

CHRISTIE'S

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SACRED AND IMPERIAL

The James and Marilynn Alsdorf Collection

HEADLINES CHRISTIE'S ASIAN ART WEEK NEW YORK

Parts I & II | Thursday, 24 September 2020

Online Sale | Friday, 4 September to Tuesday, 29 September 2020



A VERY RARE GILT-BRONZE FIGURE OF WHITE-ROBED GUANYIN,
CHINA, MING DYNASTY, 15TH CENTURY, \$400,000-600,000



JAMES AND MARILYNN ALSDORF PICTURED IN
MIAMI IN 1950. COURTESY OF THE CONSIGNOR.

"We looked for objects to delight our eyes and souls." — Marilynn Alsdorf

New York – Christie's announces final details of the most anticipated auction for the Fall season of Asian Art: the sale of the private collection of James and Marilynn Alsdorf. Aptly titled [**Sacred and Imperial: The James and Marilynn Alsdorf Collection**](#), the sales pay homage to the objects the Alsdorfs spent their lives supporting and collecting. The collection will be sold across two sale sessions on September 24, with a complementary online auction from September 4 to 29. The collection will be presented in an exhibition open by appointment starting September 16th during Asian Art Week at Christie's New York.

Known for their generosity of spirit as significant arts patrons in their hometown of Chicago, James and Marilynn Alsdorf spent their 38-year marriage building a wide-ranging collection marked by both quality and diversity. For the Alsdorfs, collecting represented the opportunity for exploration, adventure and pursuit of beauty, extending from the art-filled rooms of their Chicago residence to China and India.

From the 1950s on, the Alsdorfs were especially ardent patrons of The Art Institute of Chicago, gifting or lending hundreds of works to the museum, commencing in their earliest days of collecting. A longtime trustee, Mrs. Alsdorf served for a time as president of the museum's Women's Board, while Mr. Alsdorf served as Chairman from 1975 to 1978. In 1997, Mrs. Alsdorf presented the AIC with 400 works of Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian art, a transformative bequest celebrated by the landmark exhibition *A Collecting Odyssey: Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art from the James and Marilynn Alsdorf Collection*. Less than a decade later, Mrs. Alsdorf made yet another monumental gift when she supported the Renzo Piano-designed renovation of what are now the Alsdorf Galleries for Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian Art.

In November 2019, Christie's was honored to present Impressionist & Modern Art, Post-War and Contemporary Art, American Art, and Latin American Art from the Alsdorf Collection. Additional highlights were offered in Spring 2020 in the New York sales of Antiquities, European Sculpture, Old Master Paintings, and Jewelry, with further highlights presented in the Paris sales of African, Oceanic and North American Art, and Pre-Columbian Art.

Tina Zonars, Co-Chairman of Asian Art, Christie's, remarks: *"The Collection of James and Marilyn Alsdorf represents a notable achievement in the history of American connoisseurship. Steadily acquired throughout the latter half of the 20th century by two of Chicago's most important civic and cultural patrons, the collection is unparalleled in its breadth and quality, illuminating the remarkable feats of human artistry across time and geography. This collection affords the rare opportunity to acquire museum-quality works with the esteemed provenance of two of America's leading collectors of Asian art."*

Bridget Alsdorf, the couple's granddaughter, recalls: *"As a couple, my grandparents were the picture of elegance. They had impeccable taste, but to their family and many friends they were known for their warmth, wit, and humor. Studying and collecting art was their all-consuming passion, and it took them all over the world. Their spirit of adventure was unique; they went places that few collectors at the time were curious and confident enough to explore. They were not strategic in their collecting, instead, they were guided by what fascinated them and gave them pleasure, by knowledge and instinct."*

The Alsdorfs' Collecting History

Married in 1952, the couple quickly discovered a shared passion for cultural exploration and collecting, which for them was not a hobby but a way of life. Together they shared the odyssey of life-long global discovery through generous contributions to the arts community of Chicago and beyond. During their first trip to India in 1968, they met former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Minister of Cultural Affairs, André Malraux, close friend of the dealer Robert Rousset, from whom they had acquired their first work of art in 1955. The Alsdorfs' love of Indian, Southeast Asian and Himalayan art informed their early collection in the 1960s.

