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China Guardian Hong Kong Presents
Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art
Highlight Preview | 1 - 4 April at K11 MUSEA
Yoshitomo Nara's *Sprout*
Makes its First Appearance at Auction



Hong Kong, 26 March, 2021 - This Spring, China Guardian Hong Kong is delighted to showcase at K11 MUSEA for the first time to present Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art Highlight Preview. During 1- 4 April at this iconic cultural-retail destination, K11 MUSEA, 50 highlight artworks will show a significant breadth of classic and cutting-edge art that is bound to impress! K11 MUSEA serves as a pivotal platform for global art and cultural showcases for the community; with a mission to create shared value, empower creativity and social innovation for the next generation.

China Guardian Hong Kong Spring Auctions 2021 will take place from 18 to 23 April at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The sale series will showcase a wide array of artworks and collectibles from around the world, including Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy, Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art and Ceramics and Works of Art, offering nearly 1,300 lots.

Vita Chen, General Manager, Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art, China Guardian (HK) says, “The feature **Yoshitomo Nara’s *Sprout*** will appear at auction for the first time as a milestone that best represents the critical turning point of Nara’s life and artistic career. Since his homeland was severely damaged during the ‘3.11’ Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011 in Japan, Nara began to question and reflect on the meaning of his art - ‘*Sprout*’ thereby was born, as Nara shifted his focus and chose to work on art that brings happiness. The seemingly evil or rebellious girl is gone, instead, she is taking care of a seedling which signifies ‘rebirth’ and ‘hope’, with straight long legs that appear to grow almost directly out of the ground, as if absorbing the essence of the Earth, Sun and Moon like an ever-growing ‘Daughter of the Earth’. Nara arranges the figure with geometric structures of circles, squares, trapezoid and rectangles, creating a unique composition that so far exists in only three of his pieces, revealing the historical significance of the work. The very first attempts of Cai Guoqiang’s Cosmic Adventure, ***An Ancient Tale: Kuafu Running after the Sun***, will also be presented along with symbolic masterpieces by modern Chinese masters of the 20th century including **Wu Guanzhong, Zao Wou-Ki** and **Chu Teh-Chun** - the selection will kick off the upcoming Spring Auctions during 18-23 April at HKCEC!”



Lot 86

Yoshitomo Nara

Sprout

Acrylic on wooden panel

Painted in 2011

135.5 × 82.5 cm

Est. HK\$ 12m - 22m

/ US\$ 1,538,000 - 2,820,000

This season, we are honoured to present Yoshitomo Nara’s *Sprout*, an outstanding artwork that brings together many of the typical elements that made the two series of ‘Sprout the Ambassador’ and ‘Night Walker’ so popular. The work was completed in 2011, in a time when the artist’s career was at a crossroads - since his homeland was severely damaged during 2011’s tragic ‘3.11’ Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Nara began to question and reflect on the meaning of his art - ‘*Sprout*’ thereby was born, as Nara shifted his focus and chose to work on art that brings happiness. The painting was exhibited at Yoshitomo Nara’s Solo Exhibition ‘A Bit Like You and Me’ at the Yokohama Museum of Art, Aomori Museum of Art and Contemporary Art Museum Kumamoto during 2012 and 2013, and was later collected by an important private Asian collector, boasting impeccable provenance and underscoring the fact that its availability this Spring offers art collectors a fleetingly rare opportunity.

Painted on a wooden panel, a material which echoes the reconstruction after the catastrophe, Nara’s iconic big-headed girl stands in an indomitable position against the pure skin-coloured background, just like a statue of female saints in medieval churches. The seemingly evil or rebellious little girl has disappeared. Instead, she is taking care of a seedling, with straight long legs that appear to grow almost directly out of the ground, as if absorbing the essence of the Earth, Sun and Moon, like an ever-growing ‘Daughter of the Earth’. Nara arranges the figure with geometric structures of circles, squares, trapezoid and rectangles, creating a unique composition that so far exists in only three of his pieces.

Her full-moon resplendent pink face and the downward pointing eyelashes are ingeniously organised to highlight changes in thickness, an allusion to the emotions bubbling underneath the tranquil exterior. Echoing with the seedling which signifies ‘rebirth’ and ‘hope’, the figure seeks to convey the heart-warming power of introspection with its dazzling brilliance.

