

CHRISTIE'S

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LACQUER • JADE • BRONZE • INK THE IRVING COLLECTION

The Private Collection of Florence and Herbert Irving

CHRISTIE'S ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF EXHIBITIONS, SALE SCHEDULE, AND CATALOGUES

Part I: Evening Sale | Wednesday, 20 March 2019 | 7pm

Part II: Day Sale | Thursday, 21 March 2019 | 10am & 2pm

Online Sale | Tuesday, 19 March to Tuesday, 26 March 2019



Part I: Evening Sale
Asian Works of Art
20 March 2019



Part II: Day Sale
*Asian Works of Art and European
Decorative Arts* | 21 March 2019



Online Sale | *Contemporary Clay:
Yixing Pottery from the Irving Collection*
19-26 March 2019

First Look at the Complete Collection of More than 400 Items of Asian Art and Decorative Arts To be sold across an Evening Sale, a Day Sale, and an Online Sale

*"We have enjoyed the activity of collecting as much as we have savored living with these works of art.
Now the pleasure is ours of sharing our collection with the public." – Florence and Herbert Irving*

New York – Christie's announces final details of the most anticipated auction for the Spring season of Asian Art: the sale of the private collection of Florence and Herbert Irving. Aptly titled **Lacquer • Jade • Bronze • Ink: The Irving Collection**, the sales pay homage to the materials the Irvings spent their lives studying and collecting. The collection will be sold across an Evening Sale on March 20 and a Day Sale on March 21, with a complementary online auction *Contemporary Clay: Yixing Pottery from the Irving Collection* from March 19 to 26. The full collection will be presented in a public exhibition from March 14-20 during Asian Art Week at Christie's New York. Additional jewelry highlights will be included in the New York *Magnificent Jewels* sale on April 16, 2019.

From modest Brooklyn roots to the triumph that was the Sysco Corporation, the Irvings' inspiring trajectory allowed them to build a better, more enlightened world. Their many contributions spanned major donations to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New

York, including well over 1,300 works of Asian art, and underwriting acquisitions, curatorial positions, exhibitions, and galleries. In honor of the Irvings' extraordinary generosity, The Met named the entirety of their Asian art galleries *The Florence and Herbert Irving Asian Wing*.

Their commitment to philanthropy is also seen across a network of charities, most notably New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center, where the Irvings became the largest donors in its history. Together, the Irvings would pursue a massive philanthropic undertaking totaling over \$1 billion in support and innumerable magnificent objects of art to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Columbia University Medical Center, and New York-Presbyterian Hospital, among other causes.

For Florence and Herbert Irving, the opportunity to live in dialogue with their extraordinary collection of Asian art and European decorative art was an incomparable experience. It was not enough to live surrounded by beauty; they felt obligated to share it with the world. Asian art, in particular, would become synonymous with the Irving name, as the couple came to amass one of America's most significant private collections. From childhood days at the Brooklyn Museum to seeing their own names inscribed on the Asian art wing of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Irvings' passion for art was a truly lifelong commitment.

Tina Zonars, Co-Chairman of Asian Art at Christie's, comments: *"Christie's is honored to present Lacquer • Jade • Bronze • Ink: The Irving Collection, a grouping recognized for its remarkable quality and beauty. Carefully assembled across several decades, the Irvings created one of the foremost private collections of Asian art built upon scholarship and their personal passion. During their lifetime, the Irvings generously donated an extraordinary number of their treasured artworks to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The selection offered at Christie's this spring encompasses their most valued objects which they chose to live with in their New York City home: exceptional Asian art set amongst elegantly appointed decorative arts. The March sales will offer the landmark opportunity for collectors to participate in the legacy of one of the leading private collections of Chinese, Himalayan, Japanese, and Korean works of art."*

The Irvings' Collecting History

The Irvings made their initial foray into collecting in the 1940s and 1950s. The glassware Herbert Irving acquired during the Second World War was joined by additional glass pieces and "reasonably priced" works by living artists. An eighteenth-century Chinese table, purchased in the early 1960s from the notable dealer Robert Ellsworth, was a harbinger of greater things. However, it was not until the autumn of 1967 that they discovered the possibilities of Asian art, when Mrs. Irving suggested a trip to Japan, and a friend encouraged the couple to visit the esteemed Alice Boney in Tokyo.

