

Big three back in Asian art action

Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams are again selling in this market as the autumn season gets under way. Story and previews by *Roland Arkell*

Asian Art in London (AAL), the umbrella event that brings together dealers and auction houses in the common aim of promoting the UK's capital as a market centre for Asian works of art, returns for its 29th edition.

Running from October 29 to November 10, this year's programme covers 13 days of exhibitions, auctions, tours, talks and book launches with events devoted to Indian and Islamic art and East Asian art running simultaneously.

A total of 11 dealers and six auction houses will take part in the official AAL. Some of the dealers, such as Eskenazi, Francesca Galloway and Sundaram Tagore Gallery, participate from permanent gallery spaces but most will occupy

spots in The Lavery, Cromwell Place.

Mumbai auction house AstaGuru, which opened its London office earlier this year, has led this initiative that brings seven dealers under one roof.

For the duration of AAL, The Lavery will host Anrad Gallery, Rob Dean Art, Runjeet Singh, Hanga Ten, Simon Pilling, Schoeni Projects and Slaats Fine Art.

A mention too for Alice Williamson, former gallery director of Priestley & Ferraro, who exhibits on her own for the first time this year. Her exhibition of ceramics and works of art from China and Korea will run at Daniel Crouch Rare Books from October 29 to November 4.



Left: this massive Qing 'yangcai' famille rose baluster vase dated to the Qianlong or Jiaqing period, 2ft (61cm) high, has a guide of **£20,000-40,000** at Roseberys London on November 3.

Back in action

This year's London auctions roster also includes a welcome sale from Christie's. As reported in ATG No 2763, the firm is holding a mixed-owner 'live' Fine Asian Art sale in London on November 6 – its first for some years.

It is very good news for the London market that the three main international houses are again selling together in November. They will be joined by sales from affiliated and non-affiliated UK auction houses. A selection of highlights from these appears on the following pages.

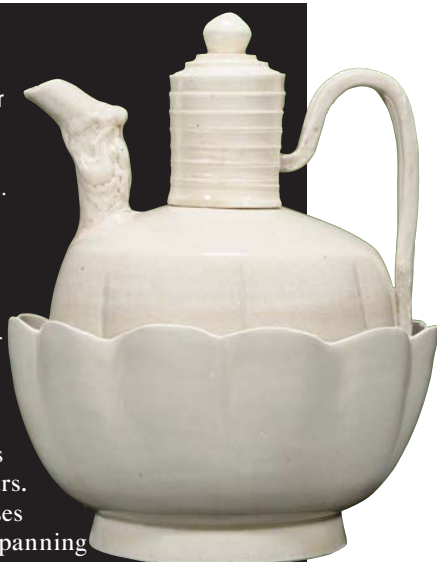
ATG is among the sponsors of AAL and will present an award to the auction house offering this year's outstanding lot at a ticketed event at the V&A on October 29. ■

Right: Northern Song Ding ware 'dragon' ewer, cover and warming bowl, estimate **£40,000-60,000** at Christie's.

Christie's mixed-owner 'live' Fine Asian Art sale in London on November 6 is its first for some years. The sale comprises around 150 lots spanning Chinese, Himalayan, Japanese, Indian and south-east Asian Buddhist art. A group of 45 works from the Muwen Tang collection of Song ceramics includes this rare Northern Song (960-1127) white glazed Ding ware 'dragon' ewer and cover.

Retaining the original warming bowl, it has a guide of **£40,000-60,000**.

As the focus in the post-Brexit years moved to consigning works for sale in Hong Kong, New York and Paris, the Chinese art department at King Street last held a 'live' mixed-owner sale in 2020. However, moving items to Paris has become more difficult following changes to import licensing regulations.



The sale of Chinese & Japanese Works of Art at Olympia Auctions on November 4 includes a private collection of 17th century blue and white ceramics.

This large thickly potted dish painted with a fabulous seated qilin among stylised flames and rockwork, dates from the Shunzhi period (1644-61). Another is in the Butler Family Collection and illustrated in *Shunzhi Porcelain, Treasures from an Unknown Reign* (2002).

The estimate in west London is **£4000-6000**.

Right: Shunzhi blue and white qilin dish, estimate **£4000-6000** at Olympia Auctions.



This 18th century Dehua blanc de chine figure of Guanyin seated and wearing flowing robes, comes with a receipt from London dealer Sydney L Moss dated September 16, 1972. It has expectations of **£700-1000** as part of Tennants' Asian art sale in Leyburn on November 13.

Left: Dehua blanc de chine figure of Guanyin, estimate **£700-1000** at Tennants.