Lot 59

Wu Guanzhong

Pondside Households (Hometown)

Oil on board

Painted in 1996

61.4 × 46 cm

Est. HK\$ 12m - 20m

/ US\$ 1,538,000 - 2,307,000

Pondside Households (Hometown) was created in 1996, during a period when Wu Guanzhong’s artistic achievements and international reputation has reached the peak. The work was featured in the *Complete Collection of Wu Guanzhong*, and was also selected as one of the 68 oil paintings included in the *Album of Wu Guanzhong 60s-90s*. As one of the only seven Wu Guanzhong’s oil paintings under the theme of ‘Hometown’, the painting best represents Wu’s art in the 1990s, from which the importance and representation of this work are self-evident.



Wu endorsed the title *Hometown* at the back of the canvas, expressing the eternal gratefulness of his roots. With minimalist, purified colour blocks and simple lines, the work depicts a Jiangnan village by the lake, where trees on the right stretches out and upwards like an elegant dancer, alongside the salient old buildings of black tiles and white walls. The artist separates the painting into two parts along the centerline by a circular structure of the embankment, forming a Tai Chi style yin-and-yang pattern corresponding to the reality and the reflections - the sequence of the buildings symbolizes unity, while the combination of the ring structure and the water flow composes a metaphor of endless succession of life and growth. In the overall composition, a peaceful and delightful visual rhythm is introduced, which reveals the feelings of “*Spring breeze ripples the old waters as before*” as in Tang Poetry, just like an everlasting love letter to the artist’s hometown.



Lot 47

Zao Wou-Ki

21.01.76

Oil on canvas

Painted in 1976

73.5 × 92.5 cm

Est. HK\$ 12m - 18m

/ US\$ 1,538,000 - 2,307,000

21.01.76 was created in a significant year when Zao Wou-Ki had remarkable accomplishments in both his life and his career, when his art has transformed by regaining the elements of Chinese ink during this critical period. With the use of colours of orange, pea green, bright yellow and black which are considered as symbols of 'life and hope', Zao created a dream-like landscape that connects the reality with the imagination, delivering his understanding of vitality and a flourishing life.

Colours assemble in *21.01.76*, as Zao Wou-Ki boldly divides the image with a bubble-like texture on the right, the heavy colours that assemble the images of rocks and waves on the lower left, and a splash of blue colour that refers to the sky on the top, presenting a composition that is totally different from those works of his 'Hurricane' series. He no longer condenses the energy in the middle of the canvas; instead, he diffuses the power, which demonstrates the result of his spiritual journey from 'self-centeredness' to 'selflessness'. In contrast to the colour green in the foreground, the colour orange resembles the energy of sun-rising, which represents fearlessness and vigour. Widely appreciated by the academic circle, the work was included in three important catalogues of Zao Wou-Ki's during 1970s and 1980s.

Lot 52

Chu Teh-Chun

Aspiration

Oil on canvas

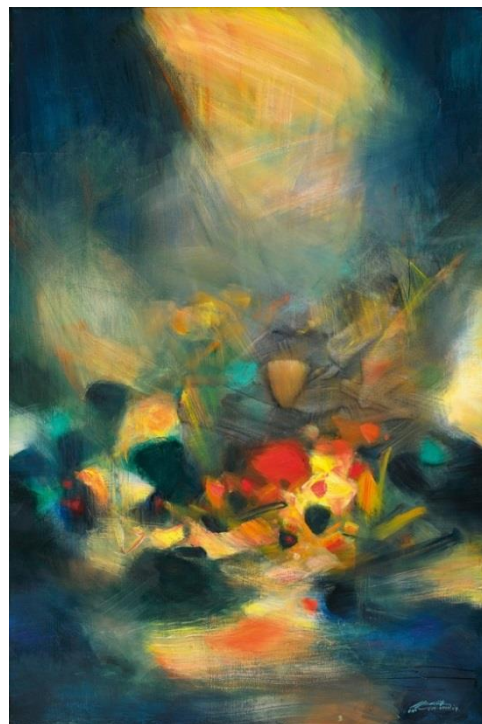
Painted in 2007

195 × 130 cm

Est. HK\$ 9.8m - 15m

/ US\$ 1,256,000 - 1,923,000

In 2008, 'Chu Teh-Chun's 88 Retrospective' was held at Taiwan's National Museum of History, with *Aspiration* (2007) as one of the highlights. For this work, on the one hand, Chu Teh-Chun pursued the extreme contrast of the light structure by Venetian painters; On the other hand, he gained profound enlightenment from the panoramic landscape paintings in the Northern Song Dynasty, to form the immeasurable visual effects in this painting. The four corners of the work are in Prussian blue, advancing with storm-like brushstrokes, gradually introducing the light source, until the fragmented colours burst in the middle of the canvas. The change of shades, the intersection of colours, and the momentum of the brushstrokes create a rich visual attraction simultaneously. Relying on precise control and guidance of light, Chu subtly manipulates the visual dimension of the canvas, painting with coarse brushstrokes in the periphery to create a strong sense of space and distance, while using fine strokes to accentuate and intensify changes in the centre. By combining colours and integrating light into the painting, Chu Teh-Chun transcribes his thoughts and emotions by depicting the harmony between human and nature, as his art has brought about a new visual language whereby he is known for his sublime integration of traditional Chinese paintings and Western abstract art.





