

# cityArts

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**Orpheus**  
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

**MOZART!**

SAT, MAR 19 @ 8 PM  
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### The music in 140 characters or less...

**ROUSSEL** *Concerto for Small Orchestra*

An orphan/sailor/late-blooming composer, Roussel found his voice as a robust Neoclassicist.

**MOZART** *Piano Concerto No. 20*

At the peak of his fame in Vienna, Mozart wowed his subscribers with this stormy showpiece.

**LERDAHL** *Waves*

From a dogma-defying composer and scholar, this early Orpheus commission still sounds fresh and engaging.

**MOZART** *Symphony No. 39*

Hard up, Mozart wrote three final symphonies without known performances; this one is inviting and serene.

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Yang Ki-hun scrolls from Kaikodo.

# Taking Stock

*Optimism about the Asian art market is fueling excitement leading into Asia Week*

**BY VALERIE GLADSTONE**  
**A**sia Week gets off to an auspicious start March 18 with an elegant reception at the Asia Society. Then, over the course of nine days, 34 Asian art dealers—along with the Asia Society, Japan Society, Rubin Museum, China Institute and the auction houses Bonham’s, Christie’s, Sotheby’s, Doyle New York and iGavel—will present exhibitions, lectures, discussions, sales, concerts, films and a gala benefit reception and dinner, with everything open to the public. The range is astonishing. Everything from exquisite jade carved bowls and Persian manuscripts to Buddhist sculptures and contemporary Japanese ceramics will be on exhibit, with dealers eager to show and discuss the incredibly rich and varied art. There’s no excuse not to know the

difference between your decorative art objects and contemporary artist prints when it’s all said and done.

“I don’t think people realize quite how much we have on offer,” says dealer Carlton Rochell, chairman of Asia Week New York 2011. “There is more great Asian art on exhibit and at auction here, as well as events surrounding it, during this period than anywhere else in the world at any one time. The market is strong and getting stronger, especially Chinese, increasingly Indian and also Korean and Japanese art. It’s going to be a fantastic week.”

To help visitors navigate the events, organizers put together a comprehensive, 88-page guide with listings and details, as well as a mobile-accessible website, AsiaWeekNY.com. The guide will be available through the cultural institutions, auction houses and galleries. In fact, opportunities extend well beyond a week, with the Arts of Pacific Asia Show also taking place March 23–27.

Asia Week represents a terrific opportunity for newcomers and seasoned collectors to discover new works. As usual, Ralph M. Chait Galleries, Inc., long a preeminent dealer in Chinese porcelain, has remarkable objects for sale. Among them are a vividly painted blue-and-white, mid-17th-century porcelain plate, decorated with lions playing with brocaded balls that

are symbolic of children living in harmony with one another, and a green, blue and red porcelain tile from the late 17th century depicting a lively

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village scene. Though the Chinese market has skyrocketed in the past five years, with mainland and Hong Kong Chinese increasingly buying the art of their past, Steven Chait says choice objects are still available, ceramics and export ware. “It may sound crazy,” Chait explains, “but buying something slightly damaged isn’t the end of the world. It’s one way to get a beautiful piece.”

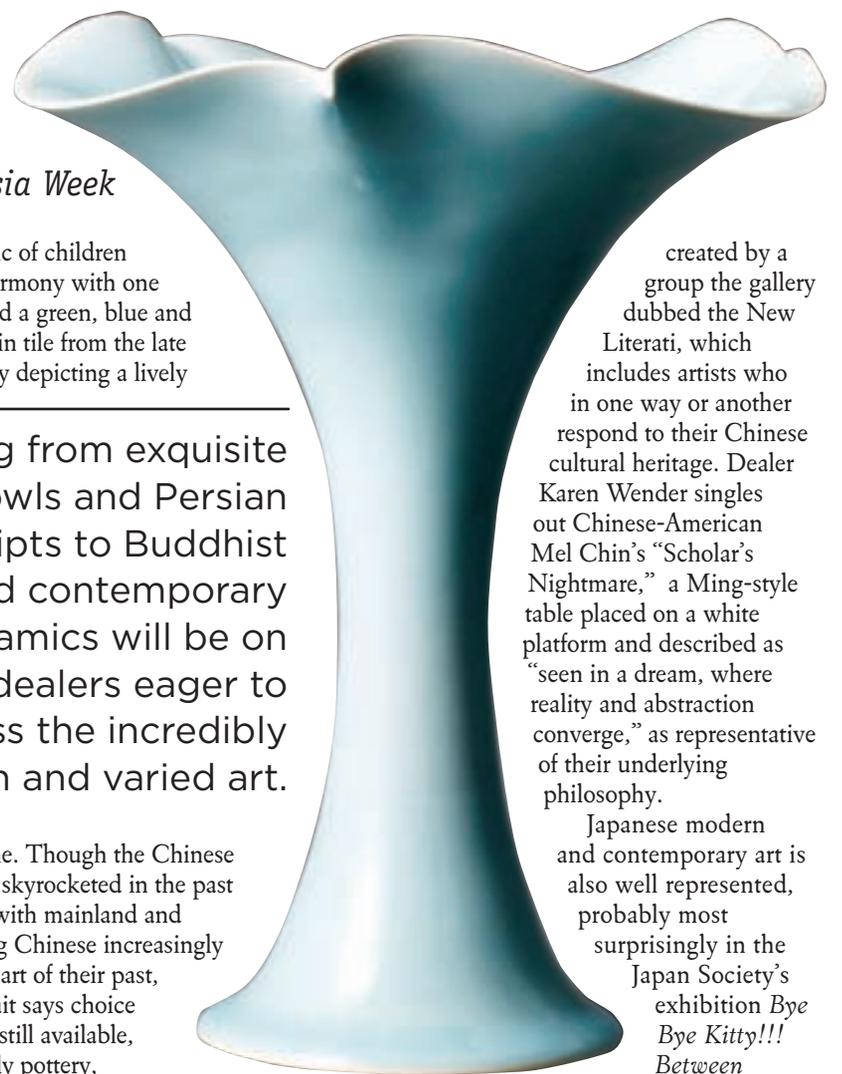
While old pieces dominate in the galleries and auction houses, there are also many wonderful modern and contemporary works available. At China 2000 Fine Art, visitors will find *New Shoots Off the Old Trunk: Contemporary Chinese Art with Classical Roots*, a collection of pieces

