EDITORIAL

I AM PROUD of my Vietnamese origins which are expressed in a unique and charming way with the cover and articles for this January-February 2008 issue. It was only early last year that I had an exclusive interview with Associate Professor Dr Truong Quoc Binh (Vietnam Fine Arts Museum Director/National Heritage Committee Member) whose warm welcome to visitors is typical of the hospitality of the Vietnamese people. In Dr Binh’s personal message on page 51, and introduction on pages 52 to 55, he records the museum’s operations and development since its inauguration in 1966.

The support that Arts of Asia receives from major museums such as the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, etc. is firmly established and appreciated both by our readers and the museums themselves. At the same time I feel it is my duty to assist and promote the lesser known museums of Asian countries.

Hong Kong is an important centre for classical and contemporary Asian art and Arts of Asia is its most positive supporter. For the January–February 2008 number Arts of Asia revisits my country of birth with a special edition on the Vietnam Fine Arts Museum in Hanoi. The knowledgeable writers from the museum world of that country support the issue headed by Dr Truong Quoc Binh. He himself is in the direct line of the museum’s seven directors since its inauguration in 1966 and throughout the unfortunate war years, which have also been reported from time to time by Arts of Asia when appropriate and apolitical.

It is of interest that the cover of our January–February 2008 magazine represents the work of three Vietnamese artists of a similar contemporary period. The issue is an exclusive first major coverage of the Vietnam Fine Arts Museum in the English language. It includes sculpture from Vietnamese temples and pagodas, as well as folk art and wood carvings from communal houses, a unique feature of traditional Vietnamese villages not seen outside the country.

According to the museum director Dr Truong Quoc Binh: “In order to expand and strengthen its collections the government provides budget allocations to enable the museum to acquire works from national exhibitions, or special exhibitions. In recent years the museum has resorted to using recurrent expenditures to purchase works to supplement existing collections. In 2007 alone purchases included thirteen artworks by such famous artists as Tran Van Can, Nguyen Van Ty and Nguyen Sy Ngoc, forty-eight altar paintings by the Dao people and twenty wood printing panels from Lang Sinh. For several years now, the museum has also benefitted from gifts, artworks and artefacts of different genres, from individuals or organisations within the country, and from overseas. These include gifts from heads of state, received directly or through diplomatic channels. These gifts are treasured not only for their intrinsic value but also as symbols of friendship among nations. In all, these gifts form a collection totalling almost 1000 art works of different types, including those by famous names such as Fernand Leger, Toba Mika, Jan Cotte, Le Thi Luu (first woman graduate from the Indochina Fine Arts School), and expatriate artists Mai Trung Thu, Le Ba Dang and Diem Phung Thi (Phung Thi Cuc).

“Following the construction and upgrading of laboratory and specialised restoration facilities completed in 2003 and 2004, all preservation activities are now concentrated in one location. The task of artefact inventory, scientific inventory and classification is receiving a great deal of attention. In 2005 a major facelift of the preservation warehouse brought changes in management of preservation storage facilities, with the installation of modern preservation equipment, a shelving system for sculptured works, a dedicated system for the hanging of paintings, and acid free storage facilities for artworks on paper. These adhere to international standards used in major museums overseas.

“The treasures of cultural heritage of Vietnam are manifestations, vivid and real, of the Vietnamese civilisation. They are objective testimonies of the formation and development of the people of Vietnam in respect of artistic tradition, and at the same time they form the basis for building and developing a new culture and promote cultural exchange on a world scale.”
The Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair

The Inaugural Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair

My Editorial for the *Arts of Asia* September–October 2007 issue included a preview of the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair (SFJAF) that took place at the Shanghai Exhibition Center from October 13th–21st, 2007. Executive Editor Robin Markbreiter and I attended the opening, spending three days carefully viewing and meeting owners of thirty-four prestigious art galleries and jewellers who came mainly from Europe, USA and Shanghai to exhibit in Shanghai for the first time. Arranging the major art exhibition in China is very complicated and can only be achieved with tremendous perseverance and strong connections. The talented young organisers, Nicolò Mori and Maximin Berko, deserve congratulations for attracting famous galleries to participate at their vetted fair. It was a wonderful opportunity for visitors to see rare Old Master paintings, ancient art and antiques, Western modern and contemporary art, and fine jewellery. Nicolò Mori, SFJAF President, was interviewed just before catching our plane to Hong Kong on October 15th.

T.N.—Can you tell me more about your background?

Nicolò Mori—I was born in Genoa which is a wonderful city in Italy. However I always had the desire to leave my environment. It was only when I became older that I truly appreciated my home town. I lived in the Riviera near Portoefino. It is very beautiful, but to be honest it is rather boring for me. So I moved to Milan and studied at Luigi Bocconi University, recognised as one of Europe’s leading institutions for business and economics. I graduated in management of international companies.

T.N.—You are rather young to organise such an important art fair. What is your work experience?

N.M.—I have done many things and believe every experience in life has helped form my skills. I am very social and always had the ability to create friendships. My father runs Hotel Vis à Vis in Sestri Levante nearby Portofino and I grew up in this hotel, working summers there since the age of twelve. I was an event planner and this helped me to increase my social skills. I had to understand what could be done to give good service. After University I spent two years in Norway.

T.N.—Why did you go to Norway?

N.M.—Everyone in Italy is expected to do military service, however at that time you could be excluded if you had a contract without end to work out of Europe. Friends of my parents had a business in Norway building offshore oil platforms and they agreed to hire me. They also had locations in Australia and other countries as well. I vividly remember that I wanted to make a major change in my life. I had been to America and thought going there would not be great change. So I decided to go to Norway where I started working as a project coordinator and became a project manager.

I learnt the Norwegian language and their habits. I made very dear friends and have a lot of respect for the country. But I also recognised people there had drinking habits and the fact that the spirit market was monopolised by the government, made me see a business opportunity. That is when I had the idea of introducing fine wines for appreciation. So with the help of a well-connected Norwegian partner we opened a company in 1998. At first we imported fine Italian wines, then fine wines from other countries. After one year only, the company was listed as the 13th official wine importer in Norway. I started to build my relationships and found myself having dinners with important business leaders who felt comfortable confiding in me.

