

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Christie's Presents the Wonders of Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art in May

*Important Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art* sale featured in day-long series

***Important Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art***

*Christie's Hong Kong*

*Tuesday May 27, approx 3:15pm*

**Hong Kong** - Christie's Hong Kong Spring 2008 sale of *Important Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art* will be offered on May 27<sup>th</sup> as part of a day-long series of five sales devoted to the splendours of Chinese works of art. The sale features over 230 objects across a myriad of categories, tastes and price points, offering something for collectors both seasoned and novice, from superlative ceramics and striking bronzes to rare scholar's objects and important jades.



Leading the sale is an **exceptionally rare mallow-shaped 'numbered' Junyao flowerpot from the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century** (*image left, estimate upon request*). This elegant Jun ware flowerpot features an exceptional opalescent blue coloured glaze, making it one of the rarest examples of these splendid vessels. It is this remarkable blue colour that sets such Jun wares apart from all other Chinese ceramics, since the glaze could only be achieved by the most careful control of the preparation and firing. Most scholars agree that it is quite possible that these high-quality plant vessels were made for the Imperial court. They were greatly loved by the emperors of the Qing dynasty who not only admired them as

antiques, but used and displayed them in some of the most important buildings and gardens in the Inner Palace of the Forbidden City, as well as other areas that were used by the emperors as is visible in contemporaneous court paintings. While the majority of surviving vessels of this type have purple-toned glaze on their exteriors, vessels with beautiful opalescent blue glaze inside and out, such as the current flowerpot, are very rare. They are a testament to the remarkable skills of both the potter and the kiln-master, and have been revered by connoisseurs to the present day.

Other important ceramic highlights include **an extremely rare and important Ming dynasty iron-red and gilt-decorated reticulated *kinrande* ewer and cover** (*image right*, estimate: HK\$2,500,000-3,000,000 / US\$320,000-380,000). Enamelled wares embellished with gilt to resemble the appearance of rich brocade are known by the Japanese term, *kinrande* meaning ‘gold brocade’, which emphasises the visual similarities between the delicate gold decoration on vessels of this type, and the designs seen on fine brocades with woven designs in gold thread. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, items of this type were exported to Japan where they were highly valued, as the Japanese kilns did not start making porcelain until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and even then these ceramics were limited in numbers and localised in distribution. Although particularly popular in Japan, the Japanese were by no means the only foreign patrons to appreciate these opulent Chinese porcelains; indeed, they were greatly treasured by European aristocracy. The present ewer is particularly rare for several distinct elements: a reticulated peach-shaped panel enclosing peony sprigs and a high level of gilded decoration, both of which make this work especially prized to collectors.



Among the leading lacquer highlights is **a very rare cinnabar lacquer box and cover, 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century** (*image left*, estimate: HK\$5,000,000-6,000,000 / US\$640,000-770,000). This box is extremely rare as there do not appear to be any other lacquer carvings from this early period with such a prominent central dragon reserved on an uncluttered ground. Also of note is **a possibly unique 16<sup>th</sup> century, Ming dynasty, carved cinnabar lacquer double-gourd ewer and cover** (estimate: HK\$1,500,000-2,000,000 / US\$200,000-260,000) and **a *tixi* rectangular box and cover from the Yuan dynasty** (1279-1368) (estimate: HK\$700,000-900,000 / US\$90,000-120,000) that is rare not only for its pronounced curvilinear features rarely found on Chinese lacquer, but also for its rectangular form.

**A very rare Qing dynasty *tianhuang* boulder** is among the important scholar's objects offered (*image right*, estimate: HK\$3,500,000 – 4,500,000 / US\$450,000 – 580,000). *Tianhuang*, ‘Yellow Field,’ is one of the most treasured of all soapstone from the Shoushan region, Fujian province, and this work is particularly exceptional as it is rare to find *tianhuang* carvings of such extraordinarily large size.



The sale also features an exquisite selection of cloisonné enamel works of art. Among the works offered is **a large pair of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Qing dynasty cloisonné enamel pear-shaped ‘Hundred Deer’ vases** (*image right*, estimate: HK\$700,000-900,000 / US\$90,000-120,000). Although porcelain ‘hundred deer’ vases simply have deer in a landscape setting, these cloisonné examples include both deer and cranes – deer symbolizing both career advancement and a long life, while cranes are additional symbols of long life. The prancing deer are reference to the rebus where deer in Chinese is a

homophone for emolument or civil service salary; the ‘hundred deer’ therefore represent the ultimate success: a career in government service in imperial China.



Leading the selection of important jades is an **intricately decorated jadeite vase and cover**, late Qing dynasty/Republic period, early 20<sup>th</sup> century depicting a tall rocky outcropping surmounted by several Buddhist lions in different postures (*image right*, estimate: HK\$2,000,000 – 3,000,000 / US \$260,000-380,000). Another highlight is a **white jade vase and cover, Qianlong period** (1736-1795), that is noted for its exceptional pure milky-white tone (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,500,000 / US\$130,000-190,000).



Following the success of Christie’s sale of *The Imperial Wardrobe: Fine Chinese Costume and Textiles from the Linda Wrigglesworth Collection* in March in New York, Christie’s is pleased to offer a number of embroidered scrolls from this famed collection in Hong Kong this season. Of note is a Gu Family embroidered scroll (*image right*, estimate: HK\$500,000-700,000 / US\$64,000-90,000) showing a pair of mandarin ducks swimming along arched lotus flowers and flowering shrubs. The Gu Family’s embroideries were greatly admired by the leading artists of the day as they reflected the subtleties of classical paintings.

#### Auction:

#### Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art Sales:

Tuesday, May 27

*Magnificent Clocks for the Imperial Chinese Court from the Nezu Museum*  
*Elegance and Artistry: Treasures from a Private Collection*  
*The Imperial Sale*  
*Important Chinese Rhinoceros Horn Carvings from the Songzhutang Collection*  
*Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*

10:30am  
 11am  
 11:15am  
 2:30pm  
 3:15pm

*\*Note times are approx.*

#### Viewing:

Taipei Fubon Life Assurance Building  
 Hong Kong Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

May 17-18  
 May 22-26

**\*High resolution images, top lot information, and press releases for each of Christie’s Spring 2008**

**Chinese Works of Art sales can be downloaded from the following link:**

<http://cshk.myftp.org/Chinese%20Works%20of%20Art>

#### **About Christie’s**

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer’s premium*

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