

June 2025

# Treasure House News

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## President's Message

To my Fellow Docents:

The year began with many of us wondering how we could possibly tour a one-man show—especially one that involved gunpowder! But thanks to everyone's creativity, collaboration, and willingness to step outside their comfort zones, the tours were a great success and well received by our visitors. Thank you to all the docents who stepped up to help fill the calendar over these last few months as we conclude another touring year. Recently, we were treated to a fascinating tour of the *Realms of the Dharma: Buddhist Art Across Asia* exhibit at LACMA, led by curator Steven Little. It was a truly enriching experience and well worth the trip.

Thanks to the Events Committee, we are now looking forward to our final gathering of the year, once again at the beautiful San Gabriel Country Club. I've also been reminded that this marks the 50th anniversary of our docent organization—a wonderful milestone and the perfect occasion to celebrate our Golden Anniversary!

As this is my final President's Message, I want to say what a pleasure and honor it has been to serve. I have every confidence that Yvonne will be a fantastic president, especially with your continued support.

Wishing you all a joyful and relaxing summer, whatever your plans may be!

Annette

## IMPORTANT DATES

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### June 3

Docent Council Board Meeting  
(Board members only)

### June 7 at 3:30 pm

USC PAM, Conversation@PAM: The  
Artist's Materials: Cai Guo-Qiang

### June 10

Docent Council Annual  
Awards Luncheon

### June 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Huntington Library Chinese Garden  
Tour by Ralph Thlick

### August 19

Field trip to Bowers Museum for  
"World of the Terracotta Warriors:  
New Archaeological Discoveries in  
Shaanxi in the 20th Century."

# Gallery Spotlight

## CAI GUO QIANG ON WORKING WITH MATERIALS

By Annette Drey



The exhibition of the works of Cai Guo Qiang is coming to a close. One of the most striking features of his work is the unusual materials he chooses to create his art. The following interview is taken from the magazine ART 21 (Nov. 2011) in which Cai comments on the nature of the materials.

### ART21: How does one work with chaos as a material for art—for example, fireworks and gunpowder?

**CAI:** With time, you start to get to know the material. You actually develop a way to know how it will behave, to a certain degree. First, you have to accept that it's uncontrollable and that there is an accidental element. You have to accept it and then work with it. I've worked with the material for so long that I've gained an understanding of how it works. Sometimes I can control it better than I realize, better than I expect. Then at that point it becomes stagnant. So, it's very important that there is always this uncontrollability that's a part of the work. My way of doing it is just to flow with the material, go with the material, and let it take me where it wants me to go. So, I continuously want it to give me problems and obstacles to overcome.

### ART21: What sort of obstacles?

**CAI:** If you follow that train of thought, it might get a little boring; so, let me use another example. This whole process of making drawings is very much like lovemaking. From the very beginning, of laying down the paper, it's like laying down the sheets on the bed. First you lay down the sheets, and you have this idea of what you might want to do today, in form or in action—what you would like to accomplish. Then you bring in the materials, you lay them out, apply pressure here, but not too much pressure here. You know what kind of effect it might have. How much attention you should give to a certain area, how much material you should use, and how you should play off another balance are all things that you have to consider throughout.

It's a very long process. You keep going at it and always working towards a final goal. But it's a very prolonged process, and all the time there's this feeling that you just want it to explode, to finish. There's continuous control of pressure: you want to set this on fire, to explode it, but yet you are afraid that maybe it's too early, maybe it's not the best time yet, maybe you need to work on it a little more.

For the complete article click [here](#)

*Gunpowder magic*

*Knowing the material*

*Physical artwork*

## Docent Spotlight

### Jeanne Heilman

By Annette Drey



My father graduated from the Colorado School of Mines and spent much of his early career in South America. He returned to Colorado to marry my mother, and soon after, they moved to Peru, where my brother and I were born in Lima. When I was seven, our family returned to Colorado and bought a farm—despite having little idea of what farming actually entailed. The property came with a variety of animals, including a cow. Most of the animals were quickly sold, but the cow stayed on and became our family pet.

As I grew older, like many teenage girls, I dreamed of having a horse. Living in Littleton, Colorado—a hub for Junior Rodeos—I naturally gravitated toward barrel racing and even managed to win a few events.

Later, I moved to California, where I met my husband. I had studied art at Colorado State University, but once in California, I wasn't quite sure how to apply my creative interests. I decided to pursue a degree in interior design at Woodbury College. Over time, however, I came to realize that art alone wasn't enough—sales was more important. This led me back to school at Otis College of Art and Design, where I focused on printmaking, particularly etching, which I continue to love.

