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# PAGODA RED

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## SET OF TWELVE CHINESE SPRING PALACE PAINTINGS

**\$36,800**

c. 1900 • China • Paper, Pigment • Collection #PHA002B

W: 16.0" D: 1.0" H: 11.5"

Chinese Spring Palace Painting, known in the West as Chinese erotic art, was a tradition that spanned from antiquity until its apex in the late Qing dynasty (early 20th century). Chinese erotica was layered in ideals of feminine beauty, narratives on imperial and vernacular life and, most importantly, humor, tenderness and love. After 1910, Chinese erotica was suppressed by modern Confucious followers, Western missionaries and the communist state resulting in the destruction of many pieces and making it difficult to find examples today. Continued...



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The intense saturation of color on this 19th century set of twelve album leaves is typical of gouache paintings on pith paper, though it is unusual to find Spring Palace Paintings executed in this way. Pith paper is actually the dried tissue from the central column of a small tree native to south-west China. The tissue is cut by hand with a knife into thin sheets. Cutting the sheets is a highly skilled process and the sheets are dried and trimmed, without any further processing necessary. Gouache sits on the surface of the sheets, producing a bright and even sparkling effect. Very fine details can be achieved as seen in the scenes of this set of twelve.

Very different than traditional Chinese ink and watercolor painting, pith painting was prized by “foreign barbarian” visitors to China, but not to the Chinese intellectual elite and was therefore not accepted widely during the 18th and 19th centuries as Chinese art.

