

CHRISTIE'S

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MUGHAL MAGNIFICENCE

RARE AND IMPORTANT MUGHAL CARPET TO
BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN OCTOBER

Rare *Millefleur* "Star-Lattice" carpet was once owned
by American industrialist Cornelius Vanderbilt II

One of the most remarkable classical carpets in existence



London – On 8 October 2013 Christie's will offer a rare and magnificent *Millefleur* "star-lattice" carpet which dates to late 17th/early 18th century Mughal India. This carpet, which is in exceptional condition, was once owned by American industrialist Cornelius Vanderbilt II and remained in his family for over a century. As one of only 12 *Millefleur* carpets from this illustrious time in Mughal India, the carpet is expected to realise between £1.5 million and £2 million.

During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries the carpet looms of the Mughal dynasty in India produced many of the most magnificent carpets extant today. These beautiful carpets were originally woven to adorn the palaces of the Mughal Indian aristocracy, but through Dutch, Portuguese and English trading companies they quickly became highly sought after objects by wealthy Europeans.

With the rise of industrial wealth in the United States in the second half of the 19th century, many of the new American millionaires began to emulate the collecting tastes of earlier European aristocracy. Along with collecting early furniture and old master paintings, these wealthy Americans avidly acquired magnificent early carpets. During this period, many 16th, 17th and 18th century Safavid Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Mughal Indian carpets entered the collections of the most prominent Americans such as J.P. Morgan, Henry Clay Frick and Benjamin Altman. Among this esteemed group with a passion for rare, early carpets was Cornelius Vanderbilt II, who acquired the offered carpet for his palatial mansion at 1 West 57th Street in New York City. Vanderbilt fully recognised the importance of this carpet and proudly displayed it on the wall of the Moorish Smoking Room at 1 West 57th Street. The carpet was later transferred to Vanderbilt's country home, "The Breakers", in Newport, Rhode Island, where it was placed in Vanderbilt's master bedroom. After Vanderbilt's death, the carpet remained at "The Breakers" in the possession of his heirs until the settlement of the estate of his youngest daughter, Countess László Széchenyi. The carpet was removed from "The Breakers" for sale in 1977. The appreciation of Mughal carpets existed throughout the Vanderbilt family as evidenced by two later *Millefleur* prayer rugs in the collection of Cornelius' youngest brother, George W. Vanderbilt, at Biltmore, in Asheville, North Carolina.

The fact that the carpet remained in the Vanderbilt family's possession for nearly 100 years may explain the extremely well preserved physical condition of the carpet. This impressive condition, along with the carpet's inherent beauty, ranks it as one of the most remarkable classical carpets existing today.

Since its time in the Vanderbilt collection this exceptional flower-strewn carpet sold in 1989 for \$719,000, and again at Christie's New York in 1995 for about \$992,000.

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PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

Friday, 4 October 2013: 9:00am – 4:30pm
Saturday, 5 October 2013: 12:00pm – 5:00pm
Sunday, 6 October 2013: 12:00pm – 5:00pm
Monday, 7 October 2013: 9:00am – 4:30pm

AUCTION:

Oriental Rugs & Carpets
Tuesday, 8 October 2013
11:00am

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