



THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG LIMITED

Dear Members

30 November 2006

OCS Newsletter – Winter 2006

This is the eighth in our new series of Newsletters. The aim is to keep you in touch with the Society and provide a handy diary of OCS events and other news at home and overseas.

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Many of you attended the private opening on October 13 of our exhibition “*Art & Imitation in China*”. It continues to run until December 17. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to view this spectacular display of 216 objects from the private collections of OCS members and institutional contributors. Most of the objects have not been exhibited previously. There is a guided tour on Sunday December 10 (*see Diary for December in Section 4 below*).

The exhibits include bronzes, jade, lacquer, ceramics, glass, textiles, brush and oil paintings and works of art in wood, bamboo, cloisonné and enamels, ranging over 3,500 years of Chinese history from the Shang Dynasty (c.1600-1100 BC) to the present day. Each is explored from a special perspective – is it a prototype or is it an imitation and, if the latter, is it *archaistic*, *trans-cultural* or *inter-media* or indeed two or more of them?

A *complimentary copy* of the catalogue awaits you, if you have not already collected it. Non-resident members may obtain a complimentary copy for the cost of postage and packing.

We look forward to seeing as many as possible of you at the Annual General Meeting at 6.30 pm on 5 December 2006 at the Hong Kong Club. The meeting will be followed by a lecture and dinner (*see Diary for December in Section 4 below*).

To greet the Winter, here is a senryu from an Executive Committee member:

*Winter in Hong Kong
Rather than admire pots
Members can sip from them.*

This is the final Newsletter which I shall write, upon retirement as President. I do hope you have enjoyed the series and that the tradition will be continued!

Sincerely yours

Malcolm Barnett
President

OCS NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2006

1. Executive Committee

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2. 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, do 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-address**, if you have not already done so.

3. Recent Events

September 4: "Recovery and Preservation of Ancient Chinese Ceramics in Malaysian Waters". A lecture by Mr. Sten Sjostrand at the Hong Kong Club (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

September 26: "The Dating of Kangxi Imperial Porcelain". The Dr. Ip Yee Memorial Lecture 2006 by Professor Peter Y.K. Lam, Director of The Art Museum, Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, at the Hong Kong Club (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

October 6: Sotheby's Autumn auction preview and handling session with Mr. Nicolas Chow at the HK Convention Centre.

October 13: "Art & Imitation in China". Private opening of the OCS Exhibition 2006 at the Hong Kong University Museum & Art Gallery, 94 Bonham Road (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

October 14: Symposium on “Art and Imitation in China” at the Hong Kong University Museum & Art Gallery, with lectures by the catalogue contributors (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

October 28: Gallery tour of the Qi Baishi Exhibition “Likeness and Unlikeness” by Sunny Tang, Assistant Curator of Xubaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy at HKMA (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

November 5-16: Egypt Tour: “Ancient Egypt & Treasures of the Nile” (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

November 23: "Cleansing the Heart: Republican Era Tea Ceramics". Lecture by Dr Alfreda Murck on Thursday, 23 November 2006 at the Hong Kong Club (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

November 25: Christie’s Autumn auction preview and handling session with Ms. Rosemary Scott at the Grand Hall (New Wing) HK Convention Centre.

November 25: Gallery tour of the OCS Exhibition led by our curator, Mr. Anthony Lin. (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

4. **Diary for December 06**

December 5: OCS Annual General Meeting at the Hong Kong Club at 6.30 pm, followed at 7.00 pm by a lecture by Mr. Richard A. Engelhardt on "Evolution and Innovation in the Conservation of Asia’s Urban Heritage: the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Conservation Awards Programme 2000-2006" and Dinner at 8.15 pm (*see Highlights in Section 8 below*).

December 10: Final guided tour of the OCS Exhibition “Art & Imitation in China” at the University Gallery and Museum, University of Hong Kong, 94 Bonham Road at 3 pm. The tour will be led by Tina Pang, Curator (Arts) of UMAG. Don’t miss this last chance to see this richly complex and fascinating exhibition, which closes on December 17, and bring along your friends. Members free, guests HK\$100.

5. **Diary for January 07**

January 10: “Show & Tell – Blue & White” with Henry Howard-Sneyd of Sotheby’s and Professor Peter YK Lam at the Hong Kong Club. Drinks 6.30 pm, Presentation 7.00 pm, Dinner 8.15 pm.

January 29: “The Dragon’s Gift: Buddhist Art from Bhutan”. Lecture by Dr Stephen Little at the Hong Kong Club. Drinks 6.30 pm, Lecture 7 pm, Dinner 8.15 pm.

