EDITORIAL

THE LUNAR YEAR of the Rat for 2008, or Chinese New Year for many of our Asian readers, began on February 7th. Although I love to spend the festivities in Hong Kong, this year I will have spent it in Paris, in a brief five days trip, so I can see my eldest brother, a longtime resident educated in France, who is seriously ill. This Editorial is written before my visit to him.

By the end of this lunar year our Arts of Asia family team will have designed, produced and supervised rather more than 230 issues. How did we do it? I take this chance to thank my retired architect husband, Stephen Markbreiter, and our four sons, all of whom at some point or other have spent time helping with the magazine. Thank you our four sons: Peter, Michael, Stephen and Robin.

But I must go on with my Editorial for this beautiful and enlightening March–April 2008 magazine, despite my thoughts at the time of its writing being on other things. First I would like to draw the attentions of our international readers to our white and gold cover with its four stunning examples of historic Chinese jewellery. These I have selected from the seventy illustrations of our lead article, “Ancient Chinese Cultures of Gold Jewellery and Ornamentation”, by Professor Yang Boda, Research Fellow and eminent authority of the Palace Museum, Beijing. With twenty-six pages of vital information, clearly translated for us from the Chinese by Dr Bruce Doar in Beijing, this article alone is a mine of art history and scholarship deserving of a book.

The periods and brief descriptions of the four historic Chinese jewellery art objects are: Late Shang (gold disc with bird circling the sun), Warring States (gold ear ornaments with turquoise and applied beading), Eastern Han (gold bixie or guardian beast, with applied filigree, gems inlay and welded gold beading), and Qing (gold filigree dragonfly hairpin with inlay gems).

I note that Yang Boda wrote for our March–April 1992 magazine a definitive article, "Jade: Emperor Ch’ien Lung’s Collection in the Palace Museum Peking” (pages 81–94, twenty-two illustrations, now out-of-print, however colour photocopies can be ordered). Also written in Chinese, this earlier article was translated for the magazine by Brenda Li in Hong Kong.

A welcomed gift released in time for the New Year was Virtuous Treasures: Chinese Jades for the Scholar’s Table, published by the University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong. It is a comprehensive 223-page bilingual English/Chinese record of the exhibition curated by Humphrey K.F. Hui and Tina Yee-wan Pang that ran from November 17th, 2007 to February 17th, 2008. It includes Foreword by Yeung Chun-tong. Introduction by Tina Yee-wan Pang, main article “Features of Qing Imperial Jades Produced under the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors” by Zhang Guangwen, a listing of “Emperors of the Qing Dynasty”, and catalogue of the exhibits. Contributors to the exhibition from their jade collections were in alphabetical order Anthony K.W. Cheung, Pine and Bamboo Hall, Humphrey K.F. Hui, Andrew K.F. Lee, Michael S.L. Liu and myself. The handsome hardbound book is available through Arts of Asia (the cost is HK$650 plus postage).

For this issue Michael Liu, a Hong Kong jade collector and regular contributor on the Chinese jade subject for Arts of Asia, covers the themes of the exhibition in thirteen pages with forty-one illustrations from the six collectors, as well as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I am touched that my friends who have seen the exhibition said they enjoyed my small handling pieces. They thought they were beautiful and good examples of what can still be found at affordable prices.

Seen in Robin’s photograph taken at the opening ceremony (from left to right): Michael S.L. Liu, Anthony K.W. Cheung, Andrew K.F. Lee, Jonathan Stone (Christie’s International Business Director, Asian Art Departments), Professor Lap-Chee Tsui (Vice-Chancellor and President, The University of Hong Kong), Kevin Ching (Sotheby’s Hong Kong Ltd Chief Executive Officer), Humphrey K.F Hui, myself, Thomas M.T. Fok, and Yeung Chun-tong (Director, University Museum and Art Gallery). 2

Asia Week in New York promises to be full of exciting events for Asian art lovers and I have listed below many of the special events my son Robin and I will make a point of attending in March.

Founded in 1996, The International Asian Art Fair, will take place on March 15th to 19th, 2008. The fair has been rescheduled to coincide with the New York Asian art auctions and to avoid the Easter holiday. Their new venue is 583 Park Avenue, on the Northeast corner of 63rd Street and the organisers will hold the Gala Preview to Benefit Asia Society on March 14th, 6–9 pm.

