

## For Immediate Release

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### AN EXQUISITE SELECTION OF HIMALAYAN ART HIGHLIGHTS THE INDIAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART SALE AT CHRISTIE'S

#### Indian and Southeast Asian Art Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art September 21, 2005



A polychromed stone stele of Mahalaka  
Tibet, 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century  
Estimate: \$80,000-100,000



An Imperial gold box and cover  
Vietnam, Nguyen Dynasty  
Estimate: \$40,000-60,000

**New York** – On September 21, Christie's New York offers a wide selection of sculpture, paintings, manuscript covers and ritual objects from India, Tibet, Cambodia, Vietnam and Mongolia in the sale of *Indian and Southeast Asian Art Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art*. Different epochs, religions and styles coalesce, blending the ancient with the strikingly modern, offering spirituality and serenity as well as passion and boldness. The afternoon session of modern and contemporary Indian art presents one of the most impressive groups of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian paintings and sculpture ever to appear on the market (*see separate release*), led by a spectacular highlight, Tyeb Mehta's captivating *Mahisasura* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000).

The Indian sculpture section presents works from the estate of R. W. Leybourne Callaghan, also known as “Callaghan of India.” A notable *bon vivant* with the Indian jet set, he was a managing director for Roche India and the Honorary Consul for Ireland in Bombay. Highlights from this section include an animated and finely carved buff sandstone stele of Shiva and Parvati (estimate: \$40,000-60,000) as well as small red sandstone bust of a celestial female depicted with exquisite detail and a coy expression (estimate: \$8,000-10,000)

A rare white marble figure of Ganesha, India, 12<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$60,000-80,000) embodies one of the most cherished deities in the Hindu pantheon. Worshipped for auspicious beginnings, success in undertakings and the removal of all obstacles, Ganesha is also the deity of education, knowledge, wisdom, literature and the arts. The smoothly polished luminescent marble expresses the rotund form of the elephant deity beautifully.

The Liao Family Collection, comprising of 42 lots, features high quality Indian, Himalayan and Mongolian sculpture. An exceptional piece is the zitan figure of Vajradhara, Tibeto-Chinese, 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). The precious zitan wood was generally reserved for Imperial use. A very prominent and striking sculpture is the portrait bronze figure of Marpa, Tibet, 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$60,000-80,000). Marpa, a renowned figure in the Tibetan religious history, was a founder of the Kagyu lineage through his most famous disciple, yogi Milarepa. Other notable pieces in the collection are a large bronze figure of Buddha Shakyamuni, Tibet, 15<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) and a gilt bronze figure of Avalokiteshvara, Mongolia, School of Zanabazar, late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$25,000-35,000)

Two exceptional Vietnamese gold objects have a fascinating history. The Imperial gold dragon basin (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) and the Imperial gold box and cover (estimate: \$40,000-60,000) both arrived in France after the fall of the Imperial city of Hue and the formation of French Indochina in 1887. The basin and box were acquired by Raphael Marty, a very successful entrepreneur and head of the E. Garretta trading company in Beijing since 1867. According to the catalogue of the sale of his estate in 1920, the two objects were made for personal use of the Empress of Annam. The basin, decorated with a vigorous five-clawed dragon in pursuit of a flaming pearl, is inscribed on the reverse stating the maker’s name by Imperial Command and the weight in gold, while the box and cover are finely worked around in repoussé.

The cover of the catalogue illustrates a black stone stele of Mahakala, Tibet, 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$80,000-100,000) from the Robert Hatfield Ellsworth collection. There are few extant stone sculptures from such an early phase of Tibetan art. Bearing traces of original polychromy, the stele is well preserved. Published in the 1996 catalogue of the seminal Tibetan exhibition, *Wisdom and*

