

CHRISTIE'S

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ASIAN ART WEEK AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN MAY 2013

London – Christie's will celebrate Asian Art in London this spring between 14 – 17 May, with a dynamic offering of rare and beautiful works with stellar provenance, many of which are coming to the market for the first time in many decades, from important private collections. The sales include: *The Hanshan Tang Reserve Collection* and *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* on 14 May at King Street; and at South Kensington: *Interiors – dedicated to Chinese Art* – and *The Japanese Aesthetic* on 15 May; and *Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles* on 17 May.

**The Hanshan Tang Reserve Collection: 14 May at 10am, Christie's King Street
Bid via Christie's LIVE™**

Christie's is pleased to present the first standalone sale of **books** offered during Asian Art week at Christie's in London: *The Hanshan Tang Reserve Collection*, from one of the foremost international booksellers specialising in books relating to the art and archaeology of Asia. A special addition to the calendar, this sale follows the great success of the books offered from the *CT Loo Collection* in New York in 2012, which were 100% sold. Meeting the current appetite for reference books on Chinese works of art, the sale comprises over 150 books, references and documents, which have been set to one side at Hanshan Tang over the last four decades having been identified as particularly important due to their rarity, fine quality, scholarly significance, or subject matter, and have come to be known within the company as the Hanshan Tang Reserve collection. The group includes imperially commissioned works; important exhibition catalogues; early publications on Chinese bronzes, archaeological material and also Chinese painting; atlases; maps; and early photographs. This sale provides a unique opportunity for scholars, students, institutions and collectors of Chinese art, as well as those in the Chinese art trade to acquire rare and important works, which are not only interesting in their own right, but are also valuable tools for the study of Chinese art, as well as providing insights into the history of that study and the history of collecting Asian art. Estimates range from under £1,000 up to £30,000.

Among the highlights is an outstanding illustrated edition of Qingding Shujing Tushuo, The Classic of History, which was Imperially commissioned by the Qing Imperial court under the Guangxu Emperor, 1905 (estimate: £15,000-20,000). Valuable reference tools with entry level estimates include TOMITA, K. *Portfolio of Chinese Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts*. Boston: Harvard, 1938 and 1961, in 2 volumes; the text in English and Chinese (estimate: £1,000-1,200).

Founded in 1975, by Soren Edgren and Christer von der who have subsequently become major international figures in the field of Chinese art, Hanshan Tang has flourished and expanded from a major European dealer in books relating to East Asian art and culture, to a major international enterprise. In 2000 the company changed hands, and was taken over by John Constable, John Cayley, and Myrna Chua. The three new owners have continued the scholarly traditions of Hanshan Tang, which remains a flourishing and academically innovative organisation.



The *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* sale at Christie's headquarters, on 14 May 2013, sets the tone for the high quality works, offered fresh to the market, from private collections with important and long established provenance, which will be presented during Asian Art Week at Christie's London this season. Comprising 300 lots which span the Tang dynasty through to the 20th century, there is a particularly rich offering of jades, porcelain and Buddhist sculptures, building on the success of the Religious art featured in November 2012. The works are all offered with attractive estimates, ranging from £2,000 to £450,000, and will appeal to discerning collectors around the globe. The auction is expected to realise in excess of £5.5 million.

The sale is led by a first for the auction market. Epitomising exceptional provenance, a magnificent, extremely rare pair of massive *famille rose* models of Pagodas, Qianlong/Jiaqing period (*circa* 1750 - 1800), which are in very good condition, are offered from the Castello di Vincigliata in Fiesole, Italy (estimate: £250,000-300,000). This is the first pair of such pagodas ever to come to auction.

It seems likely that these pagodas were based upon one of the most famous buildings in China, and one that became a symbol of Asian elegance and exoticism to Europeans. The famous Porcelain Pagoda of Nanjing or the Bao'en Temple (Temple of Gratitude) pagoda, built on the orders of the Ming dynasty Yongle Emperor to honour his parents in the early 15th century, was a source of amazed admiration for European travellers from the 17th century onwards and was often listed in the 19th century as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It is no coincidence that the current pair of massive porcelain models of pagodas, each standing more than eight and a half feet high, follow the essential design of the original Nanjing Porcelain Pagoda. They were constructed with nine upper storeys, each with the upward-curving tiled eaves typical of roofs in southern China. Their appearance accords well with both Chinese and European contemporary images and descriptions of the Nanjing pagoda, which was famous for its porcelain-faced walls and door arches. Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's description of the Nanjing pagoda, in his *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary of 1741*, describes the green roof tiles of the Nanjing pagoda. The present model pagodas also have green roof tiles, although they are primarily decorated in underglaze blue with iron red enamel and gilt in *imari* style, and with finely-painted *famille rose* enamels.

