SOTHEBY’S HONG KONG TO HOLD
CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART AUTUMN SALE 2009
ON 6 OCTOBER

Pictured Above: Money Net No. 2 by Cai Guo-Qiang     Est. HK$4.7–5.5 million/ US$605,000–705,000

Hong Kong, September 2009   Sotheby’s Hong Kong will hold its Contemporary Asian Art Autumn Sale 2009 on 6 October at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, offering over 190 exceptional works including exciting works by Chinese, Japanese and Korean artists, with a total estimate in excess of HK$98 million/ US$12.5 million*.

Evelyn Lin, Sotheby’s Head of Contemporary Asian Art, said, “Sotheby’s Hong Kong once again presents a carefully-curated auction of high-quality works by contemporary artists from across Asia. Highlighting this sale is a selection of seminal creations by some of the most prominent artists in the region including Cai Guo-Qiang, Zeng Fanzhi, Yayoi Kusama and Yoshitomo Nara. The kaleidoscopic array of works brings to the fore the diversity and dynamism of the contemporary Asian art scene, as well as the artists’ unrivalled creativity that is set to captivate our collectors.”
CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

Spearheading the Chinese section of this sale is *Money Net No. 2* by Cai Guo-Qiang (b.1957) (est. HK$4.7-5.5 million/ US$605,000-705,000; pictured on p.1), who is most acclaimed for his pyrotechnic displays. This monumental creation, measuring 4 x 6 m, was fashioned in the medium of gunpowder and ink on Japanese hemp paper. Of note, *Money Net No. 2* is a documentation of *Project No. 51–Explosion: Money Net*, performed by Cai at London’s Royal Academy of Arts at the opening of *The Galleries Show* in 2002. During that show, a sculpture of a drawstring purse, over seven metres high and constructed from wires of gunpowder fuses, was burnt into ashes. The performance was later recorded on paper in the form of the present work. The spontaneous burn marks with subtle tonal variations is reminiscent of classical Chinese ink and brush painting.

*Xu Bing* (b.1955)’s art often urges his viewers to ponder over questions at large in contemporary society. Amongst a selection of works by Xu on offer, *Silkworm series – The Foolish Man Tries to Move the Mountain* (executed in 2001; est. HK$5-5.5 million/ US$640,000-705,000) takes centre stage. The artist reinterprets Chairman Mao’s famous 1945 speech about the “foolish old man who tried to move the mountain” in six large panels covered with silkworm cocoons and threads. The right three panels transcribe the text in proper order, while the left three panels transcribe them in reverse. Through this arrangement, the artist challenges the viewers’ perception on characters and stories, and ultimately histories, memories and lives.

*Zeng Fanzhi* (b.1964)’s *We No. 2* (est. HK$3.2-4 million/ US$410,000-515,000) is an excellent painting that demonstrates the artist’s versatility. After his *Mask Series* in the 1990’s, Zeng began to experiment with colour and abstraction in 2000, leading to the *We Series* which marks the convergence of figurative and abstract elements. In this work executed in 2002, Zeng employs an unusual stylistic manner to paint, with columns of oval strokes that obscure yet simultaneously structure a person’s face. The piece is a truly rare example amongst the limited number of paintings created in this series and testifies to the phase in the artist’s career when he first burst onto the international art scene.
Li Songsong (b.1973) explores the tension between the old photos his paintings are based upon and his reinterpretation of the political events portrayed on his canvas. The Decameron (executed in 2004; est. HK$800,000-1.2 million/ US$103,000-154,000) is an excellent example. It is named after a 14th century novel by Italian author Giovanni Boccacio, in which a hundred of stories are told in ten chapters over a period of ten days. Li Songsong cut a photo of the National People’s Congress taken in 2004 into ten pieces, then reassembled the political event as a reincarnation of The Decameron. As such, the artist provokes us to rethink historical events.

**CHINESE CONCEPTUAL ART**

This season’s sale also includes a dynamic and varied selection of conceptual art works.

Huang Yongping’s (b.1954) oeuvre often references elements from Chinese tradition, Western art history, as well as the artist’s own past creations. La Liste des Offrandes (The List of Offerings) (est. HK$1-1.5 million/ US$128,000-192,000) can be best analyzed as a post-script to the artist’s well-known The Bat Project created between 2001 and 2005, it is a reflection on the historical incident of a U.S. spy plane crashing into a Chinese fighter jet, ultimately forcing it into an emergency landing on Hainan Island in April 2001.