T.N.—What did you do next?

N.M.—In 2002 we had an important renovation of our family hotel. My family needed my help so I returned to Portoefino, however I always had a home in Milan as well. Our four star boutique hotel has forty-six rooms and is stunningly located on a cliff at Sestri Levante overlooking the Riviera. I took care of the image building of the hotel and started to design and produce all the courtesy products for our hotel as well as the exterior decoration. It is at that time that I met Maximin Berko during a visit to Paris. Maximin was studying at the Sorbonne and his family has a beautiful apartment in Paris. We met at a party and immediately became good friends. I explained about my hotel renovations and he proposed to bring me to see the Canton Fair in Guangzhou. We spent three days at the fair and it was an amazing experience. I started to make all my contacts and selected catalogues for my hotel renovations.

In China it is very important to inspect the quality of workmanship and meet people face to face. I did all the sourcing for my hotel in China and found it much easier than working with people in Italy. The Chinese suppliers were efficient, business orientated, cheaper and with supervision could provide good quality. That was the start of my relationship with China.

T.N.—How did you come up with the idea for an art fair?
Inset in the view of the Shanghai Exhibition Center is the wing entrance for the fair. The building, erected in 1955, was formerly the Sino-Soviet Friendship Hall.

N.M.—Along the process Maximin kept telling me I should go with him to international fine art fairs. At first it was a hobby as my dream was to become a collector. I already started to collect Chinese antique furniture. In China you can find good deals if you know where to go. I would buy pieces to furnish my friends’ homes. Three years ago Maximin suggested that we should start an art fair in Shanghai but it seemed too early. Then last year we realised China had opened up enormously and Shanghai would host major international events such as Formula One racing, Special Olympics and international polo matches. China will also host the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics and the World Expo Shanghai 2010 attracting participants from nearly two hundred countries, international organisations and tens of millions of visitors. I was certain China would really open up further. So we felt 2007 was the perfect time to have our first fair as the energy was rising. Our decision to proceed took place in October 2006 at the Fuchun Resort Hotel in Hangzhou. At that time I never realised it was going to be such a big event and how much work would be involved.

T.N.—Beijing is more known for its culture so why did you decide to hold the art fair in Shanghai?

N.M.—We thought the art market in Beijing was already saturated. Over the last ten years around forty museums have been built there. However we felt Shanghai was a place for something new and exciting. There is a fast dynamic energy in this city. This is the main finance and banking centre in China. It is important to consider both the commercial and cultural aspects for the fair. Shanghai as a city represents something in common with what we are doing culturally. We are trying to create a bridge between the East and the West.

T.N.—How can you do this?

N.M.—In China there is a lot of Chinese art, however there is a gap in cultural learning. In the past conditions at universities were horrible and students’ education was controlled. We are a little event in greater China but in the right city. We are a little fire and we are trying to put wood on this fire. Now China is international and everyone has access to information. The cultural gap is getting thinner. People have more money and want to appreciate culture and art. Art has always been a noble form of expression. Today in China there exists all the elements for people to experience art. In a way with this fair we are creating an art experience.

T.N.—How did you select the venue for your fair?

N.M.—The Shanghai Exhibition Center, as it is now called, was formerly the Sino-Soviet Friendship Hall. It was erected in 1955 during a period of close collaboration between the two communist states. Interestingly the huge site was originally the garden and private paradise of Silas Aaron Hardoon, a tycoon who was born in Baghdad to a poor Jewish family. I thought this was a compelling story and later discovered that in the beginning of the 20th century Silas Hardoon had also held art expositions in his original mansions.

T.N.—Was it difficult to convince art dealers to join your fair?

N.M.—That was the most difficult part. We went around the world to meet the dealers in person. Maximin’s parents are well-established specialist dealers of 19th century European paintings and the Berko name was our guarantee. At art fairs the exhibitors all know each other and Maximin would present our concept to the dealers. He is the artistic side of this project. I take care of the business.

T.N.—I think you are like Yin and Yang. You complement each other.

N.M.—Yes we do. I like that comparison. Maximin brought the top dealers to join the fair. He also has a lot of art fair experience from his family’s background. Initially we had compiled an enormous list of highest level galleries to approach. The result is thirty-four top galleries participating here.

T.N.—Your fair runs for ten days. Do you think it is rather long?

N.M.—The important art fairs all last this long. Perhaps eight days should be sufficient. But this is our first event and there have been sales already. Although there have not been a huge number of visitors the galleries are very glad to see the level of visitors is very good. We have a special programme for VIPs and we feel this is a place for people to buy with confidence.

T.N.—How large is the fair?

N.M.—The total area of the fair is 7300 square metres. The exhibitors’ booths cover 2830 square metres. We charged exhibitors €600 per square metre. For that they receive the stand with carpet, painted walls in their choice of colour, electricity outlets, some lighting, internet access, and much more. For example we also include a Chinese translator for each gallery for the duration of the fair. There are seven partner hotels offering preferential rates. This is also high season. We will keep the same rates for booths next year. Our rates are lower than fairs in Europe and America.

T.N.—How do the customs and VAT procedures work?
Irina Berko, Senator Leo Goovaerts, Yue Sai Kan, Christiane Goovaerts and Nicolò Mori

Liu Ying Mei, Minister Jos Chabert and Nicolò Mori

Emmanuel Zada, Alice King, SFJAF Committee of Honour, Marc Uzal, Tuyet Nguyet, Michael Zada, Marie Jeanne Zada, Xiaolan Liu and Nathalie Uzal

Irena Berko in front of the logo for the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair

Alain Spruit, Maximin Berko, Veronique Spruit and Nicolò Mori

Elegant table setting for the exclusive Nine Dragon’s Polo Club dinner and cocktails
N.M.—This was not an easy process. Everything brought into the fair has to be fully described and the value declared. We have very good connections with the customs officials and organised an intelligent system to make things work smoothly by negotiating a bonded area status within the fair. However the moment the pieces leave the fair then a customs duty is applicable. Our broker in China processes the full customs clearance as well as acting as an intermediary for payment. This broker is an established international company with very strong connections and facilities. The VAT is 17% and the customs duty is generally 12%. Each object is treated according to its nature for customs clearance. A slightly higher tax is applied to jewellery. It is quite complicated for the moment and we are working on this as well.

