

ESKENAZI

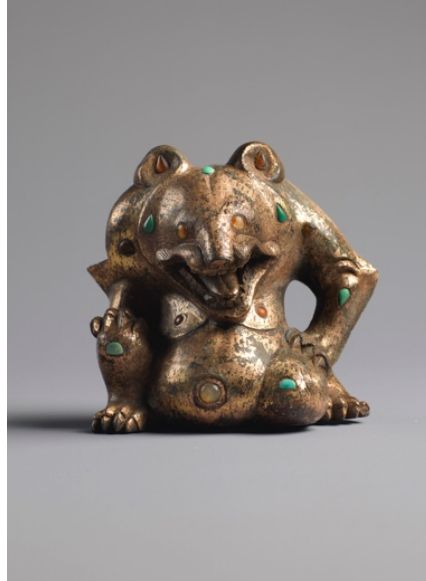
ESKENAZI TO HOST AUTUMN EXHIBITION OF EARLY CHINESE ART FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

24 Important Antiquities Spanning 2,500 Years of Chinese History

3 to 25 November 2016



Archaic Bronze Wine Vessel (*zun*)
Early Western Zhou period, 11th-10th century BC
Height: 25.0cm



Gilt-bronze, Agate and Turquoise Bear
Han period, 206 BC - 220 AD
Height: 10.6cm



Archaic Bronze Wine Vessel and Cover (*you*)
Shang or Early Western Zhou period,
11th-10th century BC
Height (to top of knob): 27.4cm

From 3 to 25 November 2016, Eskenazi will present an exhibition of 24 works of early Chinese art at their gallery at 10 Clifford Street, London. Highlighting the creative brilliance of Chinese artisans over a 2,500-year period from the late Neolithic era (circa 2000 BC) to the Tang dynasty (618 AD - 907 AD), the exhibition will include a number of highly important pieces in bronze, gold, silver, jade and bone, all sourced from private collections.

The most diverse exhibition of early Chinese art to be held at Eskenazi since 2003, it includes a core of ancient bronze vessels, artworks coveted by collectors since the advent of antiquarian scholarship in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). Previous owners of works in the exhibition include renowned collectors from the 19th and 20th centuries, including Luo Zhenyu, Bernard Berenson, Adolphe Stoclet and Lord Cunliffe, with more recent prized provenances of the 21st century including the Sze Yuan Tang and the Al Thani collections. Many of the works have also been included in notable museum exhibitions throughout the 20th century, including at the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, the Stockholm National Museum and the Palazzo Ducale in Venice.

A highlight of the exhibition is a rare archaic bronze wine vessel (*zun*) from the early Western Zhou period (11th-10th century BC) (illustrated p.1, left) shown at a famous exhibition of Chinese art at the Palazzo Ducale in Venice in 1954. A magnificent example of a Western Zhou ritual vessel, originally placed on an altar with an ensemble of vessels of other forms, it has an illustrious provenance, already recorded in Chinese literature of the 19th century as in the collection of Pan Zuyin (1830-1890), an important official of the late Qing dynasty, who owned at least 400 archaic bronzes. The interior of this vessel is cast with a seven-character inscription which reads *Ya Qi Yi zuo Mu Xin yi* (Ya Qi Yi made this ritual vessel in honour of his mother Xin). A much-published *zun* of identical form, with different inscription, is in the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The majority of pieces in the exhibition are decorated with animals or animal motifs, including dragons, bears, birds and other beasts, both stylized and naturalistic. Recognisably of animal inspiration, although highly stylized, are the masks and dragons that form the decoration of a different type of wine vessel (*you*) of the Shang or early Western Zhou period (11th century BC) (*illustrated p.1, right*). Also recorded in the 19th century when owned by the scholar Luo Zhenyu (1866-1940), it was first photographed and published almost a century ago, in 1917.

Further rare and striking pieces include a gilt-bronze dragon head from the Western Han period (206 BC - 9 AD), recently on loan to the British Museum, thought to have been the terminal of a central shaft of a chariot or carriage (*illustrated p.2, left*); a gilt-bronze bear inlaid with turquoise and agate stones from the Han period (206 BC - 220 AD) one of a set of supports for a bronze vessel or item of furniture; and a jade standing figure, Tang Period (618-907 AD) (*illustrated p.2, middle*) which was included in the landmark exhibition of 'Chinese Jade throughout the Ages' at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1975. A more mysterious object in the exhibition is an archaic jade notched disc from the late Neolithic or Shang period (2000-1500 BC), measuring 33cm in diameter (*illustrated p.1, middle*). Remarkable for its very large size, this and smaller similar discs have prompted much speculation as to their function although no consensus has yet been reached.

This autumn, Eskenazi will also hold the first European exhibition dedicated solely to the work of celebrated contemporary Chinese ink painter **Zeng Xiaojun** (b.1954) (*details available on request*). Opening on 5 October, it will then run concurrently with the exhibition of *Early Chinese Art* until 25 November, coinciding with the 19th **Asian Art in London** (3 to 12 November), the annual event that unites London's Asian art dealers, major auction houses and societies in a series of selling exhibitions, auctions, receptions and seminars.

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Eskenazi Ltd is widely recognised as one of the world's leading galleries for Oriental works of art and its exhibitions are always eagerly awaited for the rarity and beauty of the objects offered. The family business was founded in Milan in 1923 and the Eskenazi name has since become synonymous with expertise in this area. Giuseppe Eskenazi, who has been head of the business for over fifty years, has an unrivalled reputation for his knowledge and love of the subject and clients have included over eighty of the world's major museums as well as private collectors. Visit www.eskenazi.co.uk for further details.

Location: Eskenazi Ltd, 10 Clifford Street, London W1S 2LJ

Opening hours during exhibition:

Monday - Friday	09.30 - 17.30
Saturday, 5 November	10.00 - 17.00
Sunday, 6 November	10.00 - 17.00
Saturday 12 November	10.00 - 13.00
Saturday, 19 November	10.00 - 13.00

For further information and images, please contact: Matthew Paton: info@patonarts.com / +44 (0) 7711 112425



Gilt-bronze Dragon Head Terminal
Western Han period, 206 BC - 9 AD
Length: 24.5cm



Jade Standing Figure
Tang period, 618 - 907
Height: 5.9cm



Archaic Jade Notched Disc
Late Neolithic, Shang period, 2000-1500 BC
Diameter: 33.0cm