

CHRISTIE'S

THE ART PEOPLE

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER RUBENS'S MASTERPIECE

LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS

AS THE CENTERPIECE OF CLASSIC WEEK IN LONDON

OLD MASTER & BRITISH PAINTINGS EVENING SALE LONDON, 7 JULY 2016



FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE COLLECTION
SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS (Seigen 1577-1640 Antwerp)
Lot and his Daughters, circa 1613-1614
Oil on canvas, 74 x 88 ½ in. (190 x 225 cm.)
Estimate on Request

London – Sir Peter Paul Rubens's masterpiece, *Lot and his Daughters* (circa 1613-1614) will be sold by Christie's as the centerpiece of a curated week of sales, Classic Week*, in London this July. An outstanding example of Rubens's early maturity and one of the most important paintings by the artist to have remained in private hands. The work has been hidden from public view for over a century and will be exhibited during Christie's New York Classic Week (8 – 12 April 2016) and in Hong Kong (26 - 30 May 2016), before being offered in London Classic Week, leading the Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale on 7 July. *Lot and his Daughters* boasts a distinguished provenance, once forming part of the collections of wealthy Antwerp merchants; a Governor-General of the Spanish Netherlands; Joseph I Holy Roman Emperor; and the Dukes of Marlborough. It was included in the first volume of *The English Connoisseur* from 1766 and has since been listed in all the major publications on Rubens's work. The sale of this painting by the quintessential artist of the Northern Baroque presents a rare opportunity for both international collectors and institutions.

"After the historic private sale of two Rembrandt Portraits* to the French and Dutch states earlier this year, Christie's is leading the masterpiece market by offering this monumental work by the other stellar artist of the Northern School, Sir Peter Paul Rubens. The impact of this painting in the flesh is overwhelming: we look forward to seeing the reactions of those who come to view it when we exhibit it in New York, Hong Kong and London." **Paul Raison, Deputy Chairman, Old Master Pictures**

Rubens's Return to Antwerp

At the time that Rubens painted *Lot and his Daughters*, his reputation as the most important and fashionable artist in Antwerp had already put him at the centre of the European artistic stage. Having worked in Rome at the court of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, he was appointed court painter in Brussels to the Archdukes Albert and Isabella in 1609. During this period, Rubens produced some of the most well-known works of his oeuvre, including two monumental altarpieces, *The Raising of the Cross*, commissioned in 1610 for the church of St Walburga, and *The Descent from the Cross*, painted in 1611–1614 for Antwerp Cathedral. In addition to these public works, Rubens carried out a number of private commissions, instilling traditional religious subjects, such as *Lot and his Daughters*, with an exciting new energy.

Exceptional Provenance

The recorded provenance of *Lot and his Daughters* begins with the first known owner Balthazar Courtois, an Antwerp merchant who died in 1668. Listed in the inventory of his estate, the painting was described as a 'schouwstuk' (chimneypiece). It has not been established whether Courtois commissioned the painting from Rubens, but the description of it in his Antwerp house accords with the almost certain appearance of this picture in an *Interior Scene* (circa 1625–1630), Frans Francken II (1581–1642) and attributed to Cornelis de Vos (1584/85–1651).



Credit: Photo: Erik Cornelius/Nationalmuseum
FRANS FRANCKEN II (1581–1642) AND ATTRIBUTED TO CORNELIS DE VOS (1584/85–1651)
Interior Scene, also called 'Rubens's Salon', circa 1625–30
Oil on panel, Nationalmuseum Stockholm

This magnificent painting has changed hands on only a few occasions. In 1668 it was inherited by Courtois's son Jan Baptist, it then passed to the wealthy Antwerp merchant Ghisbert van Colen. In 1698 it was bought from van Colen by the military commander and avid collector Governor-General of the Spanish Netherlands, Maximilian II Emanuel (1662–1726), the Wittelsbach Elector of the Holy Roman Empire until his exile. The painting was then given to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722) in 1706 by Joseph I, Holy Roman Emperor (1678–1711), as a trophy in gratitude for the victories at Blenheim and Ramillies.

Marlborough's collection included at least 10 other pictures by Rubens and placed *Lot and his Daughters* in the Great Room at Marlborough House in 1740 until eventually being moved to England's greatest early 18th-century country house, Blenheim Palace, where it was hung in the Library in 1766 and in the Dining Room by 1810, paired with Rubens's *Venus and Adonis* (also from the collection of Maximilian II Emanuel). Around 1710–1720 the canvas was slightly extended at the top and bottom edges and the fine Blenheim frame in which it still hangs was added to complement the furniture of Blenheim Palace, designed by James Moore. The work remained in the Marlborough collection for at least a century until acquired by the entrepreneur, philanthropist and collector Baron Maurice de Hirsch de Gereuth (1831–1896) from whom it has been passed by descent.

Lot and his Daughters

The Old Testament tale, Lot and his Daughters (Genesis XIX: 30–38), had been a favoured subject with Northern European artists since the Renaissance with notable examples portrayed by Lucas van Leyden, Jan Massys, Joachim Wtewael and Hendrick Goltzius. Exploring the themes of vice and virtue, Lot and his Daughters is a cautionary story, which Rubens returned to throughout his career. Pulsating with life, this canvas illustrates the events after Lot and his family have fled the immoral city of Sodom having escaped to the desolate mountain town of Zoar. His two chaste daughters, fuelled by the desire to continue their lineage following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, conspired to seduce their father and from who, according to the Bible, Jesus Christ was directly related through David's great-grandmother Ruth, who was descended from Moab.

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On View:

New York, Classic Week, 8 – 12 April 2016
Hong Kong, 26 – 30 May 2016
London, 2 – 7 July 2016

Auction:

Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale
7 July 2016

Notes to Editors

***Rembrandt van Rijn Private Sale:** Christie's facilitated the historic private sale of two record-breaking masterpieces by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) to the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum. The first ever joint acquisition of two exceptional Rembrandts by the French and Dutch states was concluded on 1 February, with the portraits being bought for €160 million — €80 million each, and thus becoming the most expensive Old Master paintings in history.

***Classic Week:** As a further step in its sales innovation strategy, Christie's introduced a new themed week of sales, Classic Week which will take place for the first time at Rockefeller Center, New York from 8 April 2016, followed by Classic Week London from 2 July 2016. These sales will include Old Master Paintings, Sculpture, Antiquities, and Christie's signature Exceptional Sale of decorative arts. A new curated sale entitled "Revolution" will be the centerpiece of the auction series in New York, and will feature masterworks from the 18th to the 20th centuries, including paintings, drawings, prints, photography and sculpture, which will explore the radical social, political and artistic changes that defined this period of history.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2015 that totalled £4.8 billion / \$7.4 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. 2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. 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 350 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.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 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

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