

For Immediate Release

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FROM COURT REFINEMENT TO MODERN ABSTRACT



A large ceramic vase by Matsui Kosei (1927-2003)
Estimate: £8,000-10,000

Japanese Art and Design

Christie's King Street

8 November 2006 at 10:30 am & 2:30 pm, viewing 3-8 November

London – Spanning from the 14th to the 20th century, Christie's London sale of **Japanese Art and Design** on 8 November 2006 will feature over 460 lots of lacquer, netsuke, ceramics, bronzes and works of art, including a unique collection of lacquer from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts sold to benefit future acquisitions. The collection has many pieces from well known 19th century provenances including William Sturgis Bigelow (d.1926); estimates range from £700 to £5,000.

Much of the early collection of the Boston Museum was acquired by a remarkable man, William Sturgis Bigelow. A committed Buddhist who spent from 1884 to 1888 in Japan, Bigelow became eminent in the field of Japanese art studies and upon his return to Boston in 1889, presented the museum with several thousand Japanese antiquities.

Widely admired today as it was in Bigelow's time, the collection includes lacquer dating from the 14th to the late 19th centuries. The beauty and variety of Japanese lacquer, particularly the gold and coloured *maki-e* of the Muromachi (1396-1604), Edo (1604-1867) and Meiji (1867-1912) periods are highly desired by collectors and this group includes a *kego* (incense box), Muromachi period (14th-15th century) (estimate: £1,000-1,500); a rare *suzuribako* (writing box) attributed to Igarashi Doho I, Edo

period (late 17th century) (estimate: £5,000-8,000) and a pair of footed boxes, Edo period (late 18th century-early 19th century) (estimate: £4,000-6,000).

The sale also features two fine European collections of *inro* dating from the Edo period in the late 17th century to the Meiji period in the late 19th century; estimates range from £1,000 to £20,000. The collections include a number of pieces by well known artists such as Jokusai, Kanshosai, and Zeshin including a single-case *inro* depicting a teahouse (estimate: £15,000-18,000). Shibata Zeshin (1807 - 1891) was a pupil of Koma Kansai II from the age of eleven and also studied painting under Suzuki Nanrei and Okamoto Toyohiko. He was one of the very few artists to paint in lacquer on paper and was the primary lacquerer of the 19th century.

Among other works of art and lacquer is a rare Negoro type lacquer box and cover from the Kamakura period (14th century) (estimate: £35,000-40,000) which is believed to have contained Buddhist sutras (religious teachings or sermons).

The samurai culture with its splendid swords and sword fittings are highlighted by a private European collection of *tsuba* from a nobleman (estimates from £500 to £3,000) and a remarkable gold mounted *Koto Aikuchi* by Bizen Kuni Ju Osafune Harumitsu, Muromachi period (early 16th century) which is estimated between £60,000 to £80,000. Used to cut and stab upwards through the gaps in armour, this *tanto* is an example of the finest Bizen work of the period.

The success in the July sale in London of modern Japanese art has begun to forge a new area of collecting in the Japanese auction market and Christie's is pleased to offer a further selection of works from artists such as Yaichi Kusube (1897-1894), Kosei Matsui (1927-2003) and Shinobu Kawase (b.1950), including a large coloured ceramic vase by Matsui Kosei (1927-2003) who was designated a Living National Treasure in 1993 (estimate: £8,000-10,000). Kosei was famous as a master of *Neriage*, a labour-intensive technique whereby different coloured clays are combined, rolled out, cut and reassembled.

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Images available on request

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

Notes to Editors

CHRISTIE'S ASIAN ART WEEK SALE DATES;

Christie's King Street:

- Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Including Export Art, 7 November 2006 at 10.30am & 2pm
- Japanese Art and Design, 8 November 2006 at 10.30am & 2.30pm

Christie's South Kensington

- Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles, 10 November 2006 at 10.30am