Asian Art in London 2010

ARTS OF ASIA

Asian Art in London (AAL) held in November 2010 reminded the world that London continues to be a vital centre for Asian art and antiques. Conceived thirteen years ago, AAL 2010 attracted many more collectors, dealers, museum curators, academics and enthusiasts from all over the world than last year. Strong sales for Chinese and Japanese art achieved at important gallery exhibitions and auction houses were also a clear indication that there is a healthy appetite for collecting Asian art.

It was impossible to attend every event at Kensington Church Street, St James’s and Mayfair, but we made the most of our stay during this year’s AAL, covering a lot of ground by visiting over thirty of London’s leading specialist galleries and Asian art auctions. We also enjoyed museums, sightseeing, restaurants, West End musicals, friends and family, and shopping of course. As one of the most cultural, diverse and interesting cities in the world, there is always plenty to do in London.

One of the highlights of the trip was the Asian Art in London Gala Party on November 9th held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The welcome speech was given by Max Rutherston, Chairman of AAL. He also announced that Georgia Chrischilles was the winner of the lucky draw prize of a luxury holiday for two in Lhasa, courtesy of The St Regis Hotel & Resorts. Georgia, founder and organiser of the Brussels Oriental Art Fair, said it felt like a dream as she had never won anything and always wanted to visit Lhasa, the capital of the Tibetan autonomous region in China.

Kensington Church Street

Stuart and Richard Marchant celebrated their gallery’s 85th anniversary with two exhibitions: “Chinese Jades from Tang to Qing” and “Selected Pieces of Chinese Porcelain from the Collection of Professor D.R. Laurence”

Laurence Paul of Fleurdelys Antiquités dressed in a red Chinese cheongsam. Her exhibition comprised Chinese wood stands, scholar’s objects, jades and bronzes

Luisa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh exhibited armorial porcelain made in China for the Spanish market to coincide with the launch of the book Chinese Armorial Porcelain for Spain by Rocio Díaz
Grace Tsunugi specialises in fine Japanese works of art from the 1700s to the present day. She showed Japanese inro, okimono, lacquer, porcelain and ceramic items.

Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art Ltd explored the use of incense in China for religious ritual use to scholarly pursuits. Illustrated is a celadon and grey jade censer, early Ming dynasty, width 18.5 cm.

Susan Ollemans exhibited Southeast Asian jewels and sold Chinese works of art to mainland Chinese visitors. Georgia Chrischilles, founder of Brussels Oriental Art Fair, is seen on the right.

Ben Janssens is Chairman of TEFAF Maastricht’s Executive Committee. For the third year in succession he held an exhibition of Chinese lacquer from the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

Francesca Galloway’s “Indian Miniatures from the James Ivory Collection” was one of the highlights of AAL. Acclaimed American film director James Ivory was at the opening.

Miranda and Roger Keverne offered over one hundred objects for their “Winter Exhibition of Fine and Rare Chinese Works of Art and Ceramics”. Jades were highly sought after.

Simon Pilling presented 20th century Japanese works of art across a range of media, including an exquisite sake ewer by contemporary artist Makamiya Takashi.

Jacqueline Simcox held an exhibition of Chinese textiles. A specialist on Chinese, Tibetan and Central Asian textiles and works of art, she is supportive of AAL activities.

Shubha and Prahlad Bubbar showed Indian classical artworks dating from 1400 to 1950 and photographs of India at their new Mayfair office.
Kevin Page and his daughter Chloe showcased Japanese works of art from the Meiji period and Chinese ceramics from 1600 to 1900 in their large gallery.

John Eskenazi’s specialisations are Indian, Gandharan, Southeast Asian and Tibetan art. This humorous photograph was taken by his cousin Daniel Eskenazi.

On November 11th Bainbridges Auctioneers sold a Qianlong reticulated double-walled vase, found in an attic of a semi-detached house in London, for a world record £51.6 million (estimate £800,000–1.2 million).

Christie’s Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art sale on November 9th achieved £13,341,150. A pair of rare imperial engraved ivory bowls, 18th century, sold for £2,281,250 (estimate £600,000–800,000).

Sotheby’s Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art sale on November 10th achieved £14,064,175. A blue and white “peony” jar (Guan), Yuan dynasty, 14th century, sold for £2,617,250 (estimate £800,000–600,000).

A stunning piece of China’s imperial history, a seal commissioned and used by the Qianlong emperor, sold for £2,708,000 at the Bonhams Fine Chinese Art sale on November 11th. The 4 cm square white jade seal was discovered in Europe by Bonhams specialist Asaph Hyman.

Woolley & Wallis produced a company record sale of £10.2 million. On November 17th, a large Chinese imperial white jade carving of a deer with its young, Qianlong period, length 20.5 cm, sold for £3.9 million.