

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**JAPANESE PAINTINGS AND KOREAN CERAMICS
HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S JAPANESE AND
KOREAN ART SALE IN MARCH**



Katsukawa Shunsho
Nine erotic scenes from Secret Games in the Spring Palace
(*Shungu bigi*), late 1770s-early 1780s
(one of nine)
Estimate: \$500,000-700,000



A bevelled and moulded blue and white
porcelain bottle
Joseon Dynasty (19th century)
Estimate: \$220,000-280,000

Japanese and Korean Art

17 March 2008

New York – Commencing Christie's Asian Art Week, *Japanese and Korean Art* will be offered on March 17, which will include over 170 traditional and modern works of art. The Japanese section of the sale will feature a noteworthy group of paintings of beauty and the erotic, and the Korean section will offer an exquisite group of ceramics including a fine group of scholarly objects.

Japanese Art

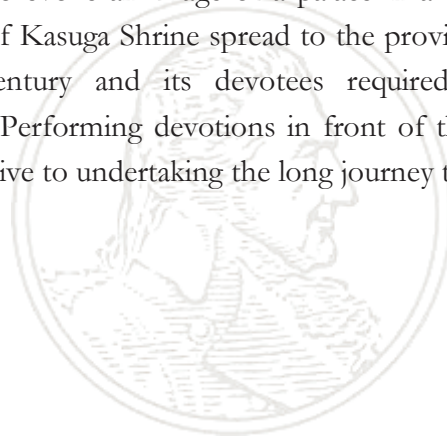
An important collection of Ukiyo-E Paintings, including Katsushika Hokusai's *Cooling Off on a Summer Evening*, leads the sale (right-estimate: \$800,000-1,000,000). This extremely large painting is thought to have been a special commission for one of Hokusai's most elite clients. It represents his highest quality luxury line, painted on silk and finely detailed. Based on the combination of signature and seal, the painting dates from Hokusai's most critically claimed period, when he was considered to be at the peak of his career.



The collection will also include Katsukawa Shunsho's *Nine erotic scenes from Secret Games in the Spring Palace (Shungu bigi)*, late 1770s-early 1780s (page 1, left- estimate: \$500,000-700,000). Originally handscrolls and remounted as ten hanging scrolls in the 1930s, these scenes have been exhibited and published frequently. The paintings of Katsukawa Shunsho rank among the most significant ever produced in Japan and the *Nine erotic scenes* is one of most spectacular painted works to have survived. Another highlight is Kitagawa Utamaro's *Ebon Komachi-biki*, (Picture book: Pulling Komachi), New Year 1802, which is a complete album of twelve illustrations (estimate: \$200,000-250,000). This spectacularly colored album is the third and last of the artist's three erotic masterworks.



The cover lot of the sale is *Kasuga Shrine Mandala*, early 14th century (detail left- estimate: \$200,000-250,000), a hanging scroll of an iconic map of the sacred grounds of Kasuga Shrine in Nara, set at the base of Mount Mikasa. Featuring an aerial view of a shrine set in a spring landscape with blossoming cherry trees and deer, this fascinating work is intended to evoke an image of a palace in a Shinto paradise. The cult of Kasuga Shrine spread to the provinces by the late twelfth century and its devotees required paintings for worship. Performing devotions in front of the painting was an alternative to undertaking the long journey to the shrine.



The sale will also include a soft-metal inlaid silver presentation vase, created by celebrated artist Unno Shomin in the Meiji Period, circa 1900 (*right-* estimate: \$100,000-150,000). This monumental silver vase is an example of the finest export work of the later Meiji period. The katakiribori chiselwork of the pine is particularly characteristic of Shomin's work, reflecting both his early study of calligraphy and Natsuo's influence.

Korean Art

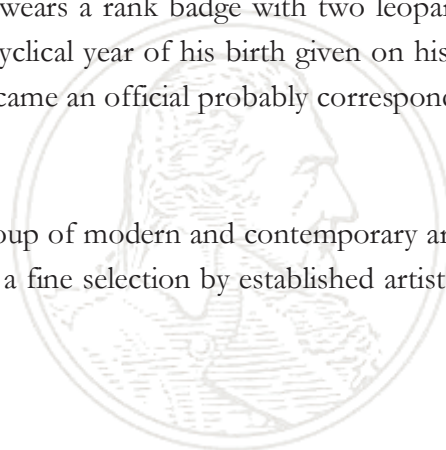
The Korean section presents an elegant and scholarly ensemble of porcelain, lacquer pieces, and traditional and modern paintings. One of the outstanding pieces in the group of porcelain is a quadrangular white porcelain jar, Joseon Dynasty (19th century) (*image right-* estimate: \$300,000-350,000), decorated with a lustrous clear glaze of blue. Also part of this group is a bevelled and molded blue and white porcelain bottle, Joseon Dynasty (19th century), (*page 1, right-* estimate: \$220,000-280,000), decorated with a glossy transparent glaze with random dark blue flecks; and a blue and white porcelain box and cover, Joseon Dynasty (18th century), painted with Han River scenery of birds, sailboats, and mountain peaks in cobalt blue (estimate: \$15,000-20,000).



Scholar implements and paintings are well represented in the sale, from a brush washer to a variety of water droppers in all shapes and colors. The finest examples are a white porcelain brush rest, Joseon Dynasty (19th century) (*left-* estimate: \$80,000-100,000), modeled in the form of the Diamond Mountains, known in Korea as the Geumgang Mountains; and a white porcelain artist's palette, Joseon Dynasty (19th century), a square shape with five shallow rectangular sections for mixing inks (estimate: \$40,000-50,000).

Portrait of a military officer, attributed to Ch'ae Yongsin (1848-1941), is a hanging scroll of an exceptionally realistic portrait of a military officer in ceremonial robes (estimate: \$15,000 - 20,000). The identity of the officer is unknown, but he wears a rank badge with two leopards that accords with military titles of first to third ranks. The cyclical year of his birth given on his tassel probably corresponds to 1862, and the cyclical year he became an official probably corresponds to 1885. It is likely that the portrait dates from 1910 or later.

The Korean section also offers a noteworthy group of modern and contemporary art with estimates ranging from \$3,000- \$100,000. The sale offers a fine selection by established artists including Kim



Sou's *Untitled*, oil on canvas (estimate: \$100,000-150,000); Kim Whanki's *Mountain and Moon*, gouache on paper, 1964 (estimate: \$8,000-10,000); and Kim Kangyong's *Reality & Image 712-937*, 2007, mixed media (estimate: \$20,000-25,000).

Auction: Japanese and Korean Art
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

March 17 at 2pm
March 13-16

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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