Eric Huntington

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Education

2013 PhD, University of Chicago
in South Asian Languages and Civilizations

2009 MA, University of Chicago
in South Asian Languages and Civilizations

2007 MTS, Harvard Divinity School
in Buddhist Studies

2005 MFA, Ohio State University
in Painting and Drawing

2003 BFA, Rhode Island School of Design
in Illustration

2000 BA with General Honors, University of Chicago
in Philosophy and Allied Fields

Appointments

2021–Present Rice University
2024–Present T. T. and W. F. Chao Associate Professor [link]
2021–2024 T. T. and W. F. Chao Assistant Professor
Department of Transnational Asian Studies

2024–2025 Harvard University
Visiting Associate Professor
Department of History of Art and Architecture

2019–2021 Rice University
Annette and Hugh Gragg Postdoctoral Fellow
Chao Center for Asian Studies

2017–2019 Stanford University
Postdoctoral Fellow in the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies
with an appointment as Lecturer in Religious Studies

2014–2017 Princeton University
Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts
with an appointment as Lecturer in Religion

2013–2014 Washington University (Saint Louis) [Shared with Saint Louis Art Museum]
Korff Postdoctoral Fellow in Art History & Archaeology

2013–2014 Saint Louis Art Museum [Shared with Washington University]
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in South Asian Art

2012 School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Adjunct Faculty

2009–2011 University of Chicago
2011 Lecturer for First Year Sanskrit

2009–2010 Teaching Assistant for Sanskrit
2010–2012 Graduate Curatorial Intern, Smart Museum of Art
2010–2012 Research Assistant for Professor Dan Arnold

2003–2005 The Ohio State University
Graduate Associate, independently teaching Beginning Drawing

2002–2003 Rhode Island School of Design
2003 Teaching Assistant for Master Painting Techniques
2002–2003 Teaching Assistant for Introductory Painting I & II

Publications

Monographs

2018 *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press) [link]
[296 pp., 153 illus., 118 in color, 1 map, 7 x 10 in.]

Awards

- Edward C. Dimock Jr. Prize in the Indian Humanities, American Institute of Indian Studies, 2018 [link]
- Millard Meiss Grant, College Art Association, 2017 [link]
- Barr Ferree Subvention, Princeton University, 2017

Reviews

- David Shulman, "Buddhist Baedekers," in *The New York Review of Books*, March 26, 2020 [link]
- Simon Wickhamsmith (2020), *The Newsletter* (International Institute for Asian Studies) 86 [link]
- Yi Ding (2020), *Reading Religion* [link]
- Lan A. Li (2021), *Isis* (History of Science Society) 112:1, 176–177 [link]
- Paulami Guha Biswas (2022), *Contemporary South Asia* 30:2, 307–308 [link]
- Geoffrey Samuel (2023), *Religions of South Asia* 17:2 [link]

Edited Volumes

2022 *Overlapping Cosmologies in Asia: Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Leiden: Brill), co-edited with Bill M. Mak [link]
[297 pp., 63 illus., 10 contributors]

Reviews

- Joseph Chadwin, *Religious Studies Review*, November 16, 2022 [link]
- Andrea Bréard, *Revue des Questions Scientifiques* 193(3–4), 2022 [link]
- Thierry Meynard, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10:1, January 9, 2023 [link]
- Dan Mao, *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, April 25, 2024 [link]
- Dagmar Schäfer, *Aestimatio: Sources and Studies in the History of Science vol. 5 (2024)*, October 10, 2025 [link]
- Ji Ho Yi, *Studies in Chinese Religions*, October 24, 2025 [link]

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Chapters

2025 "Comparing Buddhist Meta-images: On Representations as Objects, Likenesses, and Presences," in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 47 (2024)*, 105–171 (published July 15, 2025) [link]

2025 "Movements and Patterns in Embodied Landscapes for Art," in *Countless Sands: Medieval Buddhists and their Environments*, ed. Jason Protass and Jeffrey Moser (University of Hawai'i Press), 70-89 [print] [online]

2023 "Wheel of Existence," in *Himalayan Art in 108 Objects*, ed. Elena Pakhoutova and Karl Debreczeny (Rubin Museum of Art) [print] [online]

2022 "Introduction," co-authored with Bill M. Mak, in *Overlapping Cosmologies in Asia*, ed. Bill M. Mak and Eric Huntington (Brill), 1–16 [link]

2022 "Buddhist Cosmology in Bhutanese Murals: A Visual Negotiation Between *Abhidharma* and Kālacakra Systems," in *Overlapping Cosmologies in Asia*, ed. Bill M. Mak and Eric Huntington (Brill), 230–256 [link]

