

# After Qiang Xuan (1239-99): 'Bronze Vessel and Flowers', Framed Silk Painting.

Living in the transition between imperial dynasties, Qiang Xuan proved his patriotism by abandoning a career in civil service to create paintings that emphasized the long and enduring history of Chinese culture, even as the country lived under occupation by its northern neighbors. Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer **After Qiang Xuan (1239-1299): 'Bronze Vessel and Flowers', Framed Silk Painting** (\$1,5/2,500) for sale in our May Gallery Auction, held on Friday, May 17th.

This painting features a bronze vessel filled with a flower arrangement on a blank background. At the center is a large lotus flower with white petals ending in pink tips. Surrounding the

lotus are several red canna lilies and jasmine flowers, while at the bottom of



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the arrangement are white lilies and roses. Reaching towards the top of the compositions are a series of reeds and chrysanthemums, amongst other woody elements. The vessel is archaic, with two rows of ornamental bands on its base, and a plain body that curves smoothly towards an upper band separating it from the neck. The neck features additional ornamental bands, and two small handles culminate in floral protrusions where they attach to the top of the body. The painting is signed with the artist's name on the lower left corner.

Chinese floral paintings have an ancient history some of the earliest Chinese painted works feature floral subjects. Besides functioning as decorative forms, there is an equally long poetic tradition that employs flowers as important symbols. This tradition influenced painting from the



start, leading to works that allow for both aesthetic enjoyment and symbolic meaning. Lotus flowers are perhaps the most recognizable symbol of the East, with important connections to the Buddha, rebirth, and purity. Canna Lily flowers represent confidence and good luck, which is heightened by their deep red color. Jasmine has come to symbolize beauty and love, largely due to their wonderful fragrance, while Lilies have a connection to fertility due to the

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similarity between the flower's Chinese name and a common phrase used to congratulate newlyweds.

This work is believed to be a reproduction of a known work by the artist Qiang Xuan, a prominent Chinese artist born in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, a small city ninety miles east of Shanghai, in the year 1239. He lived during the transition between the Song Dynasty and the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty, a transition which profoundly shaped the course of his life. An aspiring scholar-official, he had difficulty advancing in the civil administration of the Southern Song dynasty, until, at the age of thirty-seven, the Song dynasty fell. Qiang Xuan, a fierce Chinese nationalist refused to work for the new regime, and he dedicated his life to painting. He became a skilled “fur and feathers” and “bird and flower” painter, later developing proficiencies in

character and landscape painting as well. His works commonly featured nationalist themes, mixing Song realism with the archaic Tang style, highlighting the traditions of Chinese painting and promoting Chinese culture even as he lived under foreign rulers. Labeled by the local government as a Song loyalist and kept under close observation, he continued to paint until his death in 1299.

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(\$1,5/2,500) will be offered in Michaan's Auctions May Gallery Auction on Friday, May 17th features excellent furniture, lighting, and decorative pieces from the Furniture & Decorations Department, in addition to important works from notable artists in the Asian Art Department, and a number of fine pieces from the Jewelry departments.

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The auction is led by the Furniture & Decorations Department, which will be offering a salon set, chandeliers, and tables in prominent French and Italian styles, while the Asian Art Department offers works of calligraphy and painting by important Chinese artists. Also included in the sale are platinum, diamond, and gold items, including

works by Eric De Kolb, presented by the Jewelry Department.

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