

# Dealers open their doors to welcome all

Galleries joining up for exhibition 'trail' is a growing trend in the art world calendar

By Anne Crane and Katherine Boyle

TEFAF, The Paris Biennale, Art Miami Basel, Masterpiece – antiques fairs are very much part of the art world calendar but a growing development is the gallery-based exhibition trail.

Instead of dealers taking stands at a specific location in a large hired venue, specialists in a particular market sector act together using their own galleries to mount open-house shows in their home city (or hire space there) over a fixed time. Very often these are joined by relevant auction series.

London Art Week (for paintings, drawings and sculpture); Master Drawings New York (works on paper), the Paris *Parcours des Mondes* (for Tribal art) and the two big Asian events – *Asian Art in London* and *Asia Week New York* – are all manifestations of this trend.

Obvious advantages emerge from these collaborations. The critical mass of having so many specialists gathered in one part of town for a short period draws in the visitors but avoids the expense of stand costs and travel for many of the participants.

## Veterans

The London and New York Asia fests are veterans of these initiatives. *Asian Art in London* celebrates its 20th anniversary this November. The younger *Asia Week New York* (AWNY) has been going since 2009 and will open its doors for a 10-day run from March 9-18.

What started 10 years ago in the Big Apple with 16 'Asian Art Dealers of the Upper East Side', has grown to over 51 participating galleries. Added to this are five auction houses staging their major spring series of Asian sales plus cultural institutions who join forces with exhibitions, lectures tours and other events.

The whole is masterminded by Asia Week New York Association Inc, with a planning committee of



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around a dozen dealers and auction experts headed by a president (currently Lark Mason) who stands for two years. Mason describes 2017's roster as "our latest and most diverse to date", adding that their ongoing participation is "a testament to how firmly entrenched this annual event has become".

It plainly works on a commercial level, drawing in all important Asian visitors as well as collectors from all over Europe and the US.

Not just collectors either; institutional buying is always important at these events and the critical mass attracts museum representatives from around the world looking to fill gaps in their collections. In past editions, participants have sold to museums from Beijing to Berlin and Singapore to Sydney as well as institutions all around the US.

Over the next five pages ATG looks in more detail at what is on offer in this year's AWNY. We have asked two veterans of this event why it is a must for them; preview a small sample of the works of art that will be on offer in the selling shows and the 20-plus dedicated auctions, and offer just a hint of some of the other cultural events that the visitor can attend during the 10 days.

If you want to know more, go to the online guide at [asiaweekny.com](http://asiaweekny.com). This gives you all you need to know to plan your visit.

It has a daily calendar of all the events from individual dealers and auctions, details of special lectures, maps to guide you around the open house weekend and help you locate the galleries and much more. ■

[asiaweekny.com](http://asiaweekny.com)

## Exhibitor focus

THE 50-plus dealers that are taking part in the galleries section of AWNY hail from across Europe as well as resident firms from New York.

The mix they offer takes in the widest variety of material from across south and south-east Asia and increasingly includes modern and contemporary works alongside the treasures from ancient Chinese dynasties.

We have selected some of the more striking pieces, old and modern, that will be on show and for sale during the event.

We also asked two long-standing participants why they rate this event and what makes it special: Susan Ollemans from London, who has exhibited since AWNY's inception, and New York's Joan Mirviss, a founder member and AWNY's first chair.

## The objects

### BUDDHIST ART BIGLER FINE ARTS, SWITZERLAND

This will be the third AWNY for Dr Robert R Bigler from Switzerland, who specialises in Chinese and Himalayan Buddhist Art and is particularly interested in the art historical development of Tibeto-Chinese Buddhist sculpture.

He will be exhibiting at Dickinson Roundell on East 66th Street with the show *Dynasties and Identities: Tibeto-Chinese Buddhist Art of the 13th to 15th Centuries*.

The exhibition features this mercury gilt copper alloy sculpture of Amitayus, the Buddhist deity associated with longevity. It was made in the 14th century, measures 6in (15cm) high and is priced at **\$125,000**.

