

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **ISLAMIC WEEK AT CHRISTIE'S**



Two Iznik polychrome tiles (estimate : £6,000-10,000)

### **Islamic Week**

**Christie's King Street and South Kensington**

**27-30 April 2004**

**London** – Two of the largest Islamic tile collections ever to be offered at auction lead **Islamic Week** at Christie's London. Magnificent Mughal objects from the Clive of India's Treasure (separate press release available) are further highlights together with a wonderful selection of paintings and works on paper as well as a superb assortment of carpets and rugs.

### **Islamic Art & Manuscripts including The Theodor Sehmer Collection and The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection II**

Offered in two sales at King Street on 27 April and South Kensington on 30 April, The Theodor Sehmer Collection was formed between the 1950s and 1970s and is expected to realise in the region of £500,000. Also offered in the two sales is The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection II which follows the outstanding success of the first part of the collection of antiquities held in October 2003 at South Kensington. In total there will be around 200 lots featured, representing the most impressive group of Islamic tiles and pottery to have been offered at auction.

Christie's expert William Robinson says, "*The exquisite beauty and broad price range of both these tile collections will appeal to academics, collectors and people looking for something beautiful for their home. The extraordinary variety of tiles included from these two collections demonstrates the enormous versatility of designs from the Islamic world. Whether floral or figural, arabesque or calligraphic, large or small, there are tiles here that will appeal to everybody, from the dedicated collector to the inspired decorator. It has been a great pleasure to work surrounded by them all.*"

### The Theodor Sehmer Collection

Born in 1885 in Saarbruecken, Germany, Theodor Sehmer's passion for ceramic tiles started at a young age when he visited the north coast of Spain as a student in 1910 and noticed the beautiful *Azulejos*. It was not until he retired in 1954 following a successful corporate career, that he started to collect properly, travelling the world with his wife to countries where beautiful tiles could be seen. During this time he also bought the Westerhof in Tegernsee where he created a small underground museum for his collection which he opened to the public.



A blue and white hexagonal tile, *circa* 1530 (estimate: £3,000-4,000)

The Theodor Sehmer Collection contains outstanding examples of the various styles and techniques used in all the major historical periods of the great tile-producing centres. From intricately decorated 10<sup>th</sup> century tiles through to numerous examples from the mediaeval highpoints of the 13<sup>th</sup> and the products of the powerful dynasties of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the collection continues through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is equally varied in geography from central Asia to Southern Spain and contains magnificent examples of the highly decorated Ottoman Iznik tiles of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (estimate from £300-30,000). A number of tiles which are very rarely at auction are also offered including the beautiful Syrian blue and white hexagonal tiles (estimates from £30,000-£50,000).

### The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection II

The second part of The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection features a remarkable group of Iznik tiles spanning all the major phases of design; from the early  *cuerda seca*  tile of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, through to the hexagonal blue and white tiles of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, to the glorious polychrome decoration of the latter half of that century represented in two intricately detailed Iznik

polychrome tiles (estimate : £6,000-10,000). A number have exceptional colouring, notably a very large Iznik pottery tile from Ottoman Turkey, from the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £40,000-60,000) which demonstrates the strength of Iznik drawing at its very best.



A very large Iznik pottery tile from Ottoman Turkey, last quarter 16<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £40,000-60,000)

Born in Germany, Heidi Vollmoeller began her career as a champion ice-skater and moved to Paris in the mid-1940s to study ballet. It was during this time that her passion for antiquities and Islamic art was first ignited by her uncle and mentor, the painter Hans Purrmann. Returning to Zurich in the early 1950s, she became a dealer at a time when they were hardly any women in the business and opened her first gallery which she later moved to the Vollmoeller family home on Kurhausstrasse. A passionate collector for over five decades, she sold to more than 70 museums worldwide. This superb collection offered at Christie's bears witness to her excellent taste and knowledge.

Other highlights of the Islamic Art & Manuscripts sale at King Street include a full-length portrait of `Abbas Mirza, Crown Prince and son of Fath `Ali Shah by the court painter, Mihr `Ali, painted around 1820 (estimate £200,000-300,000) which leads a strong section of Persian paintings. An oil painting of a fashionable young man painted around 1670 (estimate: £60,000-80,000) and a drawing of an Indian musician by the Iranian artist Shaykh `Abbasi dated 1666 (estimate: £15,000-20,000) will also be offered.

### **Oriental Rugs and Carpets**

A superb selection of over 280 decorative and collectable carpets and rugs will be offered at Oriental Rugs and Carpets sale on 29 April at King Street. Examples include a silk Heriz carpet (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and a pictorial Kirman carpet from South East Persia depicting a bacchanalian scene taken from a Brussels tapestry in the Royal Golestan Palace, Tehran. (estimate: £35,000-50,000). An Agra carpet from North India, 1880 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) will also be offered together with a Zareh Penyamin silk and metal-thread prayer rug (estimate: £18,000-24,000). Also scattered through the sale are Caucasian, Persian and Turkish rugs from a private collection, the first half of which was successfully sold in October 2003.

### **Indian and Islamic Works of Art**

The Indian and Islamic Works of Art sale on 30 April at South Kensington concludes Christie's Islamic Week of auctions. Featuring art from an expansive geographical range that extends from

India to Turkey, the sale includes a large 19<sup>th</sup> century Cairoware inlaid casket with fitted drawers (estimate : £3,000-5,000); a pair of 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian enamelled silver sprinklers (estimate : £1,000-1,500) and a yellow glazed Channakale ewer in the form of a lion from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (estimate : £500-700). A selection of paintings and works on paper will also be offered including a Qur'an from Ottoman Turkey, AH 1269/1852-3 AD (estimate : £1,000-1,500) and a Mughal Indian gouache on paper of a group of holy men and musicians by Mir Miran (estimate : £3,000-5,000).

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*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's website at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

**Notes to Editors :**

**Christie's Islamic Week of Sales**

**27 April, King Street** – Islamic Art & Manuscripts including The Clive of India Treasure, The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection II and The Theodor Sehmer Collection Part II

**29 April, King Street** – Rugs & Carpets

**30 April, South Kensington** – Indian and Islamic Works of Art including The Heidi Vollmoeller Collection II and The Theodor Sehmer Collection Part II