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Asian Arts, From Robes to Porcelains, Have Their Annual Jamboree

The annual spring extravaganza known as Asia Week is under way, but like so much else it's been downsized. The New York International Asian Art Fair is no more, leaving collectors and browsers with just one centralized marketplace: the New York Arts of Pacific Asia Show, in a new home across from the Empire State Building.

ART REVIEW

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Local galleries that specialize in Asian art are picking up some of the slack. Sixteen New York dealers from past Internationals have formed a temporary alliance, Asian Art Dealers of Upper Eastside New York, and have organized a series of exhibitions on the Upper East Side (information at aadyeny.com). And, as in years past, more Asian art can be found among the galleries in the Fuller Building on 57th Street.

The fair, running through Wednesday, remains the main attraction. The Arts of Pacific Asia Show packs 68 overflowing booths into a space that just two weekends ago played host to tidy rows of solo-artist presentations at the Volta contemporary art fair. (The 69th Regiment Armory, the usual location for Asia Week fairs, was unavailable because of military activities.)

The exhibitors come from the United States, Europe and the Far East, and showcase all forms of Asian art: sculpture in bronze, wood and stone; porcelain vessels; jade carvings; painted screens and miniatures; textiles; and even a few contemporary drawings and photographs. Often many of these categories are represented in a single booth.

New York Arts of Pacific Asia Show continues through Wednesday at 7 West 34th Street, Manhattan; cashylees.com.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ONLINE: THE ARTS OF ASIA

More photos from the New York Arts of Pacific Asia Show: nytimes.com/design

It helps to know the layout. Most booths with smaller objects — carved jade, jewelry, tiny statues — and pieces of more recent vintage are clustered along the perimeters. Older and bigger works can be found in some of the larger, central booths.

At the immaculate booth of S. Marchant & Son of London, prominently situated near the elevators, the display of rare imperial porcelain includes a covered bowl from the court of the Qing dynasty emperor Yongzheng.

Another orderly, museumlike display can be found at Douglas Dawson, one of four exhibitors joining the show from the International. At his sleek, gray-paint-



ed booth Buddhas and other statues rest on minimal metal pedestals. One highlight is a large cast-bronze bell, from an early-16th-century Chinese temple.

Thomas Murray combines objects from different cultures with a curator's eye. An ancient female ancestor form from the Indonesian island of Sulawesi mingles with an 18th-century Portuguese textile and masks from Japan and the Himalayas.

Other textiles can be found on the walls and floor of Joss Graham's booth, which has a cheerful bazaarlike atmosphere. Mr. Graham has also organized a

Taoist priest robes at Chinlai Tribal Antiques. They are painted, rather than embroidered, with figures like the Jade Emperor and a unicornlike creature.

A fearsome suit of Japanese samurai armor from the early Edo period, at Axel Michels, has a helmet with twisted gold horns and a white animal-hair mustache and goatee. Also at Michels are two carved-wood ancestor figures from the Heian period (794-1185). They are among the oldest works at the fair.

It's easy to overlook the smaller objects, most of which are housed in glass cases, but you shouldn't. They include brightly colored glass snuff bottles at Asian Art Studio, Chinese and Mongolian shrine boxes at Dragon House San Francisco, and carved jade at Mark Walberg, the Jade Dragon and elsewhere.

The same level of intricacy can be seen in many larger works. At Jeff Shore, an 18th-century wooden door frame from South India is adorned with painstakingly carved figures of the Hindu pantheon. At Flying Crane Antiques, blossoming cherry trees modeled in high relief decorate a silver Meiji period punch service from around 1900.

Painting is not the dominant art form here, but Art Passages has a stunning group of Indian miniatures. Nearby, at Anavian Gallery, is an Iranian miniature from a Safavid era copy of the Shah-nameh epic; in the painting, a hero beheads a villain as trumpeters and courtiers watch.

Contemporary Chinese painting can be found at J. R. Richards, Japanese outsider art at Cavin Morris and recent Korean art (paintings and abstract photography) at Kang Collection and KooNewYork. But at this fair brand-new art knows its place in a parade of objects from different centuries and cultures.

New York Arts of Pacific Asia Show

This year's offerings include Jon Eric Riis's jacket with a modern skull motif, above, and a Japanese punch set, left, from about 1900.

tented installation of Indian turbans from Rajasthan near the cafe area. The sheer cloths share a pink-and-yellow palette and a chevron pattern created by wrapping fine cotton threads around rolled cloth at spaced intervals during the dyeing process.

The dealer Jon Eric Riis has a striking booth of Chinese and Tibetan court robes, feathered crowns, and other garments and accessories. Mr. Riis also makes lavishly beaded and embroidered robes inspired by some of the objects in his inventory; one of them, hanging on the booth's outside wall, has an unmistakably contemporary skull motif.

Other compelling garments include the 18th- and 19th-century