T.N.—As there are so many expensive items what security precautions did you arrange for the fair?

N.M.—There is lot of security inside the building. In fact they are the local police and they decided themselves how many guards would be required. I believe there are fifty-eight in total on a regular basis. We also have over one hundred workers in the building.

T.N.—Can you make a profit from your first fair?

N.M.—If we break even in our first fair I will be very happy. We would not want more than sixty participating exhibitors as we want to keep the quality very high. Next year we plan to start on Saturday and shorten the fair by a few days. The hall has already been booked. The owners of the building are also our partners in the overall management of the fair. They are a government organisation and gave us favourable terms as they are extremely proud that we have brought such a high-level fair to Shanghai. This is the largest fine jewellery and art fair to have taken place in China over the last fifty years.

A follow-up telephone interview was conducted in Arts of Asia’s Hong Kong offices on October 23rd.

Tuyen Nguyet—Now that the fair is over and you have had time to reflect, do you feel happy?

Nicolò Mori—I am extremely happy. When it was over I felt a bit tired, especially after emptying the exhibition building. It was a bit sad to see everything taken down. However the overall result was great, especially the last two days. At the end all the people came and that’s when the sales happened. We had people who came back to visit galleries and important collectors bought from many galleries. We are very satisfied and the fair was a success.

T.N.—Did you have the right mix of exhibitors?

N.M.—We had a good balance between contemporary art, Old Master paintings, antiquities and fine jewellery. There was interest and sales in all fields including decorative items as well as sculptures and modern and contemporary Western and Asian paintings. People not only came to buy but they also reserved items. Twenty out of thirty-four galleries sold at this first edition of SFJAF. It is a remarkable result for a brand new concept in China.

T.N.—Was there any special moment for you during the fair?

N.M.—We received the visit on Saturday of Mr Zhou Yupeng, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, with his wife and daughter. Visitors were so surprised to see him walking around the fair without his bodyguards. He is a very important person in China politics and in organising the World Expo Shanghai 2010. I was delighted to meet him and he told me he is proud that this fair is in Shanghai and wants to discuss how we can work more closely together for next year.

T.N.—What are your plans for next year?

N.M.—Today we had a meeting with the Shanghai Exhibition Group and they want to make our fair the most important art event in Asia and push it internationally. So we are now trying to establish all our strategic alliances. It is very exciting and we have to continue to work very hard to take advantage of the momentum. What we are now doing is building on the enquiries we have received. We also plan to set up a charity foundation to support the development and appreciation of arts in China.

Next year the fair will coincide with the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics and we expect many more visitors to China so that will help us. We have also been contacted by a leading bank in China to develop a department for art and to help provide information and recommendations on where to purchase art with the possibility of starting their own private collections. We are very happy and young enough to have the energy to work hard in all these areas.

T.N.—Will you keep the same formula for the fair next year?

N.M.—We want to keep the formula of having a rather small fair with no more than sixty exhibitors to maintain a very high standard. We like having a strong representation of all aspects of fine art and that includes Asian and Western material. Our idea is to offer an overall appreciation of art history from antiquities to modern and contemporary. Very select galleries of Asian art are welcome; since we are in China we should give priority to galleries of Chinese art. Definitely priority will be given to those galleries that have supported us in our first year.

T.N.—What were the reactions from your exhibitors?

N.M.—Around 85% of the exhibitors want to return next year. It is amazing. On the penultimate day of the fair the exhibitors met together on their own initiative to talk together to think of ideas to make improvements. They can feel the China market is booming and they are pleased that the level of the fair is very high. Most of them said they will be back next year.

T.N.—What were their suggestions?

N.M.—For example the exhibitors recommended that we create a stronger link with the local administration and even want to create an exhibitors’ committee to give constructive comments. This will help us and it is a positive way forward. I feel we established a deep relationship with them and held many social events so the galleries would have an opportunity to know us and each other outside their work environment. Everyone got along very well and it felt like we were at home in a family.

T.N.—What was the final attendance figure?
Black-tie Charity Gala pre-dinner cocktail and reception held on October 17th

N.M.—I need to check with the Shanghai Exhibition Center but I think we had about ten thousand visitors. There were over one thousand people for the opening. The fair did not feel crowded and we did not want to have lots of people coming here simply to take photos. We wanted to open the door for important people who had the means to buy or support the cultural exchange. But we also want the common people to come to admire the art. Perhaps our entrance fee of RMB200 was a little high. We might revise that next year to RMB100. We will also abolish the VIP time between 11 am and noon. The fair will commence at 11 am for all people.

Those who came had an appreciation and were knowledgeable of Western art and it has touched a lot of important people in the city. We want to tour the provinces in China as well as Taiwan, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong to make our fair in Shanghai better known. And certainly if we have people like you and Arts of Asia supporting us then there is no doubt that next year will be a great success. We are always open to listen to your advice and we will be very glad to cooperate with you.

T.N.—Did you have any problems with customs duties and clearance?

N.M.—As mentioned before the tax system of China is very complicated. Our aim is to explain to the government that having a high customs duty is not a good idea for this event. I can also assure you that everything that was sent to China for this fair was returned home with no problem and we had a very special customs clearance that was put in place just for our fair. For example Gisèle Croës exhibited Chinese antique relics and museum quality pieces. She came to Shanghai with important objects and left without any difficulties. The Chinese want to show their education towards the arts and we feel confident we can do even better next year.

Over the coming year I will spend more time in China to do important public relations to members of the state government and other dignitaries. We plan to have special guests to open the event next year, such as the Director of the Shanghai Museum and the Mayor of Shanghai, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. We want to make this fair the most important cultural event in China and even the world.

