

California's Asian Art Museum launches Sikh Art Gallery

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ON ITS 35TH ANNIVERSARY, The Sikh Foundation pledged three Sikh art galleries and five campus chairs in Sikh studies in North America.

Last March the Asian Art Museum opened at its relocation at the historical district of San Francisco. The deluxe renovation of The Beaux Art-style building cost \$10 millions. Now, Dr. Forrest McGill, Chief Curator of the Asian Art Museum with the largest collections of Asian art in the Western world, declares that "The Asian Art Museum is now in the business of rich Asian Art including the Sikh Art."

April 5 marked the inauguration of The Satinder Kaur Kapany Gallery of Sikh Arts with a display of over 100 original Sikh paintings and authentic artifacts that have been gifted permanently from the internationally acclaimed Kapany Sikh Arts Collection to the Asian Art Museum.

The 500-year-old Sikh religion founded by Guru Nanak, now has a second home in California, where the Sikhs arrived and settled over a century ago. The first Asian to go to the US House of Representative was Dr. Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh Californian. The Sikh presence particularly in California, as in the whole of Northern American and countries all over the world can be felt in all the fields - from agriculture to science, high-tech, engineering, medicines, law, accounting, teaching and businesses.

The Sikh Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization was established 35 years ago in 1867 by Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany, the world renowned scientist and inventor of fiber optics, an artist, art collector and art patron.

The Sikh Foundation is celebrating the opening of The First Sikh Art Gallery and its 35th anniversary by holding a seminar and an International Black Tie Banquet on April 5 at the Osher Gallery in Asian Art Museum. Dr. Emily J. Sano, Director of Asian Art Museum, Dr. Forrest McGill, Chief Curator; The Sikh Foundation Trustees; and other Art World Dignitaries from Smithsonian, Washington D.C., (Dr. Paul M. Taylor) and Victoria Albert Museum, London (Dr. Deborah Swallow).

Dignitaries including Governor Gray Davis, Governor of California and Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco attended this important International Event.

The Sikh Foundation has also established Sikh Studies Chairs/Fellowships in various UC Campuses: Kundan Kaur Kapany Chair at UC Santa Barbara, Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini Chair at UC Riverside and Sarabjit Singh Aurora Fellowship at UC Irvine. Dr. Daniel G. Aldrich will discuss this program and the future plans for similar efforts for UC Berkeley and UC Davis.

In collaboration with UNESCO, the Sikh Foundation has also sponsored a unique project - "Restoration of Guru ki Maseet, in India." This mosque was built by the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind for his Muslim followers in 16th century and it has immense significance and relevance in the modern strife ridden world. It also stresses the "pluralism" one of the unique feature of the Sikh teachings.

The Sikh Foundation is also going to honor and present awards to Dr. Forrest McGill, Dr. Gurinder Singh Mann, Prof. Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, Mr. Sujan Singh Dhillon and Mr. Mohinder Singh Kohli for their exemplary contributions to various projects of the Sikh Foundation.

For more information about the event or the activities of The Sikh Foundation please call (650) 494-7454 or visit www.sikhfoundation.org

