On these pages, you will see select items from an extensive collection of nearly 300 pieces of sacred art that have been in part gifted and in part loaned to the Graduate Theological Union by the Institute for Aesthetic Development and Lanier Graham and family. This marvelous collection, valued at nearly $1M, covers most of the world’s religious traditions, fitting perfectly with the GTU’s expanding interest in the scholarship and practices of religions with origins in the Middle East and Asia. Donor Lanier Graham, the former Chief Curator of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, chose the GTU for this gift in part because of the GTU’s focus on multiple religions and their mutual engagement.

Sacred art often presents symbolic interpretations of that which is deemed holy or transcendent, as artists across centuries and cultures have expressed their reverence and devotion graphically through sculpture, painting, calligraphy, architecture, designs, and other artistic forms. While sacred art is included in the collections of many public and private museums, this new collection at the GTU is unique in that it focuses entirely on sacred art from multiple traditions.

The GTU hopes to take detailed photographs of each work and make images available online to students, faculty, and the public. In addition, funds are being sought to allow portions of the collection to be displayed throughout the school’s buildings on a rotating basis and to allow students and scholars to better access the entire collection.
Indra Seated, Brass, India

Gu Mask, used by women to arbitrate, painted wood, Guro People, Ivory Coast