The bat – known for its eerie associations in Western culture, is also the nickname for the EP-3 spy plane; but in a contrary, it is a symbol of good fortune in Chinese culture. This is the context for La Liste des Offrandes which is created in 2006 for the artist’s solo show The Hands of the Buddha in Paris. It consists of a giant bat hanging upside-down with its wings spread. Dangling from his mouth is a 7-metre long scroll, illustrating a matrix of pictorial symbols that include religious and animal images – such as bear, snake, shell, sheep and bird – as well as architectural components that could be interpreted as plane segments. A model of human heart is anchoring the scroll to the ground as a weight. This piece is indeed an iconic work by the artist, amalgamating his diverse interests and artistic progress into one specific moment of creation.
A further highlight is *Lire les Cendres (To Read the Cinders)* (est. HK$1.6-2.2 million/ US$205,000-282,000) by Chen Zhen (1955-2000). It is one of his works created since 1990 in which the ashes of newspapers are used as a medium. The artist observes that burnt paper is an artificial product returned to the state of nature. In this work (1999), ash is encased in 2 glass boxes separated by rows of glass cubes; a magnifier hanging in the bigger box magnifies the line “LIRE LES CENDRES”. Chen provokes the viewers to delve into various historical events, including the Holocaust, details of which are subsumed into the burned newspapers. This lot on offer also includes three sketches, which well illustrate the entire creative process of this installation work.

**CONTEMPORARY HONG KONG ART**

Further to the success of the inaugural contemporary Hong Kong art series last season, Sotheby’s once again offers an eclectic mix of works produced by local artists.

Wielding traditional Chinese *gongbi* skill in his work, Wilson Shieh (b.1970) is known for capitalizing on subject matters derived from metropolitan life in Hong Kong. *The Princess is Dead* (executed in 2007; est. HK$95,000-120,000/ US$12,200-15,400) is rare for its deployment of icons of American culture. In the painting, the death of Snow White is largely ignored by the two dwarves playing chess next to her. They are however more drawn to her underwear exposed beneath her see-through dress. This is a satirical reflection of the death of Princess Diana, who was plagued in life by the paparazzi who focused on her private life rather than her well being. This very fine ink and gouache drawing on dyed silk has embodied the outstanding technique of the artist.

Tsang Tsou Choi (1921-2007) achieved celebrity status in Hong Kong for his textual graffiti art, which he scrawled in various public locations across the city. The self-proclaimed “King of Kowloon”, he started inscribing his ink and brush calligraphy at the age of 35. He remained relentless in his endeavours and was undeterred by multiple
warnings and police arrests even into his old age. He was the first Hong Kong artist to be invited to participate in the 2003 Venice Biennale. Since his death in 2007, much of his work unfortunately has not been well preserved but removed by the authorities instead, except for a single remaining pillar at the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier. *Calligraphy* (pictured on p.4; est. HK$50,000-70,000/ US$6400-9,000), executed in 1998, is an exceptional gem by virtue of its large size, and the artist’s hallmark inscription of his family genealogy and personal history as an ‘emperor in exile’. Part of the proceeds of this lot will be donated to the Association of Contemporary Visual Arts—an institution dedicated to promoting public art in Hong Kong.

Having practised calligraphy since childhood, **Tsang Kin Wah**’s (b.1976) art penetrates both the East and the West as well as reality and falsity through a presentation that weaves together text and image. The cultural shock and racial discrimination he experienced in London during his study spurred the production of *Interior*, his first site-specific installation. Modeled on the floral patterns devised by British architect-interior designer William Morris, he covered the entire exhibition room in an analogous, swirling motif. These stylized floral patterns are actually composed of English swear words, visible on close inspection. *Interior: Red and White* (executed in 2007; est. HK$30,000-50,000/ US$3,850-6,400) on offer is an epitome of the site-specific art work.

