

Minneapolis Institute of Art

**Tour Break**

**Winter Solstice (Cross  
Currents)**

November 17, 2022

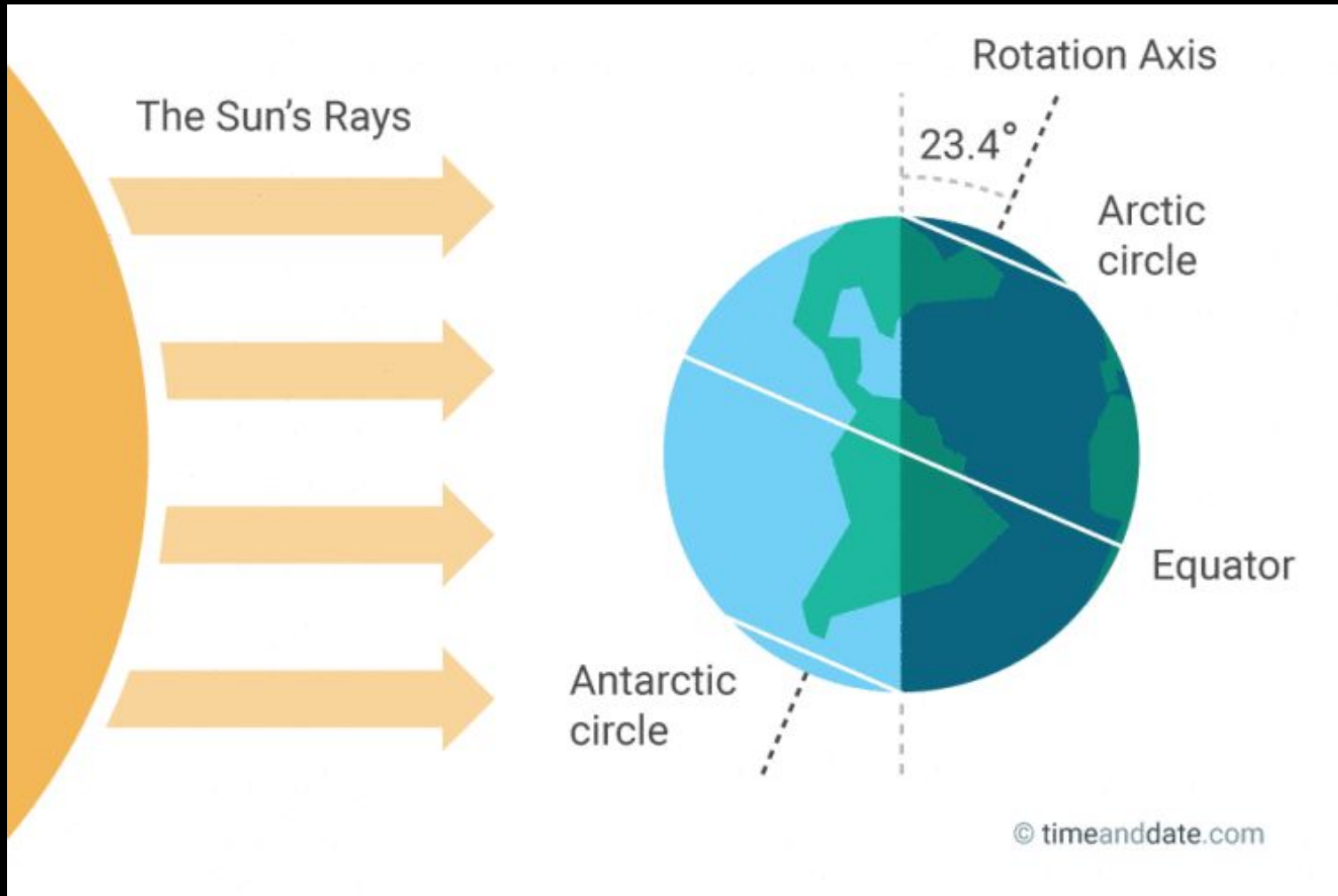
**Mia**

# Winter Solstice

*Experience how cultures around the world await the return of the light, which brings rebirth and renewal.*

At this time of year, festivals and celebrations in the Northern Hemisphere focus on the importance of light in our lives and how its return brings hope after the long, dark nights.

