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***Images Available Upon Request**

Cincinnati Art Museum announces the opening of the Anu and Shekhar Mitra Gallery *Reinstallation and reinterpretation of South Asian collections on view Dec. 14*

CINCINNATI — December 14, 2022 — The Cincinnati Art Museum is pleased to announce the opening of the Anu and Shekhar Mitra Gallery featuring the reinstallation of the museum’s South Asia collections thanks to a generous gift from Cincinnati residents and longtime museum supporters, Anu and Shekhar Mitra. It opens Dec. 14.

The reinstallation project creates a unique opportunity to explore the devotional and courtly arts from greater South Asia through stone and metal sculpture, textiles, paintings and decorative arts. A large wall-hung marble inlay artwork has been commissioned from the Lahore-based Hamra Abbas to explore how contemporary artists are creating works that critically engage with the region’s religious, cultural, political and colonial histories.

Alongside the Mitra gallery, the visitor-favorite Damascus Room will re-open to the public and incorporate new ways of thinking about collecting art from the Islamic world in museum settings.

When the Mitras first considered how to participate in the museum’s [A New View campaign](#)—a comprehensive \$65 million fundraising effort to support its strategic plan—a special opportunity presented itself: the reinstallation and reinterpretation of the South Asian collections. At the time of the gift, the couple believed that the gallery could delight visitors and share the exceptional story of this region, where a confluence of religions and cultures, spanning centuries, demonstrates rich contributions to art.

“The South Asian gallery presents the confluence of cultures that is South Asia, and which has given rise to rich artistic traditions that traverse centuries, religious lines and cultural beliefs. Our belief is that the Mitra gallery can weave this story in and through its displays so that compassion and understanding become a central unifying theme,” explains Anu Mitra. “For those of us who have lived in or visited India, one immediately knows that the region is composed of multiple ideas, complexities and paradoxes, all coexisting. The gallery creates a conversation between the past, present and future of South Asia.”

Funds raised through the [A New View campaign](#) support three priority investment areas for the museum: enhancing visitor experience and scholarship, expanding community impact and outreach and growing organizational capacity. The Mitras’ generous gift, that allowed the museum to reinstall and reinterpret these galleries, supports the enhancing-visitor-experience-and-scholarship objective.

Overview

South Asia (often defined as modern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka) is home to numerous languages, religions and cultural traditions. This plurality has produced—and continues to produce—an incredible array of art, architecture, literature, music and performing arts. While many of the objects on view at the museum relate to the geographical area encompassed by present-day India, most were made before the modern formation of that country.

The centuries of artistic expression across South Asia represented in the Mitra gallery speak to a shared cultural world and the distinct creative practices of individual places. Many of the exhibited objects played a role in religious devotion, while others were created by and for royal courts and other elite groups. There is seldom a clear

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distinction between art made for spiritual or secular life—many objects convey religious meaning inseparably from their significance in political and social life.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Special exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free.

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