

Gianguan Auctions December 16th sale is a wonderland of gifts



One of the jade pendants from a collection of more than 50 pieces of jadeite jewelry.

NEW YORK, NY. - A specially curated collection of Chinese paintings and art designed to express the importance of a gift - be it personal or business related - will grace Gianguan Auctions' Holiday Sale on Monday, December 16.

The auction opens with fifty lots of desirable carved jade pendants, bracelets and necklaces in lustrous white, apple green, lavender, coral red, yellow and classic suffusions. Many are carved with auspicious Chinese symbols. Others make a strong statement in form alone.

Serious jewelry collectors will appreciate Lot 140, a court necklace that features 108 pink jade beads evenly interspersed with larger lapis lazuli rounds. In the center, a lapis lazuli double-gourd floats above a beiyun, "back cloud". The iconic piece, weighted with three strands of blue jade beads above droplets of lapis lazuli, is expected to reach \$15,000.

By the 18th c. the Qing had produced a book of protocol entitled the Illustrated Catalogue of Ritual Paraphernalia. Yellow, reserved for the Chinese royal family, was considered the most auspicious of colors. Seldom does a yellow summer robe come to auction. This one is heavily embroidered with a five-clawed front facing dragon and the Twelve Symbols of Imperial Royalty. A high standard of preservation has resulted in even color. Lot 141 opens with a bid of \$50,000.

For aficionados of Chinese seals, the highlight lot is a set of four jade seals with tiger heads atop rectangular bases. Incised on the bottom are the titles of Eastern Han generals. It is Lot 44, starting at \$40,000.

A collection of crow-skin seals, jade, jixue, red furong, and tianhuang stone are small but mighty artistic achievements. Overall, values range from about \$1,000 to around \$3,000.

Zisha clay, prized for absorption properties that add subtlety to flavors, are a Gianguan Auctions specialty. The day's highlight is a set of nine moulded pots, each decorated with two luohans engaged in an appropriate activity. All are topped with a longevity peach and have handles and spouts shaped like a peach tree trunk. The artist mark is that of Jiang Rong. The set is Lot 245, estimated at about \$3,000.

Connoisseurs of Chinese carved jades will dwell on a collection that includes both significant works of art and scholars items. The marquee jade is a massive, open-work sculpture of nine cranes amidst lingzhi and pines — symbols of longevity.

The white, translucent stone, of even tone, has a soft finish and sits on a harmoniously carved wooden base. At t 13" tall, the 34" long sculpture quietly signifies perfection of line and craft. Lot 122, starts at \$360,000.

A pair of Han reticulated jade censers allude to the evolution of the Chinese march to artistic perfection. Of tubular form with a center band, the upper half and covers are reticulated, contrasting linear with curvilinear form. The lower half is incised with Kui dragons, zoomorphic forms and masks. Set atop a double form base on supporting feet, the 8" tall pair dramatic in their tonality. Lot 134 has a pre-sale estimate of \$50,000 or more.

Personal items include a brush washer carved from a mottled spinach green boulder that accentuates light green hues. Featuring four flaming dragons amidst fluffy clouds, the Ming treasure is Lot 138, valued at upwards of \$3,000. Also, of rare light green tones is an archaic-style reed vase with carved landscapes and beast-head handles. It is Lot 139, with the opening bid set at \$2,500.

A collection of Chinese paintings - the ultimate heritage gift - leads with Breakoff by Yuan Dynasty master Zhao Mengfu . Zhao advocated a return to a more traditional style of calligraphy that ran through the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Break-off epitomizes the success of his efforts. It is Lot 116, with a pre-sale value of \$1M or more.

From Cheng Shifa (1921-2007) comes Spring, a bold interpretation of a rural couple on a tractor, laden with packages, making their way through a blizzard. The image pops with bright reds and greens, speaking to the power of the Dazhai movement after the "Gang of Four" had been apprehended. Lot 118, dated 1963, may well soar to around \$300,000.

Li Keran (1907-1989), beloved for his paintings of shepherds and water buffalos, provides an atypical breath of his mettle in a Resounding Waterfalls. The dark, towering landscape broken by a pale house on one level and its bridge on another, is remarkable for waterfalls that tumble from an unseen heights to lowland rocks. Lot 169 is also expected to break \$200,000.

A group of three gilt-silver Apsara sculptures (Lot 161), capture the graceful femininity of the attendant to deities. First she floats amidst a trail of scarves and sashes over a base of clouds, playing the pipa, a four-stringed instrument said to sooth the longings of the Tang court. Then, entwined in a billowing scarf, she presents a frontal view and holds the pipa vertically over a shoulder. In the final manifestation, she relaxes, sensually wrapped in skirt and scarf, holding a bowl of fruit above her head, a floral finial in the other hand. The Tang group of well cast sculptures have brilliant patinas, and are each between 8" and 13" tall with proportionate width. They are expected to fetch upwards of \$150,000.

Qinbai, a glaze perfected as early as the 11th C., and now highly applauded for its pale blue-green tint, washes a seated Guanyin of Yuan origin. With exposed chest entwined in bejeweled chains, and dressed in a voluminous robe, the altar-piece embodies the best characteristics of early votive art. Adding to its rarity is the qinbai glaze that also decorates the Fonthill Vase, the oldest known piece of Chinese ceramics in Europe. The Guanyin, with serene countenance, could be a valued icon for home or temple. At 10" tall, Lot 89 starts \$30,000.

Of the Tang Dynasty, Lot 92 is a polychrome wood statue of a Guanyin on a rock outcropping. Its bearing is regal, its expression serene and its long flowing robes appropriate to the period. Rarely do 7th-10th C. Guanyins come to the podium. This one has the added benefit of traces of original red and blue pigment. It is estimated at upwards of \$50,000.

A Tibetan gilt-cloth thangka of White Tara seated in dhyanasana and surrounded by deities, all finely finished with flourishes of gilt, takes the podium at Lot 145. Valued at more than \$15,000.

A framed wall fresco depicting Parnashavari with three heads and six hands is a 19th C. mural from an unknown location. Polychromed in multiple colors with gilt accents, it is Lot 147, a bargain at little more than \$4,000.

A Song dynasty bronze figure of Bodhisattva Manjushri seated on a lotus blossom atop a Buddhist lion is something rarely seen, as reflected by the \$80,000 valuation for the 10" tall Lot 193.

It bears mentioning that votive icons run throughout the auction at prices of \$1,000 or less. Two are Lot 204, a turquoise carved Buddha, and Lot 99 an Eight Immortals brush pot.

Gianguan Auctions's full color catalog with photographs and well-researched descriptions is available online at www.gianguanauctions.com. Live previews begin on Saturday, Dec.7 and run through Sunday, Dec. 15 (10 am - 7 pm) at the W. 56th gallery. The day-of-auction preview closes at 5 p.m. starting at 6 p.m. EDT. Catch it live or online at liveauctioneers.com beginning at 6 p.m. EDT.