

Gianguan Auctions celebrates China's material heritage at its annual Spring Auction



Qing, A Superbly Carved Dragon-Phoenix Jade Wine Pot and Cover.

NEW YORK, NY.- On Monday, March 18 Gianguan Auctions celebrates the 18th running of its annual spring sale. As in previous years, the auction is scheduled to offer international collectors taking in events at Asia Week, an independent and trusted source for important and rare Chinese works of art.

In tribute to the Year of the Pig, three carved jade pigs are on the podium. The highlight is a Ming carving of a smiling pig recumbent in a woven basket with handle. The turned-up tips of its ears and the corners of its mouth are symbolic of the comforts of wealth and prosperity associated with pigs. The back of the basket carries the Shou sign, a reference to longevity. At 7.5" wide, and 3" tall, the white-with-russet jade carving weighs 2,808 grams. It is Lot 63, estimated at upwards of \$40,000.

Two pigs of the Neolithic period evoke the rituals of the era in which the Zodiac symbols originated. Lot 84 is a recumbent, russet-jade pig of spare form surmounted by a coiled dragon with bi-conical perforations. Exemplifying Hongshan culture of sophisticated simplicity workmanship, with grooved musculature and features. At 7.25" inches long, it weighs 1,955 grams and has an opening bid of \$6,000. Lot 85 is a Liangzhu culture pig. Also recumbent, but with flat snout, diamond shaped eyes and grooved ears, it has a carved animal mask on its back. The dark-russet jade has some calcification, reminding buyers that such items often accompanied their owners to the next world. Bidding starts at \$1,500.

A magnificent Kangxi ruyi scepter in the form of a lingzhi fungus leads a strong collection of Qing jade carvings. Fashioned from a rare white jade boulder, the reticulated branches are home to bats, peaches and pomegranates. The scepter is topped with a solid lingzhi head. The carving sits on an undulating wooden plinth that mirrors the overall form. This is Lot 55, expected to command upwards of \$20,000.

Equally striking is a translucent white-jade brush pot with russet inclusions. The tall cylinder is articulated with two striding dragons embedded among interlacing layers of foliage and sprays. The elaborate inner carvings that can be seen through the pierced work help create a three-dimensional effect. This is Lot 70, 4.75" tall, 4" wide, estimated at \$40,000 or above.

Rarely has a carved jade pot with cover conveyed the majesty of Lot 77. Of white jade with russet, the pot has a phoenix-head spout and curled bixie handle. The ovoid body is ornamented with dragons chasing flaming pearl, all surmounted by a domed cover featuring an archaistic dragon. Of the period and bearing the Yongzheng six character mark, the pot is about 6" tall and valued in excess of \$60,000.

Works by two female artists of the 21st and 20th centuries highlight the paintings collection. "Pomegranates in Bamboo Basket" is by Dr. Yuhua Shouzhi Wang, who currently has a solo exhibitions in the States The ink-and-color on paper combines traditional flavor with contemporary flair that tricks the eye into believing the elegant composition was effortless. It is signed Yuhua, with one artist seal. In 2008, the United States Congress recognized Dr. Yuhua Wang as a "great artist and sculptor." She has also recently been honored with a dedicated gallery at the International Art Museum of San Francisco. Lot 138 is mounted and framed and carries an auction value of \$1M or more.

Song Meiling (1898-2003), publicly known as Madame Chiang Kai-shek, is represented by "Sun Moon Lake," a 1956 chiaroscuro hanging scroll that recalls a romantic outing. It is signed and has one artist seal. The colophon with seal commemorated by her husband. The delicate landscape is Lot 141, valued at more than \$30,000.

Best-selling artist Qi Baishi (1864-1957) is represented by "Shrimps," a field of seven free swimmers. The long, segmented bodies with appendages and short anterior legs take on an abstracted angularity in flourishes of gray and black. Signed "at 89 Baishi," the hanging scroll has two artist marks. "Shrimps" is Lot 157, \$80,000 or more.

