TUAN ANDREW NGUYEN AND CECILIA ALEMANI IN CONVERSATION ON THE HIGH LINE, NYC, SEPTEMBER 19

As Part of the Monthly Series of Talks and Guided Meditation Sessions Co-Presented by the High Line and Rubin Museum, the *The Light The Shines Through the Universe* Artist will Discuss Reincarnation and Transformation

Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Cecilia Alemani in front of *The Light That Shines Through the Universe*. Photo by Liz Devine.

NEW YORK, NY (August 20, 2026) — New Yorkers will have the unique opportunity to engage with Vietnam-based artist and 2025 MacArthur Fellow Tuan Andrew Nguyen, in conversation with Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, on the High Line Spur, September 19, 2026, 2:30-4:00pm. "An Afternoon with Tuan Andrew Nguyen" will offer an in-depth discussion of Nguyen's *The Light That Shines Through the Universe*, the monumental sculpture on the High Line Plinth, created

in homage to the Bamiyan Buddhas that were destroyed by the Taliban. The program will focus on Nguyen's practice, the inspiration for his Plinth commission, and the sculpture's symbolic rebirth, followed by a guided meditation focused on transformation.

The guided meditation will be led by Jessica Angima, a Kenyan-American artist, organizer, and dharma practitioner in the Western Insight and Theravada traditions. With over ten years of training and mentorship, she leads meditation and contemplative experiences in community green spaces throughout New York City.

In the event of rain or inclement weather on September 19, the event will be rescheduled to take place on September 20, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. The event is free; advance registration will be available on thehighline.org/events.

ABOUT THE PLINTH COMMISSION

The Light That Shines Through the Universe has attracted wide-scale attention not just from High Line parkgoers and passersby in New York City, but communities around the world inspired by the sculpture's offerings of resilience and hope, and those interested in the connections between the complex cultural history of the Bamiyan Valley, Buddhism, and the transformational power of art. The towering Buddha sculpture furthers Nguyen's artistic practice, one rooted in memory, history, and the enduring impact of conflict and violence. The resulting work serves as a platform for dialogue and potential repair, examining the spiritual, cultural, and physical residue left by war.

As the fifth High Line Plinth commission, Tuan Andrew Nguyen's *The Light That Shines Through the Universe* is on view on the High Line through Fall 2027, and complemented with related, free public programming throughout its duration on the park. The artwork is a towering, 27-foot-tall carved sandstone sculpture that reimagines one of the Bamiyan Buddhas, two 6th-century colossal statues in central Afghanistan that were tragically destroyed by the Taliban in 2001 in an act of iconoclasm. For *The Light that Shines Through the Universe*, Nguyen reimagines the Buddha's hands, lost after centuries of attempted iconoclastic attacks, long before the statues were fully destroyed. Cast from melted down brass artillery shells and positioned into mudras, or ritual gestures that signify "fearlessness" and "compassion," the gleaming hands become symbols of healing and empathy.

ABOUT THE LECTURE & MEDITATION SERIES

The special event with Nguyen is part of the free monthly lecture and guided meditation series in support of *The Light That Shines Through the Universe*. Taking place monthly, May through October 2026 on the High Line at 30th Street and 10th Avenue, and presented in partnership with the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, the free series invites visitors to engage more deeply with themes of history and spiritual practice that are central to Nguyen's work.

Inspired by Nguyen's sculpture and the cultural context that influenced its creation, each month's program features a lecture by a scholar, artist, or cultural leader, followed by a guided meditation led by an invited practitioner. The series is hosted by Tashi Chödrön, Himalayan Programs and Communities Ambassador at the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, who, in her two decades with the Rubin, has led meditation programs for over ten years and is the current host of the Rubin's Mindfulness Meditation podcast.Through this combination of intellectual and contemplative practice, the series invites audiences to pause, reflect, and consider the artwork's historical and philosophical themes through both thought and experience.

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART
Founded in 2009, High Line Art commissions and produces a wide array of artworks on the High Line, including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Led by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and presented by the High Line, the art program invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the unique architecture, history, and design of the park, and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

For more information on High Line Art, please visit thehighline.org/art.

ABOUT THE HIGH LINE
The High Line is a public park on the West Side of Manhattan operated, maintained, and funded by the nonprofit conservancy Friends of the High Line. Through our work with communities on and off the High Line, Friends of the High Line is devoted to reimagining public spaces to create connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.

Built on a historic, elevated rail line, the High Line was always intended to be more than a park. You can walk through the gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food or beverage, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.

Nearly 100% of our annual operating budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York, and we operate the park under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

For more information, visit thehighline.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok.

ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF HIMALAYAN ART
The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art and its insights. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people internationally through exhibitions,

participatory experiences, a dynamic digital platform, and partnerships. Inspired and informed by Himalayan art, the Rubin invites people to contemplate the human experience and deepen connections with the world around them in order to expand awareness, enhance well-being, and cultivate compassion. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, collection sharing, and the stewardship of a collection of nearly 4,000 Himalayan art objects spanning 1,500 years of history—providing unprecedented access and resources to scholars, artists, and students across the globe.

Current projects in New York City include the Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room installation at the Brooklyn Museum through 2031, and *About a Living Culture*, a public art sculpture by IMAGINE (a.k.a Sneha Shresta) at Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights, Queens on view through September 13.

Learn more at rubinmuseum.org

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@HighLineArtNYC @tuan.andrew.nguyen #HighLinePlinth

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