

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



A CHINESE REVERSE GLASS PAINTING

China, Mid 18th Century

Starting in the 1750s, mirrors with Chinese painted scenes, the earlier examples often centring on a river, became hugely sought after in Europe. Although worked in Canton, the glass itself was usually imported from Europe, often from France, by agency of the Compagnie des Indes, as any large and flat locally produced glass of the time was apparently of poor quality. Generally fully silvered plates would be traced with design outlines, to indicate which areas of the mercury backing should be removed, before being painted with the beautiful landscape scenes.

In a letter from Brother Attiret, court painter of emperor Qianlong, 1741: " For over a year I have scarcely done anything else that paint on glass. A large number of beautiful large mirrors are brought from Europe, which the mandarins of Canton buy from the merchant ships and offer to the emperor....This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, when seen from a short distance, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscape or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one's face can be seen in the gaps left by the painting, whihc makes for very attractive variety. This type of painting would not find disfavour in Europe, especially if it were done in good taste".

A very closely related example was sold from the celebrated Horlick collection Sotheby's London, 5 June 2007, lot 21. Compare also one in the Gerstenfeld collection: E. Lennox-Boyd, *Masterpieces of English Furniture, The Gerstenfeld Collection*, London, 1998, p. 65, fig. 49.

SOLD

A very fine and rare mid 18th century Chinese Export reverse glass painting. The rectangular plate depicting a landscape beside a lake with three figures, with falcons, parrots and pavilions on the far bank. With gilt-heightened details, held in a carved and pierced giltwood rococo frame.

Glass Dimensions: 18 1/4 in x 27 1/4 in (46 cm x 60 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 22 1/2 in x 31 3/4 in (57 cm x 80.5 cm)

Literature:

Thierry Audric, *Chinese Reverse Glass Painting 1720 - 1820*

Height: 1' 10¹/₄" in (57 cm)

Width: 2' 7³/₄" in (80.5 cm)

Stock Number

R11.197

5 Ryder Street - St James's - London, SW1Y 6PY

Phone: +44(0)20 7839 5671 Mobile: +44(0)7725 332 665

Email: charlie@mackinnonfineart.com Web: mackinnonfineart.com

