

Chinese - Fake Or Real
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

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With the skyrocketing prices for some Chinese collectables, fakes and forgeries are rearing their heads.

Over the past twelve months we have seen some enormous prices realised for some amazing early pieces of Chinese decorative arts. Some items selling for in excess of ten million dollars. So the question is asked, is the Chinese vase left to you in Aunty's will fake or forgery?

This is an enormously complex and complicated question without a readily defined solution. Even the well trained experts at the major auction houses in Hong Kong and China can sometimes be deceived by the quality of the fake.

Even the Chinese themselves are renowned for producing copies of their own antiques. This was originally done to enhance the collectability but it has now turned out that some of the copies are so good they are passed off as the original items. So back to our earlier question – do you have a fake or a fortune? - my advice would be to find experts within the field. This is easier said than done. As the prices for Chinese antiques have increased so has the quality of work and the proliferation of the fakes.

Some of you may be thinking that I know where the vase has been for the last fifty years but some of the Chinese fakes could be several hundred years old.

Most of the forgeries and in fact the high ticket items have shown up in the porcelain and ceramic markets, in particular vases and bowls. But the forgers have not limited themselves to these specific areas and we are also starting to see furniture, works of art, bronzes and silver appearing on the market with questionable, if not dubious, heritage.

There is no easy way to tell fake from fortune; as with any form of collectable, seek out the expert in the field and be guided by their advice.

Next week: To Restore Or Not? That Is The Question.

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to valuations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 35 different areas of collectables.

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