

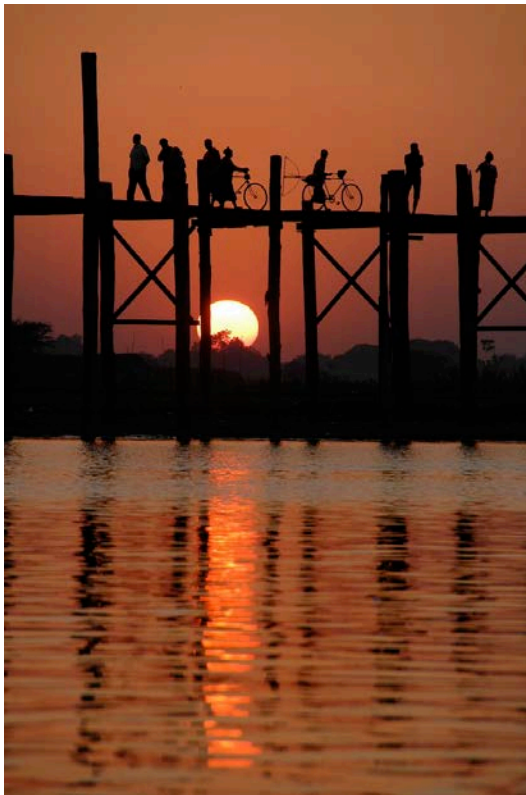


## . . . . news flashes from the Ethnic Arts Council

MARCH 2012

### Former Mayor Shares Visit with Aung San Suu Kyi

By MeraLee Goldman (reprinted from the Beverly Hills Courier – 2/3/12)



The invitation to adventure came by email from the Metropolitan Museum In New York: “Golden Stupas, Ancient Temples: The Treasures of Ancient Burma.” Burma is the traditional name of that Asian nation, while Myanmar is the name used by the despotic government regime in power. As our government had not yet recognized its legitimacy, we Americans were still calling the country by its traditional name.

It took only a moment for me to decide to travel there – and, my hope was I might be able to meet an important woman in the politics of Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi. This country, which had been so closed to much of the outside world, had come to an auspicious time in its history and seemed to be interested in opening up normalization of relations with the West. In fact Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was due to visit Burma shortly before my own travels there.

Everywhere I have traveled in the “third world” the past few years, there is evidence of Chinese activity. From friends who have lived in Yangon (formerly Rangoon) for 10 years I have learned about China’s activity in the north of Burma. Yes, roads were built, but also huge concessions were sought in terms of natural gas, minerals and gemstones. It was clearly an auspicious time in the modern history of this region.

The new movie *The Lady* tells the history of Aung San Suu Kyi very well. Her father, Aung San was a commander of the British Independence Army who was assassinated with entire cabinet just prior to achieving Burma’s independence from British colonial rule - when this daughter was only 2. Educated abroad, she married an English academic and was raising two sons in England when she received a call



that her mother had a serious stroke. Returning to Burma to care for her mother, she became involved in the democracy movement beginning to emerge and being brutally suppressed by the government. Her first speech outside Burma's most important Buddhist shrine, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, was attended by several thousand people – and then the reigning government saw her as a serious threat. Daughter of a national hero, carrying her father's name as part of her name, she became the rallying force for this new anti-government movement. Following her mother's death, she remained in Burma to carry on the family tradition of serving her people.

The story is well known of her years under house arrest (1989 – 2010) of the government's unwillingness to grant visas to her husband and sons when the husband was terminally ill at age 55, and of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded her, in absentia, with her eldest son giving her acceptance speech. Her dedication to freedom and democracy and her people has long been an inspiration the world over – but would it be possible to meet her and speak with her during my visit to her homeland.

With dedicated efforts on the part of the museum, our extraordinary art historian Olivier Bernier, and the local guide who knew her well, we were given a set time on a Sunday morning – her only personal rest time – to visit with her in her home – the very place she had so long been under house arrest. It meant chartering a special plane to meet the time schedule, and planning ahead as to how to best utilize the time we were so graciously given. It was very clear we must not ask any political questions or anything that might put her in danger. Thus, each of us would be personally introduced to her, with our personal credentials and a few minutes to speak to her, and then she would speak to our small group, followed by another opportunity to speak to her informally over tea.



Aung San Suu Kyi, a tall stately and serenely beautiful woman, very poised and dressed in a colorful but simple national dress of her country, with the traditional fresh flowers she always wears in her hair, entered the room to welcome us. She met us one by one, responding to our individual credentials with an amazing amount of knowledge about the various fields of our endeavors. I was able to ask her two important questions – first about whether she had started training her staff for the important positions they will soon begin, once elected to Parliament – and



she replied the training has already begun. Then I asked about the education of the children, which is sorely lacking, particularly in outlying regions. Many boys and girls are sent to monasteries during the school year – both for food and education – rather than for becoming life-long priests and nuns. She told me it is a huge problem, as there are no supplies or books, and she asked if I might be able to help in organizing a shipment of pencils, paper, and crayons for the school children. This is a project, which would have to involve shipping to the American Embassy in Yangon, as soon as our new ambassador is in place. I hope to bring this issue to our Board of Education and to the BHEF to see if our children can participate in the helping those of Burma/Myanmar. She told us of surviving her long years under house arrest by teaching herself to meditate each day and calm her mind. Along with small radio, it was all she had to occupy herself. Fortunately, her doctor was able to visit and bring her books occasionally. We too brought her books.

