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GOTHIC GLORY AT CHRISTIE'S - CHRISTOPHER WOOD COLLECTION TO BE OFFERED IN FEBRUARY 2007

Christopher Wood: A Very Victorian Eye
28 February 2007, King Street



King Street – Christie's is pleased to announce a single-owner sale of drawings, paintings and decorative arts from the collection of renowned dealer and scholar Christopher Wood. *Christopher Wood: A Very Victorian Eye* will offer approximately 300 lots with individual estimates ranging from £500 to £100,000, with no reserve on lots estimated at £1,000 and below, and will be available through the innovative live bidding system **Christie's LIVE™** offering collectors and enthusiasts around the world the opportunity to bid while enjoying the look, sound and feel of the sale from their personal computer. The auction will include works of art by some of the most significant artists of the 19th century including Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, John Atkinson Grimshaw, Frederic, Lord Leighton, Sir John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John William Waterhouse and is expected to realise in the region of £1 million.

Martin Beisly, Senior Director, and Harriet Drummond and Peter Brown, Directors of Christie's, comment: *'It is a great privilege to offer at auction the collection of Christopher Wood, who is widely regarded as one of the world's leading scholars and dealers of Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite art. This auction will present an exceptional opportunity to potential buyers by offering a selection of paintings, drawings and objects acquired by Christopher over a number of years, all of which illustrate his discerning and distinctive eye.'*

Christopher Wood comments: *'I have recently relocated my office and gallery to 10 St. James's Place, where I continue as a dealer and consultant in Victorian art. As a result of this move to smaller premises after many years at Bury Street, I am downsizing my collection and will be offering a selection of works from both my London and country residences at auction at Christie's in February. Throughout the years, I have collected paintings, drawings and objects from the 19th and early 20th centuries, in order to fully present the artistic texture of this exciting period, and this auction should present an impressive representational view of Victorian art.'*

Highlights of the paintings in the sale include *Lovers in a wood by moonlight* by John Atkinson Grimshaw (1836-1893) *illustrated right*. This atmospheric work depicts a romancing couple in moonlit woods, and highlights Grimshaw's outstanding ability to paint nocturnal light with a delicacy and poise unrivalled by others; James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) stated that *'I considered myself the inventor of Nocturnes until I saw Grimmy's moonlit pictures'*. Signed and dated 1873, it is expected to realise £100,000-150,000. *Interior of a House at Lindos* by Frederic, Lord Leighton, P.R.A., R.W.S. (1830-1896), the first English artist to be raised to the peerage, is a study for the artist's *Cleobulus instructing his daughter Cleobouline* and carries an estimate of £10,000-15,000.



The sale will offer approximately 150 drawings and watercolours, including portraits, landscapes, figure studies and caricatures. This section is led by *Head of a girl* by John William Waterhouse, R.A. (1849-1917)



illustrated left which is expected to realise £30,000-50,000. Further highlights include *Studies for 'The Backgammon Players'* by Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt., A.R.A., R.W.S. (1833-1898) which is expected to realise £7,000-10,000, *Ellen Terry at the piano* by George Frederick Watts, O.M., R.A. (1817-1904) which carries an estimate of £3,000-5,000 and *Study for a bather in 'The Kelpie'* by Herbert James Draper (1864-1920) (estimate: £8,000-12,000). *Study for 'The Captive Andromache'* by Frederic, Lord Leighton, P.R.A., R.W.A. (1830-1896) portrays four classical female figures and is a study drawing for the painting now at the Manchester City Art Gallery (estimate:

£4,000-6,000), while Sir John Everett Millais, Bt., P.R.A., R.W.S. is represented by a profile drawing of the artist and his wife, Effie, in the guise of Queen Victoria and Albert (estimate: £3,000-5,000). Also included in the sale are *'The Kingdom of the Future'* by Frederick Cayley Robinson, A.R.A., R.W.S. (1862-1927), an illustration for Nobel Prize winning author Maurice Maeterlinck's play *The Blue Bird* (estimate: £7,000-10,000) and *Portrait of Elizabeth Siddal, full-length, seated* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) which is expected to realise £20,000-30,000.

The second half of the 19th century was a period of artistic cross-over with a number of prominent artistic figures also heavily involved in the Decorative Arts movement. Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, a founder member with his friend William Morris of *Morris and Co.*, designed a number of tapestries and stained glass windows. The auction will include a section of decorative arts and furniture including a Pilkington Royal Lancastrian vase, decorated by Gordon M. Forsyth and presented to the designer and artist Louis Mark Solon (1835-1913) by William Burton, the manager of Pilkington Tile and Pottery Company from its foundation in 1891 to his retirement in 1915 (estimate: £3,000-4,000), a 19th century Gothic revival carved walnut side chair with needlework tapestry (estimate: £2,000-3,000) and *Credo*, a bronze figure of a knight by Emmanuel Frémiet (1824-1910) *illustrated right* which is expected to realise £2,000-3,000.



Christopher Wood is a leading writer and dealer in Victorian and pre-Raphaelite art. Educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, he worked at Christie's from 1963 to 1976 where he became Director of the 19th



Century Art department. Since 1977, he has run a private business advising and dealing in Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite art, gothic furniture and decorative arts. A renowned author and broadcaster, he appeared regularly on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* for a number of years and has written 12 books including *Victorian Painting*, *Dictionary of Victorian Painters*, *The Pre-Raphaelites* and *The Great Art Boom 1970-1997*. Christopher's latest book *William Powell Frith (1819-1909) – A Painter and his World* was published on 19 October 2006.

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I can scarcely imagine a task more agreeable for a gentleman of means, taste and leisure than to set himself to the consistent decoration and furnishing of a Gothic villa' – J. Beavington Atkinson, Art Journal, 1867

Notes to editors:

- *Christopher Wood: A Very Victorian Eye* will be on public exhibition at Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London, SW1Y 6QT on 23 and 25 - 28 February 2007.