

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kate Swan 212.636.2680

kswan@christies.com

THE ART OF FANTASY
Christie's to Sell Unparalleled Collection of Art Nouveau Jewels

An Exceptional Collection of Art Nouveau Jewels

October 11, 2006

Christie's New York

New York – September 19, 2006 – Christie's International Jewelry department is pleased to announce an incredible addition to the fall *Magnificent Jewels* sales lineup: an unparalleled collection of Art Nouveau jewelry from a distinguished private collection. It is a rarity to find just one exceptional piece from this brief, but remarkably important design period. That this extraordinary collection features thirty-nine pieces representing the finest examples from this period, many of which are of such historical importance to have been previously documented in historical texts and academic works, is unprecedented. This private collection features premier examples from the greatest jewelers of the era: Boucheron, Fouquet, Gaillard, and the undisputed genius of Art Nouveau jewelry, René Lalique.

"This exceptional collection highlights masterworks from one of the most imaginative periods of jewelry manufacture. Extraordinary creations by Boucheron, Fouquet, Gaillard and René Lalique exemplify all that this brief but highly productive age had to offer with its original style and philosophy" said François Curiel, Chairman Christie's Europe and International Head of Jewelry

ART NOUVEAU: A BRIEF PERIOD, A LASTING IMPACT

Though the Art Nouveau period lasted only from the early 1890's to 1910, its impact on the world of jewelry design was profound and resulted in some of the most imaginative and original pieces in the history of jewelry. A direct reaction to the Industrial Age that preceded it, Art Nouveau reflected a completely new and original style. Mass mechanization and materialism were rejected, in favor of free-flowing forms inspired by the natural world. Throughout the period, themes of romanticism, naturalism, and femininity abound, with materials chosen for their artistic merit, rather than their intrinsic value. The result was evocative and inventive creations designed around such novel materials as horn, ivory, glass and enamels. Non-precious gemstones, such as the opal, were explored for their texture and translucency, giving pieces the illusion of movement with delicate, shifting colors.

EXCEPTIONAL PIECES & RARE CREATIONS

This extraordinary single-owner collection is composed entirely of pieces of unparalleled quality and condition – with many pieces in their original fitted cases – offering collectors Art Nouveau creations of the highest caliber from the most important jewelers of the time.

René Lalique

René Lalique was, without doubt, the undisputed master of Art Nouveau jewelry. Over the course of this short-lived design period, this artist-jeweler proved himself to be the most prolifically inventive and imaginative designer, invoking the major themes of the period with incomparable sophistication. This spectacular collection offers an impressive twenty-two of his inspired creations, making it a testament to the collector's keen eye, as well as the unparalleled quality of the collection as a whole.

Lalique masterfully evoked the period's themes in each of his creations. Perhaps the most universal theme, Nature, is beautifully illustrated in a horn and diamond fern *diadem* (*image right*, estimate: \$60,000–80,000). Equally as alluring is an aquamarine, glass, enamel and diamond “thistle”



corsage, one of the largest of Lalique's series of “Thistles” brooches that strikingly illustrate his use of flowers and naturalism. Also of note is an extraordinarily intricate, yet delicate, enameled gold and diamond *parure de corsage* depicting lilac boughs of opaque and textured lilac and lavender enamel (*image left*, estimate \$150,000–200,000). An inventive corsage ornament of peridot, enamel and gold depicting two facing dragonflies (estimate: \$200,000–300,000) also highlights Lalique's skillful elegance in depicting forms found in the natural world.



Femininity was another theme passionately explored during this period. A diamond, baroque pearl and enamel pendant necklace depicting three sculpted nude women on a opalescent background (estimate: \$15,000–20,000); an enamel and pearl “peacock lady” brooch (estimate: \$8,000–12,000); and an enamel baroque pearl, gold and diamond pendant/brooch designed as two winged female figures (estimate: \$25,000–35,000) all delightfully depict this theme and its the imaginative variations.

Georges Fouquet

Plant and insect imagery – in whimsical and creative designs – was also frequently evoked by the jewelers of the period. A wonderful example is an exceptional agate, diamond,

ruby, pearl, *plique à jour* enamel and corsage ornament (*image right*, estimate: \$100,000–150,000) by Georges Fouquet, one of the foremost exponents of Art Nouveau. Here, Fouquet combines the popular dragonfly motif with an imaginative seaweed design to depict a “marine dragonfly family” of a mother dragonfly followed by three offspring that appear to skim across the water. Bodies and heads of these delicate creatures are made of moss agate, while seaweed, flattened and stretched, make up the wings in *plique à jour* enameling. Details such as ruby ornamented antennae and a pendant baroque pearl suspended from the smallest dragonfly complete this fanciful creation.



An agate, diamond, enamel and multi-gem peacock brooch (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$150,000–200,000) beautifully combines several of the characteristics for which Fouquet is known, including the use of a symmetrical arrangement of parts along a central axis, patterns of diamonds to accentuate forms, the extensive use of enameling, and suspended baroque pearls.

Lucien Gaillard

Lucien Gaillard was largely interested in silversmithing until he met and befriended René Lalique. Gaillard was a third generation jeweler and became well known for his Japanese style and his excellence in the art of enameling. A *plique à jour* enamel diamond choker encapsulates his mark on the Art Nouveau period with its delicately framed ginkgo leaf panels (*image right*, estimate: \$100,000–150,000).



Auction:
Viewing:

An Exceptional Collection of Art Nouveau Jewels
Christie's Galleries at 20 Rockefeller Plaza

October 11
October 6–10

CHRISTIE'S - JEWELRY MARKET LEADERS SINCE 1994

Christie's has been the world market leader in jewelry for over 12 years, with sales totaling \$280 million in 2005, a 28% increase from 2004 and the highest sales total ever realized. Christie's jewelry auctions take place in Geneva, Hong Kong, London, New York and Paris. Christie's jewelry sales cater to a vast audience of international collectors looking to buy a range of magnificent jewelry, from a single pair of ruby-inlaid cufflinks to a 100 carat diamond.

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