

*For Immediate Release*

*26 March 2004*

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## **MAGIC BEATLES COLLECTION AT CHRISTIE'S**

*Wednesday 5 May 2004 at 2pm*

*Pop Memorabilia Including the Collection of Alexis Mardas*



*The Beatles at the launch of the Sgt. Pepper album at Brian Epstein's home in May 1967  
Copyright: Rex Features*

*London – The most significant collection of Beatles' memorabilia to come on the market for over ten years forms the backbone of Christie's first Pop Memorabilia sale of 2004, taking place on Wednesday 5 May at Christie's South Kensington. The property of Alexis Mardas, or 'Magic Alex' as he was dubbed by John Lennon, the collection features 15 lots of exceptional Beatles memorabilia and is expected to realise in excess of £150,000.*

*The auction in its entirety comprises over 250 lots, featuring further Beatles memorabilia and lots relating to some of the biggest names in pop, including David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley and Sid Vicious – the sale is expected to realise in excess of £500,000.*

## *Alexis Mardas*

*Acclaimed as a science prodigy from his teens, Alexis Mardas moved from his native Greece to England in the early 1960s. He met Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones around 1963, and was subsequently commissioned to design a revolutionary new system of linking lights with sound for the band's stage performances.*

*In 1966, he met John Lennon, who was so impressed by his scientific skills that he dubbed him 'Magic Alex', and often referred to him as "my guru". The Beatles were in the early stages of forming their Apple empire, and Mardas was appointed head of Apple Electronics. He continued his experiments with audio-visual technology until the company fell foul of Apple's cost-cutting in 1969.*

*During this period, he was arguably Lennon's best friend outside the Beatles; Lennon was best man at his wedding, and Mardas accompanied the group on many of their global adventures, including their trips to Greece and India, and the filming of their Magical Mystery Tour. Even after Apple Electronics was closed, he remained friends with both Lennon and George Harrison, and John and Yoko continued to travel to Greece to holiday with him.*

### *The Collection Highlights*

- *A leather collar worn by John Lennon continuously throughout 1967-1968 - given to Alexis Mardas by Lennon  
Estimate: £10,000-15,000*

*Lennon was seen and photographed wearing the collar on numerous key occasions in his life during this period, most notably at the launch of the Sgt. Pepper album at Brian Epstein's home in May 1967 and on Lennon's naked body on the cover of his debut album with Yoko Ono Unfinished Music No. 1 - Two Virgins, 1968.*

- *A custom-made Vox Kensington guitar, 1966, given to Alexis Mardas by John Lennon  
Estimate: £80,000-120,000*

*The guitar was used by John Lennon during the rehearsals for the Hello Goodbye video filmed at the Saville Theatre in London, November 1967 and was also used by George Harrison during rehearsals for I Am The Walrus (for use in the Magical Mystery Tour film), filmed at West Malling aerodrome in Kent, September 1967.*

- *Other collection highlights include Strong, a coloured felt pen drawing by John Lennon on Hotel Continental, Paris stationery in 1967. Believed to have been executed whilst under the influence of L.S.D., the drawing carries an estimate of £4,000-6,000; an autograph letter signed by Lennon to Magic Alex and his wife asking if they could meet up with them (estimate: £2,000-3,000); a delightful wash, pen and ink drawing by Lennon entitled Happy Fish, executed on the Greek island of Hydra when visiting Magic Alex in 1969 (estimate: £3,000-5,000) and The John Lennon London Diary 1969, signed and inscribed inside the front cover, with each day filled with Lennon's printed facsimile entries (estimate: £800-1,200).*

#### *Other Auction Highlights*

*Other auction highlights include a signed copy of the Beatles' first fully-signed contract in October 1962 with Brian Epstein (estimate: £25,000-35,000); the first ever live recording of the Rolling Stones, performing at the Crawdaddy Club, Richmond in the summer of 1963 (estimate: £20,000-30,000); a sand-coloured suede jacket worn by Eric Clapton whilst a member of Cream (estimate: £3,000-5,000); an early signed 1967 David Bowie contract with Kenneth Pitt and witnessed by Bowie's parents (estimate: £2,500-4,500); a Jimi Hendrix Experience Swiss concert poster Monster Konzert, May 1968 (estimate: £800-1,200); an early Elvis Presley U.S. concert poster for a performance in Memphis, 1955 (estimate: £5,000-7,000); and a Dali-inspired watercolour by Sid Vicious executed in 1974 (estimate: £2,000-3,000).*

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*Images available on request  
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