

Arts of Asia Magazine

SPONSORED FEATURE

Bridging cultural divides

Publication promotes understanding and appreciation among collectors and fans

LIBRARY GRAND OPENING
Reports by **Vicki Williams**

SINCE 1971, galleries, dealers, museums, collectors and students have relied on arts and antiques magazine *Arts of Asia* as a reference tool. With in-depth articles, stunning images and the latest auction saleroom news, it has built a strong reputation both locally and overseas.

Publisher, editor and founder Tuyet Nguyet first conceived the idea for the bi-monthly in 1969 after her brother died in the Vietnam War. She found herself always thinking about the war and when she browsed antique shops discovered "a whole world of beauty".

"My life was enriched," she said. "And I wanted to share this joy with others in a useful and enduring way." With her interest in Asian art and antiques, contacts and a journalistic background, a magazine promoting Asian art and antiques seemed the most appropriate medium to achieve this. A preview issue of the magazine was published in 1970, followed by the first issue in January 1971.

"My goal was to publish a first-class magazine on Asian art and antiques that would promote an understanding, appreciation and love of Asian art and antiques across people of all races."

In her first editorial, she wrote: "*Arts of Asia* is the only English-language publication for collectors, art students, connoisseurs and investors in Asia. Through *Arts of Asia* the great wealth of scholarship (knowledge) in the realm of Asian art, and information on the latest regional art trends, becomes available for the first time to a worldwide audience".



A 1970 portrait of Tuyet Nguyet. Photo: Stephen Markbreiter

Her husband Stephen Markbreiter, the magazine's associate editor, was convinced that the concept would work and he helped finance the magazine for the first five years.

"It took four years to break even, largely because we had high production costs that included printing on the finest A1-grade art paper from Japan to ensure the quality of our lavish images, and the cost of mailing so many copies overseas," Mrs Nguyet said.

It took 10 years of hard work for the magazine to be successfully established and recognised as a leading source of information on Asian art and antiques. There have been many defining moments in its long history, including convincing British auction house Sotheby's to establish a presence in Hong Kong 33 years ago.

"Sotheby's would promote the coming auctions of important works of art through advertisements in the magazine and this helped *Arts of Asia* become better known," she said.

did in 1986, Mrs Nguyet said. This influence was largely due to the coverage of all saleroom news, often with buyers' details.

She said many collectors felt *Arts of Asia* was a vital resource for a wide variety of topics relating to Asian art and culture.

"From *Arts of Asia*, many people have learned about specific collecting categories, exhibitions, and the most important individuals in each field, be it collectors, dealers or academics," said Pola Antebi, senior vice-president and head of the Chinese ceramics and works of art department at Christie's.

"The magazine allows collectors, dealers and academics to remain current by reading about the auction reviews.

Additionally, Mrs Nguyet's coverage of the many fairs and symposia she attends around the world each year keeps her readers well informed."

The magazine has also influenced collectors' interest, buying trends and even prices. A September 2002 article on snuff bottles is a good example. Shortly after the issue came out, the items rose in price by 20 per cent to 30 per cent.

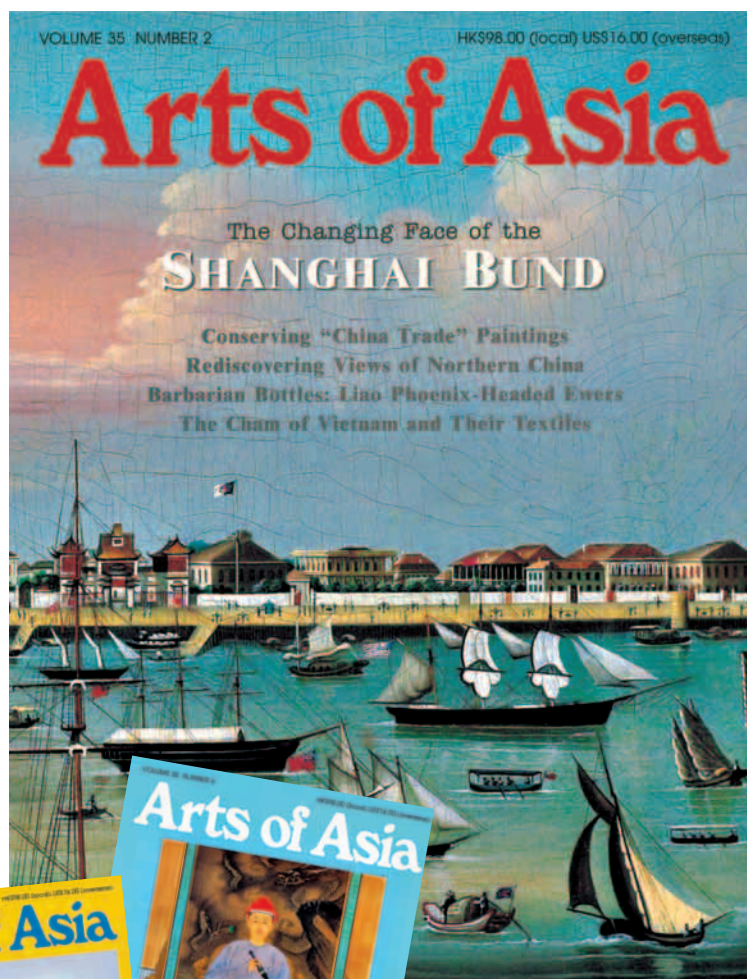
Contributors to the magazine have included learned artists, museum curators, collectors and academics. This has added to the credibility of the magazine. Mrs Nguyet said articles must be easy to understand so the content was readily assimilated by all readers.

