

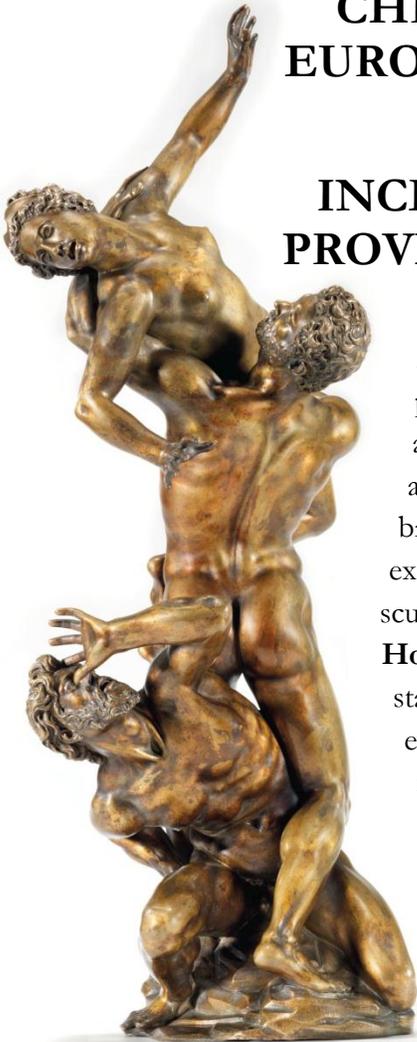
# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 16 June 2014

## THE EXCEPTIONAL SALE 2014

### CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN FURNITURE & DECORATIVE ARTS IN LONDON ON 10 JULY

### INCLUDING 16 WORKS OF ART WITH ROYAL PROVENANCE AND A BRONZE SCULPTURE BY GIAMBOLONGA



London – Christie's is pleased to announce that *The Exceptional Sale* will take place on the evening of 10 July 2014. Following the successes since the inaugural auction in 2008, this sale platform provides collectors with the opportunity to acquire masterpieces of European furniture and decorative arts. *The Exceptional Sale* brings together a wide variety of objects which are linked by a common attribute: excellence. The auction is highlighted by the Egyptian statue *Sechemka* and a bronze sculpture by Giambologna illustrated left, which will be on view during **Open House 2014**, the sixth annual summer exhibition of masterpieces that Christie's has staged, presenting over 100 exceptional artworks and objects during a five-day free event in London, from 13-17 June 2014. *The Exceptional Sale* will also present the finest examples of English, French and Italian furniture, ormolu-mounted Chinese porcelain, silver, European porcelain, clocks, sculpture and carpets. Comprising 58 lots, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £18 million.

**Robert Copley, Deputy Chairman Christie's UK, International Head of Furniture and Decorative Arts:** *United by the common themes of rarity, provenance, craftsmanship and beauty, works offered in 'The Exceptional Sale' this year continue to celebrate excellence, while providing collectors with an opportunity to acquire the very best;*

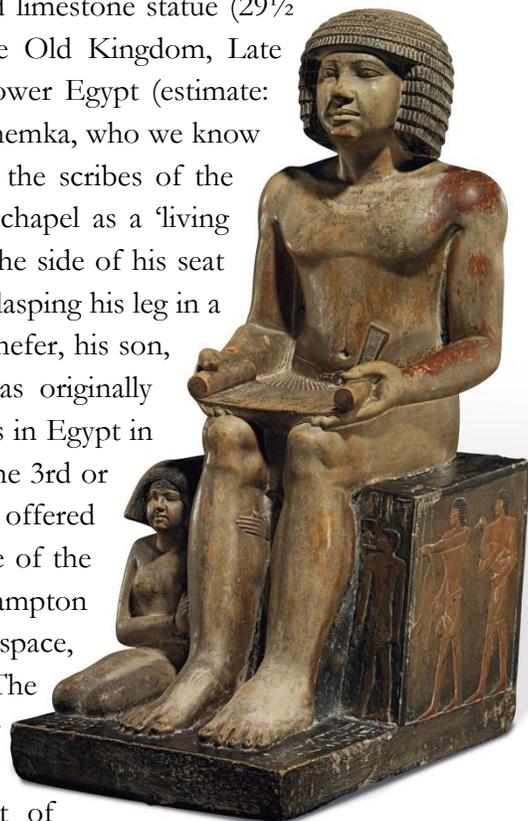
*from an exquisite Italian sculpture by Giambologna to an historical Egyptian statue, 'The Exceptional Sale' will also offer some of England's finest furniture made by Chippendale, Imperial European silver and a wide range of works with royal provenance including an elegant carpet made during the reign of King Louis XV and a porcelain vase celebrating the Duke of Wellington's victory at the Battle of Vitoria in 1813.*

