

MEDIA RELEASE: October 2016

## MOSSGREEN SPECIALISTS DISCOVER A RARE MING DYNASTY BANKNOTE INSIDE CHINESE SCULPTURE

**Melbourne, Australia** – Mossgreen specialists have discovered a rare Ming Dynasty banknote hidden within the cavity of a 13-14<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Sculpture.

The crumpled banknote was found inside the head of a large, Chinese wooden sculpture of a *Luohan* which is to be offered at auction as part of The Raphy Star Collection of Important Asian Art in December.

Specialist Ray Tregaskis, Head of Asian Art at Mossgreen said, 'It was a thrilling moment. While it was not unusual for consecration items such as semi-precious stones or scrolls to be left within the base or on the back of a sculpture, the discovery of this rare Ming Dynasty banknote is an exciting one and importantly, it verifies the date of the sculpture.'



Large Chinese wooden sculpture of a Luohan, Jin/Yuan Dynasty (13th-14th century) and the banknote found inside.  
Estimate: AUD\$40,000-60,000 (HKD\$233,700-350,500) (£22,700-34,000)

*Luohan* is a Chinese word used to describe those who have completed the four stages of Enlightenment and reached the state of Nirvana. The facial features in this image of *Luohan* are superbly defined in typical Yan Dynasty style and it wears a wise, serene expression.

The banknote found inside the sculpture is stamped with three official red seals and dated the third year of the Ming Dynasty, the Hong Wu period (1368-1398). The note is inscribed with a sinister warning for any would be forgers, 'Authorized by the Department of Finance, this bank note has the same function of coins, those who use counterfeit bank note will be-headed, the whistle-blower will be rewarded 250 Liang silvers plus all the properties of the criminal. The third year of Hong Wu period.'

The Ming Dynasty ruled their empire for almost 300 years during a prosperous time which saw increased trade and industry with Europe.

The sculpture and banknote will be sold together as one lot as part of The Raphy Star Collection of Important Asian Art on Sunday 11 December.

A second collection of Chinese Works of Art and Scholars Objects featuring exquisite bamboo and wood carvings from the early Qing Dynasty, bronze seals, small jades, and other rare and unusual pieces will be offered at auction on Monday 12 December.

- End Media Release -

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#### **Auctions**

The Raphy Star Collection of Important Asian Art: Sydney, Sunday 11 December

Part II: Fine Asian Arts: Sydney, Monday 12 December

Mossgreen, 36-40 Queen Street, Woollahra NSW 2025

#### **Viewing in Sydney**

Friday 9 – Sunday 11 December

Mossgreen, 36-40 Queen Street, Woollahra NSW 2025

#### **Viewing in Melbourne**

Friday 21 – Sunday 23 October

Mossgreen, 926-930 High Street, Armadale VIC 3143

#### **Highlights On View**

**London:** Thursday 3 – Sunday 6 November

The Beaumont Hotel, 8 Balderton Street, Brown Hart Gardens, London W1K 6TF (by appointment)

**Hong Kong:** Thursday 24 – Sunday 27 November

The Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong, 5 Connaught Rd Central, Central, Hong Kong (by appointment)

For further details visit: [www.theraphystarcollection.com.au](http://www.theraphystarcollection.com.au) and [www.mossgreen.com.au](http://www.mossgreen.com.au)

#### **ABOUT MOSSGREEN**

Mossgreen is Australia's leading art business, with auction, gallery and private sales that totalled AUD\$50 million in 2015. Founded in 2004, Mossgreen is Australia's first and only combined auction house and art gallery specialising in the auction of private, single-owner collections and the representation of a select group of Australian artists. Mossgreen is now Australia's largest multi-department auction house, offering expertise and auctions in Fine Australian & International Art, Australian Indigenous Art, Australian & Colonial History, Asian Art, Fine Jewels & Watches, Decorative Arts, Collectors' Cars, Motorcycles & Automobilia, Fine

Wines, Sporting Memorabilia and Stamps & Coins. In early 2016, Mossgreen acquired long-established New Zealand auction house Webb's and announced a merger with prominent Melbourne contemporary art gallery, Fehily Contemporary. In June of this year, Mossgreen opened the doors to its new, three-storey premises in the heart of Sydney's art and antiques district in Queen Street, Woollahra. In addition to headquarters in Melbourne and Sydney, Mossgreen also has representatives in London, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart and Perth.

[www.mossgreen.com.au](http://www.mossgreen.com.au)