The magazine receives many

Sotheby's director, China and Southeast Asia and head of the Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art department, Nicolas Chow, said: "*Arts of Asia* has an unparalleled understanding of the local and international Asian arts scene. The magazine's commitment to promoting the arts has spanned three decades and its involvement in almost every significant event in the field during all those years testifies to its influence in the world of Asian art."

He said the magazine strongly supported Sotheby's first venture in Hong Kong in 1973 and had reported on every auction since – in Hong Kong, London and New York. "The saleroom news covers three decades of Asian art and this in itself offers the readers an unparalleled insight into this fascinating and dynamic market."

The magazine began to have a real influence on the Asian arts and antiques market after it invited Christie's to establish a presence in Hong Kong, which it



Back copies of *Arts of Asia* (from top), including *The Changing Face of the Shanghai Bund*; *Classical Carpets in Cologne*; and *Qianlong, The Imperial Collector*

submissions and many are turned down. Publishing only six issues a year means the magazine can afford to be selective.

Mrs Nguyet said it was the only specialist Asian art magazine that had international distribution and, due to this and because of its reputation, many people wanted to be published in the magazine.

"Right from the start the magazine has been a winning formula and we have not changed it too much over the years. Readers love the covers, the informative editorial and the clear presentation of the scholarly articles, not to mention the exquisite images," she said.

TIMELINE

1971 First issue published in January. The cover featured Shekwan (Shiwan) ware that dates back to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). From launch the magazine included in-depth articles, impressive images and auction news.

1971-1974 Tuyet Nguyet and Stephen Markbreiter wrote articles on Chinese culture and the arts, including the Palace Museum in Beijing. At that time few people travelled to China and the articles with their plans, maps and extensive photographs were well received.

1973 Tuyet Nguyet encouraged Sotheby's to establish a Hong Kong office and auctions, which it did.

Mid 1970s *Arts of Asia* began to establish a global presence with growing subscriber numbers, especially from the United States, Australia, Europe and Japan. Also, more museums wanted to have their collections featured in the magazine. To date, the magazine has featured more than 150 museums.

1984 At the urging of serious collectors and dealers, Tuyet Nguyet went to London on behalf of *Arts of Asia* to see Christie's and convinced the auction house to establish a presence in Hong Kong. It held its first auction in January 1986.

1986 Chinese painting in the Imperial age was the cover story for the November-December issue – significant because it presented to an international readership for the first time articles written by Chinese scholars and experts that had been translated into English.

1991 The January-February issue marked the 20th anniversary of *Arts of Asia*. The magazine included an extensive index of subjects published over the previous 20 years.

1995 The magazine establishes its website – www.artsofasianet.com with a searchable database of articles.

2000 30th anniversary

2004 Special 200th edition, featuring a retrospective of achievements, important photographs and interviews.

2006 The magazine is available in 92 countries.

May 2006 *Arts of Asia* relocates to a larger office that enables the opening of the Arts of Asia Study Centre and Library.

Congratulations to *Arts of Asia* Magazine

on its 37 years of business

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Arts of Asia

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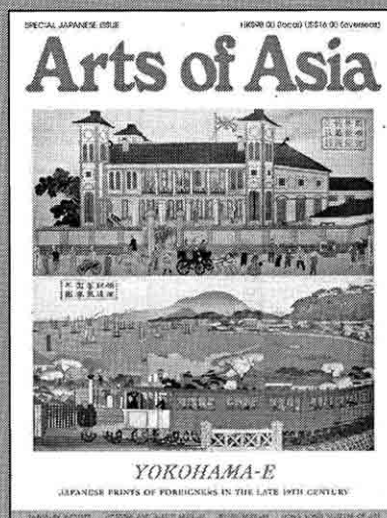
Arts of Asia, founded in 1970, is the foremost international Asian arts and antiques magazine. We publish six beautiful issues every year for our distinguished subscribers and international readers. The annual subscription cost is US\$85/HK\$650 including surface mail delivery. For earlier airmail delivery to America, Europe, Australia and Japan add US\$48 to the annual subscription rates; for rest of Asia, add US\$39. For Hong Kong residents the cost is only HK\$520 including local postage. To subscribe and order magazines, visit our secure website www.artsofasianet.com

It is our special pleasure to announce we have extended and relocated the *Arts of Asia* main offices, library and study centre to 4700 square feet on the 8th floor of Kowloon Centre.

