

Press Release

For Immediate Release
17 July 2003

Contact: Julie King 0412 666 300

CHRISTIE'S \$1.5 MILLION DECORATIVE ARTS AUCTION HAS HISTORY & DIVERSITY

Decorative Arts, Furniture, Porcelain, Silver & Jewellery in Melbourne 5 & 6 August

Melbourne, Australia,
6.00pm Tuesday 5 August 2003
6.00pm Wednesday 6 August 2003

Melbourne, Australia – Christie's have catalogued a diverse selection of Decorative Arts in a \$1.5 million offering, including furniture, porcelain, silver, jewellery and works of art to be auctioned in Melbourne in August.

Christie's Director, Richard Gordon, said *"The buoyant conditions in the market this year has encouraged vendors to submit a wide variety of items, including a complete Private Collection, likely to be of great interest to collectors. Several items are historically noteworthy, which always adds to the lustre and appeal of any object."*

A Café Australia Dining Chair designed by Marion Mahony Griffin/Walter Burley Griffin and produced in Melbourne circa 1915 is especially historic. In Japanese oak, the chair, with a triangular framed partially padded back and padded circular seat, supported by gently tapering legs was produced for the highly fashionable 'Fern Room' in Melbourne's *Café Australia*. Considered one of the most exiting early 20th Century interior spaces, it was remodelled in 1927 before being demolished and replaced by the *Hotel Australia* in 1937. The chair is one of very few pieces known to have survived and has a ***pre-sale estimate of \$8,000-10,000.***

The sale also features a particularly fine selection of art deco bronze sculpture at prices estimated upwards from about \$1,000. The highlight is an **Austrian Bronze Equestrian Group of an Amazon** – the naked female warrior, wearing a plumed helmet, and preparing to throw a spear, rides her steed bareback and grasps its mane is set on a tall moulded plinth. It is cast after the model by Franz von Stuck (1863-1928), Munich, circa 1905 and carries a ***pre-sale estimate of \$8,000-10,000.***

A Presentation Gold Cigarette Case in the auction represents a unique item of world aviation history. The rectangular case is engraved 'Smithy Old Son, We Made It, Charles'. It was presented to Sir Charles Kingsford Smith by his friend and fellow aviator Charles Ulm. The case was a gift to the present owner's father by Charles Kingsford Smith. In 1927 Smith

and Ulm circumnavigated Australia in a Bristol Tourer in 10 days 5 hours, halving the established record. In 1928 they became international heroes with the first Trans-Pacific flight from the USA to Australia in a borrowed three-engined Fokker, later named the '*Southern Cross*'.

The pair went on to form many other businesses and achieve record breaking flights. Ulm was lost, between California and Hawaii, in 1934 when he disappeared on a Trans-Pacific flight and Kingsford Smith disappeared over the Indian Ocean on a flight from England to Australia the following year. This remarkable souvenir of one aviator's respect for his comrade has a ***pre-sale estimate of \$5,000-6,000.***

The historic associations with internationally renowned Australians continues in the jewellery section where a fascinating **Art Deco Garnet and Diamond Brooch** is featured. The brooch was once part of the collection of opera singer and recording artist Dame Joan Hammond. Set in 18 carat white gold, it is designed as a microphone, with a cushion shape hessonite garnet surrounded by rose cut diamonds and a row of similar diamonds forming the stand. It carries a ***pre-sale estimate of \$4,000-6,000.***

Another famous Australian woman, Dame Mabel Brookes D.B.E., was once the owner of a **Charles II Silver Gilt Oval Dish** which is in the sale. This impressive dish bears the maker's mark of *Jacob Bodenick, London 1676*. Embossed and chased in high relief it depicts Hercules drawing his bow on the centaur Nessus, who carries away his wife Deianira, the border is pieced and chased with large flowers and matted foliage. It carries a ***pre-sale estimate of \$10,000-15,000.***

Highlights of the sale will be on view in Sydney at Christie's, 180 Jersey Road, Woollahra on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 July from 12 noon to 5pm daily. The entire sale will be on view at Christie's in Melbourne from Saturday 5 August. The auction will be conducted over two sessions at 6.00pm on Tuesday 5 (Lots 1 – 291), and 6.00pm on Wednesday 5 (Lots 352-626) of April 2003. Catalogues are now available from Christie's offices.

More information about Christie's sale of Decorative Arts on 5 & 6 August 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.