More recently, I founded "Paws a Moment Cards," a greeting card company featuring dogs dressed in whimsical outfits and staged in imaginative sets. I continue to create, market, and sell these cards.

I consider myself very fortunate. I've had the opportunity to travel extensively, and for the past 36 years, I've found fulfillment in serving as a docent at the USC PAM.

# Asian Highlights

## Indian Hindu Snake Deities

By Karen Komai Margolis



Snakes (Nagas) are revered in India as divine beings. They are symbols of fertility, power and protection, and represent rebirth, death, and mortality. In Hinduism it is considered a sin to kill a snake, resulting in bad luck. Snakes in Hindu mythology are depicted as gods, demigods, and even demons.

The three Hindu creator gods are **Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu**. Lord Shiva wears *Vasuki*, the divine serpent as a decoration around his neck. Vasuki, a snake that consumed the poison, “halala,” was tied to the Mandara Mountain as a rope for churning. In spite of consuming poison, he didn’t complain, which inspired Lord Shiva to wear Vasuki around his neck.

Lord Vishnu rests on *Sheshnaag*, (Shesha, Adishesha) the King of the Naga (snake) race. According to the Puranas (a collection of sacred texts), Sheshnaga holds all the planets of the universe on his huge hoods. When Adishesha uncoils, creation starts to take place, and time starts to move forward. When it returns to its coiled position, time stops and the universe ceases to exist.

**Karkotaka** is revered for bestowing prosperity and good health upon devotees. There is a temple in Bhimtal, Uttarakhand, dedicated to Nag Karkotaka Maharaja, taking residence there to protect the city from evil energies.

**Takshaka**, a descendant of Rama, belonged to the Ikshvaku dynasty. One can find this deity mentioned in Mahabharata as well as Bhagavata Purana. Takshaka, regarded as a friend of Lord Indra, inspired an idol of Takshaka, at Tarakeshwar temple in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh.



**Kaliya**, a venomous Naga lived in the Yamuna River in Vrindavan, according to mythology, with water around always boiling and bubbling with poison. In the Bhagavata Purana, Kaliya is subdued by Krishna after trying to harass the people of Gokulam. When Kaliya asked for pardon, Krishna asked Kaliya to leave the river, and Kaliya was banished to Ramnik Deep (Fiji).

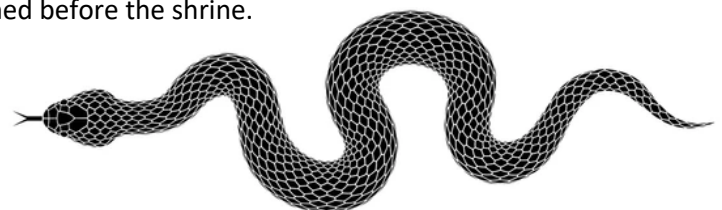


**Manasa** is the Hindu goddess of snakes. Lord Brahma made her the presiding deity of snakes and reptiles. Mainly worshiped in northern India for preventing and protecting people from snakebites, she is also known for fertility and prosperity. She is the sister of Sheshnag and Vasuki, and the daughter of Shiva

**Gullika**, considered the guardian of medicinal herbs and plants, and related to healing and the knowledge of antidotes, decorates Garuda.

The worship of Nagas is especially prominent during **Nag Panchami**, which is celebrated on July 29, 2025. Observed in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions, this festival honors snakes with the belief that they are guardians of the earth and protectors of the underworld. Carved representations of nagas or stones are used as substitutes. To these, human food and flowers are offered, and lights are burned before the shrine.

*Reverence for snakes,  
Hindu sacred animal,  
Good luck comes with change.*





# Touring Topics

*By Fran De La Rosa*

## And now, the end is near ...

It's been quite a year at PAM. For some, the year started with uncertainty and self-doubt about a new artist, direction, and learning curve. Valentina and Lonnie were understanding, offered guidance, and trusted us to meet the moment. Our colleagues were generous with their time and provided support in more ways than we thought possible. We persevered and did, indeed, rise to the challenge. We shared and learned from each other, resulting in a stronger docent core.

We can reflect on our accomplishments as we wind down the touring year and prepare to enjoy our summer escapades. As John Dewey, philosopher and educational reformer, said, "We do not learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience." The reflection process asks us to look critically at our methods, practices, and actions and decide if changes should be made to improve. We may discover areas that need work and explore new directions, or find new, untested ideas to try in the next touring season.

The reflection process will undoubtedly help us in the new year. As you have heard, next year will be a new adventure in touring. Along with new visitors, we will have a new theme, new objects, and, hopefully, new docents! A new learning curve will ask us to test how we deal with uncertainty and self-doubt. Valentina and Lonnie will be there to offer guidance and direction. And, of course, we will once again have each other to lean on.

