SACRED SPLENDOR

A CELEBRATION OF NEPAL'S TRADITIONAL ARTS

SURESH LAWAT TULADHAR • *NAMASANGATI MANJUSHREE*

CATALOGUE

Curatorial Note

What could be more profound than a life without suffering? The splendid images of deities carved and painted by the master artists and artisans provide us with spiritual sustenance and guide us to an eternal transformation to a life without delusion."

Nestled between the majestic Himalayas and the fertile plains of the Indian subcontinent, the Kathmandu Valley has for centuries been a crucible of culture, a place where trade routes, pilgrimage paths, and intellectual movements intersect. This amalgamation gave birth to one of the world's most sophisticated and enduring artistic traditions. Consequently, the depictions of deities crafted and venerated in the Kathmandu Valley acted as a nurturing force for Buddhism and Hinduism, allowing them to thrive together peacefully for over a thousand years, thereby fostering harmony and tolerance.

This exhibition illuminates the sacred conversation. The pantheon of Hindu deities, the fierce protector Bhairava, and the benevolent Ganesha stand alongside the tranquil wisdom of Buddhist figures like Prajnaparamita, Avalokiteshvara, and Vasundhara, sharing a visual language, a repertoire of gestures (mudras) and postures that helps in understanding the cause of suffering and guides to enlightenment. The artistic practices of the Kathmandu Valley are not mere remnants of the past. Our artisans and artists excel in their mediums: paintings, metal, stone, and wood carvings. They represent a vibrant tradition, upheld by the daily rituals and yearly celebrations that breathe life into the valley's communities. The artisans who forge a bronze figure today do so with the same commitment and respect for ancient texts as their forebears did hundreds of years ago. The goddess is not simply a statue; she embodies a dynamic presence, called upon, adorned, and venerated.

This exhibition shines a light on the sacred conversation. Each item, whether it be a gilded bronze figure, a vibrant paubha artwork, or a delicately carved wooden beam, emerges from a rigorous blend of spiritual and artistic dedication, with its uninterrupted continuity. Sacred Splendor invites you to look beyond the surface and see the deep spiritual currents that have shaped these arts. It is an invitation to appreciate not only the flawless craftsmanship, rich iconography, curves and colors. But also to acquire knowledge about how and why these images were introduced This is more than an exhibition of objects; it is a rare opportunity to witness the soul of a civilization that continues to create beauty as a pathway to the divine. Thus these artworks are a manifestation of the sacred splendor of the Kathmandu valley. I am proud to share that some of the living legends or master artists are represented in this exhibition

Visual Artist/Art Curator
Pradip Shakya
provfoto@gmail.com

Ganesha
Amir Shakya

Champak Wood (Chaap)

The four handed wooden Ganesha sculpture is made by the young but very popular artist from Bungamati, Lalitpur, with fifteen years of experience. In Hindu tradition, Ganapati (also known as Ganesha) is one of the most beloved and widely worshiped deities. He is revered as the Lord of Beginnings, the Remover of Obstacles, and the Master of Wisdom and Learning. His distinctive elephant head with one broken tusk and pot-bellied form are rich in symbolic meaning. His four hands wield different symbolic attributes : the axe represents detachment from attachment and the destruction of obstacles and negative tendencies. The radish/ rope symbolizes nourishment, the uprooting of obstacles while the rope to captures, binds obstacles, and helps to draw devotees closer to the truth. The modak/ laddu represents the sweetness of spiritual wisdom and the rewards of a life lived well. The rosary signifies devotion and the continuous remembrance of the divine through the repetition of mantras. The broken tusk is used as a pen, representing knowledge, sacrifice, and his role as the patron of literature.

In many Buddhist traditions, Ganapati is considered an emanation of Avalokiteshvara (the Bodhisattva of Compassion). This elevates him from a worldly deity to a wisdom deity worthy of refuge and reliance. The four-armed Ganapati became popular in Sri Lanka during 11th–12th century CE, largely due to cultural interaction with South India. In Tibet, various lineages of Ganapati practice were introduced by masters like Atisha and Pandit Gayadhara during 10th century CE.

Artist Name: Amir Shakya | Artwork Name: Ganesh | Medium: Wood carving (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 15 × 23 in

Dipankara Buddha
Niran Lawat Tuladhar

Champak Wood (Chaap)

Dipankar is the first of 35 Buddhas in the Dharma-kaya form. He is revered as the Buddha of the past who lived eons before Shakyamuni Buddha. Dīpaṅkara Buddha, also spelled Dipankara, translates as "lamp bearer" or "light of the lamp that guides to the path of enlightenment. The central story involving Dīpaṅkara is a jātaka tale where Shakyamuni, in a previous life as the ascetic Sumati or Megha, encounters Dīpaṅkara. Sumati lays his long hair across a puddle so the Buddha can walk without soiling his feet. Moved by this act, Dīpaṅkara prophesies that Sumati will one day become a Buddha named Shakyamuni. Dīpaṅkara is generally depicted with the standard lakṣaṇa of a Buddha ushniṣa, curly hair, and long earlobes, with his left hand in varada mudra and his right hand in avaya mudra. This is a popular form of the Samyek Buddha in Newar Buddhism. The festival dedicated to Samyek Buddhas is celebrated as the Samyek Festival in Patan every five years.

Artist Name: Niran Lawat Tuladhar | Artwork Name: Dipankara Buddha | Medium: Champak wood (Chaap) | Size: 24 × 10 in

Shakyamuni Buddha
Ujaya Bajracharya

Gouache on Cutton Vanvas

Ujay Bajracharya was born as a samgha member of Mayūrvarṇa Mahāvihāra, Bhinchhe Baha:, Lalitpur. He is a traditional Nepalese Paubhā artist and the Paubha Faculty Coordinator at Aksheswar Traditional Buddhist Art College. He has exhibited his Paubhā in two solo shows and has participated in over three-dozen national and international exhibitions in India, China, Bhutan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Japan and United States of America. He received the "Best Artist of the Year-2017" award from the Honorable President of Nepal, Bidhya Devi Bhandari and has also won various national awards. He has presented lectures about Paubhā at several universities and institutions of Nepal, India and United States of America. His articles about Paubhā have also appeared in major publications in Nepal and China. He is the author of his book entitled "Paubha : Where the Divinities Reside". He is appointed as an assembly member of Nepal Academy of Fine Art.

Artist Name: Ujaya Bajracharya
| Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha
| Medium: Gouache on cotton canvas
| Size: 35.5 × 47 in

Siddhartha Janma (Nativity of Buddha)
Chandra Shyam Dongol

Stone

Historical records differ on the birth date of the Shakyamuni Buddha. Indian historians record that he was born in 563 BC. In the same way, China, Burma, and Sri Lanka record different dates. However, the most accepted one is the Sri Lankan date, which is 623 BC. According to the Shyambhu Puran, Sweketaketu Bodhisattva requested Mayadevi to be the mother of Shakyamuni Buddha, and with his permission, he entered the garva, or womb, of Mayadevi as a white elephant. Mayadevi gave birth to Siddhartha while travelling from Kapilvastu to Devdaha in a beautiful garden used by both countries at that time. Lalitabistar and other Buddha Jataka texts beautifully describe the birth of Lord Buddha. During the process of birth, Mayadevi holds a branch of a Sal tree and gives birth to Shakyamuni Buddha. The Nativity Scene of Buddha is also known as the Salabhanjika of Mayadevi. It is also said that while she was giving birth, gods and sages visited her from heaven with holy water. The Nativity scene typically depicts the moment the baby Buddha walks right after his birth on his bare feet and how the lotus blooms on his every step.

Artist Name: Chandra Shyam Dongol | Artwork Name: Siddhartha Janma (Nativity of Buddha) | Medium: Black basalt stone, high and low relief | Size: 19 in height

Stupa

Rajendra Shakya

Copper, gold leaf and metal embellishments

A stupa is a dome-shaped structure, sometimes simple, sometimes grand, that is built to hold relics of the Buddha, of great monks, or holy texts, or to mark a sacred spot.

After the Buddha passed away, his remains were divided and enshrined in eight stupas. Later, stupas were built to mark important places in his life, where he was born, where he awakened, where he taught and where he died. Over time, anyone could build a stupa to hold relics or scriptures, or simply to represent the Buddha's presence. The dome represents the Buddha's body or the cosmos and the spire on top represents the path to enlightenment. The structures of these stupas are influenced by the white stupa located in Beijing, China built under Kublai Khan in 13 century CE designed by the Nepali Artist and Architect Arniko.

