

FREER | SACKLER

THE SMITHSONIAN'S MUSEUMS OF ASIAN ART

# Crowdfunding the Smithsonian

Inside the “Together We’re One” Campaign



Together we're one.

yoga | The Art of  
Transformation



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**Dates:**

May 29–July 1,  
2013 (extended to  
July 8)

**Goal:** \$125,000

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# Results: Fundraising

Total amount raised: \$176,000

Donors: 617

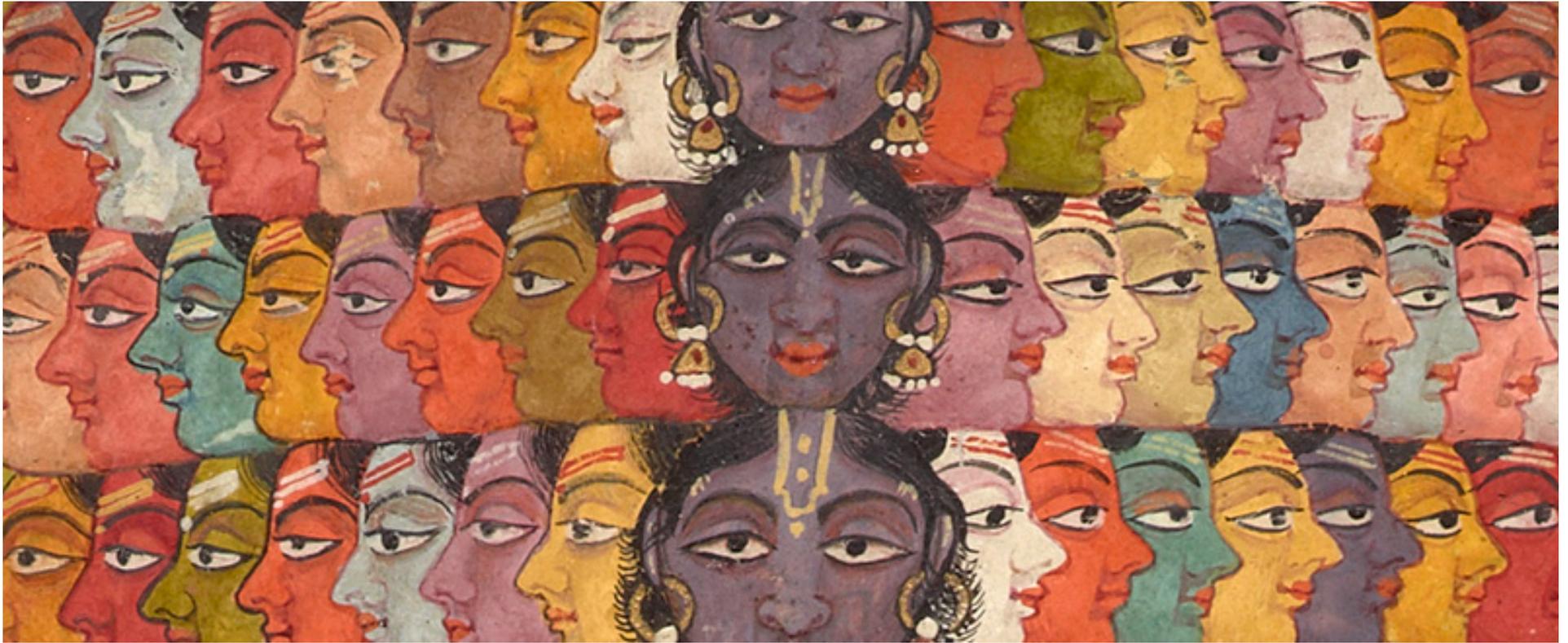
New donors: 463 (75% of total donors)

Repeat donors: **22 gave more than once**



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# Part 1: *Together We're One* 101

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# What is crowdfunding?

Asking many people for microdonations, for a specific project or cause, usually within a specific timeframe online.

*But why is it special?*

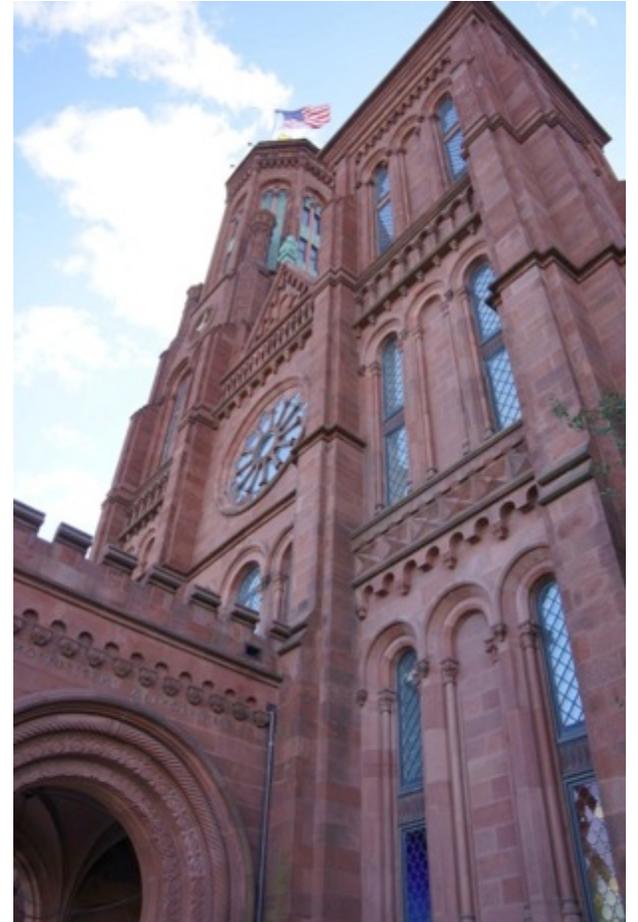
It's equal parts fundraising, marketing

AND . .