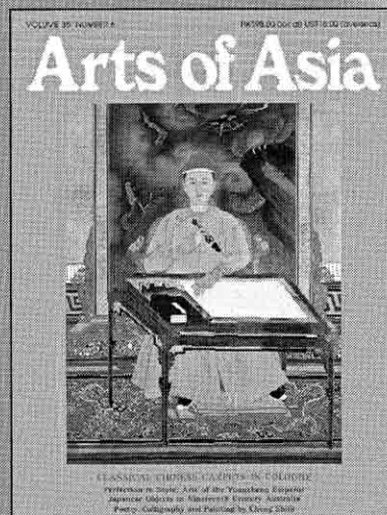
Friends are most warmly welcome to visit whether subscriber, dealer, academic or serious collector, and by appointment to make use of our free Asian art library of some 4500 Asian art books and major international auction house catalogues which date chronologically from 1970 to the present day.

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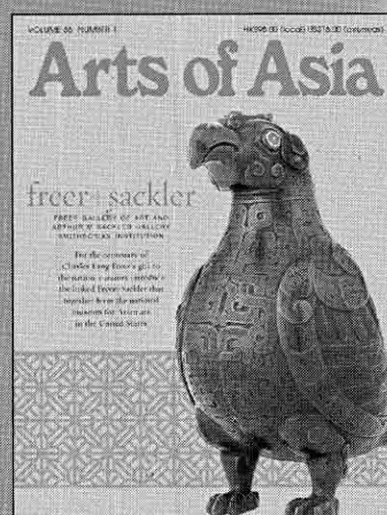
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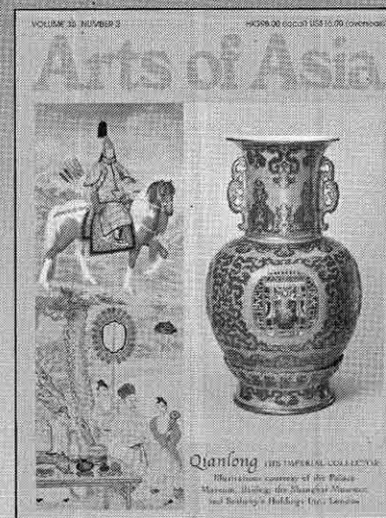
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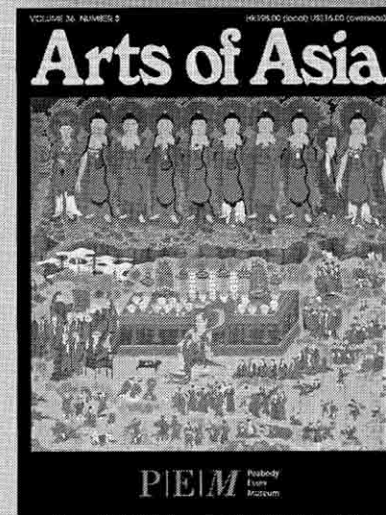
November-December 2005



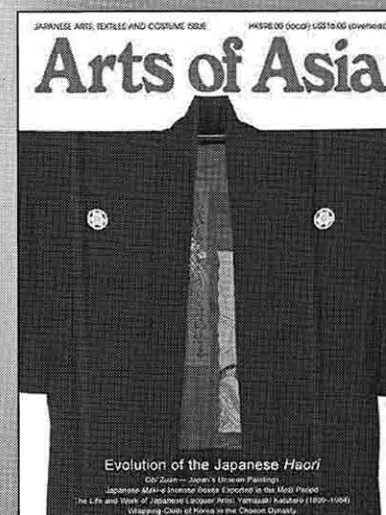
January-February 2006



March-April 2006



May-June 2006



July-August 2006

Tuyet Nguyen's groundbreaking magazine has showcased the most exquisite Asian pieces for both local and worldwide audiences

A thing of beauty is a publisher's joy forever

TUYET NGUYET, founder, publisher and editor of *Arts of Asia*, is a dynamic force in the Asian arts scene globally, as well as in person. For almost 37 years she has run the magazine, building its reputation and influence through her passion for Asian art and antiquities.

"I have created an audience that truly appreciates and enjoys the articles in *Arts of Asia*," she said. Mrs Nguyen's own journey, like that of the magazine, extends beyond Asia. She was born in Tan An province, near the Mekong River in South Vietnam. There were many French influences in her childhood. Her father, who had studied in Paris, and her mother, who was a school teacher, would often entertain French officials and businesspeople. She herself studied her secondary education at Lycée Marie Curie, a French school in Ho Chi Minh City.

She received a scholarship in 1955 to study journalism at the Mundein College for Women in Chicago, graduating in 1958. The following year, she married Stephen Markbreiter and moved to Hong Kong, where her husband was an established architect, and together they had four sons between 1960 and 1969.

In addition to her responsibilities as a parent in the early 1960s, she also freelanced for many publications.

From 1965 to 1970, she worked in the Hong Kong office of the US magazine *Modern Asia*, where she was able to learn the ropes of publishing that would inspire her to set up on her own magazine.