Artist Name: Rajendra Shakya

| Artwork: Stupa I | Medium: Copper, Gold & Metal Embellishment | Size: 12 in height |
Artwork Name: Stupa II | Medium: Copper, Gold & Metal Embellishment | Size: 9 in height
Artwork Name: Stupa III | Medium: Copper, Gold & Metal Embellishment | Size: 8 in height
Artwork Name: Stupa IV | Medium: Copper, Gold & Metal Embellishment | Size: 6.5 in height
Artwork Name: Stupa V | Medium: Copper, Silver & Metal Embellishment | Size: 6 in height

Prajnaparamita
Ram Bhakta Maharjan

Champak Wood (Chaap)

According to Mahayana the Buddha gave two sermons in Giddhakuta of Rajgriha on Prajnaparamita (Sunyata) to the Mahayanist in the 16th year of his enlightenment. Prajnaparamita in Sanskrit means Perfection of Wisdom, which is a central concept and a vast body of literature in Mahayana Buddhism. It refers both to the profound insight that realizes emptiness and to the texts that expound this wisdom, which is considered the mother of all Buddhas. The five dhyani Buddha concept was created only after the full composition of Prajnaparamita sutra approximately at 6th century CE. So she personifies the Prajnaparamita Sutra and is commonly described, as being imbued with a yellow or occasionally white skin tone. She typically sits in the Vajrasana on a white lotus or a lion throne. Her main hands usually display the Dharmacakra Mudra, signifying her role as the ultimate teacher of wisdom. The most defining feature is the book (the Prajnaparamita Sutra) resting on a lotus in her left and rosary in her right hand.

Artist Name: Ram Bhakta Maharjan | Artwork Name: Prajnaparamita | Medium: Wood (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 33 in height

Sadaksari Lokeshvara
Rabindra Shakya

Repousse in Copper

The core affirmation of faith in Buddhism is known as the Triple Gem. It comprises the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, which are the three entities a Buddhist "takes refuge in" to officially commit to the spiritual path. The Buddha is symbolized by Shakyamuni, the Dharma is represented by Prajnaparamita, and the Sangha is embodied by Sadaksari Lokeshvara.

One of the most well-known traditional declarations, recited in Pali, is Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami, and Sangham saranam gacchami. This translates to "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the Dharma. I take refuge in the Sangha." Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara is the four-armed incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. His name originates from the six-syllable mantra Oṃ Maṇi Padme Hūṃ, which he embodies and represents the core affirmation of faith in Buddhism is known as the Triple Gem. It comprises the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, which are the three entities a Buddhist "takes refuge in" to officially commit to the spiritual

Artist Name: Rabindra Shakya | Artwork Name: Sadksheri Lokeshvara | Medium: Copper | Size: 108 in height

Vajrasattva

Binamra Dongol (Maharjan)

Poster colour

Vajrasattva is shown with a white body, seated in a lotus posture, with a serene and peaceful expression. In his right hand, held near his heart, he carries a vajra, and in his left, a bell. The white body represents purity. The vajra symbolises indestructible wisdom, while the bell stands for wisdom and emptiness, the insight into the nature of reality. Together they express the balance of compassion and wisdom at the heart of Vajrayana practice. His ornaments and silk garments signify enlightened qualities rather than worldly status, and the image is meant to comfort and inspire.

Binamra Dongol (Maharjan) is a Paubha artist from Lalitpur with a diploma in Fine Arts. He trained under Bijay Maharjan, began working in Paubha in 1998/99 (2055 B.S.), and has practised professionally since 2056 B.S. He is a certified Professional Paubha Artist under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT). He has exhibited regularly with NAFA since 2059 B.S., received two second-place Special Awards from NAFA (2074 and 2077 B.S.), and was honoured with the Sarbautkrishta Rastriya Lalitkala Puraskar in 2082 B.S. His work has also been shown through the Nepal Bhasa Academy, Nepal Heritage Society and FHAN, and is held in collections in China, the USA, Japan and Tibet.

Artist Name: Binamra Dongol (Maharjan) | Artwork Name: Vajrasattva | Medium: Poster colour | Size: 36 × 27 in

Sadaksari Lokesvara
Krishna Gopal Garu

Champak Wood (Chaap)

The Triple Gem is the central declaration of faith in Buddhism. It consists of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, the three things a Buddhist takes refuge in; to formally become a follower of the path. Buddha is represented by Shakyamuni Buddha, Dharma by Prajnaparamita and Sangha by Sadaksari Lokeshvara. The most popular classic declaration, recited in Pali - Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami, Sangham saranam gacchami.- I go to the Buddha for refuge, I go to the Dharma for refuge and I go to the Sangha for refuge.

Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara is the four-armed form of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. His name is derived from the six-syllable mantra Oṃ Maṇi Padme Hūṃ, which he embodies and personifies. He is white in color with his principal hands in Anjali Mudra holding a wish fulfilling jewel - Cintamani. He holds a crystal rosary in his upper right hand to count the mantra recitation and a white lotus in his upper left hand symbolizing purity.

Artist Name: Krishna Gopal Garu | Artwork Name: Sadksheri Lokeshvara | Medium: Wood (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 72 in height

Guardian Lion (Simha)

Amir Ratna Shakya

Copper

The lion was never just a decorative animal in Buddhism. It carried deep meaning from the very beginning. Many traditional Buddhist and Hindu temples in East Asia, the Himalayas, or Southeast Asia, has a pair of muscular stone or bronze lions with open jars , glaring eyes at the entrance. They're not there to scare you away. They're there to protect the space and guard the teachings inside. Guardian Lions in Buddhists and Hindu Temples are different than other ordinary Lions. The Gajura that sits at the top of Stupa, temples or lions symbolizes its completeness in Bodhisattva's journey toward complete enlightenment (Bodhi).

Artist Name: Amir Ratna Shakya | Artwork Name: Guardian Lion (Simha), 2 pcs | Medium: Bronze | Size: 18 in height

Standing Green Tara
Amir Shakya

Wood carving (Champak wood, Chaap)

Green Tara is a revered Buddhist deity known as the Mother of Liberation, symbolizing compassion, protection, wisdom, and freedom from fear and obstacles. She is traditionally depicted in a graceful posture, with one leg extended forward to show her readiness to help those in need.

Amir Shakya's "Standing Green Tara" reflects Nepal's rich tradition of Buddhist sacred art and fine wood carving. The sculpture is carefully carved from Champak wood (Chaap), highlighting Tara's serene expression, graceful form, and intricate details.

Artist Name: Amir Shakya | Artwork Name: Standing Green Tara | Medium: Wood carving (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 13.5 × 13.5 in

Vairocana
Anmol Ratna Tuladhar

Poster color with genuine gold

The Trikāya (Three Bodies) doctrine is Mahayana Buddhism's foundational framework for understanding the nature of a Buddha. The term "Dharmakāya" was already current in the Pali Canon, where the Buddha is described as the Truth and identified with the Dharma itself. After the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, followers naturally distinguished between his physical remains (rūpakāya) and his enduring truth-aspect. The concept of the Sambhogakāya was introduced later by Mahayana thinkers to bridge the gap between the transcendent Dharmakāya and the earthly Nirmāṇakāya, which gave birth to five principal Buddhas: Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, and most importantly, Vairocana.

While Vairocana is colorless and synonymous with the Dharmachakra gesture, it also represents the Dharmakāya and is associated with the element of space and the wisdom of the Dharmadhātu. It is the combined knowledge of four other Dhyani Buddhas.

Artist Name: Anmol Ratna Tuladhar | Artwork Name: Vairocana | Medium: Poster colour with gold | Size: 30 × 24 in

Arya Tara (Green Tara)
Nabin Shakya

Metal, cast and oxidised

Arya Tara is commonly known as Green Tara is a fully enlightened female Buddha. She is the symbol of compassion, courage and protection. She is seated on a lotus in lalit asana with her right hand in gesture of compassion or avaya mudra while her left hand symbolizes the gesture of protection or varadha mudra. She is green in color and is mostly known as Green Tara.

