Exhibit Opening

_Infinite Compassion: Avalokiteshvara in Asian Art_

A collaboration with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art

**Opening Date:** Saturday, October 22, 2016  
**Time:** 10:00am – 4:00pm  
**Location:** Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Bldg A  
**Tickets:** ½ price admission all day ($4 Adults, $2.50 seniors/students, $1 children – Free for members of the Staten Island Museum and the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art)

*Staten Island, NY – September 20, 2016* The Staten Island Museum is opening its first new exhibition at their Snug Harbor location since the facility opened one year ago. **Infinite Compassion: Avalokiteshvara in Asian Art**, a collaboration with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, introduces visitors to Buddhist art, culture, and belief across Asia.

After the Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, is the most ubiquitous deity in Mahayana Buddhism. This revered **Bodhisattva** promotes compassion. A Bodhisattva is an individual who, upon achieving enlightenment, renounces his/her own Nirvana (extinction) in order to help others achieve enlightenment. The exhibit will interpret this aspect of Buddhist art with 46 sculptures, ritual objects, paintings (thangkas) and photographs from India, Tibet, China, Nepal and Japan, as well as contemporary Asian art.

Guest Curator and scholar **Patricia Karetzky**, (O. Munsterberg Chair of Asian Art, Bard College), developed the exhibition content in collaboration with the two museums. Additional works will be on loan from the **Rubin Museum of Art**; the **Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College** and private collectors.

This year-long exhibition will also host new programs such as: **Meditation 101** in the gallery, **Community Days** and **Family Days**, bus tours between the Staten Island Museum and the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, and special guest speaker events. In an effort to apply the tenets of **Infinite Compassion**, the Museum will partner with the **social practice and performance artist Ori Alon** and his **Center for Supportive Bureaucracy (CSB)** to administer **Forgiver’s Licenses** and **Compassion Punch Cards**. The CSB project, through Mr. Alon, creates custom designed “licenses, certificates, citations” which cut to the heart of growing kindness, love, acceptance, creativity, and compassion through a parody of bureaucracy. These symbolic documents identify and encourage individuals to perform compassionate acts, and applications will be part of community events through the year.

“This long awaited collaboration with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art will allow visitors to enjoy two unique New York institutions and see collection treasures in a new light. Also- the notion of compassion is bigger than any one exhibition, activity, or tradition. This Island, our families, neighbors, and our environment…all need to give and receive more compassion. As the Dali Lama explains ‘The topic of compassion is not at all religious business; it...”
is important to know it is human business, it is a question of human survival”. Diane Matyas, Vice President of Exhibitions and Programs, Staten Island Museum

Modern and Contemporary Artists
As Buddhism remains vital in the modern world, Avalokiteshvara’s message of compassion and benevolence is an important symbol. Visitors will see traditional works of Buddhist art, work produced in the modern era, and western artists that were inspired by the Bodhisattva’s imagery. Losang Gyatso (Tibet, Lives in USA) strives to keep Tibetan traditions alive while using contemporary media and techniques in his digital photograph of a Tibetan mandala featuring the goddess Tara (one of Avalokiteshvara’s manifestations). He also uses a modern minimalist format and beautiful wood, to create a contemporary homage to the scriptures. Xin Song (b. China, American) uses paper cutting, a traditional folk art in China, on a grand scale. Taiwanese Longbin Chen uses unconventional materials (used books) to carve the gentle Avalokiteshvara. Photographs by Gao Bo (Sichuan, China) and Gao Lei (Beijing, China) are dramatic depictions of Tibetan ritual and monastic portraits. Yang Jingsong’s (Chongqing, China) painting taps into ancient painting traditions he has seen in the caves of Dunhuang. Buddhism has also affected Western artists, finding its way into 20th and 21st century performance and literature: an example is pioneer modern dancer/choreographer Ruth St. Denis’s solo dances in the role of Kuan Yin. These artists all convey the universal appeal of the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

Members only preview, Friday, October 21, 5:00pm – 8:00pm
Public Opening, Saturday, October 22, 10:00am – 4:00pm
Meditation 101, alternating Wednesday starting on November 2, 2:00pm – 3:00pm
Closing Date, Sunday, September 25, 2017

The Infinite Compassion exhibition and related programs have been made possible with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs with additional funding from the New York State Council on the Arts and Northfield Bank Foundation.

About the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art
Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art, the oldest museum of Himalayan art in the country. Established in 1945, the Museum was founded by the pioneering American woman Jacques Marchais (1887-1948), an important collector and respected expert on Tibetan art. Designed by Marchais, the rustic complex of fieldstone buildings resembles a Tibetan mountain monastery. These historic buildings represent the first Himalayan style architecture be built in the United States, and it was the first Museum world devoted solely to Tibetan art.

About the Staten Island Museum
Founded in 1881 and celebrating its 135th year, the Staten Island Museum, New York City’s only general interest museum, engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions and educational programs that explore the dynamic connections between natural science, art, and history based on its diverse collections. The Museum serves over 219,000 adults and school children at the Museum and in the community. Now with two locations on the North Shore of Staten Island – in St. George, two blocks from the Ferry Terminal, visitors can embark on a voyage through time in the Staten Island Ferry exhibit; see rocks glow in the dark in the Hall of Natural Sciences; and experience the lives of Staten Island’s first inhabitants. In Building A on the Snug Harbor Campus, visitors can explore the latest exhibitions of World Art, land and seascapes spanning 400 years of Staten Island scenery, a life-sized mastodon
emerging through the wall, and how our Island went from farm to city. Staten Island Museum is owned by the City of New York and benefits from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. For current exhibits, visit StatenIslandMuseum.org.