sa.gov.au.

INTERNATIONAL

The prince and the pîr: derivation and mysticism in Iran and India
British Museum, London
11 March – 8 July 2015

In Persian-speaking Iran and India, a holy man known as a pîr or shaykh - many of whom were Sufis - often provided spiritual guidance to rulers. This display presents diverse images of Sufis between the 16th and 19th centuries from album and manuscript pages to objects used in daily life.

From Nô to Mata Hari, 2000 years of Asian theatre
Musée Guimet, Paris
15 April - 31 August 2015

Explores the epic and dramatic aspects that characterise the immense variety of Asian theatrical productions. From Indian theatre costumes to Japanese nô kimonos and masks, Peking opera dresses to Southeast Asian shadow theatre, an entire world of deities, animals and characters is brought to life.

Enigmas: The Art of Bada Shanren (1626–1705)
Freer Gallery of Art, Washington
20 June 2015 – 3 January 2016

Born a prince of the Ming imperial house, Bada Shanren remade himself as a secluded Buddhist monk and, later, as a professional painter and calligrapher. Featured in this exhibition are examples of his most daring and idiosyncratic works.

Bold and Beautiful: Rinpa in Japanese Art

This exhibition features 37 paintings, ceramics, woodblock-printed books, and lacquers by Kôrin, his brother Ogata Kenzan, and later artists who were inspired by the brilliant simplicity of Rinpa design.

28 Chinese
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
5 June – 16 August 2015

The result of more than a decade’s worth of exploration, research and collecting, this exhibition—organized by the extraordinary Rubell Collection in Miami—presents 48 artworks from 28 contemporary Chinese artists.

Please go to TAASA’s facebook page to see the latest Asian art exhibitions & events: www.facebook.com/taasa.org.

INSIDE BURMA: THE ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

22 October - 10 November 2015
Burma is changing rapidly. Archaeologist and TAASA contributor Dr Bob Hudson is the doyen of Burma guides and his longstanding annual tour is now available. As usual, extended stays are featured in medieval Mrauk U (capital of the lost ancient kingdom of Arakan) and in Bagan, rivaling Angkor Wat as Southeast Asia’s richest archaeological precinct (and seeking Burma’s second World Heritage Listing). Interesting segments in Yangon, Irrle Lake, Mandalay and private riverboat cruises down the mighty Ayeyarwady and the Kaladan are included. See Burma now before ‘progress’ changes it forever. Contact us for the full tour brochure.

Land Only cost per person twinshare $6900 ex Yangon

BURMA: WORLD HERITAGE JOURNEY

09 November - 26 November 2015
Burma’s initial entry onto the World Heritage List was in June 2014 with the inclusion of Pyu Ancient Cities. This site includes the remains of the brick, walled and moated cities of Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra who practised intensive agriculture in vast irrigated landscapes. They reflect the Pyu Kingdoms that flourished for over 1000 years between 200 BC and AD 900. Our schedule includes these three cities and their environs, Yangon and other interesting out-of-the-way places in the river valleys of the Ayeyarwady and Chindwin. Designed primarily for those who have previously visited, the journey would suit first-time Burma travellers with an added extension. Archaeologist and TAASA contributor Dr Bob Hudson, adviser to UNESCO and the Myanmar Ministry of Culture for the successful World Heritage Bid, is our program leader. Contact us for the full tour brochure.

Land Only cost per person twinshare $5950 ex Yangon

To receive a brochure or for further information contact Ray Boniface

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