

CHRISTIE'S IS PROUD TO PRESENT
A MAGNIFICENT AND EXTREMELY
RARE LARGE *DOUCAI* VASE

FROM
THE MUNSON-WILLIAMS-PROCTOR ARTS INSTITUTE
SOLD TO BENEFIT
THE HELEN MUNSON WILLIAMS ACQUISITION FUND

IMPORTANT CHINESE CERAMICS
AND WORKS OF ART
Live Auction
Hong Kong | 30 May



This spring, Christie's is delighted to present **A Magnificent And Extremely Rare Large *Doucai* Vase**, to be offered as a leading highlight in the **Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art** auction on 30 May, 2022.

Proceeds from the sale of the lot will benefit The Helen Munson Williams Acquisition Fund, solely for the purchase of artwork for the permanent collection.



A Magnificent And Extremely Rare Large *Doucai* Vase
Qianlong Six-Character Seal Mark In Underglaze-Blue And Of The Period (1736-1795)
20 ¾ in. (52.7 cm.) , wood stand
Estimate: HK\$30,000,000 – 50,000,000

The Munson-Williams-Proctor *Doucai* Vase

- 🔔 **Carefully Applied Technique:** A unique technique and style of decoration, *doucai* was both difficult and expensive to execute. After shaping and drying the vase, fine underglaze cobalt blue outlines were painted onto its porous unfired body. As the cobalt immediately soaked into the unfired clay, no mistakes could be rectified.
- 🔔 **Exceptionally Rare:** There are very few surviving *doucai* vases of such massive size from the Qianlong period. A related Qianlong vase in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, is different in shape but very similar in decoration and size. The *chilong* handles can be compared to those on a *doucai* decorated vase in the Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 🔔 **Striking Colour and Auspicious symbolism:** The *ruyi* motif, based on the form of a *lingzhi* fungus, represents a wish for 'everything you desire' and was a popular motif for imperial birthdays. In addition, four bold gilt swastikas, *wan* 卐, popular Buddhist symbols of good luck, are found on the body of the vase.
- 🔔 **Documented Provenance:** Mrs. Helen Elizabeth Munson Williams bought the vase from the American Art Galleries in 1883, and it has remained in the collection of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute of Utica in New York.

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The Munson-Williams-Proctor *Doucai* Vase is superbly enameled, with four stylised lotus blossoms interspersed with smaller lotus blossoms above gilt *wan* emblems, all amidst a lush pattern of leafy scrolls, and bordered by a band of stylised bats above clouds on the shoulder and a band of petal lappets above the foot. The tall waisted neck is decorated on either side with a lotus blossom, centered by a gilt *shou* medallion above a cluster of *lingzhi fungus*, all set against leafy scrolls and bordered above and below by *ruyi*-head bands, and flanked by a pair of handles formed as *chilong*, with scrolling bifurcated tails finely shaded in iron-red and with gilt detail.

The original receipt for this vase is still in existence, issued in 1883 by the American Art Gallery, a division of the American Art Association in New York City. The receipt confirms the vase's purchase by Mrs. Helen Elizabeth Munson Williams (1824–1894), whose collection would later be the foundation for the the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. The American Art Gallery sold both American paintings and Asian ceramics, both of which Mrs. Williams was buying in the late 1880s, a typical pursuit of sophisticated wealthy Americans at the end of the nineteenth century.

It is very rare to find such beautifully documented provenance dating back to the late 19th century. Christie's is thrilled to present this magnificent work of imperial porcelain from one of the most prolific reigns of the Qing Dynasty, the Qianlong reign.



A surviving photograph showing the *doucai* vase inside Mrs Williams' parlour

Marco Almeida, Head of Department, Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, commented: "*Christie's has established long-lasting and loyal relationships with museums and institutions around the globe, as they appreciate our expertise and professionalism when handling these highly important works of art. This season, we are honoured to bring the 'Munson-Williams-Proctor' Doucai vase to the market and an array of rare Chinese works of art, mostly with stellar provenance. We strongly believe that the 'Munson-Williams-Proctor' Doucai vase, with its documented provenance, will prove to be a huge sensation amongst collectors worldwide.*"

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Utica, New York



Preview (By appointment only):

Hong Kong | 1 – 4 April | Christie's Galleries, 22/F, Alexandra House, 18 Chater Road, Central
Beijing | May (TBC) | Christie's Beijing Art Space, 1/F, Tower 1, 82 Jinbao Street, Dongcheng District, Beijing
Shanghai | May (TBC) | 4/F, BUND ONE, No.1 Zhongshan Dong Yi Road Shanghai 200002, China
Taipei | 7 – 8 May | Marriott Taipei, No. 199 Lequn 2nd Road, ZhongShan District, Taipei
Hong Kong | 22 – 29 May | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No. 1 Harbour Road, Wanchai

Auction: Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art

Date: 30 May 2022

Location: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No. 1 Harbour Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong

Image download: Please click [HERE](#)

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About Christie's:

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Recent innovations at Christie's include the 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 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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