

# CHRISTIE'S

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## ASIAN ART WEEK AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN NOVEMBER 2013

**London** – Christie's Asian Art sales in London this autumn will take place between 5 and 8 November, presenting the market with a strong array of beautiful and rare works with important provenance, many of which are offered fresh to the market for the first time in many decades. The sales include: *Arts of the Carver* and *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* on 5 November at King Street; and at South Kensington: *Interiors – dedicated to Chinese Art* on 6 November; and *Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles* on 8 November. Japanese art from antiquity to the present will be offered in Christie's South Kensington sale of *Asobi: Ingenious Creativity & Ceramics from the Bernard Leach Collection* on 15 October, during Frieze week. For a separate press release on the Japanese sale please click [here](#).

**Arts of the Carver: 5 November at 10am, Christie's King Street**  
**Bid via Christie's LIVE™**

Asian Art week at Christie's in London will open on 5 November with *Arts of the Carver*, an extraordinary collection of over 100 Chinese works of art from an *Important Private European Collection* which showcases the incredible skill and artistry of the Chinese carver exhibited in jade, ivory, rock crystal, agate, tortoiseshell, and bamboo (獨具匠心- 歐洲私人珍藏重要中國藝術品). The collection is expected to realise in the region of £2 million.

The **jade** carver, or lapidary, had to be able to judge his stone to perfection. Faced with a very valuable jade boulder, he needed to assess the potential of the stone within, and formulate a design for an object, or objects, which would maximise that potential. A magnificent Qianlong spinach green jade brush pot provides an excellent example both of the lapidary's judgement and his skill in carving a very complex and artistically pleasing design from this challenging material (estimate: £250,000-350,000, *illustrated right*). The theme of the decoration is longevity - symbolised by the deer, cranes and pine trees. These are depicted in a rocky landscape, which encircles the brush pot. The numerous levels of carving appearing in the rocks and trees are especially striking, and piercing has been used with restraint to create further visual impact.



Two of the most admired colours for jade are the rich spinach green of the large brush pot and also white, exemplified by a smaller jade brush pot wherein the lapidary has not only made excellent use of piercing and varied levels of carving, he has also used the potential that this pale stone has for translucency in order to achieve an ethereal quality in the landscape which encircles the brush pot (estimate: £100,000-150,000, *illustrated left*). It may have been his intention that the three scholars approaching the double-roofed pavilion on one side of the vessel should be viewed as Daoists, who have retreated high into the mountains, having abandoned the red dust of the mortal world.

Nephrite jade has remained one of the most treasured materials from as early as the Neolithic period through to the present day. Due not only to its composition, but also to its crystalline structure, nephrite is a very tough material and cannot be ‘carved’ as such, but must be worn away using tools primed with abrasives such as powdered garnets. When this fact is considered, the complex forms, together with the varied decorative levels and intricate piercing included in the design of jade objects, are even more impressive.



Chinese lapidaries did not restrict themselves to nephrite, but produced fine carvings in jadeite and other **hardstones** such as agate which was popular for its varied colours. A carnelian agate ‘phoenix’ vase group provides a good example of the skilful way in which the lapidary used the different coloured layers in the stone in order to give definition and emphasis to different parts of the design, which contrast not only in colour, but in translucency (estimate: £6,000-8,000, *illustrated left*).

**Ivory**, like jade, was decoratively worked by Chinese craftsmen as early as the Neolithic period. The relative softness of ivory allowed the carver to achieve a wide range of effects, and by the Ming and Qing dynasties a great variety of carving styles were applied to ivory items. A rare lacquered ivory brush pot demonstrates both the skill of the craftsman who made it and his creative use of history in devising its decoration (estimate: £15,000-25,000, *illustrated right*). Ivory decoration comprised of incised lines filled with black ink or lacquer to resemble ink painting has a long history in China. Another version of this technique – exhibited on the present lot – had a dark, usually black or red lacquer, ground on which the designs appeared in reserve with fine line details.