It was after the birth of her fourth son that the idea for *Arts of*



A snuff bottle collected by Mrs Nguyen

Asia came to Mrs Nguyen. She said although it took a great deal of effort, it wouldn't have been possible without her love of the arts and her husband's trust and financial support.

"By publishing the first issue in 1971, I succeeded in bringing the beauty and the value of Asian art to both a local and worldwide audience. Many people had little or no knowledge on the subject at this time," Mrs Nguyen said.

"The concept and presentation of our first edition has proved to be ahead of its time and the early editions still remain remarkably fresh, interesting and insightful," she said.

Many of the highlights of her career are related to her involvement with auction houses.

"Bringing both Sotheby's and Christie's to Hong Kong stand out as milestones, as does the help and promotion I gave to China Guardian Auctions in Beijing when they set up 12 years ago," she said.

She said one reason why her involvement with auction houses stood out was because it enabled her to discover a great network of noble contacts in the Asian arts world, all of whom have remained friends.

Of those contacts, she said it was leading 20th century Chinese painter Wu Guangzhong who stood out. "I met Wu Guangzhong and his wife many years ago at their home in Beijing. He is one of the very few artists who actually combine the western palette with traditional Chinese painting. His art is so easy to enjoy and his paintings add atmosphere wherever they are hung."

Mrs Nguyen is often asked for advice on the current Asian art

scene, especially the trends. "The current Asian art and antique markets are very vibrant and continue to surge in price. This is especially true of the Chinese Imperial works of art, whether it be ceramics from the Yuan dynasty or pieces from the Qianlong period. Textiles are going up in leaps and bounds, as are snuff bottles," she said.

Snuff bottles are one of the items that she enjoys collecting, having started doing so in the

1960s because of their affordability. Her snuff bottles were recently shown as part of an exhibition held at the University of Hong Kong's Museum and Art Gallery.

Some of the art and antiques she has accrued over the years are on display at her office.

"Surrounding yourself with beautiful pieces can add to your life; they make you feel good. Beauty stimulates the mind and the emotions."

Travelling for business is still a big element of her life and these trips are part of Mrs Nguyen's efforts to ensure readers are kept abreast of all the latest news and trends.

"I travel about five times a year, mainly to attend and report on international art and antiques fairs, art gallery exhibitions and auctions," she said.

One of her personal aims was to produce an Asian arts and antiques magazine that would be enduring, and she believes this to be true of *Arts of Asia*.

She is proud of having achieved this goal and mentions many articles that are as relevant today as when they were written, even those written 30 plus years ago, as testimony to the lasting value of the magazine.

"In the publishing business it is quite something to have produced a publication that through hard work, dedication and skills is a legacy to worldwide learning."

Mrs Nguyen said that she was grateful for all the support that *Arts of Asia* had received from those in the industry since the magazine was founded.

"I want to thank our worldwide supporters for their continuing encouragement during the 37 years of my founding and publishing *Arts of Asia*," she said. "My sincerest hope is that they will continue to enjoy and to learn from the magazine for many more years."

"I travel about five times a year, mainly to report on international art and antiques fairs, art gallery exhibitions and auctions"

Tuyet Nguyen

Arts of Asia founder, publisher, editor



Tuyet Nguyen's involvement with *Arts of Asia* spans 37 years. Photo: Michael Chung



Some of the objects collected in *Asia* over the years on display in Tuyet Nguyen's office.

Thanks and Congratulations
to all at Arts of Asia Magazine
who have done so much to extend the
appreciation of Asian Art throughout the world

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Priceless collection

Students of art and history can view a range of precious reference material gathered over 40 years

CEBRATION of 37 years in art publishing, *Arts of Asia* magazine will open its previously private research and fact-checking library to the public tomorrow.

The Arts of Asia Study Centre and Library contains more than 4,500 Asian art and antique books, back catalogues from reputable auction houses and historical, original source reference material.

Executive editor Robin Markbreiter believed the library would be highly popular with international and local collectors, dealers, academics and students, as well as interested Hong Kong residents, because of its comprehensive collection of Asian art references.

"From the comments we have had from several preview users, we believe it will prove to be an invaluable learning and research facility for anyone interested in the subject," Mr Markbreiter said.

His mother, Tuyet Nguyet, who is editor and publisher of the magazine, has gathered many references over the past 40 years. The collection of books and catalogues has also accumulated as a result of the magazine receiving many auction catalogues and books for reviews.

"Our collection has expanded greatly over the years. Whenever my mother and I visit a museum, gallery or art fair around the world, we return with numerous books," Mr Markbreiter said.

Mrs Nguyet and her husband, Stephen Markbreiter, wanted to establish the library more than six years ago, but at the time they were unable to find an appropriate space to offer the facilities to the public. The recent purchase of a new office with their own funds helped them realise their goal.

Robin Markbreiter said the extensive selection of books was undergoing final categorisation, but all Asian countries and their relevant art forms and antiques were represented.

