



CALENDAR

Art Basel in Hong Kong



Mood indigo: the importance of the colour blue in Persian decorative art

The Liang Yi Museum's show of Persian artefacts is the largest ever to be staged in Hong Kong

The Blue Road: Mastercrafts from Persia

Liang Yi Museum, 181-199 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan UNTIL 24 JUNE

Iranian art is on the agenda this week in Hong Kong. Iran is represented for the first time at Art Basel in Hong Kong with the Tehran-based gallery Dastan's Basement among the 249 participating galleries. Meanwhile, The Blue Road: Mastercrafts from Persia at the privately run Liang Yi Museum is, the exhibition organisers say, the largest show ever to be held in Hong Kong of Persian decorative objects.

The exhibition includes 94 artefacts that illuminate "the significant role" of the colour blue in the visual and material culture of Iran, the organisers say. The sources of the Persian blue pigment used to adorn objects are explored, including cobalt ore which was utilised until the late Middle Ages. Ceramics, glassware, textiles, paintings and manuscripts dating from the eighth century to today are

displayed across six sections.

"The decision to mount this show came after a personal trip to Iran taken by the director [Lynn Fung] of Liang Yi Museum," a museum spokeswoman says. "After being exposed to such a magnificent culture, she thought it rather a shame that it was something that most people in Hong Kong would never get a chance to see." Fung has secured a series of prestigious loans; 11 museums and institutions worldwide have lent works, including the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London and the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore, along with three private collectors.

The curator, Yuka Kadou, says that some objects stand out, including an 18th-century coloured glass bottle on loan from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art in Honolulu. "The elegant, swan-necked bottle is part of a corpus of glasswares that have been produced in Iran, notably Shiraz and Isfahan, since the Safavid period. Poetically known as 'tear containers' (ashkdan), ostensibly to hold the teardrops of bereft women whose



An early photo of Persepolis and a 19th-century bronze and cloisonné lamp from China. Left, Lynn Fung, the director of the Liang Yi Museum

husbands were away at war, the vessels were almost certainly put to more prosaic use," says the accompanying catalogue text (the bottles were used as wine containers). Another highlight, Kadou says, is a 17th-century tile, on loan from the V&A, painted in underglaze blue, green and manganese and depicting a half-length turbaned figure. Chinese objects are also included to illustrate the similarities with Persian designs. Kadou picks out a 19th-century bronze lamp which was made in China for a local Muslim community.

"The design itself is characteristically Chinese. Besides the predominance of lotus patterns, the use of the cloisonné technique evokes highly decorative, enamelled objects with the Arabic inscriptions that became fashionable in China during the late Qing period," according to the catalogue.

The Liang Yi Museum, founded in 2014, houses the 300-strong antiques collection of the businessman Peter Fung Yiu-fai, Lynn Fung's father, who specialises in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasty wooden furniture. The institution has, meanwhile, another claim to fame. "The Liang Yi Museum also houses the world's premier collection of bejewelled clutches, compacts and powder boxes made in the finest design houses such as Cartier and Boucheron," a spokeswoman says.

Gareth Harris
•Appointments required

Events beyond the fair

Art Central fair

27 March-1 April
Central Harbourfront, 9 Lung Wo Road Central

Harbour Arts Sculpture Park

Until 6 April
Central and Western District Promenade and Wan Chai

THURSDAY 29 MARCH

Christie's: First Open auction

11am
Christie's, the James Christie room, 22nd floor, Alexandra House, 18 Charter Road, Central

In Other Words panel

11am-noon
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, Hall 5

The Future of the Museum: the Rapidly Evolving Roles of Nations, Directors and Collectors. Michael Govan, Budi Tek, Doryun Chong and Allan Schwartzman. Moderator: Charlotte Burns

Bonhams Ritual + Culture: Southeast Asia Art auction

4pm
Bonhams Hong Kong, Suite 2001, One Pacific Place, 88 Queensway

Poly Auction: Modern and contemporary art

3pm
Grand Hyatt, 1 Harbour Road

FRIDAY 30 MARCH

Artist talk: Iwasaki Takahiro, Jung Yeondoo and Sarah Lai

11am-12pm
Centre for Heritage Arts and Textile, 2nd Floor, Nan Fung Place, 173 Des Voeux Road, Central

SATURDAY 31 MARCH

Sotheby's Modern Art Evening Sale

5pm
Sotheby's Contemporary Art Evening Sale
7pm
Sotheby's, Fifth floor, One Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty



Antony Gormley's DAZE VI (2016) at the Harbour Arts Sculpture Park