



# THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG LIMITED 香港東方陶瓷學會

## Winter Newsletter, December 2007

### Inside this issue:

Upcoming Events, AGM	1
Past Events: lectures, exhibition tour, symposium, auction previews	2-3
Executive Committee	4
OCS Library, Membership	4

OCS events during the autumn consisted of a wide range of activities—lectures, auction previews, a museum exhibition tour and a one-day symposium.

Carol Michaelson spoke about the British Museum's exhibition *The First Emperor*. The talk had wide appeal and the audience enjoyed an enthusiastic and dynamic presentation. James Lally's lecture on JP Morgan provided fresh insights into nature of collecting in the early 20th century and the type of taste for Qing (1644-1911) ceramics then current. The final lecture

for the year was given by Christina Chu who discussed the paintings of Li Keran, showing many rarely seen images of his work, along with detailed visual analyses.

Sotheby's October auction preview was followed by Christie's in November. Both auctions had record-breaking prices and the guided previews gave in-depth information about many of the most important pieces.

At the beginning of December, Rosemary Scott gave two lectures in a one-day

seminar on Chinese porcelain, which covered foreign taste in porcelain and included a handling session of pieces belonging to OCS members.

Anthony KW Cheung and Dr SY Yip enthusiastically guided members through the exhibitions of their collections on Qing porcelain and Ming (1368-1644) and Qing furniture, respectively.

We look forward to seeing you at OCS events in 2008.

Catherine Maudsley  
Newsletter Editor

### Upcoming Events, 2008

Jenny F So, Professor and Chair of the Department of Fine Arts, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, will speak on jades. Professor So, who specialises in ancient Chinese bronzes and jades, received her PhD from Harvard University in 1982. She was previously Senior Curator of Chinese art at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. In the Spring, an

appreciation evening on Chinese ceramic pillows will be led by OCS member Mark Lam and Dr Qin Dashu, Professor of Archaeology at Peking University.

Jay Xu, Pritzker Curator of Asian Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, previously with the Seattle Art Museum and expert on the striking sculptures from the famous discovery of Sanxingdui, has agreed to

speak on bronze technology, most probably in May or June.

Mr Simon Kwan will give the 2008 Ip Yee Lecture and Professor Liu Xinyuan of Jingdezhen will deliver the KS Lo Memorial Lecture. Other upcoming speakers include Ms Lina Lin of the Palace Museum, Taipei and Professor Peter Lam of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

### Annual General Meeting, The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, December 19

The AGM began with the President's report. Dr Michael Martin gave a summary of OCS events for the year 2007: thirteen lectures; two all day symposia; two appreciation evenings; three museum exhibition tours and four auction previews.

In acknowledging the contribution of Executive Committee Members, he noted Malcolm Barnett's valued leadership and vision in realising the *Art & Imitation in China* exhibition and catalogue.

The Executive Committee Report and presentation of the audited accounts of the Company for the year followed, members of the Executive Committee, whose names and contact details are on page 4, were elected and the meeting concluded.



Warmest  
holiday wishes  
from the  
Executive  
Committee

Save the date  
January 30, 2008  
Professor Jenny So  
on Jades

**Past Events Oct-Dec 2007**



Vase with dragon design in iron-red and famille rose



Five-legged high waist round *ji* table in *huanghuali* and *dalishi* marble



A pair of vases with *famille rose* decoration, formerly No. 443 of the JP Morgan (1836-1913) Collection, now in the Huaihaitang Collection

**Christina Chu Lecture *Ideology and Art: A Case Study on Li Keran (1907-1989)***

Turmoil in the political history of modern China brought about important changes in content and style in Chinese painting.

Dr Christina Chu, former chief curator of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, addressed this issue by looking at paintings by Li Keran and demonstrating how this traditionally trained Chinese painter adapted, developed

and flourished within the restrictive political context of Chinese Communism. One of the ten most important artists of 20th century China, Li Keran was influenced by the art of Xu Beihong (1895-1953), Qi Baishi (1864-1957) and Huang Binhong (1864-1955).

During the 1960s and before his incarceration during the Cultural Revolution, Li Keran travelled widely, creating many sketches that

he would later transform into paintings. Two versions of *Mount Kunlun* were the last paintings he completed before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

In giving a very detailed visual examination of these paintings and other works by great Chinese and Western masters for comparison, Dr Chu presented a persuasive case for *Mount Kunlun* being seminal paintings.

