



CHRISTOPHE HIOCO

Galerie Hioco is very focused on and has honed its expertise in ancient statuary from India and the Indian-influenced regions, so as Himalayas and South-East Asia. The art of Vietnam also plays a major role in the collection, especially by extremely rare bronze pieces from the Đông Sơn culture.

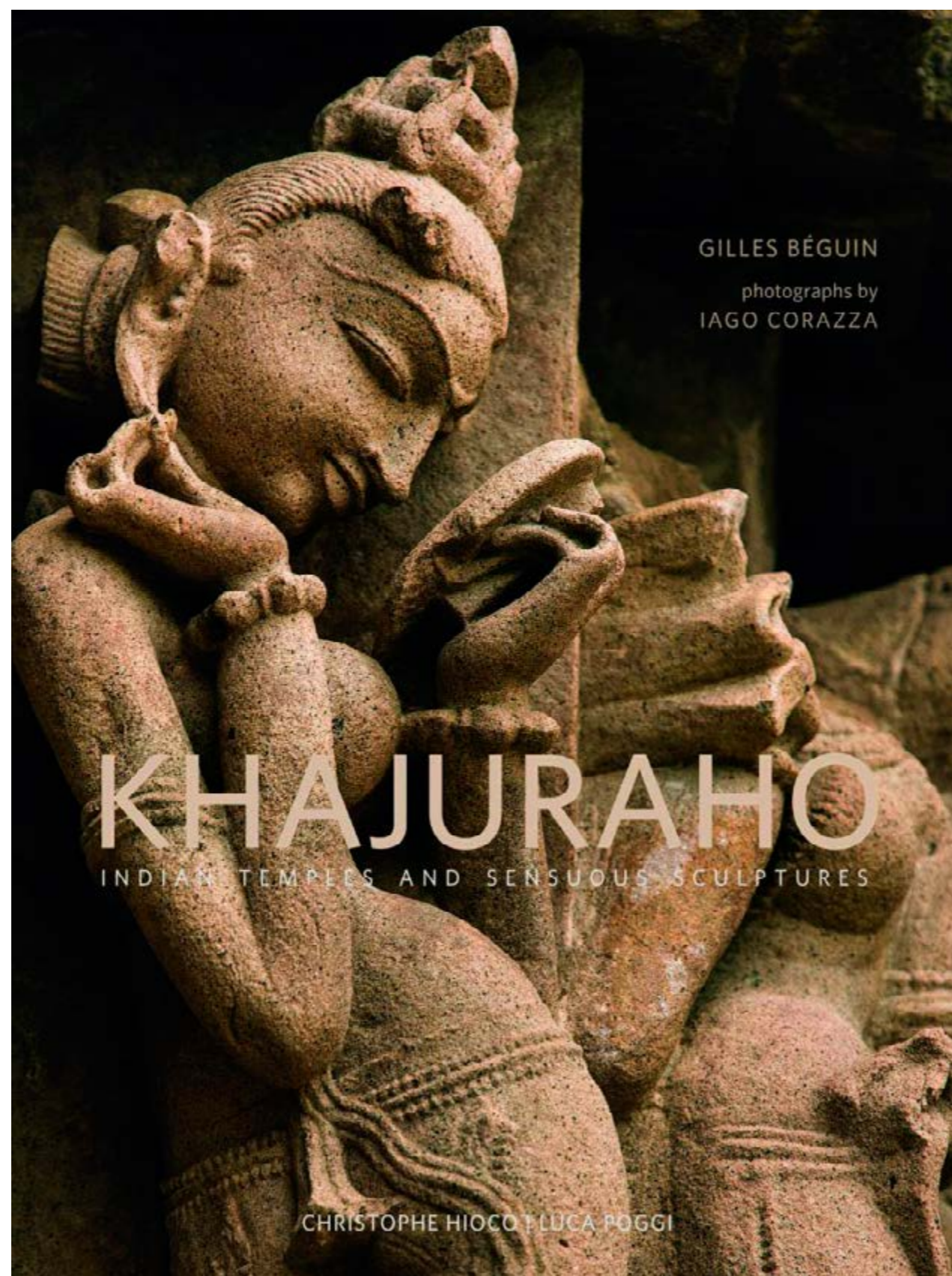
Christophe Hioco has been a passionate collector since his youth. His unbridled enthusiasm for Asian art started more than 25 years ago when J.P. Morgan Bank gave him the opportunity to live in Asia, first in Tokyo and later in Singapore. There he became knowledgeable about Asia and India, confirming his expertise in ancient art. In 2003, after 30 years as Managing Director with J.P. Morgan, he decided to focus on his passion and work in antiques, first in London and then in Paris, while also continuing as a collector, always in search of works of extreme quality. His son, Gildas Hioco, after graduating from University College London and HEC Paris, started his career in finance, specializing in Private Equity. In 2012 he concentrated his efforts on the creation of an investment fund specializing in art, and a year later joined the gallery. The Galerie's criteria for selection are every bit as demanding as those of the world's leading museums, and pay particular attention to the originality, quality, provenance and authenticity of the works it acquires. Galerie Hioco never hesitates to seek the opinion of independent experts recognized in their field, or to systematically use the latest, most sophisticated scientific methods to confirm the authenticity and integrity of the pieces proposed. This uncompromising approach and personal assurance, which stands behind every piece acquired, has enabled Galerie Hioco to build lasting relationships of unquestioned confidence with the leading collectors and museums around the globe, and to win the Gallery a place in the major Asian art events throughout the world: the Biennale des Antiquaires and the Parcours des Mondes in Paris, the BRAFA in Brussels and the Asia Week in New York. Galerie Hioco is member of the S.N.A. (Syndicat National des Antiquaires), the Belgian Royal Chamber of Antiques and Art Dealers and the Asia Week New York Association Inc. Christophe Hioco also served as a director of the Asian Art in London association for 2 years.

