



About the Gallery
Education Programs
Exhibitions and Collections

Gift Shop
Membership
Newsroom

Artists Online

Current Exhibitions

Past Exhibitions

Permanent Collection

Wheel of Time

September 11 to January 6, 2006

With Support From:



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada



Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple

Buddha's Light Centre



Tsha Tsha



Tsha Tshas



*Installation image showing Sorcerer's Mirror,
Blessing/Tantric Wand and Tantric Demon Quelling Kit*



Sand Painter

Coming October 13 to 27

Wheel of Time includes exceptional works of Buddhist art, some of which come from the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and Tibet House Museum, New York City. Wheel of Time will provide an unparalleled opportunity for visitors to the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery to experience the richness and vibrancy of traditional and contemporary Buddhist art. The combination of historical and contemporary work effectively and vividly demonstrates the importance of visual art within Buddhist traditions, as a means of experiencing the spiritual domain within the physical world.

There will be a display of historical artefacts known as Tsha Tshas - small, press-molded tablets that acted as portable shrines or reliquaries. Tsha-Tshas have been secretly used in China throughout the duration of the communist regime, but very few survived and only lately have sufficient numbers come to light to be perceived as a category of ritual objects. This material constitutes a new and exciting area of scholarship opening up in recent years due to the current relaxation of official Chinese attitudes toward faith-based materials.

From October 13th until the 27th monks from the Namgyal Monastery will be creating a sand mandala of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. This mystical tantric art extends back more than 3,000 years to Buddhist India. Created by Buddhist monks and nuns, mandalas are part of secret initiation ceremonies that have only recently been available for public viewing, and are seen both as a cultural offering and as a means to preserve Tibetan culture. The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or the Wheel of Compassion is the mandala of the Buddha of Infinite Compassion.

The contemporary aspect of Buddhist art will be represented by an installation by Toronto-based artist Alex Yeung. Yeung, an award-winning ceramist, has created an installation titled Searching for Offering Hands in homage to Kuan-yin. Known by various names - Avalokiteshvara (India), Chenresi (Tibet), or Kuan-yin (China), and Kwannon (Japan) - this Bodhisattva is an avatar of limitless compassion and is one of the most important in the Mahayana tradition. Customarily, the legion of arms is seen to protect, guide, receive supplications and provide blessings. The power

of this installation comes from the expressive multiplicity of similar forms, as well as from the unique, individually expressive parts.

In addition, a special youth project will be undertaken. Several nominated high-school students will work with the Curator and Educator at the Gallery, learning the principles of Buddhist art. They will eventually create their own Tsha-Tshas, mandalas and other objects which, when completed, will be exhibited as part of the contemporary component of the exhibition.

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