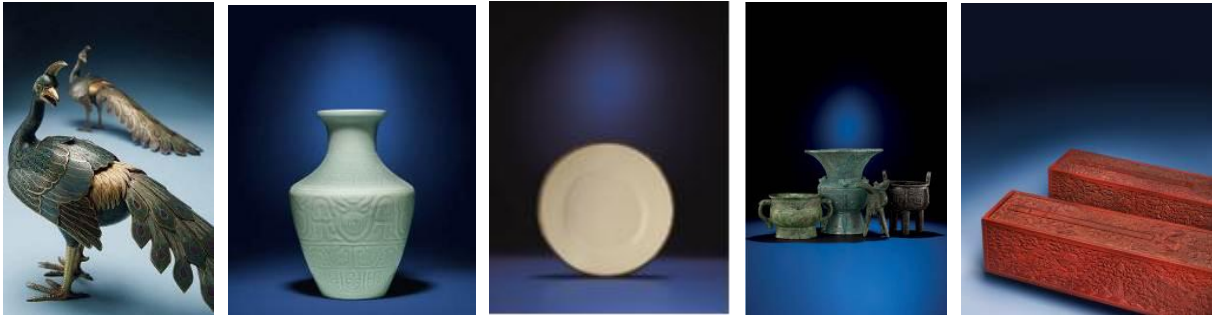


For Immediate Release

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**Christie's Hong Kong presents:**  
**Spring 2012 Chinese Imperial Ceramics & Works of Art sales**



- Masterpieces of the Enameller's Art: a stunning group of cloisonné enamels from the Mandel Collection
- New category of archaic bronzes reflect expanding collecting tastes in Asia
- Largest group of historic *huanghuali* furniture offered at auction in Hong Kong
- Imperial ceramics from Yuan, Ming and Qing periods, and a group of exquisite white-glazed ceramics
- Nearly 400 Chinese works of art valued in excess of HK\$400 million

**Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Auctions****Wednesday, 30 May 2012****Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre**

- *Masterpieces of the Enameller's Art from the Mandel Collection*, 10.30am
- *The Imperial Sale*, 11.15am
- *Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 2.30pm

***Click [here](#) to view a short video of auction highlights***

**Hong Kong** – Christie's Hong Kong Spring sales of *Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, to be held on 30 May 2012 at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, will present nearly 400 lots of Chinese Imperial ceramics and works of art, valued in excess of HK\$400 million. Highlighting the series of sales are stunning cloisonné enamels from the Mandel Collection; a superb selection of very important ceramics, jades and textiles in the Imperial Sale; and new categories including archaic bronzes and a large group of Ming *huanghuali* furniture offered at auction in Hong Kong. Highly coveted by collectors from around the world, the rare Chinese works of art presented by Christie's promise an assurance of quality and provenance.

## Masterpieces of the Enameller's Art from the Mandel Collection

Comprising 30 lots with a total estimate of over HK\$40 million/US\$5 million, this collection of cloisonné enamel works from mostly Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and the Qianlong period (1736-1795) was carefully assembled by American collectors Dr. Sam and Annette Mandel. Initially collectors of important western masters such as Miró, Picasso, Calder and Dubuffet, the Mandels also collected Roman and Russian art and French furniture before collecting Chinese art 30 years ago. Imposing, intricate and structured, the Chinese cloisonnés in their collection reflect their impeccable taste in objects of art that reflect a technical brilliance, aesthetic sensitivity and cultural symbolism of the period.



Leading the sale is a pair of magnificent cloisonné enamel caparisoned elephants from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (*illustrated left*, lot 3907, estimate: HK\$4,000,000-6,000,000/US\$518,000-777,000), reputed to have once been in the collection of Sir Winston Churchill, Aristotle Onassis and Maria Callas. These unusually large elephants would have stood on either side of an imperial throne. Elephants were a popular theme in Chinese art, especially one intended for the Imperial court. An elephant carrying a vase on its back suggests the Chinese auspicious rebus *taiping youxiang*, 'great peace in the world' -- very appropriate symbols for a wise and powerful emperor who ruled over a peaceful empire.

Another pair of exquisite animals from the collection is the very rare pair of peacock censers from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (*illustrated right*, lot 3909, estimate: HK\$3,000,000-5,000,000/US\$385,600-643,000). These incense burners are modelled as peacocks and are extremely rare. It is recorded that Emperor Qianlong was particularly fond of peacocks and would take pleasure watching these curious birds sway their bodies around the palace grounds and fanning their tails. It is therefore not surprising that these exotic birds were often given as gifts to the Emperor by foreign dignitaries.