Charity Gala dinner: Patrick Berko, Patricia Huge, Minister of State Mark Eyskens and Christiane Goovaerts

Nicolò Mori and Mr Zhou Yupeng, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai, visiting the exhibitors at the fair

Charity Gala dinner: Nicla De Nicolai Mori, Senator Leo Goovaerts and Viviane Berko
Select Exhibitors and Details

Ancient Art and Antiques

Berko Fine Paintings, Knokke-Heist

Patrick and Viviane Berko, specialists in 19th century European paintings, founded their gallery in 1976. Patrick Berko, born 1950, is the son and grandson of well-known Belgian antique dealers. Viviane is Flemish and spent her childhood in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire). She began working with Patrick when he was eighteen and is three years his junior. In less than ten years, this dynamic husband-and-wife team had their own gallery in the elegant Flemish seaside resort of Knokke when they were still in their twenties.

Together they have participated at prestigious international arts and antiques fairs in Amsterdam, Beverly Hills, Brussels, Chicago, Hong Kong, London, Maastricht, Monaco, Moscow, Palm Beach, Paris and Singapore. With their vast experience and strong connections in the art world they have been invaluable support to their son Maximin Berko (born 1978), Vice-President of the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair. Their daughter Irina Berko (born 1984) also works at SFJAF and she is responsible for marketing.

Patrick Berko is very comfortable in Shanghai and feels its people share his way of thinking. He said, “China is now a world leader again so the timing is right for this fair where the most important galleries have joined. I enjoy communicating. People here are open and have a good business mentality. It has been the best first step and it will only get better.”

Michel-Guy Chadelaud, Paris

Since 1975 Michel-Guy Chadelaud has been an antique dealer of 19th century French furniture, paintings and works of art. A member of the French National Antique Dealers Committee, he decided to bring his highest quality pieces to Shanghai. Seen at his large booth was a pair of 19th century majestic ormolu-mounted blackwood and porcelain pedestal tables of Royal Sèvres manufacture. The circular tops feature central portraits of Louis XIV and Louis XVI surrounded by seventeen medallions of the most important ladies of the French Court. Another rare item is a circa 1899 mahogany wood grande vitrine de milieu crafted by François Linke (1855–1946). This cabinet was commissioned by King Faud I of Egypt and first exhibited at the St. Louis World Fair in 1904. Mr Chadelaud’s asking price for the cabinet is €3.5 million. He believes such items that are very hard to find will gain value year by year so they are very sound investments.

“I have a passion for unique 19th century French pieces”, he said. “I was born with this and become very emotional when I discover top works. I think I have come to Shanghai at the right time and have high hopes for this fair. I decided to attend because the organisers are good friends of mine and because I already have clients from Shanghai, Beijing, Singapore and Macau. I expect the Chinese customers who come to see me in Paris will also come to the fair in Shanghai. My main market has been Russia and now we feel China is growing. The collectors in China want to have the best and are interested in the highest quality. They might need to improve their knowledge but they already have the appreciation and are willing to pay. The Chinese collectors also have good taste in their selection and do a lot of research as well. When they trust the seller they will always return as they have a sense of loyalty.”
Georgia Chrischilles, Brussels

It was the first time Georgia Chrischilles and her brother Rolf visited China and they were both most impressed with the presentation of the fair, the top galleries participating and the enthusiasm of visitors coming to see them. They were very excited to be in Shanghai and would like to return. Georgia brought affordable Asian antiques such as Himalayan and Tibetan bronzes, a nicely carved Indian 12th century Pala stone of Vishnu, a bronze Buddha head from Ayutthaya in Thailand and Ming dynasty gold jewellery from China. Since founding her company in 1984, Georgia has been an exhibitor in several art fairs and is the Founding Chairwoman of the Brussels Oriental Art Fair (BOAF).

Gisèle Croës, Brussels

The name Gisèle Croës is known to Arts of Asia readers as a leading dealer in early Chinese art, with a particular expertise in rare archaic bronzes made for ritual purposes and symbols of authority. Visitors to Shanghai are recommended to see the spectacular examples on view at Shanghai Museum of Art’s ground floor bronze gallery (also see Arts of Asia May–June 1997 special edition on the Shanghai Museum). Gisèle’s stand included Chinese works of art such as a Northern Qi white marble standing bodhisattva, Tang dynasty pottery sculptures of fat ladies and a selection of cloisonné enamels from the Kangxi and Qianlong periods. She said one of her aims in participating at the fair is “to let China know that people in the West appreciate and treasure Chinese art. This is a wonderful opportunity and I am sure the visitors who come here will return again and will continue to be interested.”

Galerie Bernard Dulong, Paris

For over twenty years Galerie Bernard Dulong has held outstanding exhibitions featuring ancient tribal art. Since 1985 Mr. Dulong has been a member of the Compagnie Nationale des Experts and is a renowned specialist of primitive arts. He said “it is a great honour for our gallery to have been invited to take part in this first antiques show in Shanghai. It was not before the beginning of the 20th century that many painters—following Matisse’s and Picasso’s lead—discovered the traditional African arts and drew inspiration from them. These works of art are kept in the greatest museums in the world and the Musée du Quai Branly inaugurated last year in Paris is entirely dedicated to them.” For Shanghai Mr. Dulong presented a selection of ancient and rare pieces and jacket to build a foundation of understanding, respect and friendship between people. “I decided to join the fair in Shanghai because I am an art dealer and wanted to try something new. In Africa there is a great amount of development and the Chinese people are very much involved in this growth. I am sowing the seeds on the ground by bringing my very best pieces as this is the way to educate people. I believe in this art and that is exactly why I am here.” He is photographed next to a 16th–17th century hardwood ceremonial trough made by the Dogon people from Mali in West Africa.

Bernard De Leye, Brussels

Bernard De Leye has been an antique dealer since 1977, specialising in Belgian and European silverware from the 17th and 18th centuries. He plays an active role in many associations and was the President of the Belgian Chamber of Experts in Works of Art. Since 2002 he has been Vice-President of the Belgium Antique Fair and attends many international art fairs, including the Paris Biennale, the Monaco Biennale and the Moscow World Fine Art Fair. In 2006 he was selected to be a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. For Shanghai he exhibited a silver-gilt covered bowl and stand, snuff boxes, sets of plates, an oval basin, wine coolers and serving dishes crafted by French and Belgian master silversmiths.

