



Press Contact: Marilyn White
973-493-3648
mwhitepr@gmail.com

Asia Week New York Cites 10 Honorees for Their Contributions to Advancing the Arts of Asia in North America



New York City: To celebrate its exciting milestone 10th anniversary, the Asia Week New York Association is pleased to announce the selection of 10 honorees, all of whom have made significant contributions to 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,” says Christina Prescott-Walker, chairman of Asia Week New York. “The common denominator that unites them is their passion for Asian-art in all its manifestations, and we thought it would be fitting to recognize their contributions to the field.”

The list of honorees and their impressive accomplishments are as follows:

Diane and Arthur Abbey have been collecting Japanese bamboo baskets for 25 years. The culmination of their collecting resulted in a recent groundbreaking eight-month exhibition of 90 of their pieces in the Japanese galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, attended by more than 400,000 visitors. Their outstanding collection, which has been promised as a gift to the Met, helped fill a museum gap in the Met’s Japanese Collection. Working closely with the entire Met’s Asian Department, the Abbeyes have also endowed a curatorial Japanese Decorative Arts chair at the Met. The chair is named The Diane and Arthur Abbey Curatorship for Japanese Decorative Arts. This curatorship is the first endowed position for Japanese Decorative Arts in the Museum’s history. Assistant Japanese Curator, Monika Bincsik, who brilliantly curated the Abbey bamboo exhibition, was named the first decorative arts curatorial recipient. In addition to her work with the Abbey Collection, as the Japanese Decorative Arts Curator, she will curate subsequent Met exhibitions of Japanese Decorative Arts including future exhibitions of lacquer, ceramics and textiles from the extensive Met collection and from other collections. The Abbey Collection was put together based upon both emotional and visual appeal more than who the artist was. Some of the pieces are by artists who have been designated as living national treasures and some are by artists who are relatively unknown. The collection, consisting of a broad diversity of the very best in bamboo, includes pieces that are used for flower displays and tea ceremonies and pieces that are purely abstract and sculptural. The collection will also be shown in three leading museums in Japan in 2019 and 2020. The Japanese museum exhibitions will commence at the Oita Prefectural Art Museum in Oita on May 18, 2019 followed by the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo opening on September 13, 2019 and lastly at the Museum of Oriental Ceramics in Osaka opening on December 21, 2019. In addition to Japanese bamboo baskets and bamboo sculptures, the Abbeyes collect other objects of art that range from ancient pre-Columbian textiles, to art deco as well as twentieth century, post-war abstract expressionist paintings and sculptures. Residents of New York, Arthur is a lawyer who has had his own firm for many years. Diane is on the Boards of and a supporter of multiple non-profits that focus on the needs of children.

Long time Asian-art collectors **Dr. Julia and John Curtis** have amassed an important collection of 17th-century Chinese art and are involved in the field in numerous capacities. John was the president of the

board of trustees at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, and also served on the boards of the China Institute and Freer|Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C. He currently serves on the Asian Art Visiting Committee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Julia was also a trustee of the Virginia Museum of Art for 10 years. She curated and wrote the catalogues for three exhibitions, two of which were at the China Institute in New York City. The third, *Treasures from an Unknown Reign: Shunzhi Porcelain*, featuring the world-renowned collection of 17th-Chinese porcelain owned by Sir Michael Butler and his family, traveled to three cities. She also taught the history of Chinese ceramics at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Julia and John reside in Virginia.

Maxwell K. “Mike” Hearn, Douglas Dillon Chairman, Department of Asian Art of the Met, began working there in 1971, helping to oversee the expansion of the museum’s collection of Chinese art as well as major additions to its exhibition spaces, including the Astor Chinese Garden Court, the Douglas Dillon Galleries and the renovated and expanded galleries for Chinese painting and calligraphy. He has worked on more than 50 exhibitions and authored or contributed to numerous catalogues, including *The Great Bronze Age of China* (1980), *Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (1996), *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C. C. Wang Family Collection* (1999), *How to Read Chinese Paintings* (2008) and *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China* (2013). Mike, who received his undergraduate degree in art history from Yale University and his PhD from Princeton, has taught graduate and undergraduate seminars on Chinese painting at Yale, Princeton, Columbia and the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. In 2014, he was elected a fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Elizabeth B. “Lillie” and Edward C. “Ned” Johnson III are avid collectors of Chinese and Japanese art from the 17th through 20th centuries. Chinese furniture is of particular interest to Ned, whose appreciation for its craftsmanship was sparked after several trips to China, including one in the mid-1970s shortly after the country opened to foreign visitors. The Johnsons’ collection includes Ming and Qing Dynasty pieces, as well as scholars’ objects and ceramics. Ned also collects Japanese *netsuke* carvings with an eye for their impressively intricate details. The Johnsons were the visionaries behind moving a stately 16-bedroom Qing Dynasty house to America and re-erecting it for the public to experience at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. As a result, hundreds of thousands of visitors have experienced the cultural heritage of rural China. The Johnsons are active lenders of their collection and have lent artworks to the National Gallery of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College. Lillie has been an active member of the Conservation and Collections Management Committee and the Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa Committee at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston for several years. Ned is chairman emeritus of Fidelity Investments.