There are also Sotheby's and Christie's auction catalogues from London and New York dating



The reading room of the Arts of Asia Study Centre and Library in the Kowloon Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui that will be open to the public from tomorrow.

back to 1972 and 1967 respectively, and for Hong Kong complete sets starting from the two auction houses' inaugural auctions in 1974 and 1986 respectively.

There are catalogues from China Guardian Auctions for the past 12 years and many catalogues from other prestigious art galleries, including Eskenazi, S. Marchant & Son, and Roger Keverne from London, Carlton Rochell and J.J. Lally & Co. from New York, and Gisèle Croës from Brussels.

"One of the unique aspects of the Study Centre and Library is that our extensive range of auction catalogues allows visitors to research the prices of various pieces over the years. For

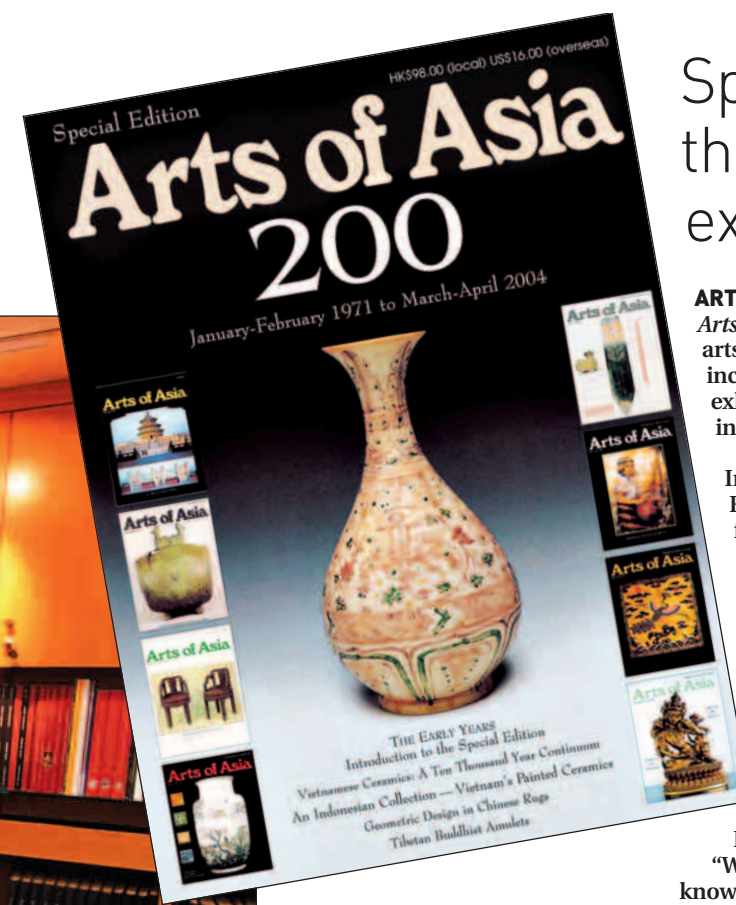
example, with Chinese ceramics, visitors can find out the estimates and prices paid for various works at Sotheby's auctions in Hong Kong over 32 years ago, at Christie's in Hong Kong up to 20 years ago and China Guardian Auctions in Beijing up to 12 years ago," Mr Markbreiter said.

"Prices at painting sales in Hong Kong, London, New York and other auction markets around the world can also be easily located. This is a tremendously valuable feature."

The collection includes many rare books, including out-of-print art books from the Palace Museums in Beijing and Taipei. Other precious books include *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* by Ulrich von Schroeder, one of only 999 copies.



Tuyet Nguyet in the main library with her son, Robin Markbreiter.



A special edition of the magazine, which is celebrating its 37th year.

"It is the definitive reference source for anyone interested in this subject," Mr Markbreiter said.

The library also houses *The Chater Collection: Pictures Relating to China, Hong Kong, Macao, 1655-1860* - the original edition of only 750 copies.

Another notable book is the limited edition *By Imperial Command: An Introduction to Ch'ing Imperial Painted Enamels* by Hugh Moss.

"Many of the Qing imperial enamel pieces in this book have been sold many times at auctions, including the Guyuexuan 'Golden Pheasants' vase, which sold at Sotheby's last October for \$115.48 million, setting a new record for Qing porcelain and the highest ever paid at auction in Asia for a work of art."

For those who appreciate original source material, there are also leather-bound articles covering the Cultural Revolution by two Chinese magazines and one Hong Kong newspaper.

"The stories and photographs in these rare records are now of great historical value," Mr Markbreiter said.

The library is accessible by appointment only.

Spreading the word via exhibitions

ARTS AND ANTIQUES magazine *Arts of Asia* supports the Asian arts world in many ways, including attending and exhibiting at important industry fairs.

A case in point is the Asia International Arts & Antiques Fair (AIAA 2006), which runs from May 26 to 29 at the AsiaWorld-Expo.

The event has attracted more than 125 exhibitors, including galleries, dealers and auction houses from Europe, the United States, Japan, Russia, Australia, Nepal, Mongolia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China.

