

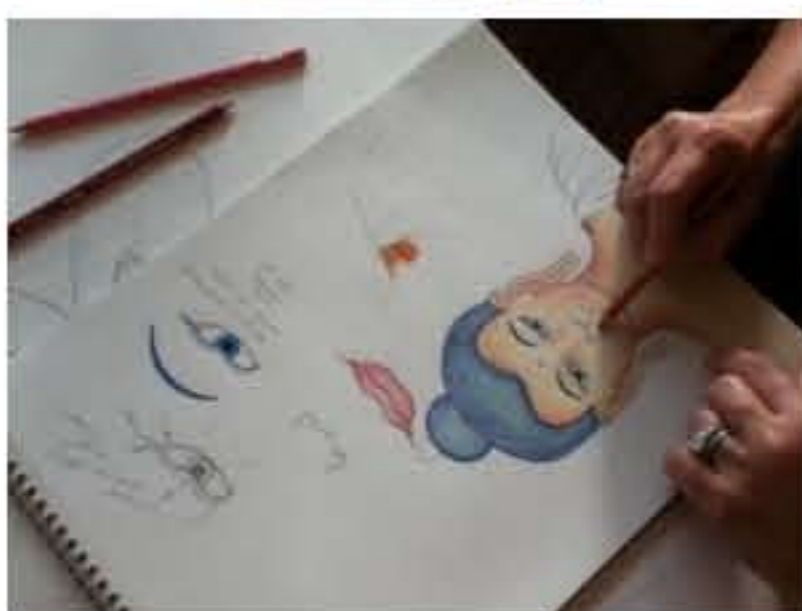
October 2013 Thangka-Making Workshop with Carmen Mensink

Posted on November 13, 2013 by Laura Sloan

Over two weekends this October visitors not only had a chance to view Tibetan paintings, called thangkas, in the Rubin Museum galleries, they also were able to create their own thangkas during **The Buddha of Ultimate Healing: A Thangka-Making Workshop with Carmen Mensink**. This Adult Workshop, part of the Rubin Museum's ongoing Adult Education classes, provided participants with a unique opportunity to draw and paint the Medicine Buddha while focusing on the healing power of this medicinal deity.

The Medicine Buddha is believed to have medicinal powers. His deep blue hue, the color of lapis lazuli, symbolizes purity and has a healing effect during visualization practices.

Guided by their facilitator, Carmen Mensink, participants focused on drawing the Medicine Buddha during the first weekend, October 11-13:



The second weekend, October 18-20, was devoted to painting the Buddha. In Carmen's capable hands, the group created some amazing pieces:



Along with the drawing and painting activities in the Rubin Museum's Education Center, participants explored the galleries to learn from the thangkas on display:



These are some of Carmen's reflections during her time with the participants and in the galleries:

"For me, the best thing of teaching at the Rubin Museum of Art (besides it being the best museum on Himalayan art!) is that I can bring my painting students who are studying Tibetan thangkas into the galleries."

"During my workshops, I give a lot of explanations on the iconography in Tibetan art and the meaning of even the smallest details, because nothing in a thangka is there without a reason. It is so much more than 'just painting a nice image' and that is very important to bring across in my teachings. When I take my students to the galleries to look at amazing antique thangkas, I point out details, painting techniques, and styles to them, together with explanations of their ritual functions. This way, what appeared to be merely a 'nice image', really comes alive for my students, resulting in a beautiful connection between the student, the art, and the long lineage of thangka painters."

"Through their work, they show me the incredible dedication and joy they had in creating this art. The purpose of Buddhist art is to inspire people along their spiritual path, and these antique masterworks have certainly done so for many centuries up until now."

According to Tibetan Buddhists, drawing a Buddha is a meditation in itself and creates inner peace and joy. At the end of Carmen's workshop, the participants left feeling inspired and refreshed!

To learn more about the Rubin Museum's Art Making Workshops or other Adult Education programs, please visit our Adult Education page on the [website](#).

The workshop was a great introduction to the Medicine Buddha. For those unable to participate, you will be able to learn more about this deity and other Tibetan medicinal practices during our upcoming exhibition *Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine* opening March 15, 2014. For more information please visit the exhibition page on our [website](#).

Carmen Mensink studied twelve years with master thangka painter Andy Weber and teaches the beautiful, meditative, and ancient craft of thangka painting in countries across the world with joy and passion. She also gives workshops and lectures at Buddhist centers and art schools. Her work has been exhibited in The Netherlands and Australia. She is currently based in Amsterdam. For more information, visit her website www.tibetanthangkapainting.com



About Laura Sloan

Laura Sloan is the Docent and Education Programs Coordinator at the Rubin Museum of Art. Along with recruiting and training new Docents she ensures the current Docents have everything they need to lead incredible tours at the museum including ongoing trainings and professional developments. She started her journey at the Rubin as an intern in 2011 and in 2013 Laura completed her M.A. in Museum Studies from City College.

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