Salomon Lilian, Amsterdam

Specialising in Dutch and Flemish 17th century paintings, Salomon Lilian is recognised as one of the leading international dealers and experts in the field of Old Master paintings. The gallery is located in the heart of Amsterdam’s historic centre and has been in business since 1989. Mr. Lilian brought to the show very high-quality and beautiful paintings in wonderful condition. The highlight was a painting of St. Phillip by Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). “I brought the best”, he said. “Old Master paintings go up in price very steadily, about 10% every year. However the top works rise more than the average.” The gallery also exhibits annually at the TEFAF in Maastricht and at the PAN Fair in Amsterdam.

M & M Objets d’Art, Monaco

Jimmy Mizes, the owner of M & M Objets d’Art, followed his father’s footsteps in Buenos Aires in the precious stones and fine jewellery business. In the late seventies he moved to New York where he started his own company and ten years later he opened a gallery in Monte Carlo where he continues to live. He said, “The passion for my work keeps me going. My taste and specialty is unique antique French jewellery of the early 20th century. I have 1920s Art Deco and Cartier 1930s collector’s pieces. Quite a few of my antique items were acquired by several museums over the years.”

Peter Pappot Fine Art Gallery, Amsterdam

Before founding his gallery specialising in paintings of Dutch and Belgian masters of the period 1800–1950, Peter Pappot was a dealer in Chinese Export porcelain. Mr. Pappot decided the change of direction nearly thirty years ago because he strongly felt that Impressionist paintings by Dutch and Belgian artists like Cornelis Springer, B.C. Kockkoek, Isaac Israels, Gustave de Smet, George Lemmen, G.H. Breitner and Kees van Dongen were significantly undervalued compared to their French counterparts. The gallery has about four hundred paintings in its collection and also provides valuation reports for paintings of the 19th and 20th centuries. He said, “All the good French and Dutch Impressionist paintings have increased a lot in price. This is an important fair where the level is very high like that of TEFAF. We always bring our best paintings to fairs and want to explain the name and background of each artist.”

Galerie Schmit, Paris

For three generations, since its foundation by Robert Schmit in 1948, Galerie Schmit has a worldwide reputation for its specialisation in works by Masters of the 19th and 20th centuries. Each spring they organise an important exhibition in their gallery dedicated to artists such as Bonnard, Boulin, Corot, Degas, Derain, Jongkind, Marquet, Villon and Zad-
Rolf and Georgia Chrischilles, Brussels

Gisèle Croës, Brussels

Mr and Mrs Bernard De Leye, Brussels

Bernard Dulon, Paris

Jimmy Mizes, Monaco

Mr and Mrs Salomon Lilian, Amsterdam

Peter Pappot, Amsterdam
kine. Robert and his son Manuel Schmit are renowned connoisseurs who regularly act as experts at auctions and important exhibitions in the most famous world museums. Manuel Schmit explained that French dealers are required to guarantee the authenticity of Master paintings for thirty years. “I was one of the earliest to agree to participate at this fair. I also love China and it is the culture of the moment. We already have Chinese collectors for Impressionist paintings as the best works continue to increase in value. Collectors will always want to buy Impressionist works for security as they are rare. I am the third generation in this business as my grandfather started with Old Master paintings. One of my favourite paintings on show is by Monet of men walking in a snow scene. It is very sensitively painted. The oil on canvas, Baigneuse assise endormie, by Pierre-Auguste Renoir is my most expensive painting at US$8.5 million.”

Zada, Brussels

Emmanuel Zada is known for the quality of his Oriental carpets and ancient tapestries for more than thirty years. He recently renovated his gallery located in the Sablon which is located in the heart of Brussels’ finest antique neighbourhood.

The huge 16th to 18th century tapestries of historical or mythological scenes are “a true window to the world as our ancestors used to see”, he said. “We offer nothing less than the top pieces. Other than age and provenance, carpets and tapestries should have personality and style. Carpets and tapestries have always complemented each other very well. They give a soul to an interior. Our passion for antique carpets and tapestries has brought us to select artworks from all around the world, coming from several different periods. The designs and colours are very important to interior designers and we make it our duty to keep up with the trends of today’s decorations.”

Modern and Contemporary Art

Rudolf Budja Gallery, Salzburg

Rudolf Budja has twenty years experience in Contemporary and Modern 20th century American, European and Asian art, with a main focus on Pop art and young artists who have evolved from this direction. In the 1980s he met artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Mr Budja said, “Andy Warhol became a world star and changed the way people thought about art. He was the first artist to hang a modern print next to an old Picasso oil painting. For the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair we brought iconic images by Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, as well works by Damien Hirst and Asian artists that demonstrate positive energy.” Mr Budja has galleries in Salzburg, Vienna, Graz, New York and Miami.

Galerie Pierre M. Dumonteil, Paris

For over twenty-five years the Pierre M. Dumonteil gallery has “played an important role in the discovery of the greatest figurative sculptures from the 20th century”. Mr Dumonteil and his Vietnamese wife Anh Tuyet have hosted many exhibitions for art lovers to appreciate the talent of artists creating works related to themes of animals. They include Bugatti to Guyot, Pompon to Artus, as well as contemporary sculptors. In parallel, the gallery also has a focus for colonial as well as figurative works by Claudel, Giacometti and Rodin.

High Gallery, Shanghai

Founded in 2005, High Gallery and its director Zhou Jiwen offer art consultation services and exhibition planning. The company has invited famous art experts in China and from abroad to be the advisors of the gallery. It aims to be a top-grade gallery in the fields of both Chinese traditional and contemporary art by providing high-quality services and offering the best works by recognised Chinese masters such as Zhang Dajian, Fu Baoshi, Xie Zhihui, Lu Yanshao, Lin Fengmian and Cheng Shifa. Jimmy Zhong, in charge of overseas marketing development, said High Gallery was very pleased to participate at the inaugural Shanghai fair to sell modern and contemporary Chinese paintings. They have enjoyed meeting collectors as well as top international dealers.

