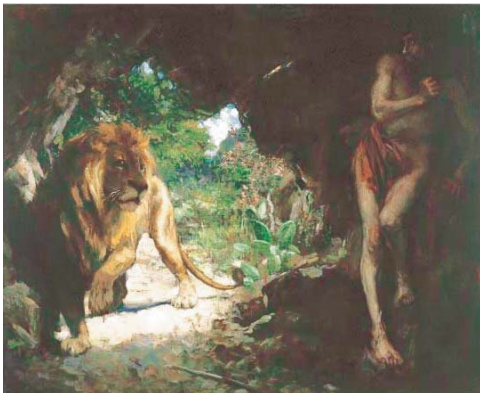


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**EXCEPTIONAL 20th CENTURY CHINESE ART ON OFFER AT CHRISTIE'S
HONG KONG AUTUMN SALE**



Xu Beihong (1895-1953)
Slave and Lion
oil on canvas
123.3 x 152.8 cm.
painted in 1924
estimate on request

**20th Century Chinese Art
26 November 2006**

In conjunction with the 20th anniversary of Christie's Hong Kong, the *20th Century Chinese Art* auction to be held on 26 November will offer more than 180 superb and very rare works by some of the most celebrated modern Chinese masters, including Xu Beihong, Chu Teh-Chun, Zao Wou-ki and Wu Guanzhong, all of whom played key roles in the artistic reforms in modern China.

The star lot of the sale is *Slave and Lion* by Xu Beihong (1895-1953) (estimate on request). A rare work, *Slave and Lion* is one of the very few so far discovered that dates from the artist's early 1920s stay in Berlin. It exhibits a masterly sense of classical refinement, maturity and depth.

Slave and Lion depicts a story set during the Roman Empire, in which a slave, Androcles, gave aid to a lion whose paw was hurt by a thorn. He later faced the same lion in the cruel games of the Roman

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amphitheatre. Rather than a bloody battle between man and lion, it turned into a scene of reunion. The Roman emperor, so moved by this touching scene, decided to free Androcles.

Xu's unique style that stems from his solid foundation in sketching technique is best seen in this superb painting. His ability to sketch deftly in both ink and oils has enabled him to create accurate, detailed yet vivid depictions of his subjects even when he was using large brushes.

In this particular work, Xu's unmistakable realistic technique creates a canvas that is magically imbued with the same lively and lyrical ambience as in traditional Chinese painting. Western sense of form and aesthetic elements of Chinese line drawing are seamlessly fused. Furthermore, the work displays Xu's grasp of historical subjects and Western literary references, and so offering a new perspective on the development of the modern Chinese art.

SANYU (CHANG YU, 1901-1966)

In *Potted Chrysanthemum in a Blue and White Jardiniere* (estimate: HK\$5,000,000-7,000,000/ US\$641,000-897,400) by Sanyu, the contrast of colour is captivating - the white and gold of the chrysanthemum and its stalks against a rich textured background of deep pink and black. Whilst retaining white spaces as in many traditional Chinese ink-and-wash paintings, Sanyu also injects spatial structuring from the West and blends them in a tightly-knit whole. The adoption of Western concepts of three-dimensional space bring great depth to the flattened spaces, and alongside the special use of colour, produces one of the finest of Sanyu's still lifes.

PAN YULIANG (1895-1977)

Nude at Window (estimate: HK\$5,000,000-7,000,000/ US\$641,000-897,400) painted in 1946 is one of the finest oil paintings by Pan Yuliang. The work is distinguished by its strong colour and sophisticated composition, which hint at the artist's strong personality and her sense of feminine refinement. The nude, sitting in a graceful posture and gazing at the photo beside her, is an incarnation of Pan's loneliness and homesickness during her stay in Paris. By presenting herself as the nude in this work, Pan also expresses her desire to throw off the restraining social mores of the time.