2022, 2024 "Buddhist Cosmology" in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Richard Payne and Georgios T. Halkias (Oxford University Press) [9,000 words] [print] [online]

2019 "Ritual Structure and Material Culture in the *Guide to Bodhisattva Practice*" in *Readings of Śāntideva's Guide to Bodhisattva Practice,* ed. Jonathan Gold and Douglas Duckworth (Columbia University Press), 132–145 [link]

2019 "Seeing the Unseen: Vision, Space, and Time in a Tantric Mandala" in *Awaken: A Tibetan Buddhist Journey Toward Enlightenment*, ed. John Henry Rice and Jeff Durham (VMFA), 180–193 [link]

2018 "Himalayan Cosmologies of Offering: A Comparison of Newar and Tibetan Treasure-maṇḍalas in Practice and Art," in *South Asian Studies* 34:2, 154–68 [link]

2017 "Image and Text in Newar Buddhist Ritual Manuals," in *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 13.2, 175–205 [link]

Essays

2021 "Buddhist Worlds of Colour in Text, Practice and Art," in *Green Sky, Blue Grass: Colour Coding Worlds*, ed. Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Kerber), 116–127 [link]

2020 "Layered Cosmologies in Himalayan Buddhist Shrines," in *Orientations* 51:5 (September/October), 48–57

Book Reviews

2018 "Buddhist Spaces: Beyond Secularity," a review of Justin Thomas McDaniel's *Architects of Buddhist Leisure* for *Marginalia*

2009 Booknote review of Gudrun Bühnemann's *Buddhist Iconography and Ritual in Paintings and Line Drawings from Nepal* in *Religious Studies Review*

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

2019–2021	Gragg Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University
2017–2019	Ho Center for Buddhist Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship, Stanford University
2017	Dunhuang Buddhist Studies Workshop, Woodenfish Foundation and Dunhuang Academy (June)
2015	University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences Grant, Princeton University
2014–2017	Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellowship, Princeton University
2013–2014	Korff Postdoctoral Fellowship in Art History & Archaeology, Washington University
2013–2014	Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in South Asian Art, Saint Louis Art Museum
2012–2013	Provost's Dissertation-Year Fellowship, Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago
2012	Committee on Southern Asian Studies Dissertation Write-up Fellowship (Summer), University of Chicago
2007–2012	Graduate Aid Initiative Fellowship, Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago
2000–2003	Honors at Rhode Island School of Design
1996–2000	Dean's List at the University of Chicago
1996–2000	National Merit Scholar

Invited Lectures

2025	"Art and Authority in Embodied Landscapes," *Buddhist Cosmopolis: Temporal, Spatial, and Technological Dimensions* conference, Yale University (September 26–28)
2025	"Cosmology in Himalayan Buddhist Art," SOAS, University of London (May 6)
2024	"Buddhist Art as Representation: A Comparative Perspective," Numata invited conference on *Buddhist Art History in Medieval South and Southeast Asia,* University of California, Berkeley (October 5)
2024	"Four Views on Buddhist Maṇḍalas: An Introduction to Art and Practice," Villanova University (September 10)
2024	"On Materiality and Presence in Buddhist Art," Harvard Buddhist Studies Forum, Harvard University (April 3)
2023	"Cosmology in Himalayan Buddhist Art," SOAS, University of London (Oct 30)
2023	"What Are You Seeing? A Look at Some Reliefs at Borobudur," Borobudur Site Conference, Princeton University (July 29)

2022 "Changing Forms and Contexts of Buddhist Cosmology," University of Macau (November 7)

2022 "Putting the World to Work: Applied Cosmology in Buddhist Thought and Practice," National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, *The Imagination and Imaginal Worlds in the Mirror of Buddhism*, Mangalam Research Center, Berkeley (June 16)

2022 "Three Yoginis in Tibetan Buddhism," Detroit Institute of the Arts (June 6)

2022 "Foundations of Buddhism in South Asia," School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (May 6)

2022 "Buddhist Geosomatics," Harvard Buddhist Studies Forum, Harvard University (March 21)

2021 "Color across Science and the Humanities," *Humanities NOW* series, Rice University (October 5)

2021 "Seeing Space through Images: Case Studies in Buddhist Geoaesthetics," Five College Buddhist Studies Faculty Seminar series, Smith College (September 23)

2021 *Approaching Buddhist Art*, a series of two lectures ("Images, Meditation, and Ritual" and "How to View a Buddhist Mandala") at Dawn Mountain (June 16 & 23)

2021 "Embodied Buddhist Landscapes in India, Nepal, and Tibet," University of Texas at Austin (April 15)

2021 "Approaching the Humanities through Visual Culture," Medieval and Early Modern Studies Keynote Lecture, Rice University (April 10)

