

# CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT | HONG KONG | 10 MARCH 2021 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christie's Proudly Unveils

## ***POTTED CHRYSANTHEMUMS*** **THE LARGEST FLORAL PAINTING BY SANYU FEATURING PINK FLOWERS AND BLUE BRANCHES**

The Latest Addition to a Formidable Line-up of Masterpieces  
Presented at Christie's this Spring



**SANYU (CHANG YU, 1895-1966)**  
***Potted Chrysanthemums***

oil on masonite  
91.5 x 48 cm. (36 x 18 7/8 in.)  
Painted circa 1950s

**Estimate: HK\$78,000,000 – 120,000,000 /  
US\$11,000,000 – 15,000,000**

**Hong Kong** – Following the announcement of "We Are All Warriors — The Basquiat Auction," Christie's 20<sup>th</sup>/ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Art department is proud to unveil another important masterpiece that will be offered at auction in Asia this spring: ***Potted Chrysanthemums*** by **Sanyu**. This still-life is the largest floral painting by the artist to feature pink blossoms set against vibrant blue branches, and is one of the few important late-period still life works still held in private hands, making it exceedingly rare.

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Within Sanyu's oeuvre, there are only five paintings that depict delicate pink chrysanthemums offset against peacock blue branches and leaves. Among them, *Potted Chrysanthemums* is the largest of the five, and the work exemplifies Sanyu's ability to evoke colours inspired by Eastern culture. Early works by Sanyu focus on the exploration of form, while later works display a bolder investigation of colour. *Potted Chrysanthemums* is thus a stunning example of Sanyu's mastery of colour, and the expressive potential of hue.

Building upon the world auction records for Sanyu's portrait, still-life and animal-subject paintings achieved over the past three consecutive seasons in Hong Kong (see appendix), Christie's once again presents a museum-quality masterpiece to international collectors. These results testify to clients' trust in Christie's expertise – unrivalled in the current international marketplace – and widespread confidence in the global market for modern and contemporary art, as Christie's strives to deliver only the highest quality works to the global collecting audience.

## **Sanyu's *Potted Chrysanthemums*: An Exceptionally Rare Masterpiece**

- **Rare museum-quality masterpiece:**
  - According to the first and second volumes of "*The Complete Works of Sanyu Oil Paintings*", there are only five Sanyu paintings that feature the unique "blue stem pink blossom" colour combination, and *Potted Chrysanthemums* is the largest of the five. This piece is an example of the artist's most mature work — the fine balance of details and colours exemplifying Sanyu's mastery of his craft.
  - The unique combination of indigo blue and saffron gold used in the background only appears in Sanyu's late period works. There are only two examples still extant, and *Potted Chrysanthemums* is the largest of the two, epitomizing Sanyu's utilization of Eastern-inspired colours during the 1940s-1950s.
- **Chrysanthemums are an important motif in Sanyu's oeuvre:** According to the first and second volumes of "*The Complete Works of Sanyu Oil Paintings*", the artist created 133 oil paintings of flowers over the course of his lifetime, of which 55 feature chrysanthemums as the primary subject, demonstrating Sanyu's love for this particular flower. Sanyu depicted chrysanthemums in his works over an uninterrupted period from the 1930s to the 1950s, exploring shape, space, and colour, signifying the importance of this flower motif throughout his artistic career.
- **The most popular still-life subject among connoisseurs:** Chrysanthemums are the most sought-after and expensive still-life subject matter in the market for canvas works by the artist. The record price for a still-life by Sanyu was achieved by Christie's in July 2020 for the sale of *Chrysanthèmes blanches dans un pot bleu et blanc (White Chrysanthemum in a Blue and White Jardinière)*. *Potted Chrysanthemums* is one of the very few important late still life works still in private hands, and is thus exceedingly rare.
- **Exceptional provenance:** The original owner of this painting was a French private collector who directly purchased the painting from Sanyu, and kept it in his collection for more than 60 years. The work later returned to Asia, and is a testimony to the historical movement of Sanyu's works from Europe to Asia.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

**Public Preview (by appointment - [infoasia@christies.com](mailto:infoasia@christies.com)):**

**Hong Kong** | 15 – 23 March | 22/ F, Alexandra House, 18 Chater Road Central

**Shanghai** | 12 – 13 April | Ampire Building, No. 97 Yuanmingyuan Road

**Beijing** | 16 – 17 April | No. 82 Jinbao Street, Dong Cheng District

**Taipei** | 1 – 2 May | Taipei Marriott Hotel, No. 199, Lequn 2<sup>nd</sup> Road, Zhongshan District, Taipei

**Auction:**

**Hong Kong** | 24 May | Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No.1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

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**Auction Records for the Artist achieved at Christie's Hong Kong:**



**Auction Record for the Artist**

**Five Nudes**

oil on masonite  
120 x 172 cm. (47 1/4 x 67 3/4 in.)  
Painted in 1950s

**20<sup>th</sup> Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale,  
23 November 2019**

**Price realised: HK\$303,985,000**



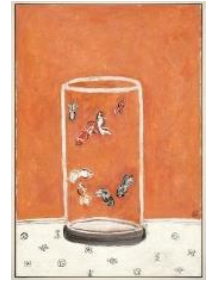
**Auction Record for a Still Life by the Artist**

**Chrysanthèmes blancs dans  
un pot bleu et blanc  
(White Chrysanthemum in a  
Blue and White Jardinière)**

oil on masonite  
110 x 60 cm. (43 1/4 x 23 5/8 in.)  
Painted in 1940s -1950s

**Modern and Contemporary Art Evening Sale,  
10 July 2020**

**Price realised: HK\$191,620,000**



**Auction Record for an Animal-Subject  
Painting by the Artist**

**Goldfish**

oil on canvas  
73.8 x 50.2 cm. (29 x 19 3/4 in.)  
Painted in the 1930s–1940s

**Sanyu: Goldfish, 2 December 2020  
Price realised: HK\$170,170,000**

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**About Christie's**

Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. 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 clients and online sales are offered year-round across all categories. Christie's global presence is spread across a network of international salerooms and 61 representatives and offices. Christies.com provides detailed articles and videos on the objects offered for sale alongside the latest advances in digital viewing tools to make Christie's accessible to all.

*\*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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Images available on request

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