

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**A MASTERPIECE OF BOSTON CRAFTSMANSHIP TO
HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S AMERICAN FURNITURE AND
FOLK ART SALE JANUARY 23, 2009**

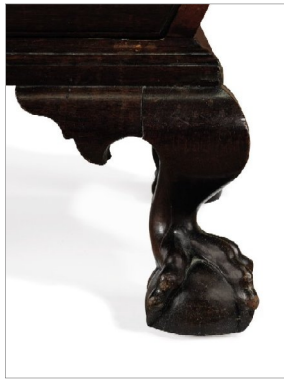


**Important American Furniture and Folk Art
January 23, 2009**

New York – An 18th century Chippendale “plum-pudding” mahogany bombé chest-of-drawers with a unique provenance is the leading lot in this season’s sale of *Important American Furniture and Folk Art*. The January 23 auction features over 200 items of furniture, historic paintings, folk art, and a special added selection of English and Dutch Delft.

The bombé chest-of-drawers (*pictured above*) is a masterpiece of colonial craftsmanship that descended in the Quincy family of Boston and was owned by a series of historical personages who played key roles in the political realm of 18th and 19th century Boston (estimate: \$2,000,000–4,000,000). The celebrated bombé form, of which only a few examples survive today, is typified by

the pronounced swell of the chest's sides beginning at the top of the third drawer. With the Quincy bombé, this curvilinear form is further enhanced by the attractive "plum pudding" color, as well as the impressive overhang on the top edge and vigorously carved ball-and-claw feet. The chest appears to retain its original brasses.



Notes affixed to the chest show the bombé was owned by Josiah Quincy III (1772 – 1864), the second mayor of Boston from 1823 to 1828 and President of Harvard from 1829 to 1845. It was most likely made for either Josiah Quincy I (1710 – 1784) or William Phillips (1722 – 1804), both grandfathers of Josiah III and prominent figures in Revolutionary War-era Boston. The bombé appears to have been made in the same shop as very closely related examples now at Historic Deerfield and at the Henry Ford Museum. The feet on all the related pieces share a robust structure with well-defined knuckles and side talons (*pictured at left*) that exhibit the

distinctive "rake" associated with Boston craftsmanship.

Other highlights of the furniture section include an exceedingly rare survival of an early 18th century American easy chair that typifies the Boston William and Mary form. A well-preserved example, the chair is one of only 12 known with sawn cabriole legs, a design element that eventually replaced the block-and-turned leg of earlier William and Mary easy chairs (estimate: \$100,000–150,000).



A pair of Chippendale mahogany chairs attributed to the highly-influential "Garvan" carver of Philadelphia is also included in the sale (*pictured at left*; estimate: \$50,000-80,000). Recent examples of the Garvan carver's work to appear on the marketplace include the Fisher-Fox family tea table, sold at Christie's in October 2007 for \$6.7 million, soaring well beyond its pre-sale low estimate of \$2 million.

Christie's is also pleased to present an excellent selection of Shaker furniture, led by a yellow-stained pine cupboard-over-drawers crafted in New Lebanon or Watervliet, New York *circa* 1850 (estimate: 20,000-30,000). A Shaker red-stained cherrywood work stand – also *circa* 1850 – is offered from a private New York collection (estimate: \$15,000-25,000).

In concurrence with the inaugural ceremonies, Christie's offers an important group of historic paintings and sculptures of the first American President. *George Washington at Princeton* by Charles Peale Polk is a powerful and enduring portrait of the General at the site of his critical military victory in 1777. Painted during the first term of Washington's presidency, Polk – nephew of American

portraitist Charles Willson Peale – renders Washington in a bold, linear style and with an assured, steady gaze that yields an iconic image of composure and heroism (estimate: \$300,000-500,000).



An 1854 painting by Tompkins Harrison Matteson, *George Washington at Valley Forge*, skillfully depicts a defining moment in America's battle for Independence. Set against the bleakness of the soldiers' winter encampment, General Washington appears to exude an inner light as he offers his hand to his ragged troops in a gesture that defines his commitment to both his men and the cause (estimate: \$300,000-500,000).

The folk art section of the sale is highlighted by several rare items of exceptional provenance and design. A large Molded Copper Indian Weathervane is a stately and highly individualized example that has remained in the family of noted Canadian/American architect Ernest Barott for over 100 years (estimate: \$60,000–90,000). An unusual pine hanging box, likely from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, is embellished with distinctive geometric designs and paint-decorated forms shared by other known examples from this unidentified maker (estimate: \$20,000-30,000). A lovely pair of portraits in profile of a Gentleman and a Lady is attributed to John S. Blunt, an early 19th century painter (estimate: \$8,000-12,000). Portraits in profile by Blunt are extremely rare in the marketplace, as few examples by him are known to exist.



A special feature of this season's sale is an added section of Dutch and English Delft dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. One of the earliest examples is a set of sixty-nine blue Dutch Delft tiles from *circa* 1620 – 1640 painted with fruit motifs (estimate: \$10,000-15,000). A pair of Dutch tile picture columns or *tegelpilasters* from the late 18th century is also featured (estimate: \$8,000-12,000), as well as a selection of late 17th and early 18th century English blue dash chargers from a Private American Collection including examples painted with tulips, with vine leaves, and with portraits of Kings William and George I, respectively (estimates ranging from \$8,000-12,000 to \$25,000-30,000).

Auction: Important American Furniture and Folk Art

January 23, 2009 (2 sessions)
approx. 11am and at 2pm

Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

January 17 - 22, 2009

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totalled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totalled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. 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 conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales 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 \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new 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

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Images available on request

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