

CHRISTIE'S

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ART D'ASIE

亞洲藝術

PARIS - 13 DECEMBER 2017



Paris - Christie's France is pleased to organize its *Asian Art* sale on 13 December which will offer a large range of important Asian works of art dating from the Ming and Qing dynasties and coming from prestigious provenances such as a cloisonné enamel table from the personal collection of Baroness Thyssen-Bornemisza, a rare Yongzheng period glazed vase from the former collection of Martine de Béhague Countess de Béarn and fifteen lots coming from the French diplomat Georges Dubail. The sale, comprising 206 lots estimated for a total of 4 to 6 million euros, will also offer other highlights including beautiful Buddhists gilt-bronzes, several important paintings and sculptures from South-East Asia.

Tiphaine Nicoul, Director of the department: "We are pleased to offer this season, eclectic works of art of high quality and with prestigious provenances. The Asian art market is still very dynamic and our clients' needs are evolving rapidly. We are particularly delighted to offer a 'hundred deer' vase to our sophisticated and knowledgeable clientele and we are confident that this extraordinary piece will certainly realize a strong result".

FROM PRESTIGIOUS PROVENANCES

A porcelain vase will be offered in this sale but from the Yongzheng period (1723-1736). This rare *Ru*-Type glazed vase with a six-character seal mark is coming from the former collection of famous French collector **Martine de Béhague, Countess of Béarn** (1870-1939). Her several travels and her parents' immense fortune gave her the opportunity to acquire eclectic objects from around the world such as paintings, drawings, sculptures, manuscripts, porcelains, antiques and Far-East object such as this glazed vase estimated at €300,000-500,000 (illustrated left) and which stayed in the same family until today.

From the collection of **Baroness Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza**, collectors will discover a beautiful cloisonné enamel 'Dragon' square table from the late 17th century (estimate: €200,000-300,000, illustrated below). Baroness Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza, director and Vice President of the Board of Trustees of The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection Foundation, has long been devoted to the cultural preservation of the arts. From the time she was a child, her family cultivated the Baroness's love of the arts. Internationally educated and well-traveled, the Baroness was exposed to a vast array of cultures with distinct artistic traditions, fostering her love of art from all corners of the world. In 1985 the Baroness married Baron Hans Heinrich von Thyssen-Bornemisza, a businessman and devoted art collector, reigniting her childhood passion and catalyzing an even deeper commitment to the arts. The marriage of the Baron and Baroness not only merged two families, but also joined their two distinctive collections into a comprehensive group of more than 1,200 works, including paintings by renowned artists such as Titian, Van Gogh and Picasso. With her husband at her side, the Baroness elegantly stepped into the role as co-caretaker of the Thyssen-Bornemisza family collection, focusing mainly on nineteenth and twentieth century North American and European painting, including select works of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Expressionism. Together they continued to build what was to become one of the most revered art collections in Europe. Housed in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid since 1992, the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection boasts Western art works spanning from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, as well as works from Asia and beyond. The Baroness has a special fondness for Asian works of art and furniture, which fill her home. This present cloisonné table illustrates her keen eye for Asian art and her commitment to collecting at the highest level in every field. Until recently, this piece remained in pride of place in her home alongside other works from her personal collection.



Two rare bronze figures of *Manjushri* and *Samantabhadra* from the Kangxi period and more specifically from the *Jiawu* year (1714) will also be offered in this sale. Amongst the fifteen lots coming from the personal collection of **Georges Dubail**, these two 18 cm. bronze figures are estimated between 5,000 and 7,000 euros (illustrated left). Georges Dubail (1845-1932) went to China for the first time in 1876. Dubail finished his diplomatic career in Peking as Minister Plenipotentiary. He came back to France in 1906 bringing along Chinese and Japanese works of art he had always lived with and which stayed in the family until today. During his career, Dubail was also committed to strengthen relationships between France and China and thus took part in the creation of the Franco-Chinese Friendship Association (*Amicale franco-chinoise*) in 1907 in Paris, which welcomed Chinese students such as Deng Xiaoping or Nie Rongzhen who then became Chinese

communist party leaders. Acquired by Dubail prior to 1906, these two figures have certainly been part of a larger group, all offered by the same donator, a lady named Zhu from the Wang family in Gusu, a district of Suzhou.

Other important Asian works of art come from the **Jean Langlois'** personal collection. Jean Langlois (1896-1949) arrived in Vietnam in 1915. After the war, he decided to stay in Vietnam where he worked as an engineer for the Société de Construction des Chemins de Fer Indochinois. He died in 1949 and his wife and two sons came back to France in Burgundy where Jean Langlois was a native of and brought with them all the works of art they acquired during more than 30 years living in Asia. This group include small gilt bronzes, some jades, literati objects and a beautiful small white and russet jade vase from the Qing Dynasty sculpted to imitate a bamboo stick enhanced with leaves and a phoenix placed on a rocky base (estimate: €5,000-7,000, illustrated right).



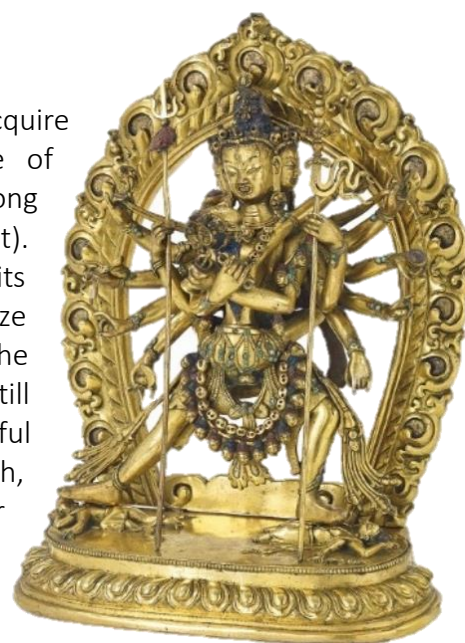
THE 'HUNDRED DEER' VASE

The highlight of this sale is a rare and magnificent *Famille Rose* 'Hundred Deer' vase from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) which stayed in the same French family since 1900, date when the vase entered the family's collection. This exceptional vase is in perfect condition, which is estimated €500,000-700,000, should attract many important collectors. Vases with this type of decoration are often known as 'hundred deer vases' - although in most cases the number 'hundred' is used loosely simply to mean 'many'.