LIAO CHI-CH'UN (LIAO JICHUN, 1902-1976)

Of particular note in the sale is *Spring Scene in the Garden* by Liao Chi-ch'un (estimate: HK\$8,000,000-12,000,000/ US\$1,023,600-1,538,461). The overall composition of this abstract work is a highlight of certain details in the garden scenery. While substituting the figurative forms in the garden by simple lines, colour patches and blocked-out space, Liao ingeniously retains the original appearance of some components of the work, such as the sleeping cat lower right. Within this framed dimension, the viewer can sense the interaction between light and space, and subjects are also represented by their silhouettes.

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This new artistic approach is a breakthrough by Liao after years of exploration into the use of colour and spatial effects.

WU GUANZHONG (BORN IN 1919)

Nature and landscapes have clearly become a central theme in Wu Guanzhong's work. On offer in the sale are his iconic landscape paintings produced during the 1970s, including *A Carrot's Plot* (estimate: HK\$1,800,000-2,200,000/ US\$230,800-282,100) and *Miao Village* (estimate: HK\$1,800,000-2,400,000/ US\$230,800-307,700). Wu travelled extensively throughout China to search for subjects which best represent the cultural hallmarks of both northern and southern regions. Under his brush, the diversity, poetic ambience and wordless beauty of the Chinese landscape come alive before the viewer's eyes.

JU MING (ZHU MING, BORN IN 1938)

Christie's is delighted to offer this season a group of eight highly distinctive and important *Taiji* sculptures in wood, bronze and stainless steel by Ju Ming. These masterpieces date from as early as the 1970s. The most eye-catching piece is *Single Whip Dip* (estimate: HK\$800,000-1,200,000/ US\$102,600-153,800), a wood sculpture that appeared at Ju's first solo exhibition in 1976 and is prized as the prototypical work in Ju Ming's *Taiji Series*. Each work in the Series captures the essence of not only the physical movement and but also the calmness which are at the heart of practicing Taiji. In particular, the wood that is used to carve *Single Whip Dip* has over the years acquired a natural and mellow patina that further enhances the appeal of the piece.

ZAO WOU-KI (ZHAO WUJI, BORN IN 1921)

Zao Wou-ki believes that the Western elements of abstraction correspond to the spirit of 'coexistence with nature' emphasized in the Chinese painting and calligraphy tradition. From 1955, Zao began to produce a series of superb and rare works inspired by ancient Chinese bronzes and oracle-bone inscriptions. Highlights on offer include *1965.10.25* (estimate: HK\$4,000,000-6,000,000/ US\$512,800-769,200), *5.3.71/28.11.74* (estimate: HK\$4,000,000-6,000,000/ US\$512,800-769,200), in which points and lines serve as basic elements that mark out the juxtaposed, overlapping layers of the compositions.

YUN GEE (ZHU YUANZHI, 1906-1963)

Influenced by the Freudian ideas of the time, works produced by Yun Gee in the 1920s exude a unique dreamlike character and style. *Princess Achille Murat* on offer, painted in 1929, is one of the artist's most compelling works of the period (estimate: HK\$2,500,000-4,000,000/ US\$320,500-512,800). Princess Murat was a key figure in Yun Gee's early artistic development, and it was she who enthusiastically encouraged the artist to move from San Francisco to France to further his career. In this work, the Princess is dressed in a traditional Chinese costume and gazes ahead in thoughtfulness. In this work the artist hoped to express his gratitude for the Princess' support and patronage, and at the same time to show his determination to pursue his artistic ideals.

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Previews:

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| Singapore | Copthorne King's Hotel | 23-24 October |
| Shanghai | Portman Ritz Carlton Hotel | 1-2 November |
| Hangzhou | Hyatt Regency Hangzhou | 5-6 November |
| Beijing | St. Regis | 8-9 November |
| Taipei | Fubon Life Assurance Building | 18-19 November |
| Hong Kong | Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre | 24-25 November |

Auction:

20th Century Chinese Art

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| Hong Kong | Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre | 26 November, 2pm |
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More information about Christie's sale of *20th Century Chinese Art* 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.