**Anthony KW Cheung and Dr SY Yip Exhibition Tour - *Ethereal Elegance: Porcelain Vases of the Imperial Qing - the Huaihaitang Collection and Feast by a Wine Table reclining on a Couch— the Dr SY Yip Collection of Classic Chinese Furniture*, December 8**

Distinguished Hong Kong collectors and OCS members, Anthony KW Cheung and Dr SY Yip, led participants through the exhibitions of selections of their collections on display at the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The afternoon began in Gallery II with examining porcelain vases from the Huaihaitang Collection, many showing a sumptuous

decorative style and sophisticated firing techniques. Anthony KW Cheung, in speaking of his acquisitions, pointed out a wide range of shapes, decorative techniques and glazes.

Dr SY Yip, OCS president from 1993-1995, led the group through 72 pieces in Gallery II. This exhibition, a sequel to an earlier one held at the Art Museum more than ten years ago, showcased new acquisitions

from the Ming and the Qing dynasty. Dr Yip discussed the variety of furniture types and woods such as *huanghuali*, *zitan*, *wumu* (ebony), *jiqimu* (chickenwing wood) and *tieli* (ironwood).

Both collectors were extremely generous in sharing their experiences as connoisseurs and patiently answered the many questions posed by members.

**Rosemary Scott *Chinese Porcelain Seminar*, December 1**

Rosemary Scott lectured on *Chinese Porcelain in the Yuan dynasty: the impact of the Mongols and Lamaist Buddhism* in the morning, followed by *Why Chinese kilns began to make Chinese porcelains in Japanese taste in the 17<sup>th</sup> century* in the afternoon.

These themes extended some of the ideas presented in Ms Scott's essay

*Some Areas of Trans-Cultural Exchange*, which she contributed to last year's OCS catalogue *Art & Imitation in China*.

In between, participants enjoyed lunch and lively conversations. With over 20 years experience in Chinese art, Rosemary Scott has been an academic advisor to Christie's since 1997, working in Europe,

Asia and America. Her fellow Christie's colleague, and Department Head, Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, Pola Antebi, joined in for the handling session, which followed the lectures.

On the previous Saturday, both experts gave an auction preview, which, like the symposium, was well attended.

## James Lally Lecture *J. Pierpont Morgan—America's First Great Collector of Chinese Porcelain*, November 26

James Lally, the well-established and highly regarded New York dealer, spoke about the importance of J P Morgan as an early American collector of Chinese art.

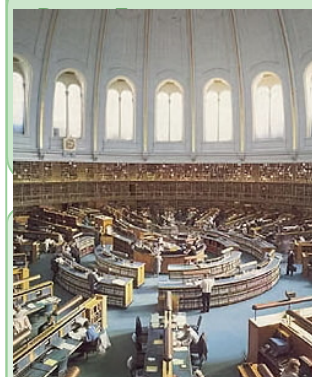
Morgan was an avid art collector with a gargantuan appetite for paintings, sculptures, manuscripts, rare books and more. In forming his vast holdings, he often acquired complete collections, as was the case

of the Garner Collection of Chinese porcelains.

To the delight of the audience, Mr Lally presented many tantalising facts about the scope of Morgan's collecting, including correspondence between the financier and a representative of the Qing Imperial family who was offering for sale the entire Imperial collection of porcelains. Sadly, Morgan died unexpectedly in Rome and with

him, the possibility of the collection reaching his hands.

The perplexing issue of *famille noire* porcelains was raised, with a number of examples from the Morgan collection illustrated. Audience member Julian Thompson, former Chairman of Sotheby's Asia and ceramics specialist, concurred with Mr Lally that there was still much research to be done in the area.



The British Museum Reading Room transformed for *The First Emperor* exhibition

## Carol Michaelson Lecture *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army and Recent Archaeological Discoveries*, October 30

Carol Michaelson, recently retired British Museum curator, discussed important archaeological discoveries featured in the British Museum's blockbuster exhibition *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army*.

The British Museum exhibition, which is on view until April 6, 2008 in the spectacular Round Reading Room, has 120 objects,

including a number of the world-famous life-size terracotta warriors, first discovered in 1974. It also includes objects from subsequent digs: terracotta bureaucrats, acrobats and musicians, discovered in 2000, and bronze cranes, geese and swans, found in 2001.