Opera Gallery, Paris

Opera Gallery first opened its doors in Singapore and Paris headquarters in 1994 at the initiative of Gilles Dyan. Today it has spacious galleries located in leading metropolitan cities such as New York (2000), Miami (2003), Hong Kong (2004), London (2005), Venice (2006) and Seoul (2007). Before 2009, five new locations are scheduled to open. Opera Gallery offers works of art by Buffet, Chagall, Dali, Gauguin, Miro, Picasso, Renoir and Warhol—guaranteeing masterpieces with recognised certificates of authenticity. Mr Dyan is also devoted to promoting new artistic talents and to supporting rising artists from America, Asia and Europe. In September 2007 the gallery in Hong Kong moved to a new location situated at the corner between Wellington Street and Wyndham Street, Central. With a growing clientele in Hong Kong, the new gallery which encompasses 4000 square feet—almost double its previous size—enables it to have an impressive exhibition space.

Ravenscourt Galleries, Moscow

Ravenscourt Galleries is a London-Moscow gallery run by expert-collector Maxim Bokser and London art dealer Elizabeth Meschkivicheva. The gallery specialises in Impressionist and Modern art, Russian art of the first half of the 20th century, as well as Russian Contemporary art. They decided to join the international fine art fair as they expect it to become one of the most significant events in Shanghai society. Amongst the thirty-four fine art galleries, fine jewellers and antique dealers exhibiting at SIFAF they are the only Russian-owned gallery taking part. Half their stand showcased French Impressionist paintings by artists such as Andre Braque and David Birluici; the other half was dedicated to stage designs and costumes of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Ms Meschkivicheva said she wanted to participate at the fair “to be alongside the top dealers like Galerie Taménaga and Galerie Schmit. Visitors here do not know much about Russian art and the names of the artists, but they closely studied the paintings, asked questions and took time to learn.”

Galerie Taménaga, Paris

Galerie Taménaga opened its flagship gallery in Tokyo in 1969. As the first gallery to introduce European modern art to Japan, it has brought to the country an enormous number of works by modern European masters. In 1971, the gallery opened its Osaka and Paris galleries. Commemorating its 30th anniversary, the Paris gallery expanded its space to 600 square metres. Mr Tsugu Taménaga, the second generation
Tuyet Nguyet and Manuel Schnit, Paris

Zada family, Brussels

Rudolf Budja Gallery, Salzburg

Mr and Mrs Pierre M. Dumonteil, Paris

Jimmy Zhong, Shanghai

Gilles Dyan, Paris

Elizaveta Meshkvicheva, London

Tsugu Tamenaga, Paris
owner of the gallery, spoke openly about his reasons for joining the fair: “We participated at Trésors in Singapore and have been cultivating the market in Asia. I personally do not know mainland China and hear that they have been collecting Chinese antiques and now fine arts and painting. We already do business with collectors from Hong Kong and Singapore, but this is our first step in China.” Mr Tamenaga guarantees his paintings and has a policy for refunds. He advises collectors to only buy Marc Chagall oil paintings with certificates of authenticity from the Chagall Committee in France, such as his signed Autumn Sky of a newly married couple for €3 million. “I have to build my reputation and credibility and need to be very careful. In order to determine the value of a painting I have to closely follow the market and decide on the price level with clients who consign to us. People also follow the auction results to judge the price and compare against paintings already in famous museums around the world.”

Galerie Thomas, Munich

For more than forty years Galerie Thomas has been one of the world’s leading art dealers for works by masters of German Expressionism, Classic Modernism, Post-War and Contemporary art. The company likes to explore new markets and have been present at national and international art fairs such as Art in Basel and Miami, Art Cologne and TEFAF in Maastricht where they have met collectors. Over the last two or three years the gallery noticed a lot of Asian collectors attending American art fairs in New York and Miami, so owners Silke and Raimund Thomas thought it would be a good idea to show their artworks in Asia for the first time. They liked the format of the Shanghai fair in combining different categories of art within a grand historic building. The standard of the fair is already very good and each exhibitor selected attractive colour schemes for their spaciously designed booths. They feel this fair will be even better next year.

Fine Jewellery

Aviva, Geneva

Known since the 1980s for its antique jewellery pieces, in December 2006 the house of Aviva opened itself to a new and modern spirit by proposing more contemporary pieces. Constant care in ensuring the rarity of its stones, as well as the uniqueness of its creations, has made Aviva one of the addresses most valued by connoisseurs.

The Swiss company collaborates with Singapore born Edmond Chin who is internationally recognised today as one of the most talented jewellery designers. During the 1990s Edmond Chin ran the Jewellery and Jade Department at Christie’s Hong Kong and finds inspiration for his modern creations from ancient Chinese art. In 2006 he created a diamond butterfly brooch that the government of Singapore presented to the Japanese empress.

Chatila, London

Chatila jewellers have been a family run business since 1860 with expertise in dealing with rare diamonds and other precious stones. They regard themselves as one of the few remaining luxury brand companies delivering that all-important personal touch when dealing with clients. Chatila clients can expect to find rare and coloured, highly sought-after stones in its London, Geneva and New York locations. They also exhibit at jewellery and fine art exhibitions around the world throughout the year.

David Morris, London

David Morris established his first store more than forty-five years ago and over the last twelve years the company has become an international business with stores in London, Moscow, Palm Beach, Riga, Doha and Dubai. The jewellery designs draw on classic techniques to create uniquely imagi-
native pieces of the highest quality, renowned for a lightness of touch that is both modern and timeless. “We decided to join the fair and come to Shanghai as we already have a lot of good clients in Hong Kong” explained William Holbech, Director of Sales. “We want to forge a new market for jewellery and explore opportunities in China. Jewellery has always been in the Chinese culture and I am sure the fair will get better and better.”

Leysen, Belgium

Leysen jewellers have been setting stones and crafting selected materials to fashion prestigious creations since 1855. Henri Leysen currently heads the company and comes from a long line of jewellers. Since 2006 he has been preparing to pass on the company to his equally creative son Maxime. Henri Leysen believes in the importance of listening to customers and in nurturing a personalised relationship. “Each customer is unique and deserves special attention. We help every one of them to find the piece of jewellery that faithfully reflects their personality. The Belgian Royal Family, other crowned heads from all over the world, famous personalities or admirers of exceptional pieces, all can look forward to the same hospitality and discretion Leysen offers.”

