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Shadow and Void: Buddha10



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esea contemporary and MAO (Museum of Asian Art), Turin, are pleased to present 'Shadow and Void: Buddha10', an innovative collaboration between the UK's only non-profit gallery dedicated to East and Southeast Asian contemporary art and one of Europe's foremost institutional collections of Asian art. Curated by Xiaowen Zhu, Director of esea contemporary, and Davide Quadrio, Director of MAO, this exhibition intertwines scientific studies, contemporary art, and spirituality by showcasing recently restored Buddhist sculptures from the seventh to the eighteenth centuries CE, on loan from MAO, alongside contemporary works by Shigeru Ishihara, Lee Mingwei, LuYang, Sun Xun, Sinta Tantra, Wu Chi-Tsung, and Zheng Bo, including three new commissions created specifically for 'Buddha10'.

The 'Buddha10' project began in 2022 as an initiative by MAO to study, analyse, and critically reinterpret Buddhist artefacts from its collection, asking questions such as: Where do they come from? Why are they here? What are the reasons behind the presence of these pieces in an Italian museum? And ultimately, how did they get here?

Additionally, the project, now realised as an exhibition, explores and re-evaluates their significance through a contemporary lens, highlighting their layered histories and cultural transformations. Initially centred on MAO's collection of Buddhist artefacts, the exhibition's first phase ran from 20 October 2022 – 3 September 2023, establishing a foundation for a multi-layered exploration of Buddhism's historical and spiritual resonance. These sculptures catalyse a dialogue about the often-overlooked history of fragmented Buddha heads displayed in isolation – a legacy that is linked to colonial disruption. The project at MAO introduced interdisciplinary programming, such as workshops, live restoration activities, and collaborations with international scholars and conservators, inviting audiences to engage with Buddhist iconography through themes of conservation, authenticity, and the ethical questions around transposing sacred objects from the contexts of rituals to museum displays.

Through collaborations with experts and contemporary artists, 'Buddha10' has evolved beyond a static display, exploring the West's historical fascination with Buddhist imagery, often acquired under colonial contexts. With its second phase launched in May 2023, 'Buddha10' expanded to include new contemporary works, digital content, and live performances, enriching the dialogue between historical and modern interpretations of Buddhism. This phase introduced further commissions c [Privacy](#) installations, immersing audiences in themes such as origins, restoration, and cultural legacy. By juxtaposing ancient artefacts with contemporary creations, 'Buddha10' delves into displacement, ritual, exotic consumption, and authenticity, inviting visitors to engage with Buddhist art as both sacred iconography and culturally significant artefact.

Curated by Xiaowen Zhu, Davide Quadrio

On from January 18, 2025 until April 20, 2025

Opening Hours

Tuesday to Saturday: 10am–5pm Sunday: 12–5pm

Free Entry

Image credits: X-ray image of the statue of Seated Buddha with Folded Hands, 16th Century. Courtesy of MAO Museo d'Arte Orientale, 'Buddha10' – X-Ray 'La Venaria Reale' Conservation and Restoration Centre

Dates and Times

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