After her husband's passing in 1990, Marilyn Alsdorf became known as "the queen of the Chicago arts community." In 1997, she donated 400 Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian works to the Art Institute of Chicago, and in 2006, a subsequent donation made possible the Renzo Piano-designed renovation of what is now the Alsdorf Galleries for Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian Art.

[Part I: Masterpieces of Asian Art \(Lots 801-823\)](#)

Part I offers a curated cross-section of 24 of the best examples across the Alsdorfs' most collected categories spanning South Indian bronzes, Qing dynasty porcelain, Chinese painting, and Chinese and Japanese works of art. Featured lots include **A Rare and Magnificent Bronze Figure of Shiva Tripuravijaya**, South India, Tamil Nadu, Chola Period, circa 1050 (\$1,000,000-1,500,000); **A Very Rare and Important Marble Head of Buddha**, China, Sui Dynasty, AD 550-618 (\$500,000-700,000); and **A Superb Peachbloom-glazed Water Pot, Taibai Zun**, China, Kangxi six-character mark in underglaze blue and of the period, 1662-1722 (\$150,000-250,000).

[Part II: Asian Art and European Decorative Arts \(Lots 825-1049\)](#)

Part II of the sale features Chinese works of art, Chinese paintings, Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian works of Art, Japanese works of art, and a selection of decorative arts. Highlights from the Chinese works of art and paintings include **A Guan-type Mallet Vase**, Qianlong six-character mark in underglaze blue and of the period, 1735-1796 (\$60,000-80,000); and a hanging scroll by **Xu Beihong (1895-1953), Horse** (\$20,000-40,000). From among the Indian, Southeast Asian and Himalayan art, highlights include **A Gilt-bronze Figure of Amoghapasha Lokeshvara** (\$20,000-30,000). Highlights from the decorative arts include **An Italian Gilt-Bronze, Porphyry, Lapis Lazuli and Hardstone-Mounted Collector's Cabinet**, 19th century (\$8,000-12,000); and **A Silk and Metallic Thread 'Phoenix' Carpet**, China, Qing Dynasty, (\$2,000-3,000).

[Online Sale](#)

The online sale takes place from September 4 to 29 and comprises Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art and Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, alongside a small group of Chinese Paintings and Japanese Art.

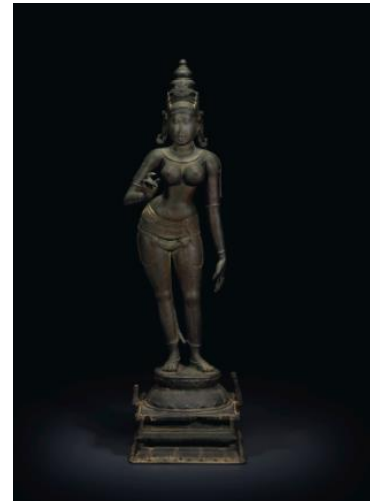
PART I: SALE HIGHLIGHTS | 24 SEPTEMBER 2020



A RARE AND MAGNIFICENT BRONZE FIGURE OF SHIVATRIPURAVIJAYA
SOUTH INDIA, TAMIL NADU, CHOLA PERIOD, CIRCA 1050
\$1,000,000-1,500,000



A VERY RARE AND IMPORTANT MARBLE HEAD OF BUDDHA
CHINA, SUI DYNASTY (AD 550-618)
\$500,000-700,000



A LARGE BRONZE FIGURE OF UMA
SOUTH INDIA, TAMIL NADU, CIRCA 1300
\$500,000-700,000



A SUPERB PEACHBLOOM-GLAZED WATER POT, TAIBAIZUN, CHINA, KANGXI SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND OF THE PERIOD (1662-1722)
\$150,000-250,000