[bigler-finearts.com](http://bigler-finearts.com)



### ARMS AND ARMOUR

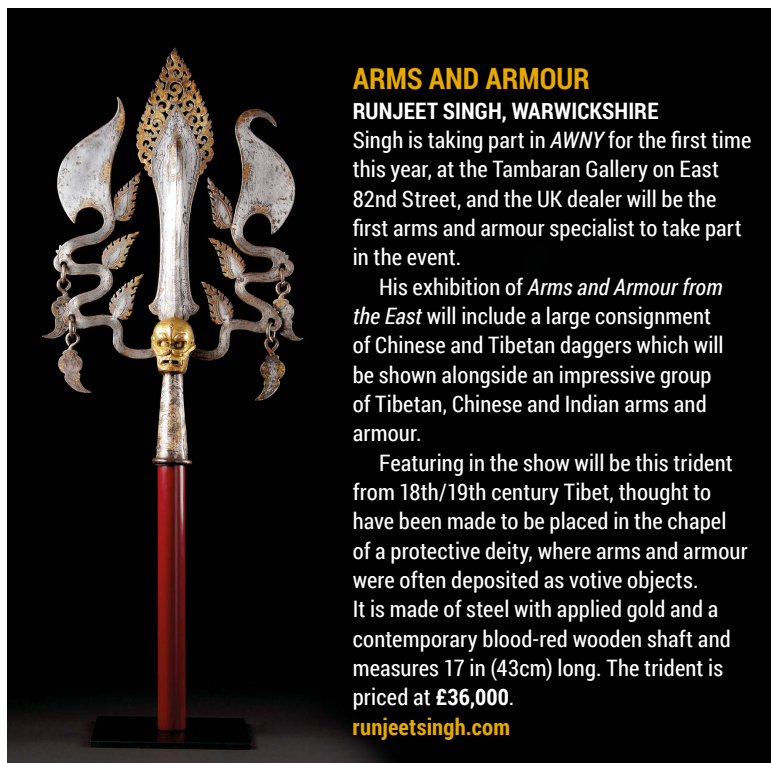
#### RUNJEET SINGH, WARWICKSHIRE

Singh is taking part in AWNY for the first time this year, at the Tambaran Gallery on East 82nd Street, and the UK dealer will be the first arms and armour specialist to take part in the event.

His exhibition of *Arms and Armour from the East* will include a large consignment of Chinese and Tibetan daggers which will be shown alongside an impressive group of Tibetan, Chinese and Indian arms and armour.

Featuring in the show will be this trident from 18th/19th century Tibet, thought to have been made to be placed in the chapel of a protective deity, where arms and armour were often deposited as votive objects. It is made of steel with applied gold and a contemporary blood-red wooden shaft and measures 17 in (43cm) long. The trident is priced at **£36,000**.

[runjeetsingh.com](http://runjeetsingh.com)





## IMPERIAL CERAMICS

**MICHAEL C HUGHES, NEW YORK CITY**

Hughes will be exhibiting at the Gallery Vallois America on East 67th Street and this fine and large Imperial archaic hu-shaped vase is a highlight of his show.

With a magnificent dark blue glaze which thins to white at the rim, it carries the Qianlong six-character seal mark on the base (pictured **below right**) and is 18½in (47cm) high. It is priced at a **low six-figure** sum.

The exhibition will feature a selection of imperial ceramics including those of the Emperors Kangxi (1662-1722) and Yongzheng (1723-35), as well as Qianlong (1735-96).

An array of Chinese works of art also features such as Tibetan gilt bronzes; an early black lacquer lobed cup-stand from the Song dynasty, 11th-13th century; bronzes, embroideries, hardstones and a group of Song, Yuan and early Ming dynasty ceramics.

[michaelchughesllc.com](http://michaelchughesllc.com)



## INDIAN PAINTINGS

**FORGE AND LYNCH, LONDON**

This delicate, 9 x 4¾in (23 x 12cm), carefully drawn *Portrait of a standing Rajput nobleman* from late 17th century India painted with pigments and gold on paper, will be on show at Oliver Forge and Brendan Lynch.

The dealership is exhibiting a selection of Indian Court paintings on East 82nd Street.

The nobleman is almost certainly Hindu and a Rajput, since he ties his *jama* (long coat) on the left side, under his armpit, from which hang long lappets ending in brocaded tips. He appears calm, yet he is clearly ready for action with the thumb of his right hand hooked around the handle of his *katar* (dagger).

It is priced in the region of **£25,000**.  
[forgelynch.com](http://forgelynch.com)



## BRONZES & TEXTILES

**CARLO CRISTI, ITALY**

Indian, Himalayan and south-east Asia specialist Carlo Cristi from Italy is taking his selection of bronzes, Thangkas, early illuminated Tibetan manuscripts and central Asian textiles to show at the Leslie Feely Gallery of East 68th Street.