The fair brings together leading dealers in Near Eastern, Indian, Himalayan, Tibetan, Southeast Asian and Far Eastern works of art, including amongst them, well known to Arts of Asia readers are Flying Cranes Antiques Ltd, Kaikodo, Koo New York, Gallery Oi Ling, Tai Gallery/Textile Arts, Sandra Whitman and Erik Thomsen LLC.
On March 19th Christie’s at 20 Rockefeller Plaza will be offering a single owner sale of Chinese textiles from the collection of Linda Wrigglesworth, a renowned dealer and collector in Chinese textiles. They will also be holding a one day seminar on Chinese textiles with guest speakers on Saturday March 15th.

Linda’s interest in Chinese textiles began in 1978 and the upcoming sale will be the first auction in the West entirely devoted to this subject. It will consist of approximately 150 lots with an expected value of US$3.3–4.6 million. Several of the treasures that will be included in the sale have been published in Imperial Wardrobe by Gary Dickinson and Linda Wrigglesworth.

Also at Christie’s New York on March 19th will be the Part II of the Meriem Collection of snuff bottles. For a full report on the sale of the first part in September 2007, please refer to the Saleroom News report by Chinyan Wong in the Arts of Asia, January–February 2008 magazine.

From Tuesday March 18th to Friday March 28th, Carlton Rochell Asian Art will be showing for sale some forty works from India, the Himalayas and Southeast Asia at their 41 East 57th Street, fourth floor, New York gallery in the Fuller Building. Amongst the highlights from private collections are Gounder,1 Old Indian and Pala sculptures, a finely-cast 13th century bronze Buddha from Central Thailand typical of Lopburi art.

A special exhibition also in the Fuller Building, coinciding with Asia Week in New York, is “Two Thousand Years of Chinese Sculpture” presented from March 17th to 29th by J.J. Lally & Co. A capsule history of Chinese sculptures, ranging from a large pottery figure of the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), through to the Sui (581–618), Tang (618–907) with two marble guardian beasts,2 Yuan (1279–1368), and Ming (1368–1644) with two bronze figures of Daoist deities.3

Ghangkar Ah-Nhey Asian Art will be exhibiting for the second time during Asia Week 2008 in New York. Antiquorum Auctioneers’s room on the fifth floor at the Fuller Building will showcase from March 17th to 23rd many fine Asian works of art. A stunning palm leaf manuscript (see detail),4 and an early West Tibet painting along with other works of art ranging from textiles, wood, metalwork, sculptures and paintings will be displayed.

During Asia Week in New York John Eskenazi will feature important Asian sculpture for the first time at Adam Williams Fine Art Ltd, 24 East 80th Street, New York (March 12th to 29th), including a beautiful stone royal portrait head from Salt Hills, northern Punjab, Pakistan, dating 6th/7th century.5 The selection of the pieces that will be shown in New York, from India, Thailand, Cambodia and Nepal, reflect the high standards staged by John Eskenazi.

Eskenazi Ltd (Giuseppe and his son Daniel), from Tuesday March 18th to Saturday March 29th, are showing at Pace-Wildenstein (7th Floor, 32 East 57th Street, New York) important stone dating from the Han dynasty to the 18th century. Their 12th annual exhibition in New York, attractions include a 15th century gilt-bronze and cloisonné vase, early to mid-18th century jade rhyton or pouring vessel,6 a glazed earthenware lokapala or guardian king from the Tang period, Buddhist temple sculpture and smaller pieces of exquisite workmanship.

Orienterations Gallery and Robyn Turner return with a shared exhibition to Helmsley Carlton House, 680 Madison Avenue at 61st Street. This will be held from March 15th to 25th, on exceptional Japanese and Chinese works from private collections. Robyn Turner will have a rare collection of snuff bottles in addition to jade, and Orientations Gallery will feature Japanese works by imperial court artists, including a gold lacquer tobako by Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891).7

Oliver Forge and Brendan Lynch Ltd will exhibit a group of Indian miniature paintings at 9 East 82nd Street from March 15th to 22nd. As of March 1st a selection of the items to be exhibited will be posted on their website www.forge-lynch.com. Among the finest paintings is a detail depicting the Emperor Humayun painted by the Mughal artist Munkur in circa 1595.8
Kaikodo’s Spring 2008 exhibition, “Material Witness”, presents paintings and works of art from China, Korea and Japan in their gallery at 74 East 79th Street and at The International Asian Art Fair. Fifty-two paintings range in date from the 12th century to 2007, and thirty-three works of art between 3rd millennium BC and 19th century. Their bronze gui ritual food vessel with bird design, early to middle Western Zhou period, is seen above.  

