

NEW YORK

Feast for the Eyes

In New York, the winds of March usher in not only spring blossoms but also a host of openings for the city's **Asia Week**, which provide an excellent way to spend time indoors until such blooms arrive. Now in its ninth year, the event, which runs March 9 through 18, welcomes 13 newcomers, bringing the total number of

participating Upper East Side dealers to 50—the greatest number yet. When they're not hopscotching among these notable shows and attending the bevy of auctions taking place, visitors can stop in at some of the 16 participating museums and institutions in and around New York that have mounted dedicated exhibitions,

featuring preeminent scholarship on topics ranging from the traditional musical arts of Asia and Ming painting to the cultural influence of Africans on the Indian subcontinent. *Art+Auction* previews three not-to-miss institutional shows opening as part of the week's festivities.

—JULIET HELMKE

Secrets of the Sea:

A TANG SHIPWRECK AND EARLY TRADE IN ASIA

March 7 through June 4

This exhibition at the Asia Society affords American audiences their first chance to view the treasures of the shipwreck found in 1998 a mile off an Indonesian island in the Java Sea. The items of gold and silver, jars filled with spices, and more than 60,000 pieces of Tang Dynasty ceramics represent a discovery crucial to understanding 9th-century Asia and the cultural and economic trade taking place in the region at the time. A 2012 exhibition of this remarkable collection slated for the Smithsonian's Freer | Sackler Galleries was canceled after objections from American archaeologists arose over its methods of excavation; the galleries elected to avoid the appearance that the U.S. government supported a project that violated accepted archaeological standards and practices. Attempting to temper any similar issues arising again, the Asia Society participates in a symposium on the controversies on March 4, cohosted by New York University's Center for Global Asia and the Institute of Fine Arts.



Clockwise from top left: A Tang Dynasty (A.D. 825–850), four-lobed stoneware bowl adorned with a dragon, likely from China's Henan province; a stoneware dish with floral lozenge decoration, also from the Tang Dynasty and likely from Henan province; a four-lobed oval box with deer and lion decoration in silver and parcel-gilt, also from Tang Dynasty; a long-necked ewer, A.D. 830s, also probably from the Henan Province, in glazed stoneware with copper-green splashes over white slip.

ALL IMAGES: ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS MUSEUM, SINGAPORE. FIRST TWO IMAGES ALSO COURTESY OF JOHN TSANTES AND ROBERT HARRELL



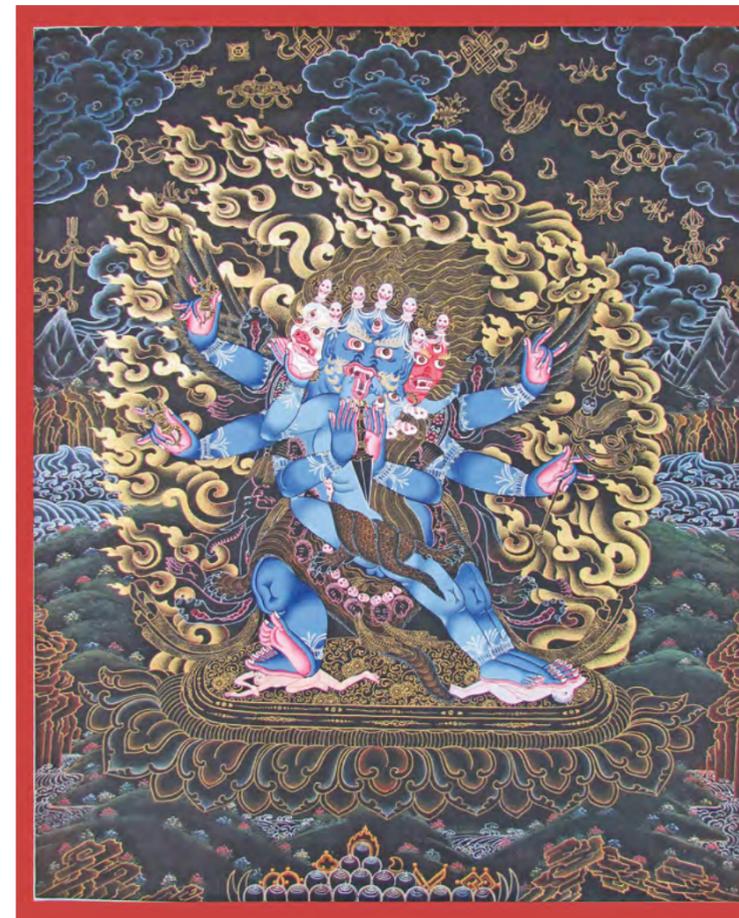
Chung Young Yang's *Yang's Lover*, from the 1960s.

The Movement of Herstory:

KOREAN EMBROIDERY

March 2 through April 27

Chung Young Yang—embroiderer, textile historian, and founder of Seoul's Embroidery Museum—is the focus of this exhibition at the Korean Cultural Center. Looking at her needlework, her scholarship, and the work she has done establishing schools for vocational training in the art of embroidery, the show contextualizes this traditional work and the culture of *gyubang* (women's quarters) as fundamental aspects of Korean art and society. It explores how Chung has challenged conceptions of craft or "women's work" as inferior creative pursuits, forming an entire emancipatory movement out of a needle and thread.