Other key examples utilising **lacquer** include a black lacquer table screen, inlaid with mother-of-pearl from the Kangxi period (estimate: £15,000-25,000, *illustrated left*). Each of the pieces of mother-of-pearl had to be shaped individually and then any details incised into the surface. The technique of inlaying shaped pieces of shell into the surface of lacquered objects was used in China as early as the Shang dynasty of the early Bronze Age, and items decorated in this way have been found at the Royal tombs at Anyang. On the current screen the *nacre* (mother-of-pearl) is from the inner layer of the *halotis* (abalone) shell and is thinner

and more iridescently colourful than the *nacre* used in the early periods. The extraordinary skill of the craftsman in shaping and manipulating the myriad tiny, and fragile, pieces of shell is evident in the scene of immortals looking out over turbulent waves on the current screen. The back of this screen is also interesting as it bears symbols which are Daoist talismanic diagrams or insignia known as the ‘True Forms of the Five Sacred Mountains’, *Zhenxing Wuyue*. They represent a balance in cosmic order and also symbolise the Five Phases or Elements: metal, fire, wood, water and earth (*illustrated right*).



**Bamboo** has traditionally been one of the most useful materials in China. It has provided food, tools, weapons, utensils, and other necessities from scaffolding to matting. The graceful stems and slender leaves of the plant have also provided artists with inspiration. In Chinese the word for the joints of the bamboo (節 *jié*) is the same as the word for integrity which the plant has come to symbolise. Bamboo has also been a favourite material for carvers. It is frequently worked using the cylindrical form of its stems to make brush pots and wrist rests, but skilled craftsmen also carved complex three dimensional objects from bamboo root. An impressive carving



made from bamboo root is a large raft with figures (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated left*). The raft is carved as if it were made from a gnarled pine tree with branches providing canopies for the groups of figures standing or sitting on its deck. In addition to the figures shown straining on long oars to propel the vessel, the Eight Daoist Immortals and the Three Star Gods are depicted with their attendants. A further group of scholars have been carved as if involved in activities such as board games. It is a highly complex composition, making full use of the original form of the bamboo root.

**Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art: 5 November at 12.00pm (Lot 201-307) & 2.30 pm (Lot 308-496)**  
**Christie's King Street, Bid via Christie's LIVE™**

The *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* sale at Christie's on 5 November presents 297 further high quality works which are offered fresh to the market, from prominent private collections, with important and long established provenance. Exemplifying the impeccable provenance featured is a Royal collection of finely carved jades, predominantly on the theme of horses, from the Estate of His Royal Highness The Prince Henry Duke of Gloucester KG KT KP. The sale presents works dating from the Shang Dynasty (*circa* 1600-1100 B.C.) through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, spanning a wide array of media including ceramics, jade carvings, bronzes, cloisonné enamel, lacquer ware, painting, sculpture and furniture. With attractive estimates ranging from £1,000 up to £300,000, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £5.5million.

***His Royal Highness The Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester***, Knight of the Garter, Knight of The Thistle and the last Knight of St Patrick (the Irish Order of Chivalry), fifth in line of succession to his great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, Empress of India was born to King George V and Queen Mary, who was an avid collector herself, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900. Prince Henry was the uncle of Queen Elizabeth II and the youngest brother of King Edward VIII and King George VI. The Prince had many royal duties. In 1925 he was made a Privy Councillor and in 1929 he was assigned The Garter mission when he travelled to Asia for the first time. The mission began in Japan and The Prince was honoured with Japan's highest order, Order of the Chrysanthemum. His later travels took him through Marseilles, Cairo, Aden, Colombo, Hong Kong and Canada.

