

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S ANNOUNCES A LANDMARK FIVE-DAY AUCTION SERIES DEVOTED TO THE COLLECTION OF ROBERT HATFIELD ELLSWORTH MARCH 17 TO 21, 2015 AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

- ALL LOTS TO BE SOLD WITHOUT RESERVE
- SIX LIVE AUCTIONS AND A SERIES OF ONLINE-ONLY SALES
- COLLECTION TO REALIZE IN EXCESS OF US\$35 MILLION



Robert H. Ellsworth in his library beneath *Prunus Branch and Rock* by Shi Lu (estimate: \$150,000-250,000).

*"Never collect anything that you don't
want to live with every day."*

– Robert Hatfield Ellsworth

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce the landmark five-day auction series devoted to the collection of the celebrated American scholar, dealer and collector Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, running March 17 to 21 at Christie's flagship New York galleries at Rockefeller Center. After successful tours to Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, and London last autumn, Christie's is unveiling Mr. Ellsworth's collection of over 1,400 lots that will be sold without reserve via an extended, eight-day public exhibition leading up to the start of the auction series. To honor the collecting legacy of Mr. Ellsworth -- fondly nicknamed "The King of Ming" - - Christie's will recreate the sumptuous interior of the celebrated 22-room Manhattan residence, where he lived among superb examples of Asian art, blended effortlessly with fine English silver and antiques in his signature style. This extraordinary collection, widely considered to be one of the most important private collection of Asian Art ever to come to market, is expected to realize in excess of US\$35 million.

Robert Hatfield Ellsworth (1929-2014), was a distinguished American scholar, dealer and collector of Asian Art who was widely recognized throughout Asia and the Americas for his ground-breaking role in the study and appreciation of Asian Art. Mr. Ellsworth was a passionate connoisseur who opened new arenas of collecting to Western audiences and built a successful business purveying the very finest works of art to his generation's foremost collectors. During his long career, he counted

John D. Rockefeller, Brooke Astor and the actress Claudette Colbert among his clients and dear friends. His home became an epicenter of New York art society, where he greeted both friends and fellow scholars, and perfected the harmonious East-meets-West design aesthetic that has influenced so many decorators since.

Among Mr. Ellsworth's greatest scholarly contributions to Asian art was his reevaluation of modern Chinese painting, of the 19th and early 20th century, a period that had been largely ignored by critics and academics. He revealed the results of his decades-long investigation into modern Chinese painting in *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: 1800–1950*, a groundbreaking multi-volume project. In addition, Ellsworth donated some 471 works of later Chinese painting and calligraphy to New York's Metropolitan Museum, a testament to the collector's belief that his source material should be available to everyone. [For more background on Mr. Ellsworth, please click here.](#)

To celebrate this exceptional collection, Christie's is **organizing public exhibitions, a five-day series of live auctions and a series of online-only sales to be held during Asian Art Week at Christie's New York.** Please refer to the schedule on page 4.

A TOUR OF A RARE COLLECTION



Robert Hatfield Ellsworth led an elegant and stylish life, surrounded by rare and superb works in his grand Fifth Avenue apartment in New York City. To step inside his vast and exquisitely appointed residence was to be surrounded at every turn by magnificent objects representing a lifetime of collecting. His admiration and respect for Asian and Western art was apparent in his library, which was adorned with distinguished English furniture and décor with fine Asian bronzes placed throughout the room. The first lot of the Evening Sale that opens the auction series will be one of Mr. Ellsworth's most treasured pieces, a fine gilt-bronze figure of a bear, Western Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 8) (estimate: \$200,000-300,000). This 3-inch tall bear sat prominently on Mr. Ellsworth's impressive George II mahogany pedestal desk (estimate: \$8,000-12,000).

In addition to the fine scholar's objects on his desk, collectors will also be drawn to the remarkable Southeast Asian bronzes artfully displayed on the far right corner of his desktop, including a figure of Avalokiteshvara, Thailand, 8th century (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) and a figure of Buddha, Thailand, 8th century (estimate: \$250,000-350,000).

Revealing Mr. Ellsworth's sophisticated eclectic taste, the foyer was adorned with a bold modern Chinese painting of *Lilies* by Pan Tianshou (1897-1971)(estimate: \$700,000-900,000) flanked by a pair of George I walnut and parcel-gilt two-light girandoles (estimate: \$5,000-8,000), directly above a very rare pair of *huanghuali* bamboo-form continuous horseshoe-back armchairs, *quanyi*, China, late Ming-early Qing dynasty, 17th century-early 18th century (estimate: \$300,000-500,000). He also placed a Southeast Asian bronze rain drum (estimate: \$6,000-8,000) supporting a Japanese bamboo flower basket, Taisho period, 20th century (estimate: \$6,000-8,000); and a Ningxia pillar rug, North China, early 19th century (estimate: \$10,000-15,000) at the foyer entrance.