At winter solstice, the sun appears at its lowest point on the horizon in its movement across the sky. This gradual decrease reverses after the solstice, marking what many cultures believe to be a “rebirth” of the sun as the hours of daylight become longer.



# Winter Solstice 2022

Northern Hemisphere at  
3:47 pm CST on Wed,  
December 21.

The sun's path has  
reached its southernmost  
position on the horizon.

The next day the path  
starts northward again.



# Kwanzaa

- Kwanzaa is an annual (secular) celebration of African-American culture, culminating in a communal feast, usually on the sixth day.
- In the United States, Kwanzaa begins on Monday, December 26 and ends on Sunday, January 1, 2023.
- Activist Maulana Karenga created Kwanzaa in 1966. He based the holiday on African harvest festival traditions, with the initial goal of unifying African American communities through a celebration of their cultural origins.





Red = struggle

Green = land and hope for the future

Black = People of African descent (unity)

Seven candles are placed in the kinara (candle holder) during Kwanzaa, with three green on the right, three red on the left, and one black candle in the center. The seven candles represent the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa.

Image and information: HowStuffWorks

## Seven principles of Kwanzaa:

1. umoja (unity)
2. kujichagulia (self-determination)
3. ujima (collective work and responsibility)
4. ujamaa (cooperative economics)
5. nia (purpose)
6. kuumba (creativity) and
7. imani (faith)

For the tour, focus on an artwork that reflects one or more of these seven principles.

## Principles of Kwanzaa:

- Unity (self-determination, creativity, and collective work and responsibility)



Bwa, Burkina Faso, Africa, Plank Mask, 1960, Wood, pigment, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 98.2. Image above: <https://library.the-possible.org/post/119251438497/bwa-plank-masks-burkina-faso-c-1960>





## Principles of Kwanzaa:

- Collective work and responsibility (and unity)

Kongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Power figure, 20th century, Wood, natural fibers, glass, metal, undetermined materials, 71.3



## Principles of Kwanzaa:

- Faith (and unity)

Left: Luba, Democratic Republic of the Congo,  
Headrest, 1880, Wood, beads, string, 98.56

Right: Luba, Democratic Republic of the Congo,  
Kabila/Mboko, 1900, Wood, 2001.198.37a,b



## Resources:

Bwa Plank Mask (in [Art Adventure LCL set booklet](#))

Kongo Power Figure (in [Art Adventure CR set booklet](#))

Luba, [Kabila, object file](#)

Information on the Luba, Shaping Power. See [short video from Lacma](#)







# Yalda, Birthday of the Sun

Ancient Persian Winter Solstice Festival celebrated annually on December 21

- Celebrated the birthday of the Roman sun god, Mithras; ancient ritual adopted by Zoroastrians.
- Main rival to Christianity in first three centuries CE.
- With ascent of Islam, became a social occasion.
- Friends and family gather together to eat, drink, play music, tell jokes and stories until well after midnight.



Fruits and nuts are eaten; pomegranates and watermelons are particularly significant as their red color symbolizes the crimson hues of dawn and the glow of life.

Even  
After  
All this time  
The SUN never says to the Earth,  
"You owe  
Me"

LOOK  
what happens  
with a love like that  
IT LIGHTS THE  
WHOLE  
SKY

SC Glad '12

HAFIZ 1520-1589

Poems of a 14th-century mystic, Hafiz, found in the homes of most Iranian families, are intermingled with peoples' lives and are read or recited.

The  
Great religions are the  
Ships

Poets the life  
Boats.

Every sane person I know has jumped  
Overboard.

That is good business  
Isn't it

Hafiz?