Porcelains of the huge size of the current pagoda models were difficult to make and were therefore very expensive and rare. They were greatly prized by European royalty and the British Prince of Wales (later King George IV, 1820-1830) purchased similar pagodas in 1804 and 1817 for his extravagant and exotic Royal Pavilion at Brighton. These remained in the Royal Collection, and in the 1840s were transferred from Brighton to Buckingham Palace. The larger pagodas in the Royal Collection appear to be identical to the pagodas in this sale. Palace records note that Robert Fogg, who supplied the two large pagodas to the Prince of Wales in 1817, also supplied some additional metal fittings, including 'dolphins' and bells of the sort seen at the tips of the eaves of the present lot, which also accord with 17th century European descriptions of the Nanjing pagoda. Not only are these beautiful

model pagodas magnificent examples of the ceramicist's art, they are also wonderfully evocative of one of the most iconic buildings in China's long history.



The rich offering of Buddhist sculptures also includes another rare survival in the form of a large and impressive pair of painted stucco Bodhisattvas, Yuan/early Ming, 14th century (estimate: £350,000-450,000, *illustrated left*). The very delicate nature of Stucco makes the superb quality of these figures, which are a mirror pair, particularly special. From the same period, a monumental and impressive painted stucco model of a Buddha is also offered (estimate: £250,000-350,000, *illustrated below right*). Seated in *padmasana*, Buddha's hands are in *dhyanasana* the gesture of 'absolute balance'. Further strengthening the offering of works in this medium is a rare pair of massive polychromed stucco figures of Buddhist attendants, from *The Property of a*

European Lady, Yuan/Ming dynasty (14th/15th century) (estimate: £40,000-60,000). Measuring 67 in. (170 cm.) high, they smile gently and are both adorned with elaborate crowns. Works of excellent quality and condition, they come to the market for the first time in 20 years, having previously been sold at Christie's New York in 1993. Other highlights from the Buddhist art section include a selection of 14 gilt bronze figures which have estimates ranging from £8,000 to £300,000. Leading the group is a finely and heavily cast imperial gilt-bronze figure of Amitayus, Kangxi period (1662-1722) (estimate: £200,000-300,000). It comes to the market for the first time in over 40 years.



The cover lot of the sale is a magnificent and auspicious pair of unusually large cloisonné enamel elephants, Qianlong period (1736-1795), which are offered from the *Property of a Noble European Family*, having been bought at Partridges, London, in 1988 (estimate: £200,000-300,000). Regarded as auspicious - emblematic of good fortune, prosperity, peace and filial piety - these elephants reflect the enduring interest in and appreciation of elephants in Chinese culture. Elephants also have positive Buddhist connotations, they are associated with the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Puxian Pusa in Chinese), who is

usually depicted seated on an elephant. Samantabhadra, together with Manjusri and the Shakyamuni Buddha form the trinity of the Mahayana Buddhism. The elephant on which Samantabhadra rides is believed by some to be the same elephant which appeared to Queen Maya, heralding the birth of the Buddha himself. Because of their symbolic significance, elephants – usually in gilt bronze and cloisonné – were frequently placed on either side of the imperial throne. Today, similarly large cloisonné elephants can still be seen flanking the throne in the Hall of Supreme Harmony in the Forbidden City. Elephants were held in high esteem by the Qing court, and the most skilled craftsmen were employed to create cloisonné models like the pair in this sale. Other works in this medium include an extremely rare cloisonné enamel baluster vase and cover Qianlong four-character mark within a double-square and of the period (estimate: £60,000-80,000).

The delicate finesse synonymous with **porcelain** is highlighted by a very attractive and rare reverse-decorated powder-blue dish, Yongzheng six-character mark within a double circle and of the period (1723-1735) (estimate: £120,000-180,000, *illustrated right*). It is offered from a ***Distinguished European Collection***, which was formed between the 1950s and 1970s. Reverse-decorated blue and white dishes from this period were modelled on earlier prototypes from the Ming Dynasty. A Yongzheng dish with a similar design to the present lot is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Elsewhere, a further notable example is an extremely rare copper-red and underglaze-blue decorated 'dragon' fish bowl Kangxi period (1662-1722), which was acquired at auction in Hong Kong in 1997 (estimate: £40,000-60,000).