Lost wax casting is deeply rooted in the Kathmandu Valley, with the earliest date inscribed to the seventh century CE. Arya Tara has traditionally been cast by renowned artists of Oku Bahal, Patan. Today, Patan remains the primary center of production, with workshops in areas of Oku Bahal continuing the tradition. The raw casting undergoes extensive finishing by specialized artisans. Details are chased, carved and the surface is smoothed. For high-quality religious images, fire gilding is applied: a gold-mercury amalgam is painted on, then heated to evaporate the mercury, leaving a bonded gold surface. Nabin Shakya is a metal sculptor from Okubahal, Patan, with over two decades of experience in metal carving, oxidising, gold plating and related techniques. He holds a diploma in management from Nepal Commerce Campus.

Artist Name: Nabin Shakya | Artwork Name: Green Tara | Medium: Copper | Size: 18 in height

Namasangati Manjushree
Suresh Lawat Tuladhar

Wood, 48 inches high

According to a popular tale of Kathmandu Valley, Vajrapani, the protector of Buddhist teachings, questions Manjushri about the nature of wisdom. Manjushri skillfully expounds on the deep philosophical principles about integrating wisdom with compassion, which is later documented as Arya Manjushri Namsangiti Tantra. Namasangiti is one of the major forms of Manjushri. Thus the iconographic form of the twelve-armed Namsangiti is the development of the Kathmandu Valley and is rarely found outside Nepal. Namsangiti translates to "chanting of the names" which refers to the specific Tantrayana (Vehicle of Tantra). His six set of arms represents the six perfections of Paramitayana (Vehicle of Perfection). Namasangiti embodies both the vehicle of Mahayana and Vajrayana which reflects the typical Buddhism of Kathmandu Valley.

aThis stunning wood sculpture represents one of the most quintessential symbols of Kathmandu valley's Newar art. Namsangiti is depicted in dhyanmudra. He is painted in pinkish white tones. He has twelve arms: the two uppermost arms above his head are in uttarabodhi mudra. The other two hands at the breast level in dharma chakra mudra, while the other pair of hands are in tarpana mudra. His two hands at the shoulder level holds a sword and the prajnaparamita scripture while other two hands holds a bow and arrow. The six pair of hands represent the six perfections of Buddhism. However, the typical sword, prajnaparamita scripture as well as a bow and arrow is not included in this sculpture. The bronze Namsangiti in the National Museum of Chhauni does not have these attributes as well.

Artist Name: Suresh Lawat Tuladhar
| Artwork Name: Namasangati Manjushree (Namsangiti) |
Medium: Wood (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 48 in height

Vasundhara
Siddhi Ratna Shakya

Copper

The six-armed form of Vasundhara is the most prevelent iconographic type of Nepal. Vasundhara, "Bearer of Treasures" is the beautiful goddess, the giver of wealth, fertility and abundance. When Vasundhara is depicted with three faces, she represents a part of Shri-Laxmi and Kumari in Kathmandu Valley. She is depicted in lalit asana and is usually painted in golden or red pigment. Her lower left hand is in varada mudra while the lower right hand holds an overflowing water pot. The middle right hand holds a cluster of jewels while the middle-left holds stalks of rice. Her upper right hand is in vaaya mudra while the upper left holds the prajnaparamita sutra.

Lost wax casting in the Kathmandu Valley is a centuries-old metalworking tradition perfected by the Newar people, particularly the Shakya caste of artisans in Patan. This technique has been used for over 1,300 years to create intricate Buddhist and Hindu statues and ritual objects in Kathmandu. Vasundhara presented here is created by the most renowned lost wax artist Siddhi Ratna Shakya, the elder son of Siddhi Raj Shakya, from a family of traditional metal sculptors based in Oku Bahal, Patan, Lalitpur.

Artist Name: Siddhi Ratna Shakya | Artwork Name: Vasundhara | Medium: Copper | Size: 20 × 13 in

Ratnasambhava
Rajani Sinkhawal

Gouache on cotton canvas

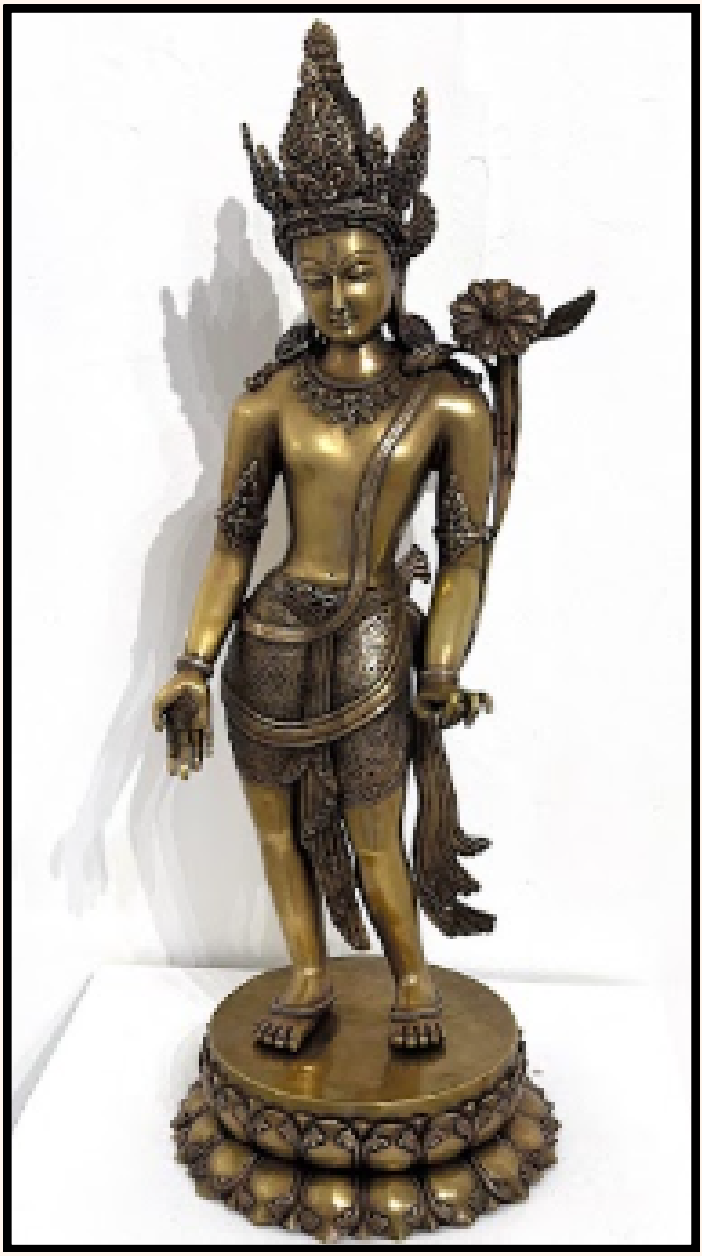
The evolution of Pancha Buddha began with philosophical shifts in early Buddhism and reached its full, systematic expression within Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism between the 6th and 8th centuries CE. Early Buddhism initially saw the Buddha primarily as a human teacher, Shakyamuni, with little distinction between a Buddha and an enlightened disciple or arahat. As Buddhist thought developed, the Trikaya (Three Bodies) doctrine emerged in the Mahasanghik school of Buddhism. This distinguished between the historical, physical body (Rupakaya) and the transcendent, ultimate reality (Dharmakaya), and the third doctrine (Sambhogakaya) was introduced, in which the divine form of deities that could be worshiped in celestial realms as five Dhyani Buddhas were developed. By the time the system was complete, the five Buddhas were assigned specific directions, colors, symbols, and spiritual functions within a mandala: Vairocana (Center): Colorless with the Dharmachakra gesture and represents the Dharmakāya and is associated with the element of space and the wisdom of the Dharmadhātu. Akṣobhya (East): Blue in color with the earth-touching gesture and represents the mirror-like wisdom. Ratnasambhava (South): Yellow in color with a blessing gesture and represents the wisdom of equality. Amitābha (West): Red in color with a meditating gesture and represents discriminating wisdom. Amoghasiddhi (North): Green in color with a fearlessness or protection gesture and represents all-accomplishing wisdom.

