

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 6 March 2014

RARE DEPICTION OF THE YOUNG HERCULES LEADS CHRISTIE'S SALE OF *ANTIQUITIES* IN APRIL



London – The Christie's sale of *Antiquities* in London on 2 April 2014 comprises 199 carefully selected lots with exceptional provenance which span the ancient world from the 3rd Millennium B.C. to the 11th Century A.D. Leading the sale is a rare statue of the young Hercules, formerly in the Roger Peyrefitte (1907-2000) Collection in Paris (estimate: £100,000-150,000, *illustrated above*). Peyrefitte was a French diplomat and noted novelist, whose collection, including this piece, was published in 1972. Further highlights include a pair of Egyptian alabaster canopic jars for Tau-Iert-Iru (estimate: £50,000 - 70,000) and a Roman marble Fortuna, previously in the collection at Harewood House (estimate: £25,000 - 35,000). With estimates ranging from £1,000 to £150,000 the sale is expected to realise in excess of £2 million.



A playful nod to his exploits to come, the statue of the young Hercules shows him wearing the Nemean lion skin, which was won in his First Labour, and leaning on the iconic olive-wood club (now missing) (estimate: £100,000-150,000, *illustrated left*). The Romans followed the Greek taste for artistic renderings of infants, and representations of Hercules as a baby abound yet there are few depictions of the hero as a cherubically plump child evident in the present work. It is known from parallel examples that Hercules would have been holding the golden apples of the Hesperides in his outstretched left hand, which he was ordered to steal as his Eleventh Labour. This seemingly illogical marrying of a tender depiction of youth with the spoils of heroic deeds is highly unusual, attested to in only a couple of other statues, including one in green basalt in the Capitoline Museums.

Canopic jars were used in ancient Egypt during the mummification process to store the internal organs of the deceased. The sale features a pair of Egyptian alabaster canopic jars which were made for a woman called Tau-Iert-Iru (estimate: £50,000-70,000, *illustrated right*). Of these two jars, one invokes the protection of the god Hapy, one of the four sons of Horus, associated with and the protector of the lungs. The other invokes the goddess Neith, who offers protection to the god Duamutef, associated with and protector of the stomach. A third jar would have been inscribed with an invocation by Isis to the god Imsety, associated with the liver, and a fourth jar would have had an invocation by Selqet, to Qebehsenuef, associated with the intestines.



Further highlights include a Roman marble Fortuna (estimate: £25,000-35,000, *illustrated left*). Roman goddess of chance and luck, she is shown with several of her characteristic attributes, including the cornucopia, which she holds, as the giver of abundance, a rudder, which signifies her role as controller of destinies, a ball, which indicates the uncertainty of fate, and a wheel, depicting the circle of life and fortune, all depicted on the side of her throne. This marble which dates to *circa* 1st – 2nd century A.D, was previously in the Harewood House collection, probably acquired by Henry Lascelles, the 6th Earl of Harewood, who married Princess Mary, daughter of George V in 1922. The goddess Fortuna had many cults in Rome, and her image was used by emperors, including Augustus, for the promotion of their leadership.

THE PLESCH COLLECTION OF ANCIENT GLASS

Christie's is honoured to be offering the second part of the Plesch collection of ancient glass, having offered part one in 2009. Peter and Traudi Plesch fell for the lure of ancient glass on their honeymoon in Israel, which sparked a shared passion for collecting ancient glass. Their one criterion for purchasing a piece of glass was that both Traudi and Peter should want the object, though not necessarily with the same passion. The frequent invitations given to Peter Plesch to lecture worldwide on Cationic Polymerisation, his specialism at Keele University, afforded the couple the opportunity of scouring antique shops in many countries for antique glass and other works of art. Traudi Plesch's interest in ancient glass, and her lectures thereon, were a

small part of her major life's work, which was volunteering locally and spearheading fundraising for the Douglas MacMillan hospice, the British Heart Foundation and the NSPCC among others. Her work was recognised in 1988 with an MBE for 'fundraising for charities', and in 2000 with an OBE for 'services to the county of Staffordshire'. A local newspaper referred to her as the 'Robin Hood of the Westlands', the area of Newcastle-under-Lyme where they both lived. The present selection spans Egyptian to the late Roman period, and bears testament to their desire to have beautiful but also academically meaningful pieces. Highlights include a Roman pale green-blue glass sprinkler flask, circa 4th century A.D. (estimate: £2,000 – 3,000, illustrated right).



THE DEREK CONTENT COLLECTION OF ANCIENT GOLD AND SILVER STATUETTES

In the face of the lack of serious scholarship on the important subject of classical sculpture in the precious metals, Derek Content set out to form a collection of this material in the 1970s, with a view to eventually publishing a large enough group to allow scholars to study this miniature yet important art form in more detail. Christie's is delighted to showcase 17 of his 160 ancient figurines, which includes Roman gods and goddesses, as well as mythological subjects, such as this rare depiction of Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guarded the entrance to the Underworld. The selection also includes a charming Roman silver mouse, nibbling on a loaf of bread, which is said to have been excavated in the UK.



A Roman silver gilt figure of Dionysos, *circa* 1st century A.D.
2 in. (5.2 cm.) long
Estimate: £7,000-10,000



A Roman silver figure of Cerberus,
circa 1st - 2nd century A.D.
1 1/4 in. (3.2 cm.) high
Estimate: £5,000-7,000



A Roman silver mouse
circa 1st - 2nd century A.D.
Size: .7/8 in. (2.2 cm.) high
Estimate: £1,500 – 2,500

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PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

Friday, 28 March 2014: 9:00am-4:30 pm
Saturday, 29 March 2014: 12:00pm – 5:00pm
Sunday, 30 March 2014: 12:00pm – 5:00pm
Monday, 31 March 2014: 9:00am – 4:30pm

AUCTION:

Antiquities
Wednesday, 2 April 2014
1:00pm

Tuesday, 1 April 2014: 9:00am – 8:00pm
Wednesday, 2 April 2014: 9:00am – 12:00pm

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 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 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 totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

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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