

## Antique – Beauty of Lacquer

### Cultural History

Lacquer is derived from the sap of the lacquer tree and hardens when exposed to oxygen and humidity, becoming an ideal protective and moisture-proof covering. Beyond these practical properties, lacquer is also admired for its unique aesthetic qualities as well.

The production of lacquerware involves the creation of a core out of material such as wood, bamboo or cloth, and applying coats of lacquer, with each coat needing to dry before the next can be applied, and high-quality lacquerware having thirty or more coats. Because the process of creating lacquerware is time consuming and costly, lacquerware has always been considered a luxury item. Lacquerware were made as decorative and storage boxes, ritual objects and gifts for international diplomacy, and even prized as objects of art.

### Collection Treasure

In China, lacquered objects have been recovered from archaeological sites of the Liang-chu culture from as early as 6,000 years ago, and from the Shang (c.1600BC - 1046BC) and Zhou (c.1046BC - 256BC) periods.

Lacquer was more widely used during the Qin and Han periods, and reached a peak in the Song Dynasty. Lacquerware from the Song Dynasty are known for their superior quality and durability, and were closely related to pottery and ceramics in form. The Yuan dynasty was the golden age of carved lacquer, with relief carved pieces being the most outstanding. In the early Qing, imperial workshops produced lacquer furniture as well. By the late Qing, the commercial lacquer making industry had died out and start the decline of Chinese carved lacquer. Most of the imperial lacquerware are currently displayed in the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Based on the development of lacquer in Chinese history, most collectors prefer to collect lacquerware from early period before early Qing, especially Song, Yuan or Ming period with much finer workmanship. Collectors can focus on the style, the shape, design and the type of the lacquer when valuing and appreciating lacquerware.

### Recommendation

Two rare lacquerwares one is from Yuan dynasty and the other is from early Qing period are able to find in Oi Ling Fine Chinese Antiques. These rare lacquerwares are most delicate and exquisite in their making, with fluency shown in the beadings as well as the carvings. Adding their simple, yet, refined style and characteristics, they constitutes unique gem among the category of ancient antiques.



早清剔红香盒  
An early Qing carved red lacquer box, 17<sup>th</sup> century

## 文物品鉴 – 漆器之美

### 文化渊源

漆是从漆树的树液提炼而成的。漆树的树液暴露于氧气和湿气中后会变硬，成为理想的保护及防潮复盖层。除此实用功能，漆器也在美学角度广为收藏家欣赏。

制作漆器需要挖空一种材料，例如木材或竹子，再在材料表面涂上一层又一层的漆，每一个涂层都必须完全干透才能再加上新的涂层。高品质的漆器有30个以上的涂层。由于制作漆器非常昂贵耗时，所以漆器一直被认为是奢侈品。漆器除了用作装饰和储物，也是祭祀礼器和外交礼物，甚至珍贵的艺术品。

### 典藏珍品

在中国，漆器在6000年前的良渚文化遗址已有出土，证明从商朝（c.1600BC - 1046BC）到周朝（c.1046BC - 256BC）时期已有人使用漆器。

漆器在秦汉时期被广泛应用，在宋代更达到了高峰。宋代漆器以卓越的品质和耐用性见称，并与陶瓷的形成有密切关系。元朝是漆器的黄金时代，其中又以雕漆最为优秀。雕漆在明代继续普及，雕刻朱砂漆就是最好的例证。清初，皇室御工坊甚至制作漆器家具。到了晚清，商业漆器制造业已完全没落，而雕漆亦逐渐息微。目前大多数皇室漆器均收藏在北京故宫博物院。

基于漆器在中国历史的发展，大多数收藏家较喜欢清初以前，特别是宋，元或明时期的漆器，欣赏其精细的做工，并关注其样式，形状，设计和类型。

### 店主推介

燕誉堂收藏了两件罕有的漆器，一件来自元朝，一件来自清初时期。两件罕有漆器设计精美，雕工精湛，线条流畅，凸显出简约、雅致的风格，实属典藏佳品。



元朝剔犀漆盒  
A tixi lacquer box, Yuan dynasty (1279-1369AD)

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