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A visual melting pot of art and artifacts

BY ADAM POCKROSS

For anyone who ever wanted a museum-quality Chinese snuff bottle, now is the time to find one at the 18th annual Los Angeles Asian & Tribal Arts Show (LAATA) at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium Friday through Sunday, November 14th to 16th.

The show, considered to be one of the best vetted art shows this side of the Mississippi, features museum-quality art — both ancient and new — from some of the most reputable international dealers around, according to a spokesman. The show specializes in the arts of China, Japan, Korea, India, South Asia, Africa, Borneo, Naga, Sumatra and Mexico, as well as some exceptional American Indian.

What started as a local event just a few years ago has grown to international proportions. According to the show's producer, Elizabeth Lees, the show brings to Santa Monica "60-plus international exhibitors offering a visual melting pot of art and artifacts from non-European cultures around the world."

While many of the exhibitors come from afar, there are also some impressive local representatives, such as Mark Johnson. who runs Mark A. Johnson Tribal Arts in Marina del Rey. As a collector of Asian & Tribal arts



THE ASIAN & TRIBAL ARTS SHOW at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium features, among thousands of other pieces, this Hornbill Effigy (above) from Borneo, and this Kota Reliquary Figure (lower right) from Malaysia. [Photos by Mark Johnson and Joel Cooner.]

since the early 70s, he is now considered one of the foremost specialists on the tribal arts of Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Johnson feels the Los Angeles Asian & Tribal Arts Show is "the best venue for offering Asian and tribal art in the Los Angeles area [and Southern California] and offers a unique opportunity for a large focused group of buyers and sellers to get together."

Philip Garaway is another exhibitor with local ties. He has been dealing in museum-quality antique Native American art for the past 34 years, currently running the Native American Art

Gallery in Venice. At the Los Angeles Asian & Tribal Arts Show, Garaway plans on showing a wide variety of tribal art, including Navajo textiles, Apache baskets, and Pueblo pottery dating back a thousand years.

"These pieces are extremely beautiful, historical, indigenous to our area and very rare," he says. "They are rare because they were made to be used or traded. The pieces represent a living history passed down from generations."

One of the more highly anticipated exhibits features Antonio Pineda, "one of the most famous modernist silversmiths of 20th century Mexican silver," according to Lees. Pineda is one of the first artists to come from the famous Taxco School in the state of Guerrero, Mexico.

Pineda's work comes from part of a larger exhibition at the Fowler Museum at UCLA, one of the only museums in Los Angeles solely dedicated to non-Western arts and cultures.

The Fowler is also one of the few museums open free of charge. As free museums need good benefits every now and again, all the proceeds from the opening night silent auction will go to the Fowler. And since no good benefit should go on without artisinal cheese, the opening night ceremonies come replete with live music and an artisinal cheese and wine tasting, sponsored in part by the Mercedes Grill restaurant in Marina del

Describing the show's relationship to the museum, Lees says, "The type of art and artifacts in the show reflect in a large part the collections of the Fowler Museum. Plus, the arts are never entirely funded. We really try to pair our opening night benefit with a nonprofit that has a need and is relevant to our

"We truly believe that the arts

need to be supported, nurtured and grown and that public collections are national treasures."

There are certainly treasures to be found at the Los Angeles Asian & Tribal Art Show, especially the Chinese snuff bottles.

The Opening Night Preview is from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday, November 14th. Tickets are \$60 for individuals, \$100 for couples or \$25 for students.

The show itself is from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, November 15th, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, November 16th. General Admission is \$12.

Information, (310) 206-3237 or www.caskeylees.com/.

