

Around the Galleries

Asia Week New York

Dealers of Asian art put their best foot forward, as they welcome established collectors and appeal to new ones, writes *Samuel Reilly*



1. *A Celebration*, c. 1810–20, Iran, Qajar dynasty, unknown artist, ink, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 16.2 × 17.20cm. Art Passages at Asia Week New York

New York's dealers in Asian art first banded together to stage a city-wide celebration of porcelain, paintings, bronzes and much more besides in 2009; now in its 14th edition, Asia Week New York (AWNY) is a firmly established fixture in the calendar. Twenty-six dealers – the majority local, but with some arriving from the UK, Europe and Asia – and six auction houses combine forces this year (a preview dedicated to the auction highlights will be published this month on the *Apollo* website). Their displays range across the continent of Asia and from antiquity to the present.

For Joan Mirviss, one of the event's co-founders, Asia Week New York has turned the city into 'the global centre for pan-Asian art'. It's a bold statement, though one which is supported by the quality and range of objects for sale, with dealers and auction houses each saving up their finest works for this moment in the calendar. Scholten Japanese Art presents 'Multiple Masters: Modern Prints & Paintings', a selection of works by Japanese artists of the 19th and 20th centuries who worked in both

mediums. Katherine Martin, director of the gallery, points to a work by Kitano Tsunetomi, titled *Bride* (c. 1930) – 'formerly in the collection of Patricia Salmon, an important collector and dealer of Japanese art' – as one of the highlights.

For Eric Zetterquist, 'Asia Week New York was born of the necessity to present the united efforts of its members.' Zetterquist's own display has been half a century in the making. Mary and Cheney Cowles began buying Chinese ceramics in the 1970s, and have assembled a formidable collection, spanning the fourth to 14th centuries, with particular strengths in white and sancai Tang Dynasty earthenware. Zetterquist has worked with the couple for some 30 years. Fifty-six works from their collection are on display at his Manhattan gallery.

Elsewhere, Art Passages offers a magnificent party scene, painted by an Iranian artist in around 1810–20, during the Qajar period, with dancers, musicians and acrobats cavorting to the delight of two lovers watching over proceedings (Fig. 1). Sanjay Kapoor brings a

metre-high sandstone sculpture of Shiva; created in Rajasthan during the 11th century, it depicts the god in his Nataraja form, in which he is said to be the keeper of the energy of the cosmos. Mirviss herself is presenting a display of works by Wada Morihiro, one of the 20th century's great masters of ceramic surface decoration, alongside those of his contemporaries. Underscoring the co-operative approach that characterises AWNY, Mirviss also hosts an exhibition by Japanese gallery Shibankaku, which makes its debut this year.

The event is around half the size of its pre-pandemic level in 2019, but dealers are sanguine about the prospects of the market today. 'Established collectors are eager to get back to the galleries,' Martin says, adding that Asia Week New York is an event peculiarly well-suited to cater for them: 'Half an hour with an expert can have a tremendous influence on one's connoisseurship.' 

Asia Week New York takes place at various venues from 16–24 March (www.asiaweekny.com).