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THE ART PEOPLE

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The Voice of Abstraction

A Superb Selection of Asian Abstract Art



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Hong Kong – Christie's announces an extraordinary sale of Asian abstract art to take place on the 28 and 29 November in the Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art Sale as part of Christie's Hong Kong Autumn Auctions.

The sales exemplify the non-representational language abstract art embodies and its ability to communicate across borders. Blending East and West, Asian abstract art is a truly international language that is globally understood.

Eric Chang, Deputy Chairman, International Director of Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art commented: The meticulously curated sales reflects the journey abstraction took across the different cultures of China, Japan, and Korea. Through cross-pollination and the exchange of transformative ideas, each culture interpreted the subtlety of abstraction in their own unique way, producing myriad artistic styles and an exciting body of work.

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Zao Wou-ki
Oil on canvas
65 x 100 cm
HK\$38,000,000 - 46,000,000
US\$4,871,800 - 5,897,400

Foudre (illustrated left) was painted in 1955, during a time Zao Wou-ki was gradually abandoning figurative depiction, and shifting the focus of his attention to the inner world. In this work, the overlapping interplay of red, blue and orange creates a powerful visual impact with a sense of energy and movement, luminosity and brightness.

The work seeks to express not the actual meteorological phenomenon of lightning, but rather the psychological tension it creates through drama and conflict on the canvas.

Having lived through the Cultural Revolution, Chinese artist Li Shan frequently appropriates images from this era as a source of inspiration in his work. Li was one of the key figures in the Political Pop Movement in Shanghai around the 1990s. Widely recognized for his Rouge Series, Li embodies an element of surrealism in his compositions, infused with the iconic pink flora motif, where continuous linear floral patterns create a sublime and surrealistic universe. Both the circle with a cracked centre and the pink-coloured surrounding forms exude a sense of minimalistic and rhythmic patterning, while the further disassociation of form of expression from reality enhances the abstract beauty of the work.

A strong sense of irony is apparent in Li's *Rouge Series No.7* (illustrated right) which seeks to create a dialogue between the taboo topics of sex and communism. The flamboyant pink lotus petals surrounding the clock are arranged in a suggestive way and charged with erotic energy. Li's mockery and satire of the clash between communism of the past and human sexuality, is both stimulating and provocative.



LI SHAN
ROUGE SERIES NO. 7
Oil and mixed media on canvas
105.4 x 114.9 cm.
HK\$800,000 - 1,200,000
US\$102,600 - 153,800

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LIU WEI

Tiananmen

Oil on canvas, triptych

Each: 250 x 180 cm ,

Overall: 250 x 540 cm)

HK\$5,500,000 - 8,000,000

US\$705,100 - 1,025,600

The powerful symbol of Tiananmen Square has long been one of authority, with wave after wave of political movements challenging this notion, and marking the critical moments in China's recent history. For these reasons Liu Wei places great importance on this subject matter. In this piece titled ***Tiananmen*** (illustrated above), Liu appears dispassionate and detached, and does not impart the same dramatic narrative or intense social criticism as his contemporaries.

By adopting an even, flat style of colouring and at the same time a combination of vivid, intense colours with uneven horizontal lines, the artist completely transforms three-dimensional, elements such as buildings, street lights and roads into a two-dimensional and abstract world of geometric beauty, thereby dissolving all sense of politics and power in real life. In this work, the gaze of the viewer begins at the street lamps in the foreground on the right, and then progresses across Chang'an Avenue finally to arrive at Tiananmen on the left.

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TOSHIMITSU IMAI

SOLEIL FENDU

160.5 x 129 cm.

HK\$3,500,000 - 5,500,000

US\$448,700 - 705,100

US\$705.100 - 1.025.600

As one of the leading figures of Art Informel in Europe in the 1960s, Imai together with the founding members of Japanese Gutai, delved into the philosophy of art from an avant-garde standpoint for both medium and the creative process.

Soleil Fendu (illustrated above) by Imai exemplifies how Imai abandoned the figurative and migrated towards pure abstraction, with a sense of expression and technique converging. Imai tends to use a variety of minerals and metal foil to impart surface skin. Soleil Fendu is full of rich, dense texture, with radiating lines producing the effect of a powerful eruption of magma and volcanic rock.

