



A Good Set of Four Oil on Linen Paintings of Chinese Junks by NC

Inventory Number :180-109

Size: 5 3/4 ins high and 7 1/2 ins wide (image) 10 ins.
high and 11 1/4 ins wide (framed)

Of fine quality handkerchief linen the four oval paintings remain on their original Chinese stretchers. Each painting of large ocean going junks, probably situated of the coast at Whampoa.

Junks were ubiquitous in Chinese waters since the second century CE and the construction remained largely unchanged over the centuries with a flat keeless hull, battened sails for ease of adjustment, and divided interior compartments or bulkheads that would reduce flooding in case they were holed.

Used for transportation, fishing and cargo, junks were capable of ocean crossings. In Chinese frames, with modern acid free matting, this set of four are interesting as they are signed by a Chinese painter "NC" and it is rare to find signed export paintings.

The initials NC could be Nam Cheong from Whampoa. Nam Cheong is one of the few identified artists of the China Trade. He is believed to have had a studio in Whampoa in the 1850s, as many of his known works feature the Whampoa Pagoda and area. He painted both ships and port scenes using a distinctive palette of colours. His paintings are often identified stylistically by his favoured pink and red tones in the distant clouds and his smoothly rendered water with a soft play of light in the foreground. A few of his paintings are signed or bear a stamp on the reverse, but most are identified by their style. He had set up a studio at Queens Road, Hong Kong by about 1870. Two signs outside in the street proclaimed, Nam Cheong from Whampoa, Portrait and Landscape Painter & c. No.70. He was a neighbor of the accomplished Chinese photographer Afong Lai who was at No. 54.

Canton, China, for the European or American Markets. c. 1840-60

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