One of the highlights will be this 4ft 6in x 4ft 2in (1.37 x 1.34m) fragment from a large 8th century silk weaving or *Samit* from Central Asia (**right**).

It has a repeat motif of roundels containing birds (perhaps eagles) holding bunches of grapes with another bunch suspended from the top of the roundel, symbolism reminiscent of Dionysian cults that were popular among those of the Zoroastrian religion. The size and the nature of the border, composed of five overlapping bands of coloured silk, suggests the hanging could have a ceremonial purpose.

The price range for the exhibition will be from **\$9000 to \$700,000**.



## CONTEMPORARY ART

**LITTLETON & HENNESSY, LONDON**

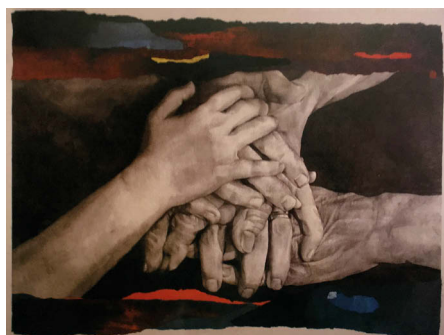
The dealership will be at Daniel Crouch Rare Books on East 64th Street for *AWNY* with a display titled *Littleton & Hennessy – 21 Years*, a highlight retrospective looking back at the various exhibitions it has held over that time.

The show has a broad focus. Tang dynasty highlights from the important Sze Yuan Tang Collection, to coincide with the *Art of the Tang Dynasty* exhibition at the Asia Society NY (running till June 4), as well as imperial ceramics, jades, bronzes and lacquer.

An important section will focus on contemporary Chinese paintings, including works by Qu Lei Lei, Qin Ai and Zhu Xin Jian. Together with Huang Rui, Ai Weiwei and others, Qu Lei Lei was one of the founding members of the 'STARS Group', and his works can be found in museums including the V&A and the British Museum.

The painting **right**, *Time – Generations* (2007), is priced in the region of **\$60,000**.

[littletonandhennessy.com](http://littletonandhennessy.com)



## Japanese exhibitions

FOR those visiting New York during *Asia Week* there is always a raft of related events taking place to delight the eye and capture the imagination.

One of them is the collaborative exhibition which the five permanent members of the Japanese Art Dealers Association (JADA) have been putting on at this time of the year since 2009.

This quintet comprises Sebastian Izzard, Leighton Longhi, Erik Thomsen, the Mika Gallery and Koichi Yanagi, all of whom are based in NYC.

*JADA 2017* will be based in its usual venue, the Ukrainian Institute of America on East 79th Street, and will be showing a mix of Japanese prints, paintings, screens, ceramics and sculpture lacquer and other works of art from March 11-13.

## ARMS AND ARMOUR

**LEIGHTON R LONGHI, NEW YORK CITY**

Among the highlights will be this impressive full suit of armour, **left**, offered by Leighton R Longhi which is priced at **\$350,000**.

Designed by the Edo period master Noguchi Zesai, it is made from iron and other metals, lacquered leather, animal skins and chain mail. The armour is one of only two known that have their address, signature and date (corresponding to 1689).

As well as their collaborative show, participants are holding longer-running selling exhibitions in their own individual New York galleries.

[jada-ny.org](http://jada-ny.org)



## MEIJI ART

**FLYING CRANES ANTIQUES, NEW YORK CITY**

Flying Cranes Antiques, specialist in Japanese art of the Meiji era, is based in the Manhattan Art and Antiques Centre and for the first time in the firm's near 40-year history has decided to hold a gallery-wide sale during *AWNY*.

On offer will be lacquer, basketry, ceramics, cloisonné enamel and other metalwares including this subtly decorated *mizusashi* by the studio porcelain artist Seifu Yohei III.

[flyingcranesantiques.com](http://flyingcranesantiques.com)



## The longstanding dealers

### Joan Mirviss

Mirviss (**right**) was a founder and the first chairperson of AWPY and is still an active member of the planning committee.

For her, the main appeal of the event is "the opportunity to meet both established and new collectors and curators from around the world, many of whom are passionate about Japanese art and others who have only recently been captivated by Japanese woodblock prints and paintings".