The Prince was known as an accomplished horseman who often rode with the Belvoir, the Pytchley and the Grafton. One of his famous feats included outriding almost all of his hunting companions on his first outing with the Quorn with only five of his fellow riders being able to keep up. The equine theme of six of the seven jade carvings being offered for sale from his collection reflects how passionate the Duke was about horses. The group is led by an 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century pale celadon jade carving of a horse standing four square, with the reins tied to a pole, beside a standing scholar wearing flowing robes (estimate: £15,000-20,000, *illustrated right*). The stone is of a pale even tone. It was acquired in Asia between 1929 and 1935.



The most valuable jade in the sale is a superb white jade 'twin fish' marriage bowl, Qianlong period (1736-1795) which is offered from the ***Property of a Distinguished Swiss Family*** (estimate: £200,000-£300,000, *illustrated left*). The exterior is intricately carved with double-xi characters and branches bearing peaches. The handles are elaborately decorated with catfish, *lingzhi*



sprays, and *wan* symbols. ‘Marriage’ bowls decorated with such auspicious symbols, were very popular at the Imperial Qing court, reflecting the wealth and status of their owners. The characters for ‘catfish’, *nianyu* in Chinese, represent the wish for abundance and prosperity year after year.

Meeting the continuing strength of demand for important religious bronzes, one of the other most valuable lots in the sale is a large and rare Ming dynasty (16<sup>th</sup> /17<sup>th</sup> century) gilt-bronze figure of Marici, which is being offered from the ***Property of a European Lady*** (estimate: £200,000-300,000, *illustrated right*). The deity is finely cast seated in *dhyanasana* on a double-lotus pedestal with each petal carved with a flaming pearl. Having been acquired by a distinguished Doctor in West Berlin, Germany, in the early 1970s, it has passed by descent to the current owner. This form of mystical interpretation of Avalokitesvara with multiple arms and heads is found on mural paintings at Dunhuang dating to the late 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Marici, whose name means ‘ray of light’, is often referred to as the goddess of dawn.



Leading the **porcelain** is a magnificent and rare yellow and green enameled vase, Yongzheng six-character mark in underglaze blue within a double circle and of the period (1723-1735), which is offered from the ***Property of a European Lady***, having been acquired from the world renowned collection of C.T. Loo in 1961 (estimate: £150,000-200,000, *illustrated left*). Porcelain enamelled in yellow and green was produced in the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The combination of bats and clouds on the current vase wish for good fortune, as the word ‘bat’, *fu*, is homophonous with ‘blessings’ and the word ‘clouds’, *yun*, is a pun for ‘fortune’.

From the ***Property of a European Gentleman***, a further porcelain highlight is a rare large *wucai* lobed ‘dragon’ jar, Jiajing six-character mark in underglaze blue within a double circle and of the period (1522-1566) (estimate: £120,000-150,000, *illustrated right*). The six-lobed jar is of baluster form and is decorated to each lobe with a roundel containing writhing iron-red and turquoise dragons amidst crashing waves, surrounded by scrolling lotus. It is very rare to find a Jiajing mark and period jar of this impressive size and quality. An almost identical Jiajing mark and period ‘dragon’ jar is in the collection of the Palace Museum in Beijing.



Among the **metal work** is a rare archaic bronze wine vessel, *zun*, western Zhou dynasty (1100-770 B.C.), previously in the collection the renowned light-bulb industrialist Dr Anton Philips, which has an inscription on the interior which translates as ‘this precious vessel was made for Fu Ding’ (estimate: £80,000-120,000). Further key examples include a rare cloisonné enamel parrot and stand, from the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century, which is offered from the ***Property of a Private English Collection***, having been purchased from Spink & Son, Ltd.,

London, in 1935 (estimate: £40,000-60,000, *illustrated above*). The multi-coloured parrot is naturalistically modelled perched on a detachable stand, with the eyes inset with glass beads and the details of its feathers finely depicted. The stand is elaborately decorated with stylised lotus scrolls, supported on four *ruyi*-shaped feet. Parrots, parakeets and lorries have long been admired in China, both for their colourful plumage and for their ability to ‘speak’. While not a completely accurate depiction, it seems possible that this bird is intended to represent a Fairy Lorikeet (*Charmosyna pulchella*) or a Chattering Lory (*Lorius ga rrulus*), either of which could have been brought to China from Indonesia.