"We are exhibiting to get to know the participants of the fair and to introduce the magazine to a potentially new audience. We will also be looking for new subjects of interest for our readers and potential future contributors," said publisher and editor Tuyet Nguyet.

Mrs Nguyet said she planned to attend many of the seminars presented by art and antique experts during the four-day event to widen her knowledge and pass this on to her readers.

Behind the scenes, Mrs Nguyet helped set up a vetting committee to ensure that all participants at the fair were reputable. "Having witnessed the rise and fall of previous Asian arts fairs in Hong Kong, I know the importance of a fully vetted new fair."

She encouraged Julian Thompson, former chairman of Sotheby's Asia, and Colin Sheaf, deputy chairman of Bonhams, to head the prestigious 12-person international committee. "I believe that such a committee will help to ensure the confidence of the collectors who visit the fair."

Keen to promote arts in Hong Kong, she also wrote the foreword for the fair catalogue. "The fair has been largely financed by people whose main aim is the same as ours, which is to make Hong Kong the leading world centre for modern, contemporary and antique Asian art."



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We express our sincere respect to
Ms. Tuyet Nguyet & Mr. Stephen Markbreiter
for the promotion of the unique Asian traditional culture
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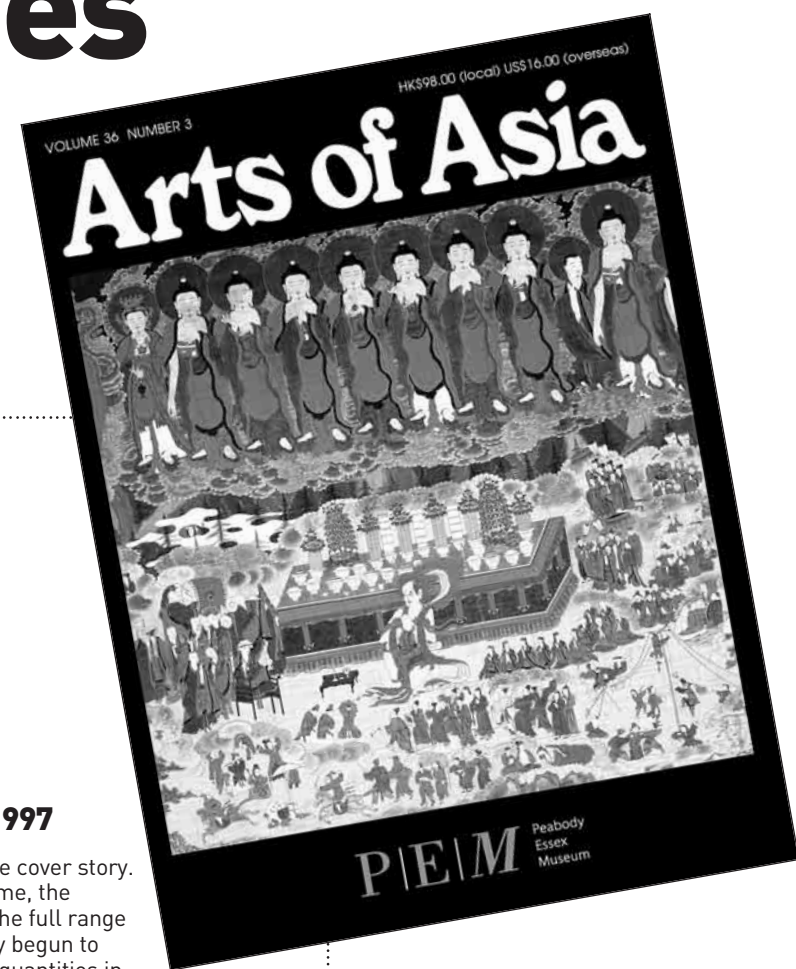
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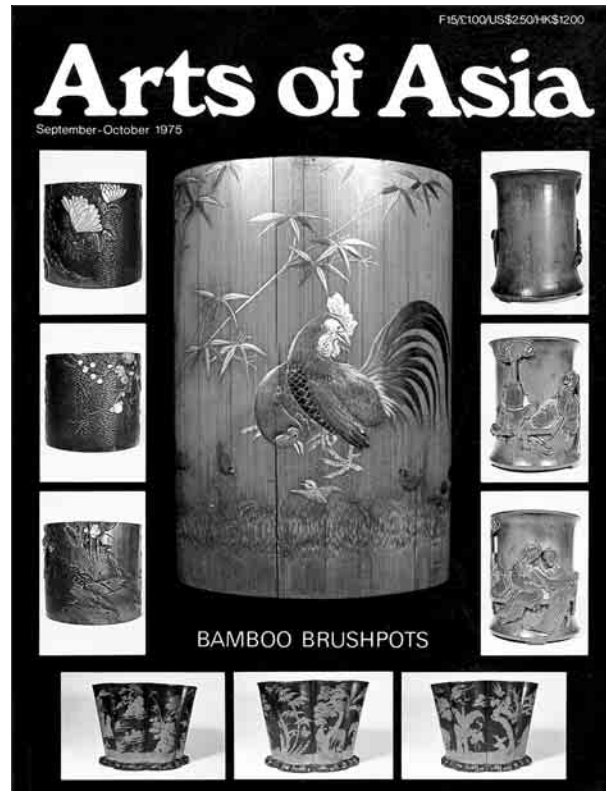
Uncovering a region's treasures

