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Sotheby's Chinese Works Of Art Sale Soars Over High Estimate To Total \$20.7 million

20 MARCH 2012 - Today at Sotheby's the Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Sale brought the outstanding total of \$20,709,776, significantly exceeding the pre-sale high estimate of \$16.8 million. The auction was led by two **Extremely Rare Famille Rose 'Heaven and Earth' Revolving Brushpots, with Qianlong seal marks and dated to the period** (ests. \$120/150,000 and \$80/120,000) which brought a combined total of \$3.5 million. There were also exceptional prices for jades, archaic bronzes, furniture, and furniture among other areas of the sale which was over 70% sold.

Henry Howard-Sneyd, Vice Chairman, Asian Art and one of today's auctioneers commented: "Today's outstanding total of \$20.7 million showed that collectors are prepared to fight for objects with rarity and good provenance when offered at conservative estimates. Two Revolving Brushpots from the Qianlong period led the sale bringing a combined total of \$3.5 million, many multiples of the high estimates. These astonishing pieces are the product of ingenious design and almost miraculous craftsmanship."

The revolving brushpots came from a Massachusetts private collection and were each just 4¾ inches high. Bidding was ferocious on both pieces, with collectors making extraordinary leaps. At one stage, the auctioneer asked for a bid from the room and was offered \$100,000, immediately to be trumped by a Sotheby's specialist bidding for a client by phone yelled out \$1 million. The brushpots eventually sold for \$1,986,500 (est. \$120/150,000) and \$1,538,500 (est. \$80/120,000).

Among the first lots to come up for sale in today's auction was a group of archaic bronzes, which was led by **A Rare Archaic Bronze 'Double Owl' Ritual Food Vessel (You), Shang Dynasty, 12th century BC**. The double-owl *you* saw competition from bidders both in the saleroom and on the telephones, finally selling to a

buyer for \$1,258,500, more than tripling pre-sale low expectations (est. \$400/600,000). The work represents an interesting final step on the evolutionary ladder of this intriguing form.

The second lot in the auction, and another highlight of this group, was an **Archaic Bronze Ritual Food Vessel (Liding) Shang Dynasty**, which sold for \$254,500, more than four times its high estimate (est. \$40/60,000).

Highlighting the Jade section in the auction, an **Imperially Inscribed Finely Carved Spinach Jade Brushpot, Qianlong Period**, dated to 1795, which sold for a remarkable \$1,426,500, six times its pre-sale low estimate after it was sought by at least five bidders (est. \$200/300,000). Carved from a solid piece of jade, the rim of this superb brushpot is inscribed with a poem composed by the Qianlong emperor and exemplifies the zenith of pictorial jade working achieved by craftsmen during his reign.

Further works in Jade that performed exceptionally well and far surpassed pre-sale expectations was an **18th century Fine White Jade Teapot and Cover, Qing Dynasty**, which brought \$572,500 against an estimate of \$30/40,000, and an **18th century Qing Dynasty Large White Jade Ruyi Scepter**, which brought \$542,500, above an estimate of \$150/200,000.

Furniture was also highly sought after with **A Fine Huanghuali Yokeback Armchair (Sichutou Guanmaoyi) Ming Dynasty. 17th Century** selling for \$542,500, comfortably exceeding the high estimate (est. \$300/400,000). **A Fine And Rare Huanghuali Compound Cabinet (Dingxiang Gui), 17th Century** also surpassed the high estimate to fetch \$512,500 (est. \$250/400,000).

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