Photographer **Simon Go** (b.1967) is renowned for capturing scenes of plebeian life in Hong Kong against the relentless tide of modernisation and urbanisation. In contrast to the Western canon of photography that mandates a necessary detachment from the subject, Go develops a rapport with his subject matters. Executed in 2007, *Hong Kong Old Shops: Wing Wo Grocery & Keng Ming Mirror Shop* (est. HK$30,000-50,000/ US$3,850-6,400) portrays the owners of the two shops against the backdrop of their stores. The proceeds of this lot will be donated to HuluCulture—an organization established to promote Hong Kong local culture and fund related research. Go’s *Hong Kong Old Shops* series has been acquired into Hong Kong Heritage Museum’s permanent collection.
Yoshitomo Nara (b.1959) has achieved cult status both in his native Japan and abroad. *It’s Everything* (est. HK$3.8-5 million/ US$487,000-640,000) is the largest work by the artist to have ever come to auction, and is a rare specimen where the medium of wooden panels is used. Depicting a child playing the guitar, the piece (2008) reflects the artist’s love of punk rock music, something he never sets to work without blasting in the background. The format in which the piece is created, as well as the materials used, are consistent with the installation works that have sprung up in all his solo exhibitions of late - huts built from leftover construction material. Despite being young, Nara’s protagonists always appear wise beyond their years. They sense what the world has in store for them and are ready to tackle the trials of growing up.

A further highlight of the Japanese section is Ryuki Yamamoto’s (b. 1976) epic work *Bullied by Justice* (est. HK$800,000-1.2 million/ US$103,000-154,000). Executed in 2008, this monumental photorealistic diptych juxtaposes a legion of American superheroes with the artist’s self-portrait. The bizarre composition and ironic visual contrast indicate the tenuous dynamics between Japan and America. The artist makes his opinion very clear through pictorial expression: America exerts its hegemonic influence over defenseless Japan, which falls under America’s might. The artist further places icons of traditional Japanese culture in less visible spots across the canvas, further symbolising the suffocation of traditional Japanese culture.

Another exceptional Japanese art piece on offer is Yayoi Kusama’s (b. 1929) *The Passing of Winter* (est. HK$1-1.5 million/ US$128,000-192,000) - a miniature incarnation of the infinite environment in the artist’s mind - created in 2006. A perfect cube is constructed out of six pieces of square double-sided mirrors with three circles of varying sizes on each surface. As the viewer peeps in
from the circles, they are instantaneously immersed in a flawless vision of a million dots radiating from the centre, the total aggregation of which culminates in a magical “mandelic phenomenon.” Another similar piece by the artist has become a permanent collection of Tate Modern in London.

**OTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

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<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Estimate (HK$)</th>
<th>Estimate (US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yue Min Jun (b. 1962)</td>
<td><em>Hats Series - The Lovers</em></td>
<td>Oil on Canvas, 2005</td>
<td>170 x 140 cm.</td>
<td>2.8-3.5 million</td>
<td>359,000-448,000</td>
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<td>Yan Pei-Ming (b. 1960)</td>
<td><em>Self Portrait as a Skull (Autoportrait en crâne) (Triptych)</em></td>
<td>Oil on canvas, 2006</td>
<td>150 x 150 cm. each</td>
<td>2.5-3.5 million</td>
<td>320,000-448,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiroyuki Matsuura (b. 1964)</td>
<td><em>Kurotsuki (triptych)</em></td>
<td>Acrylic on canvas with silver foil, 2007</td>
<td>193.3 x 390.6 cm.</td>
<td>1-1.2 million</td>
<td>128,000-154,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bae Bien-U (b. 1950)</td>
<td><em>Pine Trees</em></td>
<td>Gelatin silver print, 1992</td>
<td>83 x 168 cm.</td>
<td>200,000-300,000</td>
<td>25,600-38,400</td>
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* Estimates do not include buyer’s premium

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Sotheby’s Hong Kong Autumn Sales 2009 Calendar

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<td>3 – 4 October</td>
<td>Wine</td>
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<td>3 – 4 October</td>
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| 3 – 5 October   | 6 October    | 20th Century Chinese Art  
|                 |              | Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings  
|                 |              | Contemporary Asian Art |
| 3 – 6 October   | 7 October    | Important Watches  
|                 |              | Magnificent Jewels and Jadeite |
| 3 – 7 October   | 8 October    | Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art |

Hong Kong Exhibition and Auction Venue
Hall 3, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (New Wing),  
1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Travelling Exhibitions
5 – 6 September  Shanghai  
8 – 9 September  Beijing  
11 – 15 September New York  
12 – 13 September Singapore  
19 – 20 September Taipei