

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **ANTHONY LIN'S INAUGURAL EXHIBITION IN NEW YORK, MARCH 2006**

For his first exhibition as an international fine art dealer and advisor, Anthony Lin presents **ICONS AND ICONOCLASTS**; an exhibition which explores the power of Confucian ideals in Chinese art over the past 2,500 years and the contradictions between Old and New China. Comprising 38 sculptural works of art, the exhibition is at the New York gallery of Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, 17, East 76th Street in New York City between March 25 and April 1 2006.

Anthony Lin says of this ground-breaking show, "I decided to put together this exhibition as a tribute to China's tradition and to examine the cultural crossroads that globalization has brought to its present. Having been brought up by staunchly Confucian parents, I was fascinated by the growing chasm between my experience of that tradition and the interpretation of its meanings by Chinese contemporary artists. The concepts of hierarchy and authority have not changed a great deal in this long span of history, but the systems that define them have. Both the links and dichotomies are reflected in the works of art I have chosen for this show."

The exhibition is divided into three areas that tie the strands of this history together. The pre-Buddhist section of art explores the animal iconography of the later Zhou Dynasty. In a repertoire spanning personal ornaments such as jade and gilt-bronze garment hooks to weaponry, such as crossbow fittings.

In the Buddhist section of this exhibition, the sculptures and ritual implements cover a range of styles from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-535 ) to the Imperial grandeur of the Qianlong period (r.1736-1795) in the Qing Dynasty.

The final section of the exhibition looks at the state of Confucianism in contemporary China through the eyes of seven practicing artists from the two Chinese Republics – the People's Republic of China and the Taiwanese Republic of China. Utilising time honoured symbols and iconic forms, they ask trenchant questions of the Confucian traditions and the state of Chinese society today.

**For further information, and for images, please contact Anthony Lin at 852 2521 9030**

## ANTHONY LIN BIOGRAPHY

Until January 2005, when he established himself as a Fine Art Advisor, Anthony Lin was Chairman of Christie's Asia as well as Chairman of Christie's Hong Kong and Taiwan and the first Chinese auctioneer.

Mr. Lin joined the international auction house in 1986 as a specialist in the Chinese Works of Art Department, and assisted in organizing sales and business development in London and Hong Kong. In 1991, he was appointed Christie's Representative in Taiwan where he set up a new office in response to the growth in business in that region. In 1993, he was promoted to Managing Director of Christie's Hong Kong where sales grew steadily under his aegis and Christie's became the leading auctioneer of Chinese ceramics, paintings and jewellery in Asia.

In addition, Mr. Lin also served as International Specialist Head of Asian Art, Antiquities and Tribal Art on a worldwide basis and represented Asia on the Board of Christie's. Under his stewardship in this role, sales in those international departments posted a record US\$265 million in 2004, running second to the sales of Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary for the first time ever in the history of Christie's.

Born in Singapore of Chinese migrant parents, Mr. Lin graduated from University College London with an Honour's Degree in Philosophy and Economics, and earned a Master's Degree in Chinese Art and Archaeology with Distinction at the Percival David Foundation of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. He specializes in Chinese ceramics of the Song to Qing periods and early Buddhist sculpture. At Christie's, he pioneered the Imperial Sales which showcased the rich trove of works of art commissioned and collected by the Ming and Qing emperors from the 14th to 18th Centuries

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# ICONS AND ICONOCLASTS NOTES

## Introduction

From the Zhou Dynasty (1100-256 BC) until the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD), Confucianism was the bedrock of the hierarchy and order that bound Chinese state and society together. Around the time of the Warring States (475-221 BC), the Book of Rites (Li Ji ) and the rituals of Zhou (Zhou Li) codified ceremonials and rank by dress, materials and animal symbols. The use of jade, gold, silver and bronze and animal symbols was strictly defined, refined and retained from then through to the Qing Imperial Household Regulations over 2,000 years later. Works of art were commissioned by Imperial and noble patrons whose symbols and requirements were turned by anonymous Chinese craftsmen into great artifacts. The symbolist protocol in the art of this long period of history reflected the status of each class, from the Dragon and Phoenix representing the Emperor and his Consort, down to the various mythological animals on the rank badges worn by all grades of high officials at Court.

