

## Editorial

In 2018, the *Journal for Art Market Studies* published its first issue on Asian Art, entitled “Markets, Provenance, History”. We were honoured to be invited as guests to the renowned Berlin Kunstbibliothek to launch the publication with a well-attended podium discussion, transforming our online publication into a live event. During the lively discussion, it became clear that this subject was by no means exhausted, and I am now delighted to be able to present a successor issue.

We resumed our successful cooperation with the former guest editors Christine Howald and Alexander Hofmann, both now at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, a winning team strengthened further by Nick Pearce from the University of Glasgow. Their joint expertise in the field and their impressive international network in Asian art history led them, firstly, to a productive workshop and secondly, to the present issue of our journal.

As China looms ever larger on the global stage, the presence of Asian objects in Western institutions has become a growing topic of research and scholarly discussion. In Germany, among government-sponsored provenance research projects that were just approved, there is an investigation into the colonial contexts of Chinese art collections in a group of northern German museums and this topic is gaining increasing attention more widely in Europe.

In the current public debate we are reminded of pockets of the European colonial past that had been buried under layers of industrial development and current globalisation. The public and academic focus on colonialism brings to mind shipping routes, military expeditions, and enormous violence, all of which had faded from view in the aftermath of the wars of the twentieth century. In mental and intellectual terms, we now need to tread carefully when entering a museum, or at least begin to ask questions relating to the acquisition of some of the objects on display.

Meanwhile, the most famous looting event in China’s history, the Summer Palace in Beijing in 1860, has become the site of a museum to display objects that were stolen at the time and have since returned. The Chinese government refurbished a temple in the Old Summer Palace grounds and turned it into an exhibition venue. One of the twelve

Chinese zodiac animal sculptures that once topped a water clock in the royal garden is now on display there: the horse, donated to the government by a Chinese tycoon in 2019. Five are still missing.

With our best wishes for 2021, we hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Susanne Meyer-Abich