

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | HONG KONG | 3 APRIL 2023 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christie's Hong Kong Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Department Presents

**A FINE AND EXTREMELY RARE DOUCAI 'DRAGON' MOONFLASK
QIANLONG SIX-CHARACTER SEAL MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND
OF THE PERIOD (1736-1795)**

To Lead the Dedicated *Qianlong* Themed Live Auction
"THE IMPERIAL PALETTE - THREE QIANLONG TREASURES"
on 30 May

Has Remained in Private Hands Since First Purchased at Auction
at Christie's Hong Kong in 1995



**A FINE AND EXTREMELY RARE DOUCAI 'DRAGON' MOONFLASK
QIANLONG SIX-CHARACTER SEAL MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND
OF THE PERIOD (1736-1795)**

20 in. (51 cm.) high

**Estimate: HK\$80,000,000 – 120,000,000 /
US\$10,200,000 – 15,300,000**

Hong Kong – On 30 May, Christie's will present a magnificent and very rare *Qianlong doucai* moonflask, bearing the *Qianlong* six-character seal mark in underglaze blue and of the period (1736-1795) (estimate: HK\$80,000,000 – 120,000,000 / US\$10,200,000 – 15,300,000), as the leading highlight of the **dedicated *Qianlong* themed live auction "The Imperial Palette - Three Qianlong Treasures"** at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

CHRISTIE'S

This extraordinary *doucai* moonflask exhibits exceptional qualities that will undoubtedly entice Chinese antique enthusiasts:

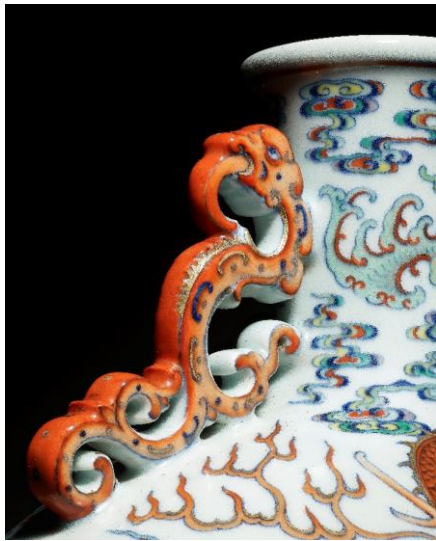


- **Extraordinary Chinese Craftsmanship and Extreme Rarity:** This masterpiece overcame several challenges in its creation. The delicate balance of the wide body standing on a small flared foot and the flattened body shape made its firing process inherently unstable. In addition, large moonflasks decorated in *doucai* style, like the current example, are particularly rare due to the risk of double jeopardy occasioned by this type of decoration. The intricate underglaze blue outlines and the required double firing for the overglaze enamel colours would have necessitated numerous *kiln* failures, further emphasising its rarity and remarkable quality.

- **Imperial Decorative Theme:** The image on either side of this flask depicts a large and powerful Imperial five-clawed dragon, with an iron red body, which has risen from the waves to fly amongst multicoloured clouds. This dragon symbolises the emperor and beneath this dragon's left foreleg is a smaller, five-clawed green dragon, which is in the process of rising from the waves. The green dragon represents the heir apparent and appears to be looking up at his father, as if mesmerised by him. This decoration is usually known as 'The Emperor instructing the Crown Prince', and it appears on only a small number of Imperial porcelains. This coloured example further explains its rarity as *Qianlong* moonflasks of this size are more commonly found in blue and white.



CHRISTIE'S



- **Museum Quality:** Measuring at 51 cm high, this example is one of the largest moonflasks of that period and possibly one of only two *doucai* examples decorated with two dragons to each face.

The closest comparable example to the present moonflask is a *doucai* moonflask (49.5 cm. high) with a slightly different composition, housed in the Palace Museum, Beijing (see *The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum, Porcelains in Polychrome and Contrasting Colours*, Hong Kong, 1999, p. 278, no. 254).

- **Exceptional Moment to Acquire:** This stunning masterwork finally reappears at auction for the first time since it was sold at Christie's Hong Kong in May 1995 for HK\$8,160,000.

Marco Almeida, Head of Department, Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, expressed his enthusiasm for this upcoming themed auction, *"This magnificent and very rare Qianlong doucai moonflask embodies the superb artistry and craftsmanship of the Qianlong period. Its successful creation, despite numerous challenges, highlights the exceptional skill of the artisans who produced it. The significant historical and cultural importance, rarity, and outstanding quality of this work of art, make it a true gem for collectors and enthusiasts alike. Please stay tuned for more highlights joining this dedicated themed sale 'The Imperial Palette - Three Qianlong Treasures' on 30 May."*

NOTES TO EDITORS

Previews:

Hong Kong | 3 – 6 Apr | Christie's Hong Kong Galleries, 22/ F, Alexandra House, 18 Chater Road, Central

Taipei | 22 – 23 Apr | Taipei Marriott Hotel, Grand Ballroom 3/F, No. 199 Lequn 2nd Road

Beijing | 9 – 10 May | China World Summit Wing, Ballroom B1, No.1 Jianguomenwai Avenue

Shanghai | 13 – 14 May | BUND ONE, 4/F, No.1 Zhongshan Dong Yi Road, Shanghai

Hong Kong | 25 – 29 May | Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No.1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

Live Auction:

Hong Kong | 30 May | Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No.1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

Image Download Link: please click [here](#)

CHRISTIE'S

Press Contact:

Flora Fung | +852 2978 6876 | florafung@christies.com

About Christie's

- Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).
- Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's has sold 8 of the 10 most important single-owner collections in history, including the [Paul G. Allen Collection](#)—the most valuable collection ever offered at auction (November 2022). In recent years, Christie's also achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction ([Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi](#), 2017), for a 20th century artwork ([Andy Warhol's Shot Sage Blue Marilyn](#), 2022) and for a work by a living artist ([Jeff Koons' Rabbit](#), 2019). Christie's [Private Sales](#) offers a seamless service for buying and selling art, jewellery and watches outside of the auction calendar, working exclusively with Christie's specialists at a client's individual pace.
- Following the groundbreaking 2021 sale of the first digital art NFT ever offered by a global auction house ([Beeple's Everydays](#)), Christie's recently launched the first [fully on-chain auction platform](#) dedicated to exceptional NFT art. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the use of hologram technology to tour life-size 3D objects around the world, and the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.
- Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.
- Browse, bid, [discover](#), and join us for the best of art and luxury at: www.christies.com or by downloading Christie's apps.

** 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.*

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

