

*For Immediate Release*

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*ARCHAIC BRONZE WINE VESSEL TO LEAD THE CHINESE SALE*

*Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*

*September 18, 2003*

*New York – On September 18, two sales of Chinese art will be presented at Christie’s New York. The day will start with the auction of The Gangolf Geis Collection of Classical Chinese Furniture (separate release available) and will be followed by the sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art. Led by a magnificent archaic bronze wine vessel, the sale will also include exquisite examples of pottery, porcelain and works of art as well as Chinese and Southeast Asian ceramics from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Breece III.*

*A spectacular bronze ritual wine vessel and cover, Guang (estimate: \$1,800,000–2,500,000) from the Shang dynasty (12<sup>th</sup> century) presides over the sale. Vessels of this form were used as wine containers for sacrificial rituals performed by aristocrats during the Shang dynasty. The lid is magnificently decorated with a dragon’s head bearing ferocious serrated teeth and bottle-shaped horns, its serpentine body curling downward towards the handle. The body is decorated with stylized birds, kui dragons and taotie masks. The finely detailed casting combined with an attractive patina and a strong sculptural form make this vessel a gem of early Chinese bronze casting.*

*A massive sancai-glazed pottery figure of a Bactrian camel, Tang dynasty (estimate: \$300,000–400,000) is another highlight of the sale. The Tang elite placed sculpture in their tombs as a sign of wealth as well as to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. Bactrian camels had been imported from Central Asia as early as the Han dynasty and their ability to travel long distances under dire circumstances made them an irreplaceable mode of transport for trade along the Silk Route. The*

*camel is rendered in a very realistic way, with bulging sacks and various provisions for the journey all set atop pack boards. The wonderful attention to details, including the hair lining the front of the neck and the expressive eyes, imbue the beast with a sense of life. This striding camel, with its dramatically thrown back head and carefully rendered saddle and packs, is characteristic of the realism of the best Tang sculpture.*

*Another sculpture dating to the Tang dynasty is the sancai-glazed pottery figure of a lion (estimate: \$120,000–150,000), modeled in a rare, playful stance. Its head is turned and hind leg is raised, apparently in an effort to scratch the side of its chin in a very naturalistic and rather charming way.*

*Previously from the Collections of Dr. Arthur M. Sackler is a rare gilded stone figure of a Buddha (estimate: \$250,000–350,000) from the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577). The dating of this piece was re-evaluated after the discovery of a cache of similar Buddhist sculptures in 1996 at the site of a former Buddhist temple in Qingzhou City. Such Northern Qi sculptures are characterized by their elegant simplicity and quiet spiritual presence.*

*One of the most delicate and refined objects of the sale is the Kangxi claire-de-lune brush washer, tangle xi (Kangxi six-character mark in underglaze blue and of the period, 1662–1722) (estimate: \$80,000–100,000). Claire-de-lune is one of the most treasured Qing glazes and was reserved exclusively for Imperial porcelains. This dreamy blue glaze was used for the ‘Eight Great Numbers’, the eight classic vessels made for the writing table. Such vessels are more commonly found covered in a soft peach bloom glaze, and the claire-de-lune examples are extremely rare.*

*A chance encounter led Mr. Breece upon the collecting path and what began as a curiosity transformed into a passion. Today the Mr. and Mrs. James Breece III Collection of Chinese Ceramics includes representative pieces spanning the history of Chinese ceramics. The sale offers several items from the collection such as a cizhou painted sgraffiato pillow from the Song Dynasty (960–1270) (estimate: \$20,000–25,000); a fine wucai-decorated dragon and phoenix bowl bearing the Qianlong seal mark and dating to the period (1736–1795) (estimate: \$15,000–25,000); a 15<sup>th</sup> century Thai Sankampaeng brown and olive-glazed baluster jar (estimate: \$15,000–25,000) and a blue and white brushpot, bitong, bearing the Kangxi six-character mark in underglaze blue and of the period (1662–1722) (estimate: \$20,000–30,000). Also included is a very rare ‘Master of the Rocks’ blue and white dish (estimate: \$20,000–30,000). This Kangxi mark and period dish is finely painted in shades of underglaze blue on the interior with a scholar and his attendant walking towards a lake side while the exterior depicts a pavilion set in a mountain range. The ‘Master of the Rocks’ style is characterized by a dense combination of dark outlines and fine parallel texture strokes.*

*Auction: Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*

*September 18 at approx. 11  
a.m. and 2 p.m.*

*Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center*

*September 12 - 17*

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*Images available on request  
Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

*More information about Christie's sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art 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.*