An introduction to many moods of Zhang Daqian opens with "Boys and Pomegranate." The whimsical painting focuses on three youths in red vests intent on investigating the chambered fruit. One stands on a table behind rockery stretching for the harvest as two children in the foreground focus on the fruit in their hand. The charming scene is Lot 115, dated 1947, signed Zhang Yuan. Its value is placed at around \$150,000.

In a more somber mood Zhang Daqian gives us "Louhan's Crossing," a relatable interpretation of Bodhidharma fording a stream to spread the word. In earlier paintings by other painters, the louhan rode a reed across the waters. Zhang Daqian portrays the stooped elder with robes tied up above his knees, a staff in his right hand, while the left rests on the head of a supporting attendant. Spare of stroke, the artist has depicted the monk with bushy eyebrows, sagging cheeks and high nose. Dated 1946, signed Zhang Yuan, the ink-and-color on paper has four artists seals. It is Lot 182, an exceptional value starting at \$60,000.

The painting headlines a collection of Buddhist art and statues. Among the more unusual is a 13th/14th century Tibetan gilt bronze thangka frieze of the Avalokiteshvara. Embossed in high relief, the enlightened one is posed in pralambopadasana on a stepped throne with hands in dharmachakra mudra. Dressed in an elaborate dhoti festooned with beads of coral and turquoise, he is surrounded by floral stems on either side and elaborately chased scrolling images. The back is embossed with Tibetan letters, possibly a mantra. Lot 131 is a rare find at \$30,000

Equally uncommon is a bronze Ming statue of seated Guanyin leaning on a stack of sutra, sacred scriptures. Of serene countenance under domed Unisa, the deity wears a gilt robe open at the chest to display a beaded necklace. Elaborate chasing decorates the meticulous folds of the gown. The base is sealed with a plate inscribed with a varja. Of the period, the 22" tall statue is impressed with the Yongle six character mark. It is Lot 135, with an anticipated hammer price of \$30,000.

A sublime votive offering is the blanc-de-chine ceramic statue of Guanyin by He Chaozong, a 17th c. master potter excelling in Dehua kilns. The elegant figure that sits in dhyanasana on a plinth of louhans and lotus blossoms was likely created as a commission for a specific monastery. Its fingers, raised in abaya mudra, are long and delicately shaped, an indication of male energy. The eyes and smile exude the serenity of meditation. A distinctive cowl hugs the head and is seemingly unique among similar works by He Chaozong. In molding the robes, the potter duplicated the softness of "pure cloth" used in monastic clothing. The shawl falls in five graduated folds above a cascading wrap that lays between the lateral folds of the Guanyin's concealed legs. The He Chaozong work is Lot 100, 15.25" tall, with a value exceeding \$50,000.

A finely carved pristine white jadeite Guanyin reading a sutra tablet is Sutra Guanyin, one of thirty-three manifestations. Seated before an amphora bottle with lotus, the deity is enveloped in an openwork flame halo reading the teachings of Buddha. All aspects of the carving work in tandem to portray the illusion of divine light. This is Lot 61, 4.74" tall on fitted stand. It is reasonably estimated at \$3,000.

The large collection of Guanyins and meditative art includes examples carved of red jade, Tianguang and shoushan stone, polychromed bone and gilt bronze. Estimates range from under \$1,000 upwards.

Among the porcelains and decorative items, collectors of cloisonné will find a stunning pair of hexagonal hu-form vases.

The enameling features flowering trees and rockery bordered with archaists scrollwork on sky blue panels. At the shoulders, taotie masks set off by Bi are flanked by golden square C-scroll handles. The 15" tall pair bear the Qianlong four-character mark in relief. Of the period, Lot 208 will not languish on the podium at \$30,000.

For details on these and other properties in Gianguan Auctions sale on Monday evening, March 18, please visit www.gianguanauctions.com. Previews open on Tuesday, March 12 and run through Sunday, March 18. Gianguan Auctions is located at 39 W. 56th Street. The auction will be conducted live in the gallery and on liveauctioneers.com.