EDITORIAL

IN THIS ISSUE, Arts of Asia celebrates the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka. Established in 1982, this important museum is renowned for housing one of the best ceramic collections in the world. It is, therefore, our great privilege to publish Director Tetsuro Degawa’s Introduction and three wonderful articles by Dr Christian Boehm, featuring masterpieces of Chinese ceramics of the Song, Jin and Yuan dynasties; Goryeo celadons; and Buncheong ware.

The museum collects, studies, conserves, exhibits and interprets East Asian ceramics, mainly from ancient China and Korea. Many pieces are from the world-famous Ataka Collection, donated by the twenty-one companies of the Sumitomo Group, as well as the beautiful Hhee Byung-Chang Collection. The ceramics include outstanding National Treasures, Important Cultural Properties and other exceptional wares that are appreciated worldwide for their great artistry.

Dr Boehm remarked: “Since I have had the privilege of studying closely the exquisite masterpieces of Chinese and Korean ceramics in the collection of the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka for the past twenty-four years and no other collection has shaped my own understanding of this field more profoundly, I am very grateful to Arts of Asia for producing this splendid issue.” It has certainly been an enriching experience working with Christian on these articles, which I hope will encourage readers to visit this must-see museum.

This May-June 2017 issue also includes enlightening articles on Japanese metal art, renowned Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama (widely regarded as one of the world’s most important living artists), tomb discoveries from China’s Han dynasty, and much more. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the authors for their fine contributions.

It was once again very enjoyable to be in New York for Asia Week and to reconnect with friends in the art world and many important collectors. Despite the inclement weather, this Asia Week was the most exciting I have attended. The ten-day Asian art extravaganza concluded on March 18th, 2017 with a record-breaking US$423.7 million in combined sales from the participating galleries and five auction houses. The Asian art market is certainly alive and kicking!

I caught up with Mr Lark Mason, chairman of Asia Week New York, several times throughout the week at participating art galleries and auctions. He commented: “With the influx of Chinese buyers, museum curators and collectors, Asia Week New York ended on an upbeat note with record-breaking sales in all categories. An unprecedented fifty galleries participated with exhibitions spanning five centuries and auction house totals skyrocketed like never before. All in all, Asia Week New York was a huge success!” In-depth coverage of the blockbuster New York sales appears later in this issue.

This year, 750 collectors, curators and Asian art specialists attended the Asia Week New York Reception on March 13th, 2017, co-hosted by the Asian Department of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. That evening, Arts of Asia was delighted to provide guests with a complimentary copy of our Special Metropolitan Museum Issue, which attracted much praise. It was also a pleasure to catch up with Dr Thomas P. Campbell, the director of The Met, and Dr Maxwell K. Hearn, Douglas Dillon Chairman of the Department of Asian Art.
I am now looking forward to several spectacular and enjoyable art events in the months ahead, and would like to mention two shows in particular. Oliver Hoare will be presenting a new edition of “Every Object Tells a Story”, a public exhibition on view from May 4th to July 5th, 2017 at 5 Cromwell Place, London. The exhibition comprises approximately 400 unusual and interesting objects spanning five millennia that represent multiple civilisations. Each has been carefully selected on the basis of its backstory and historical interest. Highlights include a 13th-century silver drinking vessel bearing the seal of Mongke Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan and ruler of the Mongol dynasty at its peak; an exceptional group of objects from the Indus Valley civilisation, probably the finest in private hands; a silver skull pomander believed to have been owned by King James II; a rare group of votive figures from ancient Bactria; a 2000-year-old Mexican stargazer; and there are also sections dedicated to magic, sex, myths, meteorites and unicorns.

This is a milestone year for the International Antiques Fair (IAF). The fair’s tenth edition will take place once again at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from May 26th to 30th, 2017. It has been a fine achievement by founders William and Priscilla Chak, and their son, Ronald Chak, who manages the fair. This year, IAF will bring together more than seventy prestigious dealers, including Galerie Lamy (Belgium), Christian Deydier (Paris), Hollywood Galleries (Hong Kong) and Esmé Parish Silver (Singapore). Additional events include an exhibition by The World’s Chinese Collectors Association, exceptional exhibitions of Chinese paintings and Japanese lacquer, antiques appraisals, lectures, guided tours and tea ceremonies. The fair will be inaugurated with a charity event to benefit the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Heritage Fund.

Also, the fifth edition of Asia Week Hong Kong will be held from May 25th to June 10th, 2017 presenting a series of educational programmes on Asian art from antiquity to contemporary at venues around the city. For more information, please visit their website www.asiaweekhk.com.

Over the past decade, Hong Kong has become a leading art hub for new and veteran collectors from China and Southeast Asia. As a result, many international galleries and auction houses have moved to or expanded their operations in the city. Cultural institutions are also keeping pace with these developments. For example, the Hong Kong Museum of Art has been closed since August 2015 for a major renovation and expansion. When it reopens in 2019, the museum’s exhibition area will increase by over 40 per cent, providing more opportunities to rotate its collections as well as attract major overseas exhibitions. The Hong Kong Palace Museum proposal is another significant initiative. If this planned undertaking proceeds, the museum will exhibit artefacts from Beijing’s Palace Museum in Hong Kong’s West Kowloon Cultural District. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2017, with the museum set for completion by 2022. Clearly, the art market continues to evolve in Hong Kong, and I am pleased to announce that our special July-August edition will focus on my home town, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the handover.