

CHRISTIE'S 佳士得

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG CHINESE CERAMICS & WORKS OF ART AUTUMN 2012 AUCTIONS ON NOVEMBER 28

HIGHLIGHTED BY DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

| Fine Chinese Furniture from Private American Collections, 10:00am |
| Important Chinese Lacquer from the Lee Family Collection, Part III, 11:00am |
| Important Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art, 11:30am & 2:30pm |

Hong Kong – On November 28, 2012 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Christie's will present three sales of Chinese ceramics and works of art. Comprising over 380 lots, the sales are estimated to realize in excess of HK\$400 million / US\$51 million. The sale of **Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art** is highlighted by a selection of Qing ceramics, glass, and carved jade objects from a number of important private collections. Two of these collections were put together by closely connected families at the beginning of the 20th century. John Insley Blair, an American banker who inherited a fortune made by his grandfather, formed the first of these. His collection is comprised of a well selected range of Chinese ceramics of cabinet and miniature proportions, with each piece exemplary of its type. The second is the collection of Millicent Rogers, heiress of American oil magnate Henry Huttleston Rogers. A fashion icon of the time, she was known for her beauty and sophistication, as well for her discerning eye for art, and her collection has remained in her family's hands until now.

Click [here](#) for the link to the press release for the sales of **Fine Chinese Furniture from Private American Collections**, and **Important Chinese Lacquer from the Lee Family Collection, Part III**.

J. INSLEY BLAIR: A PASSIONATE GENTLEMAN COLLECTOR



J. Insley Blair is considered one of the pioneering collectors of Chinese art in America. Leading the selection of works from the Blair collection are three painted enamel wares, termed '*fangcai*'. *Falangcai* was made exclusively in imperial workshops, and available only to the royal family. Appearing for the first time at auction, these works initially belonged to Alfred E. Hhipisley, who served in the Qing court as Customs commissioner until his resignation in 1910. Of the three works, ***an important and very finely inscribed falangcai enamelled 'Beneath Pine Trees' mallet-shaped vase***, dating to the Yongzheng-Qianlong period (1723-1795). This ceramic vase stands apart with its poetic inscription composed by Tang dynasty (618-906), poet, Jia Dao (Lot 2123, illustrated left, est. HK\$6,000,000-8,000,000/US\$780,000-1,000,000).

Also of note ***is a magnificent imperial falangcai enamelled glass brush pot, Qianlong four-character mark within double-squares and of the period*** (1736-1795) (Lot 2124, illustrated left, est. HK\$6,000,000-8,000,000/US\$780,000-1,000,000). The white jade-like glass of the brush pot is fine and smooth, and the design vividly depicts the symposium of the four great calligraphers of the Song

dynasty (960-1279): Su Dongbo, Huang Tingjian, Mi Yuanzhang, and Cai Junmo. The design's composition, choice in colours, and the delicacy of the painting style are testaments to the porcelain artist's expertise.



In addition to the enamelled wares, the Blair collection includes a range of fine monochrome porcelains. **A fine and rare clair-de-lune glazed vase, Kangxi six-character mark and of the period (1662-1722)** (Lot 2118, illustrated right, est. HK\$1,200,000-1,800,000/US\$160,000-230,000) exhibits a delicate pale blue glaze of the type known as *clair de lune* in Europe and *tianlan* or 'heavenly blue' in China. The amphora-shaped vase is set on a silver stand by Tiffany and Co. Vases of this form belong to one of the eight vessels made for the imperial scholar's desk, known as *Badama* or "Eight Great Numbers."



A magnificent blue and white cylindrical vase and cover, Yongzheng six-character mark within double-circles and of the period (1723-1725) also highlights the selection of works from the Blair collection. The vase is of relatively large size and illustrates a vibrant depiction of striding imperial dragons (Lot 2121, illustrated left, est. HK\$5,000,000-8,000,000 /US\$650,000-1,000,000). Painted in the Ming style with bold strokes of deep cobalt blue, this piece is characteristic of the best 18th century painting, and yet only one other counterpart appears to be known, now exhibited in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Designs in the 18th century Qianlong period (1736-1795) became increasingly formalized, and this is an example of the innovative combination of forms and decorative styles from earlier periods. In this case, the shape appears to have originated in the preceding Kangxi period (1662-1722), and the dynamic portrayal of the dragons gives reference to the designs found in the 16th century late Ming period (1368-1644).

MILLCENT ROGERS: AN ICON OF ELEGANCE

Judging from her collection, Millicent Rogers appeared to be particularly fond of Chinese works of art that were white in colour. Her collection included a number of fine jade carvings and porcelain, as well as gifts from her dear friend Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.