created by a group the gallery dubbed the New Literati, which includes artists who in one way or another respond to their Chinese cultural heritage. Dealer Karen Wender singles out Chinese-American Mel Chin’s “Scholar’s Nightmare,” a Ming-style table placed on a white platform and described as “seen in a dream, where reality and abstraction converge,” as representative of their underlying philosophy.

Japanese modern and contemporary art is also well represented, probably most

surprisingly in the Japan Society’s exhibition *Bye Bye Kitty!!! Between Heaven and Hell in Contemporary Japanese Art*, which runs through June

12. Its provocative title indicates that the artists in the show are challenging the country’s long love affair with the cute and adorable. The 16 participants, half of them women, contribute, among other works, painted screens with political commentary, a taxidermied deer covered with plastic beads and an installation which includes a wedding dress and a



Kawase Shinobu vase available from Joan B. Mirviss Ltd. Richard Goodbody



Ralph M. Chait Galleries

Rare large Chinese blue-and-white porcelain charger available from Chait Galleries.



Detail from Mano Gyotei's "Raijin" painting, available from Scholten Japanese Art.

network of linked veins.

A bit more conservatively, Katherine Martin at Scholten Japanese Art offers pieces with the theme *Monogatari: Tales of Japan*, an exhibition of paintings, woodblock prints and netsuke devoted to the art of storytelling. "What especially draws people to Japanese art is the design and composition," she says. "Even 17th-century pieces look modern." She also points out how much Japanese art influenced the Impressionists, who, of course, are tremendously popular. "I remember the first print I saw when I was 20," she says. "I found the design so amazing. I understood immediately why Monet and Van Gogh and all those guys thought it was so dynamic."

Certainly Joan Mirviss would agree. An early supporter of contemporary Japanese art, she will present *Birds of Dawn: Pioneers of Japan's Sodeisha Ceramic Movement*, focusing on the movement's three seminal founders, Yagi Kazuo (1918-79), Suzuki Osamu (1926-2001) and Yamada Hikaru (1923-2001). More than 60 works by the Kyoto triumvirate will be on view and offered for sale, among them Kuriki Tatsusuke's handsome, cylindrical sculpture with a brown and tan geometric design, Suzuki Osamu's whimsical red- and ash-glazed stoneware sculpture and Sakiyama Takayuki's sensual, curving vessel, "Chôtô; Listening to the Waves."

"These are just extraordinary artists," Mirviss says. "You see the influence of

Brancusi and Arp, as well their 2,000-year-old traditions." To understand her influence and the impact of their exposure in the West, it is necessary to know that when she started collecting the work of artists of this movement in 1984, six museums showed modern clay works; today, 45 museums here and in Europe hold collections.

She also strongly influenced Jeffrey and Carol Horvitz, who are now among the world's most important collectors of contemporary Japanese ceramics. Jeffrey says he just sort of stumbled upon them;

his collecting history up until that point was primarily in Old Masters European drawings and paintings. Like Martin, he had an epiphany the first time he saw a work in a show in New York in 2005. "I fell in love immediately," he says, remarking on how the different surfaces appealed to him. As soon as they could, he and his wife arranged a lunch with Mirviss, where they developed a vision statement for their future as collectors in the field. The prices shocked him, as they are a fraction of those for contemporary European and American art. "It's

incredible what beautiful work you can get for relatively low prices, even as low as \$1,000," he says. Plus, there are no worries about provenance, and the pieces are easily cared for.

The Horvitzs have also enjoyed meeting the artists and visiting their studios in Japan. But more than anything, Carol says, she likes the physicality of the art form. "You can hold these objects in your hands," she says. "You can even use some of them, like the sake cups. They provide a wonderfully sensory as well as aesthetic experience." ■

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