

## Art without borders

The 11th-hour lifting of trade barriers will boost this year's Asian Art in London and a second Yorkshire fair holds much to savour

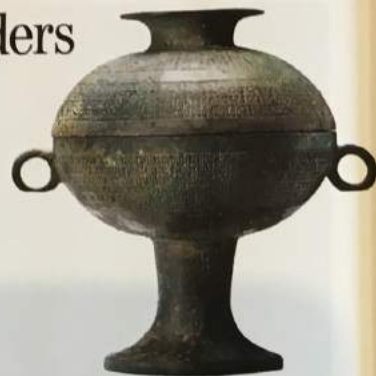


Fig 1: Pair of archaic bronze dou, with Nicholas Pitcher

**A** PARTICULARLY dark cloud over a major part of the Asian art trade has been lifted—barring any late-night tweets to the contrary—just in time for this year's Asian Art in London (AAL) dealers' shows, which will run from November 1 to 10. As part of Mr Trump's trade war with China, his administration had intended that art and antiques originally created in China were to be taxed on import together with numerous other Chinese products, no matter how long ago they had left China or from where they had been exported to the USA.

Today, there are 43 gallery shows in all (the Gray's Market grouping dropped out in 2003), but, thanks to the internet, 15 auction houses are involved, including three from outside London and six from abroad, although two of the last will be holding their sales in London. Rather to my surprise, only 14 or 15 of the dealers participated in the first AAL, although one or two more may have changed names in the interim. Museums around the country are putting on exhibitions, lectures and events.

The gala opening party will be on Thursday, November 1, at the Magazine, Serpentine Sackler Gallery in Hyde Park and the usual sequence of late-night openings—to 9pm, but check for variations—begin with Kensington Church Street on the Saturday, with St James's and Mayfair on the two following evenings.

As last year, during the first few days, there will be opportunities to join 'Gallery Hops', guided tours of selected shows for groups of up to 15 people ([www.londonartweek.com](http://www.londonartweek.com)).

I have heard it said that the traditional Chinese discomfort at the idea of collecting the grave

goods so highly prized in the West is now weakening. The change is ascribed in part to the destruction of much important early art during the Cultural Revolution and the consequent need to strengthen what remains of the national heritage. This may or may not be true, but there does seem to be greater interest from mainland China in such areas as major ancient bronzes.

Certainly, bidding at auction is far less frenetic than it was in 2010 at the height of the Chinese buying boom. That was when

### Pick of the week

Hot on the heels of the Northern Antiques Fair at Harrogate comes the Pavilions of Harrogate Decorative Antiques & Art Fair at the Yorkshire Showground from November 2 to 4. Many dealers exhibit at both events, which will cut down on their transport costs. One of these is the Timberhill Gallery from Norwich, which will show an atmospheric grey and black-ink painting of a moonlit river (above) by Henri Joseph Harpignies (1819–1916) at £1,450. He was a bridge between the Anglo-French Romantics and the Impressionists and a key member of the Barbizon group of *plein-air* artists working in the forest of Fontainebleau in the mid-19th century. They were inspired by Constable's landscapes.

David Harvey from Whitney and Roger de Ville of Denstone, Staffordshire, also do both fairs. At this one, Mr Harvey offers a 'very practical' George III mahogany secretaire reading table (above left), at £4,750, and Mr de Ville a rare creamware 1815 Waterloo commemorative plate (left), £1,350.



Fig 2 above: Indian miniature, with Simon Ray. Fig 3 left: Famille rose vase, with David Baker

a Qing reticulated porcelain vase was bid to £43 million at Bainbridge of Ruislip. That price was never actually paid and a brokered sale in 2013 is said to have been between £20 million and £25 million.

A pair to that vase was sold for £14.6 million by Sotheby's, Hong Kong, at the start of this month.

Few if any such prices are likely to be found among the AAL gallery offerings, but there

will be a feast for collectors at—relatively—more modest levels and across the disciplines. To remain with China for a moment, I am much taken by a pair of archaic bronze dou (Fig 1), or food vessels with covers, 7½in-high, with Nicholas Pitcher at 29, New Bond Street, W1. They were cast with bands of geometric designs during the Eastern Zhou dynasty, 5th to 3rd century BC, and are priced in the region of £7,500.

David Baker, who shares the first-floor premises with Mr Pitcher, has a show of recent acquisitions, including an 18th-century vase aimed at English taste (Fig 3) at £5,000.

At 12, Queen Street, W1, Sydney L. Moss summons up the demons, devils and *bakemono*



Fig 4: Mirror box with Sydney L. Moss

(ghosts) of Japanese folklore. One such is Hannya, the vengeful ghost of a jealous woman, forcefully shown on a lacquered mirror box (Fig 4) by Ogawa Haritsu, known as Ritsuō (1663–1747), an original and innovative artist who introduced Ming Chinese techniques and subject matter to Japanese lacquer-making and aesthetics.

Simon Ray, the Indian and Islamic specialist—21, King Street, St James's, SW1—always has a stock of lovely Indian miniatures and I particularly like a 24½in by 19in example in his show (Fig 2), because it is unfinished in parts and thus one can clearly see the underdrawing and construction. It is signed and dated 1764 by an artist named Shiva and shows the Maharana Ari Singh on a terrace with his Court enjoying a *hookah* and the stormy night sky.



Fig 5: Ceremonial shield from Udaipur, with Runjeet Singh

Fresh from taking part in the Parisian *Parcours des Mondes*, Runjeet Singh, the Warwickshire-based specialist in Eastern arms and armour (Fig 5), will be at 6, Ryder Street, St James's, SW1, with his show 'The Goddess: Arms and Armour of the Rajputs'.

Next week New Paris fair

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