2021 "Four Views on Buddhist Maṇḍalas (at Dunhuang and Beyond)," Dunhuang Foundation (January 28)

2020 "In Light of Color: An Interdisciplinary and Transnational View on Buddhist Chromatics," Transnational Asia Research Initiative, Rice University (November 19)

2020 "Himalayan Cosmologies of Offering," University of Michigan (September 8)

2020 "Buddhist Visions of the After-Death," Museum of Fine Arts Houston (January 30)

2019 "A Nepalese-Style Offering Ritual in Buddhist History," at the *Dharma and Punya: Buddhist Ritual Art of Nepal* Exhibition Symposium, Harvard University (December 6)

2019 "Seeing the World in a Buddhist Temple," Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Rice University (October 30)

2019 "Body/Landscape/Art: Buddhist Images and Corporeal Geographies," Transnational Asia Research Initiative, Rice University (October 25)

2019 "Buddhist Cosmology at Work," Buddhist and Silk Road Studies, Georgetown University (September 30)

2019 "Aesthetics of Place: Buddhist Art and its Contexts," Center for South Asia, Stanford University (May 9)

2019 "Places of Art: Buddhist Imagery, Spatiality, and Landscape," *Buddhist Geoaesthetics* conference, Brown University (May 3)

2018 "Visions of Buddhist Mandalas: Meaning, Form, and Function in Tantric Art," *Focus* Series, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (December 7)

2018 "On Buddhist Images: Materiality and Constructedness in Religious Representations," Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford (November 1)

2018 "Approaching Religious Visual Culture," Religion Department Colloquium, Stanford University (February 15)

2017 "Re-centering Buddhist Cosmology: Concepts of Geographic Space in Text, Ritual, and Art," Numata lecture at the University of Calgary (November 3)

2017 "Frames of Scale and Geo-Spatial Transformations in the Buddhist Maṇḍala," *Asian Representations and Constructions of Space* Series, Stanford University (October 12)

2017 "Expressive Cosmologies: Depictions of the Buddhist Universe in Text, Art, and Ritual," East Asian Studies Colloquium, Princeton University (March 29)

2016 "From Unity to Infinity: The Scalable Cosmos in Buddhist Offering Objects," at *Scale: A Colloquium*, Princeton University (April 16)

2015 "Buddhist Cosmology in the Art of Bhutan," Wonkwang University, Iksan, South Korea (June 20)

2010 "Spatial Representation in Buddhist Art and Image Consecration," Faculty Seminar Research Lecture, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan (July)

Conference Papers

2025 "Buddha Image as Object and Presence: A Comparative Approach," Twentieth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Leipzig, Germany (August 12)

2023 "Maṇḍala Offerings in Himalayan Visual and Material Culture," Eighth International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology & Arts, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China (November 10–13)

2019 "Layered Mandalic Cosmologies in Himalayan Buddhist Shrines," American Council for Southern Asian Art, Edinburgh (November)

2018 "Ritual and Representation: Performance to Vision in Himalayan Buddhist Offerings," *Religion and Ritual: The Poetics and Performance of the Ineffable*, Symposium at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (April)

2017 "Disembodied Images: The Materiality of Objects in the Buddhist Landscape," American Academy of Religion, Boston (November)

2017 "Cosmology as a Framework for Expression in Text and Image: Indic Sources and Buddhist Functions," International Association of Buddhist Studies, Toronto (August)

2017 "Translocation and Transformation: A Geo-Spatial Cosmology of Tantric Mandalas," Association for Asian Studies, Toronto (March)

2017 "Entering the Monastery, Exiting the World: Cosmological Murals in Buddhist Architecture," College Art Association, New York (February)

2016 "Cosmological Murals at the Entrance to Sacred Spaces: The Bhavacakra and Cakravāla in Tibetan Buddhism," American Academy of Religion, San Antonio (November)

2016 "'Himalayan' Cosmologies: Ritual and Representation in Nepal and Tibet," College Art Association, Washington DC (February)

2015 "Creating Universes: Divergent Ritual Cosmologies in Nepalese and Tibetan Contexts," American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia (November)

2015 "Buddhist Cosmology in Bhutanese Murals: An Iconographic Understanding of the Negotiation Between Kālacakra and Abhidharmakośa Cosmologies," Asian Studies Conference Japan (ASCJ), Tokyo, Japan (June 20–21) and the International Workshop on Traditional Sciences in Asia, Kyoto, Japan (June 17–19)

2014 "Offering the Universe: Divergent Representations of the Cosmos in Nepalese and Tibetan Rituals," Midwest Art History Society Conference, Saint Louis, Missouri (April)

