

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S AMERICANA WEEK 2012 PRESENTS RARE AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT MASTERPIECES

Select Highlights Include Works by Renowned American Craftsmen John Goddard and John Townsend, a Wine Cooler Owned by George Washington and Presented to Alexander Hamilton, and John James Audubon's *The Birds of America: The Duke of Portland Set*

New York – Christie's New York is pleased to announce *Americana Week 2012*, two weeks of sales, viewings and a symposium devoted to three centuries of American craftsmanship in all its forms, including important furniture, folk art, silver, and decorative arts. The sales begin on January 19 with *Important American Silver*, followed by *John James Audubon's The Birds of America: The Duke of Portland Set* on January 20, *Important American Furniture and Folk Art* including the *Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K. Ott* on January 20, *Chinese Export* on January 23, and the *Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Jr. Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain* on January 24. With more than 580 lots offered, the combined sales are expected to achieve upwards of \$23 million.

Important American Silver – January 19

Christie's is honored to announce that the sale of a Sheffield-plated silver wine cooler, given by George Washington to Alexander Hamilton in 1797, will be a highlight among the Americana sales on January 19, 2012 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000). This four-bottle wine cooler is an exceptionally well documented historical object, symbolizing the famous partnership between Washington and Hamilton in the early days of the republic. Never before seen by the public, it is being sold by direct descendants of Alexander Hamilton. ([See separate press release](#))

John James Audubon's *The Birds of America: The Duke of Portland Set* – January 20

On 20 January 2012, Christie's New York will offer the Duke of Portland set of John James Audubon's monumental work *The Birds of America*, which is considered the highest achievement in ornithological art today (estimate: \$7-10 million). The monumental format of this work (double elephant folios of over 3 ft. high) was due to Audubon's insistence on life-size illustrations and his determination to depict all the known species found in North America. Completed and published over eleven years from 1827 to 1838, this magnificent four volume set of 435 hand-colored engravings is one of only a few known unbound copies in existence. At the present time, 107 copies remain in institutions and 13 are in private hands. (Separate press release to come.)

Important American Furniture and Folk Art – January 20

The various owner sale of Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver and Chinese Export offers a carefully curated selection of furniture and folk art from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Leading the selection is a rare and important **Chippendale carved mahogany diminutive block-and-shell document cabinet with drawers signed by John Townsend**, 1755-1765 (estimate on request). Diminutive in scale (27 ¾ in. high) but



monumental in importance, this extraordinary document cabinet with drawers is a unique form signed by famed cabinetmaker John Townsend (1733-1809) and stands as his earliest known work with a tripartite block-and-shell façade, a design that would become a Newport classic. This document cabinet is revered as the earliest dated piece of block-and-shell furniture with both the convex and concave shaping, and is one of only six examples of block-and-shell furniture signed or labeled by Townsend.

Another top lot is a rare **Chippendale elaborately carved mahogany side chair**, carving attributed to Nicholas Bernard, made in Philadelphia, circa 1750, that was formerly in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (estimate: \$600,000-800,000). The chair illustrates an exceptional moment in American craftsmanship and its profusion of carved ornament provides a visual feast that is virtually unparalleled in American furniture. Linear and intricate, the chair's ornament demonstrates the early work of carver Nicholas Bernard and its sheer abundance is only seen elsewhere on a few other forms also attributed to the carver and from the same time period. The chair is one of nine known survivals from an original set of twelve traditionally thought to have descended from the Lambert family of Lambertville, New Jersey. Seven of these chairs are now in public collections and the chair offered in January 2012 is further distinguished by its acquisition from a Philadelphia dealer in the early 1930s by Richard Wistar Harvey (b. 1868).



The Wunsch Americana Foundation is selling a small number of pieces which are sure to please those seeking out rare objects with spectacular surfaces. Leading the group is a **Chippendale carved cherrywood bonnet-top high chest of drawers**, made in Connecticut, 1760-1790 (estimate \$100,000-150,000). This piece is whimsically designed with anthropomorphic jointed front legs ending in claw-and-ball feet. The chest also retains its original brass hardware and a dry old surface.

Another notable piece being offered by the Wunsch Americana Foundation is the **Robert and Margaret Livingston Queen Anne mahogany cypher-back side chair**, made in New York, 1750-1760 (estimate: \$50,000-80,000). This chair is a rare survival and from the only known American set of chairs with an integrated cypher used in the design.