One of his first purchases as a teenager was a large polychrome wood figure of a seated *bodhisattva*, China, Song-Jin dynasty (AD 960-1234) (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), which he prominently displayed in the living room. Notably mentioned in *Orientations* 1991 article “Not for Sale: A Few of Robert Ellsworth's Favourite Possessions”, Ellsworth identified the seated figure as the one object he would seize first in event of fire.

In 1971, Mr. Ellsworth published *Chinese Furniture: Hardwood Examples of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties*, a groundbreaking book that set new standards for dating Chinese furniture. The living room held some of the finest examples of classic Chinese *huanghuali* furniture ever assembled, including an extremely rare and important set of four *huanghuali* horseshoe-back armchairs, *quanyi*, China, Ming dynasty, 17th century (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000); a very rare *huanghuali* waisted rectangular corner-leg games table, China, Ming dynasty, 17th century (estimate: \$500,000-700,000); and a rare *huanghuali* 'four-corners-exposed' official's hat arm chair, *sichutouguanmaoyi*, China, Ming dynasty, 17th century (estimate: \$300,000-500,000).



The living room also featured with a pair of Japanese six-panel screens, *Stable With Fine Horses*, Anonymous, Edo Period, 17th century (estimate: \$200,000-250,000), and bronzes formerly in the Pan-Asian Collection, which was a significant assemblage of important artworks representing the full scope of aesthetic and spiritual traditions throughout India, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. It is highlighted by a large and important gilt-bronze figure of Avalokiteshvara, Nepal, 13th century (estimate: \$2-3 million); a highly important figure of Shiva Gangadhara Nataraja, South India, Tamil Nadu, Chola Period, 9th century (estimate: \$2-3 million); and a gilt-bronze head of Buddha, Thailand, Sukkothai period, 14th /15th century (estimate: \$80,000-120,000).



A consummate host, Mr. Ellsworth took pleasure in entertaining scholars, collectors, celebrities, and fellow dealers amidst the superb objects he chose to keep for his own collection. His dining room also displayed his unerring eye and ability to combine East and West, where fine Chinese furniture and Asian sculptures blended with English silver and European

paintings. This room features a rare pair of *huanghuali* lampstands, *dengtai*, China, Ming dynasty, 17th century (estimate: \$60,000-80,000); an important stone figure of Buddha, Thailand, Dvaravati period, 8th century (estimate: \$200,000-300,000); a pair of Regency Sheffield-plated wine coolers, circa 1815 (estimate: \$5,000-8,000); and a portrait of Madame Duplex de Bacquencourt, née Jeanne-Henriette de Lalleu, attributed to Jean-Marc Nattier (Paris, 1685-1766) and Studio (estimate: \$20,000-30,000).

Residing on the headboard in Ellsworth's bedroom was a rare and important bronze figure of a Yogi, possibly Padampa Sangye, Tibet, 11th/12th century (estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000), which was also part of the Pan-Asian Collection. So cherished was this sculpture in the Ellsworth household that when it was sent to the Los Angeles County Museum in the mid 1980s, the housekeeper, noticing the work had been removed, threatened to leave if the beloved work was not returned promptly. This figure is a masterwork of early Tibetan art and is possibly a portrait of one of the most renowned sages in Tibetan Buddhism, Padampa Sangye. The sculpture is widely regarded as a magnum opus of Tibetan art. Rarely do works of such iconic and supreme distinction come onto the market.



PUBLIC EXHIBITION	<u>March 11-18, please click here for exhibition hours</u>
ROBERT H. ELLSWORTH MEMORIAL LECTURES	March 13, 3pm-5pm
PART I – MASTERWORKS INCLUDING INDIAN, HIMALAYAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN WORKS OF ART, CHINESE AND JAPANESE WORKS OF ART	March 17, 6pm
PART II – CHINESE FURNITURE, SCHOLAR'S OBJECTS AND CHINESE PAINTINGS	March 18, 10am and 2pm
PART III – CHINESE WORKS OF ART: QING CERAMICS, GLASS AND JADE CARVINGS	March 19, 10am and 2pm
PART IV – CHINESE WORKS OF ART: METAL, SCULPTURE AND EARLY CERAMICS	March 20, 10am and 2pm
PART V – EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS, CARPETS, OLD MASTER PAINTINGS AND ASIAN WORKS OF ART	March 21, 10am
PART VI – THE LIBRARY	March 21, 10am
ONLINE ONLY SALE	March 18- 27

