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**Florida CraftArt**501 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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**Florida CraftArt presents:**

***Sacred Art Tour of Tibetan Buddhist Monks***

**January 7-12, 2020**

*Dalai Lama sanctioned monks will create a healing sand mandala with millions of colored grains of sand, along with artistic workshops and cultural events,* ***including a minute of worldwide healing.***

Eight Tibetan monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery in India will again bring to St. Petersburg teachings of ancient ways and beliefs that create the possibility of global peace, non-violent conflict resolution, compassion and wisdom. Highlighting their trip to St. Petersburg will be the creation of a Sacred Healing Medicine Sand Mandala (Buddha-Men Lha) in the Florida CraftArt exhibition gallery. The Medicine Buddha is the Buddha of Healing-- the manifestation of the healing energy of all enlightened beings. On the Second Saturday ArtWalk, people can meet the monks at 5 p.m. and then **at 6 p.m. participate in a worldwide meditation to promote healing of the country, the earth, friends and family.** It will be a time to come in harmony with the healing powers of the Universe.

This visit is the third time the monks have visited St. Petersburg and is part of the monk’s nationwide 2020 Sacred Arts Tour to share and preserve the spiritually artistic expression of the Tibetan culture. The monks demonstrate and express their peaceful ways through living art, ritual, dance and chanting.

During the opening ceremony on Tuesday, January 7, at 10:15 a.m., the monks will chant, play long Tibetan horns and consecrate the site of the mandala. Immediately following, they begin the creation of the mandala by first drawing the lines for the design on a base and then begin filling it in which colored sand. Throughout the six-day creation of the Sacred Mandala, the monks pour millions of grains of sand through a *Chakpur*, which is a funnel-shaped tool. This funnel is filled with colored sand and then rasped to release a fine stream of sand.

Sand paintings are an ancient art form of Tibetan Buddhism. “Mandala” is a Sanskrit word meaning “cosmogram” or “world in harmony.” Drawn in three-dimensional forms of sand, this art is called *dul-tson-kyil-khor* in Tibetan, signifying “mandala of colored powders.” In general, mandalas have an outer, inner and secret meaning. On the outer level, they represent the world in its divine form; on the inner level, they represent a map of which the ordinary human mind is transformed into the enlightened mind; and on the secret level, they predict the primordially perfect balance of the subtle energies of the body and the clear light dimensions of the mind. The creation of a sandpainting is said to affect purification and healing on these three levels.

Admission is free to the gallery to see the monks and the mandala. In addition to the continuation of the creation of the Sacred Mandala throughout the monk’s St. Petersburg visit, the following events will be held, and tickets can be obtained at https://floridacraftart.org/exhibitions/sacred-art-tour-of-tibetan-monks-2020/

**Schedule:  
The monks will chant daily at 10:15 a.m. and 4 p.m.** There will an **opening ceremony with chanting, horns and drums at 10:15 a.m. on Tuesday, January 7.**

On **Wednesday, January 8, at 5:30 – 7 p.m.,** there will be a reception at Florida CraftArt featuring Tibetan Culture, including the Lucky Dance and the Snow Lion Dance (FCA members $20, nonmembers $30).

On **Saturday, January 11, at 10:30 a.m. to noon, and 2 to 4 p.m.** the monks will show gallery visitors how to paint Tibetan symbols on rocks - each participant can paint their own rock as a keepsake. (FCA members $15, nonmembers $25). During the Second Saturday ArtWalk from 5 to 7 p.m. people can come and meet the monks and **at 6 p.m. participate in a worldwide meditation to promote healing of the country, the earth, friends and family.** It will be a time to come in harmony with the healing powers of the Universe.

On **Sunday, January 12, at noon**, the monks will finalize the Mandala. At 1 p.m., they will hold the Dissolution Ceremony. During this ceremony of gratitude and blessing, the Mandala is swept up and shared with our community and will be followed by a procession to the bay, where the monks will deposit sand from the mandala and perform a Buddhist blessing. Afterward, the balance of the sand is given to attendees with instructions to “spread healing in your world.”

The Sacred Art Tour supports the Drepung Gomang Monastery which houses 2,000 monks, provides food, health care and education for monks living in exile from their home country of Tibet. Between 1959 and 1961, most of Tibet’s 6,000 monasteries were destroyed during China’s Cultural Revolution. The Dalai Lama escaped, accepted land from India, and established the Tibetan government in exile. Since 1959, Tibetans have reestablished their monasteries in India, housing tens of thousands of monks, and creating schools, hospitals, libraries and archives so they can continue their traditions and culture. Handcrafted items by Tibetan artisans will be available for purchase during the cultural tour.

As the monks have taken vows of poverty, Florida CraftArt is responsible for housing and feeding them during their visit. The housing of the monks is sponsored by Beacon 430 and Unitarian Universalist of St. Petersburg. The following restaurants are hosting the monks: Bangkok Thai, Central Melt, Cider Press Café, Cops n Kids, Maple Street Biscuit, Peace4Tarpon, Renzo’s, Stacie’s Cottage Café and Tropez, Wings Bookstore, Liz Rogers and Simon Cooper.

Florida CraftArt is located at 501 Central Avenue in St. Petersburg. For more information, visit [www.FloridaCraftArt.org](http://www.FloridaCraftArt.org) or call (727) 821-7391. Admission is free. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Florida CraftArt is a nonprofit organization founded in 1951 and headquartered in St. Petersburg. Its mission is to grow the statewide creative economy by engaging the community and advancing Florida’s fine craft artists and their work. Fine craft art is presented in its 2,500-square-foot retail gallery and curated exhibitions are featured in its adjacent exhibition gallery. Florida CraftArt is the *only* statewide organization offering artists a platform to show and sell their work.

**CUTLINES (More images of work available on request. Photo and video opportunities available.)**

**2019-20 Monks Sacred Arts Tour.jpg**  
The Sacred Art Tour is by Tibetan monks from the Dalai Lama’s Drepung Gomang Monastery in India.

**Medicine Buddha for healing.jpg**The Medicine Buddha is the Buddha of Healing-- the manifestation of the healing energy of all enlightened beings. On the Second Saturday ArtWalk, people can meet the monks at 5 p.m. and then at 6 p.m. participate in a worldwide meditation to promote healing of the country, the earth, friends and family. It will be a time to come in harmony with the healing powers of the Universe.

**Monks Dissolution Photo by Doc John-2969.jpg**  
When the mandala is completed, the monks have a Dissolution Ceremony in which they destroy the mandola. The monks and guests of the ceremony carry sand to Tampa Bay and bless the water. Afterward, the balance of the sand is given to attendees with instructions to “spread healing in your world.”

**Monks' Tour promo 2019-2020.jpg**  
The Sacred Art Tour supports the Drepung Gomang Monastery which houses 2,000 monks, provides food, health care and education for monks living in exile from their home country of Tibet.

**Monks-Snow Lion dance.jpg**On January 8, there will be an evening of Tibetan culture including a performance of the Snow Lion Dance followed by the Lucky Dance.