

For Immediate Release

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TWO PAIRS OF CHINESE EXPORT SOLDIER VASES WITH A SPANISH ROYAL HISTORY

Chinese Export Art

January 24, 2005

New York, NY – Christie's January 24 sale of *Chinese Export Art* will present an extremely rare and important pair of soldier vases with the arms of Philip V of Spain, circa 1740 (estimate: \$150,000-250,000), along with a nearly identical pair with the arms of his governor-general of the Philippines, Captain Fernando de Valdés y Tamón, circa 1740/19th century (estimate: \$100,000-150,000). Not only do the two pairs of vases boast an illustrious provenance, they are also stunningly enameled and in remarkably good condition.

Following the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713, Philip V was stripped of Spain's European possessions but retained Spanish America and the Philippines, important ports for trading Chinese export porcelain. Per season, an average of two galleons full of Chinese porcelain sailed to Acapulco, some for the wealthy, sophisticated society of Mexico City, and some to go on to Spain. Philip V successfully instituted economic and financial reforms, such as building roads and canals, solidifying political institutions and strengthening the Spanish military, all of which resulted in a time of prosperity and growth. During this period, Philip V named Captain Fernando de Valdés y Tamón, a man who was integral in negotiating treaties to secure key seacoast forts, as his governor-general of the Philippines. While posted to the Far East, the governor-general ordered a pair of majestic Chinese porcelain vases and covers lavishly enameled with urns of flowers and his coat-of-arms. He ordered a second, nearly identical, pair for King Philip, bearing the royal arms. Valdés died en route to Madrid from Cuernavaca before he could personally deliver his gift to his King.

Having been born at Versailles and raised at the French court, Philip V was most likely aware of and had an appreciation for Chinese porcelain. He did have a Chinese porcelain dinner service

decorated with his coat-of-arms but very few pieces survive today. One of the few known is in the Casita del Principe of the Escorial in Spain.

Additional Highlights

A finely painted and extraordinary European subject punchbowl, circa 1795 (estimate: \$10,000-15,000), will further highlight the sale. In varying tones of sepia, an animal fable scene is depicted between bordering Chinese landscape roundels. The center of the bowl shows a boldly enameled “collapsed Hussar,” illustrating a fatigued officer in his regimental garb.

Old-style, classic collecting is represented in the sale with a group of amusing small biscuit-glazed wares splashed in green, yellow and aubergine glazes that were favored by European collectors during the reign of the Kangxi emperor (1662-1722). The group, which will offer lots ranging from \$1,000-12,000, was assembled by the late Deane F. Johnson and will be sold to benefit the Johnson Charitable Remainder Unitrust and the Deane F. Johnson Alzheimer’s Research Foundation.

Also reflecting traditional taste is a collection of Chinese blue and white porcelains from Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Saunderson. The couple inherited and collected choice objects from the traditions of the Anglo-Irish landed gentry and the European Grand Tour. Mr. Saunderson was the last private owner of Castle Saunderson, an historic estate that had been in the family for three centuries. Situated on the border of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the castle is now a Boy Scout center. His wife Louise was the great-granddaughter of William Backhouse Astor and great-niece of Frederick Vanderbilt. Among the treasures from their home in Santa Barbara is a pair of blue and white baluster jars and covers, Kangxi period (estimate: \$4,000-6,000).

A selection of China trade paintings that largely depict views of China trade sites in a variety of media will be offered, including *The Bund at Shanghai*, Chinese School, circa 1860 (estimate: \$120,000-150,000).

Auction: Chinese Export Art

January 24

Viewing: Christie’s Galleries at Rockefeller Center

January 19 –23

Additional information about Christie’s *Chinese Export Art* sale can be found on www.christies.com closer to the sale date. 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.

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