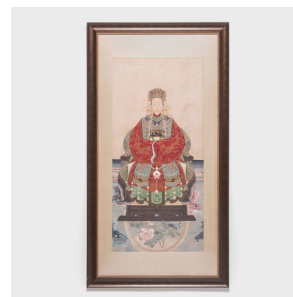


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## PAIR OF ANCESTRAL PORTRAITS

**\$4,880**

c. 1850 • Northern China, China • Paper, Ink • Collection #CBMH002

W: 36.0" D: 1.0" H: 65.75"

Believing that the departed continue to hold influence over the lives of the living, many Chinese households honor their ancestors in private family rituals, invoking their spirits for long life, health, and prosperity. Commemorative portraits, which came into vogue in the late Ming and Qing dynasties, were commissioned specifically for ancestor worship and were believed to house the spirits of the deceased. This pair of 19th-century paintings depicts a high-ranking couple, and takes care to document the ancestors' honor and prestige. Continued...



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## PAIR OF ANCESTRAL PORTRAITS

Conforming to convention, the figures are depicted life-sized in a seated, frontal pose, while dressed in luxurious garments and surrounded by opulent furnishings. Arguably the most important aspects are the distinctive faces, which were informed in this pre-photography era by verbal descriptions and composite imagery. Displayed in elegant wooden frames, we love the enveloping scale of these paintings and the intriguing contrast they present between naturalistic representation and lavish ornamentation.



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