

## **For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Bendetta Roux            212.636.2680            broux@christies.com

### **ELEGANT SONG AND SNUFFS**

#### **Important Chinese Snuff Bottles from the J&J Collection, Part II**

#### **Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art**

**March 30, 2005**

**New York** – On March 30, Christie's New York will offer an impressive group of objects that illustrate the breadth and depth of the field of Chinese art. Many of the objects represent the pinnacle of craftsmanship and technique. The day will begin with Part II of the J&J Collection of Chinese snuff bottles, comprising 88 rare examples. Immediately following is the *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* sale, highlighted by an important group of Song ceramics from the Robert L. Barron collection, an interesting group of late Ming and early Qing ceramics de-accessioned by the Saint Louis Art Museum to benefit the acquisitions fund, as well as a strong section of jades, bronzes and textiles, including an extremely rare Imperial *kesi* trompe l'oeil twelve-panel screen.

#### **Important Chinese Snuff Bottles from the J&J Collection, Part II**

On April 25 of last year, Christie's Hong Kong very successfully offered Part I of this important collection, achieving just above \$3 million and setting several world auction records along the way. This season Christie's New York will take over with another selection of 88 superb examples of this charming miniature art form. In spite of their small size, snuff bottles are in fact important conveyers of auspicious wishes. Through specific choice of color, form and design, the giver would communicate messages of good fortune in a very elegant and gracious way. Snuff bottles were indeed used as gifts on various occasions such as weddings, anniversaries and at festivals while their subtle symbolic language could also be quite effective during diplomatic visits and political events. Highlights offered in New York feature a very rare famille rose enamelled carved glass snuff bottle, attributed to the Palace workshops in Beijing (1770-1799) (estimate: \$60,000-90,000); an extremely rare Imperial Beijing enamel snuff bottle made for the Kangxi Emperor (1705-1722) (estimate:

\$180,000-250,000) and an exquisite Imperial famille rose octagonal glass snuff bottle decorated with European ladies and children (1736-1750) (estimate: \$250,000-300,000).

### **The Robert Barron Collection of Song Ceramics**

Elegant simplicity characterizes this well-known collection of Song ceramics from Dr. Robert Barron. Dr. Barron belongs to a rare breed of collectors who balance the search for beautiful and rare objects with a deep understanding and thorough knowledge. He started collecting in the 1960s when he began buying actively through dealers and auctioneers in London and New York. The varied shapes, exquisite glazes and superb quality of the pieces in his collection attest to his skill as a true connoisseur. The Barron Collection comprises a high proportion of splendid monochrome wares of the type admired by the Imperial court and the Song dynasty elite as well as several excellent examples of boldly decorated black, brown and white wares. A highlight of the collection is a large *yueyao* round box with carved and incised decoration of a pair of ducks amongst lotus, Northern Song dynasty (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). Paired ducks were a symbol of marital felicity, suggesting this box may well have been intended as a wedding gift. It is among the finest examples of Yue wares made at the Zhejiang kilns in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Displaying the ideal bluish-green color of the *longquan* wares is the extremely rare celadon brush washer with flattened rim, Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). A fine, large *qingbai* bottle, *meiping*, Northern Song dynasty, 11<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$40,000-60,000) illustrates the strong elegant forms characteristic of the Northern Song dynasty production at the Jingdezhen kilns. A highlight amongst the black wares is the rare *cizhou* black-glazed jar, Northern Song/Jin dynasty, 12th century (estimate: \$30,000-50,000) sparsely decorated in russet with simplified floral motifs.

### **Property from the Saint Louis Art Museum, Sold to Benefit the Acquisitions Fund**

Impressive in both size and decoration is the large polychrome-glazed lobed jar, Jiajing six-character mark and of the period (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) executed in rich tones of yellow, turquoise and green on an aubergine ground. Also from the museum comes a large famille verte rouleau vase, Kangxi period (1662-1722) (estimate: \$80,000-120,000), decorated with a military scene painted with various deities and a formidable army of armed men on horseback.

### **Other Properties**

The sale features a strong section featuring jades, cloisonné enamel, lacquer, textiles and archaic bronzes. A rare *fangding*, a large bronze ritual food vessel, Late Shang dynasty, 11<sup>th</sup> century BC (estimate: \$600,000-800,000) is the highlight of this section. More usually seen in tripod-form, this four-legged example is exceedingly rare and elegant. An Early Western Zhou dynasty (11<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century BC) ritual wine vessel and cover, *you* (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) and an exquisite miniature gold and silver-inlaid bronze tortoise weight from the Warring States period (475-221 BC) (estimate: \$50,000-60,000) will also be offered. Included in the textiles section is an extremely rare *kesi*

trompe-l'oeil twelve-panel screen, Qianlong period (1736-1795) (estimate: \$80,000-120,000) from the estate of Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard. This trompe-l'oeil is a tour-de-force of *kesi* weaving with the 'wood screen' woven in three tones of brown while the panels within the 'wood frame' depict scenes of various flowers, plants and trees. From an American private collection comes a pair of cloisonné enamel barrel-form stools, from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$60,000-80,000). With recent heightened interest in cloisonné enamel pieces, this extraordinary pair should attract active bidding.

Rare and exquisite is the parcel-gilt silver ewer and cover, Liao dynasty (907-1125) (estimate: \$100,000-150,000). The lower body is decorated with large lotus petals while the rounded shoulder is cast with six roundels, depicting the universal theme of boys playing jump rope.

Another remarkable lot is the famille rose 'mille fleurs' five-piece altar garniture, Qianlong mark and of the period (estimate: \$300,000-500,000), apparently one of the few Qianlong altar garnitures of this pattern. Painted in vivid colors, the delicate and exquisite decoration is a delight for anyone familiar with Chinese flora. Peonies, lotus, chrysanthemum, hibiscus, magnolia and asters are only a few examples of the formidable array of flowers depicted on this five-piece set.

Once in the collection of the Right Honourable The Viscount Leverhulme, K.G., the large turquoise-ground ovoid vase with a Qianlong mark and of the period (1736-1795) (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) comes with excellent provenance. The beautiful, lace-like decoration on this vase was achieved by painting white enamel on top of the turquoise enamel.

The Qianlong's emperor's fascination for ancient art and culture can be seen in the archaistic *hu*-form vase, Qianlong mark and of the period (1736-1795) (estimate: \$150,000-180,000). This striking vase imitates a Chinese archaic bronze with its 'taotie' mask decoration and its golden brown glaze which suggests the patina of ancient bronzes. Imitating one material in another was an artistic tradition favored by the Qianlong Emperor and lacquer, stone, wood and bronze were among the materials reproduced in porcelain.

The Tang dynasty is represented by an unusual blue, amber and straw-glazed pottery figure of a seated girl (estimate: \$80,000-100,000). This elegant figure is quite rare in bearing an inscription identifying her as a daughter of the Kuang family. The style of her dress and hairdo offers a glimpse of the style fashionable for a young girl of high social standing.

**Auction:** Important Chinese Snuff Bottles from the J&J Collection

Part II

March 30 at 10 a.m.

Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art

March 30 at approx. 10.45 a.m.  
and 2 p.m.

**Viewing:** Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center    March 23 - 29

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*Images available on request*

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

More information about Christie's sale of *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* 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.