

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **NEW YORK IMPORTANT OLD MASTER PAINTINGS SALE THIS APRIL PROVIDES A VERITABLE FEAST OF MASTERWORKS FOR ALL**

### **Important Old Master Paintings**

**April 19, 2007**

**New York** - Christie's New York annual *Important Old Master Paintings* sale takes place on April 19 and is expected to realize in excess of \$50 million with a broad selection of Spanish, Italian, English and Dutch masterworks. This is the second year in which the *Important Old Master Paintings* sale is to be held in April, a change that has brought more balance to the international sales calendar for Old Masters and appreciation from collectors.

Led by two Venetian views by Bernardo Bellotto and Canaletto, the sale includes an iconic El Greco masterpiece, a striking Madonna and Child by Cima da Conegliano, the intriguing *Rice Portrait of Jane Austen*, a tempestuous J.M.W. Turner mythological scene and over 40 restituted pictures from collection of Jacques Goudstikker.

### **Venetian Views**

Two fine Venetian views included in the sale provide a fitting reference point back to Christie's New York's first ever April sale in 2006 where Turner's Venetian masterpiece *Giudecca, La Donna della Salute and San Giorgio* sold for \$35.9 million, a record for a British painting at auction. This year, *The Grand Canal at the Church of San Stae, Venice* by Bernardo Bellotto (estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000) and *The Piazza San Marco, Venice, looking towards the Procuratie Nuove and the Church of San Geminiano from the Campo di San Basso* by Canaletto (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000) will provide collectors an opportunity to bid on two excellent 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian works.

The Bellotto is impressive in scale, and was painted when the artist was a teenager. A nephew of Canaletto, Bellotto used a far smaller picture painted for the Duke of Marlborough by his uncle and stamped his own persona on the canvas. While the picture shares Canaletto's cold light, the juicy impasto is the youthful Bellotto's, along with the calligraphy of ripples in the water, the texturing of the brickwork and the back-lighting of the boats and the figures. The Canaletto in the sale also was painted in the 1730s, the decade

when the artist produced his most characteristic work. Originally part of a set of four, this image would undoubtedly be better known had it not been largely hidden from public view.

### **El Greco**

This remarkable and mysterious painting, *El Soplón (Boy lighting a candle)*, carries El Greco's signature and was painted in Rome in the early 1570s (estimate: \$5,000,000-7,000,000). One of two autograph versions of this popular composition, a number of early copies also exist, including examples in the Uffizi in Florence and the Palazzo Reale in Genoa. Of chief interest for El Greco was the dramatic pictorial opportunities a flickering light illuminating a single figure in the darkness allowed him. An interest in the nocturne began to be developed in Northern Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and El Greco was aware of the experimentation of Titian and Jacopo Bassano – and this particular work also foreshadows the candlelit scenes of Caravaggio and his followers.

### **Cima da Conegliano**

Giovanni Battista Cima was the youngest of the major painters of Venetian late *quattrocento* and this work, *The Madonna and Child in a landscape*, is arguably the finest Venetian *quattrocento* painting to come on the auction market in a generation (estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000). At an early age Cima made his way to Venice, where he undoubtedly studied Bellini's altarpieces and the more intimate Madonnas that the master was celebrated for. From the outset Cima expressed a wholly personal language of color, cool and clear and a strong sculptural sense. As the 1490s progressed, his pictorial language was both forceful and independent, and none of his Venetian contemporaries quite matched his remarkable self-discipline of color. This particular masterpiece is one of three autograph variants, the other two being in the National Gallery in London and The North Carolina Museum of Art.

### **Rice Portrait of Jane Austen (separate release available)**

One of the world's most intriguing literary portraits, *The Rice Portrait of Jane Austen* by British society painter Ozias Humphry (1742-1810) is estimated to fetch between \$400,000 and \$800,000, and is one of the most important portraits in the history of English Literature. The only known oil painting of arguably England's most famous female writer, the work is being sold by direct descendants of Jane Austen, and the painting has been in the family since its creation.

### **J.M.W. Turner (separate release available)**

*Glauco and Scylla*, a magnificent oil on panel by J.M.W. Turner, has recently been restituted to the heirs of John and Anna Jaffé by the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. In 2005, Christie's London offered four paintings that were restituted to the family, including

*The Grand Canal, Venice, with the Palazzo Bembo* by Francesco Guardi, bought by the Getty Museum for \$7,605,488.

Estimated at \$5,000,000-7,000,000, this visionary work is part of Turner's late period, where he sought to go beyond the mere observation of nature by including historical or mythological subjects within his landscapes as moral lessons in emulation of his idol, Claude Lorrain.

### **Jacques Goudstikker (separate release available)**

Christie's is assisting the heirs of Jacques Goudstikker with the sale of over 140 of the 200 Old Master pictures restituted to the family in February 2006. The sale of the pictures will take place across three auctions: April 19 in New York, July 5 in London, and November 14 in Amsterdam. The paintings to be sold represent a breathtaking overview of Dutch Old Master pictures from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, along with excellent examples from 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany, early Italian and 18<sup>th</sup> century French works.

Arguably the most important collection of Old Master pictures ever restituted, the pictures from the collection will attract the attention of museums, dealers and collectors alike, as these works have not been on the market for over 65 years. *The Ferry boat with cattle on the River Vecht near Nijenrode* by Salomon van Ruysdael is one of the stars of the New York sale and carries an estimate of \$3,000,000-5,000,000. Painted on panel, it is in perfect condition: rich in impasto with one of the luminous blue skies, tinged with pink and yellow, for which this artist is so renowned.

<b>Auction:</b>	Important Old Master Paintings	April 19 at 10am & 2pm
<b>Viewing:</b>	Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center	April 14 - 18

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Christie's *International Old Master Department* announced an annual sales total of £146 million / \$264.3 million / €213.2 million in 2006. This built on the success of 2005 and reaffirms Christie's position as market leaders in both the Old Master Picture and Old Master Drawing categories, increasing market share against the nearest competitors to 54.5% for the Old Master Category as a whole.

### **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 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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.