The rare Longquan celadon and biscuit figure with an even sea green glaze depicts Zhenwu, the Daoist warrior God of the North. Modelled seated on a rockwork throne, he is accompanied by his emblematic animals the snake and the tortoise.

At Bennett & Dykes in London on November 8 it is expected to sell for £6000-8000.

Left: Longquan celadon and biscuit figure of Zhenwu, estimate £6000-8000 at Bennett & Dykes.

Right: Qing cloisonné lobed basin, estimate £15,000-20,000 at Chiswick Auctions.

This impressive cloisonné enamel and gilt-bronze lobed basin decorated with a celestial pavilion scene against the turquoise ground measures 17in (44cm) and is dated to the 17th or 18th century.

It is one of a group of Ming and Qing cloisonné wares that come for sale at Chiswick Auctions in west London on November 4 from the collection of A&J Speelman Oriental Art, London.

Estimate £15,000-20,000.



Right: Qianlong bamboo veneered archaistic vase, estimate £5000-8000 at Woolley & Wallis.



In 1953 the British Museum curator Soame Jenyns wrote a letter to Dr John William Hawksley Grice (1891-1976) in praise of his collection.

"Dear Dr Grice, ... your collection of bamboo carvings was a complete revelation to me. I had never seen anything of the kind before, and I am completely entranced by them ... these carvings seem to me to contain the very essence of Chinese good taste in its simplest form."

Grice assembled his collections of bamboo carvings and scholars' objects in the immediate post-war era. His essay *Chinese Bamboo Carving* published in *Country Life* magazine in 1954 was among the first English-language studies on the subject.

Many of the pieces in the collection have been on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum and have not been on the market for over 80 years.

They will be offered in a single-owner collection at Woolley & Wallis in Salisbury on November 10 when this large bamboo veneered archaistic vase from the Qianlong period is guided at £5000-8000.

This 'coiled chilong' gold and white jade pendant dates from the Eastern Zhou period (770-256BC).

Pieces of this kind combining gold, jade and bronze are exceedingly rare: the metalwork is cast using the lost wax technique with five entwined chi dragons with a further dragon head grasping a white jade ring carved with cloud motifs within its jaws. It comes up at the Fine Asian Works of Art sale at Lyon & Turnbull in London on November 6 with an estimate of £30,000-50,000.

From a Taiwanese collection assembled in the 1980s, the pendant will be subject to import tax were it to remain in the UK.



Left: Eastern Zhou gold and white jade pendant, estimate £30,000-50,000 at Lyon & Turnbull.

This Qing spinach jade box and cover bearing a four-character gilt Qianlong seal mark is finely engraved with blossoming peonies. It was purchased at John Sparks in London in July 1934 when it cost £8.

Consigned from a private west Dorset collection, the box and cover are on offer at Duke's Asian Art sale in Dorchester on November 12 when the guide is £2000-4000.



Above: Qing spinach jade box and cover, estimate £2000-4000 at Duke's.

Sworders' sale of Asian and Islamic Art in Stansted Mountfitchet on November 11-12 is led by this large 15in (38cm) Yongle (1403-24) blue and white dish.

Finely potted with gently rounded sides, it is painted in rich tones of underglaze cobalt with a flowering peony spray issuing two fully opened blooms alongside smaller buds.

Dishes of this type were made for the court as well as for the export market, transported mainly to the Middle East via the great naval expeditions of Admiral Zheng He.

This example, in restored condition, is expected to bring £40,000-60,000.



Above: Yongle blue and white 'peony' dish, guide £40,000-60,000 at Sworders.

The fifth tranche of the Marsh collection offered by Bonhams in New Bond Street on November 5 includes one of its finest pieces, this Qianlong period famille rose brushpot or bitong.

It has a guide of £300,000-400,000.

Exquisitely enamelled in a vibrant palette with a continuous mountain landscape, this is among a handful of pieces that can be closely associated with Tang Ying (1682-1756), the celebrated superintendent of the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory at Jingdezhen.

The scene, thought to depict the Tang era Pipa Pavilion at Jiujiang, is one of personal importance to Tang Ying while the poem in lishu script (a 14-character couplet derived from the Southern Song) closely parallels his own calligraphic style.

Accompanying the inscription are two iron-red seals. The seal *Pianyu* (Crescent Moon) has traditionally been associated with Tang Ying, while recent research has identified *Guwanshi* as the sobriquet of Lu Ji, a skilled painter working in the imperial workshops.

