

For Immediate Release

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RARE YUAN PAINTING LEADS CHRISTIE'S SALE OF CHINESE CERAMICS AND WORKS OF ART

Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art
An Important Yuan Painting from an American Private Collection
September 20, 2005



A large hunaghuali recessed-leg painting table
16th/17th century
Estimate: \$120,000-180,000



A blue and white
Persian-inscribed vase
Estimate: \$100,000-150,000

New York – The rare offering of an important Yuan painting by Wang Meng (circa 1309-1385) ‘Fishing in Green Depths’ formerly in the collection of Stephen Junkunc III (estimate: \$700,000-900,000) highlights the sale of *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* on September 20. One of the largest Chinese Works of Art sales ever held by Christie’s New York, the auction encompasses a broad range of collecting segments including textiles, furniture, lacquer, cloisonné enamel, sculpture, snuff bottles and ceramics, featuring the exquisite porcelains from Rodriguez Collection.

'Fishing in Green Depths' is a delicately executed painting by the famed painter Wang Meng who was active during the 14th century (estimate: \$700,000-900,000). Inscribed with a poem by the artist, the scroll also includes inscriptions by contemporaries of Wang Meng as well as a poem by Sui Chu, in which the last two lines speak of Meng turning into an old man with snow white brows, indicating that the painter was still alive when the inscription was written. Three collectors' seals are also visible, including one of Lu Yuan (1458-1526), a great collector with an excellent eye as almost all of the works that once were part of his collection are now housed in museums around the world.

An exquisite 16th/17th century huanghuali recessed-leg painting table, *bua'an* (estimate: \$120,000-180,000), executed with spare, economic lines, is referred to as a 'character one' table, due to its similarity in profile to the single horizontal stroke of that Chinese character. A counterbalance to the almost minimalist character of the table is offered by a magnificent zitan and nanmu three-railing bed from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) which shows extraordinary high relief carvings, intricately adapting the subjects of traditional Chinese painting into three-dimensional form.

Enamel wares have been gaining interest among many collectors over the past seasons and this sale offers a fine selection of cloisonné and painted enamel works. A stunning example is an Imperial painted enamel pear-shaped wine pot and cover, Yongzheng mark and of the period (1723-1735) (estimate: \$100,000-150,000). The design and shape of this ewer are very rare and most probably take their inspiration from a Western form. Like his predecessor Kangxi, the Yongzheng Emperor was open to learning about Western advancements in arts and science and objects like the present wine pot perfectly illustrates the happy marriage of Western design and Far Eastern craftsmanship.

Monumental scale and skilful carving find a perfect balance in the very rare large painted stucco head of Buddha from the Northern Song dynasty (1127-1279) (estimate: \$150,000-180,000). Formerly in a private Asian collection, the face is beautifully modeled with a well-defined mouth, a straight nose, crisply curved brows and heavily lidded eyes slightly open to reveal black glass pupils.

A very rare blue and white Persian-inscribed vase, Zhengde and of the period (1506-1521) from the estate of Guy Fairfax Cary, Jr. (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) brings an Islamic touch to the sale. The religious inscriptions can be found on each side of the square body of the vessel. The unusual form of this vase has most likely evolved from an Islamic shape and given the complexity of both the body and the design of the mouth, it is understandable that only few such objects have survived into the present day.

The Rodriguez Collection, formed primarily in the 1970s and 80s, offers a splendid array of 18th and 19th century monochromes as well as blue and white porcelain, and reflects the versatility of Chinese

potters in combining elegant form with both intense and delicate coloring. Two of the major highlights, both Imperial porcelains formerly in the renowned J. M. Hu Collection, represent the 18th century's pronounced interest in antiquity, in imitating famous wares of the Song dynasty (960-1279). One is the pale blue-glazed brush washer imitating Imperial *Ru* ware, the rarest and most coveted of Song ceramics (estimate: \$50,000-70,000). A *Ge*-style bottle vase borrows its shape from ancient bronzes and the remarkable glaze with the intentionally induced irregular crackle from Song *Ge* ware (estimate: \$150,000-250,000). Other highlights include a peachbloom-glazed brush washer, Kangxi mark and of the period (estimate: \$50,000-70,000); a miniature 'lotus bouquet' dish, Yongzheng mark and of the period (estimate: \$15,000-25,000); and a small Chenghua-style blue and white stem cup, Qianlong mark and of the period (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

To conclude, the sale also features snuff bottles including property from the estate of Martha Renk. Mrs. Renk was a beloved and enthusiastic collector who published numerous articles about her bottles. Her collection includes many fine and rare examples that display a wide variety of forms and materials. Highlights are an Imperial Beijing enamel 'European-subject' snuff bottle (estimate: \$15,000-20,000) and three rare Imperial inscribed agate snuff bottles (estimates ranging from \$18,000-35,000).

Auction: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art September 20 at 10 a.m.,
2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center September 15 - 19

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Images available on request

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

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.