Artist Name: Rajani Sinkhwal | Artwork Name: Buddha | Medium: Gouache on cotton canvas | Size: 18 × 13 in

Padmapani Lokeshvara
Jenendra Raj Shakya

Copper

After the systematized development of the five Buddhas after 5th centuries CE, the most dramatic expansion came with the Bodhisattva as a being, who postpones his own final enlightenment to save all other beings. However historical records show that by the 4th century CE, figures like Mañjuśrī -wisdom and Avalokiteśvara—compassion—were already being worshipped in Nepal and the Avalokiteśvara became the most popular, the merciful protector who hears all cries of the world. Most of the Lokeshvara are found in a standing position. His iconography is defined by the lotus – padma - he holds and the small Buddha Amitabha in his crown, with regional styles (Nepal, Tibet, Kashmir) emphasizing different postures and materials. The right hand is typically lowered in the varada mudra - gesture of granting boons/charity.



Artist Name: Jenendra Raj Shakya | Artwork Name: Standing Padmapani Lokeshvara | Medium: Copper | Size: 26 in height

Mahānkāla
Pradip Shakya

Lapis Lazuli

Mahānkāla is a deity common to Hinduism and Tantric Buddhism. In Buddhism, he is regarded as the sacred Dharmapāla—Protector of the Dharma - while in Hinduism, he is a fierce manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva. He is considered a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara in some lineages, or a protector arising from the Buddha's compassion to subdue negative forces. He is central to the ritual life of many Tibetan schools. Maha means great and kala means "time," so Mahankala symbolizes that time from birth to death is so great that it should be used in a proper way.

The two-armed Mahankala exhibited in this exhibition is made of lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Mahankala wields specific implements: his left hand holds a skull cup (kapala) filled with blood or brains, symbolizing the destruction of enemies. His right hand holds a chopper (kartika), which is used to cut through delusion, hatred, and ignorance. Manhakala is depicted standing on two human figures. This posture represents the conquering of lower human natures or negative forces. Mahankala has a fierce expression with a third eye on his forehead, symbolizing supernatural perception and the ability to frighten away evil. He also wears a crown of five skulls, which represents the transformation of five negative afflictions into five wisdoms.

Artist Name: Pradip Shakya | Artwork Name: Mahankala | Medium: Lapis lazuli | Size: 16 in height

Shakyamuni Buddha
Palsangmo Lama

painting

Shakyamuni is the latest reincarnation among the seven Manasi Buddhas. The three Ashokan pillars found in Lumbini record that three out of seven Manasi Buddhas—Kanakmuni, Kashyap, and Shakyamuni Buddha—were born in Nepal. Shakyamuni Buddha, also known as Gautama Buddha, is the historical founder of Buddhism. This painting depicts Shakyamuni's momentous enlightenment in Bodhgaya. His enlightenment is indicated by his earth-touching gesture, which symbolizes the moment he called upon the Earth Goddess to bear witness to his self-transformation, after which he became the Buddha.

Artist Name: Palsangmo Lama | Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha (Painting) | Medium: Mixed media | Size: 17 × 23 in

Indra
Jeevan Shakya

Solid - Cast Copper

In the Kathmandu Valley, the Hindu god Indra is best known through the vibrant, eight-day Indra Jatra also called Yenya festival, which celebrates him as the God of Rain and marks the end of the monsoon season. There is a popular folklore in Kathmandu, which narrates that Indra descended to the valley in disguise to steal parijat flowers, which his mother needed for a celestial ritual. The valley inhabitants caught him in the act and bound him. He was only released after his mother promised to provide the valley with the rain needed for a good harvest. This story is the reason; Indra is often depicted in Nepalese art with his arms stretched away from his body.

Artist Name: Jeevan Shakya | Artwork Name: Indra | Medium: Solid-cast copper | Size: 17 in height

Naradevi (Swetakali Ajima)
Ram Prakash

Acrylic on Canvas

Naradevi -Swetakali Ajima - is one of the most important protective Mother Goddess Ajima in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. She is particularly revered within the Newar community as the guardian deity of the Kathmandu Valley. Nara means human and devi means goddess, meaning Goddess of Humans. Swetakali meaning White Kali symbolizing her peaceful and tranquil aspect although she is also regarded as fierce manifestation of Kali..

Artist Name: Ram Prakash | Artwork Name: Naradevi Swetkali | Medium: Acrylic | Size: 43 × 43 in

Shakyamuni Buddha
Sabin Ratna Shakya

Copper, Lost wax Casting

Shakyamuni is the most recent of the seven Manasi Buddhas. The three Ashokan pillars located in Lumbini confirm that three of the seven Manasi Buddhas'(Kanakmuni, Kashyap, and Shakyamuni Buddha) were born in Nepal. Shakyamuni Buddha, also referred to as Gautama Buddha, is recognized as the historical founder of Buddhism. The sculpture shown here represents Shakyamuni at the moment of his Enlightenment, in Bodhgaya, signified by his gesture of touching the Earth, which recalls the instance when he called upon the Earth Goddess to witness his transformation, leading to his attainment of Buddhahood. This marked the second birth of Shakyamuni, transitioning from an ordinary human to an enlightened being.

Lost wax casting is deeply rooted in the Kathmandu Valley, with the earliest date inscribed to 7^{th} century CE . Shakyamuni here is carved by the renowned artist of Okubahal, Patan. Today, Patan remains the primary center of production, with workshops in areas of OkuBahal continuing the tradition. The raw casting undergoes extensive finishing by specialized artisans. Details are chased, carved and the surface is smoothed. For high-quality religious images, fire gilding is applied: a gold-mercury amalgam is painted on, then heated to evaporate the mercury, leaving a bonded gold surface.

Artist Name: Sabin Ratna Shakya | Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha | Medium: Copper | Size: 24 in height

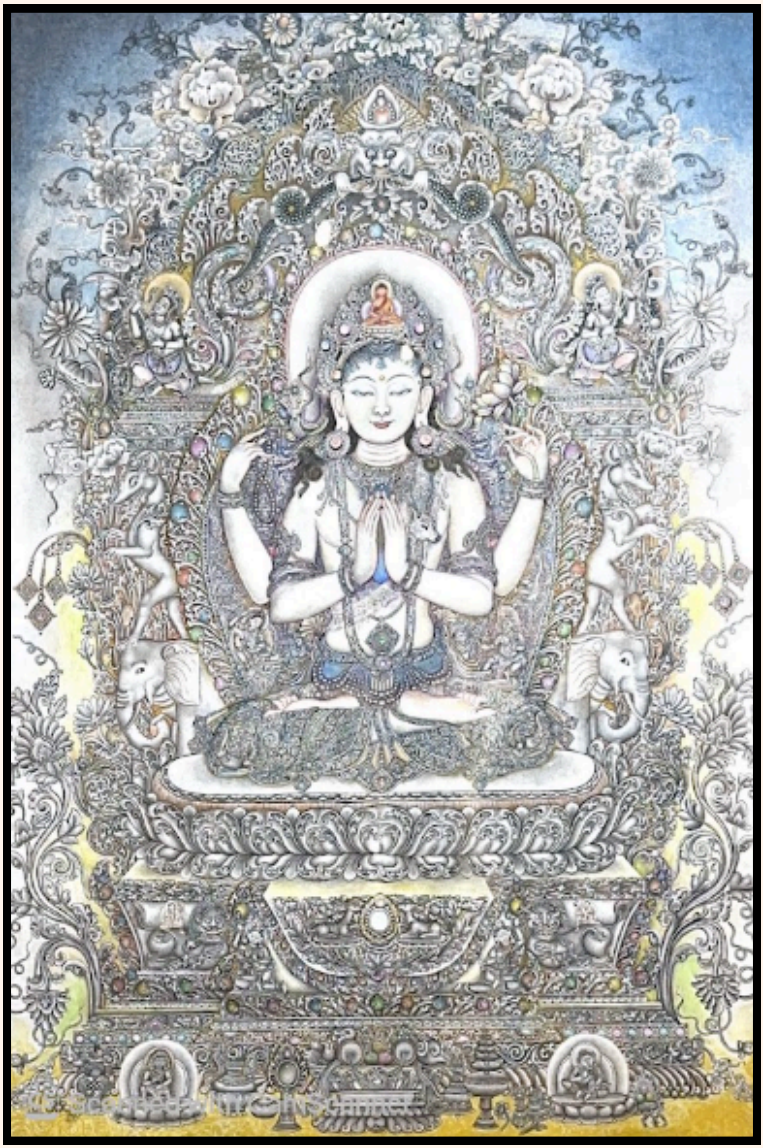
Sadksheri

Raj Kumar Ranamagar

Stone Minerals

Sadaksheri, also known as Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara, is a revered form of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. The name Ṣaḍakṣarī means “six syllables,” referring to the famous Buddhist mantra “Om Mani Padme Hum,” which is closely associated with Avalokiteśvara. The deity represents compassion, wisdom, and the aspiration to relieve all sentient beings from suffering.