As a pioneer of action painting, who defied traditional techniques, Toshio Yoshida believed that art is a creative journey or process, rather than a deliverable or end product. His concept was established as performance elements in his creations since the mid-1950s. The 1960 Untitled (illustrated right) was produced in a semi-automated performance process while the artist stood on a ladder and used a water sprinkler to spray pigments on a canvas laid out flat on the floor. The pigments are layered and build up the dense and irregular form so that each work has its own unique surface that appears as a palpable structure rather than mere surface.



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ZAO WOU-KI

Oil on canvas

54 x 65 cm

HK\$4,000,000 - 6,000,000

US\$512,800 - 769,200

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The colour blue holds special inspiration for Zao Wou-Ki's construction of space in canvas. This piece (illustrated above) represents the diversity and appeal of blue, with the variation of blue in Zao's works being closely linked to the concept of traditional Chinese ink painting and the spiritual essence of Chinese landscape painting.

The work marks the completion of a stylistic transition from the 1960s where bold lines and surging, blocks of color dominated his canvases, to the 1980s when his use of color-wash paintings liberated the expressive qualities of color itself. At this point in his career, there are no distinguishable objects to serve as reference, with color becoming the crux of his work. In the current work transparency is masterly created through different tones, seemingly reproducing the floating and billowing effect of color diffusing in water.

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THE ART PEOPLE



KAZUO SHIRAGA

Dakusya (Cloud of Sand)

Oil on canvas

96 x 129 cm.

HK\$5,500,000 - 8,000,000

US\$705,100 - 1,025,600

Park Seo-Bo is one of the most important leading artists from the Dansaekhwa movement. His input in liberating artists from institutional conservatism led him to be one of the major figures in establishing the movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Inspired by instinctive scribbling, Park resumed his noted series of *Écriture*, *Myobup* in Korean, in the late 1960s. The series has continued so far over several decades of his artistic career, evolving profound depth and maturity in different mediums, colours and styles. In Korean, *Myobup* refers to techniques and methods of depiction associated with the line in ink painting.

Shiraga was a prominent member of the Gutai Art Association, which began in Osaka in 1954 and lasted for 18 years. It is the longest and most complex avant-garde art movement in Japan after World War II, spanning two generations of artists. It was formed by Jiro Yoshihara and 17 young artists. Gutai is a name made up from two ideograms, the first of which means 'implement', and the second, tai, means 'body/form'. The link between matter and the body is the energy that passes through both.

Through unique free movement which included elements of performance, Shiraga positioned the canvas horizontally on the floor and with the help of a rope suspended from the ceiling spread oil paint freely with his feet, creating a unique composition that features a binary tension between control and release, consciousness and the inner psyche, his body and the work.



PARK SEO-BO

Écriture No. 65-75 (Writing No. 65-75)

Oil and pencil on canvas

130 x 195 cm.

Painted in 1975

HK\$5,800,000 - 7,800,000

US\$743.600 - 1.000.000

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THE ART PEOPLE



T'ang Haywen was a central figure in the revolution of Chinese ink painting as he started to develop his work while abroad in France. He crossed boundaries and explored the full expressive potential of ink as a medium, elevating it into a universal language.

T'ang Haywen saw Chinese ink painting as a mode of free expression, and did not deliberate over which categories his works should fall into. He famously once said "My paintings are neither figurative nor abstract, nor do they belong to the neo-figurative school. Such classifications seem to me too limited. I seek an art free from constraint, within which I feel free to evolve."

The work (illustrated left) with its rows of brown lines, suggesting range upon range of mountains, attests to the unlimited inspiration the artist draws from natural vistas. Tang's unique spiral brushwork displays energy, vitality and speed, while the vivid colours of gemlike blue, brown and white charge the picture with a sense of freedom, spirit and brightness.

T'ANG HAYWEN

Untitled

*Watercolour on Kyo card
100 x 70 cm.*

*HK\$800,000 - 1,600,000
US\$102,600 - 205,100*

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WU GUANZHONG

oil on board

69 x 54 cm

HK\$12,000,000 - 18,000,000

US\$1,538,500 - 2,307,700

NOTES TO EDITORS:

ASIAN 20TH CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY ART SALES

Auction: 28 and 29 November

Venue: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai

VIEWINGS:

26-28 November

10:30am – 6:00pm

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For high-res images please [click here](#)

(All images in this article are for sale in Christie's Asian 20th Century and Art Evening Sale and Asian 20th Century Art Day Sale on 28th & 29th November 2015.)

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2015 that totalled £2.9 billion / \$4.5 billion. In 2014, Christie's had global auction and private sales 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.

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 Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

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