Sabbadini, Milan

Sabbadini jewellery has been a family business for several generations. Originally founded in 1938 by Bruno Sabbadini, it holds a strong reputation for excellence in craftsmanship, originality in design and for using the highest quality gems. Alberto Sabbadini is a widely respected expert of diamonds and gemstones. His extensive knowledge has earned Sabbadini an excellent reputation when it comes to large and high-quality diamonds. Each piece of jewellery is personally designed by Alberto Sabbadini and hand-crafted in Milan by skilled goldsmiths who have worked for many years in the company’s workshops.

It was a pleasure to meet the owners of many famous galleries exhibiting at the inaugural Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair. During our conversations they generally felt the organisers did their very best and there was no complaint about their efforts. There was optimism and a sense that the timing was right for such a high level fair in Shanghai. “We haven’t done any deals yet at the fair itself” explained Elizaveta Meshkivicheva of Ravenscourt Galleries, “but we have a lot of contacts and also potential clients who might come back to us. Several of them explained that because of the taxes it will be much more interesting for them to pay directly to the gallery and have their goods shipped to China or Hong Kong from Europe. I think the fair was rather well organised, it was a very good experience altogether and we will consider taking part next year.” Manuel Schmit also plans to participate next year. His aim “was not really to sell but to meet some interesting people and to make a promotion” of his company in China. According to Mr Schmit, French art galleries are responsible for the authenticity of Western paintings they sell for a period of thirty years, while French auction houses are only responsible for two years. Their responsibility includes ensuring paintings are genuine and not stolen, so this provides a level of security for buyers.

At the fair it was widely agreed that 17% VAT combined with customs duty is too high. This concern was voiced to the organisers who have given their assurance to tackle this problem during discussions with Chinese government officials. However even exhibitors that did not manage to make sales in their first promotion in China will be happy to return to the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair next year as they believe there is great potential. It was important that Arts of Asia visited Shanghai for this new fair to provide first-hand information for our worldwide subscribers and readers. During my limited time I did try to visit every exhibitor but in some cases the gallery owners were not at their booths to give me their impressions. Overall I still feel confident that my unique twelve-page report will be enjoyed as a comprehensive and useful review of the fair.
Watercolours on silk by Vietnamese artist Vu Tuan, accompanied by a photograph of Brigitte Le, art broker and consultant

I wish to thank Vietnam Fine Arts Museum Director Dr Truong Quoc Binh and his staff for their encouragement and assistance with the production of the Vietnamese section of this issue. Also, it would not have been possible for *Arts of Asia* to further research and complete the section without the valued help of Kerry and Kim Nguyen Long who for ourselves made frequent visits to Hanoi as friends and representatives of the magazine. Long was particularly helpful in taking the photographs of additional pictures and selection of the museum photographs, while Kerry’s own article, “A Personal View”, presents the readers, as well as does the museum “with a strong impression of the rich mosaic of traditional crafts, and the sheer creative ability of the fifty-four ethnicities that make up the nation Vietnam”.

A romantic view of Vietnam is portrayed in the photograph of Brigitte Le in traditional dress as well as Vietnamese music playing on her website www.galeriebrigitte.com which introduces her gallery at 11411 Sunset Hills Road, Reston, Virginia, USA. Galerie Brigitte has been actively promoting Vietnamese contemporary fine art for the past seven years and has arranged exhibitions in venues such as the World Bank, Mandarin Oriental and Asia Society in Washington DC. As well as paintings the gallery offers to the public decorative photographs, sculptures and handicrafts.

Brigitte, a graduate from the University of Maryland with a double major in Chemical Engineering and Fine Arts, is someone to bear in mind while thinking of gifts for the Vietnamese New Year (Tet). Her latest exhibition, “Flowing Expressions”, has been running from July to December 2007 at the Mandarin Oriental, Washington DC. It presents watercolour on silk paintings by Vietnamese artist Vu Tuan who is fascinated by the allure and mystery of female beauty.

It was a pleasure attending the opening ceremonies at the Art Museum, Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong on November 10th, 2007 of the joint

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**Lunar New Year with Arts of Asia**

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Phan Van Don, born in Hanoi in 1917, was a graduate of the Indochina Fine Arts College, 13th intake class (1939–1944). He specialised in carved traditional Vietnamese painting and has worked in the Fine Arts Museum of Vietnam as well as in museums in Germany, Russia and Hungary. From 1957 to 1989 he lectured at the Fine Arts College of Vietnam.

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*The Five Traditional Ceremonial Fruits*  
Phan Van Don, 1970. Colour woodcut, 34 x 26 cm
Anthony K.W. Cheung and his wife Anne with Chinese ceramics and works of art specialist Anthony Lin at the gallery displaying imperial Qing porcelain vases.

Two of a set four zitan 18th century low-backed armchairs, in front of a display of 17th century huanghuali table and chairs, and one of a pair of cabinets also below.

Opening ceremonies at the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong on Saturday November 10th following the ribbon cutting. From the left: Dr Jenny So, Harold Wong, Dr S.Y. Yip, Mr Kot See-For, Professor Liu Pak-wai, Anthony K.W Cheung and Professor Peter Lam.

Monumentally large Qing dynasty monochrome and blue and white (below) vases found impressive places in central free-standing display cases.

As well as giving expert advice Grace Wu Bruce wrote the furniture catalogue entries. She is beside an imperial inlaid marquetry kang table.

Professor Liu Pak-wai, Pro-Vice Chancellor, gave souvenirs individually to Dr S.Y. Yip, Mr Kot See-For and Anthony K.W. Cheung.

Anthony K.W. Cheung and his wife Anne with Chinese ceramics and works of art specialist Anthony Lin at the gallery displaying imperial Qing porcelain vases.

