

*For Immediate Release*

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Contact: Victoria Cheung    852.2978.9919    [vcheung@christies.com](mailto:vcheung@christies.com)  
Carrie Chow    852.2978.9966    [cchow@christies.com](mailto:cchow@christies.com)

**CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG TO OFFER SUPERB CLASSICAL CHINESE  
PAINTINGS AND CALLIGRAPHY**

*Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy*

*26 October 2003*

*Hong Kong – A highly important handscroll comprising correspondence by eight officials of the Northern Song Dynasty (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century) is certain to be the highlight of Christie's Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy sale in Hong Kong on 26 October. Also included is a superb selection of works by pre-eminent Chinese artists from the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (11<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century).*

*Song and Yuan Masters*

*A very rare and extremely important handscroll offered is that of correspondence by eight Northern Song scholar officials (estimate: HK\$4,000,000-5,000,000/ US\$516,100-645,000). All eight calligraphers represented in this piece held high official positions in the Northern Song court. They include Wang Anli (1035-1096), Su Song (1020-1101), Fan Zuyu (1041-1098), ; Li Shiyong (early 12<sup>th</sup> century), Ye Qingchen (? – circa 1051); Zeng Bu (1036-1107); Zhang Shunmin (circa 1034-1100), and Kong Wuzhong (1041-1097). Apart from one or two pieces of calligraphy by each of Ye Qingcheng, Zeng Bu and Zhang Shunmin, all housed in the Taipei Palace museum, the calligraphy in this scroll may be the only extant examples of works by the other five scholars.*

*Another rarity is a segment of the Sutra of Buddha Names from the late Tang to Five Dynasties period. This segment carries the collectors' seals of Xiang Yuanbian (1525-1590), An Qi (1683-after 1742), and Pan Shicheng (19<sup>th</sup> century), meaning that it has been in circulation in the 16<sup>th</sup>*

century before Cave 17 in Dunhuang was discovered and such old sutras became more widely available (estimate: HK\$200,000-250,000/ US\$25,800-38,700).

Of the Song are several important paintings, the long handscroll *Carrying a Qin to Visit a Friend* (previously attributed to the Southern Song master Ma Yuan, late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> century), the hanging scroll of *Herding in Winter* by Wang Zao, and the hanging scroll of the Monk Hui'ke by the Southern Song monk Muqi (Fachang, ? – circa 1281). All these pieces were previously in private collections in Japan, and each is representative of the development in painting styles and techniques of its time. The Ma Yuan scroll show both landscape and figure painting evolution into a very mature form (estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$77,400-103,200), while Muqi shows his individualism in painting the Chan monk Hui'ke with a sleeping tiger using splashed ink and without concern with outlining (estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,800,000/ US\$154,800-193,500). Wang Zao is a little known Song painter, recorded in art history as an 'adept painter of cows and horses'. The composition, style, and in particular, the brush strokes, all confirm that this is indeed a Song piece by a very able albeit unrecognised painter (estimate: HK\$800,000-1,000,000/ US\$103,200-129,000).

Figure painting developments are also clearly seen in the album of six round fan leaves, *Historical Personages*, from the Yuan dynasty (estimate: HK\$1,400,000-1,800,000/ US\$180,600-232,300). These six unsigned pieces have been attributed to the artist Liu Guandao (active second half of 13<sup>th</sup> century) by the late Qing connoisseur Wu Hufan. There are in fact another four such fan leaves housed in the Palace Museum, Beijing which form part of this set. The present album of six leaves have been discussed and firmly ascribed a Yuan dating by the scholar Ellen Johnston Liang in her article, *Six Late Yuan Dynasty Figure Paintings*.

### *Ming Masters*

Works by the four Ming masters, Shen Zhou (1427-1509), Tang Yin (1470-1553), Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) and Qiu Ying (circa 1494-1552) can all be seen in the autumn sale. Shen Zhou's painting of *Cockscomb and Hen* is a muted rendition (using only ink and red cinnabar) of the artist's pet, as can be read from the poem inscribed on the painting (estimate: HK\$250,000-300,000/ US\$32,300-28,700). Tang Yin's painting, *Enjoying the Evening Breeze on a Fishing Boat*, is typical of his striking style – painting a huge pine tree that shadows a finely painted fishing boat peopled with elegant pleasure seekers (estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$77,400-103,200). There are several paintings by Wen Zhengming, but of note is his handscroll of calligraphy, writing poems he has composed (estimate: HK\$400,000-600,000/ US\$51,600-77,400). This was in the Qing Imperial collection, carrying collection seals of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795), recorded in the *Shiqu Baoji* (Catalogue of Paintings and Calligraphy in the Qing Imperial Collection). Qiu Ying painted the handscroll *Pavilion of the Inebriated Elders*

