

VIVIAN WANG

CHILDREN OF
GOOD FORTUNE





Habatat Galleries Present:

VIVIAN WANG

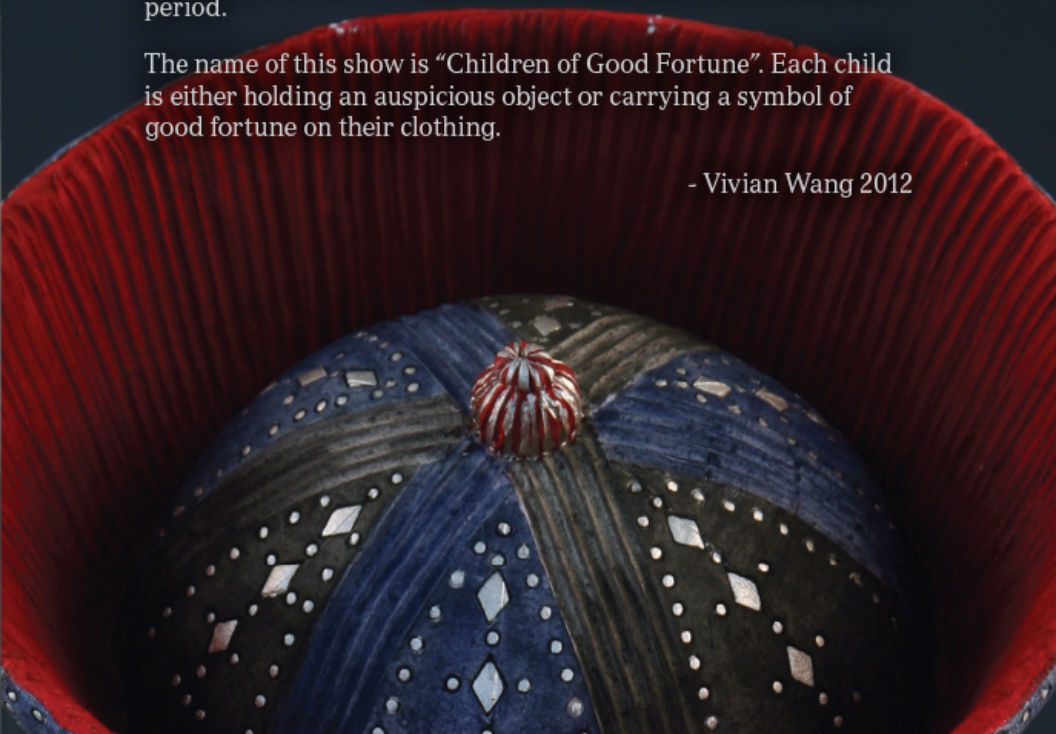
CHILDREN OF GOOD FORTUNE

An American sculptor of Chinese descent, I have been inspired mostly by Asian art. My work has always been figurative, focusing mainly on the elegant bearing and formal dress of Asian women and children from the royal courts of the past. In recent years, I have become even more fascinated with the art of ancient China and Japan.

For this show, I have sculpted figures, mostly children, inspired by the imperial life of the Heian Period of Japan (794 - 1185) and the Song Dynasty of China (960 - 1279). These periods overlap by 225 years allowing a direct comparison of the style and color of ancient Chinese and Japanese dress during the same historical period.

The name of this show is "Children of Good Fortune". Each child is either holding an auspicious object or carrying a symbol of good fortune on their clothing.

- Vivian Wang 2012



Resplendent - 2013

22 x 12 x 13"

Cast glass & stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross







Frog - 2013

25 x 13 x 11"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross



Tiger Doll - 2013

25 x 11 x 8"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross





The Baby Emperors of Japan

The Heian Period of Japan lasted 391 years, from 794 - 1185. During those years, there were eight child emperors, two of whom I was inspired to sculpt.



“Crane” was the 74th emperor of Japan. His royal name was Emperor Toba. He began his reign (1107 - 1123) at the age of four. I have portrayed him with an image of a crane on his imperial hat. The crane is a Japanese symbol of longevity and good fortune. It is a custom in Japan to fold one thousand origami cranes for a special wish. Toba’s garment displays exaggerated shoulders, a puffy and belted front bodice and a very tall hat, all traditional shapes of the royal dress of the Heian Period. The color royal blue was often worn by Japanese emperors.



“Chrysanthemum” was the 75th emperor of Japan. The eldest son of Emperor Toba, Emperor Sutoku also began his reign at the age of four (1123-1142). During the Heian Period, the Chrysanthemum, a symbol of endurance and integrity, became the primary symbol of autumn. Emperor Sutoku’s dress also emphasizes his shoulders, has a “bulky” front bodice and a tall hat placed straight upon the top of his head. The color purple was also an imperial color.

The Heian Children of Japan



“Frog” portrays a young boy of the royal court playing with his pet frog. Note the geometrically patterned “vest” that calls attention to the shoulders. As rice fields were the basis of Japan’s agricultural economy, the presence of frogs was considered good fortune. The frog became a creature revered in Japanese poetry and art.



“Hina Doll” shows a little girl holding her favorite Hina doll, a representation of the Empress. The original Hina dolls were made of straw. In ancient time, negative thoughts and worries were wished upon the Hina doll. It was then thrown into the river and left to float away. The girl is wearing a dress with distinct geometric patterning very popular during the Heian Period.

The Song Children of Japan



"Tiger Doll" depicts a young girl cradling her good luck tiger toy. The symbol of the tiger was thought to protect children from malignant spirits. The tiger is one of the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac and is considered the ruler of beasts on earth as apposed to the dragon which rules the beasts in the heavens. The girl is shown wearing multiple layers of tunics and a jade medallion at her neckline. These were prevalent fashion trends in the Song Dynasty.



"Fish Kite" shows a Chinese boy holding a painted silk kite representing a carp. The carp image is associated with the attainment of power and wealth. The Chinese economy was also based on the production of rice and the carp, like the frog to the Japanese, became an aquatic symbol of luck.



"Dragon and Phoenix" portrays a noble lady with her fraternal twins. The birth of twins of a boy and a girl, a rare occurrence, was the ultimate auspicious event. A dragon and phoenix shown together is a symbol of happiness and harmony. The boy is represented by the Dragon and the girl by the Phoenix Bird.



"Resplendent" depicts a lady of the court holding her favorite child. She is wearing a bright red color, a sign of great joy and good fortune.



Chrysanthemum - 2013

26 x 13 x 12"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross



Fish Kite - 2013

26 x 13 x 8"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross







Hina Doll - 2013

23 x 11 x 11"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross



Dragon and Phoenix - 2013

22 x 13 x 13"

Cast glass and stoneware
with steel base

Photo credit: Gregory Ross







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Crane - 2013

26 x 12 x 11"

Cast glass and
stoneware with steel base

Photo credit:
Gregory Ross