

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**THE ROBERT H. ELLSWORTH COLLECTION
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S
ASIAN ART WEEK IN MARCH 2012**



Luminous Perfection: Fine Chinese Mirrors from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection
March 22, 2012

New York – On March 22, Christie's is honored to present the sale of ***Luminous Perfection: Fine Chinese Mirrors from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection***. Prominent dealer, collector, and author Robert H. Ellsworth is a legendary figure in the field of Asian art. He began to collect Chinese bronze mirrors more than sixty years ago when there were relatively few references available to him. Regardless, Ellsworth was able to amass a superb collection of rare and important mirrors that span more than 2,000 years from the Warring States period (475-221 BC) through the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Comprising 70 lots, the sale is expected to realize in excess of \$1.2 million and will be led by a magnificent and exceptionally rare silvery bronze octalobed mirror with cranes from the Tang dynasty (618-907) (*illustrated above*, estimate: \$100,000-150,000).

Fashioned from a high tin-content bronze to produce a bright, silvery patina, these mirrors often bear exquisitely cast designs while the reverse side is polished to a reflective surface. Unlike their European counterparts, the Chinese mirror features a central perforated knob through which a cord would be strung for handling purposes. The designs range from abstract, geometric patterns to elaborate figural scenes, and often incorporate poetic inscriptions that refer to the moon, alluding to the mirrors' luminous nature.

Highlights from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection



A Rare Bronze Circular 'Shan' Mirror

Late Warring States period, 4th-3rd century BC

Estimate: \$10,000 – 15,000

This style of mirror, with its use of *shan* or T-shapes superimposed on a richly patterned ground, is typical of those from the Chu region of Hunan and Hubei provinces during the Warring States period. Here the *shan* characters are combined with two deer and a dog wearing a collar, the latter perhaps alluding to hunting.



A Large Silvery Bronze Circular 'TVL' Mirror With Inscription

Late Western Han/Xin dynasty, 1st century BC

Estimate: \$60,000-80,000

The decoration on this elaborate 'TLV' mirror, which is unusually large for its type, is derived from the layout of Qin and Han dynasty *liubo* game boards.

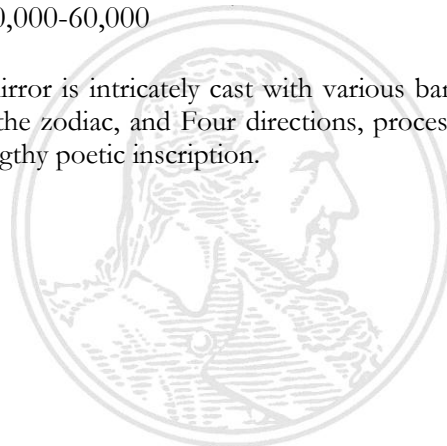


An Unusual Bronze Circular Mirror With Deities, Beasts And Inscription

Sui dynasty (581-618)

Estimated: \$40,000-60,000

This unusual mirror is intricately cast with various bands incorporating the animals of the zodiac, and Four directions, processions of mythical beasts and a lengthy poetic inscription.





A Rare Bronze Square Mirror With Apsaras

Tang dynasty (618-907)

Estimate: \$25,000-35,000

The decoration on this mirror is extremely rare. Apsaras (*tianren*) are celestial beings or angels associated with Buddhism and are usually depicted in flight wearing garments and scarves that trail elegantly behind them.



A Rare Large Bronze Octalobed Mirror

Tang dynasty (618-907)

Estimate: \$60,000-80,000

The inclusion of the pair of horses in the decoration on this mirror is very rare, and they likely make reference to a married couple, while the fruiting grapevine stems carried in the beaks of the two birds symbolize a wish for abundance, both of many sons and wealth. The ribbon-tailed bird is a symbol of longevity.



A Silvery Bronze Circular Mirror With Twin Carp

Jin dynasty (1115-1234)

Estimate: \$10,000-15,000

This mirror is heavily cast in high relief with two naturalistically rendered carp swimming atop a ground of waves, their large twisting bodies filling almost the entire space.

Auction: *Luminous Perfection: Fine Chinese Mirrors from*

the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection

March 22 at 2 pm

Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

March 16-22

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 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 and Contemporary,

Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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Images available on request

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