REVIVING THE ENVIRONMENT: WAYS TO HONOR THE DEAD AND LIVING
Talks & Lectures, and part of Thursday Nights, Tomb Treasures
Free with museum admission

APR
27
BUY TICKETS
7-9:30 PM
Samsung Hall

At a time when environmental awareness is so crucial, specialists and scientists are considering ways of burying the dead that are more environmentally friendly but still effectively honor an individual’s life. Katrina Spade, founder of the Urban Death Project, and Karla Maria Rothstein of Columbia University’s DeathLAB start our discussion of new urban development projects envisioned to achieve this purpose. Angela Hennessy, artist and associate professor at California College of the Arts, joins the discussion with perspective on historical and contemporary funeral practices, and also how art can be used to respond to grief and loss. Roy Remer, director of education and training at the Zen Hospice Project, moderates the discussion.

Lead Sponsor


Thursday Night Sponsors

Thursday Nights are supported in part by The Hearst Foundations, Inc., The Joseph & Mercedes McMicking Foundation, and Dodge & Cox.
BODY CONSCIOUS
PUBLIC PROGRAMS DELVE INTO DEATH

Some may think the topic morbid, others grim, and for some, the very mention would be considered inauspicious. But it’s a thought that can’t help but creep into your mind when viewing Tomb Treasures: What happens to us after we die?

Rather than shy away from this difficult subject matter, the museum will present a variety of public programs that address burial practices and concepts of the afterlife.

“We wanted to take death and the rituals around it during the Han dynasty, and look at how these practices are being approached now,” says Allison Wyckoff, the museum’s manager of public programs.

The centerpiece of the programming will be the Apr. 27 public conversation “Reviving the Environment: Ways to Honor the Dead and Living,” which will bring together leaders who are considering innovative ways of handling the human body after death.

Katrina Spade, founder of the Urban Death Project in Seattle, has proposed a revolutionary concept facilities that turn bodies into soil. Over several weeks, bodies become organic material that loved ones can take home to fertilize a garden or donate to a public park — a more environmentally friendly use of space than a graveyard.

Spade will be joined by Karla Maria Rothstein, director of Columbia University’s DeathLAB (affiliated with the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation), which develops design strategies aimed to revolutionize how cities accommodate the dead. A series of projects, for example, envision civic space illuminated by a shifting constellation of individual memorial lights fueled by energy “latent in the human body after life expires.”

The rather mature topic of the afterlife will be handled in a child-friendly way on Family Fun Days (every first and third Sunday, from March through May), with art-making activities that invite guests young and old to consider the questions. What makes a good life? What would you take with you into the afterlife?

To root these ideas in the context of the exhibition, Fan Jeremy Zhang, senior associate curator of Chinese art, will give a talk on Saturday, Apr. 22, about Han practices of honoring the dead and extending a person’s spiritual life.

“We’re using this exhibition as a jumping-off point to challenge and perhaps change the ways people think about death,” Wyckoff says.

TOMB TREASURES
PREVIEW PARTY
AFTERLIFE

Celebrate life and the afterlife. Live it up and get down to the sounds of a swinging New Orleans-style brass band and tunes spun by DJ Proof. Stop by edgy education stations, including special guest Good Vibrations, and pop-up bars serving craft cocktails and beer. Need to cool down? Head into the galleries and preview our new feature exhibition Tomb Treasures, a trove of fascinating objects buried with Han-dynasty royals to ensure a grand afterlife. Savor the art, music and mystical vibes while imagining what awaits in the next world.

Join the Lunar Society and Save!

Calling all art lovers who like to party. Save big with this special VIP package: For $139, enjoy 12 months of membership at the Member + Lunar Society level, which includes unlimited museum admission for two and invitations to exciting evening events. Plus, get two free tickets to the Afterlife party and a free signature cocktail or beer in the exclusive pop-up Lunar Lounge.

Private Tours
Bring Art to Life

Bring your friends and family to explore Tomb Treasure with a private, docent-led tour. Members enjoy a 20% discount on the docent fee. (Regular price $125 / member price $100 per tour for up to 20 people.)