Finally, Lonnie has shared a few comments received by visitors over the year. Teachers noted that communication with students was excellent, and they appreciated that we validated and affirmed the students' ideas and thoughts. Adult visitors commented that the docents were knowledgeable, interesting, and wonderful! After a recent tour, a teacher emailed Lonnie this message: **"Please let the docents and art teachers in both groups know they were so engaging!"**

So, as the year ends and we prepare for new experiences, I think I can safely say that no matter the challenge, we will definitely do it "our way."

# May Touring Heroes

Evelyn Xu  
Fran DeLaRosa  
Randy Quinton  
Jane Hirschowitz  
Yvonne Lee  
John O'Mally  
Annette Drey  
Shari Litsey  
Chuck Woo  
Lorenzo Vargas  
Eiko Kubota  
Ana Soulliver  
Kathy Wales  
Daniel Grosz  
Candice Siegel  
Melissa Patton  
Nancy Lan  
Lisa Koizumi

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## Please take a minute to take our Treasure House News Year-End Survey

### How Did We Do?

This year, the Newsletter Committee's mission was to provide a publication for the Docent Council that would be informative, interesting, and useful to all members. To that end, we would like to know if we, in your opinion, met our goals. The survey (link below) should take a few minutes; you may leave comments if you'd like. We value your opinions and will use your comments to improve the THN as we move forward in the coming year.

<https://forms.gle/5RpTrDsBb3mLKhwF6>

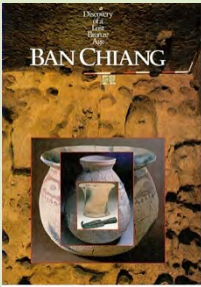
# Library Corner

By Fran De La Rosa (AI)

## Ban Chiang: Discovery of a Lost Bronze Age

Joyce C White

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*Ban Chiang: Discovery of a Lost Bronze Age* by Joyce C. White explores an important archaeological site in northeastern Thailand. The book talks about the discoveries made at Ban Chiang, which help us understand the ancient societies that lived there during the Bronze Age.

White presents her research clearly and makes complex ideas easy to understand. She describes the artifacts found at the site, such as pottery, tools, and burial items. These objects show how advanced the technology was and how society was organized at that time. The author also connects these findings to a larger historical picture, showing how Ban Chiang relates to other cultures.

The book includes many pictures, which help readers visualize the history of Ban Chiang. These images make the past feel more alive. White offers vivid descriptions that help us imagine daily life over 5,000 years ago.

She emphasizes that Ban Chiang is important for understanding trade and cultural exchanges in the Bronze Age. White encourages readers to see the value of Southeast Asia in the history of the world, rather than focusing only on Western perspectives.

In summary, *Ban Chiang: Discovery of a Lost Bronze Age* provides valuable insights into archaeology and history. Joyce C. White successfully shares the story of a lost civilization, inviting readers to learn more. This book is a great choice for anyone interested in archaeology, Southeast Asian history, or how ancient cultures developed.

# Study Group Activity

## STUDY GROUP 1

By Karen Margolis

Study Group 1 continued with reports on India. The Indian themes discussed included the following: the architecture of an early Hindu and Buddhist temple, Indian cotton, the ancient history of the Indus Valley, the Hindu Caste System, Indian goddesses, and the cuisine of northeast India. The novel "A Suitable Boy," by Vikram Seth, set in the 1950's, tells the story of four elite Indian families over an 18 month period. An arranged marriage is customary within one's class and religion predominates in Indian culture. Muslim/Hindu conflicts are revealed. Afterward members gathered together for an enjoyable lunch.

## STUDY GROUP 2

By Annette Drey

On June 2, 2025, 10:00 am, Chuck Woo from Study Group 2 will give a presentation highlighting the PAM's "Founders Interviews" on David Kamansky, who was interviewed by Heather Fraizer on October 10, 1999. Mr. Kamansky was the Pacific Asia Museum (now known as USC PAM), director from 1974 to 2003. During his 23 years as director, he was instrumental in transforming an eighty-year old red colored building which required a lot of work to a 1999 up-to-date museum. This led to attracting donors, when there were only a few at the museum's beginning to its 14,000 plus objects by the end of 1999. This presentation will include information about the donors and their donated gifts (with photos), many of which you may have seen on display in the various galleries plus more.

Here is the link to this zoom presentation

Time: June 6, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

[Join meeting here](#)

Zoom will be opened at 9:50 a.m.

Program begin at 10:00 a.m.

