

Michaan's Asian auction sets new U.S. record

BY CAROLE DEUTSCH

ALAMEDA, Calif. — In an elite 238-lot sale of fine Asian art and artifacts of the highest quality, Michaan's Auction realized impressive results that tallied \$2.8 million and set new records. The June 22 auction offered outstanding articles in all categories, which included fine artwork, bronze sculptures, porcelains, jades, scrolls, furniture, and decorative objects.

While the results of the sale did not take Allen Michaan by surprise, he was pleased with the way it reflected Michaan's strength in the marketplace.

"From year to year we see an increasing and more important consignment base," he said. "We have worked hard to become a trusted player in the field that continues to grow and we are growing with it."

Fine paintings from renowned modern Chinese masters dominated the sale, which was highlighted by a hanging scroll by Fu Baoshi, titled *Lady by the Bamboo*. It was painted in ink and color on paper, inscribed and dated 1945, and bore two of the artist's seals. The piece, which measured 44 1/4 inches high by 13 inches wide, portrayed a young woman in a blue robe leaning against a tall bamboo plant.

Fu Baoshi (1904-1965) was a Chinese painter from Xinyu, Jiangxi Province, who is credited with revolutionizing Chinese ink painting. He is widely considered one of the most important Chinese artists of the 20th century and the most original figure painter and landscape artist of the modern period in China. The catalogue noted that the piece was derived from Mr. and Mrs. David Galula, who acquired it in China between 1945 and 1949.

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Left: A hanging scroll by Fu Baoshi, titled *Lady by the Bamboo*, carried a strong presale estimate of \$150,000 to \$200,000, but soared past that figure to command an impressive \$1,410,000, setting a new U.S. auction record for the artist and also establishing Michaan's single highest selling painting to date.



Michaan's

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Twelve phone bidders competed, seven of whom were Asian, and an additional four bidders were in the room. No online bidders participated in the sale of the scroll that was ultimately won by an East Coast bidder.

Another hanging scroll, attributed to Shen Quan, was an ink and color on silk, titled *Mandarin Ducks*. The scene depicted a group of paddling ducks under the shade of a cherry blossom tree. It was inscribed, dated to the Guiyou year of the Qianlong reign (1753), and had two seals of the artist. The 62-inch by 32-inch Qing dynasty scroll sold over six times the high estimate for the handsome sum of \$64,900.

An ink and color on paper painting by Lin Fengmian, *Boats at Shore*, was signed with one seal of the artist, 1940s. The framed and glazed work measured 18 1/8 inches by 23 1/8 inches and also came from the



Above: A pair of underglaze blue lidded ice chests that bore Guangxu six-character marks were estimated at \$4,000 to \$6,000, but sold at more than 12 times that amount to achieve \$76,700.

collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Galula, acquired in China between 1945 and 1949. This piece topped the high estimate of \$40,000 to realize \$88,500. Lin Fengmian (1900-1991) was a Chinese painter and an innovator of modern Chinese painting in that he incorporated Western styles in his work. Many of his paintings were destroyed during the Sino-Japanese War and also during the Cultural Revolution.

A pair of underglaze blue lidded ice chests that were estimated at \$4,000 to \$6,000 sold at more than 12 times that amount to achieve \$76,700. Both were square form with flat corners and heavily decorated on all sides with leafy lotus scrolls surrounding stylized character medallions framed by swirling clouds. Each stood on pierced wood stands and bore Guangxu six-character marks.

An underglaze blue and Famille Verte porcelain stem bowl with a six-character Jiaqing mark had deep rounded walls enameled in green to depict five dragons. The bowl was raised upon a slightly flared stem foot incised with swirling clouds. It brought \$82,600, against a \$15,000 to \$20,000 estimate.

