

For Immediate Release

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**EXQUISITE CHINESE CERAMICS FROM THE ROBERT CHANG
COLLECTION TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG**



An Imperial famille rose *Guanyuan* bowl
Qianlong mark and of the period (1736-1795)
11.3 cm. diam.
Estimate on request

**Jade Shears and Shimmering Feathers - Imperial Chinese Ceramics from the Robert Chang Collection
28 November 2006**

Hong Kong - Christie's is honored to have been entrusted with the spectacular third and concluding sale of *Jade Shears and Shimmering Feathers - Imperial Chinese Ceramics from the Robert Chang Collection* to be held on 28 November 2006 as part of ongoing sales marking Christie's 20 years in Hong Kong. The estimated sale total is over HK\$160 million/ US\$20 million.

Over the past 40 years, Mr. Chang amassed an unrivalled personal collection which was published and exhibited in its entirety at Christie's London in 1993.

The sale, fittingly comprising 20 exquisite pieces, follows on from the successful sales of Mr Chang's collection in November 1999 and October 2000 which were an immense success establishing several world records for Qing porcelain.

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Pola Antebi, Senior Vice President & Specialist Head of the Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art Department, Christie's Hong Kong, said: "We are very honored to be conducting the third sale of such a distinguished collection. Comprised of the finest Imperial ceramics, the collection reflects Mr Chang's highly sophisticated taste and connoisseurship."

"I have gained great satisfaction and enjoyment from collecting these ceramics. It is now the appropriate time for me to pass on these pieces on to other collectors who will appreciate them as much as I have," said Robert Chang.

Celebrating his 80th birthday this year, Robert Chang, a legendary dealer and collector, continues to be one of the most influential and highly respected figures in the world of Chinese art. Since coming to Hong Kong in 1949, retaining his distinctive discerning Shanghainese taste, Robert Chang has been at the forefront of a generation of dealers whose expertise and business acumen have helped develop Hong Kong into the international centre for Chinese art as it is today.

Taking the centre-stage is an extremely rare Imperial famille rose *Guyuexuan* bowl bearing the reign mark of the Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) (Estimate on Request). The finely potted bowl is enamelled to the exterior in two shades of pink, yellow, green brown and black with graceful swallows in flight beside a flowering apricot tree. The pair of swallows is believed to suggest a rebus which refers to the passing of Imperial examinations. The other side of the bowl bears a ten-character poetic inscription bowl in praise of the swallows. It is the only existing example in private hands; its pair is in the Percival David Foundation in London.



(Detail)

Scholars identify this type of Imperial porcelain of the highest quality as being in the *guyuexuan* style, for which the exquisite designs are finely painted in delicate enamel colours, accompanied by seals and poems in *caoshu* or 'grass script' calligraphy. The technical excellence and refined painting exemplifies the high period of porcelain manufacture of the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods of 18th century and is equally representative of Robert Chang's own sophisticated taste. The bowl also has the two important attributes of being in superb condition and having impeccable provenance. It was once in the famous American collection of the Woolworth heiress, Barbara Hutton, one of the richest women in the world.

The pieces in the sale are remarkable for representing the best examples of each of the diverse periods and styles associated with the high periods of Chinese porcelain production. Of particular note is a highly important celadon glazed double-gourd vase, with a Qianlong mark and of the period (1736-1795), moulded with archaistic dragons around the body



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(Estimate: HK\$8,000,000-12,000,000/ US\$1,000,000-1,500,000). It is an outstanding example of the effect that could be achieved by using intaglio decoration on monochrome porcelain to create two differing shades of green from the same glaze. The dense archaistic designs on the domed body and upper bulb are crisply accentuated using this method.

The earliest piece in the sale is a rare numbered narcissus bowl from the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) (Estimate: HK\$3,800,000-4,800,000/ US\$480,000-600,000) designed with a band of fifteen bosses applied above the base and supported on three *nyi* feet. The vessel is covered in an even unctuous purple glaze to the exterior while the interior is of a soft lavender blue tone. The base is inscribed with the numeral *si* (four) which denotes the specific size of the bulb bowl. This type of bowl is often described as a 'drum-nail' bowl, as the bosses symmetrically spaced in relief around the rim recall the pegs used to tighten the skin stretched on top of a drum to change the pitch.

A beautifully painted blue and white 'grapes dish' of the Yongle period (1403-1424) (Estimate: HK\$4,800,000-5,800,000/ US\$600,000-750,000) bring us into the beginning of the Ming dynasty. The grapes, an unusual fruit in China, painted in particularly rich tones of cobalt blue reflect the strong influence of the preceding Yuan dynasty and its trade links with the Middle-East.

A vivid yellow-ground and underglaze blue 'gardenia' dish of the Hongzhi period (1488-1505) (Estimate: HK\$4,800,000-6,000,000/ US\$600,000- 770,000) combines a striking combination of colours with bold painting in a design that originated somewhat earlier in the 15th century during the Chenghua reign but continued throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. The central leafy gardenia branch is encircled around the well by pomegranate, grapes, persimmon and lotus.

The Qing dynasty is often associated with very elaborate forms and dense decoration, but equally noteworthy are the beautifully subtle Imperial monochromes. A peacock-feather-glazed moonflask of the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (Estimate: HK\$8,000,000-10,000,000/ US\$1,000,000-1,300,000) is a breathtaking example of the technical brilliance of the 18th century. The simple plain flask-form of the vessel is wonderfully complemented by the thick textured glaze which subtly alternates between pale turquoise and deep aubergine tones, the colours intermingling and overlapping to form the very distinctive 'peacock-feather' design.

Also on offer is a very rare blue and white oviform 'dragon' vase bearing the reign mark of Kangxi (1662-1722) (Estimate: HK\$5,500,000-6,500,000/ US\$700,000-800,000). Again of a simple elegant form the vase has a tall body with a rounded shoulder, painted in brilliant shades of bright blue with two powerful scaly five-clawed dragons. Most blue and white 'dragon' vases of this type are unmarked. Those that bear the Kangxi mark, as in this case are particularly rare and highly sought-after.

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A pair of famille rose turquoise-ground double-gourd vases of the Jiaqing period (1796-1820) (Estimate on Request) is an excellent example of porcelain produced by the official kilns in the taste of the Imperial court at the end of the 18th Century. Each vase has a short cylindrical neck while the lower gourd is enamelled with a four-headed lotus scroll below five bats representing the Five Blessings: longevity, riches, health, a natural death and love of virtue.

Pre-sale exhibitions

London, *Christie's London*
7-12 July

New York, *Christie's New York*
15-18 September

Shanghai, *Portman Ritz Carlton*
1-2 November

Hangzhou, *Hyatt Regency*
5-6 November

Beijing, *St. Regis*
8-9 November

Taipei, *Fubon Life Assurance Building*
18-19 November

Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre*
24-27 November

Auction:

Jade Shears and Shimmering Feathers - Imperial Chinese Ceramics from the Robert Chang Collection
28 November 2006, 10:00am

Grand Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

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Images available upon request

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Christie's is the world's leading auction house, a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers nearly 1,000 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from US\$200 to over US\$80 million. Christie's has 90 offices in 30 countries and 16 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Mumbai, Dubai and the branded sale in Beijing. In 2005 Christie's annual global sales increased 38% to US\$3.2 billion, the highest total in company history and propelling the auction house into global market leadership.