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Gianguan Auctions Celebrates 17th Annual September Sale

NEW YORK CITY — On September 9, Gianguan Auctions will celebrate the 17th running of its annual fall sale. Dovetailing with Asian Art Week, the auction offers paintings, carved jades, ceramics, teapots and religious items rich in aesthetics and craftsmanship. This year, works by early Twenty-First Century Chinese avantgarde artists working the traditional manner will be included.

The sale's cover lot is a giltbronze censer in the form of ferocious luduan, incised and further decorated with a tootie mask of coral, lapis, jade, malachite and glass. A favorite of Qing emperors, luduan were said to detect truth. This fabulous animal has all the hallmarks of its station: sharp clawed hooves, bulging eyes, fanged teeth, a single horn and it is valued at more than \$60,000.

Symbolic imagery overflows onto a dragon-encrusted, giltincised and painted lacquer box. The five-clawed beasts of royalty appear in all guises from a commanding frontal facing dragon centered among four in flight to four confronting pair on the outer box. Enhanced with scrolling gold Tiangi leaves, florals of blue, red and brown, a "Wan" diaper ground and key fret pattern, the box is 20 inches tall, bears the Qianlong six-character mark and is of the period (upwards of \$20,000).



"Lotus" (2016) by Zhang Xiujin (b 1951).



A dragon-encrusted, gilt-incised and painted lacquer box portending longevity, 22-inch diameter, Qianlong six-character mark, of the period.



The importance of even the most mundane creatures of the natural world comes to light in "Leaves and Insects" by Qi Baishi (1864-1957). Caterpillar, dragonfly, butterfly and ant are part of a two-panel scene featuring skeletal brown branches and leaves of ochre and green. Inscribed and signed Qi Baishi, with two artist seals on each panel, the bidding begins at \$300,000.

There are six more works by Qi Baishi in the sale. Estimates begin just shy of \$100,000.

The contemporary art collection leads with "Lotus," 2016, by Zhang Xiujin (b 1951). The muddy, weedy ground from which rise a turquoise mist and brilliantly colored flowers straining against their hard-edged outlines is the sort of visual poetry one expects from Zhang Xiujin. It is anticipated that the work will exceed its low estimate of \$150,000.

Master works from the past include "Crane and Pine" by Qing artist Hua Yan (Xinluo Shanren), an energetic rendering of nesting cranes in evergreen. Inscribed and signed Hua Yan, with two artist seals and two collectors' seals, it is expected to bring \$30,000 or more.

A highlight of the ceramics collection is an ovoid sancai vase animated with swooping red phoenixes and leaping dragons. The background of intertwined peonies and chrysanthemum is rendered in green and yellow with dashes of red. Standing 18 inches tall, it could sell for \$60,000 or more. Also Ming is a pair of sacrificial red glazed bottle vases, 20 inches tall, with a starting bid of \$15,000. Leading the stone carvings is a white jade moon flask with cover and elephant head handles with rings. The moon windows on obverse and reverse of this flask are elaborately carved with pairs of bats, deer and cranes amid bamboo, lingzhi, rock outcroppings, pine trees and clouds. With a height of 13 inches, the flask is valued at upwards of \$80,000. The maker of a Warring States zun of semitransparent greenish brown jade called on all the mythical animals to create this ritual item. While the cylindrical body is in low relief with Kui dragon motifs and geometric scrolls separated by notched flanges, there is drama in the cover, handles and feet. A recumbent Bixie is at the knob, while elongated Bixie scale the sides to form handles. The piece carries an opening bid of \$40,000 and leads a collection of archaic carvings pictured in the Gianguan catalog.

The square turquoise seal of General Wei De kicks off a collection of stone seals. With dragon masks on the base and a pierced qilin knob, the script characters are Gui De Wei Yin. It starts at \$50,000.

Classic and quixotic Zisha teapots, a favorite of collectors, include Chao Daheng's Yixing

A gilt-bronze luduan censer, incised and decorated with a tootie mask of coral, lapis, jade, malachite and glass.

Zisha pot with a monk's cap cover. It carries the Shao Daheng mark on the base and an opening bid of \$600. A Jiang Rong yellow glazed melon-form

Zisha teapot has a cicada knob, green glazed spout and a handle that culminates in a low relief leave. Bids begin at \$800.

Not to be overlooked is a collection of jade jewelry that opens the sale.

The sale begins at 6 pm EDT, preceded by a week of live viewing beginning on September 2 and running through 5 pm on September 9.

Gianguan Auctions is at 39 West 56th Street. For information, www.gianguanauctions.com or 212-867-7288.