In Chinese, a hundred deer is *bai lu* which suggests the wish *shoutian bailu* 'May you receive the hundred emoluments from heaven'. The number one hundred is implied using two other rebuses within these designs, one is by including white deer amongst the brown or red deer, since the word for white in Chinese is *bai* - a homophone for the word for a hundred. In addition, deer may represent Luxing, the God of Rank and Emolument. The Chinese word for deer, *lu*, sounds like *lu*, the word for emolument or an official salary, thus deer are symbolic of the rank and wealth that are associated with such a salary. The 'hundred deer' therefore represent the ultimate success, a career in government service in Imperial China. The deer is also associated with Daoism and the God of Longevity, Shou-lao. Chinese herbalists traditionally grind up deer antlers and include the resulting powder in certain medicines, believing it to have health-giving effects. As such, the subject-matter on the present vase alludes to a multitude of auspicious connotations.

FIGURES OF THE BUDDHIST IMAGERY

A section of the sale will offer our collectors the opportunity to acquire important Buddhist pieces, including a superb gilt-bronze statue of Chakrasamvara embracing his consort Vajravaraahi from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) and estimated at €250,000-300,000 (illustrated right). These two figures represent, respectively, compassion and wisdom and its union leads to enlightenment and Buddhahood. The artist cast the bronze with an almost electrifying intensity radiating from the central face of the deity. The eyebrow is knitted in anger; his open mouth with fangs and still his face does not show bulging eyes and gaping jaw as typical for wrathful deities. His emotionless facial expression is one between peace and wrath, while reflecting at the same time his impersonality of being a *yidam* or 'pure appearance' who transcendent duality.



The department will also present a diamond scepter (*vajra*) and a hand-bell (*ghanta*), both pieces being one of the most important pair of ritual implements of Tibetan Buddhism (estimate: €150,000-200,000). Not only implemented by each lama during ritual performances but as well held by many gods in the various religious art forms. The *vajra* is held in the right hand while the *ghanta* in the left. The first represents the male principle and compassion while the second the female principle and wisdom. Together they symbolize unity and enlightenment. Furthermore, the four prongs around the central rod of this *vajra* symbolize together the five insights and delusions. The *ghanta* chases away evil spirits through its sound. The inside of the bell bears a cast mark of emperor Yongle (1403-1424) who was a devote patron of Tibetan Buddhism and its art. His Imperial workshops produced art of the highest quality and technical workmanship as can be gleaned from this matching *vajra* and *ghanta*.



From the ancient Gandhara region, collectors will also discover an impressive grey schist figure of Bodhisattva *Maitreya* dated from the 2nd - 3rd century, often considered the high period of Gandharan art. Maitreya is considered the Buddha of the future. When the dharma is forgotten on Earth, he will descend from the Tushita Heaven, where he resides, to be born in our realm as the next Buddha. His iconic water vessel, the *kundika*, is found in many different contexts within Indian sculpture, but is almost always a symbol of fertility and life. It is an apt visual icon, therefore, for Maitreya's role as a progenitor of future peace and order. When he is born on Earth, Maitreya is depicted in rich robes similar to that of the historical Gautama Buddha, prior to his renunciation of worldly goods. His vestments include a foliate collar, a rope-work necklace with makarahead pendant, and a cord with cylindrical amulet boxes of a type still in use in South Asia. In the Gandharan period, Maitreya is considered as the most important Bodhisattva. The bodhisattva, or enlightened being, was a central feature of Mahayana Buddhism. The Mahayana ideology advocated the importance of faith in the Buddha principle, expressed through love and devotion, as the most important element in the achievement of salvation. The means through which salvation could be attained was worship of the bodhisattva, who was also a model of benevolence and compassion, qualities exemplified in the present sculpture. This sculpture from a French private collection is estimated at €100,000-150,000 (illustrated left).

IMPORTANT PAINTINGS

Several Chinese paintings from the collection of Mr. du Gardin will also be presented in the sale.

Christie's will offer *Butterflies and Amaranth*, a beautiful painting by Qi Baishi on which back Mr. du Gardin wrote to immortalize the day when he met Qi Baishi at his studio (estimate: €30,000-60,000, illustrated right).



A magnificent handscroll from the Qing dynasty will also be presented at this sale. It depicts a vivid and a festive continuous scene of a temple fair. The length, the high quality of the details and the presence of the Qianlong emperor 's seal, all suggest that it was an imperial painting. The current seal reads Taishang Huangdi Zhi Bao ('Treasure of Emperor Emeritus') and was frequently affixed to rare books and fine ancient or contemporary paintings and calligraphic works kept by the Imperial Household Department, as well as being used on Qianlong's own works. This handscroll previously owned by a private European collector who worked in the railway and salt industry in Qingdao in the early 20th century, acquired in Beijing between 1907-1907 (estimate: €120,000-180,000, illustrated below).



Sale: Wednesday 13 December at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm

Viewings: Saturday 9 December from 10 am to 6 pm, Sunday 10 December from 2pm to 6pm and from Monday 11 to Wednesday 13 December from 10 am to 6pm

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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 are reported net of applicable fees.*

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