

For Immediate Release

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POLYCHROME FIGURE OF A BODHISATTVA AND RARE JADE BEAKER TO LEAD THE SALE OF CHINESE ART

Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art September 19, 2006

New York – Ushering in Christie's Asia Week, the sale of *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* on September 19 will bring together nearly 450 works of art, including superb sculptures, bronzes, ceramics, furniture and paintings. Two magnificent and rare highlights of the sale include an early 2nd century B.C. jade beaker (estimate: \$500,000-600,000) formerly in collection of Stephen Junkunc III and a 12th century painted wood figure of a *Bodhisattva* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000) from the collection of Francisco Capelo. Among the private collections featured in the sale are the Estate of Ira and Nancy Koger and Property Formerly in the Collection of Winston F.C. Guest.

Buddhist Sculpture

The well-balanced selection of Buddhist sculpture is led by an extremely rare and impressive polychrome wood figure of a *bodhisattva* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), Jin dynasty (1115-1234). Formerly in a private Parisian collection since 1931, the sculpture likely represents *Avalokitesvara*, the most popular and benevolent of all *bodhisattvas*, deities that have forgone entrance into Nirvana until the time when all beings have attained enlightenment. The broad, corpulent figure is shown in princely guise, with long hair gathered up into an elaborate coiffure behind a tiara and splendidly attired in sumptuous silk scarves and gold jewelry befitting his regal heritage. The image displays the marked humanism of the day, reflecting an interest in sumptuous naturalism and movement. The eyes are inlaid in glass, effectively enhancing the sense of realism. A figure carved with virtually identical drapery and inscribed with a date corresponding to A.D. 1195 in the Royal Ontario Museum establishes a firm date for the manufacture of the present figure. The present *bodhisattva* also bears a remarkable similarity to one in the Cleveland Museum of Art, so much so that it is quite possible that the two may have come from the same temple. Additional Buddhist sculpture offered

includes a gilt-bronze figure of Buddha Sakyamuni, late 17th/early 18th century (estimate: \$100,000-150,000); a gilt-bronze figure of a Daoist Immortal, Ming dynasty (estimate: \$30,000-40,000); and a rare sandstone figure of a *bodhisattva*, Tang dynasty (estimate: \$20,000-30,000) which likely comes from the caves at Tianlongshan.

Jades

Gracious and elegant and carved from jade, the superb beaker is another top lot in the sale (estimate: \$500,000-600,000). Dating to the 2nd century B.C., this exceptionally rare and refined cup is one of only five known examples of this date and form, the most famous of which was excavated in 1983 from the tomb of Zhao Mei, the second king of the Nanyue State in Guangzhou in Southern China. The present vessel, which is dressed with a lavish gilt and silvered-bronze rim and painstakingly incised with exquisitely disposed abstract designs, comes from the renowned collection of Stephen Junkunc III, a revered American collector who had been collecting since the 1930's, and has been included in two seminal publications on archaic jades by the prominent Chinese art historians Alfred Salmony and Sueji Umehara .

Ceramics

A strong group of ceramics, particularly focused on the Ming dynasty, will also be offered. Among the highlights is an important and very rare early blue and white globular vase, Xuande period (1426-1435) (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), decorated with an exuberant, three-clawed dragon. The dragon is perhaps the most important motif in the Chinese ceramic decorative repertory, as it is symbolic of Imperial power. With its powerful central motif and superb execution, this vase belongs to a celebrated group of Imperial wares that may be considered among the finest of all Xuande porcelains, and has comparables in major museum collections, including the Palace Museum in Beijing. Slightly earlier in date is the blue and white 'grapevine' dish, Yongle period (1403-1425) (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), painted on the interior with a grape vine issuing from a large leaf and bearing further leaves and grapes. Grapes began to gain popularity as a motif on blue and white Chinese porcelain in the early 15th century and the introduction of such dishes into collections in Iran, India and Turkey would later lead to the emergence of the grape design on Isnik blue and white wares. Beautiful in its brightness and floral decoration is the yellow-ground blue and white dish, Hongzhi mark and of the period (1488-1505) (estimate: \$180,000-250,000). The choice of fruit and botanical motifs on this dish, besides being elegant and lush, also carried symbolic overtones: gardenias represent beauty; pomegranates fertility; persimmons riches and lotus purity. Extremely rare is the late 14th/early 15th century Longquan celadon and biscuit jar and cover (estimate: \$180,000-220,000). The generous baluster formed jar is decorated with two registers of eight carved panels left in the biscuit which burned orange in the firing in contrast to the surrounding celadon glaze. The eight panels depict the Eight Daoist Immortals crossing the sea amidst clouds.

Cloisonné and painted enamel

An early 15th century cloisonné enamel circular box and cover (estimate: \$140,000-180,000) is one of the highlights of this section of the sale. The cover is decorated with a large central peony blossom executed in red, blue, yellow and green, surrounded by buds and leaves. The high quality of the design expressed in the delicacy of the peony petals and their frilled edges is mirrored in contemporary wares in other materials including *kesi* (embroideries) and fine carved red lacquer. Also offered is a large cloisonné enamel charger decorated with a red dragon shown amidst clouds and encircled by swimming fish amid water weeds and rippling waves (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) and a pair of massive cloisonné enamel baluster jars and covers, Qianlong period (estimate: \$200,000-250,000).

The Collection of Winston F.C. Guest

Born in England in 1906 and named after his godfather and father's cousin Sir Winston Churchill, Winston Frederick Churchill Guest was raised in the company of great men. Many of the works selected for sale were purchased by Mr. Guest in the 1940's through the prominent Chinese art dealers Ralph M. Chait and C.T.Loo. Property Formerly in the Collection of Winston F.C. Guest features a pair of Imperial carved red lacquer panels, Qianlong period (estimate: \$150,000-180,000); a pair of large famille verte cylindrical vases, Kangxi period (estimate: \$50,000-70,000); and a famille verte vase of the same period (estimate: \$25,000-35,000) decorated with an unusual scene of ladies performing acrobatics on horseback.

Property from the Estate of Ira and Nancy Koger

Ira and Nancy Koger, started collecting more than six decades ago and their passion for the arts never ceased. They developed a taste for fine Chinese porcelain and English ceramics, 18th and 19th century English and American furniture and American impressionist paintings. Highlights of the Chinese art offered on September 19 include a rare pair of massive carved three-color lacquer *chun* circular covered boxes, Qianlong period (1736-1795) (estimate: \$60,000-80,000); a pale celadon-glazed carved dish, Yongzheng mark and of the period (estimate: \$20,000-30,000); and a rare pair of large 18th century aubergine-glazed *meiping* (estimate: \$20,000-30,000). Ira Koger was a real estate developer in Florida and the Southeast, who became renowned and revered for creating the concept of the office park.

Auction: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art

September 19 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

September 15 - 18

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More information about Christie's sale of *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.