# . . . audience engagement.

We needed to build a community,  
find new audiences,  
and keep them,

factoring in the advantages and  
disadvantages of our own brand  
and the cause.





Are you thinking of doing your own crowdfunding campaign?

# A Perfect Crowdfunding Storm

Incredible show

Hot topic

Headline-making novelty

Pre-existing community

Unchanneled desire  
for involvement

yoga | The Art of  
Transformation



# Pinching Pennies Till they Scream

Rule #1            Low cost and no-cost

Rule #2            Build in sharing and word-of-mouth wherever possible



# The Platform

There are  $\approx$  450 crowdfunding platforms available. *Which one should you use?*



**Fundly**  
Easy, Social Fundraising



**KICKSTARTER**



**indiegogo**

# F | S Smithsonian's Freer|Sackler

12 Fundraisers

Shared fundraisers on average raise **\$18 more** in donations!

Bring the art of yoga to light with "Yoga: The Art of Transformation," at the Smithsonian's Freer|Sackler in Washington, DC this October!



- \$ **25** Serenity | Help create tranquil galleries
- \$ **65** Power | Bring yoga classes to the museum
- \$ **150** Bliss | Share concerts, workshops & festivals
- \$ **500** Transform | Turn wisdom into books & symposia
- \$ **1000** Flight | Transport yoginis across the world
- other  (min \$10)

Make This Donation Occur

Once (Today) ▾

**DONATE****FREER | SACKLER**

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# Existing outreach platforms are your best platforms.

Email

Website

In-gallery signage

Social media



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# Easily created materials are your best materials.



Web page

Printable posters

E-cards

Facebook and Twitter background

Letterhead

Favicards

E-newsletter headers

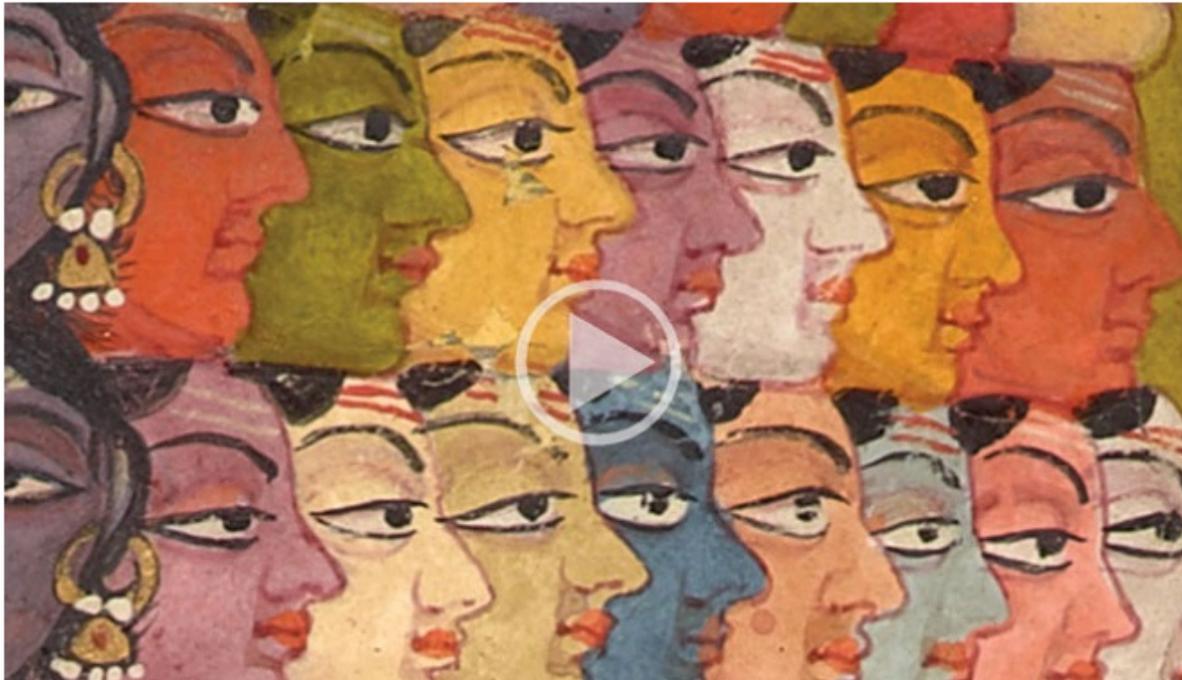
Hashtag

Digital slideshow

Backgrounds for mobile, iPad and desktop

[Home](#) > [Support](#) > Yoga: The Art of Transformation

## Yoga: The Art of Transformation



yoga | The Art of Transformation

Launch: **May 29**

Campaign Ends: **July 1**

Funding Goal: **\$125,000**

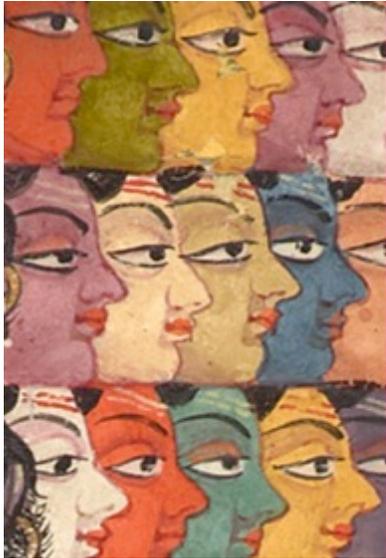
**Donate today to make yoga history!**

**We need your help to raise \$125,000 by July 1 for the world's first exhibition on the art of yoga.**

This groundbreaking exhibition requires special support, and the Smithsonian needs you! Through "Together We're One," our crowdfunding campaign for *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, we're hoping to raise \$125,000

