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**SOTHEBY'S APPOINTS RYOICHI HIRANO
AS INTERNATIONAL SENIOR SPECIALIST FOR CHINESE CERAMICS AND
WORKS OF ART AND
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SOTHEBY'S JAPAN**

Hong Kong, 26 March 2012 Sotheby's has announced the appointment of Ryoichi Hirano, the former head of the art gallery Hirano Kotoken, as International Senior Specialist for Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art and Deputy Managing Director, Sotheby's Japan. Mr. Hirano, the third generation of the famed Hirano family of dealers in Chinese works of art, will be joining Sotheby's in May, based in Tokyo.

"We are delighted by this appointment," said **Yasuaki Ishizaka, Managing Director of Sotheby's Japan**. "It will further strengthen Sotheby's dominance in the field of Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art and complement our strong business team in Japan." He continued, "As head of Hirano Kotoken, the family business founded in 1936 and reestablished in 2008, Ryoichi Hirano advised many important Chinese art collectors, museums and galleries, both in Japan and around the world. We are both delighted and fortunate to have him join our team."

For the better part of the last century, the name Hirano has been synonymous with the sale of the finest Chinese ceramics and indeed a number of celebrated collections in Japan. The Idemitsu Museum in Tokyo and the Museum of Oriental Ceramics in Osaka, for instance, have acquired some of their masterpieces from Hirano Kotoken. More recently, the gallery also explored the field of contemporary art, supporting young emerging artists. Prior to reestablishing the family business, Mr. Hirano worked for thirteen years at the prestigious Yayoi Gallery in Tokyo, where he became gallery director, handling important Japanese modern and Western paintings and working with museums and collectors to build their collections.

With his solid expertise in Chinese art carefully honed since childhood, Mr. Hirano will bring added strength to Sotheby's international team of Chinese art specialists. He will also further develop Sotheby's business in Japan, which has long been

central to the connoisseurship and collecting of Chinese ceramics and works of art. He will travel extensively within Japan and abroad to further develop this key collecting field, the cornerstone of Sotheby's business in Asia.

"Ryoichi is a very well respected figure in the field of Chinese ceramics and works of art. His knowledge and his relationships with key collectors, curators and galleries will be of enormous importance to us," said **Nicolas Chow, Sotheby's International Head of Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art and Deputy Chairman of Sotheby's Asia**. "I have long known and admired Ryoichi as a client - I am thrilled to welcome him as a colleague."

"Joining the leadership of both Sotheby's Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Department and Sotheby's Japan team, especially when coupled with the Company's unmatched international reach and capabilities, is a tremendous opportunity. I look forward with great anticipation to May," said **Mr. Hirano**.

Sotheby's Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Department has grown tenfold over the last decade. Its auctions in Hong Kong, London, New York and Paris turned over US\$400 million in 2011, making it the leader in the field.

Press release is now available at sothebys.com