Other highlights in the sale include a **Queen Anne Japed dressing table**, made in Boston, 1740-1760. Offered by a direct descendant of Paul Revere, Jr. (1735-1818), the dressing table was owned by Revere's daughter and is believed to have been owned by the

famed patriot. Estimated at \$40,000-\$60,000, this piece is a remarkable example of early Boston Japanned cabinetwork.

The sale also includes a **William and Mary turned maple easy chair**, Boston, 1710-1730 (estimate \$80,000-120,000), a rare survival from the early 18th century. One of only fourteen known block-and-vase turned chairs with brush feet from Boston, this chair survives in pristine condition with its original framework.



An exceptional full length **portrait of Nathaniel Shaw Woodbridge** of New London, Connecticut by **Ralph Earl** (1751-1801) is among the sale highlights (estimate: \$150,000-250,000). Painted in 1791, Earl composed a striking portrait of the young gentleman at the age of 21. During the 1790s Ralph Earl ranked as the foremost portrait painter of the prosperous Connecticut gentry. Unlike other contemporaries, such as Charles Willson Peale, who practiced their trade in a particular city, Earl worked as an itinerant painter and developed patrons across the Connecticut River Valley. This portrait, sold by a direct descendant of the subject, is an exceptional example of Earl's technical skill, restrained taste and stylish composition.

Folk Art

The various owners sale offers an exceptional group of folk art led by a single-owner section of approximately 60 lots. Lovingly collected and assembled over the last thirty years by a New York collector, this group contains a wonderful selection of painted furniture, stoneware, fireman's parade hats, and outstanding folk portraiture. Examples include a beautiful **federal paint-decorated Matteson pine blanket chest** from South Shaftsbury, Vermont, 1820-1825 (estimate: \$60,000-90,000). Matteson's chests are part of a rural vernacular that employs bold grain painting in an attempt to imitate the more expensive, mahogany urban examples of this form.



A **yellow paint-decorated pine miniature blanket chest** attributed to Jacob Weber from Fivepointville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, dated 1867, is among the top lots of folk art (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). A shoemaker by trade, Weber is the



known maker of a small group of decorated boxes. These chests are of similar construction, dimensions and decoration with a house centered on the front panel. As each house is distinct, the painted decoration may have been custom ordered by the patron, possibly depicting the individual homes of each owner. Probably referring to the original or early owner, this box is signed on the underside "Christian Beckers, 1867."

A **group of six painted ceremonial parade fire hats**, American, mid-nineteenth century are offered as separate lots with estimates ranging from \$8,000-12,000 to \$10,000-15,000. Emblazoned with emblems of specific fire companies, these brightly painted top hats replaced firemen's work helmets during public celebratory occasions, such as the parades to honor General Lafayette on his 1824 tour. These events took place throughout the nineteenth century and in order to draw attention



from the crowds, fire companies competed with one another with elaborate engine displays and individual dress.

Among the other exciting objects from this folk art collection are a **pair of paint and polychrome decorated leather fire buckets** signed 'H. Coffin' from Newburyport, Massachusetts, dated 1776 (estimate: \$8,000-12,000), a **group of seven nesting Nantucket lightship baskets**, labeled Davis Hall, late 19th century (estimate: \$20,000-40,000), a **federal blue painted and polychrome-decorated pine blanket chest** from Schoharie County, New York, *circa* 1820-1825 (estimate: \$20,000-40,000), and a **double handled cobalt-decorated stoneware crock with stag decoration**, impressed with the mark of John Burger of Rochester, New York, *circa* 1850-1860 (estimate: \$8,000-12,000).

Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K. Ott – January 20

A collection of Newport furniture remarkable for its focus, documentation and rarity, from the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K. Ott, leads the selection of furniture and is highlighted by two exceptionally rare and well-documented tables from colonial Newport's most celebrated craftsmen; John Townsend and John Goddard (estimate \$2-3 million each). Joseph "Darby" Kevin O'Neill Ott (1929-1994) was the foremost scholar of Rhode Island furniture and his collection stands as a testament to his passion for craftsmanship from his beloved state. Assembled with an educated and discerning eye, the collection presents a unique opportunity to acquire magnificent works from Rhode Island's past.