ZHANG RUITU (ATTRIBUTED TO, 1570-1641) LANDSCAPES AND CALLIGRAPHY
ALBUM OF FOURTEEN DOUBLE LEAVES, INK ON GOLD-FLECKED PAPER, DATED 1625
\$100,000-150,000



A FINE AND RARE GUAN-TYPE OVOID VASE, CHINA, QING DYNASTY QIANLONG SIX-CHARACTER SEAL MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND OF THE PERIOD (1736-1795)
\$100,000-150,000

PART II: SALE HIGHLIGHTS | 24 SEPTEMBER 2020



A SMALL WHITE MARBLE FIGURE OF A SEATED LION
CHINA, TANG DYNASTY (AD 618-907)
\$20,000-30,000



XU BEIHONG (1895-1953), HORSE
DATED SUMMER OF GENGWU YEAR (1930)
\$20,000-40,000



A BLUE AND WHITE 'DRAGON' DISH
YONGZHENG SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND OF THE PERIOD (1723-1735)
\$30,000-50,000

PART II: SALE HIGHLIGHTS | 24 SEPTEMBER 2020



AN ITALIAN GILT-BRONZE, PORPHYRY, LAPIS LAZULI AND HARDSTONE-MOUNTED COLLECTOR'S CABINET
SECOND HALF 19TH CENTURY
\$8,000-12,000

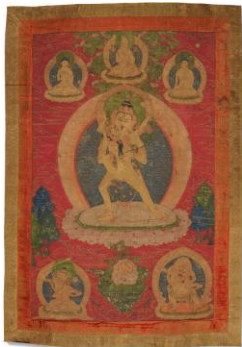


AN IMPORTANT SUITE OF EARLY SICILIAN FURNITURE
A SOUTH ITALIAN GILTWOOD, GILT-LEAD MOUNTED AND REVERSE-PAINTED GLASS SETTEE,
SICILY, CIRCA 1780
\$20,000-30,000



A SILK AND METALLIC THREAD 'PHOENIX' CARPET, CHINA, QING DYNASTY
19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURY
\$2,000-3,000

ONLINE SALE | HIGHLIGHTS | 4 TO 29 SEPTEMBER 2020



A THANGKA DEPICTING CHAKRASAMVARA AND VAJRABHAI
TIBET, 18TH CENTURY
\$3,000-5,000



A SMALL DEHUA PEAR-SHAPED VASE
CHINA, QING DYNASTY,
18TH CENTURY
\$3,000-5,000



ZENG WEI (19TH CENTURY)
TIGER
\$500-1,000



ANONYMOUS (18TH-19TH CENTURY)
ZUZÓ (ICONOGRAPHICAL DRAWING):
SEATED BODHISATTVA
\$1,000-2,000

RELATED CHRISTIE'S CONTENT:

[The Collection of James and Marilyn Alsdorf](#)

SEPTEMBER 2020 | ASIAN ART WEEK SALES

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A Lasting Engagement: The Jane and Kito de Boer Collection | 23 September 2020

South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art | 23 September 2020

Devotion in Stone: Gandharan Masterpieces from a Private Japanese Collection | 23 September 2020

Sacred and Imperial: The James and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection Parts I & II | 24 September 2020

Indian, Himalayan & Southeast Asian Works of Art | 24 September 2020

Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art | 25 September 2020

ONLINE SALES:

A Lasting Engagement: The Jane and Kito de Boer Collection | 4-25 September 2020

Sacred and Imperial: The James and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection | 4-29 September 2020

Crafted Landscapes: The Ankarcrona Collection of Japanese Lacquer and Asian Works of Art | 10 Sept. to 1 Oct. 2020

Contemporary Art Asia | 4-30 September 2020

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in 2019 that totalled £4.5 billion / \$5.8 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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Images available on request

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