Arts of Asia is an influential magazine which often includes ground-breaking material that sets buying trends. The team has chosen the following covers that made their mark on the Asian arts and antiques scene, largely because they were ahead of their time. Collectors who took note when the issues were published may be considerably wealthier today as a result, writes *Vicki Williams*



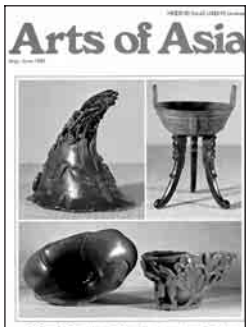
MARCH-APRIL 1972

This issue featured one of the many articles written in the 1970s by Tuyet Nguyet, publisher and editor of the magazine. The cover article discussed the life and work of Carlos Villaluz Francisco, whose mural paintings presented in the Manila City Hall on a grand scale made an immediate impact on Mrs Nguyet. The artist died on March 31, 1969, at the age of 57. He succeeded in recording both the past and the everyday life of his homeland.



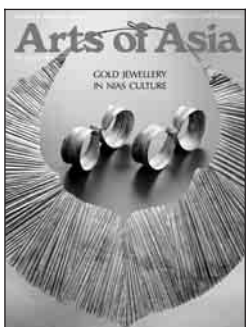
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1975

The cover article was on bamboo brushpots. At that time bamboo brushpots were an undervalued and not well appreciated art form. This article was ground-breaking in its discussion of the potential value of beginning a collection. At the time not many pieces were being auctioned, and a good piece could be bought for a few thousand Hong Kong dollars. Today these items are considered individual works of art and are highly prized, with the best pieces being auctioned for millions of dollars.



MAY-JUNE 1982

The article about The Chester Beatty Collection of Chinese carved rhinoceros horn cups in this issue was insightful in predicting the importance of these pieces. Prices of rhinoceros horn carvings have risen unbelievably since the early 1980s when they fetched less than \$50,000. At the Sotheby's Hong Kong Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art auction held last month, a 14.5cm, 17th century carved rhinoceros horn figure of Wenshu (Manjushri) fetched \$6.84 million. This was considered an extraordinary result and more examples are expected to be sold at auctions.



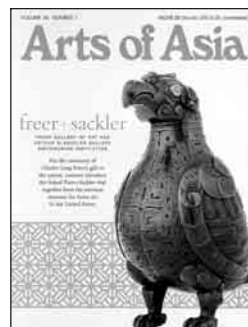
JULY-AUGUST 1989

"Gold Jewellery in the Nias Culture" was the topic of this cover story. At the time of publication not much was known about this ancient gold jewellery from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. As a result of the article, the jewellery was better understood and recognised. Dealers told *Arts of Asia* that thanks to the story, international collectors had become fascinated by the subject.



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1997

Painted Tibetan furniture was the cover story. A relatively new subject at the time, the article provided information on the full range of Tibetan furniture that had only begun to emerge on the market in larger quantities in the early 1990s. The impact of the article created great interest in Tibetan furniture collecting, and the issue was a must-have for any collector in this field. The magazine was so popular it sold out after one year and requests for copies are still received.



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2006

The Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery are two Asian art museums within the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, so called because of the donations by Charles Lang Freer and Arthur M. Sackler of their Asian art collections. This issue commemorated the centenary of Mr Freer's donations and featured articles by the museum's curators reflecting on the lives of both benefactors and the significance of their gifts. The Smithsonian ordered 2,500 copies for its own distribution and records.

MAY-JUNE 2006

In 2003, The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, began a dramatic transformation with more than 250,000 square feet of new and renovated gallery space and the reinstallation and reinterpretation of its entire collection. PEM's curators and *Arts of Asia* worked together to introduce the museum's most recent achievements to global readers. PEM was the first museum in America to collect Asian art. The museum ordered 1,500 copies for its own use.

Note - back issues of the magazine can be ordered online (www.artsofasianet.com) or in person from the office. *Arts of Asia* also provides a photocopy service for articles in out-of-print issues.

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Getting your collection started

Tuyet Nguyet provides the following tips for enthusiasts ready to make investments in this profitable business

ASIAN ART AND antiques have proved to be a smart investment, with many items increasing in value by 30 per cent or more over the past 10 years and others rocketing to fetch record prices.

If you want to start a collection for investment or pleasure, it is never too late, and despite million dollar prices at recent auctions it can take as little as \$10,000 to start. Tuyet Nguyet provided the following tips for new collectors.

DECIDE WHAT TO COLLECT Look around in antique stores, museums and through specialist magazines and choose some category of art or antiques that evoke a response and that would be a pleasure to have around, whether at home or the office.

