EDITORIAL

FOR THIS March-April 2019 issue, I am delighted to publish an exceptional edition focusing on The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of Asia Week New York, Mike Hearn, Douglas Dillon Chairman, Department of Asian Art at The Met, has assembled ten wonderful articles covering recent acquisitions as well as discoveries from The Met’s permanent collection. In addition to features on superb works in the Department of Asian Art, two articles showcase little-known Asian works in the respective holdings of the Department of Musical Instruments and the Department of Arms and Armor. Many of the objects published in this issue will be on view in Spring 2019, so I hope this will whet the appetite of our readers accordingly. It is a great honour and privilege to collaborate again with The Met, and I would very much like to thank each of the distinguished curators and specialists for their efforts and personal contribution to making this such a special issue of Arts of Asia.

I asked Mike Hearn for his thoughts on the future of Asian art at The Met and he kindly provided the following comment: “Wen Fong’s passing last October marks the end of an extraordinary chapter in The Met’s history. During his 29-year career at the museum, from 1971 to 2000, Wen worked with patrons, collectors, trustees and colleagues to create one of the world’s most comprehensive displays of Asian art. Our commitment today is to build on that foundation. As the ten articles in this issue attest, The Met remains fully committed to collecting and presenting the diverse arts of Asia.

From March 5th to June 16th we will host a major international loan exhibition, ‘The Tale of Genji: A Japanese Classic Illuminated’, while our permanent galleries feature important recent acquisitions that have catalysed our reinstallations of the arts of Sri Lanka and Chola India. In addition to the active programme of rotating displays, exhibitions and acquisitions in the Department of Asian Art, one may encounter Asian artworks in many of The Met’s curatorial areas, including the Ancient Near East, Islamic art, Arms and Armor, Musical Instruments, Photography, and Modern Art. The indispensable work of The Met’s conservation and scientific research departments is also highlighted here. With all of these artistic and human resources, we remain committed to establishing The Met as a world leader in the display of Asian cultures, presenting works of the highest quality in the most thoughtful and thoughtful-provoking contexts possible. In a world where cross-cultural understanding is more important than ever, we can do no less.”

To celebrate its exciting milestone tenth anniversary, the Asia Week New York Association will honour a number of key individuals in recognition of their respective contributions in advancing the arts of Asia in North America. “This distinguished group of honorees represents a cross section of prominent collectors, museum professionals and Asian art dealers”, advised Christina Prescott-Walker, chairman of Asia Week New York, adding: “The common denominator that unites them is their passion for Asian art in all its manifestations, and we thought it would be fitting to recognise their contributions to the field.” The recipients are Diane and Arthur Abbey, Dr Julia and John Curtis, Maxwell K. “Mike” Hearn, Elizabeth B. “Lillie” and Edward C. “Ned” Johnson III, James Lally, Soyoung Lee, Stephen Little, Joan B. Mirviss, Amy G. Poster, and Shelley and Donald Rubin.

The activities in New York City during Asia Week promise to be even more vibrant than in recent years, with more visitors anticipated from abroad than ever before. Collectors and art lovers will have the opportunity to attend gallery exhibitions presented by leading Asian art dealers from America, China, England, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland. Stimulating events will also be held at the leading auction houses, as well as at museums and cultural institutions. I am greatly looking forward to a wonderful week in New York, and provide the following information about some gallery shows that will hopefully be of interest to those readers planning to attend.

From March 13th to 29th, 2019, J.J. Lally & Co. is presenting an exhibition of “Chinese Art: The Szekeres Collection”, an eclectic collection of ancient Chinese ceramics, sculpture, metalwork and jade. The collection was formed by Janos Szekeres (1914–1998), one of the inventors of the photocopying process, which then secured a patent and introduced the liquid ink photocopier to the American market.

INK Studio, the Beijing-based gallery, marks its official debut programme at Asia Week New York with “The Four Accomplishments in Ink”, a gathering of four great ink artists who are themselves noted connoisseurs and collectors of art. This special exhibition, featuring paintings by Liu Dan, the Master of the Water, Fine and Stone Retreat, Xu Lei and Zeng Xiaojun, will also be on show at J.J. Lally & Co.

Kaikodo’s upcoming exhibition, titled “Migration”, will be of interest to both Asian art aficionados and nature lovers. Representative of the show is Flowers in Grass, a 13th century Chinese painting on silk. The exhibition also includes Chinese ceramics, jades and metalwork, and a rare and important
Vietnamese white bowl, with moulded dragon design, dating to the 15th century.