## Pre-Buddhist China



19. VERY RARE GILT-BRONZE  
AND TURQUOISE PHOENIX

Warring States (475-221BC)

## Buddhist China



5. RARE INSCRIBED BRONZE  
FIGURE OF A LUOHAN

Yuan Dynasty (1269-1367)

## Contemporary China



30. LIU LIGUO  
XP4

(Born 1964)

# ICONS AND ICONOCLASTS NOTES

## Pre-Buddhist Art

The exhibition is divided into three areas that tie the strands of this history together. The pre-Buddhist section of art explores the animal iconography of the later Zhou Dynasty. In a repertoire encompassing personal ornaments such as jade and gilt-bronze garment hooks (nos. 20 and 24 in the catalogue) to weaponry, such as crossbow fittings (no.25). The virtuoso craftsmen of the period turned the techniques of casting, inlay and overlay into prodigious works of unsurpassed quality to proclaim the prestige of their patrons. Jade, glass, turquoise, gold and silver are used on bronze in imaginative ways to enhance the animal motifs that were integral to noble status. The animal imagery includes representations of dragons, phoenix, tigers, owls and ibexes fashioned into fantastic decorative elements on objects announcing the status of their owners. The jewellery and luxurious paraphernalia of the daily lives of the aristocratic classes in this exhibition offer a glimpse of the extraordinary decorative language of the Warring States (475-221 BC) and the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD).



24. VERY RARE JADE AND IRON  
GARMENT-HOOK



20. RARE GILT-BRONZE, SILVER, JADE  
AND GLASS GARMENT-HOOK



25. PAIR OF SILVER-INLAID BRONZE  
CROSS-BOW FITTINGS

# ICONS AND ICONOCLASTS NOTES

## Buddhist Art

In the Buddhist section of this exhibition, the sculptures and ritual implements cover a range of styles from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-535 ) to the Imperial grandeur of the Qianlong period (r.1736-1795) in the Qing Dynasty. In a historic moment during the Northern Wei Dynasty, the ruling house adopted Buddhism as a state religion. Buddhism became a political vehicle which, combined with Confucianism, ensured an ordered and peaceful state reflected in the hierarchy of the various deities and their earthly and heavenly domains. The craftsmen who had so dexterously created symbolic animals in bronze, stone and jade, transferred their skills readily to the representations of these gods with human likenesses. From the monumental figure of Amitabha Buddha (no. 7 in the catalogue) of the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577 AD) to the Sino-Tibetan gilt bronze Vajrasattva of the early 15th Century (no. 12 in the catalogue), sculptural Buddhist art demonstrated the ability of the craftsmen not only to achieve amazing representational devotional figures, but also the distinguishing characteristics and status within their hierarchy. Other devotional relics such as the unique gold and silver sarira pagoda of the late Tang period (no. 8) and the white stoneware purified water vessel (no.3)of the Liao Dynasty (907-1125), show the complete mastery of craftsmanship in all media.



3. RARE WHITE-GLAZED  
STONEWARE KUNDIKA



7. VERY RARE MONUMENTAL  
FIGURE OF AMITABHA BUDDHA



8. UNIQUE GOLD AND SILVER  
SARIRA STUPA

# ICONS AND ICONOCLASTS NOTES

## Contemporary Chinese Art

The final section of the exhibition looks at the state of Confucianism in contemporary China through the eyes of seven artists from the two Chinese Republics – the People’s Republic of China and the Taiwanese Republic of China. Utilising time honoured symbols and iconic forms, they ask trenchant questions of the Confucian traditions and the state of Chinese society today. The deconstructed Ming-style chairs of Shao Fan (nos. 35-37) and Yang Mao-Lin’s newly anointed Buddhist deity (no 29) inspired by Japanese Anime are oblique critiques of old values as well as the globalised community in which we live today. Cai Zhisong’s Chinese scroll and bamboo strips (nos. 32, 33) refer to the most iconic media in the fine arts, that of painting and calligraphy. Fashioned out of lead, without any traces of the markings they are meant to accommodate, they are a response not only to the durability and dubiousness of their traditions, but also the criticism that Chinese artists ape the West. No longer anonymous, these artists sign and date their works. They work in a system, not of patrons, but of clients and critics. However dissonant, these renewed symbols in Chinese art remain phenomenal for their extended and potent links with the past. In this small selection of art works spanning two and a half millennia, the connections demonstrate the durability of Confucian ideals as well as its contradictions in the dialogue between ancient and contemporary Chinese art.



29. INVINCIBLE VIDYARAJA  
Yang Mao Lin



32. REFINEMENT TO MOTHERLAND  
NO. 3 Cai Zhisong



37. PROJECT NO. 1 OF YEAR 2004  
Shao Fan