

For Immediate Release

August 22, 2003

Contact: *Benedetta Roux*

212.636.2680

broux@christies.com

A EUROPEAN PASSION FOR AN ASIAN CRAFT

The Gangolf Geis Collection of Classical Chinese Furniture

September 18, 2003

New York – On September 18, Christie’s New York will offer the private collection of classical Chinese furniture, brought together by Gangolf Geis, a European collector who spent most part of his adult life in Asia. The collection consists of 70 lots, and reflects in an evocative way the daily life of the upper classes of 17th and 18th century China yet these pieces fit readily into any contemporary environment. Mostly furniture, the collection also offers a fine selection of smaller items and scholar’s objects. It is expected to realize between \$2 million and \$2.8 million.

Mr. Geis and his wife moved to Hong Kong in the late 1970s and fairly soon he started to discover the many artisans’ studios and shops scattered around Hollywood Road. As carpentry had been part of his family history, his attention was particularly focused on the furniture makers and he was fascinated by the exquisite quality of their craft. The ingenious joinery, the beautiful lines, the exotic woods and the combination of all these elements that would give birth to fabulous pieces of furniture mesmerized him and after having observed and pondered and learned for some time, he became a collector. As the means grew, the collection grew and Gangolf Geis emerged as a passionate collector with a gargantuan desire to find great pieces and to share them with family and friends, to cherish them and to live with them. Always exploring foreign territory, Mr. Geis has since ventured into other areas of art collecting and feels time has come for other people to take on custody of these pieces and to treat them with the respect and care they deserve. As all these pieces have once crossed his path, they will now move on to encounter the next stage of their destiny.

A highlight of the sale is the pair of carved huanghuali yoke-back armchairs, sichutouguanmaoyi, 17th century (estimate: \$130,000–180,000). The chairs show refined carvings representing auspicious animals and are probably part of a set of eight or twelve, all made by the same studio. Of superb elegance and grace, these chairs expose the one quality Chinese furniture is so highly admired for: the unassuming easiness in combining simple functionality with ravishing beauty.

Another rare pearl is the huanghuali rectangular table, banzhuo, 16th/17th century (estimate: \$130,000–180,000). This table displays an intricate decoration that gives it an almost sacred appeal. Unusual features appear such as the round section legs with cabriole tops, the diagonal dragon spandrels and the slim 'lotus leaf waist'. Only two other tables are known to exist with the same characteristics: one is currently in the Shanghai Museum and another example is exhibited at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

A fine huanghuali narrow corner-leg table, tiaoji, 16th/17th century (estimate: \$100,000–150,000) reminds one again of the excellent materials and perfect proportions used in classical Chinese furniture making. The single plank top terminates in small flanges that are supported at the corners on legs of square section and square section 'giant's arm' braces, ending in low hoof feet.

From a slightly later period and created closely following the style and techniques of Ming furniture, is a pair of huanghuali square corner cabinets, fangjiaogui, mid 18th century (estimate: \$120,000–150,000). Also 18th century is a zitan lattice-sided table, tiaozhuo (estimate: \$60,000–70,000) with legs carved in low relief with subtle ruyi-fungus at the corners of each foot.

*Auction: The Gangolf Geis Collection of
Classical Chinese Furniture*

September 18 at 10 a.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

September 12 – 17

###

Images available on request ~ Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about Christie's sale The Gangolf Geis Collection of Classical Chinese Furniture 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.