

ART REVIEW

Across a Sprawling Continent, Across the Centuries Asia Week New York Art Shows Take Over Upper East Side



Philip Greenberg for The New York Times

A 19th-century woodblock print image of three sumo wrestlers by Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1865), on display at Sebastian Izzard. More Photos »

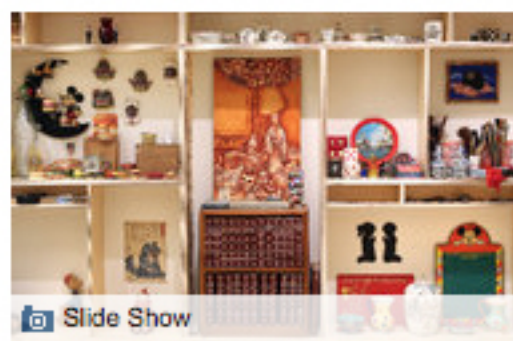
By KAREN ROSENBERG Published: March 14, 2013

The annual Asia Week New York has the festive hum of a big art fair, but is somewhat more challenging to navigate: its 40-plus shows take place at galleries all over the Upper East Side, and there's often enough in a single exhibition to hold your attention for hours. Home in on a particular region or bring a stopwatch and make it a cross-continent marathon; the choice is yours.

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A sortable calendar of noteworthy cultural events in the New York region, selected by Times critics.

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What's below is just a sampling, based on works that could be seen early this week; a more comprehensive list is at asiaweekny.com and jada-ny.org and in free guides that can be picked up along the way.

China

Ceramics of the Song dynasty (960-1279) are a theme of this year's Asia Week offerings. J. J. Lally & Company (41 East

57th Street), one of the city's top galleries for Chinese art, has a beautifully presented display of vessels from the collection of Ronald W. Longsdorf. It includes tea bowls with a speckled black-and-brown glaze called tortoiseshell, as well as carved celadon dishes.

Zetterquist Galleries (3 East 66th Street) also has an exceptional show of Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and Song ceramics from the same kiln complex, known as Jizhou, in Jiangxi Province. The Jizhou kilns were not subject to imperial design edicts because they made wares for the people rather than the courts, and the objects produced there are playful and experimental; in addition to tortoiseshell there are hawkbill and tiger's fur patterns and spare Buddhist-influenced silhouettes made with leaves and paper stencils.

Japan

The annual minifair hosted by the Japanese Art Dealers Association is always an Asia Week must-see. It takes place at the Ukrainian Institute of America (2 East 79th Street) and includes Japanese art objects of all kinds: screens, scrolls, prints, lacquer boxes, ceremonial tea ware, even historic arms and armor.

Koichi Yanagi Oriental Fine Arts is contributing a magnificent Momoyama period (1573-1615) screen by Kano Takanobu, featuring an episode called "The Shell of the Locust" from "The Tale of Genji"; in the narrative, the prince Hikaru Genji spies on a woman who will later slip from his embrace by slithering out of her thin cloak just as a locust discards its shell.

The association members also host their own separate exhibitions during Asia Week. Erik Thomsen (23 East 67th Street) has a set of

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Pieces in Asia Week shows include a bodhisattva head from ancient Gandhara, at Nancy Wiener. [More Photos »](#)

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A celadon-glazed ceramic vessel by Okabe Mineo (1919-90), presented by the Joan B. Mirviss gallery. [More Photos »](#)

screens from the Taisho period (1912-26); painted by Koyo Ishizaki, these screens show two peacocks trailing jewel-toned feathers across a light golden ground. And among the lively woodblock prints at Sebastian Izzard (17 East 76th Street) is Utagawa Kunisada's antic, multisheet image of three sumo wrestlers standing on a bridge in Edo. One holds a delicate box of fireflies, as if to make fun of himself and his equally hefty companions.

More Japanese art can be found outside the association's auspices, among the galleries participating in Asia Week. Scholten Japanese Art (145 West 58th Street) has an Edo-focused exhibition, "The Nightlife: Entertainments of the Floating World," with wrestlers and Kabuki dancers aplenty. And Joan B. Mirviss (39 East 78th Street) is showing midcentury Japanese ceramics with timeless appeal, including a torqued, carved crackle-celadon-glazed vessel by the master Okabe Mineo.

Korea

Kang Collection (9 East 82nd Street), one of the relatively few dealers to specialize in Korean art, should be included in any Asia Week itinerary; it's just steps from the Metropolitan Museum of Art

and has supplied some of the items in the Met's collection. It's now featuring court paintings of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), among them an eight-panel folding screen from a gentleman's study that depicts bronzes and fruit bowls resting atop piles of books.

The other works on view are similarly aristocratic, including a screen painted by the 19th-century prince Yi Ha-Ung. But Kang also has a striking example of Korean folk art, a painting of a dragon (a creature associated, in Korean culture, with water rather than fire). Showing the beast snaking through thunderclouds, the work is thought to have been displayed outdoors as part of a prayer for rain.

South Asia

"Hellenized" Buddhist sculpture from ancient Gandhara (now parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan) and other areas that had contact with the Mediterranean is a fascinating reminder that much of the art in Asia Week is broadly cross-cultural. Fortunately, it's popping up in several places this year; witness the Buddhas in Greco-Roman drapery at Carlton Rochell (121 East 71st Street) and Dalton Somaré (showing at Pace Prints, 32 East 57th Street), or the classically featured bodhisattva head at Nancy Wiener (showing at Jack Tilton Gallery, 8 East 76th Street).

Meanwhile, Tibeto-Chinese Buddhism from the 13th through 15th centuries is the focus of an edifying 60-piece show at Dickinson Roundell (19 East 66th Street), organized by the scholar and dealer Robert R. Bigler. It includes richly gilded icons created in China during the rule of the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, who made Vajrayana Buddhism the state religion.

Buddhas from Mongolia and Nepal are at Kapoor Galleries (1015 Madison Avenue, at 78th Street), where they accompany an excellent selection of miniatures. In an 18th-century painting Krishna shelters his followers from torrential rains by lifting a mountain and balancing it on his pinkie finger. It's a graceful image and it speaks to the huge, unwieldy but thoroughly gratifying umbrella that is Asia Week.

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