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CHRISTIE'S



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE PRINCELY HOUSE OF LIECHTENSTEIN

450 lots of furniture, paintings, clocks, sculpture, tapestry and works of art from the only surviving Principality of the Holy Roman Empire – At Christie's Amsterdam on 1 April 2008



Exterior shot of the Princely Castle in Vaduz



Interior of the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM in Vienna, origin of several interior lots



Preview of the Liechtenstein sale viewing at Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam

Amsterdam – Christie's announces that property from the private collection of the Princes of Liechtenstein will be sold in Amsterdam on Tuesday 1 April 2008. Over five centuries of European art history are represented in the 450 lot strong sale of furniture, paintings, clocks, sculpture and tapestry, with estimates ranging from €300 to €300.000. This important and historic sale of selected art objects allows one of Europe's oldest families to further invest in the many works of art which will remain in their private collection.

"My family has been collecting art for over 400 years and was able to establish one of the most important private collections in the world. Over the centuries we accumulated thousands of objects, many on display at the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM in Vienna, others being used to decorate our family homes. We have been unable to place many other works, which is why we have decided to part with 450 objects. My sincere hope is that Christie's will find new homes for these objects and that their owner will enjoy them as much as my family did," said H.S.H. Prince Hans-Adam II, Reigning Prince of Liechtenstein.

"Christie's is honored to have been instructed to sell parts of the private collection of the Princely House of Liechtenstein. Christie's have long enjoyed the trust of Europe's premier families, having in the past offered properties from Queen Victoria, and more recently from H.R.H. The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon in June 2006 and in January 2007, from King Georges I of the Hellenes," said Jop Ubbens, Chairman of Christie's Amsterdam.



The Princely Collections

Due to their prominence in the Habsburg empire, the Liechtensteins brought a vibrant cultural exchange to their Principedom, in which the arts soon flourished. This unique environment is reflected in their collection, which combines a rich diversity in taste with a consistent high quality.

Already in the 16th century, Prince Karl (1569-1627) took the initiative to install a public gallery space for painting exhibitions at Feldsberg castle. Prince Karl was also the patron of renowned sculptors such as Adriaen de Vries, whose life-size Triton is considered one of the highlights of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum.

His son, Prince Johann Adam Andreas I (1657-1712) commissioned numerous palaces during his reign, which he decorated mainly with Baroque sculpture and paintings such as Rubens' monumental eight-picture *Decius Mus-Cycle*, acquired in 1693 and currently on view in the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM in Vienna. In the 18th and 19th century, the Princes Johann I (1760-1836) and Johann II (1840-1929) continued to extend the collection; the former focusing on Dutch cabinet paintings, the latter on Renaissance works of art.

Thanks to the inventiveness and resourcefulness of the Princes, the collection largely survived the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the turbulences of World War II. Albeit parts of the collection had to be sold after the war to finance the principality, *The Liechtenstein Collection* exhibited in 1985 at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art showed the best paintings in private hands by Rembrandt, Van Dijck and Jordaens, exquisite European furniture and tapestry complemented by Greek and Roman antiquities.

With the reopening of the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM in March 2004, some of the art treasures in the Princely Collections returned home to Vienna. They had been on public exhibition there up to 1938, and were known as the "most beautiful private collection" in the world. Thus, Vienna joined Vaduz as a second showcase for the engaged princely patronage by successive generations of the House of Liechtenstein.

In 2008, the collection of the only surviving reigning principality of the Holy Roman Empire ranks among the world's greatest private collections, of which the depth and breadth is illustrated by the auction highlights detailed below.

800 chairs divided into 40 lots, estimates range from €800 to €30,000



Jupiter and Venus

Giuseppe de Levi (Verona, 1552-1614) was born into a dynasty of bronze-foundry men and is especially famous for his small figurines. Among some 30 signed examples known to this date is for instance the highly decorated pair of firedogs in the London Victoria & Albert museum. For larger statues he often collaborated with sculptor Angelo de Rossi - the bronze of St John the Baptist and St George crowning the holy water stoups in the church of S Giorgio in Braida is cast with both their autographs. The figures of Jupiter and Venus from the Liechtenstein collection are unsigned, but in style, expression and quality comfortably equal mentioned examples.

*A pair of bronze figures of Jupiter and Venus
Venetian, possibly by Giuseppe de Levi
late 16th Century, 37, cm.
Estimate: €20.000 – 30.000*

Blaeu Globes

Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571-1638) studied mathematics with the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, author of the revolutionary “De Stelle Nova”. Blaeu returned to Amsterdam in 1596 and settled down as a globe, instrument and map-maker, soon spreading his name throughout Europe. In 1633 he was appointed map-maker of the Dutch East India Company. His two sons, Johannes and Cornelis, continued their father's mapmaking and publishing business after his death in 1638. Prints and globes by the Blaeu family are highly sought after today - especially when they come in pairs and are in such exemplary condition.

*A pair of globes, terrestrial and celestial
Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571-1638)
Estimate; €200.000 – 300.000*





Dresden bureau cabinet

This highlight is a superlative showpiece, so unusual that the question of its origin cannot be conclusively attributed at this point of time. In general appearance however, this bureau-cabinet is closely related to a number of examples produced in Dresden. A splendid example, almost certainly the masterpiece of Johann Christoph Hesse made in 1740-1742, was sold at Christie's in December 2003. Typical features which occur both on the Hesse bureau and on the present one, include the commode-like lower part with a shallow kneehole recess, the mirrored doors enclosing an interior with drawers surrounding a central mirrored niche, and the pronounced curvature of the writing flap and of the top. The immaculate construction of the bureau-cabinet, all parts of which are made as frames filled with panels, points to it being a masterpiece conceived by a master whose name still has to reappear from the clouds of history.



*A Dresden ormolu mounted walnut,
mother of pearl, marquetry bureau cabinet
ca. 1750, 235 x 119 x 73 cm.
Estimate: €100.000 – 150.000*

Auction

Tuesday, 1 April 2008, 10.30 a.m.& 2.00 p.m.
Christie's Amsterdam, Cornelis Schuytstraat 57

(Old Master paintings and antiquities from
the Liechtenstein property will be on offer at
the King Street Old Master sale in July and
the South Kensington Antiquities sale in April)

Viewing

29 – 30 March 2008, 10.00 a.m.– 5.00 p.m.
31 March, 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.
Westergasfabriek, Pazzanistraat 41, Amsterdam

Catalogue

Print version available from 1 March
Online catalogue: www.christies.com

Images

available on request

Princes of Liechtenstein

The Princely House of Liechtenstein ranks among Europe's oldest noble families. The first bearer of this name, Hugo, was being mentioned in 1136, naming himself after Liechtenstein Castle south of Vienna. In the 17th century, the brothers Karl, Maximilian and Gundaker converted to Catholicism, enlarged the family properties into Lower Austria and South Moravia and drew up the covenant which, to this day, names the first-born son of the oldest line bearer of the hereditary title and Regent of the House. Karl's grandson, Prince Johann 'Hans' Adam Andreas I (1657-1712) united the territories of Schellenberg and Vaduz and raised them to the rank of Imperial Principality of Liechtenstein, which, from 1938, is reigned from the Vaduz Castle. The name Hans-Adam forms an apt link between history and the present day. Since 1972, His Serene Highness Prince Hans-Adam II (b.1945) is entrusted with the management and administration of the whole of the Princely House's property, officially succeeding his father Prince Franz Joseph II on 13 November 1989. For a detailed review: www.liechtenstein.li and www.liechtensteinmuseum.at.