Next, one of a pair of Chinese imperial Qianlong mark and period porcelain “nine peaches” dishes will be displayed by famous London dealer S. Marchant & Son at the Arts of Pacific Asia Show New York, March 20th to 24th at the 69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Avenue at 26th Street. Booths will accommodate prestigious exhibitors Eleanor Abraham Asian Art; The Asian Art Studio, Robyn Bun- tin of Honolulu; Cédric Curien Art Asiatique; Robert Hall; Hardt & Sons, Imperial Oriental Art; The Jade Dragon, Kapoor Galleries, Knapton Rasti Asian Art, Thomas Murray, Oriental Treasure Box, Orientations Gallery; Judith Rutherford; Samlum Asiatica Fine Arts and T.K. Asian Antiques. Renzo Freschi presents sculptures from India (11th century grey sandstone Umanahesvara from Rattanath) and Tibet.

The first Vietnamese painter exhibition in Spain takes place at Italcasa (Jorge Juan 27, Madrid 28001) in February and March 2008, featuring award-winning work of Mrs Nguyen Thi Hien. This event will be promoted by Asia House Spain and supported by the Vietnamese Ambassador living in Madrid. A 1967 graduate from Hanoi Fine College, the painter has previously exhibited in Vietnam, Japan, Singapore, Germany and Hawaii.

From March 7th to 16th, 2008 Italcasa will also be showing at Sculpture Highlights in Maastricht (for more information visit www.sculpturehighlights.com). Held for the second year at La Bonbonnière, the oldest theatre in Holland, this art fair will showcase an exclusive and exciting presentation of sculptures from all over the world.

The terracotta Buddha head will appear at Brussels Oriental Art Fair IV, June 4th to 8th, 2008 (www.boafair.be). Fair organiser and founder Georgia Chrischilles welcomes Arts of Asia readers and her own exhibition will feature a selection of Asian stone sculptures with animal representations: a Medieval Pala dancing Ganesha, a Gupta terracotta goose and a Kushan makara from India, Khmer monkeys, and a pair of Aso wood figures of the Dayak, Indonesia.


International fine art auction house, Bonhams, is moving to new premises in the heart of Manhattan in New York. The relocation gives the company spectacular exhibition space at the IBM Building on the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue. With extensive streetfrontage and three storeys, the company’s presence in New York is expanded fivefold. The announcement comes as the company posted record 2007 results and global sales of US$600 million. Chairman Robert Brooks says: “Our move to the former Dohesh Museum offers us the perfect platform to develop further our presence in the crucial New York market.”

Also on the move is John Guy who is well known to Arts of Asia readers for his many publications on the arts of India and Southeast Asia. After twenty-two years of distinguished service at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, John is moving to a senior position at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The picture above shows him at the V&A farewell party flanked by H.E. Mr Kittip Wasinondh (Thai Ambassador to the UK) and Barbara Harding.

Barbara presented John with a leaf of Ficus religiosa, the Bodhi tree under which Buddha gained enlightenment. For this March–April 2008 issue, which I am very proud of its exclusive contents and celebrity of authors, her husband Julian Harding has written the article “Burma: A Tribute.”

I would advise our international readers and subscribers to refer to the Index to Advertisers on the final page of this issue. Arts of Asia is one of the few international magazines that always carries such an index. I would recommend our readers to turn to such pages to focus on both long term regular important advertisers, who have supported me and the magazine since many years, and also new and enthusiastic younger ones who are starting their dealer lives. The index is a most useful first reference tool both for collectors and academics.

And finally while I am in Paris I will wish my contributors, advertisers, subscribers and readers a very happy, blessed and prosperous Chinese New Year of the Rat.