

T. J. Larkin

1848–1915

Dealer in Chinese and Japanese Art



T. J. LARKIN,
(ESTABLISHED 1881)

THE RENAISSANCE GALLERIES,

Telephone: "PEACOCK,"
LONDON.
Telephone: 535 MAYFAIR.

**104 New Bond Street,
LONDON, W.**

**CHOICE ORIENTAL
PORCELAIN and POTTERY**

of the best periods from Kien-Lung
to the epochs of Ming and Sung.

A rare Kang Li Vase. Light green ground.
Decorated with a plum tree, with
blooms in pale pink.
Height, without stand, 17½ in.

Thomas Joseph (T. J.) Larkin was an early specialist dealer primarily in Japanese and Chinese art, although he also sold European paintings and drawings. He was born in County Cork, Ireland, and was initially a telegraph engineer working for the Japanese government. During his time in Japan, Larkin developed an interest in Japanese porcelain. Upon returning to England he set up the Japanese Gallery at the Grafton Galleries on Bond Street, London, in 1881, and then moved to 7 King Street in the mid-1880s. By 1888 he had established the Larkin Gallery at 28

New Bond Street. Larkin remained there until he moved to 104 New Bond Street in April 1901, where he traded under the name of the Renaissance Galleries. According to his obituary in *Burlington Magazine*, Larkin made regular return visits to China and Japan to acquire new stock for his gallery. A series of advertisements in the London *Times* referred to the recent Boxer Rebellion in China: "Chinese War Loot – before disposing of loot, it is advisable to have it valued by an expert."

Larkin was greatly respected by his fellow dealers. He contributed a substantial number of notes to W. G. Gulland's *Chinese Porcelain*, which was published in two volumes (1898 and 1902). On February 7, 1915, Larkin committed suicide at his home in Beltinge, Herne Bay in Kent, following a bout of depression due to his growing blindness.

After Larkin's death, his son, Frederick Joseph Larkin M. C. (1886–1917), took over the business. At that time he was serving in World War I. Frederick had joined the Hon. Artillery Company as a private in 1914, but he was discharged when his father died. He rejoined the army in 1916 and was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the London Regiment. Frederick Larkin was killed in action leading his men in an attack against the Turks at Gaza. Larkin's stock was sold at a series of Christie's sales held over three days (July 15–17) in 1918.

Literature

W. G. Gulland, *Chinese Porcelain*, 2 vols. (London, 1898, 1902).

Times (London), (March 13, 1901; April 11, 1902; February 9, 1915; December 1, 1917), p. 1, and (July 18, 1918), p. 3.

"Obituary, T. J. Larkin," *American Art News* 13, no. 21 (February 27, 1915), p. 4 and (March 6, 1915), p. 2.

"Thomas Joseph Larkin," *Burlington Magazine* 26 (March 1915), p. 263.

“The Late Thomas Joseph Larkin,” *Connoisseur* 41 (1915), p. 232.

“The Late Lieut. F. J. Larkin,” *Burlington Magazine* 31, no. 177 (December 1917), p. 251.

Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, “Selected galleries, dealers and exhibition spaces in London, 1850–1939,” in Fletcher and Helmreich, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 306–307.

February 29, 2016