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KHAJURĀHO, Indian temples and
sensuous sculptures
Gilles Béguin
photographs by Iago Corazza

YOU LIVED IN ASIA WHILE WORKING FOR JP MORGAN AND BECAME AN ENTHUSIAST COLLECTOR. BUT WHAT WAS YOUR AMBITION WHEN YOU OPENED YOUR GALLERY IN 2003 ?

I have always been a collector and these years spent in Asia have allowed me to explore and to be interested in Asian art. It has been about thirty years ago already! When I opened the gallery my ambition was to learn more about the different arts of Asia, also to see the practice of collecting from another perspective. It was clear that I wanted to develop this activity of antique dealer by keeping the eye of the collector, by buying artworks which I like while always making sure of their great quality, in order to gain the trust of the amateurs and collectors.

From the beginning, I also imagined the Gallery as a structure that could promote patronage projects. Over the years, this has resulted in the publication of two books aimed at valorizing and arousing interest in the Indian sites of Khajuraho and Ellora. Other publications are coming soon and I am very much looking forward to them!

IS THE PARIS MARKET POWERED MORE BY LOCAL OR FOREIGN COLLECTORS?

Given our specialization, we have a very international clientele. The Paris market reflects this clientele. We either meet our clients abroad or they come to Paris for various reasons and take the opportunity to visit us.

GALLERY HIOCO IS A FAMILY BUSINESS. WHAT DID YOUR SON GILDAS LEARN ABOUT THIS BUSINESS, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TODAY?

Gildas followed a finance-oriented education and then began his career in Private Equity and investment banking. It was interesting for him to adapt to the specificities of the art market and to enrich his knowledge of the artworks of the gallery. In addition, he brought to the gallery his knowledge and skills acquired from his past experiences.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF YOUNG DEALERS ARE CURATING A LOOK, THEY PRESENT THEIR STOCK SO THAT IT REPRESENTS A LIFESTYLE. THE HIOCO

GALLERY HAS BEEN HOUSED IN AN APARTMENT ON RUE DE PHALSBURG FOR 12 YEARS NOW. DOES THIS MORE INTIMATE VIEWING OF ITEMS ALSO MADE YOUR CALLING CARD?

We have indeed an apartment completely dedicated to the Gallery. We appreciate welcoming our clients in this more private or intimate environment. Collectors can also come and see the artworks in natural light and project themselves as if they were at home. This is definitely a very unique configuration in Paris.

YOU ALREADY MADE THE LEAP OF EMBRACING NEW TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR BUSINESS BUT WITH THE PANDEMIC YOU HAVE ADAPTED EVEN MORE YOUR BUSINESS. HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO DEVELOP A PERSONALIZED DIGITAL RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS?

As I mentioned, our clientele is very international with collectors coming from all over the world and it is not always easy for them to travel. Technology allows us to present our pieces digitally and we are convinced that our job is also to transmit information about art and about Asia in general. We have been developing our website for 15 years and our goal has always been to keep it updated. For a few years now, we have taken our digital activities to a higher level by sending newsletters and, recently, by putting videos online. The way we see our job is to share the pleasure and the emotions that the works of art give us and we think that all this digital communication is an essential support. In these times of pandemic, these technological tools allow us to keep the contact with our customers and to exchange together on the artworks we offer.

THE ART MARKET HAS A REPUTATION OF BEING A PLAYGROUND FOR THE ELITE. WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THIS?

We have an opposite opinion. According to our experience it is perfectly possible to collect interesting, quality and affordable pieces. This is the reason why we have created and developed the website Plaisir d'Esthète (www.plaisirdesthete.com), whose objective is exactly that: to propose works of great interest, accessible, without ever compromising on quality.

WHERE DO YOU THINK THE FUTURE OF THE ART MARKET IS HEADED?

