



SOAS University of London

The Oriental Ceramic Society Centenary Exhibition

Collectors, Curators, Connoisseurs: A Century of The Oriental Ceramic Society

15 October – 11 December 2021

The Oriental Ceramic Society (OCS) is a leading global institution for the study of Asian ceramics. This October the OCS presents its centenary exhibition: ***Collectors, Curators, Connoisseurs: A Century of The Oriental Ceramic Society***. The exhibition opens on 15 October and runs until 11 December 2021 at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, University of London. Admission is free. Book online at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/>

The exhibition brings together, for the first time, over 100 rare objects dating back 3,000 years to recount the rich 100-year history of the Oriental Ceramic Society. On show will be ceramics, bronzes, jades, sculptures and works of art from some of the most outstanding collections in the UK, including the V&A, British Museum and from private individuals.



Earthenware tomb figure of a roaring lion with green splash-glaze
Tang dynasty about 700-750AD. North China, possibly Henan province. Height: 26.7cm
Courtesy of the British Museum, bequeathed by Henry J. Oppenheim, 1947



Underglaze blue porcelain moon flask, *bianhu*
Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period, 1722-1735
Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province
Height: 38cm
Courtesy of Winchester College



Large lead-glazed stoneware seated figure
Ming dynasty, probably late 15th century
Height: 130cm

The centenary exhibition presents specially chosen objects telling the story of the close and fruitful relationship between OCS collectors, curators and dealers. From an 8th century Chinese figure of a roaring lion to a thousand-year-old, green-glazed vase exquisitely decorated with peonies, an ancient and a rare archaic bronze ritual vessel from China's Bronze Age to beautifully painted examples of early 20th century Chinese porcelain, nearly all the objects have particular connections to the Oriental Ceramic Society and its members past and present. The early 20th century OCS members were trailblazers in the field of Asian art in the West, both as collectors and as scholars, and the carefully curated objects celebrate their story over the hundred-year history of the Society. Images can be viewed here <https://www.orientalceramicsociety.org.uk/ocs-centenary-press-release>.

The exhibition illustrates the Society's journey from a private group of twelve connoisseurs and collectors to its present position as a leading global institution for the study of Asian art and, in particular, ceramics. Exploring the role and legacy of the collector and the dynamic between institution and collector, the exhibition also looks at changes in collecting taste over the course of the 20th century.

Sarah Wong, curator of the exhibition said, *"This centenary exhibition brings to life the story of the Oriental Ceramic Society, through a rich array of objects borrowed from museums and private lenders and never-before exhibited archival material. The early collectors, curators and connoisseurs that formed the Society were pioneers in the field of Asian art in the West. Through display of objects owned, published and exhibited by key past members, this exhibition re-kindles the collecting passions and evokes the scholarly and philanthropic activities of the OCS over the last 100 years."*

On show are loans from the British Museum, V&A, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath and Winchester College, as well as rare pieces from private members. Most of the objects are from China but there are also exhibits originating from Japan, Korea and the Middle East.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

- ***Collectors, Curators, Connoisseurs: A Century of The Oriental Ceramic Society*** runs from 15 October – 11 December 2021
- OPEN: Tuesday – Saturday 10.30 – 17.00 (Thurs late until 20.00) CLOSED: Sunday & Monday. Admission is FREE. Book online at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/>
- Please see separate document for full exhibition details
- The exhibition curatorial team is led by Sarah Wong
- The exhibition design is by the design kollektiv
- The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication *Collectors, Curators, Connoisseurs: A Century of the Oriental Ceramic Society, 1921-2021*. Edited by Sarah Wong and Stacey Pierson. This 336-page hardback fully illustrated catalogue includes four specially commissioned essays and new unpublished material about the Society's history. The price is £100 (plus delivery). To purchase a copy please visit <https://shop.orientalceramicsociety.org.uk/product/collectors-curators-connoisseurs>
- The exhibition has been timed to coincide with **Asian Art in London**, an annual programme of events for dealers and auction houses specialising in Asian Art. The dates for 2021 are: Indian & Islamic Art, 21 – 30 October; East Asian Art, 28 October – 6 November.
- The exhibition has been realised thanks to the exceptional generosity of many sponsors and supporters, notably the Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, which made a very significant donation in support of the exhibition catalogue.

For further press information, images and interviews please contact:

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About the Oriental Ceramic Society

The Oriental Ceramic Society (OCS) is a leading international society for the study and appreciation of Asian art, with a special focus on ceramics. Founded in 1921, the Society has members throughout the world. The Patron is HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Founded on the 31st January 1921 in a London drawing room, 2021 marks the centenary of the Oriental Ceramic Society. The Society hosts lectures on all aspects of Asian art, particularly Chinese and Japanese ceramics, jades, paintings and Middle Eastern art. Lectures are held in London (usually in the Society of Antiquaries at the Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly). Evenings begin and end convivially with a glass of wine, providing a regular opportunity for members to meet one another and talk informally. The Society also offers handling sessions of objects from museums, auction houses, private collections, as well as organises visits to public and private collections both in the United Kingdom and overseas.

There has been a long-standing connection between the OCS and SOAS since the first lectureship in Chinese Art and Archaeology was established there in 1930 by Sir Percival David and was taught by another OCS member (Professor Yetts). The OCS has also held previous exhibitions in the Brunei Gallery, SOAS in 2003, 2006 and 2009.

Centenary Study Day: The History of the Oriental Ceramic Society will take place in London on Saturday 13 November 2021 in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre at SOAS. Topics include women collectors, past presidents, exhibitions, museums and the art market. Booking will be online via www.orientalceramicsociety.org

Biography of the curator Sarah Wong

Sarah Wong's undergraduate degree at Oxford University was followed by a master's in 'Regional Studies in East Asia' at Harvard University. She previously worked at Christie's Chinese Department in New York, as a specialist and business manager. Starting at Eskenazi Limited as a researcher in 1994, Sarah has been a director of the company since 2013. She is currently Assistant Hon. Secretary of the Oriental Ceramic Society and chair of the Centenary Exhibition Committee.

The OCS's social media handles:

www.orientalceramicsociety.org.uk/ocs-centenary
#CollectorsCuratorsConnoisseurs

Instagram: @theorientalceramicsociety
www.instagram.com/theorientalceramicsociety/

Facebook: @theorientalceramicsociety
www.facebook.com/theorientalceramicsociety

Weibo: @ocslondon
weibo.com/ocslondon

Venue:

Brunei Gallery, SOAS
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

E: gallery@soas.ac.uk

W: www.soas.ac.uk/gallery