The Captain Anthony Low Queen Anne mahogany marble slab table is the earliest known masterpiece of the renowned cabinetmaker John Goddard (1724-1785) and surviving with its original top and 1755 bill of sale is an extraordinary testament to Newport cabinetmaking. Combining mass and elegance, the marble slab table has been widely acclaimed for its design and



is part of a select group of serpentine furniture that illustrates the sophistication of Newport's fashion-conscious elite and Goddard as the city's principal practitioner of this style. Descending in the Low and Arnold families until the mid-twentieth century, the table is a rarity on several fronts. It is one of only eight examples of furniture signed by or documented to John Goddard and less than ten marble slab tables with their original tops are known from pre-Revolutionary Newport. Of remarkable distinction, the table has a deserved place of prominence in the scholarship of American cabinetmaking and has featured in every major study of Rhode Island furniture.

Powerfully designed and signed by its maker, the **Bowers-Brayton Family Chippendale carved mahogany block-front and open-talon card table** is a masterful creation by Newport's renowned cabinetmaker John Townsend (1733-1809). Dramatic, bold and expertly carved, this card table reflects Townsend's mature cabriole-leg furniture of the 1760s and inscribed *John*, is one of only two block-front card tables signed in John Townsend's distinctive calligraphic style. The table is further enhanced by its descent in the Brayton family of Somerset, Massachusetts and its probable ownership by known Townsend-patron Jerathmael Bowers (d. 1799). Combining beauty, rarity and historical evidence, the table illustrates the collecting ideals of Joseph K. Ott, who determinedly researched its authorship and family history.



Among the 51 lots comprising the Ott Collection, other top works include a **Chippendale carved mahogany block-and-shell tall-case clock**, the dial signed by Seril Dodge (1759-1802), Providence, with a Newport case, 1784-1799 (estimate: \$300,000-500,000), the **Smith family Chippendale mahogany open-talon drop-leaf dining table**, attributed to John Goddard, Newport, 1760-1770 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) and a **rare and important Queen Anne mahogany hooped-arm armchair**, Probably Newport, 1740-1760 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000).

Chinese Export Art – January 23

Exceptional Chinese Export Art will be on offer in Christie's January sales. On Monday January 23, lots from various owners will include China Trade paintings in oil and gouache, rare animals and figures, highlighted by a pair of magnificent famille rose pheasants from the Qianlong period (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), and a strong group of large, “country house” porcelains, including an extraordinary pair of famille rose jardinières from the Qianlong period (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). An American Market Chinese Export dinner service from the first-half of the 19th century were originally made for Benjamin Etting (1798-1875) and are from the Property of a Philadelphia Gentleman (estimate: \$15,000-25,000).



Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Jr. Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain – January 24

On Tuesday, January 24, Christie's is proud to be presenting the **Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Jr. Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain**. The late Peter Frelinghuysen, longtime U.S. Congressman from New Jersey and last grandchild of the famed collectors H O and Louisine Havemeyer, collected classic Chinese export throughout his lifetime, with an emphasis on American market, pieces with historical or political interest, and Dutch armorial, reflecting his family heritage. Particularly rare are a **plate with golfing scenes**, late 18th century (estimate: \$20,000-30,000), a large **pair of grisaille Battle of the Saintes punchbowls** circa 1784 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), and a unique **pair of dishes painted with the hongts at Canton and Whampoa Anchorage**, circa 1830 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). ([Separate press release available](#))

Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver & Chinese Export

Americana Sales 2012

<u>Silver</u>	<u>Auction</u>	<u>Public Exhibition</u>
<i>John James Audubon's The Birds of America: The Duke of Portland Set</i>	Thursday, 19 January, 10am	14-18 January
<i>Furniture & Folk Art</i>	Friday, 20 January, 10am	14-19 January
<i>Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph K. Ott</i>	Friday, 20 January, immediately following	14-19 January
<i>Chinese Export</i>	Friday, 20 January, immediately following	14-19 January
<i>Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, Jr. Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain</i>	Monday, 23 January, 2pm	14-23 January
	Tuesday, 24 January, 10am	14-24 January

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2011 that totaled £2.0 billion/\$3.2 billion. In 2010 it achieved global auction and private sales of £3.3 billion/\$5.0 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as 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 450 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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