ELLSWORTH AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

PART I – MASTERWORKS

INCLUDING INDIAN, HIMALAYAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN WORKS OF ART, CHINESE AND JAPANESE WORKS OF ART



A LARGE AND IMPORTANT GILT BRONZE FIGURE OF
AVALOKITESHVARA
NEPAL, 13TH CENTURY
ESTIMATE: \$2,000,000-3,000,000



AN EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT SET OF FOUR
HUANGHUALI HORSESHOE-BACK ARMCHAIRS, *QUANYI*
CHINA, MING DYNASTY, 17TH CENTURY
ESTIMATE: \$800,000-1,200,000



A WOOD FIGURE OF THE *BODHISATTVA* JIZO
JAPAN, NANBOKUCHO-MUROMACHI PERIOD, 14TH -15TH CENTURY
ESTIMATE: \$40,000-60,000



A RARE AND HIGHLY IMPORTANT BRONZE FIGURE OF
SHIVA GANGADHARA NATARAJA
SOUTH INDIA, TAMIL NADU, CHOLA PERIOD, 9TH CENTURY
ESTIMATE: \$2,000,000-3,000,000



A SILK AND METAL THREAD 'NINE DRAGON' CHINESE CARPET
CHINA, QING DYNASTY, LATE 19TH CENTURY,
OR POSSIBLY EARLIER
ESTIMATE: \$30,000-50,000

PART II – CHINESE FURNITURE, SCHOLAR’S OBJECTS AND CHINESE PAINTINGS



TANG YIN (1470-1524)
PLAYING THE ZITHER
ESTIMATE: \$1,200,000-1,800,000

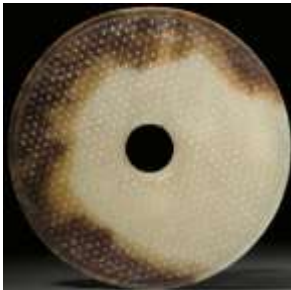


PAN TIANSHOU (1897-1971)
LILIES
ESTIMATE: \$700,000-900,000

PART III- CHINESE WORKS OF ART: QING CERAMICS, GLASS AND JADE CARVINGS



A RARE *DOUCAI* OVOID JAR
CHINA, YONGZHENG-QIANLONG PERIOD (1723-1795)
ESTIMATE: \$5,000-8,000



A PALE GREENISH-WHITE AND BROWN JADE *BI* DISC
CHINA, WESTERN HAN DYNASTY (206 BC-AD 8)
ESTIMATE: \$40,000-60,000

PART IV – CHINESE WORKS OF ART: METAL, SCULPTURE AND EARLY CERAMICS



A RARE PURPLE-SPLASHED JUNYAO HEXALOBED CUP STAND
CHINA, NORTHERN SONG DYNASTY (AD 960–1127)
ESTIMATE: \$50,000–70,000

PART V – EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS, CARPETS, OLD MASTER PAINTINGS AND ASIAN WORKS OF ART



A GEORGE II MAHOGANY RUSTICATED LIBRARY BOOKCASE
CIRCA 1745
ESTIMATE: \$100,000-150,000



A PAIR OF LARGE WILLIAM AND MARY SILVER CANDLESTICKS
LONDON, PROBABLY 1691, MAKER'S MARK IE, PELLET BETWEEN
AND BELOW (JACKSON, REV. ED. P. 133, LINE)
ESTIMATE: \$15,000-25,000

PART VI – THE LIBRARY



CHINESE PAINTING. *TAIFUDO MEISEKI TAIFUDO MEISEKI (THE WORKS OF CHINESE PAINTERS IN THE COLLECTION OF DAFENGTANG)*. KYOTO: BENRIDO CO., 1955-1956. 4 VOLUMES. – *YURIN TAIKAN (WORKS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE FUJII YURINKAN MUSEUM)*. KYOTO: YURINKAN, 1942. 4 VOLUMES (OF 6, LACKING VOLUMES 1-2). – [WITH:] APPROXIMATELY 27 OTHER WORKS ON CHINESE PAINTING (INCLUDING ONE SET OF PHOTOCOPIES).
ESTIMATE: \$20,000-30,000

ONLINE ONLY SALE



A YELLOW-GLAZED OVOID JAR
CHINA, QING DYNASTY, KANGXI SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN
UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND OF THE PERIOD (1662-1722)
ESTIMATE: \$5,000-\$7,000

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2014 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James

Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £916.1 million (\$1.5 billion) in 2014, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Shanghai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Dubai.

**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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