In our areas of specialization, we are witnessing a steady increase in the number of collectors as people travel more and are interested in different cultures. On the other hand, and thanks to the importance given to the question of provenance, we observe a rarefaction of the offer of artworks. For these reasons, our challenge is to be able to buy quality pieces in reasonable conditions. The advice we can give is to take advantage of the prices of sculptures from India and South-East Asia, which are still reasonable!

IF YOU COULD STEAL ONE WORK OF ART WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

To be perfectly honest, I don't allow myself to have these kinds of thoughts.

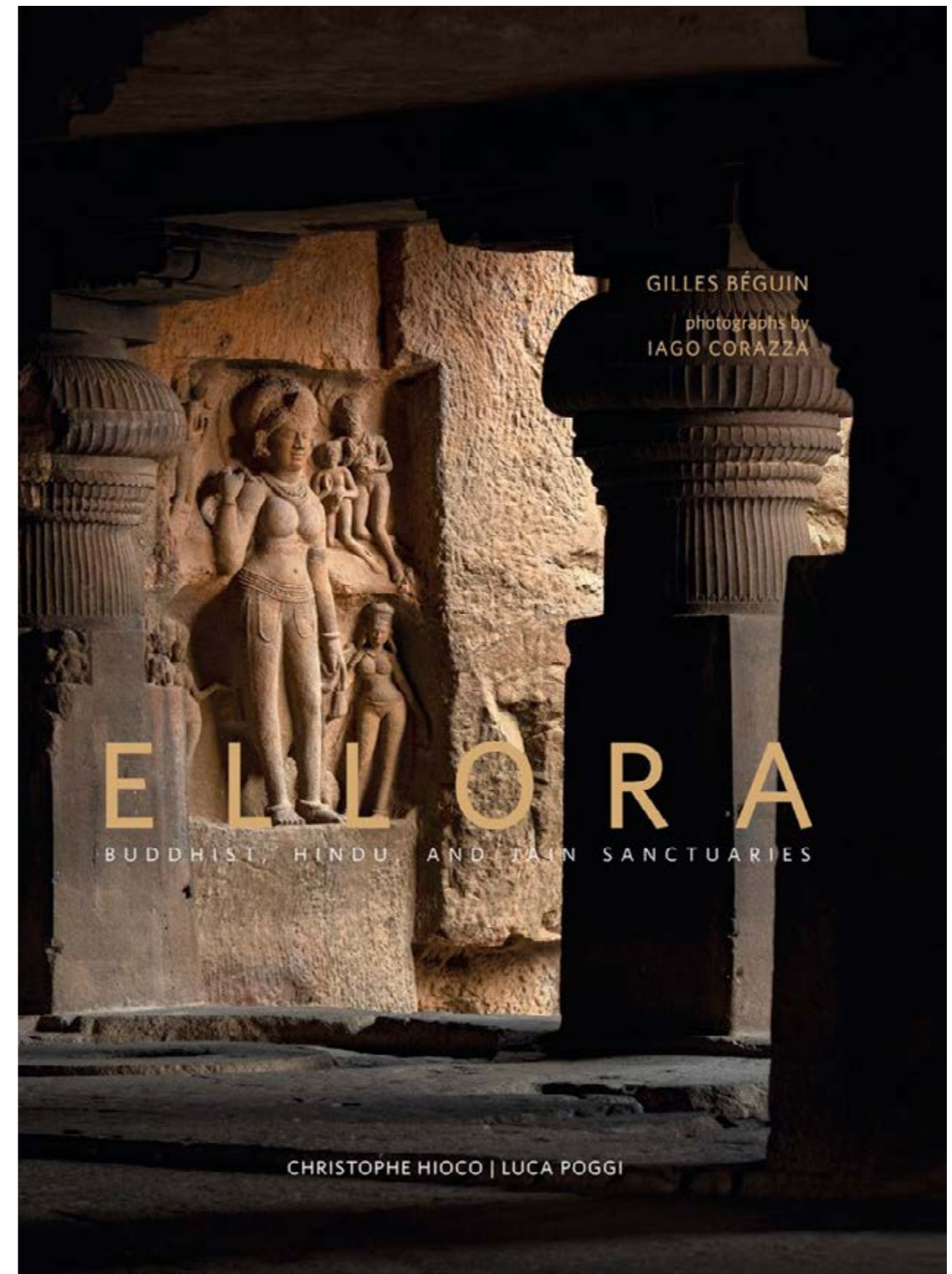
WHAT WORK DO YOU WISH YOU HAD BOUGHT WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE?

Not surprisingly, there are quite a few! Because I sometimes wanted to be too reasonable regarding the purchase price and years later I understand that I should have finally followed my intuition.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPRACTICAL WORK OF ART YOU OWN?

In our gallery we have mainly stone or bronze sculptures of significant size and weight. Most of them are therefore difficult to move and, in general, not very practical. When we exhibit at fairs, we often envy galleries that sell jewelry or small objects!

ELLORA Buddhist, Hindu, and
Jain sanctuaries
Gilles Béguin
photographs by Iago Corazza





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