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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Asia Week New York Zooms in on *Unintended Consequences: An Overview of Objects of Addiction: Opium, Empire, and the Chinese Art Trade*, at the Harvard Art Museums, Wednesday, December 13th**



New York: Asia Week New York, in collaboration with Harvard Art Museums, is delighted to present "Unintended Consequences: An Overview of "Objects of Addiction—Opium, Empire, and the Chinese Art Trade," now on display there through January 14, 2024. This intriguing webinar explores the interconnected histories of the opium trade and the Chinese art market from the late 18th to early 20th centuries. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, at 5:00 p.m. EST. Click here to register:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_4YQwwwqHSEeBo4GPjFVF5A](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4YQwwwqHSEeBo4GPjFVF5A)



Dr. Sarah Laursen, curator of "Objects of Addiction: Opium, Empire, and the Chinese Art Trade" will lead the discussion, unveiling the intricate relationship between opium and Chinese art. This exploration sheds light on their profound impact on the global economy, cultural landscape, education, and, notably, public health and immigration—issues that continue to resonate today. The session will be moderated by Lark Mason, founder of iGavelAuctions.

Dr. Laursen will provide a historical context to the complex opium and Chinese art trades, presenting a comprehensive timeline of events in China, Europe, and the United States. The consequences of the Opium Wars, from the 18th-century illegal sale of Indian opium in China to the active involvement of Massachusetts merchants in the opium trade during the 19th century, will be highlighted. The discussion will also explore the growing interest in Chinese art in Europe and the United States post-Opium Wars, examining the formation of Chinese art collections in Massachusetts in the early 20th century. Artifacts from former opium traders' homes, such as the Forbes House Museum and Ipswich Museum and others, illustrate the prevailing taste for functional or decorative objects such as export ceramics and lacquer furnishings. Newly available imperial palace treasures also prompted the collecting of ancient bronzes and jades unearthed from tombs. Dr. Laursen also draws parallels between China's historical opium crisis and the contemporary opioid epidemic in Massachusetts and offers potentially life-saving information about overdose prevention.

**About Dr. Sarah Laursen**

Sarah Laursen serves as the Alan J. Dworsky Curator of Chinese Art at the Harvard Art Museums, overseeing the Chinese art collection and portions of the Korean and Central, South, and Southeast Asian collections. Specializing in early medieval China, her research interests include Chinese archaeology, digital humanities, technical art history, collecting history, and contemporary Asian and Asian American art. Dr.

Laursen co-curated "Earthly Delights: 6,000 Years of Asian Ceramics" (summer 2022), curated "Objects of

Addition: Opium, Empire, and the Chinese Art Trade" (fall 2023), and collaborated with students to develop the virtual exhibition "Reframing Tianlongshan."

### **About Lark Mason**

Lark Mason, the owner, and CEO of iGavelAuctions, served as a General Appraiser from 1979 until 1985, and as a Senior Vice President and specialist in Chinese art with Sotheby's Chinese Works of Art Department from 1985-2003. From 2000-2003 he concurrently was a Director of Online Auctions for Sothebys.com. He also served as a consulting curator at the Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art in Dallas, Texas from 2003-2009. A generalist in American and European works of art and paintings, as well as an expert in the field of Chinese art, Mason has valued and advised many private collectors and institutions.

Lark Mason Associates has a history of record sales of Chinese and other works of art and holds the record for the highest price achieved for any work of art in an online sale—a Chinese handscroll—that realized close to \$4.2m. He is noted for his regular appearances on "The Antiques Road Show."

### **About Asia Week New York**

The collaboration of top-tier international Asian art galleries, the six major auction houses—Bonhams, Christie's, Doyle, Heritage Auctions, iGavel, and Sotheby's—and numerous museums and Asian cultural institutions, Asia Week New York is a week-long celebration filled with a non-stop schedule of simultaneous gallery open houses, Asian art auctions as well as numerous museum exhibitions, lectures, and special events. Participants from Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, and the United States unveil an extraordinary array of museum-quality treasures from China, India, the Himalayas, Southeast Asia, Nepal, Japan, and Korea. 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](http://www.asiaweekny.com) @asiaweekny #asiaweekny

### **About Songtsam, Presenting Sponsor**

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Captions (top to bottom)

Opium pipe, China, Qing dynasty to Republican period, inscribed with cyclical date corresponding to 1868 or 1928. Water buffalo horn, metal, and ceramic. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943.55.6. Photo: © President and Fellows of Harvard College; courtesy of the Harvard Art Museums.

Bronze gong (covered ritual wine vessel), China, Western Zhou period, mid-11<sup>th</sup> to early 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Cast bronze. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943.52.91. Photo: © President and Fellows of Harvard College; courtesy of the Harvard Art Museums