INFORMATION IS KEY As important as purchasing power, perhaps more so at the initial stages, is knowledge. To make an informed buying decision takes sound understanding. One place to begin researching is *Arts of Asia* as the articles provide the depth of information needed and many photos. Ensure you know a lot about your chosen collection before you buy.

GET HELP When making a purchase it is vital to feel confident. If not, then seek the advice of a knowledgeable friend or reputable dealer. Better to pay a little more to ensure a good buy.

DO NOT BE INTIMIDATED by others and do not make rushed purchases which you might later regret. Don't buy because things seem cheap and be careful if pieces are offered both above and below market levels.

TOUCH IS IMPORTANT Getting a feel for the item or being able to view it close up is also part of the

selection process, it is a way to check those small details that separate a genuine article from a fake.

IT MUST BE PERFECT If you can help it never buy chipped, cracked or broken items, no matter the age, as your eyes will tend to focus on the imperfections. It will also negatively impact the price if you decide to sell later. Present-day restorations are of a high standard and may not be immediately detectable other than to the trained eye of a specialist. This is another reason for the new collector to seek professional recommendations.

CLEANING AND RESTORATION Do not attempt to do cleaning and restoration yourself unless you have the background and know what you are doing. Specialist dealers and auction houses can advise collectors, should cleaning or restoration be needed.

COLLECTING IDEAS The following are items that can be purchased by the new collector for a reasonable investment: antique gold and silver jewellery, 18th and 19th century blanc de Chine ware, scroll weights and small desk ornaments of animal, vegetable or mythological form.

Also, items of historical interest, for example those related to notable political figures such as Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) and Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925) or from the Republic of China period (1912-1949) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This covers a wide range of collectibles including art, coins, stamps and photographs, to name a few. These are affordable except at the highest levels.

One of the hottest trends for those with more to spend is avant-garde modern Chinese ceramics and paintings.

Examples include ceramics by Liu Ligu or paintings by Xue Song.



17th century Chinese bronze scroll weight in the shape of a scaly unicorn.



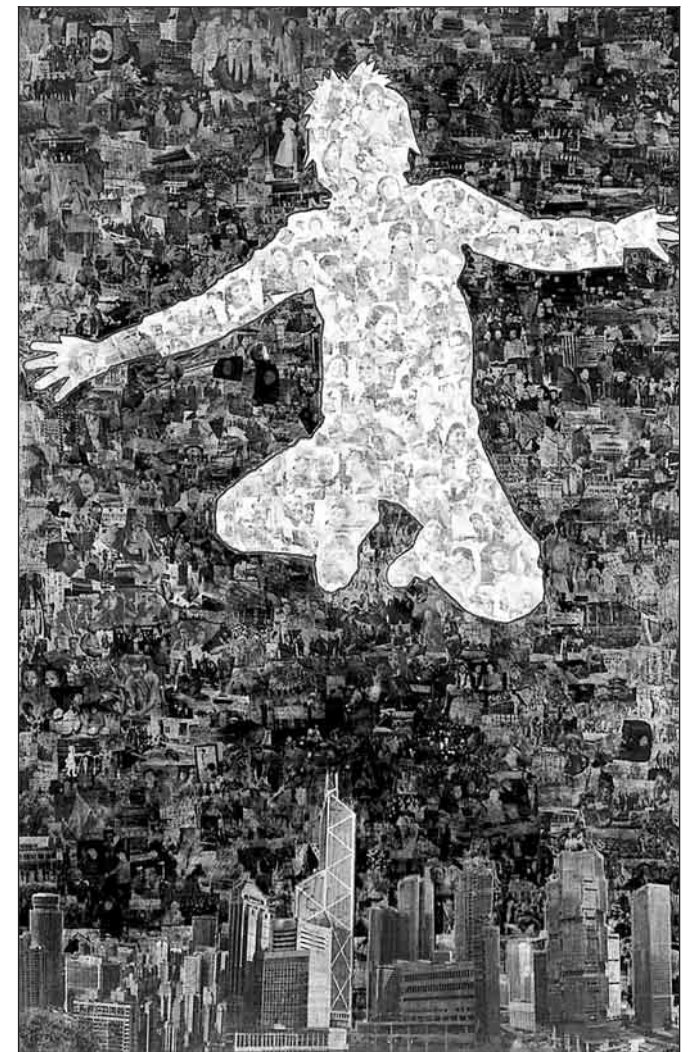
A group of 18th-19th century exported blanc de Chine miniatures



Contemporary Chinese art pieces like this porcelain and enamel by Liu Ligu are much sought after



Selection of 18th century Indian and Southeast Asian silver jewellery




Xue Song's *Ecstasy* (mixed media on canvas, 236x149cm)



Cultural Revolution brushpot



Cultural Revolution badges



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at Arts of Asia Magazine, longevity
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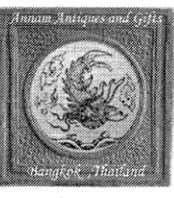
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