The brushpot, acquired by collectors Sam and Marion Marsh from Spink & Son in July 1994, provided the front cover illustration to the catalogue of the *China Without Dragons* exhibition held by the Oriental Ceramic Society in 2016.



Qianlong famille rose 'Tang Ying' brushpot, estimate **£300,000-400,000** at Bonhams.



Sotheby's Chinese Art sale in London on November 4 includes a selection of early ceramics from the Houlezhai collection, led by an exceptional Northern Song dynasty Cizhou sgraffito meiping (estimate £200,000-400,000).

Bursting with vitality, deftly carved by a practised hand, it is considered one of the best of its type in private hands. The technique, popular from the late 11th through to the 12th century, involved coating the form in successive layers of white and black slip allowing the craftsmen to carefully incise their floral designs. While several kiln centres around Cizhou are known, pieces of this quality and complexity appear to mostly have been produced at the centre of the region around Guantai.

Sotheby's will also stage an online sale titled Asian Art 5000 Years. It features a selection of 100 lots of snuff bottles from the Wei Miao Shan Fang collection offered without reserve. The collection was formed by Jason Chen, a former president of the Chinese Snuff Bottles Association in Taiwan, and has been published and exhibited in Shanghai, Taipei, and Okinawa.



Above: Northern Song dynasty Cizhou sgraffito meiping, estimate **£200,000-400,000** at Sotheby's.

This Edo period ink on paper hanging scroll depicting a large cockerel observing two small chicks has two red artist's seals reading as *Jakuchu Koji* and *To Jokin in*.

Housed in a tomobako (wood box) dated late autumn 1931, the painting is accompanied by certificates issued at the time by the Bijutsu Kurabu (Fine Arts Club, no 738) and the Imperial Art Authentication Bureau (Teikoku Bijutsu Kanteikyoku), both confirming the work as an authentic original by Ito Jakuchu (1716-1800) dated to c.1794.

The painting, that comes from a Somerset private collection, has a guide of £8000-12,000 at Woolley & Wallis' Japanese Works of Art sale on November 11.

Right: ink on paper hanging scroll by Ito Jakuchu, estimate **£8000-12,000** at Woolley & Wallis.



Above: pair of Kangxi famille verte 'ladies' rouleau vases, estimate **£30,000-50,000** at Mallams.

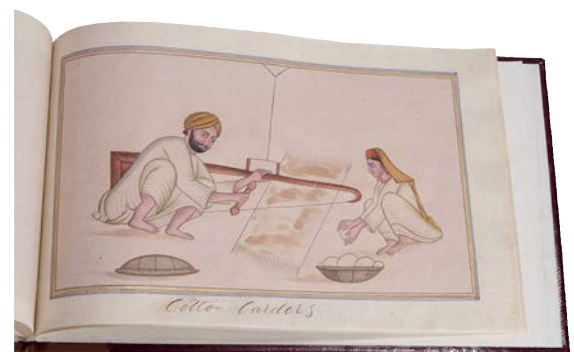
The sale of Asian, Indian and Islamic Art at Mallams in Cheltenham on November 18 is led by this pair of Kangxi famille verte 'ladies' rouleau vases.

Each standing 18in (46cm) high and finely enamelled with elegant court ladies engaged in leisurely pursuits, they carry old collection labels to the bases for Richard Bennett of Thornby Hall, Northampton, and were pictured in the *Catalogue of the Collection of Old Chinese Porcelains* formed by Richard Bennett, Esq., published in 1911.

The vases, which have come for sale from "a British noble family" have a guide of £30,000-50,000.

This image titled *Cotton Carders* is one of 50 images of domestic life in Punjab and Sikh rule that appear in an album created in northern India in the late 19th century. The English inscriptions suggest they were made to sate the collecting interests of the colonial period as much as to record the visual culture and history of the Sikh kingdom.

Purchased by the vendor in Portobello Road 27 years ago, it has a guide of £6000-8000 at Sworders' sale of Asian and Islamic Art in Stansted Mountfitchet on November 11-12.



Above: a page from an album of watercolours depicting life in the Punjab, estimate **£6000-8000** at Sworders.

UPCOMING AUCTIONS:

Chinese, Japanese & Southeast Asian Art | *Tuesday 3 & Wednesday 4 November*

Old Master, British & European Pictures | *Wednesday 11 November*

Antiquities, Islamic & Indian Art | *Friday 13 November*

Jewellery & Watches | *Tuesday 17 November*

Luxury Items | *Wednesday 18 November*

Modern British & 20th Century Art | *Tuesday 24 November*

Works from The Boundary Gallery | *Wednesday 25 November*

