

For Immediate Release

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A COLLECTION IN THE GRAND OLD STYLE: CHINESE ART FROM EVELYN ANNENBERG HALL



The Collection of Evelyn Annenberg Hall: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art March 29, 2006

New York – On March 29, Christie's New York will offer *The Collection of Evelyn Annenberg Hall: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, a beautiful group of mainly 18th century imperial monochrome porcelains as well as Ming-style pieces, formed in the vein of the most discerning of collecting traditions. This single-owner sale comprises 94 lots and is expected to realize in excess of \$2,000,000.

Evelyn Annenberg Hall was a major philanthropist in the fields of art and medicine over a period of some fifty years. She was also a collector, and from the late 1940s through the 1960s she and her

second husband, William Jaffe, built a remarkable art collection which reflected their impressively broad range of interests, from pre-Columbian artifacts and Renaissance drawings to sophisticated and elegant Chinese porcelains.

A recurring theme among many of the finest Chinese pieces is ‘archaism,’ which reflects the three great Qing dynasty emperors’ fascination with the art of former times. All three rulers – Kangxi (1662–1722), Yongzheng (1723–35), and Qianlong (1736–95) – commissioned porcelains made either as direct copies of prized antique ceramics, or in styles influenced by ancient wares in various media. Rather than simply copying earlier pieces, these porcelains all bear the respective Qing emperors’ reign mark.

The pair of handsome Qianlong blue and white *meiping* vases (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) is a perfect illustration of Qing imperial admiration for the porcelains of the early 15th century. These vases have been beautifully painted with a decorative scheme that comes straight from early Ming dynasty wares. While their form has the bolder profile typical of the finest 18th century porcelains, their decorator has carefully emphasized the painting elevates that are characteristic of 15th century porcelains.

An extremely rare Qianlong vase with lustrous celadon glaze (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) is a fine example of the influence of Bronze Age metalwork on Qing porcelain. The confronted *kuni* dragons in the central decorative band relate closely to those cast in relief on ancient bronze vessels, while the pierced cloud and dragon form flanges and handles on the sides of the vessels refer back to gold and silver inlays on vessels from the late Bronze Age. Thus the ceramic craftsman has taken themes from early bronzes but has transformed them into a bold contemporary design without losing any of its archaic resonance.



Magnificent and very rare is the large blue and white pear-shaped vase (estimate: \$500,000-700,000). On this vessel the ceramic artist has taken a classic decorative theme – imperial five-clawed dragons amongst lotus scrolls – but has treated it in a manner wholly characteristic of 18th century taste. It is a masterpiece among Qing imperial wares, displaying elegant form, bold contrast between the pure white porcelain body and the brilliant, deep cobalt blue, and the dramatic disposition of the motifs over the body.

Auction: The Collection of Evelyn Annenberg Hall:
Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art

March 29 at 10 a.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

March 24 - 28

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about Christie's sale of *The Collection of Evelyn Annenberg Hall: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* can be found on 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 provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.