16 days, 13 hrs, 47 mins and 57 secs to go





Together we're one.

yoga | The Art of Transformation

Crowdfund the world's first #artofyoga exhibition at [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga).

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Reveal hidden mysteries.

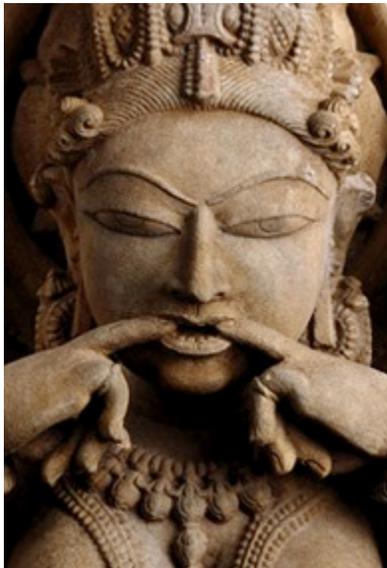
yoga | The Art of Transformation

Crowdfund the world's first #artofyoga exhibition at [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga).

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More than you know.

yoga | The Art of Transformation

Crowdfund the world's first #artofyoga exhibition at [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga).

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Keep calm and carry on.

yoga | The Art of Transformation

Crowdfund the world's first #artofyoga exhibition at [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga).

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Together we're one  
yoga | The Art of Transformation

- Tweets >
- Following >
- Followers >
- Favorites >
- Lists >

Photos and videos >



Freer and Sackler  
@FreerSackler

The Smithsonian's National Museums of Asian Art located on the National Mall in Washington DC. Discover ancient relics and modern artworks of Asia.

Washington, DC USA · [asia.si.edu](http://asia.si.edu)

3,143  
TWEETS

670  
FOLLOWING

9,343  
FOLLOWERS



Edit profile

Tweets

  **Freer and Sackler** @FreerSackler 22 Jun  
Want to see your name in lights? Donate now to support #artofyoga: [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga) & join the digital plaque: [ow.ly/100Uy](http://ow.ly/100Uy)  
Expand

  **Freer and Sackler** @FreerSackler 22 Jun  
Om is where the art is. We need your help to bring the world's 1st #artofyoga exhibition to light! Donate by 7/1 [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga)  
Expand

  **Freer and Sackler** @FreerSackler 21 Jun  
Koringa wants YOU to check out #artofyoga. And she's a magicienne, so... [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga)  
Expand

  **Freer and Sackler** @FreerSackler 21 Jun  
Friday #FastFact: The #artofyoga spans 2,000+ years. Want to know more? Check out [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga)  
Expand

Twitter

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Smithsonian's Freer and S... Timeline Now



Like · Comment · Share

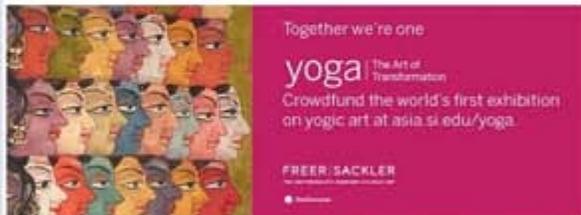
4 people like this.

Write a comment...

Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries changed their cover photo. Monday

Help make yoga history:

http://www.asia.si.edu/support/yoga/default.asp



Like · Comment · Share

58

123 people like this.

Top Comments

Write a comment...

Lize Shealin Awesome!!!!

Like · Reply · 2 · May 28 at 10:40pm

Irina Cher So looking forward!!!

Like · Reply · 1 · June 17 at 6:46pm

View 4 more comments

Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries shared a link via Brightest Young Things. Monday



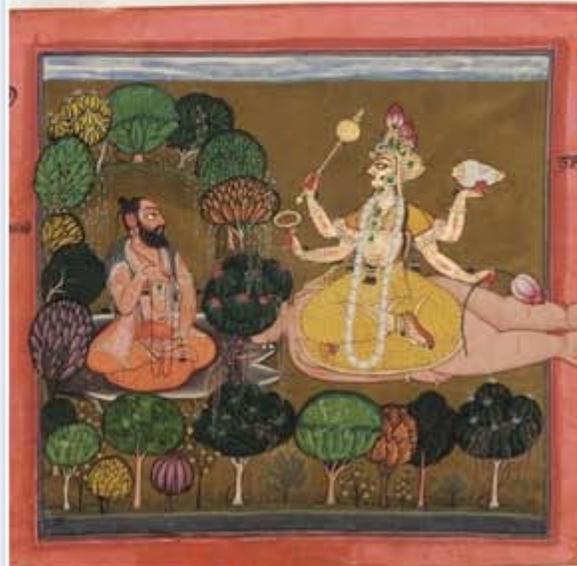
Like · Comment · Share

5 people like this.

Write a comment...

Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries Tuesday

In this painting from "Yoga: The Art of Transformation," the goddess's jewels are made from iridescent beetle wings. When you pick up the painting, as a traditional viewer would have done, they flash and sparkle. #ArtOfYoga



Like · Comment · Share

30

88 people like this.

Top Comments

Create Page

Now

2012

2011

2010

2009

2008

1987

1923

1913

1906

Born

Sponsored

Create Ad

Apartments



Flats at Atlas, Washington, DC

43,218 people like Apartments.com.

Hot customer deals

att.com



Add another line to your existing AT&T account and shop popular phones starting at free.

Online Business Degree

umuc.edu



Position yourself for success with a bachelor's degree from UMUC. Contact an advisor!

Wind Power+ \$35 Gift Card

americanefficient.com

Greenbelt

Get Wind + \$35 Gift

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# What do they all have in common?

*Branding.* This was a lifesaver in the long run.

We even carried the theme through to our giving levels.

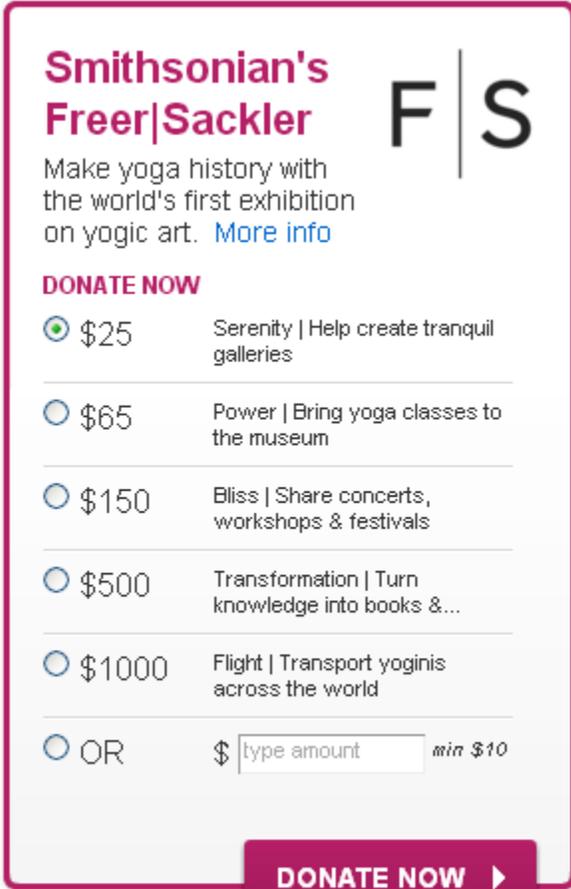
\$25 – Serenity

\$65 – Power

\$150 – Bliss

\$500 – Transformation

\$1000 – Flight



**Smithsonian's Freer|Sackler** F | S

Make yoga history with the world's first exhibition on yogic art. [More info](#)

**DONATE NOW**

- \$25 Serenity | Help create tranquil galleries
- \$65 Power | Bring yoga classes to the museum
- \$150 Bliss | Share concerts, workshops & festivals
- \$500 Transformation | Turn knowledge into books &...
- \$1000 Flight | Transport yoginis across the world
- OR \$  min \$10

