

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | Paris

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 7 November 2014

AFRICAN, OCEANIC AND AMERICAN INDIAN ART IN PARIS – ON 11 DECEMBER 2014



PARIS – On 11 December 2014, Christie's Paris is delighted to offer our sale of *African, Oceanic and American Indian Art* - crossing time and geography from the far reaches of Western North America, to the shores of Polynesia and Melanesia and back to the age of the Renaissance in Sierra Leone and Nigeria in Africa. This rich offering features a rare and spectacular Tsimshian headdress worn by the ceremonial leaders of the Northwest Coast of America. A sumptuous Maori adze formerly in the collection of James Hooper and a rare stone-carved Iatmul hook figure with a painterly surface, exhibited in important surveys of Sepik River Art since the 1970's, are two notable works from the South Pacific on offer. Ancient ivories, the white gold of Africa, in the form of regal adornments and musical instruments of the highest level from the 16th century in Sierra Leone and Nigeria lead the sale for African art. With a series of works from many historic collections, totally fresh to the market, from Europe and the United States, including James Hooper, Faith-dorian Wright, Edith Gregor Halpert, Jacques and Denise Schwob, Capitaine Delanneau, Dorothy Tremaine Hildt, Rudolf and Leonore Blum, Helen Mandelbaum, Maximilian Schell and Boris Kegel-Konietzko, it is a sale designed to entice the '*amateur's amateur*'.



Our **TSIMSHIAN HEADDRESS**, estimated at 80,000 - 100,000 euros, incorporates important elements from different realms: the sea in its abalone eyes, the earth with its matrix of wood, as well as seal whiskers from a revered creature that navigates easily between these realms, the sky is represented by the carving of the eagle with the amphibian in its mouth. Hyper-symbolic and sensitively carved, it is a masterwork of the Northwest American Coast art, circa 1840-1860.

A mythical being of the **MAORI** from New Zealand is the central figure of an early 19th century, possibly 18th century, **ADZE**, estimated at €15,000-25,000. It features a sensual nephrite blade, which was formerly in the collections of Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Phipps, 1st and 3rd Dragoon Guards (retired 1838-1839) and James T. Hooper.



From New Guinea an **IATMUL JANUS HOOK FIGURE** estimated at €100,000-200,000, carved without the use of metal tools and richly decorated with mineral pigments, leads our Oceanic selection. The sculpture enjoys a rich history having been featured in publications on Oceanic art and shown in major exhibitions, including an exhibition about the Surrealist, Dali, and held in several esteemed collections since its discovery in the 1960's. It is revelatory, but not so surprising, to imagine the Renaissance, an apogee of Western culture, on the shores of Africa. The sophisticated royal courts of Sierra Leone quickly married their artistic production to the tastes of the Portuguese, who arrived in the 15th century.

From this period of 1475 to 1525, we offer a rare **SAPI-PORTUGUESE HUNTING HORN** estimated between €100,000 and €150,000. In their study of these works, Ezio Bassani and William Fagg located only 31 horns of this type, with 20 resting in Museum collections. Characterized by their use of the Oliphant form inscribed with classical scenery –such as mythological animals, fantastic scenes of crocodile hunters, horses, deer hunting, snakes, parrots–, and heraldic elements of Spanish and Portuguese inspiration –crosses, sword-shield emblems and letters–, they were likely created and preserved as part of a cache of precious regalia.



A **BENIN LEOPARD PENDANT** estimated at €100,000-150,000, is another rare ivory work from the 1600s. Created for royalty, the leopard is a symbol of the King's strength, courage and authority. The pendant is offered from the Blum Collection and first appeared on the market in 1969 from the collection of Bernard Le Dauphin.



From the Ivory Coast is an archetype of **SENUFO STATUARY**: a female figure will be offered at €60,000-80,000. This figure was collected in the 1960's by the pre-eminent scholar and dealer, Hélène (Kamer) Leloup. Tall and abstract, it was likely a deble for use as a rhythm pounder during important ceremonies of the Poro society. This figure remained since the 1960's in the celebrated Tremaine Collection, which included Western masterworks by Mondrian and Jasper Johns.

One of the most iconic works in African art is a **LUBA KIFWEBE MASK**, noted for its reconfiguration of an anthropomorphic face coupled with the extreme graphic nature of the concentric circles forming the face and alternating vibration of black and white. This mask was formerly in the famous Schwob Collection, Belgium and will be offered for €30,000 - €50,000.



Highlights are now on view through 12 November in our New York, Rockefeller Plaza Galleries. Our exhibition will take place at Galerie Felix Vercel on the ground floor of 9, avenue Matignon on the corner of rue de Ponthieu (between Gagosian Gallery and Christie's). This historic building was designed in 1913 by Rene Sergent, who was also the architect of the building which today houses the Musée Guimet.

AUCTION:

Thursday 11 December at 4pm.

at **Christie's**: 9, avenue Matignon
75008 – Paris

PUBLIC VIEWING:

Saturday 6 December from 10 am. to 6 pm.

Sunday 7 December from 2 pm. to 6 pm.

Monday 8 to Wednesday 10 December from 10am. to 6pm.

Thursday 11 December from 10 am. to 12 pm.

at the **Galerie Felix Vercel**: 9, avenue Matignon – 75008 – Paris

PRESS CONTACTS:

Beverly Bueninck | 01 40 76 84 08 | bbueninck@christies.com

Mathilde Fennebresque | 01 40 76 85 88 | mfennebresque@christies.com

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2014 that totaled £2.69 / \$4.47 billion, making it the highest half year 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 around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales in the first half of 2014 totalled £498.9 million (\$828.2 million).

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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