Separate press release of the Mandel Collection can be found [here](#).

## Search for the Perfect White: early Chinese white-glazed ceramics

Chinese ceramics have long been prized by collectors worldwide. Christie's is privileged to offer a group of exquisite white-glazed porcelains from the Song to the early Ming periods. The following four lots were formerly from the Carl Kempe Collection. Complementing each other, together they can show the evolution of white-glazed ceramics throughout the centuries.

Fine white ceramics first became the focus of connoisseurs' appreciation as early as the Tang dynasty (618-906). It was at this time that ceramics were first truly appreciated by Chinese connoisseurs for their aesthetic qualities as art objects, and significantly it was not multi-coloured wares that were the subject of imperial approbation and literary praise, but the monochrome ceramics with plain white glazes or soft, grey-green celadon glazes.



The whiteness of this type of ceramics is derived from the white clay material rather than the glaze, which is in fact transparent. This fine incised Ding lotus bowl (*illustrated left*, lot 4053, estimate: HK\$2,000,000-3,000,000 (US\$250,000-400,000)) is an excellent example from the Northern Song period (960-1127). It is thinly potted and beautifully and freely incised with meandering lotus blossoms. Typical of Ding ceramics, this bowl was originally fired upside down in the kiln, leaving an unglazed rim which was bound with a metal rim. Prior to the Carl Kempe Collection this lot was acquired from famed dealer Yamanaka & Co. Ltd. in London.

The appreciation for white ceramics continued through the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) as white was highly regarded in the religion and court of the Mongols. In response to continued demand, potters at Jingdezhen developed new textures and shades of white ceramics, which reached its pinnacle in the early 15th century in the reign of the Yongle Emperor (r.1403-24). This is the famous *tianbai* or 'sweet white' glaze, which was applied to finely-potted, superbly pure white porcelains at the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. In some cases, designs were

incised before the bowls were glazed and fired, and sometimes were so subtle that they may seem hidden, hence the term *anhua*, or 'hidden' decoration.

The fine and large *anhua*-decorated white-glazed bowl, *lianzhiwan*, is a wonderful example of the elegant *tianbai* wares produced for the Ming court (*illustrated right*, lot 3979, estimate: HK\$3,000,000-4,000,000/ US\$380,000-520,000). The present lot is intricately incised with lotus petals and alternating chrysanthemum and camellia over breaking waves.



The use of *anhua* decoration continued into the Xuande reign (1426-1435). This fine large white-glazed *anhua*-decorated bowl (*illustrated left*, lot 3981, estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,500,000/ US\$120,000-200,000) has extremely subtle lotus leaves and blossoms as a main motif. Unlike its Yongle predecessor, this object has a six-character underglaze blue Xuande mark. The above three lots had all been widely published and exhibited at the Palazzo Ducale, Venice in 1954.

Further details on Chinese white-glazed ceramics can be found [here](#)

## Prized Chinese ceramics from the Yuan and Qing periods

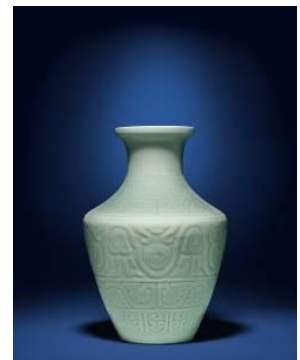
As one of the most appreciated forms of Chinese art, ceramics come in a vast variety of shapes, patterns, and decorative techniques. In addition to the examples above, highlights from two other prolific and innovative periods in the development of Chinese ceramics – the Yuan and Qing periods -- are also presented this season.

The magnificent blue and white "Mandarin Ducks" charger from the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) (*illustrated right*, Lot 4054, estimate: HK\$12,000,000-18,000,000/ US\$1,500,000-2,300,000) has vibrant tones of underglaze blue depicting a pair of mandarin ducks. Surrounding them are decorative scrolls of flowering lotus which also appear on the rim. This lot is reputed to have been in the private collection of a Japanese Daimyo since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and acquired more recently in the 1930s from Harabun, an antiques dealer in Ueno, Japan. It had also been exhibited at the Museum of Oriental Ceramics in Osaka, Japan in 1985.



The Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong periods (1736-1795) were reigns when Imperial interest in the arts pushed technical innovation and creative design to new heights. From the Yongzheng period comes this rare large *doucai meiping* (*illustrated left*, lot 3995, estimate: HK\$8,000,000-10,000,000/ US\$1,000,000-1,300,000). The present lot was acquired from Yamanaka & Company, Inc. in 1943 in New York.