*using ink and light colours to depict the landscape famously described in Ouyang Xiu's poem of the same name. Wang Guxiang (1501-1568) wrote the poem in running script calligraphy that accompanies the painting. A collaborative work such as this exemplifies the close association of artists in the flourishing Wu school of this period (estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$77,400-103,200).*

*Dong Qichang wrote an entire series of calligraphic scrolls, each in the style of ancient masters. The autumn sale includes two such scrolls from this, Dong's studio 'Xihong tang' series. Scroll numbered six is written after Tang and Five Dynasties masters Yan Zhengqing, Xu Jihia, Yang Ningshi (estimate: HK\$200,000-250,000/ US\$25,800-32,300), and scroll numbered seven is written after two of the Song masters, Cai Xiang and Su Shi (estimate: HK\$250,000-300,000/ US\$32,300-38,700). Both scrolls were in the collection of Wu Hufan, and each carries an index and colophon by Wu.*

#### *Qing Masters*

*The untrammelled style of Bada Shanren (Zhu Da, 1626-1705) can be seen in three hanging scrolls; two scrolls each comprises an album leaf of calligraphy and one leaf of painting (each estimated at HK\$250,000-300,000/ US\$32,300-38,700), and the third scroll of a Myna Bird, Flowers and Rock (estimate: HK\$800,000-1,000,000/ US\$103,000-129,000). Here, birds are humanised with personalities that can be gleaned from their eyes, while rocks and narcissus are never common daily objects. Xiang Shengmo (1597-1658), the grandson of the great Ming connoisseur and collector Xiang Yuanbian (1525-1590) was an accomplished painter. In his album of landscapes, each of the paintings is accompanied by poetry composed and written by Xiang in various scripts (estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$77,400-103,200). The album has been collected and recorded by both Liang Zhangju (1775-1849) and Pang Yuanji (1864-1949), and carries a total of thirty-one colophons by famous collectors and connoisseurs of the Qing dynasty. Also of the late Ming is a massive hanging scroll measuring over ten feet long by Sheng Maoye, Travelling in the Winter (estimate: HK\$400,000-600,000/ US\$51,600-77,400). Strong and bold brushstrokes are used to describe the harsh wintry forest through which travellers are seen.*

*The sale also includes a pair of very rare and impressive six panelled screens painted by Shen Quan (1682 —circa 1760). One screen is of cranes, signifying longevity, and the other of deer, the symbol of prosperity and achievements. Painted in 1750 using strong vibrant colours in typical Shen Quan's extravagant style, this pair of screens has been discussed and written about by various Shen Quan scholars (estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,500,000/ US\$154,800-193,500). The Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou are represented by Zheng Xie (1693-1765), most notably by his set of four hanging scrolls of Bamboo and Rock (estimate: HK\$600,000-700,000/ US\$77,400-90,300); Gao Qipei (1660-1734), who painted with his fingers instead of a brush, can be seen in several works. There is*

*a small gem by Huang Shen (1687 – circa 1770), an album of various subjects that showcases his versatility in subject matter, and also displays his remarkable skill in spatial composition as well as the control of ink and colours (estimate: HK\$200,000–300,000/ US\$25,800–38,700).*

#### *Imperial Paintings and Calligraphy*

*The Imperial section has nine pieces, six of which had been in Emperor Qianlong's collection. Most noteworthy are the two Song pieces, a handscroll of two poems attributed to the Song master calligrapher Mi Fu (1051–1107), and an anonymous landscape handscroll attributed to Yan Wengui (circa 967–1044). The Mi Fu piece is stated to be written by him when drunk, and carries collectors' seals from the Yuan dynasty (1271–1367) downwards (estimate: HK\$1,000,000–1,500,000/ US\$129,000–193,500). The anonymous landscape carries a collector's seal of the Yuan Princess, Xiangge Ceji, (Princess Dachang, circa 1283–1331), perhaps the most famous and important woman collector in Chinese art history. It was also in the Ming emperor Hongwu's collection, and eventually passed into Emperor Qianlong's possession. Throughout the ages, this piece has been considered one of the very few extant works by Yan Wengui, and modern scholars such as Yang Renkai and Xu Bangda have discussed this and reached the same conclusion (estimate: HK\$400,000–550,000/ US\$129,000–193,500).*

#### *Pre-sale Exhibitions:*

<i>Shanghai</i>	<i>9 –10 October</i>	<i>Portman Ritz–Carlton</i>
<i>Beijing</i>	<i>12 – 13 October</i>	<i>The St. Rigis Beijing</i>
<i>Taipei</i>	<i>18 – 19 October</i>	<i>Taipei Metro</i>
<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>24 – 25 October</i>	<i>JW Marriott Hotel</i>

#### *Auction:*

*Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy, 26 October at 12:30 pm,  
JW Marriott Hong Kong*

*More information about Christie's sale of Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy 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.*

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*Images available on request*

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