



URANCHIMEG (*ORNA*) TSULTEMIN

MEDIA KIT



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Uranchimeg (Orna) Tsultem

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ABOUT ORNA

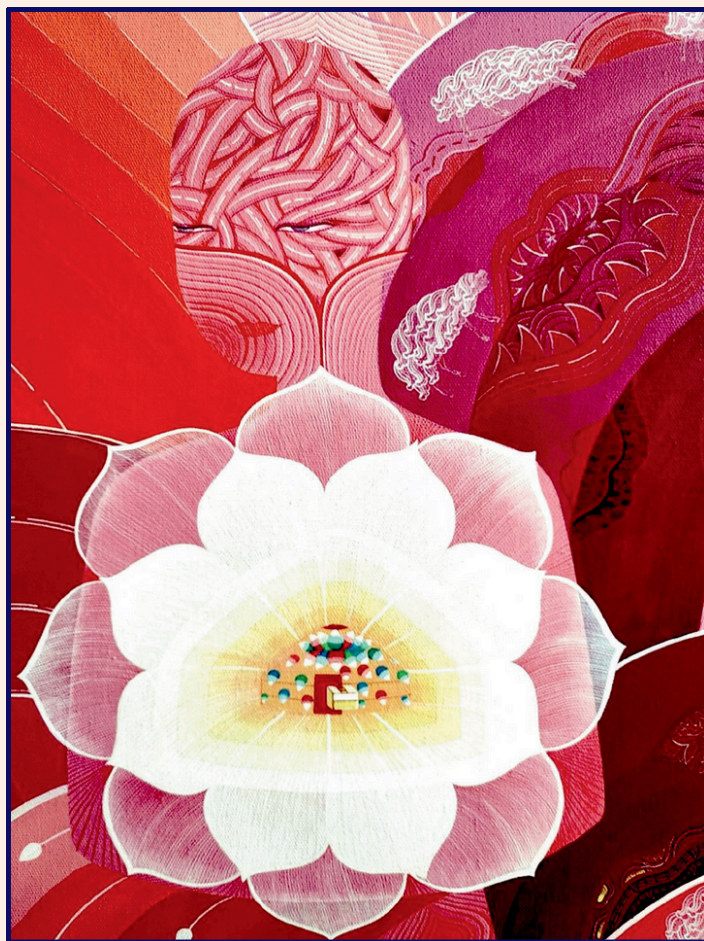
Professor Uranchimeg (Orna) Tsultemin is historian of Mongolian art and the first Mongolian curator active in the field since 1993.

Dr. Tsultemin is the Edgar and Dorothy Fehnel Chair of International Studies and an associate professor of art history at the Herron School of Art + Design, IU Indianapolis.

She received her Ph.D. in Art History from UC Berkeley in 2009 with a dissertation on 17th to 20th century Mongolian Buddhist art titled *Ikh Khüree: A Nomadic Monastery And The Later Buddhist Art Of Mongolia*. She has served as a lecturer for the History of Art Department at UC Berkeley, as a visiting associate professor at the National University of Mongolia, and as a Kluge Center scholar at the Library of Congress. In 2014-15, she worked on Mongolian Buddhist art and texts funded by the American Council of Learned Societies.



EXHIBIT GALLERY



MONGOL ZURAG: THE ART OF RESISTANCE

This pioneering exhibition introduces the Mongol Zurag ("Mongolian picture") tradition through historical and contemporary paintings by four prominent artists. Originating during the Cold War era, the tradition emerged amidst debates surrounding national identity and the preservation of cultural heritage, spurred by the socialist government's eradication of Buddhist culture in favor of Socialist Realism. Moving beyond discourses on national borders, the Mongol Zurag artists of today respond to the pressing global issues, from the global pandemic to political failures around the world and environmental crises. The artists in this exhibition continue the legacy of creativity as a means of resistance against various manifestations of power, whether it is the imposed Socialist Realism of the Cold War era that was made mainstream in Mongolia, or the pervasive influence of destructive neoliberalism in modern times.

Featured in:

Contemporis • Pikasus • Culturieuse (*Mentioned*) • Venezia News • My Art Guides •
Finestre sull'Arte • Hanart TZ Gallery • New Art Examiner (*Mentioned*)



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Orna Tsultem's Venice Exhibition Illuminates Mongolian Art—Often Missing from Western Museums

Los Angeles, CA – August 28, 2024 – Venice is currently hosting an exhibition by renowned art scholar and curator Uranchimeg (Orna) Tsultem, whose deep expertise in Mongolian art and cultural heritage is on full display in her latest showcase, *Mongol Zurag: the Art of Resistance*. This is Tsultem's third exhibition in Venice. In 2015, she was the inaugural curator of the first Mongolia Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. She also curated a solo show for prominent Mongolian artist Mugi in Venice that same year. Running from April 20 to November 24, 2024, *Mongol Zurag* brings together historical and contemporary works by four pivotal figures in the Mongolian Zurag tradition —Nyam-Osoryn Tsultem, Baasanjav Choijiljav, Baatarzorig Batjargal, and Urjinkhand Onon. In conjunction with the 60th Venice Biennale, the exhibit highlights the resilience of Mongolian creativity against the backdrop of historical and political upheavals. This curated display not only underscores the enduring significance of cultural resistance but also connects these traditional artworks to contemporary global dialogues.