From their first acquisition in Tokyo, the Irvings wholeheartedly embraced Asian art. Mrs. Irving began to study the history of Chinese art, ceramics, and furniture at Columbia University, and attended lectures at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Through annual visits to Asia and in conversation with Boney, Ellsworth, and other dealers around the world, the Irvings honed their unique connoisseurial vision—one greatly aided by Mrs. Irving's astute eye and enthusiastic scholarship. Behind the Irvings' commendable acquisition strategy was a network of dealers and experts that came to feel like family.

The Irvings' personal ties to dealers, curators, and fellow collectors grew in tandem with their collection. Each work, whether of masterpiece quality or more modest value, was viewed as an opportunity to develop connoisseurship. Throughout their journey in collecting, the Irvings were keen not only to acquire masterworks of Asian art, but also to build enduring relationships.

Part I: Evening Sale (Lots 801-826)

The Evening Sale includes a curated cross-section of 26 of the best examples across the Irvings' most collected categories: *Lacquer*, *Jade*, *Bronze*, and *Ink*, and some select ceramics. Featured lots include **a highly important and extremely rare gilt-bronze figure of a multi-armed Guanyin** (\$4,000,000-6,000,000); **an important and extremely rare Imperially inscribed greenish-white jade 'Twin Fish' washer** (\$1,000,000-1,500,000); **a rectangular lacquer tray with decoration of autumn grasses and moon, Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891), Meiji period** (\$60,000-80,000); and ***Lithe Like A Crane, Leisurely Like A Seagull*, by Fu Baoshi (1904-1965)** (\$800,000-1,200,000).

Part II: Day Sale (Lots 1101-1422)

The Day Sale is divided into a Morning Session of Asian Works of Art (Lots 1101-1237) and an Afternoon Session for English and European Decorative Arts, Carpets, Fine Art, and Asian Works of Art (Lots 1301-1422). The morning session spans impressive bronzes, jades, Chinese and Japanese lacquerware, paintings, and Japanese gold-leaf screens. Highlights include **a silver-and-copper-inlaid bronze figure of a Buddha, Western Tibet, 11th-12th century** (\$100,000-150,000), **a sandstone figure of a male deity, Khmer, Angkor period, Angkor Wat Style, 12th century** (\$100,000-150,000), **a rare and finely carved**

white jade 'Bridge Scene' brushrest and spinach-green jade base, 18th-19th century (\$80,000-120,000), and a rare carved black lacquer circular dish, Ming dynasty (\$30,000-50,000).

The afternoon session presents a selection of decorative arts from the Irvings' New York City apartment. Included in the offering English and European decorative arts, carpets, fine art, Asian works of art, and a group of art reference books. Among the featured lots are a **set of eight George III solid mahogany dining chairs, possibly by Wright & Elwick, circa 1765 (\$40,000-60,000)**; a **Chinese Export reverse mirror painting, last quarter 18th century (\$25,000-40,000)**; and a **pair of George III silver candelabra by John Wakelin & William Taylor, 1777 (\$20,000-30,000).**

Online Sale (Lots 1-68)

The online sale, ***Contemporary Clay: Yixing Pottery from the Irving Collection***, takes place from March 19-26 and comprises 68 teapots, figures and objects made by well-known Yixing pottery artists. Florence and Herbert Irving, known for their great eye for exceptional quality in art and form, appreciated the unique charm of contemporary Yixing ware. Steeped in earlier Ming and Qing traditions, while drawing creative inspiration from nature and the daily life, each potter has a distinct style.

Part I: Evening Sale Highlights | 20 March at 7pm



A HIGHLY IMPORTANT AND EXTREMELY RARE GILT-BRONZE FIGURE OF A MULTI-ARMED GUANYIN
CHINA, YUNNAN, DALI KINGDOM,
11TH-12TH CENTURY
\$4,000,000-6,000,000



**FU BAOSHI (1904-1965),
LITHE LIKE A CRANE,
LEISURELY LIKE A SEAGULL**
SCROLL, MOUNTED AND FRAMED, INK AND
COLOUR ON PAPER
\$800,000-1,200,000



A RARE BRONZE FIGURE OF SHIVA NATARAJA
SOUTH INDIA, TAMIL NADU, CHOLA
PERIOD, 13TH CENTURY
\$100,000-150,000



AN IMPORTANT AND EXTREMELY RARE IMPERIALY INSCRIBED GREENISH-WHITE JADE "TWIN FISH" WASHER,
CHINA, QING DYNASTY, QIANLONG
INCISED FOUR-CHARACTER MARK
AND OF THE PERIOD, DATED BY
INSCRIPTION TO THE
CYCLICAL *BINGWU* YEAR,
CORRESPONDING TO 1786
\$1,000,000-1,500,000



