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CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS RUSSIAN MASTERPIECES IN APRIL

**Russian Paintings & Works of Art
April 18, 2007**

New York – Christie's spring sale of *Russian Paintings & Works of Art* in New York on April 18 will present collectors a wide range of works from the great masters of Russian painting, as well as a strong selection of top decorative works of art, including rare pieces of Fabergé, Imperial Porcelain, and bronzes. The sale also includes a unique collection of Russian graphic design and a selection of property from Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia. The sale comprises over 330 lots and is expected to realize \$13-19 million.

Russian Paintings

The selection of Russian paintings is led by Vasilii Vereshchagin's *Solomon's Wall*, a magnificent and historically significant painting by the artist (estimated at \$3-5 million). Very few of Vereshchagin's works have appeared on the market in the U.S in the last half-century, and most of his works are currently housed in Russian museums, making this is a rare opportunity for collectors around the world. (*Separate release available*).

The sale features a selection of top works by such masters as Boris Anisfel'd, Boris Grigor'ev, and Nikolai Roerich. Leading a group of painting from Nikolai Roerich is *Gilgit Road*, one of twelve works from the artist's *Lakes and Gilgit Path* series completed in early 1925 whilst Roerich was staying in Srinagar, present-day Kashmir (estimate: \$300,000-400,000). As most of the paintings from this series are in private collections in the United States, the present lot marks an important opportunity for collectors.

Boris Grigor'ev's *Russian Peasant Woman* (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) is from the artist's well known series of works entitled *Visages de Russie* or *Faces of Russia* (1921-1924). Following the theme started in the earlier series *Raseia* or *Russia* (1917-1922), the artist developed new and transformed images of Russia, influenced by the Russian iconographic tradition and presenting a poetic and generalized vision of his motherland.

Russian Paintings from the World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904

The sale includes a group of four paintings that were exhibited in the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis that together tell a story of intrigue, money, and politics. The Russian exhibition at the

St. Louis World's Fair was the largest art collection ever sent abroad by one country to another. While the Russian exhibit included many of the few well-known Russian artists of the time such as Ilya Repin and Nicholas Roerich, most works were by young and unknown artists, many of whom had agreed to send their paintings to America in hopes of attracting attention in the marketplace. Shortly following the exhibition, however, it was discovered that the necessary – and costly – tariffs required to display these painting in the United States had not been paid. What followed was a controversial chain of events that eventually brought the matter to the desk of U. S. President William Howard Taft. The works were ultimately impounded by the U.S. Treasury Department and then offered for sale in a highly publicized public auction in San Francisco in 1912, where the vast majority of the paintings were purchased by Frank Havens, a wealthy Oakland businessman who owned a Piedmont art gallery. While Havens kept some paintings, most were sold most off over the years, with many sold in a private auction in Oakland in October 1916. The four paintings offered by Christie's on the 18th are coming back into the public eye for the first time since their international debut in St. Louis over a century ago. Among the group is Ivan Goriushkin-Sorokopudov's *Boyars on the Road* (estimate: \$100,000–150,000) and Karl Kahl's *Spring* (estimate: \$25,000–35,000).

Property from the Collection of Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia

A selection of objects and paintings from the collection of Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia will also be offered. The collection of 26 lots includes portraits of the members of the Romanov family, the aristocratic family of Demidoffs, historical artifacts connected with the Empress Catherine the Great and Emperor Peter the Great, miniatures, engravings, and the decorative items by Fabergé. Leading the collection is Karl Briullov's *Portrait of Anatole Demidoff, Prince of San-Donato* (estimate: \$100,000–200,000).

Russian Works of Art

A strong selection of top decorative works of art will offer collectors a wide range of objects, from rare and unique pieces of Fabergé, to porcelain, enamels, glass, and bronzes, with many highlights coming from two important private collections.

Leading a large group of fine Fabergé enamels, hardstone, gold, and silver articles is a rare and highly important carved carnelian figure of a gnome mounted as scent flask marked Fabergé from an important private collection (estimate: \$250,000–350,000).

A large grouping of Russian porcelain from the 18th–20th centuries is also of particular note, including rare dishes from the major services by the Imperial Porcelain Factory and the Gardner order services. Among the highlights from a private collection is a plate from a military service, Imperial Porcelain Manufactory, period of Nicholas I, dated 1828 (estimate: \$120,000–180,000). From this same collection comes a rare silver-gilt mounted bowenite table clock marked Fabergé, circa 1900 (*illustrated right*, estimate: \$150,000–250,000). Rounding out

the sale's decorative arts offerings is a number of fine enamels, highlighted by several works by Feodor Rückert, rare glass from the 18th-20th centuries, silver, including nine silver dinner plates from the Iussupov Table Service, and bronzes by Lanceray and Grachev.

An Exceptional Collection of Russian Graphic Designs

Among the more unique offerings in the sale is a highly important and comprehensive collection of Russian graphic design from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The collection, comprising 2,350 pieces arranged in three volumes, includes a remarkable variety of printed material: official state announcements, coronation menus, theatre programs, candy and cigarette wrappers, and advertisements for consumer products (estimate: \$120,000-180,000). Of particular historical significance is a series of highly important menus, which by the mid-19th century had become an essential part of high cuisine and official state dinners in Russia, and which are today incredibly rare and passionately collected. The collection includes coronation menus printed for the last two tsars of the Russian Empire – Tsar Alexander III in 1883 and Tsar Nicholas II in 1896 (*image above*). Coronations included numerous banquets that were accompanied by incredibly ornate and festive menus that later became not only historically significant, but a treasured souvenir that grant an intriguing look at the culinary history of Russia.

Auction: *Russian Paintings & Works of Art* April 18
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Center Galleries April 14-17

Notes to Editors:

- Christie's holds the world auction record for any Russian painting sold in a Russian Sale (Somov's *Pastorale Russe*, £2,696,000/\$5,251,808/€3,981,992, Christie's London November 2006), and for any Russian Work of Art (the 2002 sale of Faberge's Imperial Winter Egg for \$9.9 million).
- Christie's was the first auction house to devote sales to Russian art, although the connection between Russia and the world's leading auction house extends back to the 18th Century when James Christie, the company founder, helped negotiate Robert Walpole's Collection of Pictures to Catherine the Great of Russia, now the core of the Hermitage Collection.
- Christie's expanded activities in Russia (such as the exhibitions of the Blue Picasso in Moscow in October 2006, an exhibition in Samara in 2007, and the exhibition of Vereshchagin's *Solomon's Wall* at The State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow in March 2007), pay homage to the dominance of Russia's position as a world-class art and economic center, are a continuation of the firm's commitment to bringing the most important paintings and objects to Russia and demonstrate Christie's understanding of the needs of the growing numbers of private clients in Russia.

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales

through Christie's LIVE, its unique, real-time online bidding service.

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Images available on request

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More information about Christie's sale of *Russian Paintings & Works of Art* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.