In Nepalese Buddhist art, Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara is traditionally depicted in a richly adorned and peaceful form, reflecting the sophisticated artistic heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. The figure is generally shown seated in a meditative posture, with multiple arms symbolizing the various ways in which compassion can be expressed. The central hands are commonly held in a gesture of devotion, while the other hands carry symbolic attributes associated with Avalokiteśvara.



Artist Name: Raj Kumar Ranamagar | Artwork Name: Sadksheri | Medium: Stone & minerals | Size: 20 × 20 in

Aparamita and Shakyamuni Buddha

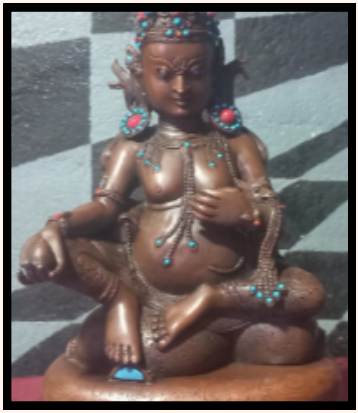
Deependra Shakya

Copper

Aparmita in Sanskrit means "immeasurable life". It refers to a specific Buddha associated with longevity, health, and infinite wisdom. In Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, particularly in Tibetan traditions, Aparimita is a revered figure embodying boundless life and wisdom. He is often depicted holding a vase of immortality (Kalasha) and is red in colour. , considering it as an emanation of Amitabha Buddha. He is often referred to as Aparimitayus.

Shakyamuni Buddha is the founder of Buddhism and is also known as the historical figure. born as Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini, Nepal, around the 5th–6th century BCE. Shakyamuni literally means the "Sage of the Shakya clan", and the Buddha means `Awakened One` "

Shakyamuni Buddha was a prince who left palace life, practised asceticism, and attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, and taught the Dharma for 45 years until his parinirvana at Kushinagar. He is often depicted sitting in meditation, touching the earth in an earth-touching mudra, holding a begging bowl, with a serene expression.



Artist Name: Deependra Shakya
| Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha on Throne | Medium: Copper | Size: 13 in height
| Artwork Name: Kuber | Medium: Copper | Size: 15 in height | Artwork Name: Aparamita | Medium: Copper | Size: 20 in height

Kurukulla

Bishnu Prasad Libi

Wood

This wood carving depicts Kurukulla, a deity associated with the transformation of passion into enlightened wisdom and compassion, a theme rooted in tantric tradition.

Bishnu Prasad Libi is a wood carving artist from Bhojpur district with twenty-five years of experience in the craft. A lover of wood carving since childhood, he began working under other craftsmen in 1998/99 (2055 B.S.) before establishing himself, through years of effort, as an accomplished wood carving artist in his own right.

Artist Name: Bishnu Prasad Libi | Artwork Name: Kurukulla | Medium: Wood carving | Size: 31 in height

Vajrasattva
Rusa Maharjan

poster colours on cotton canvas

Vajrasattva is the one of the Buddhist deities of Mahayana and Vajrayana whose name translates to "Diamond Being" or "Thunderbolt". He is in Radiant white, which symbolizes pure consciousness, transparency, and freedom from karmic defilements.His expression is Youthful, peaceful, and gentle, contrasting with fierce protective deities. He is Crowned and adorned with silk garments and princely jewels andTypically seated in the full lotus posture (padmasana) or a relaxed bodhisattva posture upon a moon disc and lotus throne.He holds on Right a gold vajra (dorje) near the heart, representing compassion and skillful method and left hand rests near the hip or lap holding an upturned bell (ghanta), representing wisdom and the realization of emptiness. He is known as the Buddha of Purification and Practiced as a powerful tantric method to clear negative karma, emotional burdens, and past misdeeds.The combination of the vajra and bell signifies the inseparable unity of compassion and wisdom required for enlightenment.

Artist Name: Rusa Maharjan | Artwork Name: Vajrasattva | Medium: Poster colour on cotton canvas | Size: 24 × 18 in

Simhanada Lokeshvara

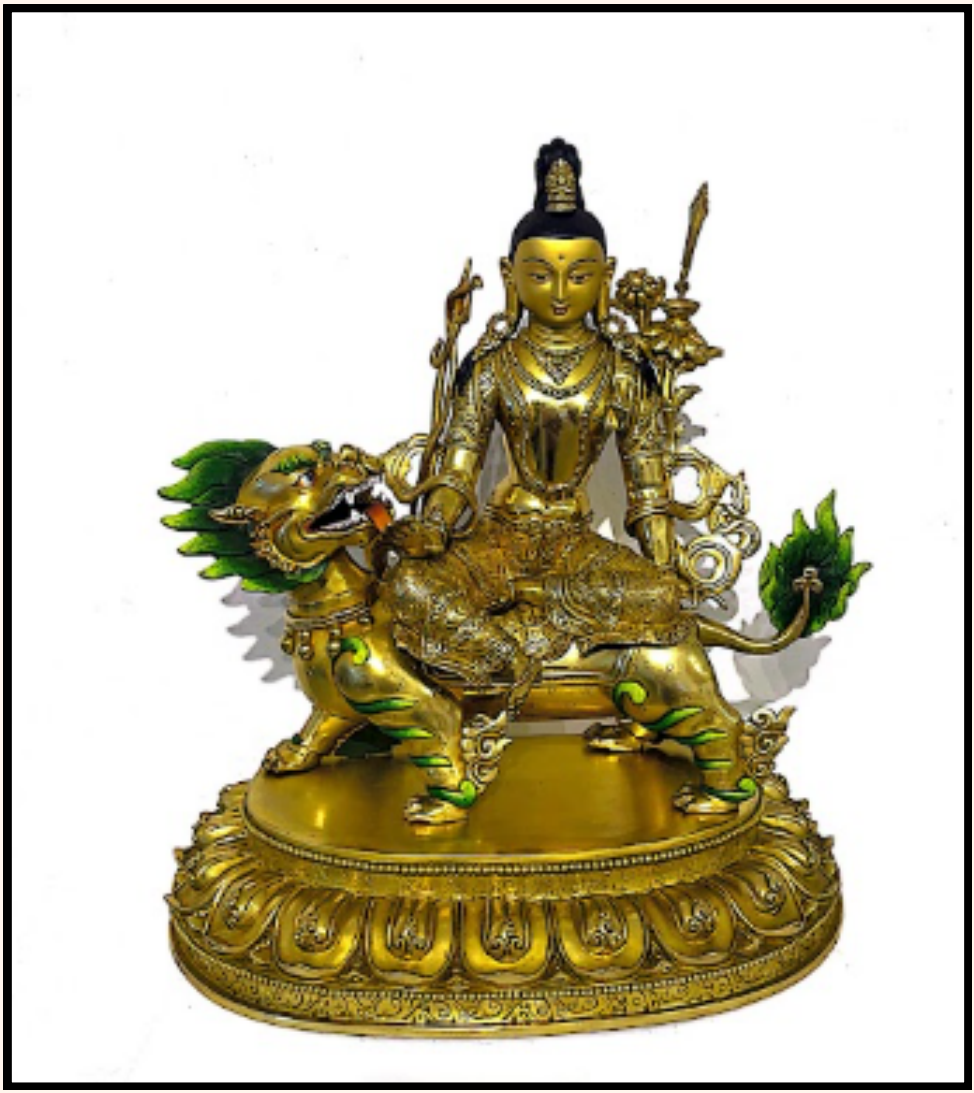
Pipendra Shakya

Champak Wood (Chaap)

Simhanada Lokeshvara, also spelled Simhanath Lokeshvara, is a specific manifestation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Bodhisattva of Compassion in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. The name translates to Lion-Roar Lokeshvara, referring to his distinctive mount and his fearless proclamation of the Dharma.

