

Press Release

**CHRISTIE'S**

佳士得香港有限公司

## Immediate Release

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Contact: Victoria Cheung 852.2978.9919 vcheung@christies.com  
Dick Lee 852.2978 9966 dlee@Christies.com

### AN IMPERIAL COURT PAINTING BY GIUSEPPE CASTIGLIONE TO LEAD THE CLASSICAL PAINTINGS SALE AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG



Lang Shining (Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688-1768)  
*Deer in an Autumn Forest*  
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk  
121 x 64.7 cm  
Estimate on request

#### Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy

#### The Imperial Sale

30 May 2005

**Hong Kong** - The Spring auction of *Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy* to be held on 30 May will offer 236 important works by esteemed masters from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, of which 17 will be featured in *The Imperial Sale*. It also marks the first time that Christie's will stage the auction at the internationally-renowned Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The centerpiece is *Deer in an Autumn Forest* by Lang Shining (Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688-1768), the Italian Jesuit priest and court painter to three Qing Emperors – Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong (estimate on request). Nine deer, one stag and eight doe in an autumn forest are depicted,

Christie's Hong Kong Limited  
2203-5 Alexandra House, 16-20 Chater Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
tel 852 2521 5396 fax 852 2845 2646  
www.christies.com

foreshadowed by a massive pair of entwining pines. The painting carries with it eight collector's seals of the Qianlong Emperor, signifying that it was given the highest accolade. It was recorded in the Shiqu Baoji Xubian (Catalogue of Paintings and Calligraphy in the Qing Imperial Collection). The painting has also been examined by Nie Chongzheng, researcher and specialist in Qing court painting who wrote on this and confirmed its authenticity. Almost all paintings by Lang Shining were painted for court and they are all housed in either of the Palace Museums, Beijing and Taipei. It is indeed very rare for any Lang Shining painting of this high quality to appear in the market.

Another highlight is *White Heron on a Snow Covered Willow*, an anonymous painting of the Southern Song (13<sup>th</sup> century). This had been in various important Japanese collections and had been published often. The scholar Richard Barnhart discussed this painting in his book *Great Painters of the Great Ming*, and stated that 'everything in this painting suggest a Song date' (estimate: HK\$3,800,000-5,000,000/ US\$490,300-645,000).

Several important pieces from the Yuan dynasty will be offered. *Fishing in Green Depths* (estimate: HK\$5,500,000-6,000,000/US\$710,000-774,000) by the master Wang Meng (1309-1385) is a virtuoso display of the artist's individual techniques and vision. It was recorded in Ming and Qing catalogues, and was in the collection of the Ming collector Lu Yuan.

On offer is also an anonymous handscroll of *Sixteen Arhats* (estimate HK\$1,200,000-1,500,000/ US\$154,800-193,500) of the 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> Century. According to the colophons, the handscroll was in the collection of the Guangji Temple in Beijing for centuries. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it fell into the collection of the warlord Duan Qirui, and was then brought to the West by Duan's grand daughter.

Another excellent Yuan painting in the sale is *Landscape after Huang Gongwang* (estimate: HK\$800,000-1,000,000/ US\$103,200-129,000) by Huang Qian (14<sup>th</sup> Century). This handscroll was a gift to Zhang Daqian, a modern master painter, by his student. During the Qing dynasty, it was in the collection of the renowned collector Gao Shiqi, and was recorded in Gao's catalogues in the category "Permanent Collection – Treasure of the Highest Grade".

Of the Ming dynasty masters, a handscroll *Landscape in mist* (estimate HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$77,400-103,200) by Tang Yin (1470-1523) will be offered. It carries with it the colophons by Tang's contemporaries of the Ming, including Wen Peng and Zhou Tianqiu. This was also in Gao Shiqi's collection in the Qing, and subsequently in the collection of Liu Shu, and Zhang Daqian and his brother Zhang Shanzi.

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Also from the Ming dynasty is an album of three poems, each composed and written by Tang Yin (1470-1523) (estimate: HK\$500,000-700,000/ US\$64,500-90,300). Two of the poems were dedicated to Defu, and are recorded in *The Complete Poems of Tang Yin*. A painting by Tang, also dedicated to Defu, is now housed in the Shanghai Museum.

An unusual landscape by Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) is painted in the Mi Fu style, using very broad strokes and washes (HK\$150,000-200,000/ US\$19,400-25,800). Wen is renowned for his meticulous style, hence his paintings of a more 'impressionistic' style are very rare and highly valued. The sale will also feature a handscroll of poems by Wen which was written in large running standard script calligraphy (estimate: HK\$450,000-600,000/ US\$58,100-77,400). This was once in Mr. Li Qiyuan's Qunyu Zhai collection.

An array of exceptional pieces from the late Ming and early Qing will also be featured. One of them is a very long handscroll of flowers by Xu Wei (1521-1593) (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,200,000/ US\$129,000-154,800). The scroll depicts flowers of the four seasons and exhibits the eccentric and quirky style of the artist. Sixteen poems praising flowers were also written on the scroll.

Works of three of the 'Four Monks' will also be presented – an album of landscapes of Mount Huang (Huangshan) by Mei Qing (1623-1697) (estimate: HK\$400,000-500,000/US\$51,600-64,500); and two hanging scrolls by Bada Shanren (1626-1705), each estimated at HK\$250,000-300,000/US\$32,300-38,700 and each comprises an album leaf of calligraphy and one painting. A set of seven album leaves of fruit, flowers, and landscape comprising four paintings by Bada Shanren, and three by Shitao (1642-1707) which had been in Zhang Daqian's Dafengtang Collection (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,500,000/ US\$129,000-193,500) is a further highlight.

The six master painters of the early Qing are well represented. Among the noteworthy pieces is a large hanging scroll of *Landscape After Zhao Mengfu* by Wang Jian (1598-1677) (estimate: HK\$2,000,000-3,000,000/ US\$258,100-387,100), and a set of landscape album leaves painted by Wang Hui (1632-1717) after poetry by the Tang poet Lu You (estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,600,000/ US\$154,800-206,500). This was originally a set of sixteen leaves, but four leaves are now lost leaving six of ink and colour on paper, and another six on silk. The eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou are also richly represented.

An album of sixteen leaves of flowers was painted by Li Shan (1686-1756) for Zheng Banqiao, showing all of Li's consummate skill not easily seen in his usual works, and still carries a titleslip by Zheng (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,500,000/ US\$129,000-193,500). Of the three pieces by Hua Yan

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(1682-1756) offered in the sale, the most impressive one is a large hanging scroll of *Birds and Flowers*, focusing on a bird perched on a flowering crab-apple branch (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,200,000/ US\$129,000-154,800).

There is also a selection of thirteen pieces of paintings and calligraphy by Guangdong artists. Apart from well-known artists such as Lin Liang and Li Jian, there is also a massive calligraphy hanging scroll by the famous general Yuan Chonghuan (1584-1630) of the late Ming dynasty (estimate: HK\$150,000-200,000/ US\$19,400-25,800). Measuring over three metres long, it shows that besides being a great military man, Yuan also had great artistic abilities.

## **Pre-sale Exhibitions:**

Shanghai	Portman Ritz-Carlton	May 9 – 10
Beijing	St. Regis Beijing	May 12 -13
Taipei	Fubon Life Assurance Building	May 21 – 22
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	May 27 – 29

## **Auctions:**

Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy, 30 May at 10:00am

Imperial Sale, 30 May at 2:00pm

Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

*More information about Christie's sales of Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy & Imperial 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.*

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*Images available upon request*

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