Christie's London is proud to present a stellar array of further **porcelain** alongside **jade** and **snuff bottles** from the property of the prominent Shanghai collector ***YC Chen*** at both the King Street and South Kensington sales. This sale features 28 lots led by a very fine pair of delicately enamelled *famille rose* 'boy' bowls, Daoguang iron-red six-character seal mark and of the period (1821-1850) (estimate: £10,000-15,000). Each bowl depicts a continuous scene with a young boy standing with one hand covering his ear and the other arm out-stretched to light a fire-cracker placed on a rock; the pair comes to the market for the first time in a decade, having been acquired at Christie's Hong Kong in 2003.

The strong array of **jade** featured is led by a rare 18th century pale celadon jade 'marriage' bowl, which is offered from the ***Property of a Noble European collector***, having been purchased from Spink in 1947; it was originally part of the collection of Sir John William Buchanan-Jardine, 3rd Baronet of Castle Milk, Scotland (1900-1969) (estimate: £80,000-120,000). From the ***Property of a Noble European Lady*** comes a superb 18th/19th century Mughal-style white jade ewer and cover; the body finely carved with a central lotus bloom surrounded by meandering leafy stems (estimate: £50,000-80,000). A pale celadon jade 'mythical beast' vase, Qianlong period (1736-1795) is offered from the ***Property of a European Royal Family***, where it has been since the early 20th century (estimate: £10,000-15,000). Earlier examples include a rare mottled jade square 'dragon' seal, Yuan dynasty, 13th/14th century (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated left*).



A Private English Collection presents 16 lots of **jades**, ***blanc de chine*** and **hardstones**, which were mainly purchased in London during the 1960s and 70s and are all offered with their original invoices. The group is led by a pair of finely carved spinach-green jade archaistic vases, *gu*, on gilt-bronze stands 18th century, which comes to the market for the first time in over 40 years, having been acquired in 1971 from John Sparks (estimate: £50,000-80,000, *illustrated right*). It is unusual to have a pair of such archaistic vessels; they demonstrate the fashion for archaism which became very popular in the Qing court during the 18th century. A second ***Private English Collection*** features 20 jades and hardstones, including a small pale celadon jade boulder depicting immortals in an idyllic landscape, with a bright russet area to the back (estimate: £8,000-12,000).



**Chinese Interiors: 15 May at 10.00 am, Christie's South Kensington
Bid via Christie's LIVE™**



An extremely popular feature of Christie's Asian Art Week in London is the *Interiors* sale, dedicated to Chinese Art, held at South Kensington. Offering collectors affordable works of art dating from the Neolithic period through to the 20th century, the auction on Wednesday 15 May will include porcelain, cloisonné enamels, snuff bottles, bronzes, jade, paintings, textiles and more.



The sale presents an array of works from important private collections including *The Peter and Nancy Thompson Collection of Chinese Art*, *A Private European Collection Acquired between 1960 and 1990*; *A Private English Collection* and *A Private East Asian Collection*. The sale comprises over 430 lots, with estimates starting at just £500. Highlights range from a 17th/18th century Chinese Dehua baluster vase from The Peter and Nancy Thompson Collection, which comes to the market for the first time in almost 20 years (estimate: £2,000-3,000, *illustrated above right*); to a collection of Rank Badges from a Private Collector, led by a 19th century Chinese embroidered censor's Xiezhi rank badge, Buzi, which is worked in couched silver and gold thread (estimate: £3,000-5,000); and two 19th century Chinese jade pendants from a Private Private East Asian Collector: one of pale celadon and russet tone, depicting a recumbent cat, the other of white and russet tone, depicting two long tailed cats at play (estimate: £800-1,200, *illustrated above left*).

**Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles: 17 May at 10.30am & 2.30pm,
Christie's South Kensington - Bid via Christie's LIVE™**

Christie's South Kensington sale of *Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles* on 17 May comprises over 300 lots spanning over one thousand years of Chinese art from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) through to the 20th century. The sale has been carefully curated to meet the current trends in Chinese taste, presenting a wide array of notable furniture, scholars' objects and jade carvings, alongside works which cross all mediums from porcelain, bronzes, silver, cloisonné, lacquer, bamboo, paintings, snuff bottles and textiles. With estimates ranging from £1,000 to £30,000 - for an imperial Jiaqing mark and period (1796-1820) 'Hundred Boys' vase (£20,000-30,000) - this auction is very accessible and provides established and new collectors with great opportunities to buy quality works, with established provenance, which are in good condition. The sale is expected to fetch in the region of £1.5 million.