It was exciting and inspiring to meet this woman who suffered so much, but still stands so strong in her resolve to move her country toward democracy and improve the lives of her people. It was a truly memorable and meaningful experience at a historic moment.

## **Review of the San Francisco Tribal Art & Textile Art Show:**



Over the weekend of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>, the tribal art faithful assembled at the West Coast's sacred hall: the Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason in the city of San Francisco. The San Francisco Tribal & Textile Arts show, in its 26<sup>th</sup> year, is without a doubt the best tribal art venue in America and arguably, the world. There are two other high-end shows in Europe, but the emphasis is on African art. The SF show has much more depth, with top sellers from the US, Europe, and Australia offering a much wider range of materials and cultures: wood and stone sculptures, ceramics, masks, textiles, beadwork, jewelry from Africa, Oceania, Asia, and the Americas.

Exhibiting EAC members included: Ron Dammann (Pre-Columbian art), Joshua Dimondstein (African art), Michael Hamson (Oceanic art), Fily Keita (African art), Leonard Kalina (Pre-Columbian and Asian art), Stella Krieger (Textiles and Jewelry), Tom Murray (Tribal Asian art), Mike Glad (Photography), and Mark Johnson (Tribal Asian art).

After a few slow years, this time attendance was up, as well as enthusiasm. Not once, for the first time since 2009, did I hear potential buyers complain about the economy or put off purchases based on money woes. Serious sales were made



and at least one well-known Indonesia tribal art dealer had the best show, sales wise, ever! Most of the dealers I talked to reported better sales this year, although as usual some sellers left disappointed.

In my area, Tribal Asia and the Western Pacific, including Indonesia, there were many rare and important objects on display. There were two archaic Tau-Tau figures, several ancient Kayanic Dayak (Kayan, Bahau, Modang) wood sculptures, a crowned Nias Island figure, ancestral figures (Aitos) from Timor Island, a pair of Batak Pagars, a beautiful Kenyah Dayak dance mask, an old human figure style Toraja shrine door, painted Dayak shields, lots of weapons, Javanese batiks, and Iban ritual textiles. Known sales of Indonesia tribal art included a rare Dayak cave guardian (one of four of this quality, type and condition known on the market), an amazing Dayak chief's stool in the form of a dragon (Aso) with a super patina, a ladle from Timor Island with early provenance, one of the Tau-Tau figures, and a beautiful and unusual beaded vest/skirt set from Borneo Island.

As an added bonus to the festivities, Bay Area legend Tom Murray celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party on Saturday evening at the Fort Mason Gate House. Well over 300 of Tom's closest friends joined him for food, drink, and live music.



As usual, the super team put together by show organizers Bill Caskey and Liz Lees created the perfect venue for viewing great works of art: a large historic hall overlooking the beautiful San Francisco Bay. Besides the regular well-received opening night Gala, there was a colorful display of contemporary Moroccan rag rugs in the lobby.

## **UPCOMING EAC PROGRAMS:**

### **Program 7:**

**Connoisseur Home Tour - The Cheri and Edwin Silvers Collection**  
**March 18, 2012, 3pm to 5pm**

In a rare opportunity to view an important connoisseur's collection, EAC members are invited to join the Silvers for an afternoon of viewing and story telling. Their remarkable and diverse collection of African and Pre-Columbian art, complemented



by Native American, Indian, and modern pieces, recalls the genesis of the EAC and reminds us how collecting has evolved as materials became scarce, reproductions proliferated, prices escalated, and cultural patrimony laws developed.

Note: This program is full.

**Save the dates for upcoming EAC programs. EAC program chair will send out official announcements:**

**Program 8: Tour of “Plumed Serpent”, LACMA  
April 7, 2012**

**Program 9: Lecture on cochineal dyes at Grinnell residence, Ojai, CA  
May 12, 2012**

**Program 10: Tour of Ruderman art collection, Palos Verdes Estates, CA  
June (exact date to be determined)**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

### **ANTIQUES, OBJECTS & ART L.A.**

**Antique Show: Ethnographic to Modernism, Tribal, Folk Art, Devotional, Chicano Art, American Indian, Spanish Colonial, Etc. Fine Art, Furnishings, Decorative Arts, Textiles, Jewelry and More**

Regular Hours:

**Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10am – 6pm**

**Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 4pm**

Glendale Civic Auditorium

1401 N. Verdugo Rd., Glendale, CA 91208

For details, please go to: [www.antiquesandobjects.com](http://www.antiquesandobjects.com)

### **SALE OF EDWARD BOREIN ITEMS (and American Indian art) TO BENEFIT THE SANTA BARBARA HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

**March 16, 17, & 18, 2012, Fri/Sat: 10am to 5pm, Sun: 12pm to 5pm**

Covarrubias Adobe-Santa Barbara Historical Museum

136 E. De la Guerra Street, Santa Barbara, CA.

For details, please go to: [www.santabarbaramuseum.com](http://www.santabarbaramuseum.com)

Edward Borein Artist of the Old West (1872-1945) portrayed cowboy and Native American Indian life in the Southwest from direct experience. In the 1920's he moved to and opened a studio in Santa Barbara CA, a flourishing art colony, with such artists as Thomas Moran, Carl Oscar Borg, Frank Tenney Johnson and many



others. He was a personal friend with Will Rogers, Charlie Russell, Leo Carrillo, and Maynard Dixon. Borein was well known for his dry point etchings, pin and ink drawings and watercolors. The Santa Barbara Historical Museum is in the process of building the “John Edward Borein Gallery of Western Heritage and Research Center.”

**AN ALTERNATE MODERNITY:  
TWENTIETH CENTURY BALINESE PAINTING  
THE LEGACY OF QUETZALCOATL IN ANCIENT MEXICO  
A lecture by Professor Adrian Vickers, director, Australian Centre  
for Asian and Archaeology, the University of Sydney**

Sponsored by the Southern Asian Art Council and  
the UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

**March 19, 2012, 7pm**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art – Brown Auditorium  
5905 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA.

For details and RSVP, please respond by March 15<sup>th</sup> to: [saac@lacma.org](mailto:saac@lacma.org).

**CHILDREN OF THE PLUMED SERPENT:  
THE LEGACY OF QUETZALCOATL IN ANCIENT MEXICO**

**April 1, 2012 to July 1, 2012**

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
5905 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA.

For details, please go to: [www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

**ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF A NEW ETHNIC ART STUDY  
GROUP FOR EAC MEMBERS:**

It has come to the attention of the EAC Board that many EAC members would like additional opportunities to access information about unfamiliar forms of ethnic or tribal art. It was suggested that forming smaller region-specific “study groups” within the EAC might be one solution. The concept is for individuals, including academics, art dealers, seasoned buyers, and new collectors, interested in a specific area of tribal art could meet on a regular basis with other like-minded souls in an informal and intimate environment to discuss the details and cultural uses of specific objects. Additional discussions could focus on authentication issues, patrimony concerns, market trends, as well as buying, selling, and donation opportunities. The primary goal is to allow new collectors easy access to expert information from other members within the study group and to be exposed to a broader range of examples of tribal art. Eventually, we would like to see separate groups that will focus on African, Tribal Asian, American Indian, Pre-Columbian (or Ancient American), and Oceanic cultures.



These groups will be limited to EAC members only. The groups will be autonomous and self-supporting. These groups will create their own agendas (perhaps in connection with related EAC functions), meeting schedules, and meeting locations (most likely the private homes of individual members).

With that in mind, EAC Board Member and Tribal Asian art dealer Mark Johnson will form the first specific study group in the EAC. This new “Tribal Asian Study Group” will focus on the tribal arts of Asia and Insular Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on the material culture of Indonesia, Philippines, Formosa (Taiwan), Indochina, and the Himalayas. Members interested in joining this new group, should contact Mark Johnson directly at: [gallery@markajohnson.com](mailto:gallery@markajohnson.com).

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Dr. Nafissa Abdullah, Dr. Patti Anawalt, Bryce and Elaine Bannatye, Cindy Bendat, Robert and Phyllis Blaunstein, Dr. Elizabeth Brook, Ellie Farbstein, Gregory Ghent, Helen Goldberg, Wynn Hammer, David Miller, Drs. Polly & Alan Roberts, Karl Schober, Dr. Dan Silver, Alex Sorota, Ramona Swerdhoff, Kevin Goff and Nancy Thomas, Laura Thornhill, & Kim Walters.

Notice to all members: If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions that would improve your interest and participation in the EAC, please contact the EAC Board at: [info@ethnicartscouncil.org](mailto:info@ethnicartscouncil.org).



**Endnotes:**

Mark Johnson, editor: [gallery@markajohnson.com](mailto:gallery@markajohnson.com)

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**Contributors: MeraLee Goldman, Sam Singer (photos), Mark Johnson.**

**The Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles (EAC)**  
• **Dedicated to Advancing the Knowledge, Interest, and**  
**Appreciation of Ethnic Art •**  
[www.ethnicartscouncil.org](http://www.ethnicartscouncil.org)

**Become a member! Contact: Paula Meichtry at [paulameichtry3@gmail.com](mailto:paulameichtry3@gmail.com)**