The iconography of *Simhanada Lokeshvara* varies across regions, but certain features are consistent. He is almost always depicted seated on a lion, sometimes on a snow lion in the Himalayan region, which represents his mastery over delusion and his swift compassion. In many depictions, particularly from Eastern India and Nepal, he may be shown with a snake-entwined trident in his right hand and the sword of wisdom in his left hand, with a deer skin over his shoulder. Like all forms of Avalokiteshvara, he is often depicted with a small figure of Amitabha Buddha in his crown or hair. After the systematized development of five Buddhas after 5th century CE, the most dramatic expansion came with the Bodhisattva as a being who postpones their own final enlightenment to save all other beings.

His iconography is described in the *Sadhanamala*, and he is counted as number 20 of the 108 forms of *Avalokiteshvara* found in Jana Bahal, also popular as Machhandar Vahal, Kathmandu.



Artist Name: Ujaya Bajracharya
| Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha
| Medium: Gouache on cotton canvas
| Size: 35.5 × 47 in

Shakyamuni Buddha
Sanu Maharjan

Copper, cast, with repoussé sheet work

This statue of Shakyamuni Buddha is cast in copper and then cleaned and finely chased by the artist. The design is entirely his own, including the copper sheet base beneath the lotus petals, which he shaped and decorated using the traditional repoussé technique. The prabha, the halo behind the figure, is made in the same way, from design to finish. The separate pieces were joined by the artist himself using gas welding, so every stage of the work is his own.

Sanu Maharjan is a metal artist from Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, with twenty-five years of experience. He handles every stage of his work himself, from design and casting to repoussé, welding and finishing.

Artist Name: Sanu Maharjan | Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha | Medium: Copper, cast, with repoussé sheet work | Size: 42 in height

Padmapani Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, and Tsang Nyon Heruka (lama)

Siwali Shakya

copper with oxidised and gilt bronze

Padmapani Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, is seated in rajalilasana - royal ease- upon a double lotus pedestal, holding a lotus stem in his left hand while his right displays varada mudra, the gesture of generosity. The work draws on the Pala school of art, with a simple ornate halo and tiered square throne reflecting medieval Indian Buddhist sculpture.

Manjushri, the embodiment of transcendent wisdom, is seated in lalit asana upon a lotus throne, holding the stem of a lotus bearing the flaming sword of wisdom in his right hand and the Prajnaparamita text in his left. The piece is based on his depiction within the set of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. This artwork was created using the traditional lost wax casting technique, followed by fine hand carving and traditional 24 carat gold gilding as the final finish. Carved precious and semi-precious stones are intricately set into the ornaments of the statue, adding richness and fine detail to the overall work.

Tsang Nyon Heruka (1452–1507), known as the "Madman of Tsang," was a famous Tibetan yogi and author, best known today for compiling and publishing the life story and collected songs of the great poet-saint Milarepa. His influence extended beyond literature. It is recorded he sponsored extensive restoration work on the great Svayambhū Stūpa, a major pilgrimage site of Kathmandu Valley. His iconography reflects his unconventional path. In sculptures and paintings, he is presented with the appearance of Mahasiddha, a tantric yogi wearing bone ornaments and a skull headdress, holding a Vajra and a skullcup, and sometimes a katvanga staff sitting on a lion skin.

Artist Name: Siwali Shakya
| Artwork Name: Padmapani Avalokiteshvara
| Medium: Copper with oxidised patina | Size: 12 in height
Artwork Name: Manjushri | Medium: Gilt bronze | Size: 12 in height
Artwork Name: Tsang Nyon Heruka | Medium: Copper with oxidised patina | Size: 12 in height

Ganesh and Mahankala

Pratham Raj Bajracharya

Wood

In the Buddhist monasteries or vihāras of the Kathmandu Valley, Ganesh and Mahākāla serve as a paired guardian system. They are typically installed together in the entranceway or outer niches of Newar Buddhist temples to protect the interior of sacred spaces. While Ganesh is a Hindu deity, he was incorporated into Newar Buddhism as a protector, remover of obstacles, for the faithful. Whereas, Mahankala, often called Mahankal Dya in Newari, is a fierce protector deity whose form initially originated from the Hindu Shiva-Bhairava, but was later adopted into the Buddhist pantheon. In Nepal, he is depicted with the celestial Buddha Akshobhya on his crown. He is known as a powerful deity who protects the Dharma and individual Buddhists. Like Ganesh, he functions as a guardian of Newar monasteries. He is often found in side walls at the entrance or within the courtyard.

Artist Name: Pratham Raj Bajracharya | Artwork Name: Ganesh & Mahakal (Set of 2) | Medium: Sal wood, antique finish | Size: 16.5 × 23 in

Shakyamuni Buddha
Niran Lawat Tuladhar

Chamak Wood (Chaap)

Shakyamuni Buddha, also referred to as Gautama Buddha, is recognized as the historical originator of Buddhism. The artwork shown illustrates Shakyamuni at the time of his Enlightenment in Bodhgaya, marked by his gesture of touching the earth, which signifies his appeal to the earth goddess to witness his transformation, after which he attained Buddhahood. This event represents Shakyamuni's second birth, transitioning from an ordinary human to an enlightened being.

Shakyamuni is depicted with the 32 auspicious marks (lakṣaṇa) of a Buddha, including the uṣṇīṣa - cranial bump, ūnā - forehead mark, long earlobes, and webbed fingers. Shakyamuni is the most recent of the seven Manasi Buddhas. The three Ashoka pillars located in Lumbini verify that three of the seven Manasi Buddhas (Kanakmuni, Kashyap, and Shakyamuni Buddha) were born in Nepal.

Artist Name: Niran Lawat Tuladhar | Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha | Medium: Champak wood (Chaap) | Size: 18 × 12 in

Bhairav
Amir Shakya

Wood carving (Champak wood, Chaap)

According to the Shiva Puran, Bhairab is the most magnificent manifestation of Lord Shiva. The famous, ferocious, and frequently enormous mask-like sculptures of Bhairava, the angry manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva portrayed in a joyful expression by the painters of the Kathmandu Valley, are known as the "Bhairava face of Kathmandu Valley."

These faces, which are revered by both Buddhists and Hindus, are essential to the religious and cultural life of the Newar community in Nepal. They act as strong defenders of the city, its temples, and its people. It is thought that while the god Macchindranath was being brought to Nepal from Kamarupa, four Bhairabs of Kathmandu were used for carrying the chariot.

Artist Name: Amir Shakya | Artwork Name: Bhairav | Medium: Wood carving (Champak wood, Chaap) | Size: 25 × 20.5 in

Padmapani Lokeshvara
Sundar Sinkhawal

Gouache on cotton canvas

Padmapani Lokeshvara is a form of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the manifestation of compassion and mercy in Mahayana Buddhism. In this painting Padmapani Lokeshvara is shown in the centre, surrounded by deities from Buddhist and Hindu mythology and culture: White Tara, Amitabha Buddha, Ganesha, and Mahakala. Combined, they create a harmonious composition that symbolises compassion, protection and wisdom. Padmapani Lokeshvara is conventionally represented through a graceful and elegant figure with a relaxed gait. The lotus flower wrapped around him references both the name Padmapani or Lotus Bearer, and the themes of purity, wisdom and awakening.

Sundar Sinkhawal is a Nepalese Paubha artist originating from Bhaktapur, and has been practising art since 1986. He has created over 300 paintings, which have been exhibited in Nepal, India, China and the Maldives. He is also greatly involved in the art world of Nepal through teaching, judging and selecting, having served on many NAFA committees, including the judging committee of the National Exhibition of 2021 and the selection and organisation committee of the National Exhibition of 2019, and was a part of NAFA's Academic Assembly. He is currently the Secretary of Khwopa Paubha Chowmi Pucha and holds several national awards, such as first place at the 33rd NAFA National Art and Craft Exhibition in 2003, second place at the 36th National Exhibition in 2006, and Best Painting at the SPANDAN Art and Craft Exhibition in 2015.