Among a selection of jade and hardstone carvings was an 18th century reticulated white jade plaque that



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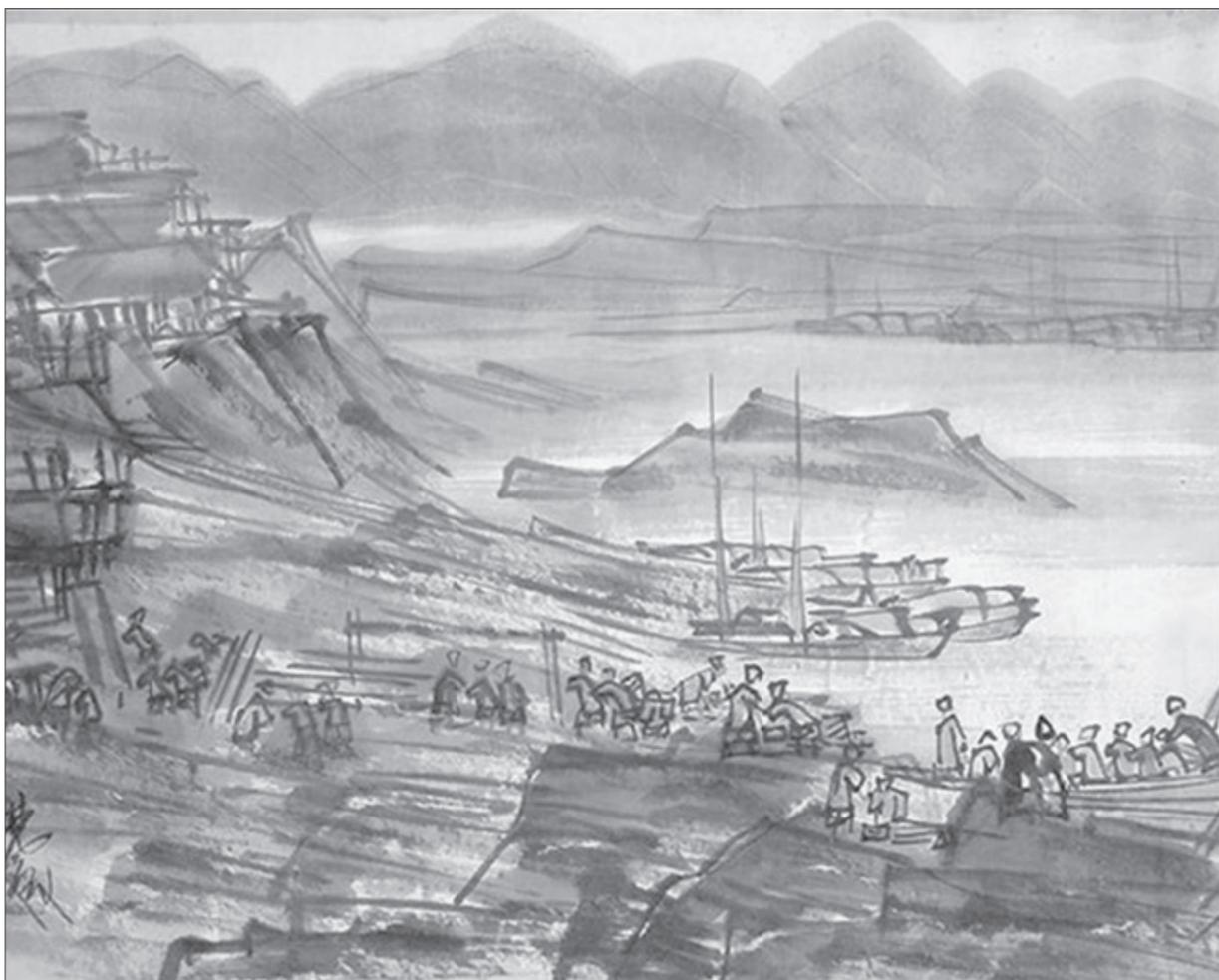
was finely carved in openwork with a winged Daoist figure, scrolling clouds, and dragons. It measured 3 1/3 inches high and was estimated at \$4,000 to \$6,000. It sold to an Internet buyer in China who won the plaque for \$56,050.

Michaan's holds Asian specialty auctions twice annually. The next exclusively Asian sale will be in December.

Prices reflect a 21 percent buyer's premium.



Left: *Mandarin Ducks*, an ink and color on silk hanging scroll, attributed to Shen Quan, sold past the high estimate of \$10,000 for the handsome sum of \$64,900.



Above: An 18th century reticulated white jade plaque that was finely carved in openwork with a winged Daoist figure was estimated at \$4,000 to \$6,000 and sold for \$56,050.

Left: An ink and color on paper painting by Lin Fengmian, *Boats at Shore*, was signed with one seal of the artist, 1940s. It more than doubled the high estimate of \$40,000 to realize \$88,500.