Beautiful Japanese works of art are being presented by Orientations Gallery and Oriental Treasure Box at the elegant Nippon Gallery at Nippon Club Tower. This year’s event, titled “Fabulous Forms and Imagery: Legendary Japanese Artworks”, celebrates their eighth collaborative vetted exhibition. Rare examples by Imperial Court Artists and Living National Treasures will also be on view. “Legendary Japanese Artworks” refer to both these master artists and the splendid techniques displayed in their creations. The themes and forms of the artworks also reflect inspiring legends and symbolism of folklore, history and the religious traditions of Shinto and Buddhism. An illustrative lecture by Hollis Goodall, Curator of Japanese Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, will complement the exhibition at 3 pm on Monday, March 18th. This lecture is likely to be one of the highlights of Asia Week and possibly standing room only, so readers are advised to arrive early.

TAI Modern is exhibiting important historic and contemporary works of Japanese bamboo art. Margo Thoma, gallery director, said: “I am thrilled to be able to bring these works to Asia Week. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic collectors we see there are the perfect audience for our bamboo artists, both historic and contemporary.” Kosuge Kogetsu’s 1966 Flower Basket, one of only two pieces submitted by Kosuge to the Nitten art exhibition in Japan, will be exhibited for the first time in the West.

Joan B Mirviss Ltd, with the invaluable assistance of Shibuya Kurodaitou Co., Ltd, Japan’s leading modern ceramic dealer, is honoured to present “Vessel Explored / Vessel Transformed —Tomimoto Kenkichi and his Enduring Legacy”. Joan Mirviss explained: “Tomimoto is revered as the father of his field. He was the most significant figure in the world of 20th century Japanese ceramics and his impact continues through his gifted and inspired former pupils and their talented students, many of whom are now professors of ceramics.”

Francesca Galloway, leading dealer in the field of Indian painting, is exhibiting in a new venue: a beautiful gallery space on 1018 Madison Avenue. She is delighted to present a group of outstanding Rajasthani paintings together with a few exceptional Pahari works, all from the Ludwig Habighorst collection, which will be accompanied by a publication researched and written by J.P. Losty. One of the highlights from the collection is an important and dynamic double-sided folio made for a royal album in Jaipur. "Treasures of China’s Past" is the title of Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art's exhibition of important works of art from private collections dating from the Northern Wei to the Qing dynasty, including an impressive chestnut-glazed pottery horse. Richard Littleton and James Hennessy celebrated twenty-two years in business in 2018, and are now pleased to welcome Mark Slaats as a partner. Mark has worked passionately at the firm as a director for over ten years. I would personally like to congratulate Mark and wish the company continued success.
Collectors of Chinese paintings should also visit China 2000 Fine Art, which is featuring recent acquisitions of paintings by several of China's most distinguished artists of the 20th century. Among the selection of fine paintings is Ducks by the Pond, a hanging scroll painted by Ren Yi in 1868.

Runjeet Singh is this year marking his third outing to Asia Week New York with a move to the 7th floor of the Fuller Building. His exhibition, titled "Treasures from Asian Armories", focuses on arms and armour from the Chinese and Indian royal courts. Among the highlights of the exhibition will be a 17th-18th century jade-hilted dagger from Mughal India.

Carlo Cristi's exhibition includes bronzes and thangkas from India, Nepal and Tibet, sculptures from Gandhara, and artworks and textiles from Central Asia. Notable among the bronze sculptures is a splendid 11th-12th century Vajrasattva from India.

Sebastian Izzard LLC Asian Art is exhibiting a selection of ukiyo-e paintings and woodblock prints during Asia Week. A standout in the exhibition is a figure of a beautiful youth (wakashū) on a plain ground, painted by an unknown artist of the Kanbun era (mid-17th century). Sebastian Izzard noted: "Such images evolved from genre screens and were the precursors to the beauty paintings of the Ukiyo-e school." Also on display is a unique group of double-sided fan prints by Utagawa Toyokuni, titled Imayo funi-kagetsu (Fashionable Twelve Months), with each double-print featuring a beauty representing a month of the year.

Onishi Gallery proudly presents an interesting new show focusing on ceramic and metalwork items made specifically for the Japanese tea ceremony. This exhibition will not only feature the material creations required for the ceremony, but also a live demonstration of a special tea ceremony. The six talented artists represented are Sako Ryuhei and Hata Shunsai III, working in metal; Ohi Chozaemon V and Ohi Chozaemon VI, working in ceramics; Noda Akiko, working in glass; and Kisui, a calligrapher.