She also believes that the privacy afforded by having the dealers hosted in large galleries or hotel suites is important, allowing collectors anonymity and the time for extended conversations.

Mirviss notes that there has been a seismic shift in taste and collecting interest towards the modern and contemporary in art everywhere, and Asia is no exception. For her, the timing has been perfect, as she has been championing Japanese clay art of the 20th and 21st centuries for more than three decades.

"Working directly with seasoned, celebrated masters as well as emerging, brilliant young talents has been both gratifying and exciting. Together we have changed the collecting directions of numerous museums and countless collectors," she says.

This month Mirviss will present *Timeless Elegance in Japanese Art: A Celebration of Forty Years* to mark her 40th year in business. The show includes 20 works that have been created or specifically selected for the event by living artists long represented by the gallery as well as major, innovative paintings and famous ukiyo-e prints by important 18th and 19th century artists.

[mirviss.com](http://mirviss.com)



**Together we have changed the collecting directions of numerous museums and collectors**

**Right:** among the contemporary works in Joan Mirviss' 40-year anniversary show is *Wind Direction* (2016) by Fujikasa Satoko (b.1980) who has received international acclaim for her captivating sculptural work.

The ethereal pieces are all hand built using traditional Shigaraki clay and a technique called *tehineri* (twisting by hands) where she merges slender coils of clay, requiring months of work to complete a single form.

This example carries a price of **under \$30,000**.



**Above:** among the jewellery that Susan Ollemans is taking to New York is this pair of 19th century gold earrings from the Nias people of Indonesia, worked into two coils. They are priced at **\$11,500**.

### Susan Ollemans

Ollemans (**below right**) started trading in Indian and south-east Asian jewellery in 1979 and has exhibited at AWPY since its inception in 2009. This year she will be travelling from London to show at Les Enluminures on East 73rd Street.

"After *The International Asian Art Fair* ended in 2008 a lot of us wanted to continue to work together in New York, so this dealer-driven event was established and it's been a great success," she says.

"It is particularly successful in New York as the city puts a lot of energy behind the week, and with the support of the museums and the auctions it just works. All the finest Asian works of art are exhibited in dedicated shows, and behind them come all the great American collectors and museum curators who are very proactive in the US."

She has witnessed the event grow and change a huge amount over the years and says: "As the import regulations have tightened up considerably in the US, inevitably it's more difficult for antiquities dealers to exhibit, so we are seeing many of them being replaced by contemporary galleries, although of course this may be a response to changing tastes too."

This year she will be showing a dedicated exhibition titled *Ancient and Modern Design in Asian Jewels* with pieces ranging from the 5th century BC to the 19th century.

"What I want to show is that so much traditional Asian jewellery has very cutting-edge, very modern design and antique pieces need not be old fashioned – they can be very contemporary and beautiful. Even if you aren't interested in jewellery, it's still worth seeing the show as the pieces work equally well as objects of decoration."

[ollemans.com](http://ollemans.com)



**It is particularly successful in New York as the city puts a lot of energy behind the week**



## Take a dip into the New York cultural hub

As AWPY takes place in the country's main cultural and museum hub, visitors can avail themselves of the wealth of Asian scholarship and collections available in NYC's institutions.

Several of these have directly linked to the event, not least the Met. It hosts AWPY's main ticket-only reception (on March 13), holds the annual lecture on south and south-east Asian Art, *Durga, the all powerful in Eastern India* on opening night and has its own roster of eight Asian exhibitions that run through 2017.

But 15 other museums and cultural institutions are also involved.

These include the Tibet House on West 15th Street, an educational institution and cultural centre devoted to the cultural and spiritual heritage of Tibet.

It opens its exhibition *Tibetan Tangkas Today*, devoted to the thangkas of modern master artist and thangka painter Karsang Lama, from the Dharmapala Thangka Center of Kathmandu in Nepal, on March 10,

with an evening reception (the show runs until May 11).

The Rubin Museum of Art in Chelsea on West 17th street is a cultural hub focusing on the Himalayan regions via exhibitions, films, concerts and other programmes.

For AWPY it is holding a ticket-only evening reception on March 16. Visitors can combine cocktails and canapés with a view of current exhibitions including a final tour of *Nepalese Seasons: Rain and Ritual*, which closes on March 27. This uses loan exhibits and its own collections to examine the country's rituals, festivals and seasons.

