

CHRISTIE'S

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INTO THE WEST

*THE ANNENBERG COMMISSION BY THOMAS MOLESWORTH:
PROPERTY FROM RANCH A*

TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S ON SEPTEMBER 25



Living Room, Ranch A, circa 1975

Property of Crook County Museum in Sundance, Wyoming from the Ranch A Historical Collection

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce that the sale of *Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver, Paintings and Prints* on 25 September will offer *The Annenberg Commission by Thomas Molesworth: Property from Ranch A*. This comprehensive collection of 28 pieces of furniture and objects designed by Thomas C. Molesworth (1890-1977), often credited as the creator of the American Western aesthetic, hails from the designer's very first commission near Beulah, Wyoming in 1933. It was this commission by Moses Annenberg, which would launch the furniture maker's vastly successful career.

In 1932, when publishing mogul Moses Annenberg was passing through Beulah, Wyoming, he stopped at a local restaurant for supper and was particularly taken with the trout. The impulsive Annenberg found out where the fish had been caught and purchased 650 acres surrounding the creek, paying \$27,000 in cash on the spot. Annenberg was not

alone in his interest in the West; it was the Golden Age of Western Ranching in America and wealthy Easterners, such as John D. Rockefeller and Bob Woodruff, flocked there, in search of a glamorous and romantic “cowboy” experience.

While Ranch A was under construction, Annenberg was walking in the nearby town of Cody, when he came across Thomas Molesworth’s store, *The Shoshone Furniture Company*. An alumnus of the Art Institute of Chicago, Molesworth had been imbued with the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement. As a reaction to the loss of craftsmanship through industrialization, the movement promoted small shops with a high level of workmanship and quality materials. Upon seeing the vibrant manner in which Molesworth combined rustic elements with Western themes, Annenberg commissioned him to design and furnish the entire interior of Ranch A. Though a daunting undertaking for the two-year old company, the commission resulted in 245 pieces, many of which are preserved at the Wyoming State Museum. Ranch A’s exaggerated cowboy style, combined with Navajo blankets and rugs, Chimayo weavings, and Western artworks, would consistently appear in Molesworth’s décor for the remainder of his career, becoming the cornerstone of his aesthetic.



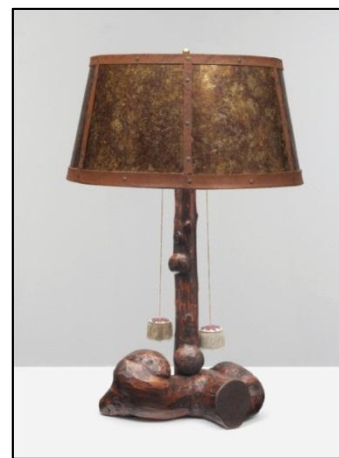
Living Room, Ranch A, circa 1956
Bates Littlehales/National Geographic Creative

The family of the present owners’ of the Ranch A furnishings inherited this fantastic collection from their parents, who acquired the furniture when they purchased Ranch A in the early 1950s. *National Geographic Magazine* later featured the Ranch with the present owners’ family in their October 1956 issue. After changing hands over the years, Ranch A, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is currently owned by the State of Wyoming and functions as the *Ranch A Educational Center*, a non-profit group that is charged with maintaining the ranch as an educational facility.

Highlights from the collection include:



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Pair of Armchairs, circa 1933
Burled fir, upholstered
Each 40 ½ in. high
Estimate: \$20,000-30,000



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Table Lamp, circa 1933
Burled fir, mica and leather shade, two beaded fur pulls
28 ½ in. high, 18 ¼ in. diameter of shade
Estimate: \$30,000-50,000



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Side Table, circa 1933
 Burled fir, leather
 24 ½ in. high, 23 in. diameter
 Estimate: \$10,000-15,000



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Sofa, circa 1933
 Burled fir
 37 ¼ in. high, 90 in. wide, 33 in. deep
 Estimate: \$20,000-30,000



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Full Bed, circa 1933
 Burled fir with leather lamp shades, cotton bed spread
 headboard: 50 ½ in. high, 58 ¾ in. wide;
 footboard: 36 in. high, 55 ¼ in. wide
 Estimate: \$6,000-8,000



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Coffee Table, circa 1933
 Burled fir, leather
 19 ¼ in. high, 36 ¾ in. wide, 17 ¾ in. deep
 Estimate: \$12,000-18,000

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[The complete eCatalogue will be available at Christies.com.](https://www.christies.com)

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2013 that totaled £2.4 billion/\$3.68 billion. In 2012, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 £465.2 million (\$711.8 million) in the first half of 2013, an increase of 13% on the previous year, and for the third successive year represents the highest total for the period in both company and art market history.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth 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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Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:



Thomas Molesworth (1890-1977)
A Two-Arm Table Lamp Base, circa 1933
Burlwood fir, 18 ½ in. high
\$12,000-18,000