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VIVA ESPAÑA

CHRISTIE'S CELEBRATES *SPANISH PICTURES* ~

A GALA AUCTION WILL TAKE PLACE IN MADRID IN OCTOBER

Having Recently Celebrated its 30th Anniversary in Spain, Christie's will offer Old Master Pictures, 19th Century, Modern and Contemporary Art at the Hotel Palace

Spanish Pictures

Christie's Madrid

6 October 2004

Madrid – Christie's announce that an important sale celebrating the Spanish painting will take place in Madrid on 6 October 2004. *Spanish Pictures* will be the first auction to be staged by Christie's in Spain since the 1970s as well as the exceptional house sale of Bendinat in Mallorca in 1999. Following on from the highly successful exhibition that marked the 30th anniversary of Christie's activities in Spain, this sale will include approximately forty lots and is estimated to exceed 3 million Euros.

"We are thrilled to bring the excitement of Christie's auctions to the heart of Spain. Celebrating four centuries of Spanish art, we intend to make this an annual event in Spain. We are carefully selecting a superb range of pictures to present to the market here in Madrid", said Juan Varez, of Christie's Spain. "This sale will complement the Spanish art offered in 2004 in our international auctions. We have recently seen a surge of interest in our nations art and this auction responds to the growing audience for both private and international sales."

The auction will offer an important selection of Old Master pictures through 19th century painting to Contemporary works of art produced in the late 20th century.

A magnificent pair of paintings by Juan van der Hamen y León (1596-1631) will highlight the selection of Old Master pictures. *A basket of grapes, pears and plums in a blue and white bowl, with a gourd and a melon on a stone ledge*, 1629 (estimate: E800,000-1,200,000) and *A basket of lemons and cherries, with an artichoke and a glass jar, a basket of figs and a plate of apples on a stone ledge*, 1629 (estimate: E800,000-1,200,000) are previously unknown and have been in the same

private family collection since the 19th century. These works cannot be exported from Spain due to their artistic importance.

Van der Hamen y León is arguably the most important 17th century still-life painter. He served at the courts of Philip III and Philip IV and was perhaps the most influential artist in establishing the popularity of the new genre of still life in Madrid, completely monopolising still life painting in the court between 1620 and 1630. He was the son of a Flemish courtier, who had moved to Madrid from Brussels before 1586, and a half-Flemish mother of noble Toledan ancestry.

The artist and his two brothers (both of whom were writers) emphasized their Spanish roots by using part of their maternal grandmother's family name, Gómez de León. The artist inherited his father's honorary positions at court and also served as unsalaried Pintor del Rey. His artistic activity in the service of the crown is first recorded on 10 September 1619, when he was paid for painting a still-life for the country palace of El Pardo, to the north of Madrid. Van der Hamen y León's paintings combine traditional influences from the 17th century with conditions of cosmopolitan life in Madrid.

Modern highlights already consigned include the exquisite *Nude woman sitting in a chair* by Antonio López García (b. 1936) (estimate: E400,000-800,000). Antonio López is one of the most important painters of Spanish Realism and has long been internationally recognised as an artist of great standing within this post-war movement. He only painted a very small number of pictures, exhibiting infrequently; thus his works are extremely rare. Part of the reason for this was his scrupulous, conscientious and meditated way in which this artist from Tomelloso worked.

Among the younger artists, Christie's will present an interesting wooden and polyester sculpture, *Cría Roja*, 1993, by Francisco Leiro (estimate: E15,000-25,000) and the striking *El tigre de Fernando*, 1987, by Andrés Nagel (estimate: E15,000-25,000).

Other paintings included in the sale so far are by Francisco de Zurbarán, Joaquín Sorolla, Francisco Leiro, Andrés Nagel, Pedro Pruna and Antoni Clavé. Further details will be released later this year.

To organise this ambitious project Christie's has the support of Julieta Rafecas, who having worked at Christie's for twelve years, has rejoined to oversee the sale. Julieta Rafecas graduated from the Complutense University of Madrid in History of Art and completed a Fine Arts Course at Christie's London and an MBA at the Institute of Business.

Auction: 6 October 2004
Exhibition Viewing Dates: 30 September – 6 October 2004

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Images available on request
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