

## ART MARKET

### US & Americas

# New York's biggest ever Asia Week

*This year's event reflected the increasingly strong market for Asian art and antiquities*

#### ART FAIRS

**New York.** Since it was founded in the early 1990s, New York's Asia Week (14-22 March) has grown from being a promotional event for the auction houses to incorporate commercial galleries, museums and other institutions. It has been run by the Asia Week New York Association, a trade body for dealers, since 2009.

At its core, the event is still a selling opportunity, and this year it attracted even more art dealers (47 from New York and overseas), as well as hosting 19 sales at four auction houses, plus two selling exhibitions at Sotheby's. "It is the highlight of the Asian art year," says Brendan Lynch of the London-based gallery Oliver Forge Brendan Lynch.

Of course, there is no such thing as a distinct Asian art market, but rather a collection of mini-markets. New York-

based Scholten Japanese Art has been participating in Asia Week since the gallery opened in 2000, but "my market hasn't changed much", says its director, Katherine Martin. "You'll hear a very different story if you talk to a dealer with business from China."

Indeed, China is now home to 6% of the world's highest-net-worth individuals (those whose fortunes exceed \$50m), a figure that puts the country second only to the US, according to a 2013 report by the bank Credit Suisse.

"The increasing wealth in China has been the basis of our success," says Karen Wender, the co-owner of New York's China 2000 Fine Art. "When we began our business 34 years ago, we grew our inventory through frequent trips to China. Now, those same people are travelling to New York during Asia Week to buy from us and resell to Chinese collectors."

**Rachel Corbett**

## The works on sale during Asia Week ranged from a 3,200-year-old Chinese bronze gong to contemporary Indian painting

**Suzuki Harunbou, *Elegant Erotic Mane'emon*, around 1768-70**  
**Set of 12, \$78,000 (Scholten Japanese Art, New York)** *Unsold as we went to press*

After centuries of censorship and restrictions on the reproduction of works, scholars have recently revived interest in the Japanese erotic art form known as Shunga. The style was popular among Japanese artists from the 17th to 19th centuries before spreading to Europe, where "all the Impressionist painters collected Shunga—Picasso had a great collection", says Katherine Martin, the director of Scholten Japanese Art. The British Museum and the Honolulu Museum of Art recently held Shunga exhibitions, so it was a prime time to offer Suzuki Harunbou's set of calligraphic prints, which illustrate the story of Ukiyonosuke, a miniature peeping Tom who travels around Tokyo.



**"Min" Fanglei bronze wine vessel, 11th-12th century BC**

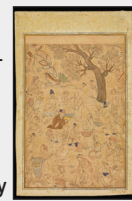
**Est \$15m (Christie's, New York, 20 March)** *After we went to press*  
This 92lb archaic vessel from the late Shang/early Western Zhou Dynasty set the world record for a work of Asian art when it sold at Christie's New York for \$9.2m in 2001. The intricate and sharply defined animals and mythological creatures that layer its surface represent a remarkable feat of bronze casting.



**A Gathering of 30 Dervishes; folio: Safavid Persia Isfahan, 1620-30; album: Persia or The Deccan, 1600-25**

**Around \$100,000 (Oliver Forge Brendan Lynch, New York and London)** *Sold*

This lively drawing of 30 dervishes set in a gold-flecked album page demonstrates the early influence of the Chinese blue-and-white colour scheme on artists from modern-day Iran. It also has a particularly compelling provenance, having passed through the collections of the English bibliomaniac Thomas Phillips, the Los Angeles-based Islamic art collector Ralph Benkaim and the first governor-general of India, Warren Hastings. Hastings bought it "at a time when Calcutta attracted a group of very cultivated Europeans who went to great lengths to learn about the indigenous culture of India", says the dealer Brendan Lynch.



**Yagi Kazuo, asymmetrical vase, 1970**  
**Around \$30,000 (Joan B. Mirviss, New York)** *Sold*

Yagi Kazuo and his Sodeisha movement of the 1940s pioneered the modernisation of Japanese ceramics by reinventing traditional pottery as non-functional art objects. Kazuo went on to further push the limits of the form by drawing inspiration from Western artists including Paul Klee and Joan Miró, leading to his abstract markings on pottery, such as the black squares and swipes on this stoneware vessel.



**V.S. Gaitonde, *Painting No. 3*, 1962**  
**Est \$2m-\$3m (Sotheby's, New York, 19 March)** *After we went to press*

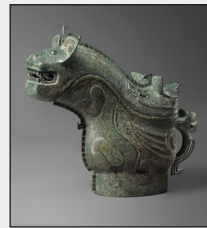
As the market for Modern Indian art grows, the late painter V.S. Gaitonde, who will be the subject of a retrospective at New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum this year ("Painting as Process, Painting as Life", 24 October-11 February 2015), is leading the pack. The markings on this clamshell-coloured picture, the highlight of Sotheby's South Asian sale, look almost like shadows on a horizon line—but not quite, indicating a key shift in the artist's trajectory from representational to abstract art at the time it was made.



**Shang Dynasty bronze gong, around 1200BC**

**Around \$9m (J.J. Lally, New York)** *Unsold as we went to press*

This bronze wine vessel from the late Anyang period (1300BC-1028BC), formed from the intertwined bodies of an owl and tiger, is the most prized object in the collection of the New York-based lawyer Daniel Shapiro, who has been acquiring ritual vessels from the Shang Dynasty (Anyang was its last capital) for 30 years. Before it entered his collection, a US Navy captain bought the boat-shaped object, known as a gong, during a tour of China in 1948. R.C.



# Halls

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#### PAINTINGS SILVER & JEWELLERY AUCTION

Wednesday 16th April 10am start

#### Viewing

Monday 14th April 9:30am – 7:00pm Reception Evening

Tuesday 15th April 9:30am – 4:30pm



Dirck Van Delen (1605-1671)  
*'Dives and Lazarus'*  
oil on panel  
61.5cm x 73cm  
signed with the artist's initials  
£80,000-120,000



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