An exhibition exploring contemporary approaches of celadon practices, titled "Kind of Blue: Japanese Artists Working with Celadon and Beyond", is being presented by Dai Ichitar Art, Ltd. Director Beatrice Chang has travelled throughout Japan, researching and cultivating relationships with artists for this exhibition. Contemporary Japanese ceramicists represented by the gallery include Kawase Shinobu, Suzuki Sansei, Kino Satoshi, Fukami Suzuhiro, Shuhama Tomoko and Kato Tsubasa.

Susan Ollemans is exhibiting a collection of silver and gold jewellery from Asia for the tenth anniversary of Asia Week New York. From Indonesia comes a large group of gold pieces from Central Java: 9th-12th century rings, bangles and necklaces. There is also a wonderful 14th century Vietnamese royal ring, set with moonstone and rubies, mounted on a double lotus and held in place by makan.

Eric Zetterquist has extensive knowledge of Chinese ceramics from the Tang to the Qing dynasty, and his Zetterquist Galleries is presenting an exhibition of Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics, with highlights from the John R. Menke Collection. He is also a gifted photographer, and his recent exhibition of photography at the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka, was a tremendous success, with friends from New York, Taipei, Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka joining him at the opening.

Maureen Zaremba, owner and founder of Tambaran Gallery, presents an exciting new body of work by Sung Hee Cho, the noted contemporary Korean artist. She explained: "Using minimalist forms on an oil painted canvas, Sung Hee’s unique accumulation of handmade rice and hanji mulberry..."
paper creates art with movement and dimension that is both simple and profound. She explores and examines the complex relationships between colour, texture and nuance through her labour intensive and time consuming process."

Returning to Asia, it is my great pleasure to inform our readers that Maria Kiang Chinese Art, 88 Gallery and Chelesa Art have joined forces for an innovative exhibition, titled "Convergence", which takes place from March 26th to April 2nd, 2019 on the 6th floor of Pedder Building in Central, Hong Kong. The three galleries have drawn from their respective expertise in antiques, art and design to present a fusion of modernity and antiquity in the form of a luxurious living space. Maria Kiang told me: "In concert and in situ, the juxtaposition of the works highlight their individual qualities while combining to generate a space of unparalleled sophistication." The curated works in "Convergence" will be displayed within a specially constructed space occupying 1200 square feet.

"For Blessings and Guidance: the Qianlong Emperor’s Design for State Sacrificial Vessels" opened on January 26th, 2019 at the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), showcasing over sixty items of Qing ritual vessels and a blue silk dragon robe. Thanks to the generous donations of Qing ritual vessels by Dr Iain Clark, guest curator of the exhibition, and Mr Anthony K.W. Cheung, Master of Huaitaitang, the Art Museum has not only enriched its collection, but can also boast the largest repository of Qing ritual vessels outside of the Palace Museum, Beijing. The ritual vessels displayed in the exhibition are rare examples of those specified in the Illustrated Regulations, that documented official ritual practice under the Qianlong emperor. Unlike ancient Chinese bronzes, Qing ritual vessels have been largely overlooked by collectors and little studied by academics. However, Dr Clark, an Australian engineer, became passionate about them and spent years investigating the topic. The beautiful 210-page exhibition catalogue displays the fruitful results of his research.

I would also like to congratulate Paul Bromberg, one of our Contributing Editors, on the successful publication of his very attractive new book, THAI SILVER and Nielloware, published by River Books. There had been little written in Thai or English on this long overlooked subject, and the book became a true labour of love for Paul over a four-year period, during which he was also working full-time and undertaking editing duties. The book was launched in December at the wonderful Chakrabongse Villas in Bangkok, the family home of Narisa Chakrabongse, who edited and also published the book.

Finally, my wife, Nancy, and I are delighted to announce that our son, Max, was born on January 3rd, 2019 (Year of the Dog) weighing 7 pounds 7 ounces. We are absolutely thrilled and so are his grandparents. Max is the most gorgeous, adorable and handsome little boy. He will surely bring us great joy in years to come. On this happy note, I would like to wish all our readers a very healthy and successful Year of the Pig.

Nancy, Robin and Max

Robin Markbreiter Publisher & Editor