James Lally, one of the leading dealers of Chinese art in America, established J.J. Lally & Co. in 1986. His long and illustrious career began at Sotheby’s where he was instrumental in establishing the Chinese art auction sales in Hong Kong and greatly expanding Chinese art sales in New York. James was named President of Sotheby’s in North America in 1983. After Sotheby’s was taken over by an investment consortium he left in 1985 to open his eponymous gallery. His inaugural exhibition of early Chinese works of art at J.J. Lally & Co. was a resounding success. American museums and private collectors competed with buyers from Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, London, Paris and Zurich, and more than half of the exhibition was sold on opening night. Other special exhibitions with scholarly catalogues of Chinese ceramics, bronzes, sculpture and jades have followed. Annual exhibitions devoted to private collections of Chinese art and various specialties including Song ceramics, archaic bronzes, archaic jade carvings, and Chinese sculpture are always very well received. Chinese works of art from J. J. Lally & Co. are in important museum collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Freer|Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C.; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco; the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City; the Harvard University Art Museum; the Rockefeller Collection at the Asia Society; the Tokyo National Museum; the British Museum; the Shanghai Museum; and many others.

Soyoung Lee is the Landon and Lavinia Clay Chief Curator at the Harvard Art Museums—the Fogg Museum, the Busch-Reisinger Museum and Arthur M. Sackler Museum. Her areas of expertise and research interests include Korean and Japanese ceramics from 1400 to 1700 and issues of cross-cultural

exchange in East Asia. Until September 2018, Soyoung was the curator for Korean art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. During her 15-year tenure, she organized a number of critically acclaimed international loan exhibitions. Most recently, she was one of six curators on the organizing team for the Met exhibition *Jewelry: The Body Transformed*. Her publications include *Diamond Mountains: Travel and Nostalgia in Korean Art* (2018), *Silla: Korea's Golden Kingdom* (2013, with Denise Patry Leidy) and *Korean Buncheong Ceramics from the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art* (2011, with Jeon Seung-chang).

Stephen Little is the Florence and Harry Sloan Curator of Chinese Art, Head, Chinese, Korean, and South & Southeast Asian Departments, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Prior to joining LACMA's curatorial staff in 2011, Stephen served as curator of Chinese art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the Cleveland Museum of Art; curator of Asian Art at the Honolulu Academy of Arts; Pritzker Curator of Asian Art at the Art Institute of Chicago; and director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts. His research interests include Chinese and Japanese painting; Chinese, Korean and Japanese calligraphy; Chinese ceramics; the classical arts of Southeast Asia; and European old master paintings. His publications include *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period* (1983), *Visions of the Dharma: Japanese Buddhist Paintings and Prints in the Honolulu Academy of Arts* (1991), *Spirit Stones of China* (1999), *Taoism and the Arts of China* (2000, with Shawn Eichman), *Chinese Paintings from Japanese Collections* (2014) and *17th-Century Chinese Paintings from the Tsao Family Collection* (2016). He was awarded the College Art Association's Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Award for Best Museum Exhibition Catalogue for *Taoism and the Arts of China* in 2000, and the Art Libraries Society of North America's George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award for *17th-Century Chinese Paintings from the Tsao Family Collection* in 2017. Between 2003 and 2008 he led an international team that organized the first exhibition to explore the Vajrayana Buddhist art of Bhutan: *The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan* (2008). He is now preparing major exhibitions on the history of Korean calligraphy (2019) and the Ming Dynasty painter Qiu Ying (2020). Stephen has taught at the University of Virginia, the University of Chicago, the University of London and Harvard University.

