

## Gianguan's fall sale strong on paintings and ceramics plus Chinese seals and Zisha teapots



Album leaf of "Bird on a Twig," by Zhao Ji, the personal name of the eighth emperor of the Song. One Emperor's seal and three Collectors' seals. Mounted and framed, Lot 106. \$850,000 is the catalog low estimate.

NEW YORK, NY.- When Gianguan Auctions, New York's premier independent Chinese Auction Gallery, opens its doors for the 15th annual running of its fall sale on September 8, international connoisseurs will find strong collections of Chinese paintings, porcelains and archaic bronzes as well as small collectibles such as stone seals, carved jades and snuff bottles. As is traditional, we begin with the headliners—the stars of design and craftsmanship whose values set the tone for more reachable items in each category.

At first blush is a pair of Warring States ritual Dou that rise 19" inches tall from the backs of ferocious looking Bixie. Making them even more fantastical are Kui dragons that encircle the risers and dare clutch the horn of the stealthy Bixie below. All components are intricately inlaid with silver and gold in geometric patterns and scrolling and set flush with the bronze. Created several hundred years before the Common Era, these ritual vessels attest to the upward mobility that was everyman's opportunity during that early age of turmoil. The pair is Lot 81, expected to fetch more than \$200,000.

Bronze, a foundation of civilization as well as the decorative arts was, by the period of the First Emperor, an advanced art in China. Its age resistant composite made it the perfect medium for the fruit and foods that assisted the deceased in their eternal journey. An excellent example is the Warring States tripod Ding, (ritual bowl with cover), decorated with cicada and geometric shapes. Of mottled olive-green bronze with pale encrustation, it is Lot 82, valued at upwards of \$6,000.

Six hundred years later, during the Tang Dynasty, scholars and artists sought their measure in the use of ink. Great scrolls of calligraphy such as the eight-foot panel by Liu Gongquan, one of four masters of regular script, were highly praised for the precision and beauty of their ink work, and in many cases, their content. This particular offering has thirteen Emperors' seals and fourteen Collectors' seals that attest to its aesthetic impact. Lot 98, its value is more than \$2M.

Another offering is the sharp, semi cursive script of Zhang Ruitu, a Ming master and poet. Lot 105, signed by the artist, in a more manageable length of twenty-five inches, with two artists seals is upwards of \$20,000. Liu Yan's Qing offering, eleven feet long, with two artist seals is set to go off at upwards of \$6,000.

Please note the Gianguan Catalog does justice to very large scroll paintings by portraying them in panels that simulate the span one would see if opening a hand scroll as intended, right hand reaching from the shoulder outward.

Other paintings hit the high points in aesthetic evolution. Among these is "Bird on a Twig," by Zhao Ji, the personal name of the eighth emperor of the Song. Characterized by fine brush work that allows a crested bird to sit lightly on a branch of yellow flowers, the album page has one Emperor's seal and three Collectors' seals. Mounted and framed, Lot 106 will likely soar above its \$850,000 low catalogue estimate.

A more accessible Northern Song album leaf is “Chirping Birds” by Xu Chongju. Here the ephemeral lightness of singing birds and leaves is captured in tones of gray. With three Emperors’ seals and eight Collectors’ seals, Lot 157 starts at \$20,000.

A classic example of the two-dimensional perspective of landscape painters is Yuan painter Huang Gongwang’s “Visit.” With China’s mountainous terrain as metaphor for the reaching of humans to heaven, houses of mortals nestle in its crooks and pockets. With seven Emperors’ seals and three Collector’s seals the ink with muted color on paper, Lot 131 is poised to bring upwards of \$600,000.

A more energetic landscape is twentieth century artist Wu Guanzhong’s “Suhang Landscape.” Often called the founder of Chinese Modern Art, he delivers the terrain in bold abstractions of black ink over a white ground populated with splashes of color. The twelve-foot work is Lot 193, expected to go off at \$80,000 or more.

Xu Beihong’s horses add another dimension to the modernist vision. “Horse Standing” is a 1940 work offering a three-quarter profile of a black horse on a green and tan field. It is Lot 107, expected to go off at more than \$50,000. Several more Xu Beihong paintings illustrate his magnificent way with horses and carry appropriate estimates.

Yangyong Ding, who witnessed and then experimented with 20th century movements in modern art, is represented by three outstanding works. “Frogs” (Lot 77), “Cat and Butterfly” (Lot 78) and “Chrysanthemum and Insects” (Lot 79). Each masterfully conveys power with few brush strokes. These excellent bargains start at \$3,000 each.

Chinese porcelains, favorites of Emperors and collectors, play a major role in this auction. While some of the enduring favorites, such as the blue and white Yuan fish plate at Lot 127, looks familiar, it is unique. Note the center fish has a spiky dorsal fin and swims in a space crowded with reeds. That and the bracket at the rim and foot contribute to its rarity and the estimate of \$40,000 or more.

Meanwhile, the complexity of Famille rose with colors introduced from Europe is a Gianguan tradition. A rare offering is the 22-lobed vase with sweeping trumpet neck and a dark ground and rose-colored florals and medallions. It is Lot 160, upwards of \$6,000.

Delightful and possibly playable is a Wucui green-glazed porcelain Qin. With a center window featuring a dragon in copper red, the Qin has both high and low ridges for strings. Of the period, the Qing Dynasty, it has a six-character mark in copper red. 31 1/2 inches long, it is Lot 210, estimated at \$6,000 or more.

To experience the pure joy of color, collectors will find excellence in a selection of purple splash ceramics. Among them, a Song Dynasty Junyao tri-pod censer with a soft blue ground. It is Lot 62, \$1,000-\$3,000.

Collectors on alert for Gianguan’s best-selling categories should look to these lots for their favorites: Zisha teapots, Lots 261-274...Chinese seals of Shoushan, Furong and Tianhuang stone, Lots 37-42 and 45-52...Snuff bottles, Lots 1 - 14.

The Gianguan Auctions catalog can be viewed at [www.gianguanauctions.com](http://www.gianguanauctions.com). Live previews run Wednesday, August 29 - Friday, September 7 (10 a.m.-7 p.m. EDT) at Gianguan Auctions gallery in New York City. The auction will be conducted live on Saturday, September 8, beginning at 6 p.m. EDT. Bidding is live, online at [invaluable.com](http://invaluable.com), [liveauctioners.com](http://liveauctioners.com) and [epailive.com](http://epailive.com).

For inquiries and condition reports, please contact the Gallery Director Mary Ann at 212-867-7288 or email [info@gianguanauctions.com](mailto:info@gianguanauctions.com).