#### SCULPTURE

Discerning collectors will not want to miss the opportunity to acquire the present bronze by Giambologna entitled *The Rape of A Sabine*, which last appeared at auction at Christie's London in December 1989 when it made a world record price of £2,750,000 (estimate: £3,000,000 – 5,000,000 million, *illustrated above left*). It was purchased at that time by a private collector who is now offering it again for sale 25 years later. The bronze depicts one of the most celebrated compositions of the Florentine court sculptor Giambologna (1529-1608) and is one of only three bronzes to bear the inscription 'GIO BOLONGE' – the other two being in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, and the *Museum of Fine Arts* in Boston. In terms of facture and surface, it

closely resembles an important group of Giambologna bronzes in the collection of the noble family of Schönborn, who acquired them in 1660 from the heirs of Sebastian Zäch, a close friend of Giambologna. Documents show that an example of this composition was among the Schönborn bronzes purchased from the Zäch family, and it may be that the present bronze is the missing Zäch/Schönborn cast.

Another stellar lot in the sale is an exceptional Egyptian painted limestone statue (29½ in./75 cm. high) which is over 4,500 years old, dating to the Old Kingdom, Late Dynasty 5, circa 2400–2300 B.C., probably from Saqqara in Lower Egypt (estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000, *illustrated right*). It depicts a man called Sekhemka, who we know from the inscription on the statue's base was the Inspector of the scribes of the royal court. This statue would have been placed in his tomb's chapel as a 'living image', with the depictions of offerings in carved relief around the side of his seat sustaining his soul for eternity. His wife, Sitmerit, sits at his feet clasping his leg in a gesture of affection. On the opposite side a young man, Seshemnefer, his son, holds a lotus flower, the symbol of rebirth. The sculpture was originally acquired by the 2nd Marquess of Northampton during his travels in Egypt in 1849-50 and was given to the Northampton Museum by either the 3rd or 4th Marquess of Northampton prior to 1880. The statue is being offered for sale by Northampton Borough Council. Proceeds of the sale of the sculpture will help fund a major new extension of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery doubling the size of the exhibition space, creating new galleries, teaching facilities and commercial space. The new development will position Northampton as a leading regional museum focused on history, art and Northampton's footwear heritage. There will also be a major refurbishment of



Abington Park museum, which will focus on the building's connection with William Shakespeare and on the history of the Northamptonshire Regiments. These significant developments at the museum will underpin the growth of Northampton's Cultural Quarter. For a dedicated press release, please click [here](#).

## FURNITURE



The incredible selection of furniture in *The Exceptional Sale* is highlighted by a superb pair of console tables, decorated with precious Japanese lacquer and exquisitely chased ormolu mounts (estimate: £600,000-1,000,000, *illustrated left*). These epitomise the creative genius generated by the collaboration of the leading Parisian marchand-mercier Dominique Daguerre and the celebrated ébéniste Adam Weisweiler. The foremost Parisian marchand-mercier of the last decades of the Ancien Régime, Daguerre dominated taste in Paris and subsequently also London, supplying *objets de luxe* to the French Court and, increasingly during the 1780s, to the English nobility.

Further highlights include an Italian specimen marble table top, produced in the late 16th century in Rome, on an Irish George II giltwood stand attributed to Thomas Johnson after a design by Matthias Darly, circa 1756-58 (estimate: £400,000-600,000, *illustrated right*). Probably acquired by Admiral John Forbes (d. 1796), while in Rome in March 1755, he commissioned a superb George II giltwood stand carved with naturalistic oak branch supports that are wrapped with foliate trails. The auction will also feature a pair of Louis XVI ormolu-mounted and brass-inlaid ebony meubles d'appui by Pierre Garnier, *circa 1775-1779* (estimate:



