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FOREVER TO PRESENT RARE CHINESE PAINTINGS & CALLIGRAPHY IN 2007 SPRING SALE

Beijing - Forever International Auction Company Limited (Forever) announces that it will hold its third auction using Christie's name on 15 May 2007 at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel in Beijing. Featuring over 400 works, the sale of *Chinese Paintings & Calligraphy* is expected to realize in excess of RMB38 million/ US\$4.9 million. This also marks the first time that Forever stages its auction in Spring. Pre-sale exhibitions will be held in Beijing on 13 & 14 May.

Forever was established in the People's Republic of China in 2005. Christie's, in recognition of Forever's vision and mission, has agreed to license its name to Forever for its auction events. The inaugural Christie's/Forever branded auction of Chinese paintings was held in Beijing in November 2005.

Of particular interest in the sale are 129 fine fan leaves from a North American Private Collection that have not been seen in the market over the past fifty years. This wide array of paintings and calligraphy on fan leaves spans across nearly all schools in modern Chinese art history. With the pristine condition and excellent provenance, it is expected to draw great interest from Chinese art collectors.

The centerpiece, *Listening to the Lute* by Fu Baoshi (1904-1965) (Lot 104, Estimate: RMB150,000-200,000/ US\$19,405-25,875), is painted in 1947 and illustrates the classical verses by the Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi. Though inked and coloured on a small fan leaf, Fu's masterful command of the brush vividly interprets the poetic sentiments many would only vaguely visualize in mind while reciting the stanzas.



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Birds and flowers, some of the favorite subjects of Qi Baishi (1863-1957), fit perfectly into the dimension of the fan leaf. Among his eleven pieces on offer, *Birds Perching on Pine Tree* (Lot 118, Estimate: RMB80,000-100,000/ US\$10,500-12,940 – *illustrated left*) and *Dragonfly and Butterfly* (Lot 98, Estimate: RMB100,000-120,000/ US\$12,940-15,525) are two particularly magnificent examples of Qi's exquisite skills attributed to his life-long pursuit for perfection, originality and longevity.

Another rare example in this collection is *Ducks in Spring River* by Xu Beihong (1895-1953) (Lot 113, Estimate: RMB120,000-180,000/ US\$15,535-23,285) that is yet another visual interpretation of poetic sentiments inspired by Su Shi, a Song Dynasty litterateur. Xu's good command of Western Realism made him eloquent in depicting the birds joyfully moving in the warm spring water.

Also on offer are exceptional works by modern Chinese masters including Li Kuchan, Li Keran and Zhang Daqian. *Changchun & Budiao* (Lot 242, Estimate: RMB2,000,000-2,500,000/ US\$258,735-323,415) are two rare albums of 48 leaves by twenty three important artists from the 1950s to 1970s including Shi Lu, Huang Zhou, Wu Zuoren, Huang Yongyu, Li Kuchan and Guan Shanyue. It was first published as 1979's *Forever Green - The 20th Anniversary of Mingpao* in Hong Kong. Though improvised and in small sizes, these leaves demonstrated the bonds between the masters, as well as their artistic depths and delicate styles.



(Detail)



Collectors in search of larger works by Li Kuchan (1899-1983) will not miss his scroll *Eagles and Pine Tree* that measures 143 x 357 cm (Lot 358, Estimate: RMB5,000,000-6,000,000/ US\$646,830-776,200 – *illustrated left*). Equally remarkable is Li's long and superb handscroll *Aquatic Creatures, Flowers and Birds* (Lot 213, Estimate: RMB1,500,000-2,000,000/ US\$194,050-258,735). This scroll is

an exceptional example of Li's bold style and was given to a poor Mongolian student as an instruction piece.

Other highlights in the sale include:

- *Reflection of the Society* (Lot 249, Estimate: RMB150,000-200,000/ US\$19,405-25,875), a rare 94-leaf comic strip by the Lingnan maestro Guan Shanyue(1912-2000) based on a novel reflecting the social reality in Hong Kong. This album was scheduled to be published in 1949, but has however been kept in private hands due to the abrupt closure of the publisher.
- *Landscape* by Li Keran (1907-1989) (Lot 311, Estimate: RMB700,000-900,000/ US\$90,560-116,430) illustrates the unrivalled beauty of the Yellow Mountain in Li's unmistakable brushstrokes.
- *Landscape* by Zhang Daqian (Lot 322, Estimate: RMB300,000-320,000/ US\$38,810-41,400) is an incarnation of the artist's pursuit for serenity, tranquility and freedom found in country life.



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