Joan B. Mirviss is one of the top dealers in Japanese art in the United States, specializing in modern and contemporary ceramics, *ukiyo-e* prints and paintings in the United States. In 2009, she and Jiyoung Koo, a Korean-art specialist, cofounded the Asia Week New York Association, where she served as its first chairman and subsequently has remained an active member of the planning committee. An expert and leading dealer for more than 40 years, Mirviss organizes five to six annual exhibitions at her Madison Avenue gallery of modern ceramics, bringing the work of celebrated artists as well as hitherto unknown talents to the attention of the American public through exhibitions, publications and lectures. Her clients include more than 70 museums throughout the world. In addition to her business, she has been active in both curatorial and scholarly projects for major museums in the United States, Canada, Japan, Switzerland and France, and is the author of numerous publications on various aspects of Japanese art. Having participated in more than 100 art and antiques fairs across the country since the late 1970s, Joan and her exhibitions have been published in numerous international publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Nikkei*, *Japan Times*, *Architectural Digest* and *ARTnews*, among numerous others. Philanthropically, she initiated and helped to fund the Miyeko Murase Travel Fund for Japanese art studies at her alma mater, Columbia University. More recently she endowed a professorship in Japanese art history at the University of Wisconsin, which is the only such endowed position at a public university in the U.S. She currently sits on that department's board of advisors and is on the advisory council of the Chazen Museum of Art.

Amy G. Poster is an independent curator of Asian art and a consultant specializing in museum strategic planning. After a distinguished career at the Brooklyn Museum, where she chaired the Department of Asian Art and from which she retired as curator emerita in 2006, she is currently the consulting curator of the Asian Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She has consulted for several museums, including the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida; the Indianapolis Museum of Art, where for the second time in her life she was a Mellon Curator, brought in to expand the museum's activities in the Indian art field; and the Japan Society Gallery in New York City, where she was the interim director in 2015. During her career she has organized exhibitions of Japanese, Indian, Chinese and Korean arts and published widely, particularly in the fields of Japanese and Indian art, both in scholarly articles and in museum catalogs. She is a trustee of the Rubin Museum in New York City and serves on many museum and arts advisory

committees, including the Visiting Committee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Islamic Art Department, the Olana Historic Site, the Japan Society Gallery, the JASA Program Committee, the Friends of Khmer Culture and the advisory board of the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum in Hyderabad.

Shelley and Donald Rubin are philanthropists and cultural leaders who are recognized for their initiatives to expand public access to the arts and foster understanding between people throughout the world through meaningful interactions with art. In 2004, the Rubins founded the 70,000-square-foot Rubin Museum of Art to share and exhibit their collection of art from Tibet and Himalayan regions. *The New York Times* recently praised the Rubin as “one of the biggest-thinking small museums in Manhattan.” As trustees of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, Shelley and Donald believe that art has the potential to challenge the status quo and generate new opportunities for creative engagement with issues that affect all members of society, particularly underserved communities. In 2010, the couple established The 8th Floor, an interdisciplinary exhibition and event space, to promote artistic, cultural and philanthropic initiatives. As collectors, the Rubins support the work of artists from cultures outside the mainstream, with a focus on India, Tibet and Cuba. They believe in the power of art to promote access, inspiration, and understanding through exhibitions and strong partnerships. Shelley and Donald have been honored for their contributions to the artistic and cultural life of New York City, and they are recipients of the Bedrock Award from the Associates Group of the Public Design Commission (2015), India Abroad Person of the Year (2015) and the Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Award for Outstanding Patronage of the Arts (2016).

About Asia Week New York

The 2019 edition of Asia Week New York, which opens on March 13-23, continues to offer a non-stop round of gallery open houses, auctions sales, exhibitions, lectures, symposia and special events. To celebrate the week's festivities, a private, invitation-only reception, jointly hosted with the Department of Asian Art of The Metropolitan Museum of Art will once again take place in the Museum's Asian art galleries.

The comprehensive guide with maps will be available at participating galleries, auction houses and cultural institutions, starting February 2019 and online at asiaweekny.com. Emphasizing the strength of interest from Chinese-speaking buyers, a Chinese version of the website is available at cn.asiaweekny.com.

Asia Week New York Association, Inc. is a 501(c) 6 non-profit trade membership organization registered with the state of New York. For more information, visit www.asiaweekny.com. Instagram: @asiaweekny; Twitter #asiaweekny.

Caption: Top row: Diane and Arthur Abbey, Dr. Julia and John Curtis, Maxwell K. “Mike” Hearn, Elizabeth and Edward Johnson III, James Lally; Second row: Soyoung Lee, Stephen Little, Joan B. Mirviss, Amy Poster, Shelley and Donald Rubin