

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Bendetta Roux

212.636.2680

broux@christies.com

SUPERB 16TH CENTURY SCREEN AND WHITE CERAMICS COLLECTION TO HEAD JAPANESE AND KOREAN ART SALE

Japanese and Korean Art March 20, 2007

New York – Immediately following Art for the Way of Tea, Christie's will continue the Asian Art Sales with Japanese and Korean Art, traditionally devoted to the arts of Japan and Korea from the 16th century all the way to artists living and working today. The Japanese segment boasts a magnificent pair of 16th century screens while the Korean section offers an exquisite group of white ceramics. The sale is expected to realize in excess of \$5.5 million.

Pine Trees in Moonlight, a magnificent rare pair of six-panel screens attributed to Hasegawa Tohaku (1539-1610) is the star lot of the sale (estimate on request). Undoubtedly the finest pair of screens to have come to the market in New York, *Pine Trees in Moonlight* is a recent discovery. The screen is closely related to the famous National Treasure screen called *Pine Trees*, by Hasegawa Tohaku which is part of the permanent collection of the Tokyo National Museum. Both works feature four clusters of pines arranged in nearly identical groupings. The most striking difference is the addition of a moon in the pair of screens offered. Gold wash suggests moonlight and ink was applied to the back of the paper to darken the surface and enhance the contemplative, nocturnal mood. *Pine Trees in Moonlight* was part of several exhibitions including in the Kyoto National Museum, the Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo and the Ishikawa Nanao Art Museum, Nanao.

Another sensational discovery is the twelve album sheets depicting erotic encounters between male lovers, by Torii Kiyonobu (circa 1664-1729), created in 1702-3 (estimate: \$30,000-40,000). By the time Kiyonobu produced this album, Edo (now Tokyo) was the largest city in the world with nearly one million inhabitants, two thirds male. The courtesan and the actor were the two great fantasy fonts of Edo Japan and with arranged marriages being the standard rule and an entrée into the

demimonde being prohibitively expensive, erotic prints were a popular and widely accepted form of amusement. Kiyonobu is believed to have produced around 100 erotic prints but the offered set is unique in that it is the only set depicting solely male lovers and the characters are all identified actors and dandies.

Two more highlights of the Japanese section are a stoneware water jar, Muromachi period (16th century) (estimate: \$80,000-100,000); a wood seated figure of Yakushi Nyorai, Heian period (late 12th century) showing the Buddha of Healing with a medicine jar in his left hand (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) and an insect-cage incense burner from the Meiji period (late 19th – early 20th century) designed in bronze, gold and silver (estimate: \$25,000-35,000).

The sale will also include a group of arms and armor which features a suit of armor with a russet-iron solid plate Do and a Saiga-style helmet, Edo period (17th – 18th century) (estimate: \$25,000-30,000) and a nanban lacquer saddle from the same period, decorated with European playing cards in relief (estimate: \$8,000-10,000).

The Korean section of the sale will shine with a superb group of white ceramics which can largely be divided in a section of scholar's objects which would include water droppers and paper roll holders and ritual objects.

The highlight of the group is a massive white porcelain jar in lantern form, Choson period (18th century), showing a lustrous and thick transparent glaze (estimate on request). A practically identical jar is part of the U Hak Collection, Seoul and is a National Treasure. A white porcelain paper-roll holder, Choson period (18th century), pierced with four triple-hole lozenges and decorated by a bluish clear glaze (estimate: \$180,000-220,000) and a large white porcelain ritual bowl, Choson period (17th century) covered overall with a transparent glaze of high gloss and blue hue (estimate: \$170,000-190,000) are also part of this group.

Another highlight of the Korean segment is *Landscapes and calligraphy*, an 18th century album of 20 pages; 10 paintings and 10 pages of calligraphy (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) executed by the painter Kim Yusong and the calligrapher Sung Dai Joong. Kim Yusong and Sung Dai Joong accompanied the 11th Korean mission to Japan between 1763 and 1764. a two-page colophon appended to this album was written by the connoisseur Kimura Kenkado (1736-1802) who entertained the envoy's party in Japan. It recounts that the album is a treasured gift made upon their return to Korea in appreciation of Kenkado's cordiality.