Lot 74

Cai Guoqiang

An Ancient Tale: Kuafu Running after the Sun

Gunpowder and oil on canvas

Painted in 1985-1986

180 × 125 cm

Est. HK\$ 5.8m - 8.8m

/ US\$ 743,000 - 1,128,000

As the first Chinese contemporary artist to be included in American art history textbooks, Cai Guoqiang is celebrated for his radical experimentation with materials - especially gunpowder, which he has used to ignite his drawings. This Spring we are proud to present the very first attempts of Cai Guoqiang's Cosmic Adventure - *An Ancient Tale: Kuafu Running After the Sun*, one of Cai's earliest works under the theme of traditional Chinese mythology, and the third largest painting of Cai's first

six paintings of gunpowder on canvas. It is the quality that makes the painting a museum-standard artwork. As a crucial starting point for Cai's painting with gunpowder, the painting manifests his reflections on life dimensions, cosmic space, as well as one's personal 'essence, energy and spirit'.

The painting was taken by Cai Guoqiang with him to Japan to 1986, and then to New York in 1995, which demonstrates the value of the work for himself. It was published in 'Meishu' Magazine in October 1987, and later became part of the collection of an important Asian art collector in the past 20 years. The horizon runs vertically, and a dazzling man runs after the sun in the mist, in a space that is full of tension with the traces of the explosion - for thirty years the painting remains unparalleled.

Lot 82

Ayako Rokkaku

Thinking Girl

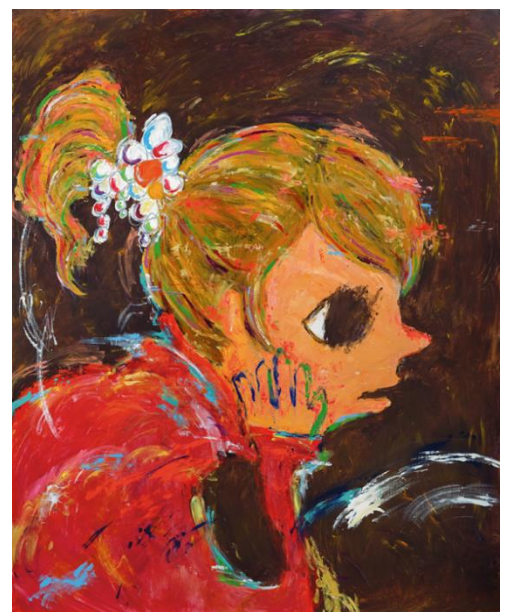
Oil on canvas

Painted in 2006

162 × 130 cm

Est. HK\$ 1.2m - 2m / US \$ 153,800 - 256,400

In 2006, the 24-year-old artist Rokkaku Ayako won the Goto Akio Prize in the GEISAI #9 hosted by Takashi Murakami, which became the turning point of her artistic career. As one of her early works that is rarely seen in the market, the work *Thinking Girl* was created in the same year, with a girl looking towards a glorious future with a hand on her cheek and eyes wide open - just like Ayako herself longing for opportunities in the art world then. By painting directly with her hand, Ayako invites the viewers to travel in a rhythmic and vivid visual world that is one of its kind.



China Guardian Hong Kong Presents

Asian 20th Century and Contemporary Art Highlight Preview at K11 MUSEA

Date: 1 - 4 April 2021

Time: 10am - 8pm

Venue: K11 Art & Cultural Centre, 6F, K11 MUSEA

Estimates do not include buyer's premium | Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.
Press releases and hi-res images can be downloaded via the link: <http://bit.ly/3s2A3lo>

China Guardian Hong Kong Spring Auctions 2021

Venue: Hall 5FG, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition

21 Apr (Wednesday)	
10am	Masterpieces of Ancient Chinese Jades Part II: The Ju-Yi Scholar's Studio Collection
2pm	Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Part I: Jades
5:30pm	Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Part II: Works of Art
22 Apr (Thursday)	
10:30am	Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy
23 Apr (Friday)	
10:30am	Asian 20 th Century and Contemporary Art
3pm	Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art Part III: Ceramics
6pm	Imperial Appreciation: Magnificent Treasures from the Court