Poems bound into beautiful books; the illustrations and calligraphy are both art forms

Mir Husain al-Husaini; Painter:  
Mahmud al-Muzahhib, Manuscript  
of the Baharistan (Spring Garden),  
1551, Tooled and gilded leather,  
ink, colors, and gold on paper,  
52.13





In Persian poetry, Yalda is often symbolic of separation from loved ones, loneliness, and waiting. Young men send seven varieties of fruits and several gifts to their fiancées.

Poetry by Saadi, a 13th-century Persian medieval poet, speaks to this longing:

*The sight of you each morning is a New Year  
Any night of your departure is the eve of Yalda.*

*With all my pains, there is still the hope of recovery  
Like the eve of Yalda, there will finally be an end.*

Beautifully decorated platters in Mia's collection speak of spending time together, communal eating and drinking, and waiting for the long night to end.

Persia (Iran), Large Bowl, 10th century,  
Earthenware with a white slip ground under a  
clear glaze with red, dark brown, olive and gold  
slip-painted decor, 2003.98.2



Lusterware: gold represents  
divinity in Islam

*“... shines like the light of the sun.”*

—Abu’l Qasim

Pottery with a metallic glaze that  
gives the effect of iridescence.  
Produced by metallic oxides in an  
overglaze finish; given a second firing  
at a lower temperature in a reduction  
kiln, which cuts off supply of oxygen.

Unknown artist, Iran, Bowl with hare  
and dog motifs, before 1220,  
Stonepaste with golden luster-painted  
decoration, Kashan ware, 50.46.425





Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, Plate,  
17th c., 86.44





“With the reflections, you’re also a part of the art piece. Your own appearance, your own face, your own clothing—if you move, it is a part of the art. You’re the connection: it is the mix of human being and reflection and artwork.”

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, *Fourth Family Octagon*, 2013, Mirror mosaic, reverse glass painting, glue and plaster on wood, 2021.35.2









In the 1970s Farmanfarmaian visited the mirrored Shah Cheragh (“The Emperor of the Light”) mosque in Shiraz, Iran, and described the experience as transforming the material world into the infinite:

“The very space seemed on fire, the lamps blazing in hundreds and thousands of reflections . . . It was a universe unto itself, architecture transformed by performance, all movement and fluid light, all solids fractured and dissolved in brilliance in space, in prayer.”







Gallery 341



# Christianity: Christmas

- As Christianity developed, Jesus' birth was not celebrated. Easter was the main holiday.
- Church officials made Jesus' birth a holiday in the 4th century. The Bible never mentions the date of his birth, so Pope Julius I made an executive decision and chose December 25.
- Most believe the Pope had another agenda in choosing that date. He wanted the new Christian holiday to replace the traditional--and pagan--Solstice celebrations.
- The new holiday spread throughout the Christian world, arriving in England in the 6th century.



# Christianity: The Nativity

Hans Schäufelein was active in Albrecht Dürer's workshop in Nuremberg 1503-7 and in Hans Holbein the Elder's workshop in Augsburg in 1508-9.

He worked in Augsburg until 1515, after which he moved to Nördlingen, securing a job as the municipal painter.

Hans Schäufelein, Germany, 1482–1539/40, The Nativity, 1510–20, Stained glass, lead, 2014.103.2





## Stained Glass

- From 1100 to 1500, stained glass was one of the major techniques of painting practiced in Europe. Stained glass often was used to tell stories, especially Biblical narratives.
- These roundels show five events in the life of Jesus: (1) Annunciation; (2) Nativity; (3) Adoration of the Magi; (4) Resurrection; and (5) The Last Judgment.
- The roundels were likely made for the family chapel in a castle or palace. The carefully executed details are only visible up close, so these could not have been appreciated in a large church or a cathedral.

