



PRESS CONTACTS:

Tim Hallman  
415.581.3711  
[pr@asianart.org](mailto:pr@asianart.org)

Annie Tsang  
415.581.3560  
[annietsang@asianart.org](mailto:annietsang@asianart.org)



## IRANIAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP BRINGS ANCIENT ARTIFACT TO SAN FRANCISCO

Sponsorship allows Asian Art Museum to present the  
Cyrus Cylinder—sometimes called the first bill of  
human rights—in first U.S. tour

SAN FRANCISCO, July 18, 2013—Modest in size and appearance and made more than 2,500 years ago, the Cyrus Cylinder continues to be hailed as an international symbol of tolerance and justice. Thanks to Tina and Hamid Moghadam, Bitā Daryabari and Dr. Reza Malek in collaboration with the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, the Cylinder will travel to the Asian Art Museum as part of the intimate exhibition ***The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning***. The Cylinder is on its first U.S. tour on loan from the British Museum, and will be on view at the Asian Art Museum Aug. 9–Sept. 22, 2013. The exhibition also includes 16 rare artworks from ancient Persia (Iran) during the Achaemenid period (550–330 BCE), providing a context for understanding the Cylinder's cultural and historical significance.

"The Cyrus Cylinder Tour has provided us the perfect opportunity to showcase our continued support for Persian art and culture, and good governance," stated Tina and Hamid Moghadam. "The legacy of Cyrus the Great remains relevant to all those who seek to establish societies based on tolerance and the rule of law. We are humbled to be able to join Bitā Daryabari and her husband Dr. Reza Malek as co-sponsors of this summer's exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco."

"I am honored to share in this rare privilege of bringing one of the Persian culture's most cherished relics to the world at large," stated philanthropist and entrepreneur Bitā Daryabari. "It is a proud element in the history of all Iranian Americans due to its ties to King Cyrus. The hope, inspiration and significance of this ancient artifact are the cornerstones for all free-thinking societies, and the Asian Art Museum is the befitting distinguished host for the Bay Area exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder's U.S. tour."

MORE

The Cyrus Cylinder, 539-538 BCE. Iraq, Achaemenid period (550-330 BCE). Baked clay. © Trustees of the British Museum.

"Today, Iranian Americans continue to be inspired by the legacy of Cyrus the Great, as we ourselves set roots in new lands, build bridges across cultures and languages, and contribute to the communities in which we reside," stated Saghi Modjtabai, executive director of the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans. "The Cyrus Cylinder is a reminder to all of us that we must remain proud of our heritage, who we are, and what we have accomplished and that, united together, as a community, we will continue to contribute to the cultural, economic and social tapestry of the United States and the world."

Dating to 539 BCE, the Cyrus Cylinder—one of the most famous surviving icons from the ancient world—was uncovered in 1879 at Babylon (in modern Iraq) during a British Museum excavation. The Cylinder was inscribed in Babylonian cuneiform script on the orders of the Persian king, Cyrus the Great (ruled 559–530 BCE), after he captured Babylon in 539 BCE. It is often referred to as the first bill of human rights, as it mentions Cyrus's return from Babylon of deported peoples to their homelands and his encouragement of freedom of religious practice.

Further information about the Cyrus Cylinder and its first tour of the U.S. can be found here: [www.cyruscylinder2013.com](http://www.cyruscylinder2013.com).

#### **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION**

This exhibition was organized by the British Museum in partnership with the Iran Heritage Foundation and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The exhibition at the Asian Art Museum is generously supported by Tina and Hamid Moghadam, Bitra Daryabari and Dr. Reza Malek in collaboration with the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans.

#### **ABOUT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM**

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco's premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Information: 415.581.3500 or [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. From February through September, hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 p.m. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

General Admission: FREE for museum members, \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors (65+), college students with ID, and youths (13–17). FREE for children under 12 and SFUSD students with ID. Admission on Thursdays after 5 p.m. is \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and museum members, who are always admitted FREE).

Admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month). A surcharge may apply for admission to special exhibitions.

Access: The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access: 415.581.3598; TDD: 415.861.2035.

###