

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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ARTS OF THE SAMURAI AT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK



A *Gomai-Do Yukinoshita* armor
Edo Period (17th century)
Estimate: \$80,000-100,000

Red-and-blue laced gold-lacquered
Honkozane Nimai Do Gusoku armor
Edo Period (17th century)
Estimate: \$250,000-300,000

A red-laced gold-lacquered archaic style armor
Edo Period (18th -19th century)
Estimate: \$30,000-40,000

New York- Christie's New York is pleased to announce a dedicated sale of *Arts of the Samurai* on October 23, which exemplifies the outstanding craftsmanship and visual splendor of the Samurai culture. The collection includes over 80 lots comprising of armor, helmets, and most importantly, swords dating from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries. The Samurai have a major presence in New York this autumn: the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition entitled *Art of the Samurai: Japanese Arms and Armor, 1156-1868* opens on October 21 and the Japan Society will stage a sword drawing demonstration on October 22.

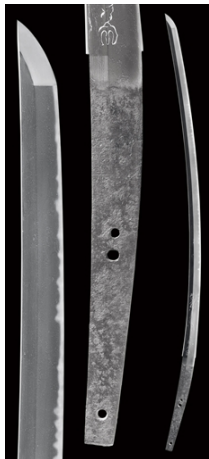
Armor

The samurai armor is a powerful, unique work of art made by multiple craftsmen of the highest skill. Whether used for combat or ceremony, the armor was the most decorative, yet flexible of sophisticated construction. The cover lot of the sale is the red-and-blue laced gold-lacquered *Honkozane Nimai Do Gusoku armor*, Edo Period (17th century) (illustrated on page 1 and detailed image on right, estimate: \$250,000-300,000). This armor is of the highest quality and bears the insignia of the Tokugawa Family from the Kii Province. Immediately striking is the forest of the helmet in the form of a praying mantis poised as if to strike its prey.



Other key works include a *Gomai-Do Yukinoshita armor*, Edo Period (17th century) (illustrated on page 1, estimate: \$60,000-80,000); a red and white laced *Yokohagi Okegawa Nimai Do Gusoku armor*, Edo Period, (17th-18th century) (estimate: \$60,000-80,000) with provenance from the Stokesay Castle in England; and a red-laced gold lacquered archaic style armor, Edo Period (17th century) (illustrated on page 1, estimate: \$30,000-40,000).

Swords



Samurai utilized a variety of weapons such as bows and arrows, spears and guns; but their most prominent weapon and their symbol was the sword. Leading the selection is a Bizen *Tachi* sword from the Kamakura Period signed Nagamitsu, 13th century (illustrated left, estimate: \$200,000-250,000). The maker, Nagamitsu, is one of the best known of the Kamakura period swordsmiths and there are six blades by him designated as National Treasures by the Japanese government. This particular blade is of great length and carries a fine carving of a dragon entwining the sword. The sword comes from the collection of the first British Ambassador to Japan, James St. Vincent Saumarez, and is said to have been given to him by the Emperor Meiji.

Further significant swords include a Bizen *Tachi* in Katana mounting, Kamakura Period, 13th century, attributed to Katayama Ichimonji Norifusa (estimate: \$150,000-200,000), formerly in the collection of the painter and avid sword collector Hashimoto Dokuzan (1869-1938); a mounted Etchu *Tachi*, attributed to Yoshihiro from the late Kamakura-early Nanbokucho Period (14th century) (estimate: \$180,000-200,000), outstanding for its clarity and brilliance of the surface texture of the steel; and a Hizen *Tanto* in fine Uchigatana mounting from the Edo Period (early 17th century) signed *Hizen kuni ju Tadayoshi* (estimate: \$120,000-140,000), in a fine 19th century mounting by the

master Araki Tomei, designated as an Important Sword Fitting by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword.

Helmets

Among the fine selection of helmets offered are two Italian helmet bowls adapted in Nanban style of the Momoyama period (ca. 1580) (*illustrated right*, each estimate: \$60,000-80,000). The Italian ‘Cabassat’- type of helmet was imported into Japan in the late 16th or early 17th century when such foreign pieces were fashionable among the high ranking samurai. Also included is a “Catfish-Tail” Kawari Kabuto, Edo Period (17th-18th century) (estimate: \$15,000-20,000), an exotic helmet built up of a kind of paper mâché and lacquered silver; and a helmet of a distinguished military commander and retainer of the Shogun: A Myochin *Zaboshi Kabuto*, Muromachi Period (16th century) (estimate: \$18,000-22,000), once belonging to Okubo Hikozaemon, one the most popular members of the Samurai class.



Additional Highlights

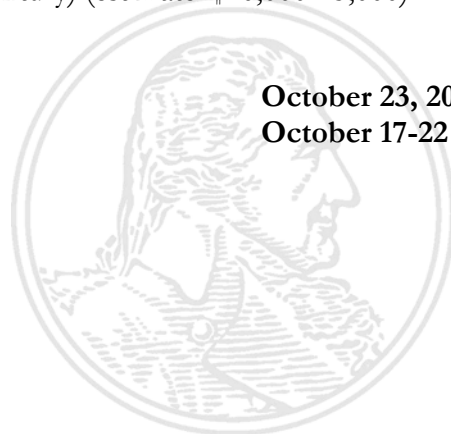


The wide-ranging selection of Samurai art includes *The first man across the Uji River* named from the *Tale of the Heike*, an impressive pair of six-panel screens by the Hasegawa School (early 17th century) (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$120,000-180,000). The screens illustrate

armor in realistic detail during the Genpei wars of 1185 where two samurai gallop into the intimidating Uji River. Other highlights offered are a Haniwa terracotta figure of a seated warrior, Late Kofun Period (6th century) (estimate: \$15,000-20,000); a porcelain figure of a samurai of the Kakiemon style from the Edo period (17th-18th century) (estimate: \$80,000-100,000); and a pair of stirrups with Nanban design, Edo Period (17th century) (estimate: \$10,000-15,000).

Auction: *Arts of the Samurai*
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

October 23, 2009
October 17-22



About Christie's

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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