This 2ft x 19in 16th century painting on cloth (right), *Monsoon Ritual around the Stupa* (Gumla Dharma Laksha Chaitya), is one of its own holdings, a gift of Shelley and Donald Rubin.

[metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)

[tibethouse.us](http://tibethouse.us)

[rubinmuseum.org](http://rubinmuseum.org)



© The Rubin Museum of Art

## Under the hammer during Asia Week

AUCTIONS have been a key fixture of *Asia Week* now for many years, longer indeed than the gallery initiative as they date back to the time when the Haughtons' Asian art fair was a big fixture in town.

Over 20 sessions in all take place: seven each taking place at Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams, plus a large mixed Asian art event at Doyle, while Igavel is previewing its April sale at Lark Mason Associates Gallery.

Sales range from Chinese works of art to dedicated offerings of snuff bottles, tea ceremony wares and plenty of Indian and Himalayan material from bronzes to works by modern painters as well as Japanese and Korean art.

Pictured here is a small taste of what the auction rooms have assembled to tempt would-be purchasers into loosening their purse strings.

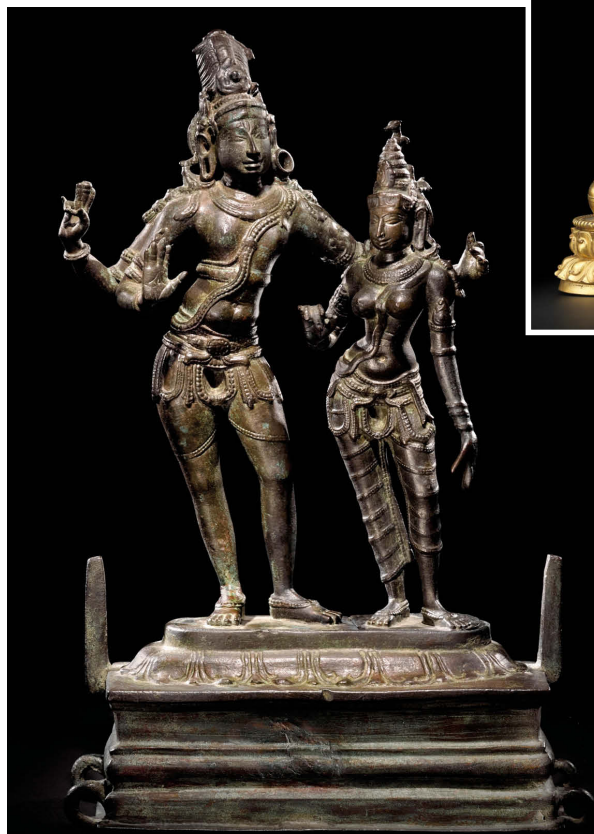
[sothebys.com](http://sothebys.com)

[christies.com](http://christies.com)

[bonhams.com](http://bonhams.com)

[doyle.com](http://doyle.com)

[igavelauctions.com](http://igavelauctions.com)



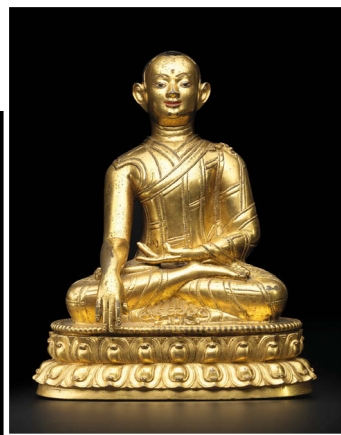
### Indian and Himalayan works of art

Three main New York auction houses – Bonhams, Sotheby's and Christie's – are all offering dedicated sales of classic early Indian, Himalayan and south-east Asian sculpture and works of art (and in Sotheby's case an extra sale of painting by Indian artists of the modern era).

Bonhams is augmenting its selection with a separate single-owner auction titled *Portraits of the Masters*.

This features 108 Tibetan bronze sculptures headed by a 9in (23cm) high 13th century gilt copper alloy figure of Drigunga Jigten Sumgon Rinchen pel (1143-1217), **above right**, estimated at **\$250,000-350,000**.

A group of property from the Cleveland Museum of Art will be included in Sotheby's Indian Himalayan and South East Asian sale on March 15. Its highlight is a Chola period bronze group of Shiva embracing Uma (**above left**), which was purchased in 1954 from the dealer CT Loo and is thus making its first appearance on the market in over 60 years. It carries an estimate of **\$300,000-500,000**.



