

CHRISTIE'S

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Asian Art at Christie's

Fine Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art

Including The Soame Jenyns Collection of Japanese and Chinese Art

London, November 2018



A Rare Large Ming-Style Blue and White Moonflask, Bianhu,

Yongzheng six-character seal mark
in underglaze blue and of the
period (1725-1735)
Estimate on request

London – On 6 November 2018, Christie's *Fine Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art* auction will present an array of rare works of exceptional quality and with important provenance, many offered to the market for the first time in decades. The season will be highlighted by exquisite imperial ceramics, fine jade carvings, Buddhist art, *huanghuali* furniture, paintings from celebrated modern Chinese artists, along with works of art from a number of important collections, including *The Soame Jenyns Collection of Japanese and Chinese Art*. The works will be on view and open to the public from 2 to 5 November.

The auction will be led by a moonflask, *Bianhu*, Yongzheng six-character seal mark in underglaze blue and of the period (1725-1735) (estimate on request). This magnificent flask is exceptionally large, and takes both its form and decoration from vessels made in the early 15th century. The Yongzheng Emperor was a keen antiquarian and a significant number of objects produced for his court were made in the antique style, particularly blue and white porcelain, and so their style was often adopted for imperial Yongzheng wares in the 18th century. The vessel is decorated with stylised floral scrolls and a pair of elegant strap handles, each decorated with flowers and foliage, terminating in *ruyi* heads.



Rare and Finely-Cast Gilt-Bronze Seated Figure of Avalokiteshvara
 Xuande six-character incised mark and of the period (1426-1435)
 Estimate: £150,000-200,000

The sale will be highlighted by important works of art from the collection of the late Soame Jenyns which will be presented across the *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art* sale, alongside an online sale which runs from 1 to 8 November. Soame Jenyns (1904-1976) was a legendary figure in the field of Chinese and Japanese art. He was a renowned British art historian, collector and connoisseur and worked at the British Museum authoring several seminal books on East Asian art. The collection was built throughout his lifetime and will be led by a gilt-bronze figure of Avalokiteshvara (1426-1435) (estimate

£150,000-200,000). It is engraved with a six-character inscription, which can be translated as '*Bestowed [during the] Xuande era [of the] great Ming*'. The figure perfectly reflects the connoisseurship of Soame Jenyns. Radiological examinations of the figure have revealed small consecratory objects: a miniature scroll, various textile fragments and beads. It is rare for the base plate of such an old bronze to be intact and confirms that the figure had been consecrated in a Buddhist ritual. Both aspects are highly appreciated by collectors of Buddhist bronzes. Further highlights of the collection include a rare *famille verte* 'Yu Tang Fu Gui' teapot (estimate: £20,000-40,000), an elegant and fascinating tribute to the skills of porcelain decorators at the imperial kilns in the early Yongzheng reign; and a 'peony' ogee-form bowl and cover (estimate: £10,000–15,000), likely to have been made in the early 18th century within the Imperial Palace Workshops in the Forbidden City. Painted enamel was a European technique, which was introduced to China in the Kangxi period (1662-1722). The bowl emphasises the technical sophistication in the workshops and the cultural and artistic exchange between China and Europe in the 18th century.

In addition to the live auction, *The Soame Jenyns Collection of Japanese and Chinese Art* online will offer a superb selection of Japanese lacquer and porcelain including a rare and important Kutani fan box, dating to the Edo period (mid-17th century) (estimate: £20,000-30,000), alongside Kakiemon and Arita ceramics and porcelain from the Ming and Qing dynasties including wucai, blue and white, and enamelled ceramics.



An Important Japanese Kutani box in the form of a fan

Edo Period, mid-17th century
 Estimate: £20,000-30,000



Front Centre: A Large White Jade 'Cranes' Group,
Qianlong period (1736-1795), Estimate: £30,000 - 50,000
Left: A Greenish-White Jade 'Mythical Beast' Vase,
18th century, Estimate: £15,000 - 20,000
Right: A Greenish-White Jade Square-Section Brush Pot,
Bitong,
18th century, Estimate: £10,000 - 15,000

The highlight of the jade offering comprises the collection of Chinese hardstone carvings from the late John Pearce (1918-2017), purchased from the Chinese art dealer, T. Y. King (金從怡), in the 1950s and 1960s. Born into a family with a rich Hong Kong heritage, John Pearce was appointed an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) by George VI for his intelligence work during the Second World War. He was a prominent businessman and became a noted bloodstock breeder and racehorse owner. For forty years he lived at the Hong Kong Mandarin Oriental hotel, where he amassed an impressive collection of art. The collection is led by a large white jade cranes group from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (estimate: £30,000-50,000). Skillfully executed as a larger and a smaller crane grasping a leafy peach branch, the details of their feathers are finely incised. The imagery of cranes and peaches portrays a wish for longevity, with both symbols closely associated with the Immortal, Shoulao, the God of Longevity. In

Chinese mythology, peaches give long life to whomever consumes them, and hence are heavily featured in imagery associated with Immortals and other legendary figures. The collection also presents a greenish-white jade 'Mythical Beast' vase (estimate: £15,000–20,000). Dating to the 18th century, the impressive vessel is carved as a baluster vase which forms the body of a *bixie*, considered to have the power to dispel evil. Additional works from the collection include a greenish-white jade square-section brush pot, *Bitong*, 18th century (estimate: £10,000–15,000). Standing on four ruyi-form feet, each side is carved with a panel depicting a different scene of a seated scholar in a pavilion, a cowherd, a fisherman, and a farmer, all in a natural landscape.

A magnificent *sancai* and blue-glazed pottery figure of a guardian warrior dating to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) (estimate: £150,000 - 250,000) will also be offered. The guardian is modelled with an unglazed head, bearing a fierce expression. These large *sancai* tomb figures were the preserve of the Tang elite, and indeed some of the kilns producing them have been linked to the court. The current figure



**A Magnificent Sancai and Blue-
Glazed Pottery Figure of a Guardian
Warrior**

Tang dynasty (618-907)
Estimate: £150,000 - 250,000

would have been particularly valuable since it has been decorated with a generous amount of blue glaze. In Tang times the cobalt used to create the blue glaze was imported into China and was expensive and used sparingly, unless the family commissioning the *sancai* ware belonged to the highest echelons of society.

The sale will also present outstanding examples of *huanghuali* furniture including a rare pair of huanghuali horseshoe-back armchairs, *Quanyi*, (17th to 18th century) (estimate: £100,000-200,000), alongside important archaic bronzes and works by leading modern Chinese painter Qi Baishi (1863-1957).

The auctions will be held during Asian Art in London 2018 (AAL), which takes place from 1st to 10th November.

Please click [here](#) to browse the sale.

Christie's Features: [5 minutes with... A Yongzheng-period moonflask](#)

Christie's Features: [5 minutes with... A gilt-bronze Bodhisattva containing hidden treasures](#)

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Public Viewing:

2 November: 10am - 4:30pm

3 November: 12pm - 5pm

4 November: 12pm - 8pm

5 November: 9am - 4:30pm

Auction:

6 November: 10:30am (Lots 1 - 153)

6 November: 2pm (Lots 154 - 322)

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2018 that totalled £2.97 billion / \$4.04 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**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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