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SAMA-ALTOONA EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS MUSEUM'S TIBETAN ART COLLECTION

Altoona – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is pleased to announce the opening of *Tibetan Treasures: The Rezk Collection of Tibetan and Nepalese Art*. The exhibition, which includes approximately seventy objects of Tibetan and Nepalese art spanning eight centuries, opens January 25 and will remain on view through May 11.

The Museum's Rezk Collection is one of the major collections of Tibetan and Nepalese art in the United States. The exhibition was recently displayed at SAMA-Loretto to rave reviews and now returns to Altoona for its first showing in more than a decade. *Tibetan Treasures* features approximately seventy objects, all made within the context of Tibetan Buddhism, including thangkas (scroll paintings), block prints, sculpture, and ceremonial and ritual pieces. These range in date from the twelfth century to the twentieth, and give a fascinating overview of the rich iconography of Tibet's unique form of Buddhism. Personifying abstract ideas as gods, demons, monsters, and saints, the objects in the exhibition bring Buddhist concepts to life in a resonant and marvelously imaginative way.

"One does not need to be an expert on Tibetan Buddhism to appreciate this material," said SAMA Curator for Visual Arts, Dr. Scott Dimond. "The mellow colors and serene expressions of the figures invite contemplation regardless of the viewer's spiritual orientation. At the same time, the intricacy of these pieces fosters a sense not only of wonder, but also of respect for the devotion with which the artists approached their subjects."

To celebrate the exhibition, the Museum will host a series of events throughout the winter. Glenn H. Mullin, a world renowned Tibetologist, Buddhist writer and translator of classical Tibetan literature, will speak at a dinner and lecture event at the Altoona Museum on Wednesday, February 13. The dinner, catered by Bold, will begin at 6 p.m. Cost is \$40 per person. The following day, Mullin will speak at a Lunch a l'Art program at the Museum. Included in his presentation will be a showing of *The Sacred Sites of the Dalai Lamas: A Pilgrimage to The Oracle Lake*, a documentary film

starring Mullin. Cost for the program, which begins at noon, is \$13 or \$12 for SAMA members.

In March, the Museum will host a three-day Tibetan film festival. Over the course of March 5, 6 and 7, the Museum will show the films *Kundun*, *Vajra Sky over Tibet*, and *Why Has Boddhi-Dharma Left for the East?* The films will be shown from 1 to 3 p.m. each day, and refreshments will be provided. Cost is \$5 per day. Please call the Museum at (814) 946-4464 for reservations.

Additionally, the Museum will host a professional development workshop for artists, teachers, school administrators and the public on March 8. The workshop will include meditation practices, hands-on activities and an in-depth tour of the exhibition. The workshop will be led by Michael Allison, former SAMA curator and a Buddhist with twenty years of practice. Cost for the workshop is \$35 per person. For more information on the workshop, please contact SAMA Education Coordinator Jessica Campbell at (814) 472-3920.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is located in the Brett Building at 1210 Eleventh Avenue. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. Parking is available in the garage across the street or in metered spots in the lot at the rear of the building. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

This project was made possible through the AIE Partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency. State government funding for the arts depends upon an annual appropriation by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The PCA Arts-in-Education Partner in this region is the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art.