Christie's South Kensington is proud to present over 75 lots from *The Collection of Peter & Nancy Thompson*, which will be offered between this sale (34 lots) and Chinese Interiors sale (41 lots). Formed predominantly in the 1970s and 80s, with the eye of informed connoisseurs, the works offered are led by a particularly large **blue and white** early Kangxi period (1662-1722)



'Immortals' bowl, measuring 13 ⁵/₈ in. (34.5 cm.) diameter, which was exhibited at the *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners* exhibition staged by The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong and the Urban Council, Hong Kong in 1981 (estimate: £8,000-12,000, *illustrated right*). An auspicious subject matter signifying longevity, the bowl depicts the Eight Daoist Immortals at leisure beneath trees, observed by Shoulao seated on a crane in flight. As is typical of the best porcelain produced at this time, the painting is in a freely executed style and the blue tones are very strong. Another of the most valuable works is a slightly earlier 17th century blue and white

brush pot, bitong, from the Transitional period, *circa* 1630-50, decorated with a continuous scene depicting two cowherds seated beneath leafy trees, while a water buffalo and its calf looks on (estimate: £6,000-10,000). This is one of a fine array of **scholars items** offered from the collection, including two exceptionally large cylindrical brush pots which will appeal particularly to Chinese taste. The first, an 18th/19th century *huangbuali* brushpot, of a yellowish brown tone with a natural grain, measures an impressive 8 in. (20.3 cm.) high (estimate: £4,000-6,000, *illustrated right*); the other, a *zitan* brushpot, of a deep dark brown tone, (18th/19th century), measures 7 7/8 in. (20 cm.) high (estimate: £4,000-6,000, *illustrated far right*). As both types of hardwood are very slow growing to have such large brushpots is rare, making these examples particularly special; they are offered among a wide array of scholar's table objects and *huangbuali* furniture.



This sale presents a strong offering of **Jade and Jadeite** from private collections, including a **Private East Asian Collection** of Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-192) dynasty works which showcase the broad spectrum of Jade colours available, from white and yellow through to celadon and grey; all of which continue to be in high demand. A 19th/20th century carving of a white jade snake from the collection is expected to make between £2,000 and £3,000 in this Year of the Snake. Stellar provenance is also exemplified by a group of six 18th century **Jades** which are offered

from a **Private English Collection**; each lot is accompanied by its original invoice from 24th June 1957, when all of the works were acquired in Hong Kong. A charming group, which were brought in to the South Kensington valuation counter, they comprise a number of Qianlong dynasty (1736-95) pale celadon jades: a crane (estimate: £4,000-6,000, *illustrated left*); a 'phoenix-form' brushwasher (estimate: £4,000-6,000); a censer and cover (estimate: £4,000-6,000); a 'double-*ruyi* head' brushwasher (estimate: £6,000-8,000); a pale celadon and grey-speckled jade 'horse and monkey' group (estimate: £3,000-5,000); and two 19th/20th century celadon and russet jade 'horse and monkey' groups (estimate: £2,000-3,000). The King Street sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art also features works from this collection.

Jades with notable histories also include a large rectangular jade censer and cover which is offered from a **Private English Collection**, having been acquired *circa* 1970 from a member of the First American Volunteer Group, nicknamed the "Flying Tigers", who acquired it in China during the Second World War (estimate: £3,000-5,000).



Around 20 works will be offered from the celebrated **YC Chen Collection** (with a further 20 lots in the Chinese Interiors sale) ranging from Ming and Qing dynasty mark and period **porcelain**, to **agate snuff bottles** and **jade carvings**, such as an 18th century pale celadon jade model of a goose, an auspicious subject matter in Asia often associated with marital fidelity as pairs of wild geese were thought to mate for life (estimate: £6,000-10,000). The **porcelain** dates from the early 16th century through to the early 20th century and includes a slender underglaze copper-red brushpot decorated with two Buddhist lions from the 18th/19th century (estimate: £3,000-5,000).



Six works from a Distinguished Private English Collection include two carved cinnabar lacquer spittoon-form bowls and covers, Qianlong period (1736-95) (estimate: £5,000-8,000, *illustrated left*) featured in Spink & Son's 1987 exhibition *Minor Art of China* are amongst several works of art purchased by the collector at the celebrated London firm in the late 1980s.