### Japanese and Korean art

Bonhams is the only auction room holding dedicated Japanese and Korean auctions in this spring series.

Its 250-lot March 15 offering of Japanese and Korean works of art will include objects from the collection of Jeffrey M Kaplan such as this Edo period uncut, *uchiwa-e* (fan) print of a hawk in flight c.1840 (**above**), by Katsushika Hokusai. It is guided at **\$12,000-18,000**.

On the same day Bonhams is offering *The Korean Aesthetic: The Collection of Robert W Moore* with 60 lots of Buddhist art, ceramics and paintings.

The highlight is set to be this large 12½in (32cm) high 18th century porcelain reticulated flower pot stand from the late Joseon dynasty distinguished by its characteristic lattice work imitating basketry (**above right**). It is guided at **\$60,000-80,000**.



### Chinese furniture

Chinese hardwood furniture has been on buoyant form in recent years, enjoying a boom in prices.

A centrepiece of one of Christie's seven *AWNY* auctions is the 86-lot ensemble of works from the collection of Marie Theresa L Virata.

Ceramics, Japanese screens, carpets and works of art all feature, but the main focus is a group of classical Chinese furniture which was assembled with advice from the celebrated dealer Robert Hatfield Ellsworth.

Highlights include a rare pair of armchairs of 'southern official's hat' form in hunghuali wood estimated at \$600,000-800,000 and this 18th century luohan low bed in zitan, **below**, which is guided at **\$2m-3m**.





## Archaic bronzes

This rare 8½in (22cm) long ritual wine vessel in the form of a ram dates from the late Shang dynasty (13th-11th century BC).

It is one of the highlights in Christie's March 15 sale of Chinese art from the Fujita Museum to be offered. It comes with its own Japanese double wood box and is estimated at **\$6m-8m**.



## Chinese paintings

Classical Chinese paintings and calligraphy are one of the boom areas of the Asian market where interest and prices have grown exponentially.

Christie's and Sotheby's each devote an entire sale to this genre on March 14 and 16 respectively with lots assembled from vendors around the globe.

A highlight of Christie's 124-lot assemblage is the 14th century artist Ni Zan's landscape **above right**, a gift to Ban Yun, in ink on paper dated *xinchou* year, corresponding to 1361. It is estimated at **\$150,000-300,000**.

At 12 x 8¼in (40 x 21cm), this is a relatively small composition from the artist's repertoire but has affinities with some of his masterworks.

It also bears two collectors' seals for Dong Qichang and Zhi Wenjun.

The undoubted stand-out lot from Sotheby's similar sized sale is Zhu Dha's 12 leaf album *Flowers Birds Fish and Fruit* (**below right**), which is dated 1703, and painted towards the end of his life.

Not only is this a work by a master artist, but it also belonged at one time to Zhang Diqian, one of the best known artists of 20th century China, and carries three of his collectors' seals.

The estimate is **\$2.5m -3.5m**.



## Ceramics



This tiny 1½in (4cm) high doucai porcelain cup, **above**, is delicately enamelled with roundels of leafy fruiting peach branches to the exterior and with a Chenghua six-character mark within a square in underglaze blue to the base.

It is one of the highlights of Doyle's wide-ranging sale of Asian works of art on March 13, estimated at **\$50,000-70,000**.



One of the most select ceramic offerings in the NYC spring auction round will be Sotheby's March 14 auction titled *Ming the Intervention of Imperial Taste*.

This comprises just 14 lots arranged in chronological order to show the development of different potting and decorating styles over a 300-year period. The products range from the blue and white ware that emerged from the Yuan prototypes through monochromes to polychrome decorated pieces.

They include this large 15¼in (39cm) diameter Xuande dish, **left**, reserve decorated in white on a royal blue ground with peony and other flowering plants.

It has a six-character mark to the reverse, comes from the collection of Baron Guy de Villelume (1908-91) and is guided at **\$1m-1.5m**.



This large 13¾in (34cm) high Yongzheng seal mark and period vase of Hu form is one of the ceramic highlights in Sotheby's March 14 mixed-discipline auction of Chinese works of art, where it carries an estimate of **\$200,000-300,000**.

The vase, whose shape is inspired by archaic bronzes, is influenced by ru wares of the Song period and is notable for its subtle lavender glaze.

It has come by direct descent from the collection of Fred and Marguerite Shumaker of Larchmont New York and was acquired in the early 1930s.