

## **For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Bendetta Roux

212.636.2680

[broux@christies.com](mailto:broux@christies.com)

### **CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER SINGLE OWNER COLLECTION CELEBRATING THE TEA CEREMONY**

*"It is essentially a worship of the Imperfect, as it is a tender attempt to accomplish something possible in this impossible thing we know as life."*

Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (1906)

#### **Art for the Way of Tea – An Important Private Collection**

**March 20, 2007**

**New York** – Christie's, the world's leading art business, is opening the series of Asian Art Sales at Rockefeller Center with Art for the Way of Tea, a unique sale devoted to tea-ceremony related items. The collection, which was brought together over several decades by a private Asian collector, spans a time zone of four hundred years (16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), consists of 40 lots and is expected to realize in excess of three million dollars.

Art for the Way of Tea includes the full range of objects needed for the preparation of tea in a traditional tea room: painting or calligraphy to hang in the alcove, containers for powdered tea, flower vases, fresh-water jars, food vessels and sake bottles for the tea meal and, of course, ceramic tea bowls. In a classic tea arrangement, known as *torianawase*, the host would combine Japanese, Korean and Chinese objects suited to the time and place, and this tradition is reflected in the collection offered.

The top lot of the sale is a rectangular stoneware bowl with bridge handle, Momoyama period (17<sup>th</sup> century), Mino ware, Narumi Oribe type (estimate: \$350,000-400,000). This object is a superb one-of-a-kind serving dish created through a time-consuming and exacting process which consisted of molding, hand-molding, decorating and glazing. Narumi Oribe ware was made by combining red

and white clay in separate areas. When dry, the red clay was painted with floral motifs in white slip and the white clay was covered with a cool, copper-green glaze.

A stoneware water container, Momoyama period (early 17<sup>th</sup> century), Iga ware (estimate: \$200,000-250,000) is another highlight. The Iga kilns near Kyoto are famous for their tea vessels made during the Momoyama and early Edo periods. The jar presented has the bold and colorful style associated with the tastes of Kyoto tea masters Furuta Oribe (1544-1615) and Kobori Enshu (1579-1647). The rounded form of the container was deliberately flattened on two sides, a spatula was used to impress whimsical patterns, and a sharp tool to incise lines that curve around the body. The intentional, contrived manipulation of the glaze and clay is representative of a period when surface effects were no longer strictly natural.

Other noteworthy items include a Chinese porcelain 'shoe-shaped' blue and white tea bowl, Ming dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> century) (estimate: \$100,000-150,000), specially commissioned by Japanese tea aficionados from the Zangzhou kilns on the southern coast of China and a bronze turnip-shaped flower vase, Ming dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> century) (estimate: \$100,000-150,000), made as an arrow vase for a Chinese drinking game but used during the Japanese tea ceremony as a flower vase.

**Auction:** Art for the Way of Tea – An Important Private Collection                      March 20 at 10 a.m.

**Viewing:** Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center, New York                              March 16 - 19

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales through Christie's LIVE, its unique, real-time online bidding service.

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*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

More information about this sale can be found on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.