EDITORIAL

The Shanghai Museum building is an architectural combination of traditional features and modern spirit. Tuyet Nguyet attended the opening ceremony on October 12th, 1996 and interviewed then Director Ma Chengyuan in his office.

WITH OVER 140,000 precious relics, the Shanghai Museum’s collections of ancient Chinese bronzes, ceramics, paintings and calligraphy are celebrated throughout the world. However, the museum’s richest collection undoubtedly lies in their Jingdezhen porcelain from the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. *Arts of Asia*, which has worked closely with the Shanghai Museum for over a year to prepare this special issue recording the museum’s “60 Years Anniversary”, has therefore selected for the attractive cover the exquisite imperial Yongle period underglaze blue and white moon flask with design of camellia sprays.

Founded and first opened to the public in the former Shanghai Racecourse club house in 1952 and then moved in 1959 to the Zhonghui Building previously housing insurance companies, the Shanghai Museum quickly developed in aspects of acquisition, conservation, research, exhibition, education and cultural exchanges with other institutions. In 1992, the Shanghai municipal government allocated a piece of land at the centre of the city, the People’s Square, as the museum’s new site. The construction took three years, from August 1993 to its inauguration on October 12th, 1996.

My son Robin Markbreiter and I were invited to the official opening ceremony and preview dinner attended by more than four hundred connoisseurs, donors and patrons (see *Arts of Asia* January–February 1997 issue, pp. 4–7). It was an unforgettable occasion. I also interviewed former Director Ma Chengyuan in his office on the afternoon of October 14th. Mr Ma was quite impressed that I first visited the old museum in 1963 and has always greeted me warmly.

For this anniversary issue the Foreword by Mr Chen Xiejun, Executive Director of the Shanghai Museum, and eight articles from distinguished curators were written originally in Chinese. The professional translations done by Bradley James Gardner and Emily J.C. Tu were essential commissions paid for by *Arts of Asia* as our contribution to the museum. I would especially like to thank Zhou Yanqun, a Research Fellow and Head of the Shanghai’s Museum’s Cultural Exchange Office, for her help in coordinating the manuscripts and providing the illustrations. The Shanghai Museum has also ordered 300 magazines to present to VIPs, donors, collectors, benefactors and museum officials for their 60th Anniversary celebrations. I am certain this special edition will be appreciated and treasured by our international readers for many years to come.

On November 1st, there will be a celebration meeting held in the Shanghai Museum. Officials both from the Central and Local government will attend the meeting and directors from domestic museums will also participate. After the meeting there will be the opening of the special exhibition of fifty-nine Chinese paintings and calligraphy from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art. A forum for international museum directors will take place on November 2nd, where fourteen directors have been invited as the keynote speakers. Following this a symposium on Chinese paintings and calligraphy from the four American museums will be held on November 3rd and 4th.

I personally congratulate the Shanghai Museum on its exceptional achievements over the last sixty years. It is one of the major art institutions I never tire of returning to as there is always much to see and learn.

Readers are reminded that the 3rd Shanghai Fine Jewellery and Art Fair (SFJAF) will take place from November 3rd—11th, 2012 at the Shanghai Exhibition Center. Some fifty dealers are expected to participate at this exclusive event. Founders Nicolò Filippo Mori and Maximin Berko list the following well-known dealers who have confirmed their attendance: Berko Fine Paintings (Belgium), Bernard de Leye (17th and 18th century Belgium and European silverware), Galerie Jacques Barrère (Paris), Galerie Orphée (Japan), JGM Galerie (Paris), Lorenz Baumer (fine jewellery, Paris), Louis-Pierre Denil (antique lighting, Belgium), and Zada Gallery (ancient carpets and tapestries, Belgium). Activities during the fair
include Private Viewing Cocktail, Charity Gala Dinner, and Polo Club Gala Dinner held inside the exhibition hall among the art with over 600 VIP guests. For more information please visit their website: www.sfja.com.

I always try to support art events related to my country of origin, Vietnam, so I was delighted to attend the opening ceremony for “Vietnam Now” at The Rotunda in Exchange Square on August 23rd. Organised by Suzanne Lecht, Art Director of Art Vietnam Gallery in Hanoi, six unique artists in Vietnam today showed their innovative works and were greatly appreciated by those present. The participating artists were contemporary calligraphy scholar artists Le Quoc Viet and Nguyen Quang Thang; silk painter Nguyen Thi Chinh Le and fellow female bronze sculptor Nguyen Thi Chinh Le, their works depicting the universal feminine struggle; Ha Tri Hieu, one of Vietnam’s elder contemporary painters; and Nguyen The Son who takes innovative 3D photographs.

Suzanne Lecht said, “All these unique and talented artists are to be congratulated for producing excellent works of art that portray to the world the Vietnam of today. And all my staff at Art Vietnam Gallery would like to thank Hongkong Land and Sandra Walters of the Sandra Walters Art Consultancy for generously supporting this exhibition.”

On September 27th, 2012, Oi Ling Antiques (52 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong) held a cocktail party to launch an exhibition of rare books and manuscripts. Titled “書香世代—A Home Imbued with the Perfume of Books” and extending for one month only, all the manuscripts in the show are drawn from Oi Ling Chiang’s personal collection and are not for sale.

