

PRESS RELEASE

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JOURNEY TO DUNHUANG: BUDDHIST ART OF THE SILK ROAD CAVES OPENS AT ASIAN ART MUSEUM MAR 5

See the wonders of China's Dunhuang Caves—a World Heritage site—through the eyes of photojournalists James and Lucy Lo

March 5–June 12, 2016

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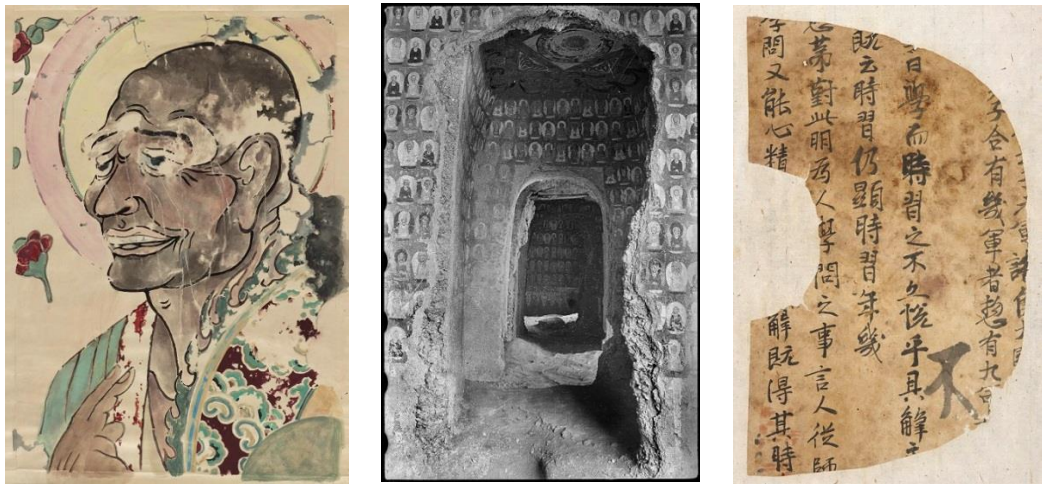
SEATTLE, WA - The Asian Art Museum presents *Journey to Dunhuang: Buddhist Art of the Silk Road Caves*, an exhibition featuring photographs, ancient manuscripts, and artist renderings of the sacred temple caves of Dunhuang. Selected from the collection of photojournalists James and Lucy Lo, the works are a treasure trove of Buddhist art that reveal a long-lost world.

Located at China's western frontier, the ancient city of Dunhuang lay at the convergence of the northern and southern routes of the Silk Road—a crossroads of the civilizations of East Asia, Central Asia, and the Western world. From the late fourth century until the decline of the Silk Road in the fourteenth century, Dunhuang was a bustling desert oasis—a center of trade and pilgrimage. The original “melting pot” of China, it was a gateway for new forms of art, culture, and religions. The nearly 500 caves found there tell an almost seamless chronological tale of their history, preserving the stories of religious devotion throughout various dynasties.

During the height of World War II in 1943, James C. M. Lo (1902–1987) and his wife, Lucy, arrived at Dunhuang by horse and donkey-drawn cart. Their ambitious 18-month project produced over 2500 black-and-white images that record the caves as they were in the mid-20th century, capturing many views of the interiors and exteriors that no longer exist today. They also collected fragments of ancient texts and drawings, which now form the largest group of Dunhuang manuscripts in the U.S.

After moving to Taiwan in the 1950s, the couple invited a group of young artists to produce life-sized copies of the cave murals. These stunning renderings were painted freehand, or by projecting the Los' black-and-white slides onto walls where paper was pasted. Color was then added based on the Los' memories and notes.

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These remarkable works are testament to James and Lucy Lo's mission to preserve and transmit the visual splendors of this ancient site. "It's such an intimate experience to see Dunhuang through their eyes; you can see the love they had for the site—and for each other," says FOONG Ping, SAM's Foster Foundation Curator of Chinese Art. "It opens a window onto a part of the world that's difficult to get to, and in some cases, already gone. Put it this way—we're making it so you don't have to get there by donkey."

The exhibition is organized in cooperation with the Princeton University Art Museum and the P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art.

For the [March 16 edition](#) of SAM's Conversations with Curators, FOONG Ping will speak about the exhibition in relation to art, culture and religion on the Silk Road. This series is open only to SAM members.

Also in March, the Gardner Center for Asian Art and Ideas presents two events related to the exhibition. On March 5, the opening day of *Journey to Dunhuang*, Mimi Gardner Gates (director emerita, Seattle Art Museum) presents *Buddhist Caves at Dunhuang: Art, Spirituality and Cultural Heritage*. The talk is part of the winter edition of the highly popular [Saturday University](#) series (Jan 30-Apr 9, 2016). While series tickets are no longer available, individual lecture tickets can be purchased at the door as available (\$10, SAM members \$5).

Also of interest is [Asia Talks: Buddhist Art Inspiration](#) on March 17. This panel discussion features three thinkers who have adapted Buddhist concepts in their work: Charles Johnson, noted scholar and author of the National Book Award-winning *Middle Passage*; artist, writer, and [Friend of Dunhuang](#) David Berger; and Dr. Ron Yeh, a physician who trains other physicians in using mindfulness for better patient outcomes.

Image credits: *Celestial musician with flute*, 1958-63, Chinese, Modern period, 1912-present, copy after wall painting, Western Wei dynasty, 535-557, Place made: Mogao Caves, Dunhuang, Gansu province, China, ink and color on paper, 27 1/4 x 19 1/8 in., James C. Lo Workshop, Gift of Lucy L. Lo, 2012-133. *Parinirvana, Mogao Cave 158*, Middle Tang dynasty (781-848), Photograph taken in 1943-44, The Lo Archive. *Kasyapa*, 1958-63, Chinese, Modern period, 1912-present, copy after wall painting, High Tang Dynasty, 704-781, Place made: Mogao Caves, Dunhuang, Gansu province, China, ink and color on paper, 30 7/8 x 21 3/4 in., James C. Lo Workshop, Gift of Lucy Lo, 2012-136. *View North From Mogao Cave 268 Into Adjacent Caves*, Photograph taken in 1943-44, The Lo Archive. *Examination paper, reused for the upper part of a funeral shoe*, 618-907, ink on paper, 15 3/4 x 12 3/16 in., Princeton East Asian Library Dunhuang and Turfan Collection, manuscript # PEALD 7p. © The East Asian Library, Princeton University.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.