

LA GAZETTE DROUOT

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EDITORIAL



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Each year, as the summer solstice approaches, a certain excitement sweeps over the Grands Boulevards in Paris, which has nothing to do with the sales at the Galeries Lafayette nearby. During Asian Art Week, when one or more auctions are held each day, the Hôtel Drouot is assailed by Chinese collectors seeking rare treasures from the Middle Kingdom – preferably from the Qianlong period (p. 22) – and others focusing on Thailand or India, as the whole of Asia goes willy-nilly under the auctioneer's hammer. In this field (and we can rely on the experts), the Paris market has maintained its pole position for years as a purveyor of "fresh" pieces with impeccable pedigrees. If we then leave the auction room and go north-west, we find ourselves before an extraordinary collection of Song, Ming and Qing porcelains – but these are no longer for sale. They belong to Mr Hikonobu Ise, one of the great Japanese collectors of Chinese ceramics (p. 68), and their finely-glazed charms can be admired in the showcases of the Musée Guimet until September this year. It would be no surprise to meet their owner (or one of his representatives, at least) in a saleroom at Drouot, or elsewhere...

The Sale
Garden Party
since 1989
Artigny

”Waltz with History”

29th sale on 11 and 12 June 2017, 260 lots



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Garden Party at the château

11 AND 12 JUNE

There was a time that the under-twenties have never known, when the expression "garden party", used to describe an open-air high society reception, was one of the few English expressions to have penetrated Molière's language. The term, here applied to Rouillac's spring sale, is to act as a Proust Madeleine for a whole generation, and gives the event a delightfully retro feel. It consists of the 29th edition of the Vendôme auction house's speciality: large-scale sales bringing together jewellery, objets d'art, paintings, furniture and more in an outstanding setting at the heart of the Loire Valley. Since 2015, the meticulously-trimmed lawns of the Château d'Artigny have hosted this positive bidding theatre. All the great and the good flock to the occasion, sometimes for the simple entertainment value. With Rouillac, you find a wealth of rare objects with

their own story, like this Mazarin chest, now famous since its sale to the Rijksmuseum in 2013 for over €7 million. This year's 260 lots cover a broad period from antiquity to modern times, incorporating both Asian art and science and technology. Two champions stand out for their high prices, forming a real couple, as they consist of works by Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel: a patinated plaster of the former's "Minotaur" (c. 1885, €80,000/120,000), and an eye-catching bronze "Waltz" by the latter, cast during the artist's lifetime in around 1900 before being forgotten in a closet for 100 years (€500,000). Also worth noting: an eight-Louis gold coin by Jean Varin (€70,000/80,000), a painting on card mounted on canvas of the "Pont de Bordeaux" by Albert Marquet, (€20,000/30,000) and one of the five last known examples of the first microcomputer in IT history (€20,000). Meanwhile, the first prize for curiosity definitely goes to a singular dragon sleigh from Northern Europe (€35,000/40,000). Apparently, these were all the rage during the reign of Louis XIV and later, at the Mérode princes' court, in Belgium. Let the show begin!

Céline Piettre



Camille Claudel (1864-1943),
"La Valse" ("The Waltz"), 1889-1905,
bronze proof with brown/black patina,
sand cast produced during the artist's
lifetime, c. 1900. Signed "Camille Claudel"
(on the terrace), 46.7 x 25.5 x 16.8 cm.
Estimate: €500,000.