Oi Ling’s recently published hardcover fold-out 100-page book is now available. With text in Chinese and English, and designed in the Chinese style reading from right to left, it cleverly introduces how Chinese books are prepared. According to Oi Ling, “善本 literally translated means ‘good foundation’ and is used to refer to a good book. In order to qualify as a shanben, a book must fulfill three requirements. First, it has to be complete without any part of the content missing. Second, it has to be edited and collated with good bibliography. Third, it has to be an old print or a hand copy of old.”

Arlie Sulka, a graduate of Smith College, is the owner and Managing Director of the world renowned gallery, Lillian Nassau LLC, in New York City, which opened in 1945. Mrs Nassau is credited with reviving the interest in and almost single-handedly creating the market for the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany and Tiffany Studios. In 1980, Mrs Nassau recruited Ms Sulka, who was then working as the senior cataloguer at Plaza Auction Galleries, Inc. Mrs Nassau personally educated Ms Sulka, who accompanied the celebrated dealer to numerous museums and gallery openings, auction exhibition previews and sales, and visits to private clients’ homes.

With over thirty years experience in the field of late 19th and early 20th century decorative arts, Ms Sulka has also researched and negotiated the acquisition of thousands of objects offered to her gallery and has authenticated and appraised objects for collectors and museums in North America and Europe. She serves on the Board of Directors of the National Antiques and Art Dealers Association of America, Inc. (NAADAA). Since 1998, Ms Sulka has appeared on TV’s “Antiques Roadshow” as an appraiser of glass and Tiffany Studios. She participated at Fine Art Asia 2012 for the first time to show art connoisseurs in Hong Kong, Greater China and Asia the beauty and workmanship of museum quality Tiffany Studio lamps, as shown in the above photographs.

The 8th Fine Art Asia event (October 4th–7th, 2012), the region’s leading fine art fair, returned to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre with its strongest presentation and line-up ever. The organisers said, “Over ninety exhibitors showed more than 6000 pieces, with a total value of over HK$2 billion”. Visitors were able to see rare Oriental and Western antiques, fine art jewellery, antique silver, decorative art, Impressionist painting, modern art and contemporary art.

Well-known London dealer Robert Hall was delighted to
present the legendary painting *Geese Returning Home* by the Chinese master Shen Yaochu (1907–1990). Except for one viewing in the USA, this monumental and important work has been stored and unseen to the market since it was completed in 1985. Shen Yaochu devoted all his life to painting and became known for his bird and flower, and landscape paintings in the *xieyi*, or freehand, Expressionist style.

Joyce Gallery participated again at Fine Art Asia this year (Booth F1). The gallery featured an impressive range of archaic bronzes from the Shang and Zhou dynasties, including some important inscribed bronze vessels, which caught the attention of collectors, curators and antiquities lovers.

At Booth H1, Alisan Fine Arts presented “Fang Zhaoling: Vigorous and Fresh Chinese Ink Painting”. Internationally known artist Fang Zhaoling (1914–2006) is one of Hong Kong’s most famous painters. Since her passing away in 2006, this was her first solo exhibition in Hong Kong where around twenty-five paintings and calligraphy dated 1978 to 1998 were on display and for sale. The exhibition’s opening ceremony was officiated by Mrs Anson Chan (Hong Kong’s former Chief Secretary for Administration), the artist’s daughter.

The Fall 2012 Asia Week sales in America enjoyed strong results and collectors around the world bid competitively, especially for high-quality pieces with provenance. Sotheby’s Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art sale in New York achieved US$277 million, its highest total in over five years (see Saleroom News in this issue, pp. 175–177). On September 9th, Freeman’s in Philadelphia also outperformed expectations, especially for top lots, including US$1,314,500 for a painting by modern China-born master Lee Man Fong (1913–1988). Titled *Compoon*, it is a work of remarkable size and technical maturity by the renowned Southeast Asian artist, and an ambitious depiction of the Balinese community in a balanced state of material abundance and spiritual serenity. The artwork was new to the market with an impeccable provenance—the former owner was a close friend of the artist, and the work illustrates that friendship.

Christie’s Fall 2012 Asia Week sales realised US$44.7 million and drew participation from international collectors, reflecting a global demand for the finest works of Asian art. The week opened on a high note with the top lots of the Japanese and Korean Art sale exceeding pre-sale estimates. A large blue and white porcelain dragon jar, Joseon period, sold for US$3,218,500 while an iron articulated model of a dragon fish, 18th century, achieved US$458,500, over seven times the US$60,000 low estimate.

Collectors of the antique arts of Japan will be interested to know that Flying Cranes Antiques Ltd has an exhibition and sale of 19th century Meiji art at the The Manhattan Art & Antiques Center, 1050 Second Avenue, New York City. The exhibition runs until November 30th, 2012 in gallery #58. Jean Schaefer, the firm’s owner, highlighted a multi-lobed three-legged censer, modelled with gold, silver, bronze and copper, as one of the rare pieces on exhibit. Six inlaid *shibuichi* panels, dazzling against the silver of the body, are lavishly carved with scenes from nature.

I know our subscribers have enjoyed the *Arts of Asia* issues we have produced throughout the year. In fact, this November–December 2012 special edition with 188 pages has surpassed our goals and is the largest issue we have ever published. As we head towards December it is appropriate to wish all my friends and faithful worldwide readers a happy holiday season. Thank you for your support and may you enjoy good health, happiness and success for 2013.

TUYET NGUYET Publisher & Editor