The lecture will describe the development and contents of a planned ground-breaking exhibition (of the same name as the lecture) to open at the Honolulu Academy on February 2008, where it will remain for the following three months. It will then travel to eight other venues, before the objects return to Bhutan. The exhibition will include some 150 objects, primarily religious art (thangkas & sculptures) 90% of which have never before been viewed by non-Bhutanese.

Dr. Stephen Little is currently the Director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts. He graduated with a PhD in art history from Yale University in 1987, and since then has held a series of increasingly prominent and responsible positions in major museums in the USA. He is widely published in his areas of research interest, which include Chinese

painting, calligraphy and ceramics, Daoist art, Japanese painting and woodblock prints, Tibetan Buddhist painting and Southeast Asian sculpture and ceramics.

6. **Diary for February 07**

February 3: One-day Symposium by Dr. Stacey Pierson, Curator of the Percival David Foundation, London, focusing on Song and Ming ceramics from the PDF collection. Dr. Pierson will be en route to a Song symposium in Taipei and it is hoped that members may accompany her and tour the galleries of the National Palace Museum under her guidance. Further details will be announced nearer the time.

7. **Forthcoming Events**

Autumn 2007: Lectures by Rose Kerr and Rosemary Scott.

8. **Highlights**

4 September 06: “Recovery and Preservation of Ancient Chinese Ceramics in Malaysian Waters”. A lecture by Mr. Sten Sjostrand at the Hong Kong Club. This event was co-presented with the Friends of the Hong Kong Museum of Art and was well attended by members and guests of both societies.

Following a lively musical introduction to set the scene, Sten Sjostrand gave an engaging lecture and video presentation on historical shipwrecks in Malaysian waters. A naval architect by profession and former long-term resident of Singapore, Mr Sjostrand has been working off the waters of Malaysia for many years and his efforts to date have yielded ten wrecks. The recovery of important and datable finds of Chinese and other Asian ceramics has brought to light new information on the maritime trade passing along the east coast of Malaysia and the ships that carried that trade.

On display at the lecture for handling and examination were several ceramic objects recovered from these wrecks, including some which are now in members’ private collections.

13 October 06: Private Opening of OCS Exhibition "Art & Imitation in China".

The OCS exhibition opened at the University Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong on October 13. The event was attended by over 300 members and guests and there was a buzz of excitement at the exhibits which included, in the Rotunda where the ceremony was held, a striking display of contemporary Chinese paintings and sculpture. Music was provided by a trio of Chinese plucked instruments from the HK Academy for Performing Arts.

A warm welcome was extended by Professor Lap-Chee Tsui, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, who officiated at the ceremony. In response, OCS President Malcolm Barnett gave an address to introduce the exhibition. For those who missed it, the text is set out below:

“Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen

The OCS is delighted to present the exhibition *Art & Imitation in China* as a showcase for over 200 objects from the private collections of OCS members and institutional contributors, traversing a broad sweep of over 3,500 years of Chinese history from the Shang dynasty to the present day.

Established in 1974, the OCS has presented a number of exhibitions over the years, the last of which was in year 2000. At the time of reaching the 30 year mark in 2004 it was decided by the new Executive Committee to wait until we were ready to tackle the next significant challenge: an exhibition broad enough in scope to feature a wide selection of objects from our members' many and varied collections and sufficiently appealing to draw in as new members established private collectors from the Far East region, thereby adding new blood to the society and strengthening its reservoir of cultural resources.

As a collector, I have long been fascinated by the theme of 'imitation' in Chinese art and felt it could provide an intriguing, multi-faceted framework for an exhibition. Where does the artist or craftsman turn for inspiration? To what extent is he influenced by traditional teaching, by personal experience, by observation of other works, forms and styles, or indeed by the requirements or 'whims' of the patron by whom the work is commissioned? As Confucius said "Study the past if you would define the future" and this precept was carved deep into the roots of traditional Chinese teaching.

There are many forms of imitation ranging from sincere emulation to venal deception. After some brain-storming on the Exhibition Organising Committee, we decided to focus on just three:

first, *archaism* – that is imitation as a tribute to the utopian past through recreating ancient Chinese objects and styles;

second, *trans-cultural influence* – that is imitation of foreign idioms and designs for purposes of religion, novelty, trade or social commentary;

and third, *inter-media exchange* – that is imitation of works of art in a different medium from that in which they were originally made, sometimes simply to demonstrate technical virtuosity.