Ms Michaelson's talk generated much excitement

about the astonishing scope of the First Emperor's legacy. She also discussed the wide-reaching education programmes accompanying the exhibition and the hope that Eurocentric people, as a result of *The First Emperor* exhibition, would see Qin Shihuangdi as a man of astonishing vision and in the company of other luminaries such as Alexander the Great.



White jade Imperial seal, 1796

## Sotheby's Auction Preview, October 7 Christie's Auction Preview, November 24

Sotheby's preview was guided by Edie Hu, specialist in the New York ceramic department for over six years and recently transferred to Hong Kong, along with Hajni Elias who joined Sotheby's seven years ago as International Researcher and Archivist for Chinese sales in London, New York and Hong Kong. They concentrated on the *Lost Treasures* sale, which featured many Imperial objects looted by foreign troops in the 1860s.

One highlight was a small, six centimetre (2.4 inch) imperially inscribed seal marking the Qianlong Emperor's abdication in 1796. It sold for HK\$46.2 million.

Other highlights included an Imperial court painting of the Bannerman Isam (Yisamu), from a series 50 portraits of 100 meritorious officers ordered by the Qianlong Emperor in 1760.

The Christie's preview, conducted by Rosemary Scott

and Pola Antebi, included *Important Chinese Jades from the Collection of Alan and Simone Hartman*, featuring superb examples of jade carving, the highlight of which was a large white jade brushpot, probably one of the largest examples in private hand to be offered at auction. With a carved exterior depicting a continuous miniature landscape, it sold for HK\$54.1 million.



White jade cylindrical brushpot, Qianlong period (1736-1795)

The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong  
 Ltd. GPO Box 6202  
 Hong Kong  
 Phone: 852 2527 0696  
 E-mail: ocs@orientalceramics.org.hk

WEBSITE  
 WWW.ORIENTALCERAMICS.ORG.HK

The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong Limited (OCS) is devoted to the study and appreciation of all forms of oriental art and culture.

It is the OCS mission to gather together members whose interest in oriental art and culture is their main enthusiasm, to provide a forum for the lively exchange of ideas and information, to issue educational publications, to present stimulating lectures from distinguished speakers, to organise study sessions and travel programmes, and to encourage collector members to open up their treasures to other members

## Executive Committee

		Phone	Fax	Email
<b>President</b>	Dr Michael R. Martin	2859 2796	2559 8452	martinmr@hkucc.hku.hk
<b>Hon Treasurer</b>	Chris Hall	2822 0182	2213 2182	chris.hall@asia.equitytrust.com
<b>Membership</b>	Barbara Park	2849 8490	2849 2808	bpark@plant-a-park.com
<b>Publications &amp; Bulletins</b>	Chris Frape	2857 6553	2546 7676	chrisf@pacific.net.hk
<b>Library</b>	Dorcas Hu	2571 4871	2524 1515	Dorcas.hu@gmail.com
<b>Newsletter</b>	Catherine Maudsley	2522 8028	2854 2218	maudsley@netvigator.com
<b>Exhibitions &amp; Academic Liaison</b>	Tina Yee-wan Pang	2241 5503	2546 9659	tywpang@hkucc.hku.hk
<b>Special Projects, Website, IT &amp; PR</b>	Joseph Silva	2527 0696		
<b>External Relationships</b>	May Lau	2865 1005	2730 7711	maysplau@yahoo.com.hk
<b>Committee Member</b>	Tony Miller	2828 5336		tonyandngaching@netvigator.com
<b>Committee Member</b>	Dr Kossen Ho	2845 6223	2877 5085	kmtho@hkurology.com
<b>Administrator</b>	Tonia Ng	2527 0696		ocs@orientalceramics.org.hk

## OCS Membership

We rely on membership subscriptions and healthy attendance at OCS events.

If you have any friends who share our interests

and are not already members, please **bring them along** to our next event.

Postal communications are being phased out.

For ease, cost-efficiency and expedition of communication, **please supply an e-mail address**, if you have not already done so.

## OCS Library

The **OCS Library**, comprising the Society's collection of over 400 books, catalogues, journals and papers on oriental art and culture is available to members at the Art Section on the tenth floor of the Central Library in Causeway Bay.

Thanks go to Anthony KW Cheung for his donation of ***Ethereal Elegance : Porcelain Vases of the Imperial Qing - the Huaihaitang Collection***.

Material from the **OCS Library** is available for lending to OCS Members on presentation of their OCS Membership card and library card and to other Central Library members for browsing only.