Contrasting against the simplicity of Song and Ming white-glazed ceramics and the resplendent colours of Qing *doucai* ceramics is this rare and magnificent carved celadon-glazed vase, with a Qianlong six-character seal mark and of the period (1736-1795) (*illustrated right*, lot 3963, estimate: HK\$25,000,000-35,000,000/ US\$3,213,000-4,500,000). Fusing the archaistic forms of ancient Zhou bronzes with new glazing techniques of the time, this vase was highly prized by Chinese and Japanese royalty alike: it was made for the Emperor Qianlong, and was reputed to be in the collections of Zaizhen (1876-1948), son of Yikuang, the fourth Prince Qing, and great-great-grandson of the Emperor Qianlong, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister at the Imperial Court; and later in the collection of Shoken Kotai Go, Emperor Taisho's stepmother and wife of the Meiji Emperor.



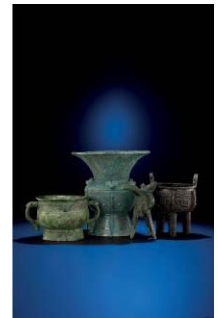
Further details on Lot 3963 can be found [here](#).

## Archaic bronze – a symbol of divine power

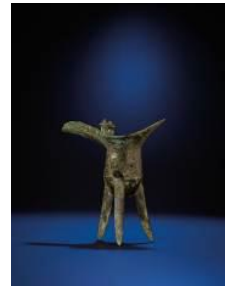
This season Christie's will offer a large group of archaic bronzes dating from the Shang (1,600-1,100 B.C.) to the Zhou dynasties (1,029-221 B.C.), during which bronzes were a symbol of power for the ruling elite. Emperor Qianlong amassed a large collection of early bronzes in the Forbidden Palace, and most of which he had published and recorded in the Imperial archives. Highly appreciated for its great social, historical and artistic value, Chinese ancient bronze ware remained much sought after today by international and increasingly, Asian collectors.



Leading this category is an important large archaic bronze ritual wine vessel, Fu Zun from the Shang dynasty, early Anyang period, 13<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (*illustrated left*, lot 4134, estimate: HK\$12,000,000-15,000,000 / US\$1,500,000-2,000,000). Richly decorated with quintessential *taotie* masks surrounded by buffalo, rams and *kui* dragons, the inside is inscribed with a pictogram – Fu – the name of the clan.



The archaic bronze ritual tripod vessel, Shi Jue from the late Shang dynasty, late Anyang period (12<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) (*illustrated right*, lot 4130, HK\$500,000-800,000 / US\$60,000-100,000) is an elegantly shaped vessel decorated with animal mask motifs and cicadas, as well as a pictogram – Shi – inside the handle, indicating the name of the maker/commissioner. This lot is from the collection of former Louvre curator Rene Huyghe (1907-1997).



## Important huanghuali furniture

Christie's Hong Kong will offer a range of important *huanghuali* furniture from various private collections, the first time such a large group is offered at auction in Hong Kong. Leading this category is a magnificent group of six pieces from a private Hong Kong collector acquired nearly 30 years ago.



This imposing pair of *huanghuali* yoke-back armchairs from Ming dynasty (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century) rank among the most desirable forms for collectors of Chinese furniture (*illustrated left*, lot 4073, estimate: HK\$3,000,000-5,000,000 / US\$380,000-650,000). When the present pair was made nearly 500 years ago, they would have been reserved for the most important guests or members of the household, since the S-shaped backslat puts the body into an upright position, giving the sitter an air of honour, dignity and power, while lower ranking members sit on stools.

The form of the square frame leading into rounded legs mentioned above can be seen in a rare *huanghuali* square corner-leg table, *fangzhuo*, from the late Ming/early Qing period, 17<sup>th</sup> century (*illustrated right*, lot 4074, estimate: HK\$800,000-1,200,000 / US\$100,000-150,000). Coming from the same collection, this form not only has an allegorical meaning – *tianyuan difang* (round heaven, square earth), but also served a practical purpose – its legs can be removed to become a low table placed on top of heated platforms in winter, or added back on, to become an elevated table in the summer. An example of a *huanghuali* table of this form can be found in the Palace Museum in Beijing.



Another interesting classical form in Chinese furniture – the recessed-leg table – is presented in this collection. The present lot is a *huanghuali* recessed-leg side table, *pingtounan*, from the late Ming/early Qing period, 17<sup>th</sup> century (*illustrated left*, lot 4072, estimate: HK\$1,800,000-2,500,000 / US\$230,000-320,000). Its simple shape and sleek proportions make it particularly elegant and appealing, hence this form was adapted to produce a wide range of tables, benches and stools.