The sale presents a strong selection of **paintings**, with excellent provenance. This is highlighted by a group of ***Chinese Paintings from the Collection of Peter Townsend (1919-2006)*** (lots 285-300). Key examples from the collection range from calligraphy by Guo Moruo (1892-1978), which the artist dedicated to Mr. Townsend (estimate: £35,000-£50,000, *illustrated left*) to a sketch of a horse by Xu Beihong (1895-1953), signed, with one seal of the artist, which was reputedly given to Mr. Townsend by Guo Moruo (estimate: £50,000-60,000, *illustrated below*).

Peter Townsend was thrown into the turmoil of war-torn China in 1941 and developed a lifelong love for the people and the country. After leaving Oxford University, he arrived in China as a member of the Friend's Ambulance Unit. He remained in China for ten years as international secretary for the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, based successively in Chengdu, Chongqing, Shanghai and Beijing and travelled extensively throughout China. The turbulent and cataclysmic 1940's in China proved also to be an extremely important period in Chinese art history. Many of the most prominent artists, who were studying at art schools overseas, chose to return to China to support the war effort. They brought back with them new knowledge, techniques, reputations and awareness of art movements in the West, thereby combining western modernism and Chinese techniques. Townsend returned to England in 1951 and published a first-hand account of the Revolution (*China Phoenix*). He became editor of *Studio International* which rapidly became the most important art magazine in Europe. He went on to found and edit *Art Monthly* in the UK and later, *Art Monthly Australia*. He remained editor of both magazines until 1992 and editor of *Art Monthly Australia* until 1996. *For more information on the collection and Peter Townsend please click [here](#).*



*Nine Fishes* by Qi Baishi (1864-1957) is offered from the ***Property of the Professor Frederick Segquier Drake Family Collection*** (estimate: £8,000-12,000, *illustrated below*). Professor Frederick Segquier Drake (1892-1976) was born in Shandong, China. From a distinguished English family, Drake was ordained minister as a young man and devoted himself to missionary work. Professor Drake was a traveller, and a scholar in Chinese and



Divinity; as an archaeologist he travelled extensively within China and was Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at Qiliu (Cheeloo) University in Ji'nan, Shandong. After a brief return to his native England during the Chinese Civil War, Prof. Drake came to Hong Kong as Chair of Chinese at the University of Hong Kong and occupied the position for twelve years. He was widely respected by his students and within the academia. His most notable achievement included leading the archaeological excavation of the Lei Cheng Eastern Han Tomb in Hong Kong in the 1950s.

**Chinese Interiors: 6 November at 10.00 am, Christie's South Kensington**  
**Bid via Christie's LIVE™**

An extremely popular feature of Christie's Asian Art Week in London is the *Interiors* sale dedicated to Chinese Art, held at South Kensington. Offering collectors affordable works of art dating from the Neolithic period through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the auction on Wednesday 6 November will include porcelain, cloisonné enamels, snuff bottles, bronzes, jade, paintings, textiles and more. Comprising over 500 lots, with estimates starting at just £500, the sale presents an array of works from important private collections including ***The Lizzadro Collection of Chinese Works of Art; A Private East Asian Collection; A Private European Collection and An English Collection of Rank Badges*** amongst others.





Highlights range from two Jizhou bowls dating to the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £4,000-6,000), to the *A.J. Marlowe Private Collection of Chinese Export Silver*, led by a 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese silver cup (estimate: £3,000-5,000, *illustrated left*). It also includes various jade carvings such as six 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century pale celadon ‘Bird’ plaques which were acquired prior to 1960 and are offered from the Lizzadro Collection, Chicago, Illinois, (estimate: £3,000-5,000, *illustrated above*). The sale presents 52 textile lots, including a Chinese ‘censor’ *xiezhai* front rank badge, 19<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £1,500-2,500, *illustrated right*). The badge depicts a *xiezhai*, a mythical beast with a dragon’s head, single horn and crested spine; it would have been worn by

Censors, high ranking supervisory officials directly responsible to the Emperor in charge of inspecting civil servants for corruption. These badges are more unusual than those found for military and civil ranks. Other textiles include a Chinese Beijing opera costume, *circa* 1900-20 (estimate: £1,500-2,000). Costumes are incredibly important in Beijing opera (*jingju*) because they distinguish to the audience at first glance the rank, the type, and even the morality of the character being played by the use of colour, type of robe, and decoration.



### Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles: 8 November at 10.00am, Christie’s South Kensington - Bid via Christie’s LIVE™



The *Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles* sale at Christie’s South Kensington on 8 November comprises approximately 300 lots spanning over one thousand years of Chinese art. The sale has been carefully curated to meet the current trends in Chinese taste and offers a wide array of jade carvings, porcelain, paintings, cloisonné enamel, bronze, lacquer, furniture, snuff bottles and textiles. Estimates range from £1,000 to £30,000, providing established and new collectors with great opportunities to buy quality works with established provenance.

Amongst the notable UK private collections is a 34-lot group of **jade carvings** predominantly acquired in the 1980s. One of the most beautiful and earliest carvings is an intricately carved and pierced ‘dragon’ hat finial from the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368) in pale celadon and russet jade (estimate: £6,000-8,000, *illustrated above left*). Later jade works of art from other collections include a carved and pierced 19<sup>th</sup> century white jade ‘lotus leaf’ brush washer from a private collection assembled prior to 1960 (estimate: £8,000-12,000, *illustrated above*).



Showcasing the skill of the Chinese ceramicist, is a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century *famille rose* and gilt ‘landscape’ double lozenge vase with an openwork base from an old European private collection, believed to have been acquired between 1908 and 1939 and then passed by descent (estimate: £10,000-15,000, *illustrated left*). A large standing figure of Guanyin exemplifies the quality of the best **porcelain** made at the Dehua kilns in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated right*). Worshipped for her power to protect fishermen, the sculpture bears the impressed mark “Boji yüren”, which can be translated as “virtue extends even to fishermen”.



Demand for later, Republic Period porcelain (1912-49) has escalated in recent years as seen by the high prices achieved for the collections offered at South Kensington. This season, South Kensington will offer a large





rectangular *famille rose* 'landscape' plaque by Wang Dacang (1899-1953) (estimate: £10,000-20,000, *illustrated left*). Wang Dacang was one of a group of artists known collectively as the "Eight Friends of Zhushan". Porcelain painted by this group of artists is sought after and Wang Dacang is particularly famed for his landscapes.

Highlighting the **painting** section is the 8-lot collection of Dr and Mrs Hawes. The collection was assembled in the 1960s with the help of Mary Shen, a pioneering dealer in London in Modern Chinese paintings at the time. It includes a hanging scroll by Zhu Qizhan (1891-1996), *Orchid and Rock*, ink on paper (estimate: £5,000-8,000, *illustrated right*).



29 **textiles** will be offered, led by a 19<sup>th</sup> century embroidered silk panel worked in the 'Hundred Birds' design and in the style of the imperial palace workshops (estimate: £10,000-15,000, *illustrated left*). Birds have always had



auspicious meanings in Chinese culture, with many of their names being homophones for words expressing wishes for good fortune and success. Among the stunning robes is a blue silk *kesi* formal court robe, *jifu*, circa 1870/1880 (estimate: £10,000-15,000, *illustrated right*). *Jifu*, known for its dragon design, was worn by court officials on festive occasions, including imperial birthday celebrations, and is often paired with accessories such as a belt, and hat.




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#### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2013 that totaled £2.4 billion/ \$3.68 billion. In 2012, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £465.2 million (\$711.8 million) in the first half of 2013, an increase of 13% on the previous year, and for the third successive year represents the highest total for the period in both company and art market history.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*