Our vision for the exhibition having been conceived, the main issue was how to bring such an ambitious project to fruition on the slender resources of the OCS. This could not have been achieved without the help of the following, to each of whom we are deeply indebted:

The University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong for hosting the exhibition and making available professional guidance from CT Yeung and Tina Yee-wan Pang in setting it up;

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited for generously sponsoring the exhibition;

Anthony Lin Hua Tien for donning the onerous mantle of curator and lavishing his time, energy, expertise and creativity on transforming the vision into reality; and finally

The Lenders for opening up their treasures to the public and without whom the exhibition would not have been possible.

The paintings and sculptures in this Rotunda mainly showing trans-cultural influence in contemporary Chinese art are in a sense the finale to the exhibition; they are preceded by the exhibits in the gallery on my right showing to the right and centre archaism in classical paintings and works of art and to the left trans-cultural influence in China trade paintings. On the upper floor the exhibition includes the two galleries on the right at the top of the stairs (one gallery leading to the other). Although the exhibition due to its three different themes has not been arranged chronologically, logic probably dictates that on the upper floor one starts with the furthestmost showcase in the inside gallery which contains fine examples of the archaic bronze vessels from which many of the later objects are derived through archaism and/or inter-media exchange.

As you walk round the exhibition and examine individual objects it is useful to bear in mind that they may have the attributes of not only one but also two or even all three of these forms of imitation.

We hope that you will find it an enlightening, culturally stimulating and above all pleasurable experience.”

Short addresses were also given by Mr Andrew Long, Chief Operating Officer HSBC on behalf of the Sponsor of the exhibition and by Mr C.T. Yeung, Director of the University Museum and Art Gallery by whom the exhibition is hosted.

14 October 06: Symposium on the OCS Exhibition "Art & Imitation in China".

On Saturday afternoon October 14, the OCS presented a Symposium at the University Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong. The event was held in the Rotunda of the Fung Ping Shan Building. The Speakers were Julian Thompson on "The Message in the Mark - Late Ming Copies, Pastiches and Fakes of Chenghua Imperial Porcelain", Mayching Kao on "Imitation and Innovation in Chinese Painting", Richard Stanley-Baker on "Archaism (fugu)", and Paul Serfaty on "Art, Politics and Imitation in China". The Moderator was Anthony Lin, the Curator of the exhibition.

The symposium was packed and it was clear that the exhibition and its special themes as propounded and illustrated by the four excellent lectures captured the imagination of OCS members and the public alike.

28 October 06: Tour of the Qi Baishi Exhibition “Likeness and Unlikeness”.

OCS members were given a tour of the Qi Baishi Exhibition “Likeness and Unlikeness” by Sunny Tang, Assistant Curator of Xubaizhai. The exhibition features a range of the master’s works and Sunny touched on the various categories of paintings, providing an interesting and informative tour.

5-16 Nov 06: Egypt Tour: “Ancient Egypt & Treasures of the Nile”.

Twenty OCS members with our intrepid leader, Executive Committee member and Tour director, Jacqueline Muller, embarked on an odyssey to the land of the Pharaohs. The trip started with the Giza Plateau, its great pyramids and the Sphinx at dawn. Archaeologist, Mark Lehner led the group in exploring the newly discovered excavations of “The Village of the Workers” adjacent to the pyramids. This was followed by a flight to Aswan and (for part of the group) an excursion to Abu Simbel to view the majestic statues and temples so effectively moved for safety to higher ground above the high dam.

A five-day cruise down the Nile on the “Sonesta Sun Goddess” included side trips to Philae at dawn, Edfu temple at night, and the step pyramid at Saqqara with a museum visit to view ceramic tiles dating back 5,000 years. In the Valley of the Kings, the magnificent and rarely visited tomb of Sethi 1 was ceremonially unlocked by the OCS President. This section of the trip concluded with visits at dawn of the temples of Karnak and privately at night to the temple of Luxor by floodlight, with music from Aida and dinner in a tent of cloth of gold.

Back in Cairo, Dr. Zahi Hawass, Chairman of the Antiquities Department, gave a charismatic lecture on recent discoveries in Egypt, and, at the farewell dinner, Robert Bauval, author, astronomer and Egyptologist, shared a few of his controversial views on the “raison d’être” of the pyramids and ancient Egyptian beliefs.

November 23: "Cleansing the Heart: Republican Era Tea Ceramics". A lecture by Dr Alfreda Murck at the Hong Kong Club.

Teapots are ubiquitous in China and are often associated with commercial transactions and entertainment. In her stimulating lecture, Dr Alfreda Murck used images of privately collected Republican era teapots to discuss inscriptions and paintings whose subject matter ranged from political comment (such as messages supporting or opposing the Qing dynasty) to education, patriotism, antiquarianism and entertainment. Dr Murck also touched on issues of authenticating such teapots in the current market for antiques in China.