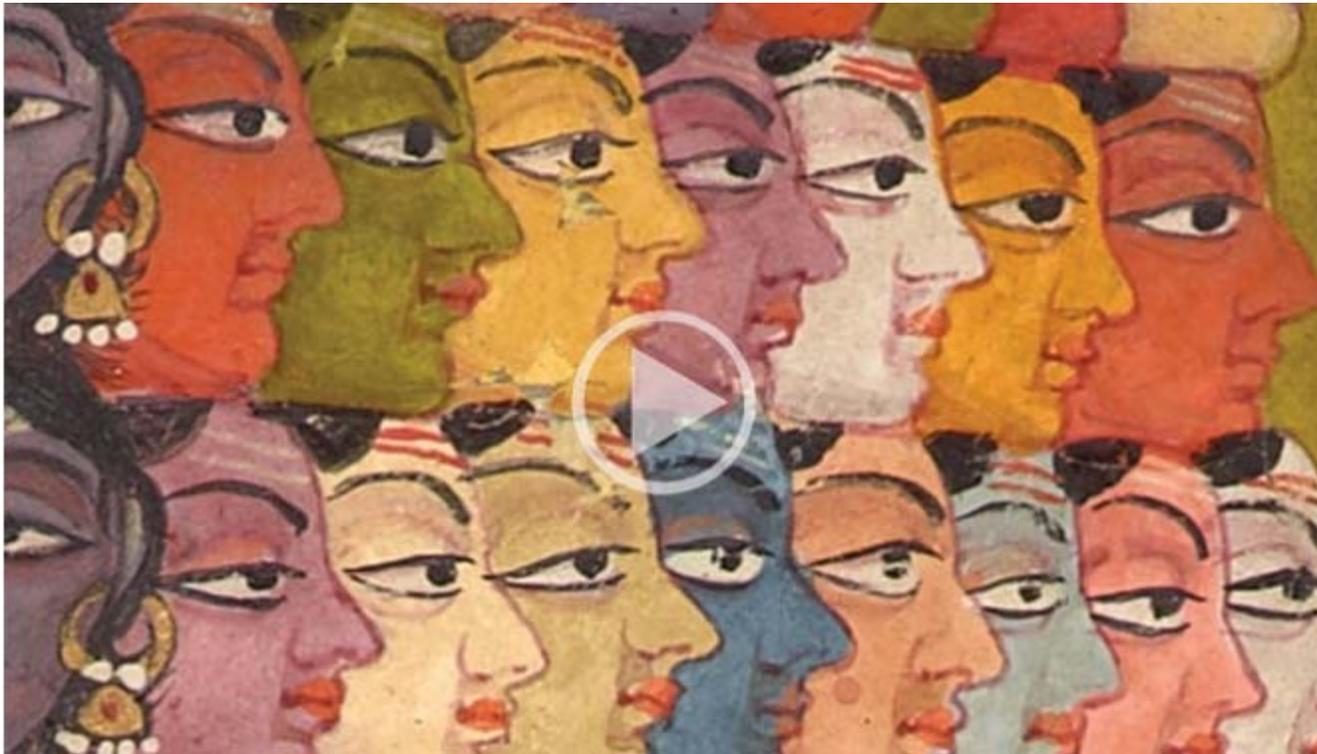
**DONATE NOW** ▶

POWERED BY **razoo**

[Embed this on your site](#)

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# Campaign Videos



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# Surround yourself with allies. . .

Corporate sponsors

Media sponsor

“Promotional Partners”

Razoo

Smithsonian colleagues



# . . like the Yoga Messengers . .

Passionate supporters

Provided a structure for involvement

Helped build word of mouth

Demonstrated community involvement and ownership



# . . and the media.

Planned media announcements:

3 weeks out

beginning of campaign

end of the campaign

First press release was also first major announcement of the exhibition itself

Smithsonian's Sackler Gallery Debuts World's First  
Exhibition on the Visual History of Yoga

"YOGA: THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION" OPENS FALL 2013, SUPPORTED BY THE  
MUSEUM'S INAUGURAL CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN



# Part 2: Full Speed Ahead!

Campaign Launch, Structure & Messages

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3 weeks out

- First media announcement

2 weeks out

- Visited groups and events to do informal message testing
- First announcement to museum's e-mail list and social media

1 week out

- Gathered names and emails of potential supporters, lists, studios
- Prepared all first-week communications

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4 days out

- Confirmed attendance of social media “influencers” at exclusive launch party

2 days out

- Soft launch to ensure process was glitch-free
- “Seeded the tip jar” with internal and planned gifts

Launch day!

- Blasted on social media platforms
- Major email announcement to all supporters and e-newsletter lists
- Hosted launch party in the galleries
- Second media announcement – short alert that campaign had started

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# Communication strategy is aggressive.

Daily and weekly touches across all platforms

Yoga Crowdfunding Campaign - Editorial Calendar											
Content due	Send date	Donations	Web hits	Reach	Communication	Topic	Type	Platform	Lead	Prerequisite	Status
<b>Monday, May 13–Sunday, May 19</b>											
date due	date				SAMPLE: First email to Buddhist temples		E-mail	Platform	Staff	E.G. Need lists from XYZ person/Need image ABC, etc.	Complete/In Process/Behind Schedule
	5/13				Preliminary campaign announcement – coming soon!		FS E-newsletter	NetCommunity	PAM/Vennesa Yung		Complete
	5/13				Launch Party Invites – Email list		Invitation	Outlook	Miranda Gale		Complete
	5/14				Press Release blast to FJS lists		Press	Constant Contact	PAM/Allison		Complete
	5/14				Press Release via FS Twitter		Social Media	Twitter	PAM/Allison		Complete
	5/14				Press Release email to Meltwater export		Press	Outlook	PAM/Allison		Complete
	5/15				Launch Party Invites – Twitter		Invitation	Twitter	Miranda Gale		Complete
	5/15				Press Release email via PR Newswire		Press	PR Newswire	PAM/Allison		Complete
<b>Monday, May 20–Sunday, May 26</b>											
	5/21				Yoga Messenger Cultivation Emails		Email	Outlook	Lizzie	Email text, YM docs	COMPLETE
	5/23				"Coming Soon" announcement?						
5/23	5/24				RSVP reminder		Email	Outlook	Lizzie		
<b>1. Monday, May 27–Sunday, June 2</b>											
Themes/content: Why crowdfunding, and why this exhibition? What is this exhibition, and where did the artwork come from? How long have we been working on it? How incredible is this exhibition, and what does it mean?											
	5/27				MEMORIAL DAY						
5/22	5/27				Why Crowdfunding? Blog Post		Blog	Bento	Miranda	Text from Miranda	Complete
	5/28	24 donors			Why Crowdfunding? Blog Post	Repost from Bento Blog	Blog	Razoo Blog	Allison	Text from Bento	Complete

