

For Immediate Release

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THE FORBES COLLECTION OF VICTORIAN PICTURES AND WORKS OF ART TOTALS £16.9 MILLION / \$27 MILLION / Euro 25.1 MILLION 65 New Artist Records at Auction Established During Two Day Sale

The Forbes Collection of Victorian Pictures and Works of Art Evening Sale - 19 February 2003

London – The landmark sale of *The Forbes Collection of Victorian Pictures and Works of Art*, the finest collection of Victorian art to come up for sale since the Sir John Aird Collection which was sold in at King Street in 1942, has totalled £16,919,337 (\$27,087,858 E25,108,296). Established and new collectors to the category crowded the saleroom today and last night. The sale was 75% sold by lot and 81% by value.

“Christie’s sale of the Forbes Collection of Victorian Art gave a fresh opportunity for buyers at all price ranges to appreciate and acquire Victorian art, bringing many new private collectors from both the United Kingdom and abroad to this category. We also saw some old collectors return to the saleroom which was also encouraging. In the more selective market of today, the auction overall underlies the ongoing health and stability of the London art market at both the high end as well as the middle-market. Christie’s established sensible guideline estimates which attracted competitive bidding throughout the auction,” said Jonathan Horwich, International Head of British and Irish Art at Christie’s and this afternoon’s auctioneer.

The evening sale totalled £11,069,275 (\$17,644,424 E16,437,873) and was led by John Martin’s (1789-1854) dramatic *Pandemonium*, a haunting vision inspired by John Milton’s text for *Paradise Lost* led the sale. The painting sold for a record price of £1,656,650 (\$2,640,700 E2,460,125). A celebration of the elegant Victorian aristocrat depicted in *Scene in Chillingham Park: Portrait of Lord Ossulston*, also called *The Death of the Wild Bull*, by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, R.A. (1802-1873) was the second highest price of the sale realising £1,271,650 (\$2,027,010 E1,888,400). It also established

a new world record for the artist at auction. Further highlights of the evening sale included the memorable painting by James Jacques Joseph Tissot, *Goodbye on the Mersey* which sold for £831,650 (\$1,325,650 E1,235,000). The monumental sculpture, *An athlete wrestling with a python*, by Frederic, Lord Leighton, P.R.A. sold for £446,650 (\$711,960 E663,275), establishing a record price for a sculpture by the artist at auction.

The day sale saw many, many artist records (see separate sheet and top ten) and successful results at all price ranges with paintings selling for less than £300 to £358,650. The top lot of the day was a painting by Edith Hayllar, *A Summer Shower* that totalled £358,650 (\$574,199 E532,237), a record price. Reflecting the Scottish ancestry of the Forbes family, the collection was strong in Scottish masters headed by the dramatic *The Chieftain's Candlesticks* by John Pettie which sold for £199,150 (\$318,839 E295,539). A strong display of works by female painters also appealed to collectors with top lots in the sale including the Edith Hayllar painting mentioned above as well as works by her sister, Jessica Hayllar and others.

Over thirty years ago, the late Malcolm S. Forbes purchased William Powell Frith's *For Better, For Worse*, the first major painting in this collection. From there, under the guidance of his son, Christopher Forbes, one of the most quixotic ventures of modern collecting began. Today the venture concluded with a new generation of lovers of Victorian art acquiring works for their own collections and homes.

A statement released by the Forbes family today said: The Forbes family is delighted the collection was so well received at auction. They spent over 30 years assembling this extraordinary collection and they wish the new owners much happiness with their acquisitions over the years to come. Remarking on the sales, Christopher Forbes said, "*There's nothing that binds a family closer than a great success of a collection at auction.*"

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Images available on request