The **textile** section comprises over 30 lots and is led by a blue kesi robe (estimate: £5,000-7,000, *illustrated left*). This very fine quality court robe was made for a Mandarin (civil servant) at the Imperial Court, mid-19th century and would have been worn beneath a plain blue coat with the Mandarin's rank badge prominently displayed. This example comes to the market for the first time in over a



century, having been acquired by the grandparents of the present owner in the early 1900s. The sale also includes the ladies equivalent: a formal court robe (chifu) of red silk gauze, *circa* 1890, which would be worn with her husband's rank badge (estimate: £6,000-8,000, *illustrated right*).

The Japanese Aesthetic: 15 May at 10.30am, Christie's South Kensington
- Bid via Christie's LIVE™



Coinciding with the *Netsuke* convention in London, the sale of *The Japanese Aesthetic* on 15 May presents an array of *netsuke* and *inro* from private collections including the ***Collection of the Marquis Costa de Beauregard***, many of which have not been seen on the market since the 1930s, and a group of remarkable and impressive *netsuke* from an ***Important American Collection***. Comprising 450 lots which represent 400 years, spanning the early Edo Period to the 20th century, the sale also features a group of screens; a group of *ukiyo-e* prints from the ***Collection of Nicholas Bouvier***, a Swiss travel writer (1929 – 1998) among other prints; and a ***Private Collection of Lacquer***, as well as swords and armour. With estimates ranging from £800 up to £150,000, the auction is expected to realise in excess of £1.5million.

A wonderful example of an 18th century *netsuke* is a staganter *netsuke* of a horse, Edo Period (18th century) (estimate: £25,000-30,000, *illustrated left*). *Netsuke* are small carvings which fit into the palm of a hand and were worn as part of everyday dress during the Edo period. They are avidly collected in the West today as miniature sculptures due to their extraordinary range of subjects, styles and artists. This powerfully carved example is typical of the great carvings of the 18th century and is one of a group from an Important American collection in this sale. Another is an amazingly detailed *netsuke* of a skeleton (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

A group of *inro* from a private European collection includes a fine example with a rare *tamagoji* [quail egg-shell] ground. This intricate technique involves the application by hand of individual fragments of quails' egg-shell directly onto the fresh lacquer and is complemented by a bold design in gold, red and black lacquer of a weasel startling a cockerel (estimate: £5,000-7,000, *illustrated right*).



A further highlight is a fine **lacquer** wedding casket from the Edo period (early 17th century) (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated left*). This small casket belongs to a group of lacquer known as 'Transition' style, which is believed to have started during 1630's and lasted for around fifteen years. The term describes the period of change from the *Namban* style of lacquer of the 16th

and early 17th centuries, to the fully-developed Pictorial style which lasted into the 18th century. *Namban*, *Transition* and *Pictorial* style lacquers were produced for export to the West, particularly for Portuguese and Dutch markets. There is a similar example in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Later lacquer highlights in the sale include a Meiji period (late 19th century) cabinet which is decorated in gold, silver and red *takamaki-e*, *hiramaki-e*, *iroe-togidashi-e*, *nashiji* and mother-of-pearl inlays on a black ground, with various aspects of Nikko Toshogu; the hinged door opens to reveal three drawers with a sacred bridge Shinkyō with maple trees; and a dense *nashiji* interior (estimate: £10,000 -£15,000). 25 lots of **Lacquer and Inro from a Private European Collection** include a fine four-case *inro* signed *Jokasai*, Edo period (19th century), which is decorated in *iroe-togidashi-e* on a silver ground with the fox's wedding in moonlight (estimate: £6,000-8,000).



There is an impressive group of over fifteen screens. These amazing folding paintings so adored by decorators and collectors in the West have been used for striking effect in interiors in Europe and America since the 18th century. An Edo Period (18th century), pair of **six-panel folding screens** executed in ink,

colour and gold leaf on paper depict an amusing scene of monkeys hanging playfully from a gnarled branch (estimate: £15,000-18,000, *one of the pair is illustrated above*).

The ceramics of the 17th century is highlighted by a wonderful large *Ao-kutani* dish, square *fuku* mark, Edo period (late 17th century) which measures 35.1 cm. in diameter (estimate: £25,000-30,000). It is decorated in typical palette of *Ao-kutani ceramic* ware, with impressive tree leaves with vines against a ground with plum flowers.

Notes to Editors: Please click [here](#) to go to Christie's dedicated Asian Art web page

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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.*

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*Images available on request
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