Min Chiu Society members Anthony K.W. Cheung and Humphrey K.F. Hui who wrote the porcelain catalogue entries together with Lai Suk Yee.

exhibitions “Feast by a wine table reclining on a couch: The Dr S.Y. Yip Collection of Classical Chinese Furniture III” and “Ethereal Elegance: Porcelain Vases of the Imperial Qing, The Huaihaitang Collection”. Professor Peter Y.K. Lam, Director of the Art Museum, has written an article on Dr S.Y. Yip’s furniture collection in this edition of Arts of Asia. In addition he has provided me with abstract translations of their mainly Putonghua opening speeches delivered by Mr Kot See-For, Chairman of the Min Chiu Society, and Professor Liu Pak-wai, Pro-Vice Chancellor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, of which I have selected the following comments.

From the speech of Mr Kot See-For: “This is the first single-collector display from Anthony Cheung. He has chosen a small topic—Qing imperial vases and bottles, but the range and selection of the exhibits are far from small, and this only constitutes one category of the wide spectrum of art objects in the Huaihaitang Collection. Ceramic collectors would know well that the so-called ‘open-form’ pieces like dishes and plates are never comparable to the ‘closed-forms’, i.e. bottle, vases and pots. The former category had been catered for everyday use, but the latter were fired for decorative purposes. The former is two-dimensional, while the latter is all rounded. Hence, no matter from artistic, aesthetic, or monetary value, the former far supersedes the latter.”

And from Professor Liu Pak-wai: “The Chinese classic furniture pieces of the Ming and Qing periods, and the imperial ceramics fired in Jingdezhen during the Qing dynasty represent, respectively, the peak in history of Chinese furniture and ceramics. This statement is so vividly illustrated in these two major exhibitions held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. We are grateful to Dr Yip and Mr Cheung for sharing their priceless treasures with us... The first one-man show of Dr Yip’s furniture was held at the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, some fifteen years ago. Now after having mounted twenty more worldwide, he came back to us and staged this second, and brand new exhibition at the Art Museum again.”

The important exhibitions celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Institute of Chinese Studies. Over one hundred people attended including a visiting delegation from the Oriental Ceramic Society of Malaysia. The opening was followed by a dinner at the Hong Kong Jockey Club which I much enjoyed, as also the joint exhibitions, “A perfect evening.”

It is always nice to reunite with our loyal contributors to Arts of Asia and I am sure readers will remember the wonderfully colourful article by Datin Seri Kee Ming-Yuet on “Straits Chinese Porcelain” in the July-August 2005 issue. It was a pleasant surprise to find after the opening ceremonies at the Art Museum that the author, founder of Prime College Malaysia, was leading the Malaysian delegation following the invitation of Min Chiu Society member Humphrey K.F. Hui. I was honoured to be posed by them in the centre of their group photograph. Between Datin Seri Kee and myself
Alastair Gibson was “over the moon” with a Qianlong blue and white “dragon” vase sold at Sotheby’s London on November 7th, 2007.

Visiting delegation from the Oriental Ceramic Society of Malaysia at the Art Museum opening ceremonies. Seen centre of the group are Datin Seri Kee, Peter Lam, Tuyet Nguyet and Humphrey K.F. Hui.

On November 7th, a Qianlong mark and period “dragon” moonflask sold at Sotheby’s London for £2,820,500, establishing a new auction record for a piece of Qing dynasty blue and white. The vase, which had been dismissed as a copy in the 1970s and had subsequently lain neglected in the bottom of a wardrobe, was discovered by Sotheby’s expert Alastair Gibson earlier this year. It was bought by Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art, of London and New York.

Alastair Gibson, MRICS (Member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors), has worked at Sotheby’s since 1988, initially as a porter, then as a specialist in British, European and Oriental ceramics. He began his career under Lars Tharp, working with Colin Mackay and Julian Thompson. In 1997 he was promoted to the European Valuation Department, specialising in high net worth valuations across Europe and America. In 2000 Alastair was responsible for cataloguing the Mottahedeh Collection in New York and for the last seven years was Director of the London Chinese Ceramics Department. He leaves Sotheby’s at the end of 2007 to follow other business interests in the Oriental ceramics and works of art field, but can be contacted through his website www.gibsonantiques.com.

I am very happy to announce that The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF) will be held in the Dutch city of Maastricht from March 7th–16th, 2008. The venue is MECC (Maastricht Exhibition & Congress Centre), Forum 100, 6229 GV Maastricht, The Netherlands. The opening hours are daily 11 am to 7 pm, Sunday March 16th, 11 am to 6 pm. The admission cost is €55 per person, inclusive of one catalogue, or €90 for a double ticket.

Since its modest beginnings in 1975 the fair has become one of the most influential art events where collectors can find the finest antiques from 220 of the world’s most important dealers. Authenticity, quality and condition of every item are verified by eighteen vetting committees, made up of over 150 internationally respected experts. In 2008 there will be an impressive number of participating dealers covering a broad range of Oriental and Asian art. At the time of writing these include Blitz Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art, Cohen & Cohen, John Eskenazi Ltd, Martyn Gregory, Robert Hall, Ben Janssens Oriental Art Ltd, Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art Ltd, Marcel Nies Oriental Art, Polak Works of Art, Priestly & Ferraro, Vanderven & Vanderven Oriental Art, Kunstzalen A. Vecht, Jorge Welsh, Grace Wu Bruce Co., Ltd and Zen Gallery.

Following Maastricht I am informed by International Antiques & Arts Investment Expo of a new and exciting Hong Kong venture to be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition in May 2008. We are likely to hear more of this later, but meanwhile their website is www.iaaie.com.

Again the New Year is a time for reflection of the past twelve months of achievements. There is no doubt that Arts of Asia produced six unique, beautiful issues that not only widen the knowledge of our readers but also captivate their enthusiasm to do further research of their own special interests. I say so because I have received many letters of congratulations from subscribers and admirers to thank us for what we have done. In this edition of January–February 2008 I have written a much longer Editorial because I wish to inform our subscribers what happened in Shanghai, a city that receives international news headlines almost every day. I feel confident you will enjoy my interview and recollections of the Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair.

I thank most warmly all my contributors and advertisers for their valuable support, and wish all our friends and colleagues in the Asian art world a most successful 2008 year.

Publisher
TUYET NGUYET
Editor
Alastair Gibson was “over the moon” with a Qianlong blue and white “dragon” vase sold at Sotheby’s London on November 7th, 2007.