

# CHRISTIE'S

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## Christie's Hong Kong Is Thrilled to Present The Sanyu Masterpiece

### ***POTTED PRUNUS***

## The Only Prunus Painting by the Artist In the 1940s Auction Debut to Lead the 20th and 21st Century Art Evening Sale

30 November | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre



**SANYU (1895 – 1966)**

***Potted Prunus***

oil on masonite

90.5 x 63.5 cm. (35 5/8 x 25 in.)

Painted in the 1940s

**Estimate: HK\$85,000,000 – 100,000,000 / US\$11,000,000 – 13,000,000**

**Hong Kong** – On 30 November, the auction debut of Sanyu's masterpiece - ***Potted Prunus*** (estimate: HK\$85,000,000 – 100,000,000 / US\$11,000,000 – 13,000,000) will take centre-stage at the 20th and 21st Century Art Evening Sale, underscoring Christie's continued market leadership in offering the most representative works by the artist at auction\*.

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- **Fresh To The Market With Exceptional Provenance:** The work, which makes its auction debut this November, was originally owned by Jean-Claude Riedel, a Parisian dealer and important collector of Sanyu's works, and was later purchased by Raymond & Catherine Meyer, before being held by important private Asian collectors.
- **An Extremely Rare Theme Featuring Prunus:** *Potted Prunus* is the only prunus painting by the artist created in the 1940s, and the only work that presents prunus on a golden wooden table with longevity symbols.
- **A Museum-Quality Masterpiece – One of Only Ten Prunus Oil Paintings by Sanyu:** Sanyu only created approximately 300 oil paintings in his lifetime and, within this body of work, only ten feature prunus as a subject, three of which reside in the collection of the National Museum of History in Taipei.
- **A Sign Of Hope In Times of Challenge:** The prunus itself signifies nobleness and perseverance. Sanyu painted *Potted Prunus* in the 1940s, an incredibly tumultuous time when, at over 50 years old, the artist lived through World War II in Europe and lost his family wealth, giving up on painting for a period. Consequently, there are a very limited number of works by Sanyu from the 1940s, and this is the only known work from the time which depicts the "prunus" theme.
- **Unique Oriental Style Merging With The School of Paris:** Sanyu moved to Paris in the 1920s, the epicentre of artistic innovation and creative bohemianism at the time. He emerged as an outstanding talent in the School of Paris by integrating what was then a highly avant-garde type of flat, planar expression through line and colour with the spirit of Eastern aesthetics. *Potted Prunus* fully displays this unique amalgamation.

Evelyn Lin, Deputy Chairman and Co-Head of the 20th and 21st Century Art Department, Christie's Asia Pacific, remarked, "One of the foremost artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sanyu masterfully blended the pioneering formal qualities of European modernism with the intrinsic philosophies of Chinese painting and calligraphy. The outstanding *Potted Prunus* is a unique and poignant masterpiece, painted at a time of immense challenge for the artist yet sharing a message of hope and determination that remains relevant to this day, and for us all. As the market leader for the sale of Sanyu works, it is a great honour for Christie's to present another magnificent piece to the market. Auctioned for the very first time, the sale of *Potted Prunus* is a singular opportunity, and we look forward to engaging our esteemed collector base this autumn."

## Prunus Oil Paintings in the Collection of the National Museum of History in Taipei



*Prunus Branches*  
oil on board  
126 x 69 cm.



*Prunus Blossoms*  
oil on board  
126 x 69 cm.



*Magpie on a Prunus Branch*  
oil on board  
94 x 73.5 cm.

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## NOTES TO EDITOR

### \*Christie's Hong Kong Holds Auction Records of The Three Most Iconic Themes By Sanyu



**World Auction Record For A Painting Depicting Nudes By the Artist**

***Five Nudes***

oil on masonite

120 x 172 cm. (47 1/4 x 67 3/4 in.)

Painted in the 1950s

**Price Realised: HK\$303,985,000 / US\$39,181,211  
23 November 2019**



**World Auction Record For A Still Life By the Artist**

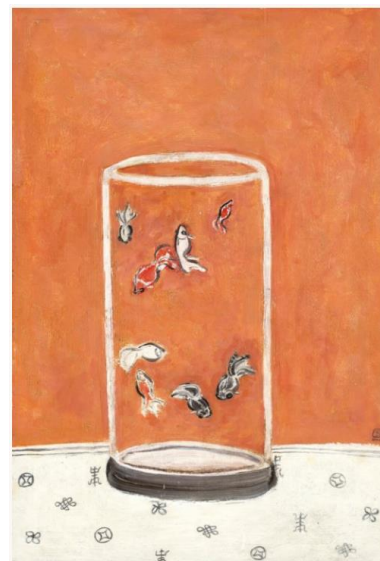
***Chrysanthèmes blanches dans un pot bleu et blanc*  
(*White Chrysanthemum in a Blue and White Jardinière*)**

oil on masonite

110 x 60 cm. (43 1/4 x 23 5/8 in.)

Painted in the 1940s – 1950s

**Price Realised: HK\$191,620,000 / US\$24,844,389  
10 July 2020**



**World Auction Record For A Painting  
Depicting An Animal Subject By the Artist**

***Goldfish***

oil on canvas

73.8 x 50.2 cm. (29 x 19 3/4 in.)

Painted in the 1930s – 1940s

**Price Realised: HK\$170,170,000 / US\$22,056,326  
2 December 2020**

# CHRISTIE'S

## Public Preview:

**Taipei** | 22 – 23 Oct | Taipei Marriott Hotel, No. 199, Lequn 2nd Road, Zhongshan District

**Beijing** | 7 – 8 Nov | China World Summit Wing, No.1 Jianguomenwai Avenue

**Shanghai** | 11 – 13 Nov | BUND ONE, 4/F, No.1 Zhongshan Dong Yi Road

**Hong Kong** | 26 – 30 November | Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No.1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

## Live Auction:

**Hong Kong** | 30 November | Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No.1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

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## About Christie's

Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).

Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. In recent years, Christie's has achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction ([Leonardo da Vinci's \*Salvator Mundi\*](#), 2017), for a 20th century artwork ([Andy Warhol's \*Shot Sage Blue Marilyn\*](#), 2022) and for a work by a living artist ([Jeff Koons' \*Rabbit\*](#), 2019). Christie's is also recognised as a reference for prestigious single owner collections, having auctioned 8 of the 10 most important collections in history.

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Recent innovations at Christie's include groundbreaking sale of the first NFT for a digital work of art ever offered at a major auction house ([Beeple's \*Everydays, March 2021\*](#)), with the unprecedented acceptance of cryptocurrency as a means of payment. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the use of hologram technology to tour life-size 3D objects around the world, and the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.

Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.

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*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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