Vajrakilaya, 1996, by Karsang Lama, in mixed media on canvas.

Tibetan Thangkas Today:

MASTERPIECES FROM THE DHARMAPALA THANGKA CENTER OF KATHMANDU

March 10 through May 11

The painstakingly detailed sacred Buddhist scroll paintings, known as *thangkas*, which are thought to have originated in Tibet, are created primarily as religious teaching tools or guides for meditative practice. There are few working in this style today, none more notable than Karsang Lama, who runs his own center dedicated to keeping the art form alive in Kathmandu. On view at Tibet House are more than 20 of his works of religious iconography, including deities in both peaceful and wrathful states of being, from Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist traditions.

FROM TOP: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR; DHARMAPALA THANGKA CENTER, KATHMANDU

A rare bronze ritual ram-form wine vessel, from the Late Shang Dynasty, 13th–11th century B.C., carries an estimate of \$6 million to \$8 million at Christie's on March 15.



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Eastern Offerings

On March 13, Asia Week auctions kick off with sales at Doyle and Bonhams. At Doyle, an array of porcelain, jade, scholars' objects, and paintings, as well as many more items hailing from across Asia, hit the block. Among the highlights is a painting of a fruiting vine by a Ming Dynasty artist, done in the style of the revered Qian Xuan of the late 13th- to early 14th-century Yuan Dynasty, known for his depictions of flora and fauna. This ode to Xuan is estimated at \$40,000 to \$60,000. Also in the sale is a late 18th- to early 19th-century imperial Chinese jade vase made of light celadon with an estimate of \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Just downtown from Doyle on the city's East Side, the sales at Bonhams begin with three auctions: fine Chinese snuff bottles; Chinese works of art; and Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian art. Among the pieces offered in the latter auction is a stone plaque from northeastern India, showing scenes from the life of Buddha and dating to the Pala period (circa the 12th century). It is estimated at \$100,000 to \$150,000. Another star lot from the same sale is a 14th-century gilt copper and alloy figure of the dancing goddess Vajravahari. Hailing from central Tibet, it was once housed in the Densatil Monastery, which is now a ruin. The work, in surprisingly pristine condition for its age, has an estimate of \$200,000 to \$300,000. On March 14, a single-owner Bonhams sale consisting of 108 bronze sculptures from a private Western collection hits the block, with a presale total estimate of \$4.5 million to \$6.5 million. Finally, on March 15 in a Japanese works of art auction, the house will offer a rare Edo-period six-panel screen of blooming poppies painted on a gold-foil background (est. \$80,000–150,000).

In its fine Chinese paintings sale on

CHRISTIE'S

March 14, the first of its seven sales taking place during Asia Week, Christie's presents *Boating Among Hills*, 1948, a large vertical piece by Zhang Daqian estimated at \$70,000 to \$100,000. The next day brings the fourth part of the house's hugely successful sales series dedicated to the Ruth and Carl Barron collection of Chinese snuff bottles. Also on March 15, deaccessioned works from the Fujita Museum in Osaka are on offer, including an exceedingly rare bronze wine vessel (*gong*) in the form of a ram from the late Shang Dynasty. Estimated at \$6 million to \$8 million, it is the highest priced lot of the week at Christie's. On March 16, an important assortment of *huanghuali* and *zitan* Chinese furniture from the Marie Theresa L. Virata collection goes to the block, with an 18th-century *luohanchuang*, or "couch bed," estimated at \$2 million to \$3 million.

Sotheby's goes head-to-head with rival Christie's with auctions scheduled for the same days and in similar categories. On March 14, a selection of works from the collection of Joan Oestreich Kend are for sale, with a blue-and-white dragon-motif tea caddy and cover from the Yongzheng period (est. \$1.3–1.5 million). Also on the 14th is an auction of modern and contemporary South Asian art, including *Untitled (Damayanti)*, a 19th-century oil on canvas by Raja Ravi Varma (est. \$500–700,000), and *The City-II*, 1999, by Jehangir Sabavala, which carries an estimate of \$250,000 to \$300,000. March 15 sees a gilt-bronze figure of a Shakyamuni Buddha from 14th- to 15th-century Tibet (est. \$150–200,000). The week wraps up at Sotheby's with fine Chinese paintings and calligraphy, led by the 12-leaf folio *Flowers, Birds, Fish, and Fruit* by Qing Dynasty artist Zhu Da. It has an estimate of \$2.5 million to \$3.5 million.

—DANIELLE WHALEN



Clockwise from above: A six-panel screen from the early Edo period (1603–1868), depicting poppies in bloom on a gold foil ground and mounted in a lacquer frame, is estimated at \$80,000 to \$150,000 at Bonhams on March 15;

Wu Zhen's *Studio Among Streams and Mountains*, a hanging scroll of ink on paper from the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), is estimated at \$800,000 to \$1 million at Sotheby's on March 16; *Boating Among Hills*, 1948, by Zhang Daqian is included in the fine Chinese painting sale at Christie's on March 14 with an estimate of \$70,000 to \$100,000.