## Other highlights

A vast array of other fine Imperial works of art that appeal to international collectors of diverse interests and tastes such as lacquer, jadeite carvings, textiles and other types of ceramics will also be presented.



The important and rare mallow-shaped “numbered” jun flower pot with matching stand, from the Yuan/Ming period, 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century (*illustrated left*, lot 3976, estimate: HK\$6,000,000-8,000,000 / US\$780,000-1,000,000).

Another exceptional item is the important large *wucai* fish jar, Jiajing six-character mark and of the period (1522-1566) (*illustrated right*, lot 4063, estimate: HK\$5,000,000-7,000,000 / US\$650,000-900,000). Jars of this type are among some of the most admired of the imperial ceramics in the Jiajing period.



Following the success of previous Christie's sales of lacquerware, this important pair of Imperial carved cinnabar lacquer “Southern Inspection Tour” scroll boxes of the Qianlong period (1736-1795) (*illustrated left*, lot 4012, estimate: HK\$5,000,000-8,000,000 / US\$648,000-1,036,000) have intricate designs of dragons riding on clouds. The Emperor Qianlong made six inspection tours to Southern China. These lavish grand tours of pomp and pageantry were recorded in twelve massive silk handscrolls for which these elaborately carved lacquer boxes were made. Inscribed with the name of the tour *Nanxuntu*, the current pair of boxes would have housed scroll numbers 7 and 8.

The magnificent apple-green jadeite archaistic vessel and cover, *fangding*, Qing dynasty (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century) (*illustrated right*, lot 4275, estimate: HK\$3,000,000-4,000,000 / US\$385,600-518,000) belongs to an exclusive group of jadeite censers that were carved from exceptionally high quality and valuable material, such as the translucent icy apple-green jadeite of the present lot. Although jadeite was known in the Ming period, it was not used for carvings until the late Qianlong reign in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The glass-like translucency and the rarest emerald-green coloured jadeite carvings were highly prized by the Empress Dowager Cixi in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Imperial textiles have long been a popular collecting category, especially among international collectors. This Imperial yellow *kesi* child's dragon robe from the Qing dynasty, 19<sup>th</sup> century, likely made for the Guangxu emperor at 13, (*illustrated left*, lot 4026, estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,200,000 / US\$120,000-150,000) is from a European private collection. There are few examples of imperial robes of this size (90 cm long) from the Guangxu period of this size. One is in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and another at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

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<http://cshk.myftp.org/2012%20Spring%20Christie's%20Hong%20Kong%20Auctions/WOA/RELEASE/VO%20Release/Images/>

Selected highlights will be on view in the following cities, prior to the sale.

| Date      | Location  | Venue                                      |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| 12-13 May | Taipei    | Fubon Life Assurance Building              |
| 24-29 May | Hong Kong | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre |

## Christie's Hong Kong Spring 2012 Auctions Schedule

| 26-30 MAY                                                 |                |                                   |                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public viewing begins on 24 May                           |                |                                   |                                                                                                               |
| Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre |                |                                   |                                                                                                               |
| Saturday,<br>26 May                                       | 10.30am<br>7pm | Woods Room<br>James Christie Room | Fine and Rare Wines: The Property of a Gentleman Part II Asian 20th Century & Contemporary Art (Evening Sale) |
| Sunday,<br>27 May                                         | 10am<br>3pm    | James Christie Room               | Asian 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Art (Day Sale)<br>Asian Contemporary Art (Day Sale)                            |
| Monday,<br>28 May                                         | 2.30pm         | James Christie Room               | Fine Chinese Classical Paintings and Calligraphy                                                              |
| Tuesday,<br>29 May                                        | 10am &<br>3pm  | James Christie Room               | Fine Chinese Modern Paintings                                                                                 |
|                                                           | 1.30pm         | Woods Room                        | Hong Kong Magnificent Jewels                                                                                  |
|                                                           | 2.30pm         | James Christie Room               | Grandiose and Mysterious – Magnificent Paintings by Cui Ruzhuo                                                |
| Wednesday,<br>30 May                                      | 9.30am         | Woods Room                        | Important Watches                                                                                             |
|                                                           | & 2pm          |                                   |                                                                                                               |
|                                                           | 10.30am        | James Christie Room               | Masterpieces of the Enameller's Art from the Mandel Collection                                                |
|                                                           | 11.15am        | James Christie Room               | The Imperial Sale                                                                                             |
|                                                           | 2.30pm         | James Christie Room               | Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art                                                                   |

### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/US\$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 US\$200 to over US\$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 / US\$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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