A RARE AND FINELY CARVED RED LACQUER DAOIST SCRIPTURE BOX AND COVER,
CHINA, QING DYNASTY,
QIANLONG PERIOD (1736-1795)
\$150,000-250,000



A RECTANGULAR LACQUER TRAY WITH DECORATION OF AUTUMN GRASSES AND MOON
SHIBATA ZESHIN (1807-1891), JAPAN, MEIJI
PERIOD, LATE 19TH CENTURY
\$60,000-80,000

Part II: Day Sale | Morning Session Highlights | Asian Works of Art | 21 March at 10am



**A SANDSTONE FIGURE
OF A MALE DEITY**
KHMER, ANGKOR PERIOD, ANGKOR
WAT STYLE, 12TH CENTURY
\$100,000-150,000



**A SET OF WRITING TABLE (BUNDAI), WRITING BOX,
(SUZURIBAKO) AND PAPER BOX (FUBAKO),
SCHOOL OF SHIBATA ZESHIN (1807-1891),
JAPAN, MEIJI PERIOD, LATE 19TH CENTURY
\$30,000-50,000**



**A SILVER- AND COPPER-INLAID
BRONZE FIGURE OF A BUDDHA,**
WESTERN TIBET,
11TH-12TH CENTURY
\$100,000-150,000



**A RARE CARVED BLACK
LACQUER CIRCULAR DISH,**
CHINA, MING DYNASTY
(1368-1644)
\$30,000-50,000



**ANONYMOUS, JAPAN, 18TH CENTURY
BLOSSOMING CHERRY TREES BESIDE A RIVER BANK,
A PAIR OF HANGING SCREENS, INK, COLOR AND
GOLD LEAF ON PAPER
\$50,000-70,000**



**A LARGE SPINACH-GREEN JADE
TRIPOD CENSER AND COVER,**
CHINA, QING DYNASTY,
18TH CENTURY
\$50,000-70,000

Part II: Day Sale | Afternoon Session Highlights | European Decorative Arts | 21 March at 2pm



**A CHINESE EXPORT REVERSE
MIRROR PAINTING**
QING DYNASTY, LAST QUARTER
18TH CENTURY
\$25,000-40,000



**A SET OF EIGHT GEORGE III SOLID
MAHOGANY DINING CHAIRS**
POSSIBLY WRIGHT & ELWICK, CIRCA 1765
\$40,000-60,000



**A PAIR OF GEORGE III SILVER
TWO-LIGHT CANDELABRA,**
MARK OF JOHN WAKELIN &
WILLIAM TAYLOR, 1777
\$20,000-30,000



**A GEORGE III ORMOLU-MOUNTED
PADOUK BOOKCASE, CIRCA 1765**
\$15,000-25,000



A CHINESE EXPORT REVERSE MIRROR PAINTING
QING DYNASTY, LATE 18TH CENTURY
\$20,000-30,000



**A REGENCY KINGWOOD
DINING TABLE,**
CIRCA 1820
\$25,000-40,000

Online Sale | Contemporary Clay: Yixing Pottery from the Irving Collection | 19-26 March



A BOAT-FORM YIXING TEAPOT AND COVER,
'CANAL BOAT'
ZHOU DINGFANG (B. 1965)
\$2,400-3,000



A BLUE LOTUS LEAF-FORM YIXING
TEAPOT AND COVER,
'GREEN LOTUS FROG'
JIANG RONG (1919-2008)
\$15,000-25,000



A YIXING TEAPOT AND COVER MODELED AS
A GROUP OF THATCHED COTTAGES, 'OLD
YIXING,' ZHOU DINGFANG (B. 1965),
DATED 1994
\$1,500-2,500



A COMPRESSED YIXING TEAPOT AND
COVER, 'FLOWING'
WANG YINXIAN (1943-2018) AND
ZHANG SHOUZHI (B. 1932)
\$30,000-50,000



A YIXING GINGER ROOT-FORM
TEAPOT AND COVER, 'TALL GINGER'
LU WENXIA (B. 1966) AND
LU JIANXING (B. 1968)
\$1,500-2,500



A YIXING TEAPOT AND COVER,
'NESTING BIRD'
WANG YINXIAN (1943-2018)
\$30,000-50,000

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2018 that totalled £5.3 billion / \$7 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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