

# Rosy prospects for Fine Art Asia

Longevity, constancy and eclecticism are the ingredients for Fine Art Asia's success. It is an unobtrusive art fair compared with its compatriot Art Basel Hong Kong (which makes regular headlines in Western media), but its stable quota of some 22,000 visitors proves its appeal. The same goes for its exhibitors, whose numbers (around 85) and identity vary little year after year. The stands themselves and their location within the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre are becoming a fixture, according to Pierre Dumonteil. The French gallery owner, a specialist in 20th-century art who has been established in Shanghai for the last decade, is taking part for the eighth time in the fair, which he describes as "the steadiest in all of Asia". It benefits from "ideal timing" because it coincides with Sotheby's big sales. A reassuring fair - a volume of transactions totalling HK\$525 million (US\$67 million) was recorded at the previous edition -, Fine Art Asia provides relative financial security for its exhibitors.

## Opening up to the East

Whether you're a dealer or a visitor, it's impossible to come back empty-handed given the active attendance and extremely varied offer, which covers 5,000 years of history, and includes photography (now with its own dedicated section since 2016) and jewellery - for example, the young Chinese brand Dickson Yewn, whose jade rings were sported by Michelle Obama at a Buckingham Palace gala. While the main area of business remains Asian antiques, the Western arts, especially painting, are attracting visitors' attention more and more. In 2016, a painting of the "Aiguille d'Etretat, Marée Basse" by Claude Monet made a distinct impression at the stand of the London gallery Gladwell & Patterson, while works by French painters Georges Robin, Alexandre Jacob and Auguste Bouvard sold within minutes of the fair opening. Its director, Glenn Fuller, told us on this occasion of Asian collectors' "increasing understanding" in Western painting. Coming from Mainland China and



Camille Roche (1894-1948),  
"Three Hinds", c. 1930, 73 x 60.5 cm.  
Galerie Dumonteil, Paris, Shanghai  
and New York.

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Central Asia, c. 7th century BC, an  
important gold fragment with  
embossed animals, 9.5 x 9 cm.  
David Aaron, London.



across South-East Asia, they stand out for their immense curiosity and propensity for impulse buying. "Last year, one of the world's top collectors of Chinese bronzes asked me to commission a monumental sculpture (for a square in Nanjing) from Daniel Daviau, an artist he had just discovered at the fair," said Pierre Dumonteil. "Such spontaneity is unheard of today in the West."

## A sunny forecast

At his stand this year, living artists look set to stay in the spotlight, while David Aaron (London) goes back in time to the Asia of the 7th century BC with a superb gold fragment ornamented with embossed animals, and Chang's Oriental Art gallery (Taipei) presents furniture in zitan and huanghuali: woods highly prized by Chinese emperors. At Rossi Rossi, a late 17th/early 18th-century Mongolian gilt copper sculpture of the deity Changan Sambhar-a awaits antique lovers. The London gallery is also based in Hong Kong, in the island's southern district of Wong Chuk Hang, which is attracting ever more galleries because of its affordable rents and available space. Its director, Fabio Rossi, hopes the 2017 fair will be as successful as the last one, which enabled the gallery to meet new collectors. "Over the past ten years, the fair has become bigger and more international, and the quality of the exhibitors and audience has also matured," he says. An enthusiastic statement that Andy Hei, the dealer specialising in furniture who founded Fine Art Asia in 2006, wouldn't argue with. "The recent success of big contemporary art fairs and then Sotheby's very high results in Hong Kong are defying predictions of a declining art market in China," says Hei on Barneby's website. The forecast for Fine Art Asia looks decidedly sunny.

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Fine Art Asia, from 30 September to 3 October 2017, opening and VIP preview on 29 September, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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