Artist Name: Sundar Sinkhwal | Artwork Name: Padmapani Lokeshvara | Medium: Gouache on cotton canvas | Size: 26 × 20 in

Bhairab

Jeetendra Tuladhar

Champak Wood (Chaap)

Bhairab is the most terrifying form of Lord Shiva as inscribed in Shiva Puran. The Bhairava face of Kathmandu Valley refers to the iconic, fierce, and often monumental mask-like sculptures of Bhairava. He is the wrathful manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva presented in a cheerful expression by the artists of Kathmandu valley. In Nepal, these faces are central to the religious and cultural life of the Newar community. He is a powerful guardian of the city, its temples, and its inhabitants, and is venerated by both Hindus and Buddhists. It is believed, while the god Macchindranath was being brought to Nepal from Kamarupa, four Bhairabs of Kathmandu assisted in carrying the chariot. The sculpture of Bhairab is one of the most significant wooden images displayed in this exhibition. Bhairab displayed in this exhibition is made by an artist from Bungamati, which is well known for artisans working with wood. This sculpture typically features Bhairab with a broad forehead, fearsome eyes, a diabolic third eye, decorative eyebrows, flat nose, long ears around, while serpents coil around his ears, neck and crown,

Artist Name: Jeetendra Tuladhar | Artwork Name: Bhairab | Medium: Champak wood (Chaap) | Size: 25 × 18 in

Bishnu Mirror
Pradip Shakya

Copper Filigree (Gold Plated)

This fascinating mirror frame on a copper plaque is made on the basis of Newari filigree technique, also known as Jadau Jya. It involves the curling, twisting, and plating of fine, pliable threads of metal, which are then soldered together to form an object, including the decoration of faceted, cabochon, and carved precious and semi-precious stones to give preferred color to the artwork. In the mirror, Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, is depicted with a serpent in his mouth, symbolizing the triumph of wisdom and awareness over animosity and hatred. The serpent represents Dwesha, the emotions of hatred, aversion, and repulsion that can cloud the mind and create suffering.

Garuda symbolizes wisdom and spiritual strength and reminds us of the importance of recognizing and overcoming these negative emotions. The mirror itself carries a deeper meaning. Each time we look at our reflection, we are invited not only to see our physical appearance but also to reflect upon our inner self. The mirror encourages us to look beyond the surface and become aware of the emotions and thoughts that influence our actions. By confronting our own Dwesha, we can cultivate greater understanding, compassion, and balance. Thus, reflection becomes a reminder that overcoming hatred begins within ourselves, through self-awareness, wisdom, and mindful practice.

Artist Name: Pradip Shakya | Artwork Name: Bishnu Mirror | Medium: Copper filigree (gold plated) | Size: 58 in height

Shakyamuni Buddha
Jigme Tamang Mugum

Mineral Colours

Shakyamuni Buddha, also referred to as Gautama Buddha, is recognized as the historical originator of Buddhism. This artwork illustrates Shakyamuni's momentous enlightenment in Bodhgaya, marked by his gesture of touching the earth, which signifies his appeal to the Earth Goddess to witness his transformation, after which he attained Buddhahood. This event represents Shakyamuni's second birth, transitioning from an ordinary human to an enlightened being. Shakyamuni is depicted with the standard 32 auspicious marks—lakṣaṇa—of a Buddha, including the uṣṇīṣa—cranial bump, ūnā—forehead mark, long earlobes, and webbed fingers. Shakyamuni is the most recent of the seven Manasi Buddhas. The three Ashokan pillars located in Lumbini verify that three of the seven Manasi Buddhas (Kanakmuni, Kashyap, and Shakyamuni Buddha) were born in Nepal.

Artist Name: Jigme Tamang (Mugum) | Artwork Name: Buddha with 16 Arhats | Medium: Mineral colours | Size: 24 × 16 in

Strut with Dancing Couple
Indra Prasad Silpakar

Wood

Struts locally known as Tunalas are intricately carved wooden supports that bear the load of overhanging roofs used in the multi tired temples architecture. They are a defining feature of Newar architecture, combining structural function with rich religious and cultural storytelling. The carvings on these struts are complex and deeply symbolic, often depicting a wide range of figures from both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This strut is carved with a dancing couple representing the rice culture of the Kathmandu Valley.

Artist Name: Indra Prasad Silpakar | Artwork Name: Strut with Dancing Couple | Medium: Wood | Size: 12 × 24 in

Vajrayogani
Sabin Shakya

The name Vajrayogini - Tibetan: Dorje Neljorma - refers to a central female meditational deity in Vajrayana Buddhism. She embodies the union of great bliss and emptiness and is the principal consort of Heruka Chakrasamvara. She is especially important in the Kagyu tradition and the Six Yogas of Naropa, where she serves as the primary meditational deity. She is semi-wrathful in brilliant red color symbolizing inner heat, life force, and the blazing wisdom of transformation. She is typically depicted nude, which signifies freedom from worldly concerns and illusions. She has three eyes, representing her awakened consciousness and ability to see past, present, and future. In her right hand, she holds a kartika, symbolizing the cutting of delusions. In her left, she holds a kapala filled with blood, from which she drinks, symbolizing the experience of supreme bliss. She often tramples on figures representing ignorance and ego. She wears a crown of five skulls and a necklace of fifty skulls, representing impermanence.

Artist Name: Sabin Shakya | Artwork Name: Vajrayogini | Medium: Copper Printed | Size: 27 in height

Khadkapani and Dandapani
Pratham Raj Bajracharya

Sal Wood Antique Finish

The name derives from Sanskrit khaḍga (sword) and pāṇi (hand), meaning "sword-in-hand" or "one who holds a sword. The sword in Khadgapani's hand is likely a symbol of cutting through ignorance and delusion, a common motif in Buddhist iconography. His name literally means "staff-in-hand" or "one who holds a stick" (from daṇḍa, meaning "staff" or "punishment," and pāṇi, meaning "hand"). So the staff in Dandapani's hand symbolizes the Karma, we receive the outcomes of good and bad result of bad karma accordingly. In the Buddhist monasteries (vihāras) of the Kathmandu Valley, Khadkapani and Dandapani serve as a pair of guardians.

Artist Name: Pratham Raj Bajracharya | Artwork Name: Khadgapani & Dandapani (Set of 2) | Medium: Sal wood, antique finish | Size: 16.5 × 23 in

Vajradhara and Arya Tara
Dilip Bajracharya

Copper

Vajrayanist's believe that the Buddha gave his third sermon on Mantrayana in Dhanyakuttaparvat on the full moon day of Chaitra. It is said that Shakyamuni Buddha took the form of Vajra Dhara while he was teaching the tantric path to his gifted disciples. In Vajrayana Buddhism, Vajra Dhara is the primordial Buddha -Adi-Buddha- and the ultimate source of the tantric teachings. He represents the Dharmakaya, absolute truth body of enlightenment and is considered the progenitor of the Five Dhyani Buddhas and the entire Vajrayana pantheon. In essence, Vajra Dhara is the personification of the ultimate, unchanging reality from which all tantric paths and enlightened forms arise. He holds vajra - lightning bolt - in his right hand and a bell in his left hand and is usually blue in color. His two hands embrace vajrahumkara mudra showing perfection in the union of wisdom and compassion leading to perfect enlightenment.

Arya Tara commonly known as Green Tara is a fully enlightened female Buddha. She is the symbol of compassion, courage and protection. She is seated in lotus in lalitasana with her right hand in gesture of compassion and with her left hand in the gesture of protection, avaya and varadha mudra. She is green in color, so she is mostly known as Green Tara. Lost wax casting is deeply rooted in the Kathmandu Valley, with the earliest date inscribed to 7th century CE. Arya Tara is carved by the renowned artist of Oku Bahal, Patan, which remains the primary center of production. For high-quality religious images, fire gilding is applied: a gold-mercury amalgam is painted on, then heated to evaporate the mercury, leaving a bonded gold surface.

Artist Name: Dilip Bajracharya | Artwork Name: Vajradhara | Medium: Copper | Size: 29 in height

Shakyamuni Buddha
Rabindra Shakya

Copper, Lost wax Casting, Gold gilded

Shakyamuni Buddha is recognized as the founder of Buddhism and is often referred to as Siddhartha Gautama, the historical figure born in Lumbini, Nepal around the 5th–6th century BCE. The name Shakyamuni translates to the Sage of the Shakya clan, while Buddha means the Enlightened one. Originally a prince, Shakyamuni Buddha renounced his life in the palace, engaged in ascetic practices, achieved enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, and shared the Dharma for 45 years until his Parinirvana in Kushinagar. He is frequently depicted seated in meditation, performing the earth-touching mudra, holding a begging bowl, and wearing a tranquil expression. Shakyamuni Buddha is depicted in his bejeweled form. The statue is made of copper alloy and is ultimately gilded in gold. A special face painting artist has adorned her face with gold and acrylic colors to bring the image to life.