£400,000 – 600,000, *illustrated left*). One of the most influential protagonists of the *Gôut-Grec* style of the 1770s was Madame de Pompadour's brother, the Marquis de Marigny (d.1781). In a letter written by him to the Parisian ébéniste Pierre Garnier (d.1806) on 17 November 1779, Marigny refers to '*deux bas d'armoire en ébène que vous m'avez fait pour mon cabinet place du Louvre*', clearly identifying these

cabinets, their original commission and their maker. Conceived in elegant architectural lines and with their black ebony veneers strikingly off-set by brass inlay and ormolu mounts, perfectly embodying *Gôut-Grec*, these cabinets were destined for one of the most fashionable houses of the time, the Marquis' hôtel de Marigny on the rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre in Paris. Following the Revolution and Marigny's death, the cabinets formed part of another celebrated Parisian collection: that of painter and art dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun (d.1813), sold as lot 415 on 29 September 1806.

Examples of English furniture will include a set of chairs designed and made by one of the greatest English cabinet-makers, Thomas Chippendale, in his St Martin's Lane workshop (estimate: £150,000-250,000, *illustrated right*). Created in the new neo-classical style, the chairs are almost certainly part of the set supplied to the 2nd Earl of Shelburne for his London residence, Lansdowne House in Berkeley Square. The original Lansdowne Dining Room by Robert Adam is now preserved in the



Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Supplied in 1769 as a set of fourteen chairs at a cost of £51.9s (£3.15s each), it was a model that Chippendale varied very slightly over the subsequent five years, supplying sets to his most famous patrons at Harewood House, Goldsborough Hall and Newby Hall all in



his native Yorkshire, Brocket Hall in Buckinghamshire, as well as a set for the virtuoso actor, David Garrick for his house in Robert Adam's newly created and fashionable Adelphi. Another example of English furniture is the Colworth House Desk, which was supplied by Tatham, Bailey & Saunders in 1811 to William Lee Antonie, Colworth House, Bedfordshire (estimate: £700,000-1,000,000, *illustrated left*). The luxurious combination of exotic East Indian satinwood and ormolu typifies the taste of the Carlton House Set. Supplied in 1811, this desk is one of a small group of extremely grand Regency desks made by Tatham, Bailey & Saunders; other patrons included the Prince Regent and the hero of Waterloo, the Marquess of Anglesey.

## SILVER

Building on the strong results achieved by the silver in *The Exceptional Sale* 2013, in which the Maharaja Patiala's banqueting service achieved a record price for an English dinner service at auction, *The Exceptional Sale* 2014 will offer the finest examples of both British and European silver. Two candelabra from the Riga Service, made in Augsburg in the French neo-classical style, embody the outward looking nature and cosmopolitan taste of the court of Empress Catherine the Great of Russia (estimate: £300,000-500,000, *illustrated right*). These magnificent candelabra were commissioned in 1781 by Catherine for her Governor's palace in Riga, capital of the Latvian region. The service was one of 13 ordered for Governor's palaces across her realm. They had the dual purpose of displaying Catherine's power, authority and wealth, while on a practical level sparing her household the cost and risk of transporting extensive quantities of silver across the vast expanses of her Empire. So large was the commission that six different Augsburg goldsmiths collaborated to produce what is undoubtedly the greatest neo-classical German dinner service to survive.



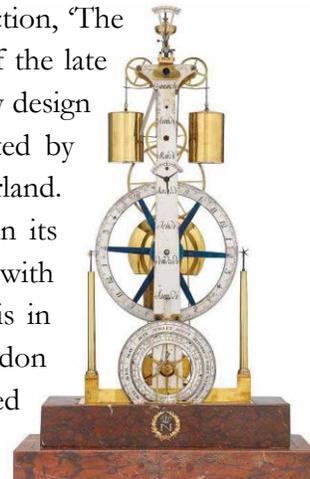
## PORCELAIN



This magnificent vase celebrates the Duke of Wellington's victory at the Battle of Vitoria in 1813, depicting the Duke and his generals on horseback with the battle raging around them (estimate: £120,000-180,000, *illustrated left*). Two years later, just months after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in June 1815, work began in Berlin on a magnificent porcelain dinner service for the Duke of Wellington. In gratitude for Napoleon's defeat, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia commissioned the service for the Duke on 5 October 1815, including two vases of the same form as this vase. The Duke of Wellington's service was delivered in 1819, but was preceded by gifts of Berlin porcelain to 14 other Englishmen of high rank. Unfortunately all that is known of these gifts is that they arrived in 32 cases: no record of the contents or the recipients appears to have survived. The quality of the vase and its shape suggests that it could have been intended for Wellington in advance of his service, and if not for him then it is likely a Royal gift to one of his generals.