# Around Town

By Maureen Nyhan

## USC-PAM Docent Tour at the Huntington Chinese Garden!

Friday June 13th | 9:30 AM

Our fellow docent, Ralph Thlick, has generously offered to give docents a tour of the Chinese Garden at the Huntington. Meet at the Admission entrance to the Huntington Library and Garden; free for docents

Sign up by sending an email to [thlick@verizon.net](mailto:thlick@verizon.net)  
Sign up deadline is Monday, June 9th

## Chinese Medicinal Garden Open House at the Huntington Library

Informal drop-in talks take place from 10 AM – 12:00 PM and then 1 – 3 PM

Chinese medicine is rooted in one of the world's oldest systems of plant knowledge. This new garden offers essential insights into humanity's changing relationship with nature. During this open house event, experts will give informal tours of the various plant beds and answer questions from guests. These tours will be offered monthly, check the Huntington website for exact dates.

## Los Angeles County Museum of Art

REALMS OF THE DHARMA: BUDDHIST ART ACROSS ASIA

May 11, 2025 - Jul 12, 2026 at Resnick Pavilion

This new exhibition is curated by Stephen Little: Incorporating 180 masterpieces of pan-Asian Buddhist art, the exhibition explores key concepts of Buddhist thought and practice through the prism of rare and extraordinarily beautiful Buddhist sculptures, paintings, and ritual objects drawn from LACMA's permanent collection, with several significant loans from private collections.

Free general admission for all visitors on the second Tuesday of each month, and free general admission to L.A. County residents Monday through Friday after 3 pm (closed on Wednesday).

## Japan Foundation Los Angeles

THROUGH THE FRAGRANT SCREEN: GENJI'S WORLD IN SCENT AND SPACE

Lecture: Wednesday June 4th, 2025 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Free, Click Here to register: [RSVP REQUIRED](#)

In classical Japanese literature, the term oikaze (literally "tail wind") refers to the faint scent one encounters when passing by, or the fragrance wafting from a room. It captures the phenomenon of an aroma being carried by the flow of air to one's sense of smell. Though once common, this term has fallen into disuse in modern Japan. Drawing inspiration from this term, this lecture focuses on Chapter 25, titled "Fireflies" from the [Tale of Genji](#).

A scented spatial artwork by the artist, embodying the concept of oikaze, will be exhibited at [Ether: Aromatic Mythologies](#) (May 30 — Sept 7, 2025) at Craft Contemporary. Visitors to this lecture may find their experience of the installation enriched by the lecture.



## Japan House Los Angeles - Ovation Hollywood

Saturday June 7, 2025 | 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM - Doors open at 10:30 AM

Step into a world where heritage meets innovation in a dynamic talk by Taku Kato, Deputy Head of Content Strategy at NHK, acclaimed drama director, and the creative force behind the "[NEO-JAPONISM | SAMURAI AND BEYOND](#)" exhibition. Celebrating 100 years of broadcasting in Japan, this exclusive event spotlights NHK's groundbreaking approach to cultural storytelling—most powerfully seen in its beloved Taiga dramas, which bring Japan's rich history to life with cinematic flair. (Exhibit is ongoing on Level 2)



## Online



### Online Lecture: Japan and Kami (Japan Foundation)

THIRD IN THE SERIES: SHINTO AND JAPANESE LIFE -  
AS SEEN AT MEIJI JINGU SHINTO SHRINE, TOKYO

Wednesday June 18, 2025 | 7:00 - 8:15 PM

Free, Click Here to Register: [RSVP REQUIRED](#)

In this lecture, Moriyasu Ito, who has served as a Shinto priest at Meiji Shrine, an institution widely known to Americans, will introduce Meiji Shrine while discussing what a shrine is, what kami is within Shinto, the relationship between Japanese life and Shinto, and Shinto from an international perspective. He will contextualize this information based on his global experiences.



### Korean Sketch Artist Kim Jung Gi

Kim Jung Gi - 1975–2022 - was a South Korean illustrator, cartoonist, and manhwa artist. He was famous for his large, highly detailed illustrations, often drawn only from memory.



## DOCENTS ON THE GO

*By Eiko Kubota*

On May 20th, 19 docents visited LACMA for a tour of Realms of the Dharma: Buddhist Art Across Asia led by curator Stephen Little.

This exhibition examines key concepts of Buddhist thought and practice through sculptures, paintings, textiles, and ritual objects. Incorporating 180 beautiful works of pan-Asian Buddhist art, Realms of the Dharma begins with the religion's origins in India in the 5th century BCE and follows its spread through Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, and East Asia.

If you missed the tour, you still have a chance to visit the exhibition. It will run until July 12, 2026.

