

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | SOUTH KENSINGTON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 27 March 2013

## Going, Going, Gone... A Rare Dodo Bone Leads Natural History Group Offered at Christie's in April



Dodo bone femur  
Estimate: £10,000-15,000



Illustration of a dodo from Martyn's  
*A New Dictionary of Natural History*  
(London: 1785)

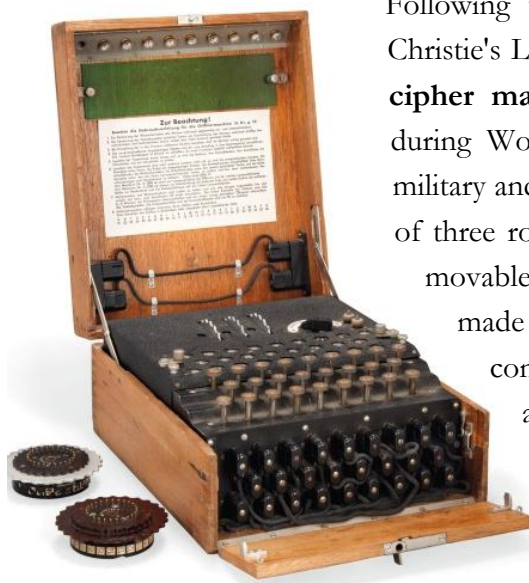
**South Kensington, London** – Christie's is honoured to present a rare fragment of a **dodo bone femur**, in the *Travel, Science and Natural History* sale at South Kensington on 24 April (estimate: £10,000-15,000, *illustrated above*). This is believed to be the first dodo bone to come to auction since 1934. First recorded by Dutch sailors in 1598 on the remote island of Mauritius (see illustration below), the dodo was driven to extinction in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, less than a hundred years after its discovery. This femur bone was almost certainly excavated in 1865 at Mare aux Songes, in the South-East of Mauritius during the famous dig by George Clark (1807-1873), a natural history enthusiast. Comprising over 260 lots, the auction features a wide array of works, including curiosities of natural history, globes, scientific instruments, rare books and maps, alongside paintings and works of art from the ages of exploration.

**James Hyslop, Head of Travel, Science and Natural History, Christie's South Kensington** commented: "*As an icon of extinction, the dodo is second to none. From its appearance in Alice in Wonderland to the expression 'dead as dodo', the bird has cemented its place in our cultural heritage. This exciting discovery is one of the few pieces of dodo material in private hands, and it is a privilege, and humbling experience, to have been entrusted with the bone. It is a reminder of the effect humans have on the natural world, and presents a rare opportunity to engage with this now lost and most enigmatic bird.*"



Another marvel of the **natural world** is a very rare and complete sub-fossilised **Elephant Bird egg** (*Aepyornis maximus*), pre-17<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated left*). This egg measuring over 100 times the average size of a chicken egg stands at 8¾ inches (21cm) in diameter and 12 inches (30cm) in height. The extinct Elephant Bird, a native of Madagascar, was the largest bird ever to have lived. Resembling a heavily-built ostrich with long legs and talons, it grew to around 11 to 10 feet in height and is thought to have been hunted to extinction in Madagascar between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fragments of eggs can be found in the Southern part of the island, but whole examples such as the present lot are extremely rare.

**Travel** highlights include a fine view of *Port Louis, Mauritius*, a lost work by **William Hodges R.A.**, which was recently discovered (estimate: £70,000-100,000, *illustrated right*). The early view was taken from around a mile out at sea, illustrating the shipping off Port Louis and the familiar profile of the Moka range of mountains, with the distinctive shapes of La Pouce and the peak of Pieter Both. William Hodges was the official artist on Captain Cook's second voyage around the world during the 1770s and is famous for his paintings of Tahiti and the Polynesian islands. This lost Mauritius painting probably dates from his voyage home from Hodges tour of India in 1785.





Following the world record price for an enigma machine at auction achieved at Christie's London, September 2011 - this sale presents a German three-rotor **Enigma cipher machine**, *circa* 1939 (estimate: £40,000-60,000, *illustrated left*). Widely used during World War II to encrypt and decode messages sent between the German military and their commanders. It was designed with a complex, interchangeable series of three rotors bearing the 26-character alphabet, a 'reflector' and a plug-board with movable connecting cords that connected pairs of letters. The Enigma machine made a total of 15 billion billion possible readings for each character. This was considered too complex to be broken, but due to the efforts of Alan Turing and an elite team of cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park, the coding mechanism was solved, enabling the allies to read all secure messages, which some commentators have said shortened the war by two years.

Unlike the Enigma, the **Schlüsselgeraet 41** or SG-41Z, *circa* 1944, remained a secure cipher device, which was never solved by the cryptanalysis (estimate: £10,000-15,000, *illustrated right*). The present, restored, example consists of a numeric keyboard used for weather service communications by the German air-force. Based on designs by **Boris Hagelin** (1892-1983) the SG-41 was introduced too late and in too few numbers to make a difference to the outcome of the war. A now declassified report from 1946 by the American Security Agency states that 11,000 machines were ordered but only a small quantity had been manufactured and put to use.



**Further highlights include:**

	<p><b>Pocket Globe</b> Johannes Deur, <i>circa</i> 1720 Measures 2 ¾ inches in diameter Estimate: £15,000 - £25,000</p> <p>Please click <a href="#">here</a> for full press release</p>
	<p><b>China Trade Paintings</b> Three large views of waterfront Canton, Southern China <i>Before, during and after</i> the Great Fire 1822 Estimate: £100,000 - £150,000</p> <p>Please click <a href="#">here</a> for full press release</p>

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**Please click [here](#) for the complete e-Catalogue**

**Public Exhibition:**

Saturday 20 April 11am-5pm  
Sunday 21 April 11am-5pm  
Monday 22 April 9.00am-7.30pm  
Tuesday 23 April 9.00am-5pm

**Auction:**

*Travel Science and Natural History*  
24 April 2013  
10:30am

**Christie's South Kensington**

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from under £1,000. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Popular Culture Memorabilia, Vintage Couture, Islamic Art, Jewellery, 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, amongst others. In 2012 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the third consecutive year with sales of £139.4 million / \$223.1 million having welcomed a 10% growth in registered bidders and a 20% increase (£ / \$) in total sales.

**About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2012 that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions 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 also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £631.3 million/\$1 billion in 2012, an increase of 26% on the same period last year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the Middle East, with successful sales, exhibitions and initiatives in Moscow, Baku, Beijing, Mumbai, Delhi, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Doha 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.