Artist Name: Rabindra Shakya | Artwork Name: Shakyamuni Buddha | Medium: Copper & Gold Gilded | Size: 44 × 32 in

Garuda
Late Kalu Kumale

Copper

Garuda is depicted with a serpent in his mouth, symbolizing the triumph of wisdom and awareness over animosity and hatred. The serpent represents Dwesha, the emotions of hatred, aversion, and repulsion that can cloud the mind and create suffering. Garuda, as a symbol of wisdom and spiritual strength, reminds us of the importance of recognizing and overcoming these negative emotions.

Late Kalu Kumale (1933-2026), born Kalu Dakshaprajapati Thaku, was a celebrated Nepali traditional sculptor known as Krodhakala Shiromani for his mastery of wrathful deity sculptures. With over seven decades of experience, he specialized in tantric, Hindu, Buddhist, and Newar iconography, working in metal, wood, clay, and stone. He created over 600 sculptures, held in museums, temples, and monasteries across more than 55 countries, including the Victoria and Albert Museum. His honors include the Prabal Gorkha Dakshinabahu, Prabal Janasevashree, and Araniko National Lalit Kala Pragya Samman.

Artist Name: Kalu Kumale (Late) | Artwork Name: Garuda | Medium: Copper | Size: 72 in height

GALLERY STATEMENT

The Siddhartha Art Gallery was established on 27 September 1987 at Pratap Bhawan, Kantipath. Sangeeta Thapa and Shashikala Tiwari cofounded the Gallery as a contemporary art space and meeting point for artists from Nepal and abroad. In 1997, Siddhartha moved to the beautiful Baber Mahal Revisited, as my cousin Gautam Rana had envisioned a gallery space in the Revisited complex. Thirty-nine years and more than 600 exhibitions later, we have hosted artists from all over the world and mounted retrospectives by Nepal's master artists Amar Chitrakar, Tej Bahadur Chitrakar Uttam Nepali, Karna Narsingh Rana, Shashikala Tiwari, Shashi Bikram Shah, Birendra Pratapa Shasi, Birendra Pratap Singh, and Ragini Upadhya-Grela. Siddhartha Art Gallery has showcased the works of Nepali artists from the UK, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and at the Moesgaard Museum in Denmark.

Siddhartha Art Gallery has worked beyond the gallery space and initiated community art projects such as Khulla Dhoka, Nirantar Khulla Dhoka, Shanti Art for Hope, and Whose City is—bringing artists and poets together when the country needed much dialogue to move ahead with the political impasse. After the first Kathmandu International Art Festival in 2009, the Siddhartha Arts Foundation (SAF) was founded in 2011 to promote and develop Nepali arts and culture. SAF has since hosted the 2012 festival and the Kathmandu Triennale in 2017 and 2022, co-commissioned the Nepal Pavilion at the Venice Biennale with Ang Tsherin Sherpa, and taken Nepali artists to the Kochi Biennale. Its education initiative, SAFEI, trains art managers, curators, and critics, and its Mobile Library with Asia Art Archive carries books on contemporary art across Nepal. In 2023.

On a national level, Siddhartha Art Gallery has worked with the Ministry of Culture, the Nepal Tourism Board, the Nepal Academy of Fine Arts, the Nepal Art Council, the Kathmandu Municipal Corporation, Kathmandu University, Lalitkala Academy, Sirjana College of Fine Art, Bijayswri School, Photo Circle, Chitrakar Samaj, Naag Bahal Tole Sudar Samitee, Patan Museum, the Chhauni National Museum, Taragaon Museum, and the Nepal Army. She has also worked with local arts organizations on fundraising initiatives in which 90 artists participated. The sale of artworks and private donations raised Rs. 1,215,410 for the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. She also donated Rs. 120,000 to Child Reach from an exhibition of photographs by internationally acclaimed photographer Lisa Kristine.

Siddhartha Art Gallery also manages the Kathmandu Art Gallery, which began at Le Sherpa and now sits in the first courtyard of Baber Mahal Revisited as an extension of Siddhartha Art Gallery. It has a gallery space for exhibitions, workshops, and private events, and a residency program for artists and travelers. The two galleries share a platform for contemporary practice while each keeps its own programming and identity. T

raditional art has long been part of that program. In 2011, Jewels of Newar Art presented the collection of the late Purna Man Shakya and Anjana Shakya of the Bodhisattva Gallery, inaugurated by Dr. Dina Bangdel, who also wrote its catalogue. From Bhaktapur to Kantipur brought together eleven artists from Bhaktapur. In 2012, Siddhartha hosted an exhibition by celebrated repousse artist Rabindra Shalya and American national Maureen Drdak—Rabindra's colossal stupa occupied the ground floor of the gallery alongside Maureen's contemporary works which were amalgamated traditional techniques with contemporary expression. Sinkhwal's Sādhanā ran from 24 October to 25 November 2024, with part of its sales supporting local flood relief. This year we presented Aarambha by Sujit Maharjan and Saru Prajapati in May and Traditional Paubha Paintings by Shankar Kumar Joshi and Shankha Narayan Shrestha in July. Our paubha, Mithila, and botanical painting workshops and talks such as Homage to Banaras, open the practice to the public. The Gallery has worked tirelessly to connect traditional art with collectors like Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, and with international artists.

Sacred Splendor grows out of this work and marks our 39th anniversary. Curated by Pradip Shakya, a well-known figure in the traditional art world, it presents the traditional arts of the Kathmandu Valley, where deities have been carved, cast, and painted by hand for over a thousand years by families who inherit the craft along with the responsibility of keeping it. Bhairav and Ganesh stand beside Prajnaparamita, Avalokiteshvara, and Tara, sharing a visual language of mudras and postures that has let Hinduism and Buddhism coexist in the Valley for centuries. In wood, stone, metal, and paint, the exhibition shows a living tradition in which a statue is a presence that is invoked, adorned, and venerated.

Participating artists: Amir Shakya, Amir Ratna Shakya, Anmol Ratna Tuladhar, Binamra Dangol, Bishnu Prasad Libi, Chandra Shyam Dangol, Deepandra Shakya, Dilip Bajracharya, Indra Prasad Silpakar, Jeevan Shakya, Jeetendra Tuladhar, Jenendra Raj Shakya, Jigme Tamang, the late Kalu Kumale, Krishna Gopal Garu, Nabin Shakya, Niran Lawat Tuladhar, Pipendra Shakya, Palsangmo Lama, Pradip Shakya, Pratham Raj Bajracharya, Rabindra Shakya, Rajani Sinkhwal, Rajendra Shakya, Ram Bhakta Maharjan, Ram Prakash, Rusha Maharjan, Raj Kumar Ranamagar, Sabin Shakya, Sabin Ratna Shakya, Sanu Maharjan, Siddhi Ratna Shakya, Sundar Sinkhwal, Suresh Lawat, Ujaya Bajracharya, and Siwali Shakya.

We thank Pradip Shakya for his curation, the artists and artisans, collectors, friends from the media, and the communities of the Valley whose faith keeps this craft alive.

Sangeeta Thapa
Founder and Director, Siddhartha Art Gallery

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Pradip Shakya, Curator of this exhibition

For Participating Artist:
Amir Shakya, Amir Ratna Shakya, Anmol Ratna Tuladhar, Binamra Dangol, Bishnu Prasad Libi, Chandra Shyam Dangol, Deepandra Shakya, Dilip Bajracharya, Indra Prasad Silpakar, Jeevan Shakya, Jeetendra Tuladhar, Jenendra Raj Shakya, Jigme Tamang, the late Kalu Kumale, Krishna Gopal Garu, Nabin Shakya, Niran Lawat Tuladhar, Pipendra Shakya, Palsangmo Lama, Pradip Shakya, Pratham Raj Bajracharya, Rabindra Shakya, Rajani Sinkhwal, Rajendra Shakya, Ram Bhakta Maharjan, Ram Prakash, Rusha Maharjan, Raj Kumar Ranamagar, Sabin Shakya, Sabin Ratna Shakya, Sanu Maharjan, Siddhi Ratna Shakya, Sundar Sinkhwal, Suresh Lawat, Ujaya Bajracharya, and Siwali Shakya.

Siddhartha Art Gallery Team:
Binod Adhikari, Binod Bhujel, & Pinak Shrestha

Baber Mahal Revisited, PO Box 1776, Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: artgallerysiddhartha@gmail.com, sthapa@mos.com.np
Website: www.siddharthaartgallery.com
Tel: 01-5318048, +977 9869366335