## CLOCKS

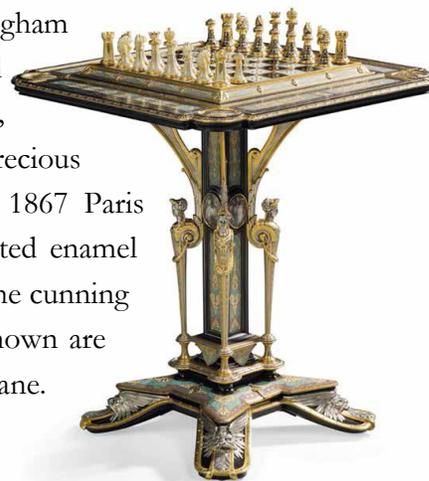
Clocks in *The Exceptional Sale* include an important timepiece from the Ilbert Collection, 'The Breguet "Napoleon" Clock' – Pendule à Trois Roués, 1795, from the collection of the late Michael Inchbald. Abraham Louis Breguet (1747–1823) conceived this extraordinary design in 1787 (estimate: £700,000-1,000,000 *illustrated right*). The clock was first executed by Breguet with the assistance of Samuel Roy of Neuchâtel during his exile in Switzerland. The present clock is one of only five known to survive from this period. Within its simple frame it displays both the Gregorian and Revolutionary calendars, together with 'equation of time'. It was almost certainly taken by Breguet on his return to Paris in 1795. The Breguet archive records it then being sold in June of that year to his London agent Louis Recordon. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it reappears in the esteemed collection of Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956) who formed one of the greatest horological collections known. The vast majority of the collection was catalogued for auction at Christie's in 1958 and subsequently acquired by the British Museum where it has received international acclaim.





Further highlights of the auction include an important Savonnerie carpet, woven as part of a Royal commission for King Louis XV of France (estimate £500,000-800,000, *illustrated left*). The carpet was designed by the King's favourite artist designer, Pierre Josse Perrot, who defined the style of Savonnerie during the reign of Louis XV. The first carpet woven from this cartoon was for Louis XV's dining room at Fontainebleau which was completed in 1739–40. The extraordinary condition of the present carpet indicates that it was most likely given as a diplomatic gift from the King, therefore escaping the destruction that was brought to bear on many Savonnerie carpets after the Revolution in 1789. The exquisite naturalistic drawing of the flowers and the wonderfully rich palette are characteristic of the finest Savonnerie weavings of the 18th century.

*The Exceptional Sale* will also offer a chess-table by the Birmingham silversmiths Elkington & Co.: which is exemplary of the innovation and superb quality of 19<sup>th</sup> century design (estimate: £400,000-600,000, *illustrated right*). Exquisitely crafted in gilt-electrotype inlaid with precious enamels, it was a highlight Elkington's medal winning stand at the 1867 Paris *Exposition Universelle*. Each corner of the top is set with a finely painted enamel portrait roundel depicting a great Emperor from history; in allegory of the cunning and military strategy needed to win a battle of chess. The Emperors shown are Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon Bonaparte and Tamerlane. The table reputedly later belonged to Tsar Alexander II (d. 1881).



**PRESS CONTACT:** Alexandra Deyzac | +44(0)207 389 2265 | [adeyzac@christies.com](mailto:adeyzac@christies.com)

Please click [here](#) for the complete eCatalogue

**PUBLIC EXHIBITION:**

OPEN HOUSE EXHIBITION LONDON:

Friday, 13 June: 9:00 am – 21:00 pm  
 Saturday, 14 June: 9:00 pm – 21:00 pm  
 Sunday, 15 June: 9:00 pm – 21:00 pm  
 Monday, 16 June: 9:00 am – 17:00 pm  
 Tuesday, 17 June: 9:00 am – 13:00 pm

**AUCTION:**

*The Exceptional Sale*  
 Christie's London  
 Thursday, 10 July 2014  
 19:00

**AUCTION PREVIEW**

Friday, 4 July 2013: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm  
 Saturday, 5 July 2013: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
 Sunday, 6 July 2013: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
 Monday, 7 July 2013: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm  
 Tuesday, 8 July 2013: 9:00 am – 3:30 pm  
 Wednesday, 9 July 2013: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm  
 Thursday, 10 July: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

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