Tsultem explains, "The creativity of these artists in mastering the Mongol Zurag style and its specific features—such as the flat, decorative quality, the delicate yet meticulous line work of the brush, the immersive viewing experience that demands both a close-up engagement and a panoramic, bird's-eye view—is uniquely saturated with their explicit disenchantment with the neoliberalism that continues to reinforce a global infrastructure which supports and enables the 'capitalization of nature' around the world, and in Mongolia in particular."

This project is especially meaningful for Tsultem because it marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of her father, Nyam-Osoryn Tsultem, a foundational figure in Mongolian art history whose paintings and drawings in this exhibition are being shown to the public for the first time. It's also a response to the ongoing exclusion of Mongolian art from Western institutions, a gap the curator has devoted her career to bridging.

In conjunction with the Venice exhibition, Dr. Tsultem is working on several book projects on Mongolian modern and contemporary art. Her forthcoming book from Columbia University Press on the topic of imagination and rituals in Mongolian Buddhist art. This research has been supported by ACLS, Robert Ho Foundation, Institute of Arts and Humanities-Indianapolis and Alice and Robert Schloss Faculty Award.

Dr. Tsultem's influential role in the art world is further exemplified by her extensive curatorial work, which has included major exhibitions in Shanghai, Hong Kong, New York City, and now Venice. Her past endeavors include curating the largest Mongolian art exhibition at Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong in 2011 and recent projects such as the exhibition of Tsherin Sherpa and dialogues with Gonkar Gyatso. She also curated the first and only Mongolian contemporary art exhibition in the United States, presented in 2000 at the E&J Frankel Gallery in NYC, which later traveled to the SomArts Cultural Center in San Francisco. The Edgar and Dorothy Fehnel Chair in International Studies at Indiana University's Herron School of Art and Design, she has been recognized with several honors, including the Alice and Robert Schloss Faculty Award in 2021, the College Art Association Publication Award in 2019, and multiple research grants. Additionally, she has delivered keynote speeches at major international conferences, such as the Annual Conference of the Mongol Zurag Art Society at the Chinggis Khan Museum in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and an international workshop on vernacular religion at the University of Bern, Switzerland, showcasing her expertise in Mongolian Buddhist art and global contemporary art. Dr. Tsultem's latest projects reinforce her position as a leading voice in the exploration of Mongolian art and its global implications.



About

Uranchimeg (Orna) Tsultem (Ph.D. UC Berkeley) is an art historian of Asian art with expertise in Mongolia. Her active curatorial practice covers Mongolian and global contemporary art with exhibitions in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Venice, and NYC. She is the curator of the first and only Mongolian contemporary art exhibition in the United States, which was shown in 2000 at E&J Frankel Gallery in NYC and traveled to SomArts Cultural Center in San Francisco.

Media Contact

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TALKING POINTS

- Curating the "Mongol Zurag: The Art of Resistance" Exhibition
- Unique Characteristics and Techniques of the Mongol Zurag Artistic Tradition
- Mongolian Art as a Form of Cultural and Political Resistance
- The Systematic Exclusion of Mongolian Art and Efforts to Integrate it into Western Museums
- Exploring Environmental Art Through Mongolian Cultural Practices
- The Impact of Curatorial Work in Major Global Art Cities
- Mongolia's first curator who introduced the curatorial practice to Mongolia in 1990s
- Invited curator for Mongolia's first Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015
- Curating the first and only Mongolian modern and contemporary art exhibition in New York City and San Francisco in 2001.

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

- Art Book award for the monograph A Monastery on the Move: Art and Politics in Later Buddhist Mongolia (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, c2021) by the International Convention of Asia Scholars in Leiden, the Netherlands, 2023
- IU Presidential Arts and Humanities Inaugural Fellow, 2022-2024
- IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute (IAHI) Research Grant, 2022
- Enhanced Mentoring Program with Opportunities for Ways to Excel in Research (EMPOWER) grant, IUPUI, 2021
- Alice and Robert Schloss Faculty Award, 2021
- Summer Academy Fellow, IUPUI Institute for Arts and Humanities (IAHI), 2020
- New Frontiers Exploratory Grant, 2020
- College Art Association Publication Award, 2019
- American Council of Learned Societies/Robert Ho Foundation Collaborative Research Award, 2014-2016
- John W. Kluge Fellowship, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2013
- Khyentse Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, San Francisco, 2012-2014
- Josephine De Karman Dissertation Completion Fellowship, San Dimas, CA, 2008-2009
- Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, Washington D.C., 2007-2008
- Institute of East Asian Studies Fellowship, UC Berkeley, Fall 2009
- Fulbright/IIE Fellowship, 2002-2005
- Monbusho Fellowship, Ministry of Education of Japan, 1997-1999