

# Chinese art in big demand

By CORINNE ABATT

After a visit to the collection of Oriental art at Hudson's Northland store, collectors who started years back are probably patting themselves on the back.

Art expert Pierre Mendouse, who accompanies the collection which has been traveling to major American cities, has some rather astounding predictions about the price changes to come in the immediate future.

The \$350,000 Srednick collection, which was brought out of mainland China within the past few years, has items that range from \$17,000 for a porcelain vase to \$25 for watercolors on silk.

In between, there are bronzes, wood carvings, a variety of porcelains, ivories, jades, jewelry and cloisonnes.

Mendouse, a third generation antique dealer from France, said the law of supply and demand is about to have a dramatic effect on prices of Chinese antiques.

"Less and less will be coming out of China," he said. The Chinese preference for the Japanese yen over the American dollar is one reason. Another is the growing reluctance of the People's Republic of China to part with some of the great art treasures. "The best business people in the world are the Chinese—the Japanese and the Chinese are the roughest," said Mendouse, who has made buying trips to China. "They both are merchants and they are dealers."

Mendouse said prices on fine Oriental pieces have risen 70 per cent since China opened the doors of its warehouses and he said they have gone up another 40 per cent since last year.

"In the next year and a half, the collector items will double and the common (less expensive) items will go up half again."

The majority of the pieces in the present collection are from the Ch'ing dynasty. There are only two from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Those from the Ch'ing are mostly from the years 1821-1906.

Another reason for the rising prices which directly affects the supply and demand is that many of the processes for the beautiful porcelains have been lost. Mendouse said there was a time during the revolution when the porcelain makers were killed and the books and records for making the porcelains and the colors were burned.

"Many of the materials are no longer available," he added.

"The colors, oxidized cobalt blue, famille rose, famille verte, famille black, even turquoise, the process for crackleware, and celadon have all been destroyed."

In crackleware, for instance, the crackle in the glazing is emphasized by using ink to accent the crackle lines and then glazed again. This ware, like so much of Chinese art because of the purity of line and form, has a totally timeless quality. Another type that has an astonishing contemporary look to it is the flambe, which is a shaded rose to purple-crimson without surface decoration.



PIERRE MENDOUSE



You can still register for classes offered by the Southfield Community Education program. Most classes begin the week of April 17 and range from art to upholstery. Lou Decupio, of Southfield High School, is shown here in an auto mechanics class offered earlier through the adult education program. For more information on classes available and registration procedures, call the adult education office at 354-7456.

### Registration still open

## Super Saturday classes open to handicapped

This weekend's Super Saturday classes will be available to all children, including the handicapped, according to Southfield school officials.

The classes are offered through the Southfield Community Education Program at Lederle Middle School, 1875 Nine Mile. Most classes will meet each Saturday for five weeks. Class fees range from about \$8 to \$10.

Children with handicaps have never been barred from the classes, but now, school officials said, participation in the program should be easier thanks to aides who will now be on duty to help those needing assistance.

The western entrance to the school

has a special ramp for wheelchair-bound young persons. Classes offered include music, art, baton twirling, bike repair, disco dancing, languages, typing, tennis and many others.

For more information about any of the classes, call the education center at 354-7456.

Parents may register their child for the class using the registration form sent to most homes in the Southfield School District. Registration also is available at the community education office weekdays. Course fees are payable at the time of registration. Books, materials and supplies must be purchased separately.

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