



Pair of Chinese famille rose plates, Yongzheng (1723-35) POA

Pair of Chinese famille rose plates, Yongzheng (1723-35), decorated to the central roundels in bright enamels with a pair of mandarin ducks swimming amongst blooming lotus flowers and water weeds; the cavetto with four cartouches containing beribboned precious objects against a pink ground; the wide rim with the Eight Immortals crossing the sea on their magic vehicles amongst crashing waves.

Condition: Frits to rim.

Native to East Asia, mandarin ducks mate for life and consequently represent marital bliss and fidelity. They are frequently depicted swimming amongst lotus, a motif which originated in the Tang dynasty and which represents a desire for sons (see Pierson, Stacey, *Designs as Signs: Decoration and Chinese Ceramics*, Percival David Foundation, London 2001). The motif of the Eight Immortals symbolises long life, as these semi-historical Daoist figures are said to have discovered the elixir of life. The scene depicted on these plates refers to the Ming Dynasty myth 'The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea' (ba xian guo hai), which tells of the journey to the Conference of the Magical Peach, and of the difficulties encountered by the Immortals. When a stormy sea bars their way, each Immortal uses their unique powers (represented by the different vehicles) to get across the water, giving rise to the Chinese proverb: "The Eight Immortals cross the sea, each reveals its divine powers" used to refer to situations where individuals combine their skills to achieve a common goal.

Material and Technique	Porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration in the famille rose palette
Origin	Chinese
Period	18th Century
Condition	Good
Diameter	22.5cm. (8 7/8in.)

Antique ref: X297