November 25: Tour of "Art & Imitation in China"

Members were treated to a tour of the OCS exhibition at the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery by our curator, Mr. Anthony Lin. Anthony systematically covered the diverse displays in the exhibition in a tour lasting almost 2 hours. A couple of the lenders were present and described their exhibits.

December 5: "Evolution and Innovation in the Conservation of Asia's Urban Heritage: The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Awards Programme 2000-2006". A lecture by Mr. Richard A. Engelhardt at the Hong Kong Club at 7.00 pm.

Built heritage is a tangible representation of culture and of cultural diversity and constitutes our collective cultural memory. Monuments, religious buildings and houses provide a connection with the earlier times, serving as physical reminders of people, events and values and providing tangible spaces in which intangible forms of culture can be expressed. Our built heritage is also valuable for its aesthetic beauty and symbolic qualities and for the emotions which these inspire.

In his lecture, Mr. Engelhardt, UNESCO's Regional Advisor for Culture for Asia and the Pacific, will examine the lessons which can be derived from the winners of the UNESCO Heritage Conservation Awards programme since its inception 7 years ago, with special emphasis on the winning projects in Guangdong Province and the Pearl River Delta, including Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR.

9. **News from Other Societies**

The University of Hong Kong Museum Society

1. Spirit of South India Trip: Dec 1-12; tour starts in Chennai, Tamil Nadu and ends in Kochi, Kerala. Contact Linda Chan at linchan2@netvigator.com
2. January 6: Macau Museum of Art and studio/home visit with artist Lucia Cheung.
3. Contact Sef Lam at seflam@gmail.com.
4. Mid January: Fotan Open Day. Contact Bonnie Huo at ufomail@netvigator.com.
5. February 3: Heritage Museum and Daofeng Shan. Contact Margaret Yu at feitian@netvigator.com.
6. February 8: Gourmet Vegetarian dinner. Contact Audy Mak at acdmak@gmail.com

The Royal Asiatic Society of Hong Kong Limited

1. December 8: Lecture by Prof. Mark MacAlpine "Daniel Caldwell: Churchman, Freemason, Policeman ... and Pirate Accomplice?"

2. January 12: Lecture by Ron Clibborn-Dyer "From Tangled Jungle to Hidden Paradise"
3. January 26: Lecture by Stephen Davies "Putting Hong Kong on the Map: The Strange Story of Captain Daniel Ross, Marine Surveyor".
4. February 9: Lecture by Dr Werner Breitung "Hong Kong and Macau – A comparison of Integration with the Mainland"
Contact tel 28137500.

The Friends of the Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Details of events may be circulated to Members as and when they become available.

10. **News from Overseas**

- 22 Aug-10 Dec: Chinese Ceramics & The Maritime Trade Pre-1700, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, England
- 5 Oct-31 Dec: Gilded Splendour: Treasures of China's Liao Empire, Asia Society, New York
- Until 28 January: Pleasure Gardens and Garden Tombs: Courtly Art in the Mughal Empire, The Museum of Indian Art, Berlin.

11. **Orientalisms**

In the current November/December issue of *Orientalisms* Tina Yee-wan Pang's article 'Imitating Values in Chinese Art' discusses objects in the OCS exhibition 'Art & Imitation in China'.

Orientalisms is offering members an annual subscription of eight issues at a reduced price (after 25% discount) of HK\$536.25. The January/February 2007 issue will celebrate the Taipei National Palace Museum's 80th anniversary and reinstallation of its new galleries; March will feature the Japanese, Chinese, South and Southeast Asian collection at the Rietberg Museum, Zurich to mark the reopening of the museum and the April issue will contain a series of articles on the Weng Tonghe collection, the last great collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy still in the possession of the original family. Contact *Orientalisms*, 17th floor, 200 Lockhart Road, Hong Kong. Tel 25111368 or email omag@netvigator.com; www.orientations.com.hk.

12. **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.

The *OCS Library* is a growing collection and we will be very happy to accept additions. If you have any books on any branch of oriental art and culture that you would like to donate, please send us a note of the titles by e-mail to ocs@orientalceramics.org.hk. We will check whether they are already included in our collection or the Central Library's own collection, and advise you accordingly.

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.

Our thanks to Donald H Graham, Jr for recently donating "Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China" to the collection.

13. **Website**

Do have a browse on www.orientalceramics.org.hk and give us your feedback.

14. **Enquiries**

The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong Limited, GPO Box 6202, Hong Kong;
please contact Tonia Ng on telephone 25270696 and e-mail ocs@orientalceramics.org.hk