2011 "Reading the Mysteries: Visual and Textual Encoding in a Newar Buddhist Ritual Manual," South Asian Studies Association Conference, Richmond, Virginia (April)

2010 "Image Construction as Divinity Construction in a Buddhist Sculpture Manual," North American Graduate Student Conference in Buddhist Studies, University of Toronto (April)

Exhibitions and Events

2023 *Sacred Arts of Tibet* sand mandala creation by Gaden Shartse monks, Rice University (October 16–20)

2020 *Newar Buddhist Rituals*, two lectures and a ritual performance by Naresh Man Bajracharya, Tribhuvan University (Nepal), Rice University (February)

2014 Curator and designer for "Facets of the Three Jewels: Tibetan Buddhist Art from the Collections of George E. Hibbard and the Saint Louis Art Museum," an exhibition of Tibetan paintings and sculptures at the Saint Louis Art Museum

2012 Co-curator, designer, and photographer for "Mirrors of Clay: Reflections of Ancient Andean Life in Ceramics from the Sam Olden Collection," an exhibition of ceramics at Jackson State University

2012 Museum layout & graphic design for "Awash in Color," an exhibition of Japanese and Western color prints at the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago

2010–2011 Curator for "Tibetan Art & Culture," an exhibit of photographs and original drawings at the University of Chicago, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and The Ohio State University

2010–2011 Museum layout & graphic design for "Tragic Muse," an exhibition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European art at the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago

2010 *Vajrayāna Buddhism*, a week-long series of lectures and Sanskrit readings with Naresh Man Bajracharya, Director of Buddhist Studies at Tribhuvan University (Nepal), University of Chicago (May)

Faculty Seminars, Working Groups, and Other Collaborations

2022–present Borobudur Working Group, Princeton University

2022 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, *The Imagination and Imaginal Worlds in the Mirror of Buddhism* (as faculty lecturer), Mangalam Research Center, Berkeley (June 12–24)

2022 Detroit Institute for the Arts, workshop on yoginis across Asian religions (June 6 & 28)

2021–present *Buddhist Bodies: An Introduction and Collective*, University of Winnipeg

2020 *Oceans, Waters, and Aquifers*, a comparison of fluid movements across spatial visualizations, dir. Lan Li, Rice University [link]

2009 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, *Buddhist Traditions of Tibet and the Himalayas* (as participant), College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

Languages

- Sanskrit (reading)
- Tibetan (reading)
- French (reading)
- Pali (reading)
- Hindi (reading)

Professional Memberships

- American Academy of Religion (AAR)
- International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS)
- Association for Asian Studies (AAS)
- American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA)
- College Art Association (CAA)

Courses Taught

Introduction to Buddhist Art and Architecture

Rice, 2026 (Spr)

Introduction to Buddhist Arts of Space and Place [link]

Harvard, 2025 (Spr)

Art and Embodiment in Buddhism [link]

Harvard, 2024 (Aut)

Asian Religious Environments

Rice, 2024 (Spr)

Religions from India

Rice, 2026 (Spr)

Rice, 2023 (Spr)

Buddhism and Science

Rice, 2022 (Aut)

Gender and Society in Buddhism

Rice, 2022 (Aut)

South Asian Studies [co-taught with Prof. Lisa Balabanlilar]

Rice, 2023 (Aut)
Rice, 2022 (Spr)

Storytelling in Buddhism: From Ancient Stones to Graphic Novels

Rice, 2025 (Aut)
Rice, 2024 (Spr)
Rice, 2023 (Spr)
Rice, 2022 (Spr)

Asian Philosophy in Context

Rice, 2025 (Aut)
Rice, 2023 (Aut)
Rice, 2021 (Aut)

Religion and Art in Transnational Asia [co-taught with Prof. Shih-shan Huang]

Rice, 2021 (Aut)
Rice, 2020 (Aut)

Geographies of Religion in South Asia

Rice, 2020 (Spr)

Tantric Buddhism (graduate level)

Stanford, 2019 (Win)

Creating the Universe: Buddhist Science, Ritual, and Art

Stanford, 2018 (Win)
Princeton, 2017 (Spr)
Princeton, 2015 (Spr)
Washington University, 2014 (Spr)

Buddhist Art and Material Culture: The Virtues of Objects

Princeton, 2016 (Spr)

The Buddhist Individual: Society, History, and Gender

Princeton, 2015 (Aut)

Visualizing Buddhism: Art, Religion, Philosophy
Princeton, 2014 (Aut)
Washington University, 2014 (Spr)

Buddhist Heroes: Buddhism through the Literature of its Exemplars
School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2012 (Spr)

First Year Sanskrit (language)
University of Chicago, 2011 (Win)