# Messaging keeps your story alive.

Weekly themes introduced new content

Emails

Videos

Blog post

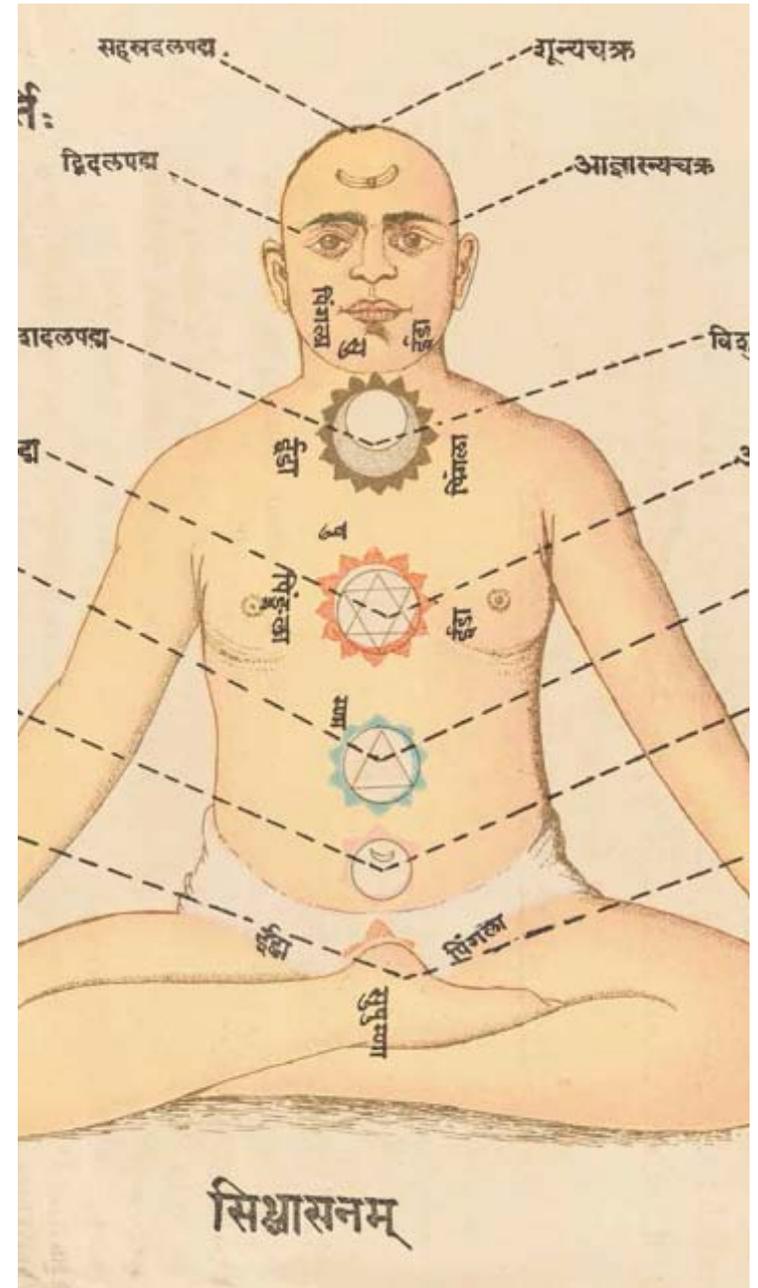
Social media content

Targeted correspondence to existing audiences

Donors, members

Staff

Interest groups



# Time partners to maximize benefits.

Planned corporate sponsor and partner “boosts” throughout the campaign, both in funding and in the messages we asked them to send out.



# Balance content versus “the ask.”

Messaging – a balance between education and solicitation



# Mid-campaign pivoting

Messaging became more direct, honest about financial need

Email timing changed for last 3 days of campaign



Just under 5 hours and \$4,550 to make yoga history!

WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE. TOGETHER WE'RE ONE.

donate now

Dear friends,

We don't have much time, so we'll keep it brief—with just a few hours left to meet our crowdfunding goal of \$125,000 for *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, we really need to ask you for help.

We hope you'll take a moment right now to make a tax-deductible gift to support the world's first exhibition of the art of yoga.

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# Donation Incentives

## Low- and no-cost incentives

- Social media recognition
- Preview of digital catalogue
- Reserved seating at free concerts
- “Special invitation” to existing events

## A VIP visitor experience

- Pins for donors
- Signage in the space





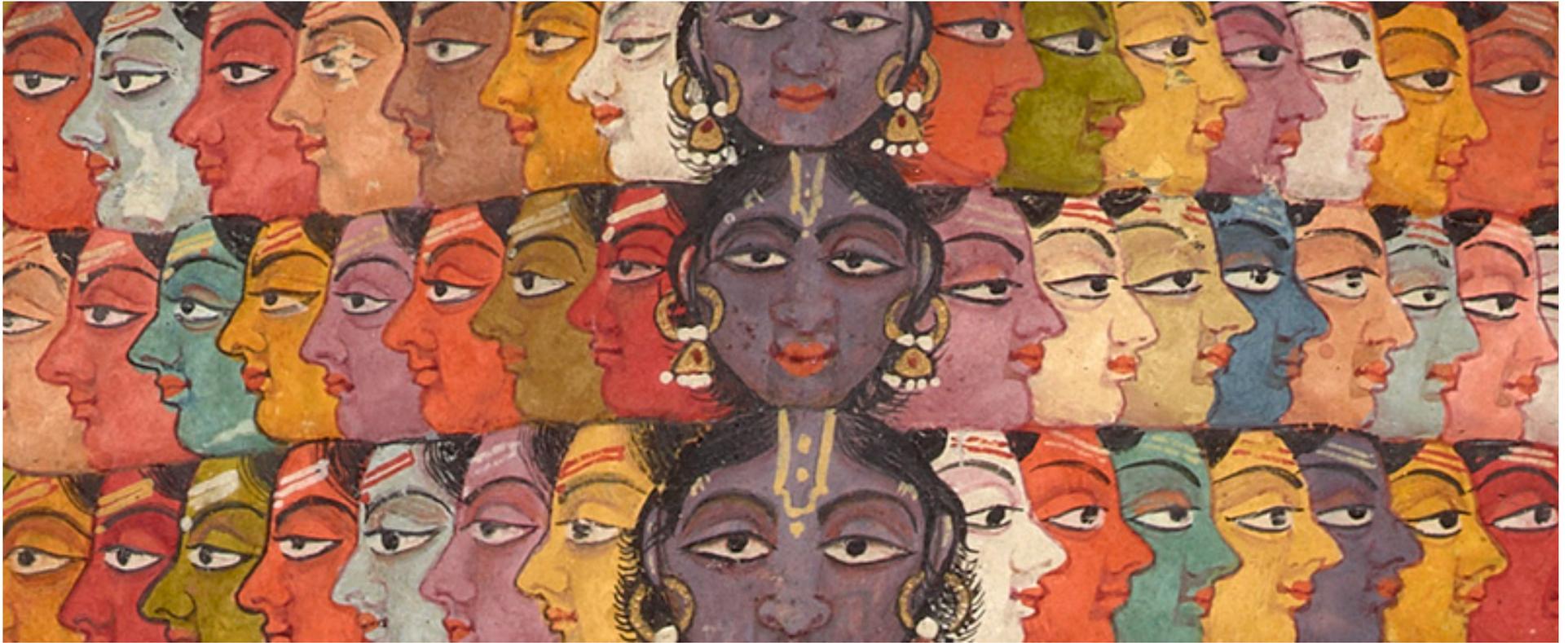


# Donor Communication

## Kept in touch over multiple platforms

- Immediate “thank you” email with a pre-drafted tweet to share
- Email when digital plaque was updated, linked to an in-situ photo of the plaque on Facebook
- Email when the campaign ended
- Email when exhibition opened





# Part 3: Lessons Learned

# Planning Phase

You will need more time to plan than you think.

Mobilize teams and corporate sponsors in advance

Receive approvals for images, videos, or other necessary marketing pieces in advance



# Human Capital

You will need more staff during the campaign than you think.

(especially to do the kind of analysis that helps you adjust mid-stream)



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# Campaign Kick-off Event

Invest time in a launch party to use as a donor cultivation tool.

It's better than a thank you event after campaign is over.



# Lean on your friends

Work with your fundraising staff to tap your existing constituents: members give again, major donors can come to the rescue!

Give advance notice to make them “insiders” to the project  
Prepare for audience segmentation based on giving levels and create dynamic, targeted content for their email messages

Leverage your board, members and high-level donors for matching gifts and peer-to-peer fundraising

# Corporate support and scheduled donations are key

Crowdfunding campaigns have peaks and valleys – with a stretch of inactivity in the middle.

- Line up corporate sponsors to create incentives and rejuvenate interest in the middle of your campaign through matching gifts or challenges.
- Add larger gifts from major donors during down times.

Success begets success!



**Donate Today!**

Your gift will be generously  
matched by Whole Foods Market®



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# Real-Time Tracking

Understand where your conversions are failing.

- We had a low conversion rate, based on the number of people that we reached
- Track and source donations appropriately
- Build in segmentation, testing and adjustment



# Stay Flexible

## Curveballs will happen.

- Alec Baldwin might announce himself mid-campaign
- Last, strongest email might not send
- ~~Government might shut down~~

### Planned

Open your wallet chakra! Help me crowdfund the world's 1st #artofyoga exhibit @Smithsonian's @FreerSackler.  
Donate: [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga)

### Actual



Alec Baldwin@

We r @Smithsonian 's "Yoga" exhibition Gala Chairs.  
Join Hilaria & I 4 the 1st #artofyoga exhibit @FreerSackler  
<http://asia.si.edu/yoga>

# Prepare to Pivot

**F|S** Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries changed their cover photo.  
May 28



Help make yoga history:  
<http://www.asia.si.edu/support/yoga/default.asp>



Together we're one

**yoga** | The Art of Transformation

Crowdfund the world's first exhibition on yogic art at [asia.si.edu/yoga](http://asia.si.edu/yoga).

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Facebook

Unlike · Comment · Share · Assign To

131 7 78

**F|S** **Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries**  
Yoginis, or female embodiments of yogic power, were seen as both mortal women and powerful goddesses. This 10th-century yogini from Uttar Pradesh in north India sits on an owl, which suggests she has the ability to fly. Using her fingers, she makes a piercing sound. She is likely one of the yoginis whose names roughly translate as "she who makes a loud noise." <http://asia.si.edu/yoga>

Unlike · Comment · Share · June 15

You and 197 others like this. Top Comments ▾

85 shares

# Results: Online Engagement

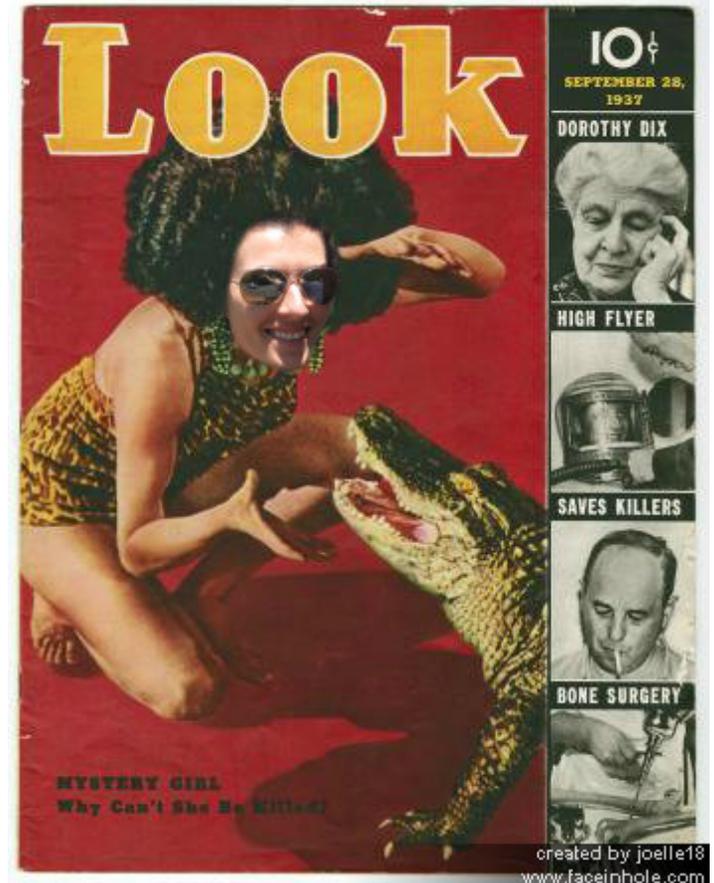


Exhibition website visits 23,000+

Social media reach 45M+

Campaign video views 10,000+

#artofyoga direct uses 1,400+



# Results: Media Attention

**Major feature stories:** Washington Post, AP, CNN, CBC, NBC, Business Journal, NPR, Vogue, CBS Sunday Morning, New York Times (twice!)

**Passionate, positive editorial support amongst key influencer outlets:** YogaDork, Yoga Journal, ArtsJournal, etc.

**Total stories:** 2,000

**Media impressions:** 1.2 billion

**Publicity value:** \$10.5 million

**Long-lead prep**



# Results: Attendance

Opening weekend: 250% of previous year

Closing weekend: 250% of previous year



# Results: Visitor Survey

Came just to see *Yoga*: 85%

Heard about the exhibition  
through word of mouth,  
through friends or studios: 45%

Heard about the crowdfunding campaign: 10%

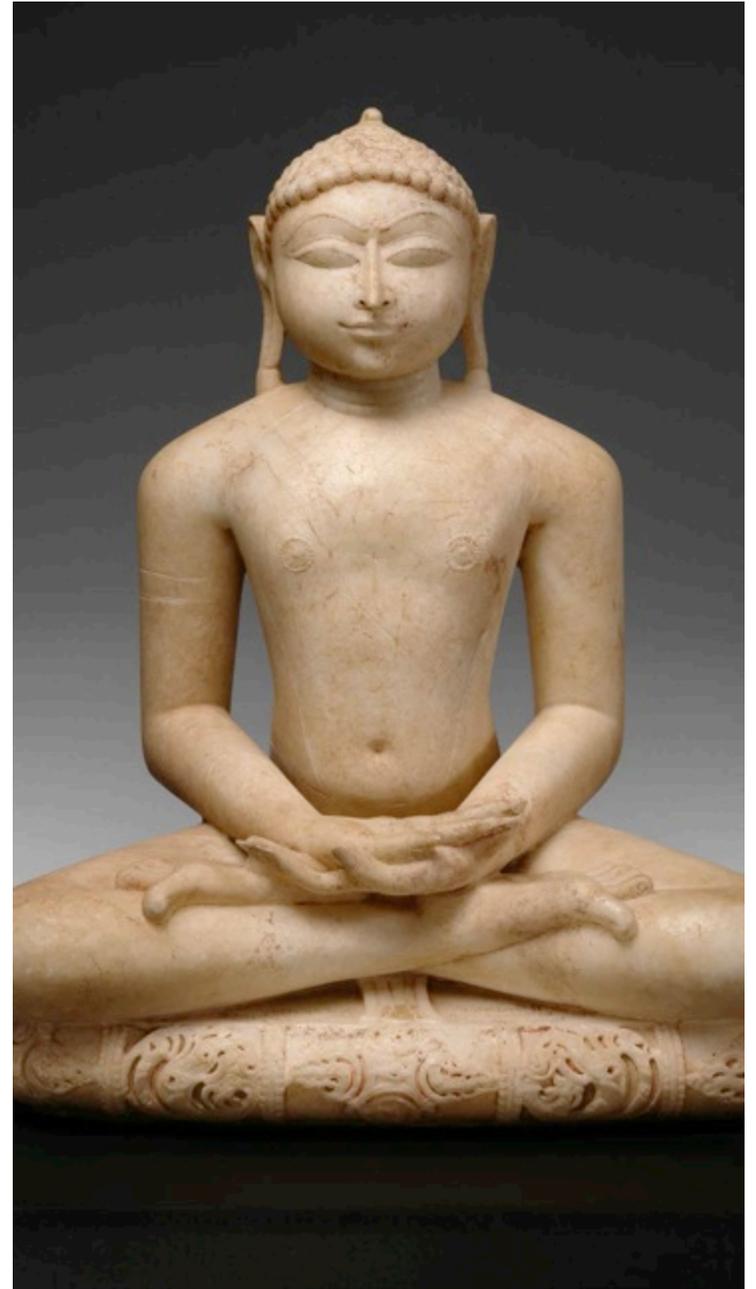
Note: Data from the last month of the exhibition



# Results: ROI

Cost per dollar (without video): \$0.09

Cost per dollar (with video): \$0.22



Next challenge:

How to turn this into a community that stays with us?

How to maintain momentum?

Will these donors stay invested in our organization?





Freer Gallery of Art  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery  
[asia.si.edu](http://asia.si.edu)