Underscoring the works offered in the sale is **a pair of rare carved white jade 'chicken' bowls**, dating to the Qing Dynasty, 18th century (Lot 2126, illustrated above right, est. HK\$1,600,000-2,400,000/US\$200,000-300,000). Each bowl is supported on five shallow bosses, and the angular sides are finely carved with a continuous scene of two roosters and a hen in a garden setting. The stone possesses the exemplary even white tone. Jade bowls carved with the chicken motif exist in very limited quantities. This pattern seems to have been inspired by the popular *doucai* 'chicken cups' in porcelain, which first gained prominence during the Chenghua period (1464-1487) in the Ming dynasty, and continued to be highly sought after and copied during the Qing period (1644 to 1912).



A carved white jade 'bajixiang' alms bowl, dating to the Qing dynasty, 18th century is also of note (Lot 2127, illustrated left, est. HK\$800,000-1,200,000/US\$110,000-150,000). The Emperor Qianlong was known as a devout Buddhist, and during his reign he commissioned a number of alms bowls in jade (1735-1796). The semi-translucent white stone is carved with rounded sides curving in at the rim. The bowl is expertly carved to the exterior in low relief with the Eight Buddhist Emblems on a ground of dense clouds. The flat base is incised with swirling wave motifs.

Continuing on the theme of beauty in white is **a rare relief-decorated white-glazed baluster vase, Qianlong incised six-character seal mark and of the period (1736-1795)** (Lot 2129, illustrated right, est. HK\$600,000-800,000/US\$78,000-100,000). The piece is skillfully moulded and carved in low relief to the body with a continuous scene depicting a lotus pond with egrets in flight amidst lotus blossoms. The vase is evenly covered with a warm white glaze. The intricate design of the lotus pond is inspired by some of the top quality *fahua* porcelains with lotus pond motifs from the Ming dynasty. These *fahua* wares were much admired by the Qing dynasty Qianlong Emperor, who ordered similar items to be made for his court. This decorative technique in rendering motifs in low relief appeared to have found popularity among monochrome ceramics.

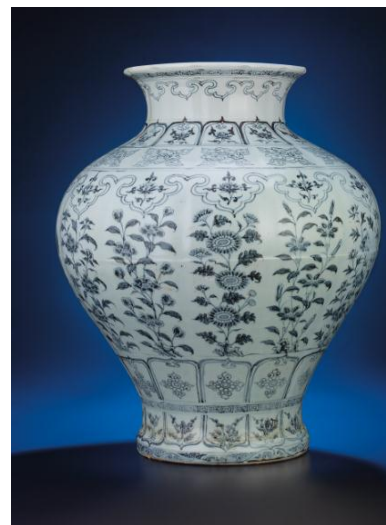


RARITY IN FORM



From another private collection is **a fine and exceptionally rare pair of gilt-decorated and enamelled vases, Qianlong moulded six-character seal marks and of the period (1736-1795)**. The pair was acquired in Hong Kong in 1986 in the seminal sale of the T.Y. Chao collection (Lot 2200, illustrated left, est. HK\$12,000,000-15,000,000/US\$1,500,000-2,000,000). With the technical advances of porcelain production during the Qianlong period, potters from the official kilns were able to experiment with different methods and decorative techniques. These vases took inspiration from vessels produced in *repoussé* metalwork, although the stylised *kui* dragons and cicada motifs are in imitation of those on early bronzes. Only one other vase of this form and decoration is known, an example preserved in the Palace Museum Collection, Beijing.

An important and very rare early Ming underglaze-blue baluster jar, guan (Lot 2207, illustrated right, est. HK\$6,000,000-8,000,000/US\$780,000-1,000,000) also highlights the sale. The majestic jar, with its high shoulders and tapering sides, dates to the Hongwu reign (1368–1644); a brief period during which underglazed red wares replaced underglazed blue as the primary decorative technique, making this a very rare example of a blue and white decorated ware dating to the Hongwu period. A jar of this grand size would have required a large amount of cobalt blue, attesting to both the costly and challenging nature of the jar's production.



Also underscoring the selection of works on offer is **a pair of doucai floral bowls, Yongzheng six-character marks within double-circles and of the period (1723-1735)** (Lot 2198, illustrated left, est. HK\$3,800,000-4,500,000/US\$780,000-1,000,000). The Chinese word *doucai* translates to 'both colours' and 'contrasting colours'. *Doucai* production originated in the 15th century and



was technically quite complex. Two kiln firings were required, one at high temperature outlining the decorative elements and then another at a lower temperature filling in the design in contrasting coloured enamels.

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IMAGES of select highlights are available [here](#)

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ABOUT CHRISTIE'S

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*