# Christianity: The Nativity





Christianity:

# The Adoration of the Magi



Hans Schüfelein, Germany, The Adoration of the Magi, 1510–20, Stained glass, lead, 2014.103.3

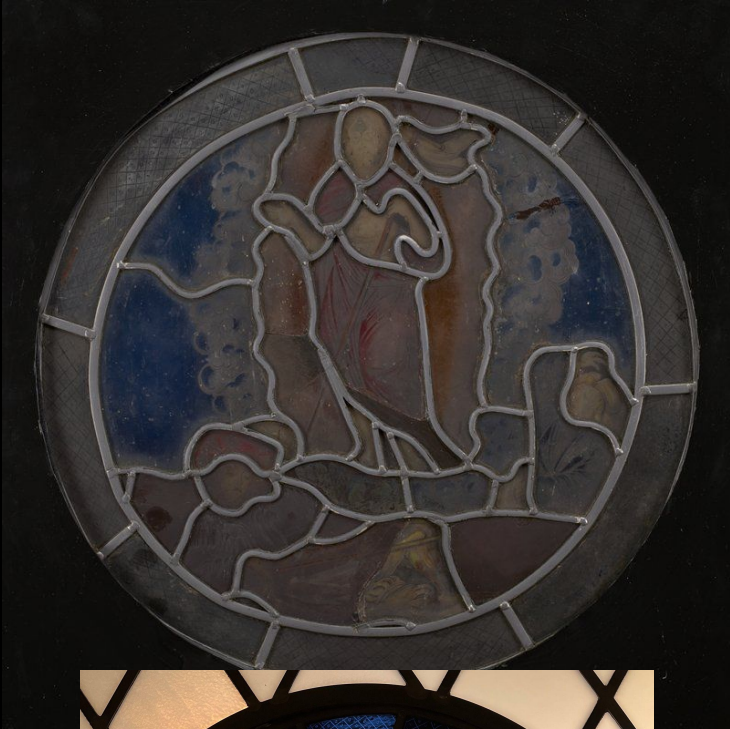


Christianity:  
The Adoration of the  
Magi





# The Annunciation, Resurrection, and Last Judgement



## Resources

Free online publication from the Getty:

[Painting on Light: Drawings and Stained Glass in the Age of Durer and Holbein](#)

From the Khan Academy:

[Stained glass: history and technique](#)

From History.com: [History of Christmas](#)





# Hanukkah, Festival of Lights

- Begins in U.S. at sunset on Sunday, December 18 and ends at sunset on Monday, December 26, 2022.
- Minor holiday which has gained cultural significance in U.S and elsewhere because occurs around same time as Christmas.
- Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and rededication of the Second Temple during the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid (Greek) Empire in the 2nd century BCE.



The oil, only sufficient for one day, miraculously burned for eight days, allowing enough time to purify another batch and reestablish the eternal flame over the altar in the Temple.



Hanukkah Lamp



Menorah stands for light of knowledge and truth shed by the Torah



Today candles used in place of oil: add one candle each night, right to left; light from left to right. Remain lit until one-half hour after sunset (made correct length to do this).

Shamash/servant candle, used to light others, is elevated.



[http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article\\_cdo/aid/103868/jewish/How-to-Light-the-Menorah.htm](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/103868/jewish/How-to-Light-the-Menorah.htm)



Rotger Herfurth, Germany,  
Hanukkah Lamp, c. 1760,  
2008.2.1a,b



Whenever purchasing a mitzvah (“good deed”) article, buy the most beautiful one that is within your means, often this means made of silver. Beautifying a mitzvah is a way of expressing appreciation to G-d, and showing how dearly we hold His commandments.

Michael Ende, Israel, Hanukkah Lamp, 1986, 2000.172a-l







Robert Lipnick, Hanukkah  
Lamp, 1989, 2005.145.2

Hanukkah Lamp, early 20th c.  
98.136.6A,B





Foods deep-fried in oil commemorate the oil from the menorah in the Temple

Latkes

Jelly Doughnuts



Bumuelos







## Dreidel and Gelt

Small gifts are given to children each of the eight days

No work permitted while Hanukkah lights are burning; people play games and tell riddles.

Spin the dreidel. Each side has a letter of the Hebrew alphabet: Nun, Gimel, Hei, Shin. Forms acronym for:

*Neis Gadol Hayah Sham*

“A great miracle happened there.”

Europe, Dreidel, 19th-20th